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## Chapter Six

### Student Activism

As noted in chapter two, students were an important opposition force during the early New Order. From the late 1960s small groups of student activists organised demonstrations, which grew larger and more frequent as the influence of the 1966 generation dissipated and elected student councils became involved. The post-Malari crackdown put a temporary stop to them, but 1977-78 saw a new crescendo of protest. The subsequent repression resulted in relative quiet on campuses until the late 1980s, when student protest again emerged as a significant source of opposition.

This chapter focuses on this new generation of student activism, especially the relatively small activist groups which pioneered protest on a range of sensitive political issues. As time passed, such groups diversified ideologically, some becoming increasingly radical, others moving closer to sections of elite opposition. Broader circles of students, including many Islamic activists, also became involved in anti-government activity.

Students have played prominent roles in anti-government movements in many developing countries. Huntington suggests that students constitute 'the universal opposition; they oppose whatever regime exists in their society.'<sup>1</sup> Following the worldwide student radicalisation of the 1960s, a substantial body of literature was produced which identified many factors which incline students toward militancy and often give them a political significance at odds with their usually small numbers. These included students' relative autonomy from conservatising adult responsibilities, access to learning and new ideas, concentration in strategic urban centres, and so on.<sup>2</sup>

In New Order Indonesia these factors were reinforced by the place occupied by students in national political discourse due to their role in the anti-colonial movement and the fall of Sukarno's 'Old Order'. Even if official histories sometimes downplayed its role, the student movement of 1966 continued to be a core component of the foundational myth of the New Order, reproduced in numerous histories and memoirs, spoken of at countless induction and graduation ceremonies, and commemorated every year by associations of now prosperous 1966 veterans.<sup>3</sup> In much wider social circles, especially among intellectuals and liberals, there was a

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<sup>1</sup> Huntington, 1991, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Altbach, 1966; Archer, 1972; Emmerson 1968; Cockburn & Blackburn, 1969, Sampson 1970; Lipset, 1966 & 1967; Lipset & Altbach, 1970; Pinner, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of an official history which downplays the student role, instead placing the military at the centre of the changes of 1966, see Kartodirjo, Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1977, p. 124. For a more laudatory officially sanctioned treatment of the 1966 students and their cooperation with the military, see Yayasan Kreativitas Pemuda dan Remaja, 1995, which includes a preface by Suharto's daughter Siti

widespread assumption that students had a natural, morally-motivated, ‘corrective’ political role.<sup>1</sup> Such ideas were also transmitted between generations of student activists: much student movement literature of the 1980s and 1990s stressed the duty to match the example set by their forebears.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Student Politics in the early and mid-1980s**

The repression which followed the 1977-78 protests was more comprehensive and effective than any which had preceded it. Campuses were occupied by troops, scores of students were arrested and tried. Student councils (*dewan mahasiswa*) were permanently ‘frozen’ and replaced by new bodies, *Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan* (BKK, Bodies for the Coordination of Student Affairs) whose members were appointed by campus administrators and subject to their veto. A permanent ban was placed on campus political activity. Collectively known as NKK/BKK (with NKK standing for *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus*: ‘Normalisation of Campus Life’), these measures extended the reach New Order depoliticisation and corporatist policies to campuses. They were intended, according to then Minister of Education and Culture, Daoed Joesoef, to ensure that students used their time wisely: ‘fill it up with reading, writing, conducting research, don’t waste it in the streets.’<sup>3</sup>

The effect of these policies and accompanying repression was to further marginalise student activism. After an initial round of anti-NKK/BKK protests in 1979-80, during the early 1980s it was very difficult for students to organise openly on campus in any conceivably anti-government fashion.<sup>4</sup> Rare demonstrations resulted in suspensions and other disciplinary action.<sup>5</sup> Interference in the legal, student *ormas* also peaked, and they became increasingly

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Hardiyanti Rukmana, and articles by various ministers and other New Order notables who participated in the 1966 movement.

<sup>1</sup> See for example the publication *Mahasiswa Dalam Sorotan* (Kelompok Studi Proklamasi, 1984) which contains articles by numerous intellectuals, NGO leaders and government critics, uniformly bemoaning the low levels of student activism and social consciousness in the 1980s. Novelist and former newspaper editor Mochtar Lubis (p. 44-5), for example, noted how great a loss it was that students could no longer play their traditional role as ‘spearhead for the nation’s progress’.

<sup>2</sup> On student movement representations of students’ historic role, see Aspinall, 1993, p. 30-34.

<sup>3</sup> Joesoef, who was linked to CSIS and the Moertopo group, was the chief government spokesperson on NKK/BKK policy. This quotation is from an article he wrote after ceasing to be Minister, but while continuing to defend the policy: Joesoef, 1984, p. 70. The chief argument advanced in favour of depoliticisation by Yusuf and other officials was that students needed to concentrate fully on their studies in order to ‘*mengisi teknostruktur*’ (‘fill the techno-structure’). For examples and discussions of the technocratic and ideological justifications for NKK/BKK see a collection of press articles collated in CSIS, 1980; also van Dijk, 1980, p. 129-30. For a contemporary student reaction, see the 1979 publication released by the *Keluarga Mahasiswa ITB* (‘ITB Student Family’), *Misteri dan Tragedi di Balik NKK* (The Mystery and Tragedy Behind NKK).

<sup>4</sup> In some campuses where the activist tradition was strongest there were spirited attempts to defend the organisational base of the student movement, despite the freezing of student councils. At ITB for example, although the Student Council itself eventually dissolved, the *Komite Pembelaan Mahasiswa* (Student Defence Committee), which had been established by the council to coordinate the defence of students who were on trial, survived to the late 1980s and provided a rare element of continuity for student activists: interview with Harry Wibowo, October 9, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> One such protest was against a motor rally at ITB in 1982: Ammarsyah, 1990, p. 213-15.

passive. In 1983-86 particularly heavy-handed government intervention in HMI split the organisation when it forced through a compliant leadership and acceptance of Pancasila as 'sole basis'.<sup>1</sup>

In this repressive atmosphere, critically-minded students found refuge in three types of alternative political vehicles. First, study groups were formed in large numbers from around 1982-83 in university towns in Java.<sup>2</sup> These groups varied greatly in size, orientation, and political outlook. Mostly, they were loosely structured, involving small groups of students who met regularly near campus to discuss social and political theory, recent political developments, local social problems, and the like. Some study groups became better organised and produced regular journals.<sup>3</sup> But most remained informal. Some of those involved believed that they represented an entirely new style of student politics which avoided confrontation with government and promoted change by contributing reasoned, intellectual contributions to public debate (*aksi informasi*, 'information action', rather than *aksi massa*, 'mass action').<sup>4</sup> Others viewed them as products of necessity amidst repressive political conditions. All used them to deepen their theoretical knowledge, seek new solutions for the country's political, social and economic problems, and understand the 'failure' of previous generations of student activism. This search led some study group participants towards various radical and populist writings.<sup>5</sup>

The student press was a second important vehicle for activism.<sup>6</sup> After 1977-78 many campus publications were banned or suspended. In the 1980s, many old publications were revived, and new ones established. Although these were usually published under the aegis of official bodies, like faculty senates, they often attracted the most critically-minded students on campus. Student media offices often became informal organising centres. Groups of activists around publications like *Politika* (Universitas Nasional, Jakarta); *Ganeshha*, (ITB); or *Arena*, (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta) were later important in the re-emergence of protest. The contents of such publications was initially greatly circumscribed by political conditions and campus administrators, but they eventually incorporated very critical material.

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<sup>1</sup> Hassan, 1987, p. 188-89.

<sup>2</sup> By 1987 the phenomenon was so widespread that twenty such groups were estimated to exist in Yogyakarta alone: *Tempo*, April 22, 1989, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> The *Kelompok Studi Proklamasi* in Jakarta even received substantial Ford Foundation funding and produced a number of books.

<sup>4</sup> A chief advocate of this view was Denny J. A. of the *Kelompok Studi Proklamasi* (Proklamasi Study Group): see his 1990 book *Gerakan Mahasiswa dan Politik Kaum Muda Era 80-an* [The Student Movement and the Politics of Youth in the 1980s]. This attitude sparked intense debate later in the 1980s, when activists involved in public demonstrations accused Denny and other study group proponents of elitism, labeling them 'NATO' ('No Action, Talk Only'). For examples of such attacks, see Goesyadi, 1990, p. 3, Akhmad, 1989, p. 92. See Aspinall, 1991, p. 106-8 for further discussion.

<sup>5</sup> Among the favoured writings were those of Paulo Freire, Franz Fanon, Ivan Illich, Jurgen Habermas, Islamic radicals like Ali Shariati, advocates of dependency theory, the Frankfurt school, classical Marxism, liberation theology, and publications of radical groups in South Korea and the Philippines.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent study of the emergence of the student press in this period see Supriyanto, 1998.

Third, NGOs were important for some students. The banning of political activity on campuses coincided with (and partially accounted for) the NGO boom referred to in earlier chapters. Most NGOs relied on students as volunteers and recruits. Many students became involved in community development NGOs, but the more politically conscious were attracted to those which questioned developmentalist approaches and conducted advocacy work. For example, SKEPHI, the environmental NGO established in 1982 by former 1978 student leader Indro Tjahjono, attracted numerous student recruits.<sup>1</sup> Some student study groups also tentatively initiated contacts with poor communities.<sup>2</sup> At the same time that they were studying structuralist and radical theories, some students thus came into direct contact with the poor and their problems, helping to generate the radicalisation discussed below.

From about 1985-86 networking activities began among some study group and campus media activists from different cities in Java. From early 1987, demonstrations began on campuses both in and beyond Java.<sup>3</sup> Mostly, they focused on internal campus issues like enrolment fees, corrupt university administrations and inadequate facilities.<sup>4</sup> Although many students clearly felt strongly about such issues, their prominence was partly a deliberate tactic adopted by activists to avoid confrontation with security forces, which gave them some breathing space to learn practical organising techniques.

The potential for more serious, albeit spontaneous, unrest was indicated by major student riots in 1987 in Pontianak and Ujungpandang. These were sparked by government regulations requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets. In both cases, many students were arrested, campuses closed temporarily, and in Ujungpandang, several protesters were shot dead. These protests, especially that in Ujungpandang, sparked numerous ‘solidarity actions’ in major Javanese campuses, consolidating networks between activist groups.<sup>5</sup>

## **2. The Rebirth of Student Protest, 1988-90**

The beginning of a new and protracted wave of organised student protest was marked by an outbreak of demonstrations against NKK/BKK and in favour of ‘campus autonomy’ in Yogyakarta, Bandung and Jakarta in the final months of 1988.<sup>6</sup> Through 1989 and 1990, as the

<sup>1</sup> On SKEPHI, see Uhlin, 1997, p. 112-13.

<sup>2</sup> Among the first to do so were *Yayasan Geni* in Salatiga and *Yayasan Studi Masyarakat* (Foundation for the Study of Society) in Jakarta. See for example Harsono, 1990, on an early campaign by Salatiga students to cooperate with becak (bicycle rickshaw) drivers against anti-becak regulations.

<sup>3</sup> These protests were sometimes portrayed by a sympathetic media as signifying the birth of a new generation of student activism: ‘Protes Kampus Sana, Protes Kampus Sini’, *Tempo*, May 14, 1988, p. 94-5.

<sup>4</sup> See Aspinall, 1991, p. 47-52.

<sup>5</sup> Ammarsyah, 1990, p. 214-15; Hendratmoko, 1992, p. 160-69.

<sup>6</sup> The demonstration which many activists viewed as marking the definitive rebirth of student activism occurred on October 29, 1988, when one hundred students took to the streets of Yogyakarta, chanting slogans against NKK/BKK: *Tempo*, November 12, 1988, p. 33. See also *Tempo* December 3, 1988, p. 34-35, December 24, 1988, p. 80.

issue of ‘openness’ increasingly dominated national political debate, student protests repeatedly grabbed national media attention. This was a period of great activity. New student organisations sprang up, underground pamphlets and open publications proliferated, and there was feverish coordinating activity between cities. Demonstrations initially tended to be deferential and polite (often in the form of visits to the DPR or Ministerial offices, requesting dialogue), but they rapidly became larger, more confrontational and raised more sensitive topics.<sup>1</sup> There was considerable optimism and, although numerous activists were arrested and some were tried, there was no knockout blow from the security forces.

Two sets of issues dominated the demonstrations. First, there was a concerted attempt to campaign to extend student political rights, reflecting a strategic decision to concentrate on the short term aim of winning back space for campus political activities. Many demonstrations called for ‘campus autonomy’, repeal of NKK/BKK and, especially, the release of student activists who were on trial.<sup>2</sup>

Second, there was great emphasis on problems experienced by poor communities, especially land disputes. Student activists ‘lived in’ in poor rural communities, organised protest campaigns and mobilised members of the affected communities (see below).

Activists thus deliberately avoided direct confrontation with the government on what they labeled ‘elite’ issues, such as the Presidency, choosing instead ostensibly ‘local’ issues which allowed them to express a new populist orientation and desire for political reform.

## 2.1 Regional Distribution and Social Background

The regional distribution of the new student protest movement was distinctive. The 1973-74 and 1977-78 movements, and the 1966 generation from which they were descended, were strongly Jakarta and Bandung centered.<sup>3</sup> Although Bandung and Jakarta remained important, the new wave of activism was much more widely dispersed. In 1989-90 sustained organising emerged in most of the important university towns in Java: Bogor, Semarang, Yogyakarta, Solo, Salatiga, Surabaya, Malang, Jombang, and Jember, as well as Mataram in Lombok and Denpasar, Bali. If anything, Central Java and, especially, Yogyakarta were the new focus.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Aspinall, 1993, p. 40-49.

<sup>2</sup> In Yogyakarta in 1988-90 three study group members were tried for subversion for possessing and distributing banned ‘Marxist’ books, including works by the famous novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer; in Bandung in 1989-90 seven ITB activists were tried for protesting against a campus visit by Interior Minister Rudini. For an insightful discussion of the Yogyakarta trials see Heryanto, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1960s East and Central Javanese campuses tended to be dominated by students linked to the Nationalist GMNI and the Communist CGMI, which backed Sukarno. Because these organisations, especially the second, were among the victims of the 1965-66 coalition, student activism remained seriously disabled in those regions for much of the subsequent decade and a half.

<sup>4</sup> Although there are dangers in such generalisations, Central Java and Yogyakarta tended to be the centre of the new radicalism. In Jakarta and Bandung student activists tended to have more elite backgrounds

Unlike in the 1960s and 1970s when students from the elite state universities (especially *Universitas Indonesia*, UI and *Institut Teknologi Bandung*, ITB) were the unchallenged pacesetters, activism now involved more students from smaller and less prestigious private campuses. In Jakarta in particular, UI was conspicuously quiescent and students from private campuses like *Universitas Nasional*, *Mustopo*, and *17 Agustus* were more prominent.

In part this change reflected the more rigorous application of NKK/BKK on state universities, especially those which had been foci of political activism. But it also reflected the changing shape of tertiary education. Indonesian university students in 1966 were the children of a tiny elite. Over the New Order period economic development and the growth of the middle class created demands for new skills and a larger market for tertiary education. Private universities mushroomed: according to Ministry of Education and Culture figures increasing from 63 in 1978 to 221 in 1990, with much of the growth in provincial centres.<sup>1</sup> Tertiary education was no longer the exclusive preserve of the upper reaches of the narrow, cosmopolitan elite of the big cities (many of whom, in any case, now sent their children overseas for study). Instead, it had become more accessible to wider layers, including provincial youths from more humble backgrounds.

Lane argues that the lower middle class origins of many activists contributed directly to the more radical flavour of student activism from the late 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Although there is no clear empirical evidence to back this claim, it coincides with my own field observations. Many more radical activists, especially in provincial towns, were the children of teachers, low-ranking civil servants, small time entrepreneurs, even prosperous farmers. But this was by no means a universal phenomenon, the most radical activists also included children of upper-middle class professionals and even relatively senior officials.<sup>3</sup> Many activists were the children of ABRI officers, unsurprising given the military's integration into the nation's social elite.

## 2.2 Organisational Form and Political Outlook

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and were more closely integrated with elite opposition circles, thus maintaining more of past traditions. This was especially the case at ITB where the legacy of the (some would say PSI-inclined) 'Independent Group' of the 1970s remained important through to the 1990s: interview with Harry Wibowo, October 9, 1993.

<sup>1</sup> Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 1979; Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1993. According to *Kompas* (May 18, 1986) there were already 960 thousand students enrolled in private tertiary institutions by 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Lane, 1989b, p. 11. The correlation between class background and radicalism is a point of contention in many international and comparative studies of student movement politics. Some studies conclude that lower middle class students tend to have aspirations to move to a higher social status group, and hence concentrate on their studies and avoid radical activism. Others suggest that their humble origins tend to make them more sympathetic to the poor and, hence, more radical: Emmerson, 1968b, p. 395.

<sup>3</sup> Budiman Sudjatmiko, for example, who went on to lead the most radical student based organisation, the PRD, was the son of a manager of a Goodyear plant in West Java. Another important leader of the organisation was the son of the editor of the major daily newspaper in Aceh, *Serambi Indonesia*.

In the 1970s student protest was largely organised by the officially sanctioned student councils. This avenue was closed by NKK/BKK. In the late 1980s the public face of student protest was largely represented by transient and ad hoc action committees, which coalesced for particular campaigns and then disbanded.<sup>1</sup> Such committees were themselves alliances of less publicly visible, campus-based groups centred on study groups or campus newspapers, which acted as organising and recruiting centres. Open city-wide organisations began to appear in the late 1980s. The prototype was FKMY (*Forum Komunikasi Mahasiswa Yogyakarta*, Yogyakarta Students' Communication Forum) which in 1989 claimed a membership of 1500 students from some 20 different campuses.<sup>2</sup> Another organisation which played a crucial role at this time was INFIGHT (Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights), a coalition of some of the smaller activist NGOs (notably Indro Tjahjono's SKEPHI) and many student groups, especially from Central Java. It became something akin to a national coordinating centre for the new radical student movement.<sup>3</sup>

These flexible, informal and semi-underground ways of organising student activism emerged primarily as a response to the tighter political controls on campuses. As a result, the student activist network which emerged in this period was more resilient than its predecessors, and numerous incidents of repression did not destroy it. On the other hand, it was also splintered and marginalised. Small activist groups were often relatively isolated from the student body as a whole and faced difficulties in coordinating their activities on a national basis. As a result, demonstrations (at least of students alone) were rarely as large, nor the movement as nationally representative, as in the 1970s. It was clearly a minority phenomenon, involving at most, a few thousand activists. Although broad sections of the student population apparently sympathised with the activists (on rare occasions many thousands could be mobilised) most students followed Daoed Joesoef's advice and got on with their studies.

Among the activists, the most striking difference from the 1970s, was a far more uncompromising attitude toward the New Order (Pamuntjak calls this 'the radicalisation of a marginalised minority.'<sup>4</sup>) There was greater emphasis on human rights (including examination

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<sup>1</sup> For example, *Kelompok Solidaritas Korban Pembangunan Waduk Kedung Ombo* (Group in Solidarity with the Sacrificial Victims of the Kedung Ombo Reservoir Development) at its height in 1989 involved students from a number of cities, but was soon abandoned as the campaign declined.

<sup>2</sup> *Tempo*, April 24, 1989, p. 30. Around the same time (1989-90) similar organisations were established in other cities, the most prominent of which were BKMJ (*Badan Koordinasi Mahasiswa Jakarta*, Jakarta Students' Coordination Body), Bakor (*Badan Koordinasi Mahasiswa Bandung*, Bandung Students' Coordination Body) and FKMS (*Forum Komunikasi Mahasiswa Surabaya*, Surabaya Students' Communication Forum).

<sup>3</sup> Designed in deliberate counterpoint to INGI, the NGO forum which engaged in international campaigns by using international links and lobbying, INFIGHT's approach to such matters was characteristically more direct: in 1990 it organised demonstrations against the then IGGI (Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia) head, Dutch Foreign Development Minister, J. Pronk, and called for a halt to foreign aid: Lane, 1991a, p. 18-21. There were numerous attempts, involving many cross-city gatherings, around this time to establish a national, underground organisation which could unite the diverse factions in the movement.

<sup>4</sup> Pamuntjak, 1993.



of previously taboo issues like abuses in East Timor, Irian, and Aceh, and the 1965-66 massacres), far greater open hostility to the military and its political role, and a new emphasis on mass action. In the words of one Bandung student activist on trial in 1990: 'Going to the streets or demonstrating is the one and only potent tool for overthrowing an authoritarian regime.'<sup>1</sup>

What above all characterised the new populist mood was exaltation of the common people, the *rakyat*. Student pamphlets, defence speeches and essays stressed that they were interested above all in empowering the poor, and defending them against the exploitation and oppression experienced under the New Order. The primary practical expression of this was involvement in land dispute campaigns. There was parallel hostility to the 'elite', who were portrayed as beneficiaries of the exploitation experienced by the masses. Mostly such discussions were made in classic populist terms of a broad dichotomy between *rakyat* and *elit* or *penguasa* (ruler).<sup>2</sup> Some material reflected Marxist influence and more explicitly identified capitalism as the chief enemy.<sup>3</sup>

The general hostility to elite politics, in part derived from activists' analysis that students in the 1970s had erred by intervening in national politics, and had consequently been *ditunggangi* (literally 'ridden' - used, taken advantage of) by elite interests.<sup>4</sup> As if to symbolise the break, an early demonstration in Yogyakarta in 1989 was directed against – the by now retired and outspoken – General Soemitro to whom 1974 student leaders had looked as a potential ally when he was Kopkamtib chief.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ammarsyah, 1990, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson (1972, p. 50) notes a tendency in pre-New Order Indonesian political discourse to posit a basic distinction between the undifferentiated and amorphous categories of *rakyat* and *pemimpin* (leader, big shot). Such a distinction is characteristic of populist discourses the world over. As student activist Nugroho Katjasungkana (1991, p. 9) notes, however, the vagueness was also partly because the more radical 'activists faced difficulties in using Marxist "class" terminology [i.e. because of the very real threat of coercion]. Thus, the path of compromise was taken, and [the term] 'class' was refined (*dihaluskan*) into 'rakyat.'

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the themes of the new student movement, especially the discourse of social difference, class and anti-capitalism, based on an analysis of leaflets, trial defence speeches and other literature produced by student activists see Aspinall, 1993, p. 22-25.

<sup>4</sup> I have in my possession a large collection of papers and notes which argue this and which were presented in student discussions from the late 1980s. These are listed in the bibliography and include: Moestahal, 1989, and Katjasungkana, 1991. For some published articles see: Akhmad, 1990 (Fazlur Akhmad was a pseudonym for one of the left-wing activists who later went on to lead the PRD), Radjab, 1991 (Suryadi A. Radjab was a Bandung student who went on to be active in LBH and other human rights organisations in Jakarta), Arief, 1994 (Andi Arief became the leader of the radical student group, SMID).

<sup>5</sup> As a leaflet distributed on the day put it, 'who knows if he's again seeking our [i.e. student] sympathy and support to use in the competition for the seat of power in 1993...Whatever else, Sumitro is still a soldier, whose ideology is to defend the status quo, who never sides with the people or defends the peoples' interests': *Sumitro, Runtuhlah Kekuatan Anti-Demokrasi* (2 page leaflet produced by 'Laskar Pembela Demokrasi Bulak Sumur, August 1989)

The new student activists also frequently castigated elite opposition – intellectuals, NGO leaders and the like – for their alleged conservatism and elitism.<sup>1</sup> And yet, many of the student activist groups which emerged in the late 1980s were inseparably connected to the elite opposition milieu. Major campaigns, on land disputes for example, were generally organised jointly with NGOs like LBH (even if differences in approach frequently caused tensions). Moreover, whenever small student groups required funds for a demonstration or other activity, they were frequently obliged to seek donations from sympathetic ‘sponsors’, often NGO leaders with access to unallocated ‘campaign’ funds or dissident figures with business connections. The resulting economic dependence was frequently a conduit for influence, even if it sometimes caused resentment.

If marginalisation caused radicalisation, it also meant that student activists were little exposed to open competition of differing political ideas or ideological currents.<sup>2</sup> This contributed to a somewhat nebulous character of much of the populist student critique. During fieldwork interviews in 1993 many student activists were unwilling to define their political outlook beyond a broad *visi kerakyatan* (populist vision) which entailed a general defence of the poor’s political, economic and social interests. Many argued they were not motivated by ideological considerations, but were simply responding to visible injustices in society. In many respects the emergent movement thus continued the ‘moral force’, and hence essentially regularising, traditions of the 1970s, albeit with a new populist veneer. References to the student movement as a moral rather than a political movement, or as a ‘social control,’ remained common. Frequent declarations of student ‘purity’ (*kemurnian*) were similarly consistent with the *Angkatan 66* traditions of ‘student as saviour’ and hostility to partisan politics.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.3 The Role of Islam

Before proceeding, it is important to note the Islamic element which, in addition to secular forms of radicalism, contributed to the new activism. Many strongly religious Islamic campuses (like IAIN [*Institut Agama Islam Negeri*, State Institute for Islamic Studies] Sunan Kalijaga and

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<sup>1</sup> Some students especially portrayed the big NGOs and their leaders as ‘sellers of poverty’ who professed concern for the poor in order to live comfortably on the proceeds of funding from foreign agencies: see for example Akhmad, 1990, p. 92. Such attitudes tended to be exacerbated by conflicts with NGOs over the handling of particular cases. Sometimes, students would criticise NGOs for pursuing litigation in a land dispute, for example, rather than mobilising those affected. A common complaint was that students would organise a particular campaign, which an NGO would then ‘claim’ as its own project to a foreign funding agency, hence benefiting financially.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the new activist groups often contained individuals with widely varying family political backgrounds, with students with PNI, PSI, HMI, NU or Christian heritages sometimes coexisting in the same group.

<sup>3</sup> Aspinall, 1993, p. 33-34. The emphasis on purity echoed dominant New Order political discourse, with its preoccupation with subversive, foreign bodies in the polity which sought to *menunggangi* (to ‘ride’), *mendalangi* (manipulate, mastermind) or *mengotori* (dirty, pollute) students and other social forces. But it also reflected students’ desire to counter-pose what they viewed as their own selfless, moral motivations to the corrupted world of official, adult politics: as Emmerson (1968b, p. 398) notes an ‘emphasis on purity and righteousness’ is virtually a universal feature of student movements.

*Universitas Islam Indonesia*, UII, in Yogyakarta) became centres of energetic activism. Groups which campaigned on land disputes and similar issues attracted many members who viewed their motivations partly in religious terms, contributing to the highly moral flavour of much activism. Commitment to the poor was partly influenced by works by 'leftist' Middle Eastern Islamic thinkers, like Ali Shariati, and rediscovery of Muslim radicals from Indonesia's own past.<sup>1</sup>

Demonstrations in the 1980s against the prohibition on *jilbab* in schools, state lotteries and *tempat maksiat* (places where gambling, drinking alcohol and prostitution took place) indicated the existence of an additional distinct current of Islamic activism.<sup>2</sup> Most important were the large student demonstrations against the magazine *Monitor* in December 1990.<sup>3</sup>

Such protests drew on networks distinct from (although often overlapping with) the new populist ones discussed above. For example, the legal Islamic student *ormas*, especially HMI (see below), were sometimes willing to mobilise their large numbers on matters which did not confront the government too directly. There were also more subterranean networks, including HMI-MPO (*Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi*: HMI – Council to Save the Organisation), that wing of HMI which had rejected adoption of Pancasila as 'sole base'.<sup>4</sup> Campus mosques were also important organising centres and focal points for inter-campus networking.

This activism drew its sustenance from a campus religious and cultural Islamic revival. From the early 1980s students flocked to campus mosques in growing numbers and university Islamic study and prayer groups grew noticeably. This phenomenon clearly reflected broader trends of Islamisation and expansion of the Muslim middle class.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Several groups (especially in Central Java) attempted to reconcile Islam and Indonesia's radical heritage, by studying the experiences of the *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Union) in the early twenties and reviving the writings of Haji Misbach and other early 'red santri.'

<sup>2</sup> Aspinall, 1991, p. 59-61.

<sup>3</sup> These protests caused division in student ranks. For example, on October 26 there was a demonstration by over 2000 students in Yogyakarta which called for the courts to 'hang Arswendo', the editor of *Monitor: Nurani*, No. 1, December 1990, p. 8. Shortly thereafter, on Universal Human Rights Day (December 10) at UGM, many activists defended Arswendo in their speeches: Pusat Pemberitaan Mahasiswa – FKMY, 1990, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> HMI-MPO even held national congresses, and remained dominant on many campuses (for example, UII in Yogyakarta).

<sup>5</sup> See for example Rosyad, 1995.

## 2.4 The Government Response

The government response to the resurgent student activism was the classic authoritarian mixture of inconsistently applied, but sometimes severe, repression, tempered by occasional toleration. From the start, some senior officials made belligerent statements.<sup>1</sup> Between 1988 and 1994 over forty student activists were tried for various political offences. Demonstrations and meetings were frequently violently broken up, student publications closed down, and activists were occasionally tortured. Beyond this, activists were confronted by constant low level monitoring and intimidation. Intelligence officers would frequently 'drop in' at meeting places 'to chat' or for more straightforward interrogation. University rectors were often briefed by security officials and instructed to enforce campus depoliticisation.<sup>2</sup> On some campuses there was regular confrontation, often violent, with the campus *Menwa* (*Resimen Mahasiswa*, Student Regiments), which were directly supervised by local military commands.

But from the start there were instances of tolerance, co-optation and concession. In 1988-89, when the first student street protests since the 1970s occurred, the response of certain officials, notably Interior Minister Rudini and several Fraksi-ABRI members, was surprisingly welcoming: student activism was described as (*masih* - 'so far') 'normal', 'honest', even 'positive'.<sup>3</sup> In 1990, the government made a concession to demands for abolition of NKK/BKK by allowing establishment of campus-wide student senates (SMPT, *Senat Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi*) on state universities. These bodies, however, remained subject to important controls by campus administrators and had limited powers and were consequently condemned by many student activists.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ABRI Commander in Chief, Try Sutrisno, for example reminded students that a 1970 Kopkamtib decree banning demonstrations had not been rescinded: '1970 ban on protest rallies still holds', *Jakarta Post*, April 11, 1989. President Suharto said that students were allowed to communicate their views but not *en masse* (*ramai-ramai*) or via 'actions': 'Mahasiswa Boleh Keluarkan Pendapat, Kata Presiden', *Media Indonesia*, April 13, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> See for example 'Rektor PTN Sepakat Tolak Politik Praktis di Kampus', *Suara Merdeka*, June 28, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Such comments clearly partly reflected the 1966 legacy and consequent legitimacy of student protest and criticism in Indonesia, even within New Order discourse. It is worth noting, of course, that ITB students were later tried after they protested against a campus visit by Minister Rudini.

