

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF INDONESIAN IRREDENTISM

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I

AT A SEMINAR OF SENIOR NAVAL OFFICIALS ON AUGUST 4TH 1965 the then Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Achmad Yani declared that "our defense system must cover all of Southeast Asia", that the Indonesian kingdoms had maintained hegemony over Southeast Asia for centuries through control of the seas, and ended by saying that "the Indonesian nation and people will not ignore the decisions of history, and it has been my conclusion since 1963 that at some time the Indonesian Navy will take over the role of the United States Seventh Fleet and the British Far Eastern Fleet in Southeast Asia."¹ The desultory remarks which follow are an attempt to clarify and document a case where perception and knowledge of the past are helping to shape contemporary political patterns, a case in which past history is an active partner in making new history. We will not so much be concerned with the extent to which a knowledge of Indonesia's past will be enlightening in understanding and explaining her present policies, much less in predicting her future policies as with watching the interplay between history and formulation of public opinion.

The case for Indonesian irredentism is forcefully presented in the writings of former Deputy First Minister and Minister of Information, the late Professor Muhammad Yamin² who had in no uncertain terms argued that "Indonesia is the rightful heir to all the former territories of *nusantara*." For Yamin the *nusantara* comprises the eight island groups of Sumatra, Malaya, Borneo, Java, Celebes, Lesser Sundas, Moluccas and West New Guinea. The point to be made is that Yamin is not alone in maintaining such aspirations. *Ipsa facto*, he is merely documentating a theory prevalent among Indonesian nationalists that the rising tide of European colonialism in the sixteenth century

¹ Quoted by Seymour Topping in *The New York Times*, August 25th 1965.

² See for example, his "A Legal and Historical Review of Indonesia's Sovereignty over the Ages," *Dewan Nasional* (Sept. 1958), p. 19; *Sumpah Indonesia Raya* (Djakarta: N. V. Nusantara, n.d. ca. 1956), p. 34; also his somewhat romanticized biography *Gajah Mada pahlawan persatuan Nusantara* (Djakarta: Bali Pustaka, 1953) and his doctoral dissertation *Tatanegara Majapahit*, 7 vol. (Djakarta: Jajasa Prapantja, 1962).

submerged a Golden Era in Indonesian history which is only being re-exposed today with the ebb of European power in the region.

Such aspirations and hopes were categorically expressed in the meetings of the Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (Investigating Committee for the Preparation of Indonesia's Independence) which was established by the Gunseikan (Head of the Japanese Military Administration) on March 1st 1945. It was at the plenary session of 31st May that Yamin enunciated his guiding principles that led him to associate the eight island groups listed above with the People's State of Indonesia. The first is ethnic in origin, claiming "that the areas which should be included in Indonesian territory are those which have given birth to Indonesian people;" the second is geopolitical, in that "it should be our aim to preserve our territorial integrity, that is, we must be prepared to preserve with all consequence every inch of our own land, and, at the same time, not wish for even the size of a palm of other people's territory." In the light of these principles Yamin then goes on to discuss in some detail the territorial limits of Indonesia, arguing, for example, that "from a geopolitical point of view Malaya represents a bridge for any power in Indo-China to proceed towards Indonesia. Vice-versa the same peninsula has in the past provided a bridge for powers in Indonesia to cross over to the Asian continent. It forms a natural bridge between the China Sea, Java Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Straits of Malacca provides a passage to our islands while the Malay peninsula forms the neck of our archipelago. To separate Malaya from the rest of Indonesia amounts to deliberately weakening from the outset the position of the People's State of Indonesia in her international relations." In conclusion Yamin said that "our satisfaction in determining the limits and the territory of our State will be further heightened if our views can be supported by documentary evidence." These are, according to Yamin, the list of thirty-six place names after the colophon and Javanese postscript of the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*³ and the fourteenth century Javanese court poem the *Nagarakertagama* written by the Buddhist Priest Prapanca.

Sukarno at the same meeting declared that "I am in full agreement with the stand taken by my colleague Mr. Yamin, who said

³ There are three lists of place-names after the text, the first two to localities referred to in the text and the third to the places claimed in part three of the text as having been conquered by Majapahit. The only copy of the text still extant was made for Sir Stamford Raffles in 1814 and it would seem that these lists were compiled on Raffles' instructions, for similar lists do not occur in contemporary Malay texts. C. A. Gibson-Hill (quoted by A. H. Hill in his romanisation and translation of the text published in *Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, XXX, No. 2 [1960], 207, n. 202) argues that this list of Majapahit dependencies is a late interpolation on the grounds that a number of place-names are anachronisms.

yesterday that neither on moral grounds nor on the grounds of international law are we obliged to be the inheritors of the Dutch. In discussing the territory of Indonesia, we do so fully realising that it is in the interest of our motherland that we should not be the inheritors of the Dutch, as we are not bound by any moral obligations to the Dutch." So with regard to Malaya Sukarno felt that "Indonesia will not become strong and secure unless the whole of the Straits of Malacca is in our hands." Sukarno closed his speech with the following invocation:

God in His wisdom has mapped out this earth. Everyone looking at the world map will understand what God has ordained as is shown on the map. God has determined that certain parts of the world should form single units—the British Isles as one, and likewise the Hellenic islands, and India surrounded by the ocean below and the Himalayas above. God has also determined on the map which He has created that the Japanese isles should form one single unit. And when I look at the islands situated between Asia and Australia and between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, I understand that they are meant to form a single entity.

