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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California



## THESIS

**A HOUSE DIVIDED: THE DECLINE AND FALL OF  
MASYUMI (1950 – 1956)**

by

Robert E. Lucius

September 2003

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Glenn E. Robinson  
Gaye Christoffersen

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**A HOUSE DIVIDED: THE DECLINE AND FALL OF MASYUMI (1950 – 1956)**

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Submitted in addition to the  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the rise and fall of *Masyumi* during the era of the provisional parliament in Indonesia (1950-1956). As the largest of the pre-Suharto Islamic political parties in a country with an overwhelming Muslim majority, *Masyumi* was poised in 1955 to achieve political ascendancy, and thus to achieve its primary objective of establishing an Islamic state. Ultimately, *Masyumi's* leaders failed to unify Indonesian Muslims, and they consequently lost much of their moral and political authority. In an important demonstration of the malleability of Islamic and ethnic identity politics, *Masyumi's* struggle was eventually submerged within a greater struggle by the Javanese to assert cultural hegemony over the entire Indonesian archipelago. This thesis describes *Masyumi's* role in precipitating not only its own fall, but also in helping to bring about the collapse of Indonesia's first attempt at parliamentary democracy.

Indonesia's Islamist past contains many important lessons for US policymakers dealing with this largest of all Muslim countries, particularly in light of the war on terror. Understanding the contingent and variable nature of *Masyumi's* Islamic politics can help shed light on the present ideological battles in Indonesia.



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I have set out upon an exciting new journey, and this thesis is but the first small step.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis examines the role of Indonesia's largest post-independence Islamic political party, *Masyumi*, during the period of the provisional parliament (1950 – 1956). This relatively brief era remains an important subject of analysis for contemporary scholars because its lessons can help shed light on the multifaceted role of Islam in Indonesia's modern political discourse. It can also point towards a better understanding of the potential influence that Islam might yet have on Indonesia's emerging democracy in the post-Suharto era. Although *Masyumi* was disbanded over forty years ago, a careful study of the roots of the political conflict between it and its secular opponents, as well as between it and the other Islamic political alternatives, remains relevant today because it offers a window on what might have been and what might yet still be.

As in the era under consideration, the inability of the political representatives of the modern Indonesian *ummah*, or *Muslim community*, to achieve consensus regarding the appropriate role of religion vis-à-vis politics continues to hamper their attempts to make significant gains against entrenched secular interests. The subsequent failure of the Islamist political parties to pose a serious challenge to their secularist opposition in the years since Indonesia's first democratic elections in 1955 has caused many observers to speculate regarding the existence of a widespread cultural antipathy in Indonesian society towards the admixture of politics and religion. To this sociopolitical proclivity is attributed the decline and ultimate fall of *Masyumi* during the 1950s. The analysis outlined in this research suggests that this "cultural" view is in reality far more contingent and variable than usually assumed.

Indonesia is a complex society in which religion, especially Islam, continues to have a profoundly influential role in all facets of life, including politics. However, as is demonstrated in this research, the failure of the Islamists to successfully call upon Indonesia's overwhelming Muslim majority to sweep them into power in the 1955 general elections had less to do with inherent Indonesian affinities towards secular governance than it did with the fractious nature of the Indonesian *ummah*. The process of Islamization, which began in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the Indonesian archipelago, produced a



bifurcation of socio-political culture and produced a fault line between the Islamic-entrepreneurial societies of the Javanese *pesisir* and outer island entrepots and the inland agrarian societies of Java. The absorption and syncretization of Islam within the pre-existing Hindu-Buddhist cultures of the latter produced a stream of Islamic political thought that manifested into a worldview quite different from that subscribed to by the entrepreneurial societies. The cleavage between these groups has been long-lasting and decisive in shaping Indonesian politics.

This Islamic cleavage became further pronounced with the importation of modernist doctrine during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century as Indonesians began to travel more frequently to the *Hejaz* and other centers of Islamic study in India, Arabia and Persia. The development of a native Indonesian modernist movement was most prolific in the Javanese *pesisir* and in the *seberang* communities, especially in West Java and Sumatra. This movement ultimately became manifest in the founding of the *Muhammadiyah*, a religious and educational organization dedicated to *dakwah* along the modernist model. The orthodox Islamic leaders, most of who came from East and Central Java, responded by forming the *Nahdatul Ulama*, an organization established with the principle aim of defending traditionalist Islamic values in the face of modernist gains.

The *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama* coexisted relatively peacefully, if not somewhat grudgingly, under the close supervision of the Dutch colonial authorities, but the arrival of the Japanese occupation forces in 1942 upset the delicate balance between these two entities. In an effort to co-opt Islamic leaders in support of the war effort, the Japanese military authorities formed *Masyumi* as an umbrella organization for both the modernist and traditionalist elements of the Indonesian *ummah*. The traditionalists of the *Nahdatul Ulama* initially dominated *Masyumi*'s leadership structure, but with the surrender of the Japanese and the declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945, the modernists moved to the fore and the influence of the traditionalists receded.

The years following independence were marked not only by an intense struggle between Islamists and the secularists to assert their own particular vision for Indonesia, but also between the modernist and now-marginalized traditionalist elements of *Masyumi*

to achieve primacy within the party. This struggle came to a climax in April 1952 with the disaffiliation of *Nahdatul Ulama* from *Masyumi* and its formation as a separate political party. The fracturing of *Masyumi* along the modernist-traditionalist cleavage was catastrophic for the political aspirations of the Islamists because it divided the Indonesian *ummah* not only along socio-political lines, but along ethnic lines as well. The Javanese-dominated traditionalists of the *Nahdatul Ulama* allied themselves with the other Javanese parties, which were predominately secular in orientation, while the modernist-dominated *Masyumi* became identified with the outer island constituencies. The struggle to assert Islam as the guiding principle of Indonesian politics was subsequently submerged beneath an equally virulent struggle to assert Javanese ethnic supremacy manifested in the primacy of the *abangan* cultural worldview. This thesis describes that struggle and *Masyumi*'s failure to measure up to the challenge.

The Javanese socio-political culture would eventually prove victorious in this ethnic struggle, and the political voices of the *seberang*, notably *Masyumi* and its allies, would be silenced for the remaining years of Sukarno's Old Order and for the duration of Suharto's New Order regime. The re-awakening of democracy in Indonesia after nearly a half-century of slumber has also re-awakened the potential for the Islamists to regain the political ascendancy their forefathers forfeited when the Javanese political worldview became dominant. Any success by the modern Islamist leaders will be contingent upon their collective ability to reunify the Indonesian *ummah* in the face of ethnic, cultural and theological differences, rather than upon any need to overcome an innate societal antipathy towards religious-based politics. This goal was unachievable for *Masyumi* and has so far been unachievable by its political successors, but the repeated failure of Indonesia's secular governments since 1999 to overcome economic malaise, separatist agitation, communal violence, and systemic corruption has left their continued political dominance increasingly vulnerable.

The lessons of *Masyumi*'s rise and fall within the context of the era of the provisional parliament provides modern observers with numerous points of reference with which to analyze the political machinations of Indonesia's modern political actors, particularly as they relate to the future electoral potential of political Islam in that

country. Much of this context is reflective of the modern political environment in Indonesia, in terms of domestic and international factors, each of which have influenced the political discourse and shaped both the policy and propaganda of *Masyumi* and its opponents. *Masyumi's* leaders did not have a comparable historical case study against which to weigh their political decisions. In effect, they were blazing a new political trail where others had not yet tread, and their missteps, although inevitably catastrophic, were understandable in light of their collective political inexperience. However, today's Islamist leaders have no such excuse for their own frequent missteps: Whether they avail themselves of the lessons of their own past in order to avoid similar mistakes remains to be seen.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has been an independent state for over a half century, but its citizens have tasted the bittersweet joys of democracy for but two brief periods of its history. During the thirty-two years between the *Orde Lama* (“Old Order”) and the present era, former President Suharto ruled Indonesia with fear and political oppression. Although elections were periodically and methodically conducted under his regime, the results were usually a foregone conclusion.

For almost the entire duration of Suharto’s *Orde Baru* (“New Order”), political participation in Indonesia was limited to a relatively modest slate of anemic political parties tolerated in great part for their inability to pose a serious challenge to the ruling elites. After the general elections of 1971, Suharto took drastic steps to restrict Islamic political expression to a single government-approved party. The four Islamic political parties that had survived the turbulent events of the 1950s and 1960s were merged under the banner of the *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (“United Development Party” –PPP). By forcing them together in this manner, Suharto had hoped that the internal divisions among its constituent parts would serve to keep the PPP perpetually weak. In the early 1980’s, Suharto further homogenized political expression by decreeing that all state organizations, including the PPP, had to affirm a common, predominately secular guiding ideology. Islam was no longer considered an acceptable basis for political expression.

Since the collapse of Suharto’s *Orde Baru* in May 1998, Indonesia has once again experienced a flowering of political parties. During the 1999 general elections, which were the first truly free national elections held since 1955, some forty-eight parties were approved to contest for seats in the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (“People’s Representative Council” -DPR). These parties represented the entire spectrum of Indonesian political interests, except for Communism, which had remained a banned ideology since 1966. Among the many new parties to rise from the ashes of the *Orde Baru* during this era of *reformasi* were a half-dozen or so Islamic parties hoping to take advantage of the loosening of the reins on the participation of religious organizations in politics.

Of the many developments to arise from the 1999 general elections, one of the most interesting was the role played by those political parties that had endeavored to

employ Islamic symbols and rhetoric to define their image. “Islamism” is the belief that Islam can and should form the basis for the development of political ideology. In that sense, religion can serve as a “blueprint for political engagement” (Barton, October, 2002, p. 5). Although a significant number of the new parties formed after 1998 adopted the “Islamic” label, it would be unwise to assume that all of these parties were Islamist, that they based their respective political agendas on the strict implementation of *Sharia*, or that all were unanimous in calling for the establishment of an Islamic state. Some of these parties merely wished to use the core values and principles of Islam as a light by which to guide good and effective governance. For these parties, secularism was not mutually exclusive with Islam. Although the agendas and aspirations of these parties were surprisingly diverse, most of them failed to find substantial support from the Indonesian electorate.

Of the four political parties that did achieve support in the double-digit percentages, only two can be regarded as having Islamic roots of any consequence; the *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (“National Awakening Party” –PKB) and the *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (“United Development Party” -PPP). Interestingly, although the former was the primary political vehicle for the leadership of *Nahdatul Ulama* (“Renaissance of the Religious Scholars”), it strictly affirmed the *Pancasila* as its sole guiding ideology. Conversely, the PPP, which was a remnant of the Suharto era discarded *Pancasila* entirely, and instead claimed Islam as its basis.

Of the remaining seventeen parties that won seats in the DPR, eight of these employed Islam in some manner to distinguish themselves from their competitors, and all but one claimed Islam as their fundamental political ideology. The remaining party, the *Partai Amanat Nasional* (“National Mandate Party” –PAN) carefully distanced itself from Islamism, and like the PKB, chose instead to use *Pancasila* as its guiding ideology. Together these ten “Islamic” parties captured nearly thirty-five percent of the seats in the DPR, and despite significant ideological rifts amongst them they were able to ally themselves long enough to win the Presidency for Abdurrahman Wahid, the head of *Nahdatul Ulama*. Since then, this “Central Axis” of Islamic parties has again splintered, and several of its constituent parties have themselves fragmented into smaller parties. Questions remain as to whether they will ever again be able to overcome the fundamental

political and theological difference among them to compete effectively against the secular parties in the upcoming 2004 general elections. O'Rourke has suggested that such a potential still exists if these parties can effectively capitalize on the political fragility of the secular parties, many of which continue to be plagued by corruption scandals and their own internal instability (O'Rourke, 2004, p. 2).

In many ways, the conditions that characterize the political situation in modern Indonesia are eerily reminiscent of those that were prevalent in the years leading up to Indonesia's first general elections in 1955. Like its historical predecessor, the Indonesia of today is wracked by pervasive corruption, economic instability, and separatist unrest, while its fragile democracy lives under the unspoken threat of intervention by an army uninspired by its civilian leadership. Because of the similarities between these two periods in Indonesian history, any lessons that can be distilled from an examination of the earlier era may help us clarify the potential for political Islam to rise again in the years to come. Thus, the lessons of *Masyumi's* decline and fall remain relevant for those seeking to understand the modern relevance of political Islam in shaping contemporary political discourse in Indonesia.

#### **A. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS: LOOKING BACK IN ORDER TO LOOK FORWARD**

At the dawn of Indonesia's independence in 1950, *Masyumi* was not only the most important Islamic political party in Indonesia; it was arguably the most important political party of all. Ward has argued that *Masyumi* was perhaps the only truly national party at that time because its support came from both Java and the outer islands (1970, p. 13). Yet in spite of its vast organizational power in 1950, by 1958 *Masyumi* would find itself fighting and loosing a rearguard action against a growing cast of enemies as it struggled to preserve the remnants of Indonesia's first democratic experiment against the rising political triumvirate of President Sukarno, the army and the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* ("Indonesian Communist Party" –PKI). By 1962, *Masyumi* would become an outlawed organization, and its principal leaders would be hunted as criminals.

The results of the following analysis suggests that the decline and subsequent proscription of *Masyumi* in 1962 need not have been a foregone conclusion, but rather that it was instead the avoidable consequence of a string of poor strategic and tactical

political decisions made by its leadership over the span of the previous decade. A careful study of these errors is important because although forty-five years have passed since the collapse of Indonesia's first flirtation with democracy, the contours of Indonesia's post-Suharto political landscape continue to be largely shaped by the events and experiences of that era.

Although the full import of Islamic politics remains an unknown quantity for modern Indonesia's still immature democracy, conventional wisdom opines that the majority of Indonesians are religiously tolerant, secular-leaning, and traditionally ambivalent to the intermingling of religion and politics. The relatively weak showing of Islamic political parties in the 1999 general elections is often held up as proof that the Indonesian voting public is not likely to support religiously-based parties in the near future. However, conventional wisdom on the eve of the 1955 general elections suggested Indonesian voting habits that were of a vastly different stripe. In those days pundits were confident that the majority of Indonesian voters would in fact largely be influenced by their religious sympathies, and this perception in turn gave rise to their oft-repeated predictions that the three main Islamic political parties (*Masyumi*, *Nahdatul Ulama*, and the *Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia*) would win a decisive majority in both the parliamentary elections of September 1955 and in the elections for the Constituent Assembly conducted three months later (Feith, 1954, p. 246; Bone, 1955, p. 1084). The fact that the largest of these parties, *Masyumi*, ultimately received far less popular support than the pundits had predicted begs an explanation that can only come from a careful study of the actors and issues that dominated the political scene in the critical years leading up to those elections. Did the party's ideology fail to resonate with the public, or are other reasons at the root of *Masyumi's* failure?

An explanation for why the conventional wisdom of the 1950s proved so grossly mistaken has profound relevance for those who hope to divine the future course of Indonesian politics. Many political observers continue to question the relative significance of political Islam in Indonesia because of tenacious perceptions that Indonesians will continue to reject Islamism as somehow incompatible with their secular sympathies. The research outlined in subsequent chapters, however, will suggest that the

cause for the failure of political Islam to coalesce into a decisive political force is far more complex than that proffered by the purveyors of conventional wisdom.

## **B. ROOTS OF POLITICAL DISUNITY AMONG THE INDONESIAN UMMAH**

Despite the existence of relatively small pockets of Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians and animists, Indonesia is today a predominately Muslim country. It is in fact the world's most populous Muslim country, and yet to say that Indonesia is roughly 90% Muslim is to miss the cultural complexity that underlies such a broad demographic generalization. In reality, Indonesia's Muslim polity is as diverse as any other large multi-ethnic community, and perhaps even more so.

Before independence, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) was a disparate collection of regencies, sultanates, and kingdoms that served as home to a vast assortment of ethnic, linguistic, and religious variations appropriate to a swath of territory encompassing well over 740,000 square miles. Although the long struggle for independence helped to graft the idea of a singular "Indonesia" as a thin veneer of nationalism around an amalgam cauldron of diverse cultural identities, the concept espoused by Indonesia's national motto, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" ("Unity in Diversity"), could neither quickly nor easily erase centuries of divergent development.

Almost forty years ago, noted anthropologist Clifford Geertz cautioned scholars not to confuse the almost total Islamization of Indonesia with either cultural or political homogeneity (1960, p. 7). If anything, religious diversity is the central characteristic that defines Indonesian society, and a nuanced discussion of the origins of that diversity can help explain the influence of cultural and regional differences on the full breadth of the political landscape. The process through which Islam first came to the Indonesian archipelago and began to expand led to bifurcation of Islamic socio-political culture, and these patterns were subsequently hardened as a consequence of both the Dutch colonization and the Japanese wartime occupation. Political discourse in the 1950s was in large part grounded in these divisions, and the 1955 elections reflected them demographically. A study of Islam's contributions to Indonesia's socio-political culture is all the more important if we are to understand that religion's failure to transform itself from a widespread cultural phenomenon into a commensurately powerful political one.



Chapter II provides the background necessary for understanding the origins of the cleavage between the traditionalist and modernist wings of the Muslim constituency. It would be this very schism that would serve as an obstacle to *Masyumi*'s attempts to unify the *ummah* under its party banner throughout the era immediately following independence. That chapter also traces the development of Indonesian Islam as a social and political force from its introduction into the archipelago in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, until the dawn of full independence in December 1949. It identifies those key events that have subsequently contributed to Indonesian Islam's fragmentation over the centuries, and it draws out the causes that contributed to the failure of Muslim political parties to rise to the challenge of leadership in the era of the post-independence provisional parliament.

### **C. THE DECLINE OF MASYUMI IN THE ERA OF THE PROVISIONAL PARLIAMENT**

Chapter III provides a detailed discussion of *Masyumi*'s role during Indonesia's first brief experiment with democracy (1950-1957). It also provides a discussion of the complex web of interaction between *Masyumi* and the other important actors on Indonesia's political stage during that tumultuous period. As the party with the largest share of seats in the 1950 provisional parliament, as well as the largest grassroots organization of any party in Indonesia, *Masyumi* was ideally positioned at the dawn of independence to seize the mantle as the preeminent political force in Indonesia. It was in recognition of this factor that *Masyumi* was given the privilege of assembling Indonesia's first post-independence cabinet. Its chairman, Mohammed Natsir, would subsequently be appointed as the Republic of Indonesia's first Prime Minister. However by late 1962, the parliament would cease to exist, *Masyumi* would be outlawed, and two of its former Prime Ministers would be imprisoned. It would be a long, hard fall for *Masyumi*, made all the more dramatic because of the power and prestige it had once enjoyed.

Of the numerous political parties that came into existence at the dawn of Indonesia's independence, *Masyumi* was by far the least intuitive of them all. It was after all a residual fabrication of the Japanese occupation; an organization welded together from the disparate wings of the *ummah*, not of their own accord, but rather as an extension of self-serving Japanese occupation policies. *Masyumi* was founded not to unify the Muslim leadership for the sake of giving political power to the Indonesian

people, but instead to mobilize the labor capacity of the Indonesian population to support Japanese wartime aims. As such, it was from the beginning an unstable organization. The mutual antagonisms that had characterized relations between its various constituent parts before World War II were only held in check during *Masyumi's* early years by a collective fear of the Japanese. After the war, Muslim leaders continued to set aside their own factional conflicts in order to present a unified front in the struggle against Dutch attempts to retake Indonesia. With the attainment of partial independence in 1945, however, the fractures within the leadership began to widen again, and *Masyumi* slowly began to come apart at the seams.

Because its support had come not only from the Javanese heartland, but also from throughout almost the entire archipelago, *Masyumi* had been the only truly nationalist party at the beginning of the parliamentary period (Ward, 1970, p. 13). This source of strength, however, depended on the maintenance of all of its constituent factions, especially the *Nahdatul Ulama* constituencies of Central and East Java. When *Nahdatul Ulama* withdrew from *Masyumi* in 1952, the latter became almost exclusively a party of West Java and the *seberang* (“outer islands”). Although the socio-political discourse in Indonesia had long reflected the dichotomy between Javanese and *seberang* interests, *Masyumi* had always been well-positioned to speak for both because of the broadness of its constituency. The 1952 split with *Nahdatul Ulama* altered this pattern, and *Masyumi* subsequently began to be identified as the most prominent voice of the *seberang*.

The dominant secular parties, including both the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (“Indonesian Nationalist Party” –PNI) and the PKI, overwhelmingly represented Javanese interests, which frequently proved to be at odds with those of the *seberang* communities, particularly in the economic sphere. The relative equality in parliamentary influence between *Masyumi* and those parties prior to 1952 ensured that neither could gain complete dominance, but the withdrawal of *Nahdatul Ulama* from the *Masyumi* fold, and the subsequent alignment of *Nahdatul Ulama* with the Javanese secular parties shifted that balance of power decisively against *Masyumi*.

From 1952 on, *Masyumi* was forced to rely on two sources of strength to keep its enemies at bay. The first was the almost universal fear among secularist parties that *Masyumi* was poised for a landslide victory in the 1955 elections, and the second was the

close, almost symbiotic, relationship between the senior army leadership and *Masyumi's* leaders. Both of these sources of strength became increasingly vulnerable throughout the mid-1950s, until both would eventually evaporate in the wake of the 1955 elections. The web of relationships between *Masyumi* and the President, the army, the opposition parties, among *Masyumi's* own political allies, and even between its own constituent factions, holds the key for understanding the complex chain of events that led to its failure to attain the expected landslide victory in the 1955 general elections. In that web, we may also find the causes for *Masyumi's* growing political isolation as its former allies abandoned it on by one as the light of democracy was extinguished all across Indonesia.

#### **D. FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION IN APPLYING THE LESSONS OF THE MASYUMI EXPERIENCE**

The reasons for the decline of *Masyumi* can be found wrapped up in the multi-layered web of relationships between it and the numerous other significant actors on the political stage in the decade that followed World War II. The causes for party's ultimate destruction can also be traced through a long and complex chain of events whose origins can be found in the development of competing conceptions of Islam's role in society and politics. Reverberations from the centuries-old modernist/traditionalist schism shaped the debate within the *ummah*, and the inability of its political leaders to come to a consensus sapped the party of its political strength and doomed it to failure in the face of increasingly hostile opposition.

Geoffrey Pridham and Paul Lewis have said that emerging democracies are almost always intrinsically fragile (1996, p. 1). Indonesia's nascent democracy was no exception to this rule. The provisional parliament of 1950-1957 provided representation from across the entire spectrum of Indonesian diversity, but because almost none of the political parties were truly national parties they tended to represent very narrow constituencies. *Masyumi*, which began as the only truly national party, rested on a very unstable alliance between traditionalist and modernist Muslim organizations, the most prominent of which were *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama*. *Masyumi's* organizational leadership was in a near constant state of flux as various factions contested for control over the party's leadership council and its agenda. Modernists generally resented the traditionalists' control over the organization during the period of the

Japanese occupation, and the traditionalists likewise became increasingly bitter as they became sidelined in the wake of the modernists' rise after Japan's surrender.

The vast disparity in the experiences, perspectives and ambitions of these two groups made their alliance difficult even under the best of circumstances, but the inability (or unwillingness) of their leaders to seek compromises by which to hold the party together in the face of secularist hostility was remarkable. The decision by *Masyumi's* modernist-dominated executive council to appoint its own favorite to the post of Minister of Religion in February 1952 was perceived as simply the most egregious of a long list of insults against the leadership of the *Nahdatul Ulama*. The *Nahdatul Ulama's* leadership was already chafing as a result of what they perceived as the slow marginalization of their influence within the party, but depriving of them of their one source of bureaucratic patronage was an unforgivable insult (Barton & Fealy, 1996, pp. 22-23). The modernist wing under Mohammad Natsir may have had good, practical reasons for wanting to make the change, but their collective failure to see the ramifications of this action was catastrophic for the party's unity.

The slow, but steady, alienation of *Masyumi's* traditionalist elements by its modernist leaders culminated in the disaffiliation of *Nahdatul Ulama* from *Masyumi*, and with one fell swoop turned *Masyumi* from a national party into one that's support came mainly from the *seberang* ("outer islands") and West Java. The 1955 general elections aptly illustrated the extent not only ethnic-regional cleavages, but also the persistence of socio-religious divisions (Penders & Sundhassen, 1985, p. 101). Because the seat of government power was located in Jakarta and the levers of government were controlled primarily by the Javanese, *Masyumi's* constituency, and thus *Masyumi* itself, was put at a distinct disadvantage by this development.

While the issue of whether Indonesia would remain a secular state or become one based on Islamic principles would continue to dominate the political discourse, the real issues that separated *Masyumi* from the opposition parties were primarily economic. Both the modernist and traditionalist elements of *Masyumi* were generally in agreement on the proposition that Islam should play a significant role in shaping the character, if not the institutions of the state, but they differed greatly when discussions turned toward economic matters. In these matters, *Nahdatul Ulama's* predominately ethnic-Javanese

leadership had much more in common with their fellow Javanese-dominated parties, especially the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (“Indonesian Nationalist Party” –PNI).

Because of the exploitative nature of the economic relationship between the Javanese and the *seberang*, the latter would grow increasingly resentful of the dominance of the former. With the withdrawal of *Nahdatul Ulama* from its ranks, *Masyumi* became almost exclusively identified with *seberang* interests. Conversely, the Javanese political parties would seek common ground amongst themselves in order to maintain an economic relationship that preserved their hegemonic influence, while taking measures to marginalize an opposition that had the potential to jeopardize the *status quo*. The collapse of the economic situation in Indonesia following the end of the Korean War boom put further stress on this relationship and worsened relations between the center and the *seberang* to an even greater extent than ever before. Within a matter of years, dissatisfaction in the *seberang* blossomed into full rebellion as regional military leaders joined with local politicians to contest with the central government for greater economic and political autonomy. *Masyumi* inevitably became entangled in these uprisings and suffered the consequences of their failures (Federspiel, 1973, p. 409).

The results of the elections of 1955 also dealt a severe blow to *Masyumi*, not only by marginalizing its most important political ally, the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (“Indonesian Socialist Party” –PSI), but also by obviating the softness of its support in the Javanese heartland. The conventional wisdom that had predicted a *Masyumi* landslide victory was proven grossly overestimated and the opposition parties that had for so long feared the inevitability of *Masyumi* dominance became emboldened. In particular, the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (“Indonesian Communist Party” –PKI), which had achieved tremendous success winning votes throughout Java and parts of Sumatra, began to agitate for greater recognition of its now-demonstrated political clout. The PKI had contributed significantly to the wave of campaign attacks on *Masyumi*, painting it as an extremist and exclusionary organization out of touch with average Indonesians. In truth, *Masyumi*’s staunch unwillingness to divorce itself ideologically from the *Darul Islam* movements in West Java and Aceh did little to assuage these fears among more-secular inclined Indonesians.

In addition to the complex dynamics within the immediate sphere of the political parties, *Masyumi's* inability to maintain positive relationships with extra-parliamentary forces, especially with the presidency and the army, also bear some of the responsibility for its fall. If indeed the “institutions” of Indonesian politics formed a triangle with the parties at its apex, then the army and the presidency formed the other two critical points.

President Sukarno had never been an avid supporter of *Masyumi*. During the deliberations of the *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (“Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence” – BPUKI), he had stood firm against *Masyumi's* efforts to make Indonesia an Islamic state. His pressuring of the Muslim leaders to excise the Jakarta Charter from the 1945 Constitution on the morn of independence cast a pall of bitterness over their subsequent relations. Relations were further strained by the divergence in their visions over the direction of the Indonesian revolution. For *Masyumi*, that event was complete by 1950, and the time had come to settle in for the business of nation building. For that effort to succeed, however, Indonesia needed foreign investment, and foreign investment would only come if the West developed confidence in the stability of Indonesia's political, judicial and security institutions. Conversely, Sukarno believed that the revolution had not yet reached its culmination point (Feith & Castles, 1970, pp. 111-116). For him, the struggle was an ongoing one to erase the last remaining vestiges of colonial domination, and those who sought to extend the hand of friendship to their former oppressors were traitors to the cause. The fact that *Masyumi* was perhaps one of the most pro-West of all of the parties in the spectrum of Indonesian politics certainly did not serve to endear it to Sukarno.

Ultimately, *Masyumi* became the biggest obstacle to Sukarno's efforts to refashion the Indonesian political apparatus to one more suited to his personal tastes. With the aid of the army and the other main political parties, the President succeeded in jettisoning the western-style, liberal-democratic constitution of 1950, and replacing it with the 1945 Constitution, which gave him strong executive powers and legitimized his concept of *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (“Guided Democracy”). *Masyumi's* efforts to stave off these efforts were ineffectual because by that point, they had become politically irrelevant.

The Indonesian army's complicity in the subversion of the democratic process was pivotal not only to Sukarno's success, but also to the fall of *Masyumi* (Lev, 1963, p. 355). In the past, the army leadership, especially General A.H. Nasution, had stood by *Masyumi*, but in the wake of *Masyumi*-supported regional unrest and political bickering in the parliament, they had lost faith in the parliamentary process. The softening of the economy, rampant corruption, and regional unrest, all of which were made worse by the instability of a string of ineffectual cabinets, served to de-legitimatize the entire system of government in Nasution's mind. Following his return to the post of Army Chief of Staff in 1955, Nasution began to move closer towards Sukarno's views, and by 1957 he was openly expressing the need to complete the "unfinished revolution" (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, pp. 106-108). The narrowing of Nasution's and Sukarno's visions for Indonesia deprived *Masyumi* of its last powerful ally, and weakened it considerably. The progressive isolation of *Masyumi* as its allies abandoned it one by one throughout the 1950s weakened it to the point where it was unable to effectively respond to Sukarno's assault on parliamentary democracy.

Chapter IV provides a detailed analysis of these political relationships and describes how they helped shape the events that contributed to *Masyumi's* decline throughout the 1950s. An understanding of these dynamics, and how *Masyumi* interacted not only with its own political allies, but also with the parliamentary opposition, the army, and the President, remains essential for understanding the ebb and flow of their political alliances in a period of rapid and unpredictable transformation. Lessons gleaned from this analysis can help interested parties develop a more nuanced picture of the myriad reasons for the collapse of political Islam's influence during the transition from the *Orde Lama* to the *Orde Baru*. In a contemporary context, those lessons can also help clarify the relationship between modern, post-*reformasi* Indonesian voters and those new Islamic parties that have emerged since 1999.

The potential for the development of a powerful Islamic alternative to the secular political parties perhaps hinges less on the "conventional wisdom", which in the past has postulated an inherent incongruence between religion and politics in Indonesian society, than it does on the ability of the various factions under the umbrella of Islam to find and maintain common ground. As a consequence of my research, I argue in the text below

that Islamic politics in Indonesia is far less inherently constrained by innate societal preferences than might be presumed from a cursory review of the few electoral precedents to date. Indonesians have historically rejected political Islam not because of a pervasive cultural disaffinity, but rather because Islam has yet failed to offer a compelling, well-defined alternative to the secular model. Despite past rejections, I believe that Indonesians remain intellectually and emotionally open to the idea of a greater role for Islam in shaping the political discourse. The failure of the secular parties to effectively solve the nation's most pressing problems since 1999 merely amplifies the attraction for an alternative model. The natural extension of this conclusion compels observers to be more circumspect in quickly dismissing the potential future electoral success of the many Islamic parties that have emerged in the wake of Suharto's fall.

The Islamic parties heading into the 2004 general elections have many difficult challenges before them, but none of these are insurmountable. Their collective success or failure will be in great part dependent on their ability to adapt to the exigencies of the domestic and international political environment in a manner that politically unifies, rather than alienates the Indonesian *ummah*. Indonesia's Muslim leaders would do well to study the history of *Masyumi* in the era of the provisional parliament, if for no other reason than to identify and avoid those same pitfalls that had led to the failure of their political forefathers.



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## II. DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN INDONESIA PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE

### A. INTRODUCTION

Of all of the political forces at play in post-independence Indonesia, those with distinctly Islamic origins have perhaps the deepest roots. With a presence in island Southeast Asia reaching back to at least the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Islam had established a foothold in the region long before the first Christian Europeans arrived in force in 1511. The establishment of trading routes throughout the early centuries of the second-millennium A.D., and the intermarriage and settlement of Arab, Chinese, and Indian Muslim traders in the various ports of call along these routes, accelerated the adoption of the Islamic faith among the native populations. Eventually, *pesantren* (“religious boarding schools”) were established to educate the children in these emerging Muslim communities, and the success of these institutions further hastened Islam’s expansion. In areas largely unaffected by the trading impulse, itinerant Sufi missionaries proselytized on behalf of their orders, often finding receptive students in the Hindu-Buddhist villages of the interior. By the end of WWII, Indonesia had a population of almost 80 million people, of which nearly 90 percent identified themselves as Muslims (Van der Kroef, 1953, p. 121). In Indonesia’s fertile soil, the seed of Islam had taken root and flourished.

Regardless of the exact means of Islam’s florescence, within the course of a few centuries it had become firmly entrenched as the dominant cultural and religious framework throughout the coastal regions. With the conversion of the Mataram Sultanate in the 17th century, Islam eventually expanded beyond its coastal enclaves to also become an important social and political feature of the interior regions as well. Today Indonesia is predominately Muslim, though very small pockets of Christians, Confucians and animists still thrive. Yet with some 90% of its population professing the Islamic faith, one might reasonably expect that religion above all else would serve as the culturally and politically unifying force *par excellence*. The truth, however, is far different, and this chapter will explain why.

To say that the Indonesia of today is roughly 90% Muslim, though statistically correct, is to miss the complexity that underlies the demographics. In reality, Indonesia’s

Muslim community is as diverse as any other, and perhaps even more so. Before independence, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) was a disparate collection of regencies, sultanates, and kingdoms with the full spectrum of ethnic, linguistic, religious and economic variations appropriate to a swath of territory that encompasses well over 740,000 square miles. Although the struggle for independence helped graft the idea of “Indonesia” atop a seething cauldron of stark ethnic differences, such simple political sloganeering could not simply erase centuries of divergent development. The diversity of Indonesian Islam is a case in point, and its study is all the more important if we are to understand its failure to transform itself from a widespread cultural phenomenon into a commensurately powerful political one. As noted anthropologist Clifford Geertz once opined, “...much variation in ritual, contrast in belief, and conflict in values lie concealed behind the simple statement that Java is more than 90 per cent Moslem.” (1960, p. 7). This commentary on Javanese society can be applied to the whole of Indonesia without altering the tenor of Geertz’s caution.

This chapter will trace the development of Indonesian Islam as a social and political force from its introduction, until the dawn of full independence in December 1949. The objective is not to provide a history lesson for history’s sake. Rather, this chapter seeks to identify the key events that have contributed to Indonesian Islam’s fragmentation over the centuries, and to draw out the causes that have contributed to the failure of Muslim political parties, especially *Masyumi*, to rise to the challenge of leadership in the post-independence era.

## **B. THE IMPACT OF ISLAM ON SOCIETY IN MARITIME SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Centuries of relatively unimpeded Islamic expansion in maritime Southeast Asia eventually gave rise to a bifurcating trend in the maturation of the region’s Islamic societies. As Islam inevitably collided with various other cultural traditions within the archipelago, it either replaced them entirely, or else it subsumed those existing pre-Islamic beliefs and practices that people were unwilling to discard. Consequently, a gradual process of replacement and syncretism produced two distinct socio-cultural strains within the first few centuries of Islam’s arrival. In his seminal anthropological analysis of society in the east central Javanese village of Modjokuto, The Religion of

Java (1960), Geertz presents the three categories of *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi* to describe what he believes are the three fundamental Javanese socio-cultural divisions that have developed as a result of the shaping dynamics of both domestic and international forces on the process of Islamization.

Leaving discussion of the *priyayi* aside for the time being, this section concentrates on the other two divisions, the *santri* and *abangan* “*aliran*” (“socio-cultural streams”). Together these two streams describe the two fundamental worldviews of Indonesian religious thought that had emerged as a result of the different ways in which Islam was introduced and assimilated into different communal pockets in maritime Southeast Asia. Although Newland has recently criticized Geertz’s model for failing to adequately describe the nuanced complexity of the contemporary Indonesian social landscape, his ideas continue to provide a valuable model for understanding the origins of important cleavages in modern Indonesian politics (2000, pp. 1-3). Geertz warns us, however, that the lines between these categories are not always distinct (1960, pp. 5-7). Crossover between the various *aliran* can and do occur, further complicating generalizations concerning the contours of Indonesia’s political landscape.

### **1. Abangan**

The *abangan* variant is most often associated with the villages of the interior regions of Java where exposure to orthodox Islam had by virtue of their remoteness been very limited in the early years of Islamization, and thus imperfectly assimilated. The populations of inland communities such as these often developed hydraulic bureaucracies that were heavily dependant on irrigation-intensive wet rice agriculture, rather than on trade with the outside world. As a consequence of the relative infrequency of contact with the Muslim traders who plied the coastal regions, these societies were left to syncretize what they learned of the Islamic faith in ways that accommodated their long-held Hindu-Buddhist traditions and practices.

Formal exposure to Islam likely came via itinerant Sufi mystics who passed through the area, and who occasionally took up positions in court circles (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 5). The mystical teachings of the Sufi *tarekats*, more so than the fundamentals of Islam’s five pillars, likely found a receptive audience in those who already had a

background in Buddhist and Brahmanical thought. Yet with little reason to tow the line of religious orthodoxy more characteristic of coastal entrepôt societies, the Islamic practice of the interior domains retained a deeply ingrained amalgam of spirit beliefs, rituals, and mystical thought that most orthodox Muslims today find distasteful, if not heretical.

Indonesians within the *abangan* aliran have historically been an integral part of the agrarian economies of the densely populated, rice-producing regions of the interior regions of Java. In later years, they would also become essential labor for the Javanese and Sumatran plantation economies of the Dutch colonial administrations of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although this substratum of Indonesian society continues to remain a predominately rural and Javanese phenomenon, the sheer size of Java's population ensures that the *abangan* have wielded tremendous political power by virtue of their numbers alone. Geertz, however, is clear in cautioning that not all rural Javanese peasants follow *abangan* norms, and that due to population trends that began in the early 20th century, significant numbers of *abangan* can also now be found in urban areas (1960, p. 5).

Feith has ascribed the peculiar political *weltanschauung* of the *abangan* aliran to a combination of factors, including a state organization born of the constraints of a wet-rice agricultural economy, shallow Islamization, and the eventual long-term impact of the Dutch colonial occupation (1962, p. 31). The "Javanese-aristocratic" political culture that emerged from the convergence of these factors produced what he further notes as an abiding contempt of entrepreneurship and a tendency towards secularism. In the late colonial era, this distinctly *abangan* view of society, politics and economics would become identified with secular nationalist and the Marxist movements.

## 2. Santri

In contrast to the *abangan*, the *santri* are known for "...not only a careful and regular execution of the basic rituals of Islam – the prayers, the fasts, the pilgrimages – but also of a whole complex of social, charitable, and political Islamic organizations." (Geertz, 1960, p. 6). The strict dogmatic practice of Islam, as opposed to the *abangan*'s loosely composed amalgam of Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Sufi, and animist traditions, is

what predominately concerns the typical *santri*. The word “*santri*” itself is derived from the Javanese word for a student of Islam, and unlike the *abangan*, whose social organization revolves around the immediate household, the focus of the *santri* is upon the entire *ummah* (“Islamic community”) with its locus at the village mosque (Geertz, 1960, p. 128).

*Santri* influence has historically dominated in those regions where direct contact with Muslim trading influences was sustained and recurrent, such as along the eastern and northern coasts of Sumatra, in the outer islands, and along the northern and western coasts of Java. For that reason, the *Santri* have traditionally been associated with the merchant populations of the coastal entrepôts and port cities. The development of the *santri weltanschauung*, described by Feith as “Islamic-entrepreneurial”, was shaped in large part by a process of thorough and sustained Islamization that was subjected to a relatively light European counter-influence (1962, p. 32). The nature of the predominately entrepreneurial economies of the coastal regions, as opposed to the largely agricultural economies of the interior, fostered in the *santri* a healthy respect for merchant activities. As a result, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, *santri* tended to be almost exclusively associated with commerce.

According to Feith, the *santri* also tended to display much less anti-Dutch sentiment, and considering the light impact of the colonial establishment on much of the *santri*-dominated regions in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, this is not entirely surprising attitude (1962, p. 32). From 1830 to the 1860s, the Dutch colonial policy of *cultuurstelsel* (“cultivation”), essentially a program of forced cultivation, was particularly onerous on those coffee, sugar, rice and indigo producing areas largely populated by *abangan*, however it left *santri* populations generally unaffected (Ricklefs, 1993, pp. 119-124).

Despite being heavily concentrated in the coastal areas, over the course of centuries a sizable *santri* presence also developed in the interior. Geertz has noted that the strongest *santri* elements in many villages centers around those wealthy merchants and landowners who had been able to make the *Haj* to Mecca, and who later returned to establish *pesantren* in their communities (1960, p. 6). The expansion of *pesantren*

networks as graduates moved on to establish their own schools further spread *santri* influence into the interior regions.

Any over-simplification of *abangan* and *santri* divisions using geographic or employment characteristics alone can be misleading, because since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the merchant class has no longer been exclusively *santri*, nor are the *abangan* a predominately rural agrarian phenomenon. Urbanization and transmigration trends of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have shifted populations to the point where *santri* and *abangan* are not as geographically segregated as they once were. In many *abangan* dominated villages and towns it is not usual today to find a *kampung kauman* (“place of the pious”) where the *santri* reside.

### 3. Priyayi

Geertz also noted the existence of a third *aliran*, that of the *priyayi*, although this social grouping had begun to exert less and less influence as the colonial era receded into memory. The *priyayi* were the hereditary and/or bureaucratic aristocracy that had been co-opted by the Dutch during the era of colonial administration, especially after the collapse of the Mataram Sultanate in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The power and prerogatives of this hereditary aristocracy increasingly came to be dependent upon the patronage of a colonial administration that kept the native elites on a very short leash. In the absence of any real power within their domains, the *priyayi* tended to turn inward, concentrating their energies on the refinement and preservation of their Javanese court traditions (Crouch, 1980, p. 40).

During the later era of the Dutch colonial administration, and particularly during the implementation of the “Ethical Policy” of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the aristocratic elites were slowly replaced by a new variation of *priyayi* whose origins were to be found in a growing bureaucracy of western-educated, native Indonesians in the service of the Dutch. By and large, the younger *priyayi* often proved to be the most bureaucratized, secularized, westernized, and anti-traditional of all of three segments of Indonesian society (Geertz, 1960, p. 6). The *priyayi*’s close and rather self-serving relationship with the oppressive and much-detested colonial regime helped reinforce the particularly unfavorable image that many of the *abangan* and *santri* populations had of them.

Geertz describes the *priyayi* as a distinct socio-political *aliran*, but other scholars have taken issue with this opinion (Newland, 2000, p. 1). Much of this criticism centers on the observation that both the *abangan* and *santri* were also frequently represented in the ranks of the *priyayi* establishment, particularly in the later years of the Dutch colonial bureaucracy. Regardless, the *priyayi* distinction remained an important one during the decades leading up to independence because of the pivotal role played by the younger generation of western-educated *priyayi* bureaucrats in establishing the secular-nationalist movements of the 1920s and 1930s. After the dislodging of the Dutch regime in 1949, the *priyayi* distinction became increasingly irrelevant in Indonesian politics.

### C. THE ISLAMIC AWAKENING

From its first penetration into island Southeast Asia, Islam had always had a tendency to exhibit distinctly political overtones. By the dawn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century it had not only supplanted other deeply-ingrained traditions to become the dominant cultural and religious framework in the region, but it had also become widely embraced as the official state religion of many of the entrepôts and coastal kingdoms along the trade routes. Within a century, it had also moved inland to displace the entrenched Hindu-Buddhist cosmology upon which the rulers of the great kingdoms of Srivijaya, Majapahit and Mataram had for centuries traditionally based their legitimacy. Yet, in spite of its latent potential to become a unifying force among the disparate sultanates and kingdoms of the archipelago, particularly in the face of an increasingly hostile European presence, the idea of a greater Islamic *ummah* encompassing peoples beyond the ruler's immediate domains never really took hold. It would take the Islamic reform efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to produce Indonesia's first proto-nationalistic, Islamic political movements.

Almost from the very beginning of Islam's flowering in island Southeast Asia, local-born Muslims endeavored to make the arduous pilgrimage to the holy sites and centers of learning associated with Islam's birthplace. The eventual arrival of both the Portuguese and the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and shortly thereafter the Dutch and English, served only to encourage an even closer relationship between Southeast Asia's emerging Muslim-dominated states and the international Islamic community. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Sultanate of Aceh on Sumatra's northern coast had become widely known as



the “Veranda of Mecca” because of the large number of vessels leaving its ports for the commercial centers of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea (Reid, 1993, p. 144). Yet, despite Aceh perhaps being better known than other areas of Sumatra, Malaya and Java for its role in nurturing the development of orthodox Islam during these years, the Minangkabau kingdom of central western Sumatra proved to be the catalyst for a reform movement that was ultimately to have a profound political impact across the entire archipelago.

### **1. The Padri Movement (1803-1838)**

The Padri Movement, which began as an internal socio-economic conflict between *santri* and *priyayi* (*penghulu*) elements of Minangkabau society, had profound, long-reaching consequences for the subsequent development of Indonesian Islamic thought throughout the entire region. More importantly, it sparked the beginning of Islam’s transformation from a cultural, educational and social force into a political force as well. Historian A.H. Johns has called the Padri Movement “the watershed of the Islamic modernist movement in Indonesia.” (Reid, 1967, p. 272). What had begun as a relatively localized conflict over the apportionment of economic resources among factions of Minangkabau society rapidly escalated into religious-based warfare, and then into an anti-colonial uprising that would shake the Dutch colonial administration to its core, and confirm its emerging suspicions of the potential danger of political Islam.

The Padri movement itself takes its name from “*Orang Pĕdari*” (“men of Pĕdir”), a nickname given to Muslim pilgrims who had begun the *Hajj* from the Achenese port of Pĕdir (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 141). The main leaders of this movement had been influenced by events they witnessed while undertaking the *Hajj* pilgrimage in the aftermath of 'Abd al-'Aziz I’s capture of the *Hejaz* (“holy cities of Islam”) under the banner of Wahhabism in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the later expansion of the Saudi dominion in the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under his son, Saud I.

The Wahhabi movement was founded by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92) in the *Najd* region of central Arabia. Abd al-Wahhab traced the roots of the divisiveness and political frailty that had plagued and weakened the *ummah* to the compromise of fundamental Islamic values. Consequently, his movement sought to

purge the *ummah* of all *bid'ah* ("heterodox religious beliefs or practices") in order to restore the Islamic faith to its original grandeur and purity. In a return to the fundamentals, his followers would usher in the re-emergence of a renewed Islamic community. In the reformist theology of the *al-Muwahhidun* ("unitarians"), as the followers of Abd al-Wahhab styled themselves, the returning Minangkabau *Hajis* ("pilgrims who have completed the *Hajj*") recognized a means to remedy the pre-Islamic and Sufi accretions that had crept into native Islamic practice, had sullied its purity, and corrupted its leadership. They may not have been Wahhabis in the strictest sense, but they certainly drew inspiration from Wahhab's message (Reid, 1967, p. 272).

Although subsequent generations have characterized the Padri Movement as essentially a war between the supporters of *adat* ("customary law") and those who supported the primacy of the *Sharia* ("religious law"), the divisions were often much more complex and ambiguous (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 141). Often, the conflict was not particularly idealistic, having taken on the nature of intra-*desa* ("village") warfare over economics and political power rather than one steeped in religious principles (Taufik, 2002, p. 1). Despite the ambiguity of its seed causes, the relatively egalitarian ideas of the Padri leaders quickly proved to be attractive to many of the poorer highland villages, and the hills surrounding the *penghulu* domains rapidly came almost entirely under Padri control.

As parts of the Minangkabau kingdom fell to the Padri forces in rapid succession, the remaining *penghulu* aristocracy appealed in desperation to the Dutch for protection. Having just returned to the important Sumatran coastal trading port of Padang following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Dutch colonial administration became alarmed that the Padri Movement had the potential to compromise Holland's vast economic interests in Western Sumatra. This concern was further heightened by the close proximity of the hostile Islamic Sultanate of Aceh, and the possibility that it would seek to take advantage of any possible Dutch misfortune. Consequently, Dutch forces moved rapidly to undercut the Padri's progress, and in 1821 they negotiated a treaty with the *penghulu* that ceded much of the Minangkabau kingdom in exchange for further Dutch protection of the royal court. The war was finally brought to its conclusion in 1837 with the capture and exile of the Padri's senior leader, Tuanku Imam Bonjol. With the removal of its

charismatic leader, the Padri Movement was finally shattered, and the Minangkabau kingdom was ultimately subdued and absorbed into the Dutch colonial sphere.

Besides the obvious military and economic costs, the Padri Movement had a rather substantial impact on Dutch colonial policies throughout the entire Netherlands East Indies (NEI). As a result of the Dutch colonial administration's deepening suspicions regarding the political unreliability of the native aristocracy they imposed a Javanese model of secularized-bureaucratized administration upon the *penghulu* that stripped them of any remaining autonomy. Similarly because of Dutch sensitivity to the potentially de-stabilizing nature of Islam as a political force, they encouraged (and in some cases enforced) reliance on the use of customary *adat*, while actively discouraging recourse to *Sharia*. The effect of these policies was to create artificial distinctions that further marginalized the remaining *penghulu* and isolated religious leaders from further influence in the administrative bureaucracy (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 142). Efforts to reinforce the division between secular *adat* and Islam often proved counter-productive, and they ultimately contributed to the erosion in the perceived legitimacy of any political or religious leaders associated with the colonial administration (Taufik, 2002, p. 2).

Instead of insulating society from Islam, Dutch policies inadvertently pushed Islam's center of gravity to the village level where the *ulama* ("religious scholars") became even more involved in every aspect of society and education. Although the *priyayi* exercised authority in the name of the colonial establishment, religious leaders typically exercised the real authority for many villagers. In 1889, the Dutch relented slightly on their draconian repression of Islam by implementing what Heffner has referred to as the "crown jewel" of their colonial policy (2000, p. 32). At the urging of one of the most renowned European Islamic scholars of the period, Dr. Christian Snouck-Hurgronjje, the Dutch relaxed controls on Islam with the intent of encouraging the flowering of "cultural" Islam, while they simultaneously stepped up efforts to suppress further manifestations of "political" Islam. Such efforts were doomed to fail because of the Islamic belief in *tawhīd* ("the unity of God"), which rejects human attempts to distinguish between secular and religious aspects of life. Dutch efforts did, however, serve to encourage a trend of polarization among religious leaders. Some Muslim leaders

were willing to abide by enforced distinctions between "cultural" and "political" Islam, while others were more apt to challenge them.

Following the Padri uprising, and the even more costly war to subdue the Achenese Sultanate (1873-1903), the NEI government attempted to severely curtail travel to Egypt and Arabia in the hopes of further insulating Indonesian Muslims from the reformist and Pan-Islamic movements beginning to emerge in the centers of Islamic scholarship. Despite Dutch efforts to limit the number of Indonesians making the *Haj*, many still continued to make the arduous voyage. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the relaxation of pilgrimage controls, combined with the increasing availability of steam-powered maritime transportation and the opening up of the Suez Canal in 1869, ensured that many more Indonesians would be able to study in Cairo and Mecca (Von der Mehden, 1993, p. 3). Consequently, in the last three decades of that century, Indonesian pilgrims accounted for nearly 15% of the total overseas pilgrims visiting the *Hejaz* (Reid, 1967, p. 269). According to Snouck-Hurgronjje, the Indonesian enclave in the 1880s was by far the largest and most dynamic in the city (Geertz, 1960, p. 125). Ricklefs estimates that the number of pilgrims who traveled from Indonesia to the *Hejaz* grew from around 1,600 annually in the 1850s to upwards of 7,000 by the turn of the century (1993, p. 130). Von der Mehden writes that the number grew to in excess of 120,000 by the late 1920s (1993, p. 4).

The experience of the pilgrimage during these years made a substantial impact on many of the Indonesian Islamic scholars who would subsequently return to their homeland to teach. For the first time since perhaps the early period of the Southeast Asian Islamic kingdoms when Melaka, Aceh and Johor had formed close relationships with the Ottoman Empire, Indonesian Muslims began to feel like they were again part of a larger Islamic community that was equal in grandeur and accomplishment to any western power. Some Indonesian Islamic scholars returned home with more than just a renewed sense of larger purpose and self-worth, for some had inevitably fallen under the sway of prominent Islamic teachers who espoused modernist interpretations of Islam that seemed to provide the solution to Indonesia's problems. Where the Padri had failed in their quest to reform the *ummah* by violence, others would in turn succeed by working within the Dutch proscriptions against political Islam.

#### **D. THE INTRODUCTION OF ISLAMIC REFORMIST THOUGHT INTO THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, thousands of Indonesians visited and studied in the *Hejaz*, Cairo, Yemen, and Istanbul. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia had already produced a small cadre of Islamic scholars of international caliber in residence in Mecca and Cairo (Dhofier, 1999, p. 64). As noted above, Dr. Snouck-Hurgronjje had described Mecca's Indonesian enclave in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as one of the largest and most dynamic in the city, and many of these scholars were at its center.

For the most part, those scholars whom Indonesians came to study under taught relatively orthodox and conservative views of Islam. Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas, who was a native of Kalimantan, had moved to Mecca in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and eventually became one of the most well-known of the resident Indonesian *ulama*. He was particularly influential in his efforts to integrate the *Qadiriyya* and *Naqshabandiyya tarekat* orders under the umbrella of a new Sufi order, the *tarekat Qadiriyya wa'l Naqshabandiyya*, which would eventually become the single most important Sufi throughout Java (Dhofier, 1999, p. 64).

Most of the important traditionalist scholars of the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had studied within Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas' circle of students at one time or another. Many eventually went on to become prominent scholars in their own right, though perhaps none would have as important an impact in Indonesia as Kyai Haji Muhammad Hashim Ash`ari, the resident *kyai* of the Tebuireng *pesantren* in Central Java. He studied under one of Khatib Sambas' most influential students, Shaykh al-Nawawi al-Jawi al-Bantani al-Tanari before returning home to Java to eventually found the *Nahdatul Ulama* ("Renaissance of Islamic Scholars") in 1926.