<sup>4</sup> YLBHI, 1990, p. 5-6; Ondi, 1990. Senate activities were ultimately responsible to campus administrators, who were even entitled to screen candidates for senate positions. Previously, senates had been allowed only at the faculty level.

### 3. Student Activism into the 1990s

As *keterbukaan* unfolded student activism intensified. Activist groups emerged on many previously quiet campuses, in provincial towns in Java and beyond (for example, Palu and Manado in Sulawesi). Although private campuses remained important, there was intensification of activism in many big state universities, including UI. Student publications flourished, and many (such as *Hayam Wuruk* from Diponegoro University in Semarang or *Arena* from IAIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta) contained brazenly anti-government material.

During the first half of the 1990s, in addition to countless demonstrations on land disputes and other human rights issues, there were major campaigns for a boycott (*golput*) of the 1992 elections (the biggest such campaign since 1971) and against the 1994 press bannings. Demands made at demonstrations became increasingly direct, with regular calls for repeal of the subversion law and the five political laws, dissolution of the security agency *Bakorstanas*, abolition of *dwifungsi*, even for an extraordinary MPR session to remove Suharto from the Presidency.

This escalation was accompanied by greater differentiation within student activism. We shall see below that this was partly due to increased mobilisation by hitherto inactive groups. The first sign, however, was conflict among the activists who had pioneered campaigning on land disputes and similar issues in 1988-89. In 1991, a bitter conflict divided INFIGHT and splits soon followed in major city-wide student bodies like FKMY. Many participants argue that personal enmities, disputes over funding and similar issues caused the splits, rather than basic differences on political principle.<sup>1</sup> However, there was clearly a political dimension, revealed by accusations of ‘communism’ made at their height and by subsequent developments, whereby two distinct political poles emerged among activist groups.<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.1 Liberal-populists

One pole of the student movement may be described as liberal-populist, because it combined the new populist tone with an essentially liberal political outlook, remaining close to the mainstream tradition of New Order student dissent. In the mid-1990s a large number of small groups could be included in this category, although they were neither ideologically nor organisationally cohesive. Most were loosely organised campus and city based groups of the type which emerged in the late 1980s, mostly in Java. Among the most significant were Yayasan Pijar (*Pusat Informasi dan Jaringan Aksi untuk Reformasi*, Information Centre and

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with student activists, 1993-4. See also Hendratmoko, 1992, p. 226-35.

<sup>2</sup> Participants in the internal conflicts of the early 1990s, typically described them as being between a ‘moral’ or ‘ethical’ wing of the movement and a ‘populist’ or ‘political’ one: see for example the discussions by protagonists Brotoseno, 1992 and M. Arief Hakim, 1992.

Action Network for Reformation) in Jakarta, originally formed in 1989 by students centered around the Universitas Nasional (Unas) magazine *Politika* and DMPY (*Dewan Mahasiswa dan Pemuda Yogyakarta*, Yogyakarta Council of Youth and Students).<sup>1</sup> Occasional attempts were made to group such organisations on a national basis. In 1994 Aldera, (*Aliansi Demokrasi Rakyat*, Peoples' Democratic Alliance) was established. This was an essentially underground organisation, with an ambitious political program, centered on a few highly active individuals in Jakarta and Bandung.<sup>2</sup> Less formal networking between towns remained vigorous.<sup>3</sup> But such interaction was usually based on essentially inter-personal, even friendship, ties.

During the 1990s these students increasingly raised what they sometimes referred to as 'elite' issues concerning national-level corruption and political leadership. This was highlighted by a series of protests directed against Suharto in 1993 (see below). They tended to engage less than before in direct organisation of farmers or workers, instead their typical *modus operandi* was relatively small demonstrations which involved considerable risk.<sup>4</sup> As the political temperature increased from the mid-1990s, they became deeply involved in the major campaigns which galvanised opposition at this time (see chapter eight).

Many liberal-populist students stressed the moral character of their struggle and the need for boldness and risk (a sign at the doorway of activist group Yayasan Pijar in 1993 read '*Ragu-ragu tidak usah masuk*' - 'If you're hesitant, you needn't come in.'). Sometimes they viewed their role as a pressure group able to raise sensitive issues to the political agenda, in classic regularising terms as a social control, or even simply as an agent to *memanaskan situasi* ('heat up the situation').<sup>5</sup> Others argued they were a 'counter-hegemonic' movement, aiming to role

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<sup>1</sup> Another important organisational expression of this current were the many small NGOs established by student leaders who were active in the 1980s. These NGOs usually had a human rights advocacy perspective (e.g. Pipham, *Pusat Informasi dan Pendidikan Hak Asasi Manusia*, Centre for Human Rights Information and Education, in Jakarta) or be more oriented to 'empowerment' of rural people (CT, Cakrawala Timur in Surabaya), but their most important role is to act as informal gathering places and organising centres for former and current student activists.

<sup>2</sup> Aldera was formally established in 1994, although the name was first used in demonstrations against a PDI leadership meeting in early 1993 (see below): interviews with Standarkiaa, Pius Lustrilanang and other Aldera members, 1993, 1994 & 1995; Aldera, 1994. Another example was FAMI (*Front Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia*, Indonesian Students' Action Front), a loose alliance which was formed in late 1993 to organise a demonstration in Jakarta, and maintained organisational coherence for some months after 21 of its members were arrested and tried.

<sup>3</sup> As a visitor to student groups in many of the important centres, I was frequently struck by the frequency of visits by activists from other towns.

<sup>4</sup> Many in Jakarta opposition circles thus criticised as 'premature' a December 14 1993 FAMI demonstration at the DPR building where some 200 students called for an extraordinary MPR session to hold Suharto accountable for various human rights violations. The response from one participant, to whom I put this view, was 'If students do not criticise Suharto, who will? If we do not do it now, when will we?' He was uninterested in longer-term questions of political strategy, which he viewed as an excuse for inaction on the part of 'elite' critics. He suggested that students could be proud that they were once again in the vanguard, the first group to be bold enough to openly articulate the desires of a large segment of society.

<sup>5</sup> In late 1995, a senior activist with one Jakarta student group told me that he and his colleagues had now realised that earlier student hopes of being a force for major social and political change were unrealistic, and that the most they could hope for was that students could 'create chaos' (*menimbulkan kekacauan*), which might then force elite actors – whether from the opposition or regime – to take action.

back state intrusion in the societal realm. Many dreamed of a ‘people’s power’ movement. All, however, shared deep antipathy to the government.

The political outlook of these activists resists precise categorisation, being an updated version of the liberal-populist melange which had persistently arisen in middle class dissidence under the New Order. It combined strong anti-authoritarianism (sometimes almost an anarchist spirit), anti-militarism and anti-elitism, a populist emphasis on the *rakyat*, and liberal themes of regularisation and accountability, with the essential aim being the achievement of liberal-democratic governance. Semarang student Lukas Luwarso in his defence speech at his 1993 trial (for participation in a *golput* demonstration) thus used language which echoed that in student trials fifteen years earlier:

Lord Acton’s dictum that power always tends to corrupt, and that absolute power corrupts absolutely, has been shown to be correct in reality. . . The balance of powers in the state is the principal means by which it is possible to prevent the corruption of power. The best system of control [*pengawasan*] is the equal division of power between the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, in addition to the existence of a free press and a free people who can give voice to their aspirations and engage in social control. All of this will result in a healthy political system and respect for the principle of the *negara hukum*.<sup>1</sup>

While some groups, especially in Central and East Java, remained skeptical of elite politics, from the early 1990s others moved further toward middle class opposition circles, especially in Jakarta. Many groups invited prominent intellectuals, NGO leaders and other critics to their meetings, and sought their political advice. Some student activists from the 1980s joined established NGOs while others established their own (two Jakarta examples were Yayasan PIJAR and PIPHAM) which acted concurrently as the most confrontational wing of the NGO movement and as informal coordinating centres for student activists, bridging the two worlds. Many former student activists likewise gravitated to particular opposition leaders and groups. For example, some student activists in Jakarta were very close to the secular intellectuals involved in Forum Demokrasi.<sup>2</sup>

In part, this trend simply reflected the rapid generational turnover characteristic of student politics: as university prepares students for entry to the professions, student activism is an apprenticeship for middle class political activism of all stripes. Thus, student activism became integrated into wider oppositional circles as leaders of student groups established in the 1980s aged and moved to NGOs and other organisations, while maintaining links with their old campus networks.

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<sup>1</sup> Luwarso, 1993, p. 42-3.

<sup>2</sup> The pro-democracy party, PUDI (*Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesian United Democracy Party), which was established by former PPP legislator Sri Bintang Pamungkas in 1996, attracted many student or former student activists. For example, renowned Jakarta activist Bambang Beathor Suryadi joined its Central Board. One avenue through which the party attempted to establish regional branches was through pre-existing student networks: fieldnotes November-December 1996.

For some activists, however, a clear strategic shift was involved: given greater political openness from the early 1990s, they argued, it was time to *main elit* ('play the elite game', as one Yayasan Pijar leader informed me in 1993) and to seek broader alliances in middle class opposition.<sup>1</sup> Some suggested that this was because mobilising farmers in protests on land disputes in the 1980s had proven to be a dead-end.

### 3.2 Popular-radicalism: the PRD

The second pole among students might be labeled 'popular-radical'.<sup>2</sup> From the late 1980s there was a self-consciously radical element in the new student movement. Some activists (especially in Central Java) were particularly influenced by the leftist material they read in study groups and by leftist student movements in the Philippines and South Korea.<sup>3</sup> They consciously strove to impart a more radical ('*populis*' was a frequent codeword) tone to the movement and to break decisively from past traditions, arguing that students should replace a 'corrective' role with mobilising 'popular sectors' against the regime.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of such ideas became clearer with the appearance of the underground journal *Progres* in 1991 which circulated widely in activist circles, and contained a wide range of material, including detailed reports on campaigns by workers, peasants, and students, and critical analyses of opposition groups viewed as conservative.<sup>5</sup>

Following the splits in 1991, a handful of activists, prominent among them Daniel Indrakusumah and Budiman Sudjatmiko, developed a clandestine network and initiated the formation of groups known as *Solidaritas Mahasiswa* ('Student Solidarity') in several cities. These grew especially rapidly at several Central Javanese campuses (especially in Yogyakarta, Solo and Semarang), later in Surabaya and Jakarta, by 1996 even opening branches in Manado,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Nuku Suleiman, September 7, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed discussions of this political current, see Lane, 1994 & 1995b.

<sup>3</sup> For one example: see Navitidad (1990) in *Lentera*, a publication of the Student Senate of the Arts Faculty of *Universitas Indonesia*, praising the leftist Philippine student organisation Kabataan Makabayan.

<sup>4</sup> They also argued for a break with the 'compromised' views of other sections of the elite opposition, attacking the 'moderate' character of NGOs and the 'middle of the road' followers of the PSI, the Protestant and Catholic parties, Masyumi and NU: Akhmad, 1990, p. 92. This article was written by an individual who went on to be one of the driving forces (from underground) of the PRD.

<sup>5</sup> *Progres* gave an address in Australia for its editorial board, but it was clearly published in Indonesia. One report in *Progres* is particularly revealing about the extent of radicalisation. This is an interview with members of the 'National Youth Front' ('Wawancara Dengan Front Pemuda Nasional', *Progres*, Vol. 3, No. 1. 1993, p. 20) which clearly indicates the revolutionary and socialist aims of one section of the radical youth-student movement, and its identification with the pre-1965 left: 'The revolutionary movement was crushed by the forces of the fascist regime which is now in power, now we must rebuild the revolutionary movement in Indonesia.' See also Madjid (1992, p. 60) in the same publication for a leftist assesment about the lessons to be drawn from the splits of 1991: 'let those who cry be left behind by the advancing revolution, we must isolate the conservative and the reactionary [forces].'



Palu, Lampung, and Medan. In 1994, this current came into the open on a national basis, with the public launch of PRD (*Persatuan Rakyat Demokratik*, People's Democratic Union) in May and of SMID (*Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi*, Student Solidarity for Democracy in Indonesia) in August.<sup>1</sup> Finally, in 1996, the organisation relaunched itself as an open political party, changing its name to *Partai Rakyat Demokratik* (see chapter eight). Even so, by mid-1996 the PRD and associated organisations could claim, at most, several hundred core activists (even if they were sometimes able to organise demonstrations involving many thousands).

These activists aspired to move beyond organising only students (deepening the break with the 1966 tradition of students' 'special character'). Organisations affiliated to the PRD included SMID, an East Timor solidarity group (SPRIM), and organisations designed to represent workers (PPBI), artists (JAKER), members of the urban poor (*Serikat Rakyat*), and peasants (STN).<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to many student groups whose views were often vague, popular-radical students increasingly elaborated their views in explicit programmatic form.<sup>3</sup> They also tended to be highly disciplined. Key organisers were divided between several 'layers' with some assigned to 'public' work, while others remained underground, occupied full time in coordinating tasks or in organising work in industrial or rural areas.

The main political orientation of this current was the organisation and mobilisation of subordinate classes (a more general discussion of this phenomenon follows below), especially industrial workers.<sup>4</sup> One dramatic early manifestation of a 'worker-student' alliance, along Filipino or Korean lines, occurred on May 1 1995 with a demonstration by 1000 workers and 250 students in Semarang.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, activists from SMID and the PRD's labour affiliate,

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<sup>1</sup> For media reports of these events see *Tempo*, May 14 1994, p. 34-5; *Editor*, May 12 1994, p. 31; *Jakarta Post*, August 4, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> All of these organisations had overlapping membership. Their full names were SPRIM (*Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia untuk Rakyat Maubere*, Indonesian People's Solidarity Struggle with the Maubere People), PPBI (Centre for Indonesian Labour Struggle, *Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia*), JAKER (People's Art Network, *Jaringan Kesenian Rakyat*) and STN (National Peasants' Union, *Serikat Tani Nasional*). For a further discussion of these groups see: Human Rights Watch Asia / Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, 1996 (Section V, 'The PRD and its affiliates').

<sup>3</sup> For example, SMID branches around the country based their recruitment and campaigning on a 22 page booklet which, as well as committing the organisation to the struggle for democratisation, spelled out a programme and strategy to extend space for political organisation on campuses, by aiming at the revival of the still 'frozen' student councils: SMID, 1995, p. 5-21.

<sup>4</sup> The PRD manifesto (released in 1996) suggested that workers had the potential to 'be the vanguard in seizing and opening real democratic-liberal space' and in 'dragging progressive allies' to join the struggle: PRD, 1996, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> See *Gatra*, May 13 1995, p. 32-3. The choice of date alone (international workers' day) invited an angry response from officials: Bomer Pasaribu, secretary of the corporatist trade union SPSI, accused those involved of using a 'communist pattern.' (ibid, p. 33). It should be noted, however, that it was not only activists from the PRD and its affiliates who were involved in the organisation and mobilisation of workers. NU-aligned students in Jombang, for example, became involved in workers' protest from the

PPBI (*Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia*, Centre for Indonesian Labour Struggle) organised numerous labour protest actions, including strikes by over 10 thousand workers.<sup>1</sup> Although their influence over workers remained limited, their capacity to organise large mass actions, plus their discipline and programmatic boldness, gave them a dramatic visibility in the developing democratic movement.<sup>2</sup>

Activists associated with this current were among the first extra-systemic oppositionists to recognise the possibilities afforded by Megawati Soekarnoputri's 1993 election as PDI leader.<sup>3</sup> Recognising Megawati's popular support and sensing impending political crisis, they began to contemplate the overthrow of the regime in the medium term. To this end they emphasised the need for a united front against the government, even while remaining scornful of the capacities of many other groups.<sup>4</sup> This was reflected in vigorous participation in the campaign against the press bans of mid-1994. From at least 1994 certain PRD and SMID leaders also began to actively explore possibilities for cooperating with the PDI. This was accompanied by a theoretical readjustment whereby the 'urban poor,' viewed as the PDI support base, were conceptualised as a strategic class force which could play an important 'triggering' role.<sup>5</sup> The heightened level of political activity and rhetoric by this group during the PDI crisis of July 1996 ultimately marked it out for special repression (see chapter eight).

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mid-1990s (see below). In Surabaya, Bandung and Jakarta there was also extensive involvement by non-PRD student activists in labour organising.

<sup>1</sup> Former UI student activist and PPBI secretary general, Wilson (1995a, p. 13-24) lists 29 student-worker solidarity demonstrations in the 1990-95 period. On December 11, 1995, the PRD and PPBI organised a strike by 14 thousand workers at the PT Sritex garment factory in Solo: Presidium Sementara – PRD, 1995b. By this time, PRD activists were introducing demands relating to the broader political system (for example, repeal of the five political laws) in the worker strikes and demonstrations they organised: 'Bila Buruh Berpolitik', *Suara Independen*, No. 9, Vol 2, April, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Another indication of the extent of the radicalism of this political current was its campaigning on East Timor. Although it was not the only group to take up the East Timor issue from the early 1990s, it did so in characteristically bold style, with over 50 PRD activists participating in the occupation of the Russian and Dutch embassies alongside East Timorese asylum seekers in December 1995. They called for troop withdrawal and a UN sponsored referendum on the future of the territory: Presidium Sementara – PRD, 1995a, fieldnotes.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Daniel Indrakusumah and others, December 1993. These popular-radical activists indicated that the election of Megawati had dramatically changed the political situation in the country, and that consequently they would abandon their previous *pro-golput* strategy and seek a tactical alliance with the PDI, arguing that they were primarily interested in accessing and radicalising the PDI mass base. This distinguished them from most of extra-systemic opposition at this time, which typically remained very cynical about the capacity of any leader produced by Indonesia's formal political system to pose a genuine threat to the government.

<sup>4</sup> It might be argued that the PRD was typical of a new style of leftist movement found in many parts of the post-Cold War 'Third World'. Although its core leaders were committed ideological leftists, it emerged in conditions where the left was in global retreat and the experience of domestic dictatorship inculcated a strongly pluralist and democratic ethos in opposition. Thus, the PRD became, in essence, the most militant wing of the broad democratisation movement. The socialist core of beliefs was obvious from a reading of the organisation's documents, but did not feature prominently in its public appeal. Compare with the ideological shift in favour of pluralism which O'Donnell (1986, p. 17) argues occurred in Latin America as early as the mid-1980s.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Akhmad, 1994 (in *Merebut Demokrasi Dengan Kekuatan Rakyat* [Seizing Democracy with People Power], a booklet which circulated widely in PRD circles around the time of its formation in mid-1994). For a later example, see Mahardika, 1997.

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A caveat must be made before proceeding: although these two distinct poles were visible in student activism, there was no sharp break between them. All student activists of the types discussed above shared strong hostility to the New Order and believed in mobilisation against it to achieve ‘democratisation’. Groups from the two currents cooperated in many campaigns, and, especially outside Jakarta, many did not fit easily into either category.<sup>1</sup> The popular-radical pole was also not only identified with the PRD; many of its features, like interest in organising industrial workers, were shared by other student-based groups.

### 3.3 The Spread of Student Activism

This chapter has so far focused on the small activist groups which pioneered new forms of protest from the late 1980s. But these were not the only vehicles for student political activity.

Most important were the large cross campus, *aliran* student organisations: HMI, *Persatuan Mahasiswa Katolik Indonesia* (PMKRI, Catholic Students’ Association of Indonesia) *Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Mahasiswa Indonesia* (GMNI, National Students Movement of Indonesia, in the 1960s formally affiliated to the PNI), *Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia* (GMKI, Christian [Protestant] Student Movement of Indonesia) and PMII (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia*, Indonesian Islamic Student Movement, aligned with NU). During the 1960s these organisations (though only a tiny minority of GMNI) were important in the campaign against Sukarno. In 1972 they united into the umbrella ‘Cipayung Group.’<sup>2</sup> During the 1970s, however, they fell victim to the pressures experienced by all important societal organisations (*ormas*) which wanted to maintain legality. Leaders were obliged to ‘liaise’ with Interior Ministry and military officials, activities were tailored to attain appropriate permits.<sup>3</sup>

As a result these groups became less vocal. There were occasional crises (as with HMI over ‘sole basis’ requirements in the 1980s), but overall they busied themselves with routine recruitment, training, religious and social activities, avoiding activity which might be construed as anti-government. At most, the Cipayung Group occasionally released statements criticising specific government policies, couched in the indirect language of semi-opposition. Although students with backgrounds in these organisations were involved in the renewed activism of the

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, many NGOs formed by students and former students were involved in the organisation of peasants and workers and fell somewhere in between the two currents. There was a large range of such organisations including, for example, LPPP (*Lembaga Pendidikan dan Pengembangan Pedesaan*, Rural Education and Development Institute) in Bandung, which was mainly oriented to working among rural people, or Yayasan Arek, a labour organisation in Surabaya.

<sup>2</sup> Saidi, 1993. The group’s name came from the place in West Java where its founding meeting was held.

<sup>3</sup> Domestication was also particularly facilitated by the great influence wielded by *alumni* who had entered the political establishment. For example, during the 1970s there was persistent conflict within PMKRI between activists linked to the former members aligned with Ali Moertopo and CSIS, and a more critical grouping: interview with Chris Siner Key Timu, November 11, 1993.

late 1980s, this was largely as individuals. More radical activists and others frequently derided the larger *ormas* for their passivity and conservatism.<sup>1</sup>

However, unlike the relatively small groups discussed above, the *ormas* were sometimes quite massive, with branches through the archipelago and many thousands of members.<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1990s, the mobilisation pioneered by smaller activist groups began to stimulate wider circles of students, including, after about 1993, larger sections of the *ormas*. This was particularly so for those which were part of the Nationalist and NU political currents which, as we have seen, became more politically independent in the 1990s. GMNI activists in several towns in Java, for example, participated energetically in campaigning on land disputes and a group emerged within the organisation which explicitly aimed to assert GMNI's independence from government intervention.<sup>3</sup> A similar trend was visible in PMII and among other NU students. From the early 1990s the NU strongholds of Jember and Jombang became important centres of student activism, including on land and labour issues.<sup>4</sup> PMKRI members also became active in various political campaigns. Anti-government activity in the Cipayung group (minus HMI) peaked during the PDI crisis of 1996 (see chapter eight).

There were also signs of invigoration of student senates and other representative bodies in the mid-1990s. Senates on some of the larger campuses were colonised by more radical students, others independently began to initiate political action, although initially tending toward caution.<sup>5</sup> By 1995-96, many SMPT were calling for the repeal of the Ministerial Decree which established the SMPT as bodies subordinate to campus administrations. On some campuses, senate leaders even proclaimed the establishment of independent 1970s-style 'student councils'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Syuaib, 1987; Ap, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> One estimate of HMI membership in 1986 was 150 thousand: *Tapol Bulletin*, No. 75, May 1986, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews, late 1995. See for example: 'Presidium GMNI Dianggap Gagal', *Wawasan*, October 18, 1995, reporting on the formation of a *Dewan Penyelamat Organisasi Independen* (Council to Save the Independent Organisation) in the organisation.

<sup>4</sup> After NU university students in Jombang demonstrated against military repression of a strike in a local factory, local authorities organised intimidatory counter-demonstrations accusing the students of being communist. Eventually three students were tried under colonial-era hatred-spreading laws, see: 'Tandingi aksi buruh, Kades turun ke jalan', *Surya*, October 24, 1995; 'Pasal Kolonial di Jombang', *Forum Keadilan*, October 7, 1996, p. 33. Madrid (1999, p. 18) notes that by 1998 many 'Islami' students considered PMII to be a 'leftist organization.'

<sup>5</sup> For example, in early 1993 the UI Student Senate sent a delegation to the MPR which put forward several fairly limited reform proposals (similar to those being promoted by General Soemitro and similar figures): reduction in ABRI representation in the DPR, reduction in appointments to the legislature, limits to Presidential terms and so forth: 'Senat Mahasiswa Sampaikan Resume Kepada Wakil Ketua MPR', *Suara Pembaruan*, February 18, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> 'Impian Dewan Mahasiswa', *Forum Keadilan*, August 26, 1996, p. 27; 'Mahasiswa 36 Perguruan Tinggi Minta Ketentuan SMPT Dicabut', *Kompas*, October 10, 1996.

### 3.4 HMI, Islamic Student Activism and the Impact of ICMI

HMI had been a mainstay of student protest in the 1970s, and was harassed even through to the late 1980s.<sup>1</sup> But as the Cipayang Group became more openly critical of government in the 1990s, HMI representatives avoided endorsing several of its more critical statements.<sup>2</sup> HMI's behaviour must be put into the context of the greater rapprochement between government and modernist Islam, which impacted particularly strongly on HMI, given that so many HMI members had since the 1960s made successful careers in business, bureaucracy and government. KAHMI (*Korps Alumni HMI*) was led by prominent figures like Finance Minister Mar'ie Mohamad, and its members were important within ICMI.<sup>3</sup> HMI 'seniors' were a thus medium through which leaders of HMI could directly access centres of politico-bureaucratic power.<sup>4</sup>

Many student activists with modernist Islamic backgrounds accepted the argument that ICMI represented an historic opportunity for Islam.<sup>5</sup> Even HMI-MPO leaders, who had led a harried and underground existence through the 1980s, began to reconsider their position and the division between it and the 'official' HMI began to break down. Some student activists who had been prominent in protests during the late 1980s likewise moved closer to ICMI. For example, Mohamad Jumhur Hidayat, an ITB student who in 1990 was tried for protesting against Rudini, became executive director of CIDES and right-hand man for ICMI secretary general Adi Sasono. Eggi Sudjana, Chairperson of HMI-MPO in the 1980s and a prominent figure in Jakarta student politics, was also recruited to CIDES.

Sympathy for ICMI, however, did not mean passivity. Some HMI branches, for example, were integrated into the general spread of student activism on land and other 'populist' issues.<sup>6</sup> There

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<sup>1</sup> See for example 'Muslim students' cadre course closed by troops', *TAPOL Bulletin*, No. 74, March, 1986, p. 21, reporting on the closure of a course organised by the Yogyakarta branch, because it had no meeting permit.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time, relations were often very hostile between HMI and radical students at the campus level. I witnessed several particularly heated exchanges at student meetings in Yogyakarta.

<sup>3</sup> In 1997, the magazine *Ummat* estimated that over 200 of the 500 members of the DPR had HMI backgrounds: 'Daftar Harapan Sementara (DHS) Untuk Manuver HMI', *Ummat*, August 4, 1997, p. 33. In the same year, President Suharto addressed a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of HMI, praising the organisation for its defence of Pancasila and for its 'Islamic spirit': 'Presiden Soeharto: HMI Ikut Cegah Gejolak Sosial', *Kompas*, March 21, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> It was widely believed, for example, that rival candidates for the HMI leadership at its 1997 congress were backed by different government patrons: Fuad Bawazier, the Director-General of Taxation, who was close to the President's children, and Minister for Youth Affairs and Sport, Akbar Tanjung (Akbar's favoured candidate won). See 'Politik Dagang Sapi di HMI', *Suara Independen*, Sep. 1997, p. 9. More radical students often suggested that HMI gained access to considerable funding through such sources, allowing, for instance, the construction of large branch offices in some towns.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, there were many examples, too, of such students opposing the politics of accommodation in the *umat*. For one example, see a report of protests at the Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah University after the organisation called for Suharto's re-election as President: 'Aksi Tempel Poster di UMY', *Bernas*, March 17, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Thus, from the early 1990s, some HMI branches especially in parts of North Sumatra, East and Central Java, actively campaigned on several land disputes and environmental cases. The influence of recently

were also some very large protests by Islamic students during the 1990s. The most striking were the demonstrations against the state lottery SDSB in late 1991 and late 1993. Members of the small liberal-populist and radical-popular groups discussed above were involved in these campaigns.<sup>1</sup> However, most of the students and youths who participated had more explicit religious motivations and identities. Groups like FKMIJ (*Forum Komunikasi Mahasiswa Islam Jakarta*, Jakarta Communication Forum of Islamic Students) and PMIB (*Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Bandung*, Bandung Alliance of Muslim Students) played a major role. These were drawn mainly from hitherto largely cautious Islamic student *ormas* and networks of campus mosques. What these protests proved, above all, was the enormous mobilising potential of Islamic students (even allowing for the fact that protesting against SDSB did not pose the same level of risk as participating in more directly anti-government action<sup>2</sup>). They dwarfed any actions that the more radical students alone (though not in association with workers or farmers) could muster.<sup>3</sup>

Demonstrations on issues like SDSB pointed to a blurring of the divide between opposition from the societal realm and factional conflict within the state. There were many rumours that the SDSB campaign was ‘backed’ financially and otherwise by ICMI leaders, notably Adi Sasono. Certainly, *Republika*, campaigned vigorously against the scheme, and ICMI leaders condemned it.<sup>4</sup> In a similar example in 1994, many students from HMI or otherwise linked to ICMI organised large demonstrations against a massive corruption scandal uncovered in Bapindo (Indonesian Development bank). This campaign represented a chance to express anger about Chinese domination of the economy (the main villain of the piece was Chinese businessman, Edy Tansil). It also accorded with factional goals, given that subsidiary targets were former Kopkamtib commander, the (then) Christian retired Admiral Sudomo as well as

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graduated HMI members was very strong in the Surabaya branch of LBH, one of the branches of the organisation most committed to the ‘structural legal aid approach.’ HMI also continued to make some critical statements at the national level, for example recommending at its 1995 congress official ‘evaluations’ of the wealth of officials, revision of the five political laws, and a limitation on Presidential terms: ‘Buruk Muka, HMI dibelah’, *Tempo*, May 13, 1989, p. 101.

<sup>1</sup> Students from liberal-populist and popular-radical groups were especially important in 1991: see ‘Mahasiswa, Santri dan Rakyat Tolak SDSB’, *Progres*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1992, p. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, these protests accorded with widely held Islamic social goals and were viewed as very serious issues by the participants. In part, however, there was also a conscious selection of issues which avoided confrontation with the state: HMI leaders interviewed in 1994, for example, indicated that they did not wish to endanger their organisational infrastructure by engaging in premature, open anti-government action.

<sup>3</sup> There were conflicts between student activists involved in these campaigns. Many of the more radical or secular activists complained that the issue was reduced by the Islamic students to a question of purely religious significance (*‘haram-halal’*) which did not question the broader implications of the scheme (for example as a conduit of wealth from the poor to corrupt associates of the President and his family). These tensions were vividly expressed at a massive November 10, 1993 demonstration in Jakarta, which split in two, with only the most militant (both Muslim and more secular) activists proceeding to the Presidential palace (the first student demonstration to occur there since the *Malari* period).