In the voting that followed only nineteen of the sixty-six Committee members voted for the motion that the frontiers of the Republic of Indonesia follow that of the Netherlands East Indies, the other thirty-nine voted that it include the former Dutch Indies with the addition of Malaya, North Borneo, New Guinea, Timor and the adjacent islands.⁴

These aspirations were submerged but not forgotten in the turbulent years that followed independence. The West Irian crisis is testimony to the vitality of these concepts. Left unresolved at the 1949 Round Table Conference, the West Irian issue was to plague Indonesian-Dutch relations for the next thirteen years. But it was not until Sukarno inaugurated his concept of "Guided Democracy" in 1957 with the installation of a National Council and Cabinet responsible to him that there was a systematic build up of pressure on the issue, culminating in an agreement in 1962 where Indonesia was to take over the territory after a brief period of United Nations administration. The ease with which West Irian had been acquired made Sukarno and his colleagues drunk with ideas and hopes of empire. Yamin had already earlier declared that "when the national flag flies over Kotabaru [the new name for the capital Hollandia] Indonesia will be the chief guardian of the Pacific Ocean."⁵ Sukarno proceeded to unilaterally rename the Indian Ocean the Indonesian Ocean and babbled of a past when Indonesian influence

⁴ The proceedings of this body have been edited by M. Yamin, *Naskah-persiapan undang-undang dasar 1945, disarkam dengan dibubuhi tjatatan I* (Jakarta: Jajasan Prapantja, 1959), pp. 126-141, 201-214. It must be pointed out that not all the members, among whom Muhammad Hatta and Haji Agus Salim, were swayed by these emotional arguments. Their calls for moderation however were unheeded.

⁵ *North Borneo News & Sabah Times*, April 9, 1962.

stretched from Madagascar to the Easter Islands. This bears echoes of Yamin's hopes expressed some years earlier of an "Austronesian Confederation", of a confederation of the three M's—Melaka, Mataram and Malolos [Philippines]—nations originating from a common stock and possessing an identical culture.⁶

Afterwards, West Irian Indonesia, for various reasons, turned her attention to Malaysia, opposing the Federation on the grounds that it was a neocolonist plot designed to keep British imperialist forces in the region, encircling Indonesia, hindering and endangering her development and security. It is significant to note that Sukarno and Yamin have been very careful to deny efforts at territorial aggrandizement. Yamin has stressed that Borneo, Timor and Malaya are not fields for expansion, rather, they are to be regarded as lost territories that should be restored to their rightful owners.

II

What is this Golden Era of Indonesian history that three hundred years of Dutch rule drowned? To summarize in a few vignettes some of the dynamics of Indonesian history.

The political gravity of island Southeast Asia has, throughout its history, been centred on two core regions: central Java and South-eastern Sumatra. In these ecologically contrasting regions two dynamically opposed political systems developed. Along the riparian coast of southeastern Sumatra there was forged a thalassic geopolitical pattern which bears similarities to that of medieval maritime Europe. It was a pattern in which political power was organised in units of sea rather than land, where the control of one or two strategic ports would be sufficient to establish military hegemony, and political influence was asserted through alliances rather than conquest. It was a pattern which applied equally well to the small units which revolved around the minor channels as well as to the major empires situated astride the main trade routes. An agglomeration of attap huts on poles and rafts and house-boats situated in the swampy delta of a river mouth surrounded on three sides by mangrove would probably constitute the capital of the thalassocracy, from which tentacles stretched out to monopolise the trade through the control of a number of satellite ports. The political structure of the city probably centred on an aristocratic community whose power lay in the control of a powerful navy to enforce its monopoly of trade, on the ability to amass wealth from personal trade, levies on transit trade, war and plunder. There was a cosmopolitan population of merchants and traders engaged in the small

⁶ Antara, Oct. 2, 1959; United Press, Oct. 5, 1959, quoted in Arnold C. Brackman, *Southeast Asia's Second Front: The power struggle in the Malay archipelago* (Lond.: Pall Mall, 1966), p. 318.

time peddling of luxury articles and probably a small bourgeoisie with substantial financial resources partaking of bulk trading.

