

**No. 113**

**Rewriting Indonesian History  
The Future in Indonesia's Past**

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**Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies  
Singapore**

**June 2006**

***With Compliments***

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## ABSTRACT

“Indonesians have in the midst of all their political crises since 1945 explicitly looked back into their past for rationalizations of their present and more critically, redefine a “golden era” from which they can chart anew paths into their future. This paper examines the different challenges to the New Order version of Indonesian history and rewriting of that history for Indonesia’s future. Specifically, the paper looks at the rewriting of Indonesian history (1) for the restructuring of the state and its Constitution for a more egalitarian and democratic future, (2) that reviews the swing of the pendulum in Jakarta’s control of the provinces and justifies the devolution of power and decentralization of administration to the provinces, (3) which reviews the contribution of the Indonesian Armed Forces to the making of Indonesia’s past and justification of its future role, (4) that acknowledges a greater role for Islam in Indonesia’s past and its future.”

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## **REWRITING INDONESIAN HISTORY**

### **The Future in Indonesia's Past**

Addressing a conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia in Jakarta at the end of August 1998, former President Habibie called for a more honest and objective review of the past in explaining the crisis not only Indonesia but the rest of the region was experiencing. A new understanding of the past, according to the President, is needed to help us reflect on the future.<sup>1</sup> In calling for this review of Indonesian history, B J Habibie has concurred with a growing public chorus for Indonesian history to be rewritten<sup>2</sup>. This call for the rewriting of Indonesian history is not the first.

In 1951 the government of the year old Indonesian Republic established a National Historical Committee of Indonesian and Dutch historians from the University of Indonesia and the Archaeological Service to produce a new history of Indonesia. Perhaps not unexpectedly, no agreement was reached on how to make the transition from a colonial to a national historiography. In December 1957 a second attempt was made to rewrite Indonesian history with the convening of a National Seminar on Indonesian history. Again no agreement was reached on the contents of a new Indonesian history.<sup>3</sup> A second National Seminar on Indonesian History convened in August 1970 was more successful. The papers presented were rewritten and edited into a six volume national history of Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> A third National History Seminar to

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<sup>1</sup> President Habibie had his own version of how Indonesian history is to be rewritten. Interviewed by *Forum Keadilan* on the 100th day of his presidency, and asked when his vision of a more civil, prosperous and democratic Indonesia can and will be achieved, Habibie explained that he envisaged it will be in the sixth era of Indonesian history that started with (1) the national revival, then went on to (2) Youth Pledge; (3) Declaration of Independence; (4) New Order; (5) revival of technology; and (6) revival of democracy. (*Forum* 7/11 [7 Sept 98], pg. 16)

<sup>2</sup> On which, see Gerry van Klinken, "The battle for history after Soeharto," in Mary S. Zurbuchen, ed., *Beginning to remember; The past in Indonesian present* (Singapore: University Press/University Washington Press, 2005), pp. 232-260.

<sup>3</sup> Only 2 volumes of the proceedings of this seminar at Jogjakarta were published in 1958 under the title *Laporan seminar sedjarah*.

<sup>4</sup> Published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1975 as *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* under the editorship of three of the leading historians of the day, Sartono Kartodirdjo, Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto. Balai Pustaka published the fifth edition of this series in 1984.

update and consolidate this national history of Indonesia was organized in November 1981.<sup>5</sup> Since then the Department of Education and Culture has tried to organize a National History Seminar every four years or so, the sixth seminar convened in 1996 under the chairmanship of Taufik Abdullah.<sup>6</sup> A seventh Congress convened in 2001 and according to its chairman, Dr Anhar Gonggong (the secretary of the 1996 seminar), may rewrite a number of New Order history milestones, including the drafting of the 11 March 1966 letter transferring political power from Soekarno to Soeharto.<sup>7</sup>

The issues confronting these four seminars were however more than historiographical issues of the collation and analysis of the records and sources for the writing of history, and its periodization.<sup>8</sup> There is a more fundamental issue confronting all these three seminars which Soedjatmoko focussed on in his address to the 1957 seminar.<sup>9</sup> He pointed out that people at turning points in their history would ask questions about themselves, expecting this self-examination to provide a definition of who they really are. The hope is that this definition of who they are will then provide them the faith and courage to adapt to the new phase of history they are entering. He was right. Soekarno grappled with this issue in his 1930 Trial and

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<sup>5</sup> The Dept P & K, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional, published eight volumes of proceedings of this Seminar Sejarah III in 1982 and 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Five volumes of papers from this *Kongres Nasional Sejarah 1996* were published. This *Kongres* adopted a more topical approach to its task and examined Indonesian national history under 15 topics grouped into five panels.

<sup>7</sup> *Jakarta Post* 6 Oct 2003.

<sup>8</sup> These historiographical issues are however the criteria and framework to evaluate any attempt to construct a national history of Indonesia. As such they have been of perennial interest to Indonesian historians. See for example the benchmark text *An introduction to Indonesian historiography* edited by Soedjatmoko and Mohammad Ali, G. J. Resink and G. McT. Kahin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965) which started as a collection of studies by Indonesian scholars for an Indonesian audience and was adopted by Cornell's Modern Indonesia Project. There has since then been a constant outflow of comments on and analysis of what Indonesian history is, or should be about, and how to write about it. See for example, the LP3ES volume edited by W. H. Frederick and Soeri Soeroto, *Permahaman sejarah Indonesia; Sebelum & sesudah Revolusi* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> Soedjatmoko's address has been translated by Cornell Modern Indonesia Project in its Translation Series as *An approach to Indonesian history; Towards an open future* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, SEAsia Program, 1960). Soedjatmoko returned to these themes in his other writings, eg. his concluding chapter in the volume he edited, *An introduction to Indonesian historiography* and the lead article "Kesadaran sejarah dan pembangunan," he contributed to a special issue of *Prisma* 5/7 (1976) on "Sejarah Indonesia: antara dongeng & kenyataan." For an evaluation of Soedjatmoko, see Frederick & Soeri, pp. 56-63.

provided the classic answer which continues to confront Indonesians on how to link up their past, present and future:<sup>10</sup>

“What about activating nationalism? How do you bring it to life? There are three steps. First we show the people that the life they led long ago was a good life; second, we intensify the realization that theirs is a dismal life today; third, we turn their gaze to the bright and shining rays of a future day, and we show them ways to reach that promised-filled hour.”