<sup>4</sup> See for example Adi Sasono in: ‘Sikap ICMI sudah jelas’, *DēTik*, November 10-16, 1993, p. 18.

former Finance Minister Johannes Sumarlin, one of the triumvirate of Christian economic ministers frequently derided by ICMI activists.<sup>1</sup>

There were many other examples of how ICMI influence penetrated student politics. Student demonstrations against Golkar chairperson and Information Minister Harmoko after he mis-read sections of the Koran in mid-1995, were ended following intervention by ICMI-linked youth and student leaders, who were concerned that harming Harmoko undermined Habibie and his group.<sup>2</sup> Another excellent example was the Haryanto Dhanutirto affair, which scandalised public opinion in late 1995 and early 1996. Dhanutirto was Transport Minister, a key ICMI leader and close associate of Minister Habibie. In December 1995 opponents of ICMI within the state apparatus leaked a confidential report which detailed his corrupt activities, including a government-funded European shopping spree by his wife. The leak sparked intense press scrutiny. Numerous protests by liberal-populist student groups called for the Minister's sacking. Activists linked to ICMI counter-attacked by accusing officials unsympathetic to ICMI (especially Inspector General of Development, Kentot Harseno, who wrote the report, and Minister of the State Secretariat Moerdiono) of 'treason' for 'leaking state secrets' in order to harm the Transport Minister. Students from HMI and other Islamic networks held lively demonstrations, again backed by a *Republika*-led press campaign, calling for those responsible to be punished. This was partly successful in diverting public attention away from Dhanutirto.<sup>3</sup> This case illustrated in microcosm the capacity of the new political dispensation encapsulated in ICMI to trigger snowballing mobilisation and counter-mobilisation by forces arraigned for and against the organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> On the Bapindo scandal, see Majidi, 1994 (this is a compilation of articles which appeared in *Republika*, which campaigned very vigorously on the scandal).

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Eggi Sudjana, November 29, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> See for example 'Perang di Kabinet: Koruptor vs Pembocor', *Suara Independen*, No. 7, Vol. 2, Jan-Feb, 1996, p. 31-2.

#### **4. The Impact of Tensions in ABRI**

If student politics were influenced by the rapprochement with Islam symbolised by ICMI, this raises the question of the relationship with the ‘other side’ of elite friction: discontent in ABRI. Some writers have argued that the rebirth of student activism from the late 1980s can only be understood in this context, even that student protest was ‘encouraged’ by military elements in order to put pressure on President Suharto.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, at the outset of *keterbukaan* in 1989, some military officers, especially from the DPR, made extraordinary efforts to appear sympathetic to student protest, visiting campuses and publicly welcoming the re-emergent student social consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, from around the same time many more informal, private approaches were made by military officers to student groups (but only *after* they had drawn attention to themselves by holding demonstrations). For example, in early 1989 student activists in Central Java involved in campaigning against the Kedung Ombo dam development were visited by a prominent military officer whom they considered to be ‘Benny’s right-hand man.’ Although he was initially disguised as a journalist, students soon recognised him. After questioning them, he concluded by telling them to contact him: ‘If you need anything, if you wish to criticise Suharto, if you need funds, if you need posters or anything like that.’ He also offered to put them in contact with the Fraksi-ABRI and handed them an envelope containing money. The students were somewhat perplexed by this approach, rejected the money and did not pursue his offers.<sup>3</sup>

Many student activists recounted similar stories of being approached by military intelligence officers. For example, a regular pattern of contacts began in late 1989 involving some Jakarta student activists. The officers would typically initiate these contacts (often by taking the students into custody) and begin by seeking information about their activities. This would often lead to more general discussions, with the students attempting to seek information on elite conflicts. Although the officers never openly criticised the President, they offered tit-bits concerning conflicts or scandals involving senior officials. They also indicated sympathy with

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Vatikiotis (1993, p. 162; 5), goes as far to argue that ‘Students were persuaded to demonstrate...’ and were ‘seemingly guided...’ by elements of the military who were critical of President Suharto. Anderson (1989, p. 66) refers more cautiously to ‘rumours’ that student activism ‘has been quietly encouraged by senior military personnel.’ See also Ichlasul Amal in an interview headlined ‘Gerakan Mahasiswa Manifestasi Persaingan Antarelite Politik’ (The Student Movement is a Manifestation of Competition within the Political Elite) in *Suara Merdeka*, December 7, 1991. The issues raised in this section are also discussed in Aspinall, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> See for example ‘Blak-Blakan di UGM’, *Tempo*, October 28, 1989, p. 30 and ‘Lesehan dengan wakil rakyat’, *Editor*, October 28, 1989, p. 27, reporting on a visit by members of the DPR Komisi II to Gadjah Mada university in Yogyakarta, where Colonel Roekmini invited students to communicate all their ‘grumbles’ to the legislators.

<sup>3</sup> Confidential interviews with Salatiga students, March 1994, and in Jakarta, November 1993.



student aims and ‘encouraged’ (*mendorong*) them to continue protesting. On at least some occasions money was exchanged.<sup>1</sup>

A number of informants in East and Central Java informed me of occasional similar approaches (although activists there tended to be more suspicious of the military), especially in 1993-94. Intelligence officers frequently visited the boarding houses which served as student meeting places, and were again mainly concerned to discuss students’ activities. But they also often professed sympathy, sometimes specifically indicating that they were disillusioned with President Suharto and his family’s corruption.<sup>2</sup>

Many activists also carefully noted the military response to demonstrations, especially when it appeared there was particular lenience when demonstrators attacked President Suharto. This was first apparent in early 1993 when, before and coinciding with the MPR session, some students took the especially bold move of protesting against Suharto’s re-election. The first occurred at a January PDI leadership meeting in Bogor, where Aldera students demanded the PDI ‘not to go along with (*ikut-ikutan*) putting forward Suharto’s name as a Presidential candidate.’<sup>3</sup> Although the military used standard brutality, it was a surprise to many involved that none of the protestors taken into custody were formally charged.<sup>4</sup> Students who demonstrated right outside the MPR as it met on March 9, despite a heavy security presence, were allowed to proceed (albeit very briefly) in full view of the press. Only five were arrested (and were held for just over 24 hours), others were apparently ushered out of harm’s way and onto passing buses by Kodam officers.<sup>5</sup>

In December 1993 about 100 students were allowed by security personnel to protest for several hours in the DPR lobby. During this time they attacked Suharto very forthrightly, holding a banner reading ‘*Seret Presiden ke Sidang Istimewa MPR*’ (Drag the President to an Extraordinary Session of the MPR) and shouting ‘*Gantung Suharto*’ (Hang Suharto). However, the focus of the demonstration was the ‘security approach,’ including a call for the dissolution of *Bakorstanas*. According to a number of informants it was only when the students began to

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<sup>1</sup> Intensive contact continued until 1992, when most of it ceased following strong criticism by students from Central Java. The information in this paragraph is based on interviews with a number of liberal-populist students in 1993-94.

<sup>2</sup> In the recollection of one activist from Semarang, a BAIS (military intelligence) officer told him when visiting his *kos* (boarding house): ‘We share the same vision, we’ve both been disappointed and we should work together to overthrow Suharto’: interview with students from Semarang, February 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Aldera, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> See for example *Republika* or *Media Indonesia*, January 12, 1993; interviews with Unas students, 1993-4.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Universitas Nasional students, May 1993. It should be noted, however, that this demonstration, too, was violently dispersed: *Solidaritas Rakyat untuk Demokrasi*, 1993. In 1993 demonstrations against SDSB, many students were even given lifts in military trucks. On November 10 one anti-SDSB demonstration was allowed to proceed to the Presidential palace. These protests thus excited much speculation of military motives. Student participants I spoke to were universally surprised by the unusually soft-gloved approach of the military. It was commonly believed that this was because of the involvement of members of the Suharto family in the foundation running the lottery.

abuse the military that they were attacked, leading to the arrest and subsequent trial of 21 of them. This led many in student and elite opposition circles to criticise the protesters for attacking two competing powers at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

According to several students detained at anti-Suharto protests, interrogation was sometimes directed at ascertaining whether they were anti-military or merely opposed to the President, with students' insistence on the latter sometimes seeming to ensure rapid release.<sup>2</sup>

Such experiences, and more general perception of conflict in the ruling elite, undoubtedly gave many students a sense of confidence from early in the rebirth of student activism in 1988-89.<sup>3</sup> However, they occurred in the context of considerable hostility toward the military, especially among the smaller radical groups. Unlike in the 1970s, when the 1966 coalition was a comparatively recent memory, the historical backdrop of the student movement of the late 1980s and 1990s was the hostile military-student relations of the 1970s. Contemporary activists often believed that the 1966 students helped disguise ABRI's seizure of power, and stressed their determination not to repeat their actions.

Thus, from the start, many students explicitly rejected being drawn into elite conflicts. Bandung student Ammarsyah, for example argued at his 1990 trial that the national leadership crisis approaching 1992-93 was of no concern to student activists because '... the issue of succession is not a requirement of the common people.'<sup>4</sup> Many strongly opposed contemplating collaboration with even anti-Suharto military elements or even tailoring demands to focus on one particular 'elite faction,' such as the Suharto camp. Students linked to the PRD were particularly anti-militarist, frequently characterising the political system as 'fascist' and from

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with student activists, December 1993-March 1994. This demonstration was organised by FAMI, one of the liberal-populist networks mentioned above. See the interview with one of the students, Yeni Damayanti, in *Editor*, April 28, 1994. Press coverage of the arrests and trials (and, indeed, the trials themselves) concentrated on the attacks the students made on Suharto, all but ignoring their criticisms of the military. For an interesting discussion of this case and its implications concerning tensions in the regime, see Prasetyo, 1994. Following the first session of the trial one student activist remarked to me: '[In the courtroom] we shouted 'hang Suharto' and all of the military people there didn't touch us. If we'd insulted the military - we would have been wiped out.'

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with a range of student activists, 1993-94. In one case, a senior military officer, generally considered to be a Moerdani protégé, attended an interrogation and was very friendly toward the students, even providing his private phone number.

<sup>3</sup> For one example, student activist Miftah Fauzie Moestahal (1989), in a paper presented to a 1989 workshop of student activists in Bandung suggested that student demonstrations had 'given rise to signals from certain factions in the body of the state...The military has generally treated student actions extremely permissively, which would almost certainly not have happened had they been carried out four or five years ago.' See also an article entitled 'Demokrasi Sebagai Agenda Gerakan Mahasiswa' [Democracy as the Agenda of the Student Movement], in the magazine produced by the Bandung group KPMURI (*Komite Pergerakan Mahasiswa untuk Rakyat Indonesia*, Student Movement Committee for the Indonesian People), *Realita* No. 1, April 1992, p. 28-32. This also notes a new 'permissive attitude' by authorities toward student demonstrations, and urges students to 'seize' the opportunity to develop a mass-based movement. For a slightly later article, see an analysis produced by the Jakarta group, Yayasan Pijar, of Minister for Defence and Security Edi Sudradjat's critical comment after the banning of the three magazines in mid-1994: 'Sycophancy', *Kabar dari Pijar*, June 27, 1994, p. 1. The article praises the Minister for his 'freshness of vision and sharpness of analysis' in criticising the ban.

<sup>4</sup> Ammarsyah, 1990, p. 228-9

about 1993 including abolition of *dwifungsi* as an explicit demand at their demonstrations.<sup>1</sup> Although these students accepted the need to be cognizant of splits within the ruling elite, they argued that the appropriate response was to escalate mobilisation: ‘The emergence of popular resistance can *encourage (mendorong)* splits in the Suharto regime itself.’<sup>2</sup> Anti-militarism, of course, was not monopolised by left-wing groups; many others rejected any hint of conciliation with the military.<sup>3</sup>

From at least early 1993, however, there was increased focus on Suharto and his family in some demonstrations, in campus publications and in the anonymous leaflets which circulated in activist circles.<sup>4</sup> This was partly a simple matter of students expressing long-standing moral reprehension toward the President in the increasingly open political context of the mid-1990s. It was also a time when his family’s deprivations were becoming increasingly obvious. However, it also reflected some students’ assessment that it was advantageous to concentrate criticisms against the President, given that a certain space seemed to exist for doing so and the risks entailed in frontally assaulting the military. Some students, especially from various liberal-populist groups, also agreed with the kinds of arguments made by Forum Demokrasi intellectuals, which viewed Suharto as the main obstacle to democratisation.<sup>5</sup> Among many activists there was a half-joking tendency to describe all social and political injustices as being ‘because of Suharto’. There was even an acronym to describe this concept: *UUS - Ujung-ujungnya Suharto*, which, roughly translated, means ‘something which can be traced back to Suharto.’ And so, in the mid-1990s, one body of student activist opinion argued that criticism of any political problem should be directed back to Suharto: all criticism should be ‘*di-UUS-kan*.’<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One tactic consciously pursued at the campus level by activists from this current was to campaign against the Menwa (student regiments), as a means of encouraging anti-militarist sentiment in the broader student body.

<sup>2</sup> PRD, 1996, p. 33 (italics in original). For an earlier example, see Panitia Nasional Sarasehan Pekerja Sosial, 1994 (this is the ‘proposal’ which circulated prior to the meeting where the PRD was formed). It makes it clear that the ‘political crisis of the fascist regime’, including deepening internal divisions, was one key consideration underpinning the decision to launch the PRD as a legal organisation.

<sup>3</sup> One tactic was to accept military invitations for informal dialogue, but to use them to denounce the military’s political role. An example was a February 25, 1994 ‘open-dialogue’ with student activists requested by the Chief of the East Java Territorial Command, Major General Haris Sudarno. Activists from FKMS used this opportunity to demonstrate their opposition to the ‘security approach’ and advocate dissolution of *Bakorstanas*: *Surya*, February 25, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> For example the first 1993 edition of the Yogyakarta IAIN Sunan Kalijaga student magazine *Arena*, which detailed the business interests of the Suharto family and was subsequently banned.

<sup>5</sup> In the words of one informant: ‘How many times have we criticised the DPR for being unrepresentative and ineffective, as being a bunch of clowns? But it’s been impossible to make any changes to it - because in the end it always come back to Suharto.’ The same person described the focus on Suharto as an ‘entry point’ for a struggle for structural change.

<sup>6</sup> This approach was succinctly expressed by the sticker *Yayasan Pijar* chairperson Nuku Suleiman was convicted for five years’ imprisonment for distributing at a November 1993 anti SDSB demonstration: *Soeharto: Dalang Segala Bencana: SDSB, Nipah, Haur Koneng, Dili, Tanjung Priok* (Soeharto: Mastermind of all disasters: SDSB, Nipah, Haur Koneng, Dili, Tanjung Priok.) Nipah and Haur Koneng refer to incidents where civilians were killed in Madura and West Java in 1993, Dili refers to the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre and Tanjung Priok refers to the massacre in Jakarta’s port district in 1984. In the same way, anti-Suharto slogans were injected into a wide range of protests. See for example a poster carried by a demonstrator at a Bapindo demonstration, which is visible in a photograph on p. 23 of *Editor*,

For a time, this approach prompted lively debate among student activists. At several meetings I attended in late 1993 and early 1994 some radicals argued that anti-Suharto students were playing into the hands of the military, risking a repeat of 1966 and aiming only for change in ‘person’ rather than ‘structure.’<sup>1</sup> The counter view was that personification of power meant that Suharto himself represented a ‘structural’ obstacle to democratisation.

However, the distinction became less relevant as Suharto loyalists took over key military commands from 1993-94.<sup>2</sup> With the decline of Moerdani-era malcontents, student activists knew that prospects of a serious break with Suharto in ABRI had receded. There was less tolerance for student protest and, by 1995, students who had earlier expressed interest in the potential consequences of military disillusionment were suggesting that there was ‘no difference’ between the military and the Presidential camp.<sup>3</sup> One result was that students from a range of groupings were able to unite on common platforms which combined both anti-Suharto (an ‘extraordinary session’ of the MPR) and anti-military (eliminate dwifungsi) slogans.<sup>4</sup>

Military discontent clearly did influence the evolution of student activism from the late 1980s. But it must be concluded that its role in triggering student protest was minor and indirect. Certainly, none of the student activist groups on which this chapter has mainly focused seriously considered an alliance with military elements, as did some in more elite opposition circles.<sup>5</sup>

## **5. The Turn to the Masses**

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March 3, 1994: ‘*Kasus Nuku, Kasus Ria Irawan, Kasus Bapindo, Semuanya UUS*’ (The Nuku, Ria Irawan and Bapindo cases are all UUS). Nuku Suleiman was on trial at this time. Ria Irawan was a movie star linked to a scandal surrounding the death by a drug overdose of a young businessman in Jakarta in early 1994. This scandal was the subject of much rumor in opposition circles concerning the possible involvement of Suharto’s grandson, Ari Sigit. For a later report canvassing Sigit’s involvement, see *Tajuk*, July 1-9, 1998, p. 12-25.

<sup>1</sup> Similar criticisms were made concerning FAMI’s emphasis on Suharto in an article entitled ‘An Evaluation to Incident of December 14 1993’ in *Indonesian Mobilization* (September 1993-January 1994, no 2), an English language newsheet produced by some of the more radical activists. In many student meetings, comparisons were made with the replacement of Marcos in the Philippines, which many radical students considered resulted in no meaningful structural change.

<sup>2</sup> One early sign of this was an immediate hardening of rhetoric against students by the new breed of military leaders. See for example statements by ABRI Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs Hartono, suggesting that the student movement was becoming ‘destructive’ and opposed to ABRI. Wahono, the DPR/MPR speaker, immediately contradicted the statement: ‘Bila Kassospol ABRI Menggugat Demo Mahasiswa’, *DèTik*, March 9-22, 1994, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with liberal-populist students, November-December 1995.

<sup>4</sup> This was apparent, for example, in a Jakarta protest by a coalition of student and other groups which labeled itself ‘Oposisi Indonesia’ on October 28 1995: ‘Meretas Jalan Oposisi’, *Suara Independen*, No. 05, October - November 1995, p. 13 – 4; Fieldnotes, October 1995. This protest was partly a response to the OTB campaign which had recently been launched by Feisal Tanjung and other palace officers.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, there were many rumours that this or that student activist was close to military patrons, even took orders from them. But this is hardly surprising in a movement which was deeply penetrated by agents and informers.

If one feature of the small populist groups which emerged from the late 1980s was aversion to elite politics, we have already seen that they were mostly highly attracted to the idea of the ‘*rakyat*’, and many became directly involved in the political problems of the poor, especially land disputes and industrial conflict. This closely resembled the development of student activism in countries like South Korea and the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> But it was a novel development for New Order Indonesia.<sup>2</sup>

Early attempts to make links with subordinate classes began in the mid-1980s, as some study groups members turned to ‘structural’ theories and sought alternatives to the ‘elitist’ approaches of the 1970s. Early contacts with poor communities were achieved via existing NGOs, new organisations established especially for the purpose, or existing study groups.<sup>3</sup>

The first really intense involvement of students in lower class issues came with land dispute campaigns from late 1988. Disputes over land had been common through the New Order. But their pace accelerated through the 1980s as infrastructure development and industrialisation encroached more into rural areas. Prominent early cases involving students included Kedung Ombo (a dam development) and Cilacap (petrochemical plant) in Central Java, Badega (tea plantation), Cimacan (golf course) and Jatiwangi (a dispute over land owned by the airforce) in West Java. In such cases, whether developers were state agencies or private developers, they frequently deprived residents of their land without any real consultation, little or no compensation, and no legal recourse. They were assisted by inadequacies in land registration and general absence of legal protection for private citizens. Typically, local government and ABRI officials acted in concert with developers, using intimidatory and violent methods to enforce acquisition.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Dong, 1987. There was a direct influence from these countries. Since the study group days of the mid-1980s, some Indonesian student activists closely followed and attempted to emulate the radical student activism of South Korea, the Philippines and other countries. There were widespread allegations that some activists went to the Philippines to receive training from that country’s left.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1970s, there had been very limited contact between student activists and subordinate classes. Before *Malari*, for example, students from UI developed links with Jakarta becak drivers and dock workers from Tanjung Priok; in 1977 students from Bandung visited Krawang and other parts of West Java, then in the midst of a devastating famine: interview with Indro Tjahjono, November 29, 1993. ITB students also visited rural areas to seek data on the implementation of the 1977 elections. According to Tjahjono, although students at this time had an interest in the poor and their problems, and had a genuine desire to interact with them, such activity was in its infancy and tended to be exceptional.

<sup>3</sup> In Bandung, for example, students assisted LBH in analysing and developing policy on a land dispute in Cimarak as early as 1983, although they did not publicly demonstrate on the issue until approximately 1987: interviews with Harry Wibowo, October 9, 1993 and Paskah Irianto, March 19, 1994. Sometimes, early student efforts were somewhat disillusioning, when students found it difficult to bring about immediate change in political outlook among those they contacted. For example, Yayasan Kepodang, a small group of UI history students established an informal education group based on Paulo Friere’s teachings for village youth in the Sukabumi area. The students were disappointed when factors like economic pressures (causing the frequent departure of youth to urban areas to seek work) meant that it was impossible to maintain the project. Interview with Nugroho Katjasungkana, July 13, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of some of the issues involved in such land disputes see Lucas, 1992 & 1997; Hariadi & Masruchah, 1995; and Stanley, 1994, which presents a detailed analysis of the Kedung Ombo land dispute, and includes, at p. 134-172, an extended discussion of the student campaign on the issue.

Local people in such cases were usually very receptive to whatever assistance students, or anybody else, could offer them. ('They viewed us as gods', student activists would often reply when interviewed about initial reactions by village people to their offers of assistance). Often students would make initial contacts via NGOs, or individual students with personal connections in the local area. Then, typically, a number of students would 'live in' in the affected area, in order to become trusted by the local people and to document and assess the case. This initial period could last up to several months, depending on the level of fear in the community and the proclivities of the students involved. As the campaign developed, student activists would provide local community members with training, which might range from basic organisational matters and analysis of the case in hand, to *penyadaran* (consciousness-raising) on legal and political rights, even more complex matters of political theory. They would also sometimes assist exploring legal avenues of appeal, in conjunction with relevant NGOs, like LBH or SKEPHI. Above all, students assisted planning and organising protest campaigns, which usually demanded either cessation of land alienation or higher compensation. Such campaigns could involve demonstrations by students and local people in the area of the dispute, in regional capitals, or in Jakarta.

After about 1992, the organisation of industrial workers became a major priority for some students and former student activists, especially from the popular-radical current (but not only those affiliated to the PRD). From an early stage, several study groups were especially interested in the working class as a potentially strategic political force.<sup>1</sup> But interest expanded rapidly during the post-1990 upsurge of industrial unrest. Student involvement in labour organising followed a pattern similar to that in rural communities. Activists might visit or live in workers' quarters; sometimes they would leave their studies altogether and take jobs in factories known for poor working conditions or histories of labour unrest. Student activists again saw their main role as providing consciousness-raising and facilitating organisation. Particularly militant workers were singled out for attention, and through a slow and laborious process, informal networks would be constructed within and between factories. Students would then 'socialise' (*sosialisasi*) basic demands and concepts regarding the right to strike and other legal entitlements, the dignity of labour and its role in production, how to plan actions to maximise impact on company profitability and so forth. Often the medium term result was the organisation of strikes. As well as winning particular economic demands, the aim was to

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<sup>1</sup> Such interest increased as material from the radical movements of South Korea filtered into student circles in the late 1980s. Among small groups of leftist student activists, especially those with more intellectual inclinations, mostly in Yogyakarta, Jakarta and Bandung, the turn to the working class was also related to a debate about Indonesian social formation, in turn partly related to foreign models. Some students, under the influence of the Philippines left and Maoism, characterised Indonesian society as 'semi-feudal, semi-capitalist', with a concomitant influence on the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. This influence was particularly strong in the 1980s, stimulated by interest in the popular upsurge against the Marcos regime. Others argued for a 'semi-colonial, semi-capitalist' formulation, with an emphasis on the working class. This position was strengthened by the rise of industrial unrest in Indonesia, the influence of South Korea and the crisis of the left in the Philippines, eventually becoming dominant and resulting in, for example, the PRD's emphasis on the industrial working class.

increase the workers' militancy, organisation, and self-reliance. This was often conceptualised as assisting the construction of a cohesive and class conscious working class. Initially, due to extensive military intervention in labour disputes, students went to great pains to hide their involvement in industrial activism. As we have seen, from 1995 militant students openly supported striking workers.

Involvement in such work among subordinate classes often required significant personal transformation, given that most students came from privileged, urban backgrounds. Transforming themselves into organisers of industrial workers or rural farmers was often a great cultural challenge. Many did not adjust well; there are tales of well-meaning students being unable to communicate with rural people because of inability to adapt their mode of speech, dress and behaviour. For some, working among the poor was a temporary experience, after which they would return to campus. For others it involved considerable personal sacrifice, for which the phrase *bunuh diri kelas* ('class suicide') was sometimes used. Living in conditions of often considerable privation, suspending or leaving university education, adopting the idiom of the common people, wearing their clothing: all of this could mean abandoning the dreams of material progress fostered in the nation's new middle class society. Additionally, there were considerable risks involved, because security forces used more unconstrained violence among subordinate classes than in campus protests.<sup>1</sup>

The 'turn to the masses' was clearly an extension of the populist evolution of thinking in critical intellectual circles over the previous decade. It also resulted from the radicalisation of sections of student politics produced by political marginalisation under NKK/BKK. But different activist groups' motivations for seeking political alliances with subordinate classes varied greatly. Especially in the early years there were distinct romantic-populist overtones.<sup>2</sup> For some students, working to defend the poor was primarily a moral calling; for others, it was a tactic to adopt when repression made direct attacks on the government impossible (and once conditions opened up some students re-oriented to issues of 'national' importance, like the Presidency). Many activists, especially those working with NGOs like LBH, viewed such work as an opportunity to extend legal protection to disenfranchised groups, thus working toward the *negara hukum*. Some who worked among industrial workers described themselves as social democratic and were essentially interested only in establishing trade unions, arguing it was inappropriate to prematurely engage workers in political activity. Others, especially from the

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<sup>1</sup> Although most students who were *tried* after 1989 were not detained for their involvement in land or labour disputes, most informants indicated firstly, that in general peasants and workers themselves tend to be treated more harshly than students, and that, secondly, students involved in such cases generally faced greater risk of torture and brutal treatment than in other kinds of activities.

<sup>2</sup> The term '*turun ke rakyat*' (literally, 'going down to the people') used to describe the process is strikingly reminiscent of the ill-fated 19<sup>th</sup> Century 'going to the people' movement in Russia. The term also has an Indonesian pedigree on both the left and the right. The PKI used the term '*turba*' (*turun ke bawah* - going down below) to describe mass work, while *Angkatan 66* students used '*turun ke desa*' (going down to the village) to describe social work activities. My thanks to Dr. Harold Crouch for this point.

PRD, argued that organising subordinate classes was crucial for achieving democratisation and an egalitarian social order.

What did unite the majority of such student activists, however, was an insistence that their aim was the eventual ‘empowerment’ (*pemberdayaan*) of subordinate classes. In its widest sense, this meant fostering a sense of self-respect and dignity. To this end, activists organised theatre groups and published journals where workers and village people could express their views about their living conditions, problems of daily life, desires and aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Empowerment also implied facilitating the development of mass organisations for subordinate groups. After the early land dispute campaigns of the late 1980s, many student activists concluded that their own involvement had overshadowed the affected communities. Thereafter, students often focused on training peasant or worker organisers and building local networks, where their role was not so prominent.<sup>2</sup>

This raises the matter of political agency: to what extent were student activists (and more broadly, other middle class activists involved in NGOs and kindred organisations) crucial to the increased labour and peasant activism from the late 1980s? Clearly, such activists played an important role in organising particular campaigns, and shaping and articulating the interests of subordinate classes in them. For example, land disputes only attracted national media attention when students assisted affected communities to organise demonstrations in 1989-90. It is hardly unusual, of course, for middle class elements to play ‘midwife’ roles during early stages of lower class mobilisation. But it is also important not to exaggerate the middle class role. Signs of growing industrial and rural unrest was evident from at least the late 1970s. Even in the 1990s, students and other activists became involved in particular land disputes usually only after they had been alerted to their existence by media coverage. Most industrial strikes seemed to occur ‘spontaneously’, without the influence of student or NGO activists, facilitated instead by the mobility and growing literacy of the labour force.<sup>3</sup> Students and other middle class

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<sup>1</sup> For example, *Cerita Kami* (‘Our Story’) was a regular publication of the *Yayasan Maju Bersama* (Advance Together Foundation – a group based around a nucleus of UI students) which incorporated stories written by workers about their experiences of daily life, working conditions and industrial campaigns. Compare this with the emergence of similar working class literature in South Korea: Koo, 1993b, p. 151-55.

<sup>2</sup> It remained difficult to judge the extent of progress in this endeavour, given a political climate which made it difficult for organisations representing lower class groups to operate openly. Where such organisations emerged publicly (for example, SBSI or PPBI), their spokespeople tended to be drawn from the student activist groups and NGOs which facilitated their birth. But below the public level, underground and informal organising, where members of lower class groups themselves played a more direct role, developed substantially. My own observations in West Java in 1993-94 for example indicated a significant level of organisation and political consciousness in villages where students had campaigned on land disputes. In these villages, local people met together on a regular basis, discussed tactics and strategy, and only sought out assistance from students and NGOs when they considered it necessary.

<sup>3</sup> There were several indicators which assisted in identifying to what extent planning had gone into the organisation of strikes, which in turn often indicated the involvement of student, NGO or other outside organisers. Indicators included the day of the week on which the strike was held (a Monday or Tuesday usually indicated that it had been carefully prepared on the Sunday) and the demands made (a long and elaborate list, especially in a first strike at a particular factory, usually indicated the involvement of outsiders).



activists were thus influenced by the popular upsurge as much as they influenced it. The deepening socio-economic gap and other social and political problems linked to industrialisation, early inchoate protests by lower class groups: such factors conditioned the growing populist tendencies of student activism from the mid-1980s. The campaigns on 'populist' issues organised by students and other bodies like NGOs in turn, via the national press, had significant impact on political sensibilities of broader middle class layers, implanting a deep awareness of social inequality.

## **6. Conclusion**

During the mid-1990s it was difficult to speak of a cohesive student movement in Indonesia. As we have seen, after the late 1980s, student activism increasingly merged with different social and political forces. Some students became involved in the emerging activism of subordinate classes, others looked to dissident elite circles. A distinctly Islamic student movement emerged, in part linked to networks which reached into the state via ICMI. The diversification of student activism thus reflected the emergence of a more diverse civil society and a wider spectrum of political forces. It also must be understood as a result of the NKK/BKK restrictions on campus-based student activism and the consequent search by the most highly motivated students for off-campus political strategies.<sup>1</sup>

Despite increased heterogeneity, however, the *ideal* of a cohesive student movement did survive: hence, for example, the frequency of calls from all manner of student groups to go 'back to campus', re-emphasise basic campus recruitment work, colonise student representative institutions, and suchlike. Activists succeeded in these aims on certain campuses, like Unas in Jakarta or UGM in Yogyakarta, which became highly politicised. Students remained the social group with the overall highest rate of anti-government political organisation and mobilisation.

Even if student activism in 1989-95 assumed new forms and was less cohesive than in the 1970s, this should not imply that it was less important. On the contrary, students pioneered new forms of political action and assisted political activation of subordinate social groups. Overall, they had an important impact on the politics of *keterbukaan*, especially by testing and expanding the political space for new forms of protest. In the words of one activist: 'we would demonstrate and see whether we were arrested. If we weren't then we'd move on to a higher level.'<sup>2</sup> In this way, public protest became re-established as a normal part of political life in the 1990s.