In complete contrast to this outward looking, worldly *weltanschauung* we have in the ecologically undifferentiated plains of central Java an irrigation-based agrarian society with a *weltanschauung* that is inward looking, otherworldly, devoting its labor towards the erection and maintenance of ceremonial and temple centres where great art is rendered monumentally, with their governing officials and organised priesthoods.

Central to the political system of these inland agrarian hydraulic societies was the structure of kingship. Whatever factors, sociological, psychological or anthropological, one may wish to draw upon in explaining the veneration of the monarch, the facts are that in pre-literate Southeast Asia around the beginning of the Christian Era, as in other contemporary pre-literate societies, there was a desire to be at peace with the universe, a drive towards the preservation of social forms and the maintenance of a social equilibrium and its restoration if it was in any way disarranged. To this end we have a belief in the parallelism between macrocosmos and microcosmos, which was manifest in the architectural layout of the capital and monuments and the organisation and expansion of the realm in symmetrical patterns. There is, therefore, a preoccupation with magic numbers and number sets and the organisation of social structure in metric sets.

For example, Dutch archaeologist N. J. Krom has argued that the four rows of 284 minor temples surrounding the three main sanctuaries dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma that make up the Chandi Lara Djonggang complex at Prambanan might correspond to the various administrative divisions of the realm, the temple complex as a whole being therefore, both a royal mausoleum and a state sanctuary. Then again, the Majapahit *kraton* as reconstructed from the descriptions in the *Nagarakertagama*, comprised a large public square, the *alun-alun*, in the centre of the town, round which, arranged in a definite pattern as dictated by cosmomagical principles, are the main buildings. But more than that, as Robert Heine-Geldern has argued, the Barabudur, the Bayon and certain other Southeast Asian architectural edifices, as for example, the Balinese *padmasana*, or throne of god, form a category of architectural complexes which have not only been laid out according to cosmomagical principles, but are supposed to be located in the centre of the universe, a model of the universe.

It was here, at these monuments, which were believed to be the seat, the symbol of the God or deceased kinsman, that the latter could be most easily contacted by the king. For it was believed that the God/deceased kinsman assumed the identity of that corporeal entity

to influence the behavior and lives of the members of the society. Thus the Barabudur, the Khmer temple-mountain, came to symbolise not only the total cosmos, more than that, it came to be a substitute body for the God or ancestor. For the king this role of mediator between the worlds of men and of the gods was a step towards his own deification. For from being a link between the gods and his fellowmen to becoming a representative of the gods and eventually assuming their functions, to end by ultimately becoming a God himself are but very small steps that a number of monarchs took.⁷

And it was towards the support and maintenance of these cult and temple centres that the economy of the realm was geared to. It was towards the support of the god-king and his retinue that the taxes in rice went and it was towards the erection and conservation of the monuments that corvée labor was directed to. Whatever trade there was in such a self-sufficient economy was probably carried on by a few foreigners under the influence and direction of the bureaucracy for the benefit of the court.

The rules and norms governing inter-state relations were derived from the Indian manuals on statecraft, as for example, the *Arthashastra*, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and the *Manu Dharmashastra*. Central to Indian political theory as contained in these texts was the *mandala* theory in which states attempted to preserve and extend their security and power through various means with a view to establishing a conical hierarchy of friends and foes. The aim was to establish round the state a series of concentric circles of enemies and neutrals or allies on the basis of their power and policy towards the state. Under such conditions the criterion between friend and foe, superior and weaker states, was a question of who paid tribute to whom. And in the final analysis, this was dependent upon the personality of the ruling god-king. For in these pre-modern political systems the monarch was only supreme in the *najaragung* or crown lands. Outside of them the actual ruler was the provincial governor, be he a member of the native landed nobility or of the concerning royal family or an appointed official. Their duties were to render homage and tribute to the god-king who was simply *prinus inter pores*, and to provide labor and military assistance when summoned; otherwise they were left very much to their own devices. The god-king on his part went on periodical inspection tours to impress on the provincial governors and local population his powers and occasionally despatched a military force to calm

⁷ J. C. van Leur first noted this dichotomy in his 1934 doctoral dissertation *Eenige beschouwingen betreffende den ouden Aziatischen handel* (Middelburg: G. W. den Boer, 1934) K'o Tsung-yüan, "Studies on the Sacral Kingship in Early Southeast Asia," *Journal of the Historical Society, University of Singapore* (1967/68), 21-45.

down any provincial governor who was shouting too loudly about independence.⁸

There is throughout Indonesian history a perennial struggle between these two centres of political gravity for the hegemony of the *nusantara*. However, the floodlights of the historian have as yet not been able to dispel the darkness of early Indonesian history sufficiently to illuminate the nature and course of this conflict clearly. We can but only sketch the broad outlines of this history which does not begin till the late seventh century with the rise to power of the Shrivijayan thalassocracy. Whatever her origins, her rise to power may be traced to the sea nomads who made their coast the essential link between the Indian Ocean and China at a time when the restoration of order in China under the Sui and Tang dynasties revived the Chinese market and the demand for west Asian products, which a temporary trade recession in the Persian Gulf when the Arabs were dismantling the Sassanid empire left unfulfilled, thus increasing the value of Indonesian products which were foisted upon the Chinese as West Asian products. It was to secure this trade that Shrivijaya launched an expansionist programme which is documented in her inscriptions describing the raids she essayed against competing harbour principalities in the Melaka Straits.

