

**Representing Indonesia's "Revolusi" Years in Film:
A Case Study of the Depiction of "the Long March of the
Siliwangi Division" (1948)**

Inauguraldissertation

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Abstract

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This study investigates a historical event that occurred during the Indonesian Revolution as depicted in Indonesian historical films and argues that these films not only attempt to depict the past but also use the past as a means of social commentary, teaching moral insight, and historical reinforcement. The historical films selected are *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950) and *Mereka Kembali* (1972). Both films deal with the Long March event experienced by the troops of the Siliwangi Division in 1948. These troops were previously assigned to infiltrate Yogyakarta and its surrounding areas. They were instructed to march back to their original base in West Java as a part of the military strategies to confront the Dutch during the Indonesian Revolution, also known as the Indonesian War of Independence. This event became known as the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. This study examines not only the representation of the past or the texts of the films but also the production process, which includes the motivations of the filmmakers and the public reception when the films were screened for the public at the time—in 1950 and 1972, respectively. This approach provides a broader and richer dimension, valuable insights into the behind-the-scenes process of making the selected historical films, and essential information about the public reception of the films. From the production point of view, there are two main reasons for making these historical films: personal reason and social engagement. Further, the military also plays a vital role in these historical film productions. From the historical representation aspect, these two films depict the events of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division as a journey full of various obstacles and difficulties, such as harsh terrain, lack of food, battles against the Dutch, and internal disputes with fellow Indonesians: Darul Islam. From the reception aspect, the audience's point of view, these films provide several representations that meet their expectations about the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. However, the audience disagrees with some of the other representations. Finally, the study revealed that historical films are potential vehicles for telling, interpreting, entertaining, legitimating and preserving the past. In addition, this study has a vital implication for reopening the tradition of Indonesian film studies and reigniting attention to old films.

Keywords: historical film, representation, Indonesian Revolution, the long march of the Siliwangi Division, historical event.

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Abbreviations and Glossary

ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> (Armed Forces of the Republic Indonesia)
ANRI	<i>Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia</i> (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia)
ASEAN	Associations of Southeast Asian Nations
AUI	<i>Angkatan Umat Islam</i> (Islamic Force)
BKR	<i>Badan Keamanan Rakyat</i> (People's Peace-keeping Body, 22 August—5 October 1945)
BPUPKI	<i>Badan Penyelidik Usaha-usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> (Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence)
BSF	<i>Badan Sensor Film</i> (Film Censorship Board)
B/W	Black and White [film]
Darul Islam	House of Islam
Deppen	<i>Departemen Penerangan</i> (Department of Information)
Desa	Villages
DFN	<i>Dewan Film Nasional</i> (National Film Council)
DI/TII	<i>Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia</i>
FFI	<i>Festival Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Film Festival)
Gerwani	<i>Gerakan Wanita Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Women's Movement)
GOM-I	<i>Gerakan Operasi Militer I</i> (Military Operation Movement I)
G30S	<i>Gerakan 30 September</i> (The 30th September Movement)
Hizbullah	Army of God (militia)
IVG	<i>Informatie voor Geheimen</i> (Secret Service of the Dutch army)
Jihad	Holy Struggle
KASAD	<i>Kepala Staf Angkatan Darat</i> (Chief of Staff of the Army)
Kasdam	<i>Kepala Staf KODAM</i> (Chief of Staff KODAM)
Kempen	<i>Kementerian Penerangan</i> (Ministry of Information)
Keppres	<i>Keputusan Presiden</i> (Presidential Decree)
KFT	<i>Karyawan Film dan Televisi</i> (Indonesian Film and Television Employees Association)
KNIL	<i>Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger</i> (Royal Netherlands Indies Army)
KODAM	<i>Komando Daerah Militer</i> (Regional Military Command)
KOREM	<i>Komando Resort Militer</i> (Resort Military Command)
KOWAD	<i>Korps Wanita Angkatan Darat</i> (Woman Army Corps)
Lanuma	<i>Pangkalan Udara Utama</i> (Main Air Base)
<i>Lasykar</i>	Member of a militia
LSF	<i>Lembaga Sensor Film</i> (Film Censorship Institute)
Lurah	Village Chief
Masyumi	<i>Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia</i> (Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims)
MBT	<i>Markas Besar Tentara</i> (Army Headquarters)
<i>Merdeka</i>	Freedom
NICA	Netherlands Indies Civil Administration
NII	<i>Negara Islam Indonesia</i> (Islamic State of Indonesia)

NKRI	<i>Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia</i> (The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia)
Pancasila	Five Principles of the Indonesian state; Pancasila State Ideology of Indonesia
Panglima	Commander
Panglima Besar	Commander-in-Chief/Supreme Commander
Pangdam	<i>Panglima</i> KODAM (KODAM Commander)
PARFI	<i>Persatuan Artis Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Film Artists Association)
PDRI	<i>Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia</i> (Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia)
Perfini	<i>Perusahaan Film Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Film Company)
PFN	<i>Perusahaan Film Negara</i> (State Film Company)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PPF	<i>Panitia Pengawas Film</i> (Film Supervisory Committee)
PPFI	<i>Persatuan Produser Film Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Film Producers Association)
PWI	<i>Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia</i> (Association of Indonesian Journalists)
Revolusi	Revolution
RI	<i>Republik Indonesia</i> (Republic of Indonesia)
RIS	<i>Republik Indonesian Serikat</i> (Republic of the United States of Indonesia/RUSI)
RMS	<i>Republik Maluku Selatan</i> (Republic of South Mollucas)
RRI	<i>Radio Republik Indonesia</i> (National Radio of the Republic of Indonesia)
RUSI	Republic of the United States of Indonesia
RVD	<i>Regerings Voorlichtings Dienst</i> (Dutch Information Service)
SESKOAD	<i>Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat</i> (Army Staff and Command College)
Siliwangi	West Java Division
SPFC	South Pasific Film Corporation
STLS	<i>Surat Tanda Lulus Sensor</i> (Certificate of Censorship)
TKR	<i>Tentara Keamanan Rakyat</i> (People' peace-keeping Army, 5 October 1945—7 January 1946)
TKR	<i>Tentara Keselamatan Rakyat</i> (People's Security Army, 7-25 January 1946)
TNI	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Army, since 3 June 1947).
TNI-AD	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Darat</i> (Indonesian Army)
TNI-AL	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Laut</i> (Indonesian Navy)
TNI-AU	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Udara</i> (Indonesian Air Force)
TP	<i>Tentara Pelajar</i> (Student Army)
TRI	<i>Tentara Republik Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Republican Army, 25 January 1946—3 June 1947)
TRIP	<i>Tentara Republik Indonesia Pelajar</i> (Student Army of the Republic of Indonesia)

T & T	<i>Tentara dan Teritorium</i> (Army Territorial Command [lit., Troops and Territorial Command])
UN	United Nations
UUD 1945	<i>Undang-Undang Dasar 1945</i> (Constitution of 1945)
<i>Wehrkreis</i>	Military district

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“[F]rom the silent cinema to the present, media have contributed to an expanded understanding of history”
(Landy, 2011: 115)

1.1. Rationale and Background

This study adopts the topic of historical films, focusing on feature films that “consciously try to recreate the past” (Rosenstone, 2006: 3). Simply for mention, two scholars who have contributed significantly in this area are Rosenstone (1995b¹, 2006) and Toplin (1996a, 2002). Both can be referred to as historical film scholars and, interestingly, both are academic and professional historians. Their works have inspired me in the carrying out of this study, especially in giving me insight and new perspective in the reading of films, particularly Indonesian films in the historical films category.

Rosenstone, specifically, beckons me to seriously analyze depiction of the past on screen. Rosenstone stated that: “It is time to end [the] defensive posture and to adopt a different way of looking at historical films, to suggest that such works have already been doing history” (2006: 37).² As Munslow wrote, Rosenstone had strongly “confronted conventional historical thinking and practice” (2007: 565). Rosenstone’s works had opened up new vistas in the study of history on film, at the same time opening up space for wider scope of film study. Rosenstone’s works directly probed into “a new terrain” (Cripps, 1996: 1175) and marked “an entirely new territory for the study and construction of history” (Pingree, 1999: 106). Furthermore, we can say that the works carried out by Rosenstone, Toplin and other scholars who had

¹ This book also republishes his fascinating article “History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Reality Putting History onto Film” (see Rosenstone, 1988: 1173-1185).

² See also Toplin (2000: 5-7).

focused on this area had clearly revealed new perspectives in the way films are viewed "by updating the perspective" (O'Connor, 2003: 1113).

In the Indonesian film history, films which had attempted to present the past had appeared especially after the Indonesian war of independence which was marked by the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to Indonesia at the end of December 1949.³ Films depicting the Indonesian War of Independence started to appear in 1950. My significant motivation in wanting to study historical films stems from my great interest in "reading" Indonesian films depicting the Indonesian Revolution, a historical event which occurred in the period 1945-1949.⁴ It was during this period that Indonesia fought to uphold her independence from the Dutch who had endeavoured to regain control of Indonesia.

These film "reading" activities are solemn activities (Irawanto, 1999: vi). And as emphasized by McGinn, these activities constitute "serious research" (2005: viii). These activities have continued up to today. In addition, the opportunity and flexibility of time given to me by my academic supervisor to read and to grasp as much literature and various other information, including those that specifically address the Indonesian film world, have given me many new insights which have subsequently directed me to narrow my focus and topic of study. In other words, it is a part of my effort to seek and discover the "empty space" for me to fill as my contribution in this study realm.

³ For more information regarding the transfer of sovereignty, see Kahin (2003: 116-125).

⁴ I thank Sinematek Indonesia for providing an easy access to watch these films in the period since this institution was led by Misbach Yusa Biran up to Adisoerya Abdi. This opportunity has provided me with an opportunity to enhance my understanding of films with Indonesian Revolution theme, including the details of the conditions of these films—which films are still in existence, which films are lost, and which films are damaged—especially those films that appeared since 1950 up to 2000.

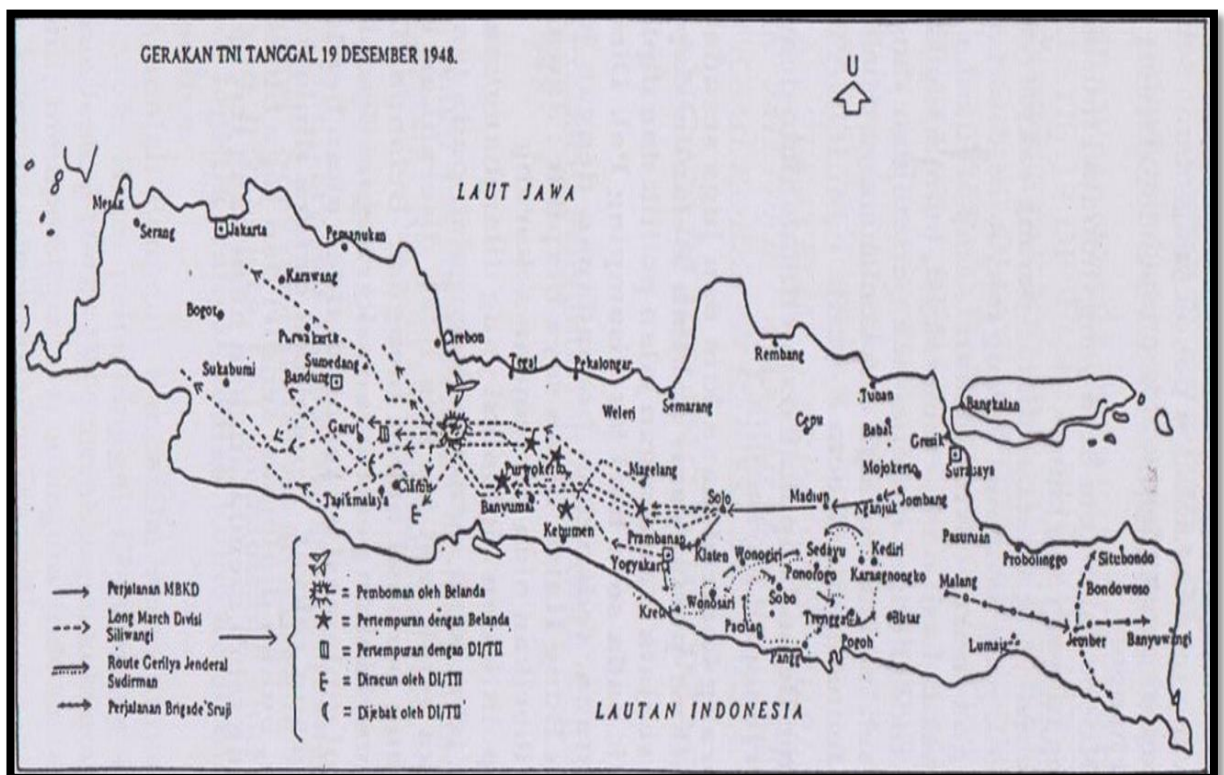
In truth, the study of films is the field in which I am personally interested. This field becomes the area that I like the most. Furthermore, my previous studies have also always focused on this subject area. In other words, I bring together my academic and personal interest into my research project (Stokes, 2003: 8-9; Stokes, 2013: 56). I place my personal experience as “the starting point” (Silverman, 2010: 79) and I hope that my experience in this field can benefit me in the conducting of this study (Moore, 2006: 11; Phillips, 2009: 3-4). This is in tune with what Bennett et al. declared, that “the more you are prepared to immerse yourself in the study of film, the easier it will become and the greater will be the rewards” (2007: 5).

Because of my film-watching activities and my reading of various literature, I became interested in examining two films which raised a historical event which occurred during the Indonesian struggle for independence. These two films are *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950) and *Mereka Kembali* (1972). These films specifically depict the event of the return of Siliwangi Division troops from an area in the Indonesian Republic, i.e. Yogyakarta and the surrounding areas to West Java. This long march event represents the implementation of Operational Order (*Perintah Siasat*) No.1/1948 which was signed on June 12, 1948 and subsequently announced on November 9, 1948 by the Indonesian Army Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*), General Sudirman, should the Dutch return to attack (Said, 1991b: 78; Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi TNI, 2000: 162).⁵

This is especially true of point 4 which states: “The troops from the ‘federal area’ (the areas taken by the Dutch in their first attack) would launch a *wingate* (infiltration into their former areas) in order to establish pockets of resistance so that the whole of Java, and later the whole of Indonesia, would be a big field

⁵ In this respect, the concept of the Operational Order was prepared by Chief of Staff of Operations of the Armed Forces Headquarters (KSOMBAP, *Kepala Staf Operasi Markas Besar Angkatan Perang*) Abdul Haris Nasution (Nasution, 1983, II: 32).

of guerilla warfare” (Said, 1991b: 78). In the history of Indonesia, the Dutch had unilaterally revoked the Renville Agreement and on December 19, 1948 had attacked the capital city of Yogyakarta, which event was known as the “Dutch Military Agression II” (*Agresi Militer Belanda II*) or “Second Police Action” which aimed to destroy the existence of the Republik (Frederick, 2011: 58; Nasution, 1983, II: 264; Nasution, 1991: 176; Stockwell, 1999: 34; Reid, 2011: 38). In response, *Panglima Besar* General Sudirman, issued Rapid Command (*Perintah Kilat*) No.I/P.B./D/48 commanding all units of the armed forces to carry out a previously-determined plan. As of that moment, Operational Order No. 1/1948 became effective to be implemented by the entire Indonesian army (Salam, 1963: 53; Suhatno and Poliman, 1993: 78) (See Map 1.1.).⁶



Map 1.1. The TNI Movements on December 19, 1948

Source: Yoedoprawiro (1999: 25).

⁶ Concerning *Perintah Siasat* and *Perintah Kilat*, see Chapter 2.

In this connection, a respected historian, Lombard mentioned that the extraordinary sacrifice made by traversing the island of Java under all manner of suffering and ordeals had earned the Siliwangi division legendary fame (2008: 119). This event was subsequently known as “The Long March of the Siliwangi Division”. In other words, these films have attempted to deal with a real event. Both films have tried to depict a past historical event in cinematic form.

Based on my searches, one film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (Jurnal Footage, 2011; Purnama, 2011; Hans SP, 2013), or both films (Heider, 1991), have been discussed and studied by several scholars. All these studies have taken different perspectives or approaches. Of all these studies, only Heider's study has the similar intersection with my study on how both films depict the struggle of the Siliwangi Division. Heider discussed these films in his book (see Heider, 1991: 102-107; 128-131). However, Heider failed to see that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, also portrayed Darul Islam. Moreover, the claim that communism issue is completely missing in *Mereka Kembali* is inaccurate. Heider also noted several details related to Darul Islam in *Mereka Kembali*. However, there are other significant details about Darul Islam that escaped his observation. Furthermore, there are also other information that are inaccurate, such as information on the identity of the film director, year of production and the perspective of the event location depicted in these films. These weaknesses directly influenced Heider's analysis and reading of these two films.

I suppose that these weaknesses occurred due to two reasons. Firstly, the limited access to information when Heider was conducting his study. Secondly, I assume that this incomplete reading was because Heider did not intend to study them further. Later, I also found a journal article which discussed the depiction of Darul Islam in the film, *Mereka Kembali* (Sasono, 2010: 50-51).

However, I was not in complete agreement with how Darul Islam was depicted as described by Sasono. Moreover, there were inaccuracies in information, such as concerning the year the film was released and concerning the positioning of the historical context related to the Long March event, especially regarding information about the Renville Agreement. This information was subsequently cited by Izharuddin (2017: 56) in her book.

Besides, Barker (2010: 9; 2011: 44) inaccurately informed that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* "follows the military's Siliwangi Division as they march back home to West Java after their successful defeat of the Muslim rebellion in Yogyakarta." In fact, the Siliwangi Division returned to West Java because the Dutch attacked Yogyakarta in an action known as a Second Dutch Police Action. Their march was the implementation of Operational Order No.1/1948.⁷ Meanwhile, the Muslim rebellion encountered by the Siliwangi Division occurred in West Java, not in Yogyakarta. This Muslim rebellion is known as Darul Islam. I feel that having an understanding and knowledge of history or the historical context depicted on film is critical, while at the same time it also becomes a challenge in conducting film study, especially the study of historical films. I will discuss and elaborate on this matter subsequently.

I am not saying that the above mentioned works with all their weaknesses and inaccuracies are inferior, not at all. Indeed, they are good works which have certainly contributed significantly and beneficially to the study of Indonesian films. All I want to say is that there is a part of their works—perhaps just a small part—that needs to be revised to give better insight. In other words, I am only critiquing those parts that are related to my study path. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that no matter how minor the information inaccuracies, if they exist then they should be critiqued and subsequently rectified. It becomes a matter of concern that if inaccurate information is cited and used as

⁷ Cf. Chapter 2.

reference, then it will certainly lead to continuous errors if no effort is made to rectify them. It is for this reason that it is essential this study is conducted so as to contribute, among other factors, in the rectification of errors which have been allowed to continue. And indeed, in the academic realm, a critical approach is essential and permitted in the framework of contributing to knowledge. This is beneficial to ensure that knowledge continues to develop and does not remain stagnant.

1.2. Significance of the Study

To my knowledge there has been no study conducted that fully examines these films and specifically focusing on the depiction of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division historical event, even more so in the reading of these films from the perspective of historical film study.⁸ In other words, this study focused on “another area of investigation” (Toplin, 1988: 1210). Arising from initial curiosity about this matter and strengthened by several reasons which I have previously described, I then decided to conduct a scientific investigation (Hurston, 1997: 43; Silverman, 2010: 81; O’Leary, 2004: 30). As has been said, a scholar’s curiosity occupies an essential position in a scientific study as “without a burning curiosity, a lively interest, we are unlikely to persevere long to make a significant new contribution” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997: 87).

It is a known fact that to make contribution to the chosen field is an important value of a study. In this sense, this study is a systematic effort “to increase the

⁸ I thank Prof. Salim Said for his valuable feedback and positive appreciation to this study. I met him on July 29, 2015 at the Institut Peradaban, Jakarta. Salim Said is a respected Indonesian film critic as well as film scholar before he shifted his interest into politics and became a military expert. For his publications on film, see Said (1982, 1991a, 1991c, 1992, 1994). His book *Shadows on the Silver Screen: a Social History of Indonesian Film* (1991a) was an English version of his *Profil Dunia Film Indonesia* (1982). Salim Said once conducted an interesting study on Indonesian Revolution films. This study, however, is described more appropriately as an initial survey rather than an in-depth study. Even so, his work should be appreciated as it pioneered the study of this subject. In addition, I must express my thanks as his work has given me some valuable insights, specifically in relation to my current study. See Said (1991c: 44-78).

sum of knowledge and understanding” (Moore, 2006: vii), “to add something to the current state of knowledge” (Phillips and Pugh, 2005: 25) as well as to conduct a scientific “revision” of prior knowledge. This is in tune with what has been declared by Toffler, that scientific study “pump[s] more refined and accurate knowledge into society, new concepts, new ways of thinking, supersede, contradict, and render obsolete older ideas and world views” (1974: 156).

According to Elsaesser, a study “can proceed from different perspectives and, consequently, construct different ‘objects of study’” (1996: 154). Consequently, the emergence of new queries, new approaches, and new perspectives will inspire the birth of “a new object of study”, even from films that have been previously studied and analyzed. Furthermore, Bortz and Döring (2006) mention that one of the criteria to gauge a study idea is whether or not the research and scientific scope adopted will allow for research to be conducted with the result that potential new insights will continue to be available (cited in Flick, 2011b: 81-80).

In this case, I am conducting my study of selected films by analyzing them in a different way and from a different perspective, including expanding the dimensions of analysis by not limiting it to merely the film texts.⁹ As Eller pointed out: “In other words, just because we have done things a certain way in the past—whether ‘we’ are business, a school, a country, or an academic discipline—does not mean that we must continue to do things that way” (2016: ix). This study is also intended to provide new information and data and, at the same time, complete the information obtained from existing available literature related to the films I am examining. Furthermore, one important point of a study is novelty. According to Phillips and Pugh (2005), if detailing is desired, the study that I am carrying out should at least

⁹ Follow this chapter as well as Chapter 3.

encompass essential points on how a study can be original. These are: “using already known material but with a new interpretation; bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue; being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies; ... [and] adding to knowledge in a way that hasn’t been done before” (Phillips and Pugh, 2005: 62).

This study will benefit anyone interested in film studies such as film scholars, film historians, film lovers, especially historical film studies. In addition, this study will also interest various audiences such as historians, history aficionados, visual media scholars, as well as from a wider audience range interested in knowing and understanding more about how a particular historical event related to the Indonesian Revolution—an important link in the chain of episodes of Indonesian history—is depicted on screen.

In addition, this study reinforces and re-directs back into the mainstream interest in the study of old films while simultaneously recommending the re-reading of these old films with a new and fresher perspective. I observe that there is still a lot of potential space in the area of the study of old films that can be further uncovered, probed and explored. In fact, if we are closely engaged in it, we will see a big opportunity to discover wide spaces that have hitherto never been anticipated or thought of.

I feel this is an important factor because there is a tendency to regard old films as being unattractive compared to recent films. And it cannot be denied that many studies are more attracted to studying recent films rather than old films. There is, in fact, a view that “if it’s black and white then it’s ‘boring!’” (Lacey, 2005: 1). This is of course bad and unwise as it will obstruct opportunities to probe into potential wealth of knowledge, especially in the area of film study as “if it is only focused on the ‘now’, the roots of modern cinema would be obliterated and access to past treasures denied” (Lacey, 2005: 1). The critical

keyword, specifically in the study that I am conducting, is to discover new ways of reading old films so that old films do not lose their vitality and their elan can be “refreshed” (Lacey, 2005: 307) through these new ways. Returning to the reading of old films will revive these films to once again find their voice and speak to the audience. And, as I have mentioned earlier, allow space for these old films to be re-discussed in a different perspective.

1.3. Studying History on Film

It cannot be disputed that the media plays a critical role in society. The media occupies a central position and represents an inseparable part of the world and how we live (Silverstone, 1999: 2; Gauntlett, 2002: 1; Briggs and Cobley, 2002: 4). In addition, the media also helps us “to define how we see and understand that world” (Dimbleby and Burton, 1998: 164).¹⁰ The media being highlighted at this time is film. This media has contributed immensely towards history as it is capable of making history “visible” (Kracauer, 1960: 300; Baudrillard, 1994: 48; Elsaesser, 2004: 76).¹¹

In fact, even from the beginning it is believed that film can record the world and all its activities. Unsurprisingly, Casetti once said that “the aim of this medium, if any, is to fuse with the world” (1999: 32). One of the capabilities of film which is referred to as the “lingua franca of the twentieth century” is its capacity to project history on screen (Vidal, 1992: 2). There are many scholars who have described that film and history are very closely linked (see Susman, 1985; Chopra-Grant, 2008; Chapman, 2013). An important point to note here is that film plays a critical role in depicting history. Experts in film study mentioned film as a form of historical representation (Landy, 1996: 1, 17;

¹⁰ For more information on this, see Thompson (1995); Moores (2000); O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002).

¹¹ See also Sobchack (1996: 1-14).

Landy, 2001b: 1; O'Connor, 2002: 23; Guynn, 2006: 18; Rosenstone and Parvulescu, 2013b: 7).¹²

It does not stop here as film is also closely linked to education. This medium has long been used for learning of history at various levels of education.¹³ Such practise in the educational world is of course “not a new idea” (Walker, 2006: 30). Using film in the learning of history is not surprising as film does indeed have the capacity to reflect historical reality (Short, 1981). In fact, as Keirstead states, film and history have actually declared their objective, which is “to present the past as it really was” (Keirstead, 2002). It is not surprising then to see how the enthusiasm of public historians, teachers and researchers towards film has rapidly developed from time to time (Toplin, 1996b).

Studies about how film and history are linked have also drawn remarkable interest. Niemi (1996: xxi) noted that “as a field of study, film and history have undergone a tremendous upsurge in interest in recent years that is commensurate with the growing public appetite for historical representations on film and television.” Moreover, still in this connection, Rosenstone noted that: “Starting around 1990, an interest in the visual media spread through the world of academia, touched many disciplines, and flourished enough within the field of history to take on a life its own. This was an international phenomenon” (Rosenstone, 2016: 174).

Through films, historical events that have occurred may be represented. In addition, through films, history may also be re-written, reconstructed, misrepresented, even misused (Vidal, 1992; Rosenstone, 1995b; Toplin, 1996a,

¹² See also Ankersmit (2001); Ankersmit (2012: 64-86).

¹³ For examples, see Benoit-Levy (1970); Maynard (1971); Pronay et al. (1972); Lacey (1972); Marwick (1976: 142-156); Haworth (1976: 157-168); Cortes and Thompson (1990: 46-53); Schultz (2007); Marcus (2005: 61-67); Marcus (2007); Marcus et al. (2010); Derelioglu and Sar (2010: 2017-2020).

Burgoyne, 2010).¹⁴ The existence of films has permanently changed the world, especially our understanding of history (Vidal, 1992: 32; Landy, 2001b: 1-22). Primarily in this context are the historical films which are also known as feature films. Simply put, the historical films “take history as their subject” (Landy, 1991: 53). Historical films are usually related to historical events such as wars, and included in these are historical personages as films may also specifically promote personages involved in those historical events.¹⁵ As Hayward emphasizes, historical films do not merely adopt past events in history or have them “set in a historical periode” but also “invests the moment or person with ‘greatness’” (Hayward, 2013: 93).

It is indeed very fascinating to study history on film as films are extraordinarily popular as “a form for mass communication of history” (Ludvigsson, 2003: 18). The public also gets messages as well as information on important historical events from this media.¹⁶ This is not surprising as “the visual media have become arguably the chief carrier of historical messages in our culture” (Rosenstone, 1995a: 3). Or in other words, “today the chief source of historical knowledge for the bulk of the population—outside of the much-despised textbook—must surely be the visual media” (Rosenstone, 1988: 1174; Rosenstone, 1995b: 22).

As has been previously mentioned, public interest in history has increased, including its interest in historical films which are enthusiastically welcomed

¹⁴ An example of how history is rewritten and misrepresented is the defeat of America in the Vietnam war (Eberwein, 2010: 34; Studlar and Desser, 1990: 101-112). As noted by Vidal: “The first time that the screening of history became truly fabulous was after we lost our long and pointless war in Vietnam. This defeat, screened daily on television, was then metamorphosed into a total victory in the *Rambo* movies, films which not only convinced everyone that we had, thanks to Mr. Stallone, won that war but which made almost as much money at the world box office as we had wasted on the war itself” (Vidal, 1992: 80-81).

¹⁵ Filming of a historical personage is known to be a biopic and is an individual genre (see Bingham, 2010; Bingham, 2013: 233-254; Brown and Vidal, 2014; Vidal, 2014: 1-32). For more information on historical films, see Chapter 2.

¹⁶ For example, many people know about the history of the atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki through films (see Morris-Suzuki, 2005: 231).

by the public (Genovese, 1999: 6). In fact, some scholars have expressed that historians are also among those who admire and adore historical films (Keirstead, 2002; Carnes, 1995: 9). Films enable people to be in contact with long-gone events of the past. Toplin argued that the ability of films to deal with both historical themes and historical personalities has aroused the interest of the public in such a way and made this media even more popular (1996a: vii). It was not an exaggeration when Smith mentioned that “so much of the public’s understanding of history now depends on what it sees on the screen” (2008: 416). In fact, films do play a significant role in shaping the attitude, thinking and understanding of contemporary society towards the past (Toplin, 2002: 2; Deshpande, 2004: 4458; Raab, 2016: 119).

From the time when films were capable of directly presenting the past, the opportunity to study history on film became more and more open. As has been previously mentioned, historical films are forms of historical representations. Therefore, historical films can express historical representations (Guynn, 2006: 19). History depicted in these films is of course different from traditional written history. Films have their own language of communicating history (Raack, 1983: 417; Rosenstone, 1988: 1180-1181; Rosenstone, 1995b: 14-15, 34-35).¹⁷

Written history has an advantage that cannot be performed by films and, conversely, likewise with films (Herlihy, 1988: 1191; Rosenstone, 1995b: 14, 46). Nonetheless, according to a historian, films have the best ability “to recover all the past’s liveliness” (Raack, 1983: 416). Meanwhile, traditional written history is constrained in the depicting of “the multi-dimensional world we daily encounter” (Raack, 1983: 416). Raack’s view is supported by McLaughlin who wrote that “to represent historical events with a scale and

¹⁷ See also Hughes (1976: 51); Rosenstone (1995d: 5-23).

concreteness impossible in written or verbal accounts” (Mclaughlin, 2010: 139).

This is not to disparage written history, rather it is to express the existence of another realm which enables history to exist through films in the form of historical films. Some scholars state this depiction of history on screen as cinematic history (Toplin, 1996a) or visual history (Rosenstone, 1988, 1995b). Rosenstone asserts that historical films are a new kind of history (Rosenstone, 1995b: 76-79; Rosenstone, 1996: 201). In this connection he reminds: “Anyone who cares about the past has a stake in their quest to understand history in the visual media, this past that is somehow different both from fiction and academic history, this past that does not depend entirely upon data for the way it asserts truths or engages the ongoing discourse of history” (Rosenstone, 1995a: 13).¹⁸ Furthermore, Rosenstone explains that “as a different endeavor from written history, film certainly cannot be judged by the same standards. Film creates a world of history that stands adjacent to written and oral history” (Rosenstone, 1995b: 78).

To narrow the gap between written history and cinematic history, White coined a term called historiophoty as “the representation of history and our thoughts about it in visual images and filmic discourse” (White, 1988: 1193). As written by White, this term is used as an equivalent to historiography as “the representation of history in verbal images and written discourse” (1988: 1193). Rosenstone added that the history known as written history is actually a form of narrative representing what historians have constructed about the past as “part of their attempts to make sense of the past.” In addition, written history, as Rosenstone demonstrated, “is a representation of the past, not the past itself” (1988: 1180).

¹⁸ Cf. Rosenstone (2012: 183-191).

It is essential to re-clarify here that this study has been conducted based on the main premises that historical films “are a legitimate way of doing history—of representing, interpreting, thinking about, and making meaning from the traces of the past” (Rosenstone, 1995a: 3). This point then further reinforces a historical film scholar’s statement that “the study of historical films is significant” (Hughes-Warrington, 2007: 1). Historical films have attracted the interest of scholars from a variety of fields, and included here are academic historians (Davidson and Lytle, 2000: 393).¹⁹

These academic historians, as described by Rosenstone, are those who had “produced works of written history before becoming interested in film” (Rosenstone, 1995a: 12).²⁰ Hence, it is not surprising that till today this field of study is one of the fields of study that has seen immense growth and rapid development. Publications related to this field of study have also increased, among them books of compiled writings as well as re-publications of books deemed to have given important contributions in this field (see Rosenstone, 1995c, Landy, 2001a; Francaviglia and Rodnitzky, 2007; Hughes-Warrington, 2009; Smyth, 2012; Rosenstone and Parvulescu, 2013a). In addition, there are journals that consistently deal with and specialized to this area: *Film & History* and *the Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* (O’Connor, 2002: 23) as well as *the Journal of American History* (Godfrey, 2006: 11).²¹

Even so, regarding the existence of historical films, there were rather intense arguments raised by various parties concerning “what constitutes an ‘accurate’ version of past events” (Landy, 2011: 115).²² And certainly,

¹⁹ For more information regarding the encounter of historian and film, see Toplin and Eudy (2002: 7-12). A respected historian, O’Connor asserted that “historians can learn a lot from studying the moving image” (O’Connor, 2002: 23).

²⁰ For examples, see Toplin (1996a); Cameron (1997); Davis (2000); McCrisken and Pepper (2005); Chapman (2005a); Hughes-Warrington (2007); Burgoyne (2010); Rommel-Ruiz (2011).

²¹ See also *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*.

²² See also Lavender (1997); Schneider (2006); Rosenstone (1995b, 2000: 26-39, 2016).

questions about the “accuracy” of historical films always surfaced (Carnes, 1996; Franklin, 2013). However, if we revert to the essence and major concept of this field of study, we will know that questions raised about accuracy appear to be irrelevant. Stubbs mentioned that “questions about the authenticity, accuracy, and artistic seamliness of historical films tend to be less productive than questions about how and why they have engaged with the past and the ways in which the filmgoing public has responded on them” (2013: 180-181).

As previously mentioned earlier, this study will focus in particular on two films which portrayed the same historical event which occurred during the war of independence. These two films emerged at different times and eras. *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* was released in 1950, while *Mereka Kembali* was released in 1972. These films attempt to re-create and reconstruct an event which occurred in the past which was known as *The Long March of the Siliwangi Division*. Both these films are simply cinematic or filmic representations which provide accounts pertaining to this momentous event. These films allow the vanished historical event to be made visible again.²³ As stated by Herlihy, films can certainly bring back history to the screen, but “not the whole of history” (Herlihy, 1988: 1192).

The dominant strength of this study is the serious attempt to understand how this historical event is depicted on film. In addition, as has been previously mentioned, this study uses a different approach compared to other studies. Abdullah (2001: 7) mentioned that such differences are normal in the pursuit of knowledge. They are acceptable as long as they do not kill the development of ideas and thoughts of other parties. Furthermore, differences are not anarchic in the scientific world.

²³ See Stierle (1973: 531).

The Long March of the Siliwangi Division is a particular historical event making up a part of a large puzzle known as the Indonesian Revolution, or Indonesian War of Independence. This is an actual event which occurred in the past during the Indonesian War of Independence. Therefore, these films have taken off from the base of the national history of Indonesia.²⁴ Or, in other words, these films were made based on “documentable historical events” (Davis, 2000: 5; Burgoyne, 2008: 3-4) or verifiable historical events (Rosenstone, 2015: 183). In short, these films deal simultaneously with a specific period (the Indonesian Revolution) and a specific historical event (the Long March of the Siliwangi Division).

As is well known, the Indonesian Revolution which took place between 1945-1949 is an important event in the history of Indonesia as “this was the period when Indonesians were fighting for their independence” (Heider, 1991: 43). During this period, Indonesia instigated guerilla warfare against the Dutch who wished to reinstate their authority and power in Indonesia (Gavi, 1968: 8; Spector, 2008: 180). Indonesia had to go through this bitter and bloody struggle in which many were killed to uphold her independence (Myrdal, 1968: 362; Graf, 2009: 918; May, 1978: 62).²⁵ This national revolution began since Indonesia declared her independence on August 17, 1945 and ended on December 27, 1949 with the Dutch finally acknowledging the sovereignty of Indonesia (Kahin, 1970: 136; Frederick, 2011: 54).²⁶

Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that the Indonesian Revolution is one of the greatest chapters in the history of Indonesia. Ricklefs argued that “the

²⁴ See Salmi (1995: 45-54).

²⁵ Vickers noted that “there has been no accurate count of the number of Indonesians who died over the course of the Revolution, but those who died in fighting could be anywhere between 45.000 and 100.000” (Vickers, 2005: 100). Meanwhile, Frederick stated that about 250.000 people lost their lives because of this national revolution (Frederick, 2011: 54). For more information about the effects of war on society, see Ausenda (1992a).

²⁶ For more information regarding the Indonesian Revolution, see Chapter 2.

revolution by which independence was won is not only a central episode of Indonesian history but a powerful element in the Indonesian nation's perception of itself" (Ricklefs, 2001: 261). This historic episode holds such an important position, and even "from the time of its outbreak, become the most dominant myth of concern of the nation. Not a single event or series of events could match the magic of this episode in the people's historical consciousness" (Abdullah, 2009: 1-2). This period is the most passionate period in the life of the Indonesian nation as it marks the peak of the Indonesian people's struggle against colonialism in the Indonesian archipelago (Moerdiono, 1997: 4; Ranni, 1993: 13). One historian believes that: "the Indonesian Revolution was an exemplary event for the world and a beacon for those inspired to end colonialism and other forms of oppression" (Vickers, 2015: viii).

In connection with the focus of this study, these selected films can at least contribute valuable information to understanding the phenomenal and monumental history of Indonesia's period of struggle. Such films can be beneficial in enriching our understanding of our history in relation to written history which has been accepted as the official history.²⁷ Historical films are simply an auxiliary tool for understanding the past.²⁸ Even further, as stated by Ferro (1983), Rosenstone (1988, 1995b, 1995d, 2006, 2012, 2016), Leab (1990), Sorlin (2001), Deshpande (2004), Gynn (2006), Lu (2012) and Barber (2015), such films could be considered to be a sort of historical source, historical information or alternative history in the effort to understand the past, especially with regard to the Indonesian Revolution, including specifically regarding the event of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. Moreover, historical films could also be a way to challenge existing history, be it written history or official history (Black, 2014). This is in relation to the possibility of rewriting history on film. Thus, historical films could also be used

²⁷ See Cham (2001: 261-266).

²⁸ See also Rosenstone and Parvulescu (2013b: 1-8).

“as entry point to explore and understand those varied visions of history” (Hughes-Warrington, 2007: 192).

The films which are the focus of this study can also be categorized as war films.²⁹ Such films usually depict battle scenes as “a requisite ingredient and these scenes are dramatically central” (Neale, 2000: 125).³⁰ The selected films depict the Long March of the Siliwangi Division and include also the events experienced by the troops and their groups of families who also participated in that long march. Through these films, we can once again view a past event happening before our eyes. These films are like “letters from the front” (Rennert, 2004: 25) because the challenges, obstacles as well as battles experienced by a division of our national army is re-lived on screen, even though the reality happening on screen is not the actual reality but is only a depiction of that event—another version described as a representation.³¹ Even so, as one filmmaker puts it, film is “much closer to reality” (Harlan, 2004: 162).

There are interesting aspects pertaining to the films selected for this study. The film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, for example, was made at a time when references as well as written sources of history were scarce. It can be said that the writing of this historical event, especially with regard to the Indonesian Revolution, was still in the process of materials and data sources collection. This particular film started production on March 30, 1950. In other words, this film was made about 3 months or 94 days after the Indonesian Revolution officially ended on December 27, 1949. Whereas, one of the significant as well as pioneering studies concerning the Indonesian Revolution only emerged later.³²

²⁹ As noted by Basinger (2007: 337): “War has been a popular topic for motion pictures since the invention of the medium in the late 1800s.”

³⁰ See also Kuhn and Westwell (2012: 449-450).

³¹ Meanwhile, a scholar defined depiction as “a specially pictorial form of representation” (Hopkins, 1995: 425).

³² See Kahin (1952).

Moreover, this film had begun to talk about and interpreted an event just experienced by the Indonesian nation. This film is attractive because it had attempted to illustrate the existence of Darul Islam in West Java during the war of independence, in which it was a part of the history of the Long March of Siliwangi Division. This film became more interesting because it portrayed the Darul Islam's method to ambush the Indonesian troops. The in-depth study about the Darul Islam only emerged several years later.³³

In other words, an account of this event had been revealed beforehand by this film. It was as if this film emerged to provide an initial explanation about the event just experienced by the Indonesian people. Meanwhile, the film, *Mereka Kembali*, can be described as a re-make of the film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, as it dealt with the same event. The interesting thing is that during the production process this film received full support and assistance from the army, especially from the Siliwangi Regional Military Command (KODAM, *Komando Daerah Militer*).

By examining these films, I hope to contribute some interesting insights and perhaps stimulating thoughts in the study of historical film. For me, films which depict battle epochs during the war of independence are interesting texts to study further as a more thorough examining of films "may reveal implicit or hidden ideas that are not obvious at first" (Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2005: 26). In other words, this study could become a probability or a way to open up ideas, narratives, historical accounts which have lain buried and forgotten by written history (Toplin, 2007: 134; Morey, 2014: xv).

³³ For some publications on Darul Islam, see van Dijk (1981); Dengel (1986). For more information on Darul Islam, see Formichi (2012); Soebardi (1983: 109-133); Boland (1971: 54-75); van Nieuwenhuijze (1958: 161-179); Kahin (1970: 326-331).

1.4. Aims of the Study

This study is the culmination point of periods of intense reading, investigating, tracking of various literature, documents and archives which certainly exhausted time, energy and thoughts. However, it has been a journey that has taught me that the more we seek, the more we will see how vast the horizon of knowledge is. There were times when I was in agony, but it was also at the same time that I was in ecstasy because I discovered new things that I would never have discovered if I had not taken this path of study. I have given this study my best endeavour in the search for knowledge while simultaneously hoping that I can contribute to the development of science and civilization. In connection with this, Booth et al. state:

Research is hard work, but like any challenging job done well, both the process and the results can bring real personal satisfaction. No small part of that satisfaction comes from knowing that your work supports and sustains the fabric of your community. That sense of contributing to a community is never more rewarding than when you discover something that you believe can improve your readers' lives by changing what and how they think (Booth et al., 2003: 8).

The objective of this study consists of two major scopes, i.e. in the intellectual or scholarly realm and in the personal realm (Maxwell, 2005: 16). In the scholarly or theoretic-academic realm, this study contributes to enrich and expand the area of film studies as "another avenue of science" (Andrew, 1976: 4) especially with a focal point on historical film studies. The significance and novelty of the study is as has been previously described, especially with regard to understanding and examining how historical films portray historical events on screen. In other words, this study positions these films as a form of historical representation. The study of these old films in the study of Indonesian films can be a breakthrough to fill the "vacant spaces" previously neglected. This study also demonstrates how films can be regarded as potential or alternative sources knowledge and understanding of the history of a large nation which might escape the memory of written history. These

films are one of the evidences that “the past is not something that is fixed and apprehended for its own sake” (Collins, 2003: 346).

Meanwhile, the objective in the personal realm is to complete the educational path as an academician as well as a researcher. As I have previously described, I have a personal interest and enthusiasm in the study of film as it has an immense and magnetic attraction for me. This magnetic attraction then brought forth love and admiration that motivated me to persist in this study. Both these factors are the “compelling basis for scholarship” (Cullen, 2013: 214). This is evidenced in the fact that since my undergraduate up to my postgraduate studies, I have always focused on the study of Indonesian films. The primary factor that becomes the basis for a person’s interest in a specific field, as mentioned by Burton, is that there is something that we know and believe in. Furthermore, we have a solid initial background in that field and we have several viewpoints and opinions that we wish to express (Burton, 2008: 1). As Stokes emphasizes that “the best dissertations reflect the interests, beliefs, and ideas of the persons writing them” (Stokes: 2013: 52). More than that, I myself wish to build an expertise base in the field of Indonesian film study. And it is in this area that I hope to be able to make valuable contributions now and in the future.

1.5. Research Questions

In this study I did not position the selected films as “the sole focus of attention” (Carlsten and McGarry, 2015: 15). On the contrary, I have expanded the area of study that I have embarked upon by also considering the aspect of production history and the aspect of film reception towards those historical films that are the focus of this study. This is done to give insights and better understanding on the background of their existence as well as audience response during that period towards films that raised a historical event during the Indonesian struggle for independence. In this respect, Carlsten and

McGarry once stated that: “The most productive approaches to historical films may be those that recognize the extent to which their historical significance is located outside the cinema” (Carlsten and McGarry, 2015: 15).

In examining the selected films, I attempted to merge the individual strengths of the methodological approaches provided by Rosenstone (2006) as well as Toplin (1996a). Rosenstone’s emphasis was on how history was portrayed on screen.³⁴ Meanwhile, Toplin recommended that in studying historical films, a person had to step “behind and around the movies” (Toplin, 1996a: xi). This is done by tracking “their production histories and the ideas and experiences of the people who contributed significantly to the movies’ interpretations of the past” (Toplin, 1996a: xi). Toplin suggested there are three important figures related to this, i.e. producers, writers and directors. Subsequently, analysis of these historical films also need to be positioned “in the context of important political and social issues of the day” (Toplin, 1996a: xi). Finally, to be able to obtain a full and comprehensive understanding of the selected historical films, I opted to examine three critical aspects of those films: content, production, and reception (O’Connor, 1990: 10-26). In this respect, as declared by Hickethier, my study attempted to analyze all the primary aspects related to those films (Hickethier, 2012: 5-6).

Based on the above mentioned considerations, the focus of this study is to respond to the following questions: How was the Long March of the Siliwangi Division portrayed in the selected films? What was the history behind the production of these films? Who made these films and why were they produced? What was the film reception to these selected films when they were screened to the public?

³⁴ See also Rosenstone (2009).

By responding to those questions, we can obtain an illustration of how a historical event is represented in selected films. Furthermore, this study will provide various interesting information related to the production background of these films, including the factors that motivated the filmmakers, producers and writers in the production of these films. In addition, this study also serves to paint a picture of audience reception to those selected films, in which is included information on polemics, criticisms as well as the people's comments at the time those films were released to the public—in 1950 and 1972, respectively.³⁵

Furthermore, according to Janesick, I possess several prerequisites which benefitted me in conducting this study, i.e. I possessed the “intellectual curiosity” along with “passion” for this subject (Janesick, 2000: 382). In other words, personal motivation, interest, previous experience and knowledge are several critical key points required to carry out a study (Watson, 1998: 180; Burton, 2008: 7; Maxwell, 2005: 16). They constitute the eternal fuel to keep one's spirits and passion continually burning at each stage of the study.

1.6. Challenge to do Historical Film Studies

According to Hughes-Warrington, the primary challenge in carrying out this study is related to access and availability of the films selected as the focus of the study (Hughes-Warrington, 2007: 191-192). Difficulty in access is usually faced by researchers who wish to study old historical films. The problems frequently faced are, for example, related to the condition of films which have become impossible to be screened, are badly damaged, or lost without trace. In fact, it frequently happens in which those old films are but just a name. As we all know, old films are made of fragile, perishable, and highly flammable materials (Coutlass, 1976: 35; Slide, 1992: 1; Taylor, 1996: 421; Lacey, 2005: 296; Horak, 2007: 105; Phillips, 2009: 479). If this happens, then certainly it

³⁵ See Toplin (1996a: 21-22).

will be a major problem for the researcher. Especially if the films intended for study are the “primary sources” (Hughes, 1976: 64). The unavailability of films as texts to be examined will certainly complicate matters for the researcher in making an independent judgment. As we all know, the purpose of film analysis is “to make statements about film’s themes and meaning” (Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2005: 22).

Consequently, accessibility and availability of films are fundamental aspects. This is where it is essential there is an institution specifically tasked to maintain archives and documentation of films. The role of such an institution is “to acquire, preserve and make available for study a collection of films” (Watson and Hill, 2012: 193). However, ideally this institution should not function simply as a storage centre for films. It should also serve to store and maintain various film-related items such as posters, scenarios, and other similar pieces. There are many countries who have already established such institutions and there exists also an international federation in this field, i.e. the International Federation Film Archives (French: *Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film/FIAF*).³⁶ In Indonesia, there is Sinematek Indonesia which is a member of FIAF.

I agree with Hughes-Warrington and Hughes that accessibility and availability of films intended for study is one of the challenges faced in the study of historical films, especially in the study of old historical films. However, it must be noted here that the challenges faced in the study of historical films do not stop there. When the required films are available, there arises another challenge. This challenge is in the ability to see and understand different variations of history, for to study history on screen we need to position our analysis in an accurate context, for example in the giving of information related

³⁶ This federation was founded in Paris in 1938. For more information on FIAF, see Frick (2011), especially Chapter 4. See also FIAF’s website on <http://www.fiafnet.org/>.

to the historical event depicted on screen. This is one of the essential qualities required in examining and analyzing historical films. This quality will complement all the other attributes such as perspective, knowledge, theory or initial assumptions and will facilitate us in studying the films we desire.

These primary attributes of understanding and knowledge of history will assist us in identifying whether the film selected as the focus of study has the context or the specific historical event platform. This is important as it can help a researcher acquire a wider picture related to the historical representation portrayed in those historical films. This does not mean that we have to be a historian to be able to study history on screen (Pereboom, 2011). However, by having adequate knowledge of history, a researcher can add a richness to the dimensions of his historical film analysis compared to if he did not have this knowledge. Therefore, I emphasize that the quality of having adequate knowledge of history is an essential element in the reading of historical films.

1.7. Organization of the Chapters

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one presents the rationale, background, and significance of the research. Chapter two outlines several key concepts related to this research. This part is intended to provide better understanding in the realm of the subject under study, especially on the notion of historical film. Chapter three discusses the research methodology. This chapter explains all major methods used by the researcher to answer the research questions. Chapter four, five and six are the main chapters of this dissertation. Chapter four provides an overview of the production histories of the selected films. The background of the films is explained by focusing on how these films were produced, who made these films and the reasons they produced these films. Chapter five is devoted to examining the depiction of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division on screen. Chapter six discusses the film reception when the films were screened to the public at that time. Chapter

seven is the last chapter of this research, which consists of summary, contributions, future work, future cinematic work, and final words of the research.

Chapter 2

Key Concepts

“Moving images never fail to fascinate”
(Nichols, 2010: 3)

“Cinema is the most important instrument”
(Lenin quoted in Kracauer, 1960: 160)

This part is an attempt to provide understanding as a way in to fathom this study. In this part I elaborate on the key concepts that make up the groundwork for this study. As a field study, the essential matter to note here is that the study of film is an area of interconnections and may be described as being interdisciplinary.¹ Therefore, as pointed out by film theorist, Andrew (1984), a person intending to do research on films requires “an accumulation of concepts, or rather, of ideas and attitude clustered around concepts” or to have what is known as film theory. Film theory as pointed out by Andrew is “a verbal representation of the film complex” (Andrew, 1984: 3).

Film theory functions as a way of understanding the film world that a researcher wishes to study (Andrew, 1976). The existence of film theory itself is “almost as old as the medium itself” (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2015: 1). Meanwhile, in its practical application the film theory to be adopted will greatly depend on its context, perspective as well as the angle of study taken by the researcher.² As Lehman pointed out: “No theories exist outside such a context of use of value to someone, and just as we must understand the theories, we must understand the uses to which those theories are put. No

¹ For a short history on the study of film, see Nichols (2007: 235-241).

² For further discussion on film theory, see Tudor (1974); Andrew (1976); Henderson (1980); Mast and Cohen (1985); Easthope (1993); Gledhill and Williams (2000); Stam (2000); Stam and Miller (2000); Miller and Stam (2004); Lapsley and Westlake (2006).

theory can be all-inclusive and simply right. As such, there will never be an end to film theory as long as people care about the subject” (Lehman, 1997: 11).

The point put forward by Lehman can at least reinforce our understanding that “no theory could explain everything” (Lacey, 2005: 147). However, by the simple act of placing important concepts related to the film study taken, a person can see the world of film that he wishes to understand “in a comprehensive and fruitful way” (Andrew, 1984: 4). Elsaesser and Hagener noted that “as a field of knowledge, one that does not involve its own object of study but tends to adorn itself with borrowed plumes, and that seems to owe its success to a kind of methodological eclecticism, as well as to its mercurial adaptive abilities to new intellectual trends” (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2015: 3). Furthermore, the reality which exist and which cannot be denied is the emergence of “the fecundity of film studies” which is driven by as well as “facilitated by the expansion of academia” (Lacey, 2005: 147).

In fact, till today, this area and efforts in its development are on-going and continuously developing (Nichols, 2007: 240). Similarly, Nelmes added that: “Film theory is influenced by contemporary thinking within society and by contemporary ways of seeing the world; it is therefore in a constant state of flux” (Nelmes, 2003: xx).³ Together with the experts and film theorists of the past, it therefore seems appropriate if we place film theory as a “transformative force” (Lopez, 1985: 58) that will continue to promote knowledge development potential in this field of study. It is hoped that this part in particular is intended to be as Casetti expressed, as “a set of assumption, more or less organized, explicit, and binding, which serves as a reference for scholars so that they can understand and explain the nature of the phenomenon under investigation” (Casetti, 1999: 2).

³ See also Dix (2008: 3). For fascinating discussion on the state of film theory, see Andrew (1984: 3-18).

2.1. Film as Moving Images

The twentieth century is known as the age of film (Casetti, 2008: 1).⁴ Film, which is also known as moving images, moving pictures, motion pictures, or *gambar idoe*⁵ is today more than a 100 years old (Nelmes, 2003: xx). Biran (1997a) defines film as "a recording of moving images on celluloid, video tapes, laser discs or on any recording material to be discovered in the future, where by its screening those recordings will be projected." Biran's definition is accurate when we look at the reality today, especially with regard to the increasingly sophisticated methods of film making. Today, films can even be recorded using digital cameras (Nelmes, 2003: xix). Newbold notes that the primary keyword of moving images are, among others, these images are produced technologically "that are in some way active, are used by an audience, and are mediated" (Newbold, 2002: 101).

According to Pardo, the first public screening of their cinematograph⁶ from the French brothers Louise and Auguste Lumiere on 28 December 1885 at the Grand Café in Paris was deemed to be a milestone in the history of the film world.⁷ He writes that "the lush and dense history of cinema as a mass spectacle and popular entertainment had only started" (Pardo, 2015: 68).⁸ At that time, audiences had to spend an amount of money to watch the show, which simultaneously signaled that this form of entertainment could earn money (Manvell, 1966: 122-123; Bowskill, 1976: 11; Dixon and Foster, 2008: 6; Turow, 2009: 464).

⁴ See also Hauser's chapter on "The Film Age" (1958: 226-259).

⁵ An Indonesian term, see Ardan (1992).

⁶ A scholar notes that this invention "was the result of combining the principles of three previous inventions, the magic lantern, photography and that species of optical toy which gives the appearance of movement to a rapid succession of static images" (Lindgren, 1963: 31). For more discussion, see Bazin (1967: 17-22). See also Herbert (2000, II) for "pre-cinema" period.

⁷ Sheridan states that "the Lumieres did not make the first film, but they were the first to project film to an audience" (1972: 121).

⁸ See also Huhtamo (2011: 3-15). For more information on history of film, see Ellis (1990).

Vasudev et al. (2002: vii) described film as a magical invention as it was capable of hypnotizing many people since it first existed up to the present moment and even into the future, especially in light of ever more sophisticated developments in technology. Scholars observed that technology was the principal component and the key factor for the existence and development of this medium. Therefore, the film can be separated from the development of audio-visual technology. No wonder if a film is also known as a technological medium (Neale, 1985: 2; Mitchell, 2002: 174; Lacey, 2005: 306).

Films are also known to possess undeniable power of persuasion. The unique power of films can draw the attention of the masses more powerfully than any other artistic medium (Cavell, 1971: 164; Rivers et al., 2003: 252; McGinn, 2005: 3). This is because films have added advantage in that they are able to deliver messages in an effective, attractive and incredible audiovisual way.⁹ In other words, film has the unique capacity to charm and convince audiences through the subject matter it is displaying. Films are capable of luring us “to understand the world in certain ways but not in others” (O’Connor and Downing, 1995: 16). Scholars state that the existence of films have changed our world forever. Films have transformed our lives, including how we look at and perceive the world (Vidal, 1992: 32; Taylor, 1996: 419; Griffin, 2003: 345).

Raack states that “the film image strikes the physical body on its way to the mind, it delivers a message effectively reinforced. Film images physically batter the viewer’s eye at twenty-four frame a second” (Raack, 1983: 418). The film image, as Ramirez argues, “speaks through its own language” (Ramirez, 2014: 33). Even more so, films “propagate messages more massively, and effectively, and sometimes quite unexpectedly and surprisingly” (Browne, 1983: ix). In addition, as emphasized by Kuhn, “the strength of film as a medium is precisely its emotional power and immediacy. Film imparts a sense

⁹ See also Gombrich (1972: 82-96).

of reality and authenticity, of 'being there,' at its best convincingly evoking the ambiance, the 'feel' of a given time and place" (Kuhn, 1996: 313).¹⁰ In line with Kuhn, Boorstin stated that films can make us be at any place "while we are still here" (1961: 231-232). Because of the magnificence of films, a film critic once wrote that "nothing beats the big screen" (White, 2014).

Nevertheless, film was initially used only for public entertainment. And indeed, film was "*par excellence* a form of entertainment" (Wright, 1972: 9). As a popular form of entertainment, film was made initially for working-class people (Nelmes, 2003: xix; Radner, 2011: 19; Salokannel, 2003: 156, 159). In the course of time, however, film showed "its potential as an information-providing device" (Raack, 1983: 411). Films could convey information, ideas, impressions, erudition, and could also suggest meanings (Casetti, 1999: 54; Lacey, 2005: 306; Sen and Hill, 2007: 9). According to Pramaggiore and Wallis, films generate meaning "by making reference to history, to real world locations, objects, or people, to other arts forms, and to other films" (2005: 27).¹¹ Therefore, films certainly possess explicit and implicit values (Gose, 2006: 66).

As a medium that emerged at the dawn of the twentieth century, film is "a novel means of communication." This medium is a language that enables the filmmaker to communicate with the audience (de Valk and Arnold, 2013: xx-xxi). Film represents a one-way communication medium between the filmmaker and viewers (Mikos, 2003: 19; Monaco, 2000: 163). For a filmmaker, a film can become a tool of enunciation. This media offers an opportunity for every filmmaker to talk to his audience and to articulate what

¹⁰ See also Gabler (1999: 149); Casetti (2008: 3).

¹¹ Story sources and inspirations for films can be obtained from history (historical events, historical persons), plays, songs, recounted stories, folklores (tale, myth, legend), fictional works (novels, short stories, serial stories in magazines or newspapers), TV and other films (Soelarko, 1978: 35; Effendy, 2002: 15; Phillips, 2009: 211). See also Tibbetts and Welsh (1999); Tibbetts and Welsh (2001).

he believes in, what his thoughts and ideas are. It is accurate then if film is described as “the art form of the mind” (Butler, 2005: 15).

Films can also be used by filmmakers to express their feelings. Through films, filmmakers can also give a human touch and perceptiveness to its audiences. All in all, film is an extraordinary medium with all its potential abilities. Therefore, it would not be exaggerated for us to say that this media will always be the fascinating media until the end of time.

2.2. Historical Film

Historical film is one of world cinema’s most fascinating and prominent film genres.¹² It is not only known as “one of the most prestigious” but also as “one of the most controversial” genres (Burgoyne, 2007a: 378). This genre has even crowned itself as “a major form in nearly every nation that produces films” (Burgoyne, 2007a: 369).¹³ Some scholars have attempted to define what historical film is. A film scholar argues that historical films are dramatic feature films that use actual historical events as their main plots or films with imaginary plots that use actual historical events (Davis, 2000: 5). Davis states that most historical films are organized “around a particular history” (2000: 6). Further, another scholar defines a historical film as “one in which the narrative is set wholly or partly in the past and is based upon real events and actual people” (Paris, 2009: 134).

¹² Genre is a way of identifying, categorizing, and classifying films. A scholar defines genre “as a classificatory device, that is, as something to connect the text to a larger group of texts” (Casetti, 2002: 21). According to Pramaggiore and Wallis, “a genre”, specifically in film studies, refers to “a group of films that share a set of narrative, stylistic, and thematic characteristics or conventions” (2005: 347). For more discussion on genre, see Solomon (1995: 454); Grant (2007: 297); Watson (2003: 153); Neale (1990: 45-66); Altman (1999); Langford (2005).

¹³ Other film genres are horror (Odell and Le Blanc, 2001; Worland, 2006; Wells, 2010; Kawin, 2012), fantasy (Butler, 2009; Fowkes, 2010; Walters, 2011), science fiction (Costello, 2004; King and Krzywinska, 2010), animation (Wells, 2002), war (Westwell, 2006; Keeton and Scheckner, 2013), children (Wojcik-Andrews, 2000), melodrama (Mercer and Shingler, 2004), vampire (Odell and Le Blanc, 2000), romantic comedy (McDonald, 2007), religious (Grace, 2009), violence (Kendrik, 2009), epic (Elley, 1984), medieval (Haydock, 2008; Bernau and Bildhauer, 2009), and biopic or biographical (Custen, 1992; Bingham, 2010).

Meanwhile, Burgoyne provides an interesting definition of what a historical film means. He wrote that historical films are “centered on documentable historical events, directly referring to historical occurrences through their main plotlines. ... The events of the past constitute the mainspring of the historical film, rather than the past simply serving as a scenic backdrop or a nostalgic setting” (Burgoyne, 2008: 4).¹⁴ More specifically, Rosenstone stated that historical film is “the dramatic motion picture that focuses on verifiable people, events and movements set in the past” (2015: 183). Nevertheless, Rosenstone prefers to call this type of film a “history film” rather than a “historical film.” Rosenstone explained, “I distinguish between history film and the more common term, ‘historical film,’ because the latter can also refer to any important film that has been made in the past. Sometimes a film can be both” (2015: 183).¹⁵

Historical films are known to have great power to address the past. Browne (1983: ix) wrote “it is difficult to miss message carried in motion picture as it explains a historical period or event—the historical message, the background, the setting, language, and incidental details.” Furthermore, Moss stated that historical film can “make history come alive” because films of this type can make “the large and tangible visions of the past available for movie goers, film have had the capacity to restructure how a viewer sees various portions of historical recreation and interpretation. As well, moving pictures that depict newsworthy scenes often become forms of very potent historical interpretation and access point in the way the past is seen” (2008: 125).

According to Landy, monumental histories will always be essential raw materials for historical films. The narrative characteristics usually concern “a

¹⁴ According to Burgoyne (2008: 3), there are five subgenres of historical films such as: war film, epic, biographical film, metahistorical film, and topical film. See also Landy (1991: 15) for a number of forms of historical films.

¹⁵ See also Rosenstone (2016: 168).

vision of the past during moments of crisis and heroic conflict, and it reveals a penchant for the actions of heroic figures” (2001b: 3). Still, historical events from all over the world can be considered the raw materials and endless inspiration for filmmakers to produce their historical films. As long as this world does not end, these sources of inspiration will never run out. As long as the apocalypse has not arrived, the historical film genre will never die and will continue to emerge because events will continue to occur, be accounted for, and be recorded as history every day. Thus, it can be declared that historical film is a never-ending genre. A historical film is a site where historical events are preserved, celebrated, remembered, and commemorated.

2.3. Historical Consciousness

Films have an undeniable capacity to spread messages and information about the past and about historical events to the public (Rosenstone, 1995a: 3). Although films were indeed initially thought of as mere entertainment, trivial and insignificant. However, with the passing of time people began to realize the important role of films in constructing human consciousness (Berger, 2011: 77). We can still recall how film was used as a tool of propaganda to arouse the masses and motivate the soldiers who were going to battle during World War I and World War II (see Paris, 2009: 129; Kurasawa, 1991: 36-92; Chapman, 2005b: 117; Doherty, 1993; Taylor, 1998; Reeves, 1999; Welch, 2001; McQuail, 2010: 52). These studies also uncovered facts that the government was actively involved in encouraging the use of films for these objectives. Doherty described this as “government work” (Doherty, 1993).¹⁶

Film, with all its ability and special quality, gives a valuable contribution in relation to the public’s thinking about the past. Moreover, there is no denying the power of film in raising public interest about the past (Herlihy, 1988: 1192; Toplin, 2002: 2). In fact, film is described as the most effective vehicle “for

¹⁶ See particularly Chapter 4, Doherty (1993: 60-84).

shaping historical consciousness” (Kaes, 1989: 196). Films, particularly historical films, will continuously offer thoughts, information and meaning about the past to audiences. Consequently, historical films along with academic written histories are, as Sobchack writes: “they co-exist, compete, and cooperate in a contingent, heteroglossic, and always shifting ratio-thus constituting the 'rationality' of contemporary historical consciousness” (Sobchack, 1997: 4).

According to Kattago (2016: 5), historical consciousness is always linked to a community, for example, a particular nation.¹⁷ Furthermore, historical consciousness is always closely linked to national identity (Kartodirdjo, 2005: 113-120).¹⁸ Soedjatmoko describes historical consciousness as the attitude of the soul in guiding towards “self understanding of a nation” (1980: 19). Historical consciousness is much needed and is defended because historical consciousness can create national solidarity (Paeni, 2014: 7). Historical consciousness can also grow a nation’s sense of national pride about its past. Thus, we can say that historical consciousness is a crucial component for a nation.

Historical consciousness is more than knowing historical facts. Nonetheless, the initial stage of historical consciousness must start with knowing historical facts (Abdulgani, 1980: 3). Historical consciousness occupies an important position in the life of a nation because it enables a nation to look at the social reality and the social issues that it is facing in their entirety and not as black and white images. A nation that can develop its historical consciousness will be able to overcome “the fog of darkness” of its present-day conditions (Soedjatmoko, 1980: 23, 25).¹⁹

¹⁷ Some scholars have equalized historical consciousness with collective memory; see Seixas (2005: 17-19).

¹⁸ For more discussion on national identity, see Smith (1991); Edensor (2002).

¹⁹ A scholar stated that historical consciousness is closely related to self-understanding (Lukacs, 1994: 12-14).

Consequently, we must be able to use the past as coordinates for moving forward and as a stepping-off point to lead the nation towards a better future. Without this ability and without memories of the past, a nation will not have a grip on its future (Hoed, 2016: 62, 71; Abdulgani, 1980: 13). According to Borries, historical consciousness is “an anthropologically necessary mental phenomenon for dealing with narratives of change from the past to present and their continuing relevance for the present” (Borries, 2011: 284). “The historical consciousness of a people in a society,” as Ludvigsson argues, “is the instrument whereby those people make meaning of the past. Involved is the process of linking the past to an understanding of the world. More specifically, it is the process of remembering the past, and understanding the present, and creating perspective for the future” (Ludvigsson, 2003: 12). One thing is certain, historical consciousness is never ever permanent nor perfect (Borries, 2011: 285). For this reason, possibilities to strengthen it will always be available and will never stop.