The 1951 National Historical Committee, established only a year after Indonesia secured its independence after a five year revolutionary struggle against the Dutch, was searching for a new future. But where is the beginning of this new future for Indonesia? Does the future of Indonesia begin with the Dutch transfer of sovereignty to the Republican government in 1949, or Soekarno’s and Hatta’s declaration of independence on 17 August 1945? Or does it begin earlier? If the future of Indonesia begins somewhere in its pre-colonial past, then the colonial constitution of that past may not provide a suitable beginning for Indonesia’s future. Indonesian history has therefore to be rewritten.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Soekarno’s statement at his 1930 Trial has been collated and translated by Roger K Paget, editor, translator, *Indonesia Accuses! Soekarno’s defence oration in the political trial of 1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975);, pg. 79.

Soekarno’s response to this existentialist *angst* of who and where we are in time is probably the most relevant for this essay. For an extended analysis of this *angst*, see Paul Ricoeur, *Time and narrative*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Univ Press, 1988), Ricoeur argues that we make sense of our lives through a narrative that links our present with our past and our future. We experience our world and make sense of it as a narrative that begins in our past and continues into our present to shape our future. See David Carr, *Time, narrative, and history* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986) for another version of this same argument about the centrality of narrative to our sense of self in time. It may well be this sense of self in time which shapes and drives our practical reasoning about what we want to do tomorrow, next week or a year or more from now. This is contrary to the traditional view (from Aristotle onwards) that some form of syllogistic reasoning (*phronesis*) underlies our thinking about the kinds of ends we choose and whether we have the means to achieve them. Deciding whether we want a more, or less, democratic future in six months or six years from now may unfortunately not be via a rational, logical argument. Questions about the kinds of ends we work towards and the means we select to achieve our ends are questions involving our desires and beliefs and not easily answered by a syllogism. Choosing what to do depends upon knowing what we want, and that may ultimately depend upon knowing “What are we”?

<sup>11</sup> The Dutch legal historian G. J. Resink (who grew up in Indonesia and was probably among the first of his generation to adopt Indonesian citizenship in 1949) captured the essence of this rewriting of Indonesian history in his 1952 essay “Tussen de mythen: Van coloniale naar nationale geschiedschrijving,” in *De Nieuwe Stem* 7/vi (Jun 52), 346-355. See H. A. J. Klooster, *Indonesiërs schrijven hun geschiedenis; De ontwikkeling van de Indonesische geschiedbeoedening in theorie en*

The second attempt to rewrite Indonesian history that Soedjatmoko was involved in was also made in a time of crisis and change. Several years of Parliamentary democracy and much-heralded elections in 1955 had failed to produce consensus, political stability or economic development that Indonesians anticipated. A number of provinces in Sumatra and Sulawesi were demanding more autonomy, failing which they threatened succession. President Soekarno was advocating the rejection of Parliamentary democracy for a form of democracy more in accordance with Indonesian traditions as he understood them. If the future of Indonesia based on Parliamentary democracy is inappropriate and a new future had to be projected, then where is the beginning of that future? Underlying the ostensive historiographical concerns of the History Seminar were more critical issues of whose vision of the Indonesian past was to become the start point of Indonesia's new future.

The third attempt to rewrite Indonesian history in 1970 occurred when General Soeharto was in the midst of establishing his New Order. Like Soekarno in 1959, Soeharto had discredited and dismantled the preceding political order and had therefore to go back into the past to locate a new start for his New Order and its future. But this attempt to rewrite Indonesian history was also bedevilled by historiographical and political issues.<sup>12</sup> The post-Soeharto call for the rewriting of Indonesian history implies that the version of Indonesian history that emerged out of the 1970 National Seminar and is enshrined in a six volume *National History of*

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*praktijk, 1900-1980*, Verhand. KITLV 113 (Dordrecht-Holland: Foris Publ. 1985) for a history of Indonesian historiography.

<sup>12</sup> The problems and difficulties bedevilling these National History Seminars and the writing of the 1975 *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia* are alluded to by Taufik Abdullah in his "In search of a national history: Experiences of a multi-ethnic and multi-historic Indonesia" presented to a 1994 University Brunei Darussalam conference writing Brunei's national history and published in Putu Davies, ed., *Constructing a national past; National history and historiography in Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and Vietnam* (Bandar Seri Begawan: Dept of History, UBD, 1996), pp. 203-218. Sartono Kartodirdjo in his paper "Writing national history in Indonesia: Theory and practice" for this Brunei conference is even more allusive and elliptical about his role in the editorship of *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*. He only hints at problems without indicating their magnitude, which led to his name eventually being dropped out of the list of editors of the series. Sartono's own views on the historiography of writing a national history of Indonesia, in response to the 1957 National History Seminar, are contained in a series of essays published between 1969 and 1974 and compiled in 1982 into a volume *Pemikiran dan perkembangan historiografi Indonesia; Suatu alternatif* (Jakarta: P. T. Gramedia, 1982). See also H. A. J. Klooster, *Indonesiërs schrijven hun geschiedenis; De ontwikkeling van de Indonesische geschiedbeoedening in theorie en praktijk, 1900-1980*, pp. 108-116 on Sartono's work.



*Indonesia* is some how wrong and needs rectification. Habibie's call for the revision of Indonesian history was also not for historiographical reasons, just as the convening of the seventh National History Congress in 2003 is also not only for historiographical reasons. This essay reviews this New Order version of Indonesian history we have become accustom to and identifies alternative interpretations of Indonesian history which are perceived to have been suppressed or marginalised. The major portion of the essay examines how Indonesians may be rewriting their history and the implications of this on their choice of the kind of future they want for themselves.

## I

The version of Indonesian history that President Habibie has agreed needs revision began on 30 September 1965, when a group of dissident army and air force officers launched a coup d'état to ostensibly pre-empt a Central Intelligence Agency operation against Indonesia. The coup was attributed to an Indonesian Communist Party plot to seize political power in an increasingly tense domestic political impasse with other political groups that was rapidly slipping out of control by the late President Soekarno.<sup>13</sup> Indonesia may have gone Communist if then Major-General Soeharto, Commander of KOSTRAD, the military's Strategic Reserve force, had not launched a counter-coup to save the Indonesian nation. The Indonesian Communist Party was decimated in a bloody massacre. Soekarno was implicated in the coup and discredited. Major-General Soeharto emerged as the saviour of the Indonesian nation and on the 11 March 1966 received a Presidential Order instructing him "to take all necessary steps to guarantee security and calm and the stability of the government and

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<sup>13</sup> Army historian Nugroho Notosusanto and Public Prosecutor Ismael Saleh provide the official version of the "coup" in *The coup attempt of the "September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement" in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pembimbing Masa, 1968). This version of the "coup" remains central to the political legitimacy of Soeharto's New Order and had to be maintained against alternative interpretations that, for example, argue it was largely an internal Army affair, notably by B. R. Anderson and Ruth T. McVey in their "Cornell Paper." The Indonesian authorities have thus found it necessary to periodically reiterate the Communist threat, for example in 1994 the State Secretariat published another collection of documents, *Gerakan 30 September. Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia; Latar belakang, aksi, dan penumpasannya* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1994).