Another prominent Indonesian scholar, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabau, an *imām* ("prayer leader") at the *Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca, was particularly influential on those Indonesian *hajis* of a less conservative bent. As a native of Minangkabau, he had exerted tremendous influence over those Indonesian scholars who came to study under him. Most of his students came from Sumatra, and they tended to be much more open than their Javanese cousins to the theological and ideological reformist ideas then beginning to percolate in both Cairo and Mecca (Dhofier, 1999, p. 73). Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabau was himself firmly opposed to the *tarekat* practices so prevalent

on Java, and he likewise encouraged his students to undertake *idjtihad*, the process of reading and analyzing the scriptures for oneself in order to apply them to the contemporary world. He re-ignited the old Padri debate over the incompatibility of secular *adat* and the *Sharia*, and he encouraged the younger generation of Indonesian Muslims to re-examine their cultural, social, and political milieu in light of modernist Islamic teachings.

Many of Ahmad Khatib's students went on to study the teachings of prominent Islamic reformers, such as Muhammad Abduh of Cairo's al-Azhar University, the Iranian-born scholar Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and the Indian scholars Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Sayyid Amir Ali and Mohammad Iqbal (Benda, 1958, p. 46). Upon returning home, these students would occasionally challenge the traditional authority and prestige of the local *kyai* ("religious teacher"), and in doing so they inevitably introduced tension in the *ummah* (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 130). This tension would eventually produce the modernist-traditionalist schism that has become the defining characteristic of 20th century Indonesian Islam.

One of Ahmad Khatib's students, Shaykh Tahir bin Jaluddin, went on in 1906 to found the first Islamic paper in Southeast Asia, the *al-Imam* ("The Religious Leader") (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 169). In 1910, a respected Minangkabau religious leader by the name of Haji Abdullah Ahmad followed suit and established the first locally-published modernist periodical, the *al-Munir* ("The Illuminative") (Van Niel, 1980, p. 121). Based in Padang, this Malay-language newspaper became widely available throughout much of the western archipelago, and it consequently fed the intellectual and religious hunger of a younger generation of Muslim students looking to discover the means to overcome the dialectic between preserving their faith and modernizing their communities. Ahmad also went on to establish Padang's *Adabiyah* School, the first modernist Islamic school in the NEI. Out of this school's initial crop of graduates was borne the first modernist Islamic movement of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia, the *kaum muda* ("young group").

Working within the framework of contemporary, yet faithful interpretations of the *Q'uran* and *Hadith*, the *kaum muda* sought to develop modernist Islamic solutions to inconsistencies that existed between the *sharia* and the customary social and legal system of *adat*. As a result of growing tensions between the *kaum muda*, who were

predominately Sumatran, and the *kaum tua* ("old group"), comprised mostly of conservative Javanese *ulama*, an ideological and theological schism developed that would eventually take on profound political overtones. Both the *kaum muda* and *kaum tua* provided the roots for the factions that are today typically characterized as the "modernist" and "traditionalist" camps of Indonesian Islamic thought. The mass movements that sprang from these factions in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century further widened the divide between the modernist camp and that of the traditionalists, and set the pattern for an ideological schism that would eventually hamstring Muslim political aspirations in the years immediately following Indonesian independence.

#### **E. MODERNIST VS TRADITIONALIST ISLAM: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN**

The Islamic reformation that swept through Indonesia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and which led to a substantially more pronounced divide between adherents of orthodox Islam and those with a more modernist outlook, was not the first of its kind to reach the archipelago. The Islamization of Indonesia has been periodically marked by attempts to purify the faith from the accretions of syncretism, *bid'ah*, ignorance, and heresy. During the reign of Iskandar Thani (1637-41), Aceh underwent a period of reform under the influence of the Indian scholar Nurud-din ar-Raniri. Ar-Raniri sought to expunge the then dominant mystical Sufi teachings of Hamzah Fansuri and Sjamsuddin as-Sumatrani that had grown to prominence under Sultan Thani's predecessor, Iskandar Muda (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 51). For the most part, however, earlier reformations such as this one were generally limited to specific areas, and they did not have far-reaching consequences for the rest of the region. The reformation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, was perhaps more important than all previous iterations precisely because of its impact on the subsequent development of Islam across the entire region.

This section will summarize the development of "modernist" Islam in Indonesia in the decades immediately preceding the formation of proto-nationalist Islamic mass movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will also describe the fundamental characteristics that differentiate the modernist movement from the "orthodox" or traditionalist variant. An examination of the nature of these divergent ideological streams is important for

understanding how this split that would eventually erode the spirit of cooperation that would briefly unify the *ummah* throughout the years of revolutionary struggle.

The “traditionalist” or orthodox outlook associated with the *kaum tua*, while not disregarding the need for social modernization, is more apt than Islamic modernism to place a higher value on the teachings and commentaries of the prominent Islamic scholars of past ages. For the traditionalists, the ideology of *ahl al-sunnah wa'l jama'ah* (“the followers of the Prophet’s tradition and the consensus of the ulama”) is what separates them from the modernists (Dhofier, 1999, p. 157). While both camps recognize the centrality of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* to the faith, the traditionalists also study the teachings of the *madhhab* (“school of law or thought”) associated with the four main schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Hanafi*, *Hanbali*, *Maliki*, and *Safii*). Accordingly, the study of scholarly interpretations of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* accrued from previous generations of *ulama* are considered a fundamental prerequisite for understanding the full import of Islam. As Federspiel notes, “Members of this group deny that religious principles need review; those principles simply need to be applied.” (1995, p. 124). Everything that needs to be known has been provided by those who came before, and there is no need for further interpretation.

For the traditionalist, the transmission of knowledge that began with the Prophet, and was then passed from the *sahabat* (“companions”), to the *tabi'in* (“followers of the companions”), the *al-tabi' al-tabi'in* (“followers of the followers”), and onwards through successive generations of *ulama* is critical to ensuring an accurate and faithful understanding of Islam in contemporary context (Dhofier, 1999, p. 159). The concept of *taqlid* (“the following of the opinion of authoritative *ulama* without questioning the basis of their arguments”) is central to traditionalist scholarship. This does not mean that conservative *ulama* do not accept the need for the *ijtihad*, but rather that a firm foundation of traditional scholarship must be achieved before one can even begin to consider modern interpretations.

Traditionalists also differ from modernists in their embracing of mystical teachings and practices associated with particular Sufi *tarekats*, (Dhofier, 1999, p. 158). Particularly disquieting to modernist Muslims are the traditionalist practices of *zuhud* (“asceticism”), *dhikir* (“recollection or remembrance of God’s names”), and the



veneration of *keramat* (“shrines and graves”), none of which modernists claim have any foundation in either the *Qur’an* or *Hadith*, and are thus at best *bid’ah*, and at worst *shirik* (“heresy”).

The most important distinction between the two streams of thought, and the one that perhaps has had the most influence on the development of their distinct political orientations, concerns the relationship between Islam and man in this world, as well as the nature and consequences of his actions in it. Both traditionalists and modernists believe in the monotheistic aspect of God, in his Prophet, as well as in the centrality of the five pillars of faith (*shahada*, *salat*, *zakat*, *haj*, and *sawm*). Both are in agreement concerning the indivisibility of *tauhid* (“oneness of God”), as are they in the eventuality of the *al-ākhirah* (“the hereafter or afterlife”). Additionally, both share a belief in *takdir* (“divine determinism”) and *kadar* (“the omnipotent power of God’s will”), but where modernists diverge from their traditionalist brethren is over the nature and consequences of human free will and the mechanistic nature of God’s justice.

Modernists generally believe that men are wholly responsible for their own decisions and actions on account of *ikhtiyar* (“free will”), and that God will unswervingly reward good acts, and punish evil acts according to his immutable law. For the traditionalist Indonesian Muslim, God’s justice is neither deterministic, nor mechanistic. While the salvation of man is hindered by his evil acts, and aided by those that are good in God’s eyes, it can never be attained simply by one’s own exertions. Similarly, one cannot escape the damnation of *jahannam* (“hell”) by good works alone. Man’s success in this world (and the next) is not determined by his ingenuity, resourcefulness or determination, but by God’s will alone. For the traditionalist, God’s grace is ultimately necessary for both worldly success and eventual salvation, but man being man, he is apt to forget this, and as a result he will tend to neglect to show appropriate gratitude and reverence to his creator (Dhofier, 1999, p. 170). The performance of rituals and the practice of asceticism is simply meant to remind man of his obligation to God, to instill in man’s mind a constant remembrance of God’s expectations, and to hopefully win God’s favor and grace. In the end, progress in this transitory world will mean nothing come the Day of Judgment. Rather than being “life-denying”, traditionalists consider themselves to be the ultimate pragmatists.

In the eyes of the modernist Muslim, traditionalists have tended to be overly preoccupied with the afterlife at the expense of not fulfilling the important social obligations of this world. As a result of this compulsiveness with earning God's grace through activities beyond those prescribed by the five pillars, the *ummah* had declined into a state of *jahiliyyah* ("ignorance") over the centuries, while western civilization had progressed. Only by throwing off the shackles of medieval "scholastic obscurantism" and reformulating Islamic thought in the light of modern thought could Muslim civilization ever hope to compete with the western civilization (Benda, 1958, p. 46). In returning to the pure fundamentals of Islam, unencumbered by both superstition and hostility to change, Muslims would then become free to adapt what was good about the west, while discarding the chaff. By succeeding materially, Muslims would then also be able to better defend their faith against the forces of Christianity and secularism.

Modernist and traditionalist religious views have never been entirely mutually exclusive of each other. Yet in spite of a raft of commonly shared beliefs and aspirations, it has been the differences that have historically been accentuated by both groups. These differences have in large measure shaped how both traditionalists and modernists came to approach politics and social activism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and how they alternately succeeded or failed to work together to achieve common goals.

## **F. INTIAL EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE ISLAMIC POLITICAL ACTIVISM**

### **1. Sarekat Islam**

The first modern, Islamic mass movement in Indonesia was established in 1911 as the *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah* ("Islamic Mercantile Association"). It was founded in Surakarta by Haji Samanhudi as an Indonesian Muslim self-help organization on the model of the *Jammyat Chair*, an Arab-immigrant organization formed in 1905 to advance the dual agenda of propagating modernist Islam and protecting Muslim merchants from their Chinese competitors. The *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah's* principle purpose was to fend off increased foreign competition in batik production, and in this regard, Islam was simply a means to differentiate native Indonesians from non-indigenous Chinese merchants (Van Niel, 1980, p. 124). Under the threat of dissolution by the Dutch government for its stridently militant, anti-Chinese activities, a new leader was brought in

1912, the name was shortened to *Sarekat Islam* (“Islamic Union”), and new bylaws were drawn up. This new leader was Umar Sayed Tjokroaminoto, a *santri/priyayi* who had graduated from the Dutch OSVIA (“School for Training Native Administrators”), but had become disillusioned and left government service. Although originally wary of the *Sarekat Islam*’s expansion to other cities, the NEI government eventually relented and accorded official recognition to the organization’s chapters in 1913 and to its central leadership committee in 1915.

Under Tjokroaminoto’s aggressive leadership, the *Sarekat Islam* began to grow, opening new chapters, and recruiting eager young Indonesians to its ranks. The organizational bylaws published in September 1912 listed among the *Sarekat Islam*’s primary objectives as the advancement of the economic interests of indigenous Indonesians, charitable work, and spiritual development. Yet, as a result of the influence of Tjokroaminoto and other western-educated modernists at the level of the central leadership, the original economic and religious aims of the *Sarekat Islam* had within the span of a few years begun to give way to a more politicized agenda. By 1918, the original core of merchants who had founded the *Sarekat Islam* had discovered that the establishment of independent trade and labor unions was a far more effective vehicle to achieve their economic goals, and thus their influence became less and less pronounced on the *Sarekat Islam*’s message (Von der Mehden, 1958, pp. 338-339).

Despite rapid membership growth at the village level, the aims of the *Sarekat Islam*’s central leadership and those of the local chapters were never really in consonance (Van Niel, 1980, pp. 125-126). Villagers tended to view the *Sarekat Islam* as a means to channel their restless energies into a fight against all non-indigenous influences, including both the Chinese and the Dutch, whereas the western-educated *Sarekat Islam* leadership was far more accommodating of the need to work with the NEI government leadership to effect gradual change. Although the organization continued to grow throughout the first decade of its existence, it rested on an increasingly unstable ideological foundation. *Sarekat Islam*’s future seemed bright as the 1920s approached, but the introduction of Marxist ideologies into the organization by the Semarang branch of *Sarekat Islam* set the movement on the path to internal dissolution.

Marxism had gained a foothold in the NEI as early as 1914 with the founding of the *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging* (“Indonesian Social Democratic Union”), but the movement had soon thereafter split into evolutionary and revolutionary factions. The leader of the radical, revolutionary wing was a young Indo-European by the name of H.J.F.M. Sneevliet. Sneevliet quickly came to view the *Sarekat Islam* as a useful weapon in the class struggle against colonial capitalist groups (Von der Mehden, 1958, p. 342). Initially, these Marxists were quite willing to play down any inherent incompatibility between Islamic and Marxist ideologies, but over time they became more strident in their anti-religious sentiments. Although the anti-capitalist message of the Marxists proved to be a bit too disquieting for the *santri* merchants who still dominated the *Sarekat Islam*’s leadership positions, it did tend to resonate favorably with those Indonesians in the village chapters, mostly *abangan* peasants involved in the plantation economy or employed as low-wage earners in the burgeoning cities. As a consequence of the rising popularity of this Marxist call to revolutionary action, the *Sarekat Islam*’s central leadership was forced to increasingly seek compromises between Islam and Marxism, and in the process they watered down their Islamic message. Yet, as the Marxists became more demanding and less tolerant of *Sarekat Islam*’s fundamentally religious theme, a schism became inevitable.

The *Sarekat Islam*’s third congress, which convened in September 1918, marked a significant and ominous shift to the left for the organization as a whole, and most notably for the central leadership. Religion was relegated to the background as calls for socialism, revolution and independence began to take the center stage of *Sarekat Islam*’s platform (Von der Mehden, 1958, p. 343). For the first time, the *Sarekat Islam*’s leadership hinted that non-parliamentary means might be necessary to achieve the organization’s goals. Shortly thereafter, however, the *Sarekat Islam*’s leadership began to recognize the danger of their new position: The renewed interest of the NEI government in the organization’s activities, and losses in membership of those Muslims who felt alienated by the *Sarekat Islam*’s increasingly secularized slant had begun to awaken the old leadership’s eyes to the threat to *Sarekat Islam*’s future. In attempting to revert back to a more modernist Islamic and evolutionary approach, the senior *Sarekat Islam* leadership set itself on a collision course with the more diehard Marxist elements.

By 1920, the radical Marxist factions had reorganized and renamed themselves the *Perserikatan Komunis di India* (“Communist Association in the Indies“ -PKI), later to be changed to the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (“Indonesia Communist Party” -PKI). As their links with the newly established (1919) Communist International (COMINTERN) deepened, their relationship with senior *Sarekat Islam* leaders worsened. A last attempt at compromise between the radical Marxist and Islamic wings occurred at the congress of the *Sarekat Islam* in 1921, but these fragile agreements rapidly broke down, and Islam was in the end again declared the movement’s one, true ideology. More importantly, a resolution was passed that declared that *Sarekat Islam* members could no longer also be PKI members. The PKI leadership unsuccessfully attempted to heal the breach, but the effect was irreversible. Within the span of a few years, the *Sarekat Islam*’s membership rolls had dwindled drastically. The large numbers of members that had left the organization in the previous years because of *Sarekat Islam*’s drift away from Islam had joined other organizations, such as the *Muhammadiyah*, and most had failed to return to the fold as the leadership optimistically expected. Similarly, those who had stuck with *Sarekat Islam* because of its increasingly revolutionary, anti-capitalist agenda saw little reason to remain, and simply left when the PKI cadres went their own way.

In the end, the success of the senior *Sarekat Islam* leadership in re-orienting the organization toward a more overt Islamic agenda proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for it never really recovered its former prestige or influence (Von der Mehden, 1958, p. 350). In trying to mimic some of the hardline dynamism of the PKI factions, the *Sarekat Islam* eventually adopted a “non-cooperative” stance toward the NEI government in its later years, but by then the *Sarekat Islam* had become such a hollow and impotent organization that the Dutch no longer took much notice of its rantings (Van Niel, 1980, p. 143). In 1929, *Sarekat Islam* even went so far as to ban its members from also being members in the apolitical *Muhammadiyah* movement because of the latter organization’s willingness to simply accept government subsidies for its Islamic educational programs (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 177). The *Sarekat Islam*’s later adoption of a stridently Pan-Islamic agenda, combined with its increasingly hardline position regarding the incompatibility of Islam not only with secular-nationalism, but with all forms of nationalism, would serve to keep it on the margins of mainstream political legitimacy throughout the waning years of the

colonial era. *Sarekat Islam's* Pan-Islamic aspirations became linked with the Ottoman Caliphate until the latter's collapse in 1924, and following ibn Sa'ud's failure to assume the Caliphate mantle, the *Sarekat Islam's* agenda was left without much international leverage. In 1923, the *Sarekat Islam* created the *Partij Sarekat Islam* (PSI), which after 1926 would later become known as the *Partij Sarekat Islam Indonesia* (PSII), but by then, the movement for change in Indonesia was becoming increasingly defined by the western-educated native elites who had begun to take up the cause of secular nationalism. In 1938, remnants of the *Sarekat Islam* created the *Partai Islam Indonesia* ("Islamic Party of Indonesia – PII"), the first overt political party organized with an Islamic agenda. According to Benda, the founding of the PII signaled the final demise of the artificial division between religion and politics, and ushered in a new era of political Islam (1958, p. 90).

In trying for too long to be all things to all Indonesians, *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi* alike, the *Sarekat Islam* had throughout the 1920s frittered away both its prestige and potency. In the years leading up to the Japanese invasion and occupation, the PSII would turn spectacularly uncooperative not only with the Dutch, but also with secular-nationalist leaders, the *Nahdatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*. Its rigid Pan-Islamic vision was bound to be unacceptable to a great majority of Indonesians, who while also agitating for independence, favored a specifically Indonesian approach. With the marginalization of both the PSII and the surviving remnants of *Sarekat Islam*, it would soon be left to both *Muhammadiyah* and the *Nahdatul Ulama* to carry forward the banner of political Islam.

## 2. Muhammadiyah

The *Muhammadiyah* ("Followers of Muhammad") was founded on November 18 1912 by Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan, a devout Muslim scholar who had studied in Mecca for several years, and had subsequently been inspired by the writings of the Egyptian reformist Muhammad 'Abduh of Cairo's Al-Azhar University. 'Abduh's ideas concerning modern Islamic education were to have a substantial impact among many modernist Muslims in Indonesia, but the movement founded by Kyai Haji Dahlan was to become the most significant expression of those ideas transformed into action. From its

very inception, *Muhammadiyah* would prove to be the single most important educational and cultural movement of the modernist *santri* community, if not of the entire Indonesian *ummah*, precisely because it eschewed overt involvement in politics (Peacock, 1978, p. 23). Its consistent apolitical outlook no doubt had much to do with the fact that of all the social and proto-nationalist movements founded contemporaneously with *Muhammadiyah*, none was able to outlast it.

The organization was first established in the central Javanese town of Yogyakarta, where Dahlan was employed as a *chatib* (“the deliver of sermons”) in the Great Mosque of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. The movement had its roots in the *kampung kauman* (“place of the pious”), the *santri* ghetto located near the Sultan’s palace, and a virtual island of modernist piety in a sea of traditionalist *santri* and *abangan* Javanese. Upon returning from overseas studies in the *Hejaz*, Dahlan had come to recognize that the enemies of native Indonesians were many, and included not only colonialism and the quasi-feudalism of the *priyayi* bureaucracy, but also the mystical and Hindu-Buddhist accretions that had perverted Islam into a search for an “inner life” at the expense of solving the practical social problems of this life (Peacock, 1978, pp. 34-35). Unlike his contemporaries in *Sarekat Islam*, however, Dahlan realized that for Islam to serve as a beacon of hope and progress for the Indonesian masses, it would first need to be purified and reformed. To Dahlan’s credit, his was a rather bold prescriptive to be undertaken in the traditionalist *santri* and *abangan* stronghold of central Java where modernist ideas had not yet found fertile ground, and it was thus bound to meet with resistance.

*Muhammadiyah*’s initial efforts reflected its founder’s belief that the struggle to reform Indonesian Islam must follow a systematic and goal-oriented evolutionary program. Consequently, initial goals were limited to the spheres of religious proselytization, social work, and education, with the organization’s overall aim being “to improve and strengthen the work of Allah and man’s fate in the afterlife.” (Peacock, 1978, p. 38). The movement began with a modest program of building mosques and establishing schools that taught a modern syllabus featuring both western subjects and Islamic studies. As this latter goal coincided with the intent of an overall liberalization of Dutch education policy in the NEI at that time, the *Muhammadiyah* found modest support for its activities from the Dutch colonial administration. After 1915, the *Muhammadiyah*

began to receive government subsidies for its education activities, beginning a relationship that would eventually cause the *Sarekat Islam's* leadership to question *Muhammadiyah's* commitment to its Islamic agenda. Despite such criticisms, however, *Muhammadiyah* was spectacularly successful in its endeavors, and was able to quickly expand its organizational program to also include charitable work and publishing.

One of Dahlan's most notable accomplishments during this period was the establishment in 1916 of a woman's auxiliary to *Muhammadiyah*. Named for "Aisjijah", a wife of the prophet Muhammad, this organization was specifically intended to organize Muslim women that they might undertake the same types of activities already carried out by *Muhammadiyah's* male members, notably proselytization, mosque-construction, education, and charitable work. Women were encouraged to study Islam, and to execute these social duties with enthusiasm and diligence. Although Dahlan's ideas about the role of women in Indonesian society were rather forward-looking for his time, they remained completely in concert with reformist Islamic conceptions regarding the position of women. Dahlan neither encouraged nor tolerated any sense of familiarity between the genders, and while *Muhammadiyah* made allowances for women's activism in the community, it was practiced on a strictly segregated basis. Still, his ideas were often met with shock, dismay and criticism by more conservative *santri*, many of whom were apt to see any role for women outside of the home as scandalous.

When Dahlan died in 1923, *Muhammadiyah* was still a relatively small organization, if not a highly organized and active one. Within a decade of its founding, however, it had expanded to five branches, and it continued to grow exponentially, so that by the time the Japanese had invaded in 1942, *Muhammadiyah* was comprised of well over a thousand branches. With a membership of slightly less than four thousand men and women at the time of its annual congress in 1923, its activities were still almost entirely limited to the vicinity of Yogyakarta. By 1950, however, it could boast of a membership of nearly 160,000 across much of the archipelago. Today, *Muhammadiyah* remains one of the largest Islamic organizations in Asia, if not the world.

Besides its contribution to the empowerment of female Muslims, *Muhammadiyah* had an equally important and far-reaching influence on the nature of Islamic education in Indonesia. Prior to the 1920s the primary method of Islamic education throughout much



of Indonesia, and particularly on Java, was the *pesantren* system. Literally, *pesantren* means “the place of *santri*” in Javanese, and these Islamic boarding schools had been for many centuries the most important training ground for young traditionalist *santri*. *Pesantren* students typically studied the *Qur’an* and *Hadith*, but with an emphasis on rote memorization, and with characteristically strict obedience and reverence for the resident *kyai* (“religious teacher”).

For the typical Javanese village, the *pesantren*, along with both its *pondok* (“student dormitory”) and mosque, are the central features, and the local *kyai* serves as the community’s teacher, informal leader, and exemplar of piety. The *kyai* is expected to explain what Islam stands for, and to train the community to be good Muslims. Consequently, much of the education received at a *pesantren* has traditionally concentrated on instilling both the moral virtues and requisite piety necessary to make for good Muslims (Dhofier, 1999, p. 3). Upon graduation, the successful student would usually earn from his *kyai* an acknowledgment of his understanding of Islam, and this *ijazah* (“report regarding the bearer’s qualifications to transmit information about the words and behavior of the Prophet”) would in turn qualify the young *santri* to establish his own *pesantren*, and thus become a *kyai* in his own right. Students were expected to remain loyal and obedient to their *kyai* throughout their entire life, and as students fanned out over the countryside, networks of interrelated *pesantren* were established. These *pesantren* networks contributed enormously to the florescence of Islam in the initial centuries of its penetration into the archipelago, and during the colonial era they provided a separate translocal leadership network that operated alongside the colonial administration and its *priyayi*-dominated bureaucracy (Heffner, 2000, p. 34). Despite their moral and spiritual value to the *ummah*, however, *pesantren* usually offered an extremely narrow curriculum of use only to future Islamic scholar (Kelabora, 1976, p. 231).

*Muhammadiyah*’s most important innovation in the field of Islamic education in Indonesia was to establish schools based on the *madrasah* (“Islamic School”) model rather than the traditional *pesantren* model. The most significant difference between these two models was that secular subjects, including specifically western subjects, were added to the *madrasah* curriculum to supplement traditional Arabic and religious studies.

The rationale behind this adaptation lies in the modernist assumption that for Indonesian Muslims to succeed to their rightful place in society, they must not only seek to be pious, but they must also seek to be educated in modern ways.

By 1939, *Muhammadiyah* had 1,744 schools in operation, about half of which were strictly secular, while the other half operated on the *madrasah* model (Peacock, 1978, p. 53). In addition, it ran 834 mosques, 31 libraries, and oversaw the activities of nearly eight thousand *muballigh* (“missionaries”) involved in *dakwah* (“propagation of Islam”). After independence, it would further expand its educational activities to also include religious- teacher schools, technical schools, and a college. For the time being, however, *Muhammadiyah’s* rapid organizational successes not only in the field of education, but in proselytization and social work as well, met with stiff resistance from conservative *santri* who resented the implication that their own understanding of Islam was somehow imperfect, and needed to be rectified (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 171). By challenging the traditional *pesantren* system and their powerful *kyai*, *Muhammadiyah* contributed to the escalation of tension between the traditionalist and modernist elements of the *santri* community. An outgrowth of this tension was the establishment in 1926 of the *Nahdatul Ulama* (“Renaissance of the Religious Scholars”), a *santri* organization whose aim it was to explicitly defend the interests of traditionalist Muslims against a perceived expansion in modernist influence in the Javanese heartland.

### 3. Nahdatul Ulama

*Nahdatul Ulama* was founded in Jombang, East Java in 1926 by Kyai Haji Muhammad Hashim Ash`ari at the urging of a group of conservative *santri*. Their principal objective was to stem the rising tide of modernism that they believed was threatening the foundation of traditional Javanese Islamic beliefs, as well as the long-standing primacy of village *kyai* as the preeminent Islamic scholars in Indonesia. These *kyai* and their *santri* were alarmed at the rapid expansion into the orthodox heartland by modernist organizations such as *Muhammadiyah* and *Sarekat Islam*. More ominously, the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, and the capture of Mecca by Ibn Sa`ud and his Wahhabi followers, seemed to signal that the very survival of the old order was at stake (Benda, 1958, p. 50). Connections between Indonesian modernist organizations and

international reformist, Wahhabi and Pan-Islamic movements, however tenuous they might be, seemed to give credence to this concern, and encouraged the proverbial circling of the traditionalist wagons.

From its inception, *Nahdatul Ulama's* activities primarily concerned the support of traditional Islamic *pesantren*, social work, and the facilitation of economic development for Muslims. As Van Niel notes, "The *Nahdatul Ulama* advanced the religious and economic interests of the Javanese traditionalists who felt themselves still integrated into Javanese life and were repelled by the firm separation from these traditions which many modernist leaders in SI were propounding." (1980, p. 142). Just as the *Muhammadiyah* had successfully adapted the instructional methodologies of Dutch and Christian missionary schools, the *Nahdatul Ulama* in turn copied those of *Muhammadiyah*. Unlike their modernist rivals, however, the *Nahdatul Ulama* had a ready-made pool of members in the Javanese *pesantren* system. Consequently, it grew fairly rapidly, and by 1942, it had expanded to 120 branches in both Java and Kalimantan. Its *dakwah* activities continued to gain ground throughout many of the outer islands, although East Java would continue to remain *Nahdatul Ulama's* heartland throughout much of its history. Likewise, *Muhammadiyah* would similarly remain strong in West Java and in the outer Islands.

In the first years of its existence, *Nahdatul Ulama's* relationship with both SI and *Muhammadiyah* was strained and acrimonious, but with the increasing radicalization of *Sarekat Islam's* Pan-Islamic message following the ejection of Marxist elements from its ranks in the early 1920s, *Nahdatul Ulama's* traditionalist *kyai* began to forge an uneasy working relationship with the *Muhammadiyah*. The final split between *Sarekat Islam* and *Muhammadiyah* in 1929 over the issue of cooperation with the Dutch NEI government, drove *Nahdatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah* even closer together, and paved the way for a cooperative relationship within the framework of the *Majelis Islamil a'laa Indonesia* ("Great Islamic Council of Indonesia" -M.I.A.I). This rapprochement between modernist and traditionalist forces was further aided by a marked increase in the overall level of repression by the Dutch NEI government in the aftermath of World War I and the PKI uprisings of 1926-27. By the mid-1920s, the Dutch had finally begun to realize that Islamic movements like *Nahdatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah* were fast becoming the

single most potent force for Indonesian unity despite their predominately apolitical agendas (Benda, 1958, p. 90). As a result, they took a more hardline stance with even ostensibly apolitical organizations such as these.

Despite its late start relative to the *Muhammadiyah*, *Sarekat Islam* and the latter's offshoots, the *Nahdatul Ulama* was able to quickly make up much ground before the Japanese military invasion in 1942. Its ability to capitalize on existing *pesantren* networks, as well as the resonance of its conservative message among many rural Javanese, gave the *Nahdatul Ulama* an organizational edge that matched the headstart achieved by competing movements. By the time the Japanese had arrived, the *Nahdatul Ulama* had achieved peer status with *Muhammadiyah*. In short order both would prove their usefulness to Japanese ambitions.

## **G. INITIAL STEPS TO UNIFY THE UMMAH**

In the years leading up to 1942, the various Indonesian political movements, whether secular or religious in orientation, had learned to tolerate each other, even if only grudgingly. The increased repressiveness of the Dutch in the wake of both the PKI uprisings of 1926-27 and the worldwide economic depression that had followed close on the heels of WWI had forced the native political movements to not only forge alliances amongst themselves, but to change their tactics as well (Van Niel, 1980, p. 155). In observing how overt hostility towards the Dutch regime over the preceding decades had resulted in the exile or imprisonment of many of the Islamic and nationalist movements' senior leaders, the remaining secular and religious leaders opted for a more gradual and cooperative approach.

After the dissolution of *Sarekat Islam* in the early 1920s, the role of Islamic parties had been almost exclusively apolitical, and as a result, it was the secular-nationalists who gained prominence for their aggressive propagandizing on behalf of Indonesian nationalist aspirations. Although many of these leaders were ultimately exiled or imprisoned, their audacity inspired the Indonesian people, and earned for them a sense of popular legitimacy as the mouthpieces of the independence movement. While the Islamic parties' membership rolls exceeded those of all the other parties several times over, they were as yet in the words of Benda, "politically inarticulate". (1955, p. 353).

For the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and certainly up to 1942, these parties had been relatively content with concentrating on issues of economic development, education, proselytization, and social justice. Ironically, it would be the Japanese army that would provide the Islamic parties with an opportunity to realize the vast political potential of their substantial, but latent grassroots support (Benda, 1958, p. 353).

In 1927, the head of Indonesia's most successful nationalist movement, Ahmad Sukarno, attempted to unify the nationalist, socialist and Islamic movements under the banner of the *Permufakatan Perhimpunan-Perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia* ("Consolidation of Indonesian National Organizations" - PPPKI), but his efforts met with little success, and any sense of unity achieved was superficial at best (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 184). In May 1937, the Marxist-Socialist groups formed the *Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia* ("Indonesian People's Movement" – GERINDO) as a united front. Similarly, in September of that same year, most of the Islamic parties joined together to establish the M.I.A.I. In 1939, both GERINDO and the M.I.A.I merged to form the *Gabungan Politik Indonesia* ("Indonesian Political Union" – GAPI) to further the common goal of achieving parliamentary governance for Indonesia. By 1942, however, little forward movement had been achieved by any of these groups, and the Dutch, secure in their hold on the NEI, had only become more intransigent in their unwillingness to compromise with native movements striving for greater political autonomy.

#### **H. JAPAN'S CONTRIBUTION: MASYUMI AND THE LESSONS OF MASS MOBILIZATION**

The Japanese invasion of the NEI in the early months of 1942 changed everything not only for the Dutch, but for the native Indonesians as well. As part of a larger military and economic strategy, the NEI's abundant supplies of petroleum, bauxite, rubber and manpower figured largely in Japan's design for the establishment of political and economic hegemony throughout Asia, euphemistically dubbed the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere". Expansion into Manchuria led Japan to rely more and more on Southeast Asia's raw materials to fuel its rapidly growing industrial and military might, and Dutch unwillingness to grant preferred trade relations with the Japanese, followed by U.S. actions to restrict Japanese access to petroleum products, put the Japanese on the horns of a dilemma, virtually assuring war in the Pacific (Dudden, 1999, p. 163). By the

end of March, the Dutch in the East Indies had surrendered to Japanese forces on Java, and most of the colonial establishment had either fled to Australia, returned home to the Netherlands, or been taken prisoner.

As a result of Japan's need to rapidly extract as many resources as possible from the islands, the occupation forces crafted policies that would aggressively court not only the various nationalist and Islamic party leaders, but also the native elites who had been almost obsequious in their loyalty to the Dutch (Reid, 1975, p. 50). While the Japanese proved eager to utilize every possible source of indigenous support for their regime, the Islamic parties were among those that early-on benefited most from their close association with the Japanese military. It was after all members of Aceh's *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* ("All Aceh Ulama Association" - PUSA) that had first approached the Japanese in Malaya with offers of assistance should they ever invade the NEI (Reid, 1975, p. 54).

The Japanese occupation forces divided the NEI into three distinct administrative regions: The Navy was responsible for Kalimantan and East Indonesia, the 25<sup>th</sup> Army was given responsibility for Sumatra, and the 16<sup>th</sup> Army occupied both Java and Madura. It was in the region controlled by the 16<sup>th</sup> Army that the most far-reaching socio-political changes took place during the occupation. As Ricklefs notes, the area under the control of the 16<sup>th</sup> Army was the least economically valuable of all the NEI territories as a result of its lack of mineral or agricultural resources, however it did have other resources that could be exploited for the Japanese war machine (1993, p. 199). Java's most abundant resource was people, and so the policies of Japan's 16<sup>th</sup> Army on Java were designed to gain the cooperation of the native elites in order to maximize the amount of labor that could be extracted from a seemingly inexhaustible labor pool. Japan's ultimate goal was to mobilize an entire population to support its war goals, and no stone was left unturned in the search for potential quislings.

Unlike the Dutch NEI government's wary position toward Islam, the Japanese aggressively courted the support of religious leaders. The Japanese were familiar enough with the structure of Indonesian society to know that it was not the *priyayi* elites whose support was essential for mass mobilization, but rather that of the village *kyai* and *ulama*. If the religious leaders gave the command, whole villages would toil. Conversely, if their

religious leaders told them to sit idle, villagers would also do that. Understanding as they did the central role of religion in the life of the Indonesian people, the Japanese established the *Kantor Urusan Agama* (“Office of Religious Affairs”) in order to coordinate efforts to win the favor of the *ulama* and *kyai* in the rural areas. The preferential treatment afforded to Muslim leaders in the early years of the occupation no doubt stemmed from the Japanese realization that only Islam could claim the allegiance of nearly all Indonesians, whereas both the nationalists and *priyayi* elites each relied upon a very small base of urban support (Benda, 1955, p. 357).

Despite their hopes for mobilizing the Indonesian masses with the assistance of rural religious leaders, the Japanese were not nearly as enthusiastic about those pre-war Islamic parties that were primarily urban and modernist in composition (Benda, 1955, p. 355). In the first weeks of the occupation, the Japanese even went so far as to ban the PSII and the PII. Politically-astute, urban modernist Muslims had proven themselves to be noticeably less pliable and far more troublesome to the Japanese than the rural *kyai*, and thus the army took pains to ensure that the two factions were kept as isolated from each other as possible (Ricklefs, 1993, pp. 204-205). The Japanese forces frequently scuttled attempts by urban elements to link up with their rural brethren, lest the former turn the latter against their patrons.

In late 1942, the Japanese established two umbrella organizations for native political parties. *Putera* was intended to encompass all of the western-educated nationalist elites, and the re-establishment of M.I.A.I was to include all of the Islamic parties. By 1943, both of these organizations were faltering, and the Japanese, who had by then shifted their patronage almost exclusively in favor of the Muslim leaders, permanently dissolved *Putera*. They did, however, soon after create a successor Islamic umbrella organization called *Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia* (“Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims” - *Masyumi*).

*Masyumi* was probably the most important consequence of Japan’s policies toward Indonesian Islam during the three and a half years of its occupation. Unlike the defunct M.I.A.I, the Japanese took pains to ensure that *Masyumi*’s leadership was drawn from the more apolitical and cooperative rural elements of *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama*. *Kyai* Haji Muhammad Hashim Ash`ari, the leader of *Nahdatul Ulama*, was

appointed to lead *Masyumi*, while the more strident and hardline of the urban modernist leaders were relegated to decidedly less influential positions. Not long after, senior *Masyumi* members were also appointed to important positions in the Office of Religious Affairs, where they were put in charge of political indoctrination courses in the villages. The influence of these Muslim leaders was further enhanced when regional branch offices of the Office of Religious Affairs were established in the summer of 1944 (Benda, 1955, p. 356). These developments were all the more important because they provided yet another means for Muslim leaders to extend their influence to every corner of Java.

In addition to *Masyumi*, in October 1943 the Japanese also established the *Pembela Tanah Air* (“Protectors of the Fatherland” - PETA), an Indonesian volunteer army that by war’s end had nearly 37,000 men in Java, and perhaps another 20,000 in Sumatra (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 206). Unlike previous incarnations of auxiliary military forces, PETA was not attached to the Japanese army *per se*, but was a distinct entity officered by native Indonesians. Hundreds, if not thousands of *kyai* and *ulama* gained practical experience in military leadership as a result of their participation in PETA during these years. In November 1944, a specifically Islamic auxiliary military unit, the *Barisan Hizbu’llah* (“Forces of God”), was established and placed directly under *Masyumi*’s supervision. This was to be only the first instance in a subsequently long and bloody history of paramilitary militias put at the disposal of political parties.

Japan’s seduction of the Muslim leaders came to symbolic fruition in 1944 with *Masyumi*’s declaration the Japan’s cause qualified as *jihād* (“holy war”), and that all Muslims were now required to rise up to support them against the Allies. For its part, *Masyumi* had been able to capitalize on the flexibility of movement afforded it by the Japanese to expand its effective reach to the smallest villages across much of the archipelago. Furthermore, through the tutelage of the Japanese, they had developed a keen appreciation for organization, discipline, and propaganda, all of which would serve them in good stead in the years to come.

When it became obvious that they were losing the war, and that the allies would eventually re-take Indonesia, Japan’s attitudes toward the native leadership gradually began to change. Beginning in late 1944, the Japanese began to shift their favor from *Masyumi* and the Muslim leadership, to nationalist leaders like Sukarno and Mohammad



Hatta. This switch should not have been entirely unexpected in light of the fact that Japan's war aims had also begun to change in the closing months of WWII. No longer were they focused on coordinating resource extraction and the mobilization of labor forces, tasks that the Muslim leadership had excelled at. Instead, they realized that they would have to abandon Indonesia sooner than later, and that the best course of action lay in the establishment of a reasonably capable indigenous administration that would be friendly to Japanese post-war interests. Consequently, the Japanese forces began to move farther away from the Muslim leadership and closer to those nationalist leaders that had received a modern western education, and who had some exposure to the bureaucratic workings of the Dutch colonial administration. In the final calculus, the Japanese came to the conclusion that these Indonesians would have the best chance of establishing a viable government after the inevitable withdrawal of the Japanese military.

As the secular nationalist leaders regained their grip on the overall Indonesian leadership, they struck back at the Muslim leaders who had for years enjoyed the patronage of the Japanese at the expense of the secularists. In March 1945, many of the nationalist leaders openly advocated for the abolishment of *Masyumi* (Benda, 1955, p. 359). Although the Japanese at first resisted this suggestion, by summer, they were willing to entertain the idea of merging both *Masyumi* and the equivalent nationalist umbrella organization, the *Jawa Hōkōkai* ("Java Service Association") into a single entity, the *Gērahan Rakyat Baru* ("New Peoples Movement"). This idea, however, would remain stillborn because of the Japanese surrender in August, and the declaration of Indonesian independence on August 17.

In November 1945, *Masyumi* voted to continue its existence as a political party in the newly independent Indonesia that had emerged at the end of the war. Its already sizable membership rolls further swelled with the addition of those Islamic parties that had been excluded by the Japanese because of their less than cooperative attitudes towards the occupation. Notably, both PSII and PII now joined the core member organizations, *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama*, to make *Masyumi* a truly inclusive, pan-Indonesian Islamic organization. Despite its numerical advantage over the various nationalist parties, the exclusion of *Masyumi* leadership from the apex of the Indonesian political hierarchy in the closing days of the Japanese occupation left them at a distinct

disadvantage in the coming years (Benda, 1955, p. 360). The nationalists proved adept at consolidating their grip on power, and also did their best to exclude Muslim leadership from meaningful participation in shaping the new government.

## I. THE STRUGGLE FOR DASAR NEGARA

In March 1945 the Japanese authorized the convening of a *Badan Pěnyělidik Usaha Pěrsiapan Kěměrdekaan Indonesia* (“Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence” - BPUKI). With an eye towards facilitating a stable and peaceful transition, the Japanese tried to ensure that the BPUKI was composed of men from the older and more experienced generation of leaders associated with the different pre-war nationalist and Islamic movements (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 209). The fundamental challenge of the BPUKI was to decide upon a *Dasar Negara* (“State Ideology”), the principles which would define the shape of the emerging Indonesian state. The members of the BPUKI largely supported the creation of a republic that would include all of the territories within the boundaries of the former Netherlands East Indies, although the Japanese restrained them from endeavoring to also include Irian Jaya, Timor, the Malayan Peninsula, and all of Kalimantan, including its British territories (Van Neil, 1980, pp. 164-165). It was also decided that this republic would be a unitary state, rather than a federal structure. Progress stalled, however, when it came to deciding the ideological basis on which the unitary republic would ultimately rest.

Schwartz describes the ideological debate as having been shaped by the “integrationalist” ideas of senior nationalist leaders, such as Sukarno and Supomo, both of whom had been positively influenced by the disciplined nature of Japanese fascism during the wartime occupation (2000, p. 8). Both traditionalist and modernist Muslim leaders by and large hoped to found an Islamic state, which would find its legitimizing principles in the *Qur’an* and *Hadith*. Finally, a small group of liberal constitutionalists led by the likes of Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir sought to create political institutions more akin to those of western European nations, and which would guarantee the protection of individual liberties while commensurately checking the unrestrained power of government. Ramage’s examination of this period indicates that the constitutionalist position had rather little support even at the early stages of this debate,

and negotiations very quickly became a contest between the establishment of a state defined in accordance with Islamic principles and a *negara integralistik* (“integralist state”) (1995, pp. 11-12).

During the last year of the Japanese occupation, the secular-nationalist leaders were handed a decisive political advantage over the Muslim leaders, and consequently, they were able to dominate much of the BPUKI’s efforts. Both the integrationalists and constitutionalists were deeply concerned about the negative impact that overt references to Islam would have on the decision of predominately Christian areas in the eastern archipelago to join the Republic. Still, the desires of the Muslim leaders could not be brushed aside with impunity, and so the BPUKI was forced to produce a compromise agreement. On June 1 1945, Sukarno gave a speech subsequently called the “*Lahirnya Pancasila*” (“Birth of Pancasila”) in which he detailed his personal vision for a state ideology that could accommodate all groups.

The ideology of *Pancasila* was essentially the product of an attempt to weld together the various ideals of the nationalist movement into a core set of principles that all of the various secular and religious factions could agree on. The five principles of *Pancasila* included *kebangsaan* (“national unity of Indonesia”), *kemanusiaan* (“just and civilized humanity”), *kerakyatan* (“democracy guided by inner wisdom and consensus”), *keadilan sosial* (“social justice”), and *ketuhanan* (“belief in God”). Sukarno’s attempt to seek the least common ideological denominator did not, however, move the debate any further forward.

In late June 1945, a subcommittee of eight members, composed of four from the Islamic camp and four from the secular camp, met with Sukarno to discuss the matter of the *dasar negara* further. The consensus that emerged from their discussions was to become known as the *Piagam Jakarta* (“Jakarta Charter”), which was essentially a short expansion and re-ordering of the *Pancasila* principles. The fifth principle of *ketuhanan* (“belief in god”) became the first principle, and it was expanded to “*ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*” (“belief in one God”). This principle was amended with an additional clause that proclaimed the attendant obligation for all Muslims to abide by the *Sharia*. The section of the constitution that dealt with religion was also amended to include a rejoinder that all Muslims must abide by Islamic law. To soothe the fears of minority religious

groups and secularists, assurances were also given for the protection of religious choice for all citizens. While the Jakarta Charter was far from the ideal of an Islamic state pursued by many of the Muslim leaders, those who had served on this subcommittee ultimately ratified it as an acceptable compromise.

When the Jakarta Charter was raised again in a second series of BPUKI meetings in July 1945, various leaders not involved in the earlier negotiations balked at the compromise. In the working group assigned to draft the actual text of the constitution, Christian representatives from the Moluccas argued that the priority of place given to Islam and the *Sharia* in the constitution's preamble was divisive. On the other hand, Muslim representatives argued for additional amendments that would not only recognize Islam as the state religion, but which would also stipulate that only a Muslim could become President or Vice-President. Some of the more traditionalist Muslims even argued for further amending of the clause concerning the obligation of Muslims to adhere to the *Sharia* in order to make Islamic law applicable to all citizens. Others argued for the establishment of an Islamic High Court to hear cases regarding the *Sharia*, and a Ministry of Religion to oversee specifically Islamic affairs, such as *dakwah*, the collection of the *zakat*, and the building of mosques. Muslims were themselves split on these issues with some, such as the *Masyumi*'s Dr. Sukiman, supporting the amendments, while others worried that further debate would only serve to endanger the hard-won compromises already achieved (Van Dijk, 48-49). As Van Dijk further notes, most of the resistance to the Jakarta Charter came not from secular representatives, but from the more strident proponents of an Islamic state (1981, pp. 52-55).

It had become obvious to just about everyone by late July 1945 that the issue of Islam's place in the new Indonesian state was holding up the progress of the BPUKI's other tasks. Arguments between the secular nationalists and Muslim nationalists, as well as between the traditionalist and modernist wings of *Masyumi*, had slowly ground the process to a halt. Sukarno stepped into the fray once again, urging Muslim leaders to accept the compromises already reached, including the Jakarta Charter and the new requirement that the President must be Muslim. He reminded them that they could try to amend the text at a later date through constitutional procedures. To his credit Sukarno was able to convince even the most ardent opponents of the Jakarta Charter to lend their

support, and as a result the draft constitution was unanimously accepted. Unfortunately, the era of the military occupation came to a more abrupt end than anyone had anticipated. With the surrender of Japanese forces to the Allies on August 14, 1945, the Indonesians found themselves unprepared for their next step.

During the evening of Japan's surrender, Indonesian youth leaders apprehended both Sukarno and Hatta under the pretense of securing them from harm. Upon realizing that the intent of their captors was to force them to declare independence, Sukarno appealed for guidance to Vice Admiral Tadashi Maeda, the head of the Japanese Army-Navy Liaison Office in Jakarta. Maeda urged the youths to release their captives, and he gave assurances that he would neither take measures to prevent a declaration of independence, nor would he take retaliation. Consequently, Sukarno and Hatta were released, and on the morning of August 17, 1945 Sukarno formally declared Indonesia's independence.

On the day following the *Proklamasi Kemerdekaan* ("independence declaration"), the twenty-one members of the *Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* ("Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence" – PPKI) met to discuss the draft constitution. Unlike that of the BPUKI, the PPKI's representatives were intended to reflect regional diversity rather than ideological diversity, thus they were of a very different character than those who had debated the draft constitution (Van Dijk, 1981, p. 60). Sukarno was appointed as chairman of the PPKI, and Mohammad Hatta was selected as its vice-chairman. The PPKI's representatives were predominately secular in orientation, and they set their sights on redressing the imbalances of the draft constitution, particularly those which had given the document too much of a religious color. Mohammed Hatta met with the prominent Muslim leaders and explained to them that the secular majority of the PPKI, many of whom came from the Christian areas of eastern Indonesia, would likely only vote for a secular constitution, or at least one that did not overtly favor Islam (Ramage, 1995, pp. 14-15). Muslim leaders were thus implored to make yet another compromise in order to preserve the territorial integrity of the new state (Suryadinata, 2002, pp. 10-11).

The emergency conditions under which the PPKI was meeting likely encouraged the willingness of the Muslim leaders to acquiesce to Hatta's urgings despite the

attendant cost to their ideological position. They also likely reached the conclusion that Indonesia's overwhelmingly Muslim majority would easily be able to make the necessary constitutional amendments following the elections anticipated to take place in the near future. To their credit, the Muslim leadership chose to put the state's immediate survival ahead of their long-range political goals. Consequently, most of the Muslim leaders agreed to Sukarno and Hatta's demands that references to the Jakarta Charter be removed from the preamble, that the related clause in the section on religion be excised, and that the stipulation that the president be a Muslim be dropped. These changes were accepted by the PPKI, and Sukarno and Hatta were elected as President and Vice-President, respectively.

When the *Undang-Undang Dasar* ("Constitution") of 1945 (UUD 45) came into force on August 29, 1945, it was an entirely secular document with no mention of Islam. It included the principle of *keTuhanan yang Maha Esa* in the preamble, and the statement "The State shall be based on Belief in the One and Only God." as the only token recognition of religious interests (Van Dijk, 1981, pp. 61-62). The heavy-handedness with which the secular nationalists had urged the abrogation of agreements arrived at through the long deliberations of the BPUKI created a sense of betrayal among the Muslim leadership, and this resentment would cast a pall on relations between secular and religious groups for at least the next two decades (Heffner, 2000, pp. 42-43). The question of the Jakarta Charter would re-emerge at the end of the parliamentary period, and it would still remain a divisive issue even in the wake of the fall of Suharto in 1998, nearly half a century after it was first proposed.

## **J. THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD (1945 – 1949)**

### **1. The Institutions of Governance**

With the implementation of the UUD 45, the PPKI was dissolved and replaced by a 150-member *Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat* ("Central Indonesian National Committee" – KNIP). This body was comprised of prominent leaders from the various factions that had been involved in the pre-war independence movement, and, thus in many ways it was similar in composition to the All-Indonesian National Congress first

proposed by GAPI in 1939 (Kattenburg, 1946, p. 290). The KNIP was intended to fulfill the role outlined in the UUD 45 for the *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (“People’s Consultative Assembly” - MPR). As the highest organ of the Indonesian government, the MPR was required to meet at least once every five years in order to select both a President and Vice President, as well as to promulgate broad guidelines for state policy. However, because elections could not reasonably be held in the near future, it was left to the President and Vice President to appoint the KNIP’s full membership.

Initial efforts to establish a one-party system using the *Jawa Hokokai* as its core were strongly resisted by those who resented the dominance of the secular-oriented collaborationists within that organization (Ricklefs, 1993, pp. 213-214). Consequently, by late October 1945 the government had thrown open the doors for the organization of new political parties, and in the span of a few months several were founded. Sukarno and Hatta then simply estimated the strengths of the various parties in order to determine the number of seats that each would receive in the KNIP. Party leaders were then asked to provide lists of representatives from within their own organizations, and in this way it was hoped that the KNIP would accurately represent the relative strength of the various interest groups within Indonesian society (Feith, 1962, p. 123). Over time the fact that representatives to the KNIP had achieved their positions as a result of the good fortune of a Presidential appointment rather than by a free election began to cast doubt on the legitimacy of this institution.

The first Republican government formed in August 1945 under the direction of President Sukarno was to be short-lived. By November, it had become increasingly apparent that the Dutch, as well as the British and Americans, were unwilling to seriously negotiate in good faith with those Indonesian leaders whom they viewed as Japanese wartime collaborators. This period coincided with the vesting of legislative powers in the KNIP in November 1945 and the shifting of the center of power away from Sukarno, Hatta and the other senior pre-war leaders. The Republic’s leadership made a strategic political decision to shift the responsibility for further negotiations to a Prime Minister selected by the KNIP. Though both Sukarno and Hatta would retain the positions of President and Vice-President, respectively, this change in leadership represented a major

shift away from the strong presidential form of government outlined in the UUD 45, and towards a parliamentary form of governance. The latter model would remain the predominant model until 1959.

With the expansion of the KNIP and its assumption of legislative powers, a *Badan Pěkerja* (“working group”) was created to assist in the day-to-day affairs of governance pending the election of the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (“House of Representatives” – DPR), the lower legislative organ provided for by the UUD 45. The UUD 45 also provided for the establishment of eleven ministerial portfolios. An additional portfolio, the Ministry of Religion, was added shortly thereafter to placate *Masyumi*. At the regional and local levels, Indonesians who had served in the Dutch and Japanese bureaucracies discretely changed hats and took over as Republican government administrators (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 213).

As the head of a strong presidential form of government, the President was intended to be the focal point of governmental power, but in practice this proved to not be entirely the case. With the appointment of Sutan Sjahrir as Prime Minister on November 14, 1945, the focus of authority and power shifted away from President and towards the KNIP. In practice, Prime Minister Sjahrir and his cabinet of youthful non-collaborationists were responsible to the KNIP, rather than to the President, though both Sukarno and Vice-President Hatta continued to exert tremendous political influence by virtue of their great prestige. This influence was aptly demonstrated by the successful ratification of the Linggadjati Agreement in 1947 despite misgivings by many serving in the KNIP (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 225). When ratification of this cease fire agreement with the Dutch appeared threatened by militant opposition within the KNIP, government supporters simply increased the authorized strength of the KNIP from 188 to 514 members, and then appointed additional supporters of Sjahrir from among the *Sayap Kiri* (“The Left Wing”) parties to ensure a majority.