We start our charting of Javanese history with a 732 SC central Javanese inscription that commemorates the erection of a *lingga* by a King Sañjaya, who is thus a Saivite and according to other sources, a prince of the Mataram Royal House. His successor, however, is described as being "an ornament of the Shailendra dynasty". The implications, as epigraphist J.G. de Casparis has drawn out, are that we have here the emergence of a new dynasty, the Buddhist Shailendras, "king of mountain", who drove the reigning dynasty of Sañjaya, architects of the monuments on the Dieng plateau, to eastern Java. Whatever the dispute about their birthplace, to the Shailendras are attributed the erection of the Buddhist monuments of central Java, notably the Barabudur. But in 832 SC the Sañjaya dynasty returned to central Java with one of their members marrying into the Shailendra house to eject the Shailendra heir Balaputra who flees to Shrivijaya to marry a Shrivijayan princess to become the ruler of that state.

The Hindu monuments of Prambaban are a testimony to the revival of Hindu influence in central Java and power of the new dynasty. After 932, under Sindok, the capital shifted to the eastern interior of Java, from where the ruling house was able to develop a trade network with the eastern part of the archipelago. Whatever the causes

⁸ B. J. O. Schricke, "The Native Rulers", and "Ruler and Realm in early Java". In his *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, 2 vol., Selected studies on Indonesia, 2 & 3 (den Haag/Bandung: van Hoeve, 1955).

of the shift—Krom and others have suggested that it was fear of a Shrivijayan attempt to reassert Shailendra rule in central Java, while B. Schrieke has tabled geographical reasons—by 990 under Dharmavamsa she decided to challenge Shrivijaya by invading her. Shrivijaya counter-invaded in 1007, destroying the Javanese *kraton* and killing Dharmavamsa. The designated heir Erlangga was, however, not able to take any positive steps towards ending the intercaste warfare among the petty chieftains until the Chola raid on Shrivijaya in 1030 temporarily terminated the latter's threat to eastern Java. After this an uneasy equilibrium exists between these two powers, Shrivijaya dominating the western half of the archipelago, and Mataram the eastern half.

Up to now our sources for the reconstruction of Java's past have been mainly epigraphical, but after the tenth century we have a growing volume of literary sources whose interpretation is highly problematic. Pre-war scholars assumed that a textual weeding out of the more obvious fantasies and myths would reveal the substratum of facts upon which these chronicles were based. But Dutch linguist C. C. Berg in a bold *reversement* of Javanese historiography questions whether the account that remains after this stripping away of myths is an accurate one. Berg argues that we cannot read these sources through Western eyes, rather, we must read them the way they were meant to be read, view them as specific cultural manifestations and components of the culture that gave birth to them. "The main question is again and again: why did the man write his book and why did he write it thus?" And if we were to "re-think" the thoughts of the Javanese priests who wrote these texts we find that these texts had a magical function: to legitimize and justify the contemporary political scene, to provide the reigning regime with a genealogy that justifies their being in power. The texts therefore had an optive, wish-fulfilment character, describing events that should have happened, not events that did happen.

According to the texts, Erlangga, before his death, divided the realm between his two sons. It fell to Ken Angrok, born of a peasant woman as an incarnation of Vishnu, the son of Brahma, adopted by Shiva, to reunite the realm. Angrok obtains power by murdering the ruler of Tumapel and marrying his widow Ken Dedes, a Mahayanist priestess whose power resided in her flaming genitals. It is her sons

⁹ N. J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis*, 2de druk ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1931); Purbatjaraka, *Riwajat Indonesia I* (Jakarta: Jajasan Pembangunan, 1951); G. Coedès, *Les états Hindouïses d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* (Paris: de Boccard, 1964).