the course of the Revolution.”<sup>14</sup> With this transfer of state executive power, Soeharto then proceeded to establish a “New Order,” the key features of which were its emphasis on economic and social growth and demphasis of mass participation in the politics of ideology associated with the “Old Order” of President Soekarno. The excess of party politics was held to be responsible for Indonesia’s problems. Democracy would be returned to its original Indonesian roots enunciated by Soekarno 20 years earlier, in his outline of the five principles or values, the *pancasila*, which defined the Indonesian nation state he was arguing for. A secure and stable society will emerge from its depoliticisation and transformation into a “floating mass.”<sup>15</sup>

The military became the key national institution in Soeharto’s New Order, responsible for not only the nation’s external, but also its internal security and stability. It was a role the military claimed on the basis of its record of having sacrificed its blood and sweat in the revolution against the returning Dutch colonialist after the end of World War II, saving the infant nation state from a coup by the Indonesian Communist Party in 1948 and from Islamic revolutionaries fighting for an Islamic nation state from 1948 to 1962.<sup>16</sup> The military formally asserted its claim to a “dual function” as the guardian of Indonesia’s external security and a socio-political for domestic stability at a national seminar in the final months of Soekarno’s Old Order and then reasserted it at another national seminar in the early months of Soeharto’s New Order. This concept of a “dwi fungsi” for the Armed Forces was enacted in law in 1982.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The background to this 11 March 1966 Presidential Order, which has become the linchpin of Soeharto’s political legitimacy, is described in *Supersemar: Surat Perintah 11 Maret dalam tulisan dan foto-foto* (Jakarta: Badan Penerbit Almanak Republic Indonesia / BP Alda, 1977).

<sup>15</sup> Soeharto’s Personal Assistant, Maj-Gen Ali Moertopo has attempted to provide an overview of this New Order ideology of modernization in his *The acceleration and modernization of 25 years development* (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi/centre for Strategic & International Studies, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> Argued in some detail by Gen A. H. Nasution in volumes 2 to 11 of his *Sekitar perang kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Bandung: Disjarah AD & Angkasa, 1978-1979).

<sup>17</sup> Former Armed Forces Chief of Staff General A. H. Nasution first proposed the concept in 1958 and has since compiled the legal documentation justifying ABRI’s dual function in *Kekarjaan ABRI* (Jakarta: Seruling Masa, 1971).

Soeharto's grounding of his New Order on *pembangunan*, conventionally translated as "development" in the World Bank-AID sense of the word,<sup>18</sup> succeeded largely because the West, in the throes of the Cold War, was prepared to pump in large amounts of foreign aid into his anti-Communist New Order Indonesia. An Inter-Government Group on Indonesia coordinated the provision of an increasing amount of financial assistance to Indonesia – from US\$200 million in 1967 to US\$4.8 billion in 1992. Indonesia's creditors were also prepared to accept Soeharto's increasingly authoritarian rule for a stable political order. The quantum increase in oil prices by OPEC after 1970 also helped Soeharto's New Order economically take off. Foreign trade and investments were aggressively pursued. The political legitimacy of Soeharto's New Order was secured by its technocrats' ability to keep foreign aid and investments flowing into Indonesia to maintain an essentially nationalist economic strategy of import-substitution industrialisation. From 1965 to the early 1980's the legitimacy of the New Order was maintained by an average annual 4.3% rate of growth in per capita GNP. This economic system founded on *pancasila* professed to harmoniously balance capitalism and socialism.

Indonesian history according to Soeharto's New Order is largely a story of economic development promoting political order and underpinning the nation's stability and security.<sup>19</sup> That history unraveled once economic development slowed or faltered.<sup>20</sup> The decline of oil prices in the early 1980's forced a series of economic reforms that may have bought a new lease of life for Soeharto's New Order, but in hindsight was the beginning of the end. The major critique of this New Order version of Indonesian history is the inherent contradiction in its *pancasila* economics. The foreign aid given and investments made have benefited only groups within the ruling elite and not trickled down to make for a more just, democratic and humanitarian

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<sup>18</sup> "Pembangunan" combines two Indonesian words for *growth/pertumbuhan* and *development/perkembangan* and as such perhaps better rendered as "upbuilding." *Pembangunan* has become a major ideological linchpin of the old "New Order" with Soeharto named *Bapak Pembangunan*.

<sup>19</sup> Described by one of its architects, Radius Prawiro in his *Indonesia's struggle for economic development; pragmatism in action* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> See Ian Chalmers and V. R. Hadiz, eds., *The politics of economic development in Indonesia: Contending perspectives* (Lond.: Routledge, 1997). See also Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, *Indonesia dalam perkembangan dunia; Kini dan masa datang* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1976).

society promised under the *pancasila* professed by the New Order.<sup>21</sup> As early as August 1973 there were major demonstrations leading to riots in Bandung against the largely Chinese businessmen and government officials who were the primary beneficiaries of trade and agency monopolies. A January 1974 state visit by Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka was the catalyst for massive civil disorder that seriously threatened Soeharto's New Order.<sup>22</sup> A decade later these continuing economic and social inequalities of *pancasila* economics resulted in another series of major demonstrations that escalated into riots in Jakarta's port of Tanjung Priok when security forces fired into the demonstrators. The May 1998 demonstrations and riots which finally forced Soeharto out of office was the climax of this growing public discontent with the contradictions of *pancasila* economics. Army suppression, often brutal, of these demonstrations and riots has lost them their claim to be guardians of the Indonesian Revolution.<sup>23</sup> As upholders of the New Order, the Indonesian military have become rather discredited.

Any attempt to rewrite Indonesian history must confront the fundamental issue of what the history of Indonesia is about. If it is about the establishment and development of the modern nation-state we know as Indonesia, then what is the complexion of this nation-state? Soeharto's New Order emphasised security and stability, *keamanan dan ketertiban*, as the defining features of the Indonesian nation-state. That is today perceived to be a betrayal of the Indonesian Revolution and a travesty of what it symbolises. The New Order nation-state is perceived to be the revival of a "feudal order" first imposed by the Dutch colonialists on the indigenous kingdoms they subjugated. And like the Dutch colonial state, the labours and produce

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<sup>21</sup> See the critique of J. Soedjati Djiwandono in a series of essays published in the 1990's and compiled in his *Setengah abad Negara Pancasila; Tinjauan kritis ke arah pembaruan* (Jakarta: Centre for Strategic & International Studies, 1995)

<sup>22</sup> Marzuki Arifin, *Peristiwa 15 January 1974* (Jakarta: Publishing House Indonesia, 1974) for background and government view that the riots were instigated by elements of the old Masjumi and socialist parties, and Heru Cahyono, *Pangkopkmtib Jenderal Soemitro dan Peristiwa 15 Januari 1974* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1998) for the alternative interpretation that it was a consequence of internal army factionalism.