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, it might be argued that the depoliticisation policies put into effect by the government favoured student radicalisation.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Nuku Suleiman, September 7, 1993.

However, caution is still called for. Most students remained politically inactive during *keterbukaan*. Indeed, many of the more radical student groups openly decried the ‘apolitical’, ‘materialistic’ and ‘consumption-oriented’ attitudes of their classmates, as if to underline their own minority status.<sup>1</sup> While economic prosperity lasted, most students were clearly inclined to concentrate on their studies and future careers. It was for this reason, above all, that the ideal of a strong, united and mass-based student movement could not be realised, at least until the economic and political crisis of 1998.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, one ITB student newspaper in 1990 argued that students increasingly originated from upper and middle class backgrounds, were obsessed with consumption, indifferent to politics (except where their right to consume was affected) and ‘allergic to change’: ‘Orientasi Kemahasiswaan: Di antara Idealisme Egaliter dan Ideologi Pembangunan’, *Ganesha*, No. 3, Aug. 1990, p. 3-6, 16 at p. 7-8. For similar references, see Aspinall, 1991, p. 79-80.

## Chapter Seven

### Megawati and the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*

Student activists, NGOs, and elite dissidents all operated more or less outside the official, New Order corporatist framework, being exemplars of civil society, dissidence, alegal, even illegal opposition. The PDI, in contrast, was a creation of government and was integrally involved in the formal political system.

From its foundation in 1973, the PDI had been a ‘semi-opposition’ in every sense. By formally participating in the official political domain, especially general elections and legislatures, it subjected itself to numerous explicit and implicit limitations. Government intervention in the party was constant and deep: candidates for leadership at all levels were ‘screened’, military and Interior Ministry officials invariably attended important party functions and the party largely depended on government funding. It did not make fundamental criticisms of the regime, and its political program was undeveloped.<sup>1</sup>

And yet, in the mid-1990s the PDI came to represent the greatest political challenge to the regime, when Sukarno’s eldest daughter Megawati Soekarnoputri became its leader. It also had a mass base which far exceeded any of those other groups. In part, this was because the PDI was more than the organisational shell which appeared in the formal arena. Party structures were grafted onto deeply rooted political forces and its popular strength relied on informal and personalistic mechanisms and appeals.

The following pages are mainly comprised of a chronological account of the period under party leader Soerjadi, Megawati’s rise and the challenge represented by the party under her leadership. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the various factors which underpinned the Megawati phenomenon.

#### **1. The Historical Legacy**

There was another important difference from the groups studied in preceding chapters. While these could all, directly or indirectly, trace their origins to the old ‘New Order coalition’, the PDI was, in the main, descended from one of the major victims of 1965-66.

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike most of the groups discussed in the previous chapters, it was difficult to obtain written documents from the PDI which contained anything beyond the vaguest statements of principle. In part this was because its formal ‘program’ included documents like the GBHN, the ‘Broad Outline of State Policy’ adopted every five years by the MPR.

The PNI and its affiliates fared badly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Some party leaders were imprisoned and many were harassed. Many lost their jobs, student supporters were driven from universities. Virtually the entire party base in the civil service was excised by 'monoloyalty' and absorbed into Golkar. The PNI left-wing was eliminated, and the large centre was mostly cowed. Right-wing leaders amenable to army dominance were handed control of the party.<sup>1</sup> Decades later, former PNI members talked of the decade following the birth of the New Order as a period of deep fear, paralysis and 'vacuum' in the party's grass roots.<sup>2</sup>

The party was poorly equipped for the new hostile environment. Having being wedded to government for so long, its members had little experience of independent politics. Cut off from former sources of state protection, they became bewildered and paralysed. Moreover, the PNI had from the late 1950s endorsed Sukarno's shift to authoritarianism, and all the ideological packaging which went with it. When the new government extended Sukarno's ideological formulae - Pancasila, the 'family principle' and so on - to justify further restrictions on political contestation, the party was unable to respond effectively. After all, Sukarnoists themselves rejected concepts like 'opposition' as part of alien, liberal culture.

So, unlike political Islam (which never faced repression like that experienced by Nationalists in 1965-68, and which had a coherent counter-ideology), Nationalists became largely passive and ineffective from the early 1970s. In 1971 the PNI attained 6.9% of the vote. In 1973 it was forced into the undignified merger into the PDI with four small secular and Christian parties, although as a result of their greater numbers, PNI members continued to dominate the new party.

Over the next fifteen years the PDI became, in Hamish McDonald's words, a 'docile partner' of government.<sup>3</sup> It was dominated by a layer of accommodationist leaders who were dependent on the patronage and *restu* ('blessing') of government officials. Even during election campaigns such leaders stressed their loyalty to key tenets of the New Order and denied that the party represented an opposition. They rarely opposed government legislation in the DPR and always endorsed Suharto's re-election. Even the most critical party leaders could only plaintively call for the proper implementation of the ideals of 'Pancasila democracy.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For discussions of the PNI in this period, see McIntyre, 1972; Ward 1974, p. 134-67.

<sup>2</sup> The label PNI-ASU (standing for PNI Ali-Surachman, an abbreviation of the names of the party's general chairperson and secretary; 'asu' is also Javanese for 'dog') continued to be deployed for many years as an effective method for reawakening fear among supporters of the party. For example, 'PNI-ASU' was identified by government and military spokespersons as one of the groups responsible for Malari and several Sukarnoist leaders were detained.

<sup>3</sup> McDonald, 1980, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> The statement produced by the first PDI congress in 1976 (*Kongres Pertama PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia) untuk Demokrasi, Kebangsaan dan Keadilan Sosial*), for example, stressed that the party was 'based on' the GBHN, hence committing it to all major policy pillars of the New Order (PDI, 1976, p. 84). Party leaders argued that *kekeluargaan*, the family principle, *kebersamaan*, togetherness and *musyawarah*, mutual deliberation, required full PDI participation in government. For instance, the first

Such docility reflected the repressive tenor of the times and continued fear in the party's grass roots. On the surface, however, the immediate cause of the party's problems was debilitating factional conflict. During the 1970s and early 1980s no party congress took place without uproar, there were bitter splits in every DPP (*Dewan Pimpinan Pusat*, Central Leadership Board), public expulsions and counter-expulsions of leading members, occupations and sit-ins in party buildings, and fierce public battles for control of regional branches.

Internal disputes partly flowed from the enforced cohabitation within the PDI of five very different political organisms. The struggle for *unsur* ('element') representation was a recurring theme in internal strife.<sup>1</sup> But most key protagonists were from the PNI and, overall, there was a striking absence of ideological or policy differences in the conflicts. Instead, competition for leadership positions and patronage resources was the driving force. Prior to the New Order, the PNI was oiled by funds secured by leaders entrenched in the bureaucracy. 'Monoloyalty' stripped the PNI and its successor of these resources and made competition for remaining patronage sources increasingly desperate. With career paths in the bureaucracy closed for ambitious party members, competition intensified for regional and national leadership positions. These were stepping stones for the greater prizes of seats in regional and national legislatures, which in turn meant access to various unofficial financial benefits and business opportunities.<sup>2</sup> With these, PDI leaders could then build their own client bases to mobilise in internal disputes and assist moving up the party hierarchy.

Factional disputes facilitated, and were encouraged by, government intervention. In conditions where 'screening' was routine, party leadership aspirants were virtually required to attach themselves to patrons in the ruling elite. In the regions such patrons might be local military commanders, Interior Ministry officials or the local Governor. At the centre they were Generals, Ministers and other players in national politics. In both cases, the aim was to secure backing in party conflicts and access to unofficial funds.

This system resulted in the PDI's domination by a layer of thoroughly domesticated party bureaucrats and a spiral of conflict and intervention. Through the 1970s and 1980s, government

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PDI congress proposed full PDI participation in the 'planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation' of the Five Year Plans (*Repelita*) and party leaders called for cabinet representation (ibid. p. 112, 191).

<sup>1</sup> The issue of 'completing fusion' thus became an important issue in many of the conflicts of the 1970s and early 1980s: Kaisiepo, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> For example, many regional PDI bosses who held seats in local DPRD (regional legislatures) which spent much of their time overseeing regional development plans, could utilise their positions to make links with, for example, local Department of Public Works officials, and hence develop successful careers for themselves as building and construction contractors on government funded projects. This assessment is based on interviews with various PDI members, and activists close to the PDI, in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Surabaya, in late 1995 and late 1996. The Department of Public Works - construction link was most commonly cited by those interviewed, in part because this Department employed many individuals with PNI or GMNI backgrounds.

and military leaders repeatedly supported a particular PDI leadership team, only to shortly afterwards provide its factional opponents with financial support, political recognition, and media access. Next, officials would cite ‘internal conflict’ to justify intervention in leadership selection (as in 1979, when Kopkamtib commander Admiral Sudomo assumed direct control of party affairs).<sup>1</sup> In this way, the government sidelined even moderately independent leaders and cultivated a constant state of disorder in the PDI, which ultimately benefited Golkar.

## **2. The Soerjadi Period: 1986-1993**

Despite some early signs of a Sukarnoist revival from the late 1970s<sup>2</sup>, the PDI reached a new nadir under Sunawar Sukowati as party leader (1982-86). This was encapsulated by its 1981 adoption of ‘four political attitudes,’ including a proposition that the ‘PDI unites itself with the national leadership of President Suharto.’ Its most independent leaders were forced out or left in disgust (even Sukarno’s children made a ‘family consensus’ not to support any party).<sup>3</sup>

Even so, the party remained torn by intense factional warfare.<sup>4</sup> In April 1986, the party’s third congress ended in chaotic deadlock. Delegates called on Interior Minister, Soepardjo Roestam to form the new DPP.<sup>5</sup> Roestam appointed a new board consisting mostly of ‘New Order generation’ leaders. The new General Chairperson, Soerjadi, had headed the pro-military wing

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<sup>1</sup> Sudomo took control from a leadership team which was itself directly appointed by the government. In 1975, after serious conflict between the supporters of two PDI leaders, Isnaeni and Sunawar Sukowati, the government stepped in and appointed Sanusi Hardjadinata and Professor Usep Ranawidjaja to head the party. The Sanusi-Usep duo survived the open conflict of the first party congress, but they soon proved to be somewhat independent and critical of the government. In January 1978, Yoga Sugama of Bakin and General Ali Moertopo forced through a new ‘compromise board’ which included many of Sanusi and Usep’s factional enemies. After Sudomo took personal control, he forbade party leaders from speaking to the press and appointed a committee to organise the upcoming second party congress in 1981. Sanusi resigned in protest, while Usep and several allies were eventually expelled from the DPP and recalled from the DPR. The congress went on to elect the most compliant leadership of the PDI yet, under Chairperson Sunawar Sukowati. See van Dijk, 1979, p. 117-143; 1981, p. 101-124.

<sup>2</sup> Tellingly, however, this mostly occurred under the sponsorship of government patrons. This was symbolised most graphically by the elaborate renovation of Sukarno’s gravesite by Ali Moertopo in 1978, and the groundswell in public interest in the former President which followed. On the renovation of Sukarno’s grave, see McDonald, 1980, p. 249-51. On the burst of publications about Sukarno and other expressions of interest in the former President, see Labrousse, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> See the interview with Rachmawati Soekarnoputri in *Editor*, October 3, 1987, p. 12. She says the decision was taken before the 1982 election. As noted in chapter two, in an illustration of the wider withdrawal into civil society then taking place, many disillusioned members withdrew from the party around this time and established ostensibly cultural and educational bodies to maintain their informal networks.

<sup>4</sup> This time conflict was between groups led by Sunawar Sukowati and DPP member Hardjantho. Although Hardjantho was reputedly formerly ‘PNI – ASU’, this was essentially a battle for office, with few discernible differences on matters of principle. Even Sukowati’s death in January 1986 failed to quell the conflict.

<sup>5</sup> For a report of the congress, see *Tempo*, April 19, 1986. In the words of one regional leader of the party (cited in Halawa, 1993, p. 7): ‘We don’t know which candidate is good and which is useless. So, we request you, Pak Minister who knows them, to take care of it and just get rid of the useless ones.’

of GMNI in the late 1960s, while Secretary General Nico Daryanto had a Catholic Party background.<sup>1</sup> Never before had a party's leaders been 'dropped' into their posts quite so openly.

The new PDI leaders had extensive links with the Moerdani camp. Soerjadi had long been associated with Ali Moertopo's OPSUS-CSIS group, which had good links with Moerdani from the late 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Daryanto also had CSIS ties.<sup>3</sup> Moerdani's influence was clearly important in their appointment.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of mounting elite tensions from the late 1980s it appears that a more critical PDI became a means for the Moerdani camp to pressure Sudharmono and, later, the Palace camp more generally. Certainly, during the Soerjadi years, there was much rumour about financial support from circles associated with Moerdani or the Wanandi brothers.<sup>5</sup> Moerdani himself told the press that the '*rakyat kecil*' (the 'small people') placed new hopes in the PDI.<sup>6</sup>

However, there had long been signs of restiveness in the Nationalist *aliran*, and pressures for reform were building within society more generally. This confluence of elite conflict from above and pressure from below provided the setting for the PDI to become more assertive.

The first test for the party was the 1987 election, during which ABRI was widely believed to be relatively 'neutral', or at least backed Golkar less vigorously than in the past. The PDI campaign was not markedly more critical than in previous elections. However, Soerjadi invited several prominent individuals including Sukarno's children, Megawati and Guruh, to

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<sup>1</sup> According to Halawa (1993, p. 9) one of the criteria used by Roestam in his choice of General Chairperson was that they could not 'smell' of 'PNI - ASU'. This worked in Soerjadi's favour, and in following years he repeatedly highlighted his 1966 credentials. Nico Daryanto had worked in managerial positions for various foreign companies, including Caltex and Dow Chemicals since the early 1960s and had been active in the Catholic party since the same time.

<sup>2</sup> Soerjadi's involvement had begun in the 1960s as one of the lonely GMNI representatives in KAMI. In the early 1970s he had participated prominently in Moertopo projects like KNPI (*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*, Indonesian National Youth Committee). From the early 1980s he had been appointed to the directorship of one of the Wanandi brothers' companies. This is alternatively named PT. Aica and PT Aica - Aibon: see *DëTik*, August 11-17, 1993, p. 11; Halawa, 1993, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> He was also the first PDI secretary general with a Catholic Party background, but claimed to have been plucked from relative obscurity, in party terms, to become the party secretary general, precisely because he had not been involved in previous conflicts: interview, October 24, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Daryanto, for example, claimed that he had his first inkling he would be secretary general when invited to meet Moerdani, who asked him to take on the post: interview October 24, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Soerjadi and Nico Daryanto publicly denied such reports: see for example interviews in *DëTik*, August 11-17, 1993, p. 8-9, 11.

<sup>6</sup> 'Si Garang dan Kampanye Kepala Banteng', *Tempo*, September 13 1986, p. 20. The party distributed copies of the speech where Moerdani made this remark to its branches and to local authorities: 'ABRI di antara Para Kontestan', *Tempo*, March 28, 1987, p. 30. My thanks to Marcus Mietzner for drawing my attention to these articles. From the start, Soerjadi and Daryanto frequently praised Moerdani and other ABRI leaders for their neutrality and openness. See for example *Indonesia Reports*, No. 22, September 1987, p. 15, 20. Moerdani also argued publicly, contradicting Sudharmono, that an 'extraordinarily large' electoral victory for Golkar would have negative consequences for Pancasila democracy: *Indonesia Reports*, June 1987, No. 21, p. 32, September 1987, No. 22, p. 5 (Thanks to Marcus Mietzner again for the reference). Sudharmono asserted that there would be nothing wrong with a Golkar victory of 100%: *Indonesia Reports*, September 1987, No. 22, p. 11.

participate. They attracted massive crowds, many of whom carried portraits of Sukarno.<sup>1</sup> The PDI's national vote increased by almost 3.5 million, up from 8% to 11%.<sup>2</sup>

In following years, Soerjadi and Daryanto attempted party revitalisation.<sup>3</sup> The two constantly toured the regions and established a structure of party village 'commissioners', circumventing 'floating mass' restrictions.<sup>4</sup> They also attempted to recruit professionals, especially intellectuals, via an advertising campaign and a renewed party *balitbang* (Research and Development body).<sup>5</sup> Well known national figures were persuaded to join the party, including movie stars and artists like Sophan Sophiaan and Mangara Siahaan, and prominent businesspeople like Kwik Kian Gie and, later, Laksamana Sukardi (number two in Lippobank and former vice-president of Citibank in Indonesia). Such individuals had not experienced the long process of grooming by government normally required to emerge from party ranks. They also owed no particular loyalty to Soerjadi or other party leaders and, having independent incomes, were less susceptible to influence by the disbursement of party posts or patronage.<sup>6</sup> By the early 1990s they began to appear as a new informal reform current in the party.

Soerjadi also attempted to push aside local party bosses who had long occupied legislative seats and provincial leadership positions, sparking a return to incessant factional conflict.<sup>7</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> On the last day of campaigning, some one million party supporters appeared on the streets of Jakarta. For estimates of crowd sizes see: *Tempo*, June 15, 1991, p. 21; Sukanto et al, 1991, p. 4. For a discussion of the role of Sukarno's children see 'Antara PNI Lama dan Konsensus Keluarga', *Editor*, October 3, 1987, p. 8-14. Megawati and her husband, Taufik Kiemas also stood as candidates. Her sister, Rachmawati, stated to the press that Megawati had broken her family's consensus not to support any of the political parties (p. 8). On the ubiquity of Sukarno's image, see for example Sukanto et al, 1991, p. 12-14. This phenomenon clearly caused concern to New Order officeholders: see a translated letter purportedly from Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, Alamsyah to President Suharto (in *Indonesia Reports, Politics Supplement*, No. 24, November 1987, p. 1-6) noting the 'extraordinary and surprising courage in [PDI] campaigning,' including the use of Sukarno's portraits and slogans of 'Golkar is corrupt'.

<sup>2</sup> In Jakarta, the party's vote doubled, clearly attracting the protest vote which had previously gone to the PPP.

<sup>3</sup> According to Nico Daryanto, when the two assumed the leadership, even the party headquarters was filthy and empty, without electricity or even light bulbs, let alone a proper filing system: interview with Nico Daryanto, October 24, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Commissioners could meet and contact each other, but they could not run an office. Daryanto claimed that by the time he and Soerjadi finished their terms as leaders in 1993, there were 56-60 thousand such officers: interview, October 24, 1995. A similar claim of numbers appears in *Tempo*, June 15, 1991, p. 24: over 44 thousand village commissioners in over 90 % of the villages of Bali and Java.

<sup>5</sup> 'Banteng Menjaring Intelektual', *Tempo*, January 26, 1991, p. 17. Soerjadi also attracted considerable publicity by recruiting a number of retired (mostly middle ranking) military officers and village and other local officials, mostly in East and Central Java. See for example 'Purnawirawan Masuk PDI', *Editor*, January 26, 1991; 'Yang Jatuh Hati ke Banteng', *Tempo*, February 23, 1991, p. 15; 'Aspirasi Politik Setelah Pensiun', *Editor*, May 25, 1991, p. 26-31. Soerjadi noted that this was approved by senior serving officers (p. 28). Most of the retired local officials who joined were former PNI members who had been forced out of the party long before by monoloyalty. Nevertheless they brought with them considerable influence in their local areas. See for example 'Banteng Masuk Desa (Lagi)', *Tempo*, March 2, 1991, p. 24; 'Persatuan Dongkol Indonesia', *Editor*, June 8, 1991, p. 28-9.

<sup>6</sup> Laksamana Sukardi, for example, actually turned down an offer of a DPR seat in 1992: interview December 5, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Shortly after Soerjadi became leader in 1986, the DPP ordered DPR members to vacate their seats if they had occupied them for two terms and banned them from simultaneously heading provincial party councils (*Dewan Pimpinan Daerah*, DPD). Although this was promoted as a means to pursue party



subsequent years many of those whom Soerjadi sidelined attempted to undermine him, repeatedly fishing for government backing by accusing him of leftism.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with past patterns, conflict gave the government more leverage, with officials frequently stating that if conflict deepened they might have to intervene.<sup>2</sup> However, while Moerdani remained influential, Soerjadi's opponents failed to secure significant influence.<sup>3</sup>

The Soerjadi-Daryanto leadership was caught in a contradiction. They were committed to the existing political system, frequently making traditional pledges of loyalty to the New Order and denials that the PDI was an opposition.<sup>4</sup> Yet they clearly wanted to give the party a more prominent role. To do this, they needed to attract mass support and appeal to the mood for change in society. Almost reluctantly, the party leadership adopted increasingly critical positions on a range of issues, going beyond the vague, populist pronouncements of the past.<sup>5</sup> For example, the *balitbang* under Kwik Kian Gie attempted to develop and articulate reasoned alternative policies, including a 1991 anti-monopoly bill.<sup>6</sup>

The contradiction was played out during and after the 1992 general election, which coincided with considerable tension between the Presidential and Moerdani camps. The PDI leadership's links to the latter group, society's accumulated experience of almost three years of *keterbukaan*, plus the ambitions of the new party reform group, combined to make the party's 1992 election campaign its most vigorous yet.

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renewal, it was also a means for Soerjadi to promote his own supporters. On the subsequent conflicts, see, for example: Sukanto, et al, 1991, p. 57-65; Halawa, 1993, p. 67-77.

<sup>1</sup> Soerjadi's opponents formed two groups. The *Kelompok 17* (Group of 17) consisted of 17 DPR members who came together in 1987. The *DPP Peralihan* (Transitional DPP) was formed in March 1988, after the party leadership expelled eight of the *Kelompok 17*, who it was believed were planning a 'coup'. The expulsions were approved by Benny Moerdani and Soepardjo Roestam: interview with Nico Daryanto, October 24, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Officials repeatedly called on the party to solve its problems by 'deliberation and consensus' (which implied readmitting the dissidents) and talked of the possibility of an 'extraordinary congress' (implying the removal of Soerjadi). See the interview with Interior Rudini, 'Siapa Bilang Golkar Grogi', *Tempo*, June 15, 1991, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> There were some indications that the malcontents were supported by sources close to the palace. Admiral Sudomo, a Presidential favourite, argued particularly frequently that the party needed to hold an 'extraordinary party congress'. Soerjadi's critics also made a clear bid for support from Moerdani's opponents when around the time of the 1988 MPR they attacked the Soerjadi leadership's reluctance to endorse Sudharmono for the Vice Presidency.

<sup>4</sup> They also never argued forcibly against government involvement in party affairs, instead repeatedly thanking the government and especially ABRI for assisting party 'consolidation': for example, Soerjadi, 1992, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> At times they seemed to be almost apologetic about this: 'At this time, we wish to request that government to understand if the party often and continually rains down attitudes and responses, even accusations which are hard and sharp'. This was part of a speech delivered by Daryanto by television at the 1992 election: Daryanto, 1992, p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> 'RUU Kwik Menjelang Kampanye', *Tempo*, February 8, 1991, p. 24-5. The new mood was also expressed by Kwik's proposal in the 1987 election campaign for the party to develop a 'shadow cabinet': 'Indonesian Democracy Ill, Opposition Says', *Reuter*, June 3, 1992. The growing mood to become an 'alternative' dovetailed with the arguments of various conservative reformers, including elements from CSIS and Fraksi-ABRI, that gradual reform required the legislature and parties to become more effective 'internal control mechanisms'.

Despite routine and novel restrictions on campaigning (like a ban on the display of portraits, enacted in response to the ubiquity of Sukarno's image last time) the turnout to PDI election rallies was even greater than in 1987. Hundreds of thousands flocked to hear party speakers, especially Megawati and Guruh, even in relatively small provincial towns. Some press reports estimated that up to 3 million people turned out in Jakarta.<sup>1</sup> The youthful composition of these crowds was obvious, and the party tried hard to project an image as the 'party of youth.'<sup>2</sup>

Outspoken campaigners, like Guruh and Sophan Sophiaan, repeatedly condemned lack of openness, the 'social gap', '*korupsi*', '*kolusi*' and even '*nepotisme*,' campaigning particularly hard on such themes in areas badly affected by clove and citrus monopolies owned by Suharto's children.<sup>3</sup> Even the party's official manifesto, although couched in conventional Pancasila discourse, adopted a more critical tone.<sup>4</sup>

Amidst heightened elite tension concerning succession, for the first time the party touched on the Presidency. Its formal position was that future occupants of the post should serve only two consecutive terms. Soerjadi stuck to this although Suharto directly criticised it as an emasculation of the Constitution.<sup>5</sup> According to several PDI members interviewed later, Soerjadi also promised that the party would present its own Presidential nominee at the 1993 MPR session.<sup>6</sup> Certainly, at rallies he spoke in terms of 'change in the national leadership.' Others went further. Sophan Sophiaan publicly nominated Guruh Soekarnoputra as Presidential candidate to a rapturous reception by 20 thousand supporters in Banjarmasin.<sup>7</sup> Nico Daryanto made the PDI the first political force to formally nominate later ABRI candidate, Try Sutrisno, for the Vice Presidency.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Thatcher, 'Indonesia: Opposition Rallies Millions Against Corruption', *Reuter*, May 31, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Campaigners played popular protest songs by artists like Iwan Fals at its rallies and supporters gave the three fingered salute (signifying its third place on ballot paper) borrowed from the heavy metal music symbol popular among many young urban poor.

<sup>3</sup> One such place was the clove cigarette manufacturing region of Kediri in East Java. Party speakers condemned those who treated the state like a 'monarchy' or a 'plutocracy'. See for example Kwik Kian Gie's speech on TVRI: Kwik Kian Gie, 1992d, p. 99-100. Guruh Soekarnoputra told one crowd, 'Our democracy is sick ... we, especially small people do not feel freedom. We feel frightened ...': Jonathan Thatcher, 'Indonesia: Ex-President's Son Says Indonesia Democracy is Ill', *Reuter*, June 3, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> It included statements like '... Democracy in our country is still not as it should be because people are scared to express their opinions ...' DPP-PDI, 1992, p. 3 It also called for the repeal of the 'floating mass' policy and for greater political openness.

<sup>5</sup> 'Dua Masa Jabatan tanpa Sungkan', *Tempo*, May 23, 1992, p. 14-20. For the formal position, see DPP-PDI, 1992, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> According to Sophan Sophiaan, at a rally in Sukabumi Soerjadi explicitly said that the PDI would form its own judgement on Suharto's leadership before the next MPR, and if it decided that it was lacking, it would not support him again: interview, December 3, 1995. PDI legislator Aberson Marle Sihalohe likewise claimed there was a tacit agreement among party leaders, including Soerjadi, that they would put forward their own candidate in 1993: interview, November 11, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Sophiaan was reprimanded for doing this by Soerjadi: interview with Sophan Sophiaan, December 3, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> He did this before an election crowd in Kalimantan, he says, quite 'spontaneously': interview, October 24, 1995.

As in 1987, the elections were conducted in conditions of relative openness. Local PDI campaigners experienced reduced harassment and Soerjadi again praised ABRI for its 'neutrality.' The PDI vote again sharply increased, from 11% to 15%.<sup>1</sup>

After the election Soerjadi was under pressure to deliver on the party's new reformist image. However, it was understood that the President had been angered by the party's campaign. The party leadership would be up for re-election at a congress scheduled to be held after the MPR; further provocation would clearly endanger Soerjadi's chances. He thus relented, first formally accepting the election results, despite thousands of reports of harassment and irregularities received by party headquarters.<sup>2</sup> Next, he resisted pressure to put forward an alternative Presidential candidate. A group of 19 DPR members (including Megawati) signed a letter calling for just this, and for a time it seemed that the MPR might be forced to its first ever vote on the Presidency.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, a leadership meeting was held near Jakarta in January to resolve the issue. Student demonstrators outside called on the party to make good its promises, and were dispersed by troops. Despite bitter debate inside, eventually Soerjadi forced through his position and Suharto was endorsed again.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This represented an increase of approximately 40%. In provinces like Central and East Java the increase was 72 and 118 %. In Jakarta, by contrast, the vote declined somewhat, indicating to some that the huge crowds of exuberant youthful supporters which had filled the streets there had scared off older and middle class voters. Among those who argued this were the party's own Kwik Kian Gie (1992b).

<sup>2</sup> Party leaders in many regions, and at the centre, resisted signing the official reports of election results for some time, but they were subjected to tremendous pressure. See for example 'Radiogram yang Bikin Gusar', *Tempo*, June 27, 1992, p. 21; 'Semua Setuju', *Tempo*, July 4, 1992, p. 22-3.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Sophan Sophiaan, December 3, 1995; Megawati Soekarnoputri, December 11, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> There was tense debate in this meeting; at first a large number, perhaps even a majority, of regional delegates supported an independent candidate. Favoured candidates were Soerjadi and Guruh, even Ali Sadikin's name was mentioned: confidential communication, December 1996. According to Nico Daryanto, Suharto was endorsed to avoid dangers of political instability. An alternative candidate would have prompted great support from students and others, and might have developed into 'a kind of revolution', prompting an ABRI response and bloodshed: interview, October 24, 1995. According to Soerjadi's critics, Suharto's renomination was mainly intended to secure Soerjadi's own re-appointment and reflected an attempt by ABRI anti-Palace elements to secure the Vice Presidency for Try Sutrisno, whereby the threat of a vote on the Presidency was merely a bargaining chip to secure Palace endorsement.

### 2.1. The Removal of Soerjadi

Soerjadi's re-endorsement of Suharto came too late to save him. He had caused the President personal displeasure and was too closely tied to the Moerdani camp, whose star was on the wane. Although in mid-1993 many Moerdani appointees retained military posts, the purge was beginning and they were not inclined to take risks for the PDI's sake. Immediately after the MPR session there were thus many indications that Soerjadi had lost government support. He was first implicated in a court case concerning the abduction of two supporters of his party opponents, following which the new ABRI Commander-in-Chief Feisal Tanjung emerged from a meeting with Suharto to state that the PDI should not elect a leader who was 'legally flawed.' Greater freedom of movement was given to Soerjadi's PDI opponents.<sup>1</sup> Finally, as branches selected congress delegates, Interior Ministry and military officials indicated in their customary 'directions' (*pengarahan*) that they should abandon Soerjadi.<sup>2</sup> His past military backing now counted for little. In the face of clear signals from the Palace, officers from the Moerdani camp took little action to defend him.<sup>3</sup>

The anti-Soerjadi campaign climaxed during the party congress in Medan in July. On the very first day, immediately after speeches by the President and other senior officials, some 400 supporters of Soerjadi's factional enemies crashed a jeep into the conference site, taking over for six hours. To pre-empt utter collapse, Soerjadi's supporters re-endorsed him as chairperson by acclamation in the first session the next day. On hearing this, the mob again forced their way in. This time, the congress did not resume.