While the combination of the above measures assured the ratification of the Linggadjati Agreement, the rapid growth of leftist leaning factions within the KNIP only seemed to worsen the government’s inherent instability. The KNIP was increasingly polarized between those who wished to negotiate with the Dutch and those who wanted to fight until the Dutch surrendered unconditionally. With the rancor of the BPUKI’s



deliberations still hanging thick in the air, it wasn't surprising that bitterness continued to characterize the policy debates between the government's secular and religious factions. All of these groups also had their own internal divisions, which only served to exacerbate the government's inability to achieve consensus of any sort. Both the fall of Sjahrir's cabinet in June 1947, and the subsequent collapse of Sjarifuddin's cabinet in January 1948, witness to the negative impact that a string of *ad hoc* institutional adjustments had on the efficacy of the Republican government during this period.

## **2. Power Dynamics in the Revolutionary Period (1945-1949)**

Sukarno's August 17th declaration notwithstanding, by late 1945 Indonesia's independence still remained an unresolved question for much of the international community, if not for the leaders of the Republic themselves. The prospects for the fragile, young state were uncertain at best in the shadow of the Netherlands' eagerness to return to their colonies and begin the process of extracting the profits that would be essential for Post-WWII reconstruction in Europe (Gardner, 1997, p. 29). By early 1946, the Dutch had returned in force with an unbridled determination to stamp out what they believed to be a collaborationist rebel government with little popular support. What they found, however, proved to far more broad-based and resilient.

Within months, the former NEI territories had become partitioned into two unequal entities. The Republic of Indonesia, with its capital and leaders re-located to Yogyakarta, maintained control over much of the heavily populated, rural interior areas of Java and Sumatra. On the other hand, the Dutch moved quickly to re-establish their authority in Jakarta. They took possession not only of most of the urban areas on Java, but almost all of the outer island territories as well. However, any simplistic description of the partitioning between Dutch-held and Republican territories can barely account for how complex and unstable the situation remained on the ground, particularly as one moved farther away from the centers of authority and into the hinterlands.

The first casualty of the Japanese surrender had been law and order, and not long after their withdrawal old social cleavages reemerged to rent the fabric of society; between *santri* and *abangan*; between modernist and traditionalist Muslims; between commoner and aristocrat; and between those who resisted and those who had collaborated with the

Japanese. These cleavages became fertile ground for the blossoming of “social revolutions”, which led to the destruction of the social order in many areas (Ricklefs, 1993, pp. 218-219). The *ulama* of Aceh took advantage of the power vacuum that followed the Japanese withdrawal to rise up and wipe out the ruling *uleëbalang* class (*priyayi*) that had for so long ruled at the behest of the Dutch (Kell, 1995, p. 9). Similar uprisings also occurred in the Batak areas of north and east Sumatra, while on the north coast of Java, young communist-sympathizers rose up against traditionalist *santri* village headmen who had cooperated with the Japanese. It almost seemed as if the Republican leaders were fiddling in Rome, whilst their kingdom burned down around them

The years immediately following the Japanese surrender were a time of palpable tension between the older nationalist leaders, such as Sukarno and Hatta, and a younger generation led by the likes of Sutan Sjahrir and Amir Sjarifuddin. The former group had worked extensively with the Japanese to further the political goals of the Indonesian nationalist movement, but not without great cost to the lives and liberty of the native peoples. Although these older leaders still enjoyed tremendous prestige among their countrymen, their international reputation was understandably tarnished. Conversely, the latter group of younger revolutionaries had been stridently anti-Japanese, and many had even gone underground to fight the occupation. Several had been captured and imprisoned by the Japanese, notably Sjarifuddin himself, who had not only been captured by the Japanese in early 1943, but whose narrow escape from a death sentence was due only to the timely intercession of Sukarno and Hatta (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 203).

During the early months of Indonesia’s post-WWII struggle for independence, the political dominance of the older generation of collaborationists was undermined, at least temporarily, by the reluctance of the Allies to negotiate with them. Sukarno and Hatta wisely chose to retreat from the center of the political stage shortly after the formation of the first presidential cabinet in August, and by November 14, a new cabinet had been named with Sutan Sjahrir as Prime Minister. By the end of November 1945, the young Republican leaders were in a position of strength in the KNIP, and Sjahrir had appointed a cabinet under his leadership that was directly responsible to the KNIP, rather than to the President. As Ricklefs points out, “...after less than three months, the 1945 constitution was suspended in practice, although in theory it remained in force.” (1993, p. 218)

With the establishment of an *ad hoc* parliamentary process beginning to take shape by early November 1945, the formation of political parties was not long to follow. Still, it would take several months before the various pre-independence groups could coalesce into recognizable parties. During the first month of independence, Sukarno had unsuccessfully tried to turn the wartime *Jawa Hokokai* into a state party, renaming it the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (“Indonesian Nationalist Party” – PNI), but this idea met strong resistance from groups that resented the President’s blatant attempt to force a broad collection of ideological forces into a monolithic entity under his leadership. The diversity of membership within the *Jawa Hokokai* made it impossible for its membership to agree on a single ideological agenda, and the younger Republican leaders that had actively opposed the Japanese chafed at such boldface attempts by the collaborationists to further perpetuate their political dominance (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 213). Likewise, Muslim leaders in *Masyumi* continued to resent their marginalization by the secularists.

During November 1945, the Republican government had given permission for the organization of political parties, and by early 1946, the main political parties had already begun to take shape. The PKI had risen phoenix-like from the flames of the 1926-27 uprising and the oblivion of wartime exile, to reconstitute itself in late 1945. Tan Malaka, a prominent PKI leader from the 1920s thought to still be in exile, had revealed himself in August and quickly taken up the reins of leadership for the disparate Marxist factions. In November 1945, Sjarifuddin’s youthful followers founded the *Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia* (“Indonesian Socialist Youth” – *Pesindo*), which for a time merged with Sjahrir’s followers to found the *Partai Sosialis* (“Socialist Party”). This union did not last long, and within a year they had split again, the moderate socialists remaining with Sjahrir’s *Sayap Kiri*, and the more radical youths aligning with Sjarifuddin. *Masyumi* too announced its intent to participate as a political party, but by November 1945, modernist Muslim leaders of the likes of Dr. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo (a former head of the *Partai Sarekat Islam*) and Natsir had displaced the Japanese-favored traditionalist leaders at the organization’s helm (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 221). Finally, the pre-war *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (“Indonesia Nationalist Party” – PNI) was reborn in January 1946, with Sukarno as its ideological leader, if not its official leader.

Although not a political party *per se*, it would be an oversight not to mention the transformation of the Republican army during this period because it would in time come to play a substantial political role. The Japanese had been active in the mobilization and training of native, quasi-military forces during the period of their occupation, particularly in the months leading up to their eventual surrender to the Allies. In early 1943, they had organized both a militarized youth corps (“*Seinendan*”) and a “Vigilance Corps” (“*Keibodan*”) for older males. Later they formed an auxiliary military force (“*Heiho*”) under Japanese command, and by the end of the year, they had escalated mobilization with the establishment of the *Pěmbela Tanah Air* (“Protectors of the Fatherland” – PETA), a volunteer army intended specifically to operate under indigenous leadership against the expected Allied invasion. Ricklefs notes that PETA was highly disciplined in accordance with Japanese military standards, and that many of its members were indoctrinated with Indonesian nationalist ideas (1993, p. 206). By late 1944, both *Masyumi* and the *Jawa Hokokai* had been given permission to organize their own militarized youth corps, the *Barisan Hizbu’llah* (“God’s Forces”) and the *Barisan Pělopor* (“Vanguard Column”), respectively. By 1945, Japanese military policies had produced a highly-militarized and disciplined Indonesian population.

As the most professional and highly-trained of the auxiliary forces created by the Japanese, PETA was therefore the most capable of successfully imposing some sense of order on the disparate collection of militarized youth groups. The Japanese took steps to try to quickly disband these groups in the closing weeks of the occupation in order to affect a smooth transfer of authority to the Allies. These actions, however, produced just the opposite effect than what was intended, for in the absence of strong central leadership, these local youth groups simply melted into the countryside where they continued to pursue their own agendas as *badan pěrjuangan* (“armed struggle groups”), which were often at odds with that of the Republican leadership in Yogyakarta (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 214). Some of these groups inevitably gravitated toward specific political ideologies, and they often became associated with political movements, such as the socialists’ *Pěsindo*, *Masyumi*’s *Barisan Hizbu’llah*, or Tan Malaka’s Marxist *Pěrsatuan*

*Pějuangan* (“Struggle Union”). Others fell under the sway of charismatic local leaders looking to make name for themselves at the expense of both the Dutch and the Republic of Indonesia.

The leadership of those forces that formed the core of the Republican army was itself split into two antagonistic camps, one led by Japanese-trained soldiers with little to no pre-wartime military experience, and the other by soldiers who had served in the former Dutch colonial army (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 222). The former tended to adopt a much more hardline position towards any negotiated settlements with the Dutch, and they tended to favor a sustained populist-guerilla war in the hopes of achieving an unconditional surrender. Conversely, the latter group was far more amenable to a combination of military action and negotiation along the lines pursued by successive Republican governments. General Sudirman emerged as the most prominent leader of the Japanese-trained faction, while Colonel A.H. Nasution would rise up through the ranks to become the leader of the Dutch-trained faction. Until the struggle for the heart and soul of the army was finally resolved, the army itself would remain a source of tremendous political instability for the young state.

Despite their relatively quick return to Jakarta, the Dutch were in a very weak position to extend their authority. They had returned with the intention of rapidly subduing the rebellion with the aid of the British, Australian, and Americans, but their optimism was quickly dashed. Britain’s transitional occupation force had suffered embarrassingly high losses, including the death of its own commander (General Mallaby) against a ragtag Republican army in the Battle of Surabaya, and they soon came to realize that this was a fight for which they had no stomach. It became more and more clear to the Dutch that if they wanted to re-take their former colonies, they would have to do it on their own. In truth, however, they simply did not yet have the available manpower or resources to undertake such a massive effort. Consequently, they were forced to seek a negotiated settlement not only to assuage the impatient urgings of their allies, but also in recognition of their own relative military weakness on the ground. To the Dutch, however, a prolonged strategy of negotiation was just another means to expand their toehold in the colonial territories until they were able to marshal enough strength to kill off the nascent Republic once and for all.

Initial Indo-Dutch negotiations brokered with the assistance of the British resulted in the Linggadjati Agreement of November 15, 1946. This agreement provided for Dutch recognition of the Republic of Indonesia's *de facto* authority over Java, Sumatra and Madura. It also led to the formation of a federal United States of Indonesia to consist of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as both Kalimantan and the "*Negara Indonesia Timur*" ("Eastern Indonesian State"). This federal structure would in turn become part of a greater Netherlands-Indonesian Union that would ultimately remain under the Dutch crown. The complexity of this agreement, particularly as it related to the structure of the federal government, debt transfer, and the preservation of Dutch ownership of investment capital, doomed this plan to failure (Gardner, 1997, p. 28).

The amount of Indonesian concessions outlined in the draft agreement met with stiff resistance within the KNIP. Although Prime Minister Sjahrir's negotiations with the Dutch had ultimately received Sukarno's blessings, many saw the agreement as a sell-out because it fell far short of the unconditional Dutch surrender and withdrawal sought by large segments of the Indonesian population, especially the populist factions of the army. Sjahrir himself had been briefly detained by outraged soldiers during the previous summer when an event subsequently known as the "July 3<sup>rd</sup> Affair" erupted because of the divisions within the military leadership over the direction of negotiations. Populist forces under the leadership of General Sudirman had sought to limit the latitude of Sjahrir's negotiations, but Sukarno failed to cave to their demands and Sjahrir was ultimately released (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 223).

Despite profound internal disagreements within the Republican government, the KNIP finally ratified the agreement four months later. However, the political backlash resulted in the fall of Sjahrir's government, and his replacement as Prime Minister by his former political ally-cum-opponent, Amir Sjarifuddin. The Linggadjati Agreement was finalized on May 25, 1947, but on July 21, 1947, the Dutch launched a military operation against Republican forces on Java and Sumatra. This "police action" led to the emasculation of the Republican authority throughout much of Sumatra and in both West and East Java, and forced the remnants of leadership to flee to the Yogyakarta region of Central Java where they would remain until 1949.

Although Dutch military efforts had largely proven effective against the poorly organized and ill-equipped Republican resistance, the international reaction to their heavy-handedness was almost entirely negative. Following protests by the governments of Australia, India and the USSR, and the United States, the United Nations successfully pressured the Netherlands into accepting a cease-fire and the assistance of a Good Offices Committee that would facilitate further negotiations. This committee, comprised of representatives from the United States, Australia and Belgium, helped the Dutch and Republican forces craft the subsequent Renville Agreement of January 17, 1948.

To Indonesians, the Renville Agreement was a disaster because it seemed to legitimize continued Dutch control of those areas seized during the 1947 police action. Although this was an almost unacceptable sacrifice to many Indonesian patriots, the willingness of Republican leaders to make such a painful concession for the sake of peace won them the high regard of U.S. officials (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 226). Still, the agreement left some 25 million Indonesians well behind the line of Dutch military advances, the “Van Mook Line”. Perhaps more importantly, it also stranded significant numbers of Indonesian military units in enemy territory (Gardner, 1997, p. 50). The willingness of the Republican government under Sjarifuddin to acquiesce to the Renville Agreement’s decidedly one-sided stipulations infuriated the Republican army leadership and contributed to a feeling that the civilian leadership had sold out the revolution to save its own collective skin.

As a consequence of the furor that the Renville Agreement created, Prime Minister Sjarifuddin was forced to resign, and Vice President Hatta was then tasked by Sukarno with assembling a “business cabinet”. By February 1948, it seemed as if relations between the Dutch and Indonesians were on a more even keel, but the apparent weakening of the Republican government only served to embolden the ambitions of charismatic local leaders bent on seizing the initiative from the isolated bureaucrats in Yogyakarta.

An Islamic leader named S.M. Kartosuwirjo, with the support of numerous local *kyai*, seized the opportunity of a leadership vacuum created by the retreat of Republican forces during the Dutch police action of 1947 to establish a breakaway regime in West Java in May 1948. Called the *Negara Islam Indonesia* (“Indonesian Islamic State”), it

became better known as the *Darul Islam* movement (from the Arabic, *dar-al-Islam*, “House of Islam”). This was a political and military movement that was committed to the establishment of a Muslim theocratic state; however, despite sharing the goal of establishing an Islamic state, Kartosuwirjo’s movement failed to win the support of *Masyumi* because of the latter’s oft-affirmed commitment to work within the parliamentary process (Van Dijk, 1981, p. 85). Although the *Darul Islam*’s guerilla activities were initially directed against the re-imposition of Dutch rule in West Java, in time they also took on a strident anti-Republic character as well. Until it was finally suppressed in 1962, *Darul Islam*’s guerrilla activity remained a considerable thorn in the side of the Republican government, and it kept *Masyumi* in an awkward position betwixt the two.

A perhaps more daunting political challenge to the Republican leadership during the late 1940s was the revitalization of Marxist forces under the leadership of Musso and Tan Malaka. Youth groups under these leaders chafed at what they saw as the Republic’s unforgivable piecemeal abrogation of the fruits of hard-won national independence. Clashes between the PKI and Republican armed forces broke out in mid-September 1948 around Surakarta in Central Java, and the conflict continued to escalate until the communists were forced to retreat to the East Java town of Madiun. From here they announced the formation of National Front government, denounced Sukarno and Hatta, and called for the immediate overthrow of the Republican government. The Republican government responded by sending the army’s Siliwangi Division under General Nasution to crush the rebels, but as the PKI forces withdrew they undertook a slaughter of *Masyumi* officials and encouraged communal massacres along *abangan-santri* lines (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 229).

The PKI revolt at Madiun was short-lived. Musso was killed, and its other prominent leaders were forced to flee into exile again. Amir Sjarifuddin, who had revealed his long-hidden PKI membership just a few weeks earlier, was captured and executed. Although Tan Malaka had played no part in the revolt, his influence waned significantly in the months that followed, and he was ultimately killed in an armed



conflict with Republican forces in February 1949. Even though the PKI was decimated in the reprisals of the Madiun revolt, it would again manage to rebuild itself to become a potent political force in the 1950s.

Although not particularly threatening from a military perspective, the “Madiun Affair” had some rather important long-term consequences for the Republic. PKI violence directed against *santri-Masyumi* elements during the retreat from Madiun produced an intense hatred among many Muslims, and the PKI violence would come home to roost some sixteen years later when the tables would be turned on the communists. Likewise, the timing of the communists’ revolt during the ongoing war against the Dutch was perceived as a stab-in-the-back by many elements in the Republican armed forces, even those who had been somewhat sympathetic to the PKI’s ideology (Heffner, 2000, p. 50). With the death of General Sudirman in early 1950, the leadership of the army would pass into the hands of Nasution, whose Siliwangi Division had been given the task of crushing the revolt. As a result of this searing experience, he would always remain suspicious of communism and would nurture a life-long antagonism towards the PKI.

Perhaps the most important effect of this event was the influence it had on the way U.S. policy makers viewed the Indonesian struggle for independence. The emergence of the Cold War in the wake of WWII had led to a redefining of relationships between the United States and other countries in the region. There was no longer much patience for fence-sitting in a world increasingly divided into the polarized camps of Communism and Democracy. U.S. post-WWII foreign policy was shaped overwhelmingly by the Truman administration’s commitment to re-building Europe and simultaneously halting the advance of Communism in both Europe and Asia. The Dutch were acutely sensitive to these U.S. concerns, and they were long able to use them in order to delay full U.S. support for Indonesian independence, however, the Republic’s demonstration of both its will and ability to crush communist insurgencies won it a great deal more standing in the eyes of the U.S. administration. U.S. officials now began to discount Dutch claims of the Republic’s susceptibility to communist infiltration, and they began to pressure the Netherlands to more quickly accommodate Indonesian demands for full independence.

Despite increasingly loud calls from the international community for a negotiated solution, the Dutch attempted once again to seize upon the perceived vulnerability of the Republican government in the aftermath of the Madiun revolt by launching a second "police action". With relative speed they were able to capture Yogyakarta in December 1948 and imprison many Indonesian leaders. Both President Sukarno and Vice President Hatta, who was at this time was also serving as Prime Minister, allowed themselves to be arrested and sent into exile in hopes of arousing the ire of world opinion. An emergency Republican government was subsequently established in western Sumatra under the leadership of Sjarifuddin Prawiranegara, and Nasution declared a martial government on Java. Although the army leadership resented the civilian leadership's timidity while soldiers were dying on the battlefield, the Republican strategy proved to be an effective one in the long run: International condemnation of the Dutch attack was both swift and decisive. In January 1949, the UN Security Council passed a resolution demanding the release of Republican government officials, the establishment of an interim government, and the completion of the full transfer of sovereignty by July 1, 1950. To buttress these demands, the Truman administration hinted that Marshall Plan reconstruction aid to the Netherlands might become jeopardized by further stalling on the issue of Indonesian independence.

From August 23 to November 2, 1943, a conference was held in the Netherlands between Republican and Dutch representatives with the aim of determining the timeline for the transfer of sovereignty. Also participating in this conference were representatives of the fifteen federal states established by the Dutch over the course of the previous four years. The resultant Hague Agreement created a federal Indonesian state, called the *Republik Indonesia Serikat* ("Republic of the United States of Indonesia" - RUSI), which was comprised of the fifteen Dutch-created states and the original Republic of Indonesia. Despite vehement protestation by the Indonesian delegation, it was determined that the territory of West New Guinea would for the time being remain under Dutch control. Sukarno and Hatta would remain President and Vice President, respectively, and a bicameral legislature would be established, which would include all of the members from the Republic's original KNIP, as well as those from the parliaments of the other federal states. Most Indonesians expected that an election would be held as soon as practical in

order to select a Constituent Assembly, which would bear the responsibility for drafting a more permanent constitution. After nearly three and a half centuries of Dutch colonial occupation and another four and a half years of armed struggle, full sovereignty was formally transferred from the Netherlands to the RUSI on December 27, 1949.

## **K. CONCLUSION**

The peculiar contours of the Indonesian political landscape on the eve of the August 1945 declaration of independence developed as a result of the unique combination of domestic and international influences at work in the region over the course of several centuries. The most important of these factors was the introduction of Islam in the first half of the second millennium A.D., and its subsequent evolution into the primary socio-political framework for the entire region. This process, however, did not occur in a vacuum, nor was the archipelago a blank slate onto which the Islamic faith could be grafted.

Long before Islam's arrival, maritime Southeast Asia had already been home to numerous thriving, cosmopolitan and culturally-complex societies, not least of which were the legendary kingdoms of Srivijaya, Mahajaput, and Mataram. Some five centuries earlier, Hindu and Buddhist culture had swept through the region on the winds of the trade routes to find a population receptive to the alien cosmology (Coedès, 1968, pp. 26-27). Over time this new religion absorbed the indigenous animist beliefs to produce a uniquely archipelagic variant that might have seemed strangely familiar, yet wholly heterodox to the Brahmins of India.

The Islamization of maritime Southeast Asia proceeded in a similar manner: Introduced through commercial interchange with the Muslim merchants of the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, India and China, Islam flowed like water across the entire archipelago, initially avoiding areas of resistance, but becoming readily absorbed where local conditions proved receptive. In time, even those areas that had at first proved uninterested in Islam's charms relented and professed the faith. By the time the ships of the Netherlands returned to the East Indies in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, Islam was firmly entrenched throughout most of the region.

The process of Islamization did not, however, proceed in an entirely uniform manner. A raft of political, economic, educational and societal differences led to the bifurcation of this process, and resulted in the development of two distinct political cultures, described by Feith as “Javanese-aristocratic” and the “Islamic-entrepreneurial” (1962, pp. 30-32). These socio-political cultures were based on differing worldviews, which had their roots in the belief systems of the *abangan*, *santri* and *priyayi* aliran described by Geertz (1960, pp. 11-261). Although differences between these variations have perhaps grown less stark than they were in the waning years of the colonial administration, they remained a significant impediment to political cooperation in post-independence Indonesia.

The arrival of the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (“United East India Company” - VOC) in 1602, and the subsequent Dutch NEI colonial regime that replaced it in 1816, further fragmented Indonesian society through the co-option of *priyayi* elites and the attempted marginalization of religious teachers and scholars through the repression of all aspects of Islam. The Padri Movement (1803-1838) made manifest the deep tensions between the *penghulu* (*priyayi*) and *santri* elements of society, and seemed to give justification to Dutch attempts to minimize the further impact of Islam on Indonesian society. The failure of the Dutch to appreciate the Islamic concept of *tawhīd*, the indivisibility of God’s dominion, made such a secularizing policy flawed from the beginning, and had it not been for the timely counsel of Dr. Snouck-Hurgronjje, the building tensions might have erupted in a far more violent manner than history has recorded.

The Dutch colonial Islamic policies that were put into place in the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the general liberalizing of attitudes in the Netherlands towards its colonies produced an environment far more accommodating towards cultural Islam, while still expressly forbidding its political manifestations. This period was marked by ever increasing numbers of Indonesian pilgrims conducting the *Hajj*, many of whom remained in Mecca and Cairo to study Islamic jurisprudence and mystical teachings at the feet of renowned Indonesian scholars in residence. Although much of the knowledge imparted by these scholars was quite orthodox, this was also a period of renewal, and the reformist exhortations of Muhammad ‘Abduh (Egyptian reformist),

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (Iranian reformist), and others took root in the fertile minds of many an Indonesian student who would later return home to challenge the status quo of both the political and religious establishments.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a change in Dutch colonial policy that was to have a profound effect on the development of Indonesian political consciousness. The introduction of the Dutch “Ethical Policy” towards the NEI in 1904 was based on a half-hearted Dutch desire to move away from an exploitative relationship with the colonies, and towards one that reflected a civilizing mission more concerned with the welfare of its subjects than economics (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 151). This policy quickened the pace of economic liberalization begun in the previous decades, opening up new entrepreneurial opportunities for *abangan*, as well as for *santri*. It also permitted the establishment of organizations founded for the purpose of charitable, economic, or otherwise apolitical purposes. Still, perhaps the most important policy shift concerned those colonial efforts that expanded the educational franchise to the native population.

The expansion of Dutch native schools in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was intended in large part to hasten the assimilation of western values and attitudes into the Indonesian worldview (Van Niel, 1980, p. 114). A more immediate goal was to produce sufficient numbers of educated natives to fill the expanding colonial bureaucracy. In some measure this effort succeeded, but only to a limited extent. Although short-term Dutch goals were achieved, the long-term effect was to awaken a hunger among educated Indonesians for the power, prestige and authority enjoyed by their Dutch masters. From this relatively small kernel of educated Indonesian elites emerged the nationalist leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, the latitude given to ostensibly Islamic economic or educational movements, such as the *Sarekat Islam*, *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama*, did much to foster a level of grassroots influence heretofore not enjoyed.

The relative brevity of the Japanese military occupation of the NEI territories belies the profound long-term effects that their policies would have not only on the contours of Indonesian political landscape, but also on the development of the Islamic political parties. Recognizing the latent power of religion to effect the efficient mobilization of the masses in support of their war effort, the Japanese took measures to recruit and indoctrinate Islamic leaders from all levels of society in the political arts of

mobilization, organization and propagandizing. For the first time in the modern era, Muslim leaders could exercise authority beyond just the scope of religious concerns, and they took to their new role with enthusiasm and vigor, discovering along the way that they had much to contribute to the nationalist dialogue. Unaccustomed as they were to such government-sanctioned authority, these leaders nonetheless rapidly embraced their new-found political legitimacy, establishing themselves not only as the most important political force in the NEI in terms of their grassroots support, but also as a potent military force with the establishment of the *Barisan Hizbu'llah*. They had finally become politically articulate.

Although the establishment of *Masyumi* theoretically united the disparate modernist and traditionalist *santri* factions under one organizational framework, efforts by the Japanese to favor the orthodox rural elements at the expense of urban modernist leaders, ultimately reinforced rather than healed the orthodox-modernist cleavages of the pre-war period. Yet, the decision of *Masyumi*'s members in November 1945 to retain their organizational framework, and to transform themselves into a political party in the post-occupation era signaled the culmination of a long transition that had begun as merely a broad self-strengthening movement within the *ummah*, but which had ended in political consciousness. Eventually, this spirit of unity would again be compromised by the reemergence of the old modernist/orthodox schism.

Japan's pragmatic shift away from *Masyumi* and towards the secular nationalist leaders as the war was coming to conclusion not only deprived the Islamic leaders of the prestige, authority and influence that they had come to enjoy and expect, but it also left them increasingly vulnerable to the machinations of secular-nationalist leaders to further marginalize any further political relevancy they might still retain. The intended effect of these efforts became increasingly obvious with the selection of the first cabinet of the post-occupation Republic of Indonesia (Aug 19, 1945 – November 14, 1945) in which *Masyumi* received only scant representation (Benda, 1955, p. 360). In time, even the older secular-nationalist leaders of the first Republican cabinet would lose influence to the "*Angkatan Baru*" ("New Generation"), a group of younger and more radical ideologues educated in the closing years of the colonial era and indoctrinated and militarized in the crucible of the Japanese occupation (Van Niel, 1980, p. 164).

The other significant result of Japanese occupation policies was the formation, training, and indoctrination of auxiliary military forces and paramilitary forces associated with various interest groups. Beginning with the creation of a military youth corps and auxiliary forces in early 1943, and gradually progressing to the formation of a volunteer Indonesian army, the Japanese forces increasingly mobilized and militarized Indonesia's youth. The establishment of *Barisan Hizbu'llah* under *Masyumi* in late 1944 further factionalized these military organizations. The leaders of these armed groups, mostly young and of rural origins, would later emerge as a daunting counter-weight to the accommodationist negotiating strategies of the early Republican governments. In the closing years of the revolutionary period and well into the era of constitutional democracy, these Japanese-trained soldiers would continue to contest with their Dutch-trained counterparts for control of the future of the Indonesian army. The inability of the army to emerge as a unified, independent political force in its own right until several years later can be traced back to this period and to the half-hearted efforts of the Japanese to build-up native Indonesian military capacities.

The history of Islam in Indonesia has largely been one of periodic *tajdid* ("renewal") and *islah* ("reform"). The process has been occasionally dramatic and revolutionary, but more often it has been gradual and evolutionary, inching forward over the course of the centuries. Dr. Snouck-Hurgronjje sagely cautioned his fellow scholars to be aware that fundamental changes in Indonesia's Islamic character were often, "...hidden from those who do not make a careful study of the subject." (Geertz, 1963, p. 16). Geertz himself cautioned observers to not confuse the overwhelming Islamic character of Indonesian society for cultural or political homogeneity (1960, p. 7). The divisive nature of the Islamic political discourse in modern Indonesia stems in great part from the social, economic and political pressures that the *ummah* was subjected to during the long process of Islamization, the Dutch colonial presence, and the brief but profoundly influential Japanese military occupation.

As the Republic of Indonesia took the first tentative steps towards freedom in 1945, they were to face significant internal and external challenges. While struggling with returning Dutch forces for control of the former NEI territories, the Republican leaders would also be forced to contest with each other to determine the shape of the

government to come. In this struggle, the Islamic parties under the unified banner of *Masyumi* had significant advantages in their favor, including organizational experience, grassroots support, discipline, and an ideological base for which an overwhelming majority of Indonesians felt a “primordial sentiment” (Geertz, 1963, pp. 105-157). Yet, in spite of these advantages, the Islamic parties failed to transform their widespread grassroots support into effective political power, and by the late 1950s they had been reduced to disarray and political irrelevancy. The following chapter will explore the reasons for this devolution, and explain its long-term consequences for *Masyumi*.



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### **III. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF *MASYUMI* DURING THE ERA OF THE PROVISIONAL PARLIAMENT (1950 – 1956)**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the role played by Islamic political parties during Indonesia's brief flirtation with parliamentary democracy during the 1950s. It provides a description of the complex web of interactions between what was once Indonesia's largest and most powerful political party, *Masyumi*, and other important actors on Indonesia's political stage during that tumultuous period. The results of a complete study of this period suggests that the decline and subsequent proscription of *Masyumi* in 1962 was not a foregone conclusion, but was instead the avoidable consequence of a string of poor strategic and tactical political decisions made by its leadership over the span of the previous decade. Although forty-five years have passed since the collapse of Indonesia's first experiment with democracy, the contours of Indonesia's post-Suharto political landscape continue to be largely shaped by the events and experiences of that era. Consequently, the lessons of *Masyumi's* decline and fall remain relevant for those seeking to understand the modern relevance of political Islam in that archipelagic state.

The escalation of religious tensions in Indonesia over the last two decades has increasingly attracted the concerned attention of the current U.S. administration, particularly since the events of September 11, 2001. With the next Indonesian general elections scheduled to occur in less than two years, much has been made of the destabilizing potentiality that political Islam could have on the still fragile electoral process. Although the specter of Islamic politics appears to loom large over the nascent democracy, conventional wisdom opines that the majority of Indonesians are religiously tolerant, secular-leaning, and traditionally averse to the admixing of religion and politics. One need only note the relatively weak showing of Islamic political parties in the 1999 general elections to reinforce this point. The incongruence of religion-based politics with the modern political sensitivities of the Indonesian public is frequently cited to dismiss the likelihood of any future success by religiously-based parties.

Although often overlooked in modern times, conventional wisdom on the eve of the 1955 general elections noted a completely opposing tendency, one that suggested that

the voting habits of most Indonesians would indeed largely be influenced by their religious sympathies. This perception in turn gave rise to the oft-repeated prediction that the three main Islamic political parties (*Masyumi*, *Nahdatul Ulama*, and the *Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia*) would win a decisive majority in the parliamentary elections held in September 1955, as well as in the elections for members of the Constituent Assembly conducted three months later. The possibility of a landslide win by these parties was used to strike fear into the heart of every devout secularist. The fact that these Islamic parties ultimately received far less popular support than the pundits had predicted begs an explanation that can only come from a careful study of the actors and issues that dominated the political scene in the critical years leading up to these elections. Were the pundits wrong about the relationship between religion and politics, or did other factors serve to undermine voter support to these parties?

An explanation for why the conventional wisdom of the 1950s proved so grossly mistaken has profound relevance for those who hope to divine the future course of Indonesian politics. Many political observers continue to question the relative significance of political Islam in Indonesia because of tenacious perceptions that Indonesians prefer to compartmentalize their politics from their religion. It is thus assumed that political Islam is somehow incompatible with their secular sympathies. This chapter will suggest, however, that the cause for political Islam's previous failures is far more complex than that offered by the purveyors of conventional wisdom. It will also lay the groundwork for the next chapter's most pressing question "How might observations of past political behavior in Indonesia help shed light on the future electoral possibilities for political Islam in that country?"

Although forty-five years have passed since the collapse of Indonesia's first experiment with parliamentary democracy, the contours of Indonesia's post-Suharto political landscape continue to be largely shaped by the events and experiences of that earlier era. Likewise, many of the domestic and international factors that came to influence the political discourse in those years have again re-surfaced to plague modern Indonesia, and the apparent inability of the three secular post-Suharto governments to solve the nation's complex web of fiscal, social, and security problems has at the very least opened the door for a serious consideration of the agenda put forth by the

proponents of political Islam. The 2004 political contest in Indonesia will largely be decided over the course of the next two years as each of these players attempts to convince the Indonesian voters of the efficacy of their respective solutions to Indonesia's growing list of problems, but these discussions always take place in the shadow of the 1950s experience. That experience ended in dictatorship.

This chapter examines the successive governments of Prime Ministers Natsir, Sukiman, Wilopo, Sastroamidjojo, and Harahap with the intent of providing a more nuanced picture of the complex dynamics between the myriad of political parties serving in both the government and parliament during these critical years. It also surveys a range of non-party players, specifically the President, the army, and the United States, all of which were capable of exerting significant influence upon government policy. The result of this examination will obviate a number of causal factors that had little to do with those suggested in conventional wisdom, but which nonetheless greatly contributed to the diminishment of political Islam's influence during this and later periods.

## **B. BACKGROUND: A NEW STATE EMERGES**

With the transfer of sovereignty finally completed in late December 1949, it must have seemed a relief to most Indonesians that they were at last finally free to pursue their own political destiny, unmolested by the continued meddling of outside powers. Yet, the lingering effects of years of Dutch and Japanese efforts to undermine the solidarity of the Indonesian nationalist movement by exploiting regional, ethnic and religious cleavages had in the end produced an inherently fragile political entity.

The Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RUSI) created in the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Dutch was comprised of sixteen relatively autonomous states marked by significant ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional differences. Consequently, the federal basis of the RUSI was to be a short-lived experiment: Almost as soon as the ink was dry on the Hague Agreement of December 1949, the various states that had been created by the Dutch in the wake of the Linggadjati Agreement began to voluntarily request to be absorbed into the Republic of Indonesia. A few of the more stubborn holdouts, notably the states of West Kalimantan, East Sumatra, and *Negara Indonesia Timur* ("East Indonesian State") finally succumbed to a combination of

internal political pressure and veiled threats of Republican military intervention, and eventually accepted the inevitable. By mid-August 1950, all of the former states had merged themselves into an enlarged Republic of Indonesia, and although occasional scattered outbreaks of anti-Republican violence would occur from time to time, Indonesia had indisputably come into existence.

The Republic of Indonesia established on August 17, 1950 was based upon a new provisional constitution drafted over the course of the previous months by an RUSI cabinet headed by Mohammed Hatta. It provided for an executive cabinet assembled by a *formateur* appointed by the President, but the cabinet remained answerable to an elected unicameral legislature. The *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (“Peoples Representative Council” -DPR), a body comprised of 236 members drawn from the former legislative organs of the RUSI, was appointed to act as a provisional parliament until elections could be conducted. Although the provisional constitution specifically provided for the elections of both a Parliamentary Assembly and a Constituent Assembly, the latter of which would be given the responsibility for drafting a permanent constitution for the Republic, these elections would not be carried out until late 1955.

Until its eventual replacement following the elections of 1955, the legitimacy of the DPR would be gradually eroded by attempts by the President, the army, successive governments, and the various party leaders to control the appointment of replacement members in order to increase their own influence over government policy. A law enacted in December 1953 gave the President full latitude to appoint replacement members for those independent, non-party representatives whom had either died while serving in office, or whom had resigned. Likewise, he was empowered to approve or reject candidates submitted by the various parties as replacements for their own members.

Over time, the maintenance of a party’s relative strength in parliament became increasingly more important, particularly as the economy stagnated and access to the sources of patronage became more scarce. Ideology thus became less and less important to successive governments as they strove to hold onto the perks and privileges of office upon which the whole traditional system of patronage relied. Consequently, the parliament became progressively more sensitive to any real or perceived attempts by successive governments to implement policies that could potentially upset the delicate

political balance of power achieved through an increasingly Byzantine web of strategic alliances and backroom agreements. The DPR thus became the main battleground for political elites to contest for power, and the failure of all of the governments between 1950 and 1956 to respect this balance ultimately led to their fall one by one.

### **C. MASYUMI DURING THE CABINET OF MOHAMMAD NATSIR (SEPTEMBER 1950 – MARCH 1951)**

The responsibility of forming the first government of the post-independence Republic of Indonesia was assigned by President Sukarno to the Chairman of *Masyumi*, Mohammad Natsir. With 49 parliamentary seats, *Masyumi* was both the largest party represented in the DPR and the obvious choice to be afforded the initial opportunity to assemble a cabinet. Most observers assumed, however, that *Masyumi's* lack of an overwhelming majority in parliament deprived them of a mandate to rule unilaterally, and thus they would be required as a matter of political pragmatism to seek to build a coalition government. The second largest party in the parliament, the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (PNI), seemed to be the obvious choice to act as a cabinet partner.

As *formateur*, Natsir did initially try to cobble together a cabinet with the PNI, but a series of disagreements over the apportionment of key ministerial portfolios inevitably led each attempt to failure. Natsir then altered his strategy, and boldly moved to assemble a cabinet with *Masyumi* at its core, but which was augmented with non-party representatives and members from many of the smaller parties in parliament. Consequently, he was able to form a cabinet in which *Masyumi* held the post of Prime Minister, as well as the key ministerial portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Religious Affairs. Five portfolios were given to individuals who were not affiliated with any specific party, and the remaining nine positions were allocated to several of the smaller parties, notably the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* - PSI (16 seats), *Partai Indonesia Raja* - Parindra (9 seats), Parkindo (4 seats), *Persatuan Indonesia Raja* - PIR (18 seats), the Catholic Faction (8 seats), the Democratic Faction (14 seats), and the *Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia* - PSII (5 seats). The relatively modest apportionment of two ministerial portfolios to the PSI belies the fact that all five of the ministers without party affiliation were reputed to have shared its political agenda (Feith, 1962, p. 151).

Not surprisingly, the composition of the Natsir Cabinet met with immediate protestation from within the parliament, as well as from within *Masyumi* itself. As the second largest party in the parliament, the leadership of the PNI vigorously objected to having been excluded from the cabinet. Likewise, *Masyumi's* senior leadership was itself split on the wisdom of excluding the PNI members in favor of a hodgepodge of many far less-influential parties. In particular, Dr. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo's wing of *Masyumi's* modernist-faction cautioned Natsir against the polarization of *Masyumi*-PNI relations that would inevitably result from forcing the latter into a closer relationship with the various other opposition parties, particularly those that subscribed to Communist ideologies (Feith, 1962, p. 151). Indeed, Sukiman and his political allies within *Masyumi* were among the most vociferous in their condemnation of Natsir's efforts to exclude the PNI from the cabinet.

Despite attempts in October 1950 by political allies of the PNI to introduce a parliamentary motion that would have led to the appointment of a new slate of *formateurs*, the Natsir government was able to muster enough support to win a vote of confidence by a fairly comfortable margin (118 to 73) (Kahin, 1950, p. 211). Still, the loss of support from the only other notable Islamic party, the PSII, precipitated the resignation of its sole representative on the cabinet, Harsono Tjokroaminoto, and thereby weakened the coalition appreciably. The substantial acrimony that characterized these and other attempts to derail Natsir's government even before it could begin its work seemed to presage a progressive worsening of relations between the parliament and future cabinets (Feith, 1962, p. 153).

### **1. Cabinet Character**

Natsir's cabinet derived its ideological impetus from the Prime Minister's own leanings toward "religious socialism", a conservative blend of modernist Islam and Marxism that gave him a political outlook closely in accord with that of the PSI's Sutan Sjahrir. Natsir had served as Minister of Information in two of the three pre-independence Sjahrir cabinets, as well as in the pre-independence cabinet of Hatta. Although there were significant differences between them that would remain irreconcilable, particularly with regard to the appropriate role of Islam in the Indonesian

state, Natsir's political and economic ideas were in many ways compatible with those of the PSI's leadership, as well as with those of both Parkindo and the Catholic Faction. These parties shared an ideological and political commitment to the concepts of religious tolerance, fiscal austerity, and an independent and active foreign policy. Above all, they shared an abiding distrust of communism, as well as a common fear that found its source in the lingering memories of the failed PKI uprising of 1926 and the ill-fated Madiun revolt of 1948. Strange bedfellows as they may have seemed to outsiders, in Natsir's political calculus they offered the best possible combination to defeat the future re-emergence of a politically-influential communist movement (Kahin, 1950, p. 211).

## **2. Agenda**

For this cabinet the "revolution" was complete, and the time was finally at hand to take the necessary measures to stabilize the social order in order to begin the long-delayed work of economic and infrastructure development. Consequently, the Natsir government's program was comprised of eight core objectives that were intended to streamline and fine-tune the machinery of the government, the military and the economy. Among these goals were the consolidation, re-organization and rationalization of both the Republic's civil service and its army in order to meet the evolving needs of the newly expanded state. With regard to the state's devastated economy, Natsir's cabinet was anxious to not only re-start the flow of foreign investment, but to rectify a drastic trade imbalance that saw most of the profits from indigenous industry flowing to Europe.

In order to attract further foreign investment and safeguard investor confidence, the government further committed itself to ending the various anti-Republican uprisings that had continued to threaten internal security despite the army's attempts to quell them. Movements, such as the *Darul Islam* in West Java and the rebellion of former Dutch Indies Army (KNIL) personnel in South Sulawesi, were foremost on the list of issues to be resolved. Likewise, Natsir was eager to continue discussions with the Dutch to resolve a litany of issues that had been agreed to during the negotiations leading up to the Hague Agreement of 1949, but which had grown increasingly intolerable to Indonesians of all political persuasions over the preceding nine months. Foremost among these issues was the question of Indonesia's continued participation in the Netherlands-Indonesian



Union, which had been established in the wake of the Hague Agreement. This was an idea that most Indonesians abhorred, and which was made even more galling by the unwillingness of the Dutch to seriously discuss the transfer of sovereignty for West New Guinea (Irian Jaya), despite their enthusiasm for transferring the Dutch colony's pre-independence debts onto the backs of the new Indonesian state.

As pressing as the above problems were for the majority of the cabinet ministers, the most important issue on the Natsir government's agenda seems to have been the scheduling of elections for the Constituent Assembly. Natsir had indicated his desire to hold elections no later than the end of 1951, at which time he planned to return the cabinet's mandate to the President (Feith, 1962, p. 153). Believing that it would achieve an even greater windfall in parliamentary seats than it already enjoyed, *Masyumi* was particularly eager to expedite the elections, and thus strengthen the balance of power in its favor. Most of the smaller parties and the PNI for that matter, however, were decidedly less enthusiastic. Most shared *Masyumi's* view that Indonesia's 85% Muslim majority would sweep the Islamic parties into office with a decisive majority, and their strategy thus became one designed to delay the inevitable for as long as possible, lest they forfeit the perks and prerogatives of the offices they owed to appointment rather than the popular vote.

The general character of Natsir's agenda was one of developmental pragmatism. As Kahin notes, the government's program was one that was intended to transform the "old colonial economy" into a "new national economy", which would not only facilitate the short-term expansion of an indigenous capitalistic economy, but which would also lay the ground for the long-term development of a mixed capitalistic-socialist economy (1950, p. 212). To that end, this cabinet was built around a core of individuals who were what Feith has described as "administrators", leaders who had the technical, legal administrative and foreign-language skills required to run a modern state (1962, p. 113). Yet, possessing those skills didn't necessarily guarantee political success in a post-revolutionary political environment where the disruption of traditional social patterns often made appeals to the colorful symbolism and emotionalism of ethnic, religious, or regional identities more compelling than the relatively uninspiring blandness of Natsir's developmental pragmatism. Consequently, the Natsir cabinet's lofty goals were almost

immediately bogged down by the sniping of opposition factions in parliament, by internecine squabbles within the parties that constituted the government, and by various degrees of pressure applied by extra-parliamentary forces, such as the President and the army. Finally, overlaid upon and thus inevitably complicating the domestic political environment there was the international dynamic beginning to take shape in the form of the “Cold War”.

### 3. Political Dynamics

#### a. *Intra-Cabinet Dynamics*

As noted above, Natsir’s formulation of a coalition of *Masyumi*, PSI and several smaller parties was not one that was overwhelmingly supported by the entire *Masyumi* membership, much less its leadership. During this period, *Masyumi* was rent by several internal cleavages that made it a far less monolithic or homogenous political threat than most of its political competitors feared it to be. As Van Der Kroef explains, “The left wing of the party is close to the position of the Socialists and embraces most of the tenets of Islamic modernism; the center and the right envisage a bourgeois civilization as the groundwork of an orthodox all-Moslem state. Only on the formal, religious questions do the various wings of the Moslem movement see eye to eye.” (1952, p. 18). In truth, these wings sometimes failed to agree even on important theological issues.

Political, ideological, and theological cleavages not surprisingly ran along the old modernist and traditionalist divide that had evolved from the bifurcated process of Islamization. As noted in Chapter II, this process ultimately produced the traditionalist *Nahdatul Ulama* heartlands of West and Central Java, and the modernist strongholds of coastal Java and the outer Islands. Although many of the *Nahdatul Ulama*’s traditionalist leaders were ousted from key party positions in the aftermath of the Japanese surrender, they continued to play a substantial role in shaping the party’s agenda and ensuring the party’s political primacy. As the village *kyai* and *ulama*, they were the link between the urban leaders and the party’s grassroots support in the villages, and to neglect that important link was to put the party at peril. Consequently, Natsir was careful to ensure that at least one of *Nahdatul Ulama*’s leaders was included in the cabinet, and thus K.C.

Wahid Hasjim (the father of future Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid) was appointed as Minister of Religious Affairs.

Further complicating *Masyumi's* internal political stability was the divide within its own modernist wing, especially in the mutual antagonism between the opposing factions led by Prime Minister Natsir and Dr. Sukiman. Natsir and Sukiman differed substantially from each other on a wide array of domestic and international positions. These two men, however, were not yet politically savvy enough to realize that by attacking each other, particularly in public forums, they only served to weaken *Masyumi's* overall position and encourage the resolve of the opposition. Eventually, Natsir's faction would come to dominate the *Masyumi* leadership, but during the first years of this period, internal *Masyumi* dynamics continued to be one of a struggle between these powerful factions and their leaders.

According to Feith, it was just the sort of hostility that existed between the Natsir and Sukiman factions, and between the modernist and traditionalist factions, that had encouraged a more hardline PNI negotiating position in the first weeks of Natsir's work as *formateur* (1962, p. 149). Whenever possible, *Masyumi's* anti-Natsir leaders, particularly Dr. Sukiman and Jusuf Wibisono, sought to erode support within their own party for the government. They achieved this by repeatedly attacking both Natsir and his government not just on the issue of the cabinet's composition, but also on a wide variety of other policy issues with which they disagreed. This divide became so pronounced that when a vote of confidence for the Natsir government was put before the parliament on October 25, 1950, senior *Masyumi* members Wibisono and Burhanuddin Harahap absented themselves from the vote in protest rather than lend their support to the beleaguered Prime Minister (Feith, 1962, p. 152).

Similarly, when the resignation of Dr. Halim as the Minister of Defense in December 1950 and the withdrawal of the PSII Minister Harsono Tjokroaminoto set the conditions for the possible re-organization of the cabinet, the factions again clashed over the appropriate course of action. Natsir opted for a minor shuffling of posts without a substantial change of the government's policies, while the Sukiman faction again pressed for a completely new cabinet. Wibisono even went so far as to publicly encourage the Prime Minister to resign.

The Natsir government's relationship with the representatives from the other government parties in parliament would prove to be no more harmonious than *Masyumi's* own internal party dynamics. The coalition arrangement between *Masyumi* and its parties introduced an unexpected slate of problems that would over time erode the government's internal cohesion, and lead one by one to the defection of its supporters. The one important theme to run through these various problems concerned the maintenance of the political status quo with regard to the apportionment of the sources of patronage, and there were essentially two factions represented within the cabinet, each of which approached this problem differently.

On one hand, the combination of *Masyumi*, the PSI, Parkindo and the Catholic Faction represented socially progressive political parties that each had relatively stable bases of support. *Masyumi* had its strength in Indonesia's Muslim majority; The PSI was the party of western-educated urban intellectuals; and the latter parties were strong in the predominately Christian areas of Eastern Indonesia. These parties had little to lose in the event of upcoming elections, and most expected to make even further gains in parliament. This inevitability was fully anticipated by the government's opponents, and as Paulker notes, "Much of the political history of independent Indonesia could be written in terms of the efforts of other political groups to weaken *Masyumi* and to postpone elections until its chances to consolidate itself as the country's leading party had been reduced." (1958, p. 134).

Conversely, many of the smaller parties in the coalition, such as Parindra, the PIR, and the Democratic Faction, knew very well that elections would likely reduce their influence in the parliament, if not put an end to their respective parties entirely. As Tinker and Walker remind us, the Indonesian parliament of this period consisted of a "...hodge-podge of members really representative of no one, and primarily interested in maintaining their own position." (1956, p. 104). Consequently, these parties had much to gain from delaying tactics that would stall the conduct of elections for as long as possible, while affording them more time to entrench themselves in the growing bureaucracy. The different ways in which these factions viewed the issue of elections tended to produce tensions not only among the various cabinet ministers, but also between the parties in the

parliament. Ultimately, it was a disagreement over a policy decision directly related to the issue of elections that would bring down Natsir's government.

The second major area of tension within the cabinet had to do with economic development and fiscal austerity, both of which were central to Natsir's agenda. Again, *Masyumi*, the PSI and the smaller Christian parties were in agreement on the need to take measures that would encourage the growth of the domestic economy; however, the smaller parties frequently accused their ministers of excessive parsimony when it came to providing access to the sources of patronage which many expected to flow from participation in the cabinet. As export revenues began to grow as a result of the increased demand for Indonesia's products during the Korean War, many expected that those close to the government would also benefit economically, but the government's Minister of Finance, *Masyumi's* Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, proved to be particularly fiscally disciplined. Over time, the leadership of these smaller parties became increasingly disillusioned by Natsir and Prawiranegara's unwillingness to more generously share the spoils of power with the cabinet's junior partners (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 242). As a direct result of disagreements such as those outlined above, cracks soon began to appear in the relatively tenuous bonds of cooperation among the various parties making up the Natsir government.

#### ***b. Parliamentary Dynamics***

The relationship between the Natsir government and the opposition was never very cordial. Excluded from the cabinet after the failure of prolonged negotiations with *Masyumi*, the PNI at first resolved to conduct a "...constructive opposition, supporting what it found good in the government's program and opposing what it found bad." (Kahin, 1950, p. 210). However, the PNI's strategy rapidly devolved into one of obstructionism, and as Dr. Sukiman had warned, the PNI leadership began to work much more closely with the communist-oriented parties in parliament. This latter development gave the communist parties a sense of legitimacy they had not enjoyed since the ill-fated Madiun Affair of 1948. Realizing that they would likely be given the next opportunity as *formateur*, much of the PNI's strategy seems to have been aimed at causing the collapse

of the Natsir cabinet, and it would be a PNI-sponsored motion in parliament that would eventually bring down the government.

*c. Presidential Dynamics*

Relations between the Natsir government and the President, as well as between the government and the army are also important components that helped shape the political dynamics of this period. President Sukarno's relationship with Natsir began to deteriorate not long after the formation of the cabinet, a development that Feith has attributed to Natsir's repeated attempts to curtail the President's direct involvement in the affairs of the government (1962, p. 171). Sukarno also became increasingly unhappy with the direction of the Natsir's policies, many of which were closely aligned with those of former Prime Minister Sjahrir, someone for whom Sukarno had nothing but contempt (Sukarno, 1965, pp. 210-211). As a consequence of his growing unhappiness with Natsir's policies towards negotiations with the Dutch over West New Guinea (Irian Jaya), as well as over Natsir's intentions to rationalize the army and civil service, the President progressively withdrew his support for the government. Although he would not overtly intervene to undermine the Natsir government, neither would he lend it his political support when it most needed it.

*d. The Role of the Army*

The relationship between the government and the army during this period was a fairly positive one, with both groups benefiting from the convergence of their respective goals. Natsir could count on the support of the senior military leadership, particularly the Acting Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Colonel T.B. Simatupang, and the Chief of Staff of the Army, Colonel A.H. Nasution, both of whom represented the professional "administrator" group of officers that had held dominance within the military since 1948 (Feith, 1962, p. 171). The ability of the army to influence the government was amply demonstrated by its successful veto of *Masyumi's* Abdul Hakim as Minister of Defense during the tense early-days of negotiations between *Masyumi* and the PNI regarding cabinet composition. The fact that Natsir proved to be far more sensitive to the concerns of the army leadership in this matter than he had been of those

of the PNI testifies to how important he considered the army's support to be. Over time, the tension and mutual disdain that had characterized relations between the army leadership and Sukarno seems to have spilled over to create further tension between Natsir and the President, effectively forcing the government into an even closer dependence on the army.