Filmmakers as a group of caring and conscious individuals who remember historical events play a role in presenting historical consciousness to the public through films (Funkenstein, 1989: 5-6). Therefore, we can also include producers as well as writers in a group similar to the group of filmmakers. They, too, play a role in boosting the birth of historical consciousness through films which adopt raw material from history. This is where historical films demonstrate their highly strategic role as it is here that they play the important role of reinforcing and simultaneously promoting historical consciousness to the public.

2.4. National Cinema

Simply put, national cinema can be defined as “the cinematic product of a given country” (Butler, 2005: 26). Nonetheless, in reality it is not always simple to

define this term, even more so in the context of an ever-global development such as is now occurring, especially “in a period of globalised capital and media” (Darke, 2003: 446).²⁰ As has been noted by de Valk and Arnold that “national cinema might be defined in economic terms, thematic or representational terms, aesthetic or stylistic terms, and/or production terms” (2013: 110).

Furthermore, definitely this definition of the national cinema concept has given rise to arguments due to its devious, problematic and complex nature (Higson, 2000; Crofts, 2002; Vitali and Wilemen, 2006; Zhang, 2009). Consequently, the definition of what is a national cinema is not so simple as “they vary according to country and history, and to the political status of the nation concerned” (Sargeant, 2003: 322). Unsurprisingly, a film scholar describes it as “a complex mesh of variables” (Lacey, 2005: 273).

However, we can use Guynn’s explanation regarding this term. Guynn wrote that national cinema is nothing more than “a set of films made within the territory of a nation by indigenous filmmakers who work within a specific cultural tradition constituting an expression of national identity” (Guynn, 2011d: 213). In tune with Guynn, Gittings mentioned that national cinema indicates to “a group of films produced in a specific national territory” (Gittings, 2007: 209).

This term, besides being used to point to films produced by a particular country, is also used to differentiate these films from “Hollywood film-making” (Nelmes, 2003: 461). In other words, a cinema can be described as national if that cinema is put face-to-face with a cinema of foreign origin (Croft, 2002: 26). Furthermore, Sargeant added that “the identification of films as the product of a national cinema may depend upon the coherence of themes and imagery or

²⁰ Cf. Butler (2005: 136-137). See also Crofts (1998: 385-394); Christie (2013: 19-30).

the recurrence of personnel across a period of time or accross a range of cultural forms” (Sargeant, 2003: 322). Meanwhile, Nowell-Smith provides an important emphasis regarding national cinema by writing as follows: “A national cinema, in the full sense of the term, is not just the national production registered in a particular country but a cinema which in some way signifies itself to its audience as the cinema through which that country speaks” (Nowell-Smith, 1999: 76).

Another characteristic of the national cinema, besides being directed to local audiences, is its inclination to undertake “at some point to turn its national distinction into an asset” (O’Regan, 2002: 155-156). Continuing in the same harmony as what has been expressed by Nowell-Smith and O’Regan, Higson provides important parameters in describing a national cinema. He suggests that “the parameters of a national cinema should be drawn at the site of consumption as much as at the site of production of films; an argument, in other words, that focuses on the activity of national audiences and the conditions under which they make sense of and use the films they watch” (Higson, 1989: 36). Even further, national cinema is indeed a collection of the various perspectives of an individual who query identity, nation and community, aspirations and dreams. Hence, national cinema “is not therefore constructed from one homogenous perspective or dominant historical, political or cultural discourses” (Higbee, 2012: 90).

In film studies, national cinema constitutes an important concept as a perspective in the reading of films produced by a certain country. These films can be said to be closely linked with “a sense of national identity” and may be understood as “indicative of national spirit or character” (Butler, 2005: 126-127; Wright, 2007: 107). Furthermore, fictional feature films,

documentaries²¹, and newsreels²² are products of national cinema. However, fictional feature films will always be “the staple product of all national cinemas” (Chapman, 2003: 421). Such films are also known as “the most popular mode of filmmaking in the world” (Desjardins, 1995: 406). Without disparaging documentaries and newsreels, fictional feature films as the product of national cinema are the films which grab the widest attention and many film festivals emerge specifically to appreciate films of such genre.

2.5. Representation

According to Hall, representation “means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people” (Hall, 1997: 15). Therefore, to represent is to “make present again” (Pitkin, 1967: 8). Or in other words, “something that at the moment is not here (reality) returns in a different form (images)” (Casetti, 1999: 204). The image here serves to provide “a world of substitution” (Jones and Holmers, 2011: 114). Meanwhile, the image itself is none other than representation (Barthes, 1977: 32). An essential keyword here is that representation attempts to present something in a different form and this term represents a manifestation of an abstract concept into a concrete concept (Hartley, 2004: 202).

Representation is a social process in which humans attempt to organize their sense of the world “or some portion of it” into a version (Andrew, 1984: 39; O’Sullivan et al., 1994: 265; Fox, 2016: 1). Nonetheless, representation does not simply reflect “a pre-given ‘real’ (natural) world” (O’Sullivan et al., 1994: 29). This is because the reality or the world that is endeavoured to be represented is a reality or a world that has been previously selected, interpreted and constructed in compliance with the interests, perspectives,

²¹ For more information on documentaries, see Rotha (1975: 234-246); Sorlin (2009: 107-122); Winston (2011: 84-91).

²² For more information on newsreels, see Pronay (1976: 95-119); McKernan (2009: 95-106).

positions and values of the creator of the representation. In short, “representation is never neutral” (Kress and Mavers, 2005: 173).

In addition, representation does indeed stand to represent reality. However, we have to be mindful that “reality is always more extensive and complicated than any system of representation can possibly comprehend” (Dyer, 1993: 3). The position of representation in social life is “an essential feature”, because “they allow us to communicate and make sense of our surroundings” (Bernstein, 2002: 260). Even further, Bernstein summarizes this term as follows: “In essence, representation refers to the process by which signs and symbols are made to convey certain meanings. Importantly, this term refers to the signs and symbols that claim to stand for, or re-present, some aspect of ‘reality’, such as objects, people, groups, places, events, social forms, cultural identities, and so on” (Bernstein, 2002: 260).

Based on the discussion above we can highlight that there is no such thing as an unbiased representation. O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002) mentioned that representations cannot be unbiased and therefore “objective representations of the world” do not exist. In this connection, they further clarify that: “Because all representations come from humans, they come from a particular position. So they are relative; they will carry the bias of that particular person or group of people” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002: 50). In general, representations can be presented and constructed through any media. One thing is certain, and that is representation is always mediated (Bernstein, 2002: 260-261).

Therefore, media plays a crucial role with regard to representations. This is because “media present themselves as sites in which reality is dealt with (and is dealt with the same language of reality)” (Casetti, 2002: 42-43). What is essential to remember is that the reality represented by the media is “an

interpreted and constructed reality” (Bernstein, 2002: 261-262). It is not surprising if Burton states that “media texts are full of representations” (Burton, 2010: 1). In the context of the media, a scholar specifically defines representation as a “way in which someone or something is portrayed or depicted in media” (Danesi, 2009: 253).

According to Schneider, film is a mode of representation (Schneider, 2006).²³ Film as representation has at least three meanings, among which are: “(1) to look like or to resemble; (2) to stand in for something or someone; (3) to present a second time—to re-present” (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002: 50). Consequently, it is not an exaggeration to describe film as a “representation machine”, since it continuously produces representations for audiences (Danesi, 2009: 181). As is known, film possesses unique representation strengths (Rosenstone, 1995b: 43). Film can represent the vanished past because film is simply “a language that made things visible” (Wenders, 2001: 323).

Thus, film can represent an event including, in this case, a historical event (Andrew, 1984: 97; Bernstein, 2002: 260).²⁴ A historical event as “an event that is no longer observable” can now be represented such that that historical event is now visible (White, 1996: 22). Nevertheless, “film does not reflect or even record reality; like any other medium of representation it constructs and ‘represents’ its pictures of reality by way of the codes, conventions, myths, and ideologies of its culture as well as by way of the specific signifying practices of the medium” (Turner, 1999: 152). Thus, we can say that the attempt to depict the past through film “is never simply being recreated but rather it is being interpreted” (Barber, 2015: 10).

²³ See also Henriot and Yeh (2012: 5).

²⁴ See White (1996: 17-38).

The Indonesian Revolution or Indonesian War of Independence that is depicted on film however is actually a representation, a cinematic or filmic representation. These representations are produced, shown and used by filmmakers to express ideas. Therefore, these representations must be “understood in specific social contexts” (Barker, 2003: 8). In fact, a topic which is certainly a representation, has intentionally been constructed for us, to communicate something to us. Thus, each film, even more so historical films, is certain to offer information as well as meaning to its audiences.

2.6. Indonesian Revolution: The Unforgettable Period

The period of Indonesia’s revolution constitutes a part of the history of the existence of Indonesia and is a very significant and special period. It was during this period that the war of independence was ignited. According to Feith and Castles, this period of the war of independence “has nevertheless been thought of nostalgically ever since as one of unity and common endeavor. And while it is true that there is an element of historical myth-making here, it also undeniable that the *feeling* of unity was powerful at the time ... thanks principally to common hostility to the Dutch”²⁵ (Feith and Castles, 1970: 29).

The Indonesian War of Independence was a fight against colonialism and imperialism.²⁶ Indonesia fought the Dutch who wished to return to take possession of and rule Indonesia. Even more so because Indonesia had proclaimed her independence on August 17, 1945. The following is the Declaration of Indonesian Independence.

We, the Indonesian people, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia. Matters concerning the transfer of power and so forth should be carried out in a careful manner and as quickly as possible.²⁷

²⁵ Emphasis in original.

²⁶ For more discussion on colonialism and imperialism, see Hobson (1963, 1965); Gough and Sharma (1973); Wesseling (1997); Loomba (2005).

²⁷ The Indonesian texts: “*Kami bangsa Indonesia dengan ini menyatakan kemerdekaan Indonesia. Hal-hal yang mengenai pemindahan kekuasaan dan lain-lain, diselenggarakan*

Sukarno²⁸ and Mohammad Hatta²⁹ became the two central figures in the major event that determined the history of Indonesia (Hatta, 1969: 2).³⁰ They signed the declaration of independence and subsequently were acclaimed as the President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia (Wilhelm, 1980: 20; Dahm, 2015: 65).

This declaration demonstrated the Indonesian nation as a vital life force moving towards a better life and rejecting subjugation by other nations. Moreover, this declaration of independence was simply the inner voice of all the Indonesian people (Zainu'ddin, 1968: 222; Roem, 1970: 45; Suryohadiprojo, 1995: 21). Therefore, the war of independence was a struggle to save the newly-born republic. It was also to save a nation which had declared herself to be free of all manner of colonialism. Thus, the beginning of the war of independence to defend her sovereignty commenced since the day independence was proclaimed (Kahin, 1970: 136).

For the people of Indonesia, independence was likened to a lifeline that was non-negotiable. More so in its essence, independence was something yearned by all nations of the world, including Indonesia. This is the reason for the huge enthusiasm and spirit demonstrated by the Indonesian people when

dengan cara seksama dan dalam tempo yang sesingkat-singkatnya." See Shigetada (1986: 323). For Sukarno's full statement of proclamation, see Kahin (2003: 18). See also Ricklefs (2001: 260) and Reid (2011: 1), they used a slightly different English word choice in the translation of the proclamation of independence text. Meanwhile, in the original proclamation text by Sukarno, there were found several corrections. Susanto et al. (1994: 7-8) referred to these correction scribbles as editorial strategies. For a more comprehensive description pertaining to the background of these correction scribbles and proclamation text dynamics, see Djameluddin (1992).

²⁸ For more information on Sukarno, see Adams (1965); Dahm (1969, 1987); Legge (1972), Giebels (2001); Hering (2001); Hering (2002).

²⁹ For more information on Mohammad Hatta, see for example Imran (1981); Mangandaralam (1986); Noer (1990); Noer (2002); Rose (2010).

³⁰ Hatta (1969: 44-56) wrote about how the text of the proclamation was read to which the people responded with cheers of joy.

independence was proclaimed.³¹ Mitsuo illustrated that “their spirit spread like a forest fire all over Indonesia” (Mitsuo, 1986: 378).

Various posters and writings scrawled on walls of houses began appearing urging the people to defend this independence.³² Moreover, Indonesia had previously experienced numerous bitter sufferings during the Dutch and Japanese occupations.³³ Military brutality, sexual violence, starvation, and forced labour were some examples of the sufferings the Indonesian people went through.³⁴ Consequently, Indonesia’s independence which was the result of a long and unrelenting struggle—which began since the national Indonesian movement in 1908—was an event that was long awaited (Nagazumi, 1972; Dahm, 1971: 109).³⁵ Indonesia herself was not merely the name of a newly-found nation, it was in fact a self-identity for mutual coexistence achieved through a long period of struggle (Gonggong, 2011: 11).³⁶

However, harsh reality immediately assailed the newly-felt independence. The Dutch refused to acknowledge the independence of Indonesia. They endeavoured to return to take possession of Indonesia by riding on the support of allies. Indeed, the proclamation of Indonesian independence was a climax that the Dutch never anticipated (Lubis, 1987: xii). Aware that the Dutch had returned to Indonesia, the Indonesian people, of course, did not stay low and ignited the war of independence subsequently known as the physical

³¹ See Mintaraga et al. (1986: 47-48); Shigetada (1986: 299); Suryanah (1995: 42).

³² For some illustrations, see Reid and Akira (1986). See also Wehl (1948: 7) as well as an interesting testimony from an employee of the Balai Pustaka at that time (Halim, 1992: 128-129).

³³ As noted by Lucas: “The Japanese occupation had created even more stress and insecurity among the rural masses and was referred to as the mad age (*zaman edan*), a time of disorder in Javanese eschatological literature” (1991: 149). See also Frederick (2011: 49).

³⁴ See Frederick (1989: 132); Suwarno (1999: 137); Vickers (2005: 85); Abdullah (2011: xxii). Several studies have concluded instances of heartbreaking sexual slavery which occurred during the Japanese occupation. See Mariana (2015); Hartono and Juliantara (1996, 1997); Hicks (1995); Lucas (1997: 73-78).

³⁵ See also Zuhri (1979); Materu (1985); Kartodirdjo (1990); Pringgodigdo (1991); Kansil and Julianto (1991); Komandoko (2008); Latif (2008).

³⁶ Cf. Vickers (2005: 9); Department of Foreign Affairs (1962: 47-60).

revolution or the Indonesian Revolution. That period of revolution, as Ricklefs (2001) stated, was a crucial period for both the Netherlands and Indonesia as “a time of continuity with the past”. He further explains,

For the Dutch, the aim was to destroy a state run by collaborators with the Japanese and to restore a colonial regime which they believed they had built out of 350 years of effort. For the Indonesian revolutionary leaders, the aim was to complete and perfect the process of national unification and revival which had begun four decades before (Ricklefs, 2001: 262).

Ricklefs recorded that this was the third time the Dutch attempted to colonize Indonesia. The first instance was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which they were at the end defeated by the British. The second occurred during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, which ended in their defeat by the Japanese (Ricklefs, 2001: 262). Finally, as it is now known, their third attempt failed too, due to tenacious fighting by the Indonesian people. History records that Indonesia and Vietnam³⁷ were the only Asian nations that achieved their independence after World War II through armed struggle and revolution (Ricklefs et al., 2010: 338; Philpott, 2000: 103).

Moreover, Indonesia also went through a colonial experience different from that experienced by other nations in the Southeast Asian region (Sears, 1993: 4). A respected Indonesian historian firmly asserts that Indonesia was not an ancestral legacy but that it was the result of a struggle filled with blood, tears, and loss of property and possessions (Abdullah, 2004: 120; Abdullah, 2011: xxii).³⁸ In the term used by Berger (1976), the human costs incurred to protect

³⁷ For more information about the armed struggle in Vietnam, see Heidhues (1983: 55-59). See also Frederick (1997: 341-368).

³⁸ See also Amar (1963: 10-11); Stein and Russett (1980: 399-424).

Indonesia's independence cannot be calculated using any form of statistical calculations whatsoever.³⁹

During the period of the Indonesian Revolution, there were only two options: freedom or death. As we all know, having military strength is not the only factor capable of defending independence. The people's strength in defending independence is also involved. Uncountable numbers of people such as, for example, artists (Simanjuntak, 1992; Tashadi et al., 1999), vagrants (Muttalib and Sudjarwo, 1986)⁴⁰, religious clerics (Muryantoro, 1993; Tashadi et al., 2000; Iskandar et al., 2000), gangsters (Cribb, 1991), students (Radjab, 1983; Susanto, 1985; Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI, 1985; Dinas Sejarah TNI-AD, 1986) and the *lasykars*⁴¹, units of youth organizations as well as struggle units all participated in the struggle during the Indonesian Revolution.

All manner of weapons was used, beginning from weapons seized from the Japanese⁴², machetes, knives, parangs (long slender knives)⁴³ and bamboo spears.⁴⁴ They did everything they could to defend and uphold their independence. In this matter, it is accurate to say that the entire Indonesian nation originating from different ethnicities, classes, and religions groups united to fight the Dutch (Pluvier, 1965: 25; Marlita and Poerwandari, 2005: 49; Smith, 2001: 76; Kartodirdjo, 1999: 111).

³⁹ See also Suwarno (1999: 326).

⁴⁰ In Yogyakarta during the revolution, there was *Laskar Grayak* whose members comprised of pickpockets, thieves, prostitutes and vagrants. They participated in the war against the Dutch army (Muttalib and Sudjarwo, 1986: 32-33).

⁴¹ The word "lasykar" is derived from an Urdu word *lashkar* translated as soldier, militia or army. See Cribb (1991: 71).

⁴² These weapons were seized either peacefully or by force (see Kahin, 1970: 137; Wahyono, 2013: 161-162).

⁴³ See Mitsuo (1986: 379).

⁴⁴ During the period of the revolution, there was also the existence of the *Guerrilla Division of the Bamboo Spears*, see Cribb (1991).

The event of the national revolution was not just narratives from Java but were also from other regions in Indonesia. Although it was a fact that the spotlight was frequently on the events occurring in the island of Java, giving some groups the impression that the war of independence was fought only in Java. A former independence war hero affirmed that the war of independence was waged not just in Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya but was also fought in various regions of the Indonesian republic (Abdulgani, 1986: 7)⁴⁵. In other words, the people's struggle in various regions of the republic were fought with the same tenacity and heroism as in Java (Mochtar, 2011: 70).

Several studies recorded such struggles occurring in, for example, Aceh (Jakobi, 1998), Padang (Mintaraga et al., 1986), Bengkulu (Ranni, 1993), Sunda Kecil (Wirawan, 2005)⁴⁶, DKI Jakarta (Warmansjah et al., 1997), Yogyakarta (Suratmin et al., 1990), Nusa Tenggara Timur (Doko, 1981)⁴⁷, Kalimantan Selatan (Gafuri, 1984), Sumatera Utara (Napitupulu et al., 1991), Minangkabau (Amura, 1979), Minangkabau/Riau (Husein et al., 1991, I; Husein et al., 1992, II), Bogor (Sudarjat, 2015), Sawahlunto (Sudarma and Nopriyasman, 1998), Bantul (Suhatno and Poliman, 1993), Kebumen (Harnoko and Poliman, 1986), Solok (Asnan et al., 2003), and Surabaya (Abdulgani, 1974; Meelhuijsen, 2000; Pamos, 2016; Padmodiwiryo, 2016).⁴⁸ Most of these studies represent central government or regional government projects which obviously intend to promote revolution struggle accounts.⁴⁹ Such studies will of course be

⁴⁵ There were eight provinces established in the early period of Indonesian independence on August 19, 1945. These provinces were: West Java, Central Java, East Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sulawesi (Celebes), Sunda Kecil (the Lesser Sundas), and Maluku (the Moluccas) (Kahin, 1970: 140; Wirawan, 2005: 555).

⁴⁶ See also Agung (1985), particularly on "Negara Indonesia Timur (NIT)."

⁴⁷ The region is a part of Sunda Kecil (the Lesser Sundas). See also Ardhana (2005).

⁴⁸ See also Tantri (1960) on the heroic struggles of the people of Surabaya against foreign invaders. Tantri's book has inspired Barley to write an interesting novel entitled *Snow Over Surabaya* (2017). A review said that it is an entertaining and informative historical novel (Heyward, 2017).

⁴⁹ As part of the project of inventory and documentation of national history, the Directorate of History and Traditional Values, the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.

beneficial in facilitating social legacy as well as inheritance of values for future generations because they have succeeded in recording, preserving and conserving the history of Indonesian struggle during the revolution.

The Indonesian War of Independence was a national war. It was also known as the people's war.⁵⁰ Although the war to defend independence was a bitter experience, there was however, a significant positive meaning gained from this war.⁵¹ Simatupang noted that: "Perhaps we may say that as result of this people's war our consciousness and self-respect as a nation will increase, while the means by which the war is fought will also apparently strengthen, in each region that carries on the war, the consciousness of its own value, strenght, and personality" (Simatupang, 1970: 58). During the period of this national revolution, Indonesia also had to suffer a difficult ordeal as the struggle against the Dutch was hardly over when she had to contend with a grim internal challenge in the form of rebellions from the communists and a radical Islamic group (Feith and Castles, 1970: 2; Smith, 2001: 76).

Nevertheless, Indonesia proved herself capable of surmounting those challenges. As is known, in the matter of physical revolution, especially in facing the Dutch, Indonesia engaged two lines of resistance: armed struggle and diplomatic struggle.⁵² The combination of these two lines of resistance succeeded in Indonesia finally gaining Dutch acknowledgement of her independence on December 27, 1949 after previously conducting the Round Table Conference⁵³ (Reid, 1986: 170; Vickers, 2005: 112; Frederick, 2011: 59). As noted by a historian, "it took about four-and-a-half years of armed and diplomatic struggle before the world recognized the sovereignty of the new nation-state" (Abdullah, 2009: x).

⁵⁰ For the definition of this people's war, see Simatupang (1956: 28).

⁵¹ See Stein (1980).

⁵² For more information on Indonesian diplomacy struggle, see Suwarno (1999: 341-344). See also Soedjatmoko (1988: 9-22).

⁵³ See Konperensi (1949); Ronde (1949).

The transfer of sovereignty was also marked with an accord to establish The Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RUSI) [RIS, *Republik Indonesia Serikat*](Cf. Dahm, 1990: 85).⁵⁴ Sukarno held the position of President of RUSI with Mohammad Hatta as Prime Minister of RUSI. Meanwhile, the position of President of the Republik of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia*, RI) was held by acting President Mr. Assaat, while Dr. Abdul Halim acted as Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia after previously being preceded by the “Transitional” Cabinet of Soesanto Tirtoprojo (Susanto, 2011: 23-24; Zuhri, 1979: 639-640). However, this federal state system was not acceptable to many Indonesians (Agung, 1996: 794-798).⁵⁵ As a federation, it meant “linking the Republic core to the Dutch-sponsored states. For many Indonesians this was an unacceptable colonial structure” (Vickers, 2005: 115).

Meanwhile, as recorded by Bro, “the move toward a unitary government was strong and persistent” (Bro, 1954: 76-77). Even more so because this federal state system was seen to be designed to be “under the supervision of the Dutch” (Utrecht, 2006: 87).⁵⁶ On this basis and on several other grounds which essentially declared objection towards the results of The Round Table Agreement, RUSI was declared dissolved on August 15, 1950 (see Grant, 1967: 35; May, 1978: 63-64; Dahm, 1987: 402; Swantoro, 2016: 311). In this regard, President Sukarno before the Senate and the Provisional People’s Representative Body in Jakarta stated: “Based on the Proclamation of Freedom of August 17, 1945, and on the extent of the Indonesian Nation’s struggle for freedom at this moment, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia on this day is proclaimed to encompass the entire territory of Indonesia”.⁵⁷ Ever since, the status of Indonesia changed to become the Unitary State of the Republic of

⁵⁴ For more information on RUSI, see Djaja and Nurdin (1950).

⁵⁵ First published in Indonesian language with an original title “Dari Negara Indonesia Timur ke Republik Indonesia Serikat” (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1985).

⁵⁶ In other words, to Indonesians RUSI was an “unwanted federal form” (Elson, 2008: 148).

⁵⁷ Quoted in Agung (1996: 792).

Indonesia (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*, NKRI).⁵⁸ As for its announcement, the status of unitary state was officially announced by President Sukarno on the anniversary date of the Indonesian people's proclamation on August 17, 1950 (Agung, 1996: 792).

We can thus say that the Indonesian Revolution is a clear statement concerning the struggle of a nation to claim its right to independence. The awesomeness of this event has made it a part of Indonesian history never to be forgotten. Related to this, an eminent Indonesianist scholar even believed the importance of this event for Indonesia's future. He wrote:

Whatever the case, if in attempting to solve their great postrevolutionary problems the Indonesian people were able to demonstrate the same qualities which they had shown in their struggle for political independence, their chances of success appeared strong. (Kahin, 1970: 480).

The awesomeness of this event has made it a part of Indonesian history never to be forgotten. With all its fascination and intensity, it is not surprising that the event of the Indonesian Revolution has attracted the interest of various scholars since early on. The Indonesian Revolution frequently attracts the interest of researchers because of its uniqueness in the context of Indonesian history and because it has determined the direction of the subsequent development of the Indonesian nation (Zainun, 2006: 221). A prominent scholar, Kahin (1970 [1952]), even conducted a study on the Indonesian Revolution by directly "experiencing" this remarkable Indonesian historical event. Thus, Kahin is also a witness to history as well as being a participant observer because he directly witnessed and recorded how this historical event occurred (Zainu'ddin, 1997: 156; Winter, 2006: 7).⁵⁹ It is not surprising that he

⁵⁸ The Republic of the United States of Indonesia became history. This republic only existed approximately eight months with effect from December 1949 up to August 1950 (Wirawan, 2005: 561).

⁵⁹ See description from Kahin (1952: vii-viii).

was subsequently recorded as being a scholar who conducted a pioneering study in relation to the Indonesian Revolution.

Meanwhile, several other scholars who were also recorded as having conducted studies in all their different aspects related to the Indonesian Revolution are, among others, Anderson (1972), Cribb (1991), Reid (1986 [1974]), Frederick (1989), Lucas (1991), and Zed (1991). All the studies conducted by these scholars can be said to be written history and constitutes valuable and priceless contributions, especially in relation to the study that I am conducting. Furthermore, we can describe the Indonesian Revolution as a crucial link to understanding Indonesian history. It is not surprising if this event will always be an important topic in every book that discusses and writes about Indonesian history.

2.7. The Long March of the Siliwangi Division

2.7.1. Brief History of the Siliwangi Division

The Siliwangi Division is an army unit of the Indonesian Armed Forces which has its base on Java Island, in West Java, precisely (Kartasmita, 2013: 6).⁶⁰ Two other divisions which are also based on Java Island are the Diponegoro Division⁶¹ in Central Java and the Brawijaya Division⁶² in East Java (Lombard, 2008: 121). The Siliwangi Division is formed by an amalgamation of all military units located in West Java and was established on May 20, 1946 with Abdul Haris Nasution as its first commander. One of the objectives of forming this division was to create a command unit to facilitate independence struggle efforts (Siliwangi, 1994: 37-38; Suryanah, 1995: 46). The name "Siliwangi" was

⁶⁰ The name Siliwangi was consistently upheld even though there had been several changes made to the name of the unit, such as becoming T & T III Siliwangi on July 24, 1950, then becoming KODAM VI/Siliwangi on October 24, 1959, subsequently becoming KODAM III/Siliwangi on February 2, 1985. This unit name is the name that prevails today.

⁶¹ For more information on Diponegoro Division, see Clancy (1992: 47); Sedjarah Militer Kodam VII Diponegoro (1971).

⁶² For more information on Brawijaya Division, see Sedjarah Militer Kodam VIII Brawijaya (1968).

derived from the name of an ancient Sundanese king “Prabu Siliwangi”⁶³ who was known to be a fearless and courageous king (Siliwangi, 1994: 7-8; Iguchi, 2014: 152).

The Long March of the Siliwangi Division or more popularly known as the “*Long March Siliwangi*” was a historical event experienced by troops of this division in which they had to travel a long or far distance from the republican region back to their place of origin in West Java. One military historian described this event as “an action of long-distance infiltration by thousands of Indonesian National Armed Forces troops from the Siliwangi IV Division, at the end of December 1948, enduring a march covering hundreds of kilometers moving from the eastern part of Central Java, ‘silently’ breaking through Dutch defense in Central Java with the objective of reaching its operational base in West Java in the most intact condition possible” (Soetanto, 2007: 1).

2.7.2. *Hijrah*: the First Sacrifice

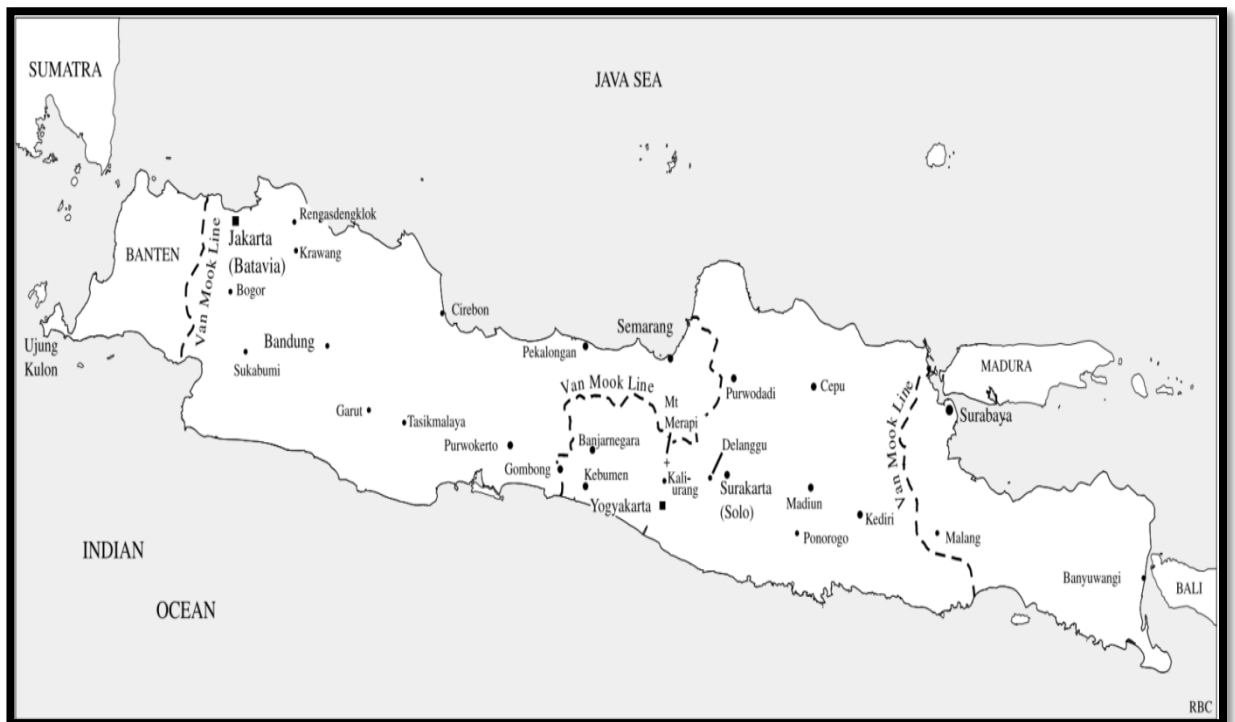
One important factor that should be noted is that the Long March of Siliwangi cannot be separated from the event known as the “*Hijrah Siliwangi*” or the Hijrah of the Siliwangi Division.⁶⁴ This was an event where the Siliwangi troops were withdrawn from West Java to the republican region in Central Java pursuant to the Renville Agreement.⁶⁵ This agreement was signed on January 17, 1948 on board the US warship, USS Renville (Simons, 2000: 146; Brecher

⁶³ For fascinating accounts on King Siliwangi, see e.g., Sutaarga (1965, 1984); Iguchi (2014), esp. Chapter 4; Danasasmita (2003, 2015). The story about “Prabu Siliwangi” had been filmed with the same title and was released in 1988. The film was produced by PT Lautan Indah Film and directed by Sofyan Sharna (Kristanto, 2007: 315).

⁶⁴ For more about the Siliwangi’s *Hijrah*, see Tim Penyusun (2008). As noted by a scholar: “*Hijrah* means retreat and refers to the Prophet’s withdrawal from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 662. The word *hijrah* connotes not only withdrawal but purification, not only retreat from the worldly but the promise of ultimate, divinely ordained victory” (Jackson, 1980: 20, fn. 5). According to Turner (2005: 162, fn. 127): “The Siliwangi preferred to use the term *hijrah* to describe their departure, recalling Mohammed’s flight from Mecca to Medina from where he mustered his forces and returned to seize Mecca.” See also Taylor (2003: 335); Soetanto (1994: 44-45). For more information on Rasullullah’s *hijrah*, see Nasution (1971: 29-32).

⁶⁵ See Soetanto (2007: 47-60); Tim Penyusun (2008: 2); Kansil and Julianto (1991: 51). For more information on the Renville Agreement, see Agung (1991); Tobing (1986).

and Wilkenfeld, 1997: 206-207; Toer, Toer and Kamil, 2003: 3; Maeswara, 2010: 164).⁶⁶ In accordance with the Renville Agreement, a ceasefire line known as the “Status Quo Line” or the “van Mook Line” was acknowledged (Kahin, 1970: 234) as “the division between Dutch and Republican authority” (Ashworth, 1990: 40) (See Map 2.1).⁶⁷



Map 2.1. Java under the Renville Agreement

Source: Kahin (2003: 34).

From the military struggle point of view, the Renville Agreement highly incapacitated the Siliwangi division as its troops had to leave their pockets of guerilla strongholds which they had continuously defended by constantly fighting the Dutch (Siliwangi, 1994: 123). In addition, because of this agreement Indonesia “lost much of its territory” (Coast, 2015: 231). The

⁶⁶ For more detailed information on the Renville Agreement, see Conference on Indonesia (1949: 14-18).

⁶⁷ The TNI troops mainly from West Java and the East Java peninsula were ordered to evacuate from the guerilla pockets in the Dutch occupation area (Said, 1985: 11). For more information regarding the “hijrah” troops from west and east, see Said (1985: 14-37).

Commander-in-chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Sudirman, likened the republican region at that time as being only as wide as a *kelor* leaf (Tjokropranolo, 1992: 198; Nasution, 1983, II: 263).

The command to withdraw was clearly a profound disappointment for the Siliwangi troops.⁶⁸ This command had in fact also created numerous problems and difficulties for the Siliwangi troops and their families who refused to be left behind in West Java (Suryohadiprojo, 2014).⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the Siliwangi troops remained obedient to the decision of the republican leader and to the armed forces commander. This proved that the troops of the republic were loyal soldiers who upheld their state politics, at the same time shattering Dutch propaganda which propagated information that the republican troops were merely gangs of rowdy or disorderly soldiers.⁷⁰

These *hijrah* troops were deployed in various areas in Central Java and East Java. The largest concentration of the Siliwangi troops was deployed in Central Java, such as in Surakarta, Yogyakarta, and Magelang. The republican troops were moved by ships, trains and some travelled on foot. There was a total of 35,000 soldiers evacuated into the region of the Republic of Indonesia (Suherly, 1971: 50-51; Soetanto, 1994: 49-50; Moedjanto, 1988: 24; Kahin, 2003: 19; Kahin, 1970: 234).

⁶⁸ See Siliwangi (1994: 124); Soetanto (1994: 44); K.H. (1988: 97-98); Soekardi (2005: 111-112).

⁶⁹ Many of these families, children, and wives followed the Siliwangi troops afterwards to the “withdrawal (*hijrah*)” area in Central Java. Then, when the Siliwangi troops were ordered to infiltrate into West Java, they also returned.

⁷⁰ See Soetanto (2007: 50-53).

2.7.3. Crushing the Madiun Affair (1948)

During this period of *hijrah*, the Siliwangi Division also played a role in the crushing of the Madiun Affair.⁷¹ The revolt was broke out on September 18, 1948 in Madiun.⁷² It had actually been well-organized.⁷³ But its execution turned out differently because several local communist commanders took the initiative to take over Madiun. Musso and the other Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) leaders who were on a propaganda tour were forced to immediately return to Madiun to support the revolt (Marboen [1965]: 4-5; Kahin, 1970: 286, 291-292; Poeze, 2011: 159-160; Frederick, 2011: 58; Nasution, 1992: 239).⁷⁴ The revolt which occurred amidst the revolution raised the anger of the republicans, especially of the military (Tjokropranolo, 1992: 198). Sukarno condemned the revolt through radio broadcast (Toer, Toer, and Kamil, 2003: 619) and declared the revolt as an Indonesian Communist Party-Musso rebellion.⁷⁵ For the government and people of Indonesia, the Madiun revolt was “an act of treachery” (Grant, 1967: 77).⁷⁶

This affair was a stab in the back for the Republic (Grant, 1967: 77; Alfian, 1978: 42; Drakeley, 2005: 89).⁷⁷ A freedom fighter expressed that the Madiun Affair had to be crushed as it was dictatorial-totalitarian in nature, had no

⁷¹ Coast (2015: 202) called Madiun as “the trade union centre and second strong city of the Indonesian Left.” For more discussion on Madiun as a base for Indonesian Communist Party, see Suratmin (2012: 4-21).

⁷² See Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI (1990: 111); Sugiyama (2011: 20).

⁷³ See Anderson (1976: 40); Djamhari et al. (2009: 232-236); Nasution (1983, II: 44); Soerojo (1988: 38-39).

⁷⁴ At that time, the Communist issued “a grandiose announcement that they had established a new national government” (Drakeley, 2005: 89).

⁷⁵ During this period, a war of declarations occurred between the republican government and the PKI-Musso. See Siliwangi (1994: 147-150); Swift (2010: 155-160); Nasution (1992: 243-247).

⁷⁶ As noted by Coast: “The general feeling in Jogja at the time was that the Communists were twice traitors: traitors to Hatta and his Government: traitors to the nationalist struggle. A suspected Communist was regarded by the ordinary people as nothing more than a common betrayer, and for a Republican to be called ‘Communist’ became now the ultimate insult” (2015: 202).

⁷⁷ Pinardi’s book (1966) on the Madiun Affair has an interesting cover illustration depicting a republican fighter stabbed in the back.

national discipline and had violated the mutual accord to fight for independence.⁷⁸ The Madiun Affair was a *coup d'etat*, a *putsch*, a revolt to topple the republican government (Sukarno, 1970: 363; Elson, 2007: 490; Coast, 2015: 201). According to Mohammad Hatta: "During the Madiun rebellion it was clear that they [the Communists] established a Madiun Soviet, while a Soviet Indonesia was their ultimate aim after the Republic of Indonesia had been defeated. Soviet Madiun was a means to conquer the Republic of Indonesia in Yogya, and to aim at a Soviet Indonesia" (Yasni, 1981: 21).

For the Indonesian government, Madiun was a crucial and strategic area and must therefore be re-captured. Madiun is the third city after Yogyakarta and Surakarta deemed to be strategically located as it was at the crossroads of road and rail traffic (Onghokham, 1978: 68; Poeze, 2011: 151). Consequently, President Sukarno commanded that Madiun be re-captured (Siliwangi, 1994: 148; Nasution, 1992: 244). The republican government responded resolutely and sent out the Siliwangi troops to crush the revolt (Drakeley, 2005: 89). This is not surprising as the Siliwangi Division was known as "the best-equipped and best-organized republican force" (Drakeley, 2005: 89).

The operation to crush the Madiun Revolt was known as Military Operation Movement I (GOM-I) (Marboen, [1965]: 14; Siliwangi, 1994: 127).⁷⁹ In twelve days, Madiun was successfully re-captured by the republican troops and within a total period of three months, the revolt was entirely snuffed out (Grant, 1967: 77, 102). When the Siliwangi troops successfully seized Madiun, the communist troops and their leaders withdrew and conducted a major

⁷⁸ A.K. Gani, "Peristiwa Madiun soal Nasional-Indisciplinair!," *Waspada* [Medan], 15 November 1950, p. 2.

⁷⁹ For more information on the Siliwangi Division's units involved in this operation, see Siliwangi (1994: 154).

evacuation in the direction of Mount Wilis (Djamhari et al., 2009: 45). There is a unique caricature that illustrates this event (See Figure 2.1.).⁸⁰



Figure 2.1. A Caricature of the Madiun Affair
Source: *Star Weekly*, No. 502, Tahun X, 13 August 1955, p. 38

The Madiun Revolt had caused thousands of human casualties.⁸¹ The revolt was a tragic incident and a disaster for Indonesia (Dekker, 1980: 66).⁸² It was

⁸⁰ I would like to thank Muhammad Ryzki Wiryawan for this valuable information. He managed his own library “the Loge Sumur Bandung” in Bandung. He also wrote a fascinating book entitled *Okultisme di Bandung Doeloe* (2014).

⁸¹ There were approximately 30.000 people who lost their lives due to this rebellion (Frederick, 2011: 58).

⁸² See an interesting discussion about two perspectives on the Madiun Affair, see Gie (2005: 275-282). For more information on the Madiun Affair, see also Sugiyama (2011: 19-41).

a bloody affair where several figures known to be against communism, such as NU clerics, were massacred.⁸³ It was during this time that reciprocal killings occurred between and among fellow Indonesians (Drakeley, 2005: 90). Eyewitnesses of the bloody events at the time described the incident as “blood-drenched” (Dydo, 1989: 51).

When the Madiun Revolt erupted, the Dutch, in fact, through Dr. H.J. van Mook offered assistance to the Indonesian government to confront the communist revolt, i.e. to Mohammad Hatta who at that time was the Prime Minister. Hatta, however, firmly turned down the offer by declaring that “the Communist rebellion is to be solely a domestic matter for Indonesia” (Hatta, 1981: 283). The Madiun rebellion clearly weakened the republic as the republic was at that time preparing to confront the possibility of the second Dutch aggression which, in fact, occurred on December 19, 1948 when the Dutch attacked the capital of the republic, Yogyakarta (Moedjanto, 1988: 40; Dekker, 1980: 65; Reid, 1986: 151-152; Muljana, 2008: 189).

However, Indonesia’s ability to crush the communist revolt proved to be a severe blow to the Dutch propaganda which had proclaimed that if Indonesia separated from the Dutch, then the republic would fall into communist hands.⁸⁴ The success of the Hatta cabinet also reinforced the status of the cabinet while simultaneously gaining international attention, respect and support. One of these countries was the United States who eventually participated in supporting Indonesia’s struggle for independence.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, Indonesia’s situation frustrated the Soviet Union, who then

⁸³ See Mun'im DZ (2014: 37-75). For more information regarding the massacres occurred in Madiun, see Suratmin (2012: 41-57); Nasution (1992: 350).

⁸⁴ See Frederick (2011: 58).

⁸⁵ See Allen (1970: 148); Suherly (1971: 69); Anderson (1976: 44); Drooglever (1988: 39-54); Noer (1990: 322); Anwar (2009b: 51); Moedjanto (1988: 40). For more information regarding the United Nations role in Indonesian independence, see Gordenker (1988: 55-71); Taylor (1960).

adopted a cold attitude towards Indonesia.⁸⁶ For the United States, the region of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, was indeed a source of worry and unease due to the communist threat (Godement, 1997: 83). For this reason, it was of high concern for the US to block communist incursion into this region. For the United States, it was deemed that “for the security of the whole Asia, the defence and security of this region was the sine qua non for America” (Sharan, 1965: 247).

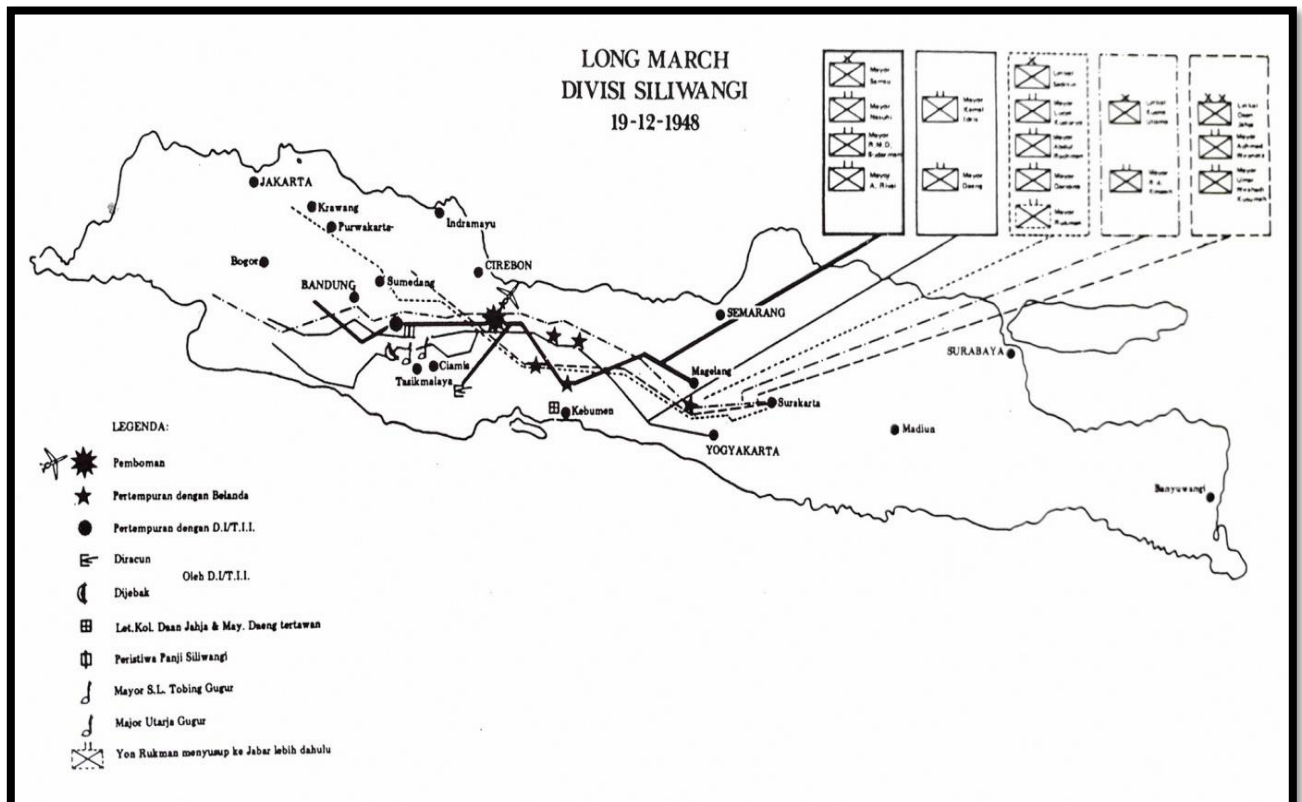
2.7.4. Back to West Java

Back to the Long March event, the Siliwangi troops infiltrated several areas found along their *hijrah* territory on their return route to West Java and re-occupied those enclaves or freedom struggle bases which they had abandoned when they were evacuated out of West Java as a result of the Renville Agreement (Soetanto, 2007: 54, 125).⁸⁷ The “Wingate”⁸⁸ maneuver executed by the Siliwangi troops used the code word “Aloha” which meant “We move back to West Java” (Said, 1985: 47; Soetanto, 2007: 114-115).

⁸⁶ Anwar (2009b: 51). As is well known, Indonesia has from the outset attempted to implement a free and active foreign policy independently of a particular bloc, whether it be the United States of America or the Soviet Union. See Hatta (1953, 1976).

⁸⁷ After successfully quashing the Madiun revolt, the Siliwangi troops had no opportunity for respite as they had to immediately implement the command to return to West Java. “The Long March’ Divisi Siliwangi,” *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, p. 5.

⁸⁸ This term was inspired by the name of a senior British Army officer, Orde Charles Wingate, who conducted a military strategy where troops infiltrated into Japanese defence lines in Burma during World War II.



Map 2.2. The Long March of the Siliwangi Division
Source: *Siliwangi* (1994: 188).

The operation to return to West Java by the Siliwangi Division was an action of complying with Operational Order No. 1/1948, which was established for soldiers who originated from West Java and East Java and who had previously been evacuated because of the Renville Agreement, to return to their places of origin and to carry out guerilla warfare.⁸⁹ The primary points of this Operational Order were as follows: (1) There would be no linier defence; (2) To delay the movement of the enemy in order that a total retreat (all civil servants and others) can be organized together with the implementation of a scorched-earth policy; (3). The formation of pockets of resistance in every sub-district, with a guerilla government in a *wehrkreise* system whose duties would include the mountain areas around the sub-district; (4). The troops from the

⁸⁹ This order was signed by General Sudirman as the Indonesian Army Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*) on June 12, 1948 and has been announced on November 9, 1948. See Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi TNI (2000: 162-163).

“federal area” (the areas taken by the Dutch in their first attack) would launch a *wingate* (infiltration into their former areas) in order to establish pockets of resistance so that the whole of Java, and later the whole of Indonesia, would be a big field of guerilla warfare.⁹⁰

This Operational Order clearly declared that the moment the Dutch attacked the republic was the moment the Siliwangi Division commenced moving to West Java (Soetanto, 2007: 124).⁹¹ On December 19, 1948, the Dutch attacked the heart of the Republic, Yogyakarta. This operation, called the “Second Police Action”⁹², was aimed “to destroy the Republic” (Cribb and Kahin, 2004: 347). After successfully dropping paratroopers at Maguwo, the Dutch then arrested the leaders of the republic, such as Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, and most of their cabinet members. With the arrest of these leaders of the republic, the Dutch hoped to crush the spirit of resistance from the republic’s troopers (Dahm, 1990: 83-84; Cribb and Kahin, 2004: 334-335; Sophiaan, 1991: 222-223).

The Dutch had misjudged the situation as the Republic was not defeated in the attack on Yogyakarta, rather the republic had now gone ahead with guerilla warfare (Kartodirdjo, 2001: 172-173).⁹³ The attack on Yogyakarta had also

⁹⁰ Quoted in Said (1991b: 78). See also Nasution (1983, II: 32).

⁹¹ However, there existed a battalion which had infiltrated West Java in the end of August 1948, or approximately three weeks before Madiun Affair. The battalion went to West Java before the Long March, officially starting on December 19, 1948. Even so, the movements of Rukman Battalion had been conducted by virtue of the official order coming from Siliwangi Division, and the battalion itself was discharged with military farewell ceremony on August 30, 1948 at Solo Balapan Railway Station. They entered West Java not as a member of Indonesian regular army, but by disguising themselves as irregular armies to deceive both the Dutch and international observers. Furthermore, Siliwangi Division further supported the endeavor by declaring through radio broadcast that the battalion had deserted the army (Siliwangi, 1994: 176-177).

⁹² The first one was launched on July 21, 1947 (see Reid, 2011: 37). During the Indonesian Revolution, the Dutch launched two Police Actions. Cribb and Kahin wrote: “They were called police actions to stress their allegedly internal character and to avoid giving the Indonesian Republic the formal recognition as belligerent implied by an act of war” (2004: 347). See also Drooglever (1988: 39-54).

⁹³ According to Abdul Haris Nasution, guerilla warfare was “a weapon suited to Indonesia’s terrain, its politics and the technical level of the army” (Grant, 1967: 226-227).

caused the Dutch to lose international sympathy (Ashworth, 1990: 40).⁹⁴ As established in the Operational Order, Indonesian troops engaged in a guerilla war strategy by forming environmental bases or military districts (*wehrkreise*) as their linear or conventional defence systems could not compete with the comprehensive and modern Dutch arsenal.⁹⁵

As is known, the Commander-in-chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Sudirman, prior to leaving Yogyakarta had issued Rapid Command (*Perintah Kilat*) No.I/P.B./D/48 through the radio⁹⁶ to the entire armed forces, the prime essence of which was for the armed forces to carry out the plan which had been established, i.e. Operational Order No.1/1948.⁹⁷ The content of the Rapid Command contained, among other contents: (1) We have been attacked; (2) On December 19, 1948 the Dutch Forces attacked the city of Yogyakarta and Maguwo Air Base; (3) The Dutch Government has revoked the ceasefire agreement; (4) The entire Armed Forces is to carry out the established plan to combat the Dutch attack.⁹⁸

In addition, before the Dutch arrived at the presidential palace, Mohammad Hatta as the Indonesian chief executive had issued an official statement that “whatever might happen to members of the government, the struggle must continue” (Simatupang, 2010: 37). Sukarno and Hatta had also issued a mandate delivered through radiogram to Syafruddin Prawiranegara⁹⁹ in Bukittinggi to establish an emergency government. This mandate was also sent to a former member of the Commissions of Nine of the BPUPKI (Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian

⁹⁴ See also Stockwell (1999: 34).

⁹⁵ See Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi TNI (2000: 163); Bro (1954: 65); Nasution (1965: 14-15).

⁹⁶ Simatupang (2010: 36). For more information regarding the importance of radio during the independence war, see McDaniel (1994: 211-215); Lindsay (1997: 110-111).

⁹⁷ See Pusat Sejarah TNI (2004: 15).

⁹⁸ Tjokropranolo (1992: 124). See also Nasution (1991: 184-185); Siliwangi (1994: 183).

⁹⁹ At that time, he served as the Minister of Prosperity in the first Hatta Cabinet.

Independence), A.A. Maramis, in India to establish a government-in-exile should Syafruddin fail to carry out his task (Abdullah, 2009: 135).¹⁰⁰

The instruction to return to West Java was received enthusiastically by the Siliwangi troops and their families who had previously followed on the “*hijrah*” because it meant they would be returning to their home villages in West Java (Soetanto, 2007: 125; Siliwangi, 1994: 173).¹⁰¹ The action of infiltration until defence enclaves were formed was successfully implemented by the Siliwangi troops in approximately three months. This period was the “roughest period in the history of the Siliwangi Division” (Nasution, 1966: 152; Nasution, 1983, II: 138). According to Soetanto (1994: 95), 80% of the division’s manpower strength which took part in the long march successfully arrived at their operational bases in West Java to subsequently join forces with the local population to fight the Dutch by carrying out guerilla warfare. As we know, a great number of the Siliwangi troops, including their families who were part of this event, perished on their march back to their operational bases.¹⁰² Accidents due to rough and extreme terrain, skirmishes with the Dutch, ambushes and traps set by the Darul Islam troops, including poisoning, reduced the number of the Siliwangi Division manpower strength.

Nevertheless, the success of the infiltration action cannot be separated from the important role played by village communities throughout the length of the route march covered by the Siliwangi troops. These village communities along the route supplied food, places of respite, as well as provided critical information to the republican troops (Soetanto, 2007: 210; Suhud, 2008: 310).

¹⁰⁰ See also Suherly (1971: 68).

¹⁰¹ Their destination areas were Ciamis, Tasikmalaya, Garut, Bandung, Cianjur, Sukabumi, Bogor, Sumedang, and the northern part of West Java. See Siliwangi (1994: 175-176) as well as the Long March of the Siliwangi Division Map at the Museum Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi, Bandung.

¹⁰² See “The Long March’ Divisi Siliwangi,” *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, p. 5.

As it was known before, the main task of Siliwangi troops after having successfully infiltrated their former operational bases in West Java was to conduct guerilla warfare against the Dutch in an unlimited period of time (Soetanto, 2007: 239-241). However, as mentioned before, Siliwangi troops would have to encounter two enemies at once: the Dutch and the Darul Islam (Nasution, 1966: 154, 174; Nasution, 1977: 295-297; Taylor, 2003: 336; Kilcullen, 2010: 88).¹⁰³ The condition created a doctrine of warfare called triangle warfare or “Dreieckskrieg” (Dengel, 1986: 74). During this time, the Dutch also founded the State of Pasundan (Boland, 1971: 58).¹⁰⁴ This state, together with several other federal states, was a strategy point, a propaganda point, and a pawn for the Dutch in confronting the Republic of Indonesia (Dekker, 1980: 62; Situmorang, 1981: 138). The existence of these puppet states, especially the State of Pasundan, undoubtedly complicated Siliwangi Division’s struggle in the Revolution (Nasution, 1983, II: 138).

2.7.5. Fighting Darul Islam and the Dutch

As mentioned above, the Siliwangi troops also had to combat serious threats from the Darul Islam when they returned to West Java. The Siliwangi troops had to fight off attacks, including ambushes, poisoning and treachery (Kilcullen, 2010: 88; Nasution, 1983, II: 138).¹⁰⁵ The Darul Islam itself was led by Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosuwirjo.¹⁰⁶ Formichi wrote that “the Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia ‘proper’ was only established in March 1948” (Formichi, 2012: 113). In its development, the Darul Islam refused “to recognize the Republic of Indonesia as the legal government of Indonesia” (Federspiel, 2001: 234).¹⁰⁷ Kartosuwirjo also proclaimed the Negara Islam

¹⁰³ For more information about the tactics employed by Indonesian army in confronting Darul Islam, see Kilcullen (2006: 44-64).

¹⁰⁴ For more information on the State of Pasundan, see Sjamsuddin (1992); Mulyana (2015); Suherly (1970); Tuhuteru (1948).

¹⁰⁵ See Map 2.2.

¹⁰⁶ For a short information on him, see Jackson (1980: 20-23); van Dijk (1981: 20-41). For more detailed information, see Pinardi (1964).

¹⁰⁷ See also Kahin (1970: 329-330).

Indonesia (NII, Islamic State of Indonesia), declaring himself as its leader (Siliwangi, 1994: 183; Drakeley, 2005: 88).¹⁰⁸

During its development, this movement spread to outside of Java, among others to South Sulawesi (August 1953), South Kalimantan (late 1954), and Aceh (September 1953) (Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI, 1990: 202; Cribb and Brown, 1995: 38-41; Drakeley, 2005: 88-89; Ramakrishna, 2009: 69).¹⁰⁹ Even so, the region of West Java was the most crucial stronghold of revolt as it was the seat of Kartosuwirjo as the leader of the Darul Islam. In addition, Fealy mentioned: “it was also the province which presented the most severe security challenge to the central government and its military forces. More lives and property were lost there than in any other region of the DI rebellion” (Fealy, 2005: 17).

When seen from its historical background, the division of West Java from the republican region and the evacuation of Siliwangi troops out of West Java in accordance with the Renville Agreement as well as the formation of the Hizbullah and Sabilillah troops in West Java, all had a critical influence in the emerging of the Darul Islam (Formichi, 2012: 109-110). Kartosuwirjo rejected the Renville Agreement and, together with the Hizbullah and Sabilillah troops, chose to remain in West Java to continue in guerilla war against the Dutch. Kartosuwirjo was furious because he felt abandoned and betrayed when the Renville Agreement was executed (Boland, 1971: 57; Soetanto, 1994: 51; Frederick, 2011: 57; Formichi, 2012: 113; Ricklefs, 2013: 148).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Formichi noted that: “The NII had existed, *de facto*, since August 1948, when the first ‘announcement’ (or decree) bearing its name appeared.” However, the NII was officially proclaimed on August 7, 1949 (Formichi, 2012: 134-135).

¹⁰⁹ For more information on Darul Islam in these areas, see van Dijk (1981: ch. 4, 5, 6). The DI movements in these areas were led by Kahar Muzakkar, Ibnu Hajar, and Daud Beureueh, respectively. For the reasons why Kahar Muzakkar and Daud Beureueh launched their rebellions, see Mattalioe (1965); Harvey (1989); Sjamsuddin (1990).

¹¹⁰ Kartosuwirjo then combined various militias in West Java, including Hizbullah, Sabilillah, Indonesia’s Muslim Youth Movement (GPII, *Gerakan Pemuda Islam Indonesia*), and other youth

Kartosuwirjo's decision to remain in West Java had actually been informed to both Commander-in-Chief General Sudirman and commander of the Siliwangi Division, A.H. Nasution, who subsequently gave their approval. Kartosuwirjo was even supplied with weapons to support in the struggle in West Java during the period when Siliwangi troops had to be evacuated.¹¹¹ Kartosuwirjo, however, went too far. When the Siliwangi troops returned to West Java, Kartosuwirjo treated them as outlaw troops that must be crushed, which of course was not approved by the majority of Muslims, including the Masyumi (Abdullah, 1991: 376; Nasution, 1965: 149; Dekker, 1980: 73; Nasution, 1983, II: 269; Drakeley, 2005: 88; Madjiah, 1993: 155). Kartosuwirjo even made an announcement to fight "the 'remnants' of the Republic" (Nasution, 1965: 149).¹¹² The following describes the order and decree of the Indonesian Islamic State:

Gentlemen and friends, as you all know, after the attack by the Dutch on territories of the Republic of Indonesia, group after group of the Army run away from Jogja, especially those of the Siliwangi Army; they came here to become irregular troops creating chaos in the territories of the Indonesian Islamic State. In no way at all do they appreciate or obey the leadership of the Indonesian Islamic State, and therefore we issue an order with regard to all troops who come from Jogja to the Indonesian Islamic State, that the Islamic Army (Armed Forces of the Indonesian Islamic State) should be at the ready for action to destroy those irregular troops (Nasution, 1965: 149).

For this reason, Kartosuwirjo regarded the return of the Siliwangi troops to West Java as a major obstruction to his ambition of forming an Islamic state (Madjiah, 1993: 155; Formichi, 2012: 127-131). For the government of Indonesia, the revolt by the Darul Islam was a heavy challenge as it involved

groups, into one military unit known as *Tentara Islam Indonesia* (TII, Indonesian Islamic Army). See Formichi (2012: 111-112, 116).

¹¹¹ *Waspada*, 16 February 1950, p. 4.

¹¹² As noted by Kahin, "by late December, 1948, Darul Islam had become openly anti-Republican" (1970: 330).

an extensive region (Suryohadiprojo, 1995: 200). Kartosuwirjo was finally captured by the Siliwangi Division on June 4, 1962 through a series of operations, Operation Brata Yudha and Operation Betis (Anwar, 1981: 223-224). The Department of Foreign Affairs noted that the “news of Kartosuwirjo’s capture was greeted with celebrations” (1962: 172).

Kartosuwirjo was put to death and was then executed by firing squad on September 12, 1962 (Soebardi, 1983: 132; Formichi, 2012: 169). On the whole, it is estimated that 15,000 to 40,000 people perished as a result of the Darul Islam revolt (Fealy, Hooker and White, 2006: 49).¹¹³ This revolt caused “massive trauma” as there were many victims and caused one million people to become refugees (Ramakrishna, 2009: 69). Indeed, the attempt to establish an Islamic state had ironically made its own Muslim humanity to become victims (Kirbiantoro and Rudianto, 2006: 46-47).

Considering the various affairs described above, the Long March of the Siliwangi Division was none other than a real event that occurred in the struggle for independence. Not surprisingly, this historic event will always remain and become an inseparable part of the history of the Siliwangi Division. The Long March of the Siliwangi Division was an event that had given a legendary name and reputation to the West Java-based division. We can now see that the *Hijrah* was an important instrument of diplomacy. Whereas, the *Long March* was a crucial instrument in armed struggle. An Indonesian Army General once mentioned that the two incidents were:

Not just events of moving physical bodies across territorial and geographical terrain fraught with merely sorrow and suffering, but that they also represented a major step in the prolonged battle to uphold noble independence, which contributed to determining the success of the struggle of the Indonesian nation and the existence of the subsequent Indonesian Armed Forces. The *Hijrah* and Long March of

¹¹³ Meanwhile, Ramakrishna noted that about 15.000 to 20.000 people lost their lives because of this rebellion (2009: 69).

the Siliwangi Troops undeniably placed the reputation of the Indonesian Armed Forces in a volatile situation which revolved around national political interest, demonstrated with absolute loyalty and complete and obedient allegiance to the Motherland (Santoso, 2007: xiv).

The Siliwangi Division is concrete evidence that the army plays a critical role in defending and ensuring the sustainability of a nation's survival, including the important role of liberating the nation from the grip of foreign power (Muhaimin, 1982: 1; Shils, 1981: 177; Said, 1985: 1). The Siliwangi Division is a good example of how an army as a state apparatus demonstrates its allegiance by its willingness to go through hell and high water together with its country (Nasution, 1966: 59). A writer even once praised the Siliwangi Division troops as the most loyal republican troops as well as "the best fighters, and the best disciplined" (Coast, 2015: 201, 230).

Chapter 3

Methodology

“Research is formalised curiosity.
It is poking and prying with a purpose” (Hurstun, 1997: 43).

To address the research questions that have been formulated in the first chapter, this research opts to use multiple qualitative methods.¹ The three major methods employed are film analysis, interview, and document analysis. The significant reason for selecting all three scientific study methods is adjusted to match the characteristic of each research question (Moore, 2006: 12). This is in line with a scholar’s affirmation that good research questions “can be significant tools that shape a study design and analysis” (Agee, 2009: 446).² Therefore, as a researcher I must select suitable methods to solve those research questions (Becker, 1998: 2).

In this study, a film analysis is utilized to examine how the event of the long march of the Siliwangi division is depicted in the selected films. Meanwhile, a blend between document analysis and interview method is selected to respond to questions concerning the backgrounds of the selected films, especially the production aspects of films that become the focus of research. The document analysis is then specifically used to track the film reception of the selected films. Meanwhile, another reason for the utilization of multiple methods is the possibility to extend depth of data to produce a good quality and comprehensive study. In this sense, this pathway is expected to provide the researcher “a very rich picture” as well as “a fuller picture” of the subject under study (Moore, 2006: 13; Silverman, 2010: 63).

¹ See Jensen (1991: 1-11). Examples of works conducted using multiple methods, see Beharrel (1993); Stokes (1999); Curran (2000).

² See also O’Leary (2004: 28).

Further, as has been previously discussed in the first chapter, this study attempts to fulfill recommendations submitted by Toplin (1996a: xi) and O'Connor (1990: 10-26; 2002: 23), that to analyze historical films it is inadequate to simply focus on the film's aspects (its contents/representations) but that it was also necessary to analyze its production and reception aspects with the object of getting a full and better understanding of the subject matter at hand. Essentially, the researcher is employing a multi-disciplinary qualitative approach which is "endlessly creative and interpretive" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 26), albeit not excluding the possibility of utilizing a quantitative approach primarily where it relates to film production data, imported films data and other such information.³ Such flexibility is necessary particularly to enrich research discoveries. All in all, in this regard, the researcher's intuition and creativity becomes important elements in the implementation of the whole research process.⁴

3.1. Film Analysis

A film is a kind of text (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002: 62; Burn and Parker, 2003: 1; Winkler, 2009a: 22; Gräf et al., 2011: 27).⁵ "A text", as McKee (2003) writes, "is something that we make meaning from" (McKee, 2003: 4). A media theorist John Ellis (2014) suggested "the idea that all films are texts". He further explains:

Film and TV texts continue to be enjoyed and examined long after their first release. They remain productive of meaning, and increasingly that productivity becomes an activity of reinterpretation. Texts can be reused away from their original contexts of interpretation, either in the knowledge of that context or even with little grasp of their origins (Ellis, 2014: 17).

³ See Brannen (1992); Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003); Brannen (2005: 173-184); Curry, Nembhard, and Bradley (2009: 1442-1452).

⁴ See Janesick (2000: 379-399); Janesick (2001: 531-540).

⁵ See also Kolker (2000: 9-21).

Ellis continues that: “shots, sequences sounds and lines of dialogue can be used for all kind of purposes beyond their original textual context” (Ellis, 2014: 18). Therefore, films as texts can be read and analyzed (Ferro, 1976: 80; Burton, 2008: 33).⁶ Textual analysis is an analysis technique which became the preferred method for film analysis (Kuhn, 2002: 3). Textual analysis, as McKee defines, “is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology—data-gathering process—for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live” (McKee, 2003: 1).