¹⁰ Berg's contributions lie scattered in the journal *Indonesië* and other Dutch serials. See his summaries in "Javanese historiography—a synopsis of its evolution", in D. G. E. Hall, *Historians of South East Asia*, Historical writing on the peoples of Asia (London: Oxford, 1961), pp. 13-23 and "The Javanese picture of the past," in Soedjatmoko, et al., eds., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1965), pp. 87-118.

who carry on the line. But this union is not successful and it fell on her great-grandson Kertanagara to attempt the task by installing an image of Aksobhya in the cemetery of Wurare where Bhanada, the priest whom Erlangga assigned to divide the kingdom, lived, in order to nullify his powers. But despite all this and other efforts the union remained uncertain. It was left to Hyam Wuruk, the son of Kertanagara's daughter Rajapatni, with the advice of his prime minister Gadjah Mada, to reunify the realm.

Berg in characteristic fashion castigates all this.¹¹ He argues that since the texts sing praises of Erlangga and could thus be construed as attempts to establish his legitimacy as king, we may infer that Erlangga was an usurper. It is these elaborate stories and genealogies which start from Sindok about Erlangga that go to form the foundation of the biography of Vijaya, founder of Majapahit, in the *Pararaton*. In this same text Kertanagara, the last king of the Singhasari house started by Ken Angrok and Vijaya's predecessor, is painted as a drunken debauchee. But the *Nagarakertagama* paints a glowing picture of him. Berg's interpretation is that he was working towards the unification of the *nusantara* through the establishment of a sacred confederacy by means of his supernatural powers, won through practising the rites of kalacakra tantra. Ideas about the unification of the *nusantara* became dormant after the death of Kertanagara at the hands of the Mongol invaders of 1292, until they were resuscitated by Gadjah Mada. Although Gadjah Mada agreed with Kertanagara in aim, he disagreed in method and there was a suspension of Kertanagara's pacifist policy in favour of a militaristic one which eventually, according to the *Nagarakertagama*, brought the better part of the *nusantara* under Javanese suzerainty.

This is the Golden Age of their history that Indonesian nationalists dream about. Yamin's eulogisms on Majapahit as found in his biography of Gadjah Mada and in his doctoral thesis may be taken to be typical of the images Indonesians have of their past. For example, Sanusi Pané in his textbook for secondary schools writes that "its [Majapahit's] Golden Age during the days of Rajasanegara and Gadjah Mada can be compared to the time during which Europe was beginning to free herself from feudalism. At that time cities were formed while trade and handicraft grew in importance."¹²

In the matter of the limit of the empire, Berg has demonstrated¹³ that the list of Majapahit's dependencies in *cantos* 13-16 of the *Naga-*

¹¹ See especially his *Herkomst, vorm en functie der Middelljavaanse rijksdelings-theorie*, Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, N.R., deel 59, No. 1 (Amsterdam: N. V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitg., 1953).

¹² Pané, *Serjarah Indonesia*, 1 (Djakarta: Perpustakaan Perguruan, 1950), p. 116.

¹³ Berg, "De Sadeng Oorlog en de mythe van Groot Majapahit," *Indonesië*, V (1951), 385-422.

rakertagama is a myth, a sum total of the geographical knowledge of the day, not of the extent of the empire as Yamin would have us believe, for that, according to Berg was limited to east Java, Madura and Bali. However from what we have said in the previous section, there could have been a certain amount of acknowledgment of Majapahit supremacy by the various harbour principalities, perhaps even Shrivijaya. For Majapahit did attempt to extract some form of acknowledgment of suzerainty and this is attested to by a report in the Ming Annals of an abortive attempt by Shrivijaya to establish direct relations with China that came to grief at the hands of Majapahit's military forces. As Wertheim summarizes the issues, "the modern state of Indonesia has as little relationship to early Majapahit as present day 'Smaller Europe' to the medieval Roman kingdom of Charlemagne, the only real link being in either case a powerful political myth." And so the misunderstood verses of a fourteenth century court panegyrist become the basis of a not to be misunderstood foreign policy of a modern nation.^{13a}

It would be interesting to explore how this misunderstanding, this myth of a Golden Age of Indonesian history, developed and is maintained. For what we have here is a theory which has, in the terminology of Karl Popper, been falsified, but is still maintained and believed in. What we have here is a case of "a subjectivity [that] is not extinguished in the objectivity of something purely factual, but in the objectivity of communal perception — perception on the part of a community which man seeks after if he does not find himself already within it; for truth is that which links us to another", to quote Karl Jaspers.¹⁴ We might say that Indonesian historiography is in the throes of a revolution, where not only the old theories, but also the very norms, standards and criteria for the writing of objective history have been overthrown; but the new concepts and theories and norms emerging from this revolutionary reformulation of the old traditions have not been accepted by all.¹⁵

This revolution was launched by Dutch socio-economist J. C. van Leur in his 1935 doctoral dissertation where he applied Weberian concepts and theories to the analysis of Indonesian history. In this dis-

^{13a} W. F. Wertheim, "The Sociological Approach," in Soedjatmoko, et al., eds., *An Introduction to Indonesian historiography*, p. 350.

¹⁴ Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (München: R. Piper, 1950), p. 10.