<sup>23</sup> The evidence from the mass graves recently excavated in Aceh of the brutality with which ABRI suppressed the Achenese rebellion from 1989 has further undermined ABRI's credentials and credibility. Geoffrey Robinson "Rawan is as Rawan does: The origins of disorder in New Order Aceh," *Indonesia* 66 (Oct 98), 127ff argues that this Achenese evidence of institutionalised terror and violence by ABRI against opposition to Soeharto's New Order has helped undermine its legitimacy.

of the people were expropriated by the New Order for its privilege few. The people have been “sacrificed” for the “*pembangunan*” or “upbuilding” of the New Order “feudal state.”<sup>24</sup>

## II

The rewriting of Indonesian history starts with the Gadjah Mada University students who in February 1998 protested against Soeharto’s forthcoming reelection. From here the student protest spread to culminate in the occupation of Parliament on 18 May 98. These students perceived themselves as the heirs of earlier generations of *pemuda* or “youth” whose militant actions in their time catalysed large-scale political change.<sup>25</sup> These *pemuda* perceive their beginnings in the group of Javanese intellectuals, officials and especially students who on 20 May 1908 came together to establish the Boedi Oetomo or “High Endeavour” to advance and improve agriculture and industry on Java, promote social reform and unity among the peoples of the Dutch East Indies. Today Boedi Oetomo is held high as the forerunner of a series of organizations formed in the first two decades of the last century by local leaders and groups thinking about who they were in the Dutch East Indies and questioning and probing the limits of Dutch colonial rule.<sup>26</sup>

This popular movement or *pergerakan* mobilized and inspired a whole generation to review their world and think about their future after Dutch colonialism.

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<sup>24</sup> Argued with passion by Heri Akhmedi, then General Chairman of the Students’ Council of the Bandung Institute of Technology at his June 1979 trial for insulting President Soeharto on his unopposed re-election in 1978. Heri’s defence statement has been translated as *Breaking the chains of oppression of the Indonesian people* by Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, in its Translation Series (Publication no. 59) in 1981.

<sup>25</sup> The *pemuda* claim to a place in history is asserted in *Pemuda Indonesia dalam dimensi sejarah perjuangan bangsa* (Jakarta: Yayasan Sumpah Pemuda, 1984) and other commemorative publications. This ascription of a significant historical role to the *pemuda* is part of old “New Order” historiography in recognition for their involvement in the events of 1965 – 1968. But the challenge for “New Order” historiography was how to transform and institutionalise the historic role they have ascribed to the *pemuda* into a historical role documented in the textbooks. Failure of engendering the historic role of the *pemuda* to the textbooks meant that the *pemuda* spirit and tradition of engendering revolutionary change lived on to haunt the “New Order” and eventually caused its downfall.

<sup>26</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer has captured the mood of the era in his “Buru Quartet” of four novels: *Bumi manusia*; *Jejak langkah*; *nak semua bangsa* and *Rumah kaca*.

The student leaders of the *pergerakan*, men like Sutan Sjahrir, Dr Mohammed Hatta, Hj. Agus Salim and Soekarno, went on to become leaders of the Indonesian Revolution. The nationalist movement and parties, especially the Indonesian Nationalist Party and the Indonesian Communist Party which emerged to fight for independence from Dutch colonial rule in the 1930's had their beginnings in the *pergerakan* era in the first quarter of this century. A blossoming of schools, literature, newspapers promoted and politicised these nationalist ideas of a free and independent "Indonesia." It was at the Congress of Indonesian Youth in October 1928 that the historic oath for one people, one nation and one language was taken and the song which would become the Indonesian national anthem sung for the first time while the red and white flag unfurled.

This nascent Indonesian nationalist movement was unprepared for the Revolution. Soekarno and Hatta had to be pressured, if not forced by the leaders of the revolutionary youth movement, the *pemuda*, to seize the opportunity of Japan's sudden surrender on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, to declare Indonesia's independence on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, and pre-empt the returning Allied powers reimposing Dutch colonial rule. For the revolutionary youth leaders their successful persuasion of Soekarno and Hatta to declare Indonesia's independence was the final fulfillment of the oath, the *Soempah Permoeda*, their forefathers took in 1928 for "one country, one nation, one language." In the days following the proclamation it was the *pemuda* who fanned the flames of the Revolution, built up the fire of battle against the returning Allied Forces, demanded no compromise or negotiations and diplomacy with the British and the Dutch.

In the *pemuda* view of Indonesian history they were the ones who first lit the fire of Indonesian nationalism in the era of *pergerakan* and then fanned and kept the nationalist ideals of egalitarianism, freedom and independence alive through the Revolution. They were disappointed with the compromises reached for the transfer of power that ended the Revolution, but kept up their struggle for a more egalitarian, free and independent Indonesia through the 50's and 60's. It was *pemuda* groups who were largely responsible for forcing Soekarno to hand over power to Soeharto on 11

March 1966.<sup>27</sup> Since then they have been in the forefront of criticisms of Soeharto's New Order for corruption, mismanagement of the economy and consequent social inequalities. The student demonstrations that finally ousted Soeharto from office is the continuation of the historic *pemuda* struggle for a more egalitarian state.<sup>28</sup>

### III

For other Indonesian nationalist leaders however these *pemuda* represented the more emotional, violent and dark dimension of the nationalist struggle that challenged their more pragmatic programme for a negotiated settlement with the Dutch. The brief and terse two-sentence declaration by Soekarno and Hatta that “we the people of Indonesia hereby declare Indonesia's independence. Matters concerning the transfer of power and other questions will be executed in an orderly manner and in the shortest possible time” masks the deep splits within the ranks of the nationalist leaders and their uncertainty about the future of their newborn republic. Were they to negotiate or militarily oppose the returning Allied forces and Dutch colonial authorities? The declaration made no reference or allusion to the plans and preparations that Soekarno and other nationalist leaders had negotiated among themselves and with the *Gunseikan*, the Japanese Military Administration for Indonesian independence.