According to Burton, in analyzing text the researcher seeks and “investigates the operations of texts, their construction, the way they produce meanings” as well as “what those meanings may be” (Burton, 2010: 9). In this research, I utilize textual analysis to examine the selected films that become the focus of my research. Here, I emphasize that film texts occupy an important position as they are the “primary sources” (Hughes, 1976: 64), “primary objects of inquiry” (Kuhn, 2002: 3) as well as “primary documents” (Altheide, 1996: 3) in this research.

3.1.1. Selected Films for Research

I will clarify on the rationale behind the selected films. It is a known fact that there is actually no standard formula for determining the number of films to be analyzed. All selections are the privilege of the researcher and are subject to the type of information being pursued. This can be for purposes of evidence, criticism, revision, or even to dispute an assumption, theory, information or knowledge which has long been believed to be truth. Nonetheless, every research certainly has grounds for arguing why researchers select specific films as the focus of their study. Kaes (1989), Toplin (1996a), and Guynn

⁶ For more information on cinematic text, see Palmer (1989).

(2006) are good examples, just to mention a few, of several historical film scholars who carry out specific considerations in determining films for analysis.



Figure 3.1. An advertisement for *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*
Source: *Aneka*, No. 13, Tahun 1, 1 September 1950.

As has been previously mentioned, the selected films in this research are *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950)⁷ and *Mereka Kembali* (1972)⁸. Both are feature-length films as they run for more than 60 minutes (Effendy, 2002: 13). I selected these films based on the research topic. In Robert A. Schneider's words, these films were chosen primarily for their "scholarly value" (Schneider, 2006). Or in other words, the films were selected as they were "the best suited" for my research topic (Bergesen and Greeley, 2000: 1). Both these films portray the event of the long march of the Siliwangi division. An event which depicted the return of Siliwangi troops from their site of "*hijrah*" back to West Java. In Indonesian history, this event represents the occurrence of an actual account when the Indonesian War of Independence or Indonesian Revolution was raging. Thus, the event is a historical event.

⁷ Directed by Usmar Ismail (Perfini).

⁸ Directed by Nawi Ismail (PT. Dewi Film).



Figure 3.2. A Film Leaflet for *Mereka Kembali*

Source: Sinematek Indonesia Archive

It can be clearly seen here that selection of films used as the primary material in this research were made based on the topic, purpose and focus of the research. Therefore, the selection is often said to be “criterion-based selection” (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) or “purposeful selection” (Creswell, 2002). As demonstrated by Watson, “selection and emphasis” in a research is much needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under

study (Watson, 1998: 180). In this research, I also use the genre approach as a method of film analysis as I have chosen films of the same genre, which is the historical film genre (Newbold, 1995: 442-445; Stokes, 2003: 81-82). Borrowing a classification from Karl G. Heider (1991), the selected films may also be described as “*perjuangan*/'struggle' genre.” A film genre where the battle for independence (Indonesian Revolution) is the theme (Heider, 1991: 42-43).

I acquired the copies of both films from Sinematek Indonesia. In the interest of research, I used the restored film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, as its audio-visual qualities were sharper and clearer. This film was restored at the end of 2013. The restoration of the film came about as the result of collaboration between Sinematek Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture and Render Post. Other films by Usmar Ismail which had been restored are *Lewat Djam Malam* (1955) and *Tiga Dara* (1956).⁹ Before this, I already had the film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, before it was restored. However, its audio-visual qualities were unsatisfactory such that I could not capture several important information for my research as the images were unclear and blur. In this respect, the audio-visual quality of the restored film was so much better compared to the unrestored version. As additional information, this film can also be found in one of the social media: YouTube.¹⁰

This film was uploaded by several parties, both in its entirety as well as in segments or parts such that it “appeared” complete. Those who had never seen this film in its entirety before or after it was restored will certainly not observe any abnormality. Even more so for those who view this film randomly and uncritically, they will not know what is lacking in the film they have

⁹ Interview with Adisoerya Abdi, 23 July 2015 in Jakarta. For more information about the *Lewat Djam Malam* restoration project, see Pasaribu and Kristanto (2012); Rahman (2013).

¹⁰ As noted by Burgess and Green (2009: 1): “YouTube was one of a number of competing services aiming to remove the technical barriers to the widespread sharing of video online”. For more information regarding this fascinating medium, see Lastufka and Dean (2009); Snickers and Vonderau (2009); Marek (2013).

uploaded from the social media. Indeed, there are missing or disconnected parts in the film whether it was been uploaded in its entirety or uploaded in segments. According to me, though, it is precisely those missing segments that make up the important parts and therefore it can be said that the uploaded film is incomplete. In the meanwhile, the film, *Mereka Kembali* is still in good condition, having sharp and clear audio-visual qualities.

The selected films were analyzed and examined thoroughly with critical reading as well as scrutiny using “the curious eye” (Rogoff, 1998). This is because the film texts are “the essential data on which findings are based” and “the basis of interpretation” (Flick, 2014: 96). Furthermore, Rogoff elaborated on the meaning of curiosity in this context as follows: “Curiosity implies a certain unsettling; a notion of things outside the realm of the known, of things not yet quite understood or articulated; the pleasures of the forbidden or the hidden or the unthought; the optimism of finding out something one had not known or been able to conceive of before” (Rogoff, 1998: 18). According to Christian Metz, there were at least five channels from which to get information out of a film: the visual image, print and other graphics, speech, music, and noise (sound effects) (cited in Monaco, 2000: 212).

My analysis, as explained by Stroman and Jones, attempts “to interpret observations in their symbolic form and to search for meaning in the content” (Stroman and Jones, 1998: 275). This is intended so that the researcher can “say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance” (Hansen et al, 1998: 95). Film texts are analyzed by first determining the categories to be used in line with perspective, approach and research orientation. The technique of determining those categories according to Krippendorff (1980: 76), is “an art.” It can also be described as part of a researcher’s “tacit knowledge” (Polanyi, 1962; Janik, 1988; Altheide and Johnson, 1993).

In this research, categories are determined flexibly and adapted to research need and focus (Altheide, 1996). This has compelled me to choose and pick the texts to be subsequently studied and analyzed (Ida, 2014). The researcher can also conduct close textual analysis on shots, sequences, or on the entire concept depicted in the selected films to build a basis for analysis and to simultaneously photograph them as an illustration (see Fabe, 2004: xvi; Ellis, 2014: 18).¹¹ Ferro (1976), for example, provided an example of a way to glean information from the film under analysis, which was by thoroughly observing each sequence in the film.¹²

To generate a good film study, time and courage are needed especially when conducting comprehensive and in-depth exploration (Kaplan, 2009: 191). In this connection, data availability, easy access to data, time availability and a good grasp of the scope of study are highly significant factors (Booth et al., 2003: 3-4, 37-38; Hart, 2005: 77).¹³

3.2. Interviews

The interview method involves “presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses” (Kothari, 2004: 97). Using this method, the researcher can obtain numerous benefits in the effort to seek information and other data required for the research. According to Peräkylä (2005), with interviews the researcher “can reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible, such as people's subjective experiences and attitudes. The interview is also a very convenient way of overcoming distances both in space and in time; past events or faraway experiences can be studied by interviewing people who took part in them” (Peräkylä, 2005: 869). In other words, this method gives the researcher the opportunity “to learn about things that cannot be observed by other means” (Lindlof, 1995: 167). Furthermore, the interview

¹¹ See also Petric (1976: 453-477).

¹² In this regard, Ferro analyzed the film, *Tchapaev* (1934). See Ferro (1976: 83-94).

¹³ See also Dunleavy (2003).

method allows the researcher to probe deeper and more comprehensively information into the selected focus of his research. In this regard, Barbour and Schostak wrote: “the interview is much more than just a tool, like a drill to screw deeper into the discursive structures that frame the worlds of ‘subjects’” (Barbour and Schostak, 2005: 43).

In this study, I utilize in-depth interviews as a traditional type of unstructured interview to obtain the required data (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 705). The primary characteristic of the unstructured interview correlates with “flexibility of approach to questioning” (Kothari, 2004: 98).¹⁴ This type of interview is conducted on informants considered to have information and knowledge of the subject of study (Bryman, 2012: 418; Pandey and Pandey, 2015: 54). Before conducting the interviews, I make up an interview guide containing the key question points to be submitted to the informants. The interview guide is useful in ensuring that no information is missed and that all information being pursued are encompassed (Bryman, 2012: 472-473). Even if the interviews are conducted in a relaxed and flexible manner, they are still focused and do not get out of context. The interview guide is therefore clearly very helpful to the researcher (Silverman, 2010: 195).

In addition, a notebook and a recorder also make up the main tools that I use in interviews.¹⁵ In general, I conduct personal interviews or “a face-to-face contact” to interview my informants (Kothari, 2004: 97). In some circumstances, however, I also conduct telephone interviews. I normally do this to confirm, crosscheck, and to acquire further information. As demonstrated by Kothari, telephone interviews provide the researcher access to informants “who otherwise cannot be contacted for one reason or another” (Kothari, 2004: 100).

¹⁴ See also Kerlinger (1973: 381).

¹⁵ See Moore (2006: 142); Bryman (2012: 482).

During the field research as the firsthand investigation (Berger, 2011: 33), I interviewed a number of important informants for my research project. Among other persons I interviewed were: Irwan Usmar Ismail (Usmar Ismail's son), Salim Said (writer and Indonesian film expert), Johan Tjasmadi (theatre expert and senior member of the Film Censorship Institute/*Lembaga Sensor Film*), Slamet Rahardjo (director and prominent senior actor), J.B. Kristanto (writer and senior film critic), Yan Widjaja (film observer), Wina Armada (senior film journalist and one of the judges of the Usmar Ismail Award), Adisoerya Abdi (Head of Sinematek Indonesia/Indonesian Film Archive). However, not all of these interviews were used in this study. In addition, I also used an interview with Misbach Yusa Biran as an Indonesian film historian that I conducted in 2009.

In addition, I was also fortunate to meet with and interview Syamsul Fuad, an assistant director of the film, *Mereka Kembali*, one of the selected films in this research. From the interview I succeeded in gleaning a lot of important and valuable information. I describe the information important and valuable because Syamsul Fuad was actively involved in the film's production process and the information I obtained have never been found before in any of the available written sources. Despite his age, this assistant director still had a clear memory.¹⁶ Nevertheless, I always adopted a critical approach on all information delivered by my informants and always crosschecked them against other data to validate them using the triangulation technique (Flick, 2011a: 11-12; Flick, 2002: 227).

3.3. Document Analysis

Bowen explained that "document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" (Bowen, 2009: 27). To identify film reception towards the selected films when those films were being shown to

¹⁶ He was born in Ranau (South Sumatera), 15 November 1936 (see Suharto WS, 1999: 424).

the public, I tracked them through documents, especially newspapers and magazines of that time, and particularly through articles, film reviews, and letters to the editors of film magazines (Biltereyst et al., 2012: 694; Chapman, 2003: 21). Bowen noted that “documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher’s intervention” (Bowen, 2009: 27). In other words, all of these documents “have been produced without any direct involvement on the part of researcher” (McCulloch, 2004: 2).

In this regard, newspapers and magazines represent important documents in research as they constitute “social facts” capable of providing insight, valuable understanding of the reception to the films that are the focus of the research (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997: 47). Even more so because newspapers are deemed “daily history”, thereby making them the most comprehensive source of history (Ali, 2005: 14). Furthermore, newspapers are a significant medium to understanding society and can reflect “a basic tension in our society” (McCulloch, 2004: 5).

I hunted for these documents in several institutions in Indonesia, such as at *Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia* (The National Library of the Republic of Indonesia)¹⁷, *Pusat Dokumentasi Sastra H.B. Jassin* (The H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Centre)¹⁸, *Sinematek Indonesia* (The Indonesian Film Archive)¹⁹, and *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia* (The National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia).²⁰ These three institutions are located in Jakarta. I also looked in *Monumen Pers Nasional* (The National Press Monument)²¹ in Surakarta, the Jogja Library Center and the Grhatama Pustaka Library in Yogyakarta. All documents collected were analyzed with “a critical eye” (Bowen, 2009: 33). Based on the results of the analysis, I will subsequently

¹⁷ See Ward (1975); Massil (1989: 475-488); Massil (2001: 519-522).

¹⁸ See Hill (1990: 109-114).

¹⁹ See Biran (1997b); Biran and Andoko (1999); Hanan (2018: 29-54).

²⁰ See Liu and Tagliacozzo (2008: 81-94); Minarchek (2015).

²¹ See Monumen (1980); Tim Penyusun (2011).

map out the historical film reception following Hall's encoding/decoding model (see Hall, 2002a: 137-138; Hall, 2002b: 302-308; O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002: 70).

Then, to answer the research question related to the background of these selected films, particularly regarding their production aspects, I utilized data sources in the form of a more various documents.²² Apart from collecting information from the institutions mentioned above, I also collected research materials from several other libraries:²³ the library of Goethe-Frankfurt University in Frankfurt, the library of Sebelas Maret University and the library of Slamet Riyadi University, both in Surakarta, the library of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, the library of Regional Military Command (KODAM, *Komando Daerah Militer*) Siliwangi and the library of Loge Sumur Bandung, both in Bandung.

I collected these data through documentary research using data sources such as notes or available documents, such as advertisements, agendas, press releases, maps and charts, various public records, official or formal records; expressive documents, such as biographies, autobiographies, photos, letters, diaries; not to mention mass media reports both through newspapers, magazines, radio, television, websites, as well as other printed and electronic media (Faisal, 1995: 52-53; Bowen, 2009: 27-28; McCulloch, 2004: 1, 30). I also did not leave out books, journals, papers, unpublished articles, other manuscript material, and any written material containing information relevant to this research (Bailey, 1982: 301-302; Hill, 1993; Altheide, 1996: 4). Without a doubt, Sinematek Indonesia is an important institution for the study of films in Indonesia.²⁴ The first Chairperson of Sinematek Indonesia, Misbach

²² For more information on advantages and limitations of documents usage, see Usman and Akbar (2001: 73); Bowen (2009: 31-32).

²³ For a guide to conducting this phase, see Mann (1987).

²⁴ At the moment, Sinematek Indonesia is led by Adisoerya Abdi. He was elected in a meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Haji Usmar Ismail Film Centre on March 14, 2013.

Yusa Biran, has been of great service, in this instance. Misbach played a vital and valuable role in the existence of this institution. His struggle in the pioneering of and up to the time the institution was finally established could be described as extraordinarily remarkable.²⁵ It would not be excessive for me to describe Misbach as the Indonesian version of Henri Langlois. Both possessed similar passion towards films (see Roud, 1999).²⁶ Borrowing Frick's words, Misbach was "an unabashed movie lover and avid film collector with a fan's passion and devotion" (Frick, 2011: 9).

As an Indonesian film historian, Misbach had written a very valuable book on the history of film production in Java entitled, *Sejarah Film 1900-1950: Bikin Film di Jawa* (2009). Up to the present time, Sinematek Indonesia is also continuing the process of media transfer for a large number of films.²⁷ It is unfortunate, however, that many archives and documents related to films, such as scenarios, posters, papers, clippings, etc., have been found to be badly preserved. In fact, it can be honestly said that the preservation of these old films had been perfunctory due to various reasons, one of them being an inadequate budget. On the other hand, we are racing against time to safeguard all these "treasures." If we fail, then it will be too late. We frequently become aware of how crucial something is only after it is damaged or destroyed. We all know that time waits for no one, that it moves on regardless (see Heidegger, 1996: 378-379).

Meanwhile, the previous chairpersons were Misbach Yusa Biran, Berthy Ibrahim Lindia, and Adi Pranajaya. *Kabar Film*, 42(V), March, 2013: 10.

²⁵ See "Menggali sumber per-filman kita melalui 'CINEMATHIK'," *Minggu Merdeka*, 6 February 1972, and Rosidi (2015c: 169-173). Sinematek Indonesia is the oldest film archive institution in Indonesia and the first one in Southeast Asia region (Kurnia et al., 2004: 9).

²⁶ For more information on Henri Langlois, see also Card (1977: 33); Myrent and Langlois (1994).

²⁷ A brochure that I acquired mentioned that approximately 800 celluloid films were undergoing the process of media transfers. See *Sinematek Indonesia Brochure*.

Efforts and acts of concern have been shown by a society group but in general, because these efforts have not been sustained, the problem continues to remain unresolved. The institution that I mentioned as the place for preserving a part of this nation's memories is still in a distressing condition. Overall, it can indeed be said that the condition of documentation and archiving in Indonesia is more of a sad story than it is a happy one. Ajip Rosidi, a well-known writer once pointed out that the Indonesian society is generally unaware of the importance of documentation (Rosidi, 2015b: 167). When in fact, it is precisely such places which store and preserve archives and documentation that should be one of the crucial infrastructures to develop the absolute Indonesian human being (Utomi, 2011).

Specifically regarding Sinematek Indonesia, if the government or relevant parties do not immediately take clear action to rescue the various film-related archives and important documents, in particular old Indonesian films, and to act to fortify this institution, then one day this institution will most likely remain just a memory. The loss of such an important institution will certainly result in regret. It cannot be argued that preservation efforts are an important matter (Frick, 2011). Thus, a major step must be taken to ensure that all these important sources are kept safe and available for research by scholars as well as future generations.

Films, nevertheless, are a part of our life. This media is simply the representation of culture which is the creative work of man (Kluckhohn, 1953: 507-523; Honigmann, 1959: 11-12; Alkhajar, 2014: 15). Thus, films are actually the cultural heritage of a nation. Protecting this cultural heritage means protecting future generations from memory loss as they, too, are entitled to this cultural heritage. The importance of film preservation, especially old films, is in the interest of the pursuit of knowledge, for example for film historians, film scholars as well as scholars from other disciplines of

learning who are interested in films. Conversely, letting this cultural heritage vanished would be a tragedy to science, even to civilization. If this should happen, certainly no party will claim responsibility, nor would they want to be accused. If this should happen, all that remain would be everlasting regret.

According to Enticknap, there are two ways of safeguarding cultural heritage in the form of films, i.e. by preservation and restoration (Enticknap, 2005: 201). Preservation can extend the lives of films. Meanwhile, restoration can increase the supply of filmic texts. Restoration is the solution for films which are deteriorating as a result of physical damage, such as staining by particles, scratches, water damage, and perforation tears (Casetti, 1999: 290; Hughes-Warrington, 2007: 191-192). Even so, as Taylor mentioned, “preservation is an expensive and time-consuming business, while restoration creates even greater problems” (Taylor, 1996: 421).

He suggested maximizing preservation and conservation efforts as these would certainly be more economical “before the need for restoration becomes imperative” (Taylor, 1996: 421). One method of preservation would be to reproduce the number of film copies or, in other words, “copy to preserve” (Enticknap, 2005: 191). A scholar even strongly highlights the importance of this method as “lots of copies can help keep media content around and available for education, appreciation, and enjoyment for the foreseeable future” (Frick, 2011: 176). Furthermore, taking advantage of digital technology for film preservation should also be enhanced (see Loiperdinger, 2002).

Therefore, film preservation in Indonesia is a critical issue which should be continuously resonated, reinforced and realized. Support and active participation from all parties, especially the state, is paramount in the effort to safeguard this cultural heritage from destruction. Thus, the existence of Sinematek Indonesia must be assured, and one way to do this is by injection of

regular fixed funding for preservation.²⁸ This action is very much needed as films are “probably the most difficult and expensive form of archival document to preserve” (Enticknap, 2005: 201).

In Indonesia, based on my observation of Indonesian Revolution films produced, especially those produced within the period 1950 to 1970, many of these films are in alarming condition. Many films are lost, damaged, incomplete number of film reels or reels are severely damaged and no longer viewable. Even so, significant efforts to revive old, damaged films have been started, including the restoration of Indonesian Revolution films.²⁹ It is as if these films have risen from the dead and can at last be enjoyed by the public. In my opinion, commitment by the state is much needed to ensure that this nation duly acknowledges film preservation as an important measure. Certainly, we appreciate all components of the public and those communities which have shown their concern for this matter. Their contributions deserve a thumbs-up. However, without the full commitment and support of the state, clearly film preservation will always continue to struggle on a difficult path.

Back to the methodological discussion, in general, it can be seen that this research utilizes multiple data collection techniques to obtain as much good empirical materials (data) as is possible (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 25). To ensure data abundance I always attempt “to think in terms of an eclectic approach, taking whatever seems useful and productive” (Phillips, 2003: 124). Nevertheless, I admit that each data or information has its own level of complexity. However, the only way to arrive at quality and robust findings is by ensuring availability of ample data. Therefore, to overcome difficulties in

²⁸ An Indonesian senior film critic notes the importance of clarifying the official status of Sinematek Indonesia so that parties who wish to support, for example, funding from the government, can do so without obstruction or difficulty (Interview with JB. Kristanto, 28 July 2015 in Jakarta).

²⁹ In 2017, *Pagar Kawat Berduri* (1961), one of the Indonesian Revolution-themed films, was successfully restored.

data collection, a researcher must demonstrate diligence, meticulousness and sincerity.

Those are all the methods that this research has gone through to answer the research questions. In other words, those were the steps taken throughout this research to obtain information and knowledge (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997: 5; Gordon, 1991: 604). I had to ensure that all work starting from the data collection process up to data analysis were thoroughly carried out. This was done for no other reason than to ensure that the data obtained would be useful in providing information and valuable input because “data do not speak for themselves” (Ratcliffe, 1983: 149).

The entire results of analysis and findings are provided in the subsequent chapters. In other words, various data, themes, or subjects in discussion were put in a framework that was meaningful and could be easily understood as well as place it in the proper context (Altheide, 1987: 68-69). Of the entire research phase, the process of writing these chapters took up the most time and energy as the construction of various data and findings into a complete research report was not a simple task (Yin, 1994: 10; Keraf, 2004: 187-188).³⁰ Besides, this is a critical phase as it is during this time that I have “to wrestle with facts and ideas” (Zinsser, 1989: 49). One thing that is very clear, as Booth et al. (2003: 5) point out is that “doing research carefully and reporting it clearly are hard work.”

³⁰ See also Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 959-978).

Chapter 4

Film Production

“There is always a purpose when one is talking about history.”¹
Alfred Döblin

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides various interesting information regarding the production backgrounds of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950) and *Mereka Kembali* (1972) films. As previously mentioned, these two films are based on the same historical event, the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. These two films can be called the living monuments of the event in cinematic form. The infiltration movements carried out by the troops of Siliwangi from around Yogyakarta to their early bases in West Java were parts of a military strategy to deal with the Dutch, who attacked the republican capital, Yogyakarta, on December 19, 1948.² The troops of Siliwangi returned to West Java to wage a guerrilla war there. The Long March itself is considered the most historic event for the army unit, the Siliwangi Division, which was formed on May 20, 1946.

As I explained, this study not only focuses on textual analysis but also goes further by tracking other information behind the films (Toplin, 1996: xi). This step can provide broader readings and richer dimensions to understand how the processes and the people behind the scenes were involved in making these films. In addition, information related to the filmmakers' motivations and values behind the films' production and the target audience can provide valuable insights (Andrew, 1984: 106; Paris, 2009: 132; Barber, 2015: 18; Salevouris and Furay, 2015: 161).

¹ Quoted in Kaes (1989: 84).

² See Reid (1986: 151-152).

Further, attention to filmmakers' words is also essential because it can help us "know what they thought about their films" (Bennett et al., 2007: 4). Bennett et al. also noted that "what a film-maker says about his or her craft is probably much more worthy of our attention than the offerings of a host of critics" (2007: 4). In other words, "a film-maker's own words are often of much more value than several volumes of academic writing" (Bennett et al., 2007: 71). Nevertheless, as Toplin (1996a: vii-xii, 21) suggests, in addition to paying attention to filmmakers, when studying historical films, one also needs to pay attention to the motivations of producers and writers of the historical films to broaden and enrich the information related to historical filmmaking practices.³

4.2. *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950)

4.2.1. Reading the Context

The Long March (Darah dan Do'a) was made in 1950 when Indonesia was in a transition period—after the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to Indonesia on December 27, 1949. Indonesia, which at the time was called the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RUSI), used a federal state system.⁴ However, before one year had passed, RUSI disbanded, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) was formed.⁵

1950 was an important year for Indonesia because, at that time, Indonesia began to reorganize its life as a nation and a state. This period was an initial period of consolidation for the country after the Indonesian War of Independence or the Indonesian Revolution ended. Abdulgani stated that the period of physical revolution was the phase of laying the foundation for the

³ Toplin regarded "writers" here as screenwriters (screenplay writers), scriptwriters, or scenarists (see Toplin, 1996a: 14). However, in the context of this study, I also include the original writers, the one who wrote the stories that become the basis for making the film's scenario, as "writers."

⁴ According to Wie, "the Dutch insisted on the creation of a Netherlands-Indonesian Union along the lines of the British Commonwealth" (2012: 5).

⁵ Cf. Chapter 2.

“nation and character building.” Meanwhile, the period after the physical revolution was the strengthening phase of the “nation and character building” (1980: 9).

However, Indonesia’s economic condition after the transfer of sovereignty was poor. The national revolution had caused much damage to the country. A historian, Ricklefs, noted that “plantations and industrial installations throughout the nation had been badly damaged” (2001: 290). This condition got worse because RUSI took “responsibility for the Netherlands East Indies debt, a figure which after much haggling was fixed at f.4.3 billion; much of this, in fact, represented the costs of the Dutch attempt to crush the Revolution” (Ricklefs, 2001: 284).

It can be said that the Dutch-Indonesian Round Table Conference has left a large foreign debt for Indonesia (Wie, 2012: 39). In addition, the dominance of the Dutch economy was also a big problem for Indonesia at that time (Wie, 2012: 6-7). Many important positions, including in economic sectors, were still under the Dutch’s control. For example, the position of President of Bank Java (De Javasche Bank) at that time was held by Dr. A. Houwink (Higgins, 1990: 40; Wie, 2005: 114; Saubari, 2003: 72).

Although the existing conditions were not ideal, during the 1950s, people’s enthusiasm for independence was robust, including in the field of films (Peransi, 2005: 151). The transfer of sovereignty brought a new wave that raised hope for the nation’s younger generation to participate in this field (Ismail, 1958: 1). Armijn Pane wrote that after the formation of the Indonesian state [RUSI], people who saw that films were not merely entertainment but also had essential societal functions began to appear. Their goal of joining the film industry differed significantly from that of

Chinese businessmen. These people wanted to elevate the art and technique of Indonesian films (Pane, 1953: 73).

According to Asrul Sani, a new generation of Indonesian filmmakers who emerged after the recognition of sovereignty intended to help complete the Indonesian Revolution. Their ambition was to help the “Indonesian Revolution” through films. Thus, their dream was to make films that have sociocultural relevance. These filmmakers did not want Indonesian films to be a means to escape reality. They wanted to encourage dialogue among the viewers and give them a clearer picture of the reality around them (Sani, 1993: v).

One of the representations of this new generation of filmmakers was Usmar Ismail. Usmar Ismail was well aware of the importance of films related to the completion of the national revolution.⁶ He tried to keep the spirit of the Indonesian Revolution alive in society. However, he maintained this spirit by using deep common sense and critical reflections in his films. Therefore, Usmar Ismail did not belong to a group that only exalts the spirit of revolution without thinking critically about it.⁷

Meanwhile, an anonymous writer had an interesting view of Usmar Ismail. He wrote: “I saw Usmar Ismail in Yogyakarta in the past, struggling to complete the revolution with a gun and pen. Now, I see Usmar Ismail still struggling to complete the national revolution with audio-visual weapons (films)” (“Tokoh Film Bulan Ini: Usmar Ismail,” 1955: 24). This description aligns with Usmar Ismail’s own view that the struggle with weapons would turn into a struggle to roll up our sleeves to build a country from the ruins of the revolution (Ismail, 1958: 1).

⁶ See Ismail (1983: 47-49).

⁷ See Kees (1957: 9).

Usmar Ismail consciously chose films as a means to articulate his ideas and views. One of them concerned national events during the period of the Indonesian Revolution, which had just ended. As previously mentioned, he intended to make a film that could contribute to the completion of the national revolution. Therefore, despite the difficult conditions, he produced *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. This film was one of the 23 films produced in 1950. The film also manifested enthusiasm towards the recently ended Indonesian Revolution. Enthusiasm for the Indonesian Revolution was a popular film subject or theme in the 1950s (Sen, 1994: 19, 82; Ayawaila et al., 2013: 71).⁸ Furthermore, over time, “the national revolution has also become the primeval myth of the new Republic” (Abdullah, 2009: 166).

4.2.1.1. A Reminder of the Purpose of the Struggle for Independence

The film intended to remind the public, especially former guerrilla fighters or freedom fighters, to uphold the purposes of the struggle during the Indonesian Revolution so that they would not commit actions that could harm themselves and the country. Moreover, at that time, the country was still in a weak and incomplete condition after the Indonesian War for Independence. According to Usmar Ismail, in 1950, many former fighters complained that they did not receive appreciation or compensation for their struggle during the physical revolution. They then took negative actions while the physical revolution had just finished (Ismail, 1963: 127).

A military officer, T.B. Simatupang, also confirmed this phenomenon. Simatupang revealed that after the official transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to Indonesia on December 27, 1949, the willingness to make sacrifices for the nation had greatly decreased. At that time, there were many demands

⁸ According to Usmar Ismail, the 1950–1951 period showed a trend in the popularity of film stories about the Indonesian Revolution or guerrilla struggle. In addition, this period was also an awakening period for Indonesian film businessmen in seeking forms regarding the production of nationality themed films (1954a: 34).

from people who felt that they had fought against the Dutch. They demanded “their share” of the fruits of the struggle in the form of positions, houses, and cars. Meanwhile, the state was still weak with major domestic political problems, and the country was also burdened with heavy foreign debt. In addition, the social conditions of the people were still full of wounds from the national revolution (Simatupang, 1951: 165).

The issues arising in the independence era were greater and more complicated than those during the Indonesian Revolution. Many people expected to receive immediate compensation when recognition of sovereignty was achieved. As a result, many feelings of dissatisfaction arose everywhere (Simatupang, 1951: 165). In other words, there were overflowing and unrealistic expectations at that time, especially towards the Indonesian government. Many people thought that when independence was achieved after the national revolution, they could get what they wanted, such as prosperity and welfare. However, the reality was not as rosy. Ricklefs wrote, “... independence did not bring the general prosperity many had expected” (2001: 292).

In the same month that Usmar Ismail’s film began production, the Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Armed Forces, T.B. Simatupang, wrote an article in *Kawan Tentara* magazine, an official magazine for soldiers issued by the Ministry of Defense. Simatupang emphasized the country’s condition at that time, as it was facing “a thousand and one other difficulties.” He mainly reminded Indonesian soldiers to be steadfast and not commit harmful acts despite the difficulties. It was important to do so because the country was struggling to fulfill its promise in the forms of betterment, protection, and welfare (Simatupang, 1950: 4).

Concerning this phenomenon, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* provides an important message through its main character, Sudarto. After the Indonesian Revolution ended and full sovereignty was achieved, Sudarto suffered a bitter fate. Sudarto, a fighter who had fought for the independence, found himself temporarily suspended and had to face a military screening committee due to a report written by his Chief of Staff, Adam. Adam thought that Sudarto had committed an act of desertion when Darul Islam attacked their battalion in a village. Sudarto wandered for days in an uncertain direction. He felt bitterness, disappointment, and regret. He felt that his struggle during the Indonesian Revolution was not appreciated.

However, Sudarto is depicted as not taking any adverse actions. He even chose to be discharged from the military by not attending military screenings, especially after he met his former subordinate, Mula, who was an opportunist. Sudarto actually knew that Mula had committed an act of desertion by leaving his battalion without justifiable reasons. Mula, however, was promoted. He wore a nice military uniform, rode in an official vehicle, and enjoyed a famous brand of cigarettes, Capstan. Sudarto is shown not only as a man who did not demand much but also as someone who was willing to admit his own mistakes. He was happy enough to have joined the fight to bring the country to its independence.

Considering this, it can be argued that Usmar Ismail's film not only tells the story of people involved in the revolution (Said, 1991c: 47) but also plays a propaganda role, namely providing critical information to the public that a freedom fighter must uphold the ideals of the struggle. However, according to Usmar Ismail, the propaganda conveyed in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was not as cheap as that of Japanese propaganda, as exhibited in the

film *Untuk Sang Merah Putih* (Ismail, 1954a: 33; Ismail, 1963: 126-127).⁹ I argue that the social milieu around Usmar Ismail encouraged him to create *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* as a serious film. Usmar Ismail was clearly trying to voice his views through the film.

In the 1950s, films about the Indonesian Revolution, in general, played an essential role in providing insights and inspiration to former guerilla fighters—from the army, lasykars, units of youth organizations, and struggle units—who had participated in the struggle during the Indonesian Revolution and were trying to adjust to society. The films also provide reflections on how to reintegrate into society.

Meanwhile, according to Soemardjono, another purpose of Usmar Ismail's film was to remind people not to underestimate freedom fighters, especially the soldiers who had physically struggled against the Dutch. This idea was proposed because civilian groups began to take on vital roles after the transfer of sovereignty was completed, while the army began to lose its role.¹⁰ Therefore, the film also seeks to remind the public of the military's role in achieving Indonesia's sovereignty. However, the course of Indonesian history has proven that the role of the army (military) did not disappear but instead grew stronger and became a force of significant influence in Indonesian political life (Noer, 1977: 25-27; Crouch, 1978: 23, 27).¹¹

4.2.1.2. Special Engagement

Toplin (1996) recommended that it is vital to trace the essential elements underlying a historical film production. From my investigation, I found some

⁹ For more on information the film *Untuk Sang Merah Putih*, see Pane (1953: 57); Said (1991c: 47-49).

¹⁰ Tjasmadi (2008: 60); Interview with Johan Tjasmadi, 23 July 2015 in Jakarta.

¹¹ For more information on this subject see Crouch (1978); Fattah (2005); Lev (1963: 349-364); Said (1987: 16-34); Pauker (1962: 185-230). Kees (1957: 14) noted that the fall of two cabinets in the parliamentary era, namely the Sastroamidjojo Cabinet and the Wilopo Cabinet, was "caused to a certain extent by the activities of the army."

interesting facts about the production of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. One of them is that Usmar Ismail played at least three prominent roles in the film's production. These roles included being a director, scenarist, and producer. In addition, Usmar Ismail also had many other important aspects that made his involvement in the film's production meaningful. I will elaborate on these and other essential elements related to the film's production as follows.

4.2.1.2.1. The Filmmaker, Scenarist, and Producer

Usmar Ismail was born on March 20, 1921, in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra (Suharto WS, 1999: 448). He was one of the notable film directors in Indonesia. His name occupies a significant position in Indonesian film history. According to Asrul Sani, Usmar Ismail was an outstanding figure in the Indonesian film industry. Thus, one cannot write the history of Indonesian film without considering his life story (Sani, 1983: 12). Considering Usmar Ismail's significant contribution to the Indonesian film industry, Sani's statement is not without reason. Usmar Ismail was known as an excellent filmmaker. President Sukarno even said, "Mr. Usmar is the only *regisseur* in Indonesia" (Anwar, 1981: 220).

Usmar Ismail had a great interest in film. He loved watching film in theaters since he was a child. He even admitted that he was addicted to it (Ismail, 1983: 149). Usmar's parents wanted him to become a cleric, but the charm of films ultimately captured his heart. Although he once said that being a filmmaker was an occupation he initially chose by accident, the film industry turned out to be the world that he continued pursuing until his death before reaching 50 years old. Usmar Ismail passed away on January 2, 1971, in Jakarta (Ismail, 1963: 127; Anwar, 1990: 5; Anwar, 2002: 216).

In connection with the film's production, Usmar Ismail occupied important positions that allowed him to express his views, thoughts, and ideas more freely in the film.¹² He could do these things without pressure from any party. His interesting views on the Indonesian Revolution can be clearly seen from the depictions in his first film under the Perfini company.¹³ He even considered *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* his first film, as he was 100 percent or entirely in charge of the production (Ismail, 1963: 121).

As is known, in 1949, previously, Usmar had worked at the SPFC, where he made two films entitled *Harta Karun* and *Tjitra*. However, he was not satisfied with the implementation of his ideals and vision as a filmmaker and screenwriter in the two films, especially concerning the freedom to express his ideas. This is because, during screenwriting and directing, he had to accept many instructions that he did not agree with from the producers of both films. Nevertheless, the experience of producing two films for a Dutch company gave Usmar Ismail significant added value in the field of film production (Ismail, 1963: 121; Pane, 1953: 56-57).

4.2.1.2.2. The Military Intelligent

Concerning the production of the film that raised the theme of the Indonesian Revolution, Usmar Ismail had a unique relationship regarding the events of Indonesia's struggle to maintain its independence. In the course of his life, precisely after he moved from Jakarta to Yogyakarta, Usmar joined the TNI in 1946. He served in the Special Military Intelligence Agency, or the Army Intelligence Agency, with the rank of Major. Usmar Ismail worked under the command of Colonel Zulkifli Lubis, the Head of Army Intelligence at the Ministry of Defense (See Safwan, 1983: 44; Anwar, 2002: 217; Anwar, 2011:

¹² As I mentioned earlier, those positions are director, scenarist, and producer. I will elaborate more on this later.

¹³ Cf. Chapter 5.

4; Sen, 1994: 22).¹⁴ According to Rosihan Anwar, Usmar Ismail had the task of finding various information related to the Dutch and looking for spy agents or enemies in disguise (“Mengenang Usmar Ismail,” 1998).

Considering this, Usmar Ismail clearly had a close connection to the Indonesian Revolution because he used to be a freedom fighter. He also had valuable experiences because he saw, felt, and experienced the Indonesian War of Independence or the Indonesian Revolution firsthand. Later, these valuable experiences became his prominent assets in creating quality films. Therefore, it cannot be denied that Usmar’s experiences gave him the insight and inspiration to bring events related to the Indonesian Revolution to the big screen. It is evident that, of the many films he made, the one with the theme of the Indonesian Revolution became an important part that articulated his views and thoughts. As Hughes mentioned, a filmmaker's work “reflects his background and attitudes toward the age in which he lives. If the film is a historical compilation it also reflects the film-maker’s view of the past, as well as his notion of his function as compiler, and his attitudes toward his materials” (Hughes, 1976: 64). Therefore, based on the analysis above, I call Usmar Ismail’s unique engagement in film production as a special engagement.

4.2.2. Pre-production

4.2.2.1. Development

Usmar Ismail wrote the film scenario based on an original story by Sitor Situmorang. However, many people assume that the film was made based on a scenario written by Sitor Situmorang (e.g., Iskandar, 1987: 21; Raffel, 1964:

¹⁴ Zulkifli Lubis received his intelligence education during the Japanese occupation. The Japanese even considered him one of their best intelligence graduates. In addition, he is also known as the first intelligence commander in Indonesia. For more information on this, see Kasenda (2012).

99).¹⁵ In fact, this information is not accurate, as Usmar Ismail wrote the scenario. According to some information, Sitor Situmorang, who at that time was a young and rising writer, told a story that he wrote down on several pages of paper to his friends, including Usmar Ismail.

Sitor Situmorang's story recounts the experience of an Indonesian national army officer on a historic march from East to West of Java. The story was then considered similar to the Red Army in China's experience, known as "The Long March." Nonetheless, Sitor's story depicts a portrait of the Indonesian people's struggle against the Dutch. After he met with Sitor Situmorang, Usmar Ismail was interested in the story and wanted to film it.¹⁶ He was attracted to Sitor's story because it "honestly told the story of a man without descending into cheap propaganda."¹⁷

Usmar Ismail then developed Sitor Situmorang's story, which consisted of several pages, into a film scenario. Usmar Ismail also appreciated Sitor Situmorang by including information in the film's credit title that the frame story of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* came from him. However, it should be noted that the writing of the film's scenario had not been finished when Usmar Ismail started the first day of shooting on March 30, 1950. The screenwriting was, in fact, completed at the shooting locations or during the film production phase. In other words, Usmar Ismail wrote the scenario simultaneously with the film shooting process. Every night after the shooting activities, Usmar Ismail wrote the scenario that would be shot the next day.¹⁸

¹⁵ He was an Indonesian poet, essayist, and writer of short stories from the '45 Generation. Mihardja calls the '45 Generation "the Generation of Freedom" (see Mihardja, 1967: 236-243). For more information on Sitor Situmorang, see Nasution (1963); Teeuw (1967); Situmorang (1981).

¹⁶ See Siagian (1950: 12); Ismail (1954a: 33); Ismail (1963: 121-122).

¹⁷ Original reads: "... karena mentjeritakan dengan setjara jujur kisah manusia Indonesia dengan tidak djatuh mendjadi film propaganda jang murah" (Ismail, 1963: 126-127). Translation was cited from Wikipedia (2018).

¹⁸ Ismail (1963: 123). For a more complete film synopsis, see Siagian (1950: 12).

In addition, in writing the film's scenario, Usmar Ismail was also assisted by Asrul Sani. Initially, Asrul Sani and his friend, Rivai Apin, came to the shooting location to look around and find out how a film production process was carried out. However, Usmar Ismail then "compelled" Asrul Sani to help him write the scenario. Usmar did this despite the fact that Asrul Sani's knowledge in film production, including scenario writing, was still limited at that time. Asrul Sani only had experience in reading a shooting script. Asrul Sani himself also admitted that Usmar Ismail had asked him to help write the film's scenario. However, Asrul Sani no longer remembers how much help he had given and whether the help was meaningful for Usmar Ismail's film.¹⁹

According to Asrul Sani, Usmar Ismail's working mechanism indeed showed an amateurish impression. However, Usmar Ismail had at least proven that he could complete a film production even though the film's picture quality was not perfect or "*belang bentong*" (hazy with dots or lines). Usmar Ismail himself was not satisfied with the film and never praised it excessively.²⁰

It was feared that Usmar Ismail's way of making the film without a finished scenario would cause problems in the filming and editing stages. However, Usmar Ismail was indeed an artist with outstanding skills and a strong sense of art. All the scenes needed for the film seemed to already exist in his mind. A filmmaker should have that ability, where he "should be able to imagine the whole movie" (Taylor, 1967: 8).

Usmar Ismail's unique and infrequent practice will no longer be found in any filmmaking practice today (Stokes, 2013: 9). Moreover, a film scenario can be regarded as the backbone of a film. Moreover, it is one of the vital components in the stages of the film production process (Effendy, 2002: 15; Guynn, 2011a: 45). Nonetheless, there is an important point related to the

¹⁹ Sani (1987: 9); Sani (1990: 140); Soemardjono (1990: 7).

²⁰ Sani (1987: 9); Sani (1990: 140).

scenario of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. Although the writing was done simultaneously with the film shooting process, when writing the scenario, Usmar Ismail still paid attention to the principles of dramaturgy (Anwar, 1990: 8).

4.2.2.2. Military Support

Before starting the film's production, Usmar Ismail personally met the Commander of the Siliwangi Division, Lieutenant Colonel Sadikin, in Bandung. He wanted to convey his plan to produce a film about the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. He also asked the army, especially the troops of the Siliwangi Division, to help him. The Siliwangi Division Commander agreed to provide the necessary assistance to produce the film.²¹

After that, one of Usmar Ismail's colleagues, Surjo Sumanto, immediately went to Purwakarta to meet the Commander of KOREM (*Komando Resort Militer*, Military Resort Command), Lieutenant Colonel (Overste) Sambas Atmadinata, to discuss preparations for the film's production.²² However, Surjo could not immediately return to Jakarta to report the discussion results because he ran out of money. Overste Sambas then conveyed Usmar Ismail's wishes to Major Suparjo. Thus, it was not surprising that later Usmar Ismail received support from Major Supardjo and his battalion in Subang for the film's production purposes.²³ The military also provided a military advisor named Captain R. Sadono. The main task of the military advisor was to provide military-technical direction related to the film's production. In addition, the military advisor was also tasked with providing input and feedback to the filmmakers so as not to deviate from the actual historical events.

²¹ Ismail (1963: 123).

²² Sambas Atmadinata served as commander from 1950-1953. In his article, Usmar Ismail mentioned Sambas' position as a Regiment Commander. However, after I checked with other data sources, the mention of Sambas' position was incorrect.

²³ Ismail (1958: 7); Ismail (1963: 123).

Overall, it can be concluded that the film received significant support from the military, with troops from nine battalions of three TNI divisions in Java involved in its production. This made Usmar Ismail's film the first Indonesian film to involve thousands of extras.²⁴ In addition, the production also received support from a number of senior officers from the Siliwangi Division. One of them even played in the film.²⁵ Usmar Ismail was able to obtain these supports and facilities mainly due to his connections and closeness to the military, as he had been part of the military during the Indonesian Revolution. However, although the film received support from the military during its production, for a number of reasons, it also received objections and screening bans from the military after being released to the public, both from the Siliwangi Division and other divisions.²⁶

4.2.2.3. The First Production

The Long March (Darah dan Do'a) was the first film produced by N.V. Perfini (Indonesian National Film Company, *Perusahaan Film Nasional Indonesia*).²⁷ The film company was established on March 30, 1950, in Jakarta. However, some sources provide inaccurate information regarding the film company's establishment date, such as Ismail (1958: 1) and Said (1982: 51; 1992: 104). Said himself seemed to quote the information in Ismail (1958). Meanwhile, I believe that the inaccurate information in Ismail (1958) is simply due to a typographical error. Usmar Ismail himself, in a number of his writings, confirmed that his film company was established on March 30, 1950, in

²⁴ Siagian (1950: 11); "The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)," *Pedoman*, 19 August 1950, p. 3.

²⁵ Ismail (1958: 7); Sen (1994: 20); Djamin (1995: 43).

²⁶ See Chapter 6.

²⁷ The term *Naamloze Vennootschap* (N.V.) is a Dutch term which is equivalent to public company or Limited Liability Company (*Perseroan Terbatas*).

Jakarta. In addition, he also started the first shooting of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* on the same day.²⁸

The film company was born from the passion and initiative of a group of young Indonesians to contribute to the field of film, especially after the transfer of sovereignty. They chose this field because it was considered fit for their talents. Under the leadership of Usmar Ismail, the film company emerged as a private enterprise that sought to be unbound from government bureaucracy and autocracy (Perfini, 1960: 1). From the beginning, Usmar Ismail even refused to become a government employee, as he wanted to make films under his own responsibility (Ismail, 1963: 122). According to him, any form of attachment, whether to the military or government, was not fit for an artist, especially in the realm of independence (Perfini, 1960: 4). Therefore, the film company can be regarded as a manifestation of the idealism of Usmar Ismail and his colleagues.

The establishment of Perfini can be noted as a milestone in film development in Indonesia because, from then on, we can talk about national film companies. Any film companies that existed before Perfini belonged to foreign or non-native companies (Siagian, 2006: 41). In addition, Perfini was the most daring Indonesian film company to produce films despite having limited capital and equipment. Perfini had to rent a more well-equipped film studio to produce its films. When the company produced its first film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, it rented a film studio from *Perusahaan Film Negara* (PFN, the State Film Company).²⁹ As a result, Perfini had to spend more on production costs (Pane, 1953: 75).

²⁸ See Ismail (1963: 122). See also, "Usmar & Perfini-nja," *Star News*, No. 14, Tahun III, 1954, p. 40.

²⁹ See Ismail (1963: 122); Pane (1953: 75, 81); G. Siagian, "The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)," *Minggu Pagi*, No. 22, Tahun II, 27 August 1950, p. 11. At that time, PFN film studio was Indonesia's only fully equipped film studio. In this context, the film studio was owned by the Indonesian government or the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Indonesia [the

Initially, Perfini only had a capital of 30,000 rupiahs. The capital resulted from money collected by Usmar Ismail and Surjo Sumanto from some of their colleagues. Most of the money came from severance pay received by Usmar Ismail and his colleagues after they resigned from the military.³⁰ This amount was clearly not enough to finance a film production. Moreover, part of the money, amounting to 25,000 rupiahs, had to be used as a down payment to rent the PFN film studio (Ismail, 1958: 1).³¹ Nonetheless, in one of his other articles, Usmar Ismail presented different information. He mentioned that the down payment for renting the PFN film studio was 15,000 rupiah, or half of their initial capital (Ismail, 1963: 122).

When the film production was about to start, the only money they had left was 12,500 rupiah. This money was certainly not enough to finance the film's production. Usmar Ismail reflected on the production cost of *Tjitra* (1949), the last film he directed when he worked for a Dutch film company, which cost f.67,500. Therefore, there was still a considerable additional cost required. Usmar Ismail estimated that he still needed an additional 15,000 rupiahs to produce *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (Ismail, 1963: 122). Moreover, the small amount of money remaining was also subject to an obligatory government cut (*sanering*) known as the "Syafuruddin cut" (*gunting Syafruddin*) (Ismail, 1958: 7; Said, 1982: 51). Despite the problematic and less-than-ideal conditions, Usmar Ismail and his colleagues began the film's production on the same day that Perfini was established.

Ministry of Information of the Republic of the United State of Indonesia] (Muntahar, 1954: 20).

³⁰ Ismail (1958: 1); Ismail (1963: 122); Biran (1982: 32).

³¹ At that time, PFN was still called PPN (*Perusahaan Pilem Negara*) and was led by Mr. SUSKA. Then, at the end of 1950, PPN changed into PFN. In addition, PFN's leadership also shifted to R.M. Haryoto as its director. Meanwhile, R.M. Soetarto was appointed as the Chief of General Production. PFN's activities included producing feature films, documentaries, and newsreels (PPFN, 1985: 8).

4.2.2.4. Full Cast

4.2.2.4.1. Film Crew

Produser, Director, Scenario	: Usmar Ismail
Original Story	: Sitor Situmorang
Editor	: Max Tera
Film Redaction	: Djohan Sjafrie
Assistant Film Redaction	: Surjo Sumanto
Cameraman	: Max Tera
Music Director	: George Rudolf Wilhelm [G.R.W.] Sinsu (Tjok Sinsu)
Art and Photography Director	: Basuki Resobowo
Sound Director	: Sjawaludin [Sjawal Muchtaruddin]
Soundman	: E. Sambas
Laboratory Director	: Tabit Abd. Chatib
Make-Up	: Ranza'
Script Supervisor	: Nas Udin [Naziruddin Naib]
Technical Film Supervisor	: Captain R. Sadono

Although not listed in the film's credit title, during the film's production, Usmar Ismail was also assisted by his colleagues such as Asrul Sani, Djadoeg Djajakusuma, Sumardjono, Rosihan Anwar, and others.³² Rosihan Anwar even played a minor role in the film.

4.2.2.4.2. Film Cast

Del Juzar	: Captain Sudarto
R. Sutjipto	: Captain Adam
Farida [Lily Handuran]	: Widya
Awaloedin Djamin	: First Lieutenant Leo
Aedy Moward	: Mula

³² See Djamin (1995: 42).

Ella Bergen : Connie
Raden Ismail : Mr. Kancil

The cast of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* are mostly amateur performers or new actors that Usmar Ismail hired to produce the film. Most of them were educated young men, such as college students and students who had never acted in front of the camera. Other names outside the film cast listed above include A. Rachman, Muhsjirsani, Johanna, Muradi, Suzanna, Djoko, E. Sambas, Trisnojuwono, and Wisjnu Mouradi.³³ According to Armijn Pane, Usmar Ismail hired these amateur performers to avoid overacting. Pane also stated that what Usmar Ismail did could be regarded as a renewal effort in film production in Indonesia (Pane, 1953: 83).

4.2.3. Production

After coordinating with several officers of the Siliwangi Division, including the Commander of the Siliwangi Division, Usmail Ismail began the film's production on March 30, 1950. The first filming occurred on the same day N.V. Perfini was officially established.³⁴ Some of the filming locations were Subang, Purwakarta, Sukabumi, Sarangan, Magelang, Wonosari, Yogyakarta, Jakarta, and PFN film studios.³⁵ The first shooting took place in Subang, Purwakarta area, West Java.³⁶

It was done mainly to take shots of the panorama or natural scenery.³⁷ The shooting was done using an old Akeley camera. At that time, Perfini did not have adequate studio equipment because they could not buy it due to limited capital. The limited equipment was one of the things that Usmar Ismail

³³ See Djamin (1995: 43); Ismail (1963: 123).

³⁴ Ismail (1958: 7); Ismail (1963: 122-123).

³⁵ See "Tjiptaan Pertama "Perfini" Darah dan Do'a". *Aneka*, No.3, Tahun 1, 1 April 1950; Muntahar (1954: 20); "Usmar Ismail di Jogja," *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 1 Juli 1950, p. 1.

³⁶ Ismail (1963: 122); Anwar (2002: 216).

³⁷ "Film "Long March" Divisi Siliwangi: Pemotretannja akan Dimulai," *Aneka*, No. 2, Tahun 1, 15 March 1950.

regretted. During the film's production phase, he hoped that the government could immediately provide a capital loan to Perfini to buy studio equipment from the United States and Europe.³⁸

This condition forced Perfini to rent PFN's film studio [PPN] even though it was tough for their financial situation. The rental fee did not include the technician's wage of f.100. Moreover, PFN only rented out their studio for 20 days. Since the available time was very short, some film production processes using PFN Studio had to be done day and night. Basuki Resobowo completed about 21 types of decorations for the film's shooting in the studio.³⁹

4.2.3.1. Filmmaker's Inspiration

The film was inspired by an actual event that occurred during the Indonesian Revolution, the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. In an interview, Nya Abbas Akup mentioned that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was one of Perfini's films based on "the reality around us" (Said, 1982: 104).⁴⁰ Usmar Ismail often used society and its events as sources of inspiration for his films. As Soelarko (1978: 1) stated, society is an essential source for film stories.

The phrase "The Long March," which is used to refer to the infiltration of Siliwangi troops from the republican territory back to their home in West Java,⁴¹ was inspired by a vast distance journey, later known as The Long March, undertaken by the Red Army or Chinese Communist troops from October 16, 1934, to the end of October 1935, as a military retreat strategy to avoid capture by Kuomintang troops in China.⁴² Mao Zedong immortalized

³⁸ Ismail (1963: 123); "Tjiptaan Pertama "Perfini" Darah dan Do'a," *Aneka*, No.3, Tahun 1, 1 April 1950.

³⁹ Siagian (1950: 11); "Tjiptaan Pertama "Perfini" Darah dan Do'a," *Aneka*, No.3, Tahun 1, 1 April 1950.

⁴⁰ Original reads: "*kenyataan sekeliling kita*"

⁴¹ However, the military strategy of the Siliwangi Division's infiltration was inspired by Orde Charles Wingate. See Chapter 2.

⁴² See Wilson (1971); Kolata (1999: 41-49).

the Red Army's bravery in his poem "*The Long March*." In the poem's first stanza, he wrote: "The Red Army fears not the trials of the Long March" (Zedong, 2003: 37).

The Red Army traveled on foot for many miles.⁴³ They also faced difficult obstacles. Wilson called the event "the most extraordinary march in human history" (1971: xiii). Shuyun even stated, "Surely nothing compares in difficulty with the Long March" (2008: 2). On one occasion, Mao Zedong proudly said, "Has history ever known a long march to equal ours? No, never."⁴⁴ It should be noted that the success of the Red Army in becoming the backbone and formidable cadres of the communist movement was greatly influenced by Mao's doctrines (see Ebenstein and Fogelman, 1990: 86-93).

There is a similarity between the far-distance journey taken by the Red Army in China and the long journey taken by the troops of Siliwangi. Both were strenuous journeys on foot. Hence, the infiltration movement of the troops of Siliwangi was later also referred to as "The Long March."⁴⁵ The phrase "The Long March" itself is an integral part of the title of Usmar Ismail's film. In this regard, I would like to correct the inaccurate information put forward by Heider (1991: 103) and Sen (1994: 20) that the phrase "*The Long March*" is the English subtitle for the film "*Darah dan Do'a*." This statement is not accurate. The main reason for using the phrase "*The Long March*" is its direct association with The Long March of the Siliwangi Division.⁴⁶ Therefore, *The Long March: Darah dan Do'a* is the film's complete title that cannot be separated. In this regard, to this day, I still find articles or publications written by journalists or academics who only write "*Darah dan Do'a*" to refer to Usmar Ismail's film.

⁴³ For estimates of the daily mileage of the Red Army, see Lemke (2002: 85); Salisbury (1985: 128).

⁴⁴ Quoted in Shuyun (2008: 2).

⁴⁵ See "'The Long March' Divisi Siliwangi," *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, p. 5.

⁴⁶ See Ismail (1954a: 33); Ismail (1963: 122); Soemardjono (1990: 5-6).

In addition, through the film, Usmar Ismail has opened a new chapter in Indonesian cinema because the film not only raises the big theme of the Indonesian Revolution but also depicts a specific historical event, namely the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. In other words, Usmar was one step ahead in using the film medium to portray the Indonesian Revolution with a specific historical event.

4.2.3.2. Out of Money

As mentioned earlier, in Subang, Usmar Ismail was assisted by Major Supardjo and his battalion for the film's production. In addition to the army's support, the film production also received help from the people at the filming locations.⁴⁷ At one point, Perfini's financial condition, which had been limited or weak since the film's production began, finally reached an end where all funds were fully depleted. Usmar Ismail revealed that they did not know where to look for money to pay the accumulated debts due to the production, while the production itself was not yet complete.⁴⁸

Despite the difficult conditions, something joyful occurred: a way out of the financial problems that beset them. Sample prints – Usmar Ismail called them “rush prints” – from the first days of shooting had been successfully completed at PFN. The rush prints were then sent back to the shooting location in Subang to be screened and watched together in a movie theater in Subang. The theater owner, Mr. Tong Kim Mew, also watched the rush print screening. Mr. Tong was the first to praise the interim production of the film. Although the production stage was far from complete, he then offered a partnership. In his offer, Mr. Tong agreed to cover the production costs. Further, he also promised to manage the film's distribution.

⁴⁷ “The Long March (Darah dan Do'a),” *Pedoman*, 19 August 1950, p. 3.

⁴⁸ Ismail (1958: 7); Ismail (1963: 124).

Mr. Tong owned a film distribution company in Jakarta. The offer was certainly a way out of the problems Usmar Ismail and Perfini were facing. Although the conditions proposed by Mr. Tong were rather tough, in the end, Perfini and Spectra Film Exchange signed a cooperation agreement. For Perfini, the deal was the best solution to their critical problems. They could pay their debts, complete the film's production, and finalize the final version of the film. In addition, they were also greatly helped in terms of the film's distribution. The film's distribution was, in fact, something that they had not thought about at that time.⁴⁹ The entire film production phase until the film was screened for the first time to the public at the presidential palace took five months, from the first shooting on March 30, 1950, to the gala premiere on August 29, 1950.⁵⁰

In addition, when the film was being made, Indonesia was in the midst of abolishing military rule in various regions, including the gradual abolition of curfew rules.⁵¹ Later, Usmar Ismail, in his film *Lewat Djam Malam* (1954), portrayed the curfew phenomenon well. This film tells the story of a former fighter struggling to adapt to society, while some of his other former colleagues had managed to do so. The film also shows portraits of community life after the transfer of sovereignty. The film ends with the death of the main character, who was shot by a patrol officer for violating the curfew rules. It is a tragic and ironic death, as he was killed by a weapon belonging to the state he had fought for during the revolutionary period.

⁴⁹ Ismail (1958: 7); Ismail (1963: 124).

⁵⁰ This information revises Soemardjono (1990: 16), who stated that the film's production took six months.

⁵¹ See *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 19 Juni 1950.

4.2.3.3. National Film Day

The first day of the filming was on Thursday, March 30, 1950.⁵² The date was later designated as National Film Day through Presidential Decree No. 25 of 1999, dated March 29, 1999, during the administration of President Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie (Suryapati, 2010: 7). However, the birth of National Film Day holds interesting dynamics, debates, and polemics, especially since the National Film Council (DFN, *Dewan Film Nasional*), on October 11, 1962, established March 30 as National Film Day until the state's recognition on March 29, 1999. Within this period, there were alternative dates that were considered suitable for National Film Day by various parties.⁵³

The Presidential Decree on National Film Day was an official state recognition. The Presidential Decree was a legal reinforcement to the decision that the National Film Council took in 1962. The presence of the Presidential Decree also eliminates the "polemic" about the national film day. However, I believe there is nothing wrong with "contesting" the Presidential Decree by presenting complete discourse and information, along with the reasons and background, that there have been alternative dates for the national film day other than March 30. Such a practice is necessary because it will enrich public knowledge and strengthen the meaning of a national film day.⁵⁴

4.2.3.4. Treatment

Usmar Ismail stated that the film intended to question the national events that had just occurred. It was the first film to engage in this kind of practice.⁵⁵

⁵² On the same day, a momentous event also took place in the government, namely the handover of the position of Mayor of Jakarta from Mr. Sastromuljono to Suwirjo (Soepangkat 1977: 37).

⁵³ For more information on this matter, see Suryapati (2010: 15-18). See also "Yang Juga Belum Beres: HARI FILM NASIONAL" (Tryman MS, 1977: 50-51) as well as other fascinating articles such as Amura (1972); Dahlan (2013, 2015).

⁵⁴ For example see Dahlan's article (2015).

⁵⁵ Ismail (1963: 127).

According to Usmar Ismail, the film has a critical meaning for the development of Indonesian cinema in the future because it uses hot story topics that have just happened, such as the Madiun Affair, the Long March of the Siliwangi Division, Darul Islam (DI), and the transfer of sovereignty. Therefore, the film is valuable as a historical document related to these events.⁵⁶ Further, through the film, Usmar Ismail wanted to depict the development of human character in the Indonesian Revolution. According to him, this is the first time a film has attempted to portray the Indonesian people in their environment, with the upheavals within and outside them, in-depth.⁵⁷

Usmar Ismail mentioned that the film is a highly ambitious film with various motives behind it. Moreover, it is the first film about the Indonesian Revolution that had just ended (Ismail, 1963: 122).⁵⁸ At that time, Usmar said, "If I could, I wanted to embrace all the great events that had just happened in a perfect film."⁵⁹ According to him, this desire was solely based on his overflowing passion. He had much to tell through the film because the national events were still close and fresh in his memory. He also realized that, at that time, he did not have enough opportunity to select events that could be related to Sudarto's story that he wanted to tell in the film.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the film was considered to have "offended a lot of sensitivities" because it depicted events of the recent past (Sen, 1994: 21). It can be seen from the

⁵⁶ Ismail (1954a: 33).

⁵⁷ Ismail (1954a: 33).

⁵⁸ Despite Usmar Ismail's claims, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was actually not the first film with an Indonesian Revolution theme. From the information I found, *Untuk Sang Merah Putih* (1950) was the first film to be released to the public. This film also takes on the theme of the Indonesian Revolution. However, it is not about a specific event from the Indonesian Revolution, as in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. *Sang Merah Putih* was screened on August 19, 1950, at theaters in Jakarta, such as Rivoli and Sin Thu. See, *Pedoman*, 19 August 1950, p. 4. Meanwhile, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was preparing for its gala premiere on August 29, 1950, at the presidential palace then.

⁵⁹ Original reads: "Kalau dapat rasanja hendak dirangkul seluruh kejadian² besar jang baru sadja berlangsung itu dalam satu film jang sempurna" (Ismail, 1963: 122).

⁶⁰ Ismail (1963: 122, 126).

various reactions that emerged when the film was released to the public. One of them was the unofficial censorship that prevented the film from being circulated and shown freely in several regions in Indonesia.⁶¹

The film was made by tracing the historical footsteps of the Siliwangi Division's actual journey. In other words, it was made based on the real history that Siliwangi Division faced and experienced. For example, before the division carried out the order to march back to their former bases in West Java, which became known as the Long March, the division had to overcome the Madiun Affair. After the Dutch attacked Yogyakarta on December 19, 1948, the division had to return to West Java immediately. Later, when the division entered West Java, they had to face the rebellion of Darul Islam. The film depicts how Sudarto's battalion was ambushed and attacked by Darul Islam. The film also shows information about the transfer of sovereignty by using snippets of news from the daily newspaper *Merdeka* that is presented on the screen.

In other words, Usmar Ismail had practiced a reenactment of the national events that the Indonesian nation had just experienced. He intended to use the film to provide depictions of the recent past. Interestingly, the film not only provides explanations but also the filmmaker's views on the national events. As Aldgate and Richards mention, films are made "to generate and inculcate views and opinions deemed desirable by filmmakers" (1999: 2). Further, films can even show what their filmmakers want (Bazin, 1996: 162). Usmar Ismail seemed to want the film to be his statement about the recent history of Indonesia.

For the sake of documentary and historical realism, the film attempts to depict historical events as they were by filming in the original locations of the

⁶¹ Cf. Chapter 6.

historical events or “on the spot.”⁶² Siagian considered Usmar Ismail’s film the first semi-documentary film because of this practice (1950: 11). Usmar Ismail’s practice was one of the inputs provided by official and unofficial advisors to him so that the filmmaking did not deviate from the actual events.⁶³ Therefore, it is unsurprising that the film crew had to travel thousands of kilometers by train, car, cart, and even on foot up and down mountains and valleys for the film’s production.⁶⁴ It was one of the reasons that caused the cost of the film’s production to be very large compared to the cost of typical filmmaking at that time.

Initially, this was in line with Usmar Ismail’s thoughts and desires, who also wanted everything to be authentic and in accordance with the actual events, where all scenes were filmed in the original locations. However, he later realized that this practice was one of his mistakes as a novice or a beginner. In his view, in filmmaking, such things should not be mandatory. Many scenes of events could be shot in other locations or even in studios and result in a more convincing picture than those shot in the original locations. As Usmar mentioned, he gradually understood that “film was truly the art of ‘make-believe,’ making people believe something, creating a new reality from what is.”⁶⁵ Usmar’s views and theories are clearly correct. This aligns with Schechter and Everitt’s statement; a filmmaker is a master of make-believe (2000: x).

⁶² “The Long March (Darah dan Do’a),” *Pedoman*, 19 August 1950, p. 3; Siagian (1950: 11); Ismail (1963: 125).

⁶³ Ismail (1963: 125).

⁶⁴ Siagian (1950: 11).

⁶⁵ Ismail (1963: 125). Original: “... *film itu adalah betul² seni “make believe”, membuat orang pertjaja tentang sesuatu, membuat kenjataan bari dari jang ada.*” Translation was cited from Wikipedia (2018).

4.2.4. Budget

The total production cost of the film was 350,000 rupiahs, most of which was borrowed from Mr. Tong Kim Mew.⁶⁶ This cost was very high for film production at that time, because, a film could be produced for as little as 100,000 rupiahs (Ismail, 1963: 127). Nevertheless, Usmar Ismail's hard work and sacrifice to produce the film were not in vain, as the film is considered an important milestone in Indonesian cinema. The day of the film's first shooting has even been immortalized as Indonesia's National Film Day today. Meanwhile, even though the film received several bans from some parties, which caused the film's circulation not to be optimal, the revenue earned from the film was not disappointing. Moreover, there were other Indonesian films with worse revenues at the time (Biran, 1976: 4). Anwar even mentioned that the film was solid because it attracted a large audience. After playing in theaters for twelve and a half months, the film collected 329,715 rupiahs (Anwar, 1974: 203).

Usmar Ismail himself argued that the film was neither a commercial success nor a complete failure (1963: 27). From the beginning, Usmar Ismail realized that producing such a film would not bring profit. However, profit was not what he was looking for. Concerning the film, Usmar Ismail even stated that "he would make no compromises at all with commercialism." (Biran, 1982: 32). Thus, he was not bothered by the commercial gain. Moreover, he had a principle that the success of his work was not measured by the amount of money earned.

Mr. Tong himself remained enthusiastic about financing Perfini's subsequent films, such as *Enam Djam di Jogja* (1951) and *Dosa Tak Berampun* (1951).

⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Anwar (1974: 203) mentioned that the film's production cost was 325,000 rupiah. However, I prefer to follow the information from Usmar Ismail as the filmmaker. In addition, Anwar also wrote that the investor or lender of the money was named Ir. Lie. However, Anwar's information seems inaccurate because Usmar Ismail (1958: 7) said the lender for the completion of Perfini's first film was Mr. Tong Kim Mew.

This is not without reason but due to his business calculation or instinct. As a businessman, Mr. Tong knew the potential profits he could make from the film business. Therefore, he did not hesitate to invest his money. Like *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, both of Perfini's following films were financed through an *ijon* system (Ismail, 1958: 7).

According to Partadireja, the *ijon* system is a form of money lending before the goods are clear or completed. The system is usually practiced in the agricultural sector.⁶⁷ Partadireja stated, "*Ijon* is derived from the Javanese word *ijo* (green). It is a term used to cover a wide variety of transactions. In its different manifestations, it has characteristics of pre-payment for crops, of money lending at very high rates, and of pawning" (1974: 54). The financing model of lending money at very high-interest rates was used in producing the three films. This meant that Perfini employees were no longer thinking about their own wages at work as they were actually working for Spectra Film Exchange to complete the films (Ismail, 1958: 7).

Usmar Ismail once said that the Chinese generally have enough capital to start new businesses in the economic field (Ismail, 1954a: 27). Biran noted: "The Chinese have long been settled in Indonesia and have established for themselves a strong position on the retail trade in the world of Indonesian commerce" (1982: 17). In addition, they are also known to have a strong instinct, as they have a nose for smelling where they can make a profit and exploit it (Ismail, 1954a: 27). Although the Chinese businessmen only viewed films as commodities, they should be recognized as having played a key role in building the foundation of the Indonesian film industry. They were vital pioneers in the emergence of the film industry in the archipelago.

⁶⁷ For more information on this, see Partadireja (1974: 54-71).

4.2.5. Post-production

4.2.5.1. Editing and Running Time

The film has a duration of 2 hours and 8 minutes, or 128 minutes (Kristanto, 2007: 15). However, the film has been edited several times. As previously mentioned, the film scenario had not been completed when the shooting phase began. The screenwriting itself was done at the shooting locations concurrently with the film's shooting. For most people, such a way of working is undoubtedly very troublesome, especially when entering the editing phase. However, Usmar Ismail was indeed a unique filmmaker. He had strong artistic instincts and was open to the various inputs and opinions of others. Although the film's editor had changed, it was not a problem because the film could be completed. The editing was finally done through the collaboration between Max Tera, Djohan Sjafrie, and Usmar Ismail (Siagian, 1950: 11; Ismail, 1963: 124; Soemardjono, 1990: 7).

4.2.5.2. Music Recording

The music recording began on July 27, 1950, at Gedung Phillips, Jakarta. This was the first time an Indonesian film used the musical accompaniment of a large orchestra. The orchestra consisted of fourteen violins, two basses, four saxophones, one clarinet, four trumpets, four trombones, one piano, and other instrumental elements. Thirty-six people were playing in the orchestra. The orchestra was also supported by an experienced musician named Paul Latuperissa. Meanwhile, Tjok Sinsu (G.R.W. Sinsu) played an important role. He was the film's composer for all the music used in the film and the chief of all the film's music recording stages.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ " 'Long March' Filmnja Akan Dibubuhi Musik Hebat," *Suara Merdeka*, 28 July 1950, p. 2; "Tjiptaan Pertama "Perfini" Darah dan Do'a," *Aneka*, No. 3, Tahun 1, 1 April 1950; G. Siagian, "The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)," p. 11

4.2.6. Distribution

Film distribution is one of the crucial aspects that cannot be separated from the presence of a film, especially after the film has been produced. On a broader scale, this aspect is closely related to the development of the film industry. Unfortunately, film distribution is also the most neglected aspect of the film industry. Many people have the experience of seeing a film in a movie theater or watching it at home, “but the routes via which films reach screens are not widely known” (Wright, 2007: 79). *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* was distributed by Spectra Film Exchange. The company is owned by Mr. Tong Kim Mew. Although the film was banned from being screened in some areas by some parties, such as local military commanders, the public in many cities could still watch the film.⁶⁹ In Java, for example, the film could be enjoyed by audiences in Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Malang.

4.2.7. Promotion

The film’s promotion was mostly done through advertisements in print-based and electronic mass media such as newspapers, magazines, and radio. Before the film premiered in a city, its advertisements usually appeared two to three times in newspapers and magazines, announcing that *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* would soon be screened. Some examples of advertisements for the film can be seen in the figures below (Figure 4.1.).

⁶⁹ Cf. Chapter 6.

(I)

MINGGU & PAGI.

SENI SONO
Matinée dj: 10.30
dan SORE dj :5.—7—9
13 th. keatas.

**TARZAN and the
LEOPARD WOMAN**

Dengan **JOHNNY WEISSMULLER**
BRENDA JOYCE
JOHNNY SHEFFIELD.

SOBOHARSONO
Matinée dj: 10.30
dan SORE dj: 5—8.30
Segala urusan.

THE LONG MARCH

Darah dan Do'a
Dg. **DEL JUZAR - FARIDA - AIDY**
SUTJIPTO - AWAL

(II)

ROYAL Heden Premiere **ROXY**
6.30—8.30 (v. 13 jr) **7.00—9.00**
FILM INDONESIA BARU jang terbesar th. 1950

THE LONG MARCH
(DARAH dan DO'A)
Tjerita jang dalam isinja dan Mengharukan

Besok 3 pert. **ROYAL 4.30-6.30-8.30 - ROXY 5.00-7.00-9.00**

MATINEE Besok pagi **ROYAL 9.00—11.00**
ROXY 9.30—11.30

(III)



Figure 4.1. Some Advertisements for *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*

Sources: (I) *Minggu Pagi*, No. 33, Tahun II, 12 November 1950, p. 1; (II) *De Locomotief*, 4 October 1950, p. 4; (III) *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 7 November 1950, p. 4.

4.2.8. Gala Premiere

The Long March (Darah dan Do'a) was the first Indonesian film to be screened at the presidential palace after the Dutch formally transferred sovereignty to Indonesia on December 27, 1949. The gala premiere of Usmar Ismail's film was on Tuesday evening, August 29, 1950. Information about the gala premiere appeared in film advertisements in various newspapers in Jakarta. For example, one of the film's advertisements about the gala premiere can be found in the daily *Sin Po* (Figure 4.2.).⁷⁰

⁷⁰ On the same day, advertisements on this gala premiere also appeared in *Keng Po*, 29 August 1950, p. III; *Java Bode*, 29 August 1950, p. 4; *Merdeka*, 29 August 1950, p. 4.



Figure 4.2. The Gala Premiere Advertisement for *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*

Source: *Sin Po*, 29 August 1950, p. III.

As reported by the newspapers, hundreds of invited guests were present to see the first public screening of the film labeled as 100% Indonesian-made without foreign assistance and interference. The audience included President

Sukarno⁷¹ and his wife, several demoted ministers from the Hatta RIS Cabinet,⁷² such as Abu Hanifah⁷³ and Suparmo [sic!],⁷⁴ Chairwoman of the Film Supervisory Committee (PPF, *Panitia Pengawas Film*) Maria Ulfah Santoso, ambassadors of friendly countries, army representatives, and other invited guests.⁷⁵

For Usmar Ismail, the gala premiere at the presidential palace was an honor because Indonesian leaders and the public present at that time watched his film for the first time. However, Usmar Ismail stated that he was very depressed at that time, and his heart was beating violently as he watched his film begin to play scene by scene on the screen. He saw that there were still many technical errors in the film. Usmar Ismail admitted that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was technically worse than the two films he had previously made when he worked at a Dutch film company, South Pacific Film Corporation (SPFC). Under his former company, he successfully produced the films *Harta Karun* and *Tjitra* in 1949.

According to him, the many technical errors in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* were because the film was made with much more primitive equipment and a limited film crew (Ismail, 1963: 121). One of the technical errors or weaknesses is related to the film's audio. Poor audio quality can be found in

⁷¹ He was the first and only president of RIS (*Republik Indonesia Serikat*, the Republic of the United States of Indonesia).

⁷² They were demissionary ministers because the RIS was declared dissolved on August 15, 1950. See *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 16 August 1950, p. 1. The Natsir Cabinet then replaced the Hatta Cabinet as the first cabinet of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The Natsir Cabinet was formed on September 6, 1950, and inaugurated the following day, on September 7, 1950 (*Pedoman*, 8 September 1950, pp. 1,3). For more details on the cabinet of the Republic of Indonesia from 1945 to 1965, see Finch and Lev (1965). For more information on the period of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia, see Feith (1962).

⁷³ Abu Hanifah served as Minister of Education, Teaching, and Culture (PPK, *Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Kebudayaan*).

⁷⁴ This should be Suparno. He served as a Minister of State.

⁷⁵ See *De Locomotief*, 30 August 1950, p. 4; *Pedoman*, 30 August 1950, p. 4; *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; *Merdeka*, 31 August 1950, p. 2; *Keng Po*, 30 August 1950, p. II; Djamin (1995: 43).

some scenes of the film.⁷⁶ In addition, Usmar Ismail also admitted that his narration was imperfect from a film perspective (Ismail, 1963: 127).

The film was first screened in theaters on September 1, 1950. Uniquely, Jakarta was not among the first cities to screen the film. The film premiere, or general public premiere, was held in three cities outside Jakarta: Medan at the Morning theater and Metropole theater, Palembang at the Rex theater and Merdeka theater, and Bandung at the Regal theater and Djamika theater.⁷⁷ Not long after the gala premiere at the presidential palace and the film premiere in the three cities, the Army Headquarters filed objections to Usmar Ismail's film. The film was also known to have received a number of protests and screening bans in some areas.⁷⁸

Nonetheless, the film was never officially banned or withdrawn from circulation. Based on observations of the film's advertisements in *Merdeka* daily, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was shown in Jakarta for seven consecutive days, from September 15 to September 21, 1950.⁷⁹ Before the screening, three other advertisements for the film were also presented in the same newspaper, which appeared from September 12 to September 14, 1950. All the three ads announced that the film would be screened soon (Figure 4.3.). Meanwhile, the film premiere in the capital of the Republic of Indonesia was held on September 15, 1950. At that time, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was screened in four theaters: Rex, Roxy, Orion, and Shanghai. At the Rex theater, the film was screened five times. Meanwhile, at

⁷⁶ Cf. Chapter 6.

⁷⁷ "'The Long March' (Darah dan Do'a)," *Pedoman*, 30 August 1950, p. 4; *Sin Po*, 29 August 1950, p. III.

⁷⁸ Cf. Chapter 6.

⁷⁹ Cf. The film's advertisements in *Sin Po* and *Keng Po*.

the Roxy, Orion, and Shanghai theaters, the film was screened four times each (Figure 4.4.).⁸⁰



Figure 4.3. One of the Advertisements for *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*

Source: *Merdeka*, 13 September 1950, p. 4.



Figure 4.4. The Film Premiere Advertisement for *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*

Source: *Merdeka*, 15 September 1950, p. 4.

⁸⁰ At that time, there were fifteen movie theaters in Jakarta, namely Globe, Roxy, Capitol, Cinema, Grand, Sin Thu, Astoria, Rivoli, Happy Theater, Menteng, Rex, Thalia, Orion, Shanghai, and Garden Hall.

In Indonesia's history of film production, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* has patented itself as the first film produced by Indonesians without the intervention of foreigners. The step taken by Usmar Ismail and his film company, Perfini, was considered a good attempt to start film production by native Indonesians.⁸¹ Despite the limitations, the production, which began on March 30, 1950, was finally completed in early August 1950. The film was then screened to the public for the first time at a gala premiere at the presidential palace. In addition, Usmar Ismail's film is one of the films produced during the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RUSI) era and screened when the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) was formed after the RUSI was declared dissolved.

Although it received pros and cons in the community, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* has brought Usmar Ismail's name to fame and flutter it on the national stage, especially in the Indonesian film industry. According to Biran, in 1952, Usmar Ismail already had a big name. His name was "already stellar."⁸² He was famous as a writer, film director, and owner or boss of a film company called Perfini (2008: 80).

4.2.9. The Next Film

After completing the film, Usmar Ismail did not stop for a moment but immediately produced his second film under Perfini, *Enam Djam di Djogja* (1951). This film highlighted another historical event of the Indonesian Revolution, *Serangan Oemoem/Serangan Umum 1 Maret* (the General Attack of March 1), 1949, in Yogyakarta.⁸³ At the time, the capital of the Indonesian Republic was occupied by the Dutch. The film's shooting day began on

⁸¹ "Film Indonesia: The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)," *Pedoman*, 19 Agustus 1950, p. 3; "'The Long March' (Darah dan Do'a)," *Pedoman*, 30 August 1950, p. 4.

⁸² Original: "sudah selangit"

⁸³ For further information regarding the General Attack of 1 March, 1949, see Putra (2001: 471-494); Hutagalung (2010).

October 14, 1950.⁸⁴ The production of the second film had even started when the first film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, was still playing in theaters. The production of the second film was, in fact, planned long before the first film was premiered to the public at the presidential palace on August 29, 1950.⁸⁵ Another fact worth noting is that on the day before the first film's screening, August 28, 1950, Perfini representatives arrived in Yogyakarta to discuss the production of the second film with the relevant parties.⁸⁶

The making of the second film received full support from various groups, especially the army and local government.⁸⁷ The film production plan was also discussed in a meeting of the Yogyakarta City Government⁸⁸ on October 9, 1950, which involved other elements such as the heads of *Rukun Kampung* (villages), the army, and the police.⁸⁹ The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Colonel Abdul Haris Nasution, assigned three officers, Major Iman Suharto, First Lieutenant Supomo, and Second Lieutenant Sudjadi, to provide technical military assistance.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, *Kedaulatan Rakyat* newspaper reported that the film production received support from Brigade 10, Garuda Mataram, Djawatan Pradja, City Hall, and the Military Police.⁹¹

Although the film's story is fictional, *Enam Djam di Djogja* features a historical plot in accordance with the real story and historical facts. For

⁸⁴ "Masuknja Tentara Gerilja di Djokja Difilm," *Suara Merdeka*, 16 October 1950, p. 1; Safwan (1983: 51).

⁸⁵ *Pedoman*, 19 August 1950, p. 3.

⁸⁶ *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 29 August 1950, p. 2.

⁸⁷ See *Merdeka*, 5(IV), 3 February 1951, p. 20; *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 23 Desember 1950, p. 2.

⁸⁸ Consisting of *Pemerintah Haminte Kota* (the city government), *manteri-manteri pamongpraja* (civil servants officers), and *jawatan-jawatan kota* (municipal service officers).

⁸⁹ *Pedoman*, 11 October 1950, p. 1.

⁹⁰ *Pedoman*, 19 October 1950, p. 2.

⁹¹ *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 20 October 1950, p. 2.

example, the General Attack started right when the siren sounded,⁹² and the Republican troops used coconut leaves as their sign.⁹³ In addition, the filming used real bullets in its battle scenes, such as in the battle scene in Yogyakarta Square (*alun-alun* Yogyakarta). At that time, a 9-year-old boy was accidentally shot in the stomach while he was watching the shooting of the battle scene. Fortunately, doctor Sudarmadji said the child's injury was not serious.⁹⁴ A similar accident also occurred during the shooting in Malioboro. This time, a cyclist was hit by a stray bullet in one of his thighs (Ismail, 1953). Ultimately, the second Perfini film, which is also based on a specific historical event during the Indonesian Revolution, was released in 1951.

4.2.10. Failure to Go to Cannes Film Festival

Usmar Ismail expected *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* to participate in the international film festival in Cannes, France, now known as the Cannes Film Festival (Biran, 1976: 4). To achieve this goal, the film's production was targeted to be completed in June 1950 to participate in the international film festival in August 1950.⁹⁵ However, this expectation could not be realized as the film's production faced funding constraints that delayed its completion schedule (Ismail, 1963: 124).

In late June and early July, Usmar Ismail was still shooting in Yogyakarta to complete scenes for the film.⁹⁶ At the end of July, the film was still in the finishing stages for music recording, handled by Tjok Sinsu at Gedung Phillips, Jakarta.⁹⁷ Moreover, in 1950, the Cannes Film Festival itself could not

⁹² During the film's shooting, a siren was sounded on December 22, 1950, in Yogyakarta as a signal to launch the General Attack. The attempt was made to recreate the situation that occurred on March 1, 1949. See *Kedaulatan Rakjat*, 23 December 1950, p. 2.

⁹³ See Elson (2001: 34).

⁹⁴ *Pedoman*, 19 October 1950, p. 2; *Utusan Indonesia*, 17 October 1950, p. II.

⁹⁵ "Film "Long March" Divisi Siliwangi: Pemotretannya akan Dimulai," *Aneka*, No. 2, Tahun 1, 15 March 1950; "Tjiptaan Pertama "Perfini" Darah dan Do'a," *Aneka*, No.3, Tahun 1, 1 April 1950.

⁹⁶ "Usmar Ismail di Jogja," *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 1 July 1950, p. 1.

⁹⁷ " 'Long March' Filmnya Akan Dibubuhi Musik Hebat," *Suara Merdeka*, 28 July 1950, p. 2.

be held due to a “lack of funds” (Riding, 1997).⁹⁸ Although the film could not participate in the international festival, we can at least know that Usmar Ismail, as a filmmaker, was aware of the vital role of international film festivals as a stage and means to introduce, showcase, and promote films so that they could be enjoyed and appreciated by the public at large and globally. As Effendy (2002: 118) says, international film festivals are also helpful for marketing films to the international market and building networks.

Nevertheless, the desire to participate in and screen his films at renowned international film festivals remained in his mind and heart. Usmar Ismail mentioned, “As a filmmaker, for ten years now, the desire in my heart that has never died is to compete in an international film festival in Cannes or Venice.”⁹⁹ Although his film was not included in the 14 films¹⁰⁰ that competed in the festival, Usmar Ismail’s hope that his film could be screened at one of the world’s most prestigious film festivals was finally realized. It happened when a committee of renowned Italian film critics selected his film, *Tiga Dara* (1957), to be one of the 40 films¹⁰¹ invited to be screened at the 20th Venice International Film Festival in Italy. *Tiga Dara* was included in the “Information Sections” along with 39 other films. The festival was held from August 23 to September 6, 1959. On August 26, *Tiga Dara* had the

⁹⁸ In his book, Salim Said (1982) wrote that everyone knows Usmar Ismail’s great expectation to participate in the Cannes Film Festival, which eventually failed. However, when I asked Salim Said about the reason of the failure, he said that he did not know the real reason. When I conveyed to him the information I had regarding why Usmar Ismail’s film failed to participate in the festival, he was very appreciative and thankful for the information I provided. He said that he had just learned about the information. Interview with Salim Said, 29 July 2015 at Civilization Institute (Institut Peradaban) in Jakarta.

⁹⁹ Original reads: “*Sebagai pembuat film, selama sepuluh tahun ini satu keinginan yang sangat tak pernah mau padam dalam hati saya ialah, turut memperlombakan film yang saya buat dalam suatu festival film internasional di Cannes atau Venezia.*” (Ismail, 1983: 134).

¹⁰⁰ These films come from 11 countries, including Italy (3 films), France (2 films), Germany (1 film), Hungary (1 film), UK (1 film), USSR/Russia (1 film), Sweden (1 film), Japan (1 film), Poland (1 film), Spain (1 film), and the United States (1 film).

¹⁰¹ These films come from 22 countries.

opportunity to be watched by the international public at the festival (Ismail, 1983: 133-135).¹⁰²

4.2.11. A History Film or a Historical Film?

As previously mentioned, I use the term “historical film” as a substitute for the term “history film” to refer to “the dramatic motion picture that focuses on verifiable people, events, and movements set in the past” (Rosenstone, 2015: 183). However, Rosenstone explains that he distinguishes between “the history film and the more common term, the ‘historical film’, because the latter can also refer to any important film that has been made in the past. Sometimes a film can be both” (Rosenstone, 2015: 183).¹⁰³ In practice, however, Rosenstone also uses the term “historical film” to refer to films that attempt to recreate the past.

Based on Rosenstone’s explanation, *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* can be regarded as representing the two terms. In terms of history film, the film is the first Indonesian film with the theme of the Indonesian Revolution that specifically takes a verifiable historical event, namely the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. The film even provides a complete depiction of the event. In Indonesian history, the Siliwangi Division was withdrawn to Central Java as one of the consequences of the Renville Agreement. The division also played a vital role in suppressing the Madiun affair. In connection with the specified military plan, after the Dutch launched the Second Dutch Military Aggression in Yogyakarta on December 19, 1948, the Siliwangi Division marched back to West Java, an event known as the Siliwangi’s Long March, or the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. Usmar Ismail’s film is interesting

¹⁰² Regarding Usmar Ismail’s feelings and impressions when he saw his film screened at the festival, see Ismail (1983: 135-137).

¹⁰³ On another occasion, Rosenstone delivered his view that: “I would come to call the *history film* (as opposed to the historical film, which to me meant any work that was important in the development of the medium) that I would produce over the next quarter-century” (Rosenstone, 2016: 168).

because it provides these depictions. The film also provides a unique depiction of the early days after the transfer of sovereignty. It is a fascinating depiction of how the Indonesian Revolution ended.

Meanwhile, in terms of historical film, the film is highly qualified to be included in the category because it was “important in the development of the medium” (Rosenstone, 2016: 168). The following points could be the reason. Usmar Ismail’s film was the first film produced by Indonesia’s first national private film company, N.V. Perfini. The film company was founded by native or indigenous Indonesians with their own capital. March 30, 1950, the date when the film’s first shooting took place, was officially designated by the Indonesian government as Indonesia’s National Film Day, which is celebrated every year.

The film is also the first Indonesian film to be technically and creatively made entirely by native Indonesians. The funding was also raised from Indonesians, although in its development, Usmar Ismail and his colleagues ran out of money and had to accept a loan from a Chinese businessman to complete the film.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the film has historical significance because it has opened a new path to posit film as a means of cinematic expression, a mode of expression, and a means of idea enunciation. Furthermore, the approach used to produce the film also has a unique novelty.

In terms of ideas, the film was encouraged by a strong sense of nationalism to create a film based on national ideals and culture. Meanwhile, from the production aspect, the film is the first Indonesian film to apply the principles of neorealism, such as adopting a documentary style, practicing improvised scenes, using nature as the concept of space by shooting in various outdoor locations, and using new performers or nonprofessional actors, most of

¹⁰⁴ See Ismail (1958: 7); Ismail (1963: 124, 127).

whom were students, as the actors. Although the film did not entirely abandon the studio as a spatial concept, it already showed a practice different from the common Indonesian filmmaking practices at that time, which still relied on the Hollywood studio system with a cast system relying on famous actors (star system).

From the various facts above, the film can also be regarded as an *avant-garde* film because it was an alternative to mainstream filmmaking at the time. Usmar Ismail practiced an alternative approach to filmmaking related to cinematic form, style, and thematic content (Verrone, 2012: 5-6). In addition, an *avant-garde* film is a very personal expression of the filmmaker (Ariansah, 2014: 93). Tjasmadi put Usmar Ismail into the “*sidestream*” director category because he made films that provided alternative perspectives for society. Usmar Ismail did not fall into the category of “*mainstream*” directors who made films following public tastes (2008: 147, 149).

The film has important historical values, with all the attributes attached to and associated with it. Therefore, it is not surprising that from time to time, the film will always be highlighted, recorded in gold ink, and occupy a special space in Indonesian film history.¹⁰⁵ In other words, the film will always be in the spotlight as one of the prominent focal points that must be mentioned when people want to discuss and understand Indonesian film history. It has occupied a prominent position as one of the primary references in discussions on Indonesian films or *film nasional*. The film itself has also become a national document of a particular period in the country’s history. In a nutshell, Perfini’s first film can be regarded as the best-known Indonesian

¹⁰⁵ There are a number of excellent studies that discuss various aspects of Indonesian film history. Some of the great scholars dealing with the topic are Biran (1982, 1987, 2009); Abdullah et al. (1993); Masak (2016); Hanan (2017; see particularly pp. 53-90).

film and the most widely admired film of all time. And I think that this is not an exaggeration.

4.3. *Mereka Kembali* (1972)

4.3.1. Reading the Context

Mereka Kembali is one of the 55 films produced in 1972. This film can be categorized as colossal or even supercolossal because it involves many people.¹⁰⁶ Two thousand five hundred extras participated in the film produced by PT Dewi Films.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the use of various weapons and military equipment on a large scale, as well as the involvement of actors and actresses who were popular at that time, added to the extraordinary impression of the film.

The film was produced during the New Order era¹⁰⁸, when Indonesia's economic conditions gradually improved towards stability, especially after "the political turmoil and economic chaos during the early 1960s" (Wie, 2006: 3). The New Order era was marked by drastic changes in economic and monetary management styles, especially after the end of the Old Order era, which went through severe inflation. Trade liberalization and foreign investments were the attempts made by the New Order government to improve economic conditions then.¹⁰⁹ The impact of the government's efforts began to unfold in 1969, when the monetary sector was under control and prices gradually moved towards stability. This stability is noted to have lasted until late 1972 (Grenville, 1990: 132; Wie, 2006: 3).¹¹⁰ Since then, Indonesia's economic conditions have returned to normal.

At that time, the production conditions for Indonesian films slowly improved after experiencing fluctuations in the previous few years. This revival mainly started when the Minister of Information, Burhanuddin Mohamad Diah,

¹⁰⁶ Another colossal film was *Perawan Di Sektor Selatan* (1971). See Irsan (1972c).

¹⁰⁷ *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40. The film's producer claims that the film is the first war film to involve thousands of extras for production purposes. See *Indonesia Raya*, 3 May 1972.

¹⁰⁸ For more information about the New Order era, see Sudirjo (1979).

¹⁰⁹ For more information on Indonesia's economic development since 1966, see Hill (1996).

¹¹⁰ For further information on monetary policy and the formal financial sector during the New Order era, see Grenville (1990: 132-165).

issued Minister Decree No. 71/SK/M/1967, or what is known as SK No. 71. This decree aimed to stimulate the passion for Indonesian film production. At that time, every foreign film imported into Indonesia was subject to a retribution fee of 250,000 rupiahs. Then, the collected funds were channeled to national film companies that wished to participate in producing Indonesian films. According to Biran, this was the first time in history that the import sector was utilized for the benefit of the production sector (1982: 46). In general, SK No. 71 sought to rehabilitate the production of national films by “giving protection to artists and workers so that they may commit themselves to the field of cinema” and “improving the standards and technology of national cinema” (Sen, 1996: 175).

The number of Indonesian film productions began to increase after the decree was implemented. There were 6 films produced in 1968, 10 in 1969, 17 in 1970, 54 in 1971, and 55 in 1972 (Amura, 1989: 154). Meanwhile, 1972, the year *Mereka Kembali* was produced, was also considered a golden year for filmworkers and cinemactors because they got a lot of work on film production projects that year. However, this trend has actually occurred since 1971, when the number of films produced began to increase sharply. This condition continued for the next several years. Therefore, it was not surprising that many filmworkers and cinemactors were involved in several film production projects simultaneously during those years. In fact, in 1971 and 1972, the availability of film workers and cinemactors was considered insufficient to meet the production needs of the films that were booming at that time.¹¹¹

Producing a war film [*film perjuangan*, struggle for independence film] is undoubtedly a challenging matter. Careful preparation and the courage to risk a sizable amount of capital are required. These two aspects were the

¹¹¹ See “Djangan Djatuhkan Vonnis Pada Film Nasional,” *Indonesian Movies*, No. 1, 1972, p. 32.

factors that led to the relatively small number of war-themed films at that time. Even though there is a tendency that producing war films is unprofitable, it did not discourage PT Dewi Films from producing *Mereka Kembali*. When the film was finally completed, a weekly newspaper, *Swadesi*, boldly described the film as a combination of great labor, capital, and courage.¹¹²

4.3.1.1. An Alternative Theme

When *Mereka Kembali* was produced, sex-themed films dominated the Indonesian film industry. At that time, many Indonesian films exposed sex scenes, including those that exploited women's calves, thighs, and breasts. *Varia* magazine claimed that over 75% of Indonesian films feature sex scenes (Prihatin, 1972: 15). This claim is in line with what Lubis noted: that, at that time, many Indonesian films used sex elements as an attraction to hook the audience (Lubis, 1972a: 37; Lubis, 1972b: 12-13). It happened because many film producers thought that without sex, the films they produced would not sell well and suffer losses (Lubis, 1972b: 13).

In addition, the advertisements for these sex-themed films were also erotic and vulgar. For example, a writer, M. Thair Yacob (1972), reported that the narration of advertisements for sex-themed films usually employed words such as "a tantalizing sex film, an arousing bed scene, grisly rape, young love, a sex film for adults, exciting, satisfying, a girl plunged into the valley of vice, 17+, 21+, and so on." Such conditions were very concerning for many parties—for example, RM. Soetarto, the Chairman of the Film Censorship Board (BSF, *Badan Sensor Film*), said that the sex scenes shown in Indonesian films were over the line, vulgar, and often had nothing to do with the continuity of the stories in the films.¹¹³ As RM Soetarto said, Ali Sadikin, the

¹¹² *Swadesi*, 18 October 1972.

¹¹³ "Ketua Sensor Film: Perfilman Indonesia 1972 Suram," *KAMI*, 5 February 1972.

Governor of Jakarta then, could only shake his head in confusion out of concern for the rise of sex-themed films.¹¹⁴

Asrul Sani, a cultural observer and filmmaker, revealed that most of the stories and film screenplays at that time came from the capital owners, who provided the funds needed to produce the films. Thus, most of the film's screenplays are simply a compilation of stories containing a certain percentage of sex and violence (Irsan, 1972a). Indonesian films, especially in the 1970s, were "marked by a slew of films with sex themes, or films with scenes of nudity and veiled sexual acts." (Sumarno and Achnas, 2002: 155-156). These were the years when there was massive sexploitation in Indonesian films (Labrousse, 1983: 211) (See Figure 4.5.).

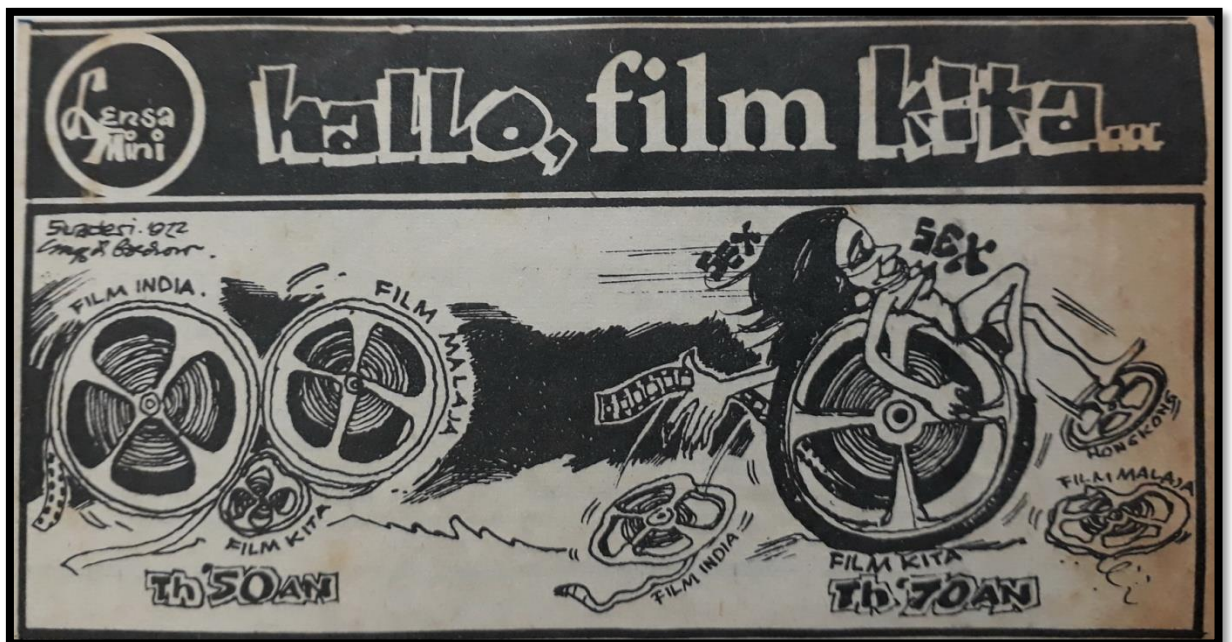


Figure 4.5. An Illustration of Indonesian Film Industry in 1950s and 1970s.

Source: *Swadesi*, 23 April 1972.

¹¹⁴ "Ketua Sensor Film: Perfilman Indonesia 1972 Suram," *KAMI*, 5 February 1972.

The illustration above portrays the situation of the Indonesian film industry in the 1950s and 1970s. In the 1950s, Indonesian films were suppressed by Indian and Malayan films. Meanwhile, in the 1970s, Indian, Malayan, and Hong Kong films were no longer rivals for Indonesian films. In the 1970s, sex themes dominated Indonesian films. However, this phenomenon did not only occur in Indonesia but also in many other countries, such as Sri Lanka, Japan, Pakistan, India, and Thailand (Lent, 1990: 5).

The proliferation of sex-themed Indonesian films at that time was allegedly inspired by the success of the film *Bernafas Dalam Lumpur* (1970), which Turino Junaidy directed. This film, which features sexual and erotic scenes, sold well and even became a box office hit in cinemas (Imanjaya, 2006: 106). Even though the appearance of this film produced by PT Sarinande Films shocked the public and became controversial due to its sexual content, it was a spectacle enjoyed by many people, from the lower class to the upper class.¹¹⁵

The potential profit that can be generated in film production made many film producers capitalize on the popularity of sexual and erotic themes. Meanwhile, many businessmen previously involved in other fields joined the film production industry. These new producers were interested in speculating and making fortunes in this field.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the government has issued Ministerial Decree No. 71/SK/M/1967 through the Ministry of Information.

Arief Budiman, a film observer, stated the same thing. According to him, one of the reasons for the many sexual and erotic scenes in Indonesian films is that film importers and producers deliberately made them. They allocate their capital to make such films with the main motive of seeking and making

¹¹⁵ "Djangan Djatuhkan Vonnis Pada Film Nasional," *Indonesian Movies*, No. 1, 1972, p. 32.

¹¹⁶ "Djangan Djatuhkan Vonnis Pada Film Nasional," *Indonesian Movies*, No. 1, 1972, p. 32.

a profit (Budiman, 1972a; Budiman, 1972b: 11). At that time, many film importers became film producers because of the fortune they could make from the film industry, especially in film imports. They tried to produce Indonesian films while continuing to import foreign films in the hope of getting multiple profits. They were merely traders oriented toward financial gain (Budiman, 1972b: 11).

With such lucrative profit potential, it was not surprising that the number of these adventurer producers was proliferating like mushrooms in the rainy season.¹¹⁷ Gajus Siagian, a film critic, said that profit-oriented producers would never think about the artistic and moral aspects (Siagian, 1972b). The Indonesian film industry at that time was undeniably filled with many oddities. One of them was the emergence of producers who mostly had much capital but were poor in creative ideas to advance Indonesian film. They were referred to as *cukong*.¹¹⁸ Producers of this kind only see films as commodities and merchandise. Therefore, the hope that these capitalists will make good films to improve human morals is an illusion (Siagian, 1972a).

Besides these sex-themed films, this period was also marked by the proliferation of Indonesian martial arts (*silat*) films. This phenomenon was also caused by the nature and habits of film producers who liked to imitate or produce films that were currently booming.¹¹⁹ Seeing these conditions, a writer, Jojo Darsijo, once warned film producers to refrain from producing martial arts films that were random and haphazard.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ *Pos Kota Minggu*, 20 February 1972. See also Sjamsuddin (1972).

¹¹⁸ "Keanehan² Dlm. Dunia Film Kita," *Yudha Minggu (Sport & Film)*, 26 February 1972.

¹¹⁹ Toni S.K., "Gedjala² Alih Pandangan Produser² Nasional," *Berita Film*, No. 2, Tahun 1, May, 1972.

¹²⁰ Jojo Darsijo, "Apa jg bisa kita banggakan dari film² silat nasional?" *Yudha Minggu (Sport & Film)*, 15 April 1972.

Such condition of the Indonesian film industry made many people sad. Unsurprisingly, many complaints and criticisms were raised and voiced by the public, who were tired and fed up with monotonous film themes that often exploit sex. Wahyu Khris Asmoro (1972) argued that national film production should consider national personality aspects so that sex scenes could be limited. According to him, sex scenes can be included as long as they are in accordance with the needs of the film's storyline and not just something forcedly added.¹²¹ However, in reality, there were indeed many films that exploited sex scenes excessively.¹²²

Therefore, judging from the need for different film themes, the film *Mereka Kembali*, which PT Dewi Films produced, was considered a breath of fresh air for Indonesian cinema. The film *Mereka Kembali* occupies an essential position as an alternative theme because Indonesian films at that time were full of sex scenes that were not educational, especially for the younger generation. Yacob (1972) mentioned that *Mereka Kembali* was one of the films the public had been looking and waiting for. The presence of this film was vital because it could function as a reminder of the heroes' services, a historical document, and an excellent example for the younger and future generations. In addition, the film was expected to be a counterweight so that the younger generation did not get sex-themed films only. He wrote: "We are now looking for historical films that are beneficial to society, the younger generation, and future generations so that they know the heroes who fought tooth and nail to defend their religion, nation, and homeland" (Yacob, 1972).

The Director General for Film of the Ministry of Information, H. Djohardin, even highly appreciated and welcomed the production of this war struggle-

¹²¹ Wahyu Khris Asmoro, "Masalah Perfilman Kita Dewasa Ini," *Yudha Minggu (Sport & Film)*, 5 August 1972.

¹²² Bharata, " 'Mereka Kembali' Muntjul Di-tengah2 'Kehidupan Sex'," *Metro*, No. 15, 31 May 1972, p. 18.

themed film because it could provide an alternative to Indonesian films, which were dominated by such themes as sex, sadism, and violence.¹²³ The mass media also gave a positive appreciation for the film's production because the public could enjoy a film with a different theme from what was circulating at the time.¹²⁴

4.3.1.2. The Transfer of the 1945 Values

Mereka Kembali was produced amidst a situation where the 1945 freedom fighters, or the 1945 Generation,¹²⁵ considered the importance of transferring the 1945 values to the younger generation. These values are expected to provide endurance and strength to face all tests and trials and be a driving force to pursue progress.¹²⁶ For this purpose, the 1945 Generation or the military felt the need to hold a special seminar that discussed this issue. Finally, the 3rd Army Seminar, with the theme of transferring the 1945 values, was held on March 13–18, 1972, at Grha Wiyata Yudha of the Army Staff and Command College (SESKOAD, *Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat*), Bandung.¹²⁷

As the leader of the New Order, President Suharto¹²⁸ felt it was important to transfer the 1945 values to future generations.¹²⁹ In the 3rd Army Seminar on March 13, 1972, Suharto explained his views on the 1945 values. According to him, "the 1945 values put national independence as the highest value, thus giving birth to the ability to fight with all strength and the willingness to sacrifice to maintain and fill this independence; with the belief

¹²³ "Epos Revolusi 'Mereka Kembali'," *Varia*, No. 734, 10 May 1972, p. 14.

¹²⁴ See for example, *Swadesi*, 21 Juni 1972.

¹²⁵ For more discussion on the 1945 Generation, see McGregor (2007: 119-123).

¹²⁶ "Kemana Dikau Pewaris?," *Topik*, No. 10, Tahun 1, 29 March 1972, pp. 8-9.

¹²⁷ Previously, the 2nd Army Seminar was held at the same place on August 25–31, 1966. After the 3rd Army Seminar was finished, the importance of transferring the 1945 values became a hot topic of conversation in society at that time. See *Buana Minggu*, 23 April 1972.

¹²⁸ For more information on Suharto, see Roeder (1969); Elson (2001); Abdulgani-Knapp (2007).

¹²⁹ Sutadi PNP, "Pewarisan Semangat Proklamasi '45," *Berita Yudha*, 23 March 1972.

that the struggle will succeed because it is right, and God Almighty will surely win the right side.”¹³⁰ Suharto also hoped that the transfer of the 1945 values could run well and smoothly.

Meanwhile, one of the seminar’s main conclusions mandated that the activity of writing the history of the Indonesian people’s struggle needed to be increased as “an effort to maintain communication between the 1945 Generation and the younger generation in the context of transferring the 1945 values” (Pranata, 1972: 51). According to McGregor, the seminar became an essential basis for the military to “circulate their versions of history to the Indonesian public through military memoirs, films, museums, monuments, and history textbooks” (McGregor, 2007: 141).

These attempts aimed to instill respect among the younger and future generations for the services that the 1945 Generation provided for the nation and state (Pranata, 1972: 52). In line with this, McGregor revealed that the efforts to transfer the 1945 values to the younger generation aimed to “ensure that they appreciated the credentials of the 1945 Generation, who then dominated the most senior positions in the regime. In the new history projects, the military focused on promoting their roles as heroes and leaders of the 1945–49 independence struggle and promoting militaristic values more broadly” (McGregor, 2007: 141).

Therefore, the 1945 Generation, as the founder and driving force of the New Order, perceived that they must ensure that the transfer of 1945 values to the younger generation go well (Pranata, 1972: 21). At that time, the Army Chief of Staff (KASAD, *Kepala Staf Angkatan Darat*), General Umar

¹³⁰ “Tjatatan Aneka Ragam,” *Purnawirawan*, I(1), May, p. 58

Wirahadikusumah, stated that the urgency of transferring the 1945 values was already in the complex, complicated, and critical phase.¹³¹

The 1945 Generation considered the transfer of the 1945 values crucial because these values were seen to fade while the number of people who took part in the struggle during the Indonesian Revolution decreased due to death. The 1945 values are the spirit to fight without expecting anything in return. Preserving these values is believed to be a force that can overcome all dangers that threaten the nation and state and lead it to glory and welfare. One way to achieve this is by spreading important historical stories about how this nation won and defended its independence, especially those based on the 1945 values (Tanumidjaja, 1972: 31-33).

Abdul Haris Nasution, a senior member of the TNI, revealed that the central point in transferring the 1945 values was to focus on the younger generation, who was expected to understand the spirit and ideals of the 1945 struggle. This ideal can only be accomplished when the younger generation respects and believes it (Nasution, 1977: 486). According to McGregor, the younger generation is the main target of the 1945 value transfer. However, the transfer of the 1945 values also targeted the general public (McGregor, 2007: 142-143).

One of the ways that the military pursued to transfer the 1945 values to the younger generation was by using films with the theme of the struggle for independence or the Indonesian Revolution. *Mereka Kembali* was one of the films considered in line with the mandate of the 3rd Army Seminar. Lukman Madewa, a military officer for the Siliwangi Division, stated that the film is very much in line with the essence, purpose, and results of the 3rd Army Seminar in Bandung, which stated that the transfer of the 1945 values is a

¹³¹ "Kemana Dikau Pewaris?," *Topik*, No. 10, Tahun 1, 29 March 1972, p. 9.

vital guideline for the younger generation. The story of *Mereka Kembali*, which is full of the 1945 values, is expected to equip the younger generation with the wisdom needed to live their daily lives.¹³² In this regard, Thaufick S. Rashid, a writer who experienced the events of the Indonesian Revolution, said that the spirit of heroism and patriotism needs to be inherited and transferred to a broad audience. He hopes films like *Mereka Kembali* can enrich society's soul and spirituality.¹³³

The film was, in fact, initiated before the 3rd Army Seminar was held on March 13–18, 1972. Nawi Ismail had even finished writing the script for the film while the army seminar was still going. In other words, *Mereka Kembali* is not a direct response to the 3rd Army seminar or a “post-1972 response,” as McGregor (2007: 147) claims. The army, particularly the Siliwangi Division, along with PT Dewi Films, had already carried out the film's pre-production stages.

The 3rd Army Seminar was more like a forum for ratification, affirmation, and authorization of the importance of transferring the 1945 values to the younger generation. Therefore, the army seminar was more of a crystallization of the anxieties felt by the 1945 generation at that time. This seminar became a strong basis of privilege for the military to promulgate various histories according to their version. Nonetheless, the film can be considered a manifestation and implementation of the military seminar conclusions, especially concerning the transfer and dissemination of 1954 values to the public and the younger generation. Since the film aligned with the military's goals and the results of the army seminar, it was not surprising that the military gave full support to its production.

¹³² *Pos Kota*, 22 March 1972; Thaufick S. Rashid, “‘Mereka Kembali’ di Gunung Manik,” *Pedoman*, 13 May 1972.

¹³³ Thaufick S. Rashid, “‘Mereka Kembali’ di Gunung Manik,” *Pedoman*, 13 May 1972.

However, Mochtar Lubis boldly criticized the spirit of transferring the 1945 values. According to him, most of the 1945 Generation had forgotten the 1945 values. He wrote:

Many of us like to talk about transferring the 1945 values to the younger generation. The good values of the 1945 struggle that were realized during the independence revolution do exist, one of which is *the fusion of the 1945 freedom fighters with the people*, both in cities and rural areas. However, this value, which I consider the best of the 1945 values, is the one most quickly abandoned and forgotten by the 1945 Generation. As soon as the war to win the nation's independence was over, most of the 1945 Generation figures gathered in big cities. Since the recognition of the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia, history has shown how their orientation towards the people weakened and then disappeared entirely. They are only engrossed in fighting for power and accumulating wealth (Lubis, 1978: 180).¹³⁴

Regarding the film's production, despite providing their full support, especially during the production stage, the military claimed that they did not receive any financial benefit. However, the military did receive benefits in other forms, namely political gains and legitimacy related to their role in the past during the revolution era. A respected Indonesian film critic, Salim Said, assessed that the military's support for the film's production seemed to be driven more by the feeling of not wanting to be forgotten by history (Said, 1991: 74).

The military did have an interest in preserving their role and services during the war for independence or the Indonesian Revolution so that the public does not forget them. Therefore, the transfer of 1945 values to the younger generation portrayed what the military felt—that they contributed significantly to upholding Indonesia's independence (Muhaimin, 1990: 63). A former freedom fighter, Abdul Haris Nasution, even emphasized that the TNI was a “republican shareholder” (Nasution, 1983, II: 295). In fact, the army is

¹³⁴ Emphasis in original.

indeed an essential component in maintaining Indonesian independence. However, it should be noted that the army is not the only party that contributes to this country (Adam, 2007b: 118).

Nevertheless, in its development, the New Order, as a “military-backed government” (Hanan, 1997: 690), used its power to write its own version of history: a “monopoly over the production and interpretation of the nation’s history clearly served as a key tool in legitimizing the institutions of the ‘security state’. Normative and ideological spheres were sharply inscribed through control over textbooks, media and publishing, arts institutes, museums, monuments, public ceremonies, and national symbols. Divergent perspectives, controversial events, and critical voices were not allowed to compete alongside the official record” (Zurbuchen, 2005: 4-5). Anderson states that the New Order regime is best understood as “the resurrection of the state and its triumph vis-a-vis society and nation” (1990: 109). The most apparent characteristic of the regime is that all aspects of life were dominated by the military (Anderson, 1990: 117).

4.3.1.3. Perfect Engagement

As Toplin (1996) suggested, a researcher needs to examine the essential elements behind a historical film production. This investigation aims to understand better the unique relationships between each element and the presence of a historical film. From the investigation results, *Mereka Kembali* appears to have unique relationships between its elements and deep meaning for the parties behind the scenes.

4.3.1.3.1. The Producer

The film production has a deep meaning for the producer, Mrs. Malidar Hadi Juwono. This meaning is significantly related to her experiences during the Indonesian Revolution. When the nation struggled to defend its

independence, Malidar was a member of *Seniman Merdeka* (Freedom Artists), who joined the struggle to answer to *Ibu Pertiwi's* (Homeland's) call (Tobing, 1972a). She and her colleagues used a truck to travel to remote areas and villages. They put on plays, music, songs about the struggle for independence, and agitational speeches to inform about Indonesian independence and raise the spirit of patriotism among the people to welcome the revolution for Indonesian independence.¹³⁵

Malidar was also one of those who experienced the Long March event firsthand. She was a member of the Indonesian Red Cross.¹³⁶ In addition, her husband was also a member of the Siliwangi Division. This fact further strengthens her bond with the army unit.¹³⁷ Therefore, Malidar had a close relationship with the Siliwangi Division. With her experience of being directly involved in the Indonesian Revolution and the Long March event, it is not surprising that she was eager to produce the film to bring back depictions of the heroes' struggle, especially those who had fallen during the Indonesian War for Independence.

Mereka Kembali is a reminder of the heroes' excellent services for this nation's independence. Although producing films with the theme of struggle for independence tends to be financially unprofitable, there are other reasons that drive producers to make them. For Malidar, the production of *Mereka Kembali* has at least three essential meanings. First, the film is a memento of her and her husband's life history and experiences. Second, the film is PT Dewi Films' contribution to the development of the national film industry. Third, the film is also a form of PT Dewi Films' contribution to helping the younger and future generations understand the harsh struggle of the

¹³⁵ *Cinema*, 1 February 1955, p. 24; *Kompas*, 5 June 1972.

¹³⁶ *Swadesi*, 4 October 1972.

¹³⁷ *Kompas*, 5 June 1972.

Indonesian heroes in defending independence.¹³⁸ These are the reasons underlying PT Dewi Films' passion and spirit to produce a film with such a theme. All in all, the film has significant meaning for the producer.

4.3.1.3.2. The Filmmaker

Nawi Ismail was born on April 18, 1918, in Jakarta. He was 54 years old when he directed *Mereka Kembali*. At that time, he was a senior figure in Indonesian cinema. He belonged to the class referred to as the "old crack." In addition, he was also in the same generation as other national film figures such as Usmar Ismail and Djamaluddin Malik.¹³⁹ In the film's production, Nawi Ismail not only acted as a director but also as a scenarist and editor.

Nawi Ismail was very enthusiastic when he was entrusted with directing a film about the Long March event. Moreover, he had a close connection with the historical event. During the Indonesian War for Independence, Nawi Ismail joined the TNI and served in the Siliwangi Division. He was a Section I infantry soldier from Regiment VI Brigade III "Kian Santang" of the Siliwangi Division. At that time, the commander of Section I was Supangkat Sumartojo. In 1950, Nawi left the army with his last rank of 2nd Lieutenant.¹⁴⁰

With such a background, it is no wonder that Nawi Ismail worked wholeheartedly and earnestly for the film's production. According to him, *Mereka Kembali* tries to emphasize the hardship faced by the troops of Siliwangi, who had to return from Yogyakarta and its surroundings to West Java while facing attacks from the Dutch and Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam everywhere (Adisubrata, 1972).

¹³⁸ *Indonesian Raya*, 3 May 1972.

¹³⁹ For more information on Nawi Ismail, see Tobing (1972b); Gayo (1979); Suharto WS (1999: 322).

¹⁴⁰ See Nawi Ismail Files, archive code: N-23. Sinematek Indonesia, Jakarta.

Nawi Ismail argued that films with the theme of war struggle have historical values that are very important for the younger generation and future generations. Historical films can help them know and understand that what they are enjoying now is the result of the struggle of their elders in the past.¹⁴¹

4.3.1.3.3. The Siliwangi Division

The film occupies a special position for the Siliwangi Division in general because it depicts the Long March event, a historic and phenomenal event for the division during the Indonesian Revolution. As explained, the Long March is an event in which the Siliwangi Division takes pride. This event is indisputable proof of the Siliwangi troops' struggle to continue the physical revolution to defend Indonesian independence in 1948. Therefore, it is unsurprising that KODAM VI Siliwangi (*Komando Daerah Militer VI Siliwangi*, Siliwangi Regional Military Command) fully supported the film's production.

Meanwhile, the film has significant meaning for two people who also played vital roles in the film's production: the Chief of Military History of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Lieutenant Colonel Infantry Lukman Madewa, and Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Major General A.J. Witono. They were both living witnesses and actual freedom fighters in the Long March. They were part of the Siliwangi troops that marched back to West Java after the Dutch attacked Yogyakarta. At that time, Lukman Madewa was a Siliwangi soldier, and A.J. Witono was a Company Commander (*Komandan Kompi III*) led by the Battalion Commander, Major Nasuhi.¹⁴² In the film's production, Lukman Madewa played an important role as an assistant director¹⁴³ and original story writer. Meanwhile, A.J. Witono was the film's supervisor.

¹⁴¹ See *Citra Film*, No. 6, November, 1981, p. 52.

¹⁴² Siliwangi (1994: 187-188); *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972.

¹⁴³ Besides Lukman Madewa, the film had another director's assistant, Syamsul Fuad.

As reported by *Bumi Artis*, the primary purpose of the film production is to provide an actual depiction for the public, especially the younger generation. It depicts what and how the event known as the Long March occurred.¹⁴⁴ Lukman Madewa stated that the film was intended to remind the younger generation about the sorrow and suffering of the Long March journey. Despite such conditions, the troops of Siliwangi continued to walk through it heroically, enthusiastically, and selflessly.¹⁴⁵

According to the Chief of Staff of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Brigadier General Hasan Slamet, the film has a crucial meaning because it intends to document the history of the struggle for independence, which involved both the army and the people. The film is a manifestation of the 1945 generation's desire to transfer its values to the next generations.¹⁴⁶ In line with Hasan Slamet, Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, A.J. Witono, argued that a film with the theme of the struggle for independence, such as *Mereka Kembali*, is an essential legacy to help the present and future generations understand visually how their nation struggled in the past (Subardjo, 1972).

According to A.J. Witono, the film is important to produce to help the children, grandchildren, the current generation, and future generations remember and contemplate the history of the struggle and the spirit of the Siliwangi troops from that time. It will enable them to discover that the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence was not easy. He also hopes that the film can transfer the spirit of the Siliwangi troops to the younger generation.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972.

¹⁴⁵ *Sinar Harapan*, 28 March 1972; See also, *Pos Kota*, 22 March 1972.

¹⁴⁶ *Buana Minggu*, 30 April 1972.

¹⁴⁷ *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972; *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972.

Further, A.J. Witono added that *Mereka Kembali* is not a 100% commercial film. In other words, the film is more concerned with achieving noble ideals for the future of the nation and state than getting as much material gain as possible. For the Siliwangi Division, the film is expected to become a legacy from the 1945 generation and provide “*wangsit*” (inspirational messages) for the younger generation. The *wangsit* refers to the messages left by the 1945 Generation, which can serve as helpful guides in life.¹⁴⁸

Based on the facts above, it can be seen that the film’s production has profound meanings for the essential elements behind the scenes, such as the filmmaker, producer, writer/scenarist, original story writer, and film supervisor. All of these elements have a close relationship, where each person has the same meeting point, namely the Siliwangi Division. They were all directly related to the Long March event. I call this a solid form of personal engagement. On the other hand, the social engagement of these elements, in the sense of their intention to contribute to their social milieu, can also be considered significant. Therefore, the film can be regarded as the product of perfect engagement. Apart from that, considering the close relationship between these essential elements, I would argue that the film is a nostalgic film for them. It is not surprising at all because some people say that “nostalgia is the best feeling.”

4.3.2. Pre-production

4.3.2.1. Development

PT Dewi Films was the one submitting the film production project plan to KODAM VI Siliwangi. The Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Major General A.J. Witono, explained that, actually, several producers were interested and offered to film the story of the Siliwangi Division’s struggle known as the Long March. However, those producers never showed up or contacted him

¹⁴⁸ See Tarmiddi (1966: 5).

again. Several producers also requested that KODAM VI Siliwangi fund the production costs for the film. Of course, KODAM VI Siliwangi declined the request because the cost to produce the film must have been very high. Finally, the producer of PT Dewi Films, Malidar Hadi Juwono, came and was willing to pay for the costs needed to produce the film (Subardjo, 1972). In other words, all costs, such as the director's, actors', and employees' fees, as well as accommodation and daily expenses, were fully covered by PT Dewi Films. Thus, ultimately, the film was produced by PT Dewi Films.¹⁴⁹

The film about the Long March event was made based on a story written by the Chief of Military History of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Lieutenant Colonel Infranty Lukman Madewa.¹⁵⁰ Together with Syamsul Fuad, Lukman Madewa acted as the film's assistant director to help the film's director, Nawi Ismail. Nawi Ismail then wrote the scenario for the film based on Lukman Madewa's story. The film's script was completed on March 16, 1972. However, during the film's production process, Nawi Ismail made several changes and adjustments to the film's scenario. In this context, Nawi Ismail used the film scenario as a guide, which could still be changed and adjusted during the shooting process. In other words, he did not make the film scenario a goal that must be interpreted literally in the film (Reynertson, 1970: 14).

4.3.2.2. The Military's Full Support

The film production obtained approval and full support from the military, especially KODAM VI Siliwangi, the Senior Corps of Siliwangi, and the Ministry of Defense and Security, which provided the extraordinary facilities needed.¹⁵¹ The approval and support mainly came from a senior member of

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

¹⁵⁰ *Pos Kota*, 22 March 1972; *Sinar Harapan*, 28 March 1972; *Indonesia Raya*, 3 May 1972.

¹⁵¹ *Pos Kota*, 22 March 1972; *Sinar Harapan*, 28 March 1972.

the Siliwangi Corps, General Abdul Haris Nasution,¹⁵² and the Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Major General A.J. Witono.

This support was given in several forms, including by providing Siliwangi soldiers, members of the Army Women's Corps (KOWAD, *Korps Wanita Angkatan Darat*), and combat trainers. The Siliwangi soldiers and KOWAD members acted as extras in the film. In addition, the military also provided all military vehicles and artillery needed for the film's production, such as tanks, military cars, canons, Mustang fighter planes, Dakota planes, and various weapons.¹⁵³ According to Syamsul Fuad, KODAM VI Siliwangi also provided army costumes for the film's production. In addition, KODAM VI Siliwangi also cooperated and coordinated with village chiefs at the filming locations so that mobilizing the people as extras was never a problem.¹⁵⁴

Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Major General A.J. Witono, said that, in general, the military would support any film production with the theme of the struggle for independence as long as the conditions set by the military were met. According to him, "KODAM VI Siliwangi, in particular, and ABRI [*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, The Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia], in general, will not hesitate to provide various assistance and military facilities, including moral assistance, to film producers who will make films with the theme of the struggle for independence, provided that the conditions requested by the military have been fulfilled."¹⁵⁵ Witono stated that there are no other Southeast Asian countries that have as rich a history of the struggle for independence as Indonesia. Therefore, stories of

¹⁵² During the Indonesian Revolution, Nasution served as the First Commander of the Siliwangi Division, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, Chief of the Army Headquarters Operations Staff, and later he was assigned as Commander of the Java Army and Territory (*Panglima Tentara dan Teritorium Jawa*).

¹⁵³ *Sinar Harapan*, 28 March 1972; *Sinar Indonesia*, 2 April 1972; *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972; *Kompas*, 5 June 1972; *Indonesia Raya*, 3 May 1972; Tobing (1972a); *Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

¹⁵⁵ *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972.

heroism and patriotism from the war for independence have the potential to be filmed (Adisubrata, 1972).

Mereka Kembali is a film version of the Long March event that the military recognized and favored because all of its production stages met all the requirements they set. In addition, the film is the only one that has received support from all elements of the military, including the Indonesian Army (TNI-AD), Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL), and Indonesian Air Force (TNI-AU). As stated by A.J. Witono, KODAM VI Siliwangi did not provide any financial assistance for the film production.¹⁵⁶ However, all the military facilities provided for the film's production can never be valued in money. Furthermore, the film was considered good because it used the "idle capacities" of the armed forces, which previously had not been utilized in any film production (Adisubrata, 1972).

4.3.2.3. The Fifth Production

The film is the fifth film produced by PT Dewi Films. Previously, the film company had made several films entitled *Berabe* (1960), *Marina* (1961), *Si Pitung* (1970), and *Banteng Betawi* (1971). Nawi Ismail is the director of the four films. In the production of *Mereka Kembali*, Nawi Ismail again served as director. Therefore, this film production is the fifth collaboration between Nawi Ismail and PT Dewi Films. Such a good relationship between Nawi Ismail and PT Dewi Films was due to the mutual comfort between PT Dewi Films' producer, Malidar Hadi Juwono, and Nawi Ismail.

According to Malidar, Nawi Ismail is an enthusiastic colleague and the best one to work with in film production.¹⁵⁷ On another occasion, she explained that Nawi Ismail's way of working was the reason that made her feel comfortable continuing to work with him.

¹⁵⁶ *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972.

¹⁵⁷ *Sinar Harapan*, 8 June 1972.

I like Nawī. He works earnestly and responsibly. Unlike most directors, when a film is finished, and they have received payment, they no longer want to deal with it, while Nawī still likes to think about the circulation of the film and so on, as if the film were his own. It's not his job, but I like that he does so; it means he is reliable. We can work together. We suit each other.¹⁵⁸

Before starting the film's production, PT Dewi Films held a celebratory event at the office located on Jalan Dr. Kusumah Atmadja S.H. No. 39, Jakarta, on April 19, 1972. The event took place with great fanfare. Various people attended the event, including the Director General for Film of the Ministry of Information, H. Djohardin; Chief of Staff of KODAM VI Siliwangi (Kasdam, *Kepala Staf* KODAM), Brigadier General Hasan Slamet; Indonesian Film Producers Association (PPFI, *Persatuan Produser Film Indonesia*) officials; Indonesian Film Artists Association (PARFI, *Persatuan Artis Film Indonesia*); Indonesian Film and Television Employees Association (KFT, *Karyawan Film dan Televisi Indonesia*); member of the Film Censorship Board Gayus Siagian; Chairwoman of the National Film Council, Maria Ulfah Soebadio; and film artists. The film's production began on April 24, 1972, in West Java and ended on June 24, 1972, in Yogyakarta.¹⁵⁹ Since the beginning, the film had been planned to be screened on October 5, 1972, to coincide with the Indonesian Armed Forces Day celebration.¹⁶⁰

4.3.2.4. Full Cast

4.3.2.4.1 Film Crew

Producer	: Malidar Hadi Juwono
Director, Scenario, Editor	: Nawī Ismail
Original Story Writer	: Lukman Madewa
Music Director	: Idris Sardi

¹⁵⁸ *Kompas*, 5 June 1972.

¹⁵⁹ *Sinar Harapan*, 14 April 1972; *Sinar Harapan*, 22 April 1972; *Nusantara*, 20 April 1972; *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972, *Mingguan Merdeka*, 11 June 1972; *Pos Kota Minggu*, 9 April 1972. *Violeta*, No. 23, 1 Agustus 1972, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972; *Minggu Merdeka*, 30 April 1972.

Production Leader	: Sukri Musa
Assistant Director	: Syamsul Fuad, Lukman Madewa
Cameraman	: H.M. Taba, Kasiyo
Assistant Cameraman	: Jos Loupias, Hidayat
Art Director	: Nazar Ali
Assistant Art Director	: Padeli
Special Effect, Property	: S. Parya
Make-Up	: Subakri
Explosion Technician	: Siliwangi Division
Lighting	: Satimin
Assistant Lighting	: Hendarto, Sutiono
Unit Manager	: Ade Iskandar Zulkarnain
Customs	: Emen Effendy
Unit Staff	: Asril, Irwansyah, Fachrudin
Script	: Syamsir Hatta
Soundman	: Suhartoyo
Photostill	: Bambang Trimakno
Unit Publicist	: Syahroni
Unit Sound	: Kimura, Subiyantoro, Akatsuka

4.3.2.4.2. Film Cast

Sandy Suwardi Hasan	: Sergeant Anwar
Abdul Hamid Arif	: Captain Van der Kloot
Rina Hassim [Hasyim]	: Sumarni
Hasan Sanusi	: Mr. Sastra
Rahayu Effendy	: Mrs. Sastra
Aedy Moward	: Major Superman
Ismar Lubis	: Lieutenant Sitorus
Arman Effendy	: Lieutenant Priyatna

Grace Simon : Maya

Mereka Kembali features popular actors and actresses from that era. They were, among others: Sandy Suwardi Hasan, Abdul Hamid Arief, Rina Hassim, Rahayu Effendi, Aedy Moward, Hasan Sanusi, and Ismar Lubis. They were recruited to attract the audience's interest.¹⁶¹ The participation of film stars in a film is one of the main aspects that draws audiences to buy film tickets (Hayward, 2013: 355). In addition to these famous names, the film also introduces two newcomers, Arman Effendy and Grace Simon.

Arman Effendy was, in fact, not a newcomer to the Indonesian film industry because he had previously performed in Usmar Ismail's film entitled *Anak-Anak Revolusi* (1964), his first debut. However, after that film, he was absent from the film industry for eight years and only recently reappeared in *Mereka Kembali*. His absence was considered long enough to make his fans forget about him. Arman Effendy also shared that his process of returning to the film industry was not easy and required struggle.¹⁶² Therefore, in the credit title, Arman Effendy "had to be" reintroduced using the phrase "introducing" (Dasriyo, 1972). This way of "introduction" was also shown in the films' advertisements and leaflets. Meanwhile, the true newcomer in this film is Grace Simon.¹⁶³

In addition, *Mereka Kembali* features not only celebrities but also actors and actresses who were just starting their careers in the film industry. These new casts include Etty Sumiati, El Manik, Mangara Siahaan, Budi Schwarzkron, Draculic, Giri Surapati, Ramli Ivar, and Fara Noor. These new names were recruited from two auditions held in Jakarta and Bandung. In total, there were about 100 people who took part in both auditions, and 20 people were

¹⁶¹ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

¹⁶² See *Buana Minggu*, 6 August 1972.

¹⁶³ See "Grace Simon," *Mimbar Berita*, 17 September 1972.

selected from each audition. Thus, there were 40 permanent supporting performers.¹⁶⁴ At that time, the Chief of Staff of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Brigadier General Hasan Slamet, reminded Bandung youths interested in acting in the film to perform their role seriously to feel the harsh struggle of the Siliwangi troops during the Long March event.¹⁶⁵

In its production process, *Mereka Kembali* also involved many extras from Siliwangi soldiers, KOWAD members, TNI-AD members, TNI-AL members, TNI-AU members, student members of the Mahawarman Regiment (*Resimen Mahawarman*),¹⁶⁶ and young men and women, as well as residents at the shooting locations (such as in Majalengka).¹⁶⁷ In total, there were 2,500 extras involved in the film production.

4.3.2.4.3. Aedy Moward: The Two Films

Of all the film's cast members, there was one person who had appeared in the first version of the film about the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. He is Aedy Moward. He was involved in the first version of the film, which was made 22 years earlier. At that time, he was still young and just starting his career in the Indonesian film industry. He played in a film by Usmar Ismail in 1950 entitled *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. However, his role in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was significantly different from his role in *Mereka Kembali*. In Usmar Ismail's film, he plays a soldier with a bad character: vindictive, unpatriotic, selfish, undisciplined, and opportunistic. Meanwhile, in Nawi Ismail's film, he plays a sympathetic role, a battalion commander who is strongminded and charismatic.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 & 26 September 2017 in Jakarta.

¹⁶⁵ *Sinar Harapan*, 14 April 1972.

¹⁶⁶ The student regiment in West Java was initially formed to deal with the chaos in West Java, especially those caused by DI/TII Kartosuwirjo. See Resimen Mahasiswa Detasemen Karawang (2016).

¹⁶⁷ *Swadesi*, 21 June 1972.