The guiding hand of the authorities in the debacle was plainly visible. Soerjadi's opponents were allowed to come in large numbers to Medan and openly proclaim their intentions.<sup>4</sup> The local military command was responsible for security, yet few guards were present during the first attack, the next day even fewer. As Marsoesi, one leader of the attack disingenuously remarked, 'this is a sign that they [the government] blessed our actions.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a three day occupation of the PDI headquarters was unimpeded by security forces: Halawa, 1993, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the governor of East Java emphasised the need for 'change' in the party to departing conference delegates. The commander of the Brawijaya military command reiterated four times that they should not elect someone who was 'legally flawed': 'Laporan Khusus: PDI Mencari Ketua Luar Biasa: Ironi Perjalanan Suatu Partai,' *Resume*, No. 12, Vol IV, August 1993, p. 13-37; p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> According to Nico Daryanto, he and Soerjadi had little or no active support in the 'superstructure' by this time, despite their best lobbying efforts. Vice President Try Sutrisno and Defence and Security Minister Edi Sudradjat were sympathetic, but neither had the power to do much: interview October 24, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> The *Kelompok 17* leader Marsoesi indicated well in advance that large numbers of the group's supporters would go to Medan: *DeTik*, 23-29 April 1993, p. 10-11. In the same interview he argued that Soerjadi had little chance of re-election because of his 'confrontational attitude to the government.'

<sup>5</sup> *Jawa Pos*, July 24 1993; 'Laporan Khusus: PDI Mencari Ketua Luar Biasa: Ironi Perjalanan Suatu Partai,' in *Resume*, No. 12, Vol IV, August 1993, p. 13-37, p. 28. In November 1996 I interviewed several PDI members and branch leaders in West Java who had participated in this attack. They explained that they had been summoned by Social and Political Affairs Staff in the Siliwangi Military Command, where

Senior officials soon announced that the government did not recognise any congress decisions and considered the Soerjadi leadership a ‘failure.’<sup>1</sup> Interior Minister Yogie S. M. declared the PDI leadership ‘de-commissioned’ and announced an ‘extraordinary congress’ for later in the year. A ‘caretaker board’ charged with organising this congress was formed in August at a meeting of the 27 PDI provincial leadership boards (DPD). The level of direct government intervention in this meeting was reminiscent of the early New Order. Unsurprisingly, it produced a caretaker board which included no Soerjadi supporters.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. Megawati’s Initiative**

It was widely expected that the ‘extraordinary congress’ would produce a pliant leadership. Among those touted as new leaders, Budi Hardjono appeared to have significant support at ABRI headquarters.<sup>3</sup> Soerjadi’s attackers at Medan, who had now renamed themselves the *Kelompok Persatuan dan Kesatuan* (‘Unity and Oneness Group’) also looked to be rewarded.<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, however, the crisis allowed more independent PDI members to nominate a person much less favoured by the President than Soerjadi had ever been. This was Sukarno’s oldest daughter Megawati Soekarnoputri, who had joined the PDI as a DPR candidate in 1987 and subsequently been one of Soerjadi’s main election crowd-pullers.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards, she had maintained a low profile, reportedly rarely attending DPR sessions. Nevertheless, she had quietly identified with the emerging party reform group.<sup>6</sup> But initially, of course, it was Megawati’s family name which ensured that she would be an immensely popular candidate.

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the plans for the operation were first discussed. The attack on the congress site, they claimed, was also coordinated closely with the local security apparatus.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Laporan Khusus: PDI Mencari Ketua Luar Biasa: Ironi Perjalanan Suatu Partai.’ in *Resume*, No. 12, Vol IV, August 1993, p. 13-37, p. 30. See *Kompas*, July 30 1993. One of the reasons which Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs Soesilo Soedarman cited as evidence of the Soerjadi leadership’s failure was that ‘radicalism still existed in the ranks of the PDI.’

<sup>2</sup> Even the invitations to the August meeting were drafted in the central office of Yogie’s Ministry, then telexed to its Social-Political Directorates in the regions, from where they were finally passed to local PDI leaders. Those who attended the meeting were vetted, Soerjadi supporters were excluded and during the meeting, constant consultations took place with government officials, including Yogie himself who was set up in a nearby hotel: *Tempo*, September 4, 1993, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Budi was a contemporary of Soerjadi’s from the 1960s GMNI Osa-Usep (the right wing faction of the PNI and allied organisations). The appointment of Latief Pudjosakti (Chair of the East Java DPD, a former Soerjadi protege who had recently abandoned him) as head of the Caretaker Board seemed to indicate that he was supported by at least Yogie S. M.

<sup>4</sup> Because the government and its sympathisers in the party portrayed ‘disunity’ as the main cause of the ‘failure’ of the Medan congress, they argued that the restoration of unity should be the main aim of the coming congress. To this end, a proportion of regional delegations were reserved for *Kelompok Persatuan dan Kesatuan* members and it was expected they would be included in forthcoming formal leadership bodies.

<sup>5</sup> On the process by which Megawati became a DPR member, see McIntyre, 1997, p. 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> For example, she was one of the 19 PDI DPR members who earlier in the year had called on the party to put forward its own Presidential candidate.

Megawati's leadership bid was announced on September 11 1993, when 100 PDI functionaries from 70 branches visited her home and requested that she stand. Over the following two months, a tightly knit group of her core supporters formed what became known as Megawati's *Tim Sukses*, 'Success Team'. This included outspoken PDI legislators and campaigners like Mangara Siahaan, Djathi Koesoemo and Sophan Sophiaan (all Soerjadi-era recruits) and, significantly, senior journalists like Eros Djarot of *DèTik*, and Panda Nababan of *Forum Keadilan*. Team members discussed tactics, organised 'lobbying', distributed vast amounts of material to branches and coordinated a vigorous press campaign.<sup>1</sup>

Partly as a result of such coordination, but largely because of the response the Sukarno name evoked in party ranks, Megawati's campaign rapidly gathered momentum. It soon became clear that she had the overwhelming support of members, and the sympathy of a large part of the broader political public (indicated by numerous readers' polls in magazines and newspapers.)

Meanwhile, a campaign against Megawati gathered pace at the local level. Intending congress delegates were brought before officials, usually the local *kaditsospol* (heads of directorates of Social-Political Affairs in the Interior Ministry), but sometimes more senior officials, and instructed to support one of Megawati's competitors. There were many reported cases of delegates being refused funding or permission to attend the conference before they signed statements to this effect.<sup>2</sup> Such local level intervention had long been the primary means of exercising control over the parties.

Megawati's Success Team devoted great energy to combating these pressures, instructing PDI to give the appearance of concurrence. In the words of one team member their advice was: 'take the money, take the facilities, go to Surabaya, and vote for Megawati.'<sup>3</sup> The team also utilised press reports of official assurances that the government had no objections to Megawati's candidacy, distributing them in bulk to party branches.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> At the same time, former supporters of Soerjadi and Nico Daryanto were instructed to support Megawati's bid: interview with Nico Daryanto, October 24, 1995. This was not insignificant, given that in the previous seven years, Soerjadi and Daryanto's supporters had been installed as DPD and DPC (*Dewan Pimpinan Cabang*, Branch (ie *kabupaten*-level) Leadership Board) leaders throughout the country (even if many had deserted after Soerjadi lost government backing).

<sup>2</sup> Reported incidents are too numerous to cite individually. For some comprehensive press reports see *DèTik*, 24-30 November 1993, *DèTik*, 1-7 December 1993, *Editor*, December 2 1993, *Tempo*, December 4 1993. Sometimes the pressure was somewhat indirect, as when North Sumatra Governor, Raja Inal Siregar advised departing delegates to 'carefully read the signs of the times.' In less uncertain terms, the Commander of the Diponegoro Military Command in Central Java, Major General Soeyono, told delegates not to support candidates who 'were hitching a ride' on the names of their famous parents: *Tempo*, December 4, 1993, p. 30; *Jawa Pos*, November 18, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Mangara Siahaan, December 1, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> One example took place in the Surabaya conference itself, when Interior Minister Yogie SM suggested in his opening speech that the conference should adopt the closed-meeting *formatur* model for the election of the party's new leadership. In a matter of hours members of Megawati's team distributed flyers headed 'Choose Yogie or choose Suharto', which contained a photocopy of an article describing Suharto's speech to a KNPI congress where he explicitly stated that voting was consistent with Pancasila democracy: confidential communication, November 1995.

The Success Team, itself half-composed of experienced journalists, was well aware of the power of the press in the relatively liberal climate of the time and assiduously cultivated sympathetic coverage. The results were unprecedented. Megawati's face adorned the front pages of all major newspapers and magazines for weeks and her grassroots momentum was portrayed as virtually unstoppable. There was also unprecedented coverage of government obstruction tactics. In order to defend the New Order facade of constitutional propriety, senior officials were thus prompted to issue increasingly strong denials that such intervention was officially sanctioned.<sup>1</sup>

Megawati and her followers concurrently strove to avoid triggering more decisive intervention. During her campaign, Megawati launched a booklet outlining her political vision entitled '*I have unfurled the flag!*'<sup>2</sup> This did not fall far outside traditional PDI/New Order Pancasila discourse, comprising mostly broad reaffirmations of the importance of national unity, Pancasila, the 1945 constitution and the like. Its central preoccupations were derived from the populist traditions of Sukarnoism, including a commitment to the *wong cilik* (the 'small people') and overcoming the 'social gap', as well as a major section on democracy and human rights. The vagueness of the language and its susceptibility to multiple interpretation meant that Megawati's supporters were able to read into the document, as with her other statements, a sub-text of advocacy of far-reaching reform.<sup>3</sup>

In Megawati's frequent press interviews before the Surabaya congress she never directly accused the government of attempting to sabotage her candidacy. Instead, she simply stressed that she would be willing to become party chairperson only if elected by the majority, that the congress should be conducted fairly and that she would not *minta restu* ('seek a blessing', i.e. government endorsement).<sup>4</sup> This was a contrast to her chief competitor, Budi Hardjono, who claimed to be a good candidate because 'In addition to having support from above, I also have support from below.'<sup>5</sup> In effect Megawati's sole platform became party independence.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example the denial by Brigadier General Syarwan Hamid, the Chief of the ABRI Information Centre, that Feisal Tanjung had released an order that Megawati should not be supported: *DèTik*, 10-16 November, 1993, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Bendera Sudah Saya Kibarkan! Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Megawati Soekarnoputri* (Soekarnoputri, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Statements like 'the growth of those on top must be braked...' (ibid, p. 39), or the call for greater openness to differences of opinions in order to allow *real* '*musyawarah untuk mufakat*' ('mutual deliberation to achieve consensus'; p. 21) were susceptible to such interpretation. I had many conversations with PDI members who insisted that they understood that Megawati could not directly attack the government, but that they could catch the 'hidden' meaning in her statements.

<sup>4</sup> For example, *Tempo*, December 4 1993, p. 35, *DèTik*, 1-7 December 1993, p. 6, *Editor*, December 2 1993, p. 23-4, *Forum Keadilan*, December 9, 1993, p. 30-4. Megawati's supporters argued that this avoidance of confrontation, and her related 'softness' (*kelembutan*) and 'motherliness' (*keibuan*) were among her great assets. Others used these same characteristics to argue against her, as when Major General Soeyono stated: 'It would be more suitable if she just became a housewife.' *Tempo*, November 27, 1993, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Jakarta Jakarta*, November 27 - December 3 1993, p. 17.

### 3.1 The Role of Elite Conflict

Megawati's campaign coincided with continuing acute tension within the ruling elite centered on the October 20-25 Golkar conference, during which Defence and Security Minister Edi Sudradjat and ABRI Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs Hariyoto P. S failed to secure a military chairperson. This resulted in many public displays of ABRI dissatisfaction. The President was also part way through restoring personal control over ABRI. Some new loyalists, prominently Feisal Tanjung, were already in command positions and many Moerdani camp-followers were vulnerable.

There was much public speculation that these tensions provided crucial leeway for Megawati. Prominent PDI member Laksamana Sukardi argued in terms which might have been borrowed from political science literature on democratisation:<sup>1</sup>

If there are splits in the power centre, there is usually an opportunity for democracy. The coming PDI extraordinary conference is a reflection of such splits in the political elite, which has already divided into different power centres, in anticipation of succession.

The Palace camp had clear interests in Megawati's failure. There were indications that a revived PDI under Megawati would nominate her as its Presidential candidate during the next MPR. For reasons which are discussed in chapter eight it was widely believed that Suharto was strongly opposed to facing any competitor in an MPR vote. At the same time, of course, all those in the bureaucracy committed to another sweeping Golkar victory were also concerned. Already press reports were speculating about a possible doubling of the PDI vote, especially in East and Central Java.<sup>2</sup>

It was logical for Interior Minister Yogie S. M. to oversee the campaign against Megawati, given his Ministry's role as the organisational backbone of Golkar. Local Ministry officials frequently doubled as Golkar functionaries and their career success depended on Golkar electoral '*sukses*'. Much of the most energetic obstruction before the Surabaya congress was conducted by staff of the Ministry's Social-Political Affairs section. But ABRI involvement was also extensive. There were rumours that Feisal Tanjung issued an order to territorial commands to prevent Megawati's election. Certainly, many territorial commanders intervened openly, especially Suharto loyalists like Commander of the Central Java Diponegoro Military Command (Kodam) Soeyono.

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<sup>1</sup> *DèTik*, 24-30 November 1993, p. 11. He added that Megawati's campaign also reflected a crystallisation of the mood for democratic reform in society.

<sup>2</sup> Some ICMI sympathisers also viewed Megawati with suspicion, believing that a revived PDI would be an instrument for opposing Islamic claims for a greater political role.



It could be expected, however, that military elements aligned against the Presidential camp would be less committed to impeding Megawati. Given their frustrations in Golkar they were less wedded to ensuring an overwhelming Golkar electoral victory (Fraksi-ABRI member Sembiring said as much in the notorious *DëTik* interview quoted in chapter three). The press often implied that military elements were using the possibility of a Megawati victory as a bargaining chip for the Golkar conference and, later, to express dissatisfaction with the outcome there.<sup>1</sup>

Megawati's circle was highly cognizant of the opportunities afforded them by friction in the military. At least after, and perhaps before, the public announcement of her leadership bid, it appears there was contact between the Megawati group and at least some senior officers.<sup>2</sup> Megawati from the outset was careful not to attack *dwifungsi*.<sup>3</sup> Some Megawati supporters also suggested that military elements in some regions largely abstained from the anti-Megawati campaign before the Surabaya congress.<sup>4</sup>

However, the evidence is far from conclusive. Other supporters of Megawati felt that the military mostly acted in concert with Interior Ministry staff. It appears that at least initially Budi Hardjono was the preferred ABRI candidate, including for officers dissatisfied with Suharto. Hardjono himself boasted of his military ties and was reported to be close to 'anti-Palace' officers including (by now retired) Lieutenant General Harsudiono Hartas, Raja K. Sembiring and Hariyoto P.S.<sup>5</sup> In this view, discontented military elements were seeking a candidate who, like Soerjadi, would owe primary loyalty to ABRI.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, 'Upaya Melahirkan Ketua Umum Luar Biasa' *Editor*, September 25, 1993, p. 20-21. This article openly speculates that Megawati's nomination would help ABRI secure the chair of Golkar.

<sup>2</sup> This was indicated to me by various core supporters of Megawati in late 1995. However, all those interviewed were keen to stress that such meetings were 'routine', that there was no conspirational element, and no significant assistance was offered them. Megawati herself (interview December 11, 1995) strongly denied that there was any contact before the announcement of her bid. Contemporary media reports and interviews also indicate that there was 'contact' with ABRI headquarters: see for example *Editor*, September 25, 1993, p. 22. On November 20, she met with Jakarta Military Commander, Hendropriyono: *Editor*, December 2 1993, p. 23, while Benny Moerdani's daughter attended her book launch (ibid, p. 28).

<sup>3</sup> In the booklet she launched during her campaign (Soekarnoputri, 1993, p. 33) she gave the concept equivocal endorsement: 'ABRI's *dwifungsi* will not be a problem, if ABRI continues to serve the interests of the people'. She made similar comments in one press interview: 'As long as ABRI continues to side with and struggle for the interests of the people, why should *dwifungsi* be questioned. Perhaps the intellectuals could question it if in the future ABRI becomes only a tool of power. . . . But personally, I am amongst those who do not like talking about an ABRI - civilian dichotomy. The problem is, rejecting ABRI's dual function is the same as rejecting historical reality. It's ahistoric': *DëTik*, November 24-30, 1993, p. 6. Such language, especially reference to ABRI as a 'tool of power,' was reminiscent of that used by discontented military elements themselves.

<sup>4</sup> Sophan Sophiaan, interview December 3, 1995. See the analysis by Cornellis Lay in *DëTik*, November 24-30, 1993, p. 12. Lay suggests that because of disappointment in the Golkar conference, Megawati received some support from 'factions' of the political elite: 'In areas where the national elite is represented by those who think in terms of Sembiring Meliala's statement [i.e. expressing ABRI resentment at Habibie and declining military influence in Golkar], then support for Mega is strong.' See also a similar argument by him in *Editor*, December 2, 1993, p. 28-9.

<sup>5</sup> During the leadership campaign before the Surabaya conference he had a well-publicised meeting with Sembiring: *Kompas*, November 10, 1993. *Editor* (November 25, 1993, p. 32) openly suggests that he was endorsed by ABRI. So does *Jakarta Jakarta*, November 27-December 3, 1993, p. 17, which states that he

### 3.2 The Extraordinary Surabaya Congress

The extraordinary congress opened on December 2. From the start it was clear that Megawati had overwhelming support. Crowds lined the streets when she arrived in town and the conference site was surrounded by hundreds of enthusiastic Megawati supporters who demonstrated, prayed, ate and slept on the streets outside. Whenever Megawati entered the conference hall or rose to speak, she was mobbed; whenever her opponents tried to obstruct proceedings they were jeered. On the second day, representatives of 256 of 303 branches in attendance declared their support for Megawati, many with fiery oration, others with voices cracking with emotion.<sup>2</sup>

Yet from the start it appeared almost certain that the congress would again end in deadlock. Caretaker Board members, who chaired congress sessions, and the *Persatuan dan Kesatuan* group appeared determined to block Megawati's election.<sup>3</sup> Initially they attempted to do this by forcing through the '*formatur*' system for electing the new party chairperson, which was also endorsed by Yogie S.M. in his opening speech.<sup>4</sup> Megawati's supporters knew that this would allow for government intervention behind closed doors, and argued for a free vote. Frustrated on this ground, Megawati's opponents simply attempted to prevent the congress reaching any decision, which would mean that, as in 1986, the government could step in as 'mediator' and appoint a new leadership.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, the congress became increasingly farcical. Organisers abandoned all pretense at impartiality, sometimes suspending sessions without warning and leaving the congress site altogether. Lights were turned off in the middle of sessions, mass brawls often seemed imminent. The height of absurdity came on the final day, when organisers suspended proceedings, vacated the hall, and did not reappear even after frantic participants sent out search parties.

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often visited ABRI headquarters for consultations: 'I view the officers at the headquarters as teachers, from whom I can learn.' In *Forum Keadilan*, December 9, 1993, p. 89 he is interviewed at length about his closeness to various military officers.

<sup>1</sup> Yogie and other Interior Ministry officials, on the other hand, were cooperating most closely with the 'caretaker board' and perhaps preferred one of its leaders, most likely Latief Pudjosakti.

<sup>2</sup> See for example the account in *DëTik*, December 1993, 8-14, p. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> The *Persatuan dan Kesatuan* group caused particular disruption by their insistence that they be allocated 50 % of seats on the central leadership board which the conference was to elect: *Tempo*, December 18 1993, p. 30. On the second last day of the conference this group apparently met and decided that they would end the congress in chaos if Megawati's supporters attempted to get her elected from the floor: *DëTik*, December 15-21, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> In this system, a caucus of delegates would meet privately, draft a list of new party leaders and present it for approval of delegates on the final day. This system was used by many organisations in New Order Indonesia, and was justified on the grounds that by facilitating negotiation and consensus it accorded with Pancasila democracy.

<sup>5</sup> As the conference moved toward seemingly inevitable breakdown, there was much press speculation that this was the hidden plan. See for example *Tempo*, December 11, 1993, p. 32.

These tactics were pursued on the basis of close coordination with government officials, especially Interior Ministry officials. *Kaditsospol* from all provinces had accompanied delegates to Surabaya, in order to ensure they honoured earlier promises.<sup>1</sup> The activities of these officials were coordinated by senior Ministry officials, notably ‘Director of Social Guidance,’ Mulyono Gendon.<sup>2</sup> The media reported many of details of the intervention, citing the great number of officials present in the conference hall and the ‘command post’ in a nearby building from where officials monitored proceedings.<sup>3</sup>

According to participants, some military officers, including intelligence officers from the local Kodam, did attempt to intervene against Megawati, although less intensely than Interior Ministry staff. The most senior military officer present was Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Hariyoto P. S, close associate of Edi Sudradjat (who, it will be remembered, later supported YKPK). According to several informants, he monitored proceedings closely, but took little action to intervene. Megawati and some of her supporters suggest that either at or immediately prior to the congress, he and other senior officers made an assessment that her bid could only be stopped by massive and transparent intervention.<sup>4</sup> On this basis a decision was made to abstain.

Since the early New Order, intervention like that attempted at Surabaya had been a feature of gatherings of all manner of political organisations. It was not even particularly unusual for different elements of the security apparatus to have conflicting agendas. What was new was, first, the extensive press coverage which the intervention attracted. The conference occurred at the height of *keterbukaan*, and the media reported with much relish the efforts to frustrate Megawati, and their incompetence. This was the first detailed exposure of the contradiction between claims to respect the parties’ formal independence and the methods used to ‘engineer’ victory by pro-government elements within them.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Their presence was so noticeable that Megawati supporters put up a banner outside the conference hall reading ‘This is a PDI conference, not a Congress of *Kaditsospol*.’

<sup>2</sup> He was also a member of the ‘Election Victory Department’ of the Golkar Central Board, a fact made much of by journalists. See for example *DëTik*, 15-21 December 1993.

<sup>3</sup> For one particularly tongue in cheek example of such reporting, see *Tempo*, December 11 1993, p. 32-3. The strategy of deadlocking the conference was thus obviously approved by Interior Ministry officials. Toward the end, however, it would appear that there was something of a change of heart on the part of Yogie S. M. On the third day, after meeting with Suharto in Jakarta, he announced that the government had no objection to Megawati leading the PDI. On the last day of the congress, he flew to Surabaya and was, according to some press reports, angry at those elements who were tending toward deadlock: for example *DëTik*, 8-14 December 1993, p. 4-5. Nevertheless, after his arrival and a meeting with the caretaker board there was no change in strategy and the conference still ended indecisively. According to one confidential source this was because Megawati rejected an offered compromise whereby she would be awarded the chair of the party, but the government would determine the composition of her DPP.

<sup>4</sup> Megawati (interview, December 11, 1995) suggested that ABRI officers had been instructed to ensure Budi Hardjono’s victory, but were reluctant to take action at the congress because ‘they saw the reality, if this was to be halted, the consequences could be fatal.’ Hariyoto lost his position (after only 8 months in it) within a month. He was either aware that he was shortly to be moved, or perhaps was shifted because of his ‘failure’ in Surabaya, as well as his opposition to Harmoko in Golkar.

<sup>5</sup> Some coverage focused on precisely this contradiction. For example, an article in *Editor*, December 16, 1993, summarised the failure of the Surabaya congress thus: ‘The real problem was just how crude was

Second, unlike in the past, most conference delegates did not succumb to the pressure. Delegates openly defied the wishes of officials who could be expected to organise future, and considerable, retribution in their local areas.<sup>1</sup> This failure of normal methods of intimidation added a new desperation to the efforts of officials, and was what made their efforts appear so crude. As Heryanto notes, it also gave birth to a new term in the Indonesian political vocabulary: '*arus bawah*' ('undercurrent') used to signify the increasingly common *keterbukaan* phenomenon of a movement for change emanating from below.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the attempted sabotage, by conference end Megawati had clearly demonstrated her overwhelming support. At five minutes to midnight on the final day she entered the conference hall and declared herself 'de facto' PDI chairperson.

### 3.3 Megawati Attains the Leadership

In the following fortnight there was a distinct change in mood. On December 13 Megawati met Minister Yogie SM, after which he stated that there was a 'large possibility' that she would be the next PDI chairperson. She next held several highly publicised meetings with military and other regime figures, including, surprisingly, Suharto's daughter Tutut.<sup>3</sup> It was announced that leaders of the party's provincial boards would assemble for a National Consultation (*Musyawarah Nasional, Munas*) to finally elect a new leadership. There was now little serious question that Megawati would be the new chairperson.<sup>4</sup>

However, in the days before this meeting, Caretaker Board and *Persatuan Kesatuan* leaders, still backed by Interior Ministry officials, again manoeuvred to stack it with sympathisers. As deadlock again loomed, and in a climate of intense press criticism of Minister Yogie, several

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the government's political engineering, via a number of PDI factions, in order to obstruct Megawati. And this seems even more unattractive when we view the engineering in the Surabaya congress - which was a public secret - against the backdrop of a range of seemingly democratic statements by the government.' (p. 19) In a period when the battle for public opinion was becoming increasingly important, such press coverage itself placed considerable constraints on attempts to frustrate Megawati in the weeks following the conference.

<sup>1</sup> In some cases the intimidation was extraordinary. Sophan Sophiaan recalled speaking to delegates from Aceh who were threatened so harshly that they feared that they would disappear when they returned home: interview, December 3, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Heryanto, 1996, p. 258.

<sup>3</sup> Others included Hariyoto P.S., Jakarta military commander, Major General Hendropriyono, and Bakin Chief, Lieutenant General Soedibyo.

<sup>4</sup> Most PDI supporters had little doubt of this at this stage, but were fearful that Megawati would be forced to accept a majority of pro-regime individuals on her DPP. At a meeting I attended at her home on December 12, where Megawati addressed supporters after returning from Surabaya, most questions directed to her were along these lines: how could her supporters prevent 'political clowns', 'people disliked by the *arus bawah*' etc from entering her DPP. Megawati answered diplomatically, appealing to her supporters to be patient (fieldnotes, December 12, 1993).

army officers dramatically assumed management of the meeting.<sup>1</sup> The main actors reported in the press were Jakarta Commander Major General Hendropriyono and Kopassus Commander and Director A (Internal Affairs) of the Strategic Intelligence Agency, BAIS, Brigadier General Agum Gumelar, although some PDI informants suggested that Major General Arie Sudewo, the deputy head of BAIS, was also involved.<sup>2</sup>

When the meeting convened on December 22, these officers quickly halted further attempts at obstruction.<sup>3</sup> Megawati was almost immediately elected unanimously as chairperson. For the next two days, there was intense bargaining on the composition of the new Central Leadership Board (DPP). It appears that a pliable board was the central condition for government acceptance of Megawati's appointment. She was strongly pressured by Interior Ministry officials (who still attended), the army officers and her PDI opponents, and was eventually forced to exclude several core supporters and accept numerous representatives of the *Persatuan-Kesatuan* group, the caretaker board and Soerjadi's group.<sup>4</sup> In subsequent years, the compromised character of this board would be of decisive importance.

### 3.4 The Military Role Considered

The initiative taken by these officers was strongly supported by much of the press. There was much praise for Hendro and Agum's intervention and open speculation about military backing for Megawati.<sup>5</sup> Some scholarly accounts also argue this line. Kingsbury, for example, suggests that parts of ABRI saw in Megawati 'an opportunity to embarrass Suharto', even that as a leader she was 'in part a creation of a faction of ABRI.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, some media publications strongly praised the military for their abstention from the Surabaya debacle. See for example an article in *DèTik* (the editor of which, Eros Djarot, was a key Megawati supporter): 'ABRI's consistent attitude to the development of democracy was observable during the extraordinary congress. It is proven that ABRI did not intervene in the conference. ABRI was only outside the arena. And that was simply to provide security for it.' (December 15-21, 1993, p. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Some informants and other sources (e.g. Tim ISAI, 1996, p. 15) also suggest that Colonel Zacky Anwar Makarim, Hendropriyono's Assistant for Intelligence was also involved. These officers quickly signaled an end to obstruction, for example by deciding that the meeting would be held in Jakarta where it would come under Hendropriyono's jurisdiction (rather than in Bogor, the choice of the Caretaker Board and its Interior Ministry backers.)

<sup>3</sup> Some PDI sources later suggested that Agum Gumelar in particular 'forced' recalcitrant Megawati foes to endorse her as leader: confidential communication, November, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Sophan Sophiaan and Aberson Marle Silalaho were crossed off Megawati's proposed list because they were allegedly 'anti *dwifungsi*': interviews with Sophan Sophiaan, December 3, 1995, Aberson Marle Silalaho, November 11, 1995 and Megawati Soekarnoputri, December 11, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> For example, *Forum Keadilan* speculated (rather coyly) about this possibility, alleging that Megawati was backed by 'a very strong group' and that a 'former ABRI official' (the implication, surely, was Moerdani) played an important role in organising her strategy: *Forum Keadilan*, December 23 1993. At the same time, such publications were engaged in a ferocious attack on the Surabaya performance of Yogie SM and his staff.

<sup>6</sup> Kingsbury, 1998, p. 137, also p. 122. McIntyre (1997, p. 12-14) goes so far as to suggest that military officers contemplated a 'limited alliance' with a Megawati-PDI in order to forestall a Habibie Presidential candidacy, and suggests that Megawati may have agreed to support an ABRI Presidential candidate. The editors of Cornell University's journal *Indonesia* likewise argued that Agum Gumelar used Directorate A of BAIS 'flagrantly in arranging the election of Megawati' (1994, p. 85).

However, although Megawati's rise was clearly a publicity coup for ABRI, it is difficult to untangle the motives of the officers involved. At first sight it appears that Suharto himself had finally recognised the inevitability of Megawati's rise, he certainly made many public signals which seemed to suggest that he did not object to Megawati becoming party leader.<sup>1</sup> A plausible interpretation is thus that Agum Gumelar and Hendropriyono simply misread such public signals, as well as general orders to 'resolve' the PDI conflict. Indeed, one confidential source who spoke to Agum on the matter suggests that the Kopassus Commander was assured by Feisal Tanjung that Megawati was permitted to become leader, and that he even attained confirmation from Suharto's son, Bambang Trihatmodjo, that the President had no objections to this outcome.<sup>2</sup>

Even so, it appears that before long Palace circles, and the President himself, came to view Hendro and Agum's actions as part of a wider conspiracy involving supporters of Moerdani, Catholics, and Nationalists, aimed at elevating Megawati in order to undermine ICMI, Habibie, the Golkar leadership, and the President.<sup>3</sup> While some blamed Agum and Hendro directly, others accused other 'anti-ICMI' officials (for example, Minister of the State Secretariat Moerdiono) of misleading the two officers as to Suharto's true intentions.<sup>4</sup> Later in 1994 Agum and Hendro were transferred to other positions.<sup>5</sup> Even if neither sidelining was permanent, these moves were widely interpreted as signs of Suharto's displeasure.