*e. International Influences*

Finally, the effect of the international environment also must be taken into consideration when analyzing the complex range of forces that influenced the Natsir government. The loss of mainland China to the communists in 1948, followed by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, dramatically altered the perspective of most U.S. policy makers. At the very least, it caused them to take stock of their strategic position in the region, and to look with a somewhat jaundiced eye at the independence movements in Southeast Asia. As far as the Truman administration was concerned, the virus of communism was spreading rapidly and was poised to consume the Asian landscape. Indonesia was increasingly beginning to be perceived as a critical link in the defensive chain that ran from Japan, through Taiwan, the Philippines, and onward into British Malaya.

Its anti-communist sentiments notwithstanding, the Natsir government's relations with the United States were shaped by a commitment to *politik bebas* ("independent politics"), a non-aligned foreign policy that Natsir hoped would allow Indonesia to navigate a safe course between the two emerging Cold War power blocs (Anak Agung, 1973, p. 179). Despite a shared disdain for communism, Natsir was convinced that the best foreign policy was one that would prevent Indonesia from becoming entangled in commitments to either the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the United States (Kahin, 1950, p. 213). Natsir's government was thus willing to accept technical and economic aid from the United States, but typically rebuffed any military aid that might incur any security commitments. This "neutral" stance did not always sit well with U.S. policy makers, but as long as the communists were in a substantially weaker position than the other political parties, as they were during this period, little overt pressure was exerted on the Indonesian government by the United States. As the

communists became stronger, however, U.S. officials would become increasingly uncomfortable with policies of non-alignment, and they would begin to exert both overt and covert means to try to influence successive Indonesian governments to choose sides in the emerging Cold War.

#### **4. The Fall of Mohammad Natsir's Cabinet**

From the moment of its inception, the Natsir government's ambitious economic and social agenda was stalled because of the cabinet's need to concentrate on the fight for its own political survival (Feith, 1962, p. 165). Dr. Sukiman's prediction that the exclusion of the PNI from the cabinet would have a polarizing effect in parliament proved accurate. The resultant backlash produced greater cooperation between the PNI and the various communist parties. Almost every domestic and foreign policy decision that the government tried to implement met with staunch resistance and second-guessing within the parliament, and more ominously, smaller and smaller margins of victory on successive confidence measures served to obviate a progressive erosion of support for the government. As those smaller parties in the government grew disenchanted with Natsir's agenda, they more frequently abstained from crucial votes, or in many cases even joined with the opposition. The resignation of the PSII party from the government in December 1950 further weakened the cabinet, while commensurately strengthening the opposition.

The Natsir cabinet was ultimately brought down over an issue that was not one of its own making. In August 1950, the government of the RUSI-era Republic of Indonesia implemented a regulation that authorized the creation of interim legislative councils at the provincial, regency, and municipal levels of government. Government Regulation No. 39 of 1950 provided procedures by which regency councils were to be elected by representatives from established political, religious, social, educational and cultural organizations within each district and sub-district. In turn, the regency and municipal councils would elect members to the provincial councils on a proportional representation basis. These councils would then serve as the provisional government until elections could be held at some future date, although an exact time frame for those elections had still not yet been determined.



Although the previous government had believed that the regulation would produce councils that were fairly representative of their respective constituencies, the regulation's most apparent effect was to strengthen *Masyumi's* position throughout much of Java and Sumatra. Compared to the other parties, *Masyumi* had a tremendous organizational advantage by virtue of its grassroots support among the village *kyai* and *ulama*. Its constituent organizations, particularly *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama*, were also far more prolific than the secular parties when it came to the establishment of social, religious, educational and cultural sub-organizations. By the end of November, *Masyumi* was well on its way towards achieving a position of almost complete control of most of the regional legislatures (Feith, 1962, p. 166). Consequently, the PNI submitted a motion to both suspend further implementation of Regulation 39 and to dismiss the councils already established. *Masyumi's* erstwhile political ally, the PSII, countersigned the motion and instructed their member to resign from the cabinet.

The intense debate that raged over the submission of the PNI motion quickly began to reflect the political polarization that was emerging both within the cabinet and within parliament. *Masyumi* supported the regulation, but offered what appeared to be a reasonable compromise. It recommended allowing the existing councils to stand, while expediting elections for the regional assemblies. Clearly, this was a win-win situation for *Masyumi*, for they certainly also expected to reap a windfall in direct elections; however, the government had not anticipated that three of its constituent parties (PIR, Parindra, and Parkindo) would cross the aisles to vote with the opposition. As a result, the government was defeated on the motion by a vote of 70 to 48. The margin of defeat was made even more striking by the decision of the PSI members in parliament to abstain from the vote *en bloc*, thus depriving the cabinet of some of its core support.

In January 1951, Prime Minister Natsir informed parliament that he would not yield on the issue of Regulation 39, and he challenged parliament to vote on a motion of no confidence in the government. On the day scheduled for further discussions of the matter, several key parties boycotted the session, and the PIR subsequently informed Natsir that it was also withdrawing its two ministers from the cabinet. Continued sniping by Dr. Sukiman and Wibisono, as well as from others within his own party, only served to make Natsir's political situation more untenable. As support for his government

crumbled all around him, the Prime Minister saw that the cabinet could no longer govern effectively, and on March 21, 1951 he returned his mandate to the President.

#### **D. MASYUMI DURING THE CABINET OF DR. SUKIMAN WIRJOSANDJOJO (APRIL 1951 – FEBRUARY 1952)**

Following the resignation of Prime Minister Natsir in March 1951, President Sukarno appointed Mr. Sartono of the PNI as *formateur* of a new government; however, after almost a month of negotiations with *Masyumi* in hopes of establishing a coalition cabinet, he was forced to admit failure. The widening ideological gulf that had come to separate these two parties seemed to militate against the hope of any future cooperation between them (Feith, 1962, p. 177). The most significant obstacle to a possible PNI-*Masyumi* coalition, however, seems to have arisen over the disagreement about who would be given the coveted post of Prime Minister. *Masyumi* lobbied for the reappointment of Natsir, while the PNI favored a candidate of its own. Although Sartono briefly considered a coalition between the PNI and the *Badan Permusyawaratan Partai-Partai* (“Consultative Body of Parties” – BPP), a loose confederation of the PKI and ten smaller parties, including both the PSII and Parindra, he seems to never have seriously entertained the option (Feith, 1962, p. 178). In the end, he was unable to bridge the divide between *Masyumi* and his own party, and in mid-April he returned his mandate to the President.

Following Sartono’s failure, Sukarno appointed two new *formateurs*, the PNI’s Sidik Djojokusarto and *Masyumi*’s Dr. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo. After several days of contentious negotiations, both men finally agreed to a cabinet formula that would give both the PNI and *Masyumi* an equal number of seats in the government. A final agreement to this effect seemed to hinge on which party would be given the coveted post of Prime Minister. The claims of both parties seemed non-negotiable, but the PNI ultimately wavered, offering to let *Masyumi* fill the post, as long as Natsir was not reappointed as Prime Minister. It was exactly the opportunity that the Sukiman wing of *Masyumi* had hoped for, yet it would not be an easily won victory.

When Dr. Sukiman announced the final cabinet agreement with the PNI, including his own appointment as Prime Minister, he was met with significant resistance from within his own party. The Natsir-led group, which from the very beginning had

expressed misgivings about Dr. Sukiman's involvement as *co-formateur*, pushed a resolution through *Masyumi's* Executive Council that declared Dr. Sukiman's actions as *formateur* were invalid and were not representative of *Masyumi's* political will (Feith, 1962, p. 180). Eventually Natsir would back down, but no members of his faction would receive portfolios in the new cabinet.

The Sukiman cabinet was composed of a core of *Masyumi* and PNI ministers, but it was also augmented by a handful of members from the smaller parties. It also included two members without party affiliation. *Masyumi* controlled the Ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs, and Religious Affairs, while the PNI held the post of Deputy Prime Minister, as well as those of the Ministries of Interior, Information, Trade and Affairs, and Public Works. The smaller parties in the government included the PIR, Parindra, Parkindo, the Catholic Faction, and the Democratic Fraction, all of which had also served in the Natsir government. The PSI was excluded, as were the PSII and the myriad of communist parties. When the parliament finally voted to approve the cabinet in June 1951, Sukiman's formula won approval with a vote of 119 to 30.

### **1. Cabinet Character**

The character of the Sukiman cabinet would prove to be quite different from that of its predecessor, despite the fact that both Prime Ministers had been senior members of *Masyumi*. Many of this government's ministers had been prominent men in the pre-war years, but had found themselves sidelined by a younger generation of leaders from 1945 on. With few exceptions, most had been excluded from participation in the Sjahrir, Sjarifuddin and Hatta governments of the revolutionary period. They tended to be more conservative than their predecessors, and they were generally more wary of radical changes to the social *status quo*. These were not the "administrators" and "technocrats" that had dominated the previous cabinet. Although many were very well educated and had served in previous governments, they tended to be less concerned with the goals of consolidation, rationalization and reorganization that had underpinned much of the previous government's agenda. Unfortunately, they also tended to have very little in common with each other in terms of their own policy objectives. The PNI and *Masyumi* ministers that made up Sukiman's cabinet differed from each other on just about every

conceivable issue, from the economy to foreign policy. Most importantly, they were not in agreement over the future of elections. The addition of nine ministers from the smaller parties, or with ambiguous party allegiance, further complicated the cabinet's cohesion.

Feith attributes the poor cohesion of the Sukiman government both to the haste with which the cabinet had been assembled, and to the lack of detailed coordination and policy negotiation that had taken place before the cabinet's composition was finalized (1962, p. 183). Despite having had a fairly solid majority in the parliament behind it, the Sukiman cabinet's diverse composition would in the end subject it to much greater internal stresses than even Natsir had been forced to face.

## **2. Agenda**

The actual agenda of the Sukiman government was not radically different from that of its predecessors, except perhaps in a matter of emphasis. Sukiman tended towards conservative domestic and international policies not unlike those of Natsir, and in fact many of his policies were simply extensions of those of the previous administration. The priority of those policies, however, did differ from those of the previous cabinet. With the increasing threat posed by both the *Darul Islam* separatist movement in West Java, and aggressive PKI labor agitation both on Java and Sumatra, the restoration and maintenance of internal security became the government's highest policy priority. Consequently, the issue of elections was dropped to third place, no doubt to the extreme satisfaction of the leadership of both the PNI and the smaller parties. With regard to economic development issues, negotiations with the Dutch over the future of Irian Jaya, and the conduct of future elections, Sukiman's course would not deviate appreciably from that laid down by the previous government.

In the area of fiscal austerity, Sukiman and his Minister of Finance, Jusuf Wibisono, proved to be less disciplined than Natsir had been. Their policy of awarding bonuses to civil service employees in honor of the Muslim feast of *Idul Fitri*, and the subsequent implementation of free monthly rice allocations to government employees earned them a great deal of political support, but it also stirred up resentment among those who were outside of the circle of patronage (Feith, 1962, pp. 186-187). This was particularly galling to some at a time when many Indonesians had been involuntarily

moved off the rolls of government service as a result of efforts to shrink the size of the bureaucracy. Still, the Sukiman cabinet viewed it as but one more way to win political loyalty for a highly-divided government. The re-ordering of the government's policy priorities under Sukiman's watch indicates the amount of concessions that *Masyumi* were willing to make in order to win the support of their PNI and its other partners. Even so, Sukiman's efforts to implement a coherent and consistent domestic and foreign policy agenda would repeatedly be threatened by the contrary agendas pursued by the other parties represented in the cabinet.

### **3. Political Dynamics**

#### ***a. Intra-Cabinet Dynamics***

As noted above, the single biggest obstacle the Sukiman government faced was a lack of internal cohesion within the cabinet itself. *Masyumi* and PNI ministers differed on a wide variety of policies that each hoped to use to further expand their control over the levers of government. Specifically, the issues of regional elections and appointments to the government bureaucracy would cause much division within the cabinet.

The debate over Regulation 39, which had contributed to the fall of the Natsir government in March 1951, was left unresolved well into Sukiman's tenure. A compromise was finally reached between *Masyumi* and the PNI that recognized the legitimacy of those provincial and regency councils that had already been created, but which also forbade the further creation of additional councils until a new process could be agreed upon. As a result of subsequent negotiations, it was agreed that the new regulation would recognize only the participation of political parties in the selection process, and it would exclude those other cultural, religious, and social organizations that had previously given *Masyumi* such a decisive edge. In principle, this agreement pointed to a compromise that both sides could live with, however, no new regulation was ever promulgated during Sukiman's tenure. Both sides simply continued to proclaim the need for elections as a national panacea, while scheming to adjust the regional political conditions in order to give them the advantage should elections ever occur.

A related *Masyumi*-PNI dispute arose after attempts by the PNI Minister of the Interior, Iskaq Tjokroadsijuro, to appoint PNI members to the governorships of West Java and Sulawesi. While such appointments were theoretically well within the purview of the Interior Ministry, previous Ministers had been obliged to appoint governors from lists of candidates submitted by the appropriate regional assemblies. In these disputed cases, however, Minister Iskaq simply ignored the lists of candidates submitted by the West Java and Sulawesi assemblies, and appointed men of his own choosing. This effort was viewed by many observers as an undisguised PNI attempt to undercut the prerogatives of the *Masyumi*-dominated provincial assemblies to control their own gubernatorial and *bupati* appointments. *Masyumi* also saw it as indisputable evidence of the PNI's ongoing strategy to further expand its own influence within the higher posts of the Indonesian civil service at the expense of *Masyumi* (Feith, 1962, p. 184). Following these appointments, only three of the ten governorships (North Sumatra, Central Sumatra, and Jakarta) were left in the hands of *Masyumi* men, and all parties well knew the pivotal role that the governors would play in the conduct of future elections.

A motion of censure against Minister Iskaq was submitted to parliament in early September, but a threat by the PNI to withdraw from the cabinet made its passage tactically unattractive to *Masyumi*. If the PNI withdrew, the cabinet would collapse, and it was very likely that Sukarno would name another PNI member as the sole formateur of the next government. Consequently, on the day that the motion was put to a vote, *Masyumi* and PSI members absented themselves from the chamber, thus ensuring that a quorum could not be achieved.

The two examples described above were indicative of the near-constant struggle that went on during this period between *Masyumi* and the PNI cabinet members, with each side striving to gain a political advantage over the other. Attempts by each party to gain the upper hand produced tension within the cabinet, and caused policies to be watered down in order to accommodate the least common denominator that would be acceptable to both. Rather than moving the country forward, policies were diluted to ensure that neither *Masyumi*, nor the PNI gained at the expense of the other. Consequently, most of the cabinet's energies had to be directed towards maintaining internal cohesion rather than outward towards solving Indonesia's growing economic and

social problems. Political inaction had become the operative basis of the government's strategy for survival (Feith, 1962, p. 205).

**b. *Parliamentary Dynamics***

Unlike that of Natsir, the Sukiman government enjoyed fairly strong and consistent support in parliament. Although it was hardly given a "free hand", the fact that the cabinet was comprised of parties that held more than 60% of the seats in parliament ensured that the government had more flexibility in policy formulation than its predecessor. Despite having a majority in parliament, the cabinet was not without potentially powerful opposition: Both the PSI and the PKI were excluded from the cabinet, and both had much to gain from Sukiman's failure. The PKI's strategy during the Natsir government had been to seek common cause with the PNI, but now that they were in the opposition alone, they were forced to seek out wedge issues that they could use to splinter Sukiman's fragile *Masyumi*-PNI coalition. In addition, there were factions in parliament from within both *Masyumi* and the PNI that were at odds with their party colleagues now serving in the government. *Masyumi*'s Natsir-led group was especially active in opposing this cabinet, and the PSI proved to be particularly cooperative in working with them in order to de-stabilize the government.

The divisions within each of these parties inevitably expressed themselves in backroom negotiations conducted in conjunction with parliamentary debates. A notable example of this trend concerned the Indonesian parliament's consideration of support for the U.S. sponsored Japanese Peace Treaty of September 1951. Many Indonesian leaders feared that by becoming a signatory to the treaty, Indonesia would find itself drawn deeper and deeper into a military relationship with the United States, however many also believed that a closer relationship with the West was both inevitable and desirable. According to Feith, both *Masyumi* and the PNI were split on the issue of this treaty, and while the members of those parties serving on the cabinet were in general agreement on the matter, the intra-party factions in parliament were at odds with each other and with the cabinet (1962, pp. 193-194). In early September, the Sukiman and Natsir factions within *Masyumi* debated the treaty, and though Sukiman ultimately won the party's approval, he did so only by a razor-thin margin. Conversely, the internal PNI

party debate resulted in a decision to oppose the treaty. Thus, when it came time for the cabinet to vote on what further instructions to provide its representative at the San Francisco Treaty Conference, it found itself divided. The actual cabinet vote of 10 to 6 found *Masyumi*, the PIR, the Catholic Faction and the Democratic Fraction supporting the treaty, with the PNI and Labor Party opposing it.

The impact of this split was never fully realized because the treaty was never sent to the parliament for a vote after it became clear that neither the PNI, nor *Masyumi's* Natsir faction would support ratification. An embarrassment to the government of that magnitude would certainly have caused it to fall, and as a result, ratification of this treaty became just one more in a long list of issues that the cabinet scrupulously avoided in order to prevent a political showdown.

### *c. Presidential Dynamics*

The quality and nature of the Sukiman government's relations with both the army and the President were also very different than that of its predecessors. Although the source of these differences can be traced back to the roles that many of the cabinet members had played during the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary period, much of the animosity can also be attributed to the cabinet's actions while in office. President Sukarno had grown increasingly disillusioned with the Natsir government despite his initial optimism, but with the Sukiman cabinet he was able to maintain better relations. It seemed that the worse the government's relations with the army became, the more amicably the President responded. Unlike the relatively young members of Natsir's cabinet, many of whom had risen to political prominence late in the revolutionary period, most of the members of Sukiman's cabinet had known and worked with each other during the colonial period and throughout the years of Japanese occupation.

Sukiman's personal relationship with Sukarno began in the 1920s, and the lasting bond of amity between them had been cemented by the support that Sukiman, as head of the pre-war *Partai Sarekat Islam*, had given Sukarno in his attempt to create a pan-Indonesian nationalist movement. The PSI's participation in the *Permufakatan Perhimpunan-Perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia* ("Agreement of Indonesian



People's Political Associations" – PPPKI) was to be short lived (1927-1929), however, Sukiman's personal relations with Sukarno continued to be cordial in the years after.

Conversely, Natsir had been associated with the extremist *Persatuan Islam* ("United Islam") movement in the pre-war years, and had become one of the modernist movement's most vocal critics of the PPPKI, arguing that any alliance between secular and religious movements would only serve to weaken the latter. His virulent polemics against Sukarno's nationalist formula would ultimately cause many in the secular camp to view Islam as a divisive and dangerous political force (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 190). As a consequence of those pre-war experiences, it is not surprising that Sukarno felt far more comfortable working with Sukiman than with Natsir.

The political relationship between Sukarno and Sukiman developed into one based on mutual support and defense. This formula became increasingly important as relations between the army and the government further deteriorated. As a result, the President was able to exert significantly more influence over the cabinet's policies than he was ever able to during any previous administration. On more than one occasion, his personal intervention ensured that the fragile cabinet did not fall apart. This relationship, however, also worked the other way. When parliament began to criticize the President for his frequent meddling in issues that were ostensibly the purview of the parliament, Prime Minister Sukiman vigorously defended Sukarno's continued role in such deliberations. His response to the President's critics helped crystallize a role for the Head of State that went significantly further than the drafters of the Constitution of 1950 had ever intended, and as a result the President's powers were greatly expanded during Prime Minister Sukiman's tenure (Feith, 1962, p. 217).

#### ***d. The Role of the Army***

The cabinet's relationship with the army was strained from the very beginning. The political affiliations of the cabinet ministers were such that they had very little in common with the professional military officers that had come to dominate the high command billets. Two of the government's ministers, Muhammad Yamin (Justice) and Achmad Subardjo (Foreign Affairs) had even been directly involved in the "Tan Malaka" coup attempt of July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1946. Senior army leaders were also gravely

disappointed with Sukiman's selection of the PIR's Sewaka as Minister of Defense, not because his views were necessarily opposed to those of the army, but rather because he lacked the political experience and *gravitas* to be a forceful and effective proponent on behalf of their institutional interests. The army-cabinet relationship further deteriorated when the cabinet repeatedly undertook actions that the military thought it have been should be consulted on, but wasn't, including the June 1951 release of nearly a thousand political prisoners by Minister of Justice Yamin. The army quickly moved to re-arrest most of these prisoners, and Minister Yamin subsequently resigned from the cabinet, but the pattern of stilted cooperation between the government and the army only got progressively worse.

The government's August 1951 arrest of some 15,000 "radicals", mostly communist activists or sympathizers, further angered the army leadership. Although Colonels Nasution and Simatupang had little sympathy for the communists, particularly with the memory of the Madiun Affair of 1948 still fresh in their minds, they did resent the government's unilateral undertaking of such a drastic action without first consulting them. As a result of their indignation over this matter, army leaders refused to assist the Prime Minister in his *post facto* attempt to use existing martial law regulations to legally justify the cabinet's rather draconian course of action (Feith, 1962, p. 207). Following this episode, the Sukiman government failed to take appropriate measures to smooth relations with the army, and their relations continued to deteriorate to the point where both the government and the army seemed to be implementing their own agendas irrespective of the other's interests.

Another issue that particularly irked the army leadership was the timidity with which both Natsir and Sukiman approached the settlement of the *Darul Islam* rebellion in West Java. Not unexpectedly, *Masyumi's* leaders, regardless of their factional loyalties, generally felt some sympathy for the movement's objectives, even if they disavowed their means. They were also well aware that a significant portion of their grassroots support in the villages of Java and Sumatra could not distinguish between *Masyumi* and *Darul Islam*, an assertion that simply fueled the army's suspicion that in many cases they were in fact one and the same (Vandenbosch, 1952, p. 183; Federspiel, 1973, p. 409). Although Sukiman did take a much harder line against the *Darul Islam*

than Natsir, he continued to press for an approach that combined military action with diplomacy, with an emphasis on the latter. This approach, however, was one that was deeply resented by the army leadership because it was seen as the needless meddling of politicians in what in their view was a strictly military affair.

Again and again, the Sukiman government acted in ways that contributed to their further estrangement from the army leadership. Likewise, the army's inability to more fully assert itself on the political stage during this period owed itself to a state of ideological disunity among its officers corps that prevented its leadership from injecting itself more forcefully onto the political stage (Crouch, 1988, pp. 28-29).

#### *e. International Influences*

By the time the Sukiman cabinet had begun to find its sea legs, the international environment had become strewn with a great many more obstacles than even Natsir had been forced to contend with. The increasing rigidity of U.S. diplomacy during the Cold War era had significant repercussions for regime stability throughout Asia. The cornerstone of Natsir's foreign policy had been to maintain an "independent", but "active" foreign policy that would allow Indonesia to steer a safe course between the emerging superpowers. His approach to dealing with overtures from the United States for more extensive military commitments had been to gently, but firmly repulse them. While Sukiman would also adhere claim to adhere to a policy of *politik bebas/aktif*, in truth his foreign policy brought Indonesia much closer into the U.S. sphere of influence.

The Sukiman government's tilt towards the United States was accelerated by the perception among many in *Masyumi* that the political power of the PKI was growing again, and that it was being supported by foreign regimes, most notably the People's Republic of China (PRC). In response, Sukiman took measures to combat what he viewed as a rising communist tide. In May 1951, the government reversed course on an earlier decision not to support a United Nations General Assembly embargo on the shipment of war materials to the PRC, even though the decision to abide by export controls on rubber, oil, and tin had the potential to stall the recovery of the Indonesian economy. In July, the government also refused entry to twenty-two Chinese diplomats assigned to the PRC embassy and consulates in Indonesia out of fear that they had been

sent to lend support to the PKI's cadre-building efforts. Finally, in August 1951, Sukiman authorized the arrest of thousands of PKI supporters, despite little evidence that they were planning another coup attempt.

It has already been shown how the government's position regarding the 1951 Japanese Peace Treaty defied the wishes of much of parliament. Similarly, the Sukiman government's secret negotiations with the United States for increased military aid blatantly contradicted the wishes of most of Indonesia's senior political leadership. The United States, however, was beginning by the summer of 1951 to push Indonesia for greater assurances that they were on the side of the "free world", and the U.S. Truman Administration was becoming increasingly less tolerant of Indonesia's neutralist stance. The U.S. Mutual Security Act (MSA) of 1951 signaled a shift in emphasis from the economic recovery of the post WWII era, to the strategic realities of the emerging Cold War. A provision of this law required that all countries desiring U.S. military aid must express a commitment to certain fundamental principles, including the contribution of its own resources to the "defensive strength of the free world". To many Indonesians, this simply meant U.S. interests, and thus was unacceptable (Feith, 1962, p. 199).

To most Indonesians, the U.S. Mutual Security Act of 1951 implied a *quid pro quo* security arrangement with the United States that they were simply unable and unwilling to commit to. Because U.S. officials were caught up in their own stark black-and-white Cold War reality, most were unable to recognize how narrow the range of policy options was within Indonesia's domestic political environment. Indonesian politicians were by and large committed to an independent, non-aligned foreign policy, and no government could survive long if it tried to stray from that ideal. Gardner has suggested that the intransigence of U.S. officials over negotiating the binding stipulations of the U.S. Mutual Security Act was specifically intended to weaken Indonesia's own commitment to this policy. Consequently, attempts were frequently made to compel the Indonesian government to accept aid based on the provisions of the U.S. Mutual Security Act, when other less-binding means were available (1997, pp. 106-107). Repeated attempts by U.S. diplomats to extract further security commitments from the Sukiman

government only seemed to contribute to the further polarization of the pro-western and neutralist factions within the Indonesian government, within the individual parties, and within the parliament as a whole.

#### **4. The Fall of Dr. Sukiman's Cabinet**

In January 1952, the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Achmad Subardjo, unwisely committed Indonesia to receiving a relatively modest amount of U.S. aid in accordance with the provisions of the U.S. Mutual Security Act. Almost immediately, Prime Minister Sukiman recognized that the political implications of the agreement would be problematic with the cabinet's detractors in parliament. To head off a possible showdown, he sought the U.S. Ambassador's assistance in modifying the text of the agreement in hopes of making it more palatable to the parliamentary opposition (Gardner, 1997, p. 106). He was, however, rebuffed by U.S. Ambassador Cochran, who perhaps failed to appreciate the gravity of the political threat to the cabinet.

The sense of dread that Sukiman must have been feeling finally came to fruition on February 4, 1952 when the exact details of the agreement became public knowledge. The government was almost immediately assailed by criticism from all quarters. Both the Minister of Defense and the senior army leadership were resentful that they hadn't been consulted regarding the details of the aid agreement. *Masyumi's* Natsir-led Executive Council passed a motion expressing opposition to the agreement, and the PNI followed suit a few days later, adding the demand that the Prime Minister return the cabinet's mandate to the President. The smaller government parties wanted the cabinet to vote on whether or not to support the agreement, but both the *Masyumi* and PNI ministers stalled, fearing that a split vote would only further destabilize the government (Feith, 1962, p. 204). On February 21, the parliament passed a motion of censure against Foreign Minister Subardjo, precipitating the submission of his resignation, but even after his departure the cabinet's political situation failed to improve appreciably. Two days later the entire cabinet resigned, and Sukiman was compelled to return the government's mandate.

**E. MASYUMI DURING THE CABINET OF MR. WILOPO (APRIL 1952 – JUNE 1953)**

Following the collapse of the Sukiman cabinet, President Sukarno appointed two new *formateurs* for the specific purpose of assembling another coalition government between the parliament's two most powerful parties. The PNI's Sidik Djojokusarto and *Masyumi's* Prawoto Mangkusasmito labored for nineteen days without success because in the end neither could win sufficient support among their own parties for the various cabinet arrangements they had formulated. The meddling of factions within both *Masyumi* and the PNI greatly frustrated these negotiations. Prawoto was a member of the Natsir-led *Masyumi* faction, and Sidik was a member of the radical nationalist wing of the PNI that opposed Natsir's religious socialist agenda (Feith, 1962, p. 227). Consequently, there was little ground for sincere cooperation even between the two *formateurs*, much less among the parties to which they belonged.

Eventually, Prawoto and Sidik were able to reach a compromise concerning the composition of most of the cabinet, but they remained deadlocked on the issue of the Ministry of Interior. Both parties had come to accept that national elections would have to be held in the next few years, but they had also come to recognize that the Ministry of the Interior would have a great deal of influence in their planning and conduct. Consequently, both parties attempted to gain that coveted post for itself in hopes of fortifying its own chances, but as negotiations stalled over this issue, Sidik and Prawoto also then began to criticize each other's nominations for other posts in the cabinet. By mid-March, it was clear that these men couldn't agree on much, and so they were forced to return their mandate to the President.

On March 19, 1952 the PNI's Wilopo was appointed by President Sukarno to be the next *formateur*. As a candidate that both the PNI and *Masyumi* had previously considered for the post of Prime Minister, he proved to be acceptable to both parties. Further, his views on most of the other important issues facing the government were ideologically compatible with those of both Prawoto and Natsir. In many respects, he seemed to be the ideal compromise *formateur*, and with that outlook, he set about building a cabinet that was more concerned with ideological cohesion than with

achieving the support of any specific party or parliamentary faction (Feith, 1962, p. 228). By March 30<sup>th</sup>, he had completed his proposed roster of ministerial candidates for submission to the President.

Wilopo's cabinet was truly a coalition cabinet. Not only did it have ministers from both *Masyumi* and the PNI, but it also included members from the PSI and the PSII, both which had been excluded from the previous cabinet. Additionally, the standard assortment of smaller parties, including the Catholic Faction, Parkindo, Parindra, and the Labor Front, was given token representation within the cabinet. The PIR and the Democratic Fraction, both of which had served in the previous two cabinets, were excluded this time around.

The President's hesitation to immediately approve Wilopo's selections was an indication of his disappointment with a cabinet primarily composed of men with socialist leanings (Feith, 1962, p. 229). Likewise, the PNI expressed displeasure at Wilopo's selections, and the *Nahdatul Ulama* leaders within *Masyumi* chafed at the exclusion of their own men from the cabinet. For the first time since 1949, *Nahdatul Ulama's* perennial Minister of Religion, K.H. Wahid Hasjim, was replaced by a member of *Muhammadiyah*, K.H. Fakhri Usman. Finally, the opportunity for yet another partnership between *Masyumi* and the PNI was sufficient reason for the PKI to be wary of this cabinet, though the fresh memory of Sukiman's persecution left them hesitant to be too vocal in their opposition (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 244). Wilopo's selection of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX as Defense Minister at least enabled him to win the cautious support of the senior army leadership.

### **1. Cabinet Character**

Despite Wilopo's credentials as a member of the PNI, his cabinet had far more in common with that of Natsir than it did with Sukiman's *Masyumi*-PNI coalition. None of the five *Masyumi* men who had served under Sukiman had been selected for this cabinet, and only two of Sukiman's five PNI ministers were invited back into this administration. Not surprisingly, this cabinet's positions on many the issues that had long divided PNI and *Masyumi* came down squarely on the side of the latter. This trend did not bode well for relations between Wilopo and the rest of his party in parliament.

In general, this cabinet was far different from its predecessor on many different fronts. Most of its members were significantly younger than those whom had served in the Sukiman government, and most were sympathetic to the progressive socialist ideology that had characterized the governments of Sjahrir and Hatta, and to some extent Natsir, as well. These were administrators and technocrats that agreed on a course for Indonesia despite their individual party memberships, and as a result they had far more internal cohesion than Sukiman's cabinet had enjoyed. Although this cabinet did not enjoy the personal support of President Sukarno as Dr. Sukiman's had, the return of the highly respected and influential Sultan of Yogyakarta to the role of Defense Minister made it far more acceptable to the army's senior leadership. Thus, the political counterbalance shifted in favor of the army and away from the President when the Wilopo cabinet ascended to power.

The cohesion of Wilopo's cabinet came from his insistence that its members be ideologically compatible and that they share certain fundamental goals. Further, he was willing to compromise in order to reach mutually acceptable agreements on policies that had deeply divided their predecessors. On a number of issues that had particularly strained the *Masyumi*-PNI working relationship, he was able to carve out middle ground that both parties could accept for the time being. Consequently, this cabinet would be able to withstand internal tensions better than his predecessors, yet it still had many enemies within parliament, within the army, and within the Presidential palace.

## **2. Agenda**

Like his predecessors, Prime Minister Wilopo promulgated a multi-point agenda that outlined his government's priorities. He re-elevated the contentious issue of national elections back to the first priority, although he was perhaps more motivated to placate *Masyumi* than he was sincerely interested in accelerating elections (Feith, 1962, p. 230). On the related issue of regional councils, he apparently also capitulated to *Masyumi*'s position and made allowances for those councils selected pursuant to Regulation 39 to continue to function. "Foreign Affairs" was dropped to the last of the six top priorities, and Wilopo made it clear that the government was returning to a truly "independent" and "active" foreign policy. To that end, he declared that Indonesia would in the future only



accept economic and technical aid from the United States, and that it would neither solicit, nor accept military aid. In an attempt to evade policy disagreements that could exacerbate already existing PNI-*Masyumi* rifts, he scrupulously avoided making policy decisions on a number of contentious issues, such as the opening of an embassy in Moscow.

On the issue of internal security, Wilopo suggested that the time had come to complete the process of transferring responsibility for provincial and district governance from soldiers to civilians. To hasten this goal, he immediately ordered the lifting of those martial law restrictions that had been imposed in accordance with the 1939 State of War and Siege Act, and which incidentally had been the same regulations that Sukiman had used to legitimize his August 1951 mass arrest of PKI activists. Feith has suggested that Wilopo's decision on this matter was far more than just an attempt to assert civilian supremacy over the army, and that it represented a combined effort by both the cabinet and the senior army leadership to deprive the nearly autonomous territorial commanders of a significant portion of their power base (1962, pp. 231-232). Territorial and regional commanders were frequently supporters of the President, and their loyalty to the army's senior leadership was often unreliable. The Wilopo government's attempts to transition leadership responsibilities from soldiers to civilians, though rational on its face, was perceived as just one more shot fired in the ongoing struggle between the various leadership factions contesting for supremacy within the military. It was a step that would ultimately have dire consequences for the government.

### **3. Political Dynamics**

#### ***a. Intra-Cabinet Dynamics***

Prime Minister Wilopo's emphasis on ensuring the ideological compatibility of his ministers went along way towards maintaining stability within the cabinet. His PNI and *Masyumi* ministers were in agreement on several key issues, including the holding of regional elections, the acceptance of foreign aid, the maintenance of internal security, and the language of ongoing negotiations with the Dutch. For those issues upon which agreement proved more elusive, Wilopo engaged a strategy of inaction, eschewing to make commitments that might prove divisive to the

cabinet. Initially, the conduct of national elections fell under this heading, but as pressure mounted on the government, Wilopo was forced by the tide of events to stake out a committed position. Fortunately, by then all of the other parties had also come to the realization that stalling was no longer a prudent action in light of escalating agitation by the military and the general public.

The first major blow to the Wilopo government came in late April 1952 when the *Nahdlatul Ulama* congress voted overwhelmingly to disaffiliate itself with *Masyumi* and to establish an independent political party. Relations had long been strained between *Masyumi's* traditionalist *Nahdlatul Ulama* members and their modernist brethren. These relations had grown progressively brittle ever since the modernists had taken control of the organization's senior leadership posts following the surrender of the Japanese in 1945. Although Dr. Sukiman had been able to work effectively with the *Nahdlatul Ulama* leaders in his capacity as both Prime Minister and Chairman of *Masyumi's* Legislative Council, Natsir's approach seemed designed to antagonize them, while marginalizing their role in the party.

The list of potential cabinet candidates that *Masyumi* had submitted to *formateur* Wilopo had been drafted under Natsir's influence, and for the first time since 1949, the name of the *Nahdlatul Ulama's* K.H. Wahid Hasjim had not been listed for the post of Minister of Religious Affairs. This slight was seen by the *Nahdlatul Ulama* leadership as an insult to their most senior and respected *kyai*, and was taken as further evidence that its contribution to *Masyumi* was under-appreciated (Feith, 1962, pp. 235-236; Barton & Fealy, 1996, pp. 20-21). *Masyumi's* Natsir faction surely must have known that to slight *Nahdlatul Ulama* in such a way would be to invite a likely fracture of the party, and yet they did so anyway.

The immediate affect of the *Nahdlatul Ulama's* abandonment of *Masyumi* was to strengthen Natsir's overall influence in the latter. It would leave *Masyumi* with seven fewer seats in parliament and have catastrophic long-term consequences for the party by almost entirely erasing its grassroots support in the heavily populated Javanese heartland. Further, *Nahdlatul Ulama's* efforts to form a federative coalition with the other smaller Islamic parties in parliament, especially the PSII and Sumatra's *Pergerakan Tarbijah Islamiyah* ("Islamic Educational Movement" – PERTI), gave Muslims a

political alternative to *Masyumi*. The *Nahdlatul Ulama's* K.H. Wahid Hasjim was elected as the first chairman of the new *Liga Muslimin Indonesia* (“Indonesian Muslim League” – LIGA).

Although the worsening of *Nahdlatul Ulama-Masyumi* relations would eventually prove to become the Achilles heel for the electoral unity of Indonesia’s Muslim polity, the internal ideological divisions within the PNI would prove to be far more vexing issue for the cabinet in the near-term. As noted above, Wilopo’s political outlook was far more consistent with that of Natsir, Hatta and Sjahrir than it was with most of the senior leadership of his own party. The PNI had long opposed many of the policy initiatives that Wilopo sought to implement because many of them had the potential to erode the PNI’s influence in both the army and the civil service. Additionally, Wilopo’s apparent commitment to the conduct of national elections was not consistent with the PNI’s attempts to delay for as long as possible.

By 1952, the PNI was also becoming rent by increasing divisions between a “radical nationalist” wing headed by Sidik Djojokusarto, and groups headed by Sartono, Suwirjo and Wilopo, which were in varying degrees far more inclined toward national consolidation and socialism. The policies of the Wilopo cabinet were particularly distasteful to the PNI’s Sidik faction, and building frustration over the willingness of Prime Minister Wilopo to implement a significant portion of the *Masyumi* agenda only seemed to increase his resolve to derail any future cooperation with the *Masyumi* leadership (Feith, 1962, p. 242). By late 1952, the Sidik group had formed a tactical alliance with the PNI’s Sartono-Suwirjo group, which further isolated Prime Minister Wilopo within his own party. The PNI’s leadership then quietly moved to develop closer ties not only with the PKI, but also with the new Islamic alternative to *Masyumi*, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 245). In time, the PNI would then turn on Wilopo himself.

#### ***b. Parliamentary Dynamics***

The ministers of the Wilopo government were able to achieve a great deal of political consensus despite frequent opposition from their respective party representatives in parliament. Still, the cabinet could not operate independently from the

will of parliament for very long. The previous two cabinets had in the final analysis been brought down by parliamentary opposition to particular government policies, and the Wilopo government was as susceptible, if not more so, to becoming submerged in the shifting sands of political allegiances in parliament. As noted previously, the disaffiliation of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* from *Masyumi* and its subsequent establishment as a political party in its own right further eroded *Masyumi's* influence in parliament. More importantly, it handed the PNI a potential Islamic political ally to oppose the *Masyumi* agenda.

The PKI, which had formed an alliance of convenience with the PNI in 1950 in order to oppose Natsir's government, had been relegated during Sukiman's tenure to political impotency. Worse, Sukiman's 1951 anti-PKI roundup had reminded them of their status as the pariah of Indonesian politics. Their situation during Wilopo's tenure was little better, but increasing disillusion within the PNI over Wilopo's agenda offered an opportunity for the PKI leadership to redeem itself, and to perhaps expand its influence once again.

The PKI's new strategy began with a public relations offensive. Starting with the inception of the Wilopo government, the PKI leadership had resolved to be less antagonistic towards the parties in the cabinet, and to support those government initiatives that it found well-framed and sound. The PKI also announced its conditional willingness to work with any other political party that shared its newfound commitment to "nationalism" (Feith, 1954, p. 244). Likewise, it also began to woo other parties that might be interested in developing political alliances by which to further the political mobilization of workers, peasants, women, and other underrepresented constituencies. It was very obvious to most observers at the time that their interest was primarily to forge links with the anti-Wilopo and anti-*Masyumi* PNI elements in parliament (Feith, 1962, pp. 238-239). The PKI's shift in attitude also extended to their public pronouncements concerning President Sukarno, which had previously been very antagonistic, but which had subsequently taken on a more positive and conciliatory tone.

The PKI's strategy was two-fold. Following the rehabilitation of its image, it would then move to exploit every potential wedge issue that could possibly induce tension between the fragile PNI and *Masyumi* coalition, and has already been

noted, there was no shortage of potentially divisive issues. By the end of Wilopo's tenure, the PKI had re-emerged with significant political influence in parliament. Its overtures to the PNI leadership in parliament had proven fruitful; however, when combined with the willingness of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* to throw its political support behind PNI, it inevitably led to the emergence of a formidable new power bloc in parliament that significantly threatened *Masyumi's* slim numerical dominance (Bone, 1954, p. 18). By late 1951, parliament had become split down the middle, with *Masyumi*, the PSI, and the small Christian parties on one side, and the PNI, PKI and *Nahdatul Ulama* on the other. Both sides continued to be assisted from time to time by the shifting support of the smaller parties, but this support was almost always self-serving and by no means consistent.

### *c. Presidential Dynamics*

The polarization of parliament into two power blocs centered on the PNI and *Masyumi* did not manifest in a political vacuum. President Sukarno was by no means a champion of the Wilopo government as he had been of that of Dr. Sukiman. Much of his indifference towards this cabinet was directly related to Wilopo's political agenda, which he correctly saw as an extension of Natsir's agenda's and by extension that of the pre-independence Hatta and Sjahrir administrations, as well. It was an agenda characterized by an emphasis on consolidation, rationalization, reorganization, neutrality in foreign relations, fiscal austerity, and managed economic growth. For the Wilopo government, the revolution was over, and the time had come for Indonesia to take its rightful place among the international community, to work to better its own domestic conditions, and to contribute to the peace and stability of the world. It had no interest in aligning with one international power bloc or another, or in continuing to fight a revolution at home now that independence had at last been achieved.

This perspective was not, however, one that was shared by President Sukarno, or for that matter, by much of the leadership of either the PNI or the PKI. They believed that the inevitable unfolding of the revolution had been stalled by the political agendas of Natsir and Wilopo, both of whom Sukarno believed had only served to impede the natural course of Indonesia's progress by kowtowing to Dutch and U.S.

interests. Although a shared view of a betrayed revolution was sufficient *raison d'être* for an increased level of cooperation between these groups, Sukarno also had personal reasons for disliking Wilopo. The Wilopo cabinet contained many men with whom Sukarno had clashed in the struggle to delimit the scope of his Presidential prerogatives (Feith, 1962, pp. 244-245). Wilopo's ministers, like those of Natsir, but unlike those of Sukiman, had repeatedly tried to contain the expansion of Sukarno's political influence by reducing the size of his office budget and severely curtailing his opportunities for making political campaign speeches. More than anything else, efforts such as these only seemed to steel Sukarno's desire to work through all other available channels in order to maintain his prestige and influence.

The tentative rapprochement between the PNI and PKI seemed to provide Sukarno with an opportunity to align with a political bloc to oppose the government agenda, but the army continued to provide an effective counterweight to his influence. The army's ideological loyalty, or at least that of its most senior leadership, was aligned with the Wilopo government, particularly its Minister of Defense, Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX. In mid-1952, a relatively delicate balance of power existed between these two contesting power blocs, but the leadership struggle within the army was now rapidly nearing critical mass. Within months, the balance of power would shift decisively.

#### *d. The Role of the Army*

Indonesia's post-revolutionary army had never been a politically unified force. Its hasty founding in 1945 had resulted in a composite force of Dutch-trained professional soldiers that had been merged with guerilla units established and trained by the Japanese army. These two wings of the army had very different ideas regarding how the revolution should be fought, as well as about who should lead the army and the government. On occasion, these differences erupted into violence between the contesting groups, or as attempts to alter the political system through unconstitutional means: The July 3rd Affair of 1946 had been the most notable attempt by radical nationalist forces within the army to assert their control over the Indonesian government. Similarly, in the aftermath of the Madiun Revolt of 1948, the professional component of the army moved decisively to excise many of the radical elements within their ranks. From 1949 to 1952,

the various factions within the army leadership had settled into a grudging acceptance of each other because neither was strong enough to overcome the other, but this struggle continued to simmer in the background.

Under Prime Ministers Hatta and Natsir, the Indonesian government had occasionally attempted to implement plans for the reduction and re-organization of the army. These plans were intended to reduce the size of the force by hundreds of thousands of soldiers, many of whom were really no more than bandits or local warlords who had been given army commissions during the struggle with the Dutch. These elements most often aligned themselves with those political parties that were in opposition to Sjahrir, Hatta, and then Natsir. Consequently, the government's efforts to rationalize and re-organize the army were seen as no less than a direct attack on a crucial component of the opposition's political base, and these efforts were vigorously resisted.

The army had maintained a relatively apolitical posture during the brief tenure of the Sukiman government mainly because its own internal leadership divisions had precluded it from speaking consistently with one voice, but also because the appointment of a relatively unimportant politician to the post of Defense Minister had deprived the senior leadership of its main avenue of political influence. The return of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX to the post of Defense Minister once again provided an opportunity for the army's senior leadership to forge close links of cooperation with the government, and to again begin their efforts to re-shape the army into the western-model of a smaller, but more professional force. This renewed sense of cooperation between the senior army leadership and the cabinet did not, however, sit well with the parliamentary opposition, who quickly seized upon disaffection within the army to launch an oblique attack against the government (Crouch, 1988, p. 29).

Wilopo's plans to reduce the size of both the civil service and the army following a post-Korean War slump in government revenues precipitated a crisis between the cabinet and parliament that would upset the army's apolitical orientation. Regional commanders, many of whom were loyal to the PNI and Sukarno, were vehemently opposed to the senior leadership's plans for reducing the army's end-strength by upwards of fifty percent. Disregarding protocol, they appealed directly to both parliament and to President Sukarno for intervention, accusing the army's senior leadership of becoming

political foils for the PSI and *Masyumi* (Feith, 1962, p. 252). The PNI leadership in parliament responded by ordering a series of reviews of Wilopo's defense policies, which culminated in late September in the tabling of a motion of no confidence in the policies of the Minister of Defense. This motion also called for a reorganization of the armed forces pursuant to the findings of a parliamentary commission that would be subsequently be established to investigate allegations of fraud within the Ministry of Defense.

Observing the emerging showdown in parliament, numerous army leaders loyal to both the Sultan of Yogyakarta and the Wilopo government began to agitate against the unwarranted interference of both the parliament and the President. Particularly galling to them was the fact that parliament was not an elected body, but rather an appointed one that had little legitimacy in their eyes. This was made more upsetting by the repeated failure of successive governments to make headway in planning for the conduct of national elections, which would ultimately lead to the replacement of the appointed provisional parliament with one that was legitimately elected by the people (Feith, 1962, p. 256). A second PNI-sponsored motion submitted in early October recommended the establishment of a joint government-parliamentary commission, heavily biased towards the latter, which would have the authority to investigate questions pertaining to the reorganization of the army. It would also be empowered to investigate questions of corruption in the Ministry of Defense. Not surprisingly, these steps were viewed as an immediate threat by the army's top leadership, and within days, seven of the territorial commanders had gathered in Jakarta to see how the situation would unfold.

When the parliament met on October 15, 1952 to discuss the various motions before it, Prime Minister Wilopo felt assured that backroom negotiations with the PNI leadership had won him enough support in the coming vote to preserve his cabinet. He had not, however, anticipated the personal interference by the President, who managed to rally support for the PNI-motion and ensure its passage by a vote of 91 to 54 (Feith, 1962, p. 256). The parliamentary vote had placed Wilopo's policies in question, and the Minister of Defense had threatened to resign if any of the motions criticizing his leadership were passed. Neither side knew what the other's response would be, so both simply waited for the other to make the next move. It was the army, however, that would attempt to seize the initiative in order to reaffirm the balance of power.



On October 17, 1952 some 30,000 officers, soldiers and civilians staged a protest outside the Presidential palace while Sukarno was meeting inside with several of the army's top-ranking officers. The senior officers, including many of the territorial commanders, had come to complain about the illegitimacy and ineffectiveness of parliament, and to demand its dissolution. The President appeared to sympathize with their concerns and told them that he would look into the matter further, but little progress was made towards cooling tempers. Over the next few days, parliament was put on recess, and the army placed several politicians under arrest. They also ordered the closure of several opposition newspapers that had been particularly critical of the government. By the end of a week, however, the situation had returned to some semblance of normalcy, and the government had re-opened for business as usual.

In the aftermath of this event, subsequently referred to as the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair, there were a series of bloodless coups at the regional level where those officers that had sympathized with the dissolving of parliament were methodically replaced by officers sympathetic to both the PNI and Sukarno. By mid-November, the pro-government territorial commanders in East Java, East Indonesia, and South Sumatra had been relieved of their commands, and the central army leadership had come to stand alone in its support for the government (Feith, 1962, p. 269). The political center of gravity within the army now shifted from behind the Wilopo cabinet, to behind the President and the PNI.

In early December, the cabinet was forced by the swell of public opinion to take measures to try to calm the situation. It announced the dismissal of Colonel Nasution and his allies from their senior posts in the army leadership, and appointed a prominent anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> leader to take over as acting Army Chief of Staff. A subsequent row between the new army chief and the Minister of Defense regarding other related personal reassignments resulted in the Sultan's resignation from the cabinet in January 1953. The threatened resignation of the cabinet's two PSI ministers was only barely prevented, but the widely held view that the PSI had somehow had a hand in encouraging the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair had placed a debilitating strain on relations between them and their traditional *Masyumi* allies (Feith, 1962, pp. 271-271).

The shift in the army's political loyalties following the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair had completely upset the delicate balance of power that had been maintained since 1948. The emergence of a pro-PNI leadership within the army's senior ranks threw the advantage to those factions within parliament that had long opposed the government. By December, Wilopo had been almost completely abandoned by his own party, and *Masyumi* and the PSI now stood against a political power bloc composed of the PNI, PKI, and the *Nahdatul Ulama*. Making matters worse, the opposition now could count on the support of both the President and the army.

*e. International Influences*

The Wilopo administration's approach to foreign relations was not one to produce significant opposition within the parliament. Realizing the fundamental differences that existed between the *Masyumi* and PNI approaches to international relations, Wilopo opted to follow a middle course designed to avoid controversy. There were of course issues that were unavoidable, such as the reoccurring debate over the Japanese Peace Treaty, ongoing negotiations with the Dutch, and the status of various diplomatic missions to the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, but Wilopo was able for the most part to steer clear of the foreign policy pitfalls that the Sukiman government had suffered so disastrously from. Rather than pressure from the outside, it would be internal pressures that would contribute to the fall of the Wilopo government.

**4. The Fall of Mr. Wilopo's Cabinet**

The government of Wilopo would fall not with a bang, but with a whimper. After the events of the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair, the cabinet enjoyed even less political latitude than before. Parliamentary support was at an all time low, and it seemed as if all the parties, including those participating in the government, were simply waiting for the next controversy to demonstrate the cabinet's weakness, and thus to precipitate its implosion. The government's attempts to resolve a series of disputes over land distribution and the relocation of squatters from western-owned agricultural estates presented just such an issue to their growing opposition.

The seed of this issue had been planted several decades earlier with the establishment of large Dutch plantations along the eastern coast of Sumatra. The granting of 75-year concessions by the Netherlands government was intended to guarantee a consistent source of revenues for the colonial regime, but the arrival of the Japanese in 1942 led to the abandonment of these properties (Vandenbosch, 1953, p. 146). As a condition of independence, Indonesia had agreed to recognize the validity of the pre-war Dutch concessions, including those estates that the Europeans had been forced to abandon as a consequence of the Japanese invasion. Prior to the return of western-owned businesses, however, thousands of Indonesia's poor and unemployed peasants began to move onto these vacant lands in order to establish their own farms. When the time came for them to vacate in order to facilitate the return of European-owned companies, they naturally resisted.

The cornerstone of both the Natsir and Sukiman economic programs had been the facilitation of western investment, including the honoring of those agreements made with the Dutch during negotiations leading to the Hague Agreement of 1949. In order to stimulate economic growth, European and American investors would have to be wooed back to Indonesia, and most Indonesian leaders knew that foreign investors would only return if they had confidence that the Indonesian state was committed to both the rule of law and the principle of private property. Under these circumstances, the growing presence of large numbers of squatters would prove to be an explosive political situation for the government. The government found itself in the difficult position of having to remove Indonesian citizens from property that was to be returned for the use of the same Europeans who had exploited Indonesians for three centuries. It was a no-win situation for Prime Minister Wilopo.

The Sukiman government had first attempted to address this issue in the Summer of 1951 by proposing a compromise formula that would reduce the size of most of these land concessions in order to set-aside land for the use of Indonesian farmers. It seemed like a plan that all parties could agree to, but that was not to be the case. By the time the Wilopo government finally got around to implementing the plan during the following March, they ran headlong into the determined resistance of the peasants, as well as the political opposition. On March 16, 1953, the police attempted to re-locate several

squatters from farms in the vicinity of Tandjong Morawa, but the squatters refused to cooperate. In the melee, several of the peasants tried to seize weapons from the police, and as shots rang out, five of the farmers fell dead. The uproar that followed would eventually lead to the fall of Wilopo's cabinet.

Although couched in the terms of squatter's rights and European investment, the heated debate that followed the Tandjong Morawa incident was indeed far more complex (Feith, 1962, p. 295). At its very heart was a struggle for political power in one of the few areas of Indonesia where the dominance of a particular political party had not yet become fully established. Much of Sumatra, particularly in the north, was politically aligned with *Masyumi*, but large swaths of territory along the eastern and southern coasts, which had long been under the control of Dutch plantations during the colonial era, were left unclaimed. In these areas, which were largely populated largely by Javanese and Chinese migrants, political Islam held little sway among the common farmer. Still, the legislative councils established pursuant to Regulation 39 had allowed *Masyumi* to gain predominance in the district, regency and provincial governments without much competition.