¹⁵ Thomas Khun, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, II, No. 2 (Chicago: University Press, 1962). Khun's argument is that science (and here we might include history) progresses through a series of revolutions, where the orthodox theories (paradigms he calls them) are found inadequate in the explanation of new phenomena or in new circumstances and situations and are overthrown in favour of new paradigms that explain the recalcitrant phenomena or the old phenomena better than the orthodox theories.

sertation he attacked the bastions of orthodox colonial history, exposing as myth their interpretation of the past four hundred years of Indonesian history as colonial history, a history of the Dutch overseas, for, as he questions, "both Speelman and the Company were rising in the Indonesian world by means of a hard struggle with the existing powers. Why then, does more light not fall on that world?" And it was this mythical archipelago ruled by the Dutch East India Company until the late eighteenth century from Java that Krom used as his model for the reconstruction of the limits of Majapahit when he there was not a trace of [Dutch] influence, however slight. These wrote that "there is no need to doubt the position of Majapahit as the only major power in the archipelago and generally recognized suzerain over the island territory under its control... the picture we obtain of the extent of Javanese authority [is] nevertheless clear: it controlled the archipelago through an area approximately the same as the Dutch at present." And in a later work he wrote that "the authority of Majapahit [reached] approximately as far as that of the Netherlands East Indies at present but with the addition of the Malay Peninsula."¹⁶

The Dutch international jurist G. R. Resink has submitted this picture of a Netherlands East Indies that stretched to the southern Celebes and covered western Java to a legal analysis. He irrefutably demonstrates that up to and into the twentieth century Batavia's relations with many of the Outer Islands amounted to no more than international relations, not internal administration. What is more, the Dutch officials at Batavia were fully aware of this. In his 1907 memorandum *Politiek beleid en bestuurszorg in de buitenbezittingen* [Political Policy and Administrative Activity in the Outlying Possessions], Colonial Minister H. Colijn wrote that "there were parts [of the archipelago] where were those parts of the archipelago where unrestricted self-government still prevailed, and with which we maintained no relations, or if so, only incidentally; those parts which according to received opinion did not legally constitute a part of the Netherlands Indies"—these parts included central Sumatra, central Borneo, central Celebes and the petty states on Flores and Sumba. So, as Resink points out, in following

¹⁶ Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche geschiedenis*, p. 418; "Het Hindoe-Javaanse-Tijdsperk," in F. W. Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië*, dl. I (Amsterdam: Joost v.d. Vandel, 1938), p. 278, 283. The translation by Terdjemahan Arif Effendi of the latter work into Indonesian *Zaman Hindu*, Pustaka Sardjana, V (Djakarta, P. T. Pembangunan, 1954), where we find, *inter alia*, "dat de Archipel inderdaad Javaansche is gemaakt [The Archipelago was indeed made Javanese]" being rendered as "bahwa Nusantara benarlah dimasukkan kedalam kekuasaan Djawa", which to a reader familiar with Dutch, but not with Krom's text, would be associated with "the archipelago being under the power of Java"; or "buitenbezittingen [outlying possessions]" translated by "daerah milik diluar Djawa", which one would associate more with absolute possession, has not served to straighten matters.

the older legal and colonial historians Krom had constructed too grandiose an image of the authority exercised by the Netherlands East Indies Government in the period of outlying possessions and dependencies prior to 1910 for a model of Majapahit's territorial limits.¹⁷

The call for a total re-writing of Indonesian history from a nationalistic perspective has served to further fossilize this image and model. The extra-Indonesian approach to Indonesian social sciences—associated with scholars like Hendrik Kern in linguistics, Snouck Hurgronje in culture and H. T. Colenbrander in history at the turn of the century—that gave way to regiocentric perspectives which emphasized the Indonesian elements and their assimilation and transformation of foreign influences, are associated with the names of C. van Vollenhoven in *adat* law, W. H. Rassers in anthropology, Berg in linguistics and Krom and W. Stutterheim in archaeology. It was van Leur who converted these regiocentric perspectives into an Indocentric perspective that has come to be associated with the names of G. W. Locher, W. F. Wertheim, Resink and B. Vlekke.¹⁸

The nascent nationalism among the Indonesian elite of the 1920's abandoned its aim of working towards the improvement of the economic condition of the Indonesian people with the founding of the Parti Nasional Indonesia which set its goal as independence through national struggle. In attempting to stimulate a national consciousness and build up a national identity among the masses, national leaders such as Sukarno, utilized the results of researches by Dutch scholars into their past, and in so doing pushed the Indocentric perspective to its *reductio ad absurdum*. For whereas van Leur swung the extra-Indonesia perspective 180° round to place on a par the European and Indonesian powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Indonesian scholars such as Sanusi and Armijm Pané and Yamin swung the perspective back another 180° to a nation-centric, ethno-centric view of history in which the native powers move into the limelight while the Europeans are unceremoniously shoved into the background, if not off the stage completely.¹⁹ Accompanying this is the trend to glorify the pre-European