The story of 'military backing' became an accepted part of the mythology of Megawati's rise. Even many of Megawati's supporters believed that support from a section of ABRI played a significant role in her win. Partly as a result, in the early years of Megawati's leadership, there was far more good will for military elements among PDI reformers than in, say, the student

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<sup>1</sup> During the Surabaya congress, Yogie SM met with the President and emerged to state that the government had no objection to Megawati becoming leader, Megawati's later highly publicised meeting with Suharto's daughter Tutut, seemed to be an even stronger sign of Presidential approval. Megawati herself (interview, December 11, 1995) said that she was unsure if Suharto had finally given his blessing to her appointment.

<sup>2</sup> Confidential communication, February 2000.

<sup>3</sup> According to one anonymous military source quoted by Honna (1999, p. 94) it was Prabowo who suggested to the President that Agum had 'failed' in the PDI affair. Prabowo's role is confirmed by another source (confidential communication, February 2000) who spoke to Agum on the matter, although in this version, it was other senior officers like Feisal Tanjung and Hartono, not necessarily Suharto himself, who came to believe Prabowo's story that Agum supported Megawati. Suspicions that Megawati's rise was not 'spontaneous' were also hinted at publicly by Moerdani's old foe Sudharmono, see for example: 'Megawati's election 'engineered': Sudharmono', *Jakarta Post*, January 6, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> This last view was suggested to me by a retired officer close to Feisal Tanjung: confidential communication, November 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Hendropriyono became Commander of the Education and Training Command (Kodiklat) in December 1994, while Agum Gumelar was banished from Kopassus to become Chief of Staff of the North Sumatran Bukit Barisan regional military command in September 1994. Confidential sources suggest that both officers were very upset by these transfers.

movement or other parts of a legal opposition.<sup>1</sup> In particular, there was considerable admiration for Hendro and Agum, who were widely viewed as having ‘saved’ Megawati. In interviews in 1994 and 1995 some of Megawati’s key supporters indicated that they believed their intervention had been motivated by real sympathy for Megawati and political reform among younger *merah-putih* officers. Some further argued that military sympathy was because of shared opposition to resurgent Islam and commitment to Pancasila. Some even expressed confidence that in a crisis, like mass protests sparked by Megawati’s nomination as President, the PDI would receive military backing. In return, they stressed that while the PDI remained remote from power, it would not attack *dwifungsi*, but rather advocate military neutrality with respect to the political parties.

Megawati, however, strongly denied that she owed a debt to Hendro and Agum. She said they did not provide her an easy road to the leadership, being among those who intensely pressured her on the composition of the DPP.<sup>2</sup> She argued that ABRI officers acceded to her leadership only because they ‘could see no other path’ which would not have had adverse security implications.<sup>3</sup> After two failed congresses, great and obvious manipulation would have been required to frustrate Megawati’s leadership aspirations. This would have entailed a sharp break with the *keterbukaan* atmosphere then prevailing. It seems that the officers involved were unwilling to attempt this, at least in the absence of very clear instructions from the Palace.

In summary, therefore, care must be taken not to exaggerate the military’s role in Megawati’s rise. It may be that some of her supporters attempted to solicit military backing and that some was forthcoming. However, it is a misreading to see her rise as substantially the product of military backing. What ensured that she became PDI leader was her grassroots support and her supporters’ refusal to succumb to customary forms of intimidation. The military role was primarily a reaction to this phenomenon.

It was also a product of a transitional phase in the military. As noted in chapter three, discontent in the military was at a high point in late 1993 in part precisely because Suharto was then intervening intensively in transfers and appointments. Some associated with Megawati’s rise were among the last members of the old Moerdani circles to hold senior posts.<sup>4</sup> As Suharto loyalists consolidated control, Megawati’s prospects became increasingly bleak.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, one DPP member interviewed in late 1995 put great store on the supposed fact that many senior military officers, like Benny Moerdani, Edi Sudradjat, Hendropriyono, and Wismoyo all followed Bung Karno’s lead and wore their watches on their right wrists.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, December 11, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, December 11, 1995. Some military informants agreed with this analysis. Major General Sembiring (interview, November 16, 1996), for instance, suggested that after two failed congresses it would have been ‘too vulgar’ to prevent Megawati’s appointment.

<sup>4</sup> Hariyoto P.S., for example ended his term as Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs in January 1994.

#### **4. Megawati as Leader, 1994-96**

Megawati's tenure as PDI leader began with a triumphal tour of regional towns in Java and elsewhere. Everywhere she went huge crowds turned out to greet her, dressed in the PDI signature red, carrying her portrait and that of her father.

However, Megawati's momentum was checked from the start by a continuation of the kind of tactics used at Surabaya. For the next two and a half years the PDI was again paralysed by debilitating internal conflict. Although the *Persatuan dan Kesatuan* group remained most aggressive, the conservative ballast in the party went far beyond this relatively small group. Most local (especially province-level DPD) leaders had attained their positions with the sponsorship of local bureaucratic and military patrons. Many now feared both being displaced by Megawati supporters and losing bureaucratic approval if the PDI became more oppositional. This layer thus remained a vehicle for the government to prevent Megawati consolidating her hold on party structures.

Problems began with DPD elections at regional conferences through 1994. Time and again, the kind of tactics used at Surabaya were re-deployed, except they were now generally subject to less media scrutiny, especially after the press bannings of June.<sup>1</sup> Only in a few provinces, like the former PNI stronghold of Bali, did Megawati supporters secure unambiguous victories. Most DPDs remained in the hands of Soerjadi-era appointees.<sup>2</sup> Even where Megawati supporters won, they were sometimes refused official recognition.<sup>3</sup>

Conflict was especially bitter in East Java. Here, the election of a Megawati-supporter, Soetjipto, as DPD chief was challenged by Latief Pudjosakti, who established a rival board and (although dismissed from the party by the DPP) was openly backed by Governor Basoefi Soedirman.<sup>4</sup> At times, meetings of Megawati supporters were broken up by thugs.<sup>5</sup> Permits were not issued for meetings they organised and Megawati herself was repeatedly denied permission to speak in the province.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Typically, conference delegates were pressured not to support pro-Megawati candidates, meeting permits were withheld, there were allegations of ballot stuffing, and rival boards were established.

<sup>2</sup> According to *Forum Keadilan* (November 24, 1994, p. 105) by late 1994, when most provincial conferences were completed, some 17 of the 27 DPD remained in the hands of Soerjadi allies.

<sup>3</sup> See for example 'Megawati Temui Gubernur Sulsel', *Kompas*, February 17, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Latief made no secret of his sympathies: 'There are certainly those who are biased and cynically say that, [I] am a lackey of the government, the lackey of ABRI. To reply to that, I say that it is better to be a comrade of ABRI rather than to be the lackey of other people, other nations.' ('Latief Pudjosakti: Saya Menganut Betul Falsafahnya Pak Harto.' *Forum Keadilan*, November 10, 1994, p. 32-36, p. 36). For an analysis of the conflict in East Java, see Tim ISAI, 1996, p. 36-51.

<sup>5</sup> See for example *Merdeka*, September 22, 1995; *Republika*, September 22, 1995; *Suara Pembaruan*, October 30, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> See for example 'Menko Polkam akan Cek Pencekalan Mega', *Kompas*, April 28, 1995; 'Mega Gagal Lagi di Jatim', *Republika*, May 12, 1995. In June 1995, for the first time, the regional administration took over organisation of the annual commemorations of the death of Sukarno at the former President's grave in Blitar (it was usually organised by the Sukarno family). Megawati did not attend because of a ban by



Old style anti-leftist rhetoric was also deployed. Some officials warned against a revival of leftist ‘Marhaenism’ and ‘Old Order’, ‘PNI-ASU’, and ‘G30S’ forces in the PDI.<sup>1</sup> Those targeted included Djadjang Kurniadi, the chief of the West Java branch, and Megawati’s husband, Taufik Kiemas.<sup>2</sup> Such accusations were backed by senior military officials, including Feisal Tanjung himself.<sup>3</sup>

The first open attempt to topple Megawati occurred in December 1994 when members of the old *Persatuan Kesatuan* group, headed by old-time party conservative Yusuf Merukh, formed a ‘DPP Reshuffle.’<sup>4</sup> This group was given considerable room to manoeuvre, presumably to see whether it had the capacity to dislodge Megawati.<sup>5</sup> However, it was too narrowly based to represent a plausible alternative leadership and never gained open government endorsement. But it played an important disruptive role, with the usual pattern of rival boards, demonstrations and invasions of party meetings.<sup>6</sup> All this, in another continuation of old techniques of control, added to the cultivated impression of disorder in the party, continually reinforced by pronouncements by government officials that Megawati was ‘too weak’ to overcome the party’s internal problems and that ‘reconciliation’ was necessary.

The ambitions of regional military and government officials (like Basoefi Soedirman) played an important role in the campaign against Megawati. But there was clearly also a high degree of

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local authorities: ‘Yang Luka, Yang Gembira Di Lautan Bung Karno’, *Media Indonesia Minggu*, June 28, 1995.

<sup>1</sup> Marhaenism was the label given to Sukarno’s populist ideology, named after a West Javanese peasant (Marhaen) he supposedly met in the late 1920s. G30S was the 30<sup>th</sup> September Movement of 1965, although the label was used in the late New Order essentially as a synonym for the PKI. For an example, see Youth and Sports Minister Hayono Isman’s comments in ‘Marhaenisme Diperlukan atau Haram?’, *Forum Keadilan*, December 4, 1995, where, in classic New Order style, he revives an old accusation that ‘Marhaen’ was an abbreviation of ‘Marx, Hegel and Engels’

<sup>2</sup> The accusation against Kiemas focused on his alleged involvement in the burning of an office owned by an Islamic newspaper, *Noesa Poetra*, in Palembang in March 1966: ‘Jurus Litsus Menggantung Mega’, *Tiras*, February 9, 1995, p. 18-22

<sup>3</sup> Tanjung backed a statement made by anti-Megawati PDI leader Yusuf Merukh that over 300 occupants of party posts in the regions were *tidak bersih lingkungan* (literally ‘without a clean environment’, i.e. linked to the pre-1965 left): ‘Bersih Diri dan Pemandanaan yang Kedaluwarsa’, *Forum Keadilan*, February 2, 1995, p. 18-20; ‘Tanda-tanda ke Situ Ada’, *Merdeka*, January 6, 1995. The West Java Military Commander, Major General Muzani Syukur stated that Djadjang Kurniadi, ‘could be suspected’ of involvement in G 30 S / PKI: ‘Lain PKI, Lain Tandingan’, *Forum Keadilan*, January 19, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> The *DPP Reshuffle* included two members of Megawati’s own DPP and a number of her regional opponents (including Latief Pudjosakti). Merukh was a long standing participant in internal PDI conflicts, noted for his pro-government sympathies. After a defeat in a factional dispute before the 1977 general elections, he and a number of colleagues called on their supporters to vote for Golkar, saying that a rival Jakarta party leader was undermining the party’s commitment to President Suharto and dual function: van Dijk, 1979, p. 122-3.

<sup>5</sup> Its meetings were not dispersed by the police (unlike many of the official PDI’s in this period) and Merukh openly claimed to have received 3 billion rupiah from the government: ‘Yogie S. M. Denies Funding Rival PDI Leadership’, *Jakarta Post*, January 16, 1995. In early 1996 there was an almost comical episode, when a conference organised by the group was broken up by Megawati supporters, who claimed to find Golkar identity papers on many of the participants: ‘Kader Golkar Gagal Bikin Kongres PDI’, *Suara Independen*, No. 10, May 1998, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> See for example ‘Warga Banteng Tawuran Lagi’, *Gatra*, July 15, 1995

central direction. Much of the ABRI leadership, especially Feisal Tanjung and other key 'green' officers, did not attempt to conceal their sympathy for anti-Megawati elements.<sup>1</sup> Several PDI leaders interviewed in late 1995 indicated that Army Chief of Staff, Hartono, was especially active. He was apparently the chief sponsor of the *DPP Reshuffle* (at the same time he supported a similar group in NU, aimed against Abdurrahman Wahid).

For the first two and a half years, the campaign against Megawati continued to be undermined by poor coordination, in the context of growing competition between Feisal Tanjung and Hartono. In the view of PDI treasurer Laksamana Sukardi, senior military officers were competing with one another in the moves against Megawati in order to prove their loyalty to the President.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, some officers, like Edi Sudradjat, Bakin Chief, Lieutenant General Soedibyo and Commander of the ABRI Staff College, Major General Theo Syafei, were widely seen as opposed to over-reaching intervention.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.1 Megawati's Strategy and Appeal

In this climate, caution remained Megawati's overriding principle. She did not overtly challenge the government on most key issues, spell out a comprehensive reform program or claim that her party was an opposition. In many ways, the aims of Megawati's PDI thus remained obscure. This partly reflected the aversion to conflict and division embedded in the Sukarnoist tradition and Megawati's personal convictions learned, as she often stressed, at the feet of her father.<sup>4</sup> Megawati repeatedly stressed that the party had to avoid sparking a political crisis, which might lead to bloodshed and endanger national unity:

Just to be patient in this Republic is a difficult challenge. In my view, I'm happy to be called *nrimo* [acquiescent to fate]. Because in my assessment the Indonesian people have a culture which must be faced with patience and with clear feelings and thoughts. If not ...Well, we are an archipelagic nation. Our history has shown that several times we have experienced splits. Now we give thanks that we have united as a nation with the philosophy of Pancasila as a glue. If not, well, you can imagine what would happen. How easy it would be for us to develop splits or to be split.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From mid-1994 there were numerous rumours in pro-Megawati circles that a concerted attempt by ABRI headquarters to unseat Megawati was imminent: interviews, late 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, December 5, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Sudradjat publicly condemned the *DPP Reshuffle*: 'Tandingan Itu Tidak Sedap', *Merdeka*, February 16, 1995. Soedibyo had been appointed Chief of Bakin in Moerdani's hey-day in 1989, and had earlier served under Moerdani as Assistant for Intelligence: Anderson, 1989, p. 66. According to some PDI sources, Megawati was invited to speak to the Staff College to address classes during Syafei's tenure, and received a very warm response there from officers.

<sup>4</sup> See McIntyre (1997) for a sensitive analysis of Megawati's political personality.

<sup>5</sup> 'Lebih Jauh dengan Megawati Soekarnoputri', *Kompas*, January 14, 1996.

Caution also related to the party's precarious political position. It was still viewed as imperative to avoid furnishing an excuse for intervention.<sup>1</sup> Party treasurer Laksamana Sukardi, when asked why the party did not produce platforms outlining labour, youth, or similar policies, explained:

We are still very busy consolidating the party. There is so much government interference everywhere that it takes up a great deal of time and money to do this, just in travelling around to all the regions, for example. We are a poor party and we have to choose our priorities. And we believe that we already have the people's trust. We do have this trust already, so why should we have platforms? And why do we have the people's trust? Because it is a public secret that there is so much corruption in the present government. And it is a public secret that we are anti-establishment . . .<sup>2</sup>

Although the PDI under Megawati thus did not put forward a sophisticated critique of the political system, its message was powerful. In part this was because of its simplicity. Above all, Megawati stood for independence from state interference. When she addressed gatherings in the regions, she repeatedly stressed that party members had full rights to participate in politics and that they should not succumb to intimidation or bribery. She called on party members to reject the 'culture of fear', have pride in their party and resist pressures to disrupt it.<sup>3</sup> Attempts to undermine her only reinforced this central message. 'It's not easy being the first party leader who was elected from below', was her refrain when questioned by the press about the PDI's problems.

Megawati's broader political message centred on promotion of respect for constitutional propriety. She and her supporters stressed that they did not stand for a radical overhaul of 'Pancasila Democracy', but rather for its proper implementation. They called for the rigorous observance of existing laws which provided for equal status of the parties, free and fair elections, party control of party affairs, and so on.<sup>4</sup> Megawati thus was able to utilise the stress on constitutionalism which had been part of regime discourse since 1966. Of course, there was nothing new about this; similar calls had been made by many dissidents and semi-opponents

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Megawati suggested it was crucial to stick to the 'constitutional road' when dealing with the party crisis in East Java. This meant, for example, always applying for the appropriate permits when holding political meetings, and not going ahead with meetings when permission was not forthcoming: 'We are different from those who want to make a rebellion . . . If we did not always seek permission, we'd be caught in their [the government's] trap.' Interview, December 11, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, December 5, 1995. Sophan Sophiaan similarly suggested that PDI programmatic weaknesses were primarily because the party leadership 'uses most of our time and energy thinking about how to survive in the face of power'. Interview, December 3, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> This was the essential message of a number of speeches made by Megawati to party members which I observed in 1994 and 1995. She argued that after joining the party in 1985, she had always viewed her main task as 'breaking down the old trauma' [the legacy of 1965] in the party's mass support base: interview, December 11, 1995. In press interviews, she repeatedly argued that the legacy of the 'dark time' of 1965 was still continuing, but that it was time for the nation to look to the future: see for example *Editor*, September 25, 1993, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> To cite a specific example, Megawati frequently stressed in her public addresses that civil servants were fully entitled to join political parties, a fact which was legally correct, but rarely observed in practice given the continued dominance of KORPRI in the civil service. See for example 'Megawati: Pegawai negeri tak perlu takut masuk PDI', *Surya*, March 27, 1995.

down the years.<sup>1</sup> But while Megawati's appeal seemed unremarkable, it resonated powerfully with the populist Sukarnoist heritage – the stress on egalitarianism, appeals for social justice and so on – which still underpinned official Pancasila discourse. It was certainly interpreted in this way by her followers. The nature of the message also enabled Megawati to avoid overt confrontation with the authorities, while minimising the need to yield to pressure.

In the process, Megawati built up a formidable public persona and charismatic appeal which was the cornerstone of the PDI challenge. She was widely viewed by her supporters as a person of honesty, simplicity and patience, yet also of directness, moral and emotional conviction, courage and determination. Her speeches were peppered with calls for party members to stand firmly for the ideals of the nation's founders and the values enshrined in Pancasila. Stickers and other paraphernalia bearing her image frequently included messages like '*Aku tidak takut!*' ('I am not afraid!') and '*Maju terus, pantang mundur!*' ('Keep going forward, no turning back!'). She was seen as the personification of the popular will for change, as the bearer of various specifically 'female' qualities (softness, 'motherliness' etc) and as the inheritor of her father's aura of national greatness and his almost mystical identification with the masses.<sup>2</sup> Many also respected her precisely because she refused to mobilise her supporters in a head-on confrontation with the regime.<sup>3</sup>

Megawati's appeal resulted in a visible energisation of party ranks. She continued to attract huge, often almost hysterical, crowds whenever she appeared in regional towns. Leaders claimed the party was attracting many new recruits and volunteers for minor posts, like village and sub-district level coordinators, where previously people had been too scared to step forward.<sup>4</sup> While government intervention was effective in the province-level DPDs, the sheer weight of numbers meant that lower party organs were dominated by Megawati loyalists.

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<sup>1</sup> As Ramage (1995) has shown, official 'Pancasila ideology' was susceptible to multiple interpretation and could be used for widely varying goals.

<sup>2</sup> She was clearly happy to use this association, suggesting in one interview that her aspiration was 'To struggle for the life of the people and for the ideals of independence, which I happened to learn at first hand from the founder of this Republic': 'Lebih Jauh Dengan Megawati Soekarnoputri', *Kompas*, January 14, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> As Laksamana Sukardi (interview, July 17, 1998) suggested, much later: '*Mbak Mega* wants non-violence...She has the power to command, and can mobilise the masses wherever she pleases. However, she prefers that no victims fall for her political interests. If she was the type of leader who didn't care, she would ask her masses to take to the streets. If she asked them, well, all of them would definitely come.' In short, Megawati was the kind of leader who proved her mass support precisely by *not* mobilising them politically. See McIntyre's (1997, p. 15) similar comments on Megawati's enigmatic silences: 'Megawati became a mute symbol; or rather, a symbol because she was mute, a sign for decency amid the abuse of power of the Soeharto regime.'

<sup>4</sup> In late 1995 Megawati claimed that the party now had active 'commissioners' in over 40 thousand villages, which was around 90% of the total of approximately 50 thousand in the country: interview, December 11, 1995. Local party leaders from Bandung and Yogyakarta interviewed in December 1996 confirmed that they had far more volunteers than ever before. Megawati (interview December 11, 1995) spoke of a process of metamorphosis in the party, whereby it was being transformed from a 'caterpillar' into a 'butterfly.'

Although Megawati was guarded in her public comments, many of her core supporters were less so.<sup>1</sup> Some publicly attacked corruption, with opposition to monopolies and collusion becoming the party's central economic demand (see below). Others advocated changes in the electoral and party laws and DPR procedures, in order to enable more energetic legislative control.<sup>2</sup> The PDI was the only DPR fraksi to roundly condemn the 1994 press bannings, outspoken PDI legislators mercilessly grilled government ministers during Commission hearings, in 1996 they rejected the government's proposed 1997-8 budget, calling for stronger anti-corruption measures and legislative scrutiny.<sup>3</sup> Legislator Aberson Marle Sihalohe even openly condemned ABRI's *dwifungsi* and called for a return to the barracks.<sup>4</sup> In short, Megawati's supporters increasingly portrayed the PDI as the party of democratisation.

#### 4.2 Support Outside the PDI

Meanwhile, Megawati was attracting growing support from beyond the PDI. The most predictable source was individuals and organisations with historical links to the old PNI and other parties which had fused into the PDI.<sup>5</sup> While these old *aliran* were mostly maintained by informal networks (see below) certain organisations remained significant. A few old *ormas* which had largely been domesticated under the New Order, notably the student organisation GMNI, and to a lesser extent, PMKRI and GMKI, became vigorous supporters. There were also several groups which had been established in the early 1980s as vehicles for former PNI members who felt alienated from the PDI. Such organisations included *Yayasan Pendidikan Sukarno* (Sukarno Education Foundation), led by Megawati's sister Rachmawati, and the more militant *Gerakan Rakyat Marhaen*, (Marhaen People's Movement, GRM), with which

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<sup>1</sup> On the DPP she was supported by a dozen or so of the 27 members, including individuals like Sutarjo Suryoguritno, Laksamana Sukardi, Mangara Siahaan and Kwik Kian Gie. Among the 56 party DPR members, there was a core group of about 20 'hard line' pro-Megawati and pro-reform legislators including Sophan Sophiaan, Aberson Marle Sihalohe and Sabam Sirait. These individuals were often involved in public disputes with party legislators who were more compliant with government wishes, including fraksi leader Fatimah Achmad and Soerjadi. See for example 'Justru Soerjadi yang Minta Maaf', *Sinar*, March 23 1996, p. 69. In response, there was even talk of 'recalling' fraksi members who were insufficiently vocal: 'Recall, PDI Segera Menyusul?', *Tiras*, April 6, 1995, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> 'Golkar Rejects PDI Call to Amend Electoral Laws', *Jakarta Post*, October 15, 1994, 'PDI Backs Study of Electoral System', *Jakarta Post*, March 1, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> 'Jurus PDI di Parlemen', *Suara Independen*, No. 8, March 1996, p. 10. In early 1996 PDI members of one commission boycotted hearings with Information Minister and Golkar Chairperson Harmoko, an unheard of gesture of defiance: 'Protes Keras Dari Gedung Semanggi', *Sinar*, March 25 1996, p. 68-73.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Jika Tut Wuri, Bubarkan Saja Fraksi ABRI', *Tiras*, May 9, 1996, p. 52-7; at p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to public support for Megawati, another measure of the reinvigoration of the older generation of Sukarno supporters around this time was the publication of several books of memoirs by former (leftist) Sukarno era officials. These constituted the first extensive public refutations of official accounts of Sukarno's downfall and rise of the New Order, and were thus important symbolic markers of the regime's mounting legitimacy problems. The most widely discussed such book was Manai Sophiaan's 1994 *Kehormatan bagi yang berhak*, ('Respect to whom it is due') Sophiaan was a member of the DPP of the PNI in the mid 1960s: Brooks, 1996, p. 89-96. Memoirs by the former Partindo Minister and long term political detainee Oei Tjoe Tjat (1995) and the former Sukarnoist military commander Suhario Padmodiwiryo (1995) also challenged New Order historiography.

Megawati's most radical sister, Sukmawati, was associated.<sup>1</sup> During the early *keterbukaan* years, the leaders of these groups had frequently condemned the PDI.<sup>2</sup> After Megawati became party leader, they mostly offered their support. So too did the 'new' PNI and Parkindo, which were formed in late 1995 as (poorly disguised) efforts to organise the constituencies of the old parties.<sup>3</sup>

The Megawati camp also developed closer ties with groups beyond the PDI's old *aliran* base. Potentially most significant was a tacit alliance with Abdurrahman Wahid's N.U. Megawati and Wahid had known each other as children, and she greatly respected his political judgement. Megawati attended the NU congress in late 1994 where Wahid was narrowly re-elected despite considerable government pressure; in following months the two frequently appeared together publicly.<sup>4</sup> How far this alliance penetrated to the organisations' grass roots was questionable, although closer cooperation was welcomed particularly enthusiastically by the new generation of activist and pro-democratic NU youth. There was both historical precedence for this cooperation (NU and PNI were twin pillars of Guided Democracy) and a sense of shared fate, given that Wahid and his allies were also being undermined in NU, and had in 1994 been roundly defeated in PPP.

Several PDI leaders interviewed in late 1995 also suggested they had a deliberate strategy of garnering support from other pro-democracy actors. Key party leaders addressed campus meetings and seminars organised by NGOs. Some even began to develop ties with more

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<sup>1</sup> The driving force behind GRM was Selamat Ginting, a former PNI leader who had been expelled in the purges of the late 1960s. GRM sustained functioning branches in many towns, mostly in East and Central Java and North Sumatra. Its leaders had long issued increasingly combative criticisms of the government, including calls for election boycotts in 1987 and 1992: Ginting, 1992. YPS focused more on ostensibly 'educational' and 'cultural' activities, and organised large and well-publicised events in commemoration of Sukarno. See for example a report of the large Jakarta ceremony commemorating the ninetieth anniversary of his birth: 'Bukan Hanya Milik PDI', *Editor*, June 15, 1991, p. 29. Interview with Bagin, November 8, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Sukmawati, on becoming a GRM leader in mid-1993 accused the PDI of being 'not very resolute or brave in debating the teachings of Bung Karno' and claimed that GRM was 'more of an opposition to the government': 'Karisma Bung Karno Tidak Bisa Dihapuskan 100 Persen', *Forum Keadilan*, June 8, 1995, p. 70-4; p. 71. For much earlier, but similar, comments, see *Editor*, October 3, 1987, p. 12-3. Usep Ranawijaya, former secretary general of the PNI and PDI, called for the PDI's dissolution in 1993: *Simphoni*, August 4, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> PNI-Baru was led by a range of older prominent Nationalist leaders, such as former ambassador at large, Ibu Supeni, former PDI general chairperson Sanusi Hardjadinata, former PNI and PDI secretary general Usep Ranawijaya, Petition of Fifty group member Melwachdiat Sukardi and members of GRM. Although PNI-Baru's leaders stressed that it was not an anti-government organisation, they did criticise the government, arguing that corruption, the 'social gap', the powerlessness of democratic institutions and other deviations from Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution endangered national unity and the integrity of the nation state: Supeni, 1995. Pro-Megawati PDI leaders involved in these initiatives included Djathi Koesoemo (PNI-baru) Marcel Beding and Sabam Sirait (Parkindo-baru). Kwik Kian Gie, Sukowaluyo and Mochtar Buchori were involved in YKPK.

<sup>4</sup> See for example 'Kalau Dua Demokrat Bertemu', *Kompas*, December 6, 1994; John McBeth, 'Power Couple: Tacit opposition alliance alarms ruling Golkar party', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 16, 1995, p. 26-7. In this article, Wahid says that he had informed 'a General' that his intention was to bring Megawati into the mainstream, to undercut the influence of 'NGO people' in the party and to stop it being nudged into the far left.

unofficial opposition including dissident groups, critical NGOs, radical student groups, and labour organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Some liberal critics remained very cynical regarding the political parties and criticised Megawati for being too hesitant. Others in unofficial opposition circles began to view the party as, if not their parliamentary voice, at least as a potentially strategic asset given opposition forces' historic isolation from the electoral arena.<sup>2</sup>

The growing challenge posed by the PDI was highlighted by signs that it was preparing to support Megawati as its Presidential candidate. From the start this had been an open secret.<sup>3</sup> But as the 1997 general election neared, support for Megawati's candidacy became more public. In January 1996, several PDI legislators, including Aberson Marle Sihalohe caused a media sensation when they circulated a petition promoting Megawati's candidacy, a majority vote on the President in the MPR, and for each Presidential candidate to campaign for explicit platforms during the 1997 election.<sup>4</sup> Aberson was characteristically forthright: 'If the people now want Megawati, Suharto will fall.'<sup>5</sup>

This was a dramatic move. Of course, it did not open the way for change in government by constitutional process: outright victory in the DPR poll, let alone in the MPR vote on the Presidency, was unimaginable given how the political system was structured. But it did dramatise the threat which the PDI posed the government. For reasons which are discussed in the next chapter, it also spelled Megawati's doom. President Suharto was determined not to face a challenger in the MPR and Megawati was consequently evicted from the PDI leadership

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<sup>1</sup> See for example 'NGO activists and PDI legislators discuss corruption', *Jakarta Post*, January 26 1994; 'DPR Perlu Atasi Kendala Internal', *Kompas*, January 26 1994; 'PDI Ditantang untuk Tampung Anggota Petisi-50', *Kompas*, October 14, 1994; 'Labor union drafting two bills on workers' rights', *Jakarta Post*, January 17, 1996. Exploratory meetings took place to discuss common interests, and leading dissidents, youth activists and other critics attended informal, social and other public meetings organised by the PDI or allied groups. PRD student activists found that, if they organised demonstrations at the DPR, they could always rely on several PDI legislators to address them. From an early point Megawati and her camp also began to develop increasing international links. Megawati was frequently invited to foreign embassies. Leading PDI members also began to make links with international bodies like the Council of Asian Liberal and Democratic Leaders.

<sup>2</sup> As noted in chapter six, the radical students of the PRD began to explore the possibility of joint activity with PDI members from a relatively early date.

<sup>3</sup> From the time she became party leader Megawati routinely stressed that the Presidential succession should be an open and democratic process, declining to state whether she would run and suggesting it would be up to the 'people': see for example 'Let people choose president: Megawati', *Jakarta Post*, February 22, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> See for example *Sinar*, February 3, 1996, p. 68-73; *Tiras*, February 8, 1996, p. 18-32; *Forum Keadilan*, February 12, 1996, p. 100-2. The last element of Aberson's proposal had long been rejected by the government as contrary to the spirit of Pancasila democracy: see for example *Editor*, March 31, 1990, p. 25. This petition had been preceded by similar ones which began to circulate in PDI branches in October 1995: *Jakarta Post*, October 19, 1995; *Forum Keadilan*, February 12, 1996, p. 100-2.