The PNI and the PKI had not, however, given up the struggle for these villages. These parties well knew that political gains at the grassroots level in these areas would allow them in turn to eventually seize control over successively higher levels of government until they fully-controlled the regional bureaucracies. Consequently, the PNI and PKI members in parliament saw this incident as an opportunity to win support from tens of thousands of potential voters, and to undercut *Masyumi's* already tenuous political support in large areas of Sumatra. It also presented an opportunity to strike at the heart of the Wilopo government, which was already teetering from the reverberations of the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair.

In the middle of May 1953, a motion was put forth in parliament by a PKI-sympathizer from the *Sarekat Tani Indonesia* ("Indonesian Peasants Association" – SAKTI). The SAKTI motion demanded a vote of no confidence in Wilopo's Minister of the Interior, *Masyumi's* Mohammed Roem. Despite the motion having been subsequently modified by the PNI in order to soften its language, Roem remained adamant in his vow to resign if the motion was passed. Both sides understood that

Roem's withdrawal from the cabinet would have dire consequences for the government; because it would also likely precipitate the withdrawal from the cabinet of *Masyumi's* other three ministers (Feith, 1962, p. 296).

Initially, fear of the government's collapse caused some restraint by both sides, but internal debate within the PNI fortified the resolve of the parliamentary opposition. Confident of their position in any subsequent cabinet, the PNI leadership offered to table the motion if Roem would offer his resignation, but *Masyumi* steadfastly refused these terms. The PNI then offered to allow Roem to remain in the cabinet if *Masyumi* would approve the appointment of a PNI member to the vacant post of Minister of Information. *Masyumi* members were well aware of the central role that this ministry would play in the planning and conduct of upcoming national elections, and thus they once again declined the terms of the compromise. Seeing that an impasse had been reached, and that neither the PNI, nor *Masyumi* were in the mood for compromise, Prime Minister Wilopo faced the inevitable and returned his mandate to the President.

#### **F. MASYUMI DURING THE CABINET OF ALI SASTROADMIDJOJO (JULY 1953 – JULY 1955)**

The collapse of the Wilopo government in June 1953 led to a prolonged period of negotiations between *Masyumi* and the PNI over the formation of a new cabinet. Despite efforts to find an acceptable solution, five successive attempts to form a coalition would each fail, and fifty-eight days would pass before a government would again be formed. Efforts by the *Masyumi's* Mohammad Roem and the PNI's Sarmidi Mangungsarkaro to form a cabinet built around a *Masyumi*-PNI core repeatedly fell short as a consequence of the insurmountable antagonism between the two main parties in parliament. Likewise, efforts by the PNI's Mukarto Notowidigdo and *Masyumi's* Burhanuddin Harahap to form cabinets centered on their own parties also met with failure. By mid-1953, it seemed as if it would be impossible for Indonesia's two largest political parties to ever cooperate again. As if recognizing the impasse, President Sukarno named the chairman of the much smaller and less influential PIR party, Mr. Wongsonegoro, as the next *formateur*, and it seemed as if the deadlock might finally be broken.

Wongsonegoro's initial cabinet recommendation was relatively generous to the *Masyumi*. He offered it the portfolio of First Deputy Prime Minister, as well as the

portfolios of Interior, Social Affairs, and Economic Affairs, but *Masyumi* stalled, hoping to either win greater concessions, or to force the return of Wongsonegoro's mandate in the hope of receiving the *formateurship* for itself in the next round (Feith, 1962, pp. 337-338). Believing that they could count on assurances by the *Nahdlatul Ulama* not to participate in any government that excluded *Masyumi*, Natsir and the other party leaders waited for a better offer, but it never came. Instead, Wongsonegoro turned away from *Masyumi*, and instead offered a greater share of ministerial assignments to the two other influential Islamic political parties within parliament, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and the PSII. Confident that both parties would reject this offer in favor of preserving Muslim unity in the face of aggressive PNI and PKI expansion, *Masyumi's* leaders learned that they had gambled badly, for both the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and PSII eventually accepted this offer. Consequently, Wongsonegoro was able to form a cabinet with significant Islamic political representation, but with no *Masyumi* influence.

The cabinet roster submitted to President Sukarno by Wongsonegoro on July 31<sup>st</sup> listed the PNI's Ali Sastroamidjojo as Prime Minister, and included a motley collection of ministers from not only the PNI, but also from the PIR, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, PSII and five of the other smaller parties. Between them, *Nahdlatul Ulama* and the PSII garnered five ministerial posts, but the PNI still dominated the cabinet with the three other major portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Economic Affairs. Excluded from the cabinet were *Masyumi*, the PSI, Parkindo, the Catholic Faction, and the Democratic Fraction – all the parties that had been instrumental in forming the Natsir government. Although both the PKI and the *Partai Murba* were excluded, two of the smallest parties given seats in the cabinet were generally believed to have close associations with the communists (Feith, 1962, p. 339). Taken together, the parties participating on the cabinet held only a narrow majority in the parliament (114 to 107). Yet, with assurances that the additional weight of the PKI's thirteen seats would be behind them, the government was able to achieve a comfortable buffer against *Masyumi's* opposition.

## 1. Cabinet Character

Feith has opined that the Sastroamidjojo cabinet was the inevitable culmination of a string of events that had brought down the previous government, and which ultimately

led to the further polarization of parliament (1962, p. 339). The PNI's alliance with the PKI, as well as its greatly improved cooperation with both the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and the PSII, had provided an effective means to blunt the powerful *Masyumi*-PSI alliance. The extra weight of both the army's and the President Sukarno's support only made the coalition's grip on power that much more secure, or so the cabinet believed.

The first Sastroamidjojo cabinet was a different animal than any of its predecessors. Most of its members had cut their political teeth as radical nationalists in the revolutionary period, but only four of its twenty ministers had participated in any of the post-RUSI cabinets (Feith, 1962, p. 341). A handful had served in the first Sukarno-led cabinet of the post-WWII Republic, and three had been involved in the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Affair of 1946 that had sought to overthrow the government of the Republic of Indonesia under Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir. In essence, this was a group of men that had enjoyed personal and professional relations with President Sukarno over the course of several decades, and which had long been opposed to the economic, military and social policies of Hatta, Sjahrir, and Natsir. It was as far removed from the cabinets of Natsir, Sukiman and Wilopo as possible in the current political climate of the parliament, and it was particularly sobering spectacle to the *Masyumi* leaders who had turned their back on good-faith negotiations with the PNI.

## **2. Agenda**

Despite this cabinet having radically different political underpinnings than any of its predecessors, Sastroamidjojo's agenda differed little from that of Wilopo or Sukiman, or even Natsir for that matter, except perhaps in terms of its emphasis on certain matters of the economy and foreign relations. Reflecting the secure mandate that he believed he enjoyed, Sastroamidjojo moved confidently on a number of significant issues about which others had often spoken, but had rarely acted on. In outlining his intended agenda to parliament, Sastroamidjojo announced his intention to send an ambassador to Moscow, to negotiate a bi-lateral treaty with Japan against the wishes of the United States, to establish a trade agreement with communist China, to settle the Irian Jaya question, and to terminate once and for all the Indonesian-Netherlands Union established pursuant to the Hague Agreement of 1949.

Perhaps the most significant of Sastroamidjojo's foreign policy goals concerned the expansion of Indonesia's cooperation with the Asian-Arab bloc in the United Nations, an effort that would culminate with Indonesia's hosting of the Asian-African Conference of 1955 at Bandung. This conference was to mark Indonesia's emergence as a leader among the third world nations, but it also served to make U.S. officials increasingly anxious about the ideological direction that Indonesia was heading. U.S. fears seemed to be confirmed when in May 1954, the Indonesian government under Sastroamidjojo proposed a non-aggression pact with communist China.

Sastroamidjojo proved to be equally aggressive when it came to his domestic agenda, which included efforts to indigenize the economy by both accelerating the nationalization of foreign-owned businesses and by granting tax credits to native Indonesians in order to facilitate the growth of entrepreneurship. The rapid expansion in the number of new Indonesian-owned firms created by these programs did little to contribute the country's overall economic growth, but Natsir's reforms did tend to retard foreign investment by eroding investor confidence in the Indonesian market. Feith notes that these programs were also tremendous drains to the Indonesian treasury at a time when the government could least afford it, particularly in light of increased expenditures to fight a new separatist movement in Aceh, as well as the long-standing *Darul Islam* movement (1962, p. 377). Sastroamidjojo's efforts to expand the civil service, which served as a means to both extend the PNI's influence and as an important source of patronage for the smaller political parties supporting the government, also proved to be an excessive drain on the government's shrinking fiscal resources.

Although marked by impressive accomplishments on the international stage, Sastroamidjojo's tenure was far less impressive on the domestic front. The widely-held perception that many of his policies were intended more to consolidate his party's influence than to benefit the nation as a whole created a great deal of resentment among the opposition and within the army, as well. The commencement of preparations for the upcoming national elections had begun the scramble for votes, as well as for control over the electoral apparatus that would in the end determine the conduct of the elections.



### 3. Political Dynamics

#### a. *Intra-Cabinet Dynamics*

The heterogeneous composition of the Sastroamidjojo cabinet almost guaranteed that it would suffer from internal conflict. By late 1953, the PNI party had become fairly unified with the eclipse of the Wilopo faction, but although many within the party had questioned the wisdom of excluding *Masyumi* from the cabinet, it was not from within this quarter that the government's troubles would emerge.

The first hint of discord appeared in September 1953 with an internal PSII struggle that led to the resignation from the cabinet of its Ministers for Communications and State Welfare. Likewise, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* was rent with internal discord, with many of its members coming to resent the wholesale abrogation of much of the party's agenda and its betrayal of *Masyumi* for the sake of an opportunity to join the government. The apparent willingness of many of the party's senior leadership to enter into a coalition underpinned by the support of the anti-religion communists of the PKI and its affiliates was a persistent source of great concern that would hamper the *Nahdlatul Ulama's* ability to commit fully to Sastroamidjojo's agenda.

By mid-1954, *Nahdlatul Ulama* dissatisfaction with the government's economic policy, as well as with the rampant corruption that it had engendered, had reached a point where the party's leadership felt compelled to voice a protest to the government. In a sternly worded communiqué submitted to the cabinet in July the *Nahdlatul Ulama's* leadership demanded the resignation of the PIR's Ministers of Economic Affairs, Finance and Interior, as well as the reassignment of responsibility for internal security matters to the *Nahdlatul Ulama's* second Deputy Prime Minister, Zainul Arifin (Feith, 1962, p. 380). In October, the PSII joined in support the *Nahdlatul Ulama's* demands.

Another of the cabinet's supporters, the PIR, also underwent an internal power struggle during this period that culminated in a decision by the party's leadership council to demand the resignation of the entire cabinet under the threat of withdrawing its three members. The refusal of the three PIR ministers to comply with the demands of their own party leadership resulted in a party split and led to the subsequent formation of a two competing factions. The anti-government group within the PIR gained the

predominance of support from the party's members in parliament, and as a result, the government lost nineteen of the PIR votes in parliament on which it had depended to maintain its rather slim margin of control. Notwithstanding their defiance against the demands of both the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and the PSII, as well as from within their own party leadership, the PIR Ministers ultimately resigned their posts at the end of October 1954.

The government withstood a series of no-confidence motions over the course of the next several months, but the growing momentum of each of these demonstrated the increasing weakness of the cabinet against both internal and external challenges. Ultimately, the wide variances in ideological outlook among the junior parties in the government coalition would pull the cabinet apart. In July 1955, Parindra voted to withdraw its Minister from the cabinet, and one day later, the PSII began to urge the whole cabinet to resign. By the end of the month, the *Nahdlatul Ulama*, PRN and Labor Party had all decided to join with the PSII in calling for the return of the government's mandate. Although the subsequent fall of the Sastroamidjojo cabinet can't be entirely attributed to the actions of the government's smaller parties, there is little doubt that the lack of a shared vision among them created an almost insurmountable obstacle to overcome once additional pressure began to be applied from outside sources.

#### ***b. Parliamentary Dynamics***

The government's relationship with parliament was not always as smooth as might be inferred from the healthy surplus of votes that it enjoyed by virtue of the PKI's tacit support. The cooperation of the smaller parties constituting the government was not always reliable and it was often vulnerable to the manipulation of those parties that remained in the opposition. Conversely, the decline in the political relevance of both *Masyumi* and the PSI was not unexpected in light of the continuing erosion of their influence in both the bureaucracy and in the army. By the end of Sastroamidjojo's tenure, the number of Indonesia's governorships under *Masyumi* and PSI control was only a quarter of what it had been two years earlier. Sastroamidjojo's efforts to replace *Masyumi* and PSI members at all levels of government service further cut into the ability of the major opposition parties to shape policy. More importantly, it also deprived them

of a significant source of patronage and party revenue in the months leading up to national elections (Feith, 1962, pp. 367-369).

*Masyumi* was increasingly compelled to fight a two front war during this period. On one hand, they had to face a powerful government coalition buttressed with a sizable contingent of *Nahdlatul Ulama* and PSII notables that had the potential for siphoning off support from *Masyumi*'s voter base. Secondly, the progressive weakening of the PSI, made all the more dramatic by the decline of its influence in the army after the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair, exacerbated *Masyumi*'s sense of political isolation and made them all the more vulnerable to counter-attack. Neither of these developments, however, seemed to dissuade *Masyumi* from taking an aggressive stance against much of the government's agenda.

From the very beginning, *Masyumi* parliamentarians made no effort to conceal their desire to bring the cabinet down. When Sastroamidjojo's cabinet was first presented to the parliament in July 1953 for a vote of support, *Masyumi* and the Catholic Faction were the only two parties to vote against the proposed government (Feith, 1962, p. 344). *Masyumi* was also the first party to sponsor a parliamentary motion questioning the government's economic policies and the rampant corruption that had been spawned by the PNI's use of government tax credits as a mechanism to reward its supporters (Feith, 1962, p. 379). The government's failure to satisfactorily respond to *Masyumi*'s original inquiries merely encouraged the latter to expand the scope of the motion into a vote of "no-confidence" against the PNI's Minister of Economic Affairs, Iskaq Tjokroadisjuro. This motion was defeated by a margin of 101 to 60 votes, but the government's apparent difficulty in cobbling together enough votes to defeat the *Masyumi* motion pointed to potential rifts within the coalition. *Masyumi*'s concerns regarding the government's economic policies would rapidly also become political fodder for the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and the PSII, both of which also stood to lose as a result of the PNI's bureaucratic expansion. This was also one of the central causes for the split within the PIR party discussed above.

Complaints over the corrupt and self-serving nature of the PNI's economic policies ultimately led to the resignation of the cabinet's PIR ministers, which in turn encouraged the PNI to finally drop Iskaq Tjokroadisjuro from the cabinet. The loss of

much of the PIR's parliamentary support could have been far more catastrophic for the government, however, a law approved by parliament during the tenure of the Wilopo government authorized the cabinet to appoint new members to replace non-party members who had either died or resigned in office. The government parties overwhelmingly benefited from this law because all but seven of parliament's twenty-three new members would prove to be supporters of Sastroamidjojo's cabinet (Feith, 1962, pp. 381-382). Subsequent attempts by *Masyumi* to bring down the cabinet would fail, and in the end it would take an extra-parliamentary force to finally destabilize the government coalition sufficiently to collapse it. Still, while *Masyumi* was focused on opposing Sastroamidjojo, it was itself being subjected to an intense attack on its flanks by the PKI.

The mass arrests that had occurred during Sukiman's August 1951 anti-communist offensive precipitated a significant change in the PKI's political strategy. After 1951, the party leadership discarded its previous policy of opposing all non-communist parties, and it began to seek out political allies from among the secular nationalist parties, especially the PNI. This change was an effort to not only remake the PKI's image as a viable political party willing to work within the constitutional parliamentary system, but by forging bonds of cooperation with other powerful parties, its leaders sought to provide the party with a measure of political cover so that it could begin to re-build itself from within (Thomas, 1981, pp. 370-371).

By adding its support to that of the government's coalition, the PKI ensured that the Sastroamidjojo cabinet would be able to maintain a sufficient majority within parliament to withstand attacks by *Masyumi* and the PSI. In practice, however, this strategy was more far more complex than it might appear, because it ultimately depended on the tacit cooperation of those members of historically anti-communist parties also serving in the cabinet and in parliament (Feith, 1962, p. 343). The most curious partnership to arise from this strategy was that which developed between the PKI and the *Nahdlatul Ulama*, whose members had viciously clashed with the communists in the aftermath of the Madiun Revolt of 1948. It was an inherently unstable relationship because the communists were competing for the same votes as *Nahdlatul Ulama* in

Central and East Java. Consequently, it was an accommodation that was entertained into only grudgingly by the latter (Barton & Fealy, 1996, pp. 29-33).

While the additional support of the PKI voting bloc ensured that the PNI would have sufficient parliamentary support to ward off repeated *Masyumi* challenges, it was actually the PKI that derived the greatest benefit from the relationship. The PKI took full advantage of the protection that its role as a political collaborator afforded it, and within a year it had doubled its membership roles (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 248). Most of its new members came from the villages of Central and East Java, as well as from the estate areas of East and North Sumatra, but its success in attracting new members during this period was in great part the result of a watering-down of its ideology and its willingness to accept anyone, regardless of social status, into its ranks (McVey, 1996, p. 102). This was the most effective period of mass mobilization for the PKI, and much of its success can be attributed to the latitude that it enjoyed as a result of its relationship with the PNI.

In addition to providing a voting bloc in parliament in support of the government's policies, the PKI's other important task was to weaken *Masyumi* by repeatedly attacking it as an intolerant and extremist party beholden to western imperialists (Feith, 1962, pp. 357-359). The most effective PKI attacks involved attempts to equate *Masyumi* with both the outlaw *Darul Islam* movement and the separatist movement in Aceh, which had erupted within weeks of the beginning of Sastroamidjojo's tenure. This was not, however, a particularly difficult line of attack to pursue in light of *Masyumi's* historic timidity about implementing aggressive military solutions against the problem of Muslim rebels and terrorists. *Masyumi's* attempts to counter the PKI attacks by depicting the latter as radical, anti-religious zealots bent on establishing a godless communist state rang rather hollow when PKI leaders drew attention to their close working relationship with a government that now included two prominent Islamic political parties (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 249).

*Masyumi's* need to fight on two fronts, and the increasing inability of the PSI to contribute much to the contest, left the modernist Muslim leaders of *Masyumi* increasingly politically isolated. Their political struggle became little more than a desperate rear-guard action for survival, while the other parties took advantage of the spoils of government to expand their membership roles and to fill their campaign coffers.

Until the political dynamics shifted once again in their favor, *Masyumi* would be forced to fight to simply maintain its own political survival.

**c. *Presidential Dynamics***

As indicated above, this cabinet's relationship with President Sukarno was perhaps the best that any Indonesian cabinet had ever enjoyed. Much of this goodwill was simply an expression of a common political outlook, if not the logical by-product of several decades of shared revolutionary experiences against the same slate of foreign and domestic enemies. The President's personal enmity toward many of *Masyumi's* senior leaders, and his long-held belief that they were working to undermine *Pancasila* as the basis for the state, only served to bolster his support for any government that would exclude them from positions of power or prestige.

For its part, the government gladly loosed the political fetters on Sukarno. It encouraged him to take to the campaign trail where his speeches inevitably favored the secular-nationalist PNI, while criticizing *Masyumi*. Although the President had in the past involved himself in politics, it had usually been in an oblique manner. Now the President's more active efforts to support the PNI, and to denounce *Masyumi*, seemed to initiate a new era of Presidential politics in which Sukarno would become much more overtly involved (Gardner, 1997, p. 115). The President's more active political role during this period was perhaps all the more apparent because the army no longer served as an effective counter-balance to his machinations (Feith, 1962, p. 341). Sukarno's "free-hand" would not, however, last forever, for the distant rumblings of dissatisfaction were beginning to be heard again in the army, and the balance of power was about to shift once again.

**d. *The Role of the Army***

Cumulative changes within the army during Sastroamidjojo's tenure represent one of three most significant political developments to occur in Indonesia in its first two decades of independence. Along with the rise of the PKI, and the concurrent eclipse of *Masyumi*, the army began to mature as a distinct and wholly independent political force in the crucible of the two years leading up to the 1955 elections.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair of 1952 had demonstrated the existence of deep political divisions within the army, and in the aftermath, the army's leadership had been effectively purged of a large number of PSI and *Masyumi* loyalists. Afterwards, the army settled once again into a relatively apolitical role, but the increasing factionalism and corruption of politics during the Wilopo and Sastroamidjojo administrations had a profound effect on the army's leadership. It contributed to a collective loss of confidence in the legitimacy of both the cabinet and the parliament, as well as in the notion of civilian control of the military. It produced the effect of causing the leaders to circle the wagons in order to safeguard the interests of the army.

The policies of the Minister of Defense, Iwa Kusumasumantri, proved to be very unpopular within the army. Iwa's party, the Progressive Faction, was known to have ties to the PKI, and his habit of appointing junior officers over the heads of those who were far more senior and capable smacked of political opportunism intended to fortify communist influence in the top ranks of the army leadership (Gardner, 1997, p. 121). A series of other cabinet decisions concerning personnel re-assignments, combined with suggestions by the Defense Minister to equip a "fifth-force" for the purpose of fighting *Darul Islam*, only further served to alienate army leaders who were beginning to resent the cabinet's incessant meddling in internal army affairs (Feith, 1962, pp. 404-405). Actions by the cabinet to limit the participation of army personnel in the upcoming elections also contributed to a sense that they were being taken for granted by the government. This resentment tended to transcend political ideologies and party loyalties because officers saw the Minister's actions as an affront to the army's status as an independent and equal arm of the Indonesian state. The army's self-perceived role as the savior and guardian of the state was under assault, and this was a situation that all soldiers, regardless of their own individual political leaning, would vigorously resist.

In February 1955, a meeting of 270 army officers was held in Yogyakarta to discuss intra-army reconciliation. Following a week of discussions, the gathering agreed to promulgate a resolution proclaiming a new spirit of cooperation among the officers and soldiers. Although intra-leadership disputes would still be a frequent occurrence in the coming years, the united front that emerged produced a much more cohesive army (Feith, 1962, p. 398). This new self-awareness was put to its first test in

June 1955 when the cabinet attempted to appoint a PNI-loyalist, Colonel Bambang Utojo, to the post of Chief of Staff of the Army (Crouch, 1988, p. 31).

The army leadership was uniformly displeased at the overtly politicized nature of the cabinet's selection of an officer that was far too junior for the post. Consequently, they joined together in refusing to recognize his authority. Over the course of the next several weeks, several prominent officers, including the leader of the anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> faction, Colonel Zulkifli Lubis, stepped forward to denounce the past efforts of politicians to split the army in order to further their own political ambitions. These officers went even further by demanding that both the cabinet and the parliament formally pledge to no longer use the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair as a political wedge issue, or to use any other criteria than seniority and competence to determine suitability for promotion (Feith, 1962, p. 398). These officers also asked the government to explicitly define the limits of acceptable political interference in the internal affairs of the army. Efforts by both President Sukarno and the cabinet to woo the anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> faction back into their camp failed in the face of the army leadership's new sense of self-awareness and resolve. The army now seemed to speak with one voice, and what it said collectively indicated that it would no longer be politically beholden to any political faction.

The emergence of a much more politically conscious army in the wake of the February 1955 conference did not bode well for either the cabinet or for Sukarno. The army had made a stand, and it would no longer be used as the political instrument of corrupt and illegitimate politicians. No longer would any of the various parties or the President be able to remain complacent about the army's political support, or even of its neutrality in any future political struggles. The support of the army would be up for grabs in future, and its price would be determined not by others, but by the army itself.

#### *e. International Influences*

When the Sastroamidjojo government came to power in July 1953 it faced a rising tide of frustration among its U.S. government counterparts. The stalemate in Korea, ongoing communist machinations in Indochina, and a sobering realization that the Peoples Republic of China was not going to be a passing phenomenon, all contributed to



a growing sense that the Cold War would be a very long struggle indeed. When General Dwight Eisenhower assumed the U.S. Presidency in January 1954, standing policy towards Asia changed only in terms of emphasis (Gardner, 1997, p. 112). Under the leadership of John Dulles, the U.S. State Department undertook efforts to tighten the web of security commitments throughout Asia. Following the course set by the Japanese Peace Treaty of 1951 and the Australia-New Zealand-U.S. (ANZUS) mutual defense pact of 1951, the United States negotiated the Manila Pact in September 1954, which led to the creation of the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). SEATO was specifically intended to help counter communist ambitions in the region, but absent among its signatories were the region's most fervent non-aligned nations, notably India, Burma and Indonesia.

While Indonesia had previously, albeit reluctantly, acceded to the Japanese Peace Treaty, Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo was well aware that it had contributed to the fall of the Sukiman cabinet. The presence of multiple former colonial powers among the SEATO signatories, allied for the undisguised purpose of preventing another communist victory like that which led to the collapse of the French colonial presence in Vietnam, was not lost on the Indonesians. No cabinet that supported a treaty with such blatant neo-colonial underpinnings would have survived for very long, and although the Sastroamidjojo cabinet viewed SEATO from a very pragmatic perspective, the Eisenhower administration proved to be far less accommodating. The U.S. administration seemed haunted by a November 1953 National Security Council (NSC) policy memorandum that had advised that the loss of Indonesia to communism "...would have serious security implications for the United States and the rest of the free world." (Gardner, 1997, p. 115).

During 1953, Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo took advantage of Indonesia's rising international profile to agitate for the resolution of the West New Guinea issue. On balance, this issue was far more important to domestic stability than perhaps even the strict adherence to an "independent" and "active" foreign policy. Indonesia's leaders recognized that the United States was obliquely supporting Dutch claims by supporting maintenance of the territorial *status quo*, and the unwillingness of the United States to support Indonesian attempts to raise the West New Guinea issue in

the United Nations in August 1954 didn't go unnoticed. If anything, American intransigence in this matter hardened the Indonesian leadership's resolve to force the issue unilaterally, and it did serve to edge them further out of the U.S. sphere of influence and deeper into the camp of other third world nations (Gardner, 1997, p. 118).

The theme of the Asian-African Conference held at Bandung in April 1955 surely must have antagonized U.S. officials, as this meeting of developing nations received most of its momentum from the Cold War tensions. The Bandung conference's stated goal of establishing a new power bloc of emerging Asian and African nations had a powerful effect of fanning nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiment among the Indonesian populace in the months leading up to the 1955 Indonesian general elections. Similarly, the increasing U.S. pressure, which was intended to drive the Indonesian government into the camp of the "free world", only seemed to strengthen the Indonesian government's resolve to re-double their efforts to resist such overtures.

#### **4. The Fall of Ali Sastroamidjojo's Cabinet**

The fall of the Sastroamidjojo cabinet was a direct result of the army's refusal to submit to the appointment of Colonel Bambang Utojo as Army Chief of Staff. By the end of June 1955, the leader of parliament's Defense Section, Zainul Baharuddin, submitted a motion of no-confidence against the Minister of Defense, Iwa Kusumasumantri, and it was immediately seconded by a member of one of the government's own parties, the Parindra's Hadjarati. The government tried to avoid a parliamentary showdown, hoping that the army's new-found unity would begin to crumble if the cabinet stood firm, but the army's resolve only seemed to stiffen in the weeks that followed (Feith, 1962, p. 401). By mid-July, the Parindra's R.P. Suroso had been instructed by his party's leadership to resign from the cabinet, and the PSII had begun to advise the government to return its mandate, yet Sastroamidjojo continued to stall.

On July 13, Defense Minister Iwa resigned, and the cabinet made one last attempt to placate the army leadership by offering to retire Colonel Bambang Utojo, and to replace him as Army Chief of Staff with Colonel Lubis. Lubis had been a pivotal leader of the Anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> faction and was a close relative of Zainul Baharuddin, the leader

of the Parliament's Defense Section. According to the compromise plan, the army leaders would simply have to make a formal acknowledgement of Colonel Utojo's authority prior to his retirement and Lubis' appointment, but even this they refused to do as a matter of principle (Feith, 1962, p. 401). The cabinet's prestige had evaporated, and by the end of the month, the *Nahdlatul Ulama*, the Labor Party and the PRN had all withdrawn their support for the government. On July 24, Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo was compelled by the collapse of his coalition to return the government's mandate to Vice President Hatta. President Sukarno's departure from Indonesia several days earlier in conjunction with a *Haj* pilgrimage to Mecca signaled as clear an indication as any that he had himself lost confidence in the ability of the Sastroamidjojo government to recover from the mortal blow that the army had dealt it (Feith, 1962, p. 402).

#### **G. MASYUMI DURING THE CABINET OF BURHANUDDIN HARAHAP (AUGUST 1955 – MARCH 1956)**

The rise of the army and the subsequent fall of Sastroamidjojo's government seemed to signal an opportunity for the re-emergence of *Masyumi* and the PSI on the political stage. The question on everyone's mind in the Summer of 1955 was whether the army would return to its pre-October 17<sup>th</sup> 1952 role as a passive supporter of the these parties, or whether it would try to increase its own share of power. Shortly after the return of Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo's mandate, Vice President Hatta arranged to meet with the Acting Chief of Staff of the Army, Colonel Zulkifli Lubis. To many observers the haste with which this meeting was convened seemed to imply that the military would have a much more active role in determining the composition of the next cabinet. An army statement released shortly thereafter denied such inferences and suggested only that the cabinet selection process should be grounded in the needs of the country as a whole, rather than in the needs of any particular political party or faction (Feith, 1962, p. 415). The army leadership cautioned the parties against a return to the rampant corruption of the kind that had characterized the previous cabinet. With the benefit of hindsight, their warnings now seem to have been a clear omen of things yet to come.

Although nearly all parties agreed that the appointment of a new cabinet needed to be completed with a sense of urgency, neither of the two main parliamentary factions

could agree on the appropriate course to take. The *Masyumi*-PSI faction recommended the appointment of a “business cabinet” led by Vice President Hatta, while the PNI and the PKI, campaigned for a coalition cabinet like those of the past. On July 29, Vice President Hatta, acting on behalf of President Sukarno, named three *co-formateurs* to assemble a new cabinet. *Masyumi*’s Dr. Sukiman, the PNI’s Wilopo, and a non-affiliated member of parliament, Mr. Assat, were tasked with negotiating a cabinet that above all else would be capable of both restoring a sense of moral authority to the government, while bringing to conclusion the planning and conduct of national elections.

The three *co-formateurs* successfully cooperated in the selection of nominees for the various ministerial portfolios, but progress stalled when it came to naming a candidate for the post of Prime Minister. *Masyumi* wanted to offer this post to Vice President Hatta, but because the 1950 provisional constitution did not authorize the Vice President to serve concurrently in the cabinet, special permission had to be authorized by parliament via special resolution. The resolution ultimately forwarded by *Masyumi* authorized the granting of a leave of absence for Hatta so that he could serve as Prime Minister, but it also permitted him to return to the post of Vice President at the expiration of the cabinet’s term. The PNI, however, refused to accept the latter stipulation, and unable to overcome this deadlock, the *formateurs* returned their mandate to the Vice President less than a week after receiving it. Hatta then turned to *Masyumi*, naming Burhanuddin Harahap as the next *formateur*.

Burhanuddin sought at first to forge a *Masyumi*-PNI coalition as the basis for the next cabinet, but the unwillingness of both of the main parties to accede to either’s choices for key assignments led each effort to failure. The PNI was particularly opposed to the idea of a *Masyumi* member in the politically sensitive post of Minister of Defense, and *Masyumi* consistently balked at the PNI’s candidates for Foreign Affairs and Public Works (Feith, 1962, p. 418). It seemed as if the bitter relations that had festered between the two parties over the last several cabinets had made any future cooperation increasing unlikely. In the end, *Masyumi* turned away from the PNI, and instead engaged in talks with the two other prominent Islamic parties (PSII and *Nahdatul Ulama*). Both of these parties now controlled a sizable voting bloc in parliament, but the *Nahdatul Ulama*’s leadership seemed to be less than enthusiastic about entering into a coalition with

*Masyumi*. Their reticence concerning this matter was grounded in the elementary political calculation that the party had made better political gains while serving in the Sastroamidjojo cabinet than it had ever made as a constituent member of *Masyumi*. Ultimately, however, they and the PSII chose to join Burhanuddin's government, along with the two Christian parties, the PSI, and several of the smaller parties that had always seemed to find a niche in previous cabinets.

### **1. Cabinet Character**

The twenty-three ministerial posts of the Burhanuddin cabinet afforded it the distinction of having been the largest of the post-independence cabinets to date. This statistic points to an ever-growing reliance on the participation in the government of the smaller parties (Feith, 1962, p. 419). This support did not, however, come without a price because the participation of the smaller parties magnified the tendency towards corruption. Realizing that the upcoming elections would in all likelihood erase not only their presence in parliament, but also their continued access to the spoils of government, the smaller parties aggressively bargained to extract as many concessions as possible from their *Masyumi* patrons. Consequently, despite high hopes that this cabinet's Islamic moorings would allow it to serve as a beacon of moral authority; it nonetheless rapidly began to demonstrate the same degree of rampant corruption that had plagued the previous cabinet.

As the smaller parties continued to graze from the public trough, *Masyumi* and the PSI re-focused their collective energies on systematically undoing PNI and PKI gains made in the civil service and military over the previous two years. It was not an agenda likely to win great public acclaim, but the nearness of the impending elections and the concomitant need for both *Masyumi* and the PSI to quickly re-establish its influence at the various levels of the government bureaucracy, imbued a sense of desperation in the government's actions. Consequently, it left little room for the pursuit of more high-minded aims.

Not all of the constituent parties within the cabinet shared the same perspective when it came to the government's agenda. The spectrum ranged from *Masyumi*/PSI's relatively straightforward policy of bureaucratic and economic rectification, to the more

haphazard struggle of the minor parties to win as much patronage as possible before the death knell of elections sounded out their doom. The *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII agendas were as motivated by practical concerns as those of any other party in the cabinet, except that they were perhaps more acutely sensitive to concerns about the implementation of government policies intended principally to antagonize the PNI. *Nahdatul Ulama*, and to a lesser extent PSII, would in all likelihood find a home in any future cabinet, and they were understandably loathe to poison their own relationships with the opposition parties for the sake of politically expedient policies which almost entirely benefited *Masyumi* and PSI membership. As a result, they proved to be stubborn in resisting much of the Prime Minister's agenda.

## **2. Agenda**

The agenda of the Burhanuddin cabinet was essentially two-fold. Its long-term goals included a slowing-down or halting of the policies of the previous administration, especially those that had been aimed at nationalizing large parts of the economy and opening it up to indigenous Indonesian businesses at the expense of foreign investment. The cabinet felt that the previous government's economic policies had been too radical in light of the fragility of the economy, and that such policies had only served to scare off foreign investors and fritter away dwindling revenues. Consequently, the Burhanuddin cabinet was far more interested in wooing back foreign investment through confidence building measures, while taking the appropriate measures to expand production capacities irrespective of the nationality of the ownership of the means of production (Feith, 1962, p. 421).

As with economics, the Burhanuddin cabinet took a different tack with respect to foreign policy, opting instead to pursue more cordial relations with the West. The policies of Sastroamidjojo had been stridently neutral, but that neutrality had often been misconstrued by the United States. Indonesia's willingness to trade with and to seek aid from both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China was frequently perceived through the distorted lens of the Cold War as something more than what it was. The

PKI's tacit support for the Sastroamidjojo government only seemed to lend more credence to U.S. concerns that Indonesia was beginning to drift dangerously close to the communist orbit.

The Burhanuddin cabinet fully appreciated the negative effect that such appearances could have on trade relationships with the West, but it also recognized the consequences that U.S. apprehensions had in fueling the impasse over the West New Guinea issue. If the United States believed that Indonesia was falling into the communist sphere, it would never agree to pressure the Netherlands to relinquish its claims of sovereignty. Consequently, the government's foreign policy became one of allaying the West's concerns in order to win the support of the United States for resolving Indonesia's territorial claims in West New Guinea, the importance of which cannot be understated in terms of how it influenced domestic morale and the political discourse.

In the near-term, the government's agenda was based on what Feith has described as a "platform of hostility" towards the policies of its predecessor (1962, p. 420). Thus, the cabinet set out to unravel the gains that the PNI and PKI had made in the army, in the civil service, and in the indigenous economy. Every policy decision was scrutinized to determine its potential political impact on the government parties, rather than in consideration of the economic or security consequences for the state. Policies were implemented with either an eye towards whatever advantage might be gained in the upcoming elections, or with the intent of depriving the opposition of some measure of patrimonial influence. Despite promises of a return to "moral authority", politics remained as corrupt and patronage-driven as ever, if not more so.

The fundamental problem with Burhanuddin's agenda was that the short-term benefits it produced would eventually be subsumed by the lack of confidence it would inevitably engender among *Masyumi's* own supporters in the long-term. The PNI and PKI naturally opposed the government's self-serving policies, however, what *Masyumi* and the PSI failed to fully appreciate was the degree of disillusionment its policies would cause not only among the general public, but in the army as well.

The generally tepid support that the senior army leaders had given to the Burhanuddin cabinet when it was first announced was no doubt due in large part to the army's suspicions that this cabinet would be in no way fundamentally different than its

predecessors. As much as army leaders might disagree over the status and end goal of the revolution, almost all were in basic agreement that the political parties as a whole had so far acquitted themselves disgracefully and in contravention to the spirit that had motivated the struggle for independence. Their constant bickering and patrimonial on-upmanship had repeatedly stalled the political process and kept the young nation mired in a state of developmental immaturity.

The lack of a shared political vision among this government's constituent elements tended to impart a lack of consistency in its overall agenda, and made even its legitimate goals unachievable. Its *ad hoc* approach to undoing the accomplishments of the previous cabinet was perhaps its most successful endeavor, but such efforts were hardly met with unqualified approval by those who might agree in principal that the policies of Sastroamidjojo had been heavy-handed and necessitated some remedy. Many who had reviled the previous government for its self-serving and corrupt nature quickly began to have similar misgivings about this cabinet, and specifically its inadequacy for carrying out the tasks of governance. Thus, the Burhanuddin cabinet's agenda, or rather its lack of one, served only to reinforce the perception of many that parliament, the parties, and the whole western-style democratic experiment had somehow failed Indonesia. The army leadership was among the first to come to this conclusion, and it was the army's support that *Masyumi* could stand least to loose.

### **3. Political Dynamics**

#### ***a. Intra-Cabinet Dynamics***

Like many of its predecessors, the Burhanuddin government was inherently unstable. The exclusion of the PNI from the cabinet necessitated *Masyumi*'s reliance on a motley collection of smaller parties, many of which were rather ambivalent towards the *Masyumi*-PSI agenda. The immanence of general elections, which were scheduled to be held within months of the cabinet's installation, precipitated a greater sense of urgency for all of the parties within the Burhanuddin's government with regard to molding the political landscape to their own advantage. However, as noted repeatedly, their respective agendas were shaped by widely divergent goals. While both *Masyumi* and the PSI were more interested in remedying the personnel and economic policies of



the Sastroamidjojo government lest they create political liabilities for the senior government parties, the outlook of the smaller parties was far more practical. The inevitability of elections that had long been feared by the smaller parties had finally arrived. Knowing full well that the national elections would likely erase their influence, if not their entire presence in parliament, the smaller parties scrambled to take full advantage of their last opportunity to wring as many concessions as possible from the government. Regardless of the potential for impeding the government's agenda, or the negative impact that their efforts would have on the cabinet's relations with the opposition parties, the President, and the army, the smaller parties pushed their own interests with relentless zeal.

The most important of the inter-cabinet dynamics, however, was that which guided political relations between *Masyumi* and the smaller Islamic parties participating in the government. Since the fracturing of *Masyumi* in 1952, both *Nahdatul Ulama* and the PSII had gone on to blaze their own trails, and they had discovered that their political support could be a valuable commodity in an almost evenly split parliament. In many ways, their ideological roots were closer to those of the PNI than they had ever been to those of *Masyumi's* modernist Muslim majority. As the voice of a constituency that was mainly concentrated in the outer islands and in the Sundanese heartland of West Java, *Masyumi's* complaints about the inequity of Javanese domination of the political process consistently failed to resonate with the Javanese-dominated *Nahdatul Ulama*. *Masyumi's* economic and political concerns were simply not those of *Nahdatul Ulama*, or vice versa. *Nahdatul Ulama's* leaders were more apt to find that they had much more in common, at least culturally and politically, with the *priyayi* who formed the core of the PNI leadership. Although *Masyumi* was eager to alter the *status quo* of Javanese political domination, both *Nahdatul Ulama* and the PNI remained favorably inclined to maintain the political hegemony of the ethnic group which constituted nearly all of their support.

*Nahdatul Ulama* was fully aware that neither of the two main parliamentary factions could achieve sufficient parliamentary support to establish a cabinet without the leverage provided by the *Nahdatul Ulama* -PSII coalition, particularly when overt PKI involvement in the government remained taboo. This realization

naturally made the *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII leaders more reticent than their *Masyumi* colleagues regarding wholesale changes in the structure of the bureaucracy or in the economy, especially if such changes could tend to embarrass or antagonize the opposition parties. *Masyumi* leaders were apt to view the political skittishness of *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII as betrayal, but *Nahdatul Ulama*'s leadership remained unperturbed: Having also been welcome in the first Sastroamidjojo cabinet, *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII leaders were quite willing to make every effort to maintain the political and bureaucratic *status quo* in order to safeguard their own future political fortunes. Regardless of which parties gained ascendancy in the upcoming elections, both *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII would likely find a role in the next government, and they were not about to jeopardize that opportunity in order to achieve political ends that held no intrinsic benefit for them.

The *Nahdatul Ulama*'s unwillingness to wholeheartedly support *Masyumi* and PSI attempts to redress perceived grievances against the previous administration was most acutely demonstrated during Burhanuddin's attempts to pursue corruption prosecutions against former ministers and other government employees. Although initially lauded as a long-belated crackdown on corrupt politicians, it soon became obvious to most observers that the bulk of the investigations were, if not entirely politically motivated, at least weighted to have the most severe effect against PNI members. *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII strenuously objected to the tenor and scope of these investigations, fearing that they would only further worsen strained relations between the two largest parties and put them uncomfortably betwixt the two giants. *Nahdatul Ulama*'s position ultimately prevailed, and the cabinet's efforts to pursue anti-corruption legislation in parliament withered on the vine.

Following the return of the general election results, the negotiating position of both *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII did improve significantly. *Nahdatul Ulama*'s parliamentary delegation increased by nearly six hundred percent (from 8 to 45), making it the third largest party in parliament, whereas PSII's grew by two hundred percent (from 4 to 8). *Masyumi*'s disappointing showing in the elections, and the PSI's loss of over sixty percent of its seats, would further constrain *Masyumi*'s ability to act in contravention to the will of its junior partners.

*b. Parliamentary Dynamics*

The initial opinion of the opposition parties regarding the Burhanuddin cabinet was cautiously reserved, but as government efforts to pursue corruption charges against former government employees (especially those with PNI affiliation) began to heat up, so did the rhetoric. Within weeks of the cabinet's installation, the opposition's simmering resentment began to bubble to the surface, but in the absence of attempts by the Burhanuddin government to achieve anything of substance in the months leading up to September general elections the opposition was left with little ammunition with which to attack the cabinet. Consequently, much of the vitriol that would normally be expressed in parliamentary debates was instead relegated to the press and the campaign trail.

The most vehement opposition to Burhanuddin's anti-corruption drive emerged within the cabinet itself, and the initial urgency of the effort eventually waned under the pressure of both *Nahdatul Ulama* and the PSII. Even the President weighed in to oppose the cabinet's efforts. In the end, despite strenuous objections by *Nahdatul Ulama* leaders, the cabinet attempted to force the issue by the issuance of an emergency law that allowed the government to convene special corruption tribunals. President Sukarno's veto complicated the implementation of this decree, and compelled the cabinet to weigh the risks of either bringing the issue to a floor vote in parliament or else letting it die a natural death in committee. Burhanuddin wisely chose the latter course for fear of further straining relations within his own cabinet, while incurring the wrath of the both the parliamentary opposition and the President.

The issue that suffered the most from rising tensions between the cabinet and the opposition parties concerned the perennial negotiations with the Dutch over both the status of the West New Guinea territories and the continuation of the Netherlands-Indies Union. The Burhanuddin cabinet, like its predecessors, attempted to renegotiate a diplomatic settlement to the more onerous stipulations of the 1949 Hague Agreement, but from the start it was hamstrung by the machinations of the parliamentary opposition. How much of this opposition was genuine is unclear, but the pattern of politics in this era was such that the opposition always seemed to oppose such efforts regardless of which parties were serving in government, even though every government since 1950 had pursued nearly identical policies towards the Netherlands.

The biggest difference between the efforts of Burhanuddin and those of his predecessor was the degree of antagonism between Indonesia and the West that each of these governments was willing to tolerate in their attempts to force the hand of the Netherlands to settle outstanding economic and territorial claims. In general, most PNI and PKI leaders were far more willing to take steps that were antagonistic to both the United States and Europe if it meant achieving their political and economic goals. The much ballyhooed Bandung Conference of Asian and African nations of April 1955 was an event meant to telegraph to the world the emerging importance (and relevance) of non-aligned third-world countries. It was also meant to remind the West that newly post-colonial, independent nations, such as Indonesia and India, no longer needed the West as much as the West needed them, and as a result, negotiations would be on their own terms, not on those of the imperialists that had for so long subjugated and exploited them.

*Masyumi*/PSI led governments, such as those of Natsir, Sukiman and Burhanuddin, were far more risk adverse than their PNI colleagues when it came to negotiations with the West. Although the economic policies of Sastroamidjojo and President Sukarno were orientated towards the indigenization of native industries and the nationalization of foreign-owned capital, *Masyumi* and PSI leaders were generally far more accommodating towards western-owned business interests, if for no other reason than that they believed that sustained foreign investment was critical to the economic development of Indonesia. Consequently, *Masyumi*/PNI-led cabinets tended to be much more hospitable and tentative in their negotiations with the Dutch for fear that short-term, symbolic gains won through unilateral action or rhetorical blustering would endanger the attainment of long-term economic gains.

In late 1955, the Burhanuddin government began to negotiate in earnest with the Dutch in hopes of resolving some of the loose-ends of the 1949 Hague Agreement that had remained unresolved throughout the previous fifteen years. The Prime Minister had high hopes that a resolution of the minor issues on the table might encourage the Dutch to become more amenable to discussions regarding the ultimate status of West New Guinea, but this conciliatory approach proved to be increasingly intolerable to the opposition parties. PNI leaders were still riding high following Sastroamidjojo's successful hosting of the Bandung Conference, and they were

exceptionally sensitive to any appearance of weakness in negotiations with a former colonial power (Feith, 1962, p. 451).

Shortly before the Indonesian Foreign Minister (Mr. Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung) departed for Geneva to begin negotiations, the opposition sniping reached its crescendo. The President also went on record in opposition to the negotiations less than a week after they had begun, and both the *Nahdatul Ulama* and PSII announced their refusal to participate in the government's delegation. Within weeks, both of these parties went even further by demanding the dissolution of the entire diplomatic mission, and when Burhanuddin hesitated, they withdrew their members from the cabinet altogether. As might be expected, the increasing softness of domestic support at the beginning of negotiations only served to undermine Anak Agung's bargaining position, while conversely strengthening that of the Dutch.

In light of such soft domestic support towards the continuation of good-faith negotiations, the cabinet was forced to lower expectations, while the constant hectoring from the opposition forced them to assume a less supple bargaining position. Initial agreements of substance between Indonesian and Dutch negotiators disintegrated under the pressures building back home, and the smell of weakening Indonesian resolve emboldened the Dutch to backtrack on previous agreements. By February of 1956, it had become obvious that little of substance would be gained by continued negotiations, and the Indonesian delegation withdrew from further discussions. Two days later, the Burhanuddin cabinet unilaterally abrogated the Netherlands-Indonesian Union. Although this was an action that many previous cabinets had considered, none had had the nerve to act so boldly.

The move by Burhanuddin to end the union was a surprise to many both inside and outside of the cabinet, though few could explain exactly what the action would mean for the Indonesian people. Although the abrogation would prove to have little practical meaning in the short-term, its symbolic value was immeasurable for those government parties that had long been portrayed as accommodationist and pro-West by the more strident nationalists in the opposition. It would be a hollow success, however, for although the cabinet's motion passed unanimously in parliament, it did so only after the entire opposition membership left the floor in protest (Feith, 1962, p. 458). In a narrow

political sense, the entire episode served to buoy the political credibility of the cabinet parties, but it also set a precedent for future unilateral usurpations of international agreements that would lead Indonesia down a slippery slope ending in the nationalization of Dutch-owned properties in 1957.

*c. Elections of 1955*

The watershed event of the constitutional period was by all measures the general elections of 1955. The importance of these events was derived not from the intrinsic influence they had in determining the participants of the political process, but rather because they redefined how those participants were perceived by both their allies and their enemies. Prior to these elections, most political observers were unanimous in their overestimation of the strength of the two main Islamic political parties (*Masyumi* and *Nahdatul Ulama*). Even after the split of *Nahdatul Ulama* from *Masyumi* in 1952, pundits continued to underemphasize the growing chasm between the opposing wings of the Muslim constituency, and their growing weakness in the face of the emerging strength of the communist parties, the President, and the army. When the results of the elections had been tallied, many of those same pundits were astonished to discover that *Masyumi's* support was far softer than any had anticipated. Worse, the numbers pointed to the re-emergence of the PKI from under the shadows of Madiun as a potent political counterweight to the Islamic parties. When the ground-truth of *Masyumi's* political strength had finally been revealed, those opposition groups that had previously hesitated to take on the Islamic juggernaut were emboldened to try to seize a bigger share of the power.

Since 1950, the idea of elections had been an oft re-occurring theme in the political discourse, but it had taken half a decade to bring the idea to fruition because of a pervasive fear among the secular parties that elections would only serve to legitimize *Masyumi's* political advantage, if not magnify it (Lubis, 1952, p. 158). In the appointed parliament of 1950-1955, *Masyumi* held forty-four seats even after the separation with *Nahdatul Ulama*, while the next largest party, the PNI, controlled only forty-two. Most observers of Indonesian politics during this era believed that *Masyumi* would inevitably gain a significant number of seats if and when elections were ever held (Feith, 1954, p.

246; Bone, 1955, p. 1084). The opposition parties understandably believed that it was in their best interest to endeavor to delay the conduct of these elections for as long as possible. Conversely, *Masyumi* was committed to forcing the issue to culmination.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair of 1952 spurred the political parties to undertake preparations for elections with a greater sense of enthusiasm and vigor (Bone, 1955, p. 1071). A growing sense within the army that the un-elected parliament and its parties had become mired in political stalemate and corruption had contributed to the pro-October 17<sup>th</sup> forces call for the wholesale disbanding of the parliament. Although those forces had not prevailed in that showdown, their warning was received loud and clear even among those who had most vigorously resisted elections (Feith, 1957, pp. 2-3). The Sastroamidjojo cabinet made great strides in scheduling the elections and completing much of the administrative preparations, but it would be left to the Burhanuddin cabinet to actually conduct the long-awaited event.

The election law promulgated in April 1953 provided for two separate national elections. The first would be for the 257 seats of the national parliament, while the second would be for the Constituent Assembly, which would have the responsibility of drafting and approving a permanent constitution that would replace the 1950 provisional constitution. The latter body would be exactly twice the size of the former and its membership would be mutually exclusive from that of the new parliament. From September 29 to November 29, more than 39 million Indonesian voters went to the polls to select those parties, organizations and individuals that would represent them in the national parliament. In December, elections for the Constituent Assembly were held, but because of the complexity of the counting procedures outlined in the Election Law of 1953, official results for these elections were not ready for release until the following March (Tinker & Walker, 1956, p. 107). The official results proved surprising to many.

Although many pundits had correctly predicted the disappearance of a majority of the smaller parties in the wake of the elections, they had overestimated their predictions regarding the inevitability of a landslide victory for the Islamic parties, especially *Masyumi*. To some extent these predictions were right: In the end, nearly 38 million votes were cast, with 85% going for the four largest parties (*Masyumi*, PNI, PKI and *Nahdatul Ulama*). The disparity between these top four and the remaining parties

was enormous. Even the smallest of the four parties, the PKI, received more than five times as many votes as the next largest party (Feith, 1957, p. 57).

On the surface, the consolidation of a large majority of the electorate under the four main parties, and the concomitant extinction of so many of the smaller parties, would seem to have been a positive development. It was after all the vacillation of the smaller parties that typically created the instability of past cabinets, but in this case the voting patterns simply reinforced ethnic and social divisions within Indonesian society (Tinker & Walker, 1956, p. 107). These ethnic and social divisions would prove to be far more dangerous to the future of democracy in Indonesia than the small parties had ever been.

The nationalist, secular and left-wing parties received the majority of their support from Central and East Java, while the religiously-based parties polled strongest in the outer islands and West Java. The sole exception, *Nahdatul Ulama*, received most of its support from East and Central Java, as well as from Sulawesi and Kalimantan (Gosnell, 1958, pp. 181-186). Most observers were surprised by the strength of both the PNI and the PKI, but their successes were geographically isolated in Java and in some of the plantation areas of East Sumatra. The PNI received nearly 66% of its vote in Central and East Java alone, while the PKI received almost 75% in those provinces (Feith, 1957, p. 62). The sheer population density of Java guaranteed at least some success to these parties in relation to those parties that were largely supported in the less-densely populated *seberang* communities, but no one could have predicted the extent of the gains they made. The party of urban intellectuals, the PSI, was decimated in these elections: It lost nine of the fourteen seats it had held in the provisional parliament.

Similarly few predicted the dramatic rise of *Nahdatul Ulama* as a political force. As a splinter party it had held a mere eight seats in the provisional parliament. As a consequence of the parliamentary elections, *Nahdatul Ulama's* presence grew well over fivefold. Gosnell suggests that *Nahdatul Ulama* undoubtedly benefited by the relentless attacks on *Masyumi* by the PNI, the PKI and Sukarno (1958, p. 187). In East and Central Java, *Nahdatul Ulama* prevailed with ease against their *Masyumi* opponents because of the *pesantren* networks and the influence of their *Kyai* in shaping the voting behavior of villagers.



