CHAPTER I

Youth: Raden Sukarno

Facts about Sukarno’s earliest years are scarce. He was born on 6 June 1901 in the bustling harbour city of Surabaja in East Java, the son of raden Sukemi Sosrodihardjo, a Javanese schoolteacher, and Ida Njoman Rai, a Balinese woman. Very little is known about the life of raden Sukemi, who in existing literature is dismissed in a few paragraphs.

This scarcity of information has led to a great deal of speculation by friend and foe alike about Sukarno’s family origins. Particularly, in Central and East Java where Sukarno drew most of his political support, stories abound about his supposed descent from Javanese royalty. One of these legends, which was current in the princely city of Solo (Surakarta) in Central Java, runs as follows:

A son of Paku Buwono X of the house of Surakarta was called Soekarno. The court’s soothsayer had prophesied that when a baby boy called Soekarno would be born, this child would liberate Surakarta, and the whole of Indonesia from Dutch domination.... This prophecy was widely known in the palace before Soekarno was born.... One of Paku Buwono’s wives who was pregnant persuaded the Sultan to have the child adopted if it was a boy. She argued that the child should not fall into the hands of the Dutch, who if they came to know about the prophecy would undoubtedly kill it. The real reason for this request, however, was that this wife wanted to make sure that her son would succeed to the throne. And although the Sultan understood what the woman was really after, he granted the request because he realized that it was the fate of the child to liberate the Indonesian people from the Dutch and to bring them to prosperity. When the baby was born and it was a son, the Sultan immediately looked for a loyal and trustworthy courtier. He found a handsome nobleman...
who was discreet and who had travelled outside Surakarta and Java. He entrusted the baby to this nobleman and ordered him to leave the court. The baby was given a magic heirloom which indicated his royal birth. The nobleman left the court with the new born baby and lived like a commoner wandering to East Java where he finally settled in Djombang. Giving up his noble title he earned his living as a teacher and came to be generally recognized as Soekarno's father. Both he and his wife kept the secret and nobody ever found out that Soekarno was actually the son of Paku Buwono X. The magic heirloom indicating his royal origin was given to Soekarno who as our president carries it with him wherever he goes ...  

Far less flattering are the various legends current since 1945 in anti-Sukarno circles claiming that he was the illegitimate offspring of a Dutch planter and an Indonesian country girl. One Indonesian author relates the following story from a 'document' he read in East Java:

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the vast plantations in the district of Kediri in East Java belonged to a Dutch firm. One day, the powerful head of this firm travelled from Holland to Indonesia and visited his possessions in Kediri. He was received, of course, with great hospitality. And as was the custom of the time this included the provision of a pretty bed-mate, because the nights in the highlands were chilly and the maidens of Kediri were lovely. After he left again for the cold country in Europe, the bed-mate was discovered to be pregnant. She gave birth to a boy ... The boy grew up, got a good education in Surabaja and in time worked in the plantations of his father, the big boss in Holland. It seems that this boy became a handsome man, an 'Indo' as they called him in Java, who was a Don Juan in his own right ... One day, he discovered a beautiful village girl ... She got pregnant in time ... Suddenly he became ill, very ill. And just at that time the girl gave birth to a child, a boy. He considered this boy as his son. His illness got worse and he became very weak. On his deathbed he called for a woman whom he knew very well and he persuaded this woman to promise him that she would take care of the baby and would give the boy a good upbringing. ... According to this 'document' the baby was Soekarno, the mother was Sarinah, the idol of Soekarno's youth. Sarinah went to live with the family of Raden Sukemi Sosrodihardjo. This 'document'
might be a fake, might be a fabrication, but the man who let me read it said that he had it from his father, who knew the family Sosro well enough . . .\textsuperscript{2}

In the absence of birth registration statistics and any other verifiable evidence in Indonesia it is impossible to confirm these stories.

Unfortunately Sukarno’s own public revelations about his origins have done little to clarify the situation, as he was obviously far more concerned with achieving certain political effects demanded by the occasion than with sticking to historical facts.

During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia when the new colonial masters pursued a policy of conciliation towards Islam in order to gain the support of Indonesian Muslims for the Japanese cause, Sukarno apparently felt that it was good politics to claim descent from the Sultans of Demak, one of the earliest Islamized principalities in Java.\textsuperscript{3} But in his autobiography published in 1965, Sukarno considered it more useful to select the kings of Kediri as his forefathers, while he claimed that his mother belonged to the Balinese nobility and was related to the princely house of Singaradja.\textsuperscript{4} However, according to well-informed Balinese sources, Sukarno’s mother was not of noble blood, but was a \textit{sudra}, a lower caste person.

On many other occasions, when there was a need to identify himself with the masses, Sukarno stressed his common origin and the great poverty he had suffered as a child.

It is possible, however, to cut through some of the mystical haze in which Sukarno and others have enshrined his youth, and to pinpoint with some accuracy the socio-economic class to which his parents belonged. The noble title \textit{raden}\textsuperscript{5} held by Sukarno’s father did not automatically ensure high social status in Java. Of equal if not more importance was the type of position held. Government employment carried—as it still does today—a high social premium. The most prestigious sector of the colonial civil service open to Indonesians at the time was the \textit{Inlands Bestuur} (Native Local Government Service),\textsuperscript{6} in which the middle and top positions were monopolized by the higher nobility (\textit{prijaji}).\textsuperscript{7} The fact that \textit{raden} Sukemi held the far less prestigious position of schoolteacher would place him among the numerous ranks of the lower nobility or in Western terms the lower middle class.

\textit{Rad{e}n} Sukemi is believed to have attended a teachers’ training school at Probolinggo in East Java; and his first posting after graduation was in Bali where he taught at an elementary school in Singaradja. In Hindu Bali he married a local girl, who because of
her marriage to a foreigner was ostracized by her own people. At that time inter-ethnic marriages were still severely frowned upon and the ideal of one Indonesian nation, language and culture—for which Sukarno fought most of his life—was still unheard of. At the beginning of the twentieth century raden Sukemi was transferred to East Java, where he taught successively in Surabaja, Modjokerto and Blitar.

Sukarno’s claim that he suffered extreme poverty in his youth must be considered as one of the many instances in his autobiography where he lets his fertile imagination run amok. In fact, twenty-five guilders per month, which Sukarno dismisses as a poor man’s salary, provided his family with an income which was considerably higher than the Javanese working classes could enjoy at the time; and it would have afforded raden Sukemi and his family a fairly comfortable life in Javanese terms.\(^8\)

Sukarno’s early education was on traditional Javanese lines. His grandfather at Tulung Agung where he stayed for a few years taught him the rules of behaviour of the Javanese nobleman (ksatriah).\(^9\) This training was continued by his father, who although having received a Dutch education had remained attached to Javanese tradition and was a member of the Theosophical Society.\(^10\)

It is significant that in his youth Sukarno did not attend a Muslim religious school, but instead was brought up on the precepts of kedjauwen: a basically tolerant, syncretic, mystical and pantheistic view of life, which draws its main inspiration from a mixture of the original Javanese animist beliefs, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, and which is practised by the majority of Javanese; it is complete anathema to the smaller group of Javanese—santri—who adhere more closely to the tenets of the Islamic Law. In his autobiography Sukarno relates an incident which provides an interesting example of this early education:

Father, however, was a strict school master. . . . The rare times I was naughty he punished me harshly. Like the morning I climbed the jambu tree in our yard and knocked down a bird’s nest. Father was livid, ‘I thought I taught you to love animals’, he thundered. I shook with fright. ‘Yes, Father, you did’. ‘You will please be so good as to explain the meaning of the phrase—“Tat Twan Asi, Tat Twam Asi”’. ‘It means “He is I and I am he; you are I and I am you”’. ‘And were you not taught this had a special significance?’ ‘Yes, Father, it means God is in all of us . . .’\(^11\)

This Javanistic upbringing left an indelible mark on Sukarno who
remained strongly mystically inclined and even during his presidency often asked advice of mystical teachers and soothsayers before making an important decision. Moreover, his later political philosophy was distinctly eclectic and he remained constantly opposed to the legalism and the theocratic tendencies of the more orthodox Indonesian Muslims.

When still very young Sukarno was allowed to attend the wajang (shadow play) performances, which usually last from late evening until early morning. It was here that he saw the Mahabharata and Ramayana epics recreated on the screen by the dalang (puppet master). Very popular in Java at the time was the Bharata Juddha, the last part of the Mahabharata, which depicts the final battle for the kingdom of Ngastina between the pandawas, such as Bima and Gatotkatja, and the korawas, such as Karna and Sangkuni. Many Javanese at the time attempted to escape the frustrations of colonial rule in the dreamworld of the wajang which they came to regard as a reality. In particular the Bharata Juddha came to be seen as the struggle for independence in which the national shame suffered at the hands of the Dutch would be expiated by the final victory of the pandawas over the foreign usurpers.

It was this version of the Bharata Juddha that Sukarno became familiar with during his childhood. And the scorn, hatred, and ridicule heaped upon the korawas—the Dutch—by the puppet master at these performances never seems to have left Sukarno throughout his life. Like any young boy in any part of the world Sukarno tried to identify himself with some of the heroes. In fact he was named after Karna, one of the korawas, a nobleman par excellence, who portrayed courage, honesty and a strong sense of duty. Sukarno in his autobiography relates the following about the namegiving:

... My name at birth was Kusno. I started life as an unhealthy child. I had malaria, dysentery, anything and everything. Father thought, 'His name is not good. We must give him another so that he may start fresh.' Father was a devotee of Mahabharata, the ancient Hindu classics. I had not yet reached puberty when Father said, 'We shall name you Karna. Karna is one of the greatest heroes in Mahabharata. ... Grasping my shoulders tightly, Father looked deep into my eyes. 'It has always been my prayer', he declared, 'for my son to be a patriot and great hero of his people. You shall be a second Karna ...'.13

This version is not fully acceptable in certain Javanese circles where
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SUKARNO

there is some speculation as to why raden Sukemi took the unusual step of naming his son after one of the korawas, while it was customary to call Javanese boys after one of the pandawas. One explanation which has been put forward is that raden Sukemi’s selection of Karna was a reflection on Sukarno’s illegitimacy. In the Mahabharata story Karna was the illegitimate son of Bataru Surya, the Sun God, and Dewi Kunti Nalibrata.

Whatever importance one might want to attach to this explanation, it is interesting that Sukarno very seldom identified himself in public with his own namesake, but preferred to model himself on one of the pandawas. Bima, the powerful and uncompromising fighter, seems to have made a particularly deep impression on him. Sukarno’s first newspaper articles appear under the pseudonym of Bima; and in his later writings and speeches he often alludes to this wajang figure.

The expectations nurtured in the Bharata Juddha about the eventual defeat of colonialism were even more strongly evident in the various prophecies current since the end of the seventeenth century about the coming of the Ratu Adil, the Just King, who would drive out the Dutch and inaugurate a millennium of prosperity and happiness for all. Undoubtedly Sukarno’s childhood view of the world would have been moulded by these messianic beliefs. The most popular were the prophecies attributed to Djojobojo, who ruled the East Javanese kingdom of Kediri during the eleventh century. One of the latest versions of the Djojobojo legend current during the 1930s has been recorded by Van der Kroef as follows:

According to this Java would first be ruled by the whites. Then the apocalypse would set in, characterized by the ‘rule of the yellow skinned ones’, who would govern Java until the padi (rice) had ripened on the fields seven times. The whites would then return for three rainy monsoons, after which Java would be free . . . 13

The impact of these millenarian beliefs never seems to have been entirely erased from Sukarno’s mind. This is evident from the strongly chiliastic content of the solutions he proposed to the major political and economic problems of the Indonesian republic when he became President.

Sukarno’s early Javanistic upbringing was followed by a thorough Western education. He began his formal Western-style education at the village school at Tulung Agung, where he stayed with his grandparents who filled his head with the age-old stories from the
wajang and spoiled him a great deal. His grandparents—at least so Sukarno tells us—believed he had supernatural powers and he was made to lick the bodies of sick villagers who, to his own amazement, were often cured quickly. His grandmother believed that Sukarno had the makings of a saint. The result was that he did not do very well at school. This changed somewhat when he moved back to his own home in Modjokerto where he attended his father’s vernacular elementary school, although at home he is said to have been very spoiled particularly by his mother.

From his earliest years Sukarno appears to have possessed a tremendous ego. He tried to push himself to the foreground and dominated his friends, which earned him the nickname djago (fighting cock). When Sukarno wanted to play football everybody had to play and when he started a stamp collection it became the rage of the village. However, it was in the European primary school, which he entered when he was eleven, where ‘bully’ Sukarno met his match with the often rough and prankish Eurasian and Dutch pupils. Highly sensitive to jokes made at his expense and upset by the slightest signs of racial discrimination, the djago of the village became quiet and withdrawn, and this made him even more the subject of attention by the students. He was highly indignant when he was not selected to play soccer for the school, although as one Dutch commentator drily remarks: 14 Sukarno does not say if he really could play the game well enough. Even towards the end of his life Sukarno was still very bitter about these humiliating experiences of his schooldays: ‘Dutch children never played with native children. It just was not done. They were the good, the pure, the snow white Westerners and they looked down on me because I was the native or inlander.’ 15

Sukarno suffered even more when after completing European primary school in 1915 he went to Surabaja to attend the Dutch High School—H.B.S. There were three hundred European boys at the school and only twenty Indonesians. The fist fights with Dutch boys and the teasings he received were unbearable cruelties for the hypersensitive Sukarno. Apparently he tried to get even by attempting to make love to Dutch girls:

It was the only way I knew to exert some form of superiority over the white race and make them bend to my will. That is always the aim, isn’t it? For a brown skinned man to overpower the white man? It’s some sort of goal to attain. Overpowering a white girl and making her want me became a matter of pride. A handsome
boy always has steady girl friends. I had many. They even adored my irregular teeth. But I admit I deliberately went after the white ones...\(^\text{16}\)

There is a story told by Sukarno about the Dutch girl Mien Hessels with whom he fell so desperately in love that he went to see her father to ask for permission to marry her:

And there I stood, shaking, in front of the father of my ivory princess, a towering six-footer who stared straight at me like I was vermin on the ground. ‘Sir’, I said, ‘if you please, I would like the hand of your daughter in marriage... Please’. ‘You? A dirty native like you’ spat Mr Hessels. ‘How dare you even come near my daughter. Out, you filthy animal. Get out!...’\(^\text{17}\)

A number of Indonesians as well as Dutchmen who passed through the same education system have argued that Sukarno’s description of race relations in Dutch-language schools in pre-war Indonesia is far too biased; and they also feel that the story about Mien Hessels was probably invented by Sukarno in order to impress upon his audiences why he hated the Dutch so much. An Indonesian nationalist, Dr Abu Hanifah, who also attended Dutch schools, writes:

I was treated the same way as any other student in the school. I knew them all, most of them were my friends, boys and girls. I was a member of the Boy Scouts, I was invited to their birthday parties, I was the same as anybody else with the exception that my skin was light brown. However, I never could summon the courage to get closer to the Dutch girls, even though they seemed very lovely and all that. It might be that I was too much involved in school fights, playing soccer, going on picnics, in brief, having fun with my Dutch friends. ... Dutch colonialists were not too friendly to the natives but they were not as bad as the English colonialists in India. Eurasians, the illegitimate offspring of Indonesian women and Dutch men, could have the best chances in the world. Some of them became even Ministers of State and professors in Holland...\(^\text{18}\)

The vitriolic diatribes in Sukarno’s speeches against everything Dutch and the warped picture of Dutch rule presented by him to foreign visitors in the post-war period, were undoubtedly necessary to radicalize the feelings of the indigenous masses and to justify the cause of Indonesian freedom to the outside world. Similar devices
were employed by other Indonesian leaders. But in the case of Sukarno there seems to have been a deeper psychological reason underlying his attitudes to the Dutch and for that matter anybody, whatever the colour of his skin, who stood in his way.

At school he was considered by many of his co-pupils as shy and distinctly odd because he did not take part in normal school life outside the classroom. Part of the explanation might be that he was as yet unable to adjust himself to a situation where because of his Western education he was uprooted to a certain extent from his own civilization and culturally and spiritually felt himself suspended in mid-air. It is more likely, however, that it was Sukarno himself, with his stubbornness, his super-ego, his unbelievable vanity, who was responsible for any unhappiness that he might have suffered rather than anything else. Unlike the village days, there was very little opportunity in the Dutch schools for Sukarno to play the leading role which he seems to have believed was his natural prerogative, so he simply retired into a world of his own—as so many Javanese had done before him—and dreamt about the great deeds which fate had destined him to perform. This capacity for day dreaming and thinking up fantastic and world-shattering schemes remained with Sukarno until the bitter end. Apparently, he was unable to force himself across the racial dividing line to find out what the other side was really like. And in spite of his thorough Western education he never seems to have really been able—or what is perhaps nearer to the truth—wanted to grasp what Western civilization was about.

Until the end Sukarno stuck stubbornly to his first impressions of European civilization which were based on books and on the watered-down and largely artificial version he had encountered in the Netherlands East Indies. To him the West stood for capitalism, imperialism, national degradation and economic exploitation. Unlike many other Western-educated Indonesians he could not appreciate Western music—he only liked the waltz—or literature, although he was more impressed by the plastic arts, especially if they portrayed the female body.

It must be added, however, that while his Indonesian schoolmates joined the Dutch students in the normal schoolboy pranks and pastimes out of school hours, Sukarno, in addition to day dreaming, also tried to grapple with a more practical solution to the unbearable frustrations he had to suffer. He eventually found the answer in the annihilation of the colonial system. Reading a great deal of political history—mainly Western—and listening avidly to the political discussions and disputes that took place in the house of Tjokroaminoto,
an important nationalist leader with whom he boarded in Surabaya, Sukarno gradually turned into a radical nationalist. One of the sons of Tjokroaminoto—Anwar—who was about ten years younger than Sukarno, describes him as a huilebalk (cry-baby) liable to throw tantrums whenever he did not get his own way. He was also terribly spoiled by Mrs Tjokroaminoto as he was by most women in his life. However, even at that time he could also if necessary be very charming. It was these qualities of charm and joviality, which he could turn on at the drop of a hat, that often stood him in good stead during some of the most dangerous and critical moments in his political career. But beneath this charm, this back-slapping friendliness, there was the iron will of a ruthless go-getter. Sukarno's self-centredness and tremendous vanity attracted very few true friends throughout his life. It is paradoxical that one of the very few real friends he ever had was a Dutchman, Emile van Konijnenburg, later Director of the K.L.M., who even during the darkest days of the West Irian dispute kept close contact with him.

Later when Sukarno began to be known in the nationalist movement and achieved his early success as a charismatic speaker, he lost his shyness and became far more confident in his dealings with his opponents the Dutch, whose domineering behaviour and punctuality he loathed although secretly he seems to have envied them these qualities. And although Sukarno would have loudly denied it, some of the mannerisms of the Dutch colonial seem to have rubbed off on him. He was no longer a shy little Javanese boy, who would hide his feelings under a somewhat enigmatic smile, controlling his emotions as a civilized Javanese was supposed to do. In the early 1920s Sukarno had undergone a complete metamorphosis; he was cocky, arrogant, always perfectly dressed in the Western manner and reputedly obsessed with cleanliness. These typically Dutch traits remained with him throughout his life; later during his presidential years he would become livid with rage if an official was not properly attired in suit and tie and if he happened to find a speck of dust in any of the Palace rooms. By his own admission, he always prayed and swore in Dutch, which shows how deeply the Dutch language had imprinted itself on his subconscious.

In addition to his tremendous ego Sukarno was endowed with an intelligence which was far above average. He passed out of the Dutch High School in Surabaya with flying colours. This was no mean feat for an Indonesian boy whose knowledge of Dutch must have been at least initially defective. Moreover, unlike their American or Australian counterparts, Dutch secondary schools such
as the H.B.S., Lyceum and Gymnasium demanded extremely high standards from students, based as they were on the French lycée with its notoriously difficult baccalaureate examination. In addition to mathematics, chemistry, physics, history and a host of minor subjects, Sukarno also had to study in considerable depth English, French and German, which explains his linguistic virtuosity in his later speeches and public performances.

In 1921 Sukarno left Surabaya for the West Javanese city of Bandung, the ‘Paris of Java’, where he enrolled at the newly established University of Technology to study architecture.

As with so many facets of Sukarno’s life there is some controversy as to how raden Sukemi, who only earned a moderate wage as a schoolteacher, managed to finance his son not only through the costly Dutch High School, but also at the vastly more expensive university. Some say that Tjokroaminoto, the Sarikat Islam (Islamic Association) leader and Sukarno’s political mentor, paid for his education. Others, who are less charitable, again conjure up a repentant Dutch father or grandfather in Holland who tried to do the right thing. However, it seems very unlikely that his supposed planter father would have allowed his son to board in the house of Tjokroaminoto, the ‘uncrowned king of Java’ and the most important nationalist leader at the time. More credible is the story reported by the Dutch Communist leader Paul de Groot, who in his memoirs relates that while he was in Moscow in the 1930s he was told by Musso, the Indonesian Communist leader, that both he and Sukarno had been adopted and educated by an ‘Ethical’ Dutchman.19 It was not unheard of for Dutch colonial families to adopt Indonesian children and give them a Dutch education. This would also make it easier to explain why Sukarno—who takes the fact that he was Dutch-educated as a matter of course—as the son of a lower-middle class Indonesian was permitted in the first place to enter the various highly selective European schools which were normally the preserve of Dutch and upper-class Indonesian children.

Sukarno was an able university student, although by his own admission he was weak in some areas of mathematics. On his graduation in 1926 Professor Wolff Schoenmaker offered him a tutorship in architecture,20 which says a great deal for his ability particularly considering the heavy colonial prejudice against him. Sukarno refused the offer, because politics already held a much greater attraction for him than an academic career or private business as an architect. Later he often proudly claimed that he built a nation rather than material structures.
CHAPTER II

Nationalist Leader: Bung Karno

Indonesian nationalism in the sense of the desire to create a united, independent state of Indonesia, out of the scattered and culturally variegated peoples and islands of the East Indies archipelago, is a twentieth-century phenomenon.

The earliest signs of this national awakening became apparent soon after Sukarno's birth, when in 1908 the students of the Medical School—STOVIA—in Djakarta founded the first modern national organization in Indonesia called Budi Utomo—High Endeavour. The emphasis of Budi Utomo on cultural problems and education could not satisfy some of the more radically inclined Western-educated Indonesian intellectuals. The result was that in 1912 another organization, the Indische Partij (Party of the Indies) was founded, which demanded immediate independence and attempted —although with little success—to combine all the racial groups in the Indies in the struggle against Dutch colonialism. Neither Budi Utomo nor the Party of the Indies were able to draw a mass following.

In the Indonesian Islamic world there were also stirrings for renewal and reform at this time. A number of Islamic teachers (ulamas) influenced by modernist teachings in the Middle East began to agitate against the medieval thinking and attitudes of Indonesian Islam and set up modern Muslim schools, which in addition to religion also taught the normal Western curricula subjects. In 1912 the Islamic Association was founded which within a few years attracted millions of followers from all walks of life who attempted to find solace for the frustrations of colonial rule in the new organization. Many of the peasants saw in H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto, the charismatic Islamic Association leader, the embodiment of the long expected 'Just King'. Initially moderate in its programme and willing to cooperate with the colonial government's policy of indigenous
economic development, the Islamic Association had by 1918 grown far more radical owing to the infiltration of Dutch and Indonesian Communists into its ranks. A serious split occurred in the organization which resulted in the ousting of the Communists, who in 1921 set up their own Partai Kommunis Indonesia (P.K.I.).