A character in a film is closely related to the demands of the role that must be played as a form of an actor's professionalism. In both films, Aedy Moward has shown good performance, where he could play the roles given to him well. Regarding his two roles in these films, I get the impression that his "good character" in *Mereka Kembali* is compensation for his "bad character" in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. In other words, older Aedy's role is in stark contrast to his younger one. The older Aedy's image in *Mereka Kembali* has improved over that of his younger self in the earlier film. Despite all that, Aedy Moward is the only actor who played in the two films about the Long March of the Siliwangi Division.

4.3.3. Production

The film's production began on April 24, 1972. The first shooting activities were carried out in the West Java area and ended in Yogyakarta. The shooting took place in several locations, namely Kuningan, Salem, Ciamis, Majalengka, Linggarjati, Yogyakarta, and the Adisucipto Main Air Base (Lanuma, *Pangkalan Udara Utama*)/Maguwo airfield.¹⁶⁸ All of these locations are historical sites related to the Long March. The film also captures and displays Indonesia's natural beauty because the shooting activities were done in exciting places. This cinematography is considered one of the film's strengths because it can encourage the potential for tourism development at that time.¹⁶⁹

Nawi Ismail used the two-camera technique for shooting purposes. The two cameras were operated by Kasiyo and H. Taba, respectively. In addition, a helicopter was used to take pictures from the air (Subardjo, 1972). This two-camera technique was meant to capture scenes of mass combat accompanied

¹⁶⁸ See *Sinar Harapan*, 28 March 1972; *Sinar Indonesia*, 2 April 1972; *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972; *Yudha Minggu (Sport & Film)*, 10 June 1972; *Buana Minggu*, 18 June 1972. Maguwo airfield is Adisucipto International Airport today.

¹⁶⁹ *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972.

by explosions and whistling bullets. The same technique was used to film the Dutch paratroopers when they descended on the Maguwo airfield.¹⁷⁰

4.3.3.1. Filmmaker's Inspiration

In the making process of *Mereka Kembali*, Nawi Ismail was inspired by a 1962 Hollywood war film entitled *The Longest Day*. This film depicts the Normandy invasion, or the D-Day landings, carried out by the Allies on June 6, 1944.¹⁷¹ Nawi Ismail hoped that the film can resemble the war depiction in the Hollywood war film. Nawi said, "I want to emulate results like the ones in *The Longest Day*."¹⁷² Meanwhile, Salim Said (1991c: 73) considered that Nawi Ismail's film was too heavily influenced by foreign action films circulating in the early 1970s. One of the films that Salim Said thought heavily influenced *Mereka Kembali* was *The Dirty Dozen* (1967). Like *The Longest Day*, *The Dirty Dozen* is a Hollywood American war film.

4.3.3.2. The Director's Military Discipline

Nawi Ismail worked passionately and earnestly in making the film. Once, he lost his appetite thinking about filming activities for the next day. Major General A.J. Witono gave Nawi a bag of bread, but Nawi did not eat it. Instead, at the lodge, he sliced the bread, filled it with cheese, and distributed it to anyone around him. Nawi did not like being forced to eat when he did not feel like eating.¹⁷³

This description of Nawi is in line with the testimony of the film's producer, Malidar Hadi. She often felt sorry for Nawi Ismail because "when working, Nawi often forgot to eat; when it went on, he often lost his appetite. He often forgot to sleep because he worked overtime until late at night. He couldn't

¹⁷⁰ *SFF* (Sport, Fashion, Film), No. 16, Tahun I, September 1972, p. 13; *Violeta*, No. 23, 1 August 1972, p. 20.

¹⁷¹ See Levine and Englemeyer (1973: 19-21).

¹⁷² Original reads: "Saya ingin mendekati hasil seperti *The Longest Day*." *Kompas*, 5 June 1972.

¹⁷³ *Buana Minggu*, 25 June 1972.

sleep thinking about what he would do the next day.”¹⁷⁴ Every night, at 22.00, Nawi Ismail always checked around to ensure that the film crew and cast were already at their lodging places to rest because they must be in their prime physical condition to make the shooting work. Nawi said, “I don’t want to take the blame for people who complain that they are tired because of work other than making the film.”¹⁷⁵

In the filmmaking process, Nawi was known to be loud when giving orders to anyone, be it the film crew or cast. He always gave instructions and orders in a loud and insistent voice, much like bullets shooting out of a machine gun. Therefore, during the film’s production, he was given the unofficial title of “the General.”¹⁷⁶

As a director, Nawi Ismail was known as the fussiest and most disciplined director. His discipline sometimes exceeded that of the military. He was very responsible for his crew, artists, and work. He never wanted to spoil others.¹⁷⁷ He was also known as the most fierce and vicious director. He often yelled “*Madi Rodok!*” as a snap and curse when angry at work.¹⁷⁸ In an interview, Nawi revealed: “Yes, I am cruel, but it will be beneficial for them. All directors are the same, like a wastebasket, who have to accept anything thrown at them, both the good and the bad” (Gayo, 1979). Despite that, the people in the production, including the actors and actresses, knew him as a very likable director.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ *Buana Minggu*, 18 June 1972.

¹⁷⁵ *Buana Minggu*, 28 May 1972.

¹⁷⁶ *Buana Minggu*, 18 June 1972.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017; Gayo (1979); *Buana Minggu*, 28 May 1972; *Buana Minggu*, 18 June 1972.

¹⁷⁸ *Madi Rodok!* is a Betawi expression that means impudent.

¹⁷⁹ *Swadesi*, 28 June 1972.

4.3.3.3. The General's Guidance

The commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Major General A.J. Witono, was often seen monitoring the film's production. He actively provided guidance, direction, and suggestions (Figure 4.6.). The participation of the two-star general even seemed flashy and exaggerated, especially due to his presence and role in the shooting locations.¹⁸⁰ One journalist even thought that A.J. Witono acted as a "co-director" because he never stopped giving instructions even though Nawi Ismail already had two assistant directors helping him in the film's production.¹⁸¹



Figure 4.6. Major General A.J. Witono [wearing sun glasses and sitting on a chair] and Nawi Ismail [squatting at the front].

Source: *Buana Minggu*, 14 May 1972.

A.J. Witono admitted that he wanted the film's contents to be truly accountable because it is about the Long March. This important historical event is not only the pride of the Siliwangi Division but also the Indonesian

¹⁸⁰ Adisubrata (1972); *Indonesia Raya*, 7 June 1972.

¹⁸¹ *Varia*, No. 747, 9 August 1972, p. 28.

nation. Moreover, almost 80% of the film's story is based on actual events.¹⁸² Nevertheless, A. J. Witono denied that he intervened in the filmmaking process. However, he admitted that he played the role of a supervisor.¹⁸³

Witono acted as a supervisor, especially for scenes containing complicated military techniques like battles and bombings. He also provided guidance on how to shoot, crawl on grass, and check for the epaulets and badges of the Siliwangi troopers, the Dutch, and the Darul Islam forces. This information aligns with the recorded data and artifacts in the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum.¹⁸⁴ "I always intervene, especially in technical military matters," said the General.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, A.J. Witono also said that there had been agreements between KODAM VI Siliwangi and PT Dewi Films that KODAM VI Siliwangi would not interfere financially or commercially. However, KODAM VI Siliwangi would provide inputs, especially related to military techniques, history, corrections, and suggestions. Such inputs were intended so that the film could create the closest depictions of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division event in 1948.¹⁸⁶ In this regard, A.J. Witono said:

Between Siliwangi and PT Dewi Films, there is an agreement regarding the filmmaking process. In short, Siliwangi takes care of all matters relating to the military-technical and ideological aspects, while PT Dewi Films handles the production's financing and management. Besides that, one more thing made us willing to participate in the film's production: We want the current generation to know about the Long March event. We consider this event the most memorable for the Siliwangi Division and the people of West Java. In addition to these ideals, we also want to transfer the fighting spirit of Siliwangi and the spirit of the 1945 generation to the younger generations."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² *Varia*, No. 747, 9 August 1972, p. 28; See also, *Varia*, No. 743, 12 July 1972, p. 14.

¹⁸³ *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972.

¹⁸⁴ *Buana Minggu*, 14 May 1972; *Kompas*, 5 June 1972; Rashid (1972b); Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017. For this study, I also visited the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum in Bandung on May 23-25, 2017.

¹⁸⁵ Subardjo (1972).

¹⁸⁶ Adisubrata (1972).

¹⁸⁷ *Indonesia Raya*, 7 June 1972.

Regarding the role of KODAM VI Siliwangi's commander, the assistant director Syamsul Fuad explained that, at that time, the military assisted with military-technical aspects but not with creative elements. He explained: "The military, especially the KODAM VI Siliwangi, did assist in military-technical matters, for example, by advising on shooting methods and styles. However, they were not involved in the creative aspect of filmmaking. As a director, Nawi Ismail was given total freedom to work. Apart from that, Nawi Ismail did not like to be intervened in because he was a strict person with the personal values that he adhered to as a director."¹⁸⁸

When *Mereka Kembali* was still in production, many people said it was a big war film, even the biggest ever made in Indonesia. A journalist, Ismail Subardjo, also confirmed this claim. Based on his direct observations, Ismail Subardjo concluded that the attribute of a big film given to *Mereka Kembali* was not mere nonsense. He even praised that the film was not only big but the "biggest ever made by the Indonesian nation to date. It is the biggest in terms of its historical value, the meaning of its production, the number of actors, and budget." According to him, the film can be considered a colossal film.¹⁸⁹

Meanwhile, the film's director also expressed a similar impression. When the film production process entered its final phase, Nawi Ismail said that he was honored to be trusted to direct a film as big as *Mereka Kembali*. He said: "Not to exaggerate, and to be very honest, this is the first time I am making a film of this magnitude."¹⁹⁰

Overall, the film's production ran smoothly without experiencing any significant problems. Professional human resources and suitable weather

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

¹⁸⁹ Subardjo (1972).

¹⁹⁰ Subardjo (1972).

conditions also contributed to the success of the filmmaking process.¹⁹¹ The shooting phase ended on June 24, 1972. In total, this phase took one and a half months or 42 shooting days.¹⁹²

4.3.3.4. Treatment

Despite using a fictional format, the film was made to approach the actual events. In other words, even though the film's story is fictional, it still refers to existing historical facts. In this regard, the Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, Major General A.J. Witono, stated that the film tries to depict all the events that occurred during the Long March as honestly as possible. He explained:

Unlike many other films about the struggle for independence, we don't want and have no pretensions to make up something that never existed. In short, in the film production so far, all the events described are adapted from the actual events, except for the names of the people involved in them. The different naming is meant to protect the good reputations of the real historical figures and the families they left behind.¹⁹³

Mereka Kembali attempts to highlight six events related to the Long March in 1948.¹⁹⁴ These events included: first, the attacks and bombings by the Dutch fighter planes and canons against the Long March company in Salem at the border of Central Java and West Java; second, the crossing of the Serayu River, which resulted in dozens of casualties; third, the crossing on a major road in Bumiayu, which also caused many casualties due to a battle against a strong Dutch Post in that area; fourth, the trapping and beheading of Major

¹⁹¹ *Mimbar Berita*, 18 June 1972.

¹⁹² *Minggu Abadi*, 24 September 1972; *Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972; *Violeta* No. 23, 1 August 1972, p. 20.

¹⁹³ *Indonesia Raya*, 7 June 1972.

¹⁹⁴ In Indonesian history, that year was known as the year of turmoil for Indonesia because it received attacks from within and outside. These attacks came from the Netherlands, PKI Madiun, and Darul Islam.

Djadja by the Darul Islam; fifth, the poisoning of the Siliwangi troops by Darul Islam in Ciamis; and sixth, the event of saving or recapturing the Siliwangi Division's banner from Darul Islam.¹⁹⁵

What the film tries to portray is very similar to information available in a book about the history of the Siliwangi Division entitled *Siliwangi Dari Masa Ke Masa* (1968)¹⁹⁶ and various displays in the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum.¹⁹⁷ I think that Lukman Madewa used these two sources—particularly *Siliwangi Dari Masa Ke Masa*—as the primary reference and inspiration for writing the film's story, which Nawi Ismail then used as the basis for writing the film's scenario. Therefore, I argue that the film is a form of filmization of the stories in the book *Siliwangi Dari Masa to Masa*.

One of the ways to approach the actual events is by shooting at historical locations related to the Long March event in both West Java and Central Java.¹⁹⁸ For the same purpose, actual demolition and burning of villagers' houses were also carried out, such as in Argasari Village (Majalengka) and Linggarjati Village (Kuningan). A tank was even destroyed for the battle scene when Siliwangi soldiers destroyed a Dutch post in the film.¹⁹⁹

Meanwhile, the actors in the film not only used weapons with blanks but also live bullets.²⁰⁰ This action was, in fact, a dangerous practice in the film's production. However, this practice created believable depictions, especially for the battle scenes. Consequently, several actors were injured, but not

¹⁹⁵ *Kompas*, 5 June 1972; *Indonesia Raya*, 7 June 1972; Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017.

¹⁹⁶ The third edition was re-published in 1994.

¹⁹⁷ The museum is located at Jalan Lembong 38, Bandung. The museum was inaugurated on May 23, 1966, by the 8th Siliwangi KODAM Commander, Colonel Infantry Ibrahim Adjie (Suganda, 2011: 36).

¹⁹⁸ *Sinar Harapan*, 14 April 1972.

¹⁹⁹ See *Buana Minggu*, 30 April 1972; *Bumi Artis*, 30 April 1972; *Minggu Abadi*, 21 May 1972; *Yudha Minggu*, 11 June 1972; *Vista*, No. 106, 29 May 1972, pp. 14, 35.

²⁰⁰ *Swadesi*, 21 June 1972.

severely. Syamsul Fuad, an assistant director who also played in a scene in the film, said that he was almost hit by a stray bullet fired by an actor during the filming. However, he survived and avoided death because he managed to duck his head. However, on another shooting day, he was hit by shrapnel from a mortar shell which injured his legs. He could not continue to play in the film because of the injury. Therefore, his character as a Siliwangi soldier was later killed in a scene when Dutch warplanes attacked the Long March company.²⁰¹

Further, in one of its scenes, the film also attempts to portray the actual event of the Dutch attack on Maguwo airfield, followed by the landing of Dutch paratroopers. For this purpose, the TNI-AU (Indonesian Air Force) provided two Mustang fighter aircrafts from an outside party because ABRI did not have them. The use of these Mustang fighter planes was an attempt to recreate the conditions of the past because, at that time, the Dutch attacked Maguwo airfield using Mustang fighter planes.²⁰² The two aircrafts were piloted by Air Major Rukandi and Air Captain Rusmali Arifin. Then, three Dakota aircraft from the Indonesian Navy were used for the Dutch paratrooper landing scene.²⁰³ The scene also depicts a *Cureng* plane bombed by the Dutch warplanes. *Cureng* is the Indonesian name for the *Yokusuka* K5Y (*Shinsitei*) plane acquired from the Japanese.

However, the *Cureng* plane used in the scene was not an original plane but a dummy one. The mock plane was made of a wooden frame wrapped in paper and painted to resemble the original. Making the mock plane cost 10,000 rupiahs (Figure 4.7.). The film uses visual manipulation techniques or optical effects to show the plane being hit by a bomb launched by a Dutch fighter,

²⁰¹ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

²⁰² *Indonesia Raya*, 7 June 1972.

²⁰³ *Varia*, No. 747, 9 August 1972, p. 28.

while, in fact, it was detonated manually using a pre-installed bomb.²⁰⁴ This scene is the last scene taken in the filming process.²⁰⁵ However, in the film's final version, this scene appears at the beginning of the film as an important scene before the Siliwangi troops begin their march back to West Java.

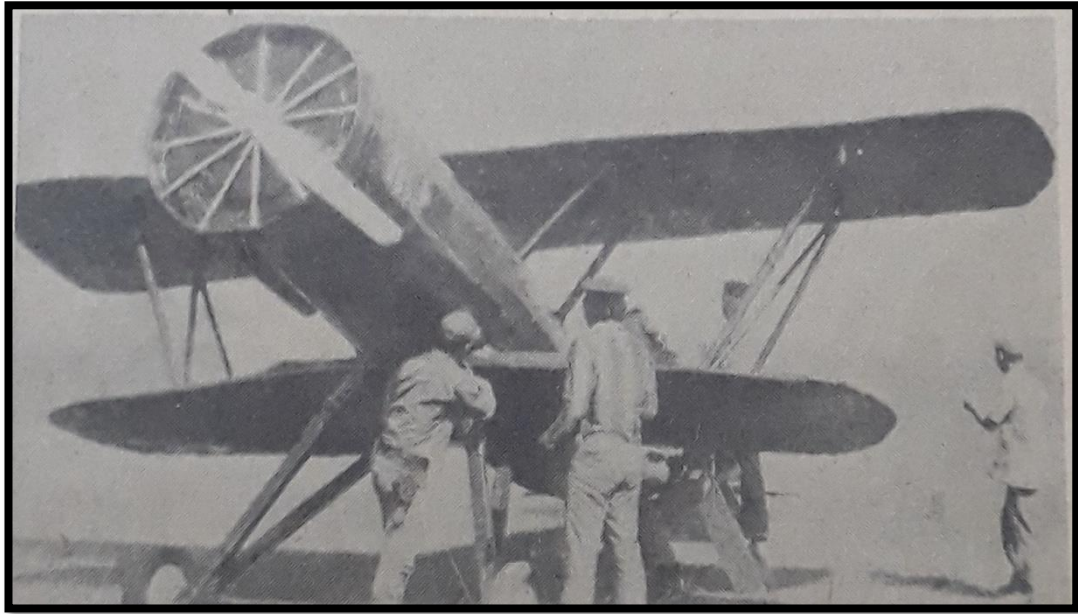


Figure 4.7. A Dummy of the Cureng Plane

Source: *Varia*, No. 747, 9 August 1972, p. 29.

4.3.3.5. Compassion and Tear

During the film's production stage, several scenes managed to move the emotions of the film's cast and crew, making them shed tears. It mostly happened during the filming of emotional scenes. First, in a scene featuring a Siliwangi soldier's wife who was about to give birth during the Long March company's journey back to West Java, the situation was precarious because no members of the Indonesian Red Cross were there to help. Meanwhile, a Dutch patrol vehicle broke down near their location. On the one hand, the group had to stay hidden to avoid being noticed by the Dutch patrol. On the other hand, someone had to help with the wife's delivery process. At the time

²⁰⁴ *Violeta*, No. 23, 1 August 1972, p. 20; *Swadesi*, 4 October 1972.

²⁰⁵ *Indonesia Raya*, 7 June 1972; *Violeta*, No. 23, 1 August 1972, p. 20.

of filming, this scene had already caused a stir and brought tears to those who witnessed it. After the scene was shot, the Commander of KODAM VI Siliwangi, A.J. Witono, who was also present at the shooting location, suddenly gave his green beret to Ismar Lubis, the actor playing the role of Lieutenant Sitorus. It was a sign of A.J. Witono's admiration for Ismar Lubis for his outstanding acting in helping the delivery process. Apparently, this scene touched the heart of the two-star general.²⁰⁶

Second, in a scene where the Dutch soldiers catch two Siliwangi soldiers in a village. These two soldiers were tortured and forced to tell where the other Siliwangi troops were. However, these soldiers would not speak and kept their mouths shut. Long story short, a Dutch commander was so angry that he ordered the two soldiers to be shot dead. Even when the two Siliwangi soldiers were dragged out to be executed, they kept shouting "*Merdeka*" (freedom) over and over again. Hearing the shouts of "*Merdeka*," the Dutch commander, played by A. Hamid Arif, should have acted to be even more furious. However, his body suddenly trembled, and he shed tears. The film's director, Nawi Ismail, was mad to see this. With a sourface, Nawi approached Hamid and shouted, "Why are you crying? No Dutch soldiers should be crying for this." Hamid replied, "Because I remember the moments of the struggle." Hearing this answer, the director, known to be the most sour-faced, stopped being mad and shed tears because he was moved too.²⁰⁷

Third, it happened in a scene where the troops of Siliwangi, who were previously separated from their main company, finally arrived at the Siliwangi Division headquarters. They were welcomed by their wives and families. They were overjoyed and hugged each other. Among the wives, however, was a soldier's wife carrying her baby, looking for her husband. She

²⁰⁶ Swadesi, 28 June 1972.

²⁰⁷ Nawi Ismail: "*Kenape ente mewek? Masak ade tentara Belanda mewek.*" A. Hamid Arif: "*Abis ane inget djaman perdjangan sih.*" Swadesi, 28 June 1972.

kept asking and looking for her husband among the other Siliwangi soldiers but did not get an answer. She and the baby started crying and kept looking. In the end, she still could not find her husband because he had died in a battle when the Siliwangi soldiers stormed a Dutch post.

This scene conveys a deep sadness by presenting a contrasting atmosphere between the happy soldiers reunited with their wives and families and a wife and baby who have lost a husband and father. The film crew at the shooting location apparently also felt this sadness. At that time, Nawi Ismail and the entire film crew also cried and froze near the camera recording the scene.²⁰⁸ According to Reynertson (1970: 16), all these events indicate that film production is not merely a mechanical process but also a humane activity.

4.3.4. Budget

The film used up 66,000 feet of film negatives for its production. Ultimately, however, only 12,000 feet of film negatives were used to make the film's final version.²⁰⁹ Director Nawi Ismail stated that, from an economic and efficiency standpoint, this should not have happened. However, it must be done to prevent the need for retakes while shooting was in progress, which would result in higher costs. It was primarily done for shooting processes that involved thousands of people, like in the Long March company's scene trekking down a mountain. Nawi Ismail said, "Imagine what would happen if we had to retake the scene when 2,500 people were coming down the

²⁰⁸ *Swadesi*, 28 June 1972.

²⁰⁹ *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40. Other information states that the film used up 140 film cans, where each can of film has 400 feet of film negatives. Then, during the editing process, only 30 cans of film were used for a two-hour running time (*Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972; *Minggu Abadi*, 24 September 1972). Referring to data from *Contessa* magazine, to reach 66,000 feet of film negatives, 165 film cans are needed. Meanwhile, the total number of film cans required until after the editing phase was completed is correct, namely 30 film cans or 12,000 feet of film negatives. Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

mountain!" Therefore, as a consequence, four million rupiahs had to be sacrificed for this purpose.²¹⁰

Overall, the film's production has cost a relatively large amount of money. Initially, the budget provided for the production of the film was 50 million rupiahs.²¹¹ However, during production, the budget doubled to 100 million rupiahs.²¹² In addition, producing a film such as *Mereka Kembali* is significantly risky because films with the theme of the struggle for independence tend to be unprofitable. Nonetheless, the film's producer, Malidar Hadi, was optimistic that the film would attract audiences to buy tickets and come to movie theaters. Malidar's husband, Hadijuwono, even once said, "to get a big fish, the bait has to be big too."²¹³

As a brief illustration, there were 32 movie theaters in Jakarta in 1967. Four years later, in September 1971, the number had increased to 91 theaters. And in April 1972, there were 94 theaters.²¹⁴ Meanwhile, the number of movie theaters in Indonesia in 1968 was 800. However, upon further investigation, the number of active theaters was only 300 because many of them were turned into warehouses. The government and parties related to the film industry then made various efforts to revive the movie theaters. As a result, four years later, the number of theaters had increased to 450.²¹⁵ By the end of 1972, the number had increased to 610, with a total of 414,620 seats (Department of Information, n.d.: 69). In the same year, the number of filmgoers for Indonesian films also experienced a significant increase, doubling from the previous year. In 1971, there were 6,739,000 moviegoers,

²¹⁰ *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40.

²¹¹ *Indonesia Raya*, 3 May 1972; *Kompas*, 5 June 1972.

²¹² *Swadesi*, 18 October 1972.

²¹³ *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40.

²¹⁴ *Violeta*, No. 6, 5 February 1972, p. 29; *Sinar Indonesia*, 2 April 1972.

²¹⁵ *Sinar Indonesia*, 2 April 1972.

while in 1972, there were 15,156,000 (Department of Information, n.d.: 58, 70).

The number of movie theaters and moviegoers that continue to increase from time to time represents excellent business potential with promising profits. However, as stated by the film producer, the purpose of producing *Mereka Kembali* is not merely for profit. The bigger goal is to make it her company's contribution so that the younger generation can know and understand the struggle of the freedom fighters in defending Indonesia's independence.

4.3.5. Post-production

4.3.5.1. Editing and Running Time

Initially, the film was designed to run for three to three and a half hours.²¹⁶ However, cinema entrepreneurs objected because they considered the film's running time too long. Considering this, the film's running time was finally cut to two hours. To do this, Nawi Ismail worked hard to make adjustments in the editing process without compromising the essence of the film's story.²¹⁷ This effort was not an easy job. Therefore, Nawi Ismail can be regarded as having done extraordinary work. Even so, a film's running time can be significantly adjusted during the editing phase because "not all of the original shots may be included" (Phillips, 1985: 177). According to Kristanto, the final film had a running time of two hours and nine minutes (2007: 94).

4.3.5.2. Dialogue Recording

The dialogue recording for the film was conducted at PENAS Studio, Jakarta. The process involved a stereophonic sound system expert, Mr. Kimura, from ISEI Production, Japan.²¹⁸ As revealed by Nawi Ismail, Kimura was involved in the dubbing process because the film crew did not have experience,

²¹⁶ Subardjo (1972); *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40.

²¹⁷ *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40.

²¹⁸ *Buana Minggu*, 18 Juni 1972; *Swadesi*, 23 August 1972; *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40.

especially with 70 mm sound films. Furthermore, Nawi explained that the people or the film crew in Indonesia had made a mistake because they had recorded the dialogue for the 70 mm film using a monophonic sound system when they should have taken it using a stereophonic sound system. PT Dewi Films spent one and a half million rupiahs to bring in the Japanese expert.²¹⁹

4.3.5.3. Final Processing

The final processing of the film was done in Tokyo, Japan. Activities such as music recording, mixing, sound effects, and film printing were carried out in the land of the rising sun.²²⁰ The film's musical illustration was completed by Idris Sardi.²²¹ It was his first experience working on musical illustrations for a war film. The creation process of the musical illustration involved a symphony orchestra from Toho Studio. Idris Sardi chose Japan as the destination to work on the film's musical illustration because it had more complete materials that the musicians needed to fill in the music illustrations with maximum results. In addition, time efficiency was also an essential factor. In Japan, studio facilities for film music were complete and always available. Moreover, the discipline of working hours in Japan is better for being efficient and not wasting a lot of time.²²² Eight songs with the theme of the struggle for independence were used to illustrate the film's music. Some of them are *Sepasang Mata Bola*, *Hallo-Hallo Bandung*, *Sapu Tangan dari Bandung Selatan*, and *Melati di Tapal Batas*.²²³

²¹⁹ *Contessa*, No. 8, 1972, p. 40.

²²⁰ The music recording was done at Toho Studio, the mixing and sound effects were done at the Tokyo Studio Center, while the film printing was carried out in the Far East Laboratory and Tokyo Laboratory.

²²¹ In the history of Indonesian cinema, Idris Sardi was known as one of the best music illustrators. He had repeatedly won the prestigious Citra Award at the Indonesian Film Festival.

²²² *Kompas*, 23 September 1972.

²²³ *Kompas*, 23 September 1972; *Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972.

The film was produced in three formats, namely 16 mm, 35 mm, and 70 mm.²²⁴ The processing of the 16 mm and 35 mm film formats was carried out at the Far East Laboratory. Meanwhile, the 70 mm full stereophonic film format was processed at the Tokyo Laboratory.²²⁵ These three types of film formats were used to meet the screening needs in movie theaters in Indonesia. The 16 mm film format was intended for *bioskop rakyat* (the people's theaters) in remote areas.²²⁶ These people's theaters are usually a means of entertainment for people on the outskirts of cities, hamlets, or villages. Then, the 35 mm film format was reserved for general movie theaters. Meanwhile, the 70 mm film format was intended for theaters equipped with 70 mm projectors with full stereophonic sound systems. All final processing activities in Tokyo were completed on September 25, 1972. The film was also ready for a gala premiere on October 5, 1972, coinciding with Indonesian Armed Forces Day.

In 1972, film production in 70 mm format was a booming trend in the Indonesian film industry.²²⁷ Unsurprisingly, many new theaters were equipped with 70 mm projectors and full stereophonic sound systems to play 70 mm format films. One of them is the New Krekot theater. The presence of the New Krekot theater adds to the line of theaters with similar facilities in Jakarta. Previously, Jakarta already had six theaters with such facilities: Jayakarta, Jakarta, Ramayana, Glora, Roi (Raja)²²⁸, and Kebayoran Baru.

In addition, up until December 1972, it was reported that several films had been produced in 70 mm format with a full stereophonic sound system, including *Mereka Kembali*, *Mama*, *Pendekar Bambu Kuning*, and *Cintaku Jauh*

²²⁴ *Minggu Abadi*, 24 September 1972; *Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972; *Buana Minggu*, 1 October 1972.

²²⁵ *Minggu Abadi*, 24 September 1972; *Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972.

²²⁶ *Mimbar Berita*, 18 June 1972.

²²⁷ See *Angkatan Bersenjata*, 19 May 1972; *Dunia Film*, 16 May 1972.

²²⁸ *Kompas*, 6 November 1972.

Dipulau.²²⁹ At that time, the number of theaters in Jakarta was up to 90, with various sizes (small, medium, large) and qualities (simple, good, grand).²³⁰ Regarding the 70 mm film format development phenomenon, a film observer named Soelarko wrote: “The 70 mm film format can indeed depict more vivid images. However, the use of the 70 mm film format does not mean that the quality of Indonesian films will automatically improve because film format is not the only factor determining film quality” (Soelarko, 1972).

It should be noted that Japan played an important role in the Indonesian film industry. In this context, Japanese music studios and film laboratories contributed to the final processing of Indonesian films. In Indonesia, since color films appeared and black and white (B/W) films began to be abandoned, the final processing of Indonesian films was carried out abroad. Japan was one of the destination countries for final processing. In fact, most Indonesian films’ final processing was done in Japan.

It is a fact that, in 1972, Indonesia did not have film laboratories for color film. At that time, Indonesia only had six film studios, one film laboratory for B/W film, and ten film subtitling laboratories (Department of Information, n.d.: 67-68). Indonesia had its first film laboratory for color film in 1976. This first color film laboratory is International Cine & Studio Center (INTERSTUDIO). This company is located in Pasar Minggu and is Indonesia’s only color film laboratory at that time (PWI Pusat, 1977: 22). Only later, in 1978, the number of film laboratories for color film increased to two companies (Department of Information, n.d.: 67).

4.3.6. Distribution

The film was distributed by N.V. Geliga Film Ltd. The main task of film distributors is to distribute and ensure that the produced films can reach

²²⁹ Irsan (1972b); *Berita Yudha*, 6 December 1972, p. II.

²³⁰ *Kompas*, 6 November 1972.

their audiences. In other words, film distributors make films available to the public.²³¹ In general, two important aspects contribute to the smooth distribution of a film: professionalism and the network strength of its distribution company. In the case of *Mereka Kembali*, the film distribution went smoothly without experiencing any obstacles. The film was screened for the first time (gala premiere) on October 5, 1972, at the Jakarta Theater. After that, the film began to be screened publicly in other theaters in Bandung and various other theaters in Indonesia. In this context, NV. Geliga Film Ltd. has fulfilled its role as the film's distributor.

4.3.7. Promotion

For its promotion, *Mereka Kembali* used various methods, such as advertising in newspapers and magazines, displaying advertisements on billboards,²³² distributing leaflets to the public, and mobilizing the masses through small- or large-scale parades.²³³ A film magazine, *Indonesian Movies*, reported coverage of a big parade held as part of the film's promotion. PT Dewi Films initiated this parade and contacted the *Indonesian Movie Club*²³⁴ to promote their film. The big parade was held on October 6, 1972, and it involved the actors and actresses who played in the film, such as Sandy Suwardi Hasan and Rina Hasyim. The parade with hundreds of participants took place with great fanfare. The Indonesian Movie Club involved more than 400 members in the parade.²³⁵ Another parade was also held to welcome the film's screening on November 2, 1972, at the Nusantara theater, Bandung.

²³¹ See Squire (2004).

²³² Cf. A photo of a large billboard advertising the film at the Kramat theater, Jakarta. See Harly Mk/*Sinar Harapan*, 19 December 1972.

²³³ The design and advertising materials appearing in newspapers, magazines, and leaflets were the same.

²³⁴ Original: Indonesian Movie Klub.

²³⁵ See "Dia (Movies) turut, dia (Movies) ramaikan dan dia (Movies) menang," *Indonesian Movies*, No. 9, 1972, pp. 22-23; *Indonesian Movies*, No. 11, 1972, pp. 3, 34; "Sekali Lagi Mereka Berpawai Raksasa," *Indonesian Movies*, No. 11, 1972, pp. 24-25.

4.3.8. Gala Premiere

As previously mentioned, *Mereka Kembali* was screened for the first time to the public on October 5, 1972, at the Jakarta Theater.²³⁶ The screening was meant to celebrate the 27th anniversary of the ABRI (Indonesian Army). The screening plan had been prepared for a long time as a special gift for the celebration of Indonesian Armed Forces Day.²³⁷ However, the screening was limited because only invited guests could attend it. The invited guests at the screening included army leaders, government officials, film journalists, and several foreign military attachés.

One of the army leaders who attended the show was the Army Chief of Staff, General Umar Wirahadikusumah. In addition, a special invitation was addressed to the Siliwangi Corps and its senior members.²³⁸ There was an interesting phenomenon in this first public screening: the reception of those who watched the film. Some of them looked deeply emotional, teary, and even crying when re-witnessing the Long March Event of the Siliwangi Division on the screen. It shows that the film evokes an interesting emotional connection from those who watch it, especially among the Siliwangi Corps and its senior members.²³⁹

4.3.8.1. Succeeding at Its Own Home

The film was reported to have received an excellent reception and a great success in its screenings in theaters in West Java. As explained previously, West Java is where the headquarters of the Siliwangi Division originates. Therefore, the film can be considered successful in its home area. In Bandung, the film screening started on November 2, 1972, at the Nusantara theater in

²³⁶ “‘Mereka Kembali’ pada 5 Okt. ’72,” *Berita Yudha*, 9 October 1972, p. IV.

²³⁷ See *Buana Minggu*, 18 June 1972; *Berita Yudha*, 29 June 1972.

²³⁸ “‘Mereka Kembali’ pada 5 Okt. ’72,” *Berita Yudha*, 9 October 1972, p. IV.; “Hari ABRI Bersama Mereka Kembali,” *Berita Film*, 24 September 1972. See also, *Minggu Abadi*, 24 September 1972; *Mingguan Angkatan Bersenjata*, 24 September 1972.

²³⁹ See Chapter 6.

70 mm film format. On the same day, a parade was held in this “City of Flowers” (Bandung’s nickname) to welcome the premiere of the film depicting the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. Besides welcoming the film premiere, this parade was a means of promoting the film produced by PT Dewi Films. The parade managed to attract the attention of Bandung residents. They clustered along the road that the parade troupe passed. The concentration point for these residents was around the Nusantara theater (Figure 4.8.).



Figure 4.8. A Parade to Welcome *Mereka Kembali*
Source: *Pos Kota Minggu*, 26 November 1972.

After the screening at Nusantara theater, the film’s screening continued in other theaters. The film was also screened in four other theaters in Bandung from November 7 to 13, 1972. These screenings also received applause from the public. The film was screened in two formats, 35 mm and 70 mm. The

format was adjusted to the conditions and equipment at each theater showing the film.²⁴⁰

FULL HOUSE !!! FULL HOUSE !!! FULL HOUSE !!!!!
 PENONTON LUBER !!!!!!!!! PENONTON MELEDAK !!!!!!!!!!!!!

" MEREKA KEMBALI " satu2nya film nasional yang sukses tiada bandingan dalam pemutaran di Bandung bentuk 70 MM.

Dilanjutkan premiere serentak 35 MM di 4 gedung bioskop Bandung, sukses luar biasa. LUAR BIASA !!!!!!!
 BANJIR PENONTON !!!!!!! LUBER PENGUNJUNG !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Menyusul pertunjukan pertama kali di DJAKARTA THEATER 70 MM.
 JANGAN KASIP !!!!!!!!!!!!! JANGAN KETINGGALAN !!!!!!!!!!!!!

PREMIERE TERMEGAH HARI INI.
 Jum'at 10 Nopember 1972.
 DI DJAKARTA THEATER.

DEWI FILMS dengan bangga mempersembahkan suatu film perang terbesar. SUPER COLOSSAL & SPECTACULAR
 70mm FULL STEREOPHONIC SOUND SYSTEM 6 TRACKS

MEREKA KEMBALI
 (They Come Back)

Penuh heroik ... tegang ... dahsyat ...
 Mengherukan dan pertintaan
 jeng abadi ...

ESA HILANG
 DUA TERBILANG

SANDY SUWARDI
A. HAMID ARIF
RINA HASSIM
RAHAJU EFFENDY
ISMAR LUBIS
AEDY MOWARD
HASAN SANUSI

EASTMANCOLOR
DEWISCOPE

memperkenalkan
ARMAN EFFENDY
GRACE SIMON
 DAN RIBUAN PEMAIN &
 LAINNJA

Produser Sutradara Musik Tjericita
NJ. HADIJUWONO • NAWI ISMAIL • IDRIS SARDI • LUKMAN MADEWA

diadarkan oleh : **NV. GELIGA FILM .**

* Sebuah film perang yang dahsyat dalam ukuran 70 MMM
 * Sebuah di
 * Sebuah film perang yang dahsyat dalam ukuran 70 MM yang benar2 seluruhnya full-stereo phonic 6 jalur.
 * "Mereka Kembali" sebuah film perang, epos revolusi yang penggarapannya didukung oleh semua unsur Angkatan Bersenjata R.I.
 * SEBUAH PRODUKSI NASIONAL TERBESAR DAN TERMEGAH TAHUN 1972 INI.
 * Diputar khusus dalam rangka menyambut hari besar 10 NOVEMBER 1972 dan seterusnya.

PASTI MENGEMPARKAN !!!!!!!!!!!!! PASTI MEMUASKAN !!!!!!! PASTI MEMUASKAN !!!!!!!!!!!!!

549/BE/BY/11/72

Figure 4.9. An Advertisement for *Mereka Kembali*
 Source: *Berita Yudha*, 10 November 1972, p. VIII.

²⁴⁰ *Pos Kota Minggu*, 26 November 1972.

Not long after being screened in Bandung, the film was screened for the public in the capital city, Jakarta. The public premiere of *Mereka Kembali* in Jakarta was held at the Jakarta Theater on November 10, 1972. An advertisement for the film in the military newspaper *Berita Yudha*²⁴¹ states that the film was screened on the date to commemorate National Heroes Day. The ad also says that this Nawi Ismail's film has received extraordinary enthusiasm from the public in Bandung. The advertisement for the film even mentioned "*Mereka Kembali*" as the only national film that had unparalleled success at the screening in Bandung in the 70 mm film format. Meanwhile, the film's screening at other theaters in Bandung in the 35 mm format was also a tremendous success because the number of audiences was booming (Figure. 4.9.).

4.3.9. *Mereka Kembali* and Film Festivals

As a work of art and a cultural product, *Mereka Kembali* also participated in various film festivals at home and abroad. In 1972, *Mereka Kembali*, as one of 30 films produced that year, took part in a festival organized by the film section of the Association of Indonesian Journalists (PWI *Jaya Seksi Film*) (PWI Jaya, 1972: 33). The festival, entitled *Pemilihan Aktor dan Aktris Terbaik* (Best Actor and Actress Award), is a form of appreciation for films produced that year. The event, which has been held since 1970, is also intended to ignite national filmmakers' spirits and passion to continue contributing to the advancement of Indonesian film. In addition, in 1973, *Mereka Kembali* also

²⁴¹ Historically, *Berita Yudha* and *Angkatan Bersenjata* were military newspapers that were founded to counter communist propaganda and rival the communist press. These two newspapers had been published since early 1965 (Said, 1988: 161; Haryanto, 2006: 54). As an illustration, in 1970, *Angkatan Bersenjata*'s circulation reached 35,000 copies. Meanwhile, *Berita Yudha* reached 75,000 copies (Haryanto, 2006: 65). After the bloody events of the September 30 Affair, on October 1, 1965, the Regional Military Commander of the Jakarta Raya, Major General Umar Wirahadikusumah, issued Warrant No. 01/Drt/101965, which prohibited all press publications without special permission except for the two military newspapers (Said, 1988: 161). These two military newspapers were also the ones that reported on the atrocities committed by Gerwani (the Women's Organization of the Communist Party) against the army generals who were kidnapped during the G30S affair (Adam, 2005: 30).

participated in *Festival Film Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Festival/FFI 1973) that was held on March 26–31, 1973 in Jakarta. At this film festival, *Mereka Kembali's* actor, Arman Effendy, won a special award as *Pemeran Harapan Pria* (3rd Best Actor) in the Male Actor category.²⁴² He played the character of Lieutenant Priyatna well in the film about the Long March of the Siliwangi Division.

Meanwhile, for international film festivals, the film participated in the 2nd ASEAN Film Festival (1972) in Bangkok, Thailand. The festival took place on November 21–25, 1972. In addition to *Mereka Kembali*, other Indonesian films that also participated in this festival were *Wajah Seorang Laki-Laki* (feature film) and two documentaries: *Nayak* and *Ramayana*.²⁴³ At the festival, the Indonesian films received a good reception and appreciation from the public in Bangkok.²⁴⁴ The film festival was not a film competition event but an exhibition because it aimed to introduce the arts and cultures of the ASEAN member countries.²⁴⁵ At this festival, *Mereka Kembali* succeeded in attracting private parties (film businessmen) from Thailand to buy the film after it was screened at the festival.²⁴⁶

The Indonesian delegation at the festival was led by the Director General for Film of the Ministry of Information, H. Djohardin, and the Head of Research, Development, and Public Relations Bureau of the ASEAN National Secretariat of Indonesia, Colonel N.J. Sofyan. The delegation comprised 12 people,

²⁴² Some sources refer to the category as *Pendatang Baru Terbaik* (Best Newcomer Actor), but the original category in Indonesian language was *Pemeran Harapan Pria* which roughly translates to 3rd Best Actor. See "Festival Film Indonesia 1973 Rima Melati dan Benyamin S, Aktris & Aktor Utama Terbaik," *Usia*, No. 6, Tahun II, 1973, pp. 32-34.

²⁴³ *Mereka Kembali* participated in this festival after successfully eliminating another Indonesian film, *Perawan di Sektor Selatan* (1971). See "Film² Indonesia untuk Festival Film Asean," *Berita Yudha*, 18 September 1972, p. VI; "Indonesia ikut Pesta Film Asean di Bangkok," *Angkatan Bersenjata*, 17 November 1972, p. II.

²⁴⁴ "Empat Film Indonesia dalam Festival Film ASEAN Ke II," *Kompas*, 29 November 1972; Department of Information (n.d.: 25).

²⁴⁵ "Festival Film Asean II adalah 'Non Competition'," *Berita Yudha*, 30 November 1972, p. VI.

²⁴⁶ See "Film Indonesia Memperoleh Sambutan Baik," *Merdeka*, 4 December 1972.

including various film elements, such as cinemactors, film employees, producers, and distributors.²⁴⁷ Slamet Rahardjo and Rahayu Effendy were the cinemactors who participated and became members of the delegation.²⁴⁸

Further, the film also participated in the 19th Asian Film Festival (1973) in Singapore.²⁴⁹ The festival was held on May 14–18, 1973. Four other Indonesian films that also participated in this festival were *Perkawinan*, *Pemberang*, *Intan Berduri*, and *Merintis Jalan ke Sorga* (Department of Information, n.d.: 22). Both of the film festivals were international festivals in which *Mereka Kembali* participated.

4.4. Conclusion

As many film scholars emphasize, films are inseparable from the milieu in which they are produced, including the economic, social, and political conditions (Ferro, 1988: 29-30; O'Connor, 1988: 1201; Kochberg, 2003: 4; Deshpande, 2004: 4459). Further, as Sorlin argued, “every film has its own ‘history’” (1980: 22). Therefore, analyzing the context of the time and the specific situation when films were made is essential to understand the existence of these historical films.²⁵⁰ Analysis of these aspects can help provide important information regarding production background, complex collaborative processes, and “the political or other purposes a film may be

²⁴⁷ “Film Indonesia ...” Ibid. See also *Sinar Harapan*, 23 November 1972.

²⁴⁸ “Empat Film Indonesia ...” Op.Cit.

²⁴⁹ At first, the festival film was named Southeast Asian Film Festival. Its first film festival was held on May 8–20, 1954 in Tokyo. At that moment, it was a film competition festival. Then, on the 4th film festival in 1957, the film festival name was changed into Asian Festival Film due to “the expansion of member countries to countries outside Southeast Asia.” On the 18th festival in Seoul, held on May 17-21, 1972, the film festival was changed from a competition to an exhibition of filmmaking. Later, on the 28th film festival in Taipei, 1983, the film festival format was changed back to a festival film competition. The film festival name was also changed into Asia-Pacific Film Festival after Australia and New Zealand joined as its members. Since 1954 to 2018, the film festival had been suspended for several times due to funding issues (Asia-Pacific Film Festival, 2018).

²⁵⁰ See Ryan and Lenos (2012: 155).

meant to serve” (O’Connor, 1988: 1205), including the intentions and values of the filmmakers, producers, and writers.

As previously described, historical films of this kind will never reflect a single purpose because there will always be dimensions of other purposes behind them. For instance, *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* was produced not only as a manifestation of the idealism and aspiration to make a national film, but also to remind the public, especially former freedom fighters, about the essence of their struggle. Meanwhile, *Mereka Kembali* is one of the implementations of the 3rd Army Seminar (1972) conclusions regarding the importance of transferring the 1945 generation’s values to the younger generation through film. We can say that both films were made to be enjoyed “not always as pure entertainment but certainly to engage the viewer” (Robert and Wallis, 2002: 2).

Related to behind-the-scenes elements, both films also have unique dimensions. Each film has an interesting personal and social engagement. The social aspect of engagement can be seen in the films’ efforts to contribute to the conditions when each film was made, in 1950 and 1972. Meanwhile, the personal engagement aspect can be seen from the backgrounds of each filmmaker, who actually joined the struggles as republican soldiers in the Indonesian Revolution era. Particularly in *Mereka Kembali*, the personal engagement aspect is more substantial than in *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)*. The filmmaker, producer, supervisor, and original story writer of *Mereka Kembali* were historical witnesses and actors in the actual Long March of the Siliwangi Division event.

From the motivations behind the two films’ production, it seems both films were presented to the public with a tendency to disregard principles of economic gain. In *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)*, the aspect of financial

profit is not even taken into account. Meanwhile, in *Mereka Kembali*, the financial profit aspect, to a certain level, is still a consideration, even though the film is not 100 percent money-oriented. In today's era, however, historical films are made not only for a quest to explore the past but also for business purposes, a commodification of the past. For example, some historical films utilize the past as a marketing strategy to sell merchandise related to the films or their characters.²⁵¹

Regardless of the two films' production backgrounds, we must appreciate those who made these films available to the public. What they did is a heroic act because they managed to prevent something from being destroyed (Wenders, 2001: 160). Benjamin (1969: 225) reminded us: "For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably." In fact, these films have preserved a historical event about the Long March of the Siliwangi Division through the screen, so that the audience can still see, read, and interpret the historical event.

Both films receive various forms of support from the military during the filmmaking process. However, after they were screened to the public, the films received different responses and reactions from the military. When *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* was screened publicly, the film received intense criticism from the military. Meanwhile, when *Mereka Kembali* was screened to the public, there was no criticism from the military.²⁵² Nevertheless, these two films can be called "artistic re-creation of the facts in the form of 'fiction'" (Toynbee, 1987: 43). In other words, "history also has recourse to fictions" (Toynbee, 1987: 44). As stated by Leonard, there are two ways to narrate the past, fiction or nonfiction (see Leonard, 2009: 16-24). Although both films are based on actual events, they use a fictional

²⁵¹ See May (1980: 200-236). For more information on commodification, see Mosco (1996).

²⁵² Cf. Chapter 6.

approach to tell the stories. However, it should be noted that *Mereka Kembali* is better well-intended in depicting the past as closely as possible to the actual event.

This chapter proves that films are incredible “artifacts of a time” because they can help us reveal and understand the values, concerns, and issues of the times when these films were made (Lavender, 1997). What I have shown in this chapter provides important information regarding the production histories of the two films. This description is in line with what is suggested by Casetti that: “Film is connected with the social environment where it appears; with the needs, habits, expectations, attitudes that characterize it; with the time and place where it is produced and projected. ...” (1999: 253). In a nutshell, it is safe to argue that by locating these films within their social and political contexts, we can provide better insights to understand them more comprehensively.

Chapter 5

Film Depiction

“The best and more serious kind of historical film does ‘history’ only in so far as it attempts to make meaning out of something that has occurred in the past” (Rosenstone, 2006: 161).

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses in depth the two films that are the focus of this study, namely *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* (1950) and *Mereka Kembali* (1972). The main discussion focuses on how these films depict the Long March of the Siliwangi Division, a historical event during the war for independence. In other words, I analyzed the content of these films (Salevouris and Furay, 2015: 158). The Long March was an event for the return of the Siliwangi troops to West Java to occupy the pockets of resistance that were abandoned because of the Renville Agreement. This event, known as the Long March, is a historical event that cannot be separated from the history of the Siliwangi Division itself.¹

From its historical point of view, before making this legendary journey, the troops of Siliwangi were tasked with quelling the communist rebellion in Madiun and several other areas. The task was completed successfully. However, before the Siliwangi troops had the chance to catch a break, the Dutch canceled the Renville Agreement unilaterally. The Dutch then launched an attack on Yogyakarta and held the leaders of the Indonesian Republic as prisoners, including the president, vice president, and several cabinet members. As is well known, on January 4, 1946, Yogyakarta became the Republic’s capital, or, more precisely, the temporary capital of the new Republic of Indonesia. That day was when the leaders of the Republic, particularly President Sukarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta, arrived in

¹ See Chapter 2.

Yogyakarta after they left Jakarta on January 3, 1946, for security reasons (Anwar, 1977: 111; Abeyasekere, 1989: 151; Mochtar, 2011: 65-66).

At the end of 1945, Jakarta, the city where independence was declared², became increasingly unsafe every day because of the arrival of the Dutch soldiers who came along with the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA).³ The Dutch soldiers' actions escalated, and they even tried to kill the Republic's leaders. In addition, there were a lot of murders, robberies, and kidnappings (Abeyasekere, 1989: 151). The escalation of these kinds of crimes continued to increase drastically, particularly in the early months of the Indonesian Revolution. Jakarta, at that time, had turned into an arena of violence and terror (Cribb, 2005: 542; Mochtar, 2011: 65). Since the arrival of Republican leaders in Yogyakarta from Jakarta, Yogyakarta became the headquarters of the Republic and the center of the political and military struggles of the Indonesian government (Ghazali, 1950: 162; Dahana et al., 1988: 34).

The Second Dutch Military Aggression to Yogyakarta on December 19, 1948, was the signal for the Siliwangi troops to march back to West Java. It also happened after the *Panglima Besar* (Supreme Commander), General Sudirman, announced *Perintah Kilat* (Rapid Command) for all Indonesian troops to carry out the plans previously stipulated in *Perintah Siasat* (Operational Order) No. 1 in anticipation of the Dutch coming back to attack the Republic.⁴

The return journey of the Siliwangi troops to West Java on foot was not easy because they also brought their families with them. According to history, the

² Cf. Abeyasekere (1989: 146-148).

³ The NICA was a special agency founded by the Dutch forces. The Nica was founded "to reestablish colonial government in the former Dutch territory and destroy the Indonesian independence movement" (Fusayama, 2010: 65).

⁴ See Chapter 1.

families of the Siliwangi troops followed their soldier relatives to Yogyakarta and its surroundings during the events of the Hijrah of the Siliwangi Division or the emptying of the West Java region under the Renville Agreement. In their march back to West Java, these Siliwangi troops had to break through Dutch military posts, which were heavily guarded by Dutch troops. Apart from facing the Dutch troops, the Siliwangi troops also faced the Darul Islam. This event became known as triangle warfare or “*Dreieckskrieg*” (Dengel, 1986: 74). In addition, the Siliwangi troops faced various rugged terrains during their long march. There are also stories of food shortages and famine during the event.

5.2. The Storytelling Strategy

5.2.1. The Role of Narrator

As a medium, a film requires someone or something to convey its story to the audience. It can be in the form of a narrator or a character that appears on the screen to tell the story (Sunarto, 2009: 116). Beck noted that “the use of the human voice as narrator for moving images is one of the earliest practices in film sound” (Beck, 2011b: 257).⁵ Kuhn and Westwell describe voice-over as “the voice of an off-screen narrator or a voice heard but not belonging to any character actually talking on screen” (2012: 446). In other words, narrator or voice-over is a technique that uses “the voice of an unseen speaker in films” (Danesi, 2009: 301). Nevertheless, a narrator can appear as a voice that is not visible on the screen or as a character within the film (Guynn, 2011e: 222).⁶ The narrator, who comes from the characters on the screen, can play a role, such as introducing a flashback (Guynn, 2011b: 211).

Narrator or voice-over is “a powerful storytelling technique” (Pramaggiore and Willis, 2005: 239). A narrator or voice-over plays an essential role in maintaining the integrity of the storyline, organizing the film’s discourse, and

⁵ For a more detailed on the evolution of sound in film, see Beck (2011a: 64-76). See also Chion (1999); Altman (2004); Sergi (2005).

⁶ For more information on voice-over in fiction films, see Kuhn and Westwell (2012: 447).

providing identification points to the audience (Guynn, 2011b: 211; Pramaggiore and Willis, 2005: 218, 239). Regarding the role of a narrator, Kurosawa added that “the narrators not only recounted the plot of the films, they enhanced the emotional content by performing the voices and sound effects and providing evocative descriptions of the events and images on the screen” (Kurosawa, 1982: 74).

From the reading of the two films that are the focus of the study, it can be noted that there are similarities and differences in the practice of using narrators in the two films. In terms of similarities, the two films, *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* (1950) and *Mereka Kembali* (1972), use a narrator as a strategy to tell the story of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division event. The narrators in these films are invisible or do not appear on the screen. In other words, the narrators’ voices can be heard but not seen on the screen. The narrator’s voice used in both films is a male one.

5.2.1.1. *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* (1950)

The film almost entirely adapts the voice-over or narrator technique commonly used in documentaries.⁷ The narrator in this film has a vital role in providing information and orientation to the audience regarding what they see on the screen. The narrator explains many of the story’s essential points. The narrator also plays the role of an influential commentator in the film’s story world. I think this is a strategy from the filmmaker to convey his messages and views on matters related to what he tried to depict through the film.

The filmmaker utilizes the narrator as an essential component in this film because *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* was the first film that tried to explain a national event that the Indonesian nation had just experienced.

⁷ For further discussion on documentary film, see Rotha (1975: 234-246); Nichols (2001); Winston (2011: 84-91).

Through this technique, the filmmaker seems to be more flexible in conveying his messages and views on the national event. The narrator's appearance in this film is quite frequent compared to that in *Mereka Kembali*. In *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, the narrator appears at the beginning, middle, and end of the film.

The narrator in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* actively provides various information to the audience. The information provided includes information about the Siliwangi Division battalion that is told in the film, explanations, emphasis, reinforcement, and interpretation, particularly regarding the situation, story development, and conditions of the characters in the film. The narrator also focuses on the main character, battalion commander Captain Sudarto. Therefore, the narrator in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* can also be called an "anchorage,"⁸ because he is vital in stitching these stories into a unified whole. The narrator also provides explanations and understanding related to the context of the events in the film. The narrator in this film can be considered as a kind of story guide who conveys the growth of the story to the audience from the beginning to the end of the film.

5.2.1.2. Mereka Kembali (1972)

In *Mereka Kembali*, the narrator's appearance is noticeably more limited. The narrator appears only at the beginning and end of the film. The narrator appears in the film's early scenes to describe the Siliwangi Division's troops, who their members are, the background of the movement (*hijrah*) outside West Java, and then their long march to return to West Java. The narrator also provides information about a battalion of the Siliwangi Division that is told in the film. After providing this information, the narrator is absent, and the story "tells itself" (Rowe and Wells, 2003: 61) until the film's end. The narrator

⁸ See Barthes (1977: 38-40).

returns at the film's end, the funeral scene of Sergeant Anwar, who died after struggling in a one-on-one battle with one of the Darul Islam troops.

These two historical films show that each narrator plays an important role in the opening, delivery, and closing of the films' stories. Most of the time, these story parts come with important messages or notes that the filmmakers want the audience to understand before they leave the theater. According to Watson and Hill (2012: 317), each of the narrators of the two films has played a significant role in shaping the meaning of the two films' texts.

5.3. *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950)

The film tells about a battalion of the Siliwangi Division led by Captain Sudarto as its commander. Sudarto and his troops are depicted experiencing various difficulties along their march back to West Java after the Dutch attacked the Republic's capital, Yogyakarta, on December 19, 1948. This journey is then well known as the "Long March." However, the film's story does not immediately begin with the Long March. The film's start goes back several months, precisely to September 1948, when the troops of the Siliwangi Division carried out the order to crush the Madiun Affair. In Indonesian military history, the Siliwangi Division's success in ending the Madiun Affair has marked its dashing credibility.⁹ This success also became a prestige for the troops of Siliwangi and made the Siliwangi Division's name famous (Suhud, 2008: 310; Vittachi, 1967: 72).

5.3.1. Madiun Affair (1948)

The film begins with a scene depicting the troops of Siliwangi fighting the communist forces in an event known as the Madiun Affair. The narrator or voice-over said that this event was the most miserable experience for Indonesia during the revolution. The Madiun Affair is also a national tragedy,

⁹ "The Long March' Divisi Siliwangi," *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, p. 6.

a civil war between Indonesians. Hutauruk called it “the dispute between us and ourselves” (1984: 37). Meanwhile, Abdul Haris Nasution, former Commander of the Siliwangi Division, expressed his views on the incident: “I myself am not that happy about including this event, because what we faced was us against us [Indonesians against Indonesians or an internal dispute], but, although this was the case, for the purposes of recording all military events I must reveal all military operations.”¹⁰



Figure 5.1. A Deadly Battle in Sarangan.

The battle took place in Sarangan.¹¹ The battalion commander’s diary, shown in a scene at the film’s end, also gives us a good idea of where this battle occurred. From the diary, it is known that the battle lasted all day. The film depicts the troops of Siliwangi attacking from the ground up because the headquarters of the communist forces was located on a hill. A former member

¹⁰ Quoted in McGregor (2007: 54). The original text is in Bahasa Indonesia. Translated version is from McGregor.

¹¹ See also Said (1990: 111).

of the Siliwangi Division, Himawan Soetanto, said that, at that time, the troops of Siliwangi did attack the communist troops uphill, attacking from the bottom up to seize Sarangan (Figure 5.1. Above).¹²

This scene shows how the troops of Siliwangi attacked the communist troops persistently and aggressively while pushing forward. Meanwhile, the communist troops tried to give resistance, but in the end, they were pushed back and retreated. A communist troop leader and several of his members then defended themselves in a house that seemed to be their headquarters (Figure 5.1. Below-Left). The rest of these communist troops held out and fought to allow their comrades to escape and save themselves from the attacks of the Siliwangi troops.

After ensuring their friends had gone far away, the remaining communist troops defending in a house then surrendered and obeyed the call of a Siliwangi soldier, who was later identified as Mula. Mula said that if the remaining communist troops surrendered, they would not be harmed. Karseno, the leader of the remaining communist forces, then told his men to surrender with a white flag (Figure 5.1. Below-Right). However, when they came out with the white flag as a sign of their surrender, they were all shot dead by Mula. The murder incident in this scene is closely related to a scene at the end of the film, where a friend of Karseno's is seeking revenge for the deaths of his comrades.

In history, the troops of Siliwangi carried out an order to clean up areas occupied by the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, Indonesian Communist Party) during the Madiun Affair in 1948. One of the areas cleansed from the PKI was Sarangan. Sarangan, which is located on the slopes of Mount Lawu, was one of the locations occupied by the communist forces. From a geographical

¹² Soetanto (1994: 201-202)

perspective, Sarangan is a strategic location for a guerrilla base (Slamet, 1950: 5). However, a week after the Madiun Affair erupted, Sarangan was successfully controlled by the troops of Siliwangi/TNI (Mangunwijaya, 1995: 91).

On September 23, 1948, the Siliwangi Division's Sadikin Brigade reported that the rebel/communist forces had been driven out of Sarangan and Walikukun areas. On September 24, 1948, the Military Governor, Gatot Subroto, who was also in charge of putting down the PKI rebellion, made an official announcement about this. The official announcement stated that the government troops had seized control of Sarangan, which belongs to the Tawangmangu sector (Djamhari et al., 2009: 182, 246; Mangunwijaya, 1987: 77). Then, the Military Governor issued a further announcement on September 30, 1948, informing that Madiun, as the center and base of the communist rebellion, had been completely occupied by Siliwangi/TNI troops (Soetanto, 1994: 194; Djamhari et al., 2009: 253-254).

The Madiun Affair of 1948 was tragic because it left a deep wound for the Indonesians. The communist group considered the Siliwangi Division its sworn enemy because the division extinguished their rebellion (Muljana, 2008: 189).¹³ Meanwhile, for the military (TNI) and Islamic groups, the Madiun Incident had created an "invisible scar" (Bird, 1966) due to the cruelty and barbarism committed by the communists at that time. This event unsurprisingly left deep grudges between the TNI and the communists (Muljana, 2008: 189). The Islamic group also cannot forget the heinous acts committed by the communist group during the Madiun Affair.¹⁴ In this regard, a writer, Taufiq Ismail, even suspected that the Madiun Affair was the earliest

¹³ For an overview on communism see Ebenstein and Fogelman (1985). For further discussion regarding the history of Indonesian communism, see McVey (1965); Brackman (1963); Hindley (1966); Mortimer (1974).

¹⁴ Cf. Chapter 2.

cause of an event that occurred 17 years later, a bloody event that had to be experienced again by Indonesia in 1965 (Ismail, 2015: 6). According to Reid, such events could undoubtedly generate what he called “the heritage of bitterness” (1986: 146).

The Madiun Affair itself caused many casualties. It also caused enormous moral and material losses for Indonesia (Kansil and Julianto, 1991: 52; Muljana, 2008: 189). Also, at that moment, Indonesia was in the midst of getting ready to face the Second Military Aggression by the Dutch. Nonetheless, there was also a positive impact from Indonesia’s success in quelling the communist rebellion with its own strength, without the help of any other country. Moreover, it happened during a period known as the Indonesian Revolution, a time when Indonesia was struggling to sustain its independence. One of the positive effects was that it made the United States more sympathetic to Indonesia (Tjokropranolo, 1992: 116). As is known, the United States then actively supported Indonesia’s struggle to defend and gain its independence.¹⁵

5.3.1.1. The Grudge of a Lasykar Chief

The film also tells about the other side of the Madiun Affair. It seems that the filmmaker wants to depict a significant problem or issue that is closely related to the Indonesian Revolution, the conflict between the Lasykars (militias) and the TNI.¹⁶ The murder of a communist leader and some of his subordinates, who had surrendered, by a Siliwangi/TNI soldier named Mula was apparently

¹⁵ Cf. Chapter 2.

¹⁶ The name of Indonesian National Army changed several times. These names include *Badan Keamanan Rakyat* (BKR, People’s Peace-keeping Body, 22 August-5 October 1945), *Tentara Keamanan Rakyat* (TKR, People’s Peace-keeping Army, 5 October 1945-7 January 1946), *Tentara Keselamatan Rakyat* (TKR, People’s Security Army, 7-25 January 1946), *Tentara Republik Indonesia* (TRI, Indonesian Republican Army, 25 January 1946-3 June 1947), *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI, Indonesian National Army, since 3 June 1947). The name then changed into *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI, Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia) and then reverted to *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI, Indonesian National Army) to date. For more information about the changes of the Indonesian Army names [BKR-TKR-TRI-TNI], see Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI (1990: 17, 27).

motivated by personal grudges. When interviewed by Sudarto, his battalion commander, Mula revealed that Karseno, the communist leader, used to be in the Indonesian army. Meanwhile, it turned out that Mula was initially a Lasykar chief before joining the Indonesian army. Mula and Karseno were previously involved in a conflict in Karawang, where Mula's men were disarmed and killed. Then Mula himself was being chased like a mad dog. In addition, Karseno used to be Sudarto's schoolmate at a medical school and comrade in arms when they fought the Dutch Red Beret troops in Tanah Tinggi.¹⁷

This scene at least provides a glimpse of the conflicts between the Lasykars and the TNI, which occurred a lot in the early days of the Indonesian Revolution.¹⁸ In its history, the national revolution or the Indonesian Revolution was not only faced by the Republican army but also by many armed groups and youth groups.¹⁹ According to van Dijk, many other armed groups participated in the struggle, and a great many irregular units, sometimes referred to as 'wild guerilla groups', operating alongside the official Republican army (1981: 4-5). Van Dijk also noted that the conflicts involving the TNI and irregular units, including those with the Lasykars, occurred "as early as the first year of the struggle for independence" (1981: 6). Meanwhile, Frederick stated, "conflict became more frequent between the TNI and *laskar*[s] and among *laskar*[s], as they competed for territory and resources or argued over tactics and political affiliation" (Frederick, 2011: 57).

¹⁷ For additional information, apart from the story in the film, on September 28, 1946, there was a sabotage event in Tanah Tinggi [Jakarta]. It was carried out by Indonesian freedom fighters against the Dutch army by bombing the region (Toer, Toer and Kamil, 1999: 424).

¹⁸ See Tjokropranolo (1992: 69-70); Drakeley (2005: 88).

¹⁹ These youth groups took the initiative to independently form various struggle units to welcome the Indonesian Revolution (see Abdullah, 2009: 1; Jackson, 1980: 7-8). However, it is important to note that not all Lasykars are purely trying to uphold the independence. Some lasykars arise because of the insistence on personal interests oriented toward certain ideologies and carrying out acts of violence against the civil government. Even many of these Lasykar leaders raised themselves with various military ranks (Situmorang, 1981: 129-130; Wahyono, 2013: 153).

At that time, the lasykers operated outside the command of the TNI, and because they were considered dangerous, efforts such as disarmament were carried out to control them. Conflicts such as armed clashes between the national army and lasykers were inevitable.²⁰ Some of these lasykers wanted to join the army (TNI) officially, but many of them refused and kept trying to defend their “sovereignty” (Simatupang, 1985: 87; Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI, 1990: 17; Tjokropranolo, 1992: 70). Many lasykar leaders rejected the strict command under the TNI. They were only willing to coordinate loosely with the TNI. In fact, when a Presidential Decree was issued in January 1946 stating that the *Tentara Republik Indonesia* (TRI, Indonesian Republican Army) was the only military organization of the Republic of Indonesia, they still refused to join the TRI. In the end, struggle organizations and Lasykers that did not want to join the TRI were given a special body called the Struggle Bureau (*Biro Perjuangan*) under the Ministry of Defense. Thus, the Indonesian state had two armed forces at that time (Tjokropranolo, 1992: 69; Wahyono, 2013: 153).

On June 3, 1947, another Presidential Decree was issued, commencing the formation of *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Army/TNI) by merging all regular army and irregular units (including lasykers and struggle organizations) (Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI, 1990: 17, 27). With this, all irregular units, whether included in the Struggle Bureau or not, were merged into the TNI. This step was taken to create a solid line of defense. Since then, the TNI has been the only vessel for the struggle and the Republic’s military organization (Tirtoprodjo, 1966: 40; Maeswara, 2010: 135; Wahyono, 2013: 154). The process of integrating all armed forces into the TNI was not an easy matter (Martha et al., 1984: 188).