The results of the parliamentary election further widened the chasm between *Nahdatul Ulama* and *Masyumi*, as well as between the constituencies of the outer island and those on Java. For *Masyumi*, the elections also served to obviate their political weakness in the Javanese heartland, the home of some 66% of Indonesian voters. Although *Masyumi* received slightly more than 51% of its vote from Javanese voters (mostly in West Java), it emerged as the strongest party by far among that one-third of the Indonesian population that lived outside of Java (Feith, 1962, p. 437). Unfortunately for *Masyumi*, this constituency was not in control of the key economic or political levers of power, and that fact would ultimately exacerbate existing tensions between the central government and the outer islanders. In time, those tensions would erupt into full-scale conflict, and *Masyumi* would be forced to choose sides. For its leaders, political and religious principles would impel them to support their outer island constituencies in their conflicts with the Indonesian government, and those conflicts would in turn further weaken *Masyumi*. In the wave of dramatic political changes to come, *Masyumi* would find itself increasingly isolated.

#### *d. Presidential Dynamics*

Following the collapse of the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair, President Sukarno's political influence once again began to grow. The lack of stability within the army had removed an effective political counterweight, and Sukarno took full advantage of the vacuum while he could, but the resolution of internal army divisions had inevitably helped bring down the Sastroamidjojo cabinet and thrown the President's continued influence in jeopardy. Sukarno had himself had nothing to do with the formation of the Burhanuddin government as he had been out of the country upon the fall of the Sastroamidjojo cabinet. Thus the appointment of the government *formateurs* and the subsequent approval of the ministerial candidates had fallen upon Hatta in his capacity as Acting President.

It was clear from the beginning that the President was not sympathetic to the Burhanuddin cabinet. With a veto of the government's anti-corruption decree, Sukarno had taken the wind of the sails of the cabinet's first efforts to assert its agenda. Similarly, the President's interference in Burhanuddin's efforts to appoint a government

loyalist to the position of Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff further weakened the government's authority. Because this appointment had been made against the wishes of the Acting Chief of Staff, it was met with obstructionism that would have been farcical had it not been so deadly serious.

The President's refusal to accept the Air Force Chief of Staff's protest resignation stiffened the spine of anti-cabinet forces in the Air Force and precipitated a clash of wills like that which had culminated in the army's October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair. On the day of the swearing-in for the incoming Deputy Chief of Staff, the ceremony was violently interrupted by a number of enlisted men likely acting on the behalf of their leadership. The Prime Minister suspected the complicity of the Air Force Chief of Staff (General Suryadarma), and so ordered his immediate arrest, however the President intervened to prevent the order from being carried out. In the end, the President and General Suryadarma would stave off Burhanuddin's attempts to expand *Masyumi*/PSI influence in the Air Force, and the government's candidate for Deputy Chief of Staff would never be sworn in. It was another significant blow to the political credibility of a beleaguered administration. More importantly, it was perceived by the army leadership as just another attempt by the parties to use the armed forces as pawns.

Relations between President Sukarno and the cabinet deteriorated further in the weeks preceding the second round of national elections conducted in December 1955. The losses dealt to *Masyumi* and PSI by the election results of September had greatly weakened their position in both the cabinet and parliament. The election aftermath had also seemed to embolden the President to try to inflict an even more decisive blow to the fortunes of the government parties in the elections for the Constituent Assembly, the body that would bear responsibility for drafting the future constitution and determining the relative role of *Pancasila* vis-à-vis Islam as the ideological foundation of the state. The President traveled across large portions of Indonesia to inveigh against what he perceived as *Masyumi* attempts to subvert *Pancasila*, and though the government attempted to restrict the President's partisan campaigning, its efforts were uniformly met by defiance. Ultimately, it seemed as if

Burhanuddin could do little to staunch attempts by the opposition to portray *Masyumi* as a party of religious extremists out of touch with the diverse needs of the entire Indonesian population.

*e. The Role of the Army*

The army's pivotal role in the fall of the Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet might have given the appearance that its senior officers were more warmly predisposed towards the *Masyumi* and PSI leadership than to that of the PNI. To some degree, that observation would have been correct. Ever since the Yogyakarta conference of February 1955, the army leadership had made significant progress in healing the internal breach that had been precipitated by the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair of 1952. Despite the continued presence of ideological schisms within the senior leadership, over time there emerged a more coherent and studied recognition that unity of leadership would need to be restored if the army was not to be subjected to further political interference by the parties (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, p. 94). The army was increasingly unwilling to accede to its own political irrelevance, even as it sought to avoid becoming the political tool of others. What its leadership really desired was a recognition that it would no longer be simply a pawn of the parties, but instead a political force in its own right, deserving of a seat at the national leadership table.

The army leadership had expressed high expectations for the re-establishment of unimpeachable moral authority as a consequence of the return of both *Masyumi* and PSI to the political fore (Feith, 1962, p. 420). Yet, Burhanuddin's cabinet selections were roundly criticized within the officer corps as a betrayal of the army's expectations. Even those marginal efforts by the cabinet to investigate and prosecute corruption cases were abandoned in the face of political opposition. Consequently, much of *Masyumi's* political capital vis-à-vis its relationship with the army was squandered very early on. Still, the senior army leadership, notably Colonels Zulkifli Lubis, Gatot Subrato, and Simbolon, really had nowhere else to turn. Their enmity towards President Sukarno and the communists made their continued political alignment with *Masyumi* and the PSI the lesser of possible evils.

Perhaps the most important and dramatic change in the political landscape during this period was the shift in relations between the leading government parties and the army leadership following the reappointment of A.H. Nasution to the position of Army Chief of Staff. The search for a permanent Chief of Staff to replace Colonel Lubis, whom had served as acting head of the army for the previous two years, was begun shortly after Burhanuddin's assumption as Prime Minister. The return of Colonel Nasution to active duty and to the post of Army Chief of Staff was an unexpected turn of events for many, not least for Colonel Nasution, himself.

Nasution's retirement since his suspension in the wake of the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair had been spent pursuing a variety of academic and political interests. He had wisely kept himself in a state of self-imposed political exile outside of the political arena and untainted by the increasingly acrimonious rhetoric among the political parties. During this period, he took the opportunity to conduct his own exhaustive, critical study of both the political conditions leading up to the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair and his own actions before, during and after those tumultuous events. As a result, Nasution had come to realize that he had made mistakes during his previous tenure as Chief of Staff, not only in his efforts to move too quickly to reform the army, but also in underestimating the implications of upsetting the delicate balance of power between the army, the parties and the President (Feith, 1962, p. 443). With a new chance now at hand, Nasution resolved not to make the same mistakes again, but his efforts to pursue a rapprochement with President Sukarno would not bode well for the continuation *Masyumi's* tenuous hold on power. The closing of the gap between Nasution and Sukarno's view of the army would ultimately compromise *Masyumi's* continued political relevancy.

The new spirit of cooperation between Nasution and the President undercut the traditional balance of power between *Masyumi*, PSI and the smaller religious parties on one side, and the PNI, the President and the communist parties on the other. Nasution was hardly a convert to the Sukarno's political views, but he had come to believe that the health and security of the nation was increasingly imperiled by the political frailty of the parliamentary system and the brinkmanship of the parties. His initial instinct was to work within the existing political system by founding a political party comprised of retired officers (*Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia* – "League

of Upholders of Indonesian Independence”), but this in time also gave way to further disillusionment in the western-style liberal democracy that had characterized Indonesian politics since 1950. In time, Nasution became convinced that only a return to the Constitution of 1945, with its strong presidential system, could prevent Indonesia from coming apart (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, p. 98).

Perhaps there was no way for the *Masyumi* leadership to foresee the merging of Nasution’s and Sukarno’s interests, but within months of Nasution’s reappointment as Army Chief of Staff, *Masyumi* and their PSI allies found themselves increasing politically isolated. *Masyumi*’s unwillingness to take aggressive action against both the *Darul Islam* movement and the budding autonomy movements in South Sulawesi and throughout Sumatra only served to further confirm Nasution’s view that the interests of the individual parties were not necessarily concomitant with the nation’s interests. Despite his sympathy for the complaints of the outer island constituencies against the Jakarta-based government, Nasution had come to the conclusion that the current system was incapable of solving the fundamental economic and political problems that were at the root of these disputes.

Many observers had expected the 1955 general elections to both clarify and stabilize the political situation by reducing the number of smaller parties, while concurrently strengthening *Masyumi*’s position in parliament (Compton, 1954, p. 76). The gaining of additional seats by *Masyumi* would have the effect of reducing its reliance on smaller parties so that it could be more aggressive in pursuing its anti-communist policies and western-friendly economic agenda, both of which were acceptable to Nasution. Additionally, the secular PNI would be forced to become more cooperative with the *Masyumi*, thus forcing it to abandon its policy of surreptitiously cooperating with the PKI. The PKI would be left alone and defenseless, and with any luck it would die on the vine.

When the results of the election began to become clear in late 1955, Nasution was faced with the realization that the political situation was unlikely to change significantly. Although many of the smaller parties had indeed evaporated, *Masyumi* had received much softer support than anyone had anticipated. Instead of gaining seats, it had lost ground in the face of gains by PNI, PKI and *Nahdatul Ulama*, all of which had

received greater than expected support. *Masyumi's* old political ally, the PSI had its presence in parliament reduced from 14 seats to 5. Consequently, although the top four parties controlled over 77% of the parliamentary votes, the PNI-PKI axis controlled nearly 37%. The tendency of the *Nahdatul Ulama* to cast its lot with the PNI, rather than with *Masyumi*, meant that a potential PNI-PKI-*Nahdatul Ulama* axis now had the potential to control nearly 55% of parliament. *Masyumi* now found itself the odd man out without sufficient votes to effectively challenge the opposition. It could from now on serve only as a “spoiler”, the lone voice of an emasculated opposition. Nasution also began to realize that unless its fundamental approach towards cooperating with the secular, Java-centric parties was radically altered, *Masyumi's* continued role in politics would only serve as a hindrance to effective governance (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, pp. 128-129).

Nasution's conclusion proved to be prescient in light of the deadlock that emerged within the Constituent Assembly when it began its deliberations in December 1956. Because voting results for this body were relatively consistent with the parliamentary elections, the Constituent Assembly was consistently unable to produce the necessary three-quarter majority needed to approve a new constitution for the Indonesian government. *Masyumi* simply would not acquiesce to making permanent any secular constitution that did not include the provisions outlined in the 1945 Jakarta Charter, and the secular parties, especially the PKI, were unwilling to make that concession. Similarly, when the President attempted to resubmit the 1945 Constitution for consideration, *Masyumi* balked because the older constitution would place too much authority into the President's hands. Ultimately, this elected body would be dissolved in 1959 because of its failure to make any progress towards drafting a new constitution.

*Masyumi's* failure to strenuously repudiate the outer island autonomy movements and its unwillingness to support Nasution's and Sukarno's calls to re-craft the machinery of the Indonesian government in order to make it less reflective of western liberal institutions, hardened Nasution's opinion toward his former allies and patrons. *Masyumi's* perceived unwillingness to compromise in the Constituent Assembly's deliberations was the final straw for Nasution. He had come to realize that *Masyumi's* resistance to compromise had doomed the government's chance to reform itself through

democratic means, and that realization had opened the door for more radical action. In July 1959 the Constitution of 1945 was re-adopted by Presidential Decree with the full support of Nasution and over the objections of *Masyumi*. Shortly over a year later, Sukarno would move to ban those parties whose ideologies he deemed were a threat to the *Pancasila* framework outlined in the 1945 Constitution, or that resisted the transition to his concept of “Guided Democracy”. First among the many casualties were Sukarno’s political nemeses, both *Masyumi* and the PSI. By this time, Nasution was fully committed to the government’s new direction, and he turned to a blind eye to the extinction of his former political allies.

*f. International Influences*

The U.S. government responded optimistically to the installation of the Burhanuddin cabinet, particularly after having endured two years of the stridently nationalist Sastroamidjojo government. Yet, as Gardner notes, U.S. enthusiasm was tempered by the realization that this particular cabinet would necessarily be short-lived because of the impending elections (1997, p. 123). Although the majority of U.S. observers, like their Indonesian counterparts, predicted a *Masyumi* sweep in the elections, there also remained a great deal of concern regarding how the Communists would fare.

By the mid-1950s, the political rehabilitation of the PKI and the rising success of their recruiting efforts in Java and South Sumatra had begun to set off alarm bells within the U.S. administration. A National Security Council policy statement from 1953 underscored U.S. wariness regarding Communist intentions in Indonesia and affirmed the willingness of the Eisenhower administration to use Islam as a political counterweight to further Communist growth (Gardner, 1997, p. 115-116). The U.S. government, though still hopeful of a *Masyumi* election win, was unwilling to leave the outcome entirely to chance. Consequently, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reportedly funneled one million dollars to gird *Masyumi*’s campaign activities in the months leading up to the elections, although apparently without much success (Conboy & Morrison, 1999, p. 13).

Although revelations of U.S. involvement in Indonesian domestic politics during this period would not be revealed until many years after the elections, there was

little doubt at the time that certain forces within the Indonesian political sphere were decidedly anti-West and leftist in orientation. The PKI clearly fell within this category, and by virtue of its economic agenda and its willingness to broker political deals with Communist parties, so did the PNI. Sukarno also was viewed with deep distrust and suspicion because of his recent tilt to the left and his increasingly vocal support for an expanded PKI role in government.

Not surprisingly, the U.S. government came to see *Masyumi* as the single best hope for a democratic Indonesia, or perhaps as the least of all possible evils. Unfortunately, as the level of the perceived threat from anti-Western forces appeared to be growing, the willingness of the U.S. administration to raise the stakes of U.S. interference in internal Indonesian affairs also rose commensurately. The Eisenhower administration had made the decision not to repeat the previous U.S. administration's mistakes concerning the preservation of the territorial integrity of China in the face of communist advances (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, p. 4; Gardner, 1997, p. 133). Indonesia would be a different matter. If need be, the U.S. would acquiesce to the territorial fragmentation of the Indonesian state in order to preserve democratic enclaves against communist expansion. Less than two years later, the U.S. government's willingness to accept the disintegration of the Indonesian state would become translated into the use of covert forces to fan the fires of various separatist revolts in the outer islands. *Masyumi's* unfortunate entanglement in these disturbances would provide just the pretext that its enemies were looking for to seal the party's fate. When its leadership became far too closely identified with these movements, *Masyumi* came to be seen as part of the problem rather than part of any potential solution.

#### **4. The Fall of Burhanuddin Harahap's Cabinet**

Despite attempts by the parliamentary opposition to hasten the collapse of the Burhanuddin government after the election results had become clear, the cabinet managed to hold on until the elected parliament could be seated in March 1956. The cabinet's tenure as a "caretaker" administration was turbulent at best and ineffective at worst. Given the opportunity to establish a government free of corruption, *Masyumi* failed to live up to the challenge. Its willingness to backtrack on its anti-corruption drive



when faced with political opposition, and its hesitancy in dealing with *Darul Islam* and outer island discontent caused senior army leaders to question the party's commitment to the very survival of the Indonesian state. The next PNI-led cabinet would again include *Masyumi* representation, but their participation would be uncooperative, grudging and short-lived.

The Burhanuddin cabinet would be the last *Masyumi*-led cabinet in the era of the provisional parliament. In less than a year, it would find itself fighting and loosing a rearguard action against a growing cast of enemies as it struggled to preserve the remnants of Indonesia's first democratic experiment. Within three years, it would become an outlawed organization and its principal leaders would be hunted as criminals.

## **H. AFTERMATH**

Although it was the first government to emerge from the post-election parliament, the cabinet that replaced that of Burhanuddin Harahap was little better than its predecessors. If the elections of 1955 had held the promise of stabilizing parliamentary politics, that promise would soon be shattered by reality. To the horror of many critics of parliamentary government, the total number of parties had in fact not been whittled down as a result of the elections, but had actually increased from 20 to 28 (Feith, 1962, p. 471). Similarly, none of the four main parties that had emerged was sufficiently strong to alone withstand strong opposition from a combination of the others. In short, none of the hoped-for stabilizing effects of the elections had come to fruition. Consequently, when the PNI's Ali Sastroamidjojo was appointed once again as cabinet *formateur*, he set to work trying to assemble a government that would have the support not only of his own party and *Nahdatul Ulama*, but of *Masyumi*, as well. In that way, he had hoped to mend the pre-elections breach between PNI and *Masyumi* and perhaps give the relationship a fresh start. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, the Sastroamidjojo cabinet won approval by the parliament by an unprecedented victory of 229 votes to none (Feith, 1962, p. 480).

Sastroamidjojo's efforts at inclusiveness were not universal. It was generally believed within the PNI's hierarchy that its own past attempts to use PKI support to weaken *Masyumi* had in large part unintentionally helped the PKI achieve higher than expected voter support in both the September and December elections. It had also

contributed to a great deal toward the enmity that had developed between them *Masyumi* and the PNI. Many thought the relationship was irreparably damaged (Feith, 1962, p. 466). Although there were serious misgivings expressed by other senior PNI leaders, Sastroamidjojo insisted on *Masyumi* representation in his cabinet. Despite President Sukarno's lobbying on the PKI's behalf, Sastroamidjojo was decidedly less enthusiastic about their possible inclusion. In the end, the decision was effectively made for him by both *Masyumi's* and *Nahdatul Ulama's* refusal to participate in any cabinet that included communist members.

Much to Sukarno's disappointment, Sastroamidjojo eventually opted to exclude the PKI in assembling a PNI-*Masyumi*- *Nahdatul Ulama* coalition cabinet. *Masyumi* received five portfolios, including the powerful Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice, as well receiving the post of First Deputy Prime Minister. Still, relations between the three main coalition parties never lived up to the ebullient expectations that had accompanied the cabinet's formation in March 1956. While Sastroamidjojo's intent for including *Masyumi* in the cabinet had been to ensure stability for the government by reducing potential parliamentary opposition, the policy differences between the PNI and *Masyumi* still remained far too wide to be easily bridged. Not surprisingly, within weeks of being seated, the cabinet's progress once again became bogged down as disagreement over government policies became the norm.

The central theme for the majority of PNI/*Masyumi* disagreements concerned the government's economic policy, which like that of the previous Sastroamidjojo cabinet was oriented toward the indigenization of the Indonesian economy. The continued overvaluation of the Indonesian *rupiah* in the face of rising inflation hit directly at the heart of *Masyumi's* constituency in the *seberang*. The outer island communities, which were almost exclusively exporters, were disproportionately hurt by the disparity between the official value of the Indonesian *rupiah* and its true worth on the international market. They bore the brunt of inflation, while government subsidies to indigenous businesses allowed large numbers of Javanese businessmen to profit. The Javanese, who were net importers of *seberang* exports, benefited enormously from this economic inequity, and not surprisingly, they were loath to appreciably alter the economic relationship. Regardless of issues of basic economic fairness, devaluation of the *rupiah* would have led

to higher import costs and would have had the most serious consequences for Javanese consumers. The failure of the *seberang* communities to force the central government to devalue the *rupiah* to a more realistic level is an indication not only of their own political impotence, but of the weakness of *Masyumi*, as well. The inability of *Masyumi* to effectively rectify the economic imbalances between the center and the *seberang* would eventually contribute to a backlash within the army that would have even more dire consequences for the government than that which had occurred almost five years earlier.

Since the early years of independence, the regional army commanders had always been forced to supplement their operating budgets by participation in private business ventures. This intermingling of military and entrepreneurial activities was not only expected, but frequently encouraged as a means to reduce the drain on the national treasury. By 1956, however, the central government's policies had brought the economy to near-ruin, and the presence of large-scale smuggling operations conducted by regional commanders was seen as a potentially vital source of revenue for the government. The central government began to try to reign in smuggling operations in the outer islands, but by then *seberang* resentment over the worsening trade imbalance with Java-based importers and manufacturers precluded much sympathy. A string of smuggling operations, which were either led by or ignored by regional commanders, was targeted for cessation by the government. In some instances, the cabinet's orders were followed, yet in others, they were simply disobeyed.

The involvement of regional military leaders in smuggling operations was merely a symptom of a greater problem that was beginning to develop within the army leadership. The unity of purpose that had emerged after the April 1955 Yogyakarta conference was beginning to crack again under the pressure of Indonesia's economic deterioration. Nasution had returned to power, but his rivals, notably Generals Simbolon and Lubis, were still chafing at having been passed over for the top job. They viewed Nasution's now close working relationship with Sukarno and Sastroamidjojo as a betrayal of the 1955 officer pledge to defend the nation's interests (if not the army's interests) against the machinations of the civil politicians to (Feith, 1962, p. 502). Nasution's efforts to solidify his grip on power by ordering mass transfers of commanders from their regional bases of power were met by quiet, determined

resistance, but an explosive combination of mistrust and enmity hung in the air, waiting only for the inevitable spark that would set it off.

A confluence of professional jealousy, exasperation over unrestrained political corruption, and unresolved economic grievances provided the spark that would eventually ignite an inferno that would consume Indonesia's fragile democracy. In August 1956, military personnel acting under the direction of Colonel Lubis arrested Foreign Minister Roeslan Abdulgani on corruption charges. Abdulgani's guilt or innocence in this matter is less significant than the government's reaction, or more specifically, Nasution's reaction to the event. At the behest of the Prime Minister, Nasution stepped into the fray to overturn Colonel Lubis' orders, but his countermanding of the arrest warrant set off a dreadful chain of events. Within days, Lubis resigned his post as Assistant Chief of Staff, but he had not yet given up the struggle to demonstrate the army's moral authority over corrupt, self-serving politicians, even if (in his eyes) Nasution had now become Sukarno's and Sastroamidjojo's lapdog.

In October and November troops loyal to Colonel Lubis attempted two *coups d'etat* in Jakarta, but their poorly coordinated efforts to invade the city and arrest key pro-government leaders were easily repulsed by troops loyal to Nasution. Consequently, Lubis was forced to flee to Sumatra, where he was welcomed as a comrade by Colonel Simbolon. A month later, in an event eerily reminiscent of the October 17<sup>th</sup> 1952 Affair, several dozen officers in Sumatra joined together to sign a petition critical of the central government, and which demanded greater economic and political autonomy for the regions. This petition also demanded the future limitation of Sukarno's role as President to a figurehead status, and it demanded the formation of a new "business" cabinet under both Mohammad Hatta and Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX of Yogyakarta.

The failure of Jakarta to respond to this list of grievances had an immediate consequence. Within days, the regimental commander in West Sumatra, Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad Hussein, seized command of the province of Central Sumatra, and two days later, Colonel Simbolon did likewise in the province of North Sumatra. The rebel commanders proclaimed the *Pemerintahan Revolusi Republik Indonesia* ("Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic" -PRRI). A similar uprising in North Sulawesi erupted not long after, and in February, both uprisings made common cause against

Jakarta. Although the government would be paralyzed by these uprisings, the army under Nasution would move relatively quickly to quash the rebels. These movements would effectively last less than a year, but they would nonetheless have very important long-term consequences for both the government and for *Masyumi*.

The Sastroamidjojo cabinet's inability to respond to this crisis made it seem weak and indecisive, and a groundswell of opposition to the government began to build. Like the rebels, *Masyumi* lobbied for a Hatta-led business cabinet, but by now the Vice-President had resigned in protest of Sukarno's policies, and neither Sukarno, nor the PNI had any intention of allowing him back onto the stage. *Masyumi*'s response was to abruptly advise Sastroamidjojo to return the cabinet's mandate, but the Prime Minister refused, and in this decision he had the support of *Nahdatul Ulama*. On January 9, 1957, *Masyumi* made the fateful decision to cast its lot with the rebel cause and it withdrew its five ministers from the cabinet. The Sastroamidjojo cabinet would be the last cabinet to have *Masyumi* representation.

## I. CONCLUSION

There were several important consequences of the failed rebellions, including the forced retirement of many anti-Nasution army officers and the reassignment of Javanese officers to leadership positions in the *seberang*, both of which had the effect of making the officer corps more sympathetic and responsive to Javanese interests. The end of the rebellions also solidified Nasution's role as the senior military leader by ridding him of his primary rivals, Simbolon and Lubis. However, *Masyumi*'s role in supporting the rebellion would also not be forgotten by Nasution, and they would suffer the inevitable consequences of their defeat. Following the collapse of these rebellions, Nasution banned local *Masyumi* branches in those areas of Sumatra and Sulawesi that had failed to support the central government. This ban effectively cut the legs out from under *Masyumi*'s voter base. As a practical consequence of their association with the failed rebel cause, *Masyumi*'s national leaders now found themselves without allies.

On March 14, 1957, the era of constitutional democracy in Indonesia came to an ignominious end with the resignation of the Sastroamidjojo cabinet and the proclamation of martial law by President Sukarno. The years that followed would be marked by

increasing authoritarianism as Sukarno and Nasution moved in tandem to stamp out the last vestiges of the power of both parliament and the political parties. In July 1958, Nasution would begin to urge President Sukarno to reinstate the 1945 Constitution, which provided for a strong presidential system. On July 5, 1959, Sukarno issued a decree to this effect, dissolving the elected parliament, and replacing it with one of his own choosing. This action marked the formal establishment of the era of *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (“Guided Democracy”); a period of increasingly dangerous political brinksmanship between the President, the army and the PKI. In time, Guided Democracy would itself be consigned to the same fate as the elected parliament, and President Sukarno would fall from power in the coup that brought General Suharto to power in 1965. *Masyumi* was permitted no role in the era of Guided Democracy, and in August 1960 it was officially proscribed by Sukarno for failing to adequately renounce its members who had participated in the uprisings. *Masyumi* was dead.

This chapter examined five successive cabinets during the era of Indonesia’s provisional parliament with the intent of analyzing *Masyumi’s* relationships with other key political actors. The intent is to draw out those relationships and events which contributed over time to *Masyumi’s* decline and eventual proscription. A careful study of this material indicates that there were several key power dynamics that either enabled or constrained *Masyumi’s* ability to achieve its political goals, including ensuring its own survival. In Chapter IV, these dynamics will be discussed in detail with the intent of extracting those fundamental lessons which may be extrapolated for consideration in a contemporary context. That discussion will help identify markers which may be useful in determining whether modern Islamic political parties in Indonesia have learned the lessons of their forefathers, or whether they are doomed to repeat the same mistakes that led to *Masyumi’s* demise.

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## **IV. A HOUSE DIVIDED: MASYUMI'S FALL AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN INDONESIA**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

*Masyumi's* decline throughout the 1950s and its ultimate proscription at the hands of its political enemies seems to have contravened the predictions of many of that era's most respected political pundits. Logically, *Masyumi* should have been able to derive an electoral advantage from the fact that Indonesia's population was nearly 90% Muslim in 1950. It should also have been able to capitalize on the fact that many of its own leaders, as well as many of the leaders of its allied parties, were some of the mostly highly-educated, politically-astute, and bureaucratically-experienced members of that era's Indonesian elite. *Masyumi* electoral potential should have also been bolstered by the support it received not only from Vice President Mohammad Hatta and from senior elements in the Indonesian army, but also from the United States as well. Yet, the question that still begs to be answered is how *Masyumi* could have begun the period armed with such a plentitude of political strengths, and still be unable to fulfill the promise of leadership that it had once offered to the Indonesian *ummah*? Were *Masyumi's* reverses and setbacks the inevitable result of a cultural disaffection for political Islam, or were they simply the consequences of poor tactical and strategic political decisions made in the context of a unique period in Indonesian history?

This chapter examines a broad spectrum of political relationships between *Masyumi* and its enemies, as well as between *Masyumi* and its allies. The power dynamics of these relationships are considered in the context of key political crises in order to pinpoint where "course changes" might have produced different outcomes for the party. In many instances, *Masyumi's* unwillingness to compromise on its core positions concerning political, economic and security policies left it increasingly isolated from those parties and organizations that were in a position to aid it. Increasingly, *Masyumi* simply did not have the political capital to sustain its hardline positions, and its intransigence in defending its principals was often perceived as obstructionism and as a threat to the internal security and stability of Indonesia. A greater proclivity for



compromise, and the recognition that short-term tactical losses do not necessarily preclude the attainment of long-term strategic goals, might have yielded a more positive outcome for *Masyumi*, for its leaders, and ultimately for the very survival of Indonesian democracy itself.

This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of how lessons gleaned from an examination of *Masyumi*'s experience in the period of the provisional parliament may yet remain applicable for modern Islamic parties in Indonesia in the year leading up to the next general elections.

## **B. MASYUMI'S POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **1. Masyumi's Internal Dynamics**

#### *a. Modernist/Traditionalist Schism*

Until *Nahdatul Ulama*'s disaffiliation in April 1952, *Masyumi* had long been an inherently unstable organization. Vast differences in socio-political orientation between that party's two main membership constituencies ensured that the struggle for control of its leadership apparatus would sap the party of its strength and impede its collective ability to orient its energies outward towards its political opponents. The origins for this struggle for dominance within the party can be traced back to the very roots of Islam in Indonesia. The long process of Islamization, which has already been outlined extensively in Chapter II, produced two very different variations of Islamic culture in maritime Southeast Asia. In commercial merchant communities, such as in North Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and among the Java *pebisir* ("coastal") entrepôts, a steady and sustained exposure to Islamic trading networks over the course of centuries led to the development of a more orthodox manifestation of Islamic culture reminiscent of its Indian and Persian influences. In these locations, Islam was embraced because it provided a means to "plug" the local community into the larger network of Islamic commerce in an era when the regional markets were dominated by Muslim merchants. Islam became the central framework that defined the development of education, the arts, the economy, government institutions, law, and social relations, and it became the lens through which these communities viewed the world.

The inner areas of Java, which were the domains of that region's most culturally advanced, if not most powerful, kingdoms, received Islam in a manner wholly different than that described above. Because contact with the Muslim-dominated trade networks was limited for hydraulic-societies such as these, and because they already possessed very mature religious cosmologies, the attraction of Islam was necessarily limited. Mass conversion was brought about only by the determined efforts of itinerant proselytizers, the *wali songo* ("nine saints"), who were able to successfully bridge the gap between Islam and the Hindu-Buddhist culture of court life. Like both Hinduism and Buddhism before it, Islam also was eventually embraced by the interior kingdoms, but in a manner wholly consistent with established social, cultural and political institutions. In short, Islam was not so much adopted, as it was absorbed and syncretized.

Chapter II discussed at length how the bifurcation of the socio-cultural development of the Indonesian *ummah* on Java and in the *seberang* became the basis for much of the theological tension between *Masyumi's* modernist and traditionalist elements, but it does not fully explain the full extent of their tortured relations. Although there were numerous theological disputes between *Masyumi's Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdatul Ulama* constituencies, they were of little importance when compared to disputes of a political or economic nature that had been colored by fundamentally different cultural perceptions.

In terms of their approach to politics, the traditionalist and modernist leaders of *Masyumi* could not have been further apart from each other. Javanese conceptions of power inevitably colored the traditionalist Muslim's worldview as much as did ideas about Islam (Lanti, 2001, p. 5). According to Anderson, this Javanese view of "power" is based upon a model of a Buddhist *mandala*, wherein authority is exerted centripetally from the Javanese heartland, and becomes progressively weaker the further it extends from the seat of government (1990, p. 42). Moreover, for the Javanese, one's ability to gain, maintain and exercise authority is determined by a finite quality and quantity of power, and thus the struggle for authority always constitutes a zero-sum game: Every gain in influence by your opponent must necessarily produce a diminishment of your own authority (Anderson, 1990, pp. 44-45). Thus, centralization of power indicates strength and reinforces itself, while the diffusion of power indicates

weakness and decay. For traditional Javanese, it was almost always preferable to compromise one's ideological principles through *musyawarah* ("deliberation") and *mufakat* ("consensus"), than to ever yield one's grip on the actual reins of power.

In the *seberang*, conceptions of power, and thus governance, were very different. Communities that emerged through the expansion of trading networks were much more attuned to negotiation, compromise, and the decentralization of authority. Outer Islanders saw the Indonesian state not as a *mandala*, but as a family of equal members working for the common good. The concept of local autonomy was a natural extension of Islam's inherent egalitarianism and provided a safeguard against fears of return of historical Javanese domination (Lanti, 2001, p. 22). Consequently, those of the *seberang* generally viewed the centralizing tendencies of the post-independence Indonesian government with alarm, even if the Javanese leaders saw it as a natural and necessary expression of Indonesian unity, power and stability.

The most fundamental disagreement between *Masyumi's* modernist and traditionalist wings generally concerned the centralization of power not only within the government as a whole, but also within the party itself. At the national level, the Javanese leaders of the *Nahdatul Ulama* were far more comfortable with political trends that reinforced the concentration of power in the hands of the central government in Jakarta. They were after all steeped in Javanese political and social culture, which had for centuries emphasized that anything other than centripetal power led to weakness and decay. Although they may have been sympathetic to the economic and political complaints of the *seberang* communities, they did not see an acceptable alternative to the centralizing trend: Diffusion of power from the center to the regions would only serve to weaken the whole.

The struggle for leadership dominance within *Masyumi* was a reflection of these differing conceptions of power. For the *Nahdatul Ulama* leadership, the usurpation of their leadership by the modernists at the end of the independence struggle was not only a practical blow to their influence, but an emotional one also. If power was finite, then the rise in the influence and authority of modernist leaders like Natsir, Sukiman and Prawiranegara could only be viewed as a diminishment of the importance of the *Nahdatul Ulama* leaders. Wahab Chasbullah, the senior *kyai* and supreme head of *Nahdatul Ulama*

throughout this period, certainly viewed the growing preeminence of modernist leadership as a growing threat to the *Nahdatul Ulama's* very survival (Barton & Fealy, 1996, p. 21).

The final break between *Masyumi* and *Nahdatul Ulama* was precipitated by the refusal of the modernist wing to acquiesce to the appointment of a traditionalist to the post of Minister of Religion in the Wilopo cabinet. As noted previously, a *Nahdatul Ulama* member, K.H. Wahid Hasjim, had held this portfolio throughout the tenures of the previous two cabinets, but by 1952, Natsir's wing within *Masyumi* was trying to expand its influence within the bureaucracies, and the portfolio of the Ministry of Religion seemed ripe for exploitation. The alignment of senior *Nahdatul Ulama* leaders with Natsir's modernist rival, Dr. Sukiman, perhaps made the assault on this last remaining bastion of *Nahdatul Ulama* influence an all the more attractive prospect, however the response by traditionalist leaders was predictable. They had been warning of the potential for a party breach as far back as 1950, when senior *kyai* had spoken out about the possibility of leaving *Masyumi* to form their own party if their influence continued to be eroded by modernist gains (Barton & Fealy, 1996, pp. 21-22). Regardless, Natsir failed to appreciate the depth of their anger and he reached too far. As a result, *Nahdatul Ulama* reacted as had been predicted and its leadership finally carried through on their oft-repeated threats to secede.

The further marginalization of *Nahdatul Ulama* was perhaps part of a larger plan by Natsir to consolidate his leadership dominance within *Masyumi*. After 1945, the power balance within *Masyumi* had alternated between favoring Natsir's "religious socialists" and a more conservative faction of modernists led by Dr. Sukiman. Because *Nahdatul Ulama* leaders had long been more favorably inclined towards Dr. Sukiman, Natsir's move was also likely intended to ensure that the balance of power within the party shifted decisively in his favor. Natsir's election as party chairman at the sixth party congress in August 1952, and the subsequent marginalization of Dr. Sukiman's influence, can be seen as confirmation of the efficacy of Natsir's short-term political strategy (Lubis, 1952, p. 155); however, the long-term consequences of Natsir's struggle for primacy were disastrous for his party. Even after his involvement in the failed PRRI and Permesta rebellions, his influence in *Masyumi* had become so pervasive

and unassailable that Dr. Sukiman was unable to expel him in a last ditch attempt to insulate the party from Nasution's and Sukarno's inevitable retribution (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 263).

**b. Lessons**

The loss of *Nahdatul Ulama* was perhaps the most catastrophic blow suffered by *Masyumi* throughout its entire history. Besides the practical consequence of denying *Masyumi* seven crucial votes in the provisional parliament, the alignment of *Nahdatul Ulama* with the PSII and several other smaller Islamic political parties under the umbrella of the *Liga Muslimin Indonesia* ("Indonesian Muslim League" – LIGA) broke *Masyumi's* monopoly on claiming to represent the wishes of the Indonesian *ummah*. Further, the natural convergence of the worldview of the *Nahdatul Ulama* leaders with those of the leaders of the other Javanese-dominated parties facilitated their political cooperation in the years that followed. Eventually, *Nahdatul Ulama* would be willing to compromise some of its most dearly-held political principles in order to preserve its continued influence in the era of Sukarno's *Demokrasi Terpimpin* ("Guided Democracy"). Conversely, Natsir's commitment to *Masyumi's* modernist agenda and its *seberang* constituency was beyond compromise, even when it became clear that the party's inability to carve out middle ground would imperil its very survival.

Had *Masyumi's* leadership been more far-sighted, they perhaps might have recognized the value of compromise in the short-term in order to achieve their long-term political goals. The alienation of the traditionalist *kyai* deprived *Masyumi* of a significant share of its grassroots support and organizational capacity in the years leading up to elections, and provided a wedge issue to the secular-nationalists that could be used to chip away at *Masyumi's* remaining support in East and Central Java. PKI and PNI efforts to cast *Masyumi* leaders as intolerant religious extremists were made all that much more believable by the apparent willingness of *Nahdatul Ulama* to discard its own political principles for the sake of ensuring the stability of central government, if not for preserving for themselves a prominent role in it.

In 1999, the *Nahdatul Ulama's* Abdurrahman Wahid was elected to the Presidency as a direct consequence of the willingness of several of the major Islamic

parties to set aside their internecine squabbles to form a *Poros Tengah* (“Central Axis”) with the singular goal of providing a third parliamentary bloc to balance against Megawati Sukarnoputri’s *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan* (“Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle” –PDIP) and the government’s *Golongan Karya* (“Functional Groups” –GOLKAR) (Barton, October, 2002, p. 275). The Central Axis did not win the backing of the largest of the Islamic parties, the *Partai Pembangunan Persatuan* (“United Development Party” –PPP), nor did it survive long after Wahid’s swearing in, but it provides a tantalizing glimpse of the potential for greater cooperation among the Islamic parties when the stakes are high.

Already there are efforts underway among the numerous Islamic parties to explore potential coalition and vote-sharing arrangements for the upcoming elections. As noted in previous chapters, there remains a great gulf between the agendas of several of these parties, if not between their basic political philosophies. The carving out of middle ground upon which all can stand will be a difficult prospect, but the potential rewards are great. As *Masyumi’s* experience in the 1950s aptly demonstrates, compromise will be fundamental to the success of these efforts. Similarly, intransigence will only serve to keep the Indonesian *ummah* politically divided and vulnerable to the continued domination of the secular parties, which remain bastions of Javanese political culture.

## **2. Masyumi’s Relationship with Its Political Allies**

*Masyumi’s* political support in the provisional parliament came from a two-tier system of informal party alliances. The lower tier of political allies consisted of a myriad of smaller parties whose political loyalty and support was inconsistent and usually more dependent on access to sources of patronage than any shared political heritage or ideology. The political support of these parties, such as the *Persatuan Indonesia Raya* (“Greater Indonesian Union” –PIR), *Partai Indonesia Raya* (“Greater Indonesian Party” –Parindra) and the Democratic Fraction, was frequently contingent upon what each prospective *formateur* could offer. The leaders of these parties were well aware that the continued existence of their respective parties after the elections was doubtful, and consequently the price of their support grew exponentially as the election season approached (Lubis, 1952, p. 158). Consequently, the practice of *dagang sapi* (“cow

trading”) became more prevalent in the later years of the provisional parliament as the two main factions were increasingly forced to vie for the crucial support of these second tier parties (Feith, 1962, p. 419). Parties such as these were usually the first to abandon a cabinet in trouble if for no other reason than they were confident of their inclusion in any follow-on coalitions. Although their support was usually essential for ensuring sufficient parliamentary support for a cabinet to achieve an opportunity to work, the price paid for the support of these parties was inherent government instability.

*Masyumi*’s top tier alliances were comprised of long-time political allies, such as Sjahrir’s *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (“Indonesia Socialist Party” –PSI), as well as numerous smaller non-Islamic religious parties, like the *Partai Katolik* and the *Partai Kristen Indonesia* (“Indonesian Christian Party” –Parkindo). The relationship between *Masyumi* and its top tier allies was girded by a shared ideological outlook concerning the decentralization of state power, measures to achieve economic stabilization and development, the process of bureaucratic rationalization, and the conduct of foreign relations. These relationships were both consistent and mutually supportive, even if none of *Masyumi*’s allies shared its enthusiasm for establishing Islam as the basis for the state.

#### *a. Christian Parties*

Although their relationship with *Masyumi* might have seemed counter-intuitive, the political support of both Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* remained consistent throughout the 1950s. Feith has described these two Christian parties as “permanent minority parties” because, unlike most of the other minor parties in parliament, their respective constituencies were drawn from distinct minority populations, rather than as a consequence of any particularly strong leadership personalities or ideology (1962, p. 145). Their voter base was comparatively solid and remained generally unperturbed by the constant machinations of the other parties in parliament (Lubis, 1952, p. 21). More importantly, they had little to fear from elections.

In the patterns of their constituencies, we can see the fundamental cause for their political alliance with *Masyumi*. All three were primarily parties of the outer islands with a vested interest in holding the Javanese parties at bay, while pushing for greater regional economic and political autonomy. Throughout this period, both

Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* were able to work comfortably with *Masyumi* because in most cases their respective political agendas were in consonance, particularly when *Masyumi's* agenda was shaped by the influence of Mohammad Natsir. The elephant in the room was of course *Masyumi's* position concerning the establishment of Islam as the basis for the Indonesian state, but this was a disagreement that all of these parties anticipated would be resolved in the Constituent Assembly through parliamentary debate. Thus, the Christian parties felt reasonably comfortable making common cause with the Islamists against other dangers that were closer at hand, particularly the threat of Javanese domination and the expansion of atheistic Communism.

Both Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* were relatively small parties. In 1951, Parkindo claimed a membership of around 320,000, and most of its membership came from the areas around Minahasa and Ambon, as well as from North Sumatra (Feith, 1962, p. 125). The *Partai Katolik* had far fewer members as a consequence of the smaller size of the Catholic population in Indonesia, and most of its members came from the islands of eastern Indonesia, especially Flores. On Java, the *Partai Katolik* could lay claim to slightly more than 100,000 Catholics, and the Protestants fared little better there (Feith, 1957, p. 63). The election results of 1955 reflected the *seberang* quality of these parties: Parkindo received most of its support in Maluku (35%), North Sulawesi (21%), West Nusatenggara (18%), North Sumatra (14%) and South Sulawesi (11%), whereas *Partai Katolik* polled strongest in the Catholic stronghold of West Nusatenggara (42%) (Cribb, 163-164). Neither received noteworthy support on Java.

Regardless of the loyalty of these parties, neither could bring much numerical support to the table. In the provisional parliament of 233 members, these parties controlled a mere thirteen seats between them. After the 1955 elections, that total would grow by only one seat, yet the total number of members of parliament would grow by twenty-four. In that period, however, the political capital of both Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* was dependant less on their numerical strength, than it was on the reputation of their members for integrity and ability (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 20). Consequently, even if they rarely held portfolios of importance, their participation in the respective cabinets of Natsir, Sukiman, Wilopo, and Harahap was greatly valued. As Bone notes, while they did not have “top-shelf” leaders like *Masyumi's* Natsir and the



PSI's Sjahrir, they were often ideal mid-level bureaucrats, who were esteemed for their competence and administrative experience (1954, p. 21).

The political support offered by Parkindo and *Partai Katolik* was generally quiet, unassuming, and non-confrontational, but on occasion it proved pivotal for *Masyumi*. In the weeks leading up to the decisive October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair, the steadfastness of both of these parties became critical in demonstrating the Wilopo cabinet's unwavering support for the beleaguered Minister of Defense, Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX. Both parties threatened to withdraw their ministers from the cabinet if the parliamentary opposition succeeded in pressuring the Sultan to resign his post (Feith, 1962, p. 255). The support of the Christian parties was all the more critical because this crisis occurred only months after *Nahdatul Ulama's* disaffiliation from *Masyumi*, which had deprived the government of seven critical seats in parliament. However, both Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* ultimately paid for their loyalty because neither of them was invited to participate in Ali Sastroamidjojo's first cabinet (1952-1955), which followed the fall of Wilopo's government.

In the turmoil that *Masyumi* would face in the years following the 1955 elections, both Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* would unfortunately prove to be of precious little help to the Islamists. The alignment of senior *Masyumi* leaders with the PRRI and Permesta rebellions in 1957 removed the political struggle from the parliamentary arena and raised the stakes of the Islamist's gamble to unprecedented heights. The Christian parties, though supportive of the goals of the PRRI and Permesta, were not supportive of their methods. It was the constitution that afforded the Christian minorities a measure of protection against efforts by Islamists like the *Darul Islam's* S.M. Kartosuwirjo and Daud Beureu'eh to establish an Islamic state by force. The abandonment by *Masyumi's* senior leadership of the very parliamentary procedures that had protected the rights of both Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* to exist in the first place ultimately caused the Christian parties to distance themselves from their former political allies at a time when *Masyumi* could least afford to see its support slip away.

**b. *Partai Sosialis Indonesia***

The *Partai Sosialis* (“Socialist Party”) was founded in December 1945 as a consequence of the merging of Amir Sjarifuddin’s *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (“Indonesian Socialist Party” –PSI) and Sutan Sjahrir’s *Partai Rakyat Sosialis* (“Socialist People’s Party”). The party that emerged drew its support primarily from young western-educated intellectuals and students, many of who had been involved with Sjahrir and Sjarifuddin’s anti-Japanese underground movement throughout the dark years of World War II. As Kahin notes, although the *Partai Sosialis*’ membership was not as numerous as those of either the PNI or *Masyumi*, its members were far more organized and politically conscious (1952, p. 158). Unlike either of the Christian parties or the post-1952 *Masyumi*, the *Partai Sosialis* was not primarily a party of the *seberang*: Instead, it became the political vehicle of intellectuals, and thus, the heart of its strength lie in the major urban areas of Jakarta, East Kalimantan and West Nusatenggara.

Sjahrir’s political ideology was based on the works of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, but he had revised and adapted those doctrines to what he perceived as unique Indonesian experiences and needs (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 21). His unique blend of Indonesian and Western values was well-suited to triangulate the divisions between the three other competing secular ideological models manifest within the revolutionary leadership; the radical nationalists, who wanted to sever all ties with the West; the accomodationist leadership, who were willing to give away too much of Indonesia’s sovereign rights; and those hardline Marxist leaders, who wanted to establish an Indonesian soviet. Sjahrir’s brand of “eclectic” democratic socialism propounded “democracy” rather than “nationalism”, and it was equally dismissive of the “feudalism” of the old traditional order, the “fascism” of the Japanese-inspired collaborationists, and the “super-nationalism” of the hardline Marxists (Kahin, 1952, p. 165). Although he disavowed the necessity of class warfare in Indonesia, he recognized the danger of “paternalistic authoritarianism” ingrained in traditional culture and he was particularly vehement in his opposition to the participation in the government of those who had collaborated with the Japanese (Sjahrir, 1968, pp. 28-29; Kahin, 1952, p. 321).

As with the Christian parties, the *Partai Sosialis*’ informal alliance with *Masyumi* would seem on the surface to be counter-intuitive, however, the reasons for it

were very pragmatic. The *Partai Sosialis*' informal political alliance with *Masyumi* can be traced to an attitude of pragmatism, both in terms of ideological compatibility and with regard to its own preservation.

With regard to ideology, the agenda of Sjahrir's *Partai Sosialis* was not far off the mark from that of *Masyumi*'s "religious-socialist" wing under Natsir. In the areas of economic development, international relations, regional autonomy, as well as on a host of many other major issues, both parties were fundamentally in accord with each other. Although the traditionalist factions of *Masyumi* may have had little in common with the *Partai Sosialis*' urban intellectuals, *Masyumi*'s modernist leaders, particularly those who were also members of the *Muhammadiyah*, shared an appreciation for the potential that western science, technology and education could and should have in solving Indonesia's problems (Samson, 1968, p. 1002). Similarly, both parties espoused complimentary views regarding the evils of "socially-harmful" capitalism and liberalism, while upholding the sanctity of individualism and the rights to property ownership (Kahin, 1952, pp. 306-311). There were striking parallels between Sjahrir's political tract, entitled *Perjuangan Kita* ("Our Struggle"), and one published by senior *Masyumi* leader Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, entitled *Politik dan Revolusi Kita* ("Politics and Our Revolution"), both of which outlined a pragmatic middle-course for the Indonesian revolution. Consequently, in a political sea of ultra-nationalists, super-nationalists, and religious traditionalists, *Masyumi*'s religious-socialists and the *Partai Sosialis*' democratic-socialists found common cause.

While the issue of Islam's role in the government remained an unresolved issue between *Masyumi* and its allies, it could hardly be said that *Masyumi* itself was even clear about where it stood on the matter. While almost all *Masyumi* senior leadership at that time remained in agreement that Islam should provide the basis for the state, there was far less consensus concerning what that would actually mean in practice. Although many continued to call for an "Islamic state" centered on the *Sharia*, many more among Natsir's faction were content to allow secular institutions to operate separate from religious interference as long as there were no basic contradictions of purpose between

the two spheres (Samson, 1968, p. 1003). In this light, it is easier to see how the *Partai Sosialis* leadership and *Masyumi*'s were able to cooperate effectively against their common ideological foes.

Despite their political compatibility, cooperation between the *Partai Sosialis* and *Masyumi* was grounded in more than ideological similitude. The strengthening of their informal alliance throughout the later 1940s and early 1950s was cemented in accordance with an old Arabic proverb, which wisely cautions us to recall, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend". Thus, one can also explain the bonds between *Masyumi* and the *Partai Sosialis* as a not-unexpected by-product of not only the ideological struggle, but also the physical struggle in the face of growing communist power.

In the years immediately following the Japanese surrender, Stalinist and Trotskyite operatives increasingly infiltrated the upper leadership levels of the *Partai Sosialis*. Many of these pro-Soviet operatives began to gain key leadership positions within the party with the aim of wresting control from Sjahrir's more moderate democratic-socialist followers. By 1946, Sjahrir's socialists were becoming overwhelmed by hardline factions within the *Sayap Kiri* ("left wing") that were calling for class warfare and closer-alignment with the U.S.S.R. (Kahin 1952, p. 258). This divide was exacerbated by the failure of the hardline Marxist factions to support Sjahrir's concessions pursuant to the negotiations that had led to the Linggadjati Agreement of 1947. When Sjahrir's cabinet finally fell, he was replaced by his biggest rival within the *Partai Sosialis*, Amir Sjarifuddin. Both he and his *Masyumi* allies were pointedly excluded from the Sjarifuddin cabinet.

Sjarifuddin's cabinet would fall in much the same way as Sjahrir's had after the details of the Renville Agreement became public, and this would precipitate the permanent fragmentation of the old *Partai Sosialis* into two parties. In February 1948, Sjahrir left his old party in order to form a new *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* ("Indonesian Socialist Party" –PSI); however, only a relatively small core of western-educated intellectuals followed him, and as a result Sjahrir never again achieved the large numbers of followers that he had enjoyed while as head of the original *Partai Sosialis* (Swift,

1989, p. 26). From that point on, the PSI became primarily a party of urban intellectuals without much rural support (Bone, 1954, p. 21).

The remaining factions of the *Sayap Kiri* remained under the leadership of Amir Sjarifuddin, who in August 1948 announced that he had been a secret member of the *Partai Kommunis Indonesia* (“Indonesian Communist Party” –PKI) since 1935. With the return of Musso from a twelve-year long exile in the U.S.S.R., the old *Partai Sosialis* was merged into the PKI and Sjarifuddin’s leadership role subsequently became markedly diminished. In September 1948, the PKI under the leadership of both Musso and Sjarifuddin attempted a coup in the city of Madiun in East Java. Their short-lived National Front Government collapsed upon the arrival of the Republican Army’s Siliwangi Division under the command of Colonel A.H. Nasution, but the intentional slaughter of *Masyumi* members by PKI fighters during the ensuing retreat irrevocably hardened both *Masyumi*’s and the Army leadership’s hatred of the Communists.

After the demise of the PKI following their crushing defeat at Madiun, the political alliance between *Masyumi* and the PSI began to stagnate. Although cooperation between the two parties continued apace, the relationship would not again be tested until 1952. The events that surrounded the October 17th Affair of that year set the stage for a showdown between the two emerging power blocs in the provisional parliament. On one side was *Masyumi*, the PSI and the Christian parties, while on the other was the PNI, which was supported by the President and to some degree *Nahdatul Ulama*. The Army, as was described in the previous chapter, was split down the middle, and the PKI, which had still not fully recovered from Madiun, was proving to be an important background supporter of the PNI block.

The PNI’s political attacks on Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX during the weeks leading up to October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair were widely seen as a proxy attack on Sjahrir’s PSI, for whom both the PNI and Sukarno held little love (Bone, 1954, p. 18). *Masyumi* was compelled by the almost rabid nature of the PNI’s tactics to come to the political defense of both the Sultan and the PSI, and in the weeks that followed, the hardening in the divisions between these two blocs became increasingly apparent. The Wilopo cabinet, for which *Masyumi*, the PSI, Parkindo and the *Partai Katolik* all fought hard to preserve, eventually fell nonetheless, and Ali Sastroamidjojo was subsequently given the

next *formateurship* by President Sukarno. The absence of members from both *Masyumi* and the PSI, as well as from either of the two Christian parties, was as clear an indication as any that the former *ad hoc* alliance between these parties had been transformed into something more permanent. The “no-quarter” political tactics of the PNI, PKI and Sukarno had hardened perceptions between both the *Masyumi* and PSI leadership that future avenues of cooperation with the PNI had all but been closed.

The membership rolls of the PSI never fully recovered from split of the *Sayap Kiri* in 1948, and it remained thenceforth almost exclusively an urban party of intellectual elites (Bone, 1954, p. 21). Still, its influence was greater than might be inferred from its size. As noted previously, its members tended to be more educated, worldlier, and more politically-conscious than those of many of the other parties. It was perhaps in recognition of their professional competence that some political observers predicted that the PSI would gain seats in the 1955 elections (Lubis, 1952, p. 158). In fact, the PSI suffered a tremendous lessening of its prestige and political power as a consequence of those elections, and its presence in parliament was cut by nearly two-thirds.