The P.K.I. grew rapidly, drawing away most of the members from the Islamic Association, which soon declined into political insignificance. In the years 1921–25 the P.K.I. became increasingly revolutionary in its activities. Strikes in industry and on the plantations increased continuously, culminating in Communist-inspired rebellions in West Java and West Sumatra in 1926–27. These uprisings were quickly suppressed by the colonial army and the police force; more than 18,000 people were arrested of whom four were condemned to death and executed, and 4,500 sent to prison. The colonial government, which hitherto had been fairly lenient and had allowed a number of revolutionaries to go into exile in the Netherlands or other overseas countries, now adopted a much harsher line and 1,308 people who had been involved in the uprisings were sent to the Tanah Merah prisoner camp at the Upper Digul river in West Irian. This suppressive policy and the greater vigilance of the Politieke Inlichtingen Dienst (Political Intelligence Service) effectively crushed the P.K.I. until the end of Dutch rule. As Ruth McVey has so aptly put it:

The P.K.I. had been the last of the older generation of Indonesian political movements to play an active role; the others . . . had either given up entirely or retired . . . from the struggle against Dutch rule. The removal of the Communists from the political scene caused the new generation, which had hitherto been gathering in the background, suddenly to occupy the centre of the stage. These were the secular nationalists, who saw their anti-Dutch efforts directly in terms of striving for an Indonesian nation state rather than in the international framework of Islam or Communism or in the political and cultural nationalism of the regional movements . . .

One of the outstanding leaders of this new generation of nationalists was Sukarno.

The first feelings of nationalism were probably instilled in Sukarno by his father, whose acquaintance with Tjokroaminoto and membership of the Theosophical Society influenced him towards nationalism. There is no doubt, however, that Sukarno’s ideological position and
his ideas about political tactics began to take shape in the period 1916–21 when he attended the Dutch High School at Surabaja. There he boarded in Tjokroaminoto’s house, which at the time was the main centre of political discussion and agitation in the Indies, having as frequent visitors such leaders as the Communists: Semaun, Tan Malaka, Sneevelt, Baars; and the Socialist Douwes Dekker, who all tried to persuade Tjokroaminoto to lead the Islamic Association in a more revolutionary direction. In addition to listening carefully to the often hot-headed debates in Tjokroaminoto’s house, Sukarno furthered his political education by attending seminars on Marxism conducted by the Dutch socialist C. Hartog, who taught German at the High School, and who considered Sukarno to be the most intelligent participant and was amazed at his fantastic capacity to memorize facts. Sukarno also spent many hours in the library of the Theosophical Society to which he had access because of his father’s membership. It was there that he debated in his mind with some of the great political figures in history:

Mentally I talked with Thomas Jefferson, with whom I feel friendly and close because he told me all about the Declaration of Independence he wrote in 1776. I discussed George Washington’s problems with him. I relived Paul Revere’s ride. I deliberately looked for mistakes in the life of Abraham Lincoln so I could argue the points with him. . . . In the world of my mind, I also communed with Prime Minister Gladstone as well as Sidney and Beatrice Webb; I came face to face with Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi of Italy; Austria’s Otto Bauer and Adler; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Lenin, and I chatted with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Aristide Briand and Jean Jaures, the grandest orator in French history. I drank in these glories. I lived their lives. I actually was Voltaire. I was the great fighter of the French revolution, Danton. A thousand times, I myself, in my black room saved France singlehanded. I became emotionally involved with these statesmen . . . .

Sukarno first came to public attention while he was a member of Jong Java (Young Java), the youth organization of Budi Utomo. The non-political nature of Young Java, which was almost entirely concerned with educational problems and the strengthening and revitalization of Javanese civilization, would have been particularly galling to the more radical-minded Sukarno. His attempts to lead the organization in a more revolutionary direction, and his arrogant
and stubborn behaviour during various meetings, caused a furore in Young Java where he came to be named Bima, the uncompromising warrior of the wajang.

In 1921 Sukarno wrote a number of articles for Oetoesan Hindia, the Islamic Association newspaper. These early writings show a distinct Marxist influence, but Tjokroaminoto’s hold on the young Sukarno appears to have been still strong enough to make him side with his mentor in the dispute between the moderate and Communist factions within the Islamic Association. Sukarno condemned the Communists for breaking up the unity of the Islamic Association movement and argued that the time was not yet ripe for revolution. The people had to be educated first, and self-government along the lines envisaged by the colonial government would have to be achieved before a successful attack could be made on capitalism and imperialism:

Once the right conditions have been created and a parliament with true representatives of the people is in existence, also then the Islamic Association must continue to work and agitate in order to reinforce democracy and Islam in the Indies and to destroy capitalism. What is the use of self-government if it is controlled by the supporters of capitalism and imperialism?  

The gradual approach in achieving independence and the syncretic position with regard to nationalism, Islam and Communism taken here by Sukarno reflects the influence of Tjokroaminoto, who first introduced him to practical politics. Sukarno often accompanied Tjokroaminoto to public meetings and while listening intently to the fiery and charismatic Islamic Association leader his own oratorical talents must undoubtedly have been considerably sharpened:

I became the tail of Tjokroaminoto. Wherever he went I followed ... and I just sat and observed. He had great authority over the people. Nonetheless, as I watched time after time I became aware he never raised or lowered his tone, never cracked jokes, his speeches were dull. I never read one of those cheap books on how to be a public speaker nor did I practice in front of a mirror. It isn’t that I wasn’t vain enough for a mirror, but because I had none. My mirror was Tjokroaminoto. I watched him throw his voice, I saw his gesture, I observed and applied.  

Soon, however, Sukarno no longer sat and watched, but was able
to test his own speaking talents at smaller meetings in the villages where he was allowed to fill in more and more for Tjokroaminoto who saw that his serious and avid young student had the makings of a great popular leader. It was at these meetings in the humble villages and kampongs around Surabaja that Sukarno first realized his tremendous speaking abilities and charismatic power which brought his listeners under his spell.

Sukarno himself admitted that Tjokroaminoto was the most important influence in his early political life and that he felt very close to him. Shortly before Sukarno departed for Bandung to take up his university studies he sealed his close friendship with Tjokro by marrying his eldest daughter, Siti Utari. He was then twenty and she was sixteen. Intellectually she was not in his class and apparently Sukarno was not really in love with her, but—so he writes in his memoirs—he was motivated by feelings of gratitude to the great master, who after his wife’s sudden death was made to feel a little happier when he saw his eldest child married to his favourite pupil. Undoubtedly he had reason to be grateful to Tjokroaminoto, but it would have been very much out of character if at least in the back of his mind Sukarno had not weighed the possible political advantages of marrying into the family of the most powerful and widely known political leader in the country at the time.

It was then in Surabaja that Sukarno served his apprenticeship as a public speaker and where he was introduced to nationalist politics under the guidance of Tjokroaminoto, who was basically a political moderate, always prepared to reach a compromise with the various factions in the nationalist movements as well as with the colonial government, providing it served his main objective which was the unification of all anti-colonial forces in the country. This quest for unity also rubbed off on the young Sukarno with whom it eventually became a complete obsession—something to be achieved even at the cost of denying the basic human rights to his people as well as ruining the national economy.

Whatever moderate political tendencies Sukarno may have had initially, they soon disappeared after his arrival in Bandung where he fell under the spell of such first generation radical nationalists as Dr Tjipto Mangunkusumo, E. F. Douwes Dekker and Suwardi Surianingrat, the triumvirate of the Party of the Indies, who after their return from exile in the Netherlands established a new radical party, the Nationaal Indische Partij (NIP). ‘Freedom now’ once more became the slogan and the party worked hard to establish a united front of all the parties and groups in the country which were striving
for self-government or independence. In 1923 the NIP issued a manifesto, signed by seventeen Indonesian political parties and organizations, calling on all nationalists to bury the hatchet and unite themselves in the struggle against colonialism. The manifesto pointed out that promises made in 1918 by the 'ethical' Governor-General van Limburg Stirum about the speedy introduction of true self-government had not been honoured by the Dutch government and it was clear that the colonial power could no longer be depended upon to introduce the political, economic and social changes which were so urgently needed and desired by the people.

Meetings discussing the manifesto were held all over Java, and Sukarno in his memoirs claims that at the meeting in Bandung he made an important speech:

I was just a youngster. I was listening. But suddenly I wanted to say something desperately. I couldn't control myself; they were all speaking nonsense. As usual they were begging. They weren't demanding. ... I want to speak my piece, I yelled. Go ahead, the chairman yelled back. There were PID Dutch secret police, all over the place. Right in front of me stood one big, scowling red-faced policeman. The supreme power—the white man. He alone could stop me. He singlehanded could disband the meeting. ... ‘Why does a volcano like Mount Kelud explode? He explodes because the hole in the crater becomes stopped up. ... It will be the same with our nationalist movement if the Dutch keep stopping our mouths and we are not allowed to give vent to our emotions. ... One day there will come an explosion with us too. And when we erupt, the Hague will go sky high. ... What good are tens of thousands of us massing together if all we do is produce petitions. ... Until now we have never been the attackers. Ours is a movement not of pressure but of pleading. Let us today resort to a policy of self-reliance. Let us stop begging. Instead, let us shout, ‘Mr Imperialist, this is what we DEMAND of you’.

No doubt Sukarno here renders very well, although probably in more colourful terms, what the radical leaders at this meeting must have said, but it is generally agreed by contemporaries that he himself never uttered these words and was really a silent participant. It is known that only party leaders made speeches at this particular meeting and Sukarno at that time was certainly not yet important enough to have been asked or allowed to speak. So, again, as on so many occasions in his autobiography, the story is apocryphal and
further illustrates how the great dreamer Sukarno with his fertile imagination could make himself believe that he was recording what had actually happened, and that the beginning of the non-cooperative nationalist movement of which later he was one of the major exponents could not possibly have occurred without him, Sukarno, in the leading role.

The reference Sukarno makes in this quotation to the Dutch policeman who could disband the meeting is rather interesting in that at the time of writing—which was in 1964—Sukarno himself certainly did have and did use his power to stop any meeting he wanted. But he just glosses over this fact because his early ideas about liberal democracy had long since been set aside as unworkable in the Indonesian context; or perhaps he had always, although unconsciously, wanted to replace the colonial power by his own, and could not see anything basically wrong with autocratic rule *per se*.

The greatest single influence on Sukarno during his Bandung period seems to have been Dr Tjibito Mangunkusumo who turned him into a convinced radical nationalist. In some ways this close relationship between Tjibito and Sukarno is not surprising; both were highly intelligent men and extremely sensitive to the reality of the colonial situation, an injustice which they took as a personal insult. Sukarno was soon to follow in the footsteps of Tjibito, the relentless and uncompromising fighter, who soon after his return from exile in Holland was placed under house arrest in Bandung and in 1927 was again exiled, this time to the East Indonesian island of Banda-Neira where he remained until just before the Japanese invasion. Here the similarity ends, however. Unlike Sukarno, Tjibito's belief in democracy remained until the end of his life and in his view traditional Javanese civilization which was basically feudal in character had to be obliterated. He considered that Western education and its subsequent social and cultural dislocation was indispensable in creating a revolutionary atmosphere. From the beginning Tjibito had disagreed with the emphasis put by Budi Utomo on the reinvigoration of the traditional Javanese civilization. As he had put it in a 1916 debate: "The psyche of the Javanese people has been changed to such an extent that a change of language, or more cynically a killing of the language has become urgent. Only in this way will it be possible to build another language on its ruins and also another civilization."  

Moreover, below his often cynical exterior Tjibito had a more strongly developed sense of humanity, intellectual honesty and gallantry than Sukarno. Both men repeatedly professed a deep
concern for the poor peasant who eked out his existence without hope of any improvement in the villages and the overcrowded kampong of the city in which he lived. During an outbreak of the plague in 1910 Tjipto’s devoted and unstinting services to the people of Java were recognized by the colonial government who awarded him the Star of the Order of Oranje-nassau. Sukarno, who always identified his suffering with that of the peasant, rode to prominence on the back of the masses but in the process did very little for them in practical economic terms. He also seems to have lacked the great courage of Tjipto and many of his co-fighters have often accused him of cowardice in times of physical danger. Also the gallantry of Tjipto, who was genuinely shocked at the German invasion of Holland and the rape of Rotterdam and publicly offered his sympathy to the Dutch people in their hour of need, was entirely foreign to Sukarno.

In terms of character Sukarno was perhaps more akin to his other master in radical politics, E. F. Douwes Dekker, who was less scrupulous than Tjipto in the means he used to achieve his goal. Unlike Tjipto he was apparently unwilling to risk another term of exile or imprisonment. And severely hampered in his political activities by the constant surveillance of the Dutch intelligence service and also deeply worried about the internal division in the nationalist movement, Douwes Dekker from the early 1920s onwards grudgingly withdrew from public political life and threw himself with great energy into national education. In 1922 he established a school society in Bandung, later named the Ksatryan Institute, which in addition to a number of primary schools also maintained a training school for journalists, businessmen, and teachers. The main purpose of the Institute, as its name implies, was to train students in the qualities of the nobleman, such as self-reliance, courage and independence of spirit. Emphasis was placed on teaching economics and commercial subjects in order to help the creation of an Indonesian middle class of independent entrepreneurs. Great stress was placed in the curriculum on the development of character and personal initiative: ‘Training which is solely directed at obtaining employment only creates half developed people. Our school diploma does not open the gate to government employment. But rather we desire to help to develop the knowledge, the understanding and especially the courage to be independent.’

Sukarno at one stage taught history and mathematics in one of Douwes Dekker’s schools and as he describes it in his memoirs, the Dutch school inspector on one of his regular visits was not exactly
enamoured of the way Sukarno conducted his history lesson, which most of the time consisted of denunciations of colonialism and imperialism. His teaching career was apparently cut short by the local authorities who invoked an ordinance issued in 1923 which empowered them to suspend for a period of up to two years teachers in private schools who were considered political agitators.

In the years 1922 and 1923 Tjokroaminoto, Sukarno’s father-in-law, suffered a serious setback to his prestige as a national leader. The Communists who had lost their bid to take control of the Islamic Association spread stories about Tjokro’s illegal use of party funds and other corruptive practices which came to be widely believed in nationalist circles. To make matters worse the colonial authorities sentenced Tjokroaminoto to a six-month prison term not because of political activities but on a charge of perjury. Sukarno, as befitted a good son-in-law, interrupted his studies and returned to Surabaja with his wife Utari where he took up a job as a clerk with the railways department in order to support Tjokro’s family.

On his return to Bandung he openly defended Tjokroaminoto against unpleasant accusations brought against him at the Communist party congress by the agitator Hadji Misbach whom he forced to retract his allegations and tender a public apology. But although Sukarno faithfully performed the duties which were expected of him as a member of Tjokroaminoto’s family—failure to do so would have made him appear despicable in the eyes of the extremely kinship-conscious Javanese—he had already distanced himself from his father-in-law in political terms to the point of no-return. And when Tjokroaminoto accepted the offer of a seat in the Volksraad, Sukarno, the uncompromising radical, broke completely with him:

Tjokro’s ideology grew narrower and narrower to me. His vision of independence for our fatherland was viewed strictly through the microscopic lense of the Islamic religion. I no longer went to him for teaching. Neither were his friends considered my tutors any more. Though still a younger man, I was no longer a receiver. I was now already a leader. I had followers. I had a reputation. I had become Tjok’s political equal. We had no sudden breakup over this. It was more like a slow bit by bit estrangement. Although Tjok and I pulled wide apart politically, we remained closeknit personally. 9

According to some Indonesians Sukarno’s concern with his political
reputation might also have played a role in his decision at this time to divorce Tjokro’s daughter, Utari. According to Sukarno he had never consummated the marriage and had treated Utari as his sister rather than his bedmate. This story, however, has caused a great deal of Homeric laughter among those Indonesians who knew Sukarno during his Bandung time and who remember his tremendous sexual appetite.

After he had sent Utari back to Surabaja, Sukarno married Inggit, his landlady, who as he admits himself had aroused his passion immediately upon his arrival in Bandung. Inggit was ten years older than Sukarno; she was beautiful, mature, motherly, and well versed in the ways of love. The novelist Suwarnih Djojopuspito who knew Inggit well at the time describes her as follows:

The oval face, the flowing lines of her nose and chin, the thick knot of hair resting on a sleek and still perfect neck, gave her a look of youthfulness which contrasted with the occasional furrow in her face and the tiredness of her eyes. She was a charming conversationalist and hostess, a real woman who found her greatest pleasure in pleasing others, in particular her husband. She spoke the peculiarly melodious Sundanese language in a clear voice gently and elegantly gesticulating which reminded one of the flowing movements of a dancer.19

But also Sukarno was a very handsome man who had a great attraction for women. Suwarnih Djojopuspito was deeply impressed meeting him for the first time.

Soelastri—the author’s pseudonym in the novel—greeted him shyly, because Karno’s fascinating personality made her feel small . . . she was captivated by his scintillating, dark, searching eyes, the firm mouth which made his forcible personality stand out even more strongly. ‘Karno’ she thought, and remembered the envelope in which she had kept his and Hatta’s photo. Hadn’t she been actually and consciously in love with him? At the time she had thought it was hero-worship, and a girlish veneration of romantic figures.11

For the first year or so of their marriage Inggit was apparently able to satisfy the demands of her fiery young husband, but after that Sukarno, who was known among his comrades to have more than
just a roving eye for beautiful women, came home late at night with increasing frequency—ostensibly from 'political meetings'.

Another interesting description of Inggit and Sukarno is found in the memoirs of Abu Hanifah:

The first time I saw her, I must confess I was very impressed. I met her when I, together with Amir Sjarifuddin, was travelling by train from Bandung to Djakarta. Amir was one of my best friends in my student days. We had the same tastes and we both loved music, art and all the good things in life, such as fine food and good company . . . Amir and I got quickly acquainted with two lovely young girls who were accompanied by their mother. At one stage when I was asking the mother where she was travelling to, and Amir, who had been educated at High School in Holland, was telling tall stories about Europe, we suddenly heard a voice calling Amir from the front of the carriage. We looked up and saw Soekarno sitting next to a pretty young woman, beckoning us. 'Hey folks', he said loudly, 'please come over here for a moment.' We were a little reluctant to go . . . he was from the crowd in Bandung and we were from Djakarta. . . . We didn't feel that he was as important as people in Bandung thought he was. And besides, there were these nice girls we liked to talk to very much, and we felt he disturbed us. But then Soekarno came over to us and standing in front of us looked at the girls. He greeted the mother politely, smiled at the girls, and led the way to his seat. 'Inggit', he said to the woman, 'may I introduce my young friends. One day they will be famous people, and it will be useful to know them.' We were five years younger than Soekarno at that time but I still resented what I felt was his condescending manner. I did not have much time, however, to think about this because Inggit stood up with a smile, and gave us a hand. Indeed, Inggit was very attractive and had the ripened beauty of a woman in her early thirties. She wore a very dark red rose in her blue black hair, and she really looked smashing. Amir was speechless, and I was also impressed, but she was too old for our taste . . . Inggit did not seem too impressed with us, and compared with Soekarno, we were just badly dressed youngsters. He dressed in shantung silk, snow white shirt and dark blue tie. His black shoes were shining and he wore his pitji—small black cap—rakishly on his head. Our clothes were a little wrinkled, we had no ties, only sports shirts and our hair was ruffled. I didn't like the setting so after a little while I excused myself and went back to my seat.
Soekarno said with a loud laugh: 'I cannot blame you for preferring the company of the girls above ours. We are old people. Say, don't you think one of the girls is a real beauty.' Inggit frowned, Soekarno smiled at her soothingly. The man is incorrigible, I thought. Even then Soekarno was already known for his love escapades.\textsuperscript{18}

Sukarno also headed the Bandung branch of the Taman Siswa organization, a cultural-nationalist movement exhibiting strong nativistic tendencies, which had been founded in 1921 in Jogjakarta by the radical nationalist Suwardi Suryaningrat, better known as Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, a name adopted in 1928, meaning 'teacher and intermediary of the gods'. Dewantoro strongly condemned the common practice of Western-educated Indonesians imitating the Dutch even to the smallest details. He argued that there should be no wholesale imitation of foreign cultures, but that foreign elements should be carefully selected and nationalized. The motto therefore adopted at the founding of the Taman Siswa was, 'Return to your inner self'. The Taman Siswa schools did not follow the Dutch influenced curriculum of the state schools, but emphasized the study of indigenous art forms such as the dance and the \textit{wajang}, and in the history lessons the periods of former Indonesian grandeur and glory.

Dewantoro like so many other major figures in the nationalist movement at the time was deeply concerned about the serious internal divisions in the ranks of those who struggled against colonialism, and he tried to solve this problem in the age-old and well-tried Javanese way by taking the sting out of these ideological differences.

Pupils as well as teachers in Taman Siswa schools were forbidden to join any specific religious or political organization, because it was felt that religion and politics tended to take up the whole of the personality, which often caused serious division in the family, the nation and the world at large. Before a person should be allowed to choose a particular political or religious direction he should be an adolescent. Furthermore—and this was the sole \textit{raison d'être} of the Taman Siswa movement—before making a choice an individual should first have been impregnated with a philosophy of life, which although allowing for freedom of action and expression, should have endowed him with a love and respect for the ways of life and convictions of others. As Mangunsarkoro, another important Taman Siswa leader, pointed out, this did not mean that the movement was
non-religious or non-political, but rather than adhering to a particular institutionalized religion its principles were based on a religious code of ethics which was a synthesis of the old kedjawaen and modern humanism. This meant that all religious faiths could be assimilated in the Taman Siswa way of life:

After all every religion can be considered as a revelation of God's will. The perfection of man is the purpose of every religion. Thus, he who dedicates his life to it lives in accordance with the will of God, and therefore feels one with Him.\\(^{13}\)

The influence of the movement's philosophy on Sukarno's political ideology as well as methodology is unmistakable. In any case precepts such as harmony, unity and religious tolerance would have come naturally to Sukarno with his Javanistic background. Muhammad Said, the Taman Siswa leader in Djakarta, some years ago described the connection between Sukarno and the Taman Siswa as follows: 'Do you see this sirih leaf? You will notice that one side is rough and the other is smooth, but when you bite it, it tastes the same.'\\(^{14}\)

Sukarno, of course, is represented by the rough (kasar) side of the leaf but his later ideal of harmonizing all the various political and religious forces of the country into a type of mystical union stems from the same source. It seems, therefore, that some Western scholars are incorrect in classifying Sukarno as a secular nationalist. It is true that Sukarno has always advocated a separation of religion and state, but this aversion to theocracy does not necessarily stem from a Western secular-liberal position but flows rather from his traditionalist Javanese religious views. And although Javanese religion, agama djawa, is not institutionalized, it is nevertheless a religion. This point was well taken by Ki Hadjar Dewantoro in a speech made to the Colonial Education Congress in The Hague in 1916 when he described himself:

... as somebody who is only Mohammedan by conviction. That is somebody without a particular religion ... I have noticed that there is a general misconception concerning my religious position; and on the request of some of my compatriots, who are present here, I would like to point out, that it is incorrect to say ... that we have lost our bearings. ... We certainly see a light which recedes deeply into ancient Javanese history. We had a religion in ancient times. This was followed by another one etc., and it is perhaps just because of this changing of religion that the Javanese
are not very fanatical religiously. We prefer to take over various
doctrines from other religions. . . . The most important thing, of
course, is to lead a truly moral life in as far as this is possible,
and that in our opinion is true religion. And although (kedjawen)
is not recognized as one of the official religions it is unjust to deny
its existence. It would thus be totally untrue to say that we stand
here as Godless people. Far from it.15

Statements then such as the one by Palmier who described Sukarno
as a pious Muslim16 are entirely meaningless unless they are shown
in the proper Javanese context. Sukarno has said himself, 'Despite
our country being predominantly Muslim, my concepts were not
rooted solely in the Islamic God. Even as I took hesitant steps down
the kindergarten path of belief, I did not see the Almighty as a
personal God.17

Suwarsh Djiojopuspito records the following discussion between
her husband and herself about Sukarno's religious position.

He is pious, and likes to read religious books. 'Yes', Sudarmo
added, 'he also often burns incense on Thursday evenings.
Moreover, he treats his kris with great piety. Sometimes he fasts
on Mondays or Thursdays.' What? Are you sure about that?
'Yes, one day he did not come to dinner using the excuse that he
did not feel hungry. But his wife said in a whisper 'He's fasting.'
This religious trait in him is rather peculiar, particularly when
you hear him say repeatedly in his speeches: 'Even if you burn
a whole picul of incense it will not make Indonesia free'. But
perhaps none of us are completely free from mysticism, although
we would strongly deny it . . . ' She thought 'Yes, we are modern,
and yet we reserve in a corner of our heart a space where we will
burn incense in desperate moments.'18

From his own writings Sukarno comes to the fore as the sole
architect and instigator of a new radical, nationalist movement
which emerges after the abortive rebellions of 1926–27. He almost
entirely ignores the very important role played in this new departure
in nationalist politics by a number of Indonesian university students
in Holland, who in 1922 had transformed an earlier largely social
organization of Indonesian students into a nationalist activist society,
the Perhimpunan Indonesia (Indonesian Association). The historical
significance of the Indonesian Association cannot be easily overstated
because many of its prominent members, such as Mohammad Hatta, Dr Sutomo, Sutan Sjahrir, and Ali Sastroamidjojo, exerted a profound influence on the pre-war nationalist movement as well as on the political scene in independent Indonesia.