²⁰ See Situmorang (1981: 125-131, 134-135).

In the film, Mula is depicted as a vengeful person, holding enormous hatred and grudges on Karseno. After he shot Karseno dead, he was even shown stepping on Karseno's corpse, which was lying on the ground. Then, in a scene at the end of the film, when Mula meets Sudarto, he still says terrible things about Karseno, whom he shot dead in Sarangan.

5.3.1.2. A Communist's Revenge

It seems that the issue of revenge does not end with Karseno's death, because it is depicted again at the end of the film. The film's main character, Sudarto, is shown dead in his rented room after being shot by a friend of Karseno's. The shooter's face is not visible in the film, especially from the viewer's point of view, because the shooter has his back on the camera. Only Sudarto knows the exact face of the shooter. The shooter likely was one of the communist troops who managed to escape from the battle at Sarangan. Moreover, he came to exact revenge on Sudarto for Karseno's death in Sarangan. He said: "Life for Life. Blood for blood."

Sudarto's death was a tragic one. He must die in the name of revenge, even though he never ordered or agreed Karseno's murder. However, as a battalion commander, Sudarto became the target of the revenge. The scene depicting the killing of Sudarto gives the impression that communist people are vengeful. After the film was screened to the public, the PKI protested this film due to this depiction.²¹

From the two depictions, both Karseno's and Sudarto's murders, the film wants to communicate that the Madiun Affair was not an ordinary family quarrel but a bitter civil war. The film has succeeded in showing the other sides of a national tragedy called the Madiun Affair, the existence of a legacy of hatred and revenge.

²¹ Cf. Chapter 6.

5.3.2. The Long March Order

The order regarding the plan to return to West Java, which became known as the Long March of the Siliwangi Division, is also mentioned in the film. In one scene, Sudarto's battalion is shown receiving a telegram from the Army Headquarters (MBT, *Markas Besar Tentara*) in Yogyakarta.²² Sudarto then ordered Adam, as his chief of staff, to prepare the trip plan to West Java as soon as possible. This scene informs us that the order to return to West Java, particularly for the Siliwangi Division, was announced after the Madiun Affair had been put out. The order is known as *Perintah Siasat* (Operational Order) No.1/1948. This order was officially announced on November 9, 1948, by the Indonesian Army Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*), General Sudirman, as an order that must be implemented when the Dutch returned to attack Indonesia (see Said, 1991b: 78; Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi TNI, 2000: 162).

5.3.3. The Second Dutch Military Aggression

The film also depicts the Second Dutch Military Aggression events in Yogyakarta. This information is portrayed briefly in a scene where a boldly printed phrase with the date "19 DECEMBER 1948" is displayed on the screen. Its emergence coincides with the narrator's voice-over: "For many people, the second Dutch military action came as a liberation from a situation that was almost unbearable." It is likewise for the battalion commander, Sudarto. In the history of the struggle for Indonesian independence, December 19, 1948, was when the Dutch launched their second aggression against the Republic of Indonesia in Yogyakarta. Before carrying out its aggression, the Netherlands first unilaterally canceled the Renville Agreement. This scene shows partially destroyed buildings accompanied by puffs of smoke and gunshots. Some of the soldiers are also shown moving quickly between the ruins of buildings. After

²² In Indonesian Army's history, the Army Headquarters was formed by Lieutenant General Urip Sumoharjo (see Muhaimin, 1982: 26; Tjokropranolo, 1992: 59-60).

that, the film depicts a coordination meeting discussing the route that Sudarto's battalion must take to arrive at a predetermined destination in West Java.

5.3.4. The Long March Began

The Second Dutch Military Aggression is the reason and signal for the Siliwangi troops to march back to West Java. Initially, the infiltration movement that had to be carried out by the Siliwangi Division when the Dutch came back to attack Indonesia was called the Wingate movement. This information is as stated in point 4 of the Operational Order (*Perintah Siasat*) No.1/1948 as follows: "The troops from the 'federal area' (the areas taken by the Dutch in their first attack) would launch a *wingate* (infiltration into their former areas) in order to establish pockets of resistance so that the whole of Java, and later the whole of Indonesia, would be a big field of guerilla warfare" (Said, 1991b: 78).²³. However, because the infiltration movement of the Siliwangi troops was carried out on foot and they needed to travel long distances, it was considered similar to what was carried out by the Red Army or Chinese Communist troops in China—later called the Long March. Therefore, the infiltration movement carried out by the Siliwangi troops from the Siliwangi Division is also referred to as the Long March or, in complete terms, the Long March of the Siliwangi Division.²⁴

5.3.4. The Long March Company

Sudarto's battalion is then shown moving from Yogyakarta to West Java. In one scene, Siliwangi troops are seen passing through Borobudur Temple (Figure 5.2. Above-Left).²⁵ The temple, built between 760 and 820 AD, is "the physical

²³ For more information on the TNI's Wingate, see Nasution (1991: 281-324).

²⁴ See Chapter 2 & 4.

²⁵ The temple began to attract worldwide attention, especially when Raffles wrote about it in his famous book, *The History of Java* (1817). This temple is also one of the extraordinary legacies of world civilization and is one of the pride of the Indonesian people. For more information about the temple, see Moertjipto and Prasetyo (1993); Joesoef (2004).

evidence of Indonesia's ancient history" (Grant, 1967: 1-2). This scene is also a footage of the actual condition of the Borobudur Temple in 1950, when this film was made. It can be seen that there were still many trees around the temple. Meanwhile, the film also shows that the company of the Long March is very long. The narrator says the march is "long kilometers away." This depiction can be seen in Figure 5.2. below.



Figure 5.2. The Long Company of the Long March.

5.3.6. Harsh and Difficult Terrain

The company of the Long March, which moved from Yogyakarta, consisted of Siliwangi soldiers with their wives, children, and parents, as well as members of the Indonesian Red Cross. Some of them are depicted carrying their belongings. A large number of group members caused difficulties for the troops of Siliwangi in carrying out their infiltration movement. This situation is as conveyed by the narrator: "These families do not always help the movements of the Siliwangi troops. In many cases, they become a heavy

burden because they are difficult to control. They are easily swayed by rumors, shocked, or panicked.”

This information is in line with what was revealed by Suryohadiprojo, a living witness of the Long March. He mentioned that the large number of family members who joined the Long March slowed down the troops of Siliwangi’s infiltration movement during their march back to West Java. Moreover, the company had to go through harsh and difficult terrains (Suryohadiprojo, 2014). In the film, the company of the Long March is depicted as having to go through such a situation, where they all had to go down steep hills. Among the company, a Siliwangi soldier’s wife in her late pregnancy and several mothers with their babies are shown going down the steep hill (Figure 5.3. Above).

Meanwhile, the troops of Siliwangi were depicted as swift in helping, organizing, and directing the group members to get through the harsh terrain. However, a terrible accident occurred when the group descended the steep hill. In one scene, it is shown that a woman slipped, fell, and died instantly on the site. The woman’s daughter cried when she found out that her mother had died. The girl did not want to let go of her arms from her mother’s body until she was finally calmed down by a member of the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI, *Palang Merah Indonesia*) (Figure 5.3. Below). The troops of Siliwangi then evacuated the woman’s body and buried her. This scene not only depicts the difficult and harsh terrain that the Long March company had to cross but also sends a message that the lives of the company members could be taken at any time. There was no time to mourn because they all had to continue their march back to West Java.



Figure 5.3. A Terrible Accident.

5.3.7. The Role of Villages during the Indonesian Revolution

The film also provides a depiction of the role of villages during the Indonesian Revolution. The troops of Siliwangi are shown passing through a village and receiving a warm welcome from the villagers. They are given food and drink. Villagers are also shown giving coconuts to several Siliwangi soldiers to drink (Figure 5.4. Above). Apart from that, the villagers also provided a place for the freedom fighters to rest for a while before continuing their long march. In the village, the chief of the Siliwangi battalion received information from the traditional radio that President Sukarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta had been exiled to Sumatra and other republic leaders in Yogyakarta had been arrested by the Dutch. Meanwhile, the troops of Siliwangi were asked to follow all instructions from the Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*), General Sudirman. In the village, the Siliwangi troops are also shown to be happy and

singing together songs such as *Rasa Sayange* and *Bandung Rebut Kembali* (Figure 5.4. Below).²⁶



Figure 5.4. The Villagers as Benevolent People.

In this scene, the villagers are portrayed as benevolent people who willingly and sincerely help the troops of Siliwangi. In fact, the villages passed by the Siliwangi troops during their long march provided necessary support concerning logistical needs. A military historian, Soetanto, also stated that, during the revolution, the villagers supported and assisted in the guerrilla war waged by the republic forces. They gave the republic troops what they had, such as rice, sweet potatoes, and cassava (2007: 210).²⁷ Such things were a common sight that occurred during the revolution. Therefore, the war for

²⁶ *Bandung Rebut Kembali* was one of the songs sung by the troops of Siliwangi in their long march back to West Java. Information about the songs sung by the Siliwangi troops can be found in one of the rooms in the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum. There the lyrics of each of these songs are neatly framed and displayed there.

²⁷ Cf. Himawan Soetanto, when interviewed in *Nama & Peristiwa*, TVOne, episode “*Jejak Sang Jenderal*.” 10 November 2016.

independence can be considered a period with a strong bond between the army and the people (Alfian, 1980: 192).

Due to the strong cooperation between the army and the people during the Indonesian Revolution, the Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*) General Sudirman called the Indonesian army “the people’s army” (Kaisiepo, 2003: 183). The armed forces and the people were like fish and water (Tirtoprodjo, 1966: 40). Therefore, the villagers’ involvement in the Indonesian Revolution’s success is an absolute fact that cannot be denied. Grant even mentioned that the people in villages are one of the last line of the Republic of Indonesia’s defenses. He wrote: “Basically it was the armed forces and militant government officials [PDRI], the Indonesian youth and the people in the villages which formed the last bulwark of the Republic of Indonesia” (1967: 91).

The villages and their inhabitants were undeniably essential actors in the Indonesian Revolution. The role of the villages in assisting the TNI during the guerrilla war was crucial. Without it, the struggle to defend Indonesia’s independence might never have succeeded. A former veteran of the guerrilla war for the independence, Tjokropranolo, praised the villagers as the actual freedom fighters. “I also need to give my opinion, that the real heroes are the people in the villages, mountains, and beaches. They were the ones who fought, protected, sustained, helped, and sacrificed for their beloved TNI. They sacrificed endlessly” (1992: xxviii-xxix). This scene shows that the military was not the only one struggling for independence because the people in the villages also played an important part in it. Without the involvement of the people, the struggle for a physical revolution would never succeed (Suharto and Poliman, 1993: 94-95).

5.3.8. The Dutch Air Strike

In their Long March, the troops of Siliwangi and its company were portrayed receiving an air strike from the Dutch. The company was moving during the day when it was attacked by a Dutch fighter plane. The company members who had lined up in a long line then spread out and hid to save themselves (Figure 5.5. Above). Meanwhile, the troops of Siliwangi put up resistance and attempted to shoot down the enemy plane (Figure 5.5. Below). There were no casualties due to the airstrike. However, a pregnant woman was shown fainting because the Dutch fighter bombed the place where she was hiding, yet she survived unharmed. From here, the journey of the troops of Siliwangi and its company is depicted to be increasingly difficult because they are getting deeper into the area fully controlled by the Dutch, West Java. And as told in the film, they had to face two enemies at once in West Java, the Dutch and Darul Islam.



Figure 5.5. A Dutch Fighter Plane.

5.3.8.1. The Long March Baby

In the middle of the Long March, a Siliwangi soldier's wife is depicted giving birth to a baby girl. The mother was the pregnant woman shocked and passed out due to the Dutch air strike in the previous scene. A nurse from the Indonesian Red Cross assisted with the delivery process. Even though they had just gone through labor, the mother and baby had to continue their journey with the Long March company the next day. Later, the mother's baby had to die from exhaustion and hunger due to the hardships of the journey. Her death left the baby daughter alone with her father.

5.3.9. Running Out of Food Supply

The company of the Long March is also told to run out of food supplies. The exhausted and hungry company is shown resting for a while in a forest. In one scene, a soldier is depicted writing the word "hungry" on a rock. Several soldiers are also shown fighting over food found by one of the soldiers in the forest. Then, a sergeant is shown cutting a yam into five pieces to be given to several soldiers to calm their hunger. Meanwhile, some of the starving company members started to complain and talk about good food and drink they can imagine (Figure 5.6.). The film also tells that the Siliwangi troops only ate leaves and tree roots when they ran out of food supplies.

5.3.9.1. Route Distribution of the Battalions

One of the scenes briefly depicts an issue regarding the distribution of routes that the Siliwangi battalions would pass in their long march. The distribution of the Siliwangi battalions' routes during the Long March of the Siliwangi Division was vital because it would affect the food supply for each battalion company. If a battalion had passed a route, the next company following the same route would undoubtedly find a decreased or even exhausted food supply.²⁸ Therefore, it was crucial not to take the same route another battalion

²⁸ Soetanto (2007: 209-210). See also Nasution (1991).

company took. On the one hand, this scene helps affirm the character of a soldier named Mula, who is very selfish because he only cares about himself and does not care about other battalions. On the other hand, this scene also indicates that there are other Siliwangi battalions doing the Long March movement.



Figure 5.6. Out of Food Supply.

5.3.10. Deceived by a Traitor

Amid their hunger, Sudarto's battalion was deceived by a traitor. The traitor was a local villager who was severely tortured by the Dutch. He said that the Dutch had captured Corporal Simin and his men. The Dutch also burned their village because they had helped the TNI. He gave information that there was a nearby prosperous village that the troops of Siliwangi could reach. However, they had to pass through the main road. The traitor suggested that the Siliwangi troops depart at night. It turned out to be a trap. On the main road, the Dutch troops were ready with their tanks and guns to attack the troops of

Siliwangi. When Sudarto's battalion arrived at the main road, the traitor lit a cigarette to signal the Dutch forces to attack (Figure 5.7. Above-Right). The Dutch attack left some members of the battalion dead and injured. Meanwhile, the traitor who tried to escape was shot dead by a Siliwangi soldier. It was a fitting retribution for a traitor. Sudarto's battalion group finally decided to withdraw because of their unpreparedness and difficulty fighting at night. They had to retreat to avoid more victims.



Figure 5.7. A Trap.

5.3.11. Trapped and Ambushed by Darul Islam

The hardships faced by the troops of Siliwangi did not stop there. They discovered that Dutch troops had closed off all access roads. They had to cross a mountain. Then, the film shows a *lurah* (village chief) who seems kindhearted because he wants to help the troops of Siliwangi voluntarily. He invited the troops of Siliwangi to come to their village. Guided by the *lurah*, they all finally arrived at the village. At first, the village looked like any other

village. The inhabitants welcomed the Siliwangi troops in a friendly manner. The *lurah* even told them not to worry because “everything is under control” (Figure 5.8. Above-Left).

However, there is a depiction that indicates something suspicious in that village. Something does not feel right. When the troops of Siliwangi were entering the village, a resident seemed to be watching them suspiciously. This kind of depiction also reappears in the film when the battalion commander is walking with a nurse in the village after a banquet from the *lurah*. Another villager was seen secretly spying on the battalion commander. And it was then proven that the resident tried to kill the battalion commander by shooting him.²⁹

5.3.11.1. Galgenmaal and Darul Islam Village

In the village, which later became known as a Darul Islam village, the troops of Siliwangi were treated to delicious food. They all ate heartily. The *lurah* (village chief) again said that they could sleep safely and soundly because the residents would take care of security (Figure 5.8. Above-Right). Then, the hospitality and banquet given by the *lurah* and its residents turned out to be a trap prepared to finish off the troops of Siliwangi. What the Darul Islam troops did to the troops of Siliwangi is similar to what is known as “*Galgenmaal*,” where the Siliwangi troops were given good food and then ambushed to be killed.

Under the darkness of the night, where most of the Siliwangi troops were fast asleep, the Darul Islam troops ambushed and attacked them. In a scene, it is shown that the residents, who were initially tasked with guarding the troops of Siliwangi while they were sleeping, later revealed their true identities as

²⁹ This information revises the erroneous information on Wikipedia (2018), which states that the *lurah* shot the battalion commander, but this was not the case.

Darul Islam troops. They were armed with bamboo spears and guns (Figure 5.8. Below). They also conveyed their stance on the return of the Siliwangi troops to West Java. One of them said: “Raise your hands. Hand us your guns. We are the ones who have the right to use guns. We are the ones who fight; we will defend it.”



Figure 5.8. A Darul Islam Village.

This scene provides information that Darul Islam troops did not want the troops of Siliwangi to return to West Java because, so far, they had been the ones fighting to defend West Java from the Dutch troops. In Indonesian history, this kind of situation occurred when the troops of Siliwangi were withdrawn from West Java to the republican region in Central Java under the Renville Agreement (Kahin, 1970: 328-329; Soetanto, 2007: 47-60). Reid stated that this “enabled the militant Islamic forces centered in the southeastern part of that province to emerge as an ideological as well as military challenge to the

national leadership” (1986: 157). Moreover, at that time, Darul Islam “became the chief core of resistance to the Dutch in West Java” (Kahin, 1970: 330).

When Yogyakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia at that time, was controlled by the Dutch, the Darul Islam leader Kartosuwirjo did declare war against the Dutch. However, “his primary target” was actually the Siliwangi troops, or republicans (Abuza, 2003: 62).³⁰ Moreover, at that time, Darul Islam already considered “West Java to be de facto NII territory.” Therefore, “when the Siliwangi division of the Indonesian army returned to West Java during early 1949, their arrival was perceived as a flagrant infringement of the authority of an existing sovereign state” (Jackson, 1980: 12). The first clash between the troops of Siliwangi and Darul Islam in West Java occurred in Antralina on January 25, 1949 (Jackson, 1980: 12).³¹ According to Boland, at that time, “the government of the Republic did not wish to consider Kartosuwirjo’s action a rising against the Republic, but only a regional counter-move against the Dutch-made ‘State of Pasundan’” (1971: 58).

This attack made the troops of Siliwangi run out and scatter away from the villagers’ houses and then fight against Darul Islam. Nonetheless, the Darul Islam attack took the Siliwangi troops by surprise. There are several interesting questions raised from this scene, one of which is as expressed by the narrator: “That sudden attack from the villagers, for most people, they came so sudden. Especially for Sudarto. When they were still in Central Java, they heard one and other things about DI movements. But what is actually DI? It is never clear to them. So where did it go wrong? Are gentlemen (*Bapak-bapak*) in Yogyakarta undiplomatic? Or is it themselves? Because of their behavior and actions all this time, which are not always supervised. Or is it indeed natural? As an inevitable tail of revolution.”

³⁰ Cf. Chapter 2 on Kartosuwirjo’s announcement regarding this matter.

³¹ See also Elson and Formichi (2011: 458-486).

This scene is an important reflection that the filmmaker wants to convey to the public and criticism to Indonesian leaders. The question, “Are gentlemen (*Bapak-bapak*) in Yogyakarta undiplomatic?” was apparently addressed to the republican leaders in Yogyakarta, including President Sukarno, Vice President Mohammad Hatta, their cabinet, and military leaders. As is known, Yogyakarta had become the republic’s capital since January 4, 1946. Of course, these leaders knew about the Darul Islam movements after the withdrawal of the Siliwangi Division from West Java due to the Renville Agreement. The criticism is, in fact, right on target because the leaders of the republic, especially President Sukarno, also attended the film gala premiere at the presidential palace in Jakarta.³²

The scene also illustrates the filmmaker’s intention to raise issues regarding a historical event that the Indonesian people went through at the time, particularly concerning the Darul Islam rebels in West Java during the Indonesian Revolution. Moreover, in 1950, when the film was made, completed, and then screened in cinemas, the Darul Islam rebellion was still going on. At that time, the Indonesian government was still trying to end the conflict peacefully through negotiations and amnesty.³³

The Darul Islam rebellion was only put down when the supreme leader of Darul Islam, Kartosuwirjo, was arrested and executed in 1962.³⁴ Thus, the questions that the filmmaker posed through the film’s narrator are critical to ask and raise. The exciting thing is that the filmmaker had even begun to critically question the issue of Darul Islam through his film long before the emergence of scientific studies from historians. For example, the question posed by the narrator relates to the actions of Darul Islam, which “are not always supervised.” This event is in line with what van Dijk argued. He stated

³² Cf. Chapter 4.

³³ See Chapter 6.

³⁴ Cf. Chapter 2.

that “being free from the active control of the Republican Army in Central Java” was one of the factors for the emergence of the Darul Islam movements (van Dijk, 1981: 71).

The negative depictions of Darul Islam in the film raised public questions at the time. The people wondered whether Darul Islam was really as evil as portrayed in the film.³⁵ Further, in a scene where the battalion commander Sudarto and nurse Widya are separated from the battalion due to a Darul Islam attack, there is also an interesting conversation between the two. Nurse Widya questioned why Darul Islam attacked the troops of Siliwangi, members of the TNI, when, in fact, they themselves used to be TNI members as well. This scene raises a critical and reflective question. Such a question seems to represent the question that was on many people’s minds about why Darul Islam attacked the troops of Siliwangi.

As is well known, since June 3, 1947, through a Presidential Decree, all irregular troops, including Hizbullah and Sabilillah, which constitute most of the Darul Islam troops, have been declared to be merged into the TNI. Therefore, they are also parts of TNI. However, when the Renville Agreement was implemented, they refused to be evacuated from West Java and chose to remain in the province (Kahin, 1970: 234; Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI, 1990: 17, 27). Meanwhile, Sudarto said he could not believe that Darul Islam, who were fellow Indonesians, would attack the Siliwangi troops. In his diary, Sudarto initially thought that the rumors he heard about Darul Islam were just like children’s fairy tales. However, seeing the reality, he said: “I prefer to die rather than going through another civil war.” According to Sudarto, he could not forget the memory of the Madiun Affair yet, and now Darul Islam is emerging. Before the Darul Islam rebellion, Indonesia was also involved in a

³⁵ Cf. Chapter 6.

civil war or an armed conflict among Indonesians known as the 1948 Madiun Affair.

The scene about Darul Islam also provides an overview to the audience regarding historical facts from the past, particularly about the existence of Darul Islam villages. Karl D. Jackson defines these villages as “villages that had fought for the establishment of the Islamic state” (Jackson, 1980: 28). Meanwhile, there were also pro-government villages that “participated actively and offensively in the fight to resist and destroy the Dar'ul Islam” (Jackson, 1980: 36). In this scene, there is an interesting message when Nurse Widya talked with Sudarto about the meaning of being a soldier who fights to defend his country. She said, “soldiers will not ask for a fee of their service.” This statement is a critical reflection that is in line with a message at the end of the film about what it means to be a true soldier.

One thing is certain, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950) was the first film to feature the rebellion of Darul Islam. The film even provides initial depictions and interpretations of the uprising. This film is interesting because it shows Darul Islam's stance towards the Indonesian republic, particularly the TNI/the troops of Siliwangi who marched back to West Java. To a certain extent, the film has managed to describe more or less people's feelings towards Darul Islam when many still wonder what Darul Islam really is.

5.3.12. Intercepted by the Dutch troops

After the Darul Islam's attack, the troops of Siliwangi had to continue moving towards their destination as set in the coordination meeting prior to their march back to West Java. Moreover, the place where they were at this time was found out by the Dutch troops. And sure enough, when they resumed their march, the Dutch forces were already preparing to intercept them. Not long after, a heavy battle took place in a hilly area. Victims began to fall from both

sides. This battle involved a lot of Siliwangi troops. They persistently continued to attack the Dutch forces, until eventually, the Dutch were forced to retreat.

Nonetheless, many Siliwangi soldiers were killed or injured. They also had to lose Widya, a reliable nurse who was shot dead by the Dutch during the battle. Meanwhile, Adam, the battalion's chief of staff, suffered severe injuries from the fighting and died later. After burying their dead comrades, the troops of Siliwangi resumed their march. Finally, they arrived at a mountain, their predetermined destination in West Java. At this point, the Long March of Sudarto's battalion was over. Then, the film's story focuses on Sudarto, the battalion commander who sneaked into the city of Bandung to retrieve bullet supplies from the republican guerillas who were operating there.

As mentioned in the film, the bullet supply of the Siliwangi troops was almost exhausted. It was like, "It lasts for one shot, then no more." Sudarto then managed to meet with the republican guerillas at a hotel. In a scene, the necessary supplies are shown ready to be taken out of town. The supplies consist of bullets and medical supplies. This information revised Heider's opinion that the battalion commander went to town only to look for "medical supplies for the wounded" (1991: 128). However, due to his negligence and indiscipline, Sudarto was eventually caught by the Dutch. He was then thrown into prison and tortured before finally being released.

5.3.12.1. The Role of Indonesian Red Cross

The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI, *Palang Merah Indonesia*) was officially established on September 17, 1945, exactly one month after the proclamation of Indonesian independence. The first management of the Indonesian Red Cross was chaired by the Vice President of Indonesia, Mohammad Hatta

(Ayatrohaedi et al., 1994: 8).³⁶ The PMI played a vital role during the war for independence, particularly in helping the freedom fighters who were injured from fighting.

The film also depicts the role of PMI in the Indonesian Revolution. The members of the red cross are shown to consist of both women and men. Their jobs are to care for the sick, assist with baby deliveries, and help and care for soldiers injured in battle. They were also always ready to provide accurate reports regarding the number of dead and wounded as a result of a battle. In addition, they were never afraid in performing their duties, which included making critical decisions in their line of work. For example, a scene shows that nurse Widya had to amputate one of a soldier's legs as the only way to save him due to a severe wound.

Nurse Widya's work depicted in the film represents how the Red Cross members carried out their duties during the Indonesian Revolution. Djajadiningrat, a former nurse during the war for independence, once shared his testimony regarding the appalling condition of the war victims. Blood, broken legs from gunshots, crushed heels, broken bones, and the smell of blood were the facts that she and her nurse colleagues must face. They, however, still carried out their duties well and with courage (Djajadiningrat, 1974: 19-20).

Widya's representation as a nurse from the Indonesian Red Cross also illustrates the role of women during the Indonesian Revolution. Vreede-de Stuers argued that, at that time, many women actively played their roles as nurses, contact persons, and administrators of communal kitchens (*dapur umum*) and mobile clinics (2008: 175). Therefore, women undoubtedly played

³⁶ See also "P.M.I. 5 Tahun," *Merdeka*, 31 August 1950, p. 2. For more information on the Indonesian Red Cross, see Mu'in (1999); Syukur et al. (2015).

a vital role in the national revolution (see Soewito, 1995). They played various roles either through women's organizations or personally. Some women joined the PMI, helped in communal kitchens, stole enemy weapons, seduced enemies, and even fought on the front lines. They did all these to support the struggle to defend the Indonesian independence (Suryanah, 1995: 45). During the revolution, women who did not hold weapons and did not fight on the frontlines also fought in communal kitchens by providing food for freedom fighters. At that time, a communal kitchen did not only function as a logistics center but also served as a struggle base, struggle headquarters, and circulation center for various important information related to the struggle (Djajadiningrat, 1983: 21-26).

5.3.13. The Day After the Transfer of Sovereignty

As intended by the filmmaker, the film seeks to depict the situation after the transfer of sovereignty. The interesting point here is that the film not only describes what might have happened in the early days after the official recognition or transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to Indonesia but also critically reflects on issues related to it for the audience.

In the film, after Sudarto was released from the Dutch prison, he reported to a delegation office of the Republic of Indonesia. However, he found a bitter reality: he was, in fact, under investigation due to a report to the Army Headquarters in Yogyakarta. The report was filed by Adam, his Chief of Staff, shortly after Darul Islam ambushed their battalion in a village. Adam reported that Sudarto prioritized his love interests with a nurse and neglected his responsibilities as the battalion commander. According to Adam, what Sudarto did had the potential to cause unwanted turns of events. As written in his report, Adam explained that he encouraged himself to submit the report for

the sake of the safety of their struggle. In other words, Adam considered Sudarto to have committed an act of desertion.³⁷

According to Said, Captain Adam was trying to uphold certainty amid the uncertain conditions during the revolution (1990: 112). As a result of Adam's report, Sudarto was temporarily suspended and obliged to appear before a screening committee in Yogyakarta. Sudarto did not intend to desert. He understood that desertion is forbidden in the military, where the perpetrator could be sentenced to death. When Darul Islam ambushed his battalion, Sudarto was injured after being shot by a Darul Islam soldier. He was lucky because nurse Widya saved him at that time. The two of them then fled from the village to save themselves.

Long story short, amid his disappointment, he met Mula, an old friend and former subordinate. In the film, Sudarto found out that Mula took two men with him and fled from the battalion. Even so, Sudarto did not report Mula's desertion to the Army Headquarters. This attitude was in stark contrast to what Adam would do. If Adam were still alive, he would have reported Mula and his men's desertion.

In this scene, Mula is shown driving a Jeep. He wears a nice uniform with one star, indicating that he received a military rank promotion. He is also enjoying his Capstan cigarettes. Capstan was a well-known brand and one of the tastiest cigarettes at the time. It is a British brand that was first introduced in 1894. This scene depicts a contrast between Mula and Sudarto, an opportunist and unpatriotic man and a true hero. However, the filmmaker also does not represent Sudarto as a perfect hero without a flaw.

³⁷ Cf. Chapter 4.

Mula greeted Sudarto and asked whether his case had been cleared. Mula then pretended to care about Sudarto by saying this is how life is, as always, without gratitude or appreciation. Mula said he had also fought, sacrificed, bled, and sweated during the revolution but did not get a fitting reward. His statement is contrary to the fact that he got many luxuries, like a Jeep, fancy cigarettes, and a promotion. Mula is a representation of a soldier who demands compensation or payment for his services. Mula's words were actually a satire on Sudarto's condition because both of them were in the same trouble and suffered in the struggle.

Shortly after Mula offered a cigarette, which Sudarto refused, Mula expressed his disappointment to Sudarto. Mula could not accept that Sudarto was angry at him when he shot Karseno dead in Sarangan. The scene ends with Sudarto refusing Mula's offer to take Sudarto to where he is going using his Jeep. In this scene, it can be seen that Mula feels that he deserves and has the right to enjoy the fruits of her struggle during the national revolution. He did not feel guilty, not even a little, even though he was actually a deserter who had run away from his battalion without permission. He is also shown enjoying the facilities he received, while in the military, a deserter is considered a traitor. It shows that, during the Indonesian Revolution, there was already a firm divide between patriots and traitors.

5.3.13.1. Suddenly becoming Patriotic

This scene is an interesting depiction from the filmmaker regarding a phenomenon that occurred in the early days after the transfer of sovereignty, where many people suddenly became patriotic and claimed to be defenders of the republic. The filmmaker succeeded in describing the actual phenomena that occurred at that time. As Abdul Haris Nasution's testimony indicates, such phenomena do exist and occur. He wrote, "... after sovereignty was transferred even the traitors emerged bosting their patriotism. That was what happened

and we still see them around us and many even have honored and powerful positions, enjoying the fruits of the struggle that they betrayed” (Nasution, 1965: 98).

Still related to this phenomenon, Nasution once explained on another occasion that, during the war for independence, Indonesia had tremendous freedom fighters consisting of the official army, struggle units, and pseudo-struggle units. He specified that during the Renville Agreement, there were 47,000 fighters in Java and 200,000 fighters in Sumatra. There was a total of 247,000 fighters. Due to the second clash, or the Second Dutch Military Aggression, the number decreased to 240,000 fighters.³⁸ He even noted that the fall of Yogyakarta at that time had caused “the numbers of patriots to decrease steadily” (Nasution, 1965: 98). However, after the transfer of sovereignty, this number increased again to 350,000-400,000 fighters throughout Indonesia, including the official military.³⁹ Meanwhile, as T.B. Simatupang (1951: 165) stated, at that time, many people, including soldiers or freedom fighters, demanded compensation from the state for their struggles against the Dutch.⁴⁰

What Mula does in the film, particularly in this scene, is the best example of both phenomena. Mula is a bad example, representing a vengeful, opportunistic, hypocritical, and unpatriotic soldier. In one scene, when the battalion chief of staff was dying from a gunshot wound he received in a battle with the Dutch, Mula complained about the conditions under which they were facing two enemies at once, namely the Dutch and Darul Islam. He also doubted the struggle for independence and said, “It seems that there will be no Republic.” In addition, he then committed an act of desertion by running away from his battalion, a grave and serious violation. According to Said, the character Mula, played by Aedy Moward, is “a man preoccupied with himself

³⁸ *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 29 November 1950.

³⁹ *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 29 November 1950.

⁴⁰ Cf. Chapter 4.

and his interests. Usmar Ismail show him as a man constantly search of a new girlfriend, even in the middle of the battalion's long march! This character is also forever prowling for the best cigarettes and food. While most of the rest of the men are starving, he is shown hiding behind a rock and eating a large plate of rice" (1990: 113).⁴¹ In the film, he is also depicted to be more preoccupied catching chickens and hunting boars.

Through this scene, the filmmaker is also trying to convey his world and moral views through the character Sudarto. He wanted to remind everyone how a true and ideal soldier should be. A true soldier is someone who faithfully adheres to the principles that he fights for, is not opportunistic, and does not ask for compensation for the struggle that he does for his nation. Meanwhile, Mula's character is an example of a bad soldier who enjoys the fruits of the struggle for independence while, in fact, he does not deserve it. If we look closely, Sudarto, the battalion commander, was actually more entitled to enjoy the fruits of the struggle. However, he did not get what he deserved. Although Sudarto was disappointed, he did not take any adverse action.

As previously mentioned, Sudarto was initially disappointed because he was temporarily suspended and had to appear before a military screening committee in Yogyakarta to explain his case. Sudarto actually had an opportunity to resolve his case. Moreover, two of his loyal friends were also willing to help him. However, Sudarto chose not to attend the screening; thus, he was permanently dismissed from the army. His meeting with Mula seems to reaffirm his choice. Sudarto did not want to be like Mula. He was aware that, as a soldier, he had made many mistakes in the past. Through this depiction, the film apparently provides "a terrain for moral contemplation" for the viewers at the time (Stearns, 1998). As stated by film scholar Landy, historical films can serve as "a form of collective morality as well as a source of morale"

⁴¹ A pack of rice (*sebungkus nasi*) to be precise.

(Landy, 2001b: 8). Meanwhile, apart from the film's story, the issue of who actually joined the guerrilla and who did not was indeed one of the critical issues in the early days after the transfer of sovereignty. At that time, many military screening committees were formed to examine TNI members and officers who did not join the guerrilla movement and carry out their duties as they should. In this case, the screening also investigated acts of desertion, whether the TNI members did it with legitimate reasons or not (Nasution, 1983, II: 176).

5.3.13.2. The Death of a Former Battalion Commander

As previously mentioned, the murder of the communist leader Karseno at the beginning of the film is closely related to the scene at the film's end. The scene depicts how Sudarto, who chose to be dismissed from the military, had to die due to an act of revenge for the 1948 Madiun Affair. He was shot dead by Karseno's friend. There are two interesting points related to this scene. First, before Sudarto was shot dead, he was reading his diary. During the long march, he is shown writing the various events he experienced in his diary. In the diary, Sudarto expressed his views and thoughts about those events. For example, he commented on the battle in Sarangan, which was closely related to the 1948 Madiun Affair. He wrote, "Regardless of who is right and who is wrong, this Madiun Affair really breaks my heart."

With a speech from President Sukarno as the background sound, Sudarto began to open and read his diary. Each page of his diary brought flashbacks of various events that occurred in the past, such as his memories with Widya in a Darul Islam village, his memories with Connie in Sarangan, the Long March of the Siliwangi troops passing through Borobudur Temple, his debate with Adam, the graves of Adam and Widya, and a shooting execution against a father [Pak Kancil], a Dutch spy, by his own son, Sergeant Sumbawa. The flashbacks then stopped at the 1948 Madiun Affair and the murder of Karseno. These

flashbacks are an interesting practice carried out by the filmmaker because the diary is a means of creating flashbacks in the film. Turim argued that a flashback is “an image or a filmic segment that is understood as representing the temporal occurrences anterior to those in the images that preceded it.” It concerns “a representation of the past that intervenes within the present flow of film narrative” (1989: 1).⁴² It was the first time flashbacks were used in Indonesian Revolution-themed films.

Second, Sudarto’s death is a way of the filmmaker to express a deeper meaning to the audience. In the last page of his diary, dated December 27, 1949, Sudarto stated that he felt proud to have been involved in lighting the flames of the struggle for independence. Sudarto’s death is in line with what Abu Hanifah said, that the revolution devours its own children (Hanifah, 1978: 218).⁴³ A tragic ending is apparently the filmmaker’s choice to convey the message about the importance of holding fast to the spirit of independence and idealism. The film’s plot is an ironic story full of precious lessons.

5.3.14. Worthless Disputes and Civil Wars

The film succeeds in showing the filmmaker’s stance towards issues of internal disputes and civil wars experienced by the Indonesians during the Indonesian Revolution, such as the 1948 Madiun Affair and the Darul Islam rebellion. One thing is certain; both were bitter histories for Indonesia. Nevertheless, the film’s message was very relevant to Indonesia’s situation when the film were screened in cinemas, starting in September 1950. At that time, the Indonesian government still had to face internal problems such as Darul Islam, the Islamic Force (AUI, *Angkatan Umat Islam*),⁴⁴ and the Republic of South Moluccas (RMS,

⁴² For more on flashback, see also Guynn (2011a: 44; 2011c: 212).

⁴³ See also Adam (2007a: 37-44).

⁴⁴ The Islamic Force (AUI, *Angkatan Umat Islam*) was formed on September 11, 1945, and consisted of armed militias (Oemar et al., 1994: 228). The AUI started as a form of Muslim participation in Kebumen, which then formed a struggle body after Indonesian independence was proclaimed. It was centered at the Simolangu Islamic Boarding School and was led by Kyai

Republik Maluku Selatan).⁴⁵ Therefore, the film's message was indeed relevant to the condition of Indonesia at that time. Moreover, the 1950s were the years when the Indonesian government faced severe internal problems characterized by the emergence of anti-government rebellions (Chalmers, 2006: 74).

Not many people could relate to the film at that time. Nonetheless, the filmmaker has stated his innermost feelings, conscience, and thoughts. The film has provided important messages on public issues at that time. Borrowing a famous phrase from McLuhan, "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 2001: 129).⁴⁶ Through the character Sudarto, the film itself has managed to deliver an important and powerful message that everyone must hear, that disputes and civil wars are worthless. The film is a form of commemoration and celebration of the struggle for independence during the revolutionary years (Hanan, 1997: 690; Hanan, 2008: 123; Hanan, 2017: 66). However, the film does not simply tell a story. The filmmaker clearly wants to make this film a conversational medium with the public about the real Indonesian problems at that time.⁴⁷ One thing is certain; this film has captured the spirit of the times and the true feelings of the period to be depicted on screen.

Simolangu (Widiyanti, 2003: 10). At first, they also fought against the Dutch, but later they rebelled against the Indonesian government. The AUI's leader, Kyai Simolangu, finally died in a battle with the Indonesian army at Mt. Srandul Kroya (*Pedoman*, 3 October 1950, p. 2). In its development, AUI was also affiliated with Darul Islam (Harnoko and Poliman, 1986: 54). The actions carried out by the AUI caused hundreds of people to flee and seek protection (*Kedaulatan Rakyat*, September 30, 1950). It was reported that the actions taken by the AUI in the Kebumen and Banyumas areas have resulted in losses estimated at f.400,000 (*Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 7 November 1950). For more information on the AUI, see Sulistiyono (2000); Harnoko and Poliman (1986: 47-57).

⁴⁵ See Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI (1990: 182, 202). For more information on the RMS, see Chauvel (1985: 237-264).

⁴⁶ See also McLuhan (1964).

⁴⁷ For more discussion on media as conversation, see Peters (2006: 115-126).

5.3.14.1. English Subtitles

One interesting aspect of the restored film is that it has been added with English subtitles to help overseas audiences or non-Indonesians understand the dialogue and follow the film's storyline. The English subtitle is indeed a good upgrade. However, I notice that there are some inaccuracies in the translation. For example, the words "*sepanjang garis Tasikmalaya*," shown on the scene discussing the route to be followed by Sudarto's battalion, was translated into "the Malayan Tactic." At the end of the film, the word "*pencideraan*," which means dispute or hostility, was mistranslated into "*pencitraan*" (imaging) due to misunderstanding, thus resulting in a meaning that is far different from what the film wants to convey. In several other scenes, there are also inaccurate or wrong English subtitles for the dialogues, which may confuse the audiences who wish to follow the film plot thoroughly. Nevertheless, the effort to add English subtitles must be appreciated because it has helped overseas audiences to understand the film more, although, according to Phillips, the translation "may be incomplete, inaccurate, and distracting." And he further added, "There is no completely satisfactory solution" (1985: 176-177).

5.4. *Mereka Kembali* (1972)

The film begins with a depiction of the Siliwangi soldiers bathing and washing clothes in a river. Then, the voice of the film's narrator appears to provide information about the background of the troops of Siliwangi long march. The narrator recounts the signing of the Renville Agreement on January 18, 1948. The signing was carried out on the Renville warship in Jakarta Bay. The agreement required the troops of Siliwangi in West Java to be withdrawn (*hijrah*)⁴⁸ to Yogyakarta. However, on December 19, 1948, the Dutch government unilaterally canceled the Renville Agreement and attacked the Republic. Then, the Indonesian Army Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*), General Sudirman, ordered the troops of Siliwangi to march back to West Java, an event later known as "the Long March."

The film's story tells about the struggle of a battalion from the troops of Siliwangi that was ordered to return to West Java. The battalion was led by Major Suparman. However, the main story then focuses on the battalion's detachment unit, led by Lieutenant Priyatna. Priyatna and his troops then separated from their battalion because they were assigned to attack a Dutch post to secure the battalion's journey. They would then rejoin their battalion in West Java.

When the battalion is shown during their march back to West Java, the film's narrator provides a great definition of the Siliwangi Division's troops: "We are not fugitives, nor are we exiles, nor are we aimless adventurers, Siliwangi shall not say no to a mission. We were ordered to withdraw (*hijrah*) here. And now, the negotiations have turned out to be for nothing. Invaders will be invaders. Diplomacy falls apart at a stalemate. Back, yes, we are back on the battlefield.

⁴⁸ For more information on this term, see Chapter 2.

So the way it has the desire [*Biar antep dia punya kahayang*]. Siliwangi is going back home. *Esa Hilang, Dua Terbilang* [never give up, until we make it].⁴⁹

This definition is an essential reference for understanding the representation of the Siliwangi troops' struggle in their march back to West Java. The motto of the Siliwangi Division, "*Esa Hilang, Dua Terbilang*," which means "never give up, until we make it," has indeed been attempted to be embodied in the film. The motto itself is used to describe the fighting spirit of the Siliwangi Division.⁵⁰

5.4.1. Renville Agreement

Although the narrator has provided helpful information for the audience to follow the film's story, it should be noted that the information about the Renville Agreement provided by the narrator is not accurate. The narrator stated that the Renville Agreement was signed on January 18, 1948. In fact, the agreement was signed on January 17, 1948.⁵¹ This information also revises inaccurate information from Sasono (2010: 50) and Izharuddin (2017: 56) regarding the year the Renville Agreement was signed, which, according to them, happened in 1947.

In addition, judging from its history, the Siliwangi's Long March, or the Long March of the Siliwangi Division, was not exclusively carried out from Yogyakarta to Bandung. To be more precise, it was done from regions around Yogyakarta to various areas in West Java, and Bandung is only one of the long march destinations.⁵² Meanwhile, referring to *Mereka Kembali's* film story, it was emphasized that the destination of the *Long March* Siliwangi (Siliwangi's

⁴⁹ For more information regarding the motto of the Siliwangi Division, see Wagianti and Zein (2017: 142); BPC Siliwangi (1997: ii).

⁵⁰ See Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings (2010: 875).

⁵¹ See Dekker (1980: 59); Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI (1990: 92); Pour (2009: 38); Conference (1949: 14-18). Cf. Chapter 2.

⁵² See Chapter 2.

Long March) is West Java, without mentioning any specific city as a destination.

Another essential piece of information that needs to be noted is that the Long March did not take place after the Renville Agreement was signed because the event that occurred after the Renville Agreement was the *Hijrah* Siliwangi (Siliwangi's *Hijrah*) or the *Hijrah* of the Siliwangi Division, a movement to withdraw the Siliwangi troops from West Java, pursuant to the Renville Agreement.⁵³

Meanwhile, the Long March was an infiltration movement from the troops of Siliwangi into their former areas in West Java. The Long March event occurred because the Dutch canceled the Renville Agreement unilaterally and attacked the Republic by launching the Second Dutch Police Action or the Second Dutch Military Aggression to Yogyakarta. This military offensive is also known as Operation Crow (*Operatie Kraai*).⁵⁴ In Indonesian history, the lethal attack on the heart of the Republic did not destroy it. The fall of Yogyakarta has proven not to be a death knell for the Indonesian Republic. Instead, it was the beginning of a new chapter for the guerrilla struggle.

5.4.2. Shadows of PKI Madiun

From the narrative point of view, the beginning of *Mereka Kembali* (1972) focuses on the start of the *Long March* Siliwangi, after the Dutch attacked the Maguwo airfield. This focus is different from the one shown in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950). In *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, the story begins with a depiction of the Madiun Affair, a rebellion that the troops of Siliwangi were tasked to put out. The story is then followed by the Second

⁵³ This information also revises the erroneous information written by Sasono (2010: 50) and Izharuddin (2017: 56), who stated that the Long March occurred after the signing of the Renville Agreement. However, the historical fact is different.

⁵⁴ See Soetanto (2006); Pour (2009: 37-59); Rockx (2016: 36-41).

Dutch Military Aggression, in which the Siliwangi troops were instructed to move back to West Java. As Heider (1991) claimed in his book, at the first glance, *Mereka Kembali* seems to ignore the Madiun Affair.

In his analysis, Heider wrote a vital point regarding the difference between *Mereka Kembali* and *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, particularly regarding the Madiun Affair. According to Heider, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* portrays the Madiun Affair, while *Mereka Kembali* does not. Heider wrote: "*Mereka Kembali*, ignores [the] Madiun [Affair] completely and begins with the Dutch attack and the Long March" (1991: 103). In this case, I am challenging Heider's views because I do not fully agree with him. The point of my objection is primarily regarding the issue of the Madiun Affair. At first glance, *Mereka Kembali* directly focuses on the Dutch attack on the Maguwo airfield and, after that, the troops of Siliwangi carrying out their Long March. Therefore, the Madiun Affair seems to be neglected in the film.

Moreover, *Mereka Kembali* has no direct visual depiction of the Madiun Affair like in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. However, if analyzed thoroughly, the Madiun Affair issue is not entirely vanished in *Mereka Kembali*. In this film, the Madiun Affair's subject is conveyed briefly through a dialogue between two Siliwangi soldiers in a river. A soldier who washing clothes was startled by a friend who suddenly jumped into the river. He then cursed at his friend, and the two soldiers then mocked each other (Figure 5.9.).

Soldier I (Manik) : "Ciatt..!!" (splash) [a Siliwangi soldier jumped into the river]

Soldier II (Amin) : "Bastard!"

Soldier I (Manik) : "Cuh" (*spitting)

Soldier II (Amin) : "Watch out, you got me all wet!"

Soldier I (Manik) : "It's water, it's supposed to be wet"

Soldier II (Amin) : “You startled me!”

Soldier I (Manik) : “Which startled you more? [This one, or] when you were surrounded by PKI in Madiun? If it weren’t for me, [you’d be dead already] (*doing a neck slashing gesture with his finger).”

Not wanting to be outdone, the startled soldier replied:

Soldier II (Amin) : “Don’t brag about, if it weren’t for me, [your eyes would have been gouged out] (*doing eye gouging gesture with two fingers)”



Figure 5.9. Siliwangi Soldiers in a River.

The information from the dialogue between the two soldiers is rather faint because it coincides with the appearance of the narrator’s voice talking about the Renville Agreement and the unilateral cancellation of the agreement by the Dutch. However, this brief information about the Madiun Affair is vital to the film. It provides information that the troops of Siliwangi that were withdrawn to Yogyakarta were the ones who fought and put out the Madiun Affair, which

is also known as the PKI Madiun rebellion that erupted on September 18, 1948. This scene also briefly depicts the horror of the Madiun Affair.

5.4.3. The Long March Began: Maguwo Airfield and Dutch Paratroopers

The film depicts Dutch fighter planes attacking and bombarding the Maguwo airfield. The Indonesian Air Force (AURI, *Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia*) troops under the leadership of Air Cadet Kasmiran, who was in charge of guarding the Maguwo airfield at that time, tried to offer resistance to the Dutch. However, they were unable to withstand the attack.⁵⁵ Kasmiran then died from the Dutch fighter attack. In this film, Kasmiran is the only historical personage played by an actor.⁵⁶ Whereas other historical personages, such as General Sudirman, are only presented through the words of the narrator and from another character's script, Sergeant Anwar. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Daan Jahja appears in written form on the screen. The Dutch then deployed their paratroopers. These Dutch paratroopers seized control of Maguwo airfield after repelling the remnants of the Indonesian Air Force troops.

The troops of Siliwangi, who were in a river, immediately ran when they learned that the Dutch were attacking Maguwo airfield. Long story short, Suparman's battalion then received a Rapid Order (*Perintah Kilat*) to implement Operational Order (*Perintah Siasat*) No. 1 from Lieutenant Colonel Daan Jahja, which reads: "Implement the Operational Order No. 1. Good Bye-Good Luck."⁵⁷ Daan Jahja was the commander of the Siliwangi Division at that

⁵⁵ For more information about the tenacity of the Indonesian Air Force troops in defending the Maguwo airfield, see Suhatno and Poliman (1993: 77) and Soewito et al. (2008: 169-173).

⁵⁶ The figure of Kasmiran was played by the Head of Operations at the Adi Sucipto Main Air Base (*Kepala Bagian Operasi Pangkalan Udara Utama Adi Sucipto*), the TNI-AU Major Susanto. See *Varia*, No. 747, 9 August 1972, p. 28.

⁵⁷ Original as it appears on screen: "*Perintah Kilat: LAKSANAKAN PERINTAH SIASAT NO.1 SELAMAT DJALAN-SELAMAT BERDJOANG.*"

time.⁵⁸ In the history of the Siliwangi Division leadership, Daan Jahja is recorded as the second commander of the Siliwangi Division.

Although not shown visually, we can infer the military chain of command from the Rapid Order. The Rapid Order came from the Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*) General Sudirman to the Division Commanders, and then to the Battalion Commanders. As is well known, the Rapid Order issued by General Sudirman via radio practically instructed the entire armed forces to implement Operational Order (*Perintah Siasat*) No. 1/1948. One of the crucial orders addressed to the Siliwangi Division troops was to march back to West Java.⁵⁹ Suparman's battalion troops happily welcomed the order. The battalion then started their Long March leaving Yogyakarta.

The scene regarding this Rapid Order is a form of change or adjustment from the scene in the film scenario. In the original film scenario, the scene regarding Rapid Order (*Perintah Kilat*) No. I/P.B./D/48 from General Sudirman was supposed to be depicted on the screen in doubleprint mode, complete with four important points.⁶⁰ However, the scene in the film was changed and adjusted so that the Rapid Order displayed and highlighted is the one from the Siliwangi Division, Commander Daan Jahja. As explained above, we know that the Rapid Order actually came from General Sudirman. It was then conveyed to all armed forces to carry out the plans set for dealing with the Dutch attack.⁶¹

⁵⁸ "The Long March' Divisi Siliwangi," *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, p. 5. Precisely the acting Commander of the Siliwangi Division, who also served as Chief of Staff of the Siliwangi Division (Soetanto, 1994: 81). This happened because the first Commander of the Siliwangi Division, Abdul Haris Nasution, was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (*Wakil Panglima Besar Angkatan Perang*) upon arriving in Yogyakarta after the implementation of the *Hijrah Siliwangi* (Soetanto, 1994: 83; Soetanto, 2007: 72-73; Pusat Sejarah dan Tradisi ABRI, 1990: 37).

⁵⁹ The order is also known as the *Perintah Panglima Besar* (Supreme Commander Order) No. 1 (Siliwangi, 1994: 181).

⁶⁰ For more information on these four important points, see Chapter 2.

⁶¹ Reid (1986: 152).

5.4.4. The Long March Company

The film portrays the Long March company walking down a small river with Prambanan Temple in the background. The company is shown as having a very long line consisting of Siliwangi troops, their wives, children, relatives, and members of the Indonesian Red Cross. There are several pregnant wives among them. They had to march back to West Java. Some of the pregnant wives were carried by their husbands, and some were carried on stretchers. All group members had to walk along the hills and footpaths under the hot sun until the Dutch forces attacked them (Figure 5.10.).



Figure 5.10. The Long March Company.

In my opinion, the scene has succeeded in depicting two important things. First, the Long March company had a very long line. In fact, the company's length once reached 35 km in the actual Long March event.⁶² Second, the number of people who joined the company was enormous. To create this

⁶² "The Long March' Divisi Siliwangi," *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, p. 5.

scene, the film involved around 2500 extras from residents around the filming locations in West Java.⁶³

5.4.5. The Dutch Attacks

5.4.5.1. The Dutch Air Strikes

On its journey, the Long March company was attacked by the Dutch forces from land and air. The attack was started by Dutch fighter planes shooting at and bombing the company. All members of the company panicked and ran for cover. This attack killed some Siliwangi soldiers and other company members.



Figure 5.11. The Dutch Fighter Planes.

One of the images exposed is the death of a pregnant soldier's wife due to the attack. Knowing his wife was dead, her husband was shocked and furious. The soldier attempted to shoot down a Dutch fighter while cursing, "Dutch Murderers, Cruel Bastards!" However, he died after being hit by a fighter plane.

⁶³ Cf. Chapter 4.

Meanwhile, the other troops of Siliwangi did not remain silent; they fought back by shooting at the Dutch fighter planes (Figure 5.11.).

5.4.5.2. The Dutch Cannons

After the air strike, the Long March company received a ground attack. The Dutch cannon troops immediately attacked the company that was trying to save themselves. In the military, cannons are known as anti-infantry weapons. The Dutch cannon troops are shown continuously throwing projectiles at the company. The explosions and bangs sounded very loud. Nonetheless, in the end, the Long March company managed to survive. This scene attempts to depict an actual event experienced by the Long March company in Salem, an area located on the border of Central Java and West Java. This scene is also meant to show that the Dutch at that time had modern weapons.⁶⁴



Figure 5.12. The Dutch Cannon Troops.

⁶⁴ Cf. Chapter 2.

5.4.6. The Event of Serayu River Crossing

The film also attempts to depict the event of the Serayu River crossing. In the actual event, crossing the Serayu River claimed dozens of lives. Suryohadiprojo, a retired Siliwangi soldier, said that the rains that fell in December 1948 caused rivers to flood and their streams to be swift. Thus, crossing the Serayu River was not easy at that time (Suryohadiprojo, 2014).



Figure 5.13. Crossing the Serayu River.

As told in the film, after escaping the Dutch's attacks, the Long March company continued their journey into the night. Some of them use torches as a means of lighting. They kept moving with the company members who were injured by the previous Dutch attack. After passing through a road frequently used by the Dutch patrols, the company is described as having to cross a river with fast currents and slippery rocks. Meanwhile, the river's water level is shown to reach as high as an adult's waist. The company members crossed the river slowly and carefully while holding hands to prevent their bodies from drifting,

drowning, or being swept away by the river currents. The Siliwangi troops are also shown carrying the injured members of the company across the river, including a woman who had just given birth (Figure 5.13.).

5.4.6.1. The Long March Baby

Previously, as told in the film, the Long March company separated into two groups. The first group had passed a road before a Dutch patrol. This group had also successfully crossed a fast-flowing river safely. Meanwhile, the second group was restrained because a Dutch patrol vehicle broke down right on a bridge on the road they had to pass before crossing the river, the one which the first group had passed. In the history of the Indonesian Revolution, the Dutch knew that after Yogyakarta fell under their control, the troops of Siliwangi moved to march back to West Java. Therefore, the Dutch increased patrols and tightened security, particularly in border areas.⁶⁵

This scene depicts a precarious and tense atmosphere of fear that the Dutch patrol would discover the company's whereabouts. In this dangerous condition, a Siliwangi soldier's wife was in the late stages of pregnancy and had to give birth. The situation became even more complicated because all members of the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI, *Palang Merah Indonesia*) had crossed the road so that no one could help. Meanwhile, a Dutch soldier appears to be trying to repair their damaged vehicle, while others are shown in full alert position with their weapons, watching their surroundings. Even though there were no PMI members who could help, the delivery process for the Siliwangi soldier's wife went smoothly because of another Siliwangi soldier's help. A baby boy was finally born safely amid their march back to West Java. The sound of the baby's crying was heard simultaneously with the sound of the Dutch patrol vehicle that had been repaired, making the crying sound faint.

⁶⁵ See Soetanto (2007).

The Dutch patrol then left the location.⁶⁶ Regarding the above experience, Simatupang, in his book *Report from Banaran* (2010: 49-50), once noted: “During the four days of my journey westward with the Siliwangi troops, I saw wives and children joining the march, setting off into the dark, crossing rivers, and climbing steep, slippery hills. I heard about cases of children who had drowned while crossing flood-swollen rivers during pitch-dark nights. Truly, we did not receive our independence as a gift.”

5.4.7. Attacking a Strong Dutch Post

The film also depicts an event of a major road crossing by the Siliwangi troops in Bumiayu. Historically, the troops of Siliwangi had to destroy a strong Dutch post to secure the Long March company’s crossing. As told in the film, some of the company members, who previously separated, managed to join the main company and reunite with them. After that, the battalion commander and a number of leaders of the Siliwangi troops discussed and planned their next journey, which was crossing a large road to continue moving towards West Java. The battalion commander then ordered his men to destroy the strong Dutch post. A detachment was formed to carry out this mission, and Lieutenant Priyatna was appointed to lead it. In the detachment member selection process, the company members’ poor conditions were displayed. They were all exhausted from the long journey they had taken. Many of them fell asleep sitting on the ground. Moreover, some of them also had to endure the pain of the injuries from the previous Dutch attack.

5.4.7.1. Siliwangi Troops Never Say No to Mission

An interesting depiction is shown in the member selection process of the detachment unit assigned to destroy the Dutch post. The troops of Siliwangi are described as soldiers who are always ready to carry out any mission

⁶⁶ In the production stage, this scene made the people who watched it move and shed tears. See Chapter 4.

assigned to them. The patriotism of the Siliwangi soldiers is clearly depicted in this scene. Among the detachment members, there was a soldier who was willing to leave his wife that had just given birth to a baby boy. The wife is shown to be tough and willing to let go of her husband to carry out his duties as a soldier. There is also a newlywed couple who preferred to join the detachment because both of them had promised to live together or die together in the struggle. The wife chose to stay by her husband's side in the mission to destroy the targeted Dutch post rather than follow the main company battalion (Figure 5.14. Above-Left).



Figure 5.14. A Siliwangi Detachment Unit.

The depiction of Siliwangi troops that never say no to a mission confirms the definition of the Siliwangi Division conveyed by the narrator at the beginning of the film. As told in the film, the company battalion then continued their journey and separated from the detachment troops assigned to attack the Dutch post, their target for the following evening. The battalion commander,

Major Suparman, told his subordinate, Lieutenant Priyatna, to regroup in West Java.

The film shows that the detachment consisted of Siliwangi soldiers and members of the Indonesian Red Cross. It is a good combination because they could support each other. In this scene, there is an interesting depiction in which the Siliwangi soldiers tasked with attacking the Dutch post are shown as religious people. Lieutenant Priyatna invited all detachment troops to pray according to their religions before carrying out this task. This information revises Sasono (2010: 51), who said that the prayer with the Siliwangi soldiers was led by “an Islamic scholar or *ulama*.” In fact, the joint prayer was led by the detachment commander, Lieutenant Priyatna (Figure 5.14. Above-Right).

This scene also depicts several Siliwangi soldiers praying in Islamic and Christian ways (Figure. 5.14. Below). I agree with Sasono (2010: 50) and Izharuddin (2017: 56), who stated that Siliwangi is shown as a national army unit consisting of various religions. This scene also depicts tolerance among the religions and unity in diversity. According to Syamsul Fuad, the depiction of the different procedures for praying represents Indonesia’s national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity).⁶⁷ This scene is a portrait of diversity in Indonesia’s population represented from a religious aspect. The choice to display Islamic and Christian prayer procedures is a means to show the existence of religious diversity because Islam and Christianity represent at least the two major religions in Indonesia.⁶⁸

However, in this scene, the Siliwangi soldiers did not pray before starting the Long March, as Sasono (2010: 51) and Izharuddin (2017: 56) claimed. Sasono

⁶⁷ According to Houben, the national motto represents “a symbolic system in which many parts are bound together, embodying commonness among particularity or separateness between that which is politically united” (Houben, 2007: 27). See also Koentjaraningrat (1987: 107); Abdullah (2010: 63-79); Aryandini (2015: 104-105).

⁶⁸ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

and Izharuddin did not accurately perceive the film's contents and the Long March's history. As is well known and explained in this study, the Long March actually started when the troops of Siliwangi left Yogyakarta. Meanwhile, the context of praying in this scene is a form of the Siliwangi troops' piety before they stormed the Dutch post. The attack on the Dutch post was meant to safely secure the main company battalion's journey. The meaning of praying in this scene is a request to God to give them success and safety in carrying out their mission.

On the next day, when the detachment was waiting for nightfall to attack the Dutch post, a poster informing that Republican leader, President Sukarno, had surrendered to the Dutch was shown. A photo of President Sukarno captured by the Dutch is shown on the poster. The poster from the Dutch Information Service (RVD, *Regerings Voorlichtings Dienst*) says (in old Indonesian spelling): "President Soekarno and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia have surrendered. Your struggle will be in vain. Surrender and report to the local authorities. Your safety and life will be guaranteed."⁶⁹

However, the Siliwangi troops believed the poster was simply a Dutch's deception. This scene depicts the attitude of the Siliwangi troops regarding the information on the poster. The attitude is also represented by the words of a soldier named Oedin: "Even though the republic leaders were arrested, I don't fight for these leaders but for Indonesian independence." A moment later, Sergeant Anwar emphasized an important message to all detachment members, that they must not to believe in the Dutch's deception. He recalled a message from the Supreme Commander, General Sudirman, that they must believe in their own strength.

⁶⁹ Original reads: "*Presiden Soekarno dan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia telah mendjerah. Perdjjuanganmu akan sia-sia. Mendjerahlah dan melaporkn kepada pemerintah setempat. Keamanan dan djiwamu akan didjamin.*"

In the history of the Indonesian War for Independence, after the Dutch succeeded in taking over the control in Yogyakarta, they began spreading information to the public that the leaders of the Republic of Indonesia had surrendered to the Dutch. This information is disseminated through various media, such as the press, radio, posters, and pamphlets. Nasution revealed that, at that time, many pamphlets made by the Dutch contained such information (1983, II: 270). In that period, pamphlet wars occurred between Indonesia and the Dutch, each of which was represented by the Ministry of Information (Kempen, *Kementerian Penerangan*) and the secret service of the Dutch army (IVG, *Informatie voor Geheimen*).⁷⁰

5.4.7.2. The Dutch Post

In the film, a detachment unit of the Siliwangi troops is shown on the side of a small river. They were preparing to attack their target, a Dutch post. The Dutch post was surrounded by a barbed wire fence equipped with a machine gun and reinforced by a tank bearing a Dutch Lion's logo (*De Nederlandse Leeuw*)⁷¹ and a Dutch flag sticker (Figure 5.15. Above-Right and Below-Left). This portrayal gives the impression that this is a strong Dutch post because it was equipped with the excellent defense equipment that the Dutch had during the Indonesian Revolution. Meanwhile, several Dutch soldiers are shown in the post. A Dutch soldier with an Ambonese accent called the troops of Siliwangi "extremist dogs." He confidently said that he would finish off the troops of Siliwangi if they dared to come to the post.

This soldier representation reminds us of the fact that many of the Dutch soldiers during the Indonesian Revolution were Ambonese. In this regard, Drake wrote: "Most of Java and Sumatra, by contrast, remained part of the revolutionary Republic. The Ambonese continued to support the Dutch and

⁷⁰ "Jogja Sama Dgn Medan Perang," *Minggu Pagi*, No. 19, Tahun II, 4 June 1950, p. 9.

⁷¹ The lion is the national symbol of the Netherlands (Swantoro, 2016: 7).

even fought against their fellow countrymen's revolutionary struggle for independence. Inevitably by so doing, they aroused bitter resentment" (1989: 42).⁷² The Indonesian freedom fighters hated them and called them "NICA dogs" (Spector, 2008: 181; Saleh, 2000: 85). As stated by Cotterell, Ambonese soldiers were known to be loyal to the Dutch (2014: 359). Meanwhile, in the Dutch post, another Dutch soldier is shown drinking beer or other alcoholic beverages.

Precisely at the designated time, the troops of Siliwangi began to attack the Dutch post. Several Dutch soldiers were killed. Meanwhile, the battalion's main company immediately resumed their journey after hearing that the Siliwangi detachment was starting to engage in combat. At the Dutch post, a heavy battle took place between the troops of Siliwangi and the Dutch forces. A series of gunshots and booms of exploding grenades sounded one after another. The Dutch soldiers tried to defend the post tenaciously. However, the troops of Siliwangi were no less persistent in pushing their attack and breaking through the barbed wire fence. The intensity of the fighting caused the Dutch tank to catch fire.⁷³ In the end, the Dutch post was finally destroyed, and all the Dutch soldiers at the post were killed (Figure 5.15. Below-Right).

The troops of Siliwangi then evacuated their fallen and injured comrades. They all then left the location before the Dutch reinforcements arrived. The battle left three Siliwangi soldiers dead. One of them was a soldier named Oedin, who had recently become a baby boy's father. This scene looks like a tragic death, but this is not the case for a true soldier. It is the real struggle of a freedom fighter for Indonesian independence, just like what Oedin said when he was still alive. The Siliwangi troops then buried their three comrades. A soldier

⁷² According to Fusayama, "the Ambonese were heretics of the nation called *Belanda Hitam* (Black Dutch), even though they were an Indonesian tribe. Hired by the Dutch as soldiers, they felt it was their highest honor to oppress others of the same race, under the protection of the Dutch forces" (2010: 44).

⁷³ See Chapter 4.

prayed for the three fallen heroes in an Islamic way, even though one of the soldiers who died was a Christian.



Figure 5.15. A Strong Dutch Post.

5.4.8. Chased by the Dutch Forces

In implementing the Operational Order to march back to West Java, the Siliwangi troops had to keep moving because they were being chased by the Dutch forces (Soetanto, 2007). In the film, the troops of Siliwangi, who had just succeeded in destroying a Dutch post, also had to flee from the Dutch forces' pursuit. They went through mortar attacks from the Dutch soldiers. Nevertheless, the troops of Siliwangi remained persistent and continued their journey forward while avoiding the mortar attacks.

5.4.8.1. A Depiction of Patriotism

Previously, in a scene, a soldier named Amin is shown to be seriously injured due to the battle where the troops of Siliwangi destroyed the Dutch post.