These plans and preparations included the drafting of an interim 37 clause Constitution based on the philosophy of *pancasila* enunciated by Soekarno on 1 Jun 45 in an address to the committee negotiating independence with the Japanese. This '45 constitution empowers a powerful executive President to administer a strong unitary state. The influence of the late colonial state is evident in the provisions of this interim constitution. The provision of a strong centralized administration echoes the *binnenlands bestuur* (Inland Government) of the Dutch territorial administration ensuring the co-operation of the “natives” to work for the *rust en orde* (tranquility and

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<sup>27</sup> Christiano Wibisono, *Aksi-aksi Tritura: Kisah sebuah partnership 10 Djanuari – 11 Maret 1965* (Jakarta: Dept. Pertahanan-Keamanan, Pusat Sedjarah Angkatan Bersendjata, 1970).

<sup>28</sup> Ricardi S. Adnan & Arvan Pradiansyah, “Gerakan mahasiswa untuk Reformasi,” in Selo Soemardjan, ed., *Kisah perjuangan Reformasi* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1999), 133-196 for a chronology and analysis of the 1998 demonstrations.

order) of the colonial state. The powers and functions of the Peoples Representative Council elected to assist and advise the President are not very different from the old *Volksraad*.<sup>29</sup> The assumptions and spirit of this interim constitution ran counter to the egalitarianism of the nationalist movement, when comrades were addressed as *bung* or brother. It is this tension between an authoritarian nation-state based on executive Presidential power, a *machstraat*,<sup>30</sup> and a more egalitarian nation-state based on the rule of law, a *rechtstraat*, that underlies Indonesian history from the Revolution to today.

A series of largely Dutch trained, more socialist and pragmatic Cabinets worked to institutionalise a democratic state based on the rule of law in the first five years of independence. A new Constitution providing for a Parliamentary form of government was introduced. But this experiment with Parliamentary democracy unraveled after the 1955 elections failed to produce a clear majority. The reasons for this failure of Parliamentary democracy continue to be intensely debated, for the answers are of more than historiographical interest: they have and will continue to shape Indonesia's future.<sup>31</sup> Was the party politics of parliamentary democracy too divisive for a society that stressed harmony and tranquility? Did the principle of

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<sup>29</sup> Ruth McVey has drawn attention to the continuity between the *Beambtenstaaten* and the post-colonial Indonesian state in "The Beambtenstaat in Indonesia," in B. Anderson & A. Kahin, eds., *Interpreting Indonesian politics: Thirteen contributions to the debate* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Modern Indonesia Project Publ. # 62, 1991 repr.). In hindsight, it was not surprising that the framers of the 1945 Constitution were impressed with and adopted some, if not much of the *Beambtenstaat* because, as Harry Benda pointed out, "the *Beambtenstaat* had triumphed in a Netherlands Indies that was far more Netherlands than were India and Burma British or the Philippines American..." in his "The pattern of administrative reforms in the closing years of Dutch rule in Indonesia," *J. Asian stud.*, 25 (1966), 604.

<sup>30</sup> The philosophical core of the unitary state provided in this 1945 Constitution has been traced back to one of its drafters, the Dutch trained *adat* (customary) law expert Raden Soepomo and his ideas of an "integralist state." Soepomo understood an "integralist state" to embody the national spirit (*volksgeist*) of its people living in a organized society. In support of this interpretation of an "integralist state" Soepomo cited Hegel and Spinoza as proponents of integralism. These ideas of Soepomo were revived in the mid-1980s and the lineage of Indonesia as an "integralist state" was stretched back to romantic visions of harmonious communities in pre-colonial Indonesia. See David Bouchier, "Totalitarianism and the 'National Personality': recent controversy about the philosophical basis of the Indonesian state," in Jim Schiller & B. Martin-Schiller, eds., *Imagining Indonesia: Cultural Politics and political culture* (Athens: Ohio Univ. Center for Inter. Stud. Monogr. , SEAsia series # 97, 1997), 157-185.

<sup>31</sup> See the essays in David Bouchier and John Legge, eds., *Democracy in Indonesia 1950s and 1990s* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Centre of southeast Asian Studies, 1994) reinterpreting the events of the 1950 and how these reinterpretations are shaping the debate about the prospects for democracy in Indonesia today.



“50% plus 1” as Soekarno expressed it, violate Indonesian values of deliberation and consensus? If so, then the failure of parliamentary democracy was predestined.

The failure of the series of weak, unstable coalition Cabinets formed after the 1955 elections to solve the nation’s economic problems and engage the provinces and regions seeking greater autonomy from the centre and a more equitable share of national income is confirmation of the irrelevance of parliamentary democracy for Indonesia. A series of regional uprisings in Sulawesi and Sumatra in 1957 had to be quashed by the Army and encouraged their expanding political role. The exodus of Dutch nationals following the nationalisation of their investments and assets exacerbated the economic crisis. Soekarno’s 1957 call for a new “*konsepsi*” of “Guided Democracy” founded on Indonesian principles of “deliberation and consensus” and “mutual assistance” was the death knell of parliamentary democracy.

The alternative interpretation of the abandonment of the 1950 Constitution for a *negara hukum/ rechtstaat* and the return to the *machtstaat/negara kekusaan* 1945 Constitution in 1958 is that it was not a consequence of lack of commitment to, understanding or irrelevance of the values and principles of parliamentary democracy.<sup>32</sup> Parliamentary democracy was undermined by the Army and Soekarno.<sup>33</sup> Neither supported it and both had their own reasons for wanting to terminate it as a system of government. Army disdain for parliamentary democracy was demonstrated on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1952 when army units demonstrated against Parliament’s efforts to reorganize and rationalise the military, which they perceived to be an attempt to reduce their status and benefits accruing from their making the Revolution. The guerrilla war they were engaged in against the Darul-Islam and its manifesto for an Islamic state did not endure them to the Masjumi and other Islamic political parties. Contempt for politicians and their parties coupled with a conviction

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<sup>32</sup> Human rights activist and lawyer Adnan Buyung Nasution has argued that the democratic aspirations to establish a constitutional state based on a recognition of fundamental human rights came very close to success in the *Konstituante* debates of 1956-59 in his doctoral dissertation *The aspiration for constitutional government in Indonesia: A socio-legal study of the Indonesian Konstituante 1956-1959* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> Argument of Daniel S. Lev, “On the fall of the Parliamentary system,” in Bouchier & Legge, eds., *Democracy in Indonesia*, pp. 39-42.

that the military could do a more efficient job of running Indonesia lead then Army Chief Nasution to formally enunciate its ideology of *dwifungsi* in 1958.<sup>34</sup>

For Soekarno the Revolution did not end in 1950 – it continues and must continue because the struggle against colonialism and imperialism had not yet been won. West Irian had yet to be liberated. The “Old Established forces” were still around and had to be confronted. The “New Emerging forces” under Indonesia’s (i.e. Soekarno’s) leadership must stand firmly together for victory over the forces of New-Colonialism, Colonialism, and Imperialism” or NEKOLIM. Domestically, Soekarno attempted to fuse the three ideologies of nationalism, religion (*agama*) and communism into a new whole - NASAKOM. But political fissure, rather than fusion followed NASAKOM, culminating in the abortive coup of 30<sup>th</sup> September 1965.