This new generation of nationalist leaders influenced by Marxist anti-colonial ideas as well as the non-cooperation movement in India, emphasized self-reliance and self-help as the only feasible way to obtain Indonesian independence. In its programme of action issued in 1923 the Indonesian Association stressed that every Indonesian should strive for a free and democratic government without relying on support from outsiders. Moreover, the various nationalist regional organizations which had emerged in imitation of Budi Utomo were condemned for causing unnecessary division and instead urged that all efforts were to be directed at establishing a national Indonesian unity. In 1925 another important platform was added which emphatically stated that Indonesian freedom could only be obtained by conscious, self-assured and self-reliant mass action.

The ideas of the Indonesian Association reached the Indies initially through its journal *Indonesia Merdeka* which was smuggled in either by Indonesian sailors serving on Dutch ships, or sent through the mail wrapped in Dutch newspapers or other ostensibly innocuous material. Sukarno was one of the avid readers of *Indonesia Merdeka*. A little later a number of students returning from Holland set up various study clubs to put the programme of the Indonesian Association into practice. The first of these was established in July 1924 in Surabaja by Dr Sutomo, who concentrated his efforts almost entirely on inculcating a greater sense of economic self-help and activity in Indonesians, and established a national Indonesian bank, various advisory services, schools and cooperatives. More directly politically-orientated were the clubs set up in 1925 by Mr Singgih and Mr Susanto in Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang. In the same year similar organizations were established in Djakarta, Bogor and Bandung. The most important of these proved to be the Bandung Study Club, of which Sukarno was one of the founders.

Unlike the Surabaja organization which used non-cooperation as a tactical weapon, the Bandung group was unequivocally opposed to cooperation with the colonial government whatever the circumstances and when in 1926 the Indonesian Association in Holland advocated the establishment of an Indonesian national people's party in order to disseminate its ideas among the masses, it was the radical nationalists who followed suit and established, on 4 July 1927,
the *Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia* (National Indonesian Union). The founding committee consisted of Sartono, Iskaq, Samsi Sastrawidagdo, Budiarto and Sunario, all former members of the Indonesian Association, and Sukarno and Anwar both from the Bandung Study Club, and Sujadi an employee of the Department of Finance in Djakarta, and the official representatives of the Indonesian Association in the colony, and J. Tilaar who worked in a Djakarta bank. At the First National Congress in 1928 in Surabaja, the party's name was changed to *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (P.N.I.), the Indonesian Nationalist Party. Sukarno became its first chairman.

The P.N.I. stood for the complete independence of Indonesia and the party programme stressed that non-cooperation, national unity, and self-reliance were the only means by which this ideal could be realized more speedily. Also the geographical limits of the new Indonesia were clearly defined for the first time as comprising all the territories under the control of the Netherlands East Indies government stretching from Sabang, a small island at the northern point of Sumatra, to Merauke in West New Guinea.

In 1928 Mohammad Hatta wrote in *Indonesia Merdeka* that with the establishment of the P.N.I. the major objective of the Indonesian Association had been achieved and that from then onwards it was up to this new party to put into practice the theoretical principles which had been formulated by the students in Holland. Hatta was happy to see that: "True to the principle of the Indonesian Association the flag of the P.N.I. carries the slogan: National Independence Through Our Own Strength and Ability." But although it is clear that the Indonesian Association played an extremely important role in getting the non-cooperative radical movement off the ground, it was Sukarno who was able to give this movement and in particular the P.N.I. the imprint of his own ideas which were not always in accordance with the views and philosophies of other prominent and more Western-orientated leaders such as Hatta and Sjahrrit.

Why was it that Sukarno, who was by no means the most intelligent or most brilliant among the radical intellectuals at that time, came to the fore and assumed the leadership of the P.N.I.? Part of the answer is that Sukarno, unlike many of the others who had spent many years away from the home country studying in Holland, had an intimate knowledge of the Indonesian political scene. From his High School days in Surabaja he had grown up at the centre of the nationalist movement. Then, of course, Sukarno's personal charm, his joviality, his powers of persuasion, and his unbending will to
succeed greatly helped him when he was lobbying for votes to support his candidature.

Furthermore, his fame as a fiery, flamboyant speaker who could hold the masses entranced was spreading, and his contemporaries admit that he was undoubtedly the most powerful political orator in the country at the time. As the P.N.I. was planned as a party of the masses Sukarno was the obvious choice to instigate and radicalize the feelings of the people. His competitors such as Hatta and Sjahrir were completely unsuited in the role of charismatic demagogue.

Mohammad Hatta was born in Bukittinggi in the region of Minangkabau (West Sumatra) on 12 August 1902. His parents were well-to-do traders. After passing through the Dutch language school system, he went to the Netherlands in 1921 where he studied at the economic faculty of the university of Rotterdam from which he graduated with a Ph.D. in 1932. The long duration of Hatta's university studies was caused by his switch in mid-stream in 1926 from theoretical economics to political economy.

Although never fanatical, Hatta always remained attached to the religion of his youth, Islam. He was a disciplined thinker and unlike other nationalist leaders from Minangkabau he was an unimpressive orator; he was dry, humourless and too analytical to be able to captivate the masses. In fact, he was almost the complete opposite of Sukarno who later complained: 'Hatta gave always the impression of the rain. If I was in a real good mood and full of ideas and then happened to encounter Hatta, then I felt I was suddenly surprised by a rain shower and got wet all over the body. My good mood was gone and also my ideas.'

Achmad Subardjo Djojoadisurjo, who played a very prominent role in the Indonesian Association and who has known both Sukarno and Hatta intimately and for a long time, makes the following cutting comparison about the two leaders:

Hatta's personality was marked by an exacting nature and a strong sense of self-discipline which flowed from his puritan Islamic outlook. He could not easily conceal his disapproval of the bohemian way of conduct of many members of the Indonesian Association who were neglecting their patriotic duties as well as their university studies... Hatta had a practical sense of organization. He was a man of action, but he didn't want to move without having made a plan first... Hatta and Sukarno differed not only in character and temperament but also in their intellectual and cultural backgrounds... Hatta's approach to a problem was
rational rather than psychological. He had been trained to use
certain methods of approach in tackling a problem when he was
studying at the Faculty of Economics in Rotterdam, one of the
influential centres of economic thinking in Western Europe. . . .
Sukarno had a different personality. His training as an architect
at the technical faculty in Bandung had made him conversant
with the exact sciences which had undoubtedly given him a sharp
sense of realism. But unlike those who had spent many years in
Western countries for higher education and general experience
. . . Sukarno's world had been largely determined by the cultural
heritage of Bali and Java which is a syncretism of Hinduism,
Buddhism, Islam and animism. He received much inspiration
from the essential teaching of Islam and from the code of behaviour
of the heroic and symbolic figures from the Hindu epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. . . . His attractive personality and his
strong personal magnetism had made him a born leader of the
masses, but he was above all self-possessed, and this quality
enabled him to face the most difficult situations and critical,
dangerous moments with amazing calmness, and a quiet inner
poise and self-assurance. These qualities enabled him to disconcert
his most vehement political opponents when they confronted him
face to face. 22

Another very important leader at the time who was closely akin to
Hatta's way of thinking, was Sutan Sjahrir, another Minangkabau,
a convinced Socialist and a strong believer in parliamentary
democracy, who stressed the need for a complete Westernization of
Indonesia. Sjahrir strongly opposed Sukarno's Javanistic outlook
and the attempts of the Budi Utomo and the Taman Siswa in
reinvigorating the traditional civilization. He wrote in his
memoirs:

Here for centuries there has been no intellectual, no cultural life,
no progress any more. There are the much-praised Eastern art
forms—but what else are these than the rudiments of a feudal
culture, which for us, the people of the twentieth century, are
impossible to fall back on. The wajang, all the simple symbolism
and mysticism—which is parallel to the allegory and mediaeval
wisdom in Europe, what can they still offer us intellectually and
culturally? Almost nothing. Our intellectual needs are twentieth-
century. Our problems, our outlook are twentieth-century . . .
To me the West means effervescence, surging life, the dynamic.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SUKARNO

It is Faust whom I love and I am convinced, that only the West, in this dynamic sense, can liberate the East from its slavery.23

But Sukarno had already solved in his own mind the problem of unity in the nationalist movement before the establishment of the P.N.I. It was a typically Javanistic solution and in the same way as Ki Hadjar Dewantoro advocated the creation of a unitary Indonesian culture out of the various regional cultures without having to eliminate the latter, Sukarno, in a number of articles in the journal *Indonesia Muda* in 1926, attempted to convince his readers that it was both possible and feasible to unite the three major streams of thought in Indonesia: Islam, Marxism, and nationalism, into a harmonious whole, without having to suppress any of the ideologies as long as they did not disturb the harmonious order of the whole. Sukarno argued that after all these three major groups were striving for the same objective: the freedom of Indonesia and the destruction of imperialism and capitalism. To the objections usually made by nationalists that Islam was an international movement Sukarno replied:

Many nationalists among us forget that the nationalist struggle and the cause of Islam in Indonesia—yes, in the whole of Asia—have the same beginnings ... both originate in a condemnation of the West or more explicitly of capitalism and imperialism ... many of our nationalists forget that Muslims, wherever they are in the Islamic world, have in accordance with their faith a duty to work for the well being of the people and the country they live in.

Sukarno also condemned the Indonesian nationalists who refused to cooperate with Marxists because they adhered to an internationally oriented ideology. He wrote that the nationalist seemed to forget that:

The origin of the Marxist struggle in Indonesia or Asia is basically the same as the struggle for freedom. He forgets that the aim of this struggle often fits in well with the aims of the Marxists. He forgets that to oppose the Marxists means the same thing as to reject a sympathetic friend and to make another enemy. He forgets and does not understand the motives underlying the attitudes of his brothers in other Asian countries, such as the great Sun Yat Sen, the great nationalist leader, who wholeheartedly
cooperates with the Marxists, although he realizes that the Marxist system cannot yet be established in China, because conditions there are not yet ripe for the establishment of this Marxist system.

As to the clash between Islam and Marxism Sukarno referred Muslims to the great Islamic reformers, Al-Afghani and Moham-mad Abduh, both of whom had struggled against Western imperialism in all its forms. He also pointed to Tjokroaminoto who had shown that many socialist tenets could be found in the teachings of Islam:

Although we know that Islamic socialism has not the same origins as Marxism, because Islamic socialism is spiritual in nature and Marxism is based on materialism... Muslims should not forget that the Marxist view of history (the materialists' view of history) often acts as a road sign pointing to the economic and political problems of the world which are difficult and complicated. They must not forget that this method of historical materialism explains the facts of the past but also what will happen in the future which will be of great use to them. Muslims should not forget that capitalism the enemy of Marxism, is also the enemy of Islam. Because surplus value, as the Marxist term it, it really nothing else than what is called usury in Islam... Muslims, who are fanatics and who are opposed to the Marxist struggle, do not know the laws of their own religion. Such Muslims do not know, that, similar to Marxism, true Islam forbids the piling up of money in the capitalist way, that is it forbids the hoarding of wealth for one's own use.\(^4\)

And then in an endeavour to put the religious qualms of Muslims completely at rest Sukarno rode roughshod over both Marx and Lenin and blandly castrated the Marxist theory of materialism of its atheistic content. He argued that there was an essential difference between philosophical and historical materialism. The first was highly speculative and could either be rejected or accepted like any other philosophical theory. Historical materialism, however, was based on undeniable factual evidence and should therefore be acceptable to any logically thinking person. According to Sukarno, anti-Marxists in Europe, in particular the Christian churches, had purposely denied the existence of this essential difference between these two aspects of Marxism:
In their anti-Marxist propaganda they constantly interchange these concepts and they never tired of accusing the Marxists of believing that thinking was solely a product of the brain in the same way as saliva originates from the mouth and gall comes from the liver. . . . That was the reason why the Marxists in Europe hated the churches and opposed religion. This hostility and this hate intensified whenever the churches made use of religion to protect capitalism, to defend the rulers' class, or to conduct an emphatically reactionary policy. 26

Addressing himself again to the Marxists, Sukarno pointed out that religion in Indonesia unlike Europe did not support the capitalist regimes; and Islam should not be seen as the religion of the poor and the oppressed. It should therefore not be too difficult for Indonesian Marxists to come to terms with their Muslim brethren and cooperate in their common struggle against colonialism and imperialism.

Sukarno's attempt to anaesthetize the obvious differences between Marxism, Islam, and nationalism was not only a case of political tactics, but also reflected his own ideological position. As he wrote in his autobiography:

The year 1926 was my year of three-dimensional maturisation. . . . Politically Bung Karno was a nationalist. Theologically Bung Karno was a theist. But Bung Karno had become a triple-headed believer. Ideologically he was now a socialist. I repeat that. I became a socialist. Not a Communist. I did not become a Communist. I did not even become a camouflaged Communist. I have never become a Communist. There are still people who think socialism is equivalent to Communism. On hearing the word socialist they cannot sleep. They jump and yell, 'Aha, I knew it! That Sukarno fellow is a Communist!' No I am not. I am a socialist. I am a leftist. Leftists are those who desire to change the existing capitalist, imperialist order. The desire to spread social justice is leftist. It is not necessarily Communist. Leftists are even at odds with the Communists. Leftophobia, disease of dreading leftist ideas, is a sickness I dread as much as Islamophobia. Nationalism without social justice is nothingism. How can a miserably poor country such as ours have anything but a socialist trend? 28

In reaching this 'three-dimensional maturisation', however, Sukarno
in line with the Taman Siswa motto had 'returned to his inner self'; and he found the solution to the problem of national unity in the cosmological Hindu-Javanese world where everything was allocated its right place in the cosmos without disturbing the harmony of the whole. The following quotation from Sukarno's *Indonesia Muda* article of 1926 clearly shows the influence of traditional Javanese thinking and it could have been taken almost word for word from the writings of Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, the Taman Siswa leader:

We do not hope that the nationalists will change sides and become Muslims or Marxists, but what we desire is harmony, and unity between these three factions. . . . The true nationalist who loves his country bases his thinking on a knowledge of the structure of world economics and history and his nationalist feelings do not emerge merely as the arrogant reaction of a backward people. The nationalist should not be chauvinistic, he must reject all narrow-minded views. True nationalism is not merely a copy or an imitation of Western nationalism, but it should flow from a feeling of love for the world and humanity. A nationalist who accepts this kind of nationalism as a divine revelation and practices it as a religious devotion has escaped from narrow-minded thinking.  

Sukarno plunged himself with great energy and enthusiasm into the formidable task of achieving a mystical union of all the anti-colonial forces in the country. The conciliatory overtures which Sukarno had been making for some time to his old master Tjokroaminoto and other prominent Muslim leaders paid off, and he was invited to attend the Islamic Association Congress at Pekalongan in September 1927 to explain his plans. Sukarno played his cards carefully and emphasized to the delegates that he was opposed to the fusion of the existing political parties and other national groupings. He argued that a unitary organization comprising the whole of the Indonesian people with its multifarious culture and social structure was not only physically impossible, but also highly undesirable because uniformity would take away the freedom of the individual and of the groups and would destroy spontaneity and originality:

The motto therefore should be federation, federation which must leave intact the personality, the individuality, the character of the cooperating parties. The ties which are necessary to combine the parties should be loosely constructed. . . . They should be like the
ties binding together the various parts of the British Empire, which are loose in order to be strong. The agreement which is to be reached between the Indonesian parties cannot be on the basis of ideological principles, because this would imply that the parties who joined would submit themselves to outside discipline. And this would mean that the parties concerned would have to sacrifice some of their independence and freedom of movement. A union which does not impose its own ideology... is inconceivable. Yet such a union is possible, if one is satisfied with incidental cooperation and the need for this is felt urgently and unanimously. For example, cooperation in the case of the right to hold public meetings, the treatment of plantation workers, mass arrests... cooperation with respect to the student martyrs in Holland... we Indonesians should be ashamed that over and over again we are defeated when we attack... and that until now we have not been able to infuse strength in our movement.

Sukarno was so successful in enthusing the delegates at this Muslim conference that they pledged their support for a national federation and charged him to work out a more detailed plan of action. Sukarno immediately set about contacting the other political groups and he was able to convene a meeting on 17 December 1927 where the delegates of the various major nationalist organizations agreed to the formation of an anti-colonial federation, which on the suggestion of Sukarno came to be called the Permusfakatan Perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (P.P.P.K.I.), which literally means the unanimous consensus of the political organizations of the Indonesian people.

The deliberate selection of the word _Permusfakatan_ is highly significant and refers to the age-old system of problem-solving and decision-making used in the villages of most of the Indonesian archipelago, where after the full deliberation of all the parties involved and mutual compromise (_musjawarah_) a final unanimous decision (_mufakat_) is reached which is binding on the whole community. Sukarno rejected Western parliamentary democracy because it was based on the tyranny of the majority. He argued that in using the traditional _mufakat_ system—which he called "a return to one's self"—true unity of purpose and action could be achieved because it would provide every party and every group, however small, with the opportunity to make its viewpoint heard and to directly influence the decision-making process.

While Sukarno's syncretic solution to the problem of nationalism,
NATIONALIST LEADER: BUNG KARNO

Marxism, and Islam—which foreshadowed his later doctrine of NASAKOM—was not new and would have come easily to any Javanese with a kedjawen background, the transplantation of the method of musjawa or mu'afakat from the village to the national level can be regarded as Sukarno's first original contribution to Indonesian political thought.

Unlike the earlier radical concentrations of 1918 and 1923 European socialists were not admitted to the P.P.P.K.I. and membership was restricted to indigenous organizations. This policy can be seen partly as a reflection of the P.N.I. principle of self-reliance, but it also resulted from a feeling of betrayal by European socialists, who at the Congress of the Second Internationale had taken a 'soft' line over colonialism and had only been prepared to grant the Indonesians self-government on the grounds that they were not ripe yet for independence.

Both Sukarno and Hatta, who was then the chairman of the Indonesian Association in Holland, fiercely denounced this decision. Sukarno argued that the European socialists apparently stood on the same side as the capitalists, who also held that Indonesia was not yet ripe for independence. A clear demarcation should henceforth be made between sini and sana, between those who were genuine fighters for Indonesian freedom and those who supported colonialism. Sukarno argued that in order to gain strength, to create a national will, which would result in national action, a 'brown national front' was needed. Out of the confrontation between the 'brown' and the 'white' front—as Marx had prophesied—there would be born the antithesis: freedom and prosperity for the oppressed.

Critics who pointed out that so far the P.N.I. and Sukarno had done a great deal of talking but had achieved very little in the way of improvements in the social and economic condition of the people were dismissed by Sukarno on the grounds that the first objective should always be: 'An independent Indonesia in the quickest way possible. This entails that we do not strive for independence by means of improving miserable living conditions in our country, but we must strive for independence in order to improve these living conditions."

The P.P.P.K.I., however, was too restricted in its activities by the mu'afakat principle to perform the great national deeds Sukarno had hoped for, and only a few general and rather lame declarations were made.

Sukarno's call for unity, however, had more success in the national youth movement. Attempts made at the first Indonesian Youth
Congress, held in May 1926 in Djakarta to fuse the various youth groups into one, had broken down because of the intransigence of the Muslim organizations, who demanded that Islam should be given a privileged status in an independent Indonesia. Far more important was the second Indonesian Youth Congress held in 1928 at which it was unanimously decided to work for the creation of one country, one language, and one people.

In his autobiography Sukarno writes: 'On October 28, Sukarno officially proclaimed the solemn pledge: "One nation, one flag, one language".'31 This is hotly denied by those who were present at the time. Sukarno and other political leaders were present but did not actually proclaim the youth oath although it is admitted that Sukarno had undoubtedly strongly influenced the various youth leaders. It was also at this youth congress that the Indonesian anthem, *Indonesia Raya*, was performed for the first time.

But it was not until the beginning of January 1931 that the various separate Indonesian youth organizations decided to fuse into one large national group, which came to be called *Indonesia Muda*. It is significant that one of the major Muslim youth organizations, the *Jong-Islamietenbond* (Union of Young Muslims), refused to join because it claimed that the new organization was too secular in its outlook.

Sukarno, during the years 1928 and 1929, became increasingly vehement in his speeches, arousing the messianic expectations of the people to a high pitch. Presenting himself as Bima, the hero of the *wajang*, he called upon his listeners to identify themselves with the forces of the right, the *pandawas*, in order to struggle as in the Bharatha Juddha against the *korawas*, the usurpers of the kingdom of Ngastina. His performance roused the masses to ecstasy wherever he went, and it is said that one Indonesian journalist who was sent to report on one of Sukarno's speeches was so taken in that he apparently believed that he was already free.32

Not all Indonesians, however, were impressed and in particular many Western-oriented intellectuals, including many students, disagreed with his thinking as well as with his approach. Abu Hanifah, who was a student at the time in Djakarta, writes:

Undoubtedly Soekarno was a great orator. I saw him at his best, which was before he became President of the Republic of Indonesia, bewitching whole gatherings with his speeches... He couldn't enchant us, the angry young men, because we did not find him either serious or sincere enough. But in front of the common people he was in his element.33
NATIONALIST LEADER: BUNG KARNO

Once, during a meeting of Djakarta students, Sukarno suffered the worst humiliation which can overcome a speaker: he was shouted down so that it was impossible for him to continue his speech. The students, in imitation of the campaign of Gandhi in India, were fanatical followers of the swadeshi movement. But Sukarno was opposed to swadeshi not so much perhaps in principle, but as he once put it, he was loath to appear in public in a sackcloth. Abu Hanifah describes this incident as follows:

There were good speakers who inflamed our spirits. And then it was the turn of Soekarno. He appeared on the podium and everybody became speechless. He looked to us like someone who had just stepped out from a fashion show or formal reception. When he began to speak everybody remained quiet for a few moments then suddenly from the back of the hall there came the first shrill whistles and loud remarks. . . . Then a group of students started shouting: 'Let him come down, he doesn't belong here. He is anti-swadeshi, down with him.' The tumult became worse and the committee sent Soekarno a note: Please go back to your chair. We will fix the misunderstanding. And so Soekarno had to come down from the speaker's platform. It was his first defeat as a leading speaker and he was furious.34

In 1929 Sukarno appears cocksure, arrogant, secure in his belief that the end of colonialism was near. While stories among the masses did their rounds again about the coming of the Just King and about the prophecies of Djojobojo, Sukarno, as Dahm points out, believed strongly in another Djojobojo, that is the prophecies of Marx about the eventual breakdown of imperialism and colonialism. In his writings at the time, Sukarno prophesied the coming of a Pacific war between Japan on one side and the United States and England on the other. And he asserted that Japan would be the key to Indonesian independence.35

Sukarno in his speeches and writings exhorted his people to unite, because, he argued, the powers of colonialism were already receding. But the Dutch colonial government apparently thought differently and proved the opposite when on 29 December 1929 it arrested Sukarno and a few other stalwarts of the P.N.I. and sent them to gaol to await trial on the charge of conspiracy to overthrow the colonial government.

As usual in his autobiography Sukarno romanticizes the events of the night of his arrest:

L.T.B.—4

37
Outside, with rifles at the ready, stood fifty policemen, blocking the house, the complex, and the street leading up to it. Three motor cars were lined up. The middle one was a special vehicle in which we dangerous criminals were escorted to the police station. In the car were hustled Gatot and the taxi driver, who was totally innocent and whose sole crime was that he loved his country too much. Suhada was released subsequently but, meanwhile, they booked him because he too looked like a desperado to them. A few years later he died. His final request was, 'Please, I wish to have a photo of Bung Karno placed on my chest.' That wish granted he folded his gnarled hands over his picture and passed away peacefully.  