¹⁷ Resink's publications are scattered through various Dutch serials. But see his summary "The Significance of the History of International Law in Indonesia," in Soedjatmoko, *et al.*, eds., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography*, pp. 359-379. Colijn's 1907 memorandum is quoted from Resink, "Een cadens van Colijn," *Indonesië*, X, No. 3 (June 1957), 2. Resink's remarks on Krom are found in his "Onafhankelijk vorsten, rijken en landen in Indonesië tussen 1850 en 1910," *Indonesië*, IX (1956), 288 and in more detail at "Uit het stof van een beeldenstorm," *Indonesië*, IX (1956), 434.

¹⁸ C. C. Berg, "Metamorphose der cultuurwetenschappen in Indonesië gedurende de laatste halve eeuw," *Oriëntatie*, XIV (Nov. 1948), 42-49.

¹⁹ See in this instance, Bambang Oetomo, "Some remarks on modern Indonesian historiography," in Hall, ed., *Historians of South East Asia*, pp. 73-84. The question is whether this perspective of history will become the dominant one, whether pre-Copernicanism will reign in Indonesian historiography. See in this respect Locher's views in his "Inleidende beschouwingen over de ontmoeting van

past, as for example, by Yamin and Armijn Pané. What dictates writing and research are not the norms of scientific research, but Ideological Absolutes. Under such scholars, in the words of Resink, the "old outlook takes on a new meaning, and it in turn creates a new past."²⁰

IV

However, the survival of these myths in Indonesian ideology is evidence of deep schisms within the society. To the Javanese with his strong ethnocentric perspective of history, which a Java-centric pattern of colonial administration served to emphasize, Majapahit is the first historic "Indonesian unitary state", a symbol of Indonesian political grandeur and cultural renaissance. But to other Indonesians all this stinks of a political and cultural imperialism, of a Javanese domination of the *nusantara*, which as Berg has demonstrated, is indicative, not of insular Southeast Asia as assumed in the everyday spoken language, but, in old Javanese proper, refers to the outer islands, foreign countries, as viewed from Java. And the critic, poet and essayist Bujang Saleh expressed such feelings when he wrote that "the illusionary greatness of Majapahit cannot form a strong bond of unity for our people at this time. On the contrary, it even harms national unity, for people from other regions will feel that the greatness of their own regional history is being denigrated."²¹ To be sure, this preaching of a mystical political unity is part of the modernization of Javanese cultural traditions to include, *inter alia*, concepts of modern collectivism as derived from Marxism, nationalism and the anti-Islam attitudes present in Javanese culture. It is the clash of this revived Javanism with the cultural traditions of the provinces that forms one of the sources of disunity in modern Indonesia.²²

Oost en West in Indonesië." *Indonesië*, II (1948-49), 411-428, 538-555, and compare this with the proceedings of the 1957 Seminar on Indonesian history at Gadjah Mada University where the initial steps towards the unravelling of the theoretical issues involved in the writing of "National History" were taken—*Laporan seminar Sedjarah; pada tanggal 14 s/d Desember 1957 di Jogjakarta* (Jogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1958).

²⁰Pané, "Indonesia di Asia Selatan: Sedjarah Indonesia sampai ± 1600," *Indonesia, Majalah Kebudayaan*, II (1951), 1-36. Resink, "Tussen de mythen: Van koloniale naar nationale geschiedschrijving," *De Nieuwe Stem*, VII, No. 6 (1952), 351.

²¹Saleh, "Mitos sebagai madat dan pengenalan diri sebagai tjambuk: Tjataan tentang Majapahit," *Siasat: Warta Sepekan*, X, No. 468 (30 May 1956), 25-25, translated as "De mythe als Opium en Zelfkennis als Zweep: Notities omtrent Majapahit," *Indonesië*, IX (1956), 449-452. Berg is quoted from his "De Geschiedenis van Pril Majapahit I, Het mysterie van de vier dochters van Kertanagara," *Indonesië*, IV (1950-51), 512.