Amin's wound got worse on the way because there was no medicine. His comrades wanted to carry him on a stretcher. Sergeant Anwar thought that Amin had the right to live because he was a true freedom fighter, not a mercenary. However, Amin chose to be left behind rather than become a burden to the entire Siliwangi troops. Moreover, the Dutch forces pursuing them were getting closer. With a weapon in his hands, Amin chose to intercept the Dutch troops from the hill where he was.

Meanwhile, Amin's comrades had to leave immediately and continue their journey to escape the Dutch's pursuit. Amin managed to shoot the leader of the Dutch forces who was chasing them. However, he then died when a Dutch soldier threw a grenade at him. Amin's comrades, who witnessed his death from a distance, looked sad. Nonetheless, they all fully understood the risks of the struggle to maintain independence. Sergeant Anwar promised to continue Amin's struggle and prayed for him to rest in peace on God's side. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Priyatna praised him as a good and brave freedom fighter and a hero.

It is a clear depiction of a patriotic soldier who is willing to sacrifice. Amin chose not to become a burden for the Siliwangi troops that had to keep moving to West Java. This scene is interesting because it affirms what the narrator said at the film's beginning about the troops of Siliwangi. The narrator says: "They are not cowards, nor are they mercenaries. They are patriots of the nation who continue to defend the Republic of Indonesia and Pancasila which is based on the 1945 Constitution. *Patah Tumbuh, Hilang Berganti* [For each fallen, two will grow]. *Esa Hilang, Dua Terbilang* [Never give up, until you make it]." In the Indonesian Revolution, as noted by Mulder, "patriots went a long way in bringing sacrifices. Many of them even offered their lives" (2005: 48).

5.4.9. The Dutch/NICA Lurah

During their march back to West Java, the troops of Siliwangi stopped in a forest near Kromo Village. In the forest, a soldier sang a song called *Sapu Tangan dari Bandung Selatan* with his guitar while other soldiers listened with great emotion. The song, composed by Ismail Marzuki, tells the story of a person who has to leave his loved one to fight for the sake of his nation and country. On this occasion, the troops of Siliwangi were also waiting for a report from their two comrades, who had not returned from observing the situation in Kromo Village.

Later, it was found out that the two Siliwangi soldiers had been captured by the Dutch. Both of them were later executed by being shot dead because they did not want to provide any information about the other troops of Siliwangi. They both did not want to be traitors. In this context, the two Siliwangi soldiers represent the loyalty of the soldiers to their corps and the republic. This scene confirms that the troops of Siliwangi are not traitors but brave heroes. The scene also depicts the hatred of a Dutch captain, who calls the republican soldiers (Siliwangi) robbers, wild gangs, and groups of hungry bandits.

Meanwhile, the troops of Siliwangi, who were in the forest, finally learned that the Dutch had captured their two comrades from the information given by a resident of Kromo Village. They also had to face the bitter reality that they had to fight against their own fellow Indonesians because the village chief (*lurah*) was a NICA *Lurah*, a traitor who sided with the Dutch. In the village, a Dutch captain, Van der Kloot, showed the villagers a propaganda poster. He said the Indonesian leaders and government had surrendered to the Dutch Empire. He also said that the Dutch Empire was kind and wanted to help the Indonesian people. In a mocking tone, the Dutch captain said that the Indonesian people would be given independence after they got smarter, but not now, in about 100 years.

The Dutch are also shown giving food and clothes to the villagers. Meanwhile, the traitorous *lurah* of Kromo Village is depicted as someone who truly hated the republican troops (Siliwangi) and called them troublemakers. He is also portrayed as having a habit of drinking beer or alcoholic beverages like the Dutch forces. Aside from that, the *lurah* also has the nicest house in the village. The house is apparently one of the results of his alignment with the Dutch. Nevertheless, the NICA *Lurah* eventually died after being shot by a Siliwangi soldier.⁷⁴

5.4.9.1. The Dutch/NICA Spies

The film also depicts a Dutch spy named Sentul. He was a servant of the *lurah* of Kromo Village. He had a sign, a small Dutch flag on his pants. When the Indonesian Revolution took place in Indonesian history, many NICA spies came from Indonesians.⁷⁵ According to Matu Mona, the spies were paid tens of thousands of rupiah per day. The enemy's spy mark was a triangular patch of color on some parts of their bodies, such as bellies or arms.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Mangunwijaya also reported about the phenomenon of NICA spies. According to him, NICA spies usually have stamps on their armpits and groins (1987: 67).

In the film, Sentul's character is portrayed as stupid because he could not count the number of Siliwangi troops he spied on in the forest. His stupidity caused the death of a Dutch Captain because, due to his report, the captain only brought a few Dutch troops to attack the Siliwangi troops. The Dutch spy finally accepted the same fate as the *lurah*. He died in a battle facing the

⁷⁴ During the Indonesian Revolution, NICA became the common term among the nationalists "to signify all types of plots, plans, and organizations aimed to reestablish colonialism" (Spector, 2008: 180).

⁷⁵ Spector even noted, "those suspected of sympathy with the Dutch or of general disloyalty were often labeled 'NICA spies'" (2008: 180). For the freedom fighters, the term "NICA" always evokes feelings of hatred and revenge. NICA means death, betrayal, Dutch colonialism, enemies of Indonesia, synonymous with the Dutch and their accomplices, as what many Ambonese did. Therefore, they must be exterminated (Saleh, 2000: 88).

⁷⁶ Quoted in Basundoro (2013: 137).

Siliwangi troops. The deaths of the two traitors in the film give an important message that the payback for traitors in the national struggle is death.

5.4.10. Arriving at Home: West Java

5.4.10.1 The Troops of Siliwangi welcomed by Villagers

After passing through a pro-Dutch village, the troops of Siliwangi arrived in West Java. They are shown to be very excited. After going through an uphill struggle, they finally arrived in their home village. They cheered and ran down the hill towards a nearby village (Figure 5.16. Above-Right). What is interesting about this scene is that the troops of Siliwangi are once again portrayed as religious troops. This depiction is represented by several soldiers who are shown expressing their gratitude to God in Islamic and Christian ways.

Upon arrival at the village, the troops of Siliwangi were greeted by villagers who shouted the word "*merdeka!*" (freedom) many times (Figure 5.16. Below-Left). The troops of Siliwangi were then entertained at a banquet and prayer led by the chief of the village.⁷⁷ The film's assistant director, Syamsul Fuad, said that this scene depicts the strong bond between the villagers and Siliwangi troops. The villagers are always ready to support the Siliwangi troops in the struggle to defend Indonesia's independence.⁷⁸

Although this scene is enough to portray the heroic role of a village in the Indonesian Revolution, I think the portrayal is far less than what is written in the film's scenario. In the film's scenario, there is a scene showing a village chief's heroic attitude through the following statement: "No sir, we as villagers are proud to help [the troops of Siliwangi] because this struggle is the struggle

⁷⁷ The depiction of the *lurah* here was confirmed by the film's assistant director, Syamsul Fuad, interview, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta. This confirmation is important because at first glance the figure that appears in the scene looks like an *ulama*, Islamic cleric dressed in all white.

⁷⁸ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

of all Indonesian people.”⁷⁹ However, this scene in the scenario is not shown in the film.

Then, the depiction of the Siliwangi troops as religious people is also presented again in a scene showing some soldiers praying [*salat*] while some others standing guard around them. The Siliwangi troops led by Lieutenant Priyatna occupied the village as their temporary base because the village was actually the territory of another Siliwangi battalion. As told in the film *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, this information also confirms that other Siliwangi battalions also carried out the Long March. In the history of the Siliwangi Division, the Siliwangi battalions had to march back from their *Hijrah* locations to their original bases in West Java.



Figure 5.16. Siliwangi Troops arriving in West Java.

⁷⁹ Cf. The original film scenario. The scenario is now kept in Sinematek Indonesia, Jakarta.

Up to this point, the Long March event should actually have ended because the troops of Siliwangi had arrived in West Java. Moreover, it was later discovered that the company of the main battalion, led by Major Suparman, had arrived safely at their intended location in West Java. However, the film also shows the difficulty of the struggle of the Siliwangi troops after they returned to West Java as a continuation of the Long March struggle. The latter story particularly focuses on the struggle of Lieutenant Priyatna and his troops to reach their headquarters and rejoin their battalion under the leadership of Major Suparman.

5.4.11. Negotiation with Darul Islam

Upon their arrival in West Java, the troops of Siliwangi discussed the whereabouts of Darul Islam. The stance of Darul Islam was still unclear to the Siliwangi troops as to whether they were friends or foes. In the film, Darul Islam is referred to as a "*gerombolan*," or a gang. This situation complicated the struggle because the war against the Dutch had yet to be completed, and other challenges from within the nation had emerged. Sergeant Anwar called the Darul Islam "*musuh dalam selimut*." This phrase literally means "an enemy under the blanket," or, in the English expression, "a wolf in sheep's clothing," a close friend who betrays you. According to Torchia, "the traitor seemed like such an intimate friend that you both slept under the same cover." Meanwhile, in another interpretation, the blanket is a "convenient hiding place for the betrayer" (Torchia, 2007: 46).

Regarding this matter, the troops of Siliwangi are depicted as the party that took the initiative to negotiate with Darul Islam. As told in the film, a Siliwangi officer, Major Djaja, asked for a guard team from the Siliwangi troops under Lieutenant Priyatna to accompany him in the negotiation with Darul Islam leaders at their headquarters. The negotiation was aimed at inviting Darul

Islam to help the troops of Siliwangi fight the Dutch and not regard them as their enemy.

5.4.11.1. The Beheading of Major Djaja

Darul Islam's stance is depicted in the negotiation. As their leader stated, Darul Islam refused to cooperate with the Siliwangi troops against the Dutch. They claimed that West Java had become an Islamic state. Therefore, the troops of Siliwangi, as the republican people, had no right to return to West Java, especially after they were deceived and expelled by the Dutch from Yogyakarta.⁸⁰ Then, in a high tone, the Darul Islam leader snapped at the Siliwangi negotiators with the words: "Repent, you infidels!"⁸¹ (Figure 5.17. Above-Left).

As the lead negotiator for the Siliwangi, Major Djaja denied Darul Islam's accusations. He emphasized that the government of the Republic of Indonesia still meant well and that West Java remained the Republic of Indonesia's territory (Figure 5.17. Above-Right). Meanwhile, Sergeant Anwar, another Siliwangi negotiator and the leader of Major Djaja's guard team, said Darul Islam had complicated the struggle because they had indirectly helped the Dutch. He then snapped back: "It is you who should repent and come to your senses!"⁸² The negotiation was a total failure. The soldiers of Siliwangi, who took part in the negotiation, were then arrested by the Darul Islam soldiers. The Darul Islam leader then ordered his men to kill them.

⁸⁰ In Darul Islam's view, the troops of Siliwangi had been deceived by the Dutch through the Renville Agreement, which forced them to withdraw from West Java. Then they were expelled and returned to West Java due to the Dutch Second Military Aggression.

⁸¹ "*Bertobatlah kalian kafir-kafir!*"

⁸² "*Kalianlah yang seharusnya bertobat dan insaf!*"



Figure 5.17. A Failed Negotiation.

Some of the soldiers of Siliwangi were executed by being shot dead, while Major Djaja was beheaded by a Darul Islam soldier using the sword of the Darul Islam leader. The incident of Major Djaja's beheading is one of the most emphasized events in the film.⁸³ In the history of the Siliwangi Division, this depiction was inspired by the incident where Major Utarya and his two bodyguards were killed after negotiating with Darul Islam. The negotiation was meant to invite Darul Islam to join forces to fight the Dutch. However, the negotiation failed. The Darul Islam then killed the Siliwangi soldiers in a heinous and cruel way in Cidugaleun Village [Tasikmalaya], where they beheaded Major Utarya.⁸⁴ The act of beheading is not visually shown in the film. This action is represented by a sound effect of a sword slashing and a Darul Islam executioner licking a sword covered in blood (Figure 5.17. Below-

⁸³ Cf. Chapter 4.

⁸⁴ Cf. Siliwangi (1994[1968]). At the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum, there is a painting depicting this brutal event.

Left). The Darul Islam leader praised the executioner for implementing the religious duty to struggle [*perintah jihad*].

In addition to beheading Siliwangi officer Major Djaja, the cruelty of Darul Islam is also portrayed in a scene where they shot the members of Major Djaja's guard team who were relaxing in a small shop waiting for the negotiation process (Figure 5.17. Below-Right). The remnants of Major Djaja's guard team were then rounded up to be executed by shooting. However, thanks to their agility, these Siliwangi soldiers finally managed to escape death.

According to Syamsul Fuad, the beheading scene was deliberately not depicted in the film. The film does not show overly graphic violence and brutality to maintain ethics and avoid "the censorship scissors." Syamsul Fuad stated, "We already know how sharp the sensor scissors are. Scenes that show overly graphic violence and brutality will definitely be cut. Apart from that, this is also done to maintain ethics."⁸⁵ What Syamsul Fuad was worried about made perfect sense because the Film Censorship Board (BSF, *Badan Sensor Film*) at that time, under R.M. Sutarto, was known to be more critical and firm on banning things from broadcasting than BSF in the previous period. During R.M. Sutarto's leadership period, BSF was known to be very strict in censoring Indonesian and imported films. At that time, there were five criteria for film censorship used by BSF, including decency, security, socio-politics, culture, and religion.⁸⁶

5.4.12. The Dutch Attacking a Village

While they were in the village that became their temporary base, the Siliwangi troops were attacked by the Dutch. The Dutch forces stormed the village with

⁸⁵ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

⁸⁶ "Perfilman Kita Sejak 'Terang Boelan'," *Topik*, Tahun 1, No. 10, 29 March 1972.

their modern weaponry. The villagers were depicted running for their lives. A number of the villagers' houses are shown damaged, destroyed, or burned by Dutch mortars. Knowing that the Dutch were attacking and heading for the village, Lieutenant Priyatna immediately ordered his troops to move, heading out of the village. They also asked the villagers not to panic and evacuate immediately. The troops of Siliwangi chose to fight outside the village to avoid more casualties from the villagers. In other words, they did not want the villagers to become victims.

On the one hand, this scene shows the Siliwangi troops' concern for the safety of the villagers. On the other hand, it shows how the Dutch forces did not care about the villagers' safety. The Dutch kept attacking and showering the village with mortars. Their attacks not only damaged, destroyed, and burned many houses but also killed a number of villagers.

These portrayals assert that war is an unpleasant story (Said, 1994: 29). War is always a traumatic and tragic event. "War always is" (Henriot, 2012: 25). War not only kills many people but also destroys property, productive facilities, physical structures, and the environment. War is a terrible threat that many people will try to avoid by fleeing it (Stein dan Russett, 1980: 399-424; Rasler and Thompson, 1992: 245; Henriot, 2012: 54). The troops of Siliwangi finally succeeded in driving back the Dutch forces and won the battle outside the village. Afterward, the troops of Siliwangi continued their journey to rejoin their main battalion.

5.4.13. The Troops of Siliwangi Poisoning Incident by Darul Islam

The film also intends to emphasize how difficult the struggle of the Siliwangi troops was. A Siliwangi officer said that the Siliwangi troops' struggle was almost beyond the limits of ordinary humans. Their condition was challenging because they had to fight both the Dutch and the Darul Islam simultaneously.

It was said that the troops of Siliwangi had to starve for two days and continued on their journey to reach a village where they could get food.

However, the village they reached was not an ordinary one or a pro-government (republic) village. It was a Darul Islam village.⁸⁷ The village is portrayed as very unusual because there were no villagers who welcomed the troops of Siliwangi like other villages usually did. They were only greeted by three villagers and the village chief (*lurah*). In this scene, it can be seen that the movements and facial expressions of the *lurah* and the three villagers are suspicious. The *lurah* said that on that day, the village was holding a seventh-day ceremony to honor the spirits of the freedom fighters who died against the Dutch. For this reason, they invited the troops of Siliwangi to commemorate those who had sincerely fought and fallen (Figure 5.18. Above-Left).



Figure 5.18. The Poisoning of Siliwangi Troops by Darul Islam

⁸⁷ For more information on Darul Islam village, see Jackson (1980: 28).

Lieutenant Priyatna thanked the villagers for their attention to the Siliwangi troops. The *lurah* and the three villagers then left the location after inviting the troops of Siliwangi to enjoy the various foods they served. The food was served on tables arranged lengthwise in an open area in the village. The hungry Siliwangi troops immediately ate the food. They ate voraciously (Figure 5.18. Above-Right).

Meanwhile, the scene then shows muzzles of the Darul Islam troops appearing from behind the houses' and walls' holes around the site. The Darul Islam forces were ready to attack the troops of Siliwangi. Sergeant Anwar, who realized that the food had been poisoned, shouted to tell his comrades. When the poison began to work, the Darul Islam forces immediately attacked the Siliwangi troops (Figure 5.18. Below). Several Siliwangi soldiers, including a soldier and his pregnant wife, were killed in the attack. Meanwhile, most of the other soldiers managed to retreat and save themselves.

This scene and the previous scene regarding the negotiation between the troops of Siliwangi and Darul Islam reinforce the depiction that Darul Islam was very hostile to the troops of Siliwangi and did not want them to return to West Java. The poisoning incident done by Darul Islam is also one of the emphasized events in the film. This event was inspired by a true story of a poisoning incident experienced by the Siliwangi troops in Ciamis.⁸⁸ In the history of the Siliwangi Division, many food poisoning incidents were committed by Darul Islam against the troops of Siliwangi upon their return to West Java.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Cf. Chapter 4.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Siliwangi* (1994[1968]). A painting depicting the poisoning incident can be found at Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum.

5.4.14. The Siliwangi Banner: A Symbol of Eternal Pride and Honor

Another highlighted depiction in this film is the rescue of *Panji Siliwangi* (Siliwangi Banner) from the Darul Islam forces.⁹⁰ In *Mereka Kembali*, the Siliwangi troops led by Lieutenant Priyatna were the ones tasked with carrying and guarding the Siliwangi Banner.⁹¹ For the troops of Siliwangi, the banner is a symbol of the Siliwangi Division's eternal pride and honor. The banner is also an important identity of the Siliwangi Division. On one of its sides, it reads "*Tentara Republik Indonesia Divisi Siliwangi*" (Siliwangi Division of the Indonesian Republican Army).⁹² Therefore, it is not surprising that this banner is highly valued and upheld by the Siliwangi troops. The troops of Siliwangi would do anything, even sacrifice their lives, to secure, defend, and ensure the safety of the Siliwangi Banner, so that it did not fall to the enemy's hands.

As told in the film, Lieutenant Priyatna's troops, who had just arrived at the Siliwangi Division headquarters, were happily welcomed by their families (Figure 5.19. Above-Left). Meanwhile, a meeting to discuss the distribution of the struggle funds was also held at the headquarters. This meeting was attended by Siliwangi officers. The struggle fund distribution was an order from the Siliwangi Division's Chief of Staff to be carried out by a senior Siliwangi officer. The meeting was briefly interrupted after a villager reported that a Dutch patrol was heading to the headquarters.

Major Suparman then assigned Lieutenant Priyatna's troops to block the arrival of the Dutch patrol. This action was intended to give time for the division staff and officers in the meeting to pack up and get away from the location. However, after the struggle funds were distributed to the Siliwangi

⁹⁰ For the original story about saving the Siliwangi Banner, see Parhadimulyo (1997: 55-60); Siliwangi (1994: 201-204).

⁹¹ For more information on the meaning of *Panji Siliwangi*, see Siliwangi (1994: xix-xx).

⁹² Original reads: "*Tentara R.I. Angkatan Darat Divisie Siliwangi*".

officers, the Darul Islam troops attacked the headquarters (Figure 5.19. Below-Left). The meeting broke up and the participants immediately left to save themselves.

In this attack, Darul Islam's brutality is portrayed in a clear and perfect way. The film depicts how evil Darul Islam was by showing them killing innocent women. They shot at the women who were panicking and running for their lives. Shortly after that, the Darul Islam forces succeeded in controlling the Siliwangi Division headquarters and arrested an officer named Puspa Lubis. The officer was tortured and held in a room. In the room, he then accidentally found a backpack containing the Siliwangi Banner. He was surprised and immediately hid the Siliwangi Banner under his uniform (Figure 5.19. Below-Right).



Fig. 5.19. The Siliwangi Banner and Darul Islam Forces.

Meanwhile, after learning that the Darul Islam attacked their headquarters from a villager, Lieutenant Priyatna's troops, who were previously assigned to ambush a Dutch patrol, returned to the headquarters. By then, they realized that the Darul Islam had conned them with the Dutch patrol information. These Siliwangi troops then rushed to save the Siliwangi Banner, which they thought had fallen to the enemy. Even though many of them were injured and shot dead, the troops of Siliwangi are depicted bravely and fearlessly advancing to attack the Darul Islam troops. One officer who had been shot even reminded his men to save the Siliwangi Banner. The Siliwangi troops' persistent attack finally succeeded in driving back the Darul Islam forces. The enemy troops chose to flee. Moreover, a number of their troops were dead.

In this scene, there is an iconic fight between Sergeant Anwar and a one-eyed Darul Islam soldier. It was a deadly one-on-one cowboy style battle. The camera shows a close-up of their faces. Their hands each pulled their guns and prepared to shoot. The two then shot at each other. The one-eyed man fell and died first. Meanwhile, Sergeant Anwar was also shot and then fell to the ground. Shortly before Sergeant Anwar died, he was asking an officer about the whereabouts of the Siliwangi Banner. The officer took out the Siliwangi Banner from under his uniform and told Sergeant Anwar that the Siliwangi Banner had been saved. Sergeant Anwar was very happy and grateful after knowing this. He then kissed and embraced the Siliwangi Banner. A moment later, Sergeant Anwar died in the arms of an officer and the woman he loved.

From the film's depiction, I agree with Heider's opinion that, for the troops of Siliwangi, the Siliwangi Banner "must be protected from Darul Islam at all costs" (1991: 129). The depiction of a struggle to save the Siliwangi Banner emphasizes how the troops of Siliwangi highly uphold the Siliwangi Banner as a symbol of their eternal pride and honor for the division. At the end of the film, the Siliwangi Banner flutters side by side with the *Merah Putih* (Red-and-

White) flag, symbolizing the strong determination of the Siliwangi Division to continue the struggle in the future.⁹³

Meanwhile, in the film's last scene, a funeral ceremony for the fallen Siliwangi soldiers due to the Darul Islam attack, important moral messages are conveyed using a monologue. The messages appear to have come from the deceased Sergeant Anwar. However, these important moral messages actually come from the Siliwangi Division and are addressed to the audience, especially the younger generation.

My dear father and mother, my lovely lover, my comrades in arms, my people, I have nothing else to pass on to you other than this piece of yellow cloth [Siliwangi Banner] that always inspires and inflames my fighting spirit as a soldier of Siliwangi. I hope that under the wave of this cloth, the lofty Red-and-White flag (*Sang Saka Merah Putih*) shall also wave. The One Almighty God protects and guides you to continue the struggle for the welfare of the people on the basis of the *Pancasila* that we have longed for since the proclamation of independence. The days are not always bright. The sun will set and be gone. I shall too be gone. Goodbye.

5.4.14.1. Darul Islam's Red Flag

There is an interesting part in the scene where Darul Islam attacked the Siliwangi Division headquarters: a depiction of Darul Islam's red flag with the symbol of a crescent moon and a white star in the middle (Figure 5.20.). This depiction of the red flag escaped Heider's (1991) observation. The field observation at the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum⁹⁴ found that the Darul Islam rebellion led by S.M. Kartosuwirjo in West Java had two flags: a red flag and a green one (Figure 5.21.).

⁹³ The Siliwangi Banner is now housed in the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum in Bandung.

⁹⁴ Visit particularly Room 5: "DI/TIII Rebellion in West Java." The museum is located at 38 Lembong Street, Bandung.



Figure 5.20. Darul Islam Troops and their Red Flag.

Each flag has its own meaning. The green flag is the staff flag, while the red one is the combat flag carried when sabotaging, robbing, terrorizing, attacking enemies, and other combat-related affairs. These two Darul Islam flags can be found in the *Museum Waspada Purbawisesa* (Museum of Eternal Vigilance). According to McGregor, the museum is focused on showing Darul Islam's rebellion as "a lesson of the past" (McGregor, 2007: 186). Therefore, it is not surprising that the museum displays "charts, maps, pictures, archival documents, miniatures, and memorabilia laid out in such a way as to establish an intelligible framework for the TNI operations against the Darul Islam across the archipelago" (Formichi, 2012: 187). The red flag depiction complements the details regarding Darul Islam's attributes that I have previously reviewed.⁹⁵ This depiction proves that the film has good details about the Darul Islam forces.

⁹⁵ Cf. Chapter 4.



Figure 5.21. Darul Islam Flags.
Source: Photograph by the author.

Darul Islam receives quite a lot of emphasis in the film. It can be seen from the large portion of the film's story that depicts Darul Islam and the crimes they committed. Syamsul Fuad confirmed that *Mereka Kembali* does put a special emphasis on Darul Islam. According to Syamsul Fuad, the bloody conflict between the troops of Siliwangi and Darul Islam is a historical fact. This event is an inseparable part of the history of the Siliwangi Division's struggle. When the Siliwangi troops returned to West Java, they were fighting not only the Dutch but also Darul Islam. Syamsul Fuad explained:

Mereka Kembali was made to depict historical events that the public, especially the younger generation, needs to know and remember. In this case, the historical events revolve around the nation's struggle during the Indonesian Revolution, or the Indonesian War for Independence. The main event is about the history of the Siliwangi Division's struggle. This film is expected to strengthen public historical consciousness in general and the younger generation in particular, so that we can all understand the hardships of the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence because, at that time, we were not only against the Dutch but also our fellow Indonesians, the Darul Islam.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

Apart from the conflict between Darul Islam and the Siliwangi Division during the Indonesian Revolution, Darul Islam's rebellion was an event not too far in the past. It seemed like just yesterday—a close memory yet to be forgotten. The Darul Islam movement even continued to live on after the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to Indonesia on December 27, 1949. Therefore, the emphasis on Darul Islam in the film's perspective is not at all surprising. Such emphasis is placed because Darul Islam was an enemy of the state, which, at that time, was not considered completely destroyed even though its leader, S.M. Kartosuwirjo, was shot dead on September 12, 1962.

In fact, the Darul Islam movement did not automatically stop after Kartosuwirjo's death because it transformed and rebuilt itself through different methods (see Solahudin, 2013).⁹⁷ This phenomenon certainly brought concern to the military, especially the National Army, because they had bitter experiences with Darul Islam. In this regard, Sebastian mentioned that, besides communism, Darul Islam had become a trauma for the military (2006: 44). Moreover, Darul Islam's rebellion has left "an institutional legacy of bitterness and distrust toward political Islam in the Indonesian army that has only recently declined" (Drakeley, 2005: 89). The rebellion itself is also known as a long and bloody uprising, spanning from the war for independence up to 14 years later, when Kartosuwirjo was caught. Therefore, Darul Islam's rebellion was a serious obstacle, threat, and challenge to the Republic of Indonesia (Feillard and Madinier, 2011: 301). Abdul Haris Nasution, a former Minister of Defense and Security, even called Darul Islam a time bomb of the revolution because this problem had emerged since the Indonesian Revolution and could only end in the early 1960s (Nasution, 2011: 212).

⁹⁷ Solahudin's study is interesting because it elaborates on the Darul Islam movement after the death of S.M. Kartosuwirjo.

The time between Kartosuwirjo's arrest and execution in 1962 and the production of *Mereka Kembali* in 1972 was only about ten years. This interval is relatively short, which is certainly not enough to heal the trauma caused by Darul Islam's treason. Therefore, the New Order regime, backed by the military, felt the need to remind the public about Darul Islam. At that time, the New Order was promoting the importance of the Pancasila as the "sole ideological foundation" (*azas tunggal*) (Sebastian, 2006: 44). Sebastian wrote, "Hence, any threat to the Pancasila ideology and the 1945 Constitution by any group proclaiming or subscribing to a competing ideology became a threat to national security" (Sebastian, 2006: 46).

According to McGregor, the two main threats are none other than the extreme right [extreme Islam, e.g., Darul Islam] and the extreme left [communists] (McGregor, 2007: 177). The military themselves perceive what Darul Islam and PKI Madiun did as an act of treason (Sundhaussen, 1982: 46). Therefore, through this film, the military feels that it is important and necessary to raise the audience's awareness about the dangers of the extreme right movement trying to turn this country into an Islamic state. The film is a means to remind the public and strengthen their historical consciousness that, in the past, tragic events such as the cruel and evil Darul Islam's rebellion occurred.

In the film, the emphasis on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution is shown clearly, one of which is through the narration conveyed by the narrator. From the production background, the film's existence is like killing two birds with one stone. On the one hand, the 1945 Generation's views on the importance of the 1945 Values or the 1945 Spirit can be transferred to the younger generation. On the other hand, the film also portrays Darul Islam as a serious threat to Pancasila and national security. What Darul Islam did in the film was a depiction of anti-Pancasila and anti-NKRI actions because they intended to establish a state within a state.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Both are important and inseparable parts of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Moreover, Pancasila is a gift for this nation. Indonesia is a Pancasila state. Yudi Latif even calls it a “par excellence state” (see Latif, 2011). The problem is, during the New Order era, Pancasila was manipulated and used to justify the disgraceful practices of the regime to perpetuate its power (Riyadi, 1999: 94).

The word “Darul Islam” is never explicitly mentioned in the two films. In *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)*, Darul Islam is referred to as “DI,” which stands for Darul Islam. Meanwhile, in *Mereka Kembali*, Darul Islam is referred to as a “gerombolan,” or a gang. Only one scene in *Mereka Kembali* mentions Darul Islam as “DI.” The scene is the one depicting a villager reporting to Lieutenant Priyatna that Darul Islam was attacking the Siliwangi Division headquarters. In the scene, the villager says, “Sir, the Siliwangi Division headquarters is being attacked by DI.”

Overall, the portrayal of Darul Islam in the two films lies in a negative depiction or negative sense because they attacked the Siliwangi troops who were returning to West Java. Darul Islam is portrayed as having trapped, ambushed, and even poisoned the food of the Siliwangi troops. Both films also present Darul Islam’s stance, which rejects the presence of the Siliwangi troops in West Java. However, in *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* (1950), there is still some brief information about the origins of Darul Islam, telling that they were once part of the Indonesian National Army (TNI, *Tentara Nasional Indonesia*). Meanwhile, in *Mereka Kembali* (1972), there is no such information. Darul Islam is shown as no more than a mere national traitor. *Mereka Kembali* perfectly displays Darul Islam’s cunning, cruelty, and brutality. I agree with Heider, who said that the film depicts Darul Islam as “crazed treacherous bandits devoid of religious feelings” (1991: 105).

Regarding the depiction of Darul Islam in *Mereka Kembali*, Sasono claims that Darul Islam committed crimes such as robbery and rape. In addition, Darul Islam also called the troops of Siliwangi infidels (*kafir*) (Sasono, 2010: 50). However, based on my analysis, not all of Sasono's claims are accurate. I agree that Darul Islam hatefully accused the troops of Siliwangi of being infidels. However, I do not find any scenes depicting the Darul Islam militia committing rape and robbery. If what is meant by "robbery" here is the confiscation of the Siliwangi troops' weapons by Darul Islam in the failed negotiation scene, such a depiction is indeed shown in the film. However, I can say that the depiction of the Darul Islam militia committing rape is not in the film. When I asked one of the film's assistant directors, Syamsul Fuad, about this matter, he said that there is no depiction of Darul Islam committing rape. According to him, the film does not depict such a portrayal because it intends to depict the atrocities of Darul Islam according to the historical facts.⁹⁸

5.5. Conclusion

Historical films are one of the sources of historical event portrayals. These cinematic works are a way to find depictions of the Indonesian Revolution. These films attempt to reconstruct various events that occurred during the infamously extraordinary period in Indonesian history through various modes of representation. Historical films also allow a nation to remember and see its past identity, an identity that is attached to and contributes to what shapes the country today. In other words, a nation can view its own portrayals through historical films. Moreover, the history of a nation is the identity of that nation (Stearns, 1998). As stated by Lukacs, we can understand a nation through its history (Lukacs, 1994: 6). Therefore, by knowing our past experiences, we can "discover who we are" (Martin, 1989: 3).

⁹⁸ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

Both *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* (1950) and *Mereka Kembali* (1972) films concentrate on the same event. The two films attempt to revive the Long March of the Siliwangi Division event and other national historical events related to it. The two films have enriched our vision of the past through their depictions or representations of the Long March by unfolding the complexities and problems faced by the troops of Siliwangi during their march back to West Java. These films show that the Long March of the Siliwangi Division was a perilous journey.

The two films demonstrate not only the futility of conflict between the nations of Indonesia and the Dutch (Chapman, 2008: 10), but also the internal conflicts among the Indonesians during the Indonesian Revolution. This is an important message that the two films about the Long March try to portray. As a young republic at that time, Indonesia faced both external and internal threats simultaneously. Meanwhile, in the historical context of the Siliwangi Division, these films have depicted the bitter past of the Siliwangi Division during the Indonesian Revolution.

The messages from these films can always remain relevant, even across generations, as long as the films can still be accessed and watched by the public; however, one of the most important functions of historical films is to bring past events to the present, or “speak to the present” (Toplin, 2003: 85). The urgency of historical films is an “address to the present” (Grindon, 1994: 1). The messages contained in these two films are primarily intended for the era when each of these films was produced and released to the public. According to Toplin (2000: 18-19), overall, both films strongly use one of the principal methods of cinematic history, drawing a lesson from the past and making it relevant to the present.

One of the important messages emphasized in both films is that the struggle to maintain Indonesian independence was not easy and required sacrifice. These two films remind the public that in the past, especially during the Indonesian Revolution, many people were willing to die and sacrifice to defend their country and homeland. This message was addressed to the era when each film was released to the public according to the intentions of each filmmaker.⁹⁹ In today's context, this message can be an important reminder for this nation. We know that, nowadays, the willingness to sacrifice for the country has been replaced by a willingness to sell the country for personal or group benefits. An Indonesian film historian, Misbach Yusa Biran (2009), once said that, nowadays, if there is no money, people will not want to make sacrifices. Money has turned into an important measure in the present.¹⁰⁰

I argue that these two films play an important role in documenting history, although it is certainly not the definitive history as it is. Nevertheless, these two films can at least help remind and explain to the mass audience about the events or episodes that occurred during the Indonesian Revolution. From what the two films portray, I opine that historical films are the best means to tell and preserve the past. The two films have portrayed the Long March event well by providing realistic depictions.

Despite everything, at least two interesting issues have yet to be raised or could be of concern in the two films depicting the Long March of the Siliwangi Division. First, the two films neglect the existence of *Negara Pasundan* (Pasundan State). Nasution once stated that the existence of this puppet state in West Java also hindered the Siliwangi Division's struggle during their return to West Java (Nasution, 1983, II: 138). Second, the two films do not have coverage of the two commanders of the Siliwangi Division.

⁹⁹ See Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Misbach Yusa Biran, 13 November 2009 in Bogor.

The two commanders were in charge of the division when it implemented Operational Order (*Perintah Siasat*) No. 1/1948 to march back to West Java. At that time, Lieutenant Colonel Sadikin and Lieutenant Colonel Abimanyu were appointed Commanders of the Siliwangi Division after the previous Commander of the Siliwangi Division, Daan Jahja, was captured by the Dutch.¹⁰¹

All in all, historical films are a medium for learning, knowing, and understanding the history of a nation. It is important for a nation to know its own history because it means knowing itself. In other words, knowing the history of our nation is knowing ourselves. Abdulgani states that a nation that forgets its past is an amnesia nation (1986: 34). Moreover, a nation that forgets its historical traces will be in great danger because it may lose its direction (Djalal, 2004: 8). These films can provide us with an easy way to rediscover memories that are starting to be forgotten, neglected, or vanished. Re-witnessing historical events presented on the big screen allows us to take valuable insights from the past as a provision for living in the future, because the past is a source of inspiration for the future.

¹⁰¹ For reasons for these two or twin commanders' existence, see Simatupang (1961, 2010); Nasution (1983, II); Suryohadiprojo (2014); Suwardjo et al. (1984: 241-242).

Chapter 6

Film Reception

6.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the audience's receptions of the selected films. The receptions included polemics, criticism, the audience's reaction, and public comments at the time of the public release. The film reception investigation will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge by providing a deeper explanation of the whole of public discourses around these particular films (Biltreyst et al., 2012: 694). In other words, this effort is way to discover a society's "structure of feeling"¹ about the film by considering the data that I revealed.

It was described in Chapter 3 that I obtained data and information from various institutions.² The common obstacle I faced in obtaining the data was that not all newspaper or magazine editions were complete. Several editions had some missing or damaged pages, whereas they contained substantial information and data for this study. Therefore, I crosschecked many times to ascertain whether other institutions had the editions that I needed. Sometimes, I managed to get the editions though sometimes other institutions did not have them. I acknowledged that the data collection process had required tremendous efforts. However, it was still possible that some other newspapers and magazines contained information that I had not discovered about these films. Nevertheless, I still expect that the information on these films' receptions discussed in this study can significantly contribute.

Moreover, this study discussing the film reception provides insights against the dominant tradition of film studies that tends to present text-oriented

¹ See Williams (1977: 128-135).

² Cf. Chapter 3.

discussion. Related to the idea, a film scholar sharply criticized the tendency and argued that the “film history has been written as if films had no audiences” (Allen, 1990: 348). In fact, research in this area is essential (Jensen, 1993: 262-270). The film study relates to the reality that the film audience is an active audience (Docherty et al., 1987). They can assess and respond to the films watched (Sobchack, 1996: 7). Aldgate and Richards have posited that the audience “does not accept passively every message that is put across in a film” (1999: 3). In addition, they actually occupy an important position and become a pivotal part of film texts, particularly regarding their reception of film texts (Mikos, 2001: 62). Despite that fact, a film scholar argued that the investigation on the audience’s reception had not received adequate attention (Chapman, 2003: 61).

6.2. *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)*

6.2.1. Objections of the Army Headquarters

After *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* was screened for the first time at the presidential palace, it began to be shown to the public. On September 1, 1950, the film was premiered simultaneously in several cinemas in three major cities: Bandung, Medan, and Palembang. However, soon after that, or exactly one week after the first public premiere, the film received objections from the Indonesian Army Headquarters. The military judged that the content of the film produced by Perfini was problematic. The Army Headquarters’ objections were officially sent in a letter³ addressed to the Minister of Information, MA Pelaupessy, in the Natsir Cabinet.⁴ The letter was also forwarded to the Chairwoman of the Film Supervisory Committee (PPF, *Panitia Pengawas Film*)

³ I have searched for the Army Headquarters objection letter in the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI, *Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia*) and the Film Censorship Institute (LSF, *Lembaga Sensor Film*), but I could not find it.

⁴ The Natsir Cabinet was the first cabinet of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The cabinet led by Mohammad Natsir was formed on September 6, 1950 and inaugurated on December 7, 1950. Cf. Chapter 4.

Chairwoman, Mr. Maria Ulfah Santoso.⁵ As a film censorship agency, the PPF's primary role was to examine, investigate, and assess films to determine whether or not they could be shown to the public. In addition, the PPF had the absolute right to determine the age classification of the audience and to cut out film content that is deemed problematic and objectionable before it is circulated and shown to the public.

Besides the PPF, Colonel Wijono, as the Head of the Army Public Relations Section of the Ministry of Defense, had examined the film.⁶ However, although the film had been previously examined by him, it still received criticism from the army. Moreover, the Usmar Ismail film had not been reviewed by the Board of Armed Forces Broadcast Observer. This step was an examination procedure commonly conducted to check the contents or information associated with the military.⁷

Many newspapers reported that the Army Headquarters delivered two points of objections in their letter. First, this film was considered not present good descriptions of the Long March and the obstacles faced by the Siliwangi troops during this arduous journey. Second, the film was so romantic that it presented deficient depictions of the characteristics of officers.⁸ Regarding the objections

⁵ She was the first Indonesian woman who won the title of Mr. (*Meester in de Rechten*). She was also known as Maria Ulfah Soebadio or Maria Ulfah Soebadio Sastrosatomo. The name "Santoso" was derived from her first husband's name, Mr. Santoso, who later died in the Second Dutch Military Aggression in 1948. After being a widow for 15 years, she married Soebadio Sastrosatomo and used her second husband's name. (Tempo, 1984: 772-773). For more information on Maria Ulfah Soebadio, see Anwar (2012: 104-110).

⁶ During the revolutionary period, he served as the Official Head of the Army Political Education (PEPOLIT, *Pendidikan Politik Tentara*) of the Ministry of Defense (Hutagalung, 2010: 676)

⁷ "The Long March: Belum Melewati Dewan Pengamat Siaran Angkatan Perang," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2; "Sekitar 'The Long March'!", *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 9 September 1950, p. 1; "'The Long March' Belum Lewat Pengawasan," *Nusantara*, 9 September 1950, p. 2.

⁸ See "Markas besar angkatan darat Memajukan Keberatan2 Terhadap Film 'The Long March'," *Keng Po*, 7 September 1950, p. II; "The Long March" terlalu banjak romantik!," *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 8 September 1950; "Markas Besar Tentara Mengajukan keberatan terhadap film 'The Long March'," *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; "Markas besar angkatan Darat keberatan," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2; "'The Long March': Markas Besar

from the Army Headquarters, the government of Indonesia did not take any responses because the authority of the film was on PPF.⁹ Moreover, President Sukarno watched the film premiere at the Presidential Palace; he did not raise any objections but said that “the film is okay” (Anwar, 1990: 10).

Responding to the objections of the Army Headquarters, the PPF explained that they did not have any authority to remove the film from public circulation. The PPF had previously held a meeting to examine the Usmar Ismail film. The meeting decided that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* passed the sensor and could be released to the public. Meanwhile, the authority to withdraw a film that had passed the censorship by the PPF from circulation in cinemas belonged only to the Attorney General.

The basis for the provisions regarding the Attorney General's authority was a law from the colonial era which was still in effect at that time, i.e. *Filmordonantie* 1940 (*Staatsblad* 1940, No. 507). It should be noted here that Indonesia at that time had not yet had a Film Law so that the law from the colonial era was still being employed. The law from the colonial era was of course not in line with the condition of the Indonesian nation because the law facilitated the interests of the colonial government.¹⁰

When a film had passed the examination by the PPF, the film would receive a “*Tanda Pemeriksaan*” (certificate of censorship)¹¹ that was valid throughout Indonesia. This meant that the film was allowed to be circulated and shown in

Tentara Keberatan Atas Beberapa Scenesnja,” *Suara Merdeka*, 8 September 1950, p. 2; “The Long March’ Diprotes Oleh Angkatan Darat: Terlalu Romantik,” *Nusantara*, 7 September 1950, p. 1.

⁹ Then, it was known as the Film Censorship Board (BSF, *Badan Sensor Film*). Today, it is known as the Film Censorship Institute (LSF, *Lembaga Sensor Film*). For further information, see Lembaga Sensor Film (2005); Ass (2011).

¹⁰ For more information on film policy in the Dutch East Indies era, see Arief (2009: 45-74).

¹¹ lit., “Check Mark.” Today, it is known as *Surat Tanda Lulus Sensor* (STLS, certificate of censorship).

all regions of Indonesian. Even so, local leaders (*kepala daerah*) had the authority to prohibit the showing of a film that had passed censorship if the film was deemed inappropriate for the developments of politics, religion, and so on, causing a commotion in society.

In other words, local leaders could prohibit a film from being shown on the grounds of maintaining public order in their area. However, the local leaders had no authority to change the PPF's decision regarding a film, for example, changing the age limit of audience or cutting certain parts of the film. As mentioned above, the party entitled to withdraw and prohibit a film from being shown in Indonesia was the Attorney General.¹² This was in accordance with Article 5 of the *Filmordonantie* which reads: "The Attorney General for reasons of preserving public order throughout or in parts of the Dutch East Indies may prohibit the showing of a film."¹³

6.2.2. Full of Romance

Although the military said that this film did not provide a good depiction of the Long March event. However, in fact this film has fairly conveyed the difficulties that were faced by Siliwangi troops and their entourage in the Long March event. The film depicts the difficulty of the terrain they walked and the difficulty of managing the line of march of people and their families who joined the Siliwangi troops.¹⁴ As the director, Usmar Ismail has depicted these difficulties in his film.¹⁵

¹² "Panitia Pengawas Film," *Aneka*, No. 1, Tahun II, 1 March 1951, p. 29. [1 Year Anniversary Number].

¹³ Original texts: [Artikel 5] "*De Procureur-Generaal kan de voorstelling van een film om redenen van openbare orde in geheel Nederlandsch-Indie of een gedeelte daarvan verbieden.*" *Filmordonantie* 1940 (*Staatsblad* 1940, No. 507), the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI).

¹⁴ Information about the difficulties faced by the troops of Siliwangi Division and their entourage during during the Long March event can also be found in a book titled *Report from Banaran* (2010) authored by Simatupang. First published in Indonesian language with original title *Laporan dari Banaran* (1961, 1980).

¹⁵ Cf. Chapter 5.

I think the main objection of the Army Headquarters is the depiction of an officer, Captain Sudarto, who is portrayed to be involved in a romance with two girls: a German girl and a nurse from the Indonesian Red Cross. Interestingly, Usmar Ismail, as the director, portrayed a burning feeling of love in Sudarto and the two girls nicely and subtly. In the end, though, this romance ends tragically. After separating, the German girl finally finds another partner. Meanwhile, the nurse is shot dead by a Dutch soldier in a battle field when she is going after a captain who is reportedly shot. She thinks the captain who is shot is Sudarto.

The Army Headquarters could not receive this not ideal depiction. The depiction of Captain Sudarto's character as a battalion commander in the film was considered inappropriate and did not reflect the character of an officer. The Army Headquarters viewed that an officer, in this case the battalion commander, was required to be a role model by keeping his reputation and honor. An officer had to be a role model for the troops he led, and his gestures had to generate trust. Moreover, an officer was a military man. Therefore, things contradicting the military souls should be abandoned as a form of implementing discipline (Soegondo, 1950: 54; Guritno, 1950: 103-105). In the military, discipline is essential because "discipline is the soul of an army" (Sdr. X, 1950: 12).¹⁶

Meanwhile, a critic argued that the romance was more visible in this film because it poorly depicted the historical event of the Long March. He gained the impression that "critical, tense, and serious atmospheres were not well depicted." He added that the tough travel depicted was more similar to a war

¹⁶ The writer seems to be inspired by George Washington's words [General Instructions to the Captains of Companies, Fort London, July 29, 1757]: "Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable, procures success to the weak, and esteem to all." See Lucas (1999: 24).

game than a strategy determining the country's safety and the life and death of the troops involved in the travel. Nevertheless, the critic delivered a different opinion from the Army Headquarters about the depiction of the officers' characters in the film. He argued that the film had already described an ideal officer. He exemplified that the character of Captain Adam, Sudarto's friend, was the embodiment of a disciplined officer.¹⁷

Similar to my previous statement, a newspaper in Yogyakarta suspected that the main reason for the Army Headquarters objecting to the show of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* in public was because the film depicted Captain Sudarto who fell in love too much.¹⁸ However, this newspaper regarded that the Army Headquarters' objection was not right. This objection seemed to regard the soldiers as figures who were extremely different from ordinary humans so that they impossibly fell in love.¹⁹ The critic added that the Army Headquarters' perspective seemed to regard the soldiers or armies as "great men without weaknesses."²⁰ However, the newspaper in Yogyakarta asserted, "the soldiers are indeed soldiers, but they remain human beings."²¹

The newspaper added that the depiction of an officer who fell in love in the film was natural. Moreover, such a phenomenon probably occurred in actual life during the Indonesian Revolution, including during the events of the Long March. This point was what Usmar actually wanted to convey to the community and the army. Finally, the newspaper judged that Usmar did not mean to insult but gave an important lesson that the character as a soldier should not have faded because of a romantic relationship with a woman.²²

¹⁷ A.A.K. [A.A. Katili] "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a," *Aneka*, No. 14, Tahun 1, 15 September 1950, p. 14(?). [The page is torn]

¹⁸ "The Long March' (Darah dan doa)," *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 9 November 1950, p. 2.

¹⁹ "The Long March' (Darah dan doa)."

²⁰ A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

²¹ "The Long March' (Darah dan doa)."

²² "The Long March' (Darah dan doa)."

6.2.3. Recommendations to Cut some Scenes of the Film

Mr. Maria Ulfah Santoso, the Chairwoman of the PPF, had an interesting personal opinion about the film produced by Perfini. She stressed that she delivered her personal opinion as an audience who had watched the film, not her institution's opinion. As the Chairwoman of the PPF, she could not attend the meeting organized by the PPF to examine the film by Usmar. However, she watched *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* when it was screened at the State Palace.²³

Based on her experience of watching the film, she suggested that some scenes in the film could be cut or removed. First, she argued that the romantic depiction between Captain Sudarto and a German girl could be removed. Therefore, many romantic scenes in the film could be reduced. Second, she argued that the scene of shooting of the Madiun rebel forces who already waved the white flag as a sign of surrender could be cut because this scene would give a bad impression about the discipline of the Indonesian army. She could not understand why this film should begin with the Madiun Affair. According to her, the film could be directly started with the Second Dutch Military Aggression.²⁴ However, a critic delivered a dissenting opinion stating that the scene of shooting of the Madiun rebel forces was right and reasonable because the leader of the communist forces seemingly moved to take his gun.²⁵ He argued that the depiction of the Madiun Affair in the film was weak because "the event in Madiun was not depicted more deeply. The depiction created an impression that as if the rebels had not had a stand at all, [and] they had been no more than ordinary troublemakers."²⁶

²³ *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2.

²⁴ *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2.

²⁵ A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

²⁶ A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

Third, the Chairwoman of the PPF opined that the scene of the dark shooting of Sudarto at the end of the film could be removed. She determined that the depiction of the condition at that time was less precise because it could create more bad feelings among fellow Indonesians. She said the film could have ended with the scene when Sudarto was listening to the speech of President Sukarno.²⁷ Similar to the Chairwoman of the PPF, a writer agreed if the scene of the shooting of Sudarto was removed because the scene actually made the film anti-climactic. He suggested the film could end with the scene when the flag of Indonesia was raised with the accompaniment of the national anthem and Sudarto watched it compassionately.²⁸ Meanwhile, the Chairwoman of the PPF argued that removing some scenes of the film would not damage its values but would bring it some benefits. Moreover, many people thought that the duration of the film was too long, and thus, the removal would not matter.²⁹

If we observed the opinion of the Chairwoman of the PPF further, it actually reflected a particular concern about the depiction of the communists or the Madiun Affair in the film, especially about the condition at that time. Based on my previous film analysis, the depiction of an Indonesian soldier's shooting of the Communist forces who had surrendered at the beginning of the film and the depiction of a communist soldier's shooting of Sudarto at the end of the film were closely related to a revenge motive.³⁰

The Chairwoman of the PPF was alarmed that these depictions could potentially raise more bad feelings among fellow Indonesians at that time. As it was known that the Madiun Affair (1948) caused nation wounds. The affair was an extremely clear stab in the back for the Republic. Moreover, the affair appeared when the Republic was preparing to face the Dutch attacks. It was

²⁷ *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2.

²⁸ A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

²⁹ *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2.

³⁰ See Chapter 5.

no wonder that the Communists were known as the “traitors to the nationalist struggle” at that time (Coast, 2015: 202). The taint of betrayal had made the communist receive a bad image in the eyes of the Indonesian army and the leaders of the Republic (Brown, 2003: 168).

Nevertheless, the fact showed that from the end of the Indonesian Revolution to the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to Indonesia, the communists were not [yet] prohibited in Indonesia.³¹ Many of them were even released from prison.³² The interesting point was that the PPF whose responsibility was to censor films from Indonesia and abroad strove to maintain a conducive atmosphere, particularly regarding the communist issues. The members of the PPF in a moment of unanimity, for example, once rejected and banned the screening of *The Red Menace* (1949)³³ on the grounds that it displays excessive anti-communist propaganda. Furthermore, the PPF argued that if the film was screened, it would cause unwanted uproar.³⁴ The PPF maintained the principle that communist parties were not banned in Indonesia and as a film censorship agency, the PPF declared that the Committee was not anti-communist.³⁵

6.2.4. Protests of the PKI

The concerns of the Chairwoman of the PPF related to the depiction of communists in the film by Usmar Ismail, as previously explained, were reasonable. At that time Indonesia still performed various internal consolidations, reinforcement, and improvements after the Indonesian Revolution had ended. Moreover, when the film by Usmar Ismail was released to the public, Indonesia was stepping into a new era as the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) after the Republic of the United States of

³¹ The Indonesian Communist Party was officially outlawed on March 12, 1966, after their abortive coup in 1965.

³² “100 Orang Komunis telah Dibebaskan,” *Waspada*, 20 February 1950, p. 4.

³³ Directed by R.G. Springsteen.

³⁴ “Film ‘The Red Menace’ Dilarang,” *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 16 June 1950, p. 2.

³⁵ See “Podjok,” *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 16 June 1950, p. 4.

Indonesia had been declared dissolved. It was known that President Sukarno read the charter of the formation of the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia on August 15, 1950.³⁶ Natsir Cabinet as the first cabinet of the NKRI also focused on stabilizing and consolidating situations in the country as one of his main programs.³⁷ In other words, according to Maria Ulfah Santoso, efforts to mutually keep the feelings of Indonesians were important at the time.³⁸

However, if we examine *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, we will certainly find one of its important messages. The film, indeed, reminded us that the conflict and civil war in a nation are worthless.³⁹ This point was what the filmmaker attempted to communicate through his film. The message was very relevant to the public concern at that time. Nevertheless, the depiction of communists in this film raised protests from the communists. According to Usmar Ismail, after the film was showed to the public, the PKI, who still overcame the great shame for conducting a bloody rebellion known as the Madiun Affair, also protested his film. They did not accept that the film depicted the communists as “fanatics who revenged” (Ismail, 1983[1966]: 73).⁴⁰ In other words, they worried about their label as vindictive people.

6.2.5. Official and Unofficial Censors

Related to the suggestions of the Chairwoman of the PPF to cut some of the film scenes, as far as I know, the suggestions were never implemented because the suggested scenes to cut, in fact, are still shown in the film today. However, some information (Sen, 1994: 22; Arief et al., 1997: 111) reported that the PPF

³⁶ For more information about the contents of the charter. See *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 16 August 1950, p. 1.

³⁷ “Program Kabinet,” *Malang Post*, 6 September 1950, p. 1.

³⁸ *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4; *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2.

³⁹ Cf. Chapter 5.

⁴⁰ “orang-orang fanatik yang membalas dendam”

had cut the film severely, but there was no detailed information explaining which parts had been cut.⁴¹

However, Usmar Ismail as the filmmaker actually provided information about the scenes cut by the PPF. In an article published in *Gelombang* magazine, Usmar Ismail stated that the PPF had cut some of the battle scenes that were considered too realistic in the film. In fact, he argued that the battle scenes cut were considered too normal today (Ismail, 1983[1966]: 73).⁴² In fact, we can still find the depiction of the battle scenes in the film today, but the remaining depiction of the battles is considered less fantastic. This condition is apparently the result of censoring some battle scenes judged to be too realistic.

As far as I know, the PPF just disapproved of the battle scenes that they judged too realistic. Meanwhile, if they had considered the battle scenes were reasonable, they would not have cut the scenes. The PPF also passed the romance scene between the Indonesian Military officer and the German girl. In other words, the PPF judged that the scene was not problematic. This information corrected Anwar's wrong statement (1990: 11) that the PPF did not agree with the romance scene. In fact, the disapproval was not derived from the censor, but from the Army Headquarters.

If we more thoroughly observe the issue, the disapproval of the romance scene was not the opinion of the PPF as a film censorship agency, but it is a personal opinion of Maria Ulfah Santoso as the Chairwoman of the PPF as I previously explained. In addition, she could not attend the PPF meeting scheduled to examine the film by Usmar Ismail.

⁴¹ Related to this, Sen in her book wrote: "By all reports the film was severely truncated by the censors, but no one has detailed precisely what was cut out" (1994: 22).

⁴² Anwar (1990: 11) also cited this information in a book about the 20th death anniversary of Usmar Ismail.

As mentioned previously, the PPF stated that the film by Usmar Ismail had passed censorship and was allowed to circulate to the public throughout the archipelago. This was a decision from the official censor who had the authority to the film censorship. However, films that had passed censorship by the PPF and were in line with the *Filmordonantie* 1940 (*Staatsblad* 1940 No. 507) could still be withdrawn and banned from circulation by the Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia. Based on the PPF policy, the local governments through the local leaders have the authority to determine films that are allowed and not allowed to screen in their regions by considering security and morality prevailing in their regions. In other words, the local governments can freely interpret films that enter their regions.⁴³ However, the local governments do not have the right to change the decision of the PPF, such as cutting a film or changing audience age classifications.

6.2.5.1. Prohibitions from the Local Military Commanders

A newspaper had reported that the objections of the Army Headquarters against Usmar Ismail's film had raised a question of whether the film would be withdrawn and banned from circulation.⁴⁴ The result of the information search in newspapers and magazines in the 1950s showed that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, indeed, was never banned or withdrawn from circulation by the Attorney General officially. However, Usmar Ismail had to encounter a harsh reality that some commanders of the local military banned his film to screen (Ismail, 1954a: 33; Ismail, 1963: 127).⁴⁵

I argue that such an unofficial censor was the toughest censor that Usmar Ismail's film experienced because the film could not circulate and show freely though it had passed the censorship and received approval from the PPF to

⁴³ See "Panitia Pengawas Film."; Arief et al (1997: 110).

⁴⁴ "The Long March akan ditarik?" *Utusan Indonesia*, 8 September 1950, p. II.

⁴⁵ In this contexts: *Komandan-komandan Militer Daerah*. They were military leaders at the city and regency levels.

release to the public.⁴⁶ One of the direct impacts was related to the non-optimal income of the film although the film production did not calculate commercial benefits. Usmar Ismail made the film because the spirit of nationalism encouraged him to give a critical, reflective, and constructive contribution to his country after the Indonesian Revolution had ended. Moreover, he wanted to prove that the indigenous people of Indonesia could produce a film with their own hands.

However, I have not found detailed information about where the commanders of local military who prohibited the circulation of the film came from. There were at least two principal reasons for the ban. First, Usmar Ismail explained that the Indonesian National Armed Forces in many regions did not agree that the film depicted an Indonesian Military officer as a too human and weak officer (Ismail, 1983[1966]: 73). The Indonesian National Armed Forces, including the commanders of local military who banned the circulation of the film, argued that the depiction of an Indonesian Military officer was inappropriate for the military soul and military world. Moreover, they were the independence fighters during the Indonesian Revolution (Kim, 1985: 14). Therefore, it was no wonder if the commanders of local military refused such a depiction.

The prohibition action of screening the film by Usmar Ismail showed that the commanders of local military played a role of censorship, and this case was a nonofficial censor. This action was extremely detrimental to Usmar Ismail and his film. In fact, the film also depicted other Indonesian Military officers with military souls, firmness, and discipline in military rules. However, these depictions were not the major concern of the local military commanders because their main concern was an officer who was considered weak and too humane.

⁴⁶ See also a review by Sen (1994: 21-22).

Second, the soldiers of the non-Siliwangi Division rejected the film by Usmar Ismail because it exaggeratedly glorified, accentuated, and adored the Siliwangi Division (Rosidi, 1978: 448; Said, 1982: 52; Anwar, 1990: 9-10). They argued that the film exaggerated the role of the Siliwangi Division during the Indonesian Revolution so that it diminished the role of other military divisions (Pane, 1953: 83). In addition, Usmar Ismail's film production that was still very close to the Indonesian Revolution era was potentially the primary cause of why several parties who felt greatly contributing to the war of independence, particularly the military, still had powerful sentiments and sensitivity. Although it was the fact that the Indonesian Military officers obviously had a pivotal role in the Indonesian Revolution.

It is known that the Indonesian Revolution officially ended after the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to Indonesia, on December 27, 1949. Therefore, things associated with the depiction of the Indonesian Revolution and the parties considered to greatly contribute to the revolution in this film became a very sensitive issue. However, as time went by, the reactions of the parties who objected to the film's depictions of the revolution era, including the depiction of the national army, gradually disappeared. In other words, the sensitivity that was previously strong slowly faded. Usmar Ismail, in particular, no longer received great reactions of excoriation as when his film, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, was first shown to the public (Anwar, 1990: 10).

Meanwhile, related to the ban on the screening of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*, Usmar Ismail said that there were local authorities in other areas who disagreed with his film because the film presented scenes involving Darul Islam's activities. The local rulers feared that it could "evoke the evil mind of other Muslims" (Ismail, 1983[1966]: 73). In addition, a magazine also

informed that the film was also banned from being shown in Central Sumatra⁴⁷ due to a ban from the local censorship.⁴⁸

It was a fact that the film was increasingly popularizing the “The Long March” event that was held by the Siliwangi Division troops. Moreover, the event is a very historical event for the army unit that is based in West Java.⁴⁹ Even though the film intended to appreciate and glorify the Siliwang Division, some internal members of the Siliwangi Division did not approve the depictions of soldiers in the film.⁵⁰ Regarding this, Asrul Sani, who helped Usmar Ismail write the scenario, said that the first film of Perfini was not popular among those who were told in the film and was glorified because of differences in views on the issues being challenged. Usmar Ismail referred to the film as “depiction of Indonesian people as military force, not military force as it should be” (Perfini, 1960: 4).⁵¹

However, the relationship of Usmar Ismail, his Perfini film company, and the army, especially the Siliwangi Division, remained good. This was proved by an occasion when Usmar Ismail was producing a film entitled *Kafedo* (1953), the Siliwangi Division assisted the process of the film production. As many as two platoons from the “Kala Hitam” Battalion—one of the battalions of the Siliwangi Division—acted as KNIL⁵² army who were depicted to land on an island inhabited by Kafedo, the main character of the film. Then, the KNIL army

⁴⁷ The Central Sumatera Province was created through Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (*Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang*) No. 4, which was enacted on August 14, 1950. The capital city of Central Sumatera was Bukittinggi, the province included West Sumatera, Riau, and Jambi (Asnan, 2011: 138, 147). For more information on Central Sumatera, see Kementerian Penerangan (1953) and Djawatan Penerangan (1955).

⁴⁸ See “Panggung Umum,” *Aneka*, No. 21, Tahun II, 20 September 1951, p. 7.

⁴⁹ “‘The Long March’ Divisi Siliwangi,” *Merdeka*, No. 40, Tahun II, 1 October 1949, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰ See Pane (1953: 83).

⁵¹ Original reads: “*pelukisan manusia Indonesia sebagai militer, bukan militer sebagaimana ia seharusnya.*” This information also quoted by Sani in his writing (1987: 7). According to Sani (1987: 5), the writer who wrote the article entitled “10 TAHUN PERFINI: Sepuluh tahun inisiatif dan usaha swasta nasional” in the book was Usmar Ismail.

⁵² The Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL, *Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*).

fought with the people's militias who rejected their arrival. The Dutch army's landing and the battle of people's militias, including the scene of the battle between Kafedo and the Dutch army, could be impressively depicted due to the assistance of the soldiers of "Kala Hitam" Battalion (Ismail, 1953).

In short, what *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* had experienced is an actual proof that a film that is part of art can provoke complaints because what a person presumes normal "may be objectionable to another" (Smiers, 2003: 1). In this case, the experience was the result of the film content. However, as I discussed previously, the atmosphere of the era clearly influenced the judgment on the film.

6.2.6. Is Darul Islam Really Evil?

Rosihan Anwar who participated in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* revealed that after the screening of the film to the public, varied reactions had occurred, one of which was concerned with the depiction of Darul Islam (D.I.) in the film. Rosihan Anwar who at the time was the chief editor with the *Pedoman* newspaper took part in Usmar Ismail's film.⁵³ He performed a minor role in a scene of a meeting addressing the infiltration plan back to West Java in the aftermath of the Second Dutch Military Aggression against Yogyakarta. He played the officer preceding the meeting. He explained the route the Siliwangi soldiers were to take. He also specifically indicated which track to be taken by the Commander of Battalion Sudarto before meeting again in an agreed upon spot.⁵⁴ The infiltration march back to West Java is later known as the Long March.

⁵³ For more information on Rosihan Anwar, see Rosidi (2015a: 142-149).

⁵⁴ A writer states that Rosihan Anwar played Abdul Haris Nasution, the Chief of Staff of the Siliwangi Division (Bintang, 1992: 182). However, the information regarding Nasution's post is inaccurate. Nasution did not play the said role, but a Commander of the Siliwangi Division, a post that he was holding since the founding of the division. In addition, when the Dutch ambushed Yogyakarta and when the Long March was taking place, Nasution no longer held the position in the Siliwangi Division. He was replaced by the Chief of Staff of the Siliwangi

The public then wondered whether the attitude and behavior of Darul Islam were actually as seen in the film. As analyzed in the previous chapter, Darul Islam was presented in negative depictions. According to Rosihan Anwar, the public only asked: “Why is DI [Darul Islam] depicted as ‘the evil’?” (Anwar, 1990: 10).⁵⁵ As stated by Said (1982: 52), the depictions of Darul Islam in the film were hard to accept to many at that time. Furthermore, the negative depictions in the film were feared to influence and impede the reconciliation processes between the government of the Republic of Indonesia and Darul Islam. Put otherwise, the depictions of Darul Islam in the film were deemed to be a potential inhibitor of the peace resolution of both parties, especially as the Indonesian government was at the time seeking the right solution to the Darul Islam issue. To the Natsir Cabinet, the Darul Islam issue was an onerous, complicated one.

Meanwhile, the event known as the Long March of the Siliwangi Division is one of the well-known events in the history of the independence struggle, particularly among those engaged in the military. The presence of Usmar Ismail’s film also popularized the term “The Long March”. It is no wonder that the term has also been used by various parties to articulate their ideas. For instance, the caricaturist Augustin Sibarani drew a gripping caricature of the condition experienced by the Natsir Cabinet, which was depicted as facing various challenges, including one from Darul Islam as symbolized by bamboo spears (Figure 6.1.). The remaining challenges came from provocations, corruption, PKI, and PNI. At that time, the two parties were opposition parties to the Natsir Cabinet.⁵⁶

Division Daan Jahja, who doubled as a Commander of the Siliwangi Division, precisely the Acting Officer of the Siliwangi Division. See chapter 5.

⁵⁵ Original reads: “*Mengapa DI [Darul Islam] dilukiskan sebagai ‘orang jahat’?*.” Republished in Anwar (2009a: 32-80) with a brief remark and later entitled “Usmar Ismail, Bapak Perfilman Nasional Yang Juga Wartawan.”

⁵⁶ See “Kekuatan partai dalam parlemen,” *Utusan Indonesia*, 15 September 1950, p. II.



Figure 6.1. A Caricature of the Natsir Cabinet by Sibarani

Source: *Pedoman*, 19 October 1950, p. 1.

This caricature reflects that when Usmar Ismail's film was screened in theatres, Darul Islam was an unsolved problem. However, at that time, many members of the Darul Islam forces surrendered to the Indonesian government. They yielded and joined the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia for a variety of reasons, including insufficient arms, a lack of food supply, famine, disease, or a desire to take the legal path to fight for their aspirations within the framework of the unitary state.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ "Segerombolan D.I. menjerah," *Utusan Indonesia*, 27 September 1950, p. II; "Penampungan 1000 lasjkar D.I.," *Pedoman*, 7 October 1950, p. 2; "Komandan T.I.I Bertobat," *Malang Post*, 20 October 1950, p. 4.