But during an interview with two Dutch journalists in 1967 the same chauffeur revealed:

How does he get it into his head to say that I am dead? After the arrest in 1929 the Dutch sentenced me to eight months in prison and they impounded my 1924 model Chevrolet. I met Sukarno for the first time again in 1956 in Bandung. He was then President and promised me expressly that he would give me my own car in order to replace the only one which I have ever owned. But he did not keep his promise.

While in gaol Sukarno seems to have lost his staunch faith in the new Djojobojo and he tried to find solace again in the stories of the wajang.

During the initial stages of the trial, which caused a tremendous sensation in Indonesia as well as in Holland, Sukarno was very subdued and did not play the great hero of the masses at all. He admitted that he was a leading figure in the P.N.I. but he emphasized the theoretical aspects of his revolutionary beliefs and denied that he had ever called on his followers to forcefully overthrow the colonial regime. When pressed by his interrogators, Sukarno admitted that the P.N.I. was revolutionary, but this, he argued, did not necessarily mean that the party was a threat to public peace and order. Sukarno stressed that in fact the P.N.I. was against the use of force. Gradually, Sukarno's answers became more poignant and belligerent. For example:

_The President of the Court: _ Are you satisfied with the policies of the present government?
NATIONALIST LEADER: BUNG KARNO

Sukarno: On the contrary! The P.N.I. is completely opposed to imperialism and capitalism. This system must be destroyed by the actions of the masses as is stated in the P.N.I. programme. But before tackling capitalism the P.N.I. first wants to attack imperialism.

The President: How does imperialism show itself in the Netherlands Indies?

Sukarno: In the large sugar and tobacco plantations, etc.

The President: In your opinion, is Dutch power here possible without imperialism?

Sukarno: Without imperialism Dutch power here would not be able to exist . . .

The President: It is always the same over and over again. The government is always depicted as a potentate, as an enemy. You have done the same thing, haven't you?

Sukarno: I have never said that.

The President: The spirit of bitterness and hostility towards the Netherlands Indies government is the only tangible result of your activities. From all the evidence it appears that everything is directed towards inculcating hate. Do you really believe, Mr Sukarno, that in this way you can achieve your objective in a peaceful way?

Sukarno: No, not in this way, but I am convinced that the P.N.I. is opposed to the use of force and that the party has a different purpose in mind . . .

The President: Why did you have secret files from the police archives in your possession?

Sukarno: They were given to me to read. I did not know they were stolen.

The President: Why did you keep them?

Sukarno: There was no sense in giving them back, because after reading them it became clear how badly the police was informed! These documents were useless to them . . .

The climax of the trial was Sukarno's defence oration which later was published under the title Indonesia Menggugat (Indonesia Accuses).

In this speech, Sukarno, running through almost the whole history of imperialism and capitalism, quoting widely from Marx, Lenin, Kautsky, Schumpeter and also from Sun Yat Sen, particularly used Dutch critics of colonial policy in the Indies, such as van Kol, Kuyper, and the socialist Van Gelderen to illustrate the pernicious-
ness and injustice of the system. He argued that as the capitalists controlled the colonial government and its agencies and also the Press, little help for the plight of the indigenous people could be expected from them. The destruction of the colonial system was therefore not only the logical answer, but would definitely occur in line with the laws of history:

Indonesia will be free! We are absolutely convinced that Indonesia will break away from Holland. And this will no longer depend on whether either Indonesians or Netherlanders want to be just and do the right thing. The history of the world and mankind does not provide one instance where a people remains under foreign domination for ever. On the contrary, it points over and over again to the fact that every people always succeeds in liberating itself. Thus if the Indonesian people, the P.N.I. and all of us strive to put an end to foreign domination, and call out for independence, then they only fulfill the historical role which of necessity must be correct. But as to the manner in which our chains shall be broken, that is entirely in the hands of the imperialists. It is not we, the Indonesian people, but the imperialists who will have the last word.89

Sukarno then tried to put the blame for the revolutionary tendencies in Indonesian society on the Dutch themselves in order to show his judges that he and his comrades were only the tools selected by fate to accomplish the inevitable predetermined historical process; and certainly in terms of the traditional Javanese view of the world there could be no question of guilt. On the contrary, it was the duty of every Javanese to live and act in accordance with the demands of the forces of nature, the cosmos.

The Bandung court, however, had no qualms about finding Sukarno guilty, and although its decision was challenged by some prominent Dutch legal scholars, Sukarno was condemned to a four year prison sentence.

The widely publicized trial instantly made Sukarno into a national hero. He was talked about even in the remotest Indonesian villages. The trial did more than a thousand of his speeches could have done, it suddenly made him the most popular nationalist leader.

Sukarno was sent to the new prison Sukamiskin in Bandung, where as in the days before the trial he tried to find solace in religion. This time apparently he became interested in Islam and Christianity. He seems to have made a careful study of both these religions, but
in his usual style he only made certain of their tenets 'his own' regarding the remainder as unsuitable for his purposes:

In my dungeon I undertook the study of all religions to see if I were truly one of the 'false and lost'. If they were better for me then I wanted them. With Pastor van Lith I commenced the study of Christianity. I particularly cherished its Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' inspiration imbued the early martyrs so they walked to their deaths singing psalms of praise to him because they knew 'We leave this kingdom, but we will enter the kingdom of Heaven'. I clung to that. I read and re-read the bible, the Old Testament and the New became dear friends to me. I renewed their acquaintances often. Then I read the Koran. And it was only after absorbing the thoughts of Mohammed that I stopped looking to books on sociology for answers to how and why things are. I found all my answers in the words of the Prophet. I felt totally satisfied.40

Even while in prison, Sukarno was able to stir up a furore in public life. A letter dated 17 May 1931, smuggled from the prison, appeared in an Indonesian newspaper and caused an uproar in Indonesia as well as in Holland. Sukarno complained in this letter that he was treated as a criminal; his head had been shaved clean, he was forced to wear blue prison clothes and the physical work he was required to do in the prison book-binding shop was so heavy that in the evening he was too tired even to read. Sukarno wrote that he was becoming lethargic and that physically he was gradually going downhill.41

The reaction in Indonesia and Holland was tremendous. Various members of the Volksraad including van Mook, who later was so often unjustly accused by Sukarno of all kinds of misdeeds against humanity, pressed in a fiery speech for a more humane and gallant treatment of political prisoners who after all were not criminals.

In the Dutch parliament similar demands were made, and the Dutch trade union leader Moltemaker, who during a tour of the Indies visited Sukarno twice in Sukamiskin prison, promised in an emotional speech on 30 August 1931 that the S.D.A.P., the Dutch socialist party, would force the Dutch government to release Sukarno from prison. This promise was partly fulfilled the next day when Queen Wilhelmina on the occasion of her birthday reduced Sukarno's prison term by three months. In December 1931 Governor-General de Graeff, who is dismissed in Sukarno's memoirs42 as an arch reactionary despite the fact that he tried with great patience and
against overwhelming odds to reduce the power of Dutch capitalism and its impact on colonial policy, decided as a conciliatory gesture to the Indonesian nationalists to release Sukarno from prison two years before the end of his term.

How much Sukarno had been the soul of the radical nationalist movement had become abundantly clear when within a few weeks of his forced disappearance from the Indonesian political scene, the P.P.P.K.I. and its built-in dynamic force, the P.N.I., came tumbling down like a house of cards.

Both organizations seemed to be lamed by the arrest and trial of the radical nationalist leaders; and the various protest meetings that were staged were rather tame and unimpressive.

The P.N.I. which had now been officially declared a forbidden organization was disbanded by Sartono, the acting chairman, on 24 April 1931, a week after the verdict against Sukarno had been confirmed by the authorities in Batavia. On 30 April 1931 a new party, the Partai Indonesia or Partindo was founded. The party had the same programme as the old P.N.I. and declared that the Indonesian people should continue to try to unify themselves irrespective of race and religion in order to gain sufficient power in the struggle for freedom.

The P.P.P.K.I., which from the beginning had been no more than a pseudo-unitary organization, was even more ineffective now that it was without its leading spirit Sukarno; and mufakat even on unimportant issues was no longer possible, because of the growing hostility between the Islamic and nationalist groups. While Sukarno had been able to hush up the various controversies that had arisen between the Islamic group and the nationalists such as national education, the establishment of a national Indonesian bank, and child marriage, in his absence hostility between the two sides reached such a high pitch that in December 1930 the Islamic Association left the federation.

The policies of Sukarno and the P.N.I. were now severely criticized by a number of more Western-orientated nationalists. In particular, Mohammad Hatta, the president of the Indonesian Association in Holland, was disgusted with the direction the movement had taken. In 1930 in an article entitled 'The crisis in the P.P.P.K.I.' he openly took issue with Sukarno's principle of mufakat:

Our happiness about the founding of the P.P.P.K.I. as a type of political concentration was mainly based on our hope that this body would develop into a representative body of the Indonesian
NATIONALIST LEADER: BUNG KARNO

people, a true Indonesian national parliament. Both popular parties, the P.N.I. and P.S.I., have the power to let the P.P.P.K.I. evolve in this natural manner. . . . Two years have since passed and instead of a consolidation of national power ideological confusion on the national level has increased and is reaching a crisis point. What are the reasons?

Hitting at Sukarno’s Javanistic solution to achieve national unity, Hatta continued:

A superficial observer of the Indonesian nationalist movement, or a dreamer about a unitary policy could perhaps be amazed and ask us on what grounds we could speak about a crisis in the P.P.P.K.I.

Hatta agreed that the unification of the youth movements and greater acceptance of the idea of national unity also among the older generation were an undeniable fact, but they could not camouflage two other facts, namely an ideological crisis and a manifestation of powerlessness:

Ideological confusion has resulted since many members of the P.P.P.K.I. began to believe that the ideal of national unity should be realized in terms of politics. There is a strong tendency to create the P.P.P.K.I. into an organ of supreme power rather than a national parliament, in which the voice of the people is heard and in which differences of opinion do not have to be suppressed. The truth of the saying that "Du choc des opinions jaillit la vérité" seems to have been forgotten. . . . It is the tragedy of this mistaken ideal of unity that criticism is often seen as an attempt to disturb unity. But in this way, the mutual understanding and greater tolerance one is seeking cannot be achieved. On the contrary bitterness will increase unnecessarily. Eventually, the P.P.P.K.I., while giving an outside appearance of strength, will be weak on the inside. Of greater importance from a political point of view is the apparent existence of a feeling of powerlessness in the P.P.P.K.I. which is apparent from its inability to declare its solidarity when its left-wing, the P.N.I., was attacked. The P.P.P.K.I. only seems to be able to stage mock battles . . . But when on 29 December 1929 the P.N.I. was strongly attacked, all the P.P.P.K.I. could do was to show its powerlessness. Admittedly shortly after a protest meeting was held in Batavia—and probably
also in other places—where declarations of solidarity were given. But these seem to have only been words and one has not heard anything any more about protest actions by the P.P.P.K.I.<sup>48</sup>

Hatta’s arguments appear to have been impressive enough for the P.P.P.K.I. to decide at its meeting in May 1931 to abandon the principle of *mufakat* and to adopt instead a Western type voting system.

Hatta was even more deeply perturbed about the disbandment of the P.N.I. In a letter published in July 1931 in the Indonesian press, he dismissed Sartono’s action as high-handed and premature, and he argued that although the P.N.I. was involved in the trial of its leaders the colonial government would have refrained from outlawing the party out of fear of widespread popular disturbances. In view of the severity of Dutch repressive measures in the colony and the fact that Hatta had actually been away for more than ten years, this contention was perhaps somewhat out of touch with reality. More fundamental, however, and showing an entirely different frame of mind to Sukarno’s thinking was Hatta’s criticism that the P.N.I. had been disbanded arbitrarily and without reference to the wishes of the rank-and-file. And in a very sharp attack on the style of leadership developed by Sukarno, Hatta wrote: ‘The people are used as a mat to wipe one’s feet on. They are considered necessary to applaud after listening to a leader’s fierce speech. The people are not taught how to take care of its responsibilities and duties.’<sup>44</sup>

According to Hatta it was useless arousing the people into a great frenzy without guiding them into constructive thinking. Instead the people should be educated first in economics and politics in order to become aware of their rights. Non-cooperation, so Hatta argued, was an educational method and not, as Sukarno had perceived it, a thing-in-itself. Moreover, it was highly dangerous to leave the fate of the nation in the hands of a single man, as was obviously clear after Sukarno’s arrest when the movement had fallen completely flat. Instead, emphasis should be placed on the training of cadres who would be able to create the people into the vast countervailing power that Sukarno had always desired.<sup>45</sup>

Hatta’s letter caused a serious division in the nationalist camp. This has carried through to the present day. Unlike Sukarno, who had only experienced Western civilization in the watered-down form he had encountered in the colony, and in whom traditional Javanese civilization had remained deeply embedded, most of the Hatta group originated from the islands outside Java. Many of them had also
been to the Netherlands where they had spent a considerable time as students, and where they had experienced Western civilization, including parliamentary democracy, at its source. They objected to Sukarno's rather facile denunciation of Western culture and they were also opposed to his nativist approach in solving the problems of the Indonesian people.

It was Sutan Sjahir who in December 1931 founded the rival nationalist party, the P.N.I. Significantly the letters P.N.I. stood for Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (the National Education of Indonesia). The new party condemned the tactics of Sukarno, and emphasized the great need to train cadres to diffuse a truly revolutionary spirit among the people. The new party then incorporated the ideals of Hatta, who became its chairman on his return from Holland in 1932.

When Sukarno was released from prison he was confronted with a P.P.P.K.I. in a state of advanced decline and a serious split in the nationalist camp. But he immediately showed that he was his old self and to the large crowd that gathered to meet him he explained in a fiery speech that his return could be compared to a kris which had been kept for three years and had now become sharper on both sides: 'I will fight. Give me a weapon, that is the unity of the masses. I shall fight for a free Indonesia as long as there is a drop of blood flowing in my veins.'

The next day he went with Inggit to Surabaja to attend the Indonesian Raja (Greater Indonesia) Congress which had been postponed until he was released. It was obviously clear that the masses had not forgotten him and the trip to Surabaja turned out to be a triumph, a real hero's welcome. At every station where the train stopped crowds of jubilant Indonesians were standing and waving. The national Indonesian newspapers presented special Sukarno editions. He was kissed and hugged, and buried under garlands of flowers. At the station at Surabaja a crowd of more than 6,000 people awaited the great leader, the martyr of the people. At the Congress he again reaffirmed his intention of struggling to the death for Indonesian freedom. Comparing himself to the wajang figure, Kokrosoro with his magic weapon nanggala, Sukarno, although saddened by the split that had occurred in the nationalists ranks, promised his listeners that he would bring unity again. However, it proved impossible for Sukarno, despite his charismatic power, to convert Hatta and Sjahir.

In addition to the formation of cadres the P.N.I. was more orthodox Marxist in its policies; and it considered a mystical union of all classes in the indigenous society as impossible. Hatta argued
that Sukarno's method would not be able to achieve *persatuan* (unity) but only *persatean*. *Sate* is skewered roasted pieces of meat. According to Hatta, a stick of *sate* could consist of all kinds of meat, but concepts such as nation, bourgeoisie, and nobility could never be chained together into one compatible arrangement. These highly divergent groups could only be united if they were all prepared to abandon their principles which they could hardly be expected to do. The only sensible way to achieve freedom therefore was to organize the proletarian masses and to wage a class struggle against both foreign capitalism and the indigenous nobility and bourgeoisie.47

After eight months of intensive lobbying Sukarno still hadn't succeeded in healing the breach. Unwilling to give up his own political views, Sukarno then decided to join the Partindo.

But even if Sukarno had been convinced by the arguments of the Hatta-Sjahir group, he would never have been willing to admit this because among the intellectuals, among his peers, he would not have been allowed to play the dominant role which he believed fate had destined him to perform. And if not fate, then certainly his vanity forced him to take the different and more palatable course of arousing the masses and mirroring his power and his greatness in them.

Sukarno's answer to the insistence of the P.N.I. on the class struggle was the concept of *marhaenism*. According to Sukarno Marxist theory did not fully fit the Indonesian situation. The number of people who only had their labour to sell (proletarians) was too small to build a revolution on. Indonesia was basically an agrarian country with teeming millions of poor peasants, who owned some tools, some land, and a small house. These people—the *marhaens*—were to be the backbone of the struggle for independence and the revolution. Sukarno relates the following story as to how he came to use the term *marhaen*.

Pedalling around aimlessly on my cycle—thinking—I found myself in the southern part of Bandung, a compact agricultural area where you see many farmers in their little fields, each of which is less than a third of a hectare. My attention for some reason was captured by a peasant hoeing his property. He was alone. His clothes were shabby. This typical scene struck me as symbolic of my people. I stood there awhile contemplating it silently. We Indonesians being a warm, friendly sort, I approached him. In the regional Sundanese I asked 'Who is the owner of this lot on which you are now working?' He said to me
'Why I am, sir', I said, 'Tell me, does anyone own this with you?'
'Oh, no, sir, I own it all by myself'... I then asked this young farmer his name. And he told me, Marhaen. Marhaen is a common name like Smith or Jones. At that moment the light of inspiration flooded my brain. I would use that name for all Indonesians with the same miserable lot. From then on I would call my people marhaenists.48

For Sukarno, then, marhaenism meant the magic formula which would unite all groups and classes in Indonesian society, because they were all exploited, into a mass movement to fight for independence.

Sukarno argued that independence should be achieved first and that then the establishment of a just and prosperous society would almost automatically come about, providing the proletariat—the factory workers and plantation coolies—assumed and retained the leading role in the struggle. Sukarno wrote:

Generally the peasants still are half-feudal in their thinking, they live in a mystical dreamworld indulging in fancies. They are not as modern and rational as the proletariat that lives in the hurly-burly twentieth century. They still revere the feudal nobility a great deal, they believe in the coming of the Ratu Adil or Heru Tjokro, incarnations from heaven, a paradise on earth in which there will be prosperity and justice... In everything they (the peasants) are backwards and old-fashioned.... They have an old-fashioned social structure. Their methods of production have not changed.... In short, their whole social economic life is still old-fashioned—and also their ideology is obviously old-fashioned....

On the other hand the proletarians as a class are the product of capitalism and imperialism. They know about factories, they know about machines, about electricity and the capitalistic production process and about all the modern things of the twentieth century. They also hold the fate of capitalism more directly in their hands, they can have a greater direct impact in fighting capitalism. It would therefore be logical that they would be in the front line fighting capitalism and imperialism... that they would be shock troops.... Marx has said that in the struggle of the peasants and the workers, the latter must become 'the revolutionary shock troops'.... The peasants must be the comrades of the workers, they must be united and harmoniously associated with the workers.... In this united struggle the workers
must 'become the standard-bearers of the social revolution'... because according to Marx as a class they are a 'social necessity and the eventual victory of the ideology is a historical necessity—a necessary historical event', a certain historical event'.

After the 'golden bridge' of independence had been achieved, the final objectives of the marhaenist struggle would be to establish a true political as well as economic democracy, a true social democracy. Social democracy meant a state of affairs, where all political, cultural and economic life was controlled by the people. All large business concerns and means of production were to become the property of the state.

Indonesian nationalism, the struggle for freedom, should therefore not be of the bourgeois kind or the feudal kind, but it should be deeply impregnated with the peoples' spirit (volksgeist). This social nationalism as Sukarno called it, was to be opposed to every type of capitalism and imperialism, and it was to be pervaded by a strong feeling of justice and humanity.

Sukarno, however, was not given a great deal of time to propound his theories, because on 1 August 1933 he was arrested again and in February 1934 he was exiled for an indefinite period to the island of Flores in eastern Indonesia. Hatta and Sjafrir and a number of other prominent nationalist leaders were arrested soon afterwards and many of them were sent to the infamous Tanah Merah camp in West Irian.

When Sukarno was unable to convince the Dutch police that he was not planning an immediate revolution, he did a complete volte-face, and as a token of his sincerity offered to cooperate with the colonial government and take a seat in the Bandung City Council or even in the Volksraad. As further proof of his 'conversion' Sukarno wrote a letter to the Partindo leadership asking to resign from the party. He added that he was retiring from politics because he no longer agreed with the principles of the party and the direction that the radical movement had taken.

When the news of Sukarno's 'conversion' leaked out in the national Indonesian Press it caused a furore, the vibrations of which took a long time to die down. With this one move Sukarno destroyed a great deal of the prestige and trust he had gained among many of the Indonesian nationalists. Among people who had previously almost venerated him as a god there were some who now turned their hate on him, pulling his portrait down from the walls and mutilating it. Some Partindo leaders demanded that Sukarno
should not be allowed to resign, but that his name should be struck
dishonourably from the party's register. The reasons for this drastic
decision by Sukarno will probably never be fully known.

It has been argued that Sukarno took this decision in deference
to his wife, who beseeched him to give up his radical non-
cooperative stance. Others again argued it was purely a tactical
move on the part of Sukarno who attempted in this way to save the
Partindo from further persecution by the Dutch. There is also the
story that it was on the advice of Husni Tahmimin, the radical
cooperative nationalist, that Sukarno took this momentous step.
Tahmimin apparently argued that Sukarno would be far more useful
as a free cooperative nationalist than as a captive non-cooperator
in Flores which was far away from the centre of Indonesian political
activity.

Another and a more likely explanation is that Sukarno at the
time was suffering from a severe mental depression and was psycho-
logically unstable, something which is noticeable at various stages
in his career when he was up against tremendous odds. Undoubtedly
his future as a great national leader must have looked rather bleak
to him at the time. In addition to being hampered by the Dutch
colonial power, Sukarno had also been thwarted by both the
Western-orientated Indonesian intellectuals and many of the
Islamic leaders in his plans to set up a mass Indonesian organization,
and he had singularly failed to bring about the 'mystical union'
he had dreamt about for so long.

This would have been sufficient to discourage any man, but it
would undoubtedly have hit even harder a man like Sukarno,
with his highly emotional makeup, who was liable to change from
a state of high elation to a fit of deep depression in a split second.
His failure as a politician together with the spectre of being exiled
for an unspecified period to a remote island was probably enough
to bring the hypersensitive Sukarno close to a mental break-
down.

It is known that Sukarno was already in a mood of mental
depression before his arrest. He confessed to one of his friends,
Sanusi Pane, a well-known journalist and writer, that he had serious
doubts about the innate ability of the Indonesian people ever to
regain their freedom, and create something of world-shattering
importance. He told Sanusi Pane: 'I would have the moral courage
to work together with the Dutch if I could be persuaded that it
would be useful.' And during a walk with Sanusi Pane in the hill-
town of Lembang near Bandung, Sukarno exclaimed:
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SUKARNO

Where are the great works of art we have produced? Where are our gigantic statues of Buddha, our Angkor Vats, our Mahabharatas, our Homers, our Dantes, our cathedrals, our peaking temples? We were and we are a weak people! ... The Indian, Chinese and Western cultures are three dimensional; ours is two dimensional. We do nothing else than copy. We are not able to produce something original. It will still take a long time before the national movement will amount to something, before we are worthy of freedom.51

Dr Tjipto Mungunkusumo, his mentor during the early Bandung days, was of the opinion that Sukarno had suffered a mental breakdown. He wrote:

When Baron de Graeff had Soekarno released from Soekamiskin—the prison of Bandung—he was receiving psychiatric treatment. I know for certain that his genuine friends advised him strongly to seek refuge in Europe or anywhere else where he would be away from his normal surroundings and could enjoy some spiritual rest. But, of course, an overseas trip, which was no luxury for the man, was not liked by his so-called best friends. The movement could not miss him, not even for a day or a night. If the popular leader went on an overseas trip, that would be taken as an example of cowardice. All these were arguments of so-called patriots, who when it comes to the point prefer to have sacrifices made to the fatherland by others rather than by themselves. During the first month after the Soekamiskin period Soekarno's actions were marked by serious nervous tension which caused me a great deal of anxiety. He was honoured with incense, flower and hallelujahs. It was as if the people were intent on applauding him away from Java, away from his country. All this filled us, who were more realistic, with disgust. I haven't followed Soekarno any longer, because I felt that his activities were not based on truth, which is the only basis on which a movement can and may be founded.52

Sukarno disappeared from Java on 15 February 1934, almost unnoticed. There were only a few people to see him off at the Surabaja wharf, from where he took ship to Flores.