The PSI’s dramatic setback in the 1955 elections has been attributed to its leadership’s underestimation of the role that traditional loyalties would play among large segments of the rural population. These loyalties in many instances produced voter patterns whereby whole villages simply cast their votes in the same way as their religious leaders (*santri/kyai*) or their village headmen (*priyayi*) (Mysbergh, 1957, p. 39). Consequently, any party that could not appeal to traditional bonds of loyalty towards leadership figures or to communal social obligations was bound to suffer from poor voter support (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 23). As a result of the PSI’s inability to capitalize on these loyalties, it went from the fourth largest party in the provisional parliament to the eighth largest in the newly elected parliament, and when the second Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet was seated in March 1956, the PSI was not among those parties offered a place at the table.

When the Permesta and PRRI rebellions broke out in Sulawesi and Sumatra, respectively, both *Masyumi* and the PSI were placed in a difficult position by the developing situation. On one hand, they were strongly sympathetic of the grievances

of the *seberang* against increasing Javanese political and economic domination, but they were also reluctant to give support to extra-parliamentary measures intended to change the nature or shape of the government, which is after all what the PKI had tried to do at Madiun. These parties took no definitive stance on the uprisings, but *Masyumi* urged the Sastroamidjojo government to seek a negotiated settlement, rather than to pursue a military conclusion (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 263). When Sastroamidjojo failed to take the *seberang* grievances seriously, *Masyumi* withdrew from the cabinet; which ultimately precipitated its fall. In the end, most PSI and *Masyumi* leaders steered clear of direct involvement of the rebellions, but a notable few who chose to become entangled in the rebel cause tainted their respective parties with the stench of sedition (Mrazek, 1994, p. 445).

Upon the inevitable fall of both the Permesta and the PRRI uprisings, both the PSI and *Masyumi* found themselves to be political outcasts in Sukarno's new system of Guided Democracy. When General Nasution moved to ban the parties he deemed responsible for giving aid and comfort to the enemy during the rebellions, his sights fell squarely on both *Masyumi* and the PSI, and as a result both of these, along with Parkindo, were banned in Sumatra and Sulawesi in September 1958. Likewise neither *Masyumi*, nor the PSI was included in Sukarno's *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – Gotong Royong* ("Peoples Representative Council – Mutual Cooperation") when it was established in March 1960 to replace the disbanded parliament. When Sukarno finally proscribed *Masyumi* once and for all in August 1960, the PSI also met the same fate for its vigorous resistance of Sukarno's cult of personality (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 268; Heffner, 2000, p. 44). By 1962, both Sutan Sjahrir and the *Masyumi*'s Mohammad Natsir would find themselves occupying jail cells, and neither would again be free whilst Sukarno continued to rule.

### *c. Lessons*

*Masyumi*'s alliances with Parkindo, *Partai Katolik* and the PSI were inherently flawed. While their cooperation with each other was more consistent, ideologically-sound, and less opportunistic than the various combinations of the PNI-PKI-*Nahdatul Ulama* coalitions of the same period, *Masyumi*'s party allies had precious

little political capital to invest to safeguard their own political survival, much less *Masyumi's*. Parkindo and *Partai Katolik* also represented *seberang* communities with only moderate political clout. In 1950, the total number of Protestants and Catholics made up only a very small percent of Indonesia's vast population, and thus they could be very easily discounted. Of a population of some 80 million souls, Christians accounted for only about 4 million during the 1950s (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 17). Further, they represented areas that were for the most part not economically critical to the Indonesian state.

Although the PSI could not lay claim to an ethnic or religious base of voter support, it received fairly consistent support from its members, even if the pool of PSI membership, like those of Parkindo and *Partai Katolik*, was necessarily limited. It remained a party of urban intellectuals in a country with few urban areas and a very small population of potential recruits. Prior to 1947, the *Sayap Kiri* had provided Sjahrir with an enormous base of support, but its split in 1948 and the emergence of a PKI alternative sapped the PSI of much of its potential rural support. By 1955, it remained one of the few parties that actually had a well-formed political ideology coupled with an agenda, but it lacked the political capital to put it into action. Consequently, it needed *Masyumi* perhaps even more than *Masyumi* needed it.

After the 1955 elections, the PSI ranked as eighth largest party in the parliament, and both Parkindo and *Partai Katolik* fared only a little better, securing the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> positions, respectively (Feith, 1971, p. 65). Against expectations, the PSI fared poorly in these elections and saw its membership in parliament dramatically reduced from fourteen seats to five. Similarly, the *Partai Katolik* also lost a quarter of its seats, dropping from eight to six. Only Parkindo managed to gain seats, increasing its representation from five to eight. Still, the combined total of these three parties was still less than half that of the smallest of the four top vote getters, the PKI, which had won thirty-nine seats in the new parliament. The 1955 election results, and similar results in 1957 regional elections, obviated more than anything else that time was not on *Masyumi* side. Their influence in parliament, including their proxy influence through political allies, was waning in the face of *Nahdatul Ulama's* disaffiliation and the re-emergence of the PKI as a major actor on the political stage.



Under these circumstances, *Masyumi's* leaders should have continued to nurture their traditional political alliances, but they should have also tried to expand the top-tier coalition to include greater representation from Java-based parties, perhaps by either seeking a rapprochement with *Nahdatul Ulama*, or by trying to find common issue with the PNI by capitalizing on the nationalists' growing alarm over the rapid, unchecked growth of the PKI. *Masyumi* failed to seize any of these opportunities: Instead they became more reactionary and belligerent towards the opposition, and as a result set the conditions not only for their own political demise, but the demise of some of their allies as well.

### **3. Masyumi's Relationship with Its Political Opposition**

The main parliamentary opposition to *Masyumi* came from both the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* ("Indonesian Nationalist Party" –PNI) and the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* ("Indonesian Communist Party" –PKI), although the origins of their discontent with the Islamists sprang from different sources. Prior to 1955, the PNI appeared to have been the biggest obstacle to *Masyumi's* unobstructed domination in parliament, particularly after the PNI established more congenial relations with *Nahdatul Ulama* in 1952. After the results of the 1955 elections had become clear, it became increasingly obvious that the PKI had supplanted the PNI as the single greatest threat to *Masyumi*. Even the PNI leadership had belatedly begun to realize that their nurturing of the PKI's proxy attacks on *Masyumi* had only served to strengthen influence of the Communists at the expense of both the Islamists and the nationalists. By late 1958, even the PNI would find its own position in parliament eclipsed by the rising power of the PKI.

#### **a. Partai Nasional Indonesia**

The first incarnation of the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* ("Indonesian Nationalist Party" –PNI) was founded on June 4, 1927 as an outgrowth of the Bandung Study Club. The PNI rapidly became an influential organization in the relatively immature field of Indonesian politics, but a Dutch crackdown in 1929 led to the arrest and exile of its leader (Achmad Sukarno), as well as to the group's proscription. The PNI was reformed on August 22, 1945, but unlike its predecessor, which had been a party of

young intellectuals, the new PNI was a party of the older generation of pre-war nationalist leaders. The PNI's slate of leadership personalities had not changed appreciably in the intervening sixteen years, except that they had simply gotten older. In fact, the leadership of the PNI was on average older than the leadership of any of any of the other post-independence parties (Kahin, 1952, p. 155). The generational gap between the PNI and many of the other parties, particularly the PKI, the PSI and the modernist wing of *Masyumi*, created not a little tension among these parties.

The PNI's membership was at first drawn almost exclusively from among the bureaucratic apparatus of the colonial administration (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 17). Both the older and younger generations that had served in the Netherlands East India government now found themselves to be indispensable cogs in the machinery of the young Republic of Indonesian state. They were the only ones with the practical experience needed in the day-to-day running of the government, and thus the common people viewed them with a sense of respect and awe. Much of the PNI's strength was based on a "...traditional and habitual response to authority..." which unconsciously influenced the peasants and urban poor to look for political guidance from their countrymen who had served in the colonial government (Kahin, 1952, p. 155). Consequently, when other traditional bonds, whether they were ideological or religious, were lacking, the PNI was in a good position to exploit traditional patterns of authority (Mysbergh, 1957, p. 39). While both *Masyumi* and *Nahdatul Ulama* were able to exploit the traditional bonds of authority, loyalty and self-identification within the *santri aliran*, and the PKI was able to capitalize of disaffection within the *abangan* stream, the PNI found its strongest support within the *priyayi* class (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 23). It essentially became a Javanese party, led by Javanese, and representative of Javanese interests (Feith, 1962, p. 140).

The PNI's ideology has been described as "Marhaenism" or "socio-nationalist democracy", a distinctive blend of nationalism and socialism, with radical overtones (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 21). This ideology opposed liberalism and individualism as offshoots of capitalism, but it affirmed the importance of democratic rights and collectivist economics (Feith, 1962, 140). The PNI was a party that "...tried to be all things to all men." (Bone, 1954, p. 22). Its leaders claimed to be opposed to capitalism,

imperialism, and fascism, and on the surface the party's political agenda appeared not to differ appreciably from that of either *Masyumi* or the PSI (Lubis, 1952, p. 157). The similarities of the PNI's agenda with that of the PSI and *Masyumi* are not surprising in light of the fact that political competition during this period was not so much about issues, as it was about personalities and the power of particular ethnic, religious, or other interest groups. Indonesian political discourse during the period of the provisional parliament had almost nothing to do with ideology, and has thus been described as a "...poker game played by a few thousand people, all of whom have known each other much too long and much too well." (Bone, 1954, p. 17). Although the PNI eventually developed a reputation for being ultra-nationalistic and anti-western because of its positions on the nationalization of foreign-owned businesses and its leniency towards the PKI, it was perhaps more adept than any other party at modifying its positions in order to adapt to the exigencies of changing political conditions (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 21). More than anything else, the PNI still seemed to be "fighting against the Dutch" even after the battle had been won (Bone, 1954, p. 22).

As noted above, the majority of the PNI's support came from employees in the civil administration and among the higher-ranking members of the *pamong pradja*, the colonial administrations corps of native territorial administrators. A large number of its supporters also came from the pool of former revolutionary fighters who failed to fit into any of the other political categories (Feith, 1962, p. 143).

Ideologically, PNI members were generally opposed to *Masyumi's* goal of establishing Islam as the basis of the Indonesian state. The *priyayi*, which formed the core of the PNI's support, were by-and-large nominal Muslims and contemptuous of attempts by the *santri* to enforce religious standards through government policy (Geertz, 1960, pp. 231-235). Although not necessarily secularist in the manner of western liberalism, they eschewed the use of Islam as the framework of the state, and instead favored the expansion of traditional, syncretic Javanese culture (Feith, 1962, p. 140). Implied in this expansion of Javanese culture was the *mandala* model of politics discussed above. Consequently, on the issues of the Jakarta Charter, the *Darul Islam* movement, and regional autonomy, the perceptions of PNI and *Masyumi* had very different points of cultural origin.

Because the nature of Indonesian politics during this period was concerned more with power and influence than with ideology, many of the political battles between the main parties had almost nothing to do with their ensuring the success of their respective visions for the country. Instead, each party was most concerned with ensuring its own access to the most lucrative sources of patronage and using the power and prerogatives of office to reward its supporters. Almost every conflict between *Masyumi* and the PNI had its roots in one, or the other, or both of these parties, trying to increase its own share of the power at the expense of the other. For the majority of their leaders, politics was a zero-sum game to be played without the possibility of giving or receiving quarter.

*Masyumi's* and the PSI's attempts to shrink the size of the army and the government bureaucracy throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s was seen by the PNI leadership as a direct assault on its main constituency. Likewise, Sastroamidjojo's efforts to replace *Masyumi* and PNI personnel at almost all levels of the civil administration with his own supporters during the years leading up to the general elections was seen by *Masyumi* as an attack on its own precarious position in the bureaucracy. In this light, political struggles over issues, such as Regulation 39 and the problems of plantation squatters in Sumatra, take on a whole new significance. Even *Nahdatul Ulama's* decision to disaffiliate with *Masyumi* and ally itself with the PNI had far less to do with ideology, than it did with ensuring the continuation of its own power and influence. Clearly, the Islamic vision of the *Nahdatul Ulama's* Wahab Chasbullah had far more in common with that of the *Masyumi* leadership than it did with that of the PNI, but the continued access to the sources of patronage within the Ministry of Religion trumped even those lofty goals.

Throughout the 1950s, the PNI and *Masyumi* contested bitterly for control of the government, the army and the bureaucracy. The relationship between the two parties had already greatly deteriorated throughout the revolutionary period. It was after all the PNI leaders who had been chosen by the Japanese to supplant the *Masyumi* leaders on the eve of Japan's surrender in 1945, and throughout the five years that followed, *Masyumi* had struggled in vain to regain its lost political prominence. When Mohammad Natsir became *formateur* of the first post-independence government, it was widely

expected that he would endeavor to form a cabinet that was as broad-based as possible (Feith, 1962, pp. 148-149). His failure to convince the PNI to join the cabinet, whether intentional or otherwise, was an ominous hint of how badly the relationship would continue to deteriorate over the following five years.

For its part, the PNI was little better at building bridges, though it perhaps exceeded *Masyumi* in the lengths it would go to undercut support for its opposition. The PNI did choose to informally ally itself with the PKI during Natsir's brief tenure in government, and notwithstanding Sukiman's efforts in August 1951 to roll back PKI gains, the communists were able to once again begin their long climb back from the brink of oblivion thanks in great part to the PNI's protection and nurturing. PNI leaders believed they could control and use the PKI to weaken *Masyumi*, while they remained out of the fray, but in doing so they were ignoring the possibility of creating a force which could someday turn back on them (Bone, 1954, p. 22). The PKI's vociferous attacks on the threat of radical Islam were intended to link *Masyumi* with the *Darul Islam* movement in the minds of voters and to produce an anti-*Masyumi* backlash that the PNI hoped to benefit from in the voting booth (Vandenbosch, 1952, p. 184).

While the PNI-PKI strategy to discredit *Masyumi* proved moderately effective, it was hardly without negative consequences for the PNI. The repeated attacks on *Masyumi* served to only to unify its senior leadership as never before. While there had always been various competing factions within *Masyumi*, Mohammad Natsir's re-election as the party Chairman at the sixth party congress in August 1952 solidified his role as the party's undisputed leader (Lubis, 1952, p. 155). The disaffiliation of *Nahdatul Ulama* and the eclipse of the Sukiman wing left *Masyumi* a much more internally-unified party than it had ever been before, and much of this can be attributed to the "closing of ranks" that was precipitated by the PNI's and PKI's machinations (Bone, 1954, p. 20). Of course, this homogenizing of the party leadership under Natsir also made *Masyumi* as a whole much more unwilling to cooperate with the opposition parties. The eclipse of Sukiman's faction in the *Masyumi* leadership had removed some of the most vocal proponents of compromise from within *Masyumi's* executive council, and exacerbated an already latent tendency towards political brinkmanship.

While the PKI was earnestly chipping away at *Masyumi* from the margins, the PNI and *Masyumi* were battling headlong for control of the bureaucracy and the army. A confrontation over the issue of Government Regulation 39, which dictated the rules by which regional government councils were to be selected, was used to bring down the Natsir cabinet. Likewise, a long-simmering dispute over which parliamentary power bloc would control the army leadership manifested itself in the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair of 1952, which pitted PNI-sympathetic army leaders against PSI supporters.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair was a decisive point in Indonesian politics because the bitter acrimony it produced on both sides of the aisle in parliament served to complete the irreversible process of political polarization that had been underway for several years. The PNI's attack on the Minister of Defense, Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, was seen on all sides as nothing less than an attack on the PSI and on its sympathizers in both the parliament and the army, and *Masyumi* was compelled to defend it ally. The dispute was further aggravated by Sukarno's machinations in support of the PNI position, which were based as much on his ideological affinity for the PNI, as they were on his personal dislike for Sjahrir's PSI (Bone, 1954, p. 20). When the dust had cleared, the army was firmly in the PNI camp, and a new cabinet under Ali Sastroamidjojo gave evidence to the final split in parliament between the PSI/*Masyumi*/Parkindo/*Partai Katolik* coalition and the alliance between the PNI, *Nahdatul Ulama* and the PKI (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 21).

Some observers have characterized the PNI's increasingly antagonistic stance towards *Masyumi* and the PSI as a form of "reckless opportunism" that had its roots in the PNI leadership's fears that their party would not fare well in the upcoming general elections (Bone, 1954, p. 22). Their perceived lack of grassroots support and rather thin organizational network outside of the government bureaucracy were seen as liabilities in the PNI's attempts to compete head-on with the Islamists and the Communists (Lubis, 1952, p. 158). To the surprise of many, the election results placed the PNI in first place with 22.3% of the total vote (Feith, 1962, p. 436). Much of the PNI's success in these elections can be attributed to the "...traditional and charismatic influence of feudal heads..." which determined the voting habits of most ordinary Javanese (Budiardjo, 1956, p. 23).

Following these elections, the PNI tried to distance itself from the PKI, while tentatively exploring the possibilities of narrowing the breach between itself and *Masyumi*. The staggering blow that the elections had delivered to the PSI, as well as *Masyumi's* own poor showing, seemed to auger the possibility of improved conditions for facilitating compromise between the PNI and both *Masyumi* and the *Nahdatul Ulama*, if for no other motive than to stave off the fourth most powerful party, the PKI. Unfortunately, as was described in the previous chapter, the outbreak of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi derailed any such outreach efforts. *Masyumi* withdrew its support from the second Sastroamidjojo cabinet in January 1957 and went into permanent opposition until its eventual proscription in 1960.

**b. *Partai Komunis Indonesia***

If *Masyumi's* struggle with the PNI was essentially about power vis-à-vis cultural dominance, the struggle against the PKI was far more personal. Indonesia's Muslim leaders had vied with their Communist foes since the earliest days of the *Sarekat Islam* ("Islamic Union" -SI). The attempt by H.J.F.M. Sneevliet to re-mold the Semarang branch of the SI into a Communist organization precipitated a showdown between that organization's devout Muslim leadership and a growing base of poor laborers who were more attracted to the evolving SI for its socialist promises than its Islamic message. When the Communists split off from the SI in 1920 to form the *Perserikatan Komunis di India* ("Communist Association in the Indies" - PKI), they left behind a significantly weakened SI that would never again be able to regain its former influence.

If the Communist betrayal of 1920 had not been enough to sour Indonesia's Muslim leaders towards their Communist brethren, then Musso's and Sjarifuddin's conduct in the closing days of the Madiun Affair of 1948 would have been sufficient to convince them of the treachery and perfidy of the Communists. The intentional slaughter of Muslim leaders during the PKI's retreat also ended any further possibility of *Masyumi* and PKI cooperation, as if the chasm between Islam and atheistic Communism wasn't already sufficient to militate against such a counter-intuitive partnership. By the early 1950s, Communism was fighting from a position of weakness

against not only *Masyumi* and the PSI, but also the PNI and the Army; however, the exclusion of the PNI from the Natsir cabinet had as Dr. Sukiman had warned forced the secular nationalists to seek common cause (at least temporarily) with the PKI. As a result, the PKI was provided with an umbrella of tacit PNI protection and a window of opportunity to regroup, reorganize and once again begin to grow.

The PKI strategy during the first half of the 1950s was to remain as uncontroversial and cooperative as possible in order to mitigate the fears of its detractors (Gosnell, 1958, p. 189). Under a new generation of leaders, such as Aidit, the Communists began again to rebuild its cadres, this time focusing its efforts on the politically undisputed plantation areas of West Java and North Sumatra, where *Masyumi* held little attraction and the PNI had not yet made significant inroads among the peasantry (McVey, 1996, p. 102). Aidit temporarily set aside orthodox Marxist-Leninist doctrine and concentrated on building an organization with deep and pervasive roots in Indonesian society. To that end he welcomed all comers to the PKI: peasants, urban laborers and even landowners and minor aristocrats (Thomas, 1981, pp. 371-372). He rationalized cooperation with the PNI and the *Nahdatul Ulama* by masking the PKI's heterodox communist strategy with traditional Marxist-Leninist terminology. For the Indonesian communist one's social class no longer was the fundamental determinant of one's political orientation: Instead, one's political orientation determined one's social class (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 241). *Masyumi* and the PSI were labeled as elements of a class of comprador bourgeoisie that had sold out to western interests, but the PNI and *Nahdatul Ulama* were only tainted by the native petite bourgeoisie, and thus they escaped the PKI's condemnation (Brackman, 1963, p. 171).

As a result of the PKI's decision to not pursue a class-conscious recruiting strategy, the PKI was eventually able to achieve dramatic gains not only in the former plantation areas, but also in East and Central Java as well. Village leaders and landowners who didn't feel welcome in the socio-cultural pigeonholes of the PNI, *Masyumi*, *Nahdatul Ulama*, the PSI, or the Christian parties were often attracted the PKI because of its promise of modernization and economic development (Mysbergh, 1957, p. 42). The PKI claimed that their membership had swollen from 165,000 in March 1954 to half a million six months later (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 248). The ironic inclusion of



landowners and aristocrats on the PKI's membership rolls finally began to draw attention around 1957 when peasant cadres began agitating for their expulsion, but it wasn't until PKI leaders began to try to implement radical land reforms in 1964 that the party was subjected to a mass exodus of landowners, most of who crossed over to the PNI (McVey, 1966, p. 103). By then, however, neither *Masyumi*, nor the PSI was an effective political party.

Although the PKI sought to establish informal alliances with the PNI and *Nahdatul Ulama*, as well as many of the other smaller nationalist parties, its leaders never tried to mend fences with either the PSI or *Masyumi*. The decision to abandon such efforts may have been a pragmatic realization that Madiun had close those doors forever, but others have suggested that the PKI's leaders simply recognized that the pervasive influence of Islam, especially in the *seberang*, presented the most serious obstacle to the expansion of Communism in Indonesia (Vandenbosch, 1952, p. 184). This observation was likely reinforced by Sukiman's August 1951 roundup of PKI leaders and supporters. Thus, PKI seized every opportunity to exploit the breach between *Masyumi* and the PNI during and after the fall of the Natsir cabinet (Bone, 1954, p. 22). Particularly onerous to *Masyumi's* leaders were the PKI's attempts to link legitimate Muslim politicians with the *Darul Islam* rebels (Feith, 1957, p. 13). In some respects, the PKI was only giving voice to the closely held suspicions of the PNI and the army, both of which resented *Masyumi* leadership's unwillingness to take a firmer stance against the Islamist rebels.

The PKI's sniping at *Masyumi* grew to a fevered pitch during the last few months leading up to the 1955 elections. They broadened their attacks beyond simply accusing *Masyumi* of being complicit in *Darul Islam*, and as the elections drew near, they also began to accuse the Muslim leaders of having been both pro-Japanese during the war and pro-Dutch during the period of the revolution (Feith, 1962, p. 427). The near constant campaign activity of the PKI vast organizational apparatus, along with the PNI's domination of the civil administration and *pamong pradjja*, had their inevitable impact on *Masyumi's* support in the contested areas. While the weak showing of *Masyumi* and the PSI in the parliamentary elections surprised just about everyone, all parties were equally astonished by the dramatic surge in popular support that the PKI had demonstrated in the elections. When the new parliament was seated in March 1956, the PKI had increased its

representation from seventeen to thirty-nine members. As a consequence of these elections, the other major parties were compelled to take the PKI much more seriously. Within three years, Sukarno would turn to the PKI as the most powerful alternative to counterbalance an increasingly strong army.

*a. Lessons*

The PNI and the PKI presented two very different challenges for *Masyumi*. One was primarily cultural, while the other was political. Despite efforts by the PNI after 1952 to utilize the PKI against *Masyumi*, this working relationship was not based on any real ideological affinity. The PNI was not by nature inherently supportive of Communist ideology. Even the watered down version of Communist ideology offered by the PKI during the 1950s was generally antithetical to the interests of the PNI's voter base. After all, the PNI was essentially the party of the *priyayi* and the bureaucrats, and although the PKI scrupulously avoided talk of class warfare until after 1957, there was little in the Communist agenda that appealed to the PNI base. Still, Natsir's rejection of the PNI's demands during the formation of the first post-independence cabinet, and the subsequent exclusion of the PNI from the government coalition put the nationalists in somewhat of a bind. Although their strength in the provisional parliament was nearly at parity with that of *Masyumi*, the Islamists could also count on PSI support, as well as support from the Christian parties. Additionally, it was widely expected that *Masyumi* would win decisively should general elections be held in the near future. The PNI, however, was fairly politically isolated. Consequently, the nationalist leadership began to cast about for a suitable ally that could help them joust more effectively with the *Masyumi* political juggernaut.

After 1948, the PKI had become the pariah of parliament. It was weak, without allies, and relatively defenseless against the persistent efforts of the other parties to minimize Communist influence in the other institutions of the government. Sukiman's efforts in August 1951 to arrest thousands of Communists merely at the hint of trouble obviated the PKI's complete vulnerability during these years. Only the army effectively spoke out against these mass arrests, but the displeasure of its leadership had less to do with the anti-Communist nature of Sukiman's actions than it did with the fact the army

had not first been consulted. Without a means to expand its influence in parliament, the PKI would have remained politically isolated and subject to the continued efforts of both *Masyumi* and the PSI to stamp it out prior to the elections: Thus, it seemed as if the needs of the PNI and the PKI converged at an auspicious moment in Indonesia's political history.

The political alliance of the PNI and PKI was devastatingly effective at eroding *Masyumi*'s influence in certain key locales, notably East Java, Central Java, and parts of Western and North Sumatra. Likewise, efforts by the PNI to stymie the political agendas of the *Masyumi* dominated cabinets were enhanced by the background support of the PKI in parliament. With the addition of the *Nahdatul Ulama* after its disaffiliation from *Masyumi* in late 1952, the resultant PNI/*Nahdatul Ulama*/PKI bloc had become sufficiently powerful to go toe-to-toe with *Masyumi* and the PSI in the struggle to define the national agenda. The Sastroamidjojo and Harahap cabinets together represent the nadir in the relationship between the main two wings of the Indonesian political spectrum.

Following the elections of 1955, the PNI became acutely conscious that their efforts to use the PKI for their own political aims had inadvertently strengthened the Communists movement. Although this development had weakened *Masyumi* considerably, it had also damaged the PNI. Consequently, when the first post-election cabinet was assembled under Sastroamidjojo in 1956, he resisted President Sukarno's efforts to ensure PKI representation in the government commensurate with their strength in parliament. Ali Sastroamidjojo, though guilty of cynically co-opting the Communists for his own purposes during his first tenure as Prime Minister, attempted this time to rely on *Masyumi* and the *Nahdatul Ulama* to form a cabinet, while pointedly excluding the PKI. However, relations between *Masyumi* and the PNI had deteriorated so badly by this time that this cabinet proved to be weak and unstable. It lasted less than a year in great part because of *Masyumi*'s decision to withdraw its members in protest of Sastroamidjojo's handling of the outer island rebellions. The series of cabinets that replaced Sastroamidjojo's were each handpicked by Sukarno, and each included prominent Communist representation of one form or another. Neither *Masyumi*, nor the PSI would ever again participate in an Indonesian cabinet.

The rift between *Masyumi* and the PNI was never truly unbridgeable. Although cultural differences between the Javanese and *seberang* politicians often frustrated policy negotiations, the ideology of the PNI was sufficiently amorphous to accommodate much of *Masyumi*'s agenda. The nationalists were primarily what Feith has called "Solidarity-Makers" (Feith, 1962, pp. 113-122). They were less concerned about the nuances of ideology than they were about the symbolism of the revolution. Perhaps if *Masyumi*'s leaders had understood this better, they would have been more capable of accommodating the PNI's symbolic needs without sacrificing their own agenda. Clearly, had *Masyumi* chosen not to take such a brazen and over-confident stance in the formation of the Natsir cabinet, much of their later troubles would have never emerged. Similarly, in light of *Masyumi* own vulnerability in the wake of its poor showing in the 1955 elections, it remains somewhat of a mystery why its leaders failed to labor more diligently to ensure that the second Sastroamidjojo cabinet did not fall. Unfortunately, they ignored their trouncing in the general elections and continued to act as if they retained the political upper-hand. Their efforts to tie up deliberations in the Constituent Assembly over the question of the Jakarta Charter represented delusional thinking at its worst. In the end, it only served to confirm *Masyumi*'s political unreliability in the eyes of their enemies.

Much of the criticism of *Masyumi*'s political behavior can also be leveled against the PNI, however, *Masyumi* bears the lion's share of the blame for how badly poisoned the political discourse eventually became. From 1950 to 1955, its leaders operated from a position of relative political strength, but they had the most to lose from the trend of Communist expansion and thus, they also bore the burden for taking the necessary measures to curtail the PKI's growth. The most intuitive of these steps would have been to bridge the widening gap between *Masyumi* and the PNI with the aim of depriving the PKI of its umbrella of support and protection. In the end, *Masyumi*'s leaders failed to act with wisdom, and they paid the price for it. More importantly, however, the Indonesian people also paid a dear price for *Masyumi*'s failings because they ultimately had suffer the result of Indonesia's decline into Guided Democracy and the thirty-two years of the New Order that followed the collapse of parliamentary Democracy.

#### 4. Masyumi's Relationship with the Army

##### a. *Evolution of the Army Leadership*

Chapter II discussed the role that the army had played in shaping *Masyumi's* ability to implement its own policies and to stave off repeated attacks by the opposition parties. It has already been discussed in detail how the army was a highly fractious organization prior to 1958. An internal struggle between the two main leadership factions served to keep the army divided and politically marginalized; however, because these factions were loosely allied with either of the two main political blocs in parliament, the army was compelled to serve as a proxy battleground upon which the political parties could contest for primacy. Throughout most of this period, the army's internal factionalism and its inability to collectively agree on a vision for the Indonesian state restrained its political influence (Federspiel, 1973, p. 408). Only after those two problems could be resolved would the army emerge as a potent political force.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair was one of the most decisive political events of the parliamentary period. Attempts by the PNI members in parliament to marginalize PSI sympathizers within the higher echelons of the army leadership led to a showdown between the army's Dutch-trained "administrator" leadership and its populist, Japanese-trained competitors. As the crisis escalated, political parties took clear sides, with the PSI and *Masyumi* lining up on one side, and the PNI, PKI, and Sukarno on the other. When the dust had cleared after several weeks of brinkmanship and political maneuvering, the "administrator" leadership had found itself out-maneuvered and out of power. Throughout the archipelago, senior PSI-sympathizers were replaced with commanders who would prove to be more malleable to the will of Sukarno and the PNI. The Army Chief of Staff A.H. Nasution, who had played almost no part in the struggle, was forced to resign in the wake of this incident, and within a matter of months, even the widely-esteemed Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX was compelled to resign the post of Defense Minister. The reverberations from this incident proved to be so powerful that the Wilopo cabinet became too weakened to effectively carry on, and it collapsed soon thereafter.

Following the collapse of the pro-October 17<sup>th</sup> forces, it seemed as if the PNI's rout of senior officers who were sympathetic to the PSI and *Masyumi* was virtually complete, but the Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet that came to power in July 1953 attempted

to overplay its hand. The overt politicizing of army assignments by Sastroamidjojo's Minister of Defense, Iwa Kusumasumantri, and the rampant corruption that was associated with this cabinet created a great deal of resentment within the ranks of the new army leadership. To many of these military leaders, the army's self-perceived role as the apolitical savior and guardian of the state was under assault.

A February 1955 reconciliation of pro- and anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> officers led to a renewed spirit of cooperation within the army leadership and a resolve to resist the politicization of the army (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, p. 94). Although intra-leadership disputes would still be a frequent occurrence in the coming years, the united front that emerged as a result of the 1955 Yogyakarta conference resulted in a much more cohesive army (Feith, 1962, p. 398). This new "self-awareness" was first demonstrated by the army leadership when it refused to recognize the Sastroamidjojo cabinet's appointment of Colonel Bambang Utojo as the new Army Chief of Staff (Crouch, 1988, p. 31). The army leadership was uniformly displeased at the overtly politicized nature of the cabinet's selection of an officer that was far too junior for the post, and they consequently joined together in refusing to recognize his authority.

As the army leadership closed ranks to ward off what they perceived as unwarranted political interference in ostensibly military matters, prominent officers of the anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> factions stepped forward to denounce their former party allies. These officers demanded that parliament agree to put an end to any remaining investigations concerning the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair, and to officially recognize it as a closed matter. Continued efforts by both President Sukarno and the PNI-dominated cabinet to woo the anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> faction back into their camp failed in the face of the army leadership's new sense of self-identity and independence. The army leadership began to speak with one voice, and it began to vigorously resist all attempts to make the army the political tool of any particular political faction or party. The army's crucial role in precipitating the fall of the Sastroamidjojo cabinet more than any other event demonstrated that the army had begun to take its own corporate interests much more seriously than it had ever before. From that point on, no party of faction could afford ever again to take the army's support for granted.

The reappointment of Nasution as Army Chief of Staff in November 1955 was a critical turning point for both *Masyumi* and the PSI. If these party leaders had expected the relationship to be like that which they had enjoyed during the tenure of the Natsir cabinet, their expectations were proven grossly mistaken. During his three years of political exile, Nasution had used the time to re-think his policies during the months before and after the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, pp. 91-92). Moreover, he had also reexamined his ideas about the nature of liberal democracy and the corrosive effect of party politics on the immature Indonesian state. By the time Nasution had returned to active duty in 1955, he had developed a greater appreciation for the importance of the “revolutionary spirit” that had flavored the 1945 Constitution. Although he wasn’t quite a convert to the President’s increasingly populist worldview, he had come to believe that the health and security of the nation was increasingly imperiled by the political frailty of the parliamentary system and the brinkmanship of the parties.

Nasution’s willingness to cooperate with the second Sastroamidjojo cabinet (March 1956 - March 1957) infuriated many of his detractors among the senior leadership ranks of the army, many of who had helped bring down the first Sastroamidjojo cabinet. For some, Nasution’s return to power had been a personal blow to their own ambitions, but for others, his actions were seen through a distinctly socio-cultural lens. His efforts to strengthen the central army leadership in Jakarta at the expense of regional commanders seemed to parallel the cabinet’s increasing efforts to economically and politically marginalize the *seberang* for the benefit of the Javanese-dominated central government. By cooperating so enthusiastically with Sukarno and the PNI-dominated cabinet, Nasution had unwittingly allowed himself to be politically identified with them. No longer was he seen as a sympathetic proponent of the *seberang*.

A series of failed coup attempts by disenchanting army leaders in late 1956 highlighted a latent frailty within the army that had been masked for the previous three years by pronouncements of army unity. Efforts by Nasution and the government to politically outmaneuver this opposition, rather than addressing their legitimate grievances, only exacerbated the situation (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, p. 118). By early 1957, the political conflict worsened in the outer islands when regional commanders took matters into their own hands and declared the PRRI and Permesta

rebellions. Within a matter of months, the *Panglima* (“commanders”) responsible for West Sumatra, North Sumatra, Kalimantan, and East Indonesia had all severed political and economic ties with Jakarta.

If any one point in the parliamentary period could be considered the point of no return for *Masyumi* and its political allies, it was the first few months of 1957. The cabinet’s situation had become increasingly brittle, and rather than seeking to listen to the complaints of the rebellious *Panglima*, Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo stonewalled in hopes that by stalling for time, the rebels’ momentum would exhaust itself. The unwillingness of the government to pursue a policy of compromise precipitated a final break with *Masyumi*, which withdrew its ministers from the cabinet in January 1957. As the situation in Jakarta became increasingly intolerable for *Masyumi* leaders to bear, many fled to North Sumatra, where they inevitably became entangled in the PRRI rebel movement (Feith & Lev, 1963, p. 35). With the fall of the second Sastroamidjojo cabinet in March 1957, the door was finally opened for Nasution and Sukarno to begin the gradual transition from a parliamentary democracy to the implementation of Sukarno’s concept of *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (“Guided Democracy”).

Unlike the 1955 Yogyakarta Conference, which had merely reconciled the pro- and anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> factions for the sake of achieving some semblance of internal unity, the collapse of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions had a much more palpable, profound and long-lasting impact on the army leadership (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, pp. 127-128). Most of the rebel officers were treated benignly: Some were given amnesty and allowed to retire, and only a handful of the most senior-ranking officers were arrested and prosecuted. For the most part, however, the army leadership was swept clean of those officers who were the most sympathetic to *seberang* interests, and in their place was assigned as whole new slate of Javanese officers. All of Nasution’s most radical foes were cashiered from the active rolls, thus consolidating his undisputed leadership within the army (Lev, 1963, p. 354). Within a year, the army had gone from an institution that was as socially and culturally egalitarian as any in Indonesia, to one that unapologetically pursued Javanese political and social hegemony (Federspiel, 1973, p. 410). The purge of high-ranking *seberang* leaders produced an army that was overwhelmingly colored by the secular and *abangan/priyayi* values of the now



predominately-Javanese officer corps, and it bestowed upon future military leaders a legacy of suspicion regarding politicized Islam (Samson, 1971, p. 561).

*Masyumi's* abandonment of the cabinet and its offering of both moral and military support to the PRRI and Permesta rebellions was the final straw for a far more politically-emboldened and institutionally-secure Nasution. Over the previous years, he had grown increasingly weary of western-style democracy, and he had all but given up his faith that the existing political structure could be reformed gradually. The inability of the political parties to keep the first post-independence cabinet together long enough to pacify the rebellions was the final proof that revolutionary change, not evolutionary, was what was needed to preserve the state's stability. *Masyumi's* willingness to disregard the rule of law and to support armed insurrection in order to effect what it could not achieve through the parliamentary system was all that was required for Nasution to cross his final ideological Rubicon. For him, *Masyumi* was no longer a legitimate voice of the outer island communities. It had thrown away that right when it sanctioned military action against the central government (Feith & Lev, 1963, pp. 36-37).

*Masyumi's* failure to strenuously repudiate the outer island autonomy movements when they turned violent, and its willingness to obstruct the progress of deliberations within the Constituent Assembly over the issue of the Jakarta Charter, irreparably hardened Nasution's opinion toward the Islamist movement. He had come to realize that the Islamists' resistance to compromise had doomed the government's chance to reform itself through democratic means, and it had necessitated more radical reforms. In July 1959 the Constitution of 1945 was re-adopted by Presidential Decree with the full support of Nasution, and the Constituent Assembly was disbanded without having achieved its primary goal. Shortly over a year later, Sukarno would also move to ban those parties whose ideologies were deemed antithetical to the *Pancasila* framework outlined in the 1945 Constitution. First among the political casualties were *Masyumi* and PSI. By this time, Nasution and the army was fully committed to Sukarno's new concept of Guided Democracy, and he turned to a blind eye to the extinction of his former political allies as a necessary sacrifice for the greater stability and security of the Indonesian state (Van der Kroef, May, 1958, p. 80).

*a. Lessons*

The reversal in *Masyumi's* relationship with the army during this period was perhaps one of the biggest blows that the Islamists had to endure. Certainly, it was even more catastrophic for their long-term fortunes than even the eclipse of the pro-PSI army leadership in the wake of the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair. In the end, however, the choice had been *Masyumi's* to make. Nasution was neither by temperament nor background inherently opposed to *Masyumi's* political agenda. As a practicing Muslim from North Sumatra, he very clearly understood not only the fundamental grievances of the *seberang* concerning the center's economic exploitation of their resources, but he was also sympathetic to the efficacy of Islam as a guide for political behavior; however, he could not bring himself to support the establishment of an Islamic state because of the negative impact it could have in the large areas of Indonesia where religious minorities held sway, such as in Christian Flores and Hindu Bali. By the late 1950's, Nasution had finally come to the realization that the constant bickering over the appropriate role of Islam in government was beginning to have a paralyzing impact on the ability of the parliament and the cabinets to carry out more pressing tasks (Federspiel, 1973, p. 409).

Prior to 1952, there was little that *Masyumi* could do to dramatically improve its relationship with the army's leadership, nor was there really much point in trying. Although it was essential for the cabinets to have the army's support, the divided nature of the senior military leadership had kept the army politically weak and ineffectual (Lev, 1963, p. 349). Only after the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair did the role of the army in politics take on new meaning: No longer could the wishes of the military leadership be ignored with impunity by a corrupt and ineffectual parliament (Van der Kroef, 1957, p. 49). The army's ability to bring down the first Sastroamidjojo cabinet because of the Prime Minister's failure to recognize the army's newfound sense of institutional self-importance should have been a clear warning shot across *Masyumi's* bow, yet they failed to heed it.

As a party, *Masyumi* consistently marched to the beat of its own drummer, no matter how out of step it was with those to the right or left of it. When Burhanuddin Harahap's cabinet came to power in August 1955, the army had high hopes that *Masyumi* and the PSI would make dramatic efforts to clean up the vestiges of nepotism, corruption and favoritism that had sullied the previous Sastroamidjojo cabinet. Instead, the new

cabinet simply began to carry out similar policies for no other reason than to strengthen their own constituencies while weakening their opposition in the critical months leading up to the general elections. *Masyumi's* failure to act ethically when it was now in a position of authority was seen by much of the army leadership as simple hypocrisy (Feith, 1962, pp. 419-420). The Islamists' political tactics were similar to those of the PNI and thus seemed to confirm the army leadership's suspicions that the tendencies of all of the parties leaned to self-preservation and corruption, whether they called themselves Islamic or not.

Nasution certainly recognized *Masyumi's* failure to live up to its rhetoric, and this certainly must have contributed towards the chilling of his own enthusiasm for it and the PSI in the months that followed Harahap's appointment as Prime Minister. His confidence in *Masyumi* and the PSI was likely also further eroded when the results of the 1955 general elections obviated the weaker than anticipated public support for both of these parties. By later 1956, it was increasingly obvious to Nasution that the old system of party politics was not only contributing to the instability of Indonesia, but that it was also one of its most fundamental causes (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, p. 75). Expectations that the elections would help stabilize the party system by reducing the number of parties to a more manageable slate proved unfounded. In fact, the results of the elections merely reinforced the pre-election political divisions, while giving additional legitimacy to the communists. The subsequent gains of the PKI in the 1957 provincial elections caused further discomfiture among those in the army who had grave misgivings about the dangers of the parliamentary system (Ricklefs, 1993, p. 260). In analyzing the situation, Nasution considered the various actors on the political stage and he came to the conclusion that *Masyumi* had become part of the problem, rather than a potential solution (Lev, 1963, p. 354).

The final proverbial nail in *Masyumi's* coffin was the participation of some of its senior leaders, among them Mohammad Natsir, Burhanuddin Harahap, Mohammad Roem, and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, in the uprisings of 1957-1958 (Van der Kroef, April, 1958, p. 62). For Nasution, *Masyumi's* corporate unwillingness to distance itself from the conduct of its renegade leaders made it collectively culpable for their behavior. In his estimation, *Masyumi* was no less guilty of betraying the Indonesian

state than the PKI had been at Madiun. Consequently, the regional banning of *Masyumi* and the PSI in 1958, as well as their later proscription in 1960, was perceived as necessary and legitimate steps to preserve the internal stability of the state. After 1959, the army would emerge to take *Masyumi's* place as the political counterweight to both Sukarno and the emerging PKI juggernaut (Lev, 1963, p. 356). This would be the culmination of Nasution's long desire to fully incorporate the army as an active player in the political system (Penders & Sundhaussen, 1985, p. 133).

## 5. *Masyumi's Relationship with the President*

### a. *Presidential Power*

Sukarno's personal responsibility in contributing to the collapse of Indonesia's first experiment with parliamentary democracy is indisputable, although history has perhaps unfairly assigned him too great a share of that burden. While it is tempting to cast him in the role of the *dalang* ("puppet master"), slyly manipulating the various actors on the Indonesian political stage as if it were some sort of grand *wayang* ("puppet show"), the benefit of almost forty years of hindsight indicates that he was as much caught up in the events of the 1950s as he was responsible for directing them. Sukarno surely does bear an enormous share of the burden for helping to set the conditions that contributed to the coup of September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1965, but his political behavior during that period was not that of an aspiring dictator bent on establishing for himself a leadership role such as that enjoyed by Mao and Stalin. Rather, he acted as the consummate Javanese politician, striving, perhaps in vain, to rise above the turmoil of the political chaos in order to syncretize competing ideological visions into a singular ideal that could be embraced by all Indonesians without regard to cultural background; however, that ideal was necessarily shaped by his own peculiar Javanese *Weltanschauung*, which valued societal stability, abhorred confrontation and sought to maintain the continuation of centripetal power.

*Pancasila*, the five-point ideological basis for the Indonesian state as defined in the UUD-45, served as the penultimate example of Sukarno's efforts during the deliberations of the *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* ("Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence" -

BPUKI) to carve out a middle ground that could find broad-based acceptance among all factions. His subsequent efforts to merge the competing streams of nationalism, religion and communism into the single political concept under the heading of “NASAKOM” (*Nasionalisme, Agama dan Komunisme*) also reflect his attitude regarding the necessity of harmonizing widely divergent, if not contradictory concepts. Likewise, the underlying *modus operandi* of Guided Democracy was to provide a vehicle by which competing views could be considered and distilled to the least common denominator. However, although the process of *musyawarah* and *mufakat* reflected Sukarno’s pre-occupation with achieving harmony, it also reflected his belief that firm, indisputable leadership was required to steer the process. It logically followed that he saw himself as best suited to provide that crucial leadership.

According to Dahm, Sukarno’s Javanese heritage also imbued in him an appreciation for the mythical concept of the *Ratu Adil* (“Just Ruler”), a messianic figure who would return to rule Java and usher in a new golden age (1969, pp. 17-21). Sukarno’s preoccupation with Javanese mythology, particularly the legends associated with the shadow plays, shaped his political outlook, and colored not only his vision of the Indonesian state but also his role in it. In some respect, Sukarno saw himself in the role of the *Ratu Adil*, whose mission it was to unify and homogenize the different elements of Indonesian society in order to achieve *tata*, the mystical concept of harmony derived from Javanese cosmology. Sukarno’s idea of political harmony did not, however, come without a price, because to achieve it, he was required to erase the very distinctions between ideologies or agendas that gave them their significance and their identity. Thus, parliamentary democracy lacked appeal for Sukarno both because it relied upon clear distinctions among parties, it demanded “either/or” choices among competing visions, and it usually produced just the sort of conflict abhorred by most Javanese (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, p. 77). Although, parliamentary debate might lead to harmony and consensus, more frequently it produced just the sort of inaction and political brinkmanship that had characterized Indonesian politics throughout the years 1950-1957. Sukarno greatly preferred the iterative process of deliberation and consensus building, which he claimed to have been the traditional mode of village leadership (Sukarno, 1965, pp. 278-279).

The major Java-based parties, especially the PNI, *Nahdatul Ulama* and the PKI, could appreciate and in varying degrees embrace Sukarno's efforts, but *Masyumi* and the PSI steadfastly resisted them because they would have inevitably lead to the washing out of the political or religious principles to which these parties clung. As Sukarno himself once said, the process of *musyawarah* is like putting "...a little water in the wine." (Sukarno, 1965, p. 278). After enough iterations, the wine becomes less and less wine, and more and more water, until very little of the original can be detected. Sukarno was not necessarily opposed to any particular religious or political impulse, for he could in part embrace all. He even once described himself as the "Gemini Twins" because of his ability to embrace both sides of every issue, belief or problem (Van der Kroef, 1968, p. 255).

The other driving impulse behind Sukarno's political maneuvering during this period was his preoccupation with the power of both mass movement and *semangat revolusi* ("revolutionary spirit"). Sukarno was what Feith has described as a "solidarity maker", a type of political leader who viewed the substance of ideology as inherently less important than the symbols and imagery of nationhood (1963, pp. 113-122). This group sought to build a sense of shared vision and solidarity among the polity in hopes that once critical mass had been achieved, all the problems of the state could easily be solved by sheer willpower alone. For leaders such as these, ideological principles played almost no role, and consequently they could be bent, exchanged or discarded as the conditions demanded.

Throughout the early 1950s, the political discourse was determined by the two main blocs in parliament, led by the PNI and *Masyumi*/PSI respectively. Sukarno's political influence had waned significantly since the establishment of a parliamentary system in 1945, but he had adapted admirably to the prevailing conditions. Despite the fact that his hand was no longer on the wheel of state, Sukarno continued to wield significant moral influence by virtue of being the "father of the nation". However, the President could not act without support, and so he began to cast about for allies.

The Natsir cabinet was the starting point for Sukarno's reawakened enmity toward *Masyumi*. He had given the *formateurship* to Mohammad Natsir in expectation that a cabinet would be formed that would be representative of all of the major parties,

but Natsir's inability or unwillingness to make sufficient concessions to the PNI had ruled out its participation in his government. Consequently, the cabinet that was eventually formed was imbalanced and lacking in the harmony that Sukarno demanded. Moreover, the President had been greatly disappointed in Natsir's unwillingness to aggressively pursue a solution to the problem of Irian Jaya, and he was disturbed by the government's repeated efforts to reduce the size of the army and the civil bureaucracy, not least because these planned cuts would significantly undermine his influence in these organizations.

Sukarno's relations with the Sukiman cabinet were much better than they had been with Natsir. This change had less to do with ideological compatibility than it had to do with mutual respect and shared experiences. As noted previously, Sukiman's relationship with Sukarno began in the 1920s, and the lasting bond of friendship between them had been cemented by the support that Sukiman, as head of the pre-war *Partai Sarekat Islam*, had given Sukarno in his attempt to create a pan-Indonesian nationalist movement. The PSI's participation in the *Permufakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kěbangsaan Indonesia* ("Agreement of Indonesian People's Political Associations" – PPPKI) was to be short lived (1927-1929), however, Sukiman's personal and professional relations with Sukarno continued to be cordial in the years after. It must also be remembered that Sukiman was not part of the Natsir "religious-socialist" faction within *Masyumi*, and that this was a time of struggle for leadership within *Masyumi*'s executive council. Thus, by supporting Sukiman, Sukarno was simultaneously serving to undermine Natsir's efforts to achieve leadership primacy within his own party.

The Wilopo cabinet, though ostensibly headed by a PNI politician, was far more aligned with Natsir's policies than it was with those of Wilopo's own party, and thus Sukarno was predisposed against it. For its part, the Wilopo government did little to repair the relationship. Instead, Wilopo continued Natsir's policies of attempting to marginalize Sukarno by limiting the President's office budget, which produced the desired effect of curtailing his travels about the country and limiting his exhortation of the virtues of *Pancasila* and the dangers of political Islam. Despite the cabinet's efforts to sideline him, Sukarno remained very active behind the scenes, and was able to strike effectively when the conditions and timing suited him.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair served to immensely strengthen Sukarno's position, and he moved quickly to take advantage of the instability that it produced in the army. By fomenting the overthrow of regional commanders unfriendly to him, Sukarno was able to buttress his support within that army leadership, which had previously served as a counterweight to his machinations. From 1952 until mid-1955 the army was a politically marginalized, and thus Sukarno had a free hand to agitate more overtly than before, and to coordinate the development of an increasingly close relationship between the PKI, the PNI and *Nahdatul Ulama* (Gardner, 1997, p. 115).

The army reconciliation of April 1955 presented mixed blessings for Sukarno. He had no interest in seeing the return to power of his former enemies in the army leadership; however, neither did he have any interest in seeing an ideologically homogenous army under a unified leadership. For the latter reason, the President acquiesced to the efforts of the army leadership to put the October 17<sup>th</sup> Affair behind them, although he had hoped that continued squabbles between the pro- and anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> forces would serve to keep the army's leadership divided and politically weak. It is unlikely, however, that Sukarno foresaw the disastrous consequences that the army's efforts to put its own house in order would have for Ali Sastroamidjojo's government, which was ultimately brought down after the Prime Minister's failed attempts to reassert the cabinet's political influence over the army.

Following the appointment of the Harahap government, Sukarno's political activities became much more overt and confrontational. Almost all political observers and participants believed that *Masyumi* would dominate the elections, but Sukarno took to the campaign trail nonetheless to harangue the masses in support of *Pancasila* and those parties that supported it. The results of the 1955 elections, which obviated the weakening of *Masyumi's* public support, seemed to support Sukarno's contention that the Indonesian masses yearned for a secular government.

During the second cabinet headed by Ali Sastroamidjojo, President Sukarno began to grow increasingly disillusioned by the relative ineffectiveness and instability of the Indonesian parliamentary structure defined by the provisional Constitution of 1950. This cabinet had been a great disappointment to the President (Gardner, 1997, p. 126). Although, Sukarno had tried to impress upon Prime Minister



Sastroamidjojo the importance of assembling a cabinet that was truly representative of the post-elections parliament, the refusal of both *Masyumi* and the *Nahdatul Ulama* to serve in a cabinet alongside the PKI made such a coalition impossible. The fall of the second Sastroamidjojo cabinet as a consequence of its inability to deal with the problems of regional rebellion finally offered Sukarno the long awaited opportunity to craft the sort of government he had long desired. Because of the army leadership's increasing support for any measures that would restore even a modicum of stability to the government, the conditions were finally right for Sukarno to begin to implement what he termed his *Konsepsi* ("Conception"). This conception was a political system that would be based on input from all sectors of society and which would be able to "...release all the vital energies of the people." (Abdulgani, 1958, p. 99). It would be a system in harmony with the "...soul of the Indonesian people..." wherein "...all members of the family sit at the table – at the eating table and at the working table." (Van der Kroef, 1957, p. 113).

From 1957 until 1959, Sukarno, with the support of the army's Nasution, began a process of transforming the parliamentary system back into a presidential system. He made incremental adjustments, and at first only tinkered with existing institutions. After Sastroamidjojo's fall, and the fall of a short-lived interim working cabinet, Sukarno directed that the next cabinet include all the major parties and be based on the principles of *Gotong Royong* ("Mutual Support and Assistance"). *Masyumi* refused to participate, but the *Nahdatul Ulama* proved more pragmatic and swallowed the bitter pill of serving alongside the PKI in order to maintain its own political survival. Sukarno was further emboldened by the political sidelining of *Masyumi* and the PSI as a result of their complicity in Permesta and PRRI, and he began thereafter to make more sweeping alterations in the political institutions.