Was the abandonment of parliamentary democracy for Guided Democracy therefore an inevitable consequence of democracy’s foreignness and incompatibility with inegalitarian traditions in Indonesian cultures, and the powerful enemies – the Army, the Communist and especially, Soekarno – pitted against it? Have these forces and actors against democracy been neutralized today? Depending upon how Indonesian history is revised to answer these questions will be whether the Indonesian nation state will continue to be authoritarian or become more constitutional in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### IV

The rewriting of Indonesian history is also haunted by its inheritance of Dutch attitudes towards Islam. For the Dutch colonial authorities Islam has been a perennial political issue which, incorrectly handled, could become a military problem. Local Islamic leaders and their followers were often the focal points of peasant unrest and

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<sup>34</sup> Gen A. H. Nasution’s 1958 proposal for the Army to adopt a “Middle Way” to be actively involved, but not dominant, in politics was made after the declaration of martial law to tackle the rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi against Jakarta. Nasution has described these events in great detail in volume 4 of his autobiography *Memenuhi panggilan tugas* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1984). According to Nasution, it was constitutional law expert Professor Djokosutono who proposed the term “middle road.”

protest against colonial rule. A whole department was dedicated to study and advise the Governor General and deal with the problem of Islam. Overall, this department was largely successful in neutralizing Islam as a political force channeling its energies into social and cultural programmes.<sup>35</sup> But the Japanese reversed this when they occupied Indonesia. In their search for allies, the Japanese formed a “Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims,” the *Majlis Sjuro Muslim Indonesia* or MASJUMI, which brought together the major Islamic organizations in Indonesia. The Japanese also allowed the establishment of an Islamic armed wing, the “Barisan Hisbullah.” Politicised Islamic leaders joined other Indonesian leaders in negotiations with the Japanese for independence and demanded a place for Islam in the new Republic. But the secular nationalist leaders led by Soekarno balked and compromised by drafting a separate Charter which enjoins Muslims to adhere to the *shari’a* law.<sup>36</sup> Disappointment with this confinement of Islam in the new Republic led more militant Muslims to launch a 14-year guerrilla war for a *Darul Islam*.

The status of this Charter and the status of Islam in the Indonesian nation state has been one of the more intensely debated political issues in Indonesian history and go to the soul of the Indonesian identity. How much of a Muslim is an Indonesian?<sup>37</sup> How prepared is he to be subjected to Islamic *shari’a* law? Formulated this way, the debate is cast between Muslims defined by their Islamic scriptures demanding formal and legal recognition of Islam as the religion of the Indonesian state expressed in the implementation of *shari’a* law and all the others who are adhere to other faiths or are more secular, or even Muslims but read the scriptures differently. The outcome of such a debate is argued to be for Islam to either forgo its political program or give in and is domesticated. The results of Indonesia’s first Parliamentary elections in

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<sup>35</sup> H. Aqib Suminto, *Islam di Indonesia; Politik Hindia Belanda; Het Kantoor voor Inlandsche zaken* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1985) for a reconstruction of Dutch policies towards Islam.

<sup>36</sup> Saifuddin Anshari, *The Jakarta Charter 1945: The struggle for an Islamic constitution in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> The answer to which hinges on whether it is assumed that Islam is only a “thin veneer” on a pre-Islamic (and for Java, Hindu-Javanese) cultural substratum, and as such, can be disregarded. Most 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Dutch scholars perceived more pre-Islamic, or non-Islamic, elements in Indonesian cultures and their perceptions became justifications for colonial officials to suppress Islam when it challenged the colonial order. These assumptions of Islam underpin the *santri-abangan* dichotomy popularised by Clifford Geertz, which has become part of Indonesian cultural and political discourse.

1955 in which the MASJUMI's efforts to further political Islam in the arena of party politics won them 20.9% of the votes while the other major Islamic Party, the more conservative and traditional Nahdlatu Ulama won a further 18.4% of the votes appeared to confirm fears that upholding Islam's political programme would split Indonesian society between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam's pursuance of its political programme polarised Indonesian society, and depending upon one's reading of Indonesian history, was another nail in the coffin of parliamentary democracy. The ensuring attempt by Soekarno attempt to accommodate Islam by fusing it with Communism and nationalism in his ideology of NASAKOM also failed.<sup>38</sup>

Soeharto's attitude towards this legacy of political Islam was thus predictable. He kept the genie of political Islam firmly corked up in the bottle of Pancasila democracy for the first 20 years of his New Order. But a new generation of Islamic theologians and intellectuals has been redefining Islamic identity. Former "Islamic Students' Society" (HMI) chairman Nurcholish Madjid and NU Chairman Abdurrahman Wahid have lead the debate<sup>39</sup> for a more inclusive, rather than exclusive definition of the *umat*, the Islamic community and its theology. They have tried to break down the walls of incompatibility and argued for compatibility between Muslims values with the values of other Indonesian communities. The core of their arguments is a more nuance and contextualised *ijtihad*, reading the scriptures in the context of its times and relevance to the personal self. Some of these Islamic neo-modernist ideas and attitudes have floated upwards and were favourably received in the upper reaches of the New Order.<sup>40</sup> The 1990 approval for the formation of an

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<sup>38</sup> See for further details, Martin van Bruinessen, "Islamic state or state Islam: Fifty years of state-Islam relations in Indonesia," in Ingrid Wessel, ed., *Indonesien am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Abera Verl. 1996), pp. 19-34 and R. W. Hefner, *Civil Islam; Muslims and democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton: Univ Press, 2000), chap. 3-4.

<sup>39</sup> Other speakers in this debate for new Islamic intellectualism includes Dawam Rahardjo, Kuntowijoyo and Azyumardi Azra, see for example Fachry Ali & Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah jalan baru Islam; Rekonstruksi pemikiran Islam, Indonesia masa Orde Baru* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan 1986) for an introduction to this new Islamic intellectualism. Effendy is one of the younger leaders of this new Islamic intellectualism, see, for example, the collection of his essays repositioning Islam's response to democracy, pluralism and civil society and business ethics in *Masyarakat agama dan pluralisme keagamaan, Perbincangan mengenai Islam, masyarakat madani, dan etos kewirausahaan* (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> One time Presidential staffer Deliar Noer, for example, was very sceptical that the "New Order" had changed its attitude and position towards Islam and argued so in his *Ideologi, politik dan pembangunan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Perkhidmatan, 1983)

“Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association or ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*) marked the start of a new era in the on-going discourse about Islam in Indonesia.<sup>41</sup>

But how much of this neo-modernist reform of Islam has trickled down to the Islamic grass roots and revised their view of Islam’s place in Indonesian history?<sup>42</sup> The 1999 and 2004 elections in which the 18 political parties (out of 48) in 2004 and 5 parties (out of 24) in 1999 which claimed Islam as their party platform and won only slightly less than the 43 per cent of the votes that the Masjumi and the NU had collected in 1955<sup>43</sup> is evidence of the continuity of the paradigm of political Islam and challenges the more inclusive neo-modernist ideas of Majid and Wahid.<sup>44</sup> What are the prospects for some form of accommodation with this version of Islam’s claim for a political role in Indonesia’s past and future?