The exiling of the radical nationalist leaders and their successors, as well as the imprisonment in 1934 of the leaders of the Indonesian
Islamic Association and the Permi in Minangkabau caused the death blow to the radical, non-cooperative national movement. Also the radical youth organizations were lamed when the colonial government forbade them to hold public meetings.

The national federation P.P.F.K.I. died a natural death in 1935, and the Partindo as well as the P.N.I. followed suit in 1936.

In the meantime the two moderate nationalist parties, Budi Utomo and the P.B.I. of Dr Sutomo, had fused themselves into a new party, the Parindra, which strove for national independence and the social-economic improvement of the people on the basis of cooperation with the colonial government.

Also the radical wing began to reorientate itself. Already in 1934 the Partindo had decided that non-cooperation should no longer be a strict principle, but should only be used as a tactical measure on suitable occasions. The Indonesian Association in Holland was the first national organization which completely changed course and decided in 1936 that circumstances had changed and that the time was ripe for cooperation with the Dutch and take seats in the various representative councils. The Gerindo, in which younger generation national leaders, such as Amir Sjarifuddin, played an important role, was strongly anti-fascist and anti-Japanese.

The Islamic movement had fared little better than the nationalists and was also suffering from a great deal of internal strife and division. A number of smaller groups separated from the Islamic Association. In 1938 a splinter party, the Party of Indonesia, was founded which strove to convince the people that Islam was the most perfect religion and that Allah had promised that the Islamic community would rule the world. In 1940 another group of Muslims who demanded an Islamic theocratic state separated from the Islamic Association. They were led by Kartosuwirjo, who later during the revolution became the leader of the terrorist Darul Islam. Similarly in Atjeh, North Sumatra, a number of theocratic Islamic teachers united themselves in the Persatuan Ulama Seluruh under the leadership
of Daud Beureuh, who in the early fifties revolted against the ‘godless Indonesian republic’.

During the late 1930s it became widely felt in both Muslim and nationalist circles that internal division was damaging to their respective causes. It was the Mohammadyah movement, which hitherto had stayed out of politics, which in 1937 took the initiative in founding the M.I.A.I., the Great Council of Indonesian Muslims, which was joined by the Nahdatul Ulama, and the Islamic Association. As stated in its programme, the M.I.A.I. was founded to unite Muslims to defend the honour of their faith seriously threatened by the colonial government, which was apparently opposed to the Islamic Law and since the mid-1920s had officially recognized and propagated the adat law.

In May 1939 the nationalists also federated again and established the Gabungan Politik Indonesia (Indonesian Political Union), which was joined by the Parindra, Gerindo, and the P.S.I.I. Also the various national youth organizations united themselves again and in December established a central council. The Muslims, however, set up their own united youth organization in February 1940.

The conciliatory moves of the Indonesian nationalists since the mid-1930s were not reciprocated by the Dutch government. After almost two years of ‘consideration’ they rejected a petition by the moderate nationalist Sutardjo, signed by other Indonesian members of the Volksraad, to call an imperial conference where both parties on the basis of equality were to construct a plan for gradual political reforms which would enable Indonesian to gain independence in a period of ten years within the framework of a Netherlands Commonwealth.

The Dutch, in spite of the obvious threat of Japan, were apparently cocksure about the impregnable defence shield which the U.S.A. and Britain would provide.

Also the demands of Gapi for a true Indonesian parliament were dismissed by the Dutch government in February 1940 on the grounds that Indonesia was not yet ripe for self-government, let alone independence. In February 1941 the Indonesian nationalists tried another approach and suggested that Holland and Indonesia should form a federation in which each partner would have its own head of state, government, and parliament. This suggestion was again ignored by the Dutch government, which at the time was in exile in London, on the grounds that discussion should be postponed until after the war.

During his period of exile on the remote island of Flores, Sukarno
seems to have spent a great deal of his time on perfecting and deepening his political philosophy. He continued the study of Islam as well as Christianity, partly perhaps to find solace in his great misfortune, but also as is obvious from his writings, to become more familiar with these religions in order to show the Muslims as well as the Christians the error of their ways and to fit them more easily into his own nationalist ideology. In his 'Letters from Endehe' to Hadji Hassan, a well-known Islamic scholar in Bandung, Sukarno simplified the Islamic religion to such an extent that the final product would have been unrecognizable to many devout followers of the prophet.

Sukarno was extremely unhappy in Flores. He was lonely. He missed the vast crowds of Java, the shouting, the wild ecstasy of the masses, the great exhilaration of being at the centre of things. In Flores, Dutch as well as Indonesian officials had been ordered to stay away from Sukarno. Also many of the Islamic traders in the predominantly Roman Catholic Flores kept apart from Sukarno out of fear of punitive measures by the Dutch authorities. The only people with whom Sukarno came into close contact were some of the Roman Catholic missionaries on the island. Sukarno had free access to the library and the recreation hall of the Roman Catholic Mission. He hired the Parish Hall in Endehe to stage a number of plays together with some of the local people. Sukarno talked a great deal with the missionaries, mainly Dutchmen, and gained a much deeper insight into Roman Catholicism and into what the missionaries were trying to do in furthering the economic and social development of the local people.

But all this could not satisfy Sukarno for long. Psychologically he started to go rapidly downhill. He became listless and moody; his depressions became worse and he began to suffer from severe attacks of malaria which also weakened him physically.

It was because of his sickness that the Batavian government decided, in February 1938, to transfer Sukarno and his family to the town of Bengkulu on the west Sumatran coast. The fact that Bengkulu was a strictly traditional Islamic town, provided a challenge to Sukarno. Almost immediately upon his arrival he began to attack traditional orthodox Islam which he dismissed as inane and stupefying. And, misquoting as usual from well-known Islamic scholars, Sukarno argued that Islam would only expect to flourish again if greater respect was given to freedom of spirit, knowledge, and nationalism.

He joined the modernist Islamic organization Mohammadijah
and he lectured to Mohammadijah teachers. In his usually impetuous and high-handed manner Sukarno tried to cut through centuries of Islamic tradition: at one prayer meeting, for example, he tore away the curtain that traditionally separates the men from the women. Sukarno's behaviour caused a great deal of adverse comment from orthodox Muslims in Bengkulu as well as in other parts of Sumatra and Java.

Sukarno also caused another stir when he began to intersperse his politico-religious polemics with a love affair with a fifteen-year-old girl, called Fatmawati, the daughter of Hadji Hassan Din, the local head of the Mohammadijah.

Sukarno was lonely and desperately wanted children. Inggit was already fifty-three years old and barren. To take a second wife was not unusual in Indonesia, as Muslims are allowed to have four wives. But when the news leaked out it caused a storm of protest from many modern Indonesians, in particular from the militant women's organizations who were strongly opposed to polygamy. Friends, although in sympathy with his physical needs, strongly counselled Sukarno against taking a second wife, because it might damage his prestige and image as a national leader. It was Inggit's stubborn refusal, however, to agree to a divorce and to make way for a younger and prettier playmate which forced Sukarno to shelve his new marital adventures for a few years.

Sukarno's attempt in his autobiography to whitewash his romance with Fatmawati has caused some derisive replies from other Indonesians. For example:

In his autobiography Sukarno is a real hypocrite when he remarks, 'To me she was just a pretty child' and further on, 'to stop the aching loneliness'. And then he said 'What I felt for her was fatherly affection'. When I read this part of the book to a couple of friends they all exploded into loud laughter. Imagine, Sukarno trying to stop his so-called 'aching loneliness' with a 'fatherly feeling' towards a pretty girl. One of my friends said rather crudely: 'What he really felt was an ache in his loins.'

During the last years of his exile in Bengkulu a strong note of self-satisfaction can be detected in Sukarno; with the outbreak of war in Europe and the rapidly approaching Pacific war he felt that his prophesy of the collapse of imperialist capitalism, out of which a free Indonesia would be born, was closer to fulfilment.

The news of the attack by Nazi Germany on Holland in May
1940 and the rape of Rotterdam which caused many staunch Indonesian nationalists, including Dr Tjipto Mangunkusumo, to openly show their sympathy with the Dutch people, was received by Sukarno with stony silence. Not one word of sympathy was heard. And when in the spring of 1941 Dr G. F. Pijper, the government adviser to the Volksraad, came to visit Sukarno in Bengkulu to ask him to write pro-Dutch articles in return for his freedom, he refused indignantly. A year later, however, Sukarno the staunch non-cooperator piped an entirely different tune, when he almost threw himself at the new Japanese masters, offering his services. In spite of his years of exile, his psychological ups and downs, and the consternation he had caused in the nationalist movement by his 'conversion' in 1933, his stock as a nationalist leader in Java apparently still stood very high at the outbreak of the Pacific war. Amir Sjarifuddin wrote in a letter to a friend in 1939 about Sukarno:

They have not forgotten him here in Djakarta. His name is still good, but you see, because he is absent he has no influence any more on the course of things. The trend of our policy has changed its tactics. He might not have approved of this if he were here in Djakarta. Poor fellow, Sukarno. You remember of course ... that in fact we ... were never very nice to him. At that time we envied him a little because he was really getting somewhere, he was such a good orator, but his thoughts and deeds were not sympathetic to us. I believe he knew it too. There was not much love lost between us and him. However, I still believe that he is still one of our top leaders. I personally don't think that he liked us too much. 55
CHAPTER III

Under the Heels of Nippon

The Japanese occupation constitutes an important watershed in modern Indonesian history. It acted as an important lever in the achievement of Indonesian independence and it provided Sukarno with opportunities of achieving his ambitions which otherwise might not have been realized.

In less than three months after the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour of 8 December 1941, the Japanese in a lightning strike southwards occupied most of South-East Asia. Singapore, the bulwark behind which the Dutch had felt themselves safe, fell on 15 February 1942 and the Dutch Commander-in-Chief, General Ter Poorten, surrendered his forces to the Japanese on 8 March 1942. The Netherlands Indies was no more.

Contrary to popular Indonesian hopes the Japanese soon proved themselves to be far stricter and more cruel masters than the Dutch had ever been. It is clear from the available documents that the Japanese had no intention of complying with the demands of Indonesian nationalists for a greater degree of self-government and independence. It was only towards the very end of the war that the Japanese changed their tune and, more as an afterthought and also perhaps to leave a time bomb behind for the Allied forces, indicated to the Indonesian leaders that Japan would no longer stand in the way of Indonesian independence.

Japanese policy, however, towards the Indonesian independence movement was by no means homogeneous; considerable differences of opinion existed within the armed forces, as well as between the military and certain sections of the Japanese government, as to how much leeway should be given to the demands of indigenous nationalists.

In the months immediately preceding the attack on Pearl Harbour various conferences were held in Japan to determine an outline of
policy to be followed in the occupied territories. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs advocated that the more developed parts of Indonesia, such as Java and Sumatra, should be granted independence within the framework of the Japanese empire, while the remainder of the archipelago should become a Japanese colony.\textsuperscript{1} This proposal was strongly opposed by the military who argued that direct occupation of the whole of the Indies was necessary to ensure the safe and uninterrupted supply of raw materials vital to the war effort. The generals were supported by some of the civilian authorities who took the view that in maintaining the political status quo of the Netherlands Indies the Japanese government would have an important lever at its disposal in case of peace negotiations with the Allies.\textsuperscript{2}

The military apparently got their way and at a conference attended by representatives of the Japanese government and the imperial staff held on 20 November 1941 it was decided to follow a conservative policy in the occupied areas and to ignore the demands of local independence movements at least for the duration of the war.\textsuperscript{3} The main concern of the Japanese was obviously the economic exploitation of South-East Asia and the occupying authorities were instructed that:

> Emphasis shall be placed on the acquisition of resources, particularly those essential to the prosecution of the war... the emphasis on resource development shall be on petroleum, and all matters necessary for this purpose shall be provided, including the priority allocation of funds, equipment and the like.... Economic hardships imposed upon native livelihood as a result of the acquisition of resources vital to national defence and for the self-sufficiency of occupation troops must be endured; and pacification measures against the natives shall stop at a point consistent with these objectives.\textsuperscript{4}

The Japanese Navy was on the whole more moderate in its views towards indigenous nationalism. Most of its top-ranking officers originated from the upper classes; many of them had spent considerable periods abroad and had become internationally oriented. The majority of Army officers had a far more limited cultural horizon and were less flexible in their thinking, although there were notable exceptions to the rule. However, the 'tough liners' in the armed forces seem to have been victorious all along the line; with the result that the more politically sophisticated Navy was put in charge of the
less advanced areas of Indonesia such as Borneo and the Eastern Islands, while the Army was to control the more nationally conscious areas of Java and Sumatra.

The 16th Japanese Army, which occupied Java, was under the command of Lieut.-Gen. Immamura Hitoshi, who had been in England for some time as military attaché and had fought in the China campaign. He was more cosmopolitan in his outlook than most of his fellow officers and apparently wanted to pursue a 'soft line' policy in Java. Immamura argued that as Japan had already shown its superiority by defeating the Allies it would be politically unwise as well as against the rules of the Japanese warriors' code to follow the high-handed, arrogant, and repressive policy which was advocated by many of the younger officers of his command. Instead, during the first few months of the occupation Immamura concentrated his efforts on bringing civilian life back to normal and staged a propaganda campaign emphasizing the need for Japanese-Indonesian friendship and cooperation. He also insisted that the Dutch civilian authorities should retain their positions for the time being and that prisoners of war were to be treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

On the other hand Indonesian hopes for early independence were quickly smashed by Immamura's persistent refusal to discuss the question which in line with the earlier policy decision of November 1941 was to be postponed until after the conclusion of the war.

Japanese propaganda in pre-war days as well as during the initial weeks of the occupation had given many Indonesians the impression that Nippon would be far more accommodating to their political aspirations than the Dutch had been. This was partly the reason why the Japanese troops were welcomed by the majority of the Indonesian population as liberators. There was no panic, no obvious fear, and Dutch propaganda about Japanese atrocities seems to have had little effect. Moreover, many Indonesians, and in particular the Javanese, took the Japanese invasion calmly because they firmly believed that the Japanese victory was the realization of the first part of the prophecies of the legendary king Djojobojo, who had predicted that the Dutch usurpers would finally be forced to surrender to the 'forces coming from the islands of Tembini, the members of which are yellow-skinned, short-legged, and they will occupy Java but only for the life-time of the maize-plant.'

The Japanese who for years had been carefully studying the
internal political situation in Indonesia made good use of these
popular messianic beliefs and just before the attack on Java,
Japanese planes released thousands of leaflets stating that the
Japanese army would come to occupy Java in order to make the
prophecies of Djiojobojo come true.

Japanese promises and the fact that Indonesians in Java were
initially allowed to display the red and white national flag and sing
the national anthem appear to have lured a number of nationalists
into believing that self-government if not independence was just
around the corner. Not only did some of the pre-war cooperative
parties want to offer their services to the Japanese, but also some of
the non-cooperators. The most conspicuous convert among the latter
was perhaps the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, which apparently
argued that it could increase its strength and influence by jumping
on the Japanese bandwagon. Also some of the Gerindo leaders seem
to have been impressed by Japanese propaganda and Mohammad
Yamin is reported to have urged a large mass meeting of students
to send a deputation to the Japanese on their arrival requesting
immediate freedom for Indonesia from their brother Asian victors
over colonialism.

Soon after their entry into Djakarta the Japanese made it officially
known that they wanted to come into contact with prominent
Indonesian leaders, and there was great excitement in nationalist
circles and various newspapers printed lists of possible Indonesian
ministerial candidates. Sukarno, who at that time was still in
Sumatra, was mentioned as a possibility for the Ministry of
Propaganda and the Press, Minister without Portfolio, and Vice-
Premier.

Nationalist hopes were raised to an even higher pitch when on
13 March 1942 the newspaper Tjahaja Timur reported a statement
by Abikusno Tjokrosujoso, a leader of the Islamic Association,
claiming that the Japanese authorities had decided to set up a
civilian government and that he had been charged with the task
of forming a cabinet.

Abikusno’s statement seems to have been the sign for the Japanese
to begin to deflate the Indonesian hope of immediate political
concessions. The Army-controlled newspaper Kan Po, on 14 March
1942, dismissed Abikusno’s story as untrue. Three days later
Sukardjo Wirjopranoto, the leader of the Parindra, was sum-
m传动 to Japanese headquarters in Djakarta and told that political
speculation had to stop. The final blow fell on 20 March when
regulation No. 3 of the military government in Java forbade, for the
time being, all discussion, activities, suggestions, and propaganda concerning the future political and constitutional development of the colony. To add insult to injury, regulation No. 4, which was issued the same day, prohibited the use of the Indonesian national flag and the national anthem.¹⁴

As it turned out, the Japanese proved to be even more repressive than the Dutch, who had at least allowed the existence of moderate political parties and limited participation in government. Now all political parties were forbidden. By the end of March 1942 the Japanese apparently felt that their veiled promises of greater political freedom had served their purpose of keeping the bulk of the population from siding with the Allies; and that now with the Dutch defeated and most of them behind bars they could show their true colours and begin to exploit the material and human resources of the archipelago on a scale which even surpassed the legendary voracity of the Dutch during the notorious Kulturstelde of the nineteenth century.

In addition to the repression of political activity, the Japanese initially cold-shouldered the overtures of the radical nationalists and Muslims, and instead concentrated their efforts on the pre-war cooperators, in particular the Parindra, a party largely patronized by the politically moderate pria (nobility). Apart from wanting to retain the existing socio-political status quo as far as possible, the Japanese during the first year of their occupation were desperately short of experienced civilian personnel and were therefore forced to cultivate the cooperation of the pria who constituted the largest corps of skilled administrators in the colony. For some of the nobility the removal of the Dutch meant an immediate elevation in status and initially Indonesia held such important positions as Governor and Vice-Governor of West Java, Mayor and Resident. However, only a few Indonesians were allowed to continue in these positions when greater numbers of Japanese personnel arrived in Java later in the year.¹⁶

Another reason for the prominent place held by the Parindra in Japanese planning at the beginning of the occupation was that some time before the war some members of the party who had become completely disillusioned with the intransigent attitude of the Dutch towards their demands for a greater degree of self-government had offered their services to the Japanese, in the hope of a better deal. The most prominent members of the Parindra party who stayed in Japan before the war were R. Soedjono and Madjid Oesman, and they made contact with extremist right-wing figures such as Toyama
Misuru, the leader of the Kokoryakai (Black Dragon Society), Taniguchi, and Shimizu Hitoshi. While still in Japan this group worked out a plan to establish a Parindra-led popular movement which was to guide the Indonesian people into cooperating with Japan.\textsuperscript{17}

Soedjono, a Dutch-educated lawyer who had worked as a teacher of Indonesian languages and as a radio commentator in Tokyo, returned to Java as a Japanese Army officer to advise the High Command on the indigenous situation. Shimizu Hitoshi was sent to Java to head the Sendenbu, the powerful Japanese propaganda bureau. It was largely under Shimizu's direction that the Gerakan Tiga A (the Three A Movement)—the A standing for Japan the Light, Protector, and Leader of Asia—was set up, which was to be a national front replacing the former political parties and combining all forces in Indonesian society in support of the Japanese cause. The new organization, which was to be ‘a spiritual movement of popular enlightenment’, was inaugurated on 29 April 1942 and on the suggestion of Shimizu, a certain Sjamsuddin, the editor of the Parindra newspaper Berita Umum and a second-grade political leader, was appointed chairman.\textsuperscript{18}

The initial popular enthusiasm for the Three A Movement soon dwindled into sullen, token support, when the people began to realize the real intentions of the Japanese. Moreover, Sjamsuddin and the predominantly prijati leadership appear to have been far more interested in advancing their personal interests and prestige than in supporting the Japanese effort, and corruption in the civil service was reported to have become widespread. But perhaps the most important reason for the failure of the Three A Movement to arouse the interest of the people in supporting the war effort was the equivocal attitude towards the organization of the occupation forces themselves. Apparently, the spectre of an urban elite leading and guiding the growing rural unrest caused by the Japanese exploitation of the peasantry, forced the military government to restrict the Three A Movement to the cities; and the Japanese secret police are reported to have suppressed with considerable force branches of the movement in the West Javanese countryside.\textsuperscript{19}

The first experiment in Japanese-Indonesian ‘cooperation’ in Java, the centre of the Indonesian political scene, took place without Sukarno having any say or playing any role in it. Sukarno rather belatedly returned to Java in the beginning of July 1942. This happened not, as some have suggested,\textsuperscript{20} because the Japanese authorities in Djakarta did not know about his whereabouts earlier,
but rather because they were not particularly interested in his services during the earlier months of the occupation.

When the Japanese landed at Palembang in South-East Sumatra, the Dutch authorities moved Sukarno and his family from Bengkulu to the port of Padang on the central-west coast of the island, from where he was supposedly to have been evacuated to Australia. Whatever the colonial government might have had in store for him, Sukarno was left behind in Padang when the Dutch, surprised by the lightning speed of the Japanese advance, left the city in panic. Sukarno's version of his activities during the days immediately before the arrival of the Japanese and the first week of the occupation seems somewhat coloured. Taking into account his tremendous vanity and his unshakable belief in his holy mission to free his country, he probably could not help himself when in 1965 he reminisced:

As I walked the streets I realized my poor, weak, subservient, undefended brothers needed to be rallied. There was nobody in charge. Nobody but Sukarno. Right actions are simply efforts to fulfil the service of God. I knew the time had come once more to go forth and answer the call. I assumed leadership immediately.

When he wrote this, Sukarno probably forgot that at the time in question he was not in Java but in Central Sumatra among the fierce and outspoken Minangkabaus, who were not by and large poor, weak, or subservient, and had shown throughout their history that they could take care of their own affairs, as the Dutch colonial governments could well testify. Over whom then was Sukarno assuming the leadership? Certainly not the majority of Minangkabaus, who had produced most of the nationally prominent opponents of Sukarno, such as Hatta, Sjahrr, Natsir, and Tan Malakka, and who at no time showed a sufficient liking for him to readily submit to his commands.

Even less credible is Sukarno's version of his first meetings with the Japanese authorities. According to his autobiography Sukarno within a few days of the arrival of the Japanese in Padang was contacted by an officer, a member of the Propaganda Bureau, who told him that the Japanese were aware of his great fame as a nationalist leader and wanted to pay their respects to him. Somewhat later Sukarno was politely 'requested' to travel to headquarters in Bukittinggi, where the commander, Colonel Fujitama, asked him to cooperate with the occupation army:
The Japanese needed me and I knew it. But I also needed them to make my country ready for revolution. This was like a game of volleyball. Except that the stakes were freedom. Colonel Fujiyama had first serve. Now it was my turn. Allah, I prayed silently, show me the way. ‘Well’, I said, ‘now I know what you want, I presume you know what I want’. ‘No, Mr Sukarno, I do not. What would the Indonesians really like?’ ‘To be free.’ ‘As a patriot who loves his people and longs for their liberty, you must realize independent Indonesia can be established only in cooperation with Japan’, he retaliated. ‘Yes’, I nodded, ‘it has become clear and bright to me that our lifeline lies in Japan... Will your government help me to liberate Indonesia?’ ‘If you promise total cooperation during our occupation, we will grant our unconditional promise to establish the freedom of your homeland.’ ‘Can I be guaranteed that during the whole period I work for you, it will be permissible for me to work for my people in the full knowledge that my ultimate aim is someday... somehow... to release them from the yoke of both Dutch and Japanese domination?’ ‘It is guaranteed. The Japanese government will put no obstacles in your way.’

Sukarno’s categorical statement that the Japanese could not do without his services seems entirely unrealistic under the circumstances. The situation was such that if Sukarno had not been willing to cooperate and had instead turned against the Japanese, he would undoubtedly have been shot as had happened to other Indonesian intellectuals who had dared to oppose the new colonial masters. And it is very doubtful whether the execution of Sukarno would have caused a large-scale uprising at that time, particularly in Sumatra. Undoubtedly Sukarno’s further assertion that he could not achieve anything without the Japanese is far more realistic.