In May 1957, the President formed the *Dewan Nasional* ("National Council"), which was comprised of forty-one representatives from functional groups from throughout Indonesian society. This "extra-political institution" was intended to tender policy advice to the cabinet whether they asked for it or not (Abdulgani, 1958, p. 100). By appointing himself chairman of the *Dewan Nasional*, Sukarno had given himself a means to effectively circumvent the constitutional constraints placed on him in his capacity as President. Supporters of the President's efforts to re-make the political

system denied that these first steps were only the first in a larger scheme to eliminate the parliamentary system, but that is exactly what happened (Abdulgani, 1958, p. 101).

On July 5, 1959, Sukarno signed a decree that ended the parliamentary system, and reinstated the more authoritarian 1945 Constitution. By March of 1960, the President had dissolved the elected *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – Gotong Royong* (“Peoples Representative Council – Mutual Cooperation”), and appointed his own handpicked parliament in its place. In that same year he banned the only major political party that had the will and courage to defy him, and thus he forced the conclusion of *Masyumi’s* long decline.

### ***b. Lessons***

*Masyumi’s* rocky relationship with President Sukarno was as much about personality conflict as it was about political and cultural differences. There were of course a variety of issues about which Sukarno and the *Masyumi* leadership saw differently, but Sukarno had the capacity to conveniently overlook ideological nuances, and so these differences need not have precluded a closer working relationship. The insurmountable obstacle was *Masyumi’s* inability or unwillingness to participate in Sukarno’s watering down of ideological divergences for the sake of achieving political harmony. For Natsir and his followers, their political principles served as the cornerstone of their party’s aspirations, and could not simply be cast aside simply to create the illusion of political unity.

It would be a mistake to presume that Sukarno’s willingness to dispense with ideological substance for the sake of style demonstrated a lack of political sincerity on his part. His cultural background had shaped his political priorities, and although his was a perspective shared by a majority of the leaders of the other major political parties, it was an alien concept to those who came from the outer islands. It was this same cultural divide that militated against a rapprochement between *Masyumi* and *Nahdatul Ulama*, and that hampered the repair of the breach between *Masyumi* and the PNI that was caused by Natsir’s ill-advised exclusion of the PNI from his cabinet. Still, it was neither the cultural nor the political differences that prevented *Masyumi’s* leadership from reaching out to Sukarno. Neither was it *Masyumi’s* commitment to the political system

provided for in the 1950 Constitution. In 1957, *Masyumi* had considered the possibility of attempting to postpone the 1960 elections out of fear that the PKI's support would grow even further. Certainly, the roles played by Natsir, Roem, Harahap and Prawiranegara in the *seberang* rebellions suggest a fragile commitment to parliamentary process. Rather, it was their political immaturity and a self-deluded overestimation of their own political strength that led *Masyumi's* leadership to overplay their hand and to take stands when compromise might have been more appropriate.

More than anything else, Sukarno was interested in the rhetoric and imagery of the revolution. For him, the mechanics of governance was less important than the sense of unity and harmony that comes from sharing a common cause. Sukarno's 1957 political *Konsepsi* was a blend of egalitarian mass democracy tempered by the twin harmonizing principles of *musyawarah* and *mufakat* (Van der Kroef, 1957, p. 114). Until both Nasution and Sukarno became convinced of the impotence of the parliament system and of the necessity for ending it, there were numerous opportunities for *Masyumi* to reach out to mend fences with both the Javanese-dominated political parties and Sukarno, if for no other reason than to safeguard their own political influence.

There was no element of Natsir's agenda that suggested a *prima facie* reason why political compromise could not have been more forthcoming on behalf of *Masyumi*. Rather, as noted above, the Islamists' overblown sense of their own political strength led them to stall and stonewall in hopes that the general elections would reaffirm their political leadership and provide them an unimpeachable mandate to pursue their political goals unencumbered by the need to make the sorts of compromises that might have saved them. The election results did not, however, give *Masyumi* their expected landslide victory, but rather indicated just how divided the polity really was. Although *Masyumi* had far less leverage with which to bargain, the opportunity still existed in 1957 for them to cooperate with the PNI for the sake of preserving the parliamentary system. Their refusal to support the Sastroamidjojo cabinet in good faith in a time of national crisis proved to be a crucial link in the chain of events which not only deprived *Masyumi* of Nasution's support, but which also convinced Sukarno that both the parties and the parliamentary system had to go.

## 6. The Influence of the United States on Political Discourse

The role of the United States in shaping Indonesia's domestic political conditions cannot be underemphasized, nor should the effect that U.S. policy had on poisoning the political discourse at a time when the stability of the Indonesian political institutions was at its nadir be underestimated. A string of ill-advised and heavy-handed attempts by successive U.S. administrations to alternately woo and coerce the Indonesian government in hopes of prompting it to acquiesce to a more clearly defined and binding security relationship had the unintended effect of weakening those political parties most supportive of U.S. interests, while conversely strengthening the hand of their opposition. The willingness of successive Indonesian governments to play the major powers off of one another in order to extract increasingly greater economic or military aid packages merely exacerbated an already tense international situation (Friend, 2003, p. 75). Both sides played a dangerous game of duplicity and brinkmanship that would in the end have disastrous consequences for *Masyumi*. Ultimately, the failure of the governments of both the United States and Indonesia to fully appreciate the motives and/or constraints for each other's own domestic and international two-level game contributed to the destabilization of the latter and helped usher in the collapse of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia.

The Yalta Conference of February 1945 is generally regarded as the starting point for the ideological struggle (if not the military and economic one as well), which would within the span of only a few years eventually engulf the whole world. This "Cold War" would be waged not only in post-World War II Europe, but also in those areas of Asia where the surrender of Japanese forces had left a power vacuum ripe for exploitation by Communist insurgency movements under the direct or indirect inspiration of their Soviet mentors. Since Marxist ideology had first gained a discernable foothold in Indonesia in 1914 with the establishment of the *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereeniging* ("Indonesian Social Democratic Union"), the archipelago had become contested ground for the Communists. In 1926-1927, the *Perserikatan Kommunist di India* ("Communist Association in the Indies" - PKI) had staged numerous, short-lived revolts against the Dutch, and despite the exile of many of its senior leaders, the PKI survived both the closing years of the Dutch colonial regime and the Japanese military occupation. During the aftermath of the Japanese surrender, the PKI reemerged to contest for political power.

At first, the PKI pursued its political goals peacefully, but with the return to Indonesia of hardline Communist leaders from their exile in China or the Soviet Union, the Communist movement began to grow increasingly radical and worrisome for U.S. policy makers.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, U.S. policy towards the newborn Indonesian state was guided by two fundamental and interrelated concerns. Perhaps the most pressing post-war concern of the United States was the timely and orderly rebuilding of the numerous devastated European countries that remained under the imminent threat of Communist expansion. Among those nations requiring a significant amount of reconstruction was the Netherlands, which having suffered greatly under Nazi occupation remained on the verge of collapse. Consequently, the desire of the indigenous Indonesians for independence was effectively trumped by the U.S. imperative to safeguard the Netherlands from an economic collapse that could only facilitate Communist infiltration (Gardner, 1997, p. 24).

Because a significant amount of Dutch revenues came from the Netherlands East Indies, there was little sympathy within the U.S. administration for forcing the Dutch to grant independence to the colonies until such time that the homeland was made solvent. The Dutch effectively bolstered their case by pointing to the threat of Communist expansion in Asia and suggesting that a newly independent Indonesia would be highly susceptible to Communist influence. The ambivalence of the Truman administration towards the repeated pleas for assistance by the Indonesian government was eventually worn down less by their own intrinsic merit and appeal to America's own Democratic values, than it was by the abhorrent and duplicitous behavior of the Dutch in their efforts to reintroduce colonial authority throughout the archipelago. The brazenness of the Dutch police actions of July 1947 and December 1948 hardened U.S. perceptions toward the Netherlands and precipitated an incremental shift in U.S. policy. Critical mass was finally achieved when the Indonesian government successfully and unhesitatingly crushed the Communist uprising at Madiun in 1948, thereby decisively demonstrating their anti-Communist credentials, while effectively disproving Dutch claims regarding the susceptibility of the archipelago to the Communists. Subtle threats regarding the continuation of Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands was sufficient to force the Dutch

back to the negotiating table, where ultimately they relented and gave in to Indonesian demands for independence.

*a. Irian Barat*

By 1949, the U.S. government fully supported the transfer of sovereignty for the former NEI territories to the interim Indonesian government, but with one small exception. The Dutch insisted on retaining the territory of West Papua (Irian Barat), and the Truman administration gave its acquiescence. The rationale behind this decision was simply to ensure a secure base of operations in the unlikely event that Indonesia did in fact go Communist, as well as to insulate Papua New Guinea from further Indonesian territorial ambitions (Gardner, 1997, pp. 90-91). Regardless of the pragmatism of the U.S. position, the exclusion of Irian Barat from the final agreement of the Round Table Discussions of 1949 would continue to haunt U.S.-Indonesian relations for the next thirteen years.

The issue of Irian Barat proved to be increasingly emotive for the Indonesian people, and progress (or lack thereof) in solving this dilemma was frequently used by the all of the political actors to either bolster their own nationalist credentials or demean those of their opposition. Despite the fact that its population was of a different ethnic and racial stock than that of Java, most Indonesians considered Irian Barat an inviolable part of their nation. While U.S. policy makers sympathized with Indonesian claims, they also were all too well aware of the tenuous nature of Indonesian democracy. Maintenance of the territorial status quo of Irian Barat provided the most pragmatic way to hedge strategic bets and ensure a foothold in the region should democracy need to be forcibly re-introduced to the archipelago (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, p. 92). The Indonesians, however, perceived the presence of their former colonial oppressors on their doorstep as a likely base of operations from which secessionist movements could quickly spread to other parts of the archipelago. The Irian Barat issue repeatedly served as a lightning rod of nationalistic sentiment, and was frequently manipulated by Sukarno and the PNI to divert attention away from their own domestic policy failures. This crisis tended to breed anti-American sentiment, and ultimately led to a severe strain on Indonesian confidence regarding U.S. commitments to anti-colonialism.

Although none of the Indonesian cabinets was able to make much headway in finalizing the transfer of these territories, *Masyumi* and the PSI were both far more susceptible to criticism than the other parties because of their perceived pro-West policies. These parties repeatedly bore the harshest of denunciations because of their expressed confidence that the matter could be resolved through both bi-lateral and multi-lateral negotiations with the West. When those efforts repeatedly failed to produce results, the pro-West parties were forced to take more dramatic action: The decision of the government of Burhanuddin Harahap to unilaterally repudiate the Indonesian-Netherlands Union in 1955 was in great measure driven by their need to appear as fervently nationalistic as both the PNI and the PKI during campaign season.

It was no secret during this time that U.S. political sympathies lay with the PSI and *Masyumi*: That much had been demonstrated by U.S. financial contributions that had been funneled through the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the election campaign coffers of *Masyumi* in May 1955 (Smith, 1976, pp. 210-215). Still, the intransigence of the United States government in not supporting Indonesia's claims to territorial sovereignty over Irian Barat continued to put both *Masyumi* and the PSI in the difficult position of having to defend their pro-West policies in the face of both the unwillingness of the Netherlands to negotiate a solution to the impasse in good faith and the unwillingness of the United States to intervene to force progress. While Irian Barat had tremendous symbolic value to the Indonesian people, it held little economic value. Consequently, the pro-West parties in Indonesia were generally loathe to jeopardize their economic agendas, which depended on the improvement of relations with both the United States and Europe, simply for a bit of useless land on the periphery. They did, however, pay a great price for their pragmatism, because they ultimately had to answer for this matter both to their constituencies and to the opposition, both of which seemed to be seduced by symbolism over substance.

Dutch retention of Irian Barat remained an important element of U.S. policy towards Indonesia in the 1950s, but the Truman administration and its successors lacked an appreciation of the passion with which this issue was held in Jakarta. The failure of the United States to support Indonesian attempts to raise the Irian Barat issue in the United Nations in August 1954 didn't weaken the latter's resolve, but it did serve to

edge the Indonesian nationalist even further out of the U.S. sphere of influence, and deeper into the camp of other third world nations (Gardner, 1997, p. 118). The agenda of the Asian-African Conference held at Bandung in April 1955 included a list of items that surely must have antagonized U.S. officials, as they were specifically intended to capitalize on Cold War tensions, rather than resolve them. The Bandung conference's public goal of establishing a new power bloc of emerging Asian and African nations had the effect of fanning nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiment during the 1955 Indonesian general elections, and as a result, both the PKI and the nationalist party (PNI) fared exceptionally well.

The shift in U.S. policy towards the transfer of Irian Barat in 1962 was not predicated by any shift in the fundamental political ground truth of the situation in Indonesia. If anything, the susceptibility of Indonesia to a Communist takeover had only worsened in the years since *Masyumi* and the PSI had been rendered politically impotent by their support of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions. The involvement of the United States in supporting those uprisings had soured U.S.- Indonesian relations, and the Kennedy administration's concern over Sukarno's rapid tilt towards the Maoist leadership model seemed to necessitate some grand gesture of good will in order to return some semblance of normalcy to U.S.-Indonesian relations. The relative military and economic unimportance of Irian Barat seemed to militate against a continuation of the policy of the previous thirteen years. The question of Irian Jaya was finally solved in August 15, 1962, when a plan negotiated by U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker paved the way for the transfer of sovereignty for Irian Barat to the United Nations for a period of one year, after which time the territory was then passed to Indonesia. Neither *Masyumi*, nor the PSI would be around to enjoy this long-awaited diplomatic triumph, for both had been banned two years earlier in the wake of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions.

#### ***b. Cold War Tensions***

A second major point of friction between the United States and Indonesia concerned the role of Indonesia in the greater scheme of the Cold War. Following the "loss" of China, the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula, the Chinese invasion of Tibet, and the escalation of Communist insurgency in Vietnam, U.S. officials became



increasingly sensitive to the vulnerability of the South East Asian basin to Communist expansion (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, pp. 8-12). U.S. foreign policy under Secretaries of State Dean Acheson (1947-1953) and John Foster Dulles (1953-1959) were in great part shaped by the realities of this emerging ideological struggle with both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. In light of both its proximity to geo-strategic lines of shipping and its abundant natural resources, Indonesia was seen as a critical link in the defensive chain stretching from Japan, through Taiwan, the Philippines, and onwards to New Zealand, Australia and British Malaya. A Communist foothold in the archipelago would not only present a backdoor for Communists to enter the South East Asia mainland, but it would also permit them to threaten both Japan and Australia. The "Domino Theory", which was first postulated by Eisenhower in 1954, came to be used to succinctly illustrate the U.S. government's worst fears regarding the Communist menace in Asia.

The Eisenhower administration's attempt in 1957-1958 to provide covert support to the PRRI and Permesta rebellions grew out of the perception that Indonesia was slipping irreversibly into the Communist sphere. This perception was reinforced by the Indonesian government's tendency to play the Soviets against the United States for foreign aid commitments, and it was exacerbated by the unwillingness of successive Indonesian cabinets to unambiguously choose sides in the Cold War. The intransigence of the Indonesians to commit to the sorts of binding security relationships advocated by successive Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations reinforced misguided perceptions in Washington, D.C. that the ideological loyalty of the Indonesian government was being won by the Soviets and the Communist Chinese.

Indonesian governments, irrespective of where they fell on the ideological spectrum, generally followed a policy of *politik bebas dan aktif* ("independent and active politics"), which was often characterized as strict neutrality in foreign relations. Still stinging from the yoke of three and a half centuries of Dutch colonization and another three years of Japanese military domination, the Indonesian people were loathe to enter into any binding relationships that could be perceived as a compromise of their hard-won sovereignty. Deep suspicion over what was viewed as neo-colonial and neo-imperialistic motives underlying U.S. support for French forces in Indochina, Republic of China

(ROC) forces in Burma, and British efforts to establish an independent Malaysia fueled a sense of nationalistic paranoia. That wariness motivated the Indonesians to scrupulously avoid any appearance of leaning too closely toward either side in the emerging Cold War standoff. The collapse of the Sukiman government in February 1952 in response to parliamentary furor over some provisions attached to U.S. economic aid pursuant to the Mutual Security Act aptly demonstrates the acute sensitivity toward this issue.

On 1 January 1950, Dean Acheson was in the third year of his tenure as U.S. Secretary of State. For the next three years, the foreign policy he helped develop and implement was shaped overwhelmingly by the Truman administration's commitment to re-building Europe and halting the advance of Communism. Truman's "Four Point Program" was specifically intended to woo uncommitted nations to the U.S. side with the three "carrots" of equipment, training, and financial aid, however the defining crisis of Secretary Acheson's tenure was undoubtedly the escalation of U.S. involvement in the Korean War (1950-53). The shock caused by this event reverberated throughout Asia, and caused U.S. officials to take stock of their strategic position in the region. In the eyes of U.S. officials, the cancer of godless Communism was spreading in dramatic fashion and it was poised to consume and waste away many of the newly liberated nations of Asia.

Within weeks of Indonesia's independence, the U.S. had offered a substantial economic aid package of \$100 million through the U.S. Export-Import Bank. This was quickly followed by the arrival of a technical survey team tasked with evaluating further aid requirements. Because of the Indonesian government's unwillingness to acquiesce to contingent security commitments, U.S. officials greeted requests for specific military aid with far less enthusiasm. Indonesia's first two cabinets, under Mohammed Natsir and Dr. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo respectively, were built on coalitions that either did not have a decisive parliamentary majority, or which were politically fractious. Both of these cabinets shared a distinctly anti-communist bent, yet in spite of their ideological affinity with the United States, most top Indonesian leaders within Masyumi and the PSI were not necessarily supportive of U.S. activities on the Korean peninsula. Moreover, U.S. strategic commodity controls on rubber and tin exports had had a profoundly negative impact on the Indonesian economy at a time when

it could least tolerate it. The PSI's newspaper lamented that U.S. efforts to stem the tide of Communism in part through commodity controls was in fact helping the Communist movement by weakening the economy (Gardner, 1997, p. 105).

Efforts by the U.S. Congress to strong-arm uncommitted foreign nations with the passage of the Mutual Security Act of 1951 merely served to tie the hands of those Indonesian leaders who wanted to work closely with the United States. In good faith, the Sukiman cabinet had attempted to finalize the details of a U.S. military aid package drafted by Dr. Hatta prior to the formation of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1950, but his coalition was so unstable because of its PNI membership, that the mere hint of establishing a mutual security arrangement with the United States was sufficient to bring it down.

The Wilopo and Sastroamidjojo governments that followed Sukiman's had no PKI members in their cabinets; however, they were the first to gain the tacit support of the Communists, and thus this period signaled the latter's re-emergence on the political scene. The Indonesian leaders as a whole learned a valuable lesson from Sukiman's fall; Straying from the path of foreign policy based on *politik bebas dan aktif* was political suicide. U.S. officials, distracted as they were by the events in Korea, in Indochina, and across Europe, can hardly be faulted for overlooking this nuance of Indonesian political thought. It would, however, contribute to a widening rift over the next decade, and add fuel to the PKI's drive to establish its political primacy.

Irrespective of the composition of the government, the concepts of "independent" and "active" had consistently served as the touchstones of Indonesian foreign policy since the nation's inception (Anak Agung, 1973, p. 178). First proposed by Dr. Hatta in 1948, and then reaffirmed by each successive government, this policy would survive relatively intact until eventually abrogated by Sukarno's suspension of the 1950 provisional Constitution, and his rapid tilt towards the Communists in 1956. Based on the non-alignment politics championed by Prime Minister Nehru of India, Indonesians saw this path as the only safe one to tread between the two emerging power blocs, both of which had former colonial powers at their core. As the old Chinese proverb warns, "When two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled." U.S. officials consistently underestimated the depth of Indonesian commitment to these principles, and tried

repeatedly to lure them into the “free world” camp by alternately wooing them with the “carrot” of aid, and threatening them with the “stick” of economic isolation. Neither of these approaches was particularly effective at weakening the Indonesian resolve; however, such heavy-handedness did serve to cast a pall of mistrust over U.S.-Indonesian relations, and provide a campaign issue for the PKI and PNI to use as a wedge issue against both *Masyumi* and the PSI.

The Sastroamidjojo government that came to power in July 1953 faced a rising tide of frustration from the U.S. administration. The Berlin Blockade of 1948, the stalemate in Korea, ongoing Communist insurgency in Indochina, and the sobering realization that the Peoples Republic of China was not going to be a passing phenomenon, all added to the growing sense of the utter seriousness and non-transitory nature of the Cold War. When Dwight Eisenhower assumed the U.S. Presidency in January 1954, standing policy towards Asia changed only in terms of emphasis (Gardner, 1997, p. 112). Under the leadership of John Dulles, the Department of State undertook efforts to tighten the web of security commitments in Asia. Following the course set down by the Japanese Peace Treaty of 1951, the Australia-New Zealand-U.S. (ANZUS) defense security pact of 1951, and the Taiwan Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954, the United States also negotiated the Manila Pact of September 1954, which paved the way for the establishment of the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO).

The Manila Pact was specifically intended to counter Communist ambitions for the region, and it was ratified by the ANZUS allies, as well as by France, Britain, the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan; however, absent among the signatories were the region’s most fervently non-aligned nations, notably India, Burma and Indonesia. While Indonesia had previously, albeit reluctantly, signed the Japanese Peace Treaty, Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo was well aware that it had contributed to poisoning of the domestic political climate and had helped bring down the Sukiman cabinet. The presence of multiple former colonial powers among the SEATO signatories, allied with the undisguised aim of propping up the French colonial legacy in Indochina, was not lost on the Indonesians. No cabinet that supported a treaty with such blatant neo-colonial underpinnings could have survived for very long in the fractious Indonesian parliament. Still, the Eisenhower administration proved to be less than patient or

accommodating of Indonesian domestic political constraints. Dulles himself believed that “neutrality” was fundamentally immoral and ultimately benefited Soviet aspirations (Sukarno, 1965, p. 277). The strained relationship between the United States and Indonesia during this period can also be traced to the Eisenhower administration’s displeasure with Prime Minister Nehru’s similar policies of non-alignment (Carpenter, 1985, p. 3). A November 1953 National Security Council (NSC) policy statement had advised the administration that the loss of Indonesia to communism “would have serious security implications for the United States and the rest of the free world.” (Gardner, 1997, p. 115).

Secretary Dulles visited Jakarta in March 1956, and he likewise invited President Sukarno to the United States in the hope of initiating a fresh start in U.S.-Indonesian relations. Sukarno did visit in May 1956, but much to the dismay of U.S. officials, he almost immediately followed this trip with a visit to the Soviet Union in August, and then to Communist China in October. While Sukarno’s initial impressions of the United States were generally favorable, over time his recollection of meetings with President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles grew increasingly negative (Sukarno, 1965, pp. 277-278). In contrast, his experiences in China had made a much more positive and profound impression on his political philosophy, and as a result, his vision for Indonesia had begun to undergo a significant alteration (Friend, 2003, p. 67). Contrasting society in the United States with what he saw in the Peoples Republic of China, Sukarno drew the conclusion that the latter provided a more appropriate model for Indonesian social, economic and political development (Anak Agung, 1973, p. 191). The embryo of political philosophy conceived during these visits would ultimately become mature in the publication of his *Konsepsi* in February 1957, and so it is fair to conclude that the seeds for his “Guided Democracy” were planted while Sukarno was visiting Beijing. The Eisenhower administration’s oft-repeated complaint that non-alignment was “immoral” perhaps had the unintended consequence of finally edging Sukarno closer to picking a side, albeit not the side the United States had hoped for (Sukarno, 1965, p. 277).

What Eisenhower had viewed as the Truman administration’s “loss” of China shadowed every foreign policy option his administration weighed (Conboy & Morrison, 1999, pp. 12-13). With the benefit of hindsight, he viewed the previous administrations’ insistence on maintaining China’s territorial integrity as a colossal

mistake that had only served to benefit the Chinese Communists. Secretary Dulles had warned in-coming Ambassador Hugh Cummings in 1953, that Truman's mistake need not be repeated, and, "As a matter of general policies, don't tie yourself irrevocably to a policy of preserving the unity of Indonesia." (Gardner, 1997, p. 133). Ongoing separatist agitation in the outer islands, particularly in Sumatra, Sulawesi and Ambon, seemed to present the administration with a golden opportunity to reverse or delay an ominous political trend that they perceived in the rising political power of the PKI, which had been obviated in the 1955 general elections, as well as in the 1957 provincial elections in Yogyakarta (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, pp. 83-107). Despite analysis from U.S. officials living in Indonesia that indicated that the army leadership remained staunchly anti-Communist, senior State Department and CIA officials clung to the perception that Sukarno had become increasingly allied with the PKI and China, and that all was about to be lost if something was not immediately done to arrest the deterioration of Indonesia's domestic political environment. As Eisenhower himself suggested, "The best course would be to hold Sumatra if Java goes Communist." (Gardner, 1997, p. 137). By September 1957, the decision had been made, and the CIA was busily supplying financial and material aid to the PRRI and Permesta separatists (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, p. 120-121).

In spite of the participation of the CIA, the U.S. Navy's 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet, and an ad-hoc American air force, the success of the PRRI and Permesta rebels was both limited and short-lived. An American pilot shot down over Ambon and captured by Indonesian forces in May 1958, was all the evidence that Sukarno, the PKI and the Indonesian military needed to confirm their long-held suspicions that the United States had played a role in fomenting these uprisings (Sukarno, 1965 pp. 269-271). The PKI and Sukarno had their political fortunes strengthened by this revelation, and whatever allies the United States did have among the military were immediately marginalized as quislings. By August, recognizing that the operation had been a dismal failure, and hoping to win over whatever fence sitters were left in the Indonesian leadership, Secretary Dulles switched course. He ordered the end of covert support, and then approved a substantial package of economic and military aid to the Indonesian government (Feith & Lev, 1963, p. 41). The rebels, who had been emboldened and encouraged by U.S. support, were simply left to

wither on the vine (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, p. 18). This was to be the Eisenhower administration's last substantial overture towards Indonesia. In May 1959, Secretary Dulles passed away, and despite a last hopeful meeting in Washington, D.C. between Sukarno and Eisenhower, the former came away more determined than ever to steer a different course for Indonesia.

*c. Lessons*

U.S.-Indonesian relations from the 1950-1958 were tortuous at best. The pressures of the emerging Cold War, and the central role of the United States in that conflict, clearly colored the perceptions of the successive U.S. administrations and constrained their options. Despite these factors, the United States often took steps that were decidedly counter-productive to policy objectives. Failing to fully understand the unique colonial experience of the collective Indonesian leadership, and its impact on their worldview, successive U.S. administrations attempted to implement foreign policies that were perceived by the Indonesians as supportive of the old colonial establishment. The pressure tactics characteristic of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations served only to embolden Sukarno and the PKI, while alienating and marginalizing those few Indonesian leaders in *Masyumi* and the PSI with pro-United States leanings (Kahin & Kahin, 1995, p. 217).

The ill-advised and ill-fated covert interference in Indonesia by the CIA would seem to be the obvious choice for the nadir of U.S. foreign policy towards Indonesia, but the seeds of that debacle were planted back in the pre-1949 period with the rather lukewarm support the United States had given to the notion of Indonesian independence. The failure of the United States to rally international support for the transfer of sovereignty for Irian Barat to Indonesia in the post-1949 period only confirmed suspicions that the United States was a fair-weather friend and a politically unreliable partner.

Despite initial setbacks in U.S.-Indonesian relations, all need not have necessarily been lost. Had U.S. officials shown themselves to be perhaps a little more accommodating to the need of the Indonesians to appear independent in thought, word and deed, greater progress might have been made in extracting security guarantees that

were mutually acceptable to all concerned parties. Prior to 1956, the Indonesian government was decidedly pro-democratic, and only after Sukarno's failed attempt to establish a rapport with President Eisenhower, did he move closer to the Soviet Union and China. Distasteful as Sukarno's personnel behavior was to the U.S. President, the latter's rather cold and stand-offish behavior towards a man who had flown half-way across the world to meet him must have seemed intolerably unacceptable. Conversely, the receptions Sukarno received in Moscow and Beijing by Khrushchev and Zhou Enlai, respectively, were specifically designed to foster that sense of equality and solidarity that Sukarno craved, but had found so lacking in the West. Simplistic as it may seem, the competition for financial one-upmanship may have ultimately been won by a handshake and a red carpet.

It would be purely speculative to suggest that the subsequent U.S. Kennedy administration had been on the right track to achieve a significant improvement in relations. By 1960, Sukarno was deeply and perhaps irreversibly wedded to both the Maoist model and to his role as the helmsmen of Indonesia's "Guided Democracy". Had the United States seized the opportunity to shore up anti-Communist factions within the Indonesian government, such as those within *Masyumi* and the PSI, without compromising their nationalistic and anti-colonial credentials in the process, the deposition of Sukarno and the PKI might have turned on his increasing irrelevancy, rather than in the massive and wide-spread rampages that occurred in the aftermath of the September 30<sup>th</sup> coup attempt of 1965. Sadly, by 1963, the Johnson Administration, which took over in the wake of President Kennedy's assassination in 1963, had very little material with which to work with in order to return U.S.-Indonesian relations to an even keel, and the rising storm across the South China Sea understandably relegated Indonesian affairs to a decidedly secondary tier of importance.

The great potential for U.S.-Indonesian relations that had seemed so promising in the immediate post-war years, ultimately proved to be illusionary. While both nations shared common hopes for friendship and cooperation, neither could reconcile the nuanced terms of that relationship. Despite its position as a superpower, it was the United States that had the most to lose from its failure to cement the bonds of mutual respect and friendship with Indonesia. The fact that Indonesia ultimately did not



fall to the Communists does not necessarily validate U.S. policy for the region. Although Indonesia did emerge from the era of “Guided Democracy” without a Communist takeover, it did instead succumb to a thirty-two year dictatorship under General Suharto. Had the United States government been more perceptive of Indonesia’s cultural proclivities and the domestic political constraints of both *Masyumi* and the PSI, it might have been able to more successfully (and overtly) support the beleaguered proponents of parliamentary democracy. As it was, ill-informed and ill-conceived efforts by the United States intended to manipulate the domestic political environment within Indonesia helped destroy that nation’s truly democratic political parties, while simultaneously facilitating Indonesia’s slide towards despotism.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Paulker has noted that much of the political history of Indonesia during the period of parliamentary democracy revolved around attempts by other political actors to weaken *Masyumi* (134). As has been demonstrated above, some of the credit for *Masyumi*’s failure to live up to its political potential can indeed be attributable to the machinations of the nationalists, the Communists, and even Sukarno and Nasution. These threats, however, were not insurmountable, and could have been overcome through more politically astute politicking on behalf of *Masyumi*’s leaders. Much of *Masyumi*’s failings can instead be traced back to its own doorstep and to a string of bad choices made in the context of the political discourse peculiar to this era. When one looks at the broad sweep of Indonesian political history during this period, one can easily identify four factors that negatively influenced not only *Masyumi*’s political fortunes, but the fortunes of the whole democratic system as well. Each of these factors will be briefly summarized below.

#### **1. Persistence of Socio-Cultural Cleavages**

##### ***a. A Divided Ummah***

The political parties during this period reflected more than anything else the cultural and ethnic cleavages that defined Indonesian society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter II explained the origins for the terms *abangan*, *priyayi*, and *santri*. It also discussed the differences between the “Islamic-entrepreneurial” and “Javanese-aristocratic” worldviews and how these different *weltanschauung* shaped antagonistic perceptions of both the problems facing Indonesia and their potential solutions.

Despite the fact that Indonesia’s population was roughly 90% in 1950 and that *Masyumi* was widely seen as the voice of the Indonesian *ummah*, the Islamic voting public (and its leadership) was far more fragmented than most might have imagined at the time. The traditionalist/modernist schism divided *Masyumi* at its very core and produced a power struggle between Natsir’s religious-socialist faction and the base *Nahdatul Ulama* constituency that ultimately produced a mass defection of the traditionalists from *Masyumi* three years before the general elections. The loss of the traditionalists’ organizational networks among the *kyai* and *pesantren* of East and Central Java was a tremendous blow to *Masyumi*’s campaign efforts in 1955, and it was one of the factors that prompted one of *Masyumi*’s own leaders to refer to his party as “...an elephant with beri-beri.” (Paulker, 1958, p. 134). Although its size in 1955 had been estimated at around one million members, it never developed the organizational framework to effectively mobilize those members after the loss of *Nahdatul Ulama*.

Another related issue is that *Masyumi*’s claim to speak for the entire Indonesian *ummah* was itself highly suspect. Islam in Indonesia was not, nor is it now a monolithic political, ideological or theological entity. The majority of Indonesians are “statistical” Muslims, who are more apt to fall into the *abangan* category than that defined by the *santri aliran*. The orthodox version of Islam practiced by the *santri*, both traditionalist or modernist, was in fact a minority religion throughout much of Indonesia in this era. Consequently, a great many Muslims in Indonesia during the 1950s did not view *Masyumi*, or the *Nahdatul Ulama* for that matter, as their voice in parliament. Many, in fact the majority, apparently were just as comfortable giving their support to the nationalist parties, and to a lesser extent to the Communist parties as well. This was a key point that *Masyumi*’s leaders failed to appreciate, which in some respects explains the hardline positions they frequently took. Their overestimation of *Masyumi*’s own political appeal to both orthodox and “statistical” Muslims alike perhaps convinced them that their strength was far greater than it actually was, and they behaved accordingly. The elections

of 1955 obviated just how overblown their own predictions and the predictions of most other observers had been with regard to their voter base, but by then, the die had been cast and Natsir's faction within *Masyumi* had become enamored with its own mythology.

**b. *The Javanese-Seberang Divide***

The cleavage between Java-centric political culture and *seberang* political culture also was a point of friction that disadvantaged *Masyumi* more than the other parties. Javanese political culture, which greatly shaped the political ideology of both Sukarno and the PNI, grew out of a historical framework that was completely alien to the *seberang*-based leaders. Political power on Java had historically been exercised through a patrimonial bureaucratic state designed to maximize the efficient utilization of capital resources, such as people and land, to generate maximum benefit for the society and its rulers.

In this type of political framework, hinted at by Wittfogel in *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (1957) as a “hydraulic-society”, top-down power was essential to ensure that society was well-ordered and productively engaged in the large-scale agricultural efforts required to sustain the state. Society becomes structured so as to be capable of supporting massive work projects designed to benefit the state as a whole, rather than the individual. In the case of historical Java, such political power was understood in terms of a patron-client relationship by which the patron, the *bapak* (“father”), was owed deference and obedience by his subordinates in return for benevolence. This benevolence often became manifest in the form of economic benefits or prestige, but it was always dependant on obedience to the traditional leadership hierarchy based on the centripetal model of the *mandala* and guided by a desire to maintain a sense of harmony and social order. Geertz's study of the Balinese state in *Negara: The theatre state in nineteenth century Bali* (1980) more fully explores the political implications of this model.

*Seberang* political culture developed in a radically different fashion than that exhibited by Java's interior kingdoms. Communities throughout the Javanese *pesisir* and the outer islands were not dependent on the revenues from massive agricultural projects, and they had no need for rigid top-down systems of governance. These were

commercial communities dominated by merchants and highly influenced by orthodox Islamic ideals. Consequently, they generally developed political systems that lacked the despotic quality of interior empires and that demonstrated more laterally diffused political power. Government policies were not obeyed as a consequence of blind deference to the leader, but rather because such policies were deemed to benefit the various constituencies they affected. This is not to suggest that *seberang* governance was Utopian by any means, but only that some amount of adaptability and flexibility was required by leaders to ensure the continued support of the key elements within their communities.

The friction between these two political cultures put a tremendous amount of strain on *Masyumi's* relations with the Javanese-based parties. The moderating effect that *Nahdatul Ulama's* leadership might have been able to have on *Masyumi's seberang* leaders was lost with the disaffiliation of the traditionalists in 1952. After that, the political cultural cleavage between *Masyumi* on one hand, and the PNI, PKI and *Nahdatul Ulama* on the other, became increasingly more pronounced. This cleavage was further exacerbated by the voting patterns of the 1955 elections, which for the most part reflected these same cleavages among the general population, and which reinforced the trend of political parties merely representing socio-political culture, as opposed to a particular ideology or agenda. With nearly 70% of Indonesia's population living on Java, this was a trend that could only severely disadvantage *Masyumi* in the long-run.

## **2. The Weak Parliamentary System**

Much of the blame for the political chaos of the 1950s can be laid at the feet of the political system provided for by the provisional 1950 Constitution. The provisional parliament sworn in to office in August 1950 was reflective of the geographical and political divisions that had characterized Indonesia during its nearly five-year long struggle for independence. Of its original 246 members, 177 came from the two houses of the federal parliament established by the Dutch for the territories that were not included in the original Republic of Indonesia. The remaining 59 members came from

the wartime Republic of Indonesia. None of these members owed their positions in the provisional parliament to popular election, having been appointed by their parties or regional governments.

In the case of the wartime Republic of Indonesia, Sukarno simply apportioned the seats in the parliament to registered political parties based on his own estimation of the relative strength of their constituencies. In some cases, Sukarno's estimates may have been overly generous, while in others they may have fallen short. Prior to the *Nahdatul Ulama's* disaffiliation in 1952, *Masyumi* controlled fifty-two seats in the provisional parliament, which likely was far more than they actually deserved based on their weak organizational support. Perhaps something can be said for the "primordial sentiment" upon which they could rely for votes, but as has been noted above, the great majority of Indonesians were "statistical" adherents of Islam, and they generally were rather less attracted to *Masyumi's* Islamic message than they were to the basically secular agenda of the PNI or the PKI. The inflated sense of their own political support handicapped *Masyumi's* leaders during this period by convincing them that it wasn't necessary to cooperate with those parties with which they might have points of contention.

*Masyumi* was not the only party to benefit from the system of apportionment in the parliament. At the time of its dissolution, the provisional parliament had twenty-one distinct parties, while another twelve seats were apportioned to non-party affiliated parliamentarians. The large number of parties had the effect of weakening parliament and the cabinets by making it almost impossible to achieve a decisive majority on any issue. This situation was further complicated by the realization among the smaller parties, many of whom had no real constituencies, that they would lose their seats if and when general elections were ever held. As the elections drew near, the price of their support in the formation of cabinets grew exponentially, as did the importance of *dagang sapi*. Political observers generally lamented the debilitating role that the smaller parties played in destabilizing the political system for their own benefit, and most critics eagerly looked forward to elections in the hope that the number of parties would be winnowed down to a more manageable slate. To the surprise of most, however, the number of

parties elected to the post-election parliament actually grew to twenty-eight, although there also emerged a more distinct differentiation between the important parties and the minor parties.

Two different criticisms emerged concerning the parliament by the mid-1950s. *Masyumi* and its allies generally supported in the system of parliamentary democracy, but they also began to push for the creation of a second house, which would provide a voice for regional representatives. By this time, the *seberang* parties were growing immensely frustrated at Javanese domination of the bureaucracy and within parliament. Many of the parties that were ostensibly regarded as national parties had their parliamentary delegations heavily weighted with Javanese delegates, and thus the voice of the *seberang* constituencies was effectively marginalized. Proponents of a regional house of representatives believed that it would afford the outer islands with a platform to influence government policy more effectively.

Sukarno, the Javanese-parties and Nasution were generally opposed to the concept of a bicameral parliament. Most of the Java-based political parties opposed the idea of a regional house of representatives because they correctly foresaw that its establishment would have a deleterious impact on their own political and economic fortunes, as well as having the effect of eroding their traditional hegemony. *Nahdatul Ulama* was itself split on the issue: Its branches in Sumatra generally favored the idea of a second house, while its Java-based branches resisted the idea. Although it is only speculative, the author believes that the establishment of a second house would have gone a long way towards satisfying the grievances of the *seberang* constituencies, even if the government's policies failed to change appreciably. The problems of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions might have been prevented had such a forum existed in which to debate the *seberang* grievances.

Nasution and Sukarno were also sanguine on the issue of a bicameral house, although for more ideological reasons than the parties. Both had come to the conclusion by 1956 that parliamentary democracy was ill-suited for the Indonesian people. The fractiousness of the multi-party system had shown itself to ineffectual and counter-productive towards satisfying the basic needs of the state. For this reason more than any other, Nasution pressed Sukarno for a return to the 1945 Constitution. Likewise,

Sukarno's concept of *Demokrasi Terpimpin* was born of the fundamental belief that western-style democracy was inappropriate for Indonesia and alien to the political proclivities of its people. In the end, *Masyumi* would be proven right, but it would take almost another half-century before the idea of a bicameral legislature would come to fruition. In August 2002, the Indonesian government accepted a Constitutional amendment, which in effect established a *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah* ("Regional Representatives Council"), consisting of two hundred elected members. This body will come into effect after Indonesia's 2004 general elections.

### **3. Response to Internal Instability**

*Masyumi's* response to crises of internal instability within Indonesia in great part shaped their image within the military and among the Java-based parties, as well as among Javanese voters. As previously noted, *Masyumi* often found itself in the difficult position of supporting the political aims of various insurgency movements, even if it disagreed in principle with the violent methods being used to achieve them. *Masyumi's* sympathy for the aims of the *Darul Islam* movement, which began in West Java in 1948, but which later spread to South Sulawesi and Aceh, is an important case in point. Both West Java and Aceh were important bases of support for *Masyumi*, and its leaders were understandably reticent about jeopardizing their influence among these critical constituencies by undertaking too harsh a response against the insurgents. The political situation was further complicated by the fact that many among these populations themselves had a difficult time distinguishing between *Darul Islam's* message and *Masyumi's* call for an Islamic state.

*Masyumi's* attempt to balance its sympathies with *Darul Islam* against the expectations of the Army and the other non-Islamic parties repeatedly called *Masyumi's* commitment to the state and to the rule of law into question. The army wished to pursue a military solution to the insurgency, but *Masyumi's* insistence on a negotiated settlement via diplomacy extended the life of *Darul Islam* far longer than it otherwise might have survived. Meanwhile, state resources were expended staving off the movement that might have otherwise been used for more constructive purposes.

The PNI and PKI were able to capitalize on *Masyumi's* soft stance towards *Darul Islam*, and they used it to support their accusations that *Masyumi* was a party of radical, intolerant Islamists bent on destroying Indonesia's democratic system. Of course, *Masyumi's* position was far more nuanced than that, but to the simple voters of Java, most of whom were nominal Muslims with little affinity for the orthodox strain of Islam, it was enough to sway their votes to *Nahdatul Ulama*, or even to the PNI or PKI.

Concern within the army over *Masyumi's* unwillingness to respond vigorously to the problem of *Darul Islam* also began to erode the leadership's confidence in Natsir's commitment to the internal security and stability of the state. As the self-proclaimed saviors of the nation, the army was very sensitive to the unwillingness of *Masyumi's* leaders to take a decisive stand against the insurgents. In many respects, this pattern is being repeated today. Accusations that many modern Indonesian political leaders have failed to act decisively or speak up convincingly against radical Islamic elements for fear that they may alienate potential voters sounds strangely reminiscent of similar complaints lodged against *Masyumi* in the 1950s. It should be noted, however, that the *Darul Islam* movements in West Java, Aceh and South Sulawesi were finally stamped out by a combined political and military approach undertaken by the army and the government after the banning of *Masyumi*.

*Masyumi's* ambiguous position concerning the PRRI and Permesta rebellions would also prove disastrous for their political credentials as a legitimate political party. As noted above, *Masyumi* did not take a collective position on the merit of the regional rebellions that began in 1957, but neither did they strongly repudiate them as illegal and anti-democratic. If anything, *Masyumi's* withdrawal of its members from the second Sastroamidjojo cabinet in January 1957 at a time of national crisis indicated a tacit approval of the actions of both the PRRI and Permesta. Further, the involvement of several of its top leaders, including two former Prime Ministers (Natsir and Harahap) and the former President of the wartime emergency government (Prawiranegara), was never fully disavowed by *Masyumi's* leadership in the aftermath of the collapse of the rebellions. Sukiman's attempt to save the party by expelling Natsir and his followers from the party was repulsed, and the whole party was banned as a result.



Like with the Darul Islam, the PRRI and Permesta rebellions put *Masyumi's* leaders between their own Scylla and Charybdis. On one hand, they sympathized with the grievances of the regional civilian and military leaders. In almost every point of the PRRI and Permesta manifestos, one can see a reflection of *Masyumi's* agenda, but the failure of *Masyumi* to condemn the anti-constitutional methods of the rebels, even as they continued to actively work within the parliamentary system to ensure a peaceful (and constitutional) rectification of the *seberang* grievances, was the cause of their final undoing. No longer could *Masyumi* claim to be the champion of democratic values and the system of parliamentary democracy. They had proven themselves to be no more principled than the Communists had been at Madiun in 1948. The 1955 elections had disabused them of their illusion of being the sole voice of Indonesian *ummah*, and their implication in these revolts likewise erased their claims of moral superiority. In the eyes of their critics, they had become just another political party looking out for their own interests.

#### **4. The Impact of Communism and the Cold War**

There is no doubt that the exigencies of the Cold War had a profound impact on Indonesia's domestic political environment. Even without the added pressure of the subversive threat of a grand international Communist conspiracy looming over Indonesia, *Masyumi's* leaders were faced with a domestic political crisis in the form of the PKI. In retrospect, much of the PKI's growth during the mid-1950s can be attributed to *Masyumi's* own role in pushing the PNI into a political alliance with the Communists; however, the PKI itself was a dangerous threat not only to *Masyumi*, but also to Indonesian democracy itself. Despite their watered-down agenda during the first three-quarters of this period, the PKI leaders were every bit as ideologically fervent as their Soviet and Chinese mentors. After 1957, the pragmatism of Aidit's earlier program began to be incrementally replaced by more hardline Marxist doctrine reflective of class-conscious warfare. It is likely safe to assume that this alteration reflected only the second phase of the PKI's long-term strategy to gradually weaken Indonesia's parliamentary democracy from within, since attacks from outside had repeatedly provide ineffective.

The PKI was equally wary of *Masyumi*, if for no other reason than that Islam continued to present the biggest obstacle to Communist expansion throughout Indonesia. Unlike most of the other political forces in Indonesia during this period, both *Masyumi* and the PKI had relatively well-formed ideas about what they represented and what their vision was for Indonesia's future. The real struggle revolved around co-opting the support of the various other parties in order to achieve the critical mass necessary to tip the scales in favor of one side or the other. As has already been noted above, *Masyumi* had an over-inflated sense of its own political importance and, as a result, its leaders were loath to compromise their own political principles in order to forge working relationships beyond their traditional political alliances. Had *Masyumi* been able and/or willing to distinguish where the real threat was, its leaders might have been more circumspect in their attacks on the PNI.

Conversely, the PKI began this period in a position of weakness. They were more willing to compromise and tolerate incremental gains, even if those gains were marred by occasional setbacks, if it meant they could achieve their long-term goals of political rehabilitation and acceptance as a legitimate party. They did not abandon the attack when necessary to preserve their own interests, but they became far more adept at the art of nipping at their political enemies from the oblique. While *Masyumi* exhausted itself throwing itself against the ideological ramparts of the PNI in parliament and in the bureaucracy to no effect, the PKI was quietly, but resolutely attacking them in East Java, Central Java and Sumatra by expanding its own voter base.

The United States had come to recognize the criticality of this struggle by the mid-1950s, but the failure of both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to recognize the unique character of Indonesian domestic political constraints underscored the heavy-handedness of their approach to shaping the outcome of that struggle. As the most pro-West of the many parties in parliament, both *Masyumi* and the PSI were the most susceptible to criticism that they had become the servile running dogs of the western imperialists. Efforts by the United States to coerce successive Indonesian governments to join in the greater Cold War struggle took the form of increasingly binding aid agreements, covert funding of political campaigns, and even direct action in the support

of rebel activities; however, none of these efforts proved successful, and cumulatively, they only served to further tarnish *Masyumi*'s foreign and domestic credentials.

One can hardly fault the U.S. administrations for the sincerity and vigor with which they attempted to contain Communism in the 1950s, even if their actions were often ill-informed and counter-productive in the long run. The threat was real, and Indonesia remained very vulnerable to Communist machinations until 1965. Indonesia's fate vis-à-vis the survival of democracy was not simply an internal matter to be decided by Indonesians: It was also was of importance for the security of the entire region. The interest of the United States in helping to determine a positive outcome is understandable, but the impact of their efforts helped doom *Masyumi* and the PSI to the dustbins of political history. Even today, the lingering effects of the 1957-1958 covert interference by the CIA in the PRRI and Permesta regional rebellions continue to negatively influence Indonesian perceptions regarding the legality and morality of foreign interventions in sovereign countries (Van der Kroef, May, 1958, pp. 76-80).

## 5. Back to the Future

This analysis indicates that the failure of *Masyumi* to rally the Muslim vote in 1955 and become the preeminent political forces in Indonesia during the 1950s has a multiplicity of causes. It cannot be simply explained away as reflecting a certain cultural tendency among Indonesian voters to shy away from political expressions of Islam. While it is true that the lack of homogeneity among the Indonesian *ummah* limited *Masyumi*'s ability to speak for all people at all times, the divergent interests between traditionalist and modernist, and between *santri* and *abangan* were not too great that they could not have been bridged by effective politics. *Masyumi*'s tent in 1950 was certainly big enough to accommodate a whole range of positions and interests, but by 1957 a string of poor tactical and strategic political decisions had eroded *Masyumi*'s support among the voters, the army, the President, and among the other parties. If the Indonesian people had become disenchanted with *Masyumi*, it was because *Masyumi* had failed to understand the political ground truth and adapt accordingly.

There are lessons from *Masyumi*'s fall that can help observers better understand the possible role of Islamic parties in Indonesia's future political discourse, or more

importantly, for determining those factors which could prevent a greater role. If one scrutinizes the four factors discussed above, one can see that similar challenges face Indonesia today. There continues to be tension between the *seberang* and the Javanese-dominated central government, as well as between traditionalist and modernist elements of the Indonesian *ummah*. Indonesia's modern Islamic parties continue to reflect these various strains, and consequently, they have been unable to effectively work together to advance their respective agendas. The one exception was the formation of the *Poros Tengah* in 1999 to ensure the election of Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency over Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Currently, the Islamic parties continue to be personality driven, that is their voter base is generally drawn to them because of who their candidate is, rather than for what the party advocates. Until these parties mature their respective agendas, they will find it difficult to find points of similarity among themselves that can be exploited as the basis for greater cooperation. There seems to be some progress in this area, but these parties, as well as the entire democratic system in Indonesia, are still very young and immature. How quickly the Islamic parties will develop coherent platforms will in great part depend on how quickly they are forced to by the changing political conditions. The establishment of a regional House of Representatives will likely spur this development because the parties will be required to compete more vigorously at the local level, and candidates will be forced to respond with more concrete ideas about what they wish to achieve for their constituents.

The inherently weak nature of the parliamentary system of the 1950s has in great part been rectified by recent amendments to the 1945 Constitution, which has remained in effect since its reinstatement in July 1959. Direct elections of the President and Vice President, as well as the provision of a second house of parliament will rectify many of the deficiencies of the current system. These changes will help stabilize the government and mitigate the effect of factional politics on the ability of the government to carry on the day-to-day tasks of government. It is hoped that these changes will also encourage more earnest discussion of government policies by narrowing the opportunities for political maneuvering simply for the sake of gaining a political leverage over the President and the cabinet. With a more disciplined discussion of policies, we may find

that the Islamic parties have something of value to add to the discourse, particularly in light of the negative association of both Golkar and the PPP with the Suharto era, and the PDI-Ps lackluster performance under President Sukarnoputri.

The future of the Islamic parties will hinge in great part also on their ability to learn from *Masyumi's* mistakes regarding *Darul Islam* and the other regional rebellions. Since September 11, 2001, and the Bali bombing of October 2002, the international community and the Indonesian people have both taken far more interest in the prospects for the reemergence of radical Islamic forces in Indonesia. To date, Indonesia's political leaders, including those of the Islamic parties, have been generally hesitant to speak out too forcefully against those in their midst who incite violence against non-Muslims. Like *Masyumi's* rationale during the 1950s, much of this hesitancy is grounded in a certain political pragmatism combined with a measure of self-delusion.

Regardless of the cause for their hesitancy in condemning the radicals, there is only a narrow window of opportunity for these parties to demonstrate the quality of their moral convictions, if in fact they have any. Indonesian history is strewn with examples of one political entity attempting to co-opt and manage another for the sake of political expediency. Whether it was the PNI co-opting the PKI, Sukarno co-opting the PKI, the PNI co-opting the anti-October 17<sup>th</sup> faction, or *Masyumi* co-opting the rebels – all ultimately suffered the consequences of having becoming the victim of their own machinations: Unstable forces are inherently uncontrollable. The unwillingness of Vice President Hamzah Haz of the PPP to sever his cordial relations with Abu Bakar Bashir of the Jemaah Islamiyah is indicative of the attempt by some among the Islamic leadership to continue to play both sides of the Muslim street. Such leaders would be wise to investigate the consequences of *Masyumi's* failure to repudiate *Darul Islam*.

Finally, U.S. officials would benefit from a careful study of the conduct of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations towards Indonesia during the 1950s. There are many parallels between today's worldwide war on terrorism and the Cold War of that era. The "You are either with us or against us" mentality of the current U.S. administration is eerily reminiscent of the anti-neutralism stance espoused by John Foster Dulles during the mid-1950s. Consequently, it would be wise for the U.S. government to take heed of the effect that Eisenhower's policies had on souring U.S.-Indonesian relations, while

effectively marginalizing its own allies within the Indonesian government. Indonesian political culture is different in many respects from that of the United States, and a different approach is often required than that which is intuitively American. Since the proscription of *Masyumi* on August 17, 1960, the fifteenth anniversary of Indonesia's independence, Indonesian political discourse has remained dominated by the Javanese political culture, which has its own peculiar way of dealing with conflict and dissent. The subtle nuances of this Javanese approach seemed to have been lost on the previous U.S. administrations. With luck and wisdom, perhaps the current administration will come to understand more fully the Indonesian way and adapt U.S. policies accordingly.

The future of Indonesian politics is difficult to read, but the upcoming elections in 2004 will surely be unlike any other in Indonesian history. The Indonesian people were blessed in 1999 with a second chance at democracy after forty-two years of despotism and oppression. Whether they merely repeat their own bleak history, or are able to open a new chapter full of promise, will be entirely dependent on their ability to distill and learn from the valuable lessons of their own past.

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