The October 2002 terrorist bombing of Kuta Beach on Bali was a dramatic demonstration that political Islam in its most radical and violent form is also very much alive.<sup>45</sup> Subsequent bombings of the J W Marriott Hotel and the Australian

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<sup>41</sup> Established under the patronage of B J Habibie, ICMI has had a chequered history as a patron-client network of Muslim government bureaucrats and Muslim intellectuals like M. Dawam Rahardjo. His essays compiled in *Intelektual inteligensia dan perilaku politik bangsa; Risalah cendekiawan Muslim* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 1993) is reflective of the views and positions he advocates for ICMI.

<sup>42</sup> How widely is this narrative of Islam’s place in Indonesia subscribed to? Or is H. M. Rasjidi, Minister of Religion and professor of Islamic studies in various Indonesian universities, voicing the Islamic mainstream in Indonesia in criticising Nurcholish Majid, e.g. *Koreksi terhadap Drs Nurcholish Majid tentang sekularisasi* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1972)? The January 1993 furore in the Indonesian media, especially *Media Dakwah*, over a paper Majid presented at an Arizona State University Program for Southeast Asian Studies seminar arguing for an Islamic theology of tolerance towards other religions suggests that a major segment, if not majority of Indonesian Muslims still speak and think in the Islamic vocabulary of exclusion and otherness. Majid’s essay, together with Taufik Abdullah’s keynote “The formation of a new paradigm? A sketch of contemporary Islamic discourse” is in Mark W. Woodward, *Towards a new paradigm; Recent developments in Indonesian Islamic thought* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State Univ. Program for SEAsian Studies, 1997).

<sup>43</sup> Aris Ananta, Evi Nurvidya Arifin & Leo Suryadinta, *Emerging democracy in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2005), pp. 21 *et passim* for analysis of the 2004 Parliamentary elections.

<sup>44</sup> See Bahtiar Effendy’s efforts to come to terms with this in the postscript to his *Islam and the state in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2003), esp. pp. 222. See also Azyumardi Azra’s response to the challenge of “political” Islam in *Reposisi hubungan agama dan negara, Merajut kerukunan antarumat* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2002).

<sup>45</sup> See Zuhairi Misrawi & Khamami Zada, *Islam melawan terorisme* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Islam Progresif, 2004) and Rudhy Suharto, & others, eds., *Terorisme, perang global, masa depan demokrasi* (Jakarta: Matapena 2004) for two examples of the intense debate on how to respond to these bombings.

Embassy in Jakarta and inter-religious conflicts in Poso in Sulawesi indicate the existence of networks of radical Islamic groups<sup>46</sup> and organisations with the Jemaah Islamiyah, the Laskar Jihad, the Laskar Jundullah and the Front Pembela Islam as the major groups dedicated to asserting a dominant political role for Islam in Indonesia. Their versions of Indonesian history dominated by the old Darul Islam vision for an Islamic state<sup>47</sup> through violence if necessary will probably threaten Indonesia for the foreseeable future.

## V

The focal point of the preceding versions of Indonesian history is Jakarta. It was here that the Revolution was launched. The former centre of the Dutch East Indies became the capital of the new republic. Java became the immediate hinterland of Jakarta; the old Javanese capitals of Jogjakarta and Surakarta were reduced to symbolic centres. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Java was systematically developed, especially under the “Culture system” implemented from 1830 onwards. Looking outward from Jakarta the other island groups became the *buitenbezittingen*, the “outlying possessions” of the Dutch colonialist. From these “outlying possessions” flowed the revenue from an increasing amount of produce, especially oil and rubber, to Jakarta after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century revenue from these “outlying possessions” exceeded those from Java. But Java consumed the larger amount of expenditure on welfare and education because of its larger and more rapidly growing population. Because of its greater economic potential, the “outlying possessions” attracted more investments, especially in the oil fields, than overpopulated Java. This asymmetric relation between Jakarta, the centre, and the “outer islands,” the periphery, has significantly shaped the writing of Indonesian history. From the perspective of these “outer islands” Indonesian history is about the draining of their resources to support an impoverished Java.

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<sup>46</sup> See the reports of the International Crisis Group, Asia Briefing, *Indonesia: Violence and Radical Muslims* (10 Oct 2001); Indonesia Briefing, *Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The case of the “Ngruki Network” in Indonesia* (8 Aug 2002), Indonesia Backgrounder: *How the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network operates* (11 Dec 2002) available at [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org).

<sup>47</sup> C van Dijk, *Rebellion under the banner of Islam* (‘s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1981)

The Revolution looked rather different from the outer islands. Nationalism had not impacted on these territories to the degree it had on Java. Support for the revolution was not as spontaneous as reported in the textbook histories. The course of the Revolution in the outer islands depended very much on the relationship between the local power-holders and the Republican leaders and the returning Dutch colonial authorities.<sup>48</sup> In East and West Sumatra the nascent Republic had to challenge the local warlords who also chose to resist the returning Dutch authorities. Other outer islands were persuaded or forced by the Dutch to become a series of 15 states that would form a Federation that would negotiate with the Indonesian Republic on Java. The Republicans were led by their more moderate leaders to accept this diplomatic solution of a federation of the “United States of Indonesia” as the road to independence in 1949. It was a short-lived federation, which ended in August 1950 when the 15 states opted to join the republic.

This asymmetric relationship between Java and the outer islands bedevilled the young Republic. Differences over macro-economic policy and the distribution of economic growth, the politics of decentralization and Army warlordism finally culminated in a series of regional revolts in 1957 demanding greater local autonomy. This challenge from the regions was one of the factors that brought back the interim 1945 Constitution for a unitary state. Regionalism ranks high on the New Order priorities. Under the New Order the outer islands were more tightly tied to the centre than at any time in the past. But bureaucratic structures and depoliticisation have not resolved the underlying economic tension between centre and periphery.<sup>49</sup> Today the pendulum is swinging in the other direction.