But it is the last part of this supposed conversation with Colonel Fujiyama which has a strong flavour of the unreal about it. It is known that the 25th Army which occupied Sumatra and Malaya acted very much the role of the haughty conqueror, treating the indigenous people as well as Europeans harshly, openly flaunting the rules of the Geneva Convention. Furthermore, the Japanese were of the opinion that nationalism was still comparatively weak in Sumatra and that the indigenous population was not yet ripe for self-government. So, organizations such as the Three A Movement and its various successors which had been set up in Java, were not considered necessary in Sumatra. It was only towards the end of
1943 that a number of advisory councils were set up in Sumatra which were designed to streamline the Japanese economic exploitation of the island. The members of these councils were all Indonesians who had been appointed by the military government. The discussion of political matters was forbidden until September 1944 when Tokyo announced that within the foreseeable future Indonesia would be granted its independence. But even then it was with considerable reluctance that the local Japanese commander complied with the order to allow Indonesians to prepare themselves for independence and to set up a Central Advisory Council similar to the one established in Java eighteen months earlier.25

It is also a known fact that the 25th Army was very critical of the ‘soft line’ policy adopted by the 16th Army in Java; and it seems therefore rather incongruous to see General Immamura, who was more accommodating to Indonesian demands, steadfastly refusing to commit himself on the question of independence, while the hardliner Fujiyama is supposed to have readily guaranteed Indonesian freedom to Sukarno.

The important role which Sukarno assigned to himself in his autobiography during the first months of the Japanese occupation was probably no more than a figment of his fertile imagination. Characteristically, Sukarno always had to be at the centre of things, and for him to admit that for the first five months of the Japanese regime he was in the political backwoods and that his actions were of no consequence whatsoever in the making of nationally important events, would have militated against his tremendous vanity and been unfitting to the memory of the Great Leader of the Revolution.

What is more likely to have happened is that the Japanese considered Sukarno—whose revolutionary record they were well aware of—politically dangerous, and wanting to keep him under close surveillance appointed him to a relatively unimportant advisory post. This impression is reinforced by Sukarno’s own glowing reports26 of how he was successful in regulating rice supplies in Padang and in procuring prostitutes for the Japanese soldiers, activities which cannot exactly be described as particularly glorious and of great importance to the nation. Something similar happened to Mohammad Hatta, the other prominent radical nationalist leader. Just before the outbreak of the Pacific war the Dutch had brought both Hatta and Sjahrrir back to Java from exile in the remote island of Banda-Neira in Eastern Indonesia. The Japanese within a few days of their arrival contacted Hatta, demanded his cooperation,
and then appointed him to a sideline job as head of an advisory bureau to Army headquarters.\textsuperscript{27}

Also the comparative readiness with which Singapore agreed to the 16th Army’s request to have Sukarno transferred to Java, as well as its warning to Imramura that he was dealing with a dangerous nationalist who would bite the hand of friendship extended to him, suggests that the 25th Army rather than finding Sukarno indispensable was apparently glad to get rid of a possible troublemaker.\textsuperscript{28} Another indication that at this stage Sukarno figured very little in Japanese plans, is the fact that he was not considered worthy of being flown back by plane to Java; instead he and his family had to risk their lives for four days in rough seas on an old ramshackle motor-launch.\textsuperscript{29}

Why then did Imramura ask for the return of Sukarno to Java? According to Mohammad Hatta,\textsuperscript{30} the Japanese authorities in Java had been interested in contacting Sukarno from the beginning of the occupation. But to conclude, as H. J. Benda has done, that “this shows that the new rulers had counted on enlisting the cooperation of the most important and most colourful leader of Indonesian nationalism from the very outset . . .”\textsuperscript{31} does not seem warranted in view of the early policy of the Japanese towards Indonesian nationalists. If Imramura had been so keen to ensure Sukarno’s services from the beginning he would certainly have gone further out of his way to find the Indonesian leader than he actually did.

It seems more realistic to see the return of Sukarno to Java in the context of a tactical change in Japanese policy. The obvious failure of the Three A Movement, as well as growing discontent in the country with the new rulers, made it clear to Imramura and his advisors that a different approach was needed; that to ensure more effective cooperation of the population for the war effort without recourse to brute force, it would be necessary to reach beyond the moderate nationalists and the prijaji and try and tap the support of the more radical leaders among the nationalists as well as the Muslims. Imramura could also have been influenced in this direction by the arguments of Count Kodama, the advisor to the military government and a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which from the beginning had advocated limited political independence for Java and Sumatra and had stressed the need for the closest possible cooperation with the more prominent radical nationalist leaders.\textsuperscript{32}

Sukarno arrived in Djakarta on 9 July 1942 after an absence of
more than eight years. His return was heralded by the Indonesian Press as an event of great national importance. That same evening Sukarno, Sjahir, and Hatta met to discuss the tactics that were to be followed with regard to the Japanese. It was agreed that as the Japanese obviously wanted to make use of Sukarno's charismatic hold over the people, he should ostensibly cooperate with the new colonial masters hoping in this way to obtain political concessions. It was also decided that Hatta should follow the same course of action. In any case Hatta was already in Japanese service and it would have undoubtedly been dangerous for him to extricate himself at that stage. Sjahir, who so far had kept himself in the background was delegated to set up an anti-Japanese underground movement which was to ensure that the true goals of Indonesian nationalism were kept alive among the people. Furthermore, the three leaders agreed to maintain the closest possible liaison.33

The anti-Japanese feeling of Sjahir and Hatta is beyond question. Both leaders were committed to a Western type of parliamentary democracy and as convinced socialists they were principally opposed to fascism. During the whole of the occupation Hatta made it clear in his speeches that for tactical reasons he had been forced to cooperate and whenever he could he stayed in the background quietly working for the nationalist cause and all through the war keeping in close contact with Sjahir's underground workers.

Sukarno's position vis-à-vis the Japanese is by no means so clear-cut and he certainly gives the impression of being willing rather than being forced to comply with the wishes of the new colonial masters. This caused the Allies—in particular the Dutch—and also some Indonesian leaders to brand him as a quisling, while there were many more Indonesians who accused him of being over-compliant.

Sukarno was never fully able to live down these accusations and until the end of his life he was very reluctant to comment publicly about this rather painful episode. It apparently took Cindy Adams, Sukarno's pretty American confidante, months before she could get him to talk about his experiences during the Japanese occupation.34 And even then the 'autobiography' unfortunately does very little to dispel any lingering doubts which the historian might have about Sukarno's real intentions at the time.

Dutch allegations that Sukarno and other Indonesian leaders who cooperated with the Japanese were traitors, although perhaps correct from a technical point of view, must be dismissed as unrealistic under the circumstances. The military debacle of the Allies
and the unwillingness of the Dutch colonial government to train large numbers of Indonesians to help in the defence of their country left the indigenous population completely at the mercy of the new colonial rulers. Many Indonesian leaders, cooperators as well as non-cooperators, left in the lurch by the Dutch military defeat, considered that whatever right Holland might have had to rule Indonesia had now been completely forfeited.

The possibilities open to the Indonesian leaders were therefore limited. They could either openly cooperate in the hope of furthering the nationalist cause; or stay out of public life and remain inactive; or engage in underground activities against the Japanese.

For Sukarno to stay quietly in the background would have been completely out of character. Neither was he the type to conduct an underground resistance movement. He was squeamish and could not stand the sight of blood and is known to have been very fearful of his life in times of physical danger, which perhaps unfairly has brought accusations of cowardice against him from some Indonesians.

It is true that whilst Sukarno displayed great courage in his conviction before the war and was willing to go to jail and into exile thereby sacrificing a relatively bright and prosperous career, he was never in any great physical danger. And although the political prisoners' camp set up by the Dutch at Tanah Merah in West Irian was in many ways an inhumane institution, Sukarno was never sent there; and while in exile he was permitted a fairly liberal living allowance by the Dutch colonial government, which at that time was not in the habit of physically torturing or executing its political opponents.35

During the Japanese occupation there was no Volksraad, where Indonesian members protected by parliamentary privilege could publicly criticize the colonial government with impunity. Also the Indonesian Press was muzzled far more severely than it had been in the Dutch time. Nor was it possible for Indonesians to play the role of the loyal opposition. Any open criticism or opposition to the Japanese military government meant imprisonment, torture and usually death.

Bereft of arms and modern military know-how, the vast majority of Indonesian leaders were unwilling to commit suicide and either elected to cooperate with the Japanese, hoping to be able to steer the situation to their country's advantage, or stayed in the background.

However, there are important differences in the basic attitude of
Sukarno towards Japan and that of many other intellectuals, in particular the Social Democrats. While the latter were principally opposed to fascism and before the war had frequently condemned Germany and Italy, as well as Japan, and had serious qualms of conscience about cooperating with the Japanese, Sukarno does not seem to have been in any way inhibited by such considerations.

Since the end of the 1920s Sukarno had advocated the principle of Asian solidarity in the struggle against colonialism and prophesied the outbreak of a war between Japan and the other major capitalist-imperialist powers in the Pacific, the U.S.A. and Britain, and had continuously stressed that Japan would be the key to Indonesian freedom.

Sukarno, although obviously at a loss as to how to reconcile Asian solidarity and the fact that Japan itself was an imperialist power, seems to give the impression in his pre-war writings that he considered Asian imperialism less dangerous than the Western variety. He also believed for a long time that it was Japan which would be attacked, making the Western powers the villains. Sukarno's thinking at this time might perhaps have been somewhat akin to that of his teacher Tjokroaminoto who during the early 1920s made a distinction between the 'sinful' capitalism of the West and legitimate indigenous capitalism.\(^{56}\)

But all this does not fully explain the complete metamorphosis in Sukarno from the Marxist-tinged non-cooperator of pre-war days into the Japanese cooperator par excellence. The deeper reasons for this drastic change in attitude can perhaps be found in Sukarno’s own political philosophy and his ideas about government which showed some affinity to the Japanese model. Undoubtedly, Japan's rejection of Western-style democracy, its condemnation of Western degeneration, the call to regenerate the spirit of Asia, and the slogan 'Asia for the Asians' were grist for Sukarno's mill. Admittedly, Sukarno was far too eclectic and unruly a person and thinker to be easily fitted into any of the major recognized ideological compartments. However, Sukarno's condemnation of Western democracy and Western values; his emphasis on strong personal leadership; his advocacy of the use of _mujjawah_ and _mujakat_ which in essence were a native Indonesian version of the corporate state; and his strong indigenous feelings which resulted in his emphasis on the need for regeneration of Indonesian culture: all these factors put him closest to the fascist camp, not the Japanese kind of fascism, because Sukarno was not a military nor bloodthirsty type of man by nature, but his love for uniforms, his grandiose plans, his oratorical
style, gave him a close resemblance to one of the greatest European swashbucklers of all time, Mussolini. Therefore ideologically Sukarno could go at least part of the way with the Japanese, a thing which had been impossible for him to do with the Dutch. The Dutch blueprint for Indonesian political development—however vague it might have been—undoubtedly envisaged a Western democratic system of government. Apart from the fact that if the Dutch had remained in power the realization of Indonesian freedom would probably not have occurred in his lifetime, Sukarno was opposed in principle to Western democracy and the Western individualistic ethos. Moreover, in the parliamentary democracy, there was no place for a man of his talents; and without the opportunity to display his charismatic and demagogic qualities he could never have reached the top.

And then, of course, there is the fact that Sukarno considered the Japanese decision to bring him back to Java as an indication that they needed him and that he would therefore be able to obtain concessions in return for his services. In this Sukarno was far too optimistic and characteristically overestimated his importance in the scheme of things. This must have become painfully clear to him when during his first interview with Immamura, the Japanese general refused to commit himself on his government’s plans for Indonesian self-government or independence, but promised that Indonesians would be allowed to participate on a larger scale in government administration. After the interview Immamura rather indifferenty instructed Colonel Nakayama, the commander of Djakarta, to hold discussions with Sukarno but not to force him into cooperating with the Japanese. Immamura added: ‘It all depends on the doctor himself; either the doctor would cooperate with the Japanese or assume the attitude of an onlooker. However, it is forbidden to attempt something against Japan.’ But during further meetings Immamura, like so many before and after him, was impressed by Sukarno and came to admire him. The general saw in Sukarno a man with an iron will who never lost sight of the great passion to gain freedom for his people. From his side Sukarno left no stone unturned to gain the friendship of Immamura, going as far as to commission a well-known Indonesian artist to paint the general’s portrait which was accepted apparently with great pleasure by Immamura. But to Sukarno’s great chagrin it still took a considerable time before the Japanese allowed him to play the major role in Indonesian affairs which he had assumed was his due. The Three A Movement was not officially discarded until November 1942 and its
predominantly *priyaji* leadership was obviously unwilling to make place for Sukarno. And in the organization's propaganda organ, *Asia Raya*, Sukarno was taken to task for his grandiose airs. But Sukarno remained bent on playing a leading role and against the advice of Sjahrir and Hatta wanted to join the Three A Movement in order to change it into a true people's organization. However, the Japanese kept Sukarno away from the central leadership of the Three A Movement. Instead he was appointed to head the organization's youth front, and in this capacity he was given the opportunity to influence the more radical youth leaders.

A further disappointment to Sukarno's plans was the unwillingness of the Japanese to appoint Indonesians into major administrative positions. By August 1942 more Japanese officials had arrived and many Indonesians were ousted from the high posts which they had held from the early days of the occupation; and even the Indonesian Mayor of Batavia was replaced by a Japanese.

It was also around this time that the Japanese attitude towards the demands of Indonesian nationalists began to harden. In Tokyo the colonial party, which advocated the direct annexation of the Indies to Japan, seemed to have won a decisive victory over its opponent, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which wanted to grant limited political freedom to Java and Sumatra. This considerably affected the situation in Java where Count Kodama, a member of the Foreign Affairs department and adviser to the Military government, initially exerted considerable influence on Immamura.

During a meeting on 1 September 1942 General Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister, wanted to restrict the power of the Foreign Affairs ministry in South-East Asia to matters of protocol only. As a result, on 1 November 1942 a Ministry for Greater Asia was set up in which the South-East section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was incorporated. Also in November 1942 Count Kodama was repatriated to Japan. In April 1943 Colonel Nakayama was replaced by Colonel Yamamoto who took a more unrelenting stand towards the demands of Indonesian nationalists. In the same month General Immamura was appointed as Commander of the 8th Army in Rabaul, and he took up this position in June 1943.

In the meantime the Japanese in Java were making preparations to replace the Three A Movement with a similar but more effective organization. As a first step the *Empat Serangkai* (Four Leaf Clover) was established with a committee consisting of Sukarno, Hatta, the Mohammadijah leader K. M. M. Mansur, and the Taman Siswa leader Ki Hadjar Dewantoro.
On 20 November 1942 the Four Leaf Clover was instructed to organize a new people's movement which initially was to be officially inaugurated on 8 December 1942, the anniversary of Pearl Harbour. When Sukarno had to announce on 8 December and again on 31 December that the establishment of the new organization was postponed, many Indonesian intellectuals were disappointed and complained that Sukarno and the other leaders had apparently been taken in too much by Japanese promises.

Stung by this criticism and also obviously annoyed at the equivocal attitude of his masters, Sukarno, in an article commemorating the fall of Singapore, wrote rather pointedly: 'Every form of colonization is destructive. Always, colonization lays waste and brings catastrophe to the land and people who are colonized. Their riches, their culture, their love of life, their character, all destroyed, all laid waste.' And although Sukarno quickly made it clear that by colonialism he meant British and Dutch colonialism to most Indonesians it was obvious that a condemnation of Japanese imperialism was also meant.48

This soft-peddling of the promised new organization was undoubtedly in part caused by the victory of the colonial hard-liners in Tokyo, which was referred to above. But another important reason was the intense rivalry in Java itself between the Senendan led by the hard-liner Shimizu and the Department of General Administration led by Mioshi and Nakayama who were in close agreement with Immamura's policies. It is reported that Shimizu, in an attempt to save his creation the Three A Movement, tried to put a spoke in the wheel of the Four Leaf Clover by setting up a rival group, the so-called Golongan 7 S.44

The Indonesians had to endure another serious blow to their expectations when at the end of January 1943 General Tojo promised in the Diet independence to the Philippines and Burma but not to Indonesia. Significantly Tojo did not use the term Indonesia but referred to the Southern Areas, mentioning Java, Sumatra, and Malaya as separate areas.

Tokyo's announcement caused considerable disillusionment and the intellectuals again accused Sukarno and other leaders of having become Japanese stooges. A report by an unnamed Indonesian written at the beginning of 1943 comments upon the situation as follows:

Regarding the people's party which is to be founded, the leaders attempt to gild the pill by telling the nationalist groups that because of the war situation they have no other choice but to
follow the (Japanese) government. They consider it as their duty. The leaders try to be out of town as much as possible in order to avoid curious questioners. It is difficult for the nationalist movement to get used to the idea of having to cooperate with the government, because during the Dutch time they were always in the opposition. . . . The great masses because of the constant economic struggle appear to have no time to pay attention to the planned organization. They are completely indifferent and they have very little respect left for the leaders. It is feared that eventually the people itself may take its own measures. The symptoms are already apparent.45

Finally on 6 March the new organization was officially launched. It came to be called *Pusat Tenaga Rakjat* (Concentration of the People's Power) or in short PUTERA. The programme of the PUTERA was extremely vague. Its main purpose was to increase the people's sense of duty and responsibility, in terms of the Greater Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. The movement was to work towards the elimination of all Western influences in the country and it was to be prepared to take part in the defence of the new order. The people were also to be prepared to bear the economic hardships caused by the war and mutual respect and trust was to be strengthened by propagating the Japanese and Indonesian languages. Another important function of the PUTERA was to increase the self-confidence of the Indonesians and to further public health.

Sukarno's views about the PUTERA, however, were quite clear. He wanted to make it into a national front organization to incite, solidify, and consolidate the Indonesian nationalist spirit. So much is clear from his inaugural speech when having kowtowed to official Japanese policy he ended up by saying: 'Brothers, it is not just coincidence that we have named our movement PUTERA [the word *putera* in Indonesian means son—*bhumi putera* means indigenous]. You must all reply: "Yes, I am a PUTERA, a PUTERA of the new era, a PUTERA of the new struggle, a PUTERA of the new society, a PUTERA of Indonesia."' 46

But again the Japanese prevented Sukarno from realizing his great ambition to set up a nationwide, comprehensive, mass organization and they squashed his and the other Indonesian leaders' hopes for early independence.

Requests for a Japanese promise of Indonesian independence similar to the one given to the Philippines and Burma, which were put by Sukarno and Hatta to Aoki, the minister in charge of the
Greater East Asian Affairs, who visited Java at the end of March 1943, received a noncommittal reply. Moreover, the new head of the General Affairs department, General Yamamoto, who arrived in Java in April to take over from Colonel Nakayama, made it abundantly clear that Tokyo was unwilling to comply with Indonesia's demands for independence. He forbade the PUTERA to set up branches in the countryside and he ordered Sukarno to guide the PUTERA movement in a more spiritual direction. In a post-war statement Yamamoto declared:

I heard that the nationalists had organized the PUTERA movement in the expectation of making it the nucleus of their campaign for independence. . . . The 16th Army had no plans in that direction. . . . All the official speeches of the leaders were subjected to censorship by the Japanese military authorities. According to my knowledge the movement has not been very active. On the other hand, it provided the Japanese administration with the means to control the activities of the top nationalist leaders.48

Apart from the fact that Japan wanted the Indies with its rich resources of oil and rubber as a colony—an ambition which dated back to the First World War—the Japanese authorities in Java like their Dutch predecessors apparently considered that the Indonesians were not yet capable of running their own affairs. A report of 1942 by a high-ranking Japanese official in Java states that the demands of Indonesian nationalists went much too far. There were too few indigenous intellectuals and politicians and the population as a whole was politically immature and apathetic. This report also argued that the intellectuals were too far removed from the people and the various classes 'reacted to each other as oil to water'; and the officials of the PUTERA were only interested in self-aggrandizement, and seemed to spend most of the time competing with each other for higher wages. The report was also critical of Sukarno's abilities as a leader and complained that after four months the PUTERA leadership had as yet achieved very little.

The lower classes agree with Sukarno's leadership and his speeches are well received. But it is felt that he involves himself too much with details. A great leader is somebody who is concerned with general policy and speaks only about important matters. Too much chatter may well cause the people to become disinterested and to lose respect for the leaders. Great leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini do not only exert great influence, but they have
also inculcated fear, respect and love in the people. According to
the best of my knowledge I have never seen Sukarno having been
properly greeted or given a sign of respect when he arrives for a
speaking engagement. When the smaller leaders do not want to
honour the great leader, then the masses will also not listen with
respect to what he has to say. A great leader must know everything
about his co-workers. He must have dossiers about well-known
personalities which contain a description of their lives, details
about their way of life, hobbies, character, etc. Moreover, a leader
must have supporters, who can take care of the details. 49

This Japanese report was correct in stating that Sukarno was not a
cruel man and did not employ the fiendishly inhuman methods of
Hitler and Mussolini. In other ways, however, this report was un-
realistic; in criticizing Sukarno’s style as a politician and as a speaker,
the author of the report completely misses the reason why Sukarno
was one of the very few leaders who was able to get across to the
people. So far as the other complaint is concerned, Sukarno did not
really need dossiers. He had a fantastic memory and this combined
with a certain streak of vindictiveness in his character ensured that
very few of his personal and political opponents ever got away un-
harmed either in the short or long term. However, the point about
not having the respect of other leaders rings more true. Neither then
nor later did Sukarno have the allegiance of most of the Indonesian
intellectuals, in particular those who had their minds attuned to the
West.

The report does show that Sukarno completely overestimated the
importance he had to the Japanese. In fact Sukarno and the other
leaders of the PUTERA who initially had been taken in by the
genuine enough promises of Nakayama and Mioshi, were eventually
duped by the new orders from Tokyo. However, it would be going
too far to suggest with Dahm 60 that Sukarno had hoped for a real
partnership with the Japanese on the basis of mutual respect and
trust. This would make him too much of an idealistic simpleton.
Despite his frequent romantic dreams and fantasies, Sukarno ex-
hibited a strong sense of realism and political acumen throughout the
course of his political life.

Momentarily the hopes of the Indonesian leaders were brightened
when Premier Tojo declared on 17 July 1943 in the Japanese
parliament that in the near future the people of Java would be
given a greater opportunity to participate in the administration of
the island. Sukarno fastened on Tojo’s speech and construed it into
a promise for independence, and as if to show his thankfulness in advance for this Japanese gift he began to identify himself more closely with Japan, intensifying in his speeches the hate campaign against the Allies. It is also significant that at this time Sukarno no longer consulted with Sjahri and the underground. Was this perhaps to avoid any accusation of being in collusion with the Allies? Or was it perhaps that Sukarno was now convinced that the Japanese would win? The real motivation behind Sukarno’s thinking at that particular time will probably never be known.

Premier Tojo, who unexpectedly visited Java in July 1943, was not taken in by Sukarno’s welcoming speech in which the Indonesian leader attempted to elicit a promise for independence. Tojo made it clear that he had travelled to a colony and he did not use the term Indonesia or Indonesians but indigenous, making it obvious that he expected the people to expend all their strength in supporting the Japanese cause.

Tojo’s promises were followed by the implementation of three new measures: the establishment of a central advisory council and regional advisory councils; the gradual transference of important administrative posts to Indonesians; and recognition of the authority of the self-governing sultans of Jogjakarta and Surakarta in their respective territories. This change in Japanese policy brought back at least a semblance of participation in government which had existed during the last decades of Dutch colonial rule.

The Central Advisory Council, however, although resembling the Volksraad, was by no means endowed with the same powers. The pre-war Volksraad had co-legislative powers and its members enjoyed parliamentary privilege. It functioned in many ways as a legitimate organ of criticism of Dutch colonial policy and practice, whereas the Central Advisory Council was meant solely as an advisory body to the Japanese military government and its members were not allowed to make any criticism of the colonial masters and their policies.

On the other hand, the transfer of important administrative positions with which the Dutch had made a hesitant beginning at the end of the 1930s, was effected on a much larger scale by the Japanese, and proved to be of immense value to the Indonesians during the early years of the revolution.