As is known, the Darul Islam problem has grabbed the attention of the Indonesian government. Since the era of the Republic of the United State of Indonesia (RUSI) until the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), there were three committee founded to deal with Darul Islam, namely the Committee founded by the RUSI government, the interdepartmental Committee founded by the government of the Republic of Indonesia,⁵⁸ and the Committee founded by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.⁵⁹ In reality, however, the Darul Islam problem resolution process was less than maximal due to an internal dispute of the Indonesian government regarding the approach to be taken to solve the problem; should it be the negotiation approach or the military one?

The conflicting opinions of the Indonesian government internal had even been carried over from the RUSI era beyond its dissolution into the establishment of the NKRI.⁶⁰ Hamengku Buwono IX who served as the Minister of Defence of the RUSI, for instance, believed that there was no other way to face the destabilizers of the state security, including Darul Islam, than firm measures involving the mobilization of the military forces. According to the proponents of the military approach, the negotiation approach was pointless and only a waste of time (Federspiel, 2001: 234-235).

Meanwhile, in dealing with Darul Islam, the Prime Minister Mohammad Natsir was opposed to the military approach. He was more inclined to the negotiation approach, as shown by, among others, his offering of general amnesty (Formichi, 2012: 154). He was against the use of the military forces because

⁵⁸ Consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

⁵⁹ "Soal D.I. soal penting jang harus segera diselesaikan," *Nusantara*, 3 October 1950, p. 1; "Panitya 'Darul Islam' bersidang," *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 October 1950, p. 2.

⁶⁰ See "Tindakan keras thd pengatjau: Lain djalan ta'adal," *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 4 August 1950, p. 1; "D.I. Hanja Dapat Diatasi Dengan Penerangan Bukan Dengan Sendjata," *Nusantara*, 16 September 1950, p. 1.

Darul Islam had assisted in the resistance against the Dutch in West Java when the Siliwangi Division was withdrawn across the van Mook line. In addition, along with former members of Darul Islam who had surrendered themselves, the Indonesian government continuously appealed the then active members of Darul Islam to give in as soon as possible. Those who yielded would have their safety guaranteed and be welcome to fight for their Islamic aspirations through the parliamentary pathway.⁶¹

However, the peace resolution efforts made by the government to negotiate with Darul Islam always met dead ends. This was because the leader of Darul Islam S. M. Kartosuwirjo demanded for the acknowledgement of Darul Islam (DI) ahead of any negotiation.⁶² Kartosuwirjo stated his objection to “every negotiation that was not preceded by an acknowledgement of DI Indonesia” that was at the time under his leadership.⁶³ Such a condition was exacerbated by the proliferation of false Darul Islam or irresponsible groups going by the name Darul Islam. These groups were comprised of Dutch soldiers, communist members, and robbers, thieves, and troublemakers. They used the name Darul Islam to murder and create chaos.⁶⁴

⁶¹ “Anggota2 D.I. Supaya turun ke kota,” *Pedoman*, 15 September 1950, p. 2; “Pasukan2 “D.I.” Di Gunung2 Diserukan Kembali Ke Kota,” *Suara Merdeka*, 15 September 1950, p. 1; “D.I. serukan ‘turun ke kota’,” *Utusan Indonesia*, 15 September 1950, p.1.

⁶² There were two options proposed by Kartosuwirjo. First, he demanded that the Republic government acknowledge the Islamic state that he had established. Second, he requested that the Republic government proclaim an Islamic state. These two options were plainly rejected by the Republic government. Therefore, Darul Islam continued “their struggle” against the Republic government. Darul Islam argued that “by rejecting Islam as the sole foundation of the state, [the Republic government] had made itself as evil an enemy as the Dutch” (Schwartz, 1994: 169).

⁶³ Paraphrased in “Akui Dulu D.I. Baru Berunding, kata Kartosuwirjo,” *Nusantara* [Makassar], 12 December 1950, p. 2. See also “Negara ‘Islam’,” *Minggu Pagi*, No. 37, Tahun II, 10 December 1950, p. 7.

⁶⁴ “D.I. = “Dutch Infantry”?... ” *Suara Merdeka*, 16 October 1950, p. 2; *Pedoman*, 6 October 1950, p. 2; “Ada Pihak Ke III Dibelakang Aksi2 “Darul Islam?” *Suara Merdeka*, 14 October 1950, p. 1.

According to Federspiel (2001: 234), the Indonesian government's efforts to deal with Darul Islam at that time generally took advantage of the "carrot-and-stick" approach. The Indonesian government on the one hand offered amnesty but continuously carried out clean-up efforts against Darul Islam by mobilizing the TNI, especially in the West Java area, on the other.⁶⁵ Even after the dissolution of the Natsir Cabinet, the Darul Islam problem remained unresolved for a long time until the arrest of the leader of Darul Islam Kartosuwirjo in 1962. Kartosuwirjo was then executed by shooting in the same year.

From the discussion above, it can be seen that some of the public still sympathized with Darul Islam especially when Usmar Ismail's film was in circulation in theatres and were reluctant to accept the depictions that Darul Islam was the state's true enemy that must be quelled. However, this sympathetic sentiment was gradually eroded in the following years by the various acts of violence and cruelty committed by Darul Islam. In Indonesia, especially in the present or after the 1998 reform, the public view of Islamic movements, such as the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII, *Negara Islam Indonesia*)⁶⁶, which deny the national agreement that the state of Indonesia is unitary state, generally assesses these movements as including treason against Indonesia.⁶⁷

6.2.7. Other Notes and Appreciations

Regarding Usmar Ismail's film title "*Darah dan Do'a*", a critic considers it to be overly poetic. He is of the view that the title "*Suka Duka dalam Gerilya dari Long March*" would be more fitting.⁶⁸ The same critic also deems that Usmar Ismail

⁶⁵ "Kemadjuan dalam tindakan pembersihan njata kelihatan," *Pedoman*, 2 October 1950, p. 3.

⁶⁶ The NII cannot be separated from the Darul Islam, see Chapter 2. See also Formichi (109-143).

⁶⁷ "NII Tindakan Makar," *Kompas*, 6 May 2011; "MUI: NII itu Gerakan Makar," *Republika*, 11 May 2011.

⁶⁸ A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

had failed to harness the opportunity in some scenes to reinforce his film for the better. He proposes that in a scene where two companions in arms, the Commander of Battalion and his chief of staff, engaged in a heated debate, it should have featured not only harsh words, but also a brawl, to truly create a tension.

As another reinforcement, the film also involves a scene where the Commander of Battalion Sudarto was jailed in a Dutch prison. In the prison, Sudarto was assigned to a cell already occupied by other Indonesian prisoners. The film attempts to create a touching atmosphere through a scene where the prisoners found out that a fellow prisoner, Hartono, had been executed by the Dutch. Those who were in the cell then prayed together for Hartono's soul. However, this scene, as the critic puts it, has failed to create the intended touching atmosphere as it does not reflect the loss of a comrade in arms. He argues that the scene that was intended to be dramatic did not produce a moving atmosphere at all. Yet, he acknowledges that the filmmaker Usmar Ismail was faced with restrictions in terms of equipment, experience, human resources, and finance during the film production. Thus, the existence of this film, in his opinion, still deserves a positive appreciation.⁶⁹

The investigation further revealed that the film has a technical drawback in audio.⁷⁰ A Dutch newspaper reported that *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* poor audio quality has rendered the dialogs in the film hardly intelligible. This report came after the film was premiered at the State Palace. Still, the film

⁶⁹ A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

⁷⁰ This technical drawback is no more today. This is especially true starting from the end of 2013 when the film was successfully restored with a dramatically increased quality in terms of audio and visual. I am not saying that the restoration made the film as perfect as it was originally prior to the restoration because in fact the film condition during its premier was already imperfect, especially in terms of audio.

received attention and warm welcome from President Sukarno and the invited guests in attendance at the time.⁷¹

When the film was officially released to the general public, the drawback in audio also drew attention from a critic. He remarks that the unclear audio has caused disturbance to such an extent that the audience were unable to follow the dialogs accurately. A case in point is the scene presenting a German maiden. The downside in audio has led the audience to question the necessity of featuring the German maiden in the film story line at all.⁷² Another writer expresses his disappointment with the film's poor audio quality as it has blurred the clarity of the film's dialogs. It is not until the mid of the film that the audio starts to be clearer.⁷³ However, as pointed out by a newspaper, such an issue is understandable as the Indonesian film industry [particularly during that time] was still in its fledgling stage.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, a Jakarta-based newspaper has addressed a sharp review on this film.⁷⁵ According to this review, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* is afflicted with numerous flaws in lighting technique, scenes, division of roles, acting of the casts, sound quality, and musical illustration appropriateness. The first ever film produced by Perfini in fact was expected to produce a better, more satisfactory outcome. Moreover, Usmair Ismail and colleagues who joined the production house aspired to surpass other production companies in Indonesia to present something different from what had been in existence or what had been presented by other production companies. Yet, the film has been generally dissatisfying. Only a few scenes can be truly considered

⁷¹ "The Long March," *Java Bode*, 30 August 1950, p. 2.

⁷² A.A.K. "LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do'a."

⁷³ Osram, "'The Long Marsch' (Darah dan do'a)," *Espres*, 14 October 1950, p. 3.

⁷⁴ "The Long March," *Java Bode*, 30 August 1950, p. 2.

⁷⁵ "'The Long March' Film pertama keluaran Perusahaan Film Nasional Indonesia," *Merdeka*, 31 August 1950, p. 2.

satisfactory.⁷⁶ The review is concluded by the message: “Dear Usmar Ismail! There remain many things to fight for, and we are awaiting for the result of the second [film] from the venture of yours and of our comrades’ in the Indonesian National Film Company!”⁷⁷

Irrespective of its weaknesses, *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* has actually garnered abundant appreciations from various parties. A newspaper based in Yogyakarta, for instance, has complimented it by saying that the film has a higher quality than that of preceding Indonesian films.⁷⁸ A reviewer even states that despite the disadvantages, Usmar Ismail’s film is superior to any Indonesian films that came before it.⁷⁹ A magazine even ranks the film as the best in depicting struggles in the revolutionary era among films under this theme.⁸⁰ On the other side, the Chairwoman of the PPF, Maria Ulfah Santoso praises the acting of the casts in the film. In her opinion, the casts’ acting in the film is smoother than that of the casts in prior Indonesian films.⁸¹ A similar view is shared by a writer who considers the acting of the casts in the film excellent and less stiff than the acting of the actors in foregoing Indonesian films.⁸² Other compliments are directed to Perfini as a national film company that is run by 100% Indonesian natives.⁸³

To a certain degree, I agree with a film scholar stating that Usmar Ismail’s film is “now more respected than it was in 1950” (Barker, 2010: 12). The fact is that the film does receive attention and better appreciation today. It takes manifestation in, among other things, its restoration in 2013. Even so, in my

⁷⁶ For more details, see “The Long March.” Ibid.

⁷⁷ Original reads: “Saudara Usmar Ismail! Masih banyak yang harus diperjuangkan, dan kita menunggu hasil [film] yang kedua dari usaha saudara-saudara dan teman-teman kita Perusahaan Film Nasional Indonesia!”. “The Long March.” Ibid.

⁷⁸ “The Long March’ (Darah dan doa).”

⁷⁹ A.A.K. “LONG MARCH: Darah dan Do’a.”

⁸⁰ See *Aneka*, No. 14, Tahun 1, 15 September 1950, p. 10(?). [The page is torn]

⁸¹ *Pedoman*, 7 September 1950, p. 4. See also *Pikiran Rakyat*, 8 September 1950, p. 2.

⁸² Osram, “The Long Marsch’ (Darah dan do’a).”

⁸³ “The Long March’ (Darah dan doa),” *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 9 November 1950, p. 2.

investigation I discovered some appealing facts that the film has also gained positive appreciations in the past. In other words, even in the past the film has gained respect comparable to that at the present. Appreciation in many forms has continuously been received by the film to date. As an example, in 1981, a French film critic strongly praised the film as a great film because it had meticulous mise-en-scène and good, authentic film scenario (Daney, 1981: 42-47). A positive appreciation which would be surprising if Usmar Ismail as the filmmaker had the chance to hear it.⁸⁴ However, this could not have happened because Ismail had already passed away on January 2, 1971.

6.2.8. The Filmmaker's Response

Usmar Ismail did not immediately respond to the measures taken by the censoring party and to the reactions of the public to his first film as he promptly moved on to his next film production. It was not until later years that he began to respond in writing to what befell his first film. In 1966 in an article on the *Gelombang* magazine, he regretted PPF's actions in cutting several battle scenes in the film for being considered too realistic although when compared to today's measure, such battle scenes are actually extremely benign (Ismail, 1983: 73).

He also addressed the banning of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* by the army, in this case the military commanders in a number of regions. He described such a deed as none other than a narrow-minded action. He believed that it was "something one should not be surprised at and remorseful about at the time."⁸⁵ Nonetheless, such bans, in his opinion, were a new, actual experience in the film production field in Indonesia which would leave "a not-too-favorable effect on the subsequent film development in Indonesia."⁸⁶ As he

⁸⁴ See also Asrul Sani's (1987) comment on Serge Daney's article.

⁸⁵ Original reads: "suatu hal jang tak perlu diherankan dan disesalkan ketika itu."

⁸⁶ Original reads: "efek yang tidak begitu baik bagi perkembangan film Indonesia selanjutnya."

pointed out, this effect was felt in an instant especially in the production of the second film by Perfini (Ismail, 1954a: 33; Ismail, 1963: 127).

The censoring of several scenes by PPF and the protests from a part of the public over Perfini's first film stirred an unrest among the internal party of the production company (Ismail, 1983: 60). Such a condition influenced Perfini's judgments in the production of the following films, such as the second film entitled *Enam Djam Di Jogja* (1951). At a glance, Usmar Ismail did not strike as someone who would be giving up on producing films under the theme of Indonesian Revolution. Moreover, he had recognized what happened to his first film. In fact, he insisted on producing another film based on a real event.

The main reason why Usmar Ismail persisted in making films under such a theme was because from the start he came up with an idea and a desire to produce a film telling the *Serangan Oemoem/Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949* (*General Attack of 1 March 1949*). This film production plan had even been established prior to the premier of *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* at the State Palace.⁸⁷ For a true artisan, putting an idea to reality to be communicated to the public is imperative.⁸⁸ The film completion was a manifestation of Usmar Ismail's idealism to provide information, education, and enlightenment to the public through film. This was all the truer given that the goal of the film was to create a representation for the public of how the phenomenal historical event took place.

As was mentioned earlier, the conditions that followed *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* had a direct effect on the production of *Enam Djam di Jogja*, where Usmar was unable to freely carry out treatments as he did when producing *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. In other words, his creative freedom became

⁸⁷ Cf. Chapter 4.

⁸⁸ See Ismail (1983: 17-27).

constrained (Ismail, 1954a: 33). He remarked that the treatments that he had carried out previously “were impossible to be carried on with given that the official (censoring) party had started to demonstrate its attitudes and it was as though the public desired to see the reality, good or bad, that prevailed in their surrounding depicted in the most genuine fashion and apparently to a high extent sensitive to all forms of criticisms, even in a constructive nature” (Ismail, 1954a: 33-34).⁸⁹

It was little wonder that the second film of his ended up being a prissy film. In his words, the film turned to be a “very sweet”⁹⁰ film. “It was ensured that no one would take offense, the only evil-doers were the Dutch, all of the Indonesian were good, and if on an occasion an Indonesian should turn treacherous, it would be taboo to make mention of his group origin” (Ismail, 1983[1966]: 73-74).⁹¹ As mentioned earlier, the story line was fictionalized.⁹² In addition, the filmmaker prepared a very cautious introduction to the film.⁹³ Those were the treatments conducted by Usmar Ismail for his second film. The main reason was to avoid undesirable reactions to the film.

Besides, what PPF has done, coupled with the public’s reaction to *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* had also driven Perfini to produce its first fictional

⁸⁹ Original reads: “tak mungkin diteruskan disebabkan sikap pihak resmi (sensur) jang mulai memperlihatkan giginya dan sikap masjarakat jang seolah-olah tak ingin melihat kenjataan baik atau djelek yang berlaku dalam lingkungannya digambarkan dengan njata-njata dan rupanja sangat tipis kulit terhadap segala rupa kritik, meski konstruktif sekalipun.” Some information is missing in Ismail (1983: 59). I assume that the re-typing of the original text was not performed carefully and meticulously. As explained by the *Star News* editorial, Usmar’s article was extracted from the first edition of the *Konfrontasi* magazine (1954). This article was broken down into two parts (part I & part II). The article was also republished in Ismail (1983) under the same title.

⁹⁰ “manis-legit”

⁹¹ Original reads: “Dijaga sekali jangan sampai ada yang merasa tersinggung, orang-orang jahat hanyalah orang-orang Belanda saja, orang-orang Indonesia semuanya baik-baik dan kalau orang-orang Indonesia ini suatu waktu menjadi pengkhianat, maka tabu untuk menyebut asal golongannya.”

⁹² See Chapter 4.

⁹³ See van der Putten (2017: 104).

film, *Dosa Tak Berampun* (1951).⁹⁴ It was the first time the company departed from the basis of actual stories.⁹⁵ It was intended to avoid the sharp censor's scissors (Ismail, 1954b: 27).⁹⁶ Put otherwise, the sharpness of the censor's scissors had influenced the company's selection of film themes.⁹⁷ Even so, the film, according to him, "received a warm welcome not only owing to the technique that approached a point of perfection, but also due to the far better script processing and directing than it was in the previous film." (Ismail, 1954b: 27).⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Directed by Usmar Ismail.

⁹⁵ As is known, *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)* and *Enam Djam di Jogja (Six Hours in Jogjakarta)* were created based on real events that took place during the Indonesian Revolution era.

⁹⁶ The information is missing in Ismail (1983: 60).

⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the production company kept on producing films under the Indonesian Revolution theme.

⁹⁸ Original reads: "*mendapat sambutan jang baik sekali, tidak sadja karena tekniknja jang mulai mendekati kesempurnaan, tetapi djuga karena pengolahan script dan regie jang jauh lebih lantjar dari film duluan.*"

6.3. *Mereka Kembali* (1972)

6.3.1. Memories and Tears

According to a historical film scholar, historical films can depict a past event on a screen to allow the audience to witness the past event (Burgoyne, 2007b: 552). It is possible because historical films can create a contemporary situation for the audience. Therefore, the audience feels as if they were involved in “those happenings, react to them, and to this extent participate in them.” Historical films make the audience an eyewitness to the events shown (Herlihy, 1988: 1187).

This statement was proven by an interesting incident during the gala premiere of *Mereka Kembali* held in Jakarta Theater. *Mereka Kembali* is a film narrating the Long March of Siliwangi troops from Yogyakarta to West Java. The people who already experienced the actual Long March regard that the film brings back their old memories about the Long March.

From the beginning to the end of the film, members and leaders of the Siliwangi Corps who watched the film immensely enjoyed it. Moreover, when watching some scenes, their eyes were teary, and they shed tears. Their reaction happened because most of them experienced the Long March firsthand. The Long March has been enormously impressive for them because they know precisely how uphill they struggled to complete the Long March.⁹⁹

A newspaper reported that many other invitees, such as military leaders or civilian leaders, were touched and shed tears while watching the film. It indicated that the past event depicted by the film was touching and could bring the audience’s memories of the experience of the Indonesian Revolution. The feelings were not only experienced by the Siliwangi Corps members but also the audiences of the film. There was an emerging resonance between the film

⁹⁹ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

on the screen and the audience. It can be said that the film has provided “an emotional connection to history” (Burgoyne, 2007a: 378), especially to the people who performed bitter struggles to gain the independence of Indonesia.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the embodiment of emotional connections has emerged and been visible from the early process of film production to the filmmaking process.¹⁰¹

6.3.2. Evoking the Imagination

Another unique reception of watching this film was a journalist’s story about his young experience of watching the film with his family in the mid-1970s. When he was in a restaurant, he saw an Indonesian film poster that displays some scenes of *Mereka Kembali*. The poster informed that the film will be in cinema soon. After briefly discussing several pictorial scenes of the film poster with his father, he became increasingly interested in it and considered it a must-watch film.

Shortly after that, he and his family watched the film. He said that this film about struggles for independence had captivated him. Moreover, it provoked his imagination of what would have happened if he had participated in the Long March. He wrote,

For (small) me, the film was amazing because it narrated not only a war (of independence) but also a thrilling adventure. I was imagining being a part of Siliwangi troops who went back to our left home and never knew what we would face next (Sjafari, 2017).

6.3.3. A Not-Sad Film

A critic wrote a positive review of *Mereka Kembali* in a newspaper. He stated that the presence of a film narrating struggles for independence was good. Moreover, at that time, many film audiences complained about and get bored

¹⁰⁰ “Sedikit tentang Film: ‘Mereka Kembali’,” *Pos Kota Minggu*, 15 October 1972.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Chapter 4.

of national film stories that frequently depicted sad-sexual and romantic scenes. He argued that the film had managed to record epic struggles of the revolution experienced by the Siliwangi Division vividly, impressively, and thrillingly. The film did not show a sad story but a fiery spirit of struggle. He stated:

When we watched *Mereka Kembali*, we were not feeling sad, but our souls were burnt with a fiery spirit of national struggle. Most especially, the revolutionaries, people who performed the Long March with Siliwangi troops, would feel a much more incredible feeling and raise the new fighting spirit. The atrocities of the Radical Horde Moslem-DI/TII highlighted in the film made people of West Java, in particular, realize that their struggles with Siliwangi soldiers in guarding and securing Pancasila are an uphill battle, not vain.¹⁰²

The critic considered *Mereka Kembali* as the most fantastic struggle film ever produced in Indonesia because it involved thousands of troops and people, various military technology, and expensive film production costs.¹⁰³

6.3.4. Lights for the Younger Generation

Another writer¹⁰⁴ also praised and welcomed the release of *Mereka Kembali* amidst the condition of the Indonesian film industry that only served monotonous film stories. He appreciated the producer of Dewi Films Company that bravely took risks to produce a film of national struggle with expensive cost.

Moreover, he respected a Regional Military Commander (*Panglima* KODAM) who had provided the facilities required during the filmmaking process. He argued that the presence of this film was necessary to evoke youth's patriotism that has dried up due to modern development. Moreover, he expected that the

¹⁰²Jatim, " 'Mereka Kembali': Rekaman masa revolusi yang hidup," *Yudha Minggu*, 22 October 1972, p. VI.

¹⁰³ Jatim, " 'Mereka Kembali': Rekaman masa revolusi yang hidup."

¹⁰⁴ Santoso, "Melihat Film: 'Mereka Kembali'," *Berita Film*, 8 October 1972.

presence of a film of national struggles, such as *Mereka Kembali*, could eliminate the apathy of younger generations who started ignoring struggling stories.

Films that portray struggles in the past are expected to make the younger generation realize that “current generation will not exist without past heroes. And history crucially functions as a light torch for the current generation that seems dark.”¹⁰⁵ Another commentator argued that films like *Mereka Kembali* could remind the “youth in development era that the revolutionary generation had gained independence with their sweat and blood.”¹⁰⁶ Another reviewer delivered a similar view stating that a film of national struggles had an essential role in understanding the history of a country for the next generation.

A film of national struggles for gaining independence always evokes spirits of nationalism. Moreover, the film can become historical materials for future generations to understand the dynamic fluctuation of their country’s historical struggles. People who were born in the independence era are reminded about the hardship of gaining independence. Therefore, it is necessary to create an accountable story that provides memories and new thoughts for the audience.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, continuous production of national struggle films, such as *Mereka Kembali*, are indispensable because they can provide positive lessons encouraging maturity.¹⁰⁸ Another writer believed that the films with struggle themes of their nation would remain universal. Moreover, he argued that films with struggle themes would rule the box office in their home country.¹⁰⁹ Another critic also expected the emergence of various films narrating the history of the Indonesian Revolution. However, he highlighted that the

¹⁰⁵ Santoso, “Melihat Film: ‘Mereka Kembali’.”

¹⁰⁶ “Mereka Kembali: Dengan Tetesan Darah dan Keringat Mengingat Kita ke.....,” *Violeta*, No. 31, 21 October 1972, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ Yaya Sutara, “Film Perang ‘Sapu Tangan’ sampai ‘Mereka Kembali’,” *Violeta*, No. 35, 1 December 1972, p. 26.

¹⁰⁸ Santoso, “Melihat Film: ‘Mereka Kembali’.”

¹⁰⁹ Santoso, “Melihat Film: ‘Mereka Kembali’.”

production of films with struggle stories “required ideas and stories that did not deviate from the actual events because they are not only entertainment media but also sources of learning material, including the history!”¹¹⁰

6.3.5. The Honorable Mission

Meanwhile, an article in a newspaper considered that this film had its characteristics in the Indonesian film industry because it brought honorable missions for the Siliwangi Corps and the Indonesian Army, in general. The article regarded that the film had an important meaning for Indonesia and the other countries. Through this film, other countries will recognize the Indonesians’ struggle for independence and the Indonesian Armed Forces’ struggle in the revolutionary period. This statement agrees with Phillips, who stated that “films can help us understand different places, people, and cultures—whether a foreign country or a region of the viewer’s own country” (2009: 3-4).

Meanwhile, for Indonesia, the film is worthwhile, especially for today and the next younger generation, to allow them to recognize the contribution to the struggle of the Indonesian Army in the Indonesian Revolution period. A newspaper concluded *Mereka Kembali* “supported the ideals of our government who wanted to bequeath the 1945 spirit and values for our today and next younger generation.”¹¹¹

6.3.6. The Film Storyline, Casts and the Technique of War

Many commentators considered that the film successfully depicted visual descriptions of struggles and brief descriptions of the 1945 values in the Indonesian Revolution.¹¹² As I disclosed in another section of this study, this film deserves appreciation because Indonesian films were dominated mainly

¹¹⁰ Sutara, “Film Perang ‘Sapu Tangan’ sampai ‘Mereka Kembali,’” p. 42.

¹¹¹ “Sedikit tentang Film: ‘Mereka Kembali,’” *Pos Kota Minggu*, 15 October 1972.

¹¹² “Sedikit tentang Film: ‘Mereka Kembali,’” *Pos Kota Minggu*, 15 October 1972.

by sexual, cheesy-drama, and cheesy-martial art (*silat*)-themed films.¹¹³ Therefore, the release of *Mereka Kembali* portraying a struggle was considered to bring a new hope amidst the condition of the Indonesian film industry at that time. The film is considered good enough because it successfully visualizes the glory of the Siliwangi Corps.¹¹⁴

According to a critic, the audience could easily catch up, follow, and understand the storyline and scenes of the *Mereka Kembali* because the film “had a physical theme and is based on a true story. Therefore, the production process did not require psychological scenes to support the story. The film did not need flashback scenes or complicated scenes that frequently complicate the audience to understand the meaning. Therefore, the audience easily understood the meaning of each scene of the film.”¹¹⁵

A critic deployed that Nawal Ismail, as a director, successfully amazed the audience with “an easy-to-follow storyline.” The suspenseful scenes depicted in the film were intended “to convince the audience that the film was not just any entertaining film, but it was a film of the historical struggle of Siliwangi.”¹¹⁶

However, one critic had different opinions from the previous critics who argued that the film provided an easy-to-follow storyline. In his review, this different critic argued that the film had a difficult-to-follow storyline. According to him, the film plot was arduous to follow. Moreover, the film presented unclear frames of the story. Therefore, the film was “nothing more than a connected collage portrait or a circumstance painting.”¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Renato Irsan, “Dua Film Perjuangan: Sebuah Perbandingan,” *Sinar Harapan*, 14 October 1972; Zaenal Arifin, “Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm,” *Minggu Merdeka*, 15 October 1972.

¹¹⁴ Irsan, “Dua Film Perjuangan: Sebuah Perbandingan.”

¹¹⁵ Irsan, “Dua Film Perjuangan: Sebuah Perbandingan.”

¹¹⁶ Arifin, “Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm.”

¹¹⁷ Emmanuel Subangun, “Mereka Kembali: Sebuah Potret Nostalgia,” *Kompas*, 17 November 1972.

Meanwhile, a newspaper reviewed the film casts' acting was good enough because the senior and supporting acts could perform convincingly.¹¹⁸ This statement agreed with another writer who argued that supports from senior casts adequately reinforced the film.¹¹⁹ In addition, the strength of the film is indicated by the technique of war in which cannon booms or gunshots frequently occurred and were heard.¹²⁰ However, another commentator argued that the director's choice of firmly torturing the audience's ears by presenting explosive bombs, grenades, and weapons did not bring good effects. Consequently, "the audience became really tensed and panic, had no time to think, and could not enjoy the motion pictures in front of their eyes."¹²¹ Nevertheless, a newspaper concluded that the film overall had a good quality of images, sound, and colors. The blow-up results of a 70 mm film with the stereophonic sound system were considered perfect because the film did not present any defects.¹²²

6.3.7. The Writer's Sentimental Story

Although Nawī Ismail's film received massive warm welcomes from the public, it was not free from criticism. A critic wrote that Lukman Madewa as the author of the original story¹²³ of *Mereka Kembali* was very sentimental because he tried to reenact the Long March event that he had experienced in the past. Moreover, the critic regarded that the film was a part of the past nostalgia of Lukman Madewa. He wrote, "If we thoroughly follow the story, we will find that the writer is very sentimental about recalling his memory of 24 years ago."¹²⁴ This statement is certainly not excessive because Lukman Madewa

¹¹⁸ "Sedikit tentang Film: 'Mereka Kembali'," *Pos Kota Minggu*, 15 October 1972.

¹¹⁹ Arifin, "Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm."

¹²⁰ Arifin, "Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm."

¹²¹ Subangun, "Mereka Kembali: Sebuah Potret Nostalgia."

¹²² "Sedikit tentang Film: 'Mereka Kembali'," *Pos Kota Minggu*, 15 October 1972.

¹²³ The original story of Lukman Madewa underlay Nawī Ismail to write a screenplay of *Mereka Kembali* film. In the production of this film, Nawī Ismail played an important role as a scenarist, director, and editor.

¹²⁴ Arifin, "Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm."

was one of the Siliwangi troops who joined the infiltration to return to West Java when the Long March occurred.

6.3.8. Depictions of Darul Islam and the Dutch

Mereka Kembali is a film that tells about the struggle of the Siliwangi troops who went home to West Java. Based on the historical facts, the film describes the Siliwangi troops who fought against Indonesia's enemies: the Darul Islam and the Dutch. Regarding the depictions of Darul Islam and the Dutch, a reviewer argued that the betrayal of Darul Islam was presented very convincingly in the film. Meanwhile, the cruelty of the Dutch was less depicted. He speculated that the writer's nation's experience was more impressive for him so that the story of Darul Islam was more highlighted in the film.

The betrayal of Radical Horde Moslem-DI/TII and other hordes was depicted with full of perfection and precision. Likewise, the betrayal of the NICA headman who served the Dutch colonial government and destroyed Indonesia's struggles for independence was vividly depicted in the film. On the contrary, the cruelty of the Dutch Army was less revealed. It seems that "the backstabbing" is more painful than on the enemy from foreign countries.¹²⁵

More depiction of Darul Islam in the film raised an interesting comment in a "Juru Catat" column of a film magazine. The commentator questioned if the film was actually a documentary for the Siliwangi Division or Islamic Armed Forces of Indonesia. He asked, "Is *Mereka Kembali* a documentary about Siliwangi troops or the Islamic Armed Forces of Indonesia?"¹²⁶ It was known that the film as if had given a stage for the Radical Horde Moslem-DI/TII to appear. However, the film did not present a positive portrayal of the Radical Horde Moslem-DI/TII.

¹²⁵ Arifin, "Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm."

¹²⁶ Original reads: *PILEM "Mereka Kembali" ini, dokumenter Siliwangi apa dokumenter buat TII? Indonesian Movies*, No. 11, 1972, p. 31.

Meanwhile, a reviewer argued that the portrayal of the Dutch Army in the film was less realistic because they were casted by Indonesian National Armed Forces. He speculated that it occurred for budget savings as hiring native Europeans would cost a lot. "It seems difficult for us to accept that brown skin faces played roles as Dutch troops who oppressed the independence of Indonesia in some scenes. Because the cost of hiring native Europeans to cast as a stand-in in the film was probably huge, the producer didn't hire them."¹²⁷

Another writer in a magazine commented that the film, produced with the cooperation between Dewi Films Company and the Siliwangi Regional Military Command (KODAM VI Siliwangi), emphasized the struggles of the Siliwangi troops but did not present the struggle of other parties. Although the writer could understand why the depiction of Siliwangi was so accentuated in the film, he argued that this excessive depiction was advertising nuance because the film glorified Siliwangi Division. He stated, "the film only accentuates the struggle of one party. However, we feel 'pleased' because we know that domestic and foreign parties undermined our struggles. The depiction is quite understandable though it slightly impresses advertisement."¹²⁸ The statement is presumably not surprising because the primary mission of the film is to show the heroism of the Siliwangi. A writer asserted that the heroism was more closely related to the "heroism of a Corps."¹²⁹ However, a critic claimed that the audience would feel proud of, emotional, sad, and enjoyed after watching a film of national struggles of the Siliwangi Division.¹³⁰

Another critic had a different opinion from the previous writer who could receive the highlight of Siliwangi in the film. The critic rejected the accentuation of Siliwangi that was entirely portrayed well in the film. He did

¹²⁷ Arifin, "Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm."

¹²⁸ Sutara, "Film Perang 'Sapu Tangan' sampai 'Mereka Kembali'," p. 42.

¹²⁹ Irsan, "Dua Film Perjuangan: Sebuah Perbandingan."

¹³⁰ Arifin, "Long March Siliwangi Dalam 70 Mm."

not mind the plot of the film built from data-based historical facts. However, depicting Siliwangi with perfect, entirely pure, and positive impressions and full of kindness was excessive and inhumane. This depiction made the portrait of the past in the film “less healthy and sly.”¹³¹ Moreover, he opined that the film mainly was dominated by the perspective of a horse cart, an analogy that referred to a view directed into one point while closing views to side directions. Consequently, the film could not depict richer aspects and dimensions of the past.

Regarding the depiction of Darul Islam, he said that Darul Islam was only presented in one deficient image. It was portrayed as a coward, rebel, and murderer. Meanwhile, the Siliwangi was displayed in handsome, compact, and powerful imageries. Moreover, he argued that the use of the black-and-white approach in the film was less precise. The contrasting depictions led to doubt and unnatural effects. Thus, what the producer presented to describe the vast differences between Darul Islam dan Siliwangi troops seemed meaningless and unnatural. He argued that this film did not reasonably convey the honesty of the history to the younger generation but only endorsed longing for the glory of the older generation.

The ‘honesty of the history’ would become actual and exciting if the filmmakers understood the moral values of *Mereka Kembali* for the younger generation who would have enough money to watch the film. It aims to deliver the history gracefully and broadly, not delivering the longing to the glory of the old generation. This aim is pivotal because history is a good teacher forever. Unfortunately, there is a myriad of history interpreters. Moreover, we will reluctantly learn history if it is viewed from the perspective of a horse cart! (*andong*).¹³²

For him, this film is a product of a hypocritical time. It seemed that the film’s shows allowed the audience to consume hypocrisy. In contrast, hypocrisy will

¹³¹ Subangun, “Mereka Kembali: Sebuah Potret Nostalgia.”

¹³² Subangun, “Mereka Kembali: Sebuah Potret Nostalgia.”

always be ready to kill our humanity. He concluded his review of the film by stating the film was an inhuman portrait of nostalgia.¹³³ Such a statement is not extreme because Lubis (1978: 180) stated that most of the figures of the 1945 generation were the old generation who disseminated the importance of transferring the 1945 values to the younger generation. Unfortunately, the dissemination gradually lost its democracy orientation because the old generation was busy gaining power and wealth.

6.3.9. The Filmmaker's Response

Nawi Ismail responded to several criticisms of his film, particularly the historical depictions. He admitted that adapting history into a film was not easy as he experienced it while producing *Mereka Kembali*. In an interview, he said:

We faced a lot of challenges in producing a film of national struggle. A film of national struggles that contained a history cannot be separated from the reality of history. We obtained a lot of historical information that perplexed us. In fact, we had to follow or adapt the history into a film precisely. A small mistake means that people will criticize us.¹³⁴

This statement clearly provides essential information that filmmakers who are making or will make a historical film should readily deal with serious challenges when they adapt history into a film. They particularly must pay attention to presenting the historical accuracy. Such complexity is generally applicable for filmmakers who want to represent “real people and events” (Salevouris, 2015: 154). Nevertheless, Oliver Stone states that filmmakers as artists “certainly have the right—and possibly the obligation—to step in and reinterpret the history of our times” (Stone, 1991).¹³⁵

¹³³ Subangun, “Mereka Kembali: Sebuah Potret Nostalgia.”

¹³⁴ *Citra Film*, No. 6, November, 1981, p. 52.

¹³⁵ He is a controversial filmmaker who produced several historical films, such as *Platoon* (1986), *JFK* (1991), and *Nixon* (1995).

6.4. Conclusion

It is undeniable that the information about historical film reception is a crucial issue to investigate. A scholar has conveyed that a film exhibition and film reception are important moments because the audience “engage with the film, and the representations of the past come into direct contact with the concerns of the present” (Lester, 2016: 518). As I previously demonstrated in this chapter, I discussed the film reception when the films under study were released to the public. In other words, I located the film texts in specific historical times when they were consumed. It is known that a study on films can be conducted by analyzing the film texts. Moreover, any study refers to its goals. In my opinion, a study on films would not be completed without investigating or analyzing the film reception.

Films, mainly historical films, are definitely inseparable from pros and cons. As I presented in this study, investigating a film reception provenly provided valuable information and insights about the public assessment or thoughts about a film, including society’s pros and cons. What I investigated was merely a way to unlock our understanding of some—not to mention the whole—dynamics of public discourse or public reception to the films under study when released to the public. Salevouris and Furay argued that historical films could “tell us how people at the time viewed (or wanted to view) their own history” (2015: 161). This view applies not only to historical film producers, investigated from their motivation and background of producing historical films, but also to consumers or audiences, investigated from their film reception. Therefore, at this point, the analysis of film reception is crucially conducted, as this study did.

Meanwhile, according to the encoding/decoding model of Hall (2002a, 2002b)¹³⁶, the reception of the two films is in the area of “negotiated reading,” meaning that, on the one hand, the audiences agree on several event representations of the Long March of the Siliwangi Division and other national events that are still closely related to it. On the other hand, the audiences disagree with some of the other depictions. In other words, the audience does not fully accept or reject the representations of the Long March event in these films. In short, it is safe to argue that the reception analysis of the two films can provide insights into the structure of the society’s feelings when these films were screened to the public then.

¹³⁶ See also O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002: 70).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

“And that as long as screens, large and small, are a major medium for showing and telling us about our world, then film will be one way of rendering the past” (Rosenstone, 2006: 160).

7.1. Summary

The historical films have evidently been able to bring the past, as a vanished world, back to life before the public. Films on the Indonesian Revolution can help provide depictions about how the Indonesian War of Independence raged in the past and about anything that likely occurred at that time. It can be said that historical films have been able to provide the past images of a nation. Indonesian Revolution films are actually a form of confirmation that Indonesia, as a state, is a product of struggle (Vickers, 2005: 3). Such films affirm that Indonesian independence was not obtained as a gift (Simatupang, 2010: 50), but through a bitter and bloody struggle.

In studying history on the screen, this study not only emphasizes how the history is depicted, as Rosenstone (2006) has done, but also investigates other aspects of the history of production and the reception of films examined (Toplin, 1996a). It is noteworthy that Rosenstone’s approach, which focuses on aspects of historical depiction on the screen, has only ever been criticized by Chapman (2007), who states that Rosenstone was reluctant “to engage with more ‘traditional’ historical approaches.” With this in mind, Rosenstone responded to and explained further the reason of his focus and continued to hold tightly to his view (see Rosenstone, 2009). Apart from this debate, the current study rather takes a different approach by combining the individual strengths of methodological approaches conducted by both Rosenstone and Toplin. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4, I expand on Toplin’s (1996a)

analysis dimension related to “writers”, which evidently contributes valuable insight towards understanding the history depicted on the screen.

As demonstrated in this study, I argue that expanding the analytical dimension, not limited to aspects of historical depiction on the screen or film text, will only provide opportunities to acquire valuable information related to how the history can occur, including other information such as spectators’ reception, which is unlikely to be completely revealed when the analysis is limited to film content only. Aspects beyond history on the screen, of course, contribute to a richer and more comprehensive understanding on how the history can occur and how the history on the screen is received by the audience. In other words, this study has shown how to analyze the important aspects such as content, production, and reception of films, thus becoming the focus of study (see O’Connor, 1990; Hickethier, 2012).

Although using a fictional format, both of the selected films are expected to follow the official historical route as a strategy in depicting history on the screen. A historical film scholar asserts that by following the route or “the lines of the historical plot”, historical films at least do not commit “serious violence” against the existing history (Davis, 2003: 47). Davis writes: “Let the imagination be guided by evidence, interpreted as best one can, when it is available and, when it is not available, by the spirit or general direction of the evidence. Historical plausibility, *vraisemblance*, and historical understanding are the goal” (2003: 47).¹

Both films, *The Long March (Darah dan Do’a)* and *Mereka Kembali*, depicted that the Long March began after the Dutch invaded the capital of the Republic, Yogyakarta.² As the two films have the same story basis about the Long March

¹ Emphasis in original.

² Cf. Chapter 5.

of the Siliwangi Division coming back to its area of operation in West Java, these films want to help us feel the past, and the experience of the Long March. In Burgoyne's words, these films allow the audience to re-witness the events of the past (2008: 7). These films give a strong sense of the pain of struggle for independence because both of them equally attempt to invite the audience to re-witness the difficulty, misery, and anguish that the Siliwangi troops encountered when they infiltrated their former bases of operation in West Java. Through these films, spectators are invited to be witnesses of the suffering from the event which became known as the Long March.

Nevertheless, the spectator is also invited to witness the Siliwangi troops' resoluteness and perseverance in undertaking an order to march back to West Java. This impression can be particularly captured strongly in *Mereka Kembali*; the resolute, disciplined, and obedient image of military can be seen clearly and is inculcated strongly into the film. Meanwhile, the military image is depicted less so in *The Long March (Darah dan Do'a)*. This contrast is closely related to the background conditions and circumstances of the time when these films were produced, and the filmmakers' intentions and/or purpose.³

As forms of historical representation, I argue that these films can provide depictions about the national revolution period. These films portray that the Indonesian Revolution is not merely a battle between the Indonesian and the Dutch, but also between Indonesians themselves, also known as a civil war, involving the Madiun Affair and the Darul Islam. The clashes with other Indonesians or the internal disputes have increased the number of life tolls during the Indonesian Revolution period (Oostindie, 2016: 12-13; Brown, 2003: 158-159).⁴ The depiction of civil war was particularly in line with the history of the Siliwangi Division when this division undertook an order to

³ Cf. Chapter 4.

⁴ See also Luttikhuis and Moses (2012: 257-276).

Hijrah and to undertake the *Long March* (the Long March of the Siliwangi Division) during the revolution.

As previously demonstrated, the result of analysis on the film production aspect shows that the production of these historical films is always in a dynamic place in which the condition of social milieu affects filmmaking practices. We will not acquire these insights when the conducted analysis stopped at the level of text analysis. It is in line with scholars' views mentioning that the understanding of the world when the films were produced, including the nature of both conditional and situational context, is an important aspect (Sorlin, 1988: 2; Chapman, 2013: 111; Ferro, 1988: 29).

Therefore, a study that can explain the nature of conditional and situational context will provide valuable insights and contribute significantly to the body of knowledge. Meanwhile, the result of analysis on the aspect of film reception can provide interesting information and unique insight into how these films are understood and received by the audience in relation to what the films depict concerning the depiction of the historical event when these films are screened publicly. Valuable information on this film reception has helped to portray tensions arising within the community against the history depicted on the screen.

From this study, it could be found that films on Indonesia's past, particularly the Indonesian Revolution, are one of the ways to evoke national pride. The Indonesian Revolution is a very valuable treasure for the largest archipelago state in the world that can be used to build the nation. Nonetheless, as stated by a scholar, "Indonesians do not on the whole draw a sense of national pride from their past. Pried lies in what Indonesian is—the fourth most populous country in the world, a leader in Southeast Asia—and in Indonesia's potential to become just and prosperous, not in what it once was" (Cribb, 2012: 32).

Therefore, to posit the past properly is an important thing so that this nation will not forget that the essence of the past is for the future.

One point I can confidently say about these two films is that both of them are high-quality films from highly dedicated filmmakers. Regarding the measure of quality, a film scholar said that “we can determine the quality of a film ... by the degree to which the re-experiencing of ourselves through it coincides with our pride, our shames, our hopes, and our honor” (Cardullo, 2015: vii).

7.1.1. The Past: A Terrain of Contestation

These films remind us that the past is a political field and that the past is not trivial (Lowenthal, 1990: 308). They confirmed that the use of the past is not only limited to the academic area, but has also expanded to many areas including cultural life (Finley, 1975: 9). The existence of historical films itself is an important piece of evidence about “the popularity of history in media culture” (Agger, 2013: 311). Therefore, the study of historical films is a serious field because historical films arise not merely as a form of entertainment, but also as a form of ideas. In Indonesia, Indonesian Revolution-themed films have appeared since the early 1950s. Since then, the subject always becomes a topic that continues to frequently arise in Indonesia films until today or even in the future.

As a major source of national myth (Abdullah, 2009: 166), the Indonesian Revolution will always be ready to be produced, reproduced or even contested on the screen. One thing is certain though; as a part of Indonesian history, these myths are related to every Indonesian and will never be erased. This field still remains to be a contestation terrain⁵ to anyone using it as a source of inspiration and a source of legitimacy. Nowadays, the intensity of using the

⁵ See Bourdieu’s field theory (e.g., Bourdieu, 1993).

past, particularly the national revolution, as a means of constructing the face of the regime perhaps is not too strong, like that during the New Order era.

At that time, the Indonesian Revolution was used widely as a basis of power legitimacy and a source of political conservatism (Abdullah, 2009: 166). Even the New Order makes itself the owner of single interpretation on the past. The regime highly understood that “to control the past is to master the present, to legitimize dominion and justify legal claims” (Ferro, 2003: x). In fact, it is not surprising because the “use of the national past to legitimize (or delegitimize) particular governments and regimes remains as widespread as ever” (Passmore et al., 1999: 281).

In my opinion, the use of the past in films will generally always remind us of an endless terrain of contestation. Borrowing Shohat and Stam’s term, this area will always be a “symbolic battleground” (1994: 183). Nonetheless, we may not forget that “the past [actually] belongs to everyone: the need to return home, to recall the view, to refresh a memory, to retrace a heritage, is universal and essential” (Lowenthal, 1981: 236). The past of a nation, of course, should not be forgotten but should be a source of inspiration and valuable lessons to face the present and the future.

7.2. Contributions

The contributions of a study are important in the world of science. The main contributions of this study will include:

(1) Providing valuable information, especially information that has not yet been circulated related to the films that are being studied. This study also seeks to confirm and revise inaccurate information from previous studies and books on Indonesian films which, in this context, of course refers to the extent to which this study is concerned. This kind of step becomes important because the right information becomes the way to give the best knowledge.

(2) Making a real contribution in combining film studies and film history. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will be a step toward finding “a new way of assessing the history film” (Rosenstone, 2009) in the context of Indonesian historical films. Although this study is included in the realm of studying history on film, in fact, the study also can be included in the realm of film history as already demonstrated in this study.⁶ The advantage of this practice can actually enrich the study because it ideally places the films in an interdisciplinary area.

(3) Providing a new insight into how a historical film study should be done. This study has at least opened a door to a new perspective in studying films about the Indonesian Revolution. This provides an opportunity and also a public invitation to everyone, whether historians, film scholars or scholars from other disciplines, to deepen their knowledge again about films that have the same topic, whether old films, films appearing at the present time, and historical films such as these, appearing in the future.

(4) Encouraging old films to be kept alive by studying them from a newer and fresher perspective. This also paves the way for mainstreaming the interest of studies on films from the past because, as demonstrated in this study, old films have proven to be an interesting area of study to explore and elaborate. This study provides a new perspective that old films are not less interesting than recent films. Therefore, the study of Indonesian films should also continue to look at films from the past, serving as a potential area for latter studies.

⁶ According to a film scholar: “The crucial difference between film studies and film history is that whereas film studies opens up a wider range of possible interpretations (there are different ways of reading films that can elicit all sorts of meanings that may or may not have been intended by the makers and understood by contemporary audiences), film history is an empirical discipline that deals not in speculation but in research. The film historian sets out to assemble, assess and interpret the facts concerning the production and reception of films” (Chapman, 2003: 19).

(5) Emphasizing the importance of having specific adequate knowledge of history is an essential element to analyze historical films, especially for film scholars. Possessing it, film scholars will enrich their analysis on historical films so that they can avoid unnecessary faults related to the historical context existing in the historical films they are analyzing.

(6) This study provides valuable insights to filmmakers into the importance of having specific adequate knowledge of history, particularly on the history that is to become the subject of the historical films, whether it be based on historical events or historical personages (biopic). In addition, this study also provides interesting information about situations of filmmaking in the past. Information and knowledge on this are important to know and to study for film production purposes in the future.

7.3. Future Research

As previously mentioned, I argue that to conduct a good historical film study or to properly study historical films, one needs to have adequate knowledge on history, and particularly on the history that is to become the subject of the historical films. With such adequate knowledge, one can analyze historical films in a better way. But without it, one can slip and make mistakes in his/her analysis, particularly when it relates to the context of the history depicted in historical films. Therefore, an adequate knowledge of history is essential.

Next, I want to remind those interested in film studies that to conduct a good film study is to keep enjoying the process of endeavor, because “we who ‘study’ film sometimes forget to enjoy” (Robert and Wallis, 2002: 2). In addition, the ability to see an empty space in film studies is something important to ensure that the study we have conducted will contribute valuably to the study realm. One thing for certain is that thinking seriously of a film does not mean that we do not enjoy watching the film (Hooks, 1996: 4).

I suggest that more research on Indonesian historical films with various perspectives should be conducted in the future. Those studies can cover text, production or reception, or even all three fields at once, just like I have done. A study involving three important aspects of film, of course, takes much time and energy. However, the opportunity to find new insights and new knowledge that will complement previous studies is an important temptation that cannot be ignored by scholars who are thirsty for knowledge.

As previously mentioned, studies on historical films in the future can be directed towards investigating the level of public understanding on the history depicted in the films.⁷ Such studies can be conducted using an experimental approach in which respondents are given the opportunity to watch historical films, becoming the material of study, and then to conduct in-depth interviews with the respondents about how they perceive the history on the screen.⁸

The study of the connection between historical films and entertainment also becomes an interesting topic to further explore in the future, particularly historical films about war (see Ausenda, 1992b). Such a study, when viewed from an Indonesian context, has been conducted very rarely. For that reason, it is possible to further explore the relation between Indonesian Revolution-themed historical films and the public's entertainment need. In addition, another potential reading that can be explored with regards to historical films is a study that uses the auteur theory approach, which relates to how filmmakers give personal stamp on the historical films they produce, for example by focusing the study on historical films that have been produced by a filmmaker.

⁷ Cf. Rosenzweig and Thelen (1998) as an example of an exploration study of public understanding of the past, as well as public interaction with it.

⁸ See Sturtevant (2010). Other works on historical film reception, cf. Bisson (2010; 2014); Sommer (2013).

To certain degree, this study which I have conducted has actually depicted several aspects related to film authorship. But, of course, it will be better when a specific study can take a focus on that point. Therefore, I suggest that a study on the authorship perspective will be a fruitful focus of future research in this context, particularly related to historical films. Next, the fact that Indonesian historical films have been widely produced particularly after the Dutch's recognition of Indonesian sovereignty is something good in the sense of an opportunity for film scholars to conduct studies on historical films. Therefore, more research on this topic is needed in order to bring about more insights in order to understand historical film practices in Indonesia. In addition, it can be a way to fill in a lacuna in Indonesian historical film studies.

7.4. Future Cinematic Work

Such the rapid advance of filmmaking technology clearly provides a good opportunity in the filmmaking process, particularly for historical films on the Indonesian Revolution. The attempts of vividly depicting on the screen the period during which the Indonesian War of Independence took place should have become easier. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that it is not as easy as imagined because the past is actually left far behind us. However, with serious attempts to engage in the past through various materials and archives that are still in existence, the attempts to produce well-made historical films about the Indonesian Revolution will be realized. Additionally, the presence of new moving image technologies brings us to a point of sensing and feeling the past more, in this case about the Indonesian Revolution.

In the presence of technology such as computer-generated imagery (CGI), the attempt to digitize the past is no longer an impossible feat.⁹ It is related to the possible use of visual effects or special effects as something impossible to do in the past. Still, as Enticknap suggests, "the use of digital imaging in film

⁹ See Stubbs (2013: 148-153).

production began primarily with the integration of digitally generated special effects” (2005: 202). In the presence of this technology, personal experience as an assistant director injured by a bomb explosion, like what happened in the production of *Mereka Kembali*, will no longer occur.¹⁰ It is well-established that such modern technology benefits the cineastes in producing films on the Indonesian War of Independence genre. Regarding this, a film scholar writes: “As the old technologies of chemistry and mechanics yield to digital electronics and photonics, filmmakers may rediscover the pioneer spirit. The medium is about to be reborn: now, if you can think it, you can film it” (Monaco, 2000: 13).

Therefore, in the future, the role of digital technology can color the production aspect of Indonesian War of Independence-themed historical films and exerts a more significant effect.¹¹ CGI technology can bring us closer to the reality of the period when the Indonesian War of Independence took place. Battle circumstances such as bomb explosions will be more real and convincing. The technology use trend is getting more apparent and strengthened particularly when we watch the Indonesian War of Independence-themed films in the post-2000 era. A prime example of this, *Jenderal Soedirman* (2015)¹² (Rulistia, 2015). CGI enables filmmakers to have real battle circumstance without necessarily leaving the studio. Moreover, technology allows filmmakers “to provide new perspectives on events” (Basinger, 2007: 346), thereby bringing about significant differences between what is filmed in the production stage and what will appear when the film has been completed as the end result ready to be performed. As we know, modern technology in film production has

¹⁰ Interview with Syamsul Fuad, 16 September 2017 in Jakarta.

¹¹ In the history of historical film production, *Forrest Gump*, directed by Robert Zemeckis, is the first historical film using CGI (Stubbs, 2013: 148).

¹² Directed by Viva Westi. *Jenderal Soedirman* (General Soedirman) is a biopic film taking the theme of General Sudirman’s guerilla struggle as the Indonesian Army Supreme Commander (*Panglima Besar*) in the Indonesian War of Independence period.

recently achieved a stage “where the representation of the events outstripped the presentation of facts” (Virilio, 1989: 1).

In Indonesia, the production prospect of historical films about the Indonesian Revolution seems to have not ended yet. The Indonesian Revolution on the screen seems to be a never-ending and never-stopping narration. This event, with the various dimensions and spectrums contained within it, will remain existent and be good inspiration to Indonesian cinema as a central theme and a part or flashback of film narrations. Moreover, the Indonesian Revolution is very meaningful and occupies a very special position in the nation’s historical consciousness (Abdullah, 2009: 1; Reid, 2011: 182). Such an event is of course too valuable to forget. Indonesia during the war of independence or the war of independence itself is like an opened book (Mohamad, 2001: 470).

In other words, there is no single tale on the Indonesian Revolution. We can say that the Indonesian Revolution will always be an interesting topic for a lifetime. Any aspects related to the Indonesian Revolution can still be explored, interpreted, understood and raised to the silver screen due to its never-ending interesting potencies. A film critic says that Indonesian Revolution-themed or Indonesian Revolution-related films will remain to be produced continuously in the future because the Indonesian Revolution has too large a meaning to the Indonesian nation and will be an interesting material to filmdom in this country (Said, 1991c: 78).

According to a historian, the past is an integral part of us (Lowenthal, 1985: 412). The past itself is a part of humanity. Therefore, “we humans”, as asserted by Rosenstone, “can never stop the effort to talk about and make meaning of the past” (1996: 216). As a nation, we should turn to the past to reflect ourselves and to learn valuable lessons so that we can reconstruct our future more effectively (Godfrey, 2006: 23; Prasodjo, 2008: 27). It is important

because history is a warehouse where we can store model stories (Habermas, 1996: 7).

Therefore, an important agenda for filmmakers who want to raise the Indonesian Revolution subject in their films is to depict the lessons from the past for the future, so that positive and valuable values of the event can keep living and remain inherited. In short, filmmakers should recreate the past in order to make it relevant and meaningful not only for the present but also for the future (Toplin, 2000: 16; Winkler, 2009b: 197). The Indonesian Revolution as a major topic for films will never be outdated when filmmakers can take lessons and historical wisdom from the event so that the past depicted on the screen will not merely be a spectacle and entertainment.

In this context, filmmakers clearly occupy an important position because they can be re-creators of the past just like historians. However, “they diverge on their approach to their subjects. Historians must remain faithful to the historical records, while directors may take the dramatic license forbidden the historians” (Godfrey, 2006: 10). Filmmakers can include dramatic elements into their films if necessary. Nevertheless, just like authors in depicting, exploring and treating the past, the filmmakers should hold tightly on to virtuous values and responsibility to the people in general (Booth, 1988: 132). In other words, filmmakers cannot abandon morality, as it is an important aspect of their works (Ernst, 1946: 183; Rosenstone, 2016: 194).

The presence of historical films on the Indonesian Revolution theme in the framework of contributing as an educational medium about the national struggle’s virtuous values to the public, particularly to the younger generation, is very desirable. In a letter to the editor, someone writes that the presence of films about the Indonesian Revolution is very desirable particularly to

inculcate and to grow nationalism and patriotism among adolescents.¹³ Meanwhile, a writer of a letter to the editor suggests the importance of such film production to make our younger generation aware of the independence the nation had achieved with bloodshed.¹⁴

Nationalism and patriotism are indeed not merely about a struggle for independence in the past, because nationalism and patriotism can also be depicted with more contemporary themes. However, the presence of historical films with struggle for independence theme will of course keep giving a diversity of themes to Indonesian cinema. Moreover, those films can provide information on how and why this nation was fighting and what virtuous values should be fought for during the revolutionary period. The Indonesian Revolution itself may no longer be there. Yet, we can still see it through films. It is the past “which created our present, and hence our future” (Godfrey, 2006: 23).

The Indonesian Revolution is like a large umbrella protecting various events occurring during the revolutionary period. As previously mentioned, in the history of Indonesian film, the Indonesian Revolution has indeed been the barn of ideas and inspirations for Indonesian films. However, many spaces have not yet been explored when it comes to the Indonesian Revolution as viewed from both historical events and historical personages¹⁵ involved in those historical events. Some important historical events and historical personages that are reasonably depicted in order to fill the big screen in the future are A.K. Gani and his smuggling actions to fund the independence war.

As we know, the struggle for independence needed much fund (Saubari, 2003: 69; Zed, 1997b: 243). Cribb mentions that the Indonesian Revolution was a

¹³ Fransiscus (2012: 2).

¹⁴ Firdaus (2012: 2).

¹⁵ Cf. Chapter 1.

costly affair (1988: 701). One interesting fact is that the struggle for independence is inseparable from the sale of opium, which funded the struggle.¹⁶ Because of his astuteness in smuggling, A.K. Gani was known as “the greatest smuggler in Asia.”¹⁷ Even a journalist has stated that A.K. Gani was slicker than an eel (Ghazali, 1950: 163). Then, the character of John Lie with his ship “The Outlaw” serving to break the Dutch’s blockade to get weapons and drugs by means of smuggling opium, rubber, tea and other crops into Singapore should be raised on the screen. John Lie himself was dubbed the “Guns and Bibles Smuggler.”¹⁸

In addition, the character of Syafruddin Prawiranegara, which was inseparable from the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PDRI, *Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia*), is of course material that is interesting enough to become a film.¹⁹ PDRI was an important part of the Indonesian Revolution because it proved that the Indonesian government had not died after the Republican Capital, Yogyakarta, was successfully overtaken by the Dutch. Before being arrested by the Dutch, Sukarno-Hatta indeed mandated Syafruddin to establish an emergency government. However, the mandate sent through radiogram had never been received by Syafruddin. Instead, PDRI stood based on the political and military leaders’ initiative in Bukittinggi, after having heard that Yogyakarta had been overtaken by the Dutch (see Salim, 1995; Simatupang, 1980: 200). Then, the existence of PDRI at that time became the national symbol and the uniting factor, particularly for

¹⁶ For more information on this, see Coast (2015: 184-196); Cribb (1988: 701-722); Zed (1997b: 243-260).

¹⁷ See Zed’s dissertation (1991). Later published as a book with the same title, see Zed (2003).

¹⁸ See Suryadinata (2015: 142). For more information on John Lie, see Nursam (2008); Dahana (2012: 571-573).

¹⁹ For some publications on Syafruddin Prawiranegara and PDRI, see Rosidi (1986); Sriyanto (2017); Salim (1995); Basral (2011); Surjomihardjo (1990); Purwoko (1991); Hassan (2002); Zed (1997a); Nain (1995); Hakiem and Noer (2011); Abdullah (2007: 13-27). A historian mentioned that Syafruddin Prawiranegara is one of two presidents of the Republic of Indonesia who escaped from official historical records. Meanwhile, the other one is Assaat. Despite a very short period, they had been presidents of the Republic of Indonesia (Adam, 2009: 64-66).

guerilla soldiers, in fighting against the Dutch (Kahin, 2005: 213). Other historical events such as *Serangan Umum* (General Attack) for four days in Surakarta²⁰ and the Indonesian diplomatic struggle in the United Nations are interesting examples as well. Clearly, many more interesting events of the Indonesian National Revolution can be brought into films.

Moreover, historical films on the Indonesian Revolution can also take stories that do not often become mainstream in the history of the struggle for independence, but actually an important part in contributing to arranging an important historical event that occurred during the Indonesian Revolution period. For example, raising the story of vagrants who also helped the Indonesian army in launching a General Attack on March 1, 1949. The vagrants offered the Indonesian troops an alternative way to escape and hide.²¹ It will be interesting if any film raises the role of vagrants as the means of maintaining and refreshing the remembrance of Indonesian history about who contributed to the war of independence, but who were not strongly recorded in mainstream Indonesian History, which solely focuses more on large events and important figures. To my knowledge, I have never seen the depiction of such vagrants. Meanwhile, the role of religious clerics, children, and women during the revolutionary period has been depicted on the screen.

I think well-made historical films can help us avoid “collective collusion”²², thereby allowing us to see the history better. The first Indonesian president, Sukarno, had once said: “Never forget history.”²³ This statement emphasizes the importance of history’s position to a nation. The historical consciousness of a nation is one of ideal bulwarks for facing future challenges. A nation will never go forward into the future if it continues the wrong doings that were

²⁰ See Yoedoprawiro (1999).

²¹ See Muttalib and Sudjarwo (1986).

²² See Wineburg (2001: 242-243).

²³ Original reads: “*Jangan sekali-kali melupakan sejarah or Jas Merah*”

done in the past. Therefore, films, particularly historical films, should be a means of providing insights, lessons and positive reflection on one's nation. With this in mind, the historical films of a nation play a very important role in enlightening the nation itself.

7.5. Final Words

Through this study, I have shown an alternative way of reading old films. I argue that the potential of reading from fresher perspectives is opened very widely and possible to do because only through this will we be able to stop them "*dead*"²⁴ (Newbold, 1998: 132). Therefore, if there is a question, is it really necessary to reread Indonesian films, from classical to contemporary films, which recently appearing in different ways, perspectives and approaches? The answer is yes, it is. Even the films that were once studied are very possible to read and to reinterpret. Moreover, the results of preexisting film analyses are not final texts or last words about those films. The use of new perspectives in studying films will generate new spaces that enrich the body of knowledge on film studies. Additionally, new reading on films that were once studied is a way of criticizing inappropriate information about the films. All of them should run with academic spirit as an endeavor to contribute to the study realm.

It is well-established that films are cinematic works of art. In addition, films, whatever they are, are products of thought. All films, as an attainment of Indonesian cineastes, are an integral part of culture that should be appreciated despite their topic or storyboard's awkwardness. Films, whether they are categorized as good or bad ones, will remain to provide valuable insight into understanding something related to the existence of films, for example the time when they are produced, and can give information about the public's taste and barometer of certain social political conditions.

²⁴ Emphasis in original.

I suggest that film scholars pay attention again not only to recent, but also to old, films. Film scholars should pay their attention to old films and reopen the beginning pages of the Indonesian cinema “book” all at once. It is intended to keep this study area dynamic. Through this study, I confirm and prove all at once that there are various ways of reading films. It is in line with a film scholar who stated that “there are always more than one way of reading a film” (Lacey, 2005: 293). Therefore, there are also many ways to read history on the screen, especially historical films (Rosenstone, 1995a: 12).

However, it is important to emphasize that this study, of course, does not become the end of reading these films, but becomes an alternative way for reading the films. As stated by a film scholar, what other researchers can do in the future is “to test their readings against mine” (Fabe, 2004: xviii), or, in other words, to conduct reading by using different perspectives by asking new questions or by using different methodological approaches. I believe that the appreciation of the freedom of interpretation in the study of films is an important thing. Therefore, as an interpretation of texts, it is completely possible for the texts to have other interpretations.

I believe that the depiction of historical events on films has not come to an end at the present time. Moreover, there is a saying perfectly depicting this condition that “every generation writes its own history of the past” (Stephens, 1916: 225). Historical events’ depiction in films is a never-ending subject. Such a depiction existing on the screen will not cease and will become unfinished history, particularly when other new films appear featuring historical events that have ever been produced before. There are two possibilities that will occur: firstly, films appearing later will take the same perspective in the sense of confirming or affirming the historical events’ depiction of preexisting films. Secondly, films appearing later will take on a different emphasis, perspective,

and interpretation of the historical events' depiction in films produced previously. Something that can be highlighted here is that films as media provide a large potential to do those practices.

One thing is for certain, and that is that historical films will always be conceived and presented as a way to remind us of, preach about, and depict, by our own means, our past. Historical films are none other than the future of history itself.²⁵ An important point about the presence of historical films is that historical films are present in order to stimulate dialogues and discussion about the past (Carnes, 1995: 10; Burgoyne, 2007a: 369). Similar to Carnes, a historical film scholar offered an interesting view as quoted below.

A historical film should open a wide discussion, the way a historical book does. The film review sections in historical journals and the existence of special periodicals on film and history are a real contribution. Historians might profitably contribute reviews in newspapers, on the radio, or on television. It's up to historians, those who have participated in the film and those who have seen it, to bring to debate both an understanding of the possibilities of film and a knowledge of the past (Davis, 2003: 48).

According to a professional historian, as well as historical film scholar, the best historical films will "show not just what happened in the past but how what happened means to us. Interrogate the past for the sake of the present" (Rosenstone, 1995b: 238). Even though the past materials which are depicted are personal, partial, political or even problematic in nature, historical films will continue to have an important position and role. As stated by Rosenstone, "it is still possible to see them fulfilling traditional tasks of history and telling histories" (1996: 215).

²⁵ See Ashkenazi (2014: 289-303).

All in all, this study is best regarded as an example of work on how to do a historical film study particularly on Indonesian cinema. It is hoped that this study can serve as a useful footing, as well as an inspiration for future research on Indonesian historical films, by using different approaches and perspectives. The method of reading historical films offered by this research has been proven to be able to provide valuable information not only in terms of what the films themselves produced, but also the conditions surrounding the films when they were produced. This study ultimately offers an idea that might be a better way of understanding historical films.

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