<sup>5</sup> Aberson Marle Sihalohe, 'Saya Tolak Soeharto Jadi Presiden', *Suara Independen*, No. 7, Jan-Feb 1996, p. 26-7. Megawati herself refused to comment on the proposal; her party opponents, predictably, opposed the move, saying it betrayed the third 'basic attitude' of the PDI, namely, support for Suharto. See for example Budi Hardjono in 'Langkah Mega Menuju Kursi Presiden', *Suara Independen*, No. 7, Jan-Feb 1996, p. 25.

in mid-1996. Before turning to these events in the next chapter, it is appropriate to present a more general analysis of the sources of Megawati's support.

### **5. The Megawati Phenomenon Assessed**

The political challenge mounted by the PDI under Megawati was, overall, a product of the deepening crisis of hegemony experienced by the New Order and the general political loosening which occurred under *keterbukaan*. As we have seen, Megawati and her supporters consciously took advantage of the new press freedom, intra-regime tensions and greater societal assertiveness.

It was not surprising that the first major challenge to the government after *keterbukaan* would take the form of revived semi-opposition, originating from one of the hitherto mostly listless components of the official corporatist political system. The state's coercive power made it difficult to establish an independent political movement outside of and in direct challenge to the official system. The political parties, though subject to numerous constraints, had an organisational infrastructure and freedom of movement which a legal opposition lacked. Moreover, their pre-New Order origins meant that they 'floated' on top of potentially restive mass constituencies. Throughout the New Order, constant management by the state apparatus had been required to contain the parties. Compliant leaderships had been maintained only by the continual application of a mixture of coercion and inducements (succinctly expressed by the Indonesian term *rekayasa* - 'engineering'). But this required a relatively unified state apparatus and relative passivity in society (long provided by the legacy of the 1965 'trauma'). As *keterbukaan* took hold PDI members became more inclined to resist, and this management task consequently became more difficult. Lack of coordination among political managers exacerbated the problem.

The PDI revival must thus be understood as a product of the generalised decline of fear in society which became visible in the *keterbukaan* years. More particularly, the paralysis of the old Nationalist populist support base was beginning to lose its effectiveness. A new generation had reached maturity, which had not experienced the repression which ended the Sukarno era. The energisation of the PDI was thus closely tied to growing frustration among youth and their search for an avenue for protest, reflected in the youthful composition of the large PDI election rallies in 1987 and 1992.

It was also unsurprising that a major challenge to the government would assume a personalist form. Opponents of the New Order had long believed that they needed a single, unifying figure with strong mass appeal. Restrictions on political activity constrained their ability to build institutionalised links to a mass base. A new charismatic leader was sometimes viewed as a



means to bypass this problem (hence, some Forum Demokrasi members' earlier hopes for Abdurrahman Wahid).<sup>1</sup>

Given the experiences of many other post-authoritarian Asian countries, it was not surprising that such a person would be a close family member of a former President. Long before Megawati took the helm of the PDI, there were many signs of increased public enthusiasm for Sukarno as a symbolic focal point of protest.<sup>2</sup> The popular image of Sukarno - that he loved and was close to the *wong cilik*, that he did not use his office to benefit his family, that he died poor - drew much of its power as a form of protest against the perceived remoteness and corruption of New Order leaders.<sup>3</sup>

At least initially much of the support for Megawati derived its intensity from her family background. In the words of one Balinese Megawati supporter quoted by *Tempo* at the Surabaya congress 'We love Bung Karno and his children, so we are supporting Megawati.'<sup>4</sup> Many of the stickers, posters and other Megawati paraphernalia which proliferated after 1993 incorporated background pictures of Sukarno hovering behind his daughter, as if a guardian spirit.<sup>5</sup> As we have seen, Megawati soon began to build a powerful public persona of her own. She was viewed by her supporters as inheriting many of her father's attributes (honesty, love for the people, commitment to national unity) as well as developing her own (notably gendered) qualities of simplicity, serenity, patience, motherhood and so forth.

In addition to the PDI's legal status, declining grassroots fear and Megawati's personal appeal, three additional factors contributed to Megawati's popular support.

### 5.1 Aliran and Informal Networks

<sup>1</sup> In the view of Laksamana Sukardi, Megawati was an important figure to facilitate the 'transition from personalistic to institutional leadership': interview, December 16, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> This became apparent in the late 1970s, but was brought home on a mass scale by the sea of portraits of the first President at PDI rallies in 1987. Increasingly large crowds visited Sukarno's grave in Blitar on the anniversary of his death, birth, and other significant dates. For example, some fifty thousand people turned out there on the 21st anniversary of his death in 1991: *Tempo*, June 29 1991, p. 15. Some sketchy poll data also pointed to Sukarno's great popularity, especially among youth. For example, in a poll of Diponegoro University students in Semarang in 1988 72 % of those questioned indicated that Sukarno was the 'number one national figure' whom they admired: *Editor*, October 10 1988, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Labrousse (1993) has written on the many materials about Sukarno which were published after 1978 and on the 'Sukarno myth' presented in them. See also Brooks, 1996, for an analysis of the shadow cast by the first President over the late New Order years.

<sup>4</sup> *Tempo*, December 18, 1993, p. 23 (also quoted in Brooks, 1996, p 87). Many PDI members interviewed for this thesis in 1995 and 1996 forthrightly indicated that it was Megawati's parentage that was her main asset. In the words of a PDI member I met in Yogyakarta: 'We don't think about the details of the changes or the democracy we want. We only see Mega. Mega is Bung Karno, and Bung Karno struggled for the people. And we know that Mega also struggles for the unity, justice, prosperity and greatness of the people.' (interview, December 5, 1996). It is worth noting that many PDI members I spoke to remarked that they had always hoped that it would be Sukarno's oldest son, Guntur, who would step forward once more into national political life, as he had done to no avail in the 1970s. See also McIntyre, 1997, p. 9, for a discussion of popular affection for Guntur.

<sup>5</sup> My thanks to Rochayah Machali for bringing this to my attention.

After the late 1960s systematic intervention had greatly weakened the PDI and other organisations which represented the old Nationalist *aliran*.<sup>1</sup> To account for the strength of the Megawati challenge, it is thus necessary to look beyond formal politics, toward an array of more humble informal networks and patterns of organisation. These greatly assist in explaining the tenacity of the old Sukarnoist mass base.

For example, many members of the old PNI and its affiliates, right through to the 1990s, remained organised in communal money-saving *arisan* groups.<sup>2</sup> *Arisan* meetings were used by former PNI members to maintain group cohesion and facilitate political discussion and communication. In former PNI base areas, like Central and East Java, supporters of the old party similarly regularly gathered for *slametan* (thanksgiving feasts) on auspicious dates for similar purposes.<sup>3</sup> Such practices remained widespread: according to one informant interviewed in 1993, there were as many as fifty PNI-oriented *arisan* groups operating in the Jakarta area alone.<sup>4</sup>

'Informal community leaders' also played an important role. Although the PNI had long since lost its leadership core in the civilian bureaucracy, numerous informants told me that retired village heads with former PNI links, small business people, 'paranormals', martial arts teachers, artists and the like, all continued to assist in maintaining the party's old (albeit much reduced) local networks. Nationalist or PDI-aligned *preman*, semi-criminal elements, played a role in mobilising young people for PDI rallies in the cities.<sup>5</sup> At the opposite end of the spectrum, despite mono-loyalty, many former state employees retained emotional attachments to old PNI symbols and networks. From the late 1980s there were numerous reports of retired village heads, ABRI officers and other officials returning to the PDI fold.<sup>6</sup> Even serving civil servants who were former GMNI members began to network increasingly openly in the early 1990s.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> By *aliran* I mean the cluster of political party and associated mass organisations, which in Geertz's (1959, p. 37) view represented a 'comprehensive pattern of social integration' in much of rural Indonesia in the pre-New Order period.

<sup>2</sup> *Arisan* groups are a traditional method of communal money saving, whereby group members gather regularly, contributing small sums which are collected and distributed to a group member chosen at random.

<sup>3</sup> Such dates included independence day, the first of June (the day when Sukarno first 'announced' Pancasila), the anniversary of Sukarno's birth and death and so on.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Soeroto Padmodihardjo, November 30, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mangara Siahaan, December 1, 1995. Mangara himself, a member of Megawati's DPP, was himself a 'gang' leader in the Blok M area of Jakarta in the 1970s, before becoming a movie star and PDI leader. The military and Golkar were far more successful in mobilising *preman*: Ryter, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> This was considered to be one reason for its increase in votes in Central and East Java in 1992. Some such retirees used their own experiences at election rallies to explain how it was usual for local level officials to exploit the people: 'Lempar Umpan dan Cekal', *Tempo*, May 30, 1992, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> A number of civil servants in East and Central Java who had Sukarnoist backgrounds indicated during interviews in 1994 that they and like-minded colleagues had recently begun to meet regularly for political discussions, even in their offices. Although until recent times, many of them had been very fearful of exposing their affiliations, they were now establishing networks between offices and even between cities. Confidential communications, Surabaya, Semarang, and Jakarta, February - March 1994. This did not

The subterranean nature of such ties makes them resistant to analysis, at least in the absence of detailed local case studies. Presumably such links maintained the old Nationalist *aliran* only imperfectly, making it difficult to recruit new cadres and maintain ideological continuity. But such informal ties did serve many functions. They were an effective means of communication (I witnessed just how quickly former PNI supporters could arrange an impromptu gathering in one small town in Central Java) and former PNI leaders in Jakarta remained in close contact with party supporters throughout the archipelago. Such informal links also had considerable efficacy for mobilisational purposes (witness the annual pilgrimages to Sukarno's grave). Overall, they served to maintain group cohesion, solidarity and identity among former PNI supporters, indirectly assisting the Megawati challenge. Such ties also enabled some Megawati supporters to bypass the intervention and paralysis experienced within formal PDI structures.<sup>1</sup>

It is unsurprising that oppositional politics should be largely uninstitutionalised and informal in repressive conditions. The important point is that it was possible to make a serious misreading of Indonesian politics, especially the effectiveness of mass depoliticisation, merely by observing formal institutions and the apparent acquiescence which occurred in the official arena. Below this level was a subterranean world of hidden political linkages and loyalties, where the old political *aliran* were merely forced into hibernation. The Megawati phenomenon indicated that once political controls were loosened, old political forces could re-emerge, albeit in modified form.

## 5.2 Cultural Cleavages

The PDI promoted a secular nationalist appeal which stressed integrative symbols like Pancasila and rejection of 'primordialism' and 'sectarianism'. Two of the parties which joined the PDI in 1973 were Christian. The PNI itself had received strong support in communities like the largely Protestant Bataks of North Sumatra and Balinese Hindus; in Java it was strongly identified with the non-orthodox *abangan* / *priyayi* cultural variants.

Cultural identification as non-*santri* clearly remained an important binding force in PDI ranks. For example, Javanese mysticism retained many PDI adherents (one PDI leader illustrated this graphically to me by describing how paranormals from rival camps strove to exert supernatural influences over the 1993 Surabaya congress.<sup>2</sup>) There were obvious messianic and millenarian

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necessarily translate into active support for the PDI, but it did feed into the formation of groups like FKA-GMNI and PCPP (see chapter four).

<sup>1</sup> For example, the petition nominating Megawati for the Presidency appeared to have been drafted by 'old style' Sukarnoists and circulated through Central Java primarily via their informal networks. The person described by *Tiras* ('Bila *Banteng* Menolak Jadi Epigon Eksternal', February 8, 1996, p. 20-2) as its initiator, Agus Condro Prayitno, was the vice chairperson of the *PNI Baru* board in Central Java.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Djathi Koesoemo, November 14, 1995.

overtones in the attitudes of many Megawati supporters. Mystics linked to the party increasingly spoke of portents signifying the end of the Suharto era, while some PDI members believed that Megawati had received the *wahyu*, the mystical essence which endowed rulers with power and authority.<sup>1</sup>

The PDI also remained an avenue for the expression of the interests of, and protest by, members of various religious minorities. For example, there was an overlap between the party and members of the beleaguered wing of the Batak Protestant Church, HKBP.<sup>2</sup> More generally, Megawati garnered particularly enthusiastic support in Hindu Bali, mostly Protestant North Sumatra, and Catholic East Nusa Tenggara.

It would be taking this argument too far to view the invigoration of the PDI and Nationalist *aliran* as largely a reaction to the reassertion of Islamic claims symbolised by ICMI.<sup>3</sup> But there was an element of this. We have seen in previous chapters how the regime's courting of Islamic support generated various forms of opposition, packaged in discourse which stressed Pancasila, national unity, dangers of 'exclusivism,' 'national disintegration' and so on. Such language was frequently employed by leaders of the PDI and allied groups. Some (but not all) pro-Megawati PDI leaders interviewed for this thesis indicated that they were concerned by what ICMI signified, and that such concern formed a potential basis for cooperation with '*merah-putih*' ABRI officers. PDI and allied groups were thus partly a vehicle to express a non-Islamic, Pancasilaist counter-vision in the new climate. Put slightly differently, the regime's new reliance on Islamic appeals had freed the old secular and nationalist ideologies to play a more oppositional role.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In late 1996 I was informed by several PDI members about strange lights sighted over Central Java, that a 'mystical object' (*benda sakti*) had been blown out of Mt. Merapi, and about other supernatural portents which favoured Megawati. For an example of the persistence of such beliefs in the Sukarnoist support base, see 'Buku Kuning Alam Gaib', *Forum Keadilan*, December 18, 1995, p. 25, a report about the circulation among Javanese transmigrants in Southern Kalimantan of a messianic tract entitled 'Stories from the mystical world, Strange but True: 1995, the rise of the '*ratu adil*' ['just prince'], Bung Karno...' In 1997 there was considerable press interest in the uncovering of cult in Malang in East Java, whose members apparently received some para-military training, and which was led by an individual who claimed to be Sukarno: 'Mengulutkan Bung Karno', *Gatra*, October 4, 1997, p. 31-37.

<sup>2</sup> In the early 1990s, a split developed in the HKBP, with the military intervening to ouster the leader of the church, Dr. S A E Nababan, who had overseen a shift in the church toward greater involvement in social action activities: Human Rights Watch Asia, 1994, p. 88-108.

<sup>3</sup> Unease about ICMI was deepest among members of the ruling elite who felt their own positions to be directly threatened by it; PDI leaders, in contrast, had long been excluded from power and did not stand to lose so much. The extent to which resentment and fear of the new power of Islam penetrated to the mass level also remained uncertain. The reinvigoration of the PDI's rank and file began to be evident well before the formation of ICMI or the turn to Islam by the regime. Likewise, as we shall see, substantial cooperation between PDI members and Islamic supporters of PPP during the 1997 elections seemed to demonstrate that hostility was often less at the mass level than in the elite arena.

<sup>4</sup> In the past secular nationalism had been bound tightly to the regime in the service of its anti-Islamist goals (again, one thinks of the timing of Ali Moertopo's restoration of Sukarno's grave at the height of the engineered panic about Islamic extremism in the late 1970s). It is also worth stressing once more that the PPP did not experience a process of reinvigoration similar to that undergone by the PDI during the 1990s, largely because of the impact of the new government policies toward Islam.

### 5.3 Class and Economic Appeals

The new ‘Sukarnoism’ espoused by the PDI and Megawati was not merely a means to assert non-*santri* cultural identity. It was the chief *anti-establishment* secular ideology. Its main appeal was egalitarian and populist and explicitly directed to the ‘common folk’: the *wong cilik*, or *rakyat kecil*.

The PDI clearly lacked significant backing from large capital, unsurprising given the continuing economic dominance of politically-dependent crony business groups. The result was perpetual difficulties in financing the party. The government provided only minimal funds, and various attempts to build a donation-base for the party from the late 1980s mostly failed.<sup>1</sup> When prominent businesspeople joined the PDI, their private business activities often suffered, as most potential partners and clients feared that their own business prospects would suffer by association with them.

The lack of independent financial support exacerbated the PDI’s vulnerability to co-optation, because of the dependence of many party leaders on positions in local and national legislatures, which offered salaries and business opportunities. The relative ease with which state officials could remove occupants of such posts, or cut off patronage sources, resulted in a layer of anxious party bureaucrats of the sort mobilised against Megawati.<sup>2</sup>

However, from the mid-1980s the party began to attract increasing, although still limited, support from the growing independent middle classes - big city professionals (lawyers, intellectuals, journalists and others) and some medium entrepreneurs. As we have seen, under Soerjadi the party made a deliberate effort to recruit from these sectors, especially intellectuals.<sup>3</sup> Even more intellectuals and professionals were attracted after Megawati became leader.<sup>4</sup> Although some key Megawati supporters were long-serving professional politicians, many others had previously been artists, lawyers, managers, academics and the like. Such individuals clearly did not join the PDI for personal gain; doing so often harmed their careers.<sup>5</sup> Many were children of the Sukarno-era national political elite, owed their middle class status to

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<sup>1</sup> For some reports on the attempts see ‘Partai Melarat & Konglomerat’, *Tempo*, April 11, 1992; ‘Banteng Beriklan Cari Sumabangan’, *Forum Keadilan*, March 31, 1994, p. 22. According to party treasurer Laksamana Sukardi (interview, December 5, 1995) government funding of political parties amounted to the paltry sum of 8 million rupiah per month from the state budget, supplemented by some funds from local authorities in the provinces. This contrasted with the Philippines under Marcos, for example, where a significant sector of large capital remained independent and backed Aquino’s Presidential challenge.

<sup>2</sup> Many party leaders with substantial business interests ultimately sided against Megawati in inner party conflicts. Soerjadi’s stewardship of a Wanandi brothers’ company makes him an obvious example. Others included Soengeng Saryadi, Alex Asmasoebrata and Yusuf Merukh.

<sup>3</sup> For some observers, the PDI came to resemble the pre-New Order old PSI, a vehicle of the ‘modern’, secular part of the middle class: Ali, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Party members interviewed for the thesis invariably argued that positions in DPD, DPC and lower party organs were increasingly being filled by individuals with tertiary qualifications.

<sup>5</sup> Mochtar Buchori, for example, was forced out as rector of the Muhammadiyah IKIP (Teachers’ College) in Jakarta: ‘Gara-gara Ikut Mega’, *Forum Keadilan*, February 2, 1995, p. 17.

this, and maintained emotional ties with the old Sukarnoist *aliran*.<sup>1</sup> Many also joined the PDI precisely because they viewed it as a vehicle to pursue ‘constitutional’ reform within the political system and avoid the dangers associated with challenging the system from outside.

However, there were limits to the extent to which the PDI attracted a middle class support base.<sup>2</sup> It was obvious by simply attending PDI meetings that the party drew its primary social sustenance from somewhat lower down the social hierarchy. Its functions, even those held in Jakarta, typically had a small town, provincial feel. The party grassroots, especially at the *kabupaten* level and below (DPC members, even more so, *kordes*, village coordinators), tended to be organised by *petit bourgeois* figures: operators of medium-sized businesses, small shopkeepers, retailers, restaurant or *warung* owners, owners of small fleets of taxis or other kinds of public transport. Often such individuals felt squeezed out by better connected business groups.<sup>3</sup> After the rise of Megawati, many of the battles for control of regional branches were between relatively independent but marginal small entrepreneurs of this kind, and local party bosses whose businesses were more dependent on government support.<sup>4</sup>

The mass support base of the party, those who made up the crowds at the party’s 1987 and 1992 elections rallies were from even more humble origins. These were the petty traders, owners of small ‘kiosks’, buskers, un- or under-employed youth and the myriad others who constituted the urban informal sector.<sup>5</sup> Many were not particularly attached to the PDI but were simply looking for an avenue to protest.

In short, the PDI retained much of the heterogeneous, populist constituency of Sukarnoism. Its appeal certainly exhibited many typical attributes of populist movements, including the characteristic exultation of the ‘small people’ and programmatic nebulosity.<sup>6</sup> The Sukarno myth, and by extension, Megawati’s popularity, likewise retained its force primarily among

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Tarto Sudiro, a German educated architect and director of an electronics firm, was the son of former Jakarta Governor Sudiro *Tempo*, June 15, 1991, p. 32. Sophan Sophiaan was the son of 1960s PNI leader Manai Sophiaan. Even Laksamana Sukardi was the nephew of Melwachdiat Sukardi, PNI ‘representative’ in the Petition of Fifty working group.

<sup>2</sup> Many in the urban middle class remain highly concerned about the dangers of political disorder and suspected the PDI and its unruly supporters as a result. At the other extreme, the most liberal middle class critics in student activist groups and NGOs remained skeptical of Megawati’s political skills and her party’s lack of programmatic clarity.

<sup>3</sup> For example, during field research in West Java in late 1996, several local PDI and *Pemuda Demokrat* (Democrat Youth) leaders who owned small scale construction operations discussed at length their frustrations at perpetually losing contracts to contractors linked to *Pemuda Pancasila* (Pancasila Youth) and other Golkar affiliates.

<sup>4</sup> Field notes, 1996, Yogyakarta and Surabaya. In rural areas, given more repressive political conditions, it was more difficult to assess the PDI’s social support base, although former village officials, medium sized farmers, local professionals, and such like seemed to comprise the party’s core organisational infrastructure there.

<sup>5</sup> Particularly prominent were public transport drivers and workers. One needed simply to chat to taxi drivers in Jakarta to get an impression of almost total support for Megawati; in Surabaya networks of *becak* drivers were important in the mobilisations of mid-1996.

<sup>6</sup> This is if we bear in mind Roberts’ (1995, p. 84) warning that ‘few social science concepts can match populism when it comes to nebulous and inconsistent usage...’.

poorer social layers, because of its evocation of a golden past when the ‘small people’ were elevated to the centre of national life.<sup>1</sup>

At the grassroots of the party, radical Marhaenism and left-wing nationalism remained alive. Talking to many PDI members, I was struck by the force of their commitment to much of Sukarno’s old radical-populist rhetoric, including support for state ownership and hostility to foreign capital.<sup>2</sup> However, the core of the PDI economic appeal from the early 1990s was directed at both the old populist constituency and the new middle class. Opposition to ‘collusion’, ‘nepotism’ and ‘monopolies’ responded to cross-class resentment at the privileges granted to Suharto family members and other crony capitalists. It appealed to the regularising instincts of middle class professionals and to the many small and medium entrepreneurs who resented losing out to the well-connected giants.<sup>3</sup> It also attracted the popular sectors, who resented the ‘social gap’ (another recurrent theme in campaign speeches) and the informal charges they were obliged to pay in all dealings with the state apparatus.

From the late 1980s the new middle class element in the party increasingly influenced its economic program. The essence of the new approach, as expounded especially by Kwik Kian Gie, was promotion of a more fairly regulated, even more free, market. This could be achieved by removing monopolies, offensive cartels and collusion, and providing fair competition and greater transparency. A new element of deregulatory liberalism, even anti-statism, was increasingly taking this traditionally most populist of political parties away from its old Sukarnoist moorings. And so for example, a 1995 DPP statement (signed by Kwik) argued that the ‘social gap’ was caused not by the ‘number of large-scale or giant companies, but the methods they use to carry out their business activities.’ What was needed was:

the right to obtain equal business opportunities. The right to obtain equal access to, and facilities from, the government. Also genuine, fair and just competition.<sup>4</sup>

The entry of these new middle class elements was also associated with early moves away from reliance on vague, demagogic and imprecise appeals (again Kwik Kian Gie was a principal

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<sup>1</sup> In conversations with PDI supporters, I was given countless examples of how Sukarno had been at one with the ordinary people. Here we have populism’s reliance on a ‘great leader ... in mystical contact with the masses.’: Wiles, 1969, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Even official PDI pronouncements retained certain features of classical Indonesian populism, including anti-capitalist rhetoric, an emphasis on cooperatives and other redistributive measures (although this was a staple of Indonesian Pancasila discourse). As Soerjadi (1992, p. 10) put it: ‘We don’t want the capitalistic tendency which has developed in Indonesia to grow stronger. We are obliged to stop it and get it back under control.’ For a discussion of some of the poverty alleviation measures promoted by the party, see, Kwik Kian Gie, 1992d.

<sup>3</sup> This was especially as the tentacles of big, crony capital increasingly stretched into the provinces. Most obvious was the devastating effects of the Suharto childrens’ clove and citrus monopolies on many small producers and traders.

<sup>4</sup> *Kompas*, September 8, 1995. See also, for example, Sukanto et al 1991, p. 10, Kwik Kian Gie, 1992d.

player) in favour of the presentation of detailed, reasoned, concrete alternative policies (although this process was never completed).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was precisely the kind of 'programmatic politics' which thirty years previously the middle class 1966 generation activists had accused the PNI and other parties of failing to deliver. See for example Kwik Kian Gie 1992c. This article, entitled 'Kampanye Pemilu yang Bertanggung Jawab' ['A responsible General Election Campaign], reprinted from *Kompas*, May 19 and 20, 1992, is a polemic by Kwik against election campaigns which utilised vague appeals (like 'we must have justice,' precisely the kind of appeal which had hitherto characterised the PDI) and used 'agitational' methods which might make the masses 'explode'. Instead, he argued in favour of press conferences, methods which 'cool' the masses and presentation of concrete policy proposals. Concomitant with this, Megawati and many of her supporters were concerned to 'modernise' the Pancasila ideology bequeathed to the party from Sukarno, ridding it of its most leftist and doctrinaire elements. According to Sophan Sophiaan 'Pancasila simply stresses the importance of social justice, democracy, equality - it's just the same as the ideology of your own country, Australia, or of other Western nations': interview, December 3, 1995.



## **6. Conclusion.**

One theme of this chapter has been the apparent contradiction between the breadth of Megawati's mass support and the vagueness of her appeal. In part, this vagueness reflected the populist class base of the party, as well as the party leadership's own aversion to promoting political disorder. It also, however, resulted from the threat of state sanction. Megawati's determination to maintain her party's semi-oppositional position in the formal system meant that she and her supporters were required to keep their public utterances within the confines of established New Order Pancasila orthodoxy.

Even so, it is clear that at least sections within the PDI were slowly moving the party beyond the semi-oppositional model toward (even if Megawati denied this) an opposition of a more fundamental type. Many members were beginning to view it as an alternative government: hence, alternative policies and an alternative Presidential candidate. Such aspirations were clearly incompatible with the role allotted the parties in the New Order political structure, at least while President Suharto remained in charge.

## **Part Three: The End of Suharto's New Order**

## Chapter Eight

### The 1996 PDI Crisis and its Aftermath

Previous chapters have presented case studies of opposition during and immediately after *keterbukaan*. In this chapter, the focus broadens to encompass a general consideration of political events after the end of *keterbukaan*. In 1996 there was a dramatic escalation of both government repression and opposition activity focused on government attempts to ouster Megawati from the PDI leadership. The full range of opposition previously discussed became embroiled in one way or another. The affair caused a dramatic deterioration in regime legitimacy: 1996 has been described as the beginning of the ‘long fall’ of Suharto.<sup>1</sup> This chapter begins with a consideration of regime and opposition dynamics, then presents an analysis of the PDI crisis, concluding with a discussion of its implications and aftermath.

#### **1. Regime Disunity: Suharto Back in Control**

By early 1996 Suharto had largely overcome the disunity in the ruling elite which had underlain the commencement of *keterbukaan*. Where it counted most, in the dozen or so crucial ABRI command positions, control was now firmly in the hands of loyalists. From retirement, or positions in the bureaucracy, DPR or DPA, some of the old Moerdani associates continued to make splutterings of discontent.<sup>2</sup> Edi Sudradjat, of course, retained his cabinet post.

This did not mean that there was no regime factionalism. Suharto’s health was declining, a fact dramatised by the death of his wife Ibu Tien in April 1996 and a poorly explained European check-up in July. Although it was by now obvious that he intended to retain the Presidency in 1998, the Vice-Presidency would be up for grabs and manoeuvrings for this position were again intense. They occurred in a context where even loyalists increasingly thought in terms of positioning themselves for the post-Suharto future.

Although it was now even less possible to speak of coherent factions in ABRI, observers increasingly identified three distinct poles centred around influential officers. First, was the ascendant duo of Feisal Tanjung (still Commander-in-Chief) and Syarwan Hamid (Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs from February 1996). These officers had long been consolidating links with Habibie and some of his ICMI associates. They were thus

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<sup>1</sup> Eklöf, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in March 1996 Major General Theo Syafei of the Fraksi-ABRI caused something of a minor media sensation when he publicly criticised promotions policy in ABRI: Kammen and Chandra, 1999, p.36-37. Even more remarkably, immediately before the 1997 general election he told a Surabaya seminar that *golput* (i.e. casting a blank or invalid vote) was perfectly legal, indeed, a ‘right’: ‘Golput itu Hak dan Sah’, *Detektif dan Romantika*, May 10, 1997, p. 32-33. Almost immediately, he was recalled from the Fraksi: ‘Akhirnya, Theo Meninggalkan Kamarnya’, *Tiras*, May 26, 1997, p. 94-95.

consolidating their ties with Suharto's protégé and possible successor, and also with an important civilian base.

Their obvious rivals by early 1996 were the loosely allied Army Chief of Staff Hartono and Kopassus Commander and Presidential son-in-law, Prabowo Subianto. These officers best personified the sultanistic element in the Army: Prabowo by his family ties and fearsome reputation, Hartono by the particularly reckless lengths he went to show his absolute loyalty to the President. He became something of a reviled figure within the political elite for the 'closeness' of his relations with the President's daughter, Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, 'Tutut'.<sup>1</sup> In March 1996, he caused significant embarrassment in ABRI when he donned a yellow jacket and appeared next to Tutut at a Golkar rally, proclaiming ABRI support for the organisation.<sup>2</sup> Both officers endeavoured to build an image of sympathy to Islamic claims for greater political representation, and from the mid-1990s began to build constituencies in Islamic organisations, especially among 'scripturalists' in Dewan Dakwah, KISDI (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam*, Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World) and allied groups.<sup>3</sup>

A newer layer of younger army officers constituted a third group. Men like the Commander of Kostrad (the Army's Strategic Command) and former Presidential adjutant Wiranto and Chief of Staff for the Jakarta Military Command, Bambang Yudhoyono, were viewed by many observers as being comparatively 'professional' and as part of the broadly defined '*merah-putih*' group.<sup>4</sup> However, these officers differed from the old Moerdani group in that they lacked open anti-palace pretensions.

What distinguished the new military factionalism from that of several years earlier was that these three loose groupings all apparently believed that to best position themselves for the post-

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<sup>1</sup> He was also something of a figure of fun: one example of this was a falsified fax which was widely circulated in pro-Megawati circles in late 1996. This purported to be an official Golkar circular, signed by Harmoko, referring to a rumour that Tutut had become pregnant as a result of her relations with Hartono, and suggesting that Tutut's relations were merely a personal matter and had no relation to her role as Golkar leader.