Another measure which proved to be of great importance to the Indonesian cause was the establishment by the Japanese of a corps of Indonesian auxiliary troops, the PETA or Defenders of the Fatherland. Sukarno’s assertion that it was he who was responsible for the founding of the PETA has been effectively denied by Gatot
Mangupradja, Sukarno’s old comrade-in-arms of the pre-war P.N.I. days in Bandung. 21

1943 was probably one of the most exasperating years of Sukarno’s life. He was hurt and deeply disappointed at the unbending attitude of the Japanese which put a complete stop to his aspirations and ambitions. To make matters worse his home life was in a shambles and he was suffering a great deal from malaria and kidney stones, a disease which was finally to kill him a quarter of a century later.

Sukarno’s relationship with Inggit, which had been severely strained because of his affair with Fatmawati in Bengkulu, had become completely impossible since his return to Java. Inggit, who for some time had suspected—and with cause—that her husband was playing around with various secretaries and was a frequent visitor to geisha houses, finally put her foot down. One night when Sukarno returned home from one of his escapades Inggit made a scene and threw a cup at him, hitting him on the forehead. Finally Inggit agreed to a divorce and went back to her hometown of Bandung. Now the coast was clear for Sukarno to marry Fatmawati, and the Japanese, glad of an opportunity to do him a personal favour without having to make any political concessions, promptly brought the lady from Sumatra to Djakarta where the wedding took place on 22 August 1943. Sukarno was severely criticized for divorcing Inggit by the Indonesian women’s organizations, and Fatmawati was only begrudgingly accepted in Djakarta circles. Sukarno and Fatmawati seem to have spent as much time as possible away from the gossip of Djakarta and they often spent the weekend in Sukabumi with Dr Abu Hanifah, who was then in charge of the local Catholic hospital and who later became a Moslem leader and Minister for Education in the republic. Abu Hanifah describes Fatmawati at that time as follows:

My wife and I were very curious about the young wife of Soekarno. She was young alright and she had the prettiness of a wild flower. We found her, however, completely unsophisticated. She had no dress sense and her manners were faulty. The young bride had really only her youth, her prettiness and her smile. She was in fact only a beautiful village girl. Her social education and upbringing afterwards was Soekarno’s work, she was really the product of Soekarno’s imagination of how a first lady should be. That he afterwards became bored with his own creation is another question.
UNDER THE HEELS OF NIPPON

Although happily newly married Sukarno apparently could still not control his roving eye. Abu Hanifah writes:

One beautiful warm day we were driving Soekarno and Fatmawati back to Djakarta. Every time we saw a pretty woman or girl on the street he would say 'Look how pretty that one is, I bet she is not yet 20', or 'What a mouth, what a bosom.' I told him smilingly if he wanted so badly to look at girls, why should he look that far because on his right and on his left were the prettiest girls in the world. Soekarno didn't appreciate the remark, he looked a little crestfallen. Fatmawati said with a teasing smile but seriously enough: 'Bung Abu, you know Bung Karno. He never knows what he really wants. He wants to have everything. Yesterday he married an older, experienced woman, today he marries me, an ignorant virgin, God knows what he wants tomorrow.'

A further setback for Sukarno in 1943 was the omission of Indonesia from the Greater Asia conference held in Tokyo between 5 and 8 November at which China, the Philippines, Burma, Manchuria and Thailand were represented. Probably in order to soften the Indonesian leaders tremendous disappointment and annoyance, the Japanese military administration in Java convinced Tokyo of the need to award Sukarno, Hatta and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo a consolation prize and present them with a trip to Japan. The Indonesians arrived in Tokyo on 13 November where they were feted and received by the Emperor who handed out decorations. Sukarno was obviously thrilled when he was the only one considered worthy of being shaken hands with by the Emperor. The Indonesians toured the mighty Japanese industrial complexes and Sukarno, in particular, who had never before been outside Indonesia, seems to have been greatly impressed. There was a visit to Tojo during which the question of independence was brought up but with very little result and the Indonesian leaders had to return home emptyhanded.

In spite of Sukarno's frequent ostentatious manifestations of Indonesian-Japanese solidarity, his power was largely illusory. And by the end of 1943 there was little to show for his efforts to advance the Indonesian cause. And his personal ambition to become the great and undisputed leader in charge of a vast and nationalistic front had so far been thwarted by Japanese policies.

From the beginning the Japanese had been well aware of the security risks involved in the establishment of a single, national, Indonesian front; and taking recourse to the well-tried colonial
remedy of 'divide and rule' the military government attempted to bottle up the various major political and ideological forces in the colony into separate organizations.

As the major objective of the Japanese in Java was to increase agricultural production at all costs, the greatest problem lay in the countryside. The Japanese, who had made a careful study of the Indonesian Islam, were undoubtedly aware of the long history of rural rebellions in Java led by Islamic teachers in times of economic hardship. The Dutch, in order to counteract the influence of Islam on the peasantry, had consistently pursued a policy of supporting and shoring up the position and power of the adat chiefs and the basically religiously syncretic prijaji and nobility. In contrast the Japanese, though by no means neglecting to obtain the support of the prijaji, adopted a policy of dealing directly with the Muslim leadership. In order to prevent the more sophisticated urban elite from creating possible rural unrest, organizations such as the Three A Movement and its successor, the PUTERA, were forbidden to set up branches in the countryside. The Japanese also tried—and with apparent success—to play on the divisions within the urban Muslim community and were able to prevent the pre-war, non-cooperative and militant P.S.I.I. from playing a leading role in the Muslim movement. The early offer of cooperation by leading P.S.I.I. figures such as Abikusno was ignored, and the Japanese gradually undermined the position of the P.S.I.I.-controlled pre-war Islamic federation, the M.I.A.I.

The first Japanese attempt to reduce the power of the M.I.A.I. by forcing this body to dissolve itself into the Persiapan Persatuan Ummat Islam (Preparation for the Unification of the Islamic Community), a subsidiary organization of the Three A Movement, was not successful. The Japanese therefore decided to take up contact directly with the rural Islamic teachers whom they tried to bind to the Japanese cause by instituting indoctrination courses—the so-called latihan kijaji—and by granting important concessions which tended to increase the status and power of the rural religious leaders vis-à-vis the prijaji.

In October 1943, the Japanese dissolved the M.I.A.I. and, in order to isolate the P.S.I.I. leaders even further, the essentially non-political Islamic organizations: the Nahatadul Ulama and the Muhammadyah were given legal status. At the same time the decree of March 1942 abolishing all political parties remained intact, leaving the leaders of the P.S.I.I. out on a limb, even further isolated from the centre of Islamic leadership.
The next step taken by the Japanese was the establishment on 23 November 1943 of the Madihi Suro Muslimin Indonesia (Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims) or in short MASJUMI. The MASJUMI could only be joined by legally recognized organizations which existed at the time: the Nahhatadul Ulama and the Muhammadyah, as well as individual ulama. Thus, in the MASJUMI the Japanese tried to link the more moderate urban Islamic leadership with the grass-root Islam in the rural areas. The new organization was headed by the well-known and respected founder of the Nahhatadul Ulama, Hasjim As’ari.

A further check to Sukarno’s plans was the abolition on 1 March 1944 of the PUTERA, which left the nationalists without an organization of their own. According to Yamamoto, the PUTERA was abolished because:

It had various defects, it was an exclusively Indonesian movement. Other races were not involved . . . the people became alienated from their own rulers which made it very difficult to indoctrinate the masses with Japanese political ideas. The common people did not show any appreciation about the fact that there was a war going on. They complained and were discontented. Therefore I felt that it was very urgent to establish an organization which was deeply rooted in the masses.83

As a result the PUTERA was replaced by a new organization called the Djawa Hokokai or the People’s Service Association of Java. In creating the People’s Service Association the Japanese were concerned solely to coordinate the activities of the whole of the Javanese population for the war effort. There was no longer any pretence of catering for Indonesian national aims. Unlike its predecessors the Three A Movement and the PUTERA, the central leadership of the People’s Service Association was in Japanese hands, while Sukarno and the MASJUMI leader Hasjim As’ari were made advisers. The organization also included representatives of the Eurasian, Arab, and Chinese communities, and was therefore not specifically nationalistic in character. Furthermore, People’s Service Association branches were set up all over the island in which the prijazi came to play a predominant role. To penetrate even deeper into the villages, neighbour organizations (Tomari Gumi) were set up which were led by lower prijazi and village chiefs in order to press the people directly into greater productive effort.

On the other hand the MASJUMI, although it was fitted into
the People's Service Association structure, remained an independent and Indonesian-led organization, while the nationalist groups were now without any formal organization of their own.

Sukarno's chairmanship of the Central Advisory Council, and his post as the main adviser to the People's Service Association only provided him with a semblance of power. He could do nothing to alleviate the sufferings of the people who were starving in large numbers in many areas of Java. Also he could do nothing to stop the transportation of hundreds of thousands of labourers, all over Java, the archipelago and many parts of South-East Asia. Nobody could have blamed Sukarno then because he was powerless; but what many Indonesians have never been able to forgive him for is that in his speeches he actively encouraged many of his unsuspecting countrymen to volunteer as slave labourers and sent many of them to an almost certain death on the Burma railway or other parts of the archipelago.

Particularly galling to some Indonesians was an occurrence in early September 1944 when Sukarno and Shimizu and other white-collar workers pulled a propaganda stunt by volunteering as labourers (romushas). The Soeara Asia dutifully reported:

Soekarno wore shorts and an ordinary shirt and a panama hat. Mr Shimizu also wore shorts, a shirt and carried a kain\textsuperscript{64} across his shoulder. He wore tennis shoes and had a petji\textsuperscript{65} on his head. . . .

Although the volunteers generally were not used to this kind of work, considerable progress was made, and they did not seem to get tired. This was due to the spirit of cooperation and a happy working atmosphere. Soekarno did his bit and together with the rest of them worked on a heap of stones. After completion of the work there was a social evening with performances by the cabaret of the Cultural Centre of Djakarta which had travelled with the volunteer romushas.\textsuperscript{66}

This idyllic picture of Sukarno and associates happily dirtying their hands for the good of the fatherland must have looked to thousands of real labourers—if they could have seen it—a cruel and callous parody of their sufferings.

According to his autobiography, Sukarno when criticized by some of his countrymen at the time about his attitude towards the labourers is supposed to have justified himself by saying: 'There are casualties in every war. A Commander-in-Chief's job is to win the war even if it means losing a few battles on the way. If I must
sacrifice thousands to save millions, I will. We are in a struggle for
survival. As leader of this country I cannot afford the luxury of
sensitivity. 68

This story sounds rather unconvincing. In the first place Sukarno
had nothing to command as yet, and as one Indonesian critic has
pointed out 68 he could well have left the job of selling his countrymen
to someone else. Moreover, even if there had been no takers for the
job, the Japanese like the Germans in Europe would certainly have
taken other measures to secure a supply of forced labour.

Perhaps the kindest way to describe Sukarno’s role in the Japanese
occupation is to compare him with the rather pathetic figure of the
Vichy leader Pétain, the national hero who, with honourable
intentions and in order to get the best for his people in a desperate
situation, cooperated with the new masters. But after this fateful
step he was drawn ever more deeply and inextricably into the
enemy’s net, being eventually forced to carry out policies which
not even by the wildest stretch of the imagination could be considered
in the national interest.

But it seemed as if the gods finally took pity on Sukarno and
decided to stop him from having to stoop even lower under the
Japanese heel. It was exactly on that same day of 7 September 1944
when he was leading his volunteer labourers, that the news reached
Java like a bolt out of the blue, about Premier Koiso’s promise in the
Japanese parliament for the future independence of the whole of
Indonesia.

Sukarno was suddenly called back to Djakarta from his work camp
in Banten and when Yamamoto told him the news he seemed to be
stunned, and he sank down and wept openly.

The official announcement on 8 September 1944 allowing the
display of the national red and white flag and the playing of the
Indonesian national anthem was taken by many Indonesians as a
sign that the Japanese finally meant business and would speedily
grant Indonesia its freedom.

Tokyo, however, agreed to a request by the authorities in Java
that a more gradual approach should be used and the military
government in fact tried to soft pedal the issue of independence as
long as possible, granting piecemeal concessions while at the same
time attempting to guide the popular enthusiasm that had been
engendered by the Koiso promise into channels that were more
productive for the Japanese war effort. The real motives of the
Japanese are clearly spelt out in a policy statement, dated 7 Septem-
ber 1944, in which the military authorities were forbidden to make
any definite commitments about the date for independence, the
geographical limits of Indonesia, or the future governmental
structure. Moreover:

National consciousness must be aroused to the highest possible
degree and must be used to strengthen our defences and the
cooperation with the military government in order to create Japan
and Java into an inseparable unit. No drastic changes are to be
allowed in the political and economic structure created by the
military government, although steps must be taken to increase
the participation of Indonesians in government administration
and their political education must be taken in hand. . . . The local
population under the direction of the military government is
allowed to investigate and study the possibilities for the realization
of independence. . . . Although the insatiable nature of the
Indonesians may sometimes cause us to become upset, we may
not adopt a hostile attitude towards them, but we must lead them
constantly in accordance with the prescribed policy. A so-called
crawling attitude is forbidden. . . . Looking at the present situation
and seeing the enthusiasm and festive excitement of the people
we must not be tempted to draw the superficial conclusion that
we have already reached our objective: that is the peoples' trust
in Japan and a greater will to fight.69

For the next six months this policy was followed almost to the letter.
The first important breakthrough for the nationalists occurred in
September 1944 when, after repeated requests by Sukarno, the
Japanese agreed to the establishment of a nationalist-led propaganda
organization, the Barisan Pelopor (Pioneer Corps). As Benda puts it:

The nationalist elite was thus for the first time during the occupa-
tion given an organizational weapon of the first magnitude. It
could now make a beginning at penetrating the Indonesian village,
and at rallying to its cause the Abangan elements that for decades
had resisted Ulama influence. Equally important, nationalist leaders
could obtain a firm footing among the thousands of young
Indonesians whom the Japanese Military administration had
afforded the first political schooling and who, as a result, had
outgrown the traditional allegiances of the Indonesian peasantry,
Abangan as well as santri oriented.60

This gain by the nationalists, however, was counteracted to some
extent again by the Japanese decision to agree to Muslim demands for their own military organization. On 4 December 1944 the Japanese allowed the MASJUMI to set up its own military forces, the *Hizbullah* (Army of Allah) which by the end of the occupation was able to put almost 30,000 troops into the field.

Towards the end of 1944 a number of Indonesians were appointed mayors in various towns and even more important Indonesians were appointed as Vice-Residents, and given top positions in the various government departments.\(^1\)

The question of independence, however, was carefully avoided by the Japanese, and Sukarno did very little to put pressure on the military in this respect. The reason for this was not so much—as has been suggested—that Sukarno was pro-Japanese and believed until the end in a Japanese victory, but rather as Dahm has said that Sukarno was more anti-Western than anti-Japanese.

Sukarno and most other Indonesian leaders realized that the Japanese defeat was imminent. But unlike many of the younger generation and socialist leaders such as Sjahrr, who were strongly anti-Japanese and wanted to obtain freedom totally by their own efforts, Sukarno argued that it was better to have one bird in the hand than seven flying in the air. He therefore made frenzied efforts to arouse the people ostensibly to support the Japanese until the end. Moreover, Sukarno was apparently worried by the threats hurled against him by the Dutch radio from Australia that traitors would be taken care of after the war. Sukarno apparently reasoned that he would have a better chance to survive politically as well as physically if he was to confront the Allies as the head of an established free—although Japanese-sponsored—state of Indonesia. And according to a well-informed Indonesian source Sukarno at that time appears to have felt that even if the Allies removed him from office on their arrival, it was preferable to taste glory for a few months than not at all.

Speculating on the gradual deterioration of the Japanese military position, which would mean increasing concessions for the Indonesians, and like everybody else not expecting the sudden collapse of Japan after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Sukarno’s belief that Indonesia would be given independence some months before the end of the war was a distinct possibility.

Another important tactical reason for Sukarno’s attempt to keep the lid on the growing anti-Japanese feeling among large sections of the population was the fear that too much pressure and certainly open rebellion would undoubtedly have caused harsh and ruthless
retaliation by the Japanese. Sukarno and a number of other Indonesian nationalists argued that the lightly armed Indonesian forces such as PETA and the Army of Allah and the Pioneer Corps would certainly be annihilated in a clash with the Japanese, leaving Indonesia without any armed forces to get the revolution off the ground and fight the real enemy, the Allies, and in particular the Dutch.

So, in November 1944, Sukarno succeeded in pushing through the Central Advisory Council his concept of the *Pantja-Dharma*—the Five Duties—a pledge of loyalty to the Japanese which read:

1. In this life and death struggle, together with the other peoples of Greater East Asia, we stand united with Dai Nippon and are prepared for sacrifice because this is a struggle in defence of right and truth.
2. We are laying the foundations of an Indonesian state which will be independent, united, sovereign, just, and prosperous, it will give credit to Dai Nippon and it will live as faithful member within the circle of the Greater East Asian family.
3. We strive with unfeigned ardour for fame and greatness, as we guard and exalt our own civilization and culture, promote Asian culture, and bring its influence to bear on the cultures of the world.
4. We serve—in firm brotherhood with the other peoples of Greater East Asia—our own state and people with unshakable loyalty, in continual accountability before Almighty God.
5. We struggle with ardent longing towards lasting peace throughout the world, a peace founded on the brotherhood of all humanity and one that conforms to the ideal of the *Hakko Ichiu*.

Sukarno’s attempt to stop uprisings against the Japanese was not entirely successful. For example in February 1945 the PETA unit stationed at Blitar in East Java staged a rebellion against the Japanese which was quickly suppressed. Most of the Indonesian officers captured were executed. Sukarno’s claim that he knew about the PETA rebellion in advance and had argued against it appears to be untrue.

During the early months of 1945 the Japanese military situation in the Pacific and southern Asia started to deteriorate rapidly. American forces landed on Iwoshima on 19 February; Manila fell five days later. The Sulu Islands, to the north-east of Borneo, fell
into American hands on 4 April, and Rangoon was captured by the British on 3 May. Allied air activity over the archipelago intensified and frequent bombing raids made it clear to the local population that the end of the war was near.

As a result the military government in Java decided to give in a little more to the Indonesian demands, and on 1 March 1945 the Japanese announced the establishment in the near future of a Committee to Investigate Indonesian Independence. As its title suggests, this committee was rather a reluctant gesture on the part of the Japanese and the fact that its first meeting did not take place until 28 May is a clear indication that the military authorities in Java tried to retard the issue of independence as long as possible. It is rather interesting that the Committee to Investigate Indonesian Independence was not headed by Sukarno, but by Dr Radjiman Wedioniingrat, an old-time nationalist of the Budi Utomo days, and a spokesman for the more conservative elements in the Indonesian elite. The usual explanation for this is that Sukarno wanted to play a more active role in the committee and therefore was not interested in the chairmanship, and that Dr Radjiman was appointed by the Japanese on the suggestion of Sukarno and Hatta. Such a move by Sukarno seems to be somewhat out of character. There is some evidence which suggests that the Japanese, who knew his ability to arouse the masses, did not consider Sukarno the right person to lead cool and rational discussions about the future state of Indonesia and that they were therefore looking for a calmer, more reasonable and less emotional person. At least this is the impression given in a report by Yoshio Ichibangse, one of the Japanese representatives on the committee, who later reported:

The majority of the nationalists wanted immediate independence even if it was not yet complete. Sukarno expressed himself as follows: 'Independence is like marriage. Should one wait until one's income has risen to for example 500 guilders per month and until one has furnished a house? I say: No, marry first and then try together to build up a household. If you want another comparison: independence is like the construction of a bridge across a river. The virgin soils on the other side can be brought under cultivation later on.' It looked to me that Sukarno would even consider a break with Japan if it was unwilling to grant independence immediately. This was contrary to the opinion of the Japanese, which was shared by the more careful Indonesian leaders, that a state must have at its disposal sufficient power and
the opportunities to generate a feeling of pride and fiery will in its sentiments. A state cannot only rest on the passions of the people, but must be founded on cool thinking and a soundly constructed basis...

Sukarno continued his attempts to turn the growing hate of the people away from the Japanese and divert it to the Allies, and his hysterical outbursts, ‘We will flatten America, and we will crush England’, date from this time.

Sukarno was also anxious to convince the leaders of Indonesia that they should forget their individual, political and ideological differences, and form a united national front to stand firm against the coming onslaught of the Dutch colonialists. The formula for this national unity was to be the Pantja-Sila (Five Principles) of the Indonesian state, which Sukarno propounded in his famous speech to the Committee for the Preparation to Investigate Indonesian Independence on 1 June 1945. In his memoirs Sukarno reminisced:

Nationalists from throughout the archipelago, chosen by me and approved by the Japanese, attended the sittings with their own plans, rules, and painfully hair-splitting suggestions worked out in advance. No one coordinated with the other. The sophisticates of Java, the traders of Sumatra, the peasants from the outer islands, found no common ground. . . . Orthodox Muslims pushed for a state on an Islamic-theocratic basis. There were moderates who decided we were too immature to govern ourselves at all. There was a great twisting and turning and lack of cohesion. For three days there was solid disagreement concerning the basic principles of Indonesia Merdeka. I sat through the hubbub letting everybody say his piece. My hair stood on end listening to them expounding plans worked out to the smallest detail. They brought forth far too many ifs and conjectural problems. At this rate none of us would know Merdeka until we were in our graves. If the Japanese had liberated us that day we would have had to say, ‘Wait a while, hold it a minute. We are not ready yet.’ I had sixteen years to prepare what I wanted to say . . . I knew we couldn’t found our nation on the constitution of the United States of America. Nor on the Communist manifesto. We couldn’t borrow anybody’s way of life, including Japan’s Tenno Koodoo Seishim, Divinity of the Emperor. Marhaenist Indonesia corresponds to no other concept. Year after year I turned this over in my brain. . . . The night before I was to speak I walked out in my garden, alone. And I
gazed up at the stars. And I marvelled at the perfection of creation. And I cried softly. I said to God, 'I am crying because tomorrow I shall experience a historic moment in my life and need your help. I know the thoughts I shall speak are not mine. You unfolded them to me. Yours is the only creative mind. You have guided every breath of my life. Please, please give me again your guidance and inspiration tomorrow."

In fact the next day, on 1 June 1945, Sukarno, divinely inspired or not, managed to electrify his listeners and have them accept his solution. His speech is perhaps one of the best examples ever of Sukarnoist thinking. Sukarno began his exposition by repeating the claims of some members of the Commission that Indonesia was not yet ready for independence:

I listened to Mr Soetardjo's speech several days ago when he replied to the question: What is it that is called independence? He said, If every individual is already independent at heart, that is already independence. If every single Indonesian of these 70 million must first be independent at heart before we are able to achieve political independence, I repeat once again, we shan't have *Indonesia Merdeka* until doomsday. It is within that *Indonesia Merdeka* that we shall make our people independent. Within that *Indonesia Merdeka* we shall make our people independent at heart.

Sukarno then emphasized to the delegates that in addition to the existence of a people with their own territory, recognition by International Law depended also on the existence of a stable national government. And he argued that true freedom could only be achieved on the basis of the political philosophy which he had expounded since 1927 and which could be expressed in the five principles: nationalism, internationalism, *mufakat* or democracy, social well-being, belief in the one supreme God.

Sukarno further explained that Indonesian nationalism meant the establishment of a state, which should contain the territories that in the distant past had been part of the great empires of Sriwidjaja and Modjopahit. Such a nationalism, however, he warned, must be opposed to regionalism as well as the chauvinism of the 'Indonesia *über alles* variety. And arguing in the same vein as the Taman Siswa leader, Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, Sukarno argued that Indonesian nationalism should be concentric with a feeling of belonging to the human race.
The third principle contained Sukarno’s solution to the inherent Indonesian problem of political and ideological division. In the same way that he had argued in 1927, he put it to the delegates that unity could not be obtained on the basis of Western democracy, on the principle of 50 per cent plus one, but only on the basis of the traditional system of reaching unanimous agreement (mufakat) after full deliberation (musjawarah).

Sukarno further argued that political democracy alone was not enough, so he introduced a fourth principle of social democracy and social justice.

And finally coming to the fifth principle, the belief in the one supreme God, Sukarno argued that all people should have the right to confess their particular religion in the new Indonesia freely and without fear.