²²On this modernisation, see Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," *American Anthropologist*, LIX (1957), 32-54. On these schisms, which in the final analysis, boils down to ecological differences, deriving from an ecosystem founded on swidden agriculture and an ecosystem founded on sawah agriculture, and the consequent differing social systems and economies founded

But the question is why and how, despite what we have pointed out above, is this myth of a Golden Era in Indonesian history being maintained? To quote Sukarno, "first we point out to the people that they have a glorious past, secondly we intensify the notion among our people that the present time is dark, and the third we show them the promising, pure, and luminous future and how to get there." To this end he has propounded a "revolutionary ideology" which calls for a fundamental restructuring of Indonesian politics, economics and society through violence. It is an ideology whose central theme, to quote Donald Weatherbee, is its "Indonesian-ness [so] giving authority a justification that ideologically proceed from an indigenous and historically uninterrupted political dynamics."²³

The role of Indonesian foreign policy in this ideology, according to former Foreign Minister Subandrio, is to "carry out the objectives of the Revolution in the international sphere and . . . to ensure that the Revolution is not obstructed from without." So, Sukarno has declared of Indonesian foreign policy that "we are not neutral; we are not passive spectators of the events happening in the world, we are not without principles, we are not without a standpoint. We do not conduct the independent policy for the sake of 'washing our hands clean', not just in a defensive way, not in an apologetic way. We are active, we have our own principles, we do have a standpoint! Our principles are clearly Pantja Sila; our standpoint is actively aimed at world peace and prosperity, actively aimed at the friendship of all nations, actively aimed at abolishing 'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme', actively opposed to, and hitting hard at, all forms of imperialism and colonialism wherever they occur."²⁴ The sum total of all this verbiage is that for Sukarno, Indonesia's foreign policy must work towards the elimination of the Old Established Forces — OLDEFO — and the creation of a new international order dominated by the Newly Established Forces — NEFO — led by Indonesia.

 on them, see the works emerging from the MIT "Modjokuto Project", especially the works of Clifford Geertz, "Religious Belief and Economic Behavior in a Central Javanese Town: Some preliminary considerations," *Economic Development & Cultural Change*, IV (1956), 134-158; *The Religion of Java* (Free Press, 1960); *Peddlers and Princess. Social Change and Economic Modernization in Two Indonesian towns* (Chicago Univ. Press, 1963) and *Agricultural Involution, The Processes of Ecological Change in Indonesia*. Assoc. Asian Stud., Monogr. & Papers, XI (Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 1963).

²³ Weatherbee, *Ideology in Indonesia: Sukarno's Indonesian Revolution*, Yale University, Southeast Asia Stud., Monogr. Ser. VIII (New Haven: Yale, 1966), p. 88.

²⁴ Subandrio, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy* (Information Division, Embassy of Indonesia in Washington, n.d. [repr. from *Le Monde* May 1964]). Sukarno is quoted from his Independence Day Address of August 17th 1959, "The Political Manifesto," published in his *Toward Freedom and the Dignity of Man* (Jakarta: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1961).

The point to be made is that because of her size and economic potential, Indonesia has tended to over-rate her importance and exaggerate her role in international politics. It is this inflated self-assessment that probably is at the foundation of her disinterest in closer regional co-operation and her resignation from the United Nations in 1965. For ranking high in Sukarno's hierarchy of priorities was the leadership of NEFO and Indonesia's role as a bulwark against the OLDEFO in Southeast Asia. For Bung Karno apparently believed that the more important was the crusade against the British and American imperialists who encircled Indonesia, threatening to stifle her development and obstructing her from playing her designated role of leader in the region. Under such circumstances, "the function of the myth of empire is to reinforce tendencies already present in Indonesian politics and to lend an aura of reality to the Indonesian image of themselves."²⁵

Such a self-image and world view originated with the group of leaders whom Herbert Feith classifies as the "solidarity makers." As opposed to the "administrators" like Hatta, Natsir, Sukiman and Wilopo, who possess the administrative, technical, legal and foreign language skills required to run the distinctive apparatus of a modern state, the solidarity makers, with Sukarno as an example, were "skilled as mediators between groups at different levels of modernity and political effectiveness, as mass organizers and as manipulators of integrative symbols." As Feith points out, up to the collapse of the Wilopo Cabinet in June 1953, the Government had been dominated by the administrators who had some success in tackling the nation's problems, but they failed to build up the foundation of support among the masses, as the solidarity makers did. After them the Government is dominated by the solidarity makers who turn their attention towards the fashioning of adventurous foreign policies, and the formulation of revolutionary ideologies, pre-occupations which are manifest in the agitational campaigns for the acquisition of West Irian, the erection of national monuments and the maintenance of an oversized army.²⁶ But the solidarity makers went out of office with the October 1965 Coup, and the administrators are back under the leadership of Nasution and Suharto. The question now is whether, and if so, to what extent, the legacy of the solidarity makers lives on and whether the irredentist ideals infused into the Indonesian people by the solidarity makers are still alive.

²⁵ Weatherbee, "Indonesia and Malaysia: Confrontations in Southeast Asia," *Orbis*, VII (1963), 343.

²⁶ Feith, *The Decline of Constitution Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1962), pp. 113 *et seq.* Also his contribution "The Dynamics of Guided Democracy," in Ruth McVey, ed., *Indonesia*, Survey of World Cultures, 12 (New Haven: Yale, 1963).