At the beginning of the last century, the Dutch passed a series of laws, starting with their 1901 Ethical Policy that decentralised the tight central administration of the outer islands. The Japanese Occupation reverted to centralisation of administration, and the post-colonial governments continued this centralisation of administration.

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<sup>48</sup> Audrey R. Kahin, ed., *Regional dynamics of the Indonesian revolution* (Honolulu: Univ. Hawai'i Press, 1985).

<sup>49</sup> Hal Hill, ed., *Unity and diversity: Regional economic development in Indonesia since 1970* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991)

With the *reformasi* movement launched by President Habibie, the pendulum has started to swing with the passing of two laws. Law 22/1999 is intended to devolve political power as part of democratisation, to strengthen local legislation, while Law 25/1999 is intended to decentralise administration to local government. How these two laws will be implemented is a subject of negotiation between Jakarta and the provinces, the outcome of which will probably be dependent upon how the provinces reflect on their social memories of dealing with Jakarta.

## VI

Underlying the 1999 and 2004 elections was not only competition for power and the right to govern Indonesia for the next five years, but the more fundamental issue of reforming the government as the existing structures and system is perceived to have gone (disastrously) wrong. But *reform* the government into what? Ultimately the most fundamental challenge confronting Indonesia's leaders is what kind of future do they envisage for Indonesia and are promising the voters? What is the basis of the different futures these leaders are envisaging? If the present system and structures are to be *reformed* and therefore not a basis for the future, then where in the past is the future to be premised? Soekarno, as noted earlier in this essay, had argued for this link between Indonesia's past, present and future in 1933.

Indonesia's Dutch-educated leaders in the first decade of independence failed to convince their electorate how make this transition from their socialist vision to a constitutional democratic future. Soekarno also failed to carry the Indonesian people that he could transform his romantic vision of Indonesia's past into a revolutionary future and his career came to an inglorious end on 11 March 1968. Soeharto eventually lost the confidence of his people that his strategy of *pembangunan* could carry them from an idealised stable and hierarchically ordered past to a New Order. None of his successors have similarly succeeded in convincing the Indonesian people of their capability to link their future to a glorious past. The onus is now on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to define the glorious past that he wants to link his vision of Indonesia's future to.



The challenge for Indonesian leaders is a counterfactual problem of at what point in the past could they have gone to an alternative present and different future?<sup>50</sup> Could Indonesia have moved into a more democratic future if the draft Constitution which the Constituent Assembly was working on from 1956 to 1959 had been completed and adopted, and not aborted by then President Soekarno, who returned the country to its interim 1945 Constitution? Were earlier generations of Muslim leaders too naïve and intense in their commitment to political Islam when they fought for Islam to become the basis of the Indonesian state in the Constituent Assembly debates?<sup>51</sup> Can the Indonesian Armed Forces redeem itself if it reverts to General A H Nasution's 1957 call for the Army to adopt a "Middle Way" between political involvement and political dominance in future?<sup>52</sup>

This review of how Indonesians may be writing and rewriting their history suggests at least three, possibly four, beginnings for a new future. The origin of these beginnings lies in the changes in Dutch colonial policy at the beginning of this century. In the view of Yale economic historian Clive Day in 1903, these Dutch policies were at an impasse. The legacy of the old Culture System hung over the more liberal policies introduced after 1850, threatening to undermine them. Initially these liberal policies had stimulated production and enhanced the general welfare of the population. But by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century these liberal policies were creating economic inequalities and diminishing welfare. Dutch politician C. Th van Deventer led the call for the Dutch government to assume greater moral responsibility for the welfare of the Javanese. The impact of these more ethical policies was to accelerate social and cultural change. A new young generation of Indonesians was introduced to the ideas of egalitarianism and nationality. Dutch liberalism, reformist Islam and Russian Communism helped create a new intellectual world, an age of motion or

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<sup>50</sup> The use of counterfactuals to link past and future in a "scenaric histories of the future" is demonstrated by Steven Weber in "Counterfactuals, past and future," in P. E Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual thought experiments in world politics; Logical, methodological, and psychological perspectives* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 268-291.

<sup>51</sup> A question Ahmad Syafii Maarif wrestles with in *Islam dan masalah kenegaraan; Studi tentang perbatasan dalam Konstituante* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985).

<sup>52</sup> An Armed Forces Staff & Command College seminar on 22-23 Sep 1998 debated this issue, on which see *TNI Abad XXI: Redefinisi, Reposisi dan Reaktualisasi Peran TNI dalam Kehidupan Bangsa* (Jakarta: Jasa Burma, 1999).

*pergerakan*, in the first two decades of this century.<sup>53</sup> It is the legacy of egalitarianism from this era of *pergerakan* that Soeharto's New Order has been charged with deviating from and must now be restored. Indonesian leaders and groups seeking an alternative to the unhappy period of constitutional democracy in the 1950's to start to their future of a more democratic Indonesia may well be looking to the earlier *pergerakan* era.

But for the Indonesian Armed forces and other institutions of government charged with maintaining the unity and integrity of the Republic, the lesson of the *pergerakan* is the divisive force of political ideologies and the need for a counterbalance in a strong executive government of a unitary state.<sup>54</sup> Their dilemma is how much the provisions of the 1945 Constitution for a *machstraat* can be reformed without compromising or undermining the fundamental unity and integrity of Indonesia as a nation state. They will have to rethink their interpretation of the Indonesian state as perennially threatened by primordial pulls of ethnicity, religion and region.

Ultimately the fortunes of Indonesia's leaders and their organizations may be dependent upon how the different futures there are proposing for Indonesia will be perceived by others. Will an attempt by ABRI to begin a redefinition and repositioning of its national role with Nasution's 1957 call for a "Middle Way" be perceived to be credible and therefore acceptable? What kind of future Indonesia is headed into may be dependent upon how the different futures now being proposed are negotiated and reconstituted and in these negotiations the genealogies of these futures may be a determining factor. But the more fundamental question is whether Indonesia has a future? The answer to which could lie in the extent to which Indonesians think of themselves as linked and identified by shared social memories of a common past. Or is Indonesia's future to be shaped by a strong unitary state holding together different social memories of a divided history? Within this context the rewriting of

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<sup>53</sup> Documented by Takashi Sshiraishi, *An age in motion; Popular radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ Press, 1990).

<sup>54</sup> They can draw encouragement from the Dutch, who in 1931 reversed their decentralisation of the administration enacted under their Ethical Policy in response to the political fallout from the *pergerakan* their Ethical Policy unleashed. From 1931 the Dutch colonial government recentralised their administration and reinvigorated their *Beamtenschaft*, on which Benda, "Dutch administrative reforms"

Indonesian history may provide insights into how Indonesians are thinking of themselves and their future.

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