Sukarno then pointed out that he had selected the number five because he loved symbolism. The principles of Islam were five, the human hand had five fingers, and human beings had five senses. But, Sukarno continued, if some people did not particularly like the idea of having five principles, they could easily be reduced to three: social nationalism, social democracy, and belief in the one God:

But perhaps not all of you like this ‘Tri-sila’ and ask for one, one principle alone. Alright, I shall make them one, I shall gather them up again to become one. What is that one? As I said a while ago, we are establishing an Indonesian state which all of us must support. All for all. Not the Christians for Indonesia, not the Islamic group for Indonesia, not Hadikusumo for Indonesia, not van Eck for Indonesia, not Nitisenito for Indonesia, but the Indonesians for Indonesia—all for all. If I compress what was five into three, and what was three into one, then I have a genuine Indonesian term, gotong-rojong, mutual cooperation. The state of Indonesia, which we are to establish must be a gotong-rojong state.67

Sukarno wrote in his autobiography that he received a tremendous ovation and that the delegates accepted his philosophy of five principles by acclamation.68 It is clear, however, that not all the delegates were entirely happy about the compromise suggested by Sukarno and they wanted a clear exposition of what the role of Islam would be in the new state of Indonesia. The Commission delegated Sukarno to head a smaller working committee and from its labours there evolved, on 22 June 1945, the Djakarta Charter,
in which the Five Principles are prefaced by the Qur'anic verse: ‘In the name of Allah, the forgiving'; and the fifth principle now read: 'The belief in God with the duty of the adherents of Islam to live according to the religious laws.'

The Committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence also concerned itself with devising an Indonesian Constitution. To speed up the proceedings on 11 July 1945 Sukarno was appointed as chairman of a special constitutional committee consisting of nineteen members. The actual preparations were left to the well-known lawyer Supomo who was able to submit a draft Constitution by 13 July to the full committee.

The draft Constitution envisaged the free Indonesia to be a unitary state and a republic. Three instruments of government were proposed: *Madjesis Permusjawaratan Rakjat* (People's Deliberation Council) or M.P.R.; *Dewan Perwakilan Rakjat* (People's Representative Council) or D.P.R.; and a Presidency and a Vice-Presidency. Sovereignty was vested in the people and embodied in the M.P.R., which was to consist of members of parliament (D.P.R.), and representatives from the regions and racial minorities. The M.P.R. was to lay down broad principles of policy and was required to meet at least once every five years. The D.P.R., which was to meet at least once a year, had the right to initiate legislation and all statutes needed this body's approval. The President was vested with important discretionary powers. He was given the right to make statutes with the approval of the D.P.R., while legislation initiated by the D.P.R. required presidential approval. The President was to hold office for five years; was made the Supreme Commander of the armed forces; and was given the prerogatives of declaring wars, states of emergencies, and concluding peace. The President was to be assisted by ministers, who were directly responsible to him and not to parliament.

The emphasis on strong leadership, as exemplified by the great powers vested in the Presidency, and the emphasis on deliberation in the various representative bodies, shows the influence of Sukarnoist thinking on the Constitution.

The objections of supporters of a more liberal democratic system of government were drowned in the debates of the Independence Investigation Committee in which Javanistic inclined members held a majority.

Muslims expressed considerable concern about Article 29 of the draft Constitution, which provided for freedom of religion. Orthodox leaders pointed out that according to the Islamic Law,
Muslims could not change their religion with impunity, and that according to the more strict interpretations the offenders were to be punished by death. Article 29 was subsequently amended and in the new version Indonesians were guaranteed the freedom to adhere to a particular religious position and to carry out the duties and responsibilities accordingly. No mention was made of the right to change religion, although in fact this remained possible in principle. A further concession to Islam was the clause that the President must be a Muslim.

These rather meagre concessions which the Muslim representatives in the Radjiman Commission were able to obtain suggests two things: first, the political power of Islam had by no means increased during the Japanese occupation to the extent that is sometimes believed; and secondly, the Japanese policy of divide and rule had not fully succeeded. For the vast majority of orthodox Muslims the Indonesian national spirit proved to be strong enough to bury their differences with the nationalists temporarily, so as not to endanger the success of the greater good of national independence.

The continuous deterioration of the military situation in South-East Asia and the Pacific caused the Japanese to speed up the granting of Indonesian independence and on 7 August 1945 the Radjiman Commission was replaced by a Committee for the Preparation of Independence. This committee was headed by Sukarno and Hatta and consisted of twenty-seven members drawn from all parts of the country. Scenting victory Sukarno made his now well-known speech of 7 August in which he referred to the Djojobojo prophecies and told the Indonesian people that the country would be free before the maize would ripen.69

The next morning Sukarno, Hatta and Radjiman were suddenly summoned to Japanese headquarters in Djakarta and told that they would be flown to Vietnam to confer with Marshal Terauchi, the Commander-in-Chief of the South-East Asian area, about the question of Indonesian independence. Terauchi told the Indonesian leaders that independence was now a certainty and that they should speed up preparations. The date on which independence would be granted was apparently laid down by Terauchi as 24 August.

However, the holocaust at Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the sudden collapse of the Japanese war effort, and the mounting pressure of anti-Japanese forces, mainly students (pemudas), within the country, took Sukarno and Hatta by surprise and almost forced them on them.
CHAPTER IV

Revolutionary Leader

On their return from Saigon on 14 August 1945 Sukarno and the other delegates were enthusiastically welcomed by thousands of Djakarta citizens at Kemajoran airport. In a speech of welcome, Koesoemo Oetoyo, the Vice-President of the Central Advisory Council, expressed the hope that the leaders had brought back with them the news which the people had been waiting for so long.

Sukarno’s reply, however, was very restrained and evasive. Knowing the radical attitudes and feelings in particular of the students, he apparently feared that a direct report on Terauchi’s instructions might trigger off a violent anti-Japanese explosion. Sukarno rather lamely told the crowd that: ‘Sometime ago I said on the radio that Indonesia would be free before the maize plant would ripen. But now I can tell you: Indonesia will be free before the maize plant begins to flower.’

While Sukarno’s speech might have calmed the general population, Sjahrir and the students regarded this further example of complete submissiveness to Japanese orders as the last straw.

On the afternoon of that same 14 August, Sjahrir told Hatta about radio reports of a Japanese peace offer to the Allies; and he urged that the Japanese-sponsored preparation committee should be by-passed and that Sukarno should declare independence immediately in the name of the Indonesian people.

Sjahrir’s claim that he managed to have Sukarno agree to proclaim Indonesian independence on the evening of 15 August is refuted by both Hatta and Sukarno, who apparently did not believe that the Japanese had surrendered. Unwilling to start off an untimely revolution which might be smothered immediately in streams of blood by the Japanese Army both leaders remained inactive. Communications both internal and external were defective at that time, and Sukarno and Hatta were by no means alone in doubting the rumours about the Japanese surrender.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SUKARNO

All of us in Indonesia were convinced that Japan would fight till the end. Even the collapse of Hitler’s power would be no reason for Japan just to quit everything and surrender. We were deeply impressed by Japanese propaganda that Japan was undefeatable. Their spirit was enormous. How could they surrender? Knowing their fanaticism and chauvinism and unbelievable faith in their God Emperor, it was really unthinkable that the war could be finished by just a couple of bombs. Only afterwards when the news came trickling in bit by bit, we began to realize that the destruction caused by the atom bombs was on a scale almost beyond human imagination.  

Before taking any action Sukarno decided first of all to get official clarification of the situation. On the morning of 15 August 1945 he and Hatta tried to get in touch with General Yamomoto, the head of the Japanese Military Administration. When the general could not be located, both leaders went to see Subardjo, the head of the Research Bureau of the Japanese Naval Liaison Office, which was under the command of Vice-Admiral Mayeda. But Subardjo was also still in the dark and made an appointment to see Mayeda in the afternoon. Mayeda proved to be unwilling to either deny or confirm the rumours about a Japanese surrender, and he could only promise the Indonesian leaders that he would inform them as soon as any official news was received.  

Sukarno and Hatta then realized that the time for action had come and that independence had to be proclaimed as quickly as possible, because the Japanese after their surrender might be ordered by the Allies to maintain the political status quo. It was decided to call a meeting of the Preparation Committee at ten o’clock the next morning at which members were to be urged to adopt the draft Constitution without delay so that the delegates from the remoter parts of the country could return home with full instructions before the Japanese could put a spoke in the wheel.  

Sukarno, Hatta, and most of the other older leaders wanted an orderly transfer of power and tried to avoid an open clash with the Japanese. This was not to the taste of the students who wanted an immediate uprising.  

On the afternoon of 15 August Hatta was visited by a few youth leaders; he rejected outright their plan for an uprising by the PETA and the students against the Japanese, which was to be preceded by a Declaration of Independence by Sukarno.  

In the evening of that same day Sukarno was also beseeched by
REVOLUTIONARY LEADER

some students, led by Wikana and Chairul Saleh, who tried to
convince him that on that same evening he should announce on the
radio that Indonesia had freed itself from the Japanese yoke. When
Sukarno persistently refused Wikana threatened that he would start
a bloody revolution the next day. Hatta who witnessed the scene,
writes:

On hearing this threat the blood rushed to Bung Karno’s head.
He rushed towards Wikana and said: ‘Here is my neck. Drag me
to that corner and take my life, now tonight. You don’t have to
wait until tomorrow.’ Wikana appeared to have been frightened
by Bung Karno’s unexpected reaction, and said: ‘We don’t want
to murder you. We only want to remind you that if by tonight
the Independence of Indonesia is not declared, tomorrow the
people will take action and they will murder whom they mistrust
and consider as supporters of the Dutch such as the Ambonese
for example.’

After that there was dead silence for some time and then Wikana
and his followers left to report to the other students who decided
to take matters in their own hands.

The students who were bent on a bloody clash with the Japanese
the next day apparently decided to abduct Sukarno and Hatta to a
safe place where they could make the Proclamation of Independence
without interference by the Japanese. At 4.00 p.m. on 16 August
Sukarno and Hatta were kidnapped by some students led by Sukarni
and brought to the PETA garrison of Rengasdengklok which was to
the south-west of Djakarta.

Subsequent events, however, vindicated Sukarno’s and Hatta’s
view that an anti-Japanese uprising at that stage would have been
disastrous to the Indonesian cause. On 16 August nothing happened
either in Djakarta or in the remainder of Java. The PETA units
who according to Wikana were supposed to have risen en masse
against the Japanese remained inactive. There was no attack by
students in Djakarta, and the general population went about its
business as usual. The plans for a student-led general uprising
apparently proved to be no more than a figment of the romantic
imagination of a few younger leaders such as Wikana, Chairul Saleh,
and Sukarni.

In the meantime, on the morning of the 16th, Subardjo, when
informed about Sukarno’s and Hatta’s disappearance, decided to
get the backing of the Japanese Navy in having the two leaders
released in case they might be captured by the Japanese Army authorities. After having informed Naval headquarters about the kidnapping, Subardjo went to see Mayeda at his house at the Nasau Boulevard. The admiral was greatly disturbed about Sukarno's and Hatta's disappearance, and promised Subardjo that he would do his utmost to discover the whereabouts of the two leaders.

Subardjo then went to the Naval headquarters where he knew that Wikana, his subordinate in the Naval Liaison Office, was holding a meeting with the students. He finally succeeded in convincing the young revolutionaries about the genuineness of Mayeda's assurance that the Japanese Navy was willing to back an Indonesian Declaration of Independence; and late in the afternoon Subardjo was allowed to visit Sukarno and Hatta at Rengasdengklok after he had guaranteed with his own life that independence would be proclaimed immediately.10

In the meantime, the kidnappers at Rengasdengklok were apparently at a loss as to what to do with the two recalcitrant leaders. Sukarno wrote later:

We waited there all day. They treated us well. They even sent for special milk for baby Guntur. There was no rush. Except, nothing happened. Not even in Djakarta. Periodically couriers arrived and departed. Whenever one returned I would ask, well, uh, has the big revolt started yet? Each time they would shake their heads sadly and mumble, no news yet from Djakarta.11

Subardjo reached Rengasdengklok at 6.00 p.m. and surprised Sukarno and Hatta in their pyjamas and quietly told them about Mayeda's confirmation of Japan's surrender; without any resistance from the students the three leaders journeyed back to Djakarta, which they reached safely about eleven o'clock that evening.

Somewhat later, Sukarno, Hatta, and Subardjo went to the house of Admiral Mayeda, the only place where they felt themselves safe to discuss the plans for the Declaration of Independence. Subardjo describes the meeting with Mayeda as follows:

We saw Mayeda coming downstairs from his bedroom on the first floor. We exchanged greetings with the Rear Admiral. He looked tired, apparently under the pressure of the heavy responsibilities he had to shoulder but he didn’t lose his self-control and his usual dignified attitude. At a glance he took in the crowd assembled in
the front room. Uniformed students were standing behind Sukarno and Hatta. They were looking around suspiciously, as if they didn’t trust matters one hundred per cent. I was told later . . . that in case we didn’t appear they would have started the scheduled revolt at midnight. Sukarno said a few words, thanking the Rear-Admiral for his hospitality. . . . Mayeda answered that his house was available . . . and he assured us that as long as we remained under his roof, he would be responsible for our safety.18

Soon after, Sukarno, Hatta and Mayeda left the house to contact General Yamamoto who refused to receive them in the middle of the night. The three leaders then went to see General Nishimura, who was adamantly opposed to the Indonesian plan to proclaim independence immediately, pointing out that the Japanese had become mere agents of the Allies and could therefore not allow any change in the status quo. Sukarno, Hatta and Mayeda returned at about 2.30 a.m., accompanied by Colonel Myoshi, the political adviser of General Nishimura, and a member of the Foreign Affairs department, who had always been sympathetic to the claims of the Indonesian nationalists. In spite of the Army’s opposition Mayeda stuck to his promise and did not interfere with the proceedings in his house.

Sukarni, and Nishizima, a Japanese Naval officer, had also left Mayeda’s residence and had made a rather adventurous car ride through the city in order to dissuade the students and PETA units from revolting. They were almost arrested by a Japanese army patrol, which after telephoning Admiral Mayeda let them go on their way. Sukarni returned to Mayeda’s house around 1.00 a.m.

The Indonesian leaders decided to proclaim Indonesian independence in spite of the Army’s disapproval and proceeded to compose the wording of the Declaration. The text of the Proclamation had already been formulated in the Djakarta Charter of 22 June. Sukarno is supposed to have asked Subardjo to dictate to him from memory the relevant phrases which he wrote down on a piece of paper. The resultant sentence: ‘We, the Indonesian people, declare herewith our Independence’ was, according to Hatta, too abstract and after some deliberation the clause: ‘Matters regarding the transfer of power and other affairs will be arranged in an accurate manner and within the shortest time possible was added.’ The text was then typed out by Sajuti Melik and was presented by Sukarno to the meeting.

Sukarni, who spoke for most of the students present, vehemently objected to the wording of the Proclamation, because it was not
explicitly directed against the Japanese. The general feeling of the meeting, however, was against the students. Sukarno’s suggestion that the Declaration should be signed ‘by the representatives of the Indonesian people’ was also rejected by Sukarni, who apparently felt that he and the other student leaders, Chairul Saleh, Adam Malik, Djawoto, and Maruto Nitimihardjo, should be the signatories, rather than the members of the Japanese-sponsored Preparation Committee. Another suggestion from someone in the crowd that everybody present should sign was also opposed by the Sukarni group. It was Sajuti Melik who apparently caused a breakthrough in this impasse with a suggestion that nobody would mind if Sukarno and Hatta were the sole signatories. This was accepted with great applause by the majority.¹³

Sukarno also squashed Sukarni’s idea that independence should be proclaimed at a mass meeting which he had arranged for the next morning on Ikada Square. Instead Sukarno suggested that a less conspicuous place was needed in order to avoid an open clash with the Japanese Army and suggested that the Proclamation should be made on the front lawn of his house at Pegangsaan Timur 56, at ten o’clock that morning.

On the morning of 17 August at 10.00 a.m. Sukarno, with Hatta at his side, read the Proclamation to a small crowd of people gathered in front of his home. At the same time a homemade red and white flag was raised and the national anthem was sung. This rather simple though moving ceremony must have been somewhat of an anti-climax to those who had for decades dreamt about this great moment. Everything was done in a makeshift fashion; there was no fanfare, and there were no great festivities.

Adam Malik who at the time was an employee of the Japanese news-agency Domei used the Djakarta radio station to transmit the news about the Proclamation to Indonesia and the rest of the world.

The following day the Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence met in session, and Hatta read out to the members the Constitution of Indonesia. For the most part this Constitution followed the earlier draft of the Supomo sub-committee, with the important exception that the earlier compromise with the Muslims was not incorporated and that Article 29 no longer contained the clause concerning the duty of Muslims to live in accordance with the precepts of the Islamic law. Also the requirement that the President of Indonesia had to be a Muslim was deleted.

Unfortunately, most of the documents concerning the meetings of the Committee were destroyed during the Dutch attack on
REVOLUTIONARY LEADER

Jogjakarta in 1948, and it is therefore almost impossible to pinpoint exactly why and how these changes were made.

The deletions were apparently insisted upon by Hatta, and the fact that they were accepted shows that the Islamic leadership had lost a great deal of their earlier political power and were now forced to play a role subordinate to the nationalists.14

On the other hand, the Five Principles, which were contained in the preamble to the Constitution, now featured as their first pillar the belief in God, which in the initial Sukarno version had been the fifth and last principle. While this might be taken as a victory for the Muslims, the substitution of the word Allah by the much vaguer word Tukan, which means the Almighty One, would rather suggest otherwise. And it is clear that the Constitution envisaged that in addition to Allah there would be a place in the Indonesian republic for other concepts of the divine.

Hatta, who also seemed to have been responsible for this change in emphasis in the state ideology, explained in 1956 in a speech in Jogjakarta:

The leaders of all groups hoped that in an Independent Indonesia everybody would not only have religious freedom, but also that there would be religious peace. Therefore on the instigation of Bung Karno, who had formulated the Panta-Sila, the principle of the Almighty God was accepted as the fifth pillar and in this way the state ideology came to consist of two layers, namely a political foundation and a moral foundation. After the formulation of the Piagam Djakarta of 22 June 1945, which was to be included in the text of the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence . . . a change was made in the order of these principles . . . the result of this change . . . is that without changing the state ideology itself, the state had been given a strong moral basis. The expression ‘Almighty God’ does not only lead to mutual respect between the various religions as was at first argued by Bung Karno, but it became the basis which leads to truth, justice, goodness, honesty, and fraternity.15

It was also during the meeting of the Preparation Committee of 18 August that Sukarno and Hatta were elected as President and Vice-President of Indonesia. However, the Preparation Committee, in view of the considerable time lag involved in setting up the various representative bodies provided for in the Constitution, decided that for the next six months all state powers should be

97
exercised by the President who would be assisted by a national committee. This decision gave Sukarno virtually dictatorial powers.

On 19 August the Independence Committee (the word Preparation was now deleted in line with the changed circumstances) divided Indonesia into eight provinces, each of which was to have a governor, a national committee, a resident with a national residential committee, and a village head with a village council. A sub-committee was set up to prepare for the establishment of the various central government departments. During the discussions the Muslims received a further setback when their demand for a department of religion was rejected by a majority of members.

On 29 August Sukarno abolished the Independence Committee and installed the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (Central Indonesian National Committee) or K.N.I.P. which counted 135 members selected by Sukarno and Hatta from all regions and from various political groups and racial minorities.

During the same meeting it was also decided to adopt a one party system and, rather significantly, this one government party was to be named after Sukarno’s old P.N.I. According to Sukarno the K.N.I.P. was only a temporary institution, but the P.N.I. was to be a permanent organization, which was to be joined by all Indonesians in a spirit of mutual cooperation and help.

Immediately after the Proclamation the republic of Indonesia only existed in name. The government apparatus as well as most of the armed power were still in the hands of the Japanese, who were bound by the surrender agreement to maintain the status quo. Sukarno put the problem clearly in a radio broadcast to the nation on 23 August:

To proclaim Independence is easy. To make a Constitution is not difficult. To elect a President and a Vice-President is easier still. But to establish the organs and offices of authority for the administration of a state, as well as to seek international recognition, especially under conditions such as the present, in which the Japanese government is still obliged by the international status quo to remain in this country to run the administration and maintain public order—these tasks are not easy.16

Contrary to the views of Sukarno and the older leaders, the students didn’t think there was a problem at all, and in their usual hot-headed manner, they argued that the Japanese should be overthrown by force. But the views of the diplomatic party were to
prevail for some time, and by diplomacy and negotiation the Sukarno-Hatta government was able to reach a type of 'gentleman's agreement' with the Japanese, which allowed Indonesians gradually to take over the civil service and public utilities. Most of the first cabinet ministers and Indonesian high public officials were drawn from the existing Japanese-controlled agencies and for some time they held the dual function of Japanese and Indonesian republican official. As one American scholar succinctly put it:

By this neat device both the Indonesian leadership and the Japanese were satisfied. The former now had a cabinet, both an important symbol of the state they were constructing and a means by which they could expect to increase their control over the rank and file of the civil service. The Japanese authorities, for their part, continued to consider the ministers as officials subordinate to them and could use this fact both to hinder the drift of the Indonesian civil servants towards the republic and to justify themselves to the Allies who wanted the status quo preserved.17

Undoubtedly even more galling to the students and other strongly revolutionary groups in Indonesian society was the comparative unconcern with which the Sukarno-Hatta government allowed the Japanese on 18 and 19 August 1945 to disarm the PETA force of sixty-six battalions, numbering in total about thirty-five thousand trained men. The republican government was apparently not sure that it could control PETA, and considered that any premature armed uprisings would completely sabotage its attempts at a peaceful takeover from the Japanese. The Sukarno government, although clearly realizing the need for a strong national army, was apparently first concerned to maintain peace and order. And on 22 August Badan Kemanan Rakjat (the People's Security Agency) or B.K.R. was set up which for all practical purposes was a type of police force rather than an army.18

Ostensibly Sukarno's personal power and authority seemed very great at the beginning of the revolution. He was the one who proclaimed independence. And the state ideology, the Constitution with its emphasis on unanimous agreement, full deliberation, strong presidential leadership, and the one party system, bore the distinct imprint of the political philosophy which Sukarno had preached since the mid-1920s.

To the Indonesian masses Sukarno was the great national hero.
In comparison to Sukarno the popularity of other leaders such as Sjahir, Hatta, Subardjo and the Communists, Tan Malakka and Musso, was minimal.

Sukarno had made good use of the opportunities provided by the Japanese occupation to extend and consolidate his pre-war popular image. He had taken the initiative from most of the other leaders and had fastened on every chance that came about to put himself into the limelight. He had almost totally monopolized the mass media and millions of Indonesians had regularly heard his voice on the radio. Any criticisms or doubts that might have arisen in the people’s mind about Sukarno’s intentions and motives during the Japanese occupation, seemed to have quickly disappeared when most of the other leaders insisted that he should make the Proclamation and be the first President of the republic.

Sukarno’s greatest asset was his mesmerizing power over the people, of which he gave another example on 19 September, when a vast crowd—estimated at 200,000—led on by Tan Malakka and his followers, gathered on Ikada Square vigorously protesting against the Japanese. The Japanese military government expecting trouble had cordoned off the area with strong detachments of heavily armed troops. Considering the ugly mood displayed by the crowd, bloodshed seemed unavoidable. But to the great astonishment and admiration of the Japanese and the equally great chagrin of Tan Malakka and his associates who for weeks had been carefully planning this move, it took Sukarno less than five minutes to defuse this extremely explosive situation and to send the people home quietly and peacefully.19

However, the initial victory of the ‘diplomatic party’ and the general quiet and peaceful atmosphere which was prevalent during August and most of September, cannot solely be ascribed to the power and prestige of Sukarno and his associates. The lack of violence and the absence of other outward signs of a physical revolution were in part a backlash of the fear and terror inculcated in the people by the Japanese. Many Indonesians, although happy about the Declaration, were confused and uncertain about what would happen next, and remained inactive. For some time, then, Indonesia, or at least Java, lived in a type of political vacuum. The people were dazed and generally adopted a wait-and-see attitude:

Even after people began to take action of one sort or another, however, this feeling of waiting persisted. Shock and inertia kept the shell of social order substantially intact while the forces