<sup>2</sup> Fealy, 1997, p. 24; Honna, 1999, p. 107-110. Hartono was also widely believed to harbour vice-presidential aspirations. During discussions in late 1996, several members of CIDES, the think-tank headed by Habibie associate Adi Sasono, indicated that they were fairly confident of Habibie's chances of securing the Vice-Presidency in the forthcoming 1998 MPR session. They largely discounted the possibility of a successful challenge by Try Sutrisno, although they were concerned that he retained support within Golkar (from various KINO and 'Big ABRI family' elements). However, they were confident that given Feisal Tanjung's role, the Fraksi-ABRI would favour Habibie's candidacy. What they most feared was that Hartono might emerge as a 'dark horse' candidate with Presidential backing.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Schwarz, 1999, p. 336-37. For a discussion of scripturalism, in the context of DDII and its journal *Media Dakwah*, see Liddle, 1996d.

<sup>4</sup> One illustration of how Wiranto was viewed by his rivals as following the same 'secular line' as Moerdani, and being essentially hostile to the interests of political Islam is found in '*Analisa Perkembangan Sosial-Politik Menjelang Pemilu 1997 dan SU-MPR 1998*' [Analysis of Social-Political Developments Approaching the 1997 General Election and 1998 MPR General Session], allegedly an analysis produced by Prabowo and Hartono's think-tank, CPDS and circulated on the internet by *Istiqlal*, March 28, 1997.

Suharto period, it was necessary to secure Suharto's favour, or at least avoid antagonising him. Thus, although some officers conceded publicly that some measure of 'democratisation' was necessary, they privately believed that reform must wait until after President Suharto left the scene (even then, of course, the reforms they envisaged were minimal). Accordingly, they tended to extreme vagueness when speaking about reform, referring to 'future' or 'long-term' processes. Although such officers had their own personal ambitions, enmities and clients, factionalism had effectively become a competition among loyal lieutenants for the President's ear.

## **2. The Escalation of Opposition**

The reimposition of unity in ABRI meant that Suharto could more confidently rely on coercion for handling political challenges. As we have seen, from mid-1994 there was a noticeable return to repressive policies. However, in a pattern common to many authoritarian regimes which pull back after limited liberalisation, the return to coercion failed to end, indeed galvanised, opposition.

Although they remained weak, some segments of opposition increasingly addressed themselves to core issues of political power. Previously highly cautious NGOs focused on 'democratisation', the PDI was preparing a Presidential challenge and student protestors were increasingly emboldened to raise sensitive issues like the Presidency.

One important development which encapsulated this trend was the formation of *Komite Independen Pengawas Pemilu* (KIPP, Independent Election Monitoring Committee) on March 15 1996. This was modeled on bodies like PollWatch in Thailand and NAMFREL in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> KIPP aimed to mobilise thousands of volunteers to monitor the conduct of the elections in order to exert pressure to ensure their conduct in a free and fair manner.<sup>2</sup> Although many of its leaders insisted that the organisation was politically neutral and morally-based, KIPP's presidium and advisory council read as a virtual 'who's who' of the country's extra-systemic opposition.<sup>3</sup> The various groups involved played complementary roles. NGOs,

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals associated with both organisations visited Indonesia and to advise the activists who established KIPP. International support for KIPP was considerable. Funding was provided by a number of international NGOs: 'Masalah yang Dihadapi KIPP Tidak Unik', *Tempo interaktif*, Edisi 13/01. On the Thai and Philippine organisations, see Callahan, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> According to Budiman Sudjatmiko, KIPP presidium member and PRD leader, the organisation aimed to organise 300 thousand volunteers for polling day: 'Komite di Balik Bayang-bayang Oposisi', *Gatra*, April 6, 1996, p. 22-4; p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> They included leaders from large NGOs like LBH, Bina Desa, Walhi, and YLKI, more radical student activist groups like PRD, SMID, Aldera, and Pijar, traditional dissident bodies like the Petition of Fifty and the quasi-party groups which had been established the previous year (like the 'new' Masyumi and Parkindo), smaller, mobilisational religious, women's and labour NGOs, as well as prominent intellectuals like Goenawan Mohamad, Nurcholish Madjid, Arbi Sanit and Arief Budiman: 'Susunan Pengurus Komite Independen Pemantau Pemilu', *Tempo Interaktif*, edisi 03/01. Indonesia-L March 16, 1996. Abdurrahman Wahid declined an invitation to be involved ('Gus Dur Tolak Ajakan Komite Pengawas Pemilu', *Surabaya Post*, March 8, 1996) although his close associate Abdul Gaffur Rahman

especially LBH (in the clearest example yet of its '*lokomotif demokrasi*' guise) played a crucial facilitating function, providing a network of regional offices and links to international donors. Student groups furnished a large pool of activists, while prominent intellectuals gave the group moral stature and media profile.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its apolitical clothing, KIPP signaled a radically new approach to general elections. Since 1971, the most outspoken opposition elements had usually advocated *golput*, which was an important symbolic statement of defiance, but one which underlined its advocates' lack of effective political strategy. When poll monitoring was first widely canvassed in late 1995, it was discussed as a more effective method to utilise the electoral moment to undermine regime legitimacy, by exposing the massive electoral abuses which they believed typified New Order elections.<sup>2</sup> The more radical hoped it might trigger a major crisis along the lines of Marcos's disastrous 1986 election, especially if it coincided with a Presidential bid by Megawati.<sup>3</sup>

It was this last factor which made poll monitoring a meaningful choice. Previously, *golput* had been a logical strategic choice for middle class critics alienated by the compliance of the two non-government parties. Now, there was the beginnings of an effective electoral challenge in Megawati's PDI.<sup>4</sup>

Government and military leaders recognised the significance of KIPP and responded to it in an extremely hostile manner.<sup>5</sup> Those involved, especially in regional towns, were harassed, meetings were broken up, and the organisation's activities were declared illegal in some provinces.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. The Unseating of Megawati**

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was a member of the advisory council. The previously largely passive semi-oppositional Cipayung student groups (PMKRI, GMNI and PMII) were also involved. PMKRI took an official position in support of KIPP and instructed branches to actively support the formation of regional branches. PMII also took an official position of support.

<sup>1</sup> On this basis, and attesting to the breadth of networks already established by NGOs and student groups, KIPP grew rapidly. By early May it had more than thirty branches, including in small towns in Java and in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Bali: Human Rights Watch Asia, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Fieldnotes from December 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Some PDI leaders interviewed in late 1995 had similar views.

<sup>4</sup> Core PDI leaders enthusiastically endorsed the new organisation. See for example 'PDI joins campaign against election fraud', *Jakarta Post*, January 11, 1996. In contrast, the reaction of PPP leaders was far more skeptical: see for example party leader Ismail Hasan Metareum's comments in *Gatra*, April 6, 1996, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> In a typical statement, Major General Suwarno Adiwijoyo stated that if KIPP's only aim was to improve the quality of the elections, then it would be accepted, but that 'if it aims to disrupt the system, for example by being a counter-institution (*lembaga tandingan*) or create instability, of course ABRI will not be able to tolerate it': *Gatra*, April 6, 1996, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> In the most spectacular case, the Medan LBH office was surrounded and stoned by a group of demonstrators while a meeting was underway inside to establish a local election monitoring body; twelve hours later the building was burned to the ground: Human Rights Watch Asia, 1996. See also, for example, 'Ujian Pertama untuk Peran KIPP', *Forum Keadilan*, April 22, 1996, p. 21. KIPP's Secretary General, prominent LBH leader Mulyana W. Kusumah was publicly branded a communist because he allegedly belonged to a leftist high school student organisation in the early 1960s.

If KIPP was harassed, it was logical that the underlying threat of a Megawati Presidential campaign should also be dealt with.

Of course, it was clearly impossible for Megawati to become President within the existing political system. The highly controlled character of the electoral system, the pressures brought to bear on voters (especially rural ones), the potential for widespread manipulation of results, and the preponderance of appointed members in the MPR prevented this.

Even so, elements in government had strong motives to move against Megawati and the PDI. It was almost universally admitted that the party's vote would rise dramatically to the detriment of Golkar. Electoral fraud and intimidation could be used against this, but given new electoral monitoring initiatives and the growing restiveness of society, this was likely to be a dangerous strategy. Militant sections of the extra-systemic opposition, as well as her own many supporters, would likely rally to a Presidential bid by Megawati, increasing the potential for mass unrest. This was the 'Aquino scenario', although only the most radical dared hope that it would lead to Suharto's fall.

More generally, a PDI Presidential campaign would have represented a fundamental departure from previous New Order general elections, where all parties had essentially been obliged to portray themselves as supporters of the government. There would have been an element of explicit contestation over both program and candidate. Without repression this would necessarily have forced a response from Golkar and the government, dramatically widening the scope of public debate at a time when Suharto and his supporters were already attempting to wind it back.

Most importantly, it was widely believed that Suharto was strongly opposed to facing a competitor in the MPR for essentially personal reasons. He had always been elected unopposed, and observers believed that he viewed this as a crucial measure of his own legitimacy, even as confirmation of his personification of the national interest.<sup>1</sup> According to General Soemitro, as early as 1978 Suharto indicated that he would rather not stand for re-election if he was not the sole candidate.<sup>2</sup> That the possible challenger was the daughter of the man he had deposed, only doubled the insult.

It thus seems that the order for the removal of Megawati came directly from Suharto. The interests of the ruler and that of the regime had fused into one, and Suharto's dominance

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<sup>1</sup> Crouch, 1996a. In the event of the MPR being required to vote on the Presidency, it was possible that some non-PDI legislators would utilise the opportunity for an embarrassing symbolic protest.

<sup>2</sup> Soemitro, 1995, p. 101.

foreclosed the route to gradual regime opening offered by the PDI's revival and a loosening of the electoral system.

Signs that the *coup de grâce* was coming appeared in April 1996 when the PDI leadership began to receive reports that Interior Ministry officials and Military officers were pressuring regional party officials to sign statements calling for another 'extraordinary party congress.'<sup>1</sup> On June 3 a delegation claiming support from 215 of the party's 305 branches visited the Interior Ministry and asked permission for such a congress.<sup>2</sup> The next day, longtime Soerjadi associate, DPP member and head of the DPR fraksi, Fatimah Achmad, formed a congress-organising committee, supported by another 15 of the 27 DPP members.<sup>3</sup> These were mostly old Soerjadi camp-followers and others who had been forced on Megawati by Hendropriyono and the others in December 1993. Senior officials like Interior Minister Yogie S. M. and ABRI Commander Feisal Tanjung immediately endorsed the congress as a means to overcome the party's 'internal crisis.'<sup>4</sup>

Ironically, it soon became clear that the government's favoured candidate as Megawati's replacement was Soerjadi, although he had been removed only three years earlier precisely because of Presidential displeasure.<sup>5</sup> Soerjadi maintained residual support among some PDI functionaries who had been appointed under his stewardship and was thus the only PDI leader with even minimal credibility as a competitor to Megawati.<sup>6</sup> The government's expenditure of considerable political resources to reinstate a figure it had previously forced out illustrated the extent of its loss of political ground during *keterbukaan*.

From the start it was clear to virtually the entire political public that this operation was instigated and planned from the apex of the regime. Core palace loyalists were in charge, including Yogie S.M. and the ABRI leadership, with Syarwan Hamid acting as Feisal Tanjung's chief operator.<sup>7</sup> In a climate where only a few pockets of discontented Moerdani-era

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<sup>1</sup> Kwik Kian Gie distributed a questionnaire to party branches from early May, seeking information about such pressure and released the findings on May 7: PIPA, 'Kudeta Megawati Dirancang Rapim ABRI' May 3, 1996 (KITLV internet library, July 8, 1996), 'Laporan Cabang PDI Tentang Tekanan ABRI', PIPA, June 12, 1996 (Indonesia-L). The timing was important: July was when parties were required to submit their lists of candidates for the 1997 general election.

<sup>2</sup> '215 Cabang DPC Desak Kongres PDI', *Republika*, June 4, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> 'DPP PDI Pecah, Kubu Mega dan Fatimah "Bertarung"', *Media Indonesia*, June 5, 1996

<sup>4</sup> 'Panglima ABRI Siap Mem-"Back Up"', *Media Indonesia*, June 6, 1996; 'Mendagri: Panitia Kongres Penuhi Kuorum: Mega Enggan Berkomentar', *Republika*, June 6, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> In interviews, Soerjadi himself seemed confused as to why he had previously been rejected but was now being reinstated, telling one journalist: 'We're not the ones who know these things. Ask the government. They're the ones who know.' Indeed, he did not 'want to know' what the government's strategy was: 'Soerjadi: Saya Masih Sayang Sama Mbak Mega', *Forum Keadilan*, August 26, 1996, p. 94-98; p. 97, 98.

<sup>6</sup> According to some reports, Syarwan Hamid first offered the PDI leadership to Fatimah Achmad but she refused, indicating that Soerjadi was the only viable choice: Anon., *Dibalik Bencana Politik 27 Juli* (Indonesia-L).

<sup>7</sup> Some reports suggest that the broad outlines of the operation were laid out at an ABRI leadership meeting on March 24-28, and later confirmed at a meeting of Politics and Security Ministers: PIPA, 'Kudeta Megawati Dirancang Rapim ABRI,' May 3, 1996 (KITLV internet library, July 8, 1996). An interview with Alex Widya Siregar, a Bakin informer and deputy treasurer in the PDI DPP later formed by



officers survived, the campaign against Megawati was far more decisive and better coordinated than previous attempts. Interior Ministry and military officials largely acted in concert through the regions.<sup>1</sup>

This is not to say that the campaign was especially sophisticated. On the contrary, because of Megawati's popularity it was necessary to conduct it in an extremely crude manner.<sup>2</sup> Only the barest attempt was made to justify the campaign in terms of the party's own procedures. Megawati's supporters found that most requests for the congress had been signed only by one or two individual branch officials, without being endorsed by conferences as required. Some were outright forgeries and others had been signed under duress.<sup>3</sup> PDI leaders in the regions interviewed in late 1996 spoke of branch (DPC) leaders being escorted to military offices where they were 'invited' to decide who would attend the Medan congress. There were stories of DPCs meeting in offices surrounded by troops, and other threats of violence.<sup>4</sup>

Another feature was a return to crude pressure on the media, in an attempt to preempt sympathetic coverage like that which assisted Megawati in 1993. Senior military officers, including Syarwan Hamid, instructed chief editors to report the conflict in a manner sympathetic to Megawati's opponents.<sup>5</sup> Some major media outlets (such as *Kompas*) hinted at what was really occurring.<sup>6</sup> A few publications aimed at the lower socio-economic market (notably the tabloid *Inti Jaya*, and dailies *Merdeka* and *Harian Terbit*) remained relentlessly

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Soerjadi, published in *Tempo* ('Saya Bertanggung Jawab Atas Penyerbuan', August 1, 1999, p. 44-45) provides details of the initiating role played by Syarwan Hamid, BIA Chief Syamsir Siregar, and Director A of BIA Zacky Anwar Makarim in early meetings with PDI leaders where the 'extraordinary congress' plan was first formulated.

<sup>1</sup> PDI officials interviewed in late 1996 indicated that individual (usually fairly junior) officers sometimes privately indicated their sympathy to Megawati during this time and suggested that they did not understand the reasons for the campaign and were simply following orders. Even so, at the local level there were no significant breaks in, or abstention from, the campaign. There were even some informal reports that key younger officers from the '*merah-putih*' group, notably Kostrad Commander Wiranto, were involved: he was believed to be involved in the distribution of funding for delegates to the congress: 'Laporan Cabang PDI tentang tekanan ABRI', PIPA, June 12, 1996 (Indonesia-L).

<sup>2</sup> As Fealy (1997, p. 35) notes, the crudity of the operation drew unfavourable comparisons with the performance of earlier political managers like Ali Moertopo and Benny Moerdani. The important point, however, is that political management in the 1990s was far more difficult than in earlier decades. In the case of the PDI, party members were more inclined to resist and were supported by a more sympathetic public.

<sup>3</sup> See for example 'Ketua Balitbang DPP PDI Kwik Kian Gie: Pemerintah Agar Teliti Berkas Keinginan Cabang Berkongres', *Suara Pembaruan*, June 8, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> These were accompanied by the more conventional offers of 'money and other facilities' for those willing to go to Medan: interviews with PDI members in Yogyakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Bali, December 1996. Even when a DPC met and formally rejected participation, it often transpired that by the time of the Medan congress one or two functionaries had relented and decided to attend. At times, those who claimed to represent branches had only tenuous links to the party. According to a number of pro-Megawati DPC members interviewed in Bali, some new, pro-Soerjadi DPC consisted entirely of members of a single family, others of individuals who had never previously been PDI members.

<sup>5</sup> Notoriously, according to some reports, journalists were even told to refer to the PDI leader not as 'Megawati Soekarnoputri', but as 'Megawati Taufik Kiemas', her husband's name. See for example 'Rekayasa Mendongkel Mega,' *Kabar Dari Pijar*, (internet version), 002/1996; 'ABRI Tambah Menekan Media Massa', PIPA, June 12, 1996 (Indonesia-L); YLBHI, 1997, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> There were unofficial reports that *Kompas* staff were reprimanded by the military for their allegedly 'biased reporting': 'Kompas, Merdeka Dianggap Bela Mega', PIPA, July 16, 1996 (Indonesia-L).

pro-Megawati.<sup>1</sup> Others, especially the ICMI-linked daily *Republika* and the weekly magazine *Gatra*, essentially portrayed the conflict as an internal party dispute.<sup>2</sup>

In mid-June, delegates began arriving in the heavily-guarded city of Medan, accompanied by military officers from their regions of origin. On June 20 the congress was opened by Yogie S. M. and Feisal Tanjung in an atmosphere of eerie calm. Unlike every previous PDI congress, it proceeded without disruption, concluding with a unanimous vote to replace Megawati with Soerjadi. The business completed, the congress wound up two days earlier than scheduled.

#### **4. The Pro-Megawati Coalition**

In the 1970s, due to the prevailing climate of repression, New Order political operators had been able to manipulate internal conflict in the PDI and remove independently inclined leaders with relative ease. The accumulation of political frustrations since then, and the experiences of independent politics during *keterbukaan*, meant there was now more active resistance.

From the start, Megawati and her supporters completely rejected the call for a congress as unconstitutional and protested against the external intervention.<sup>3</sup> At a meeting with the foreign press on June 12 PDI leaders stated that the party could bring millions of people onto the streets.<sup>4</sup> Overall, however, Megawati still maintained a mostly moderate line, urging restraint on her followers.<sup>5</sup> After the Medan congress, she partly increased the tenor of her statements, describing the government as the chief culprit and her own struggle as one for democracy.<sup>6</sup> At no point did she portray herself as the leader of a broad pro-democratic coalition. Instead her public demeanour and statements stressed her continued adherence to New Order legality, building an image of stoic victimhood.<sup>7</sup> As its main strategy, the party initiated hundreds of

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<sup>1</sup> They experienced greatly increased circulation figures as a result. For reports on this phenomenon, see 'Berita Mendongkrak Tiras', *Tiras*, September 19, 1996, p. 60; 'Inti Jaya Melejit Karena PDI', *Forum Keadilan*, October 7, 1996, p. 76. During this period *Inti Jaya* covers were emblazoned with headlines like 'SOERJADI BODOH . . . GOBLOK!' (Soerjadi is Dumb...Stupid!), quoting Megawati supporters like Ali Sadikin and Mangara Siahaan.

<sup>2</sup> For a typical example of *Republika* coverage at this time, see 'Dukungan terhadap Kongres PDI terus mengalir', June 10, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary of arguments about the constitutionality of the congress according to party rules, see: Zulkifli, 1996, p. 210-12. In press interviews Megawati criticised the 'vulgar' character of the 'engineering' taking place: 'Kubu Megawati Adukan Keterlibatan Oknum kepada Pangab, Komnas HAM', *Media Indonesia*, June 12, 1996; 'Saya Bukan Pion', *Tiras*, June 27, 1996, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> They also claimed that if elections were held in free conditions the PDI would gain 80-85% of the vote: Patrick Walters, 'Reform or else, Suharto Warned', *The Australian*, June 13, 1996. That this was in an English language press release of course detracted from its significance: formal statements directed to party followers and the Indonesian press remained much more composed.

<sup>5</sup> See for example 'Megawati Soekarnoputri: Yakinlah Pemerintah dan ABRI tak akan tolerir pemaksaan kehendak', *Kompas*, June 8, 1996; 'Ini Kudeta kepada Megawati', *Tiras*, June 27, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Pesan Harian Ketua Umum DPP PDI*, June 23, 1996 (Indonesia-L).

<sup>7</sup> She continued to stress that she favoured only peaceful protest, adding that protests which did occur were not organised by the party but were instead a 'spontaneous' reaction by the people (thus freeing herself from responsibility for them). See for example 'Megawati Soekarnoputri: "Kami Suka Damai"', *Forum Keadilan*, July 15, 1996, p. 20.

legal challenges against the Medan congress, in every *kabupaten* (district) from which delegates had attended.<sup>1</sup> The aim was to stress the PDI's own 'obedience to the law.'<sup>2</sup>

Following the announcement of the congress plans, the party splintered ferociously at the grassroots. A significant number of DPD and DPC leaders surrendered to the pressure and supported the congress. It would appear that at the provincial, DPD level, the party split about 50-50, while DPCs remained more solidly behind Megawati.<sup>3</sup> The vast bulk of the '*arus bawah*' (sub-district or village coordinators, party *satgas* (security guards) and ordinary party members) were fanatically loyal. Statements of support for Megawati flooded into party headquarters, including from many branches which supposedly backed the congress. Many PDI members pledged with their own bloody thumbprints that they were 'ready to die for Megawati.' Some occupied party offices and formed 'caretaker boards' to replace defectors.<sup>4</sup> After the congress, the split became irrevocable, resulting in 'dualism' in the party. Pro-Megawati branches often maintained control over party buildings (although in some towns these were surrendered to the authorities) but lacked official recognition. Pro-congress remnants, meanwhile, were rapidly inserted into electoral and other official bodies.

Meanwhile, from early June, a wave of mass protest began, perhaps the most widespread yet experienced under the New Order. Large demonstrations occurred in almost all the large and medium sized towns of Java, Bali and Sumatra, as well as in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, Nusa Tenggara and Irian Jaya. While the theme of most demonstrations was condemnation of the Medan congress, government intervention and PDI 'traitors', some conveyed wide ranging demands for reform. While most remained peaceful, in some places (especially cities with large student populations, like Bandung, Yogyakarta and Surabaya) clashes with troops occurred. An early peak in these protests occurred on June 20, when the congress convened in Medan. In Jakarta, a large crowd marched through the city centre and clashed with security forces in Merdeka square, with troops beating protesters in front of the international press.<sup>5</sup> Over the following week, protests peaked in almost all Indonesia's major urban centres.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See for example 'Megawati siap kerahkan pengacara ke seluruh penjurur', *Republika*, July 19, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> *Pesan Harian Ketua Umum DPP PDI*, June 23, 1996 (Indonesia-L). By implication, because it was almost universally believed that the challenges would ultimately fail, another aim was to further expose the government's own manipulation of the judicial system and disrespect for due process.

<sup>3</sup> Only in a few places (notably Bali) did an overwhelming majority of DPD and DPC members stick with Megawati.

<sup>4</sup> In Semarang two thousand party members took over the Semarang Central Java branch office: 'Aksi Mosi Tak Percaya Merebak di Daerah', *Bernas*, July 3, 1996. Often defectors were threatened with violence; some went into hiding: see for example 'Banteng Bertarung di Dua Kandang', *Tiras*, June 20, 1996, p. 81-83. Local PDI leaders interviewed in West, Central and East Java, and Bali, indicated that one of the inducements to defect offered by local military staff was 'guarantees of security' against vengeful attacks by PDI members: field interviews, December, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Over 100 were injured, and over 50 detained. For reports see for example 'Banjir Massa Merah di Jakarta', *Kabar dari Pijar*, 003/1996 (internet edition). 'Unjuk rasa damai berubah jadi kerusuhan, puluhan luka-luka', *Media Indonesia*, June 21, 1996; John McBeth, 'Political Engineering', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 4, 1996, p. 14-5.

<sup>6</sup> See for example 'Mulai muncul gelombang protes Anti-Soerjadi', *Media Indonesia*, June 25, 1996; 'Babak baru kisruh PDI: Protes, demo, dan rebutan kantor', *Republika*, June 26, 1996.

The protests were mostly organised by ad-hoc, informal action committees, typically involving local PDI leaders (who often remained highly cautious), party members (often more spirited, but inexperienced) and, crucially, non-PDI student-based groups and NGOs more accustomed to oppositional street politics. For PDI leaders, such committees were a means to protest without implicating local party organs. For the non-PDI activists, they were a means to express solidarity and reach out to the party's mass base.

One group which was particularly active in these campaigns was activists from the PRD and SMID, especially in Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Solo and certain other towns in Java.<sup>1</sup> PRD cadres liaised with 'informal leaders' of the PDI, often bypassing provincial and *kabupaten* leaderships.<sup>2</sup> They contributed their experiences in the techniques of mass mobilisation - how to maintain discipline, identify *provocateurs* and so forth - but also endeavoured to popularise their own demands, aiming at radicalisation of the PDI's mass following. In the words of one Yogyakarta SMID activist interviewed in late 1996:

The PDI activists and masses had no experience in organising actions. If students were not involved their actions tended to be smaller, and also less political. [Those present would] just abuse Soerjadi, Fatimah and PDI functionaries who defected, and there wouldn't be any political slogans, like abolish dual function or repeal the five political laws. When we introduced these elements the PDI masses greeted them very enthusiastically. Our strategy was for a radicalisation of the PDI masses in order to push Megawati forward, so that she wouldn't be left behind by the masses. We fully understood that Megawati was surrounded by many opportunists, but we saw her masses as a great potential, although we knew that they would not move forward without their leaders.<sup>3</sup>

The PRD was not the only student-based group to participate in such coalitions. Virtually the full range of liberal-populist and popular-radical groups discussed in chapter six did so. For example, the militant group Aldera organised demonstrations in Bandung, where stones were thrown at security forces.<sup>4</sup> In Jakarta, Pijar activists marched in demonstrations chanting the slogan 'Megawati! *Reformasi!*'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It will be remember from chapter six that activists associated with the PRD began to consider the possibility of political cooperation with the PDI as early as late 1993, immediately after Megawati became party leader.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with SMID members, Yogyakarta, December 4, 1996. These activists contrasted 'infomal leaders', who were typically small businesspeople, with the formal leaders of branches who they characterised as having *priyayi* or 'petty aristocratic' (*bangsawan kecil*) outlooks, and being far more averse to radical political action.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with SMID activist, Yogyakarta, December 4, 1996. SMID and PRD activists interviewed for this thesis insisted that most PDI members responded eagerly to their intervention, for example, enthusiastically taking up anti-*dwifungsi* slogans (especially when their own demonstrations had been at the receiving end of brutality by security forces).

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with Pius Lustrilanang and other Aldera activists, December, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> To my knowledge, this was the first time this word was used in a protest campaign: 'Pijar dukung Megawati', *Kabar dari Pijar*, edition 003/1996 (internet edition).

The campaign also involved the greatest yet protest action by the Cipayung student groups, PMII, GMKI, PMKRI and, of course, GMNI. In Bali, the body *Gerakan Rakyat Bali* (GRB, Bali People's Movement), which organised some very large protests, was essentially a coalition between GMNI activists and PDI members.<sup>1</sup> Similar coalitions were important in Bandung, Jakarta and elsewhere.

Beyond students, the pro-Megawati coalition included a wide range of alegal, semi- and proto-opposition. KIPP called for the elections to be postponed until democracy in the PDI was restored.<sup>2</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid publicly defended Megawati, and younger NU followers supported protests in many towns.<sup>3</sup> Retired officials who had long supported reform, like Soemitro and Rudini, expressed their dismay.<sup>4</sup> Old PNI networks were also partly reawakened.<sup>5</sup>

In late June MARI (*Majelis Rakyat Indonesia*, Indonesian People's Council) was established at a meeting in the LBH offices. This body was a coalition of some 30 student groups, NGOs and other bodies.<sup>6</sup> As well as defending Megawati, its platform included demands for increased minimum wages, lower prices, repeal of the five political laws and an end to 'corruption, manipulation, collusion, monopolies and bribery.'<sup>7</sup>

On July 1, 24 prominent figures signed a 'statement of concern' decrying, in general language, the spread of violence in political life and practices which threatened to 'kill Pancasila democracy'. Most of those who signed the statement were involved in YKPK. The major addition was Abdurrahman Wahid, plus the leaders of the *Cipayung* student organisations (except HMI).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This group also drew on intellectuals, spiritual leaders, and other informal community leaders. According to those involved, the largest street protest in Denpasar mobilised some 10 thousand people: interviews with Alit Kelakan and other GRB activists, December 1996.

<sup>2</sup> KIPP press release, 'Proses Pemilu Tak Layak Diteruskan', July 9, 1996 (Indonesia-L)

<sup>3</sup> See for example 'DPP PDI Panggil "Pembelot" Bergabung', *Media Indonesia*, June 13, 1996; 'Kongres untuk menggusur Megawati Soekarnoputri', *Forum Keadilan*, July 1, 1996, p. 100-102, at p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> See for example 'Rudini: Rekayasa Pemerintah Kendala terhadap Demokratisasi', *Bali Post*, July 2, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> They were especially important in organising Megawati's support in rural areas during the crisis, when the formal bodies of the PDI became restricted. A number of PDI and other activists interviewed in Yogyakarta and Central Java in late 1996 indicated that during this period many older people who had long ago been active in the PNI and affiliated organisations like GPM (*Gerakan Pemuda Marhaen*, Marhaen Youth Movement), 'reported' to local pro-Megawati PDI leaders, offering their services.

<sup>6</sup> Luwarso et al, 1997, p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch Asia / Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, 1996, appendix 5. In late 1996, it was difficult to locate MARI documents, because they had mostly been hidden or destroyed after the July 27 crackdown. However, according to various participants, the groups involved included: 'Masjumi - baru', Pijar, SBSI, PUDI, GMNI, PMKRI, PNI (baru), PRD, SMID, PPBI, Jaker, STN, Aldera, FKAGMNU, YLBHI, Pipham, Aliansi Perempuan Demokratik Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Democratic Alliance), Parkindo-Baru, GRM, LPHAM, Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity), Kalyanamitra (a major women's NGO) and AJI. See Margot Cohen, 'New Zeal: NGOs rally round opposition leader Megawati', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 11, 1996, p. 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Signatories who were associated with YKPK included retired military officers, and various Golkar, Nationalist, Christian and NU figures, including Bambang Triantoro, Kharis Suhud, Sunarjo Djajusman, Frans Seda, Matori Abdul Djilil, Midian Sirait, Pontas Nasution, Jacob Tobing and Dahlan Ranuwihardjo

Those who supported Megawati had varying motivations. There was a large element of sympathy in response to the machinations against her. Many of her new supporters from urban, middle class, liberal opposition circles still doubted her abilities and the PDI's capacity to become a democratising vehicle. Some groups, however, believed that by attacking Megawati the regime was furnishing them with the kind of unifying issue and symbol which they had long lacked. The scope of MARI demands, for example, reflected a deliberate attempt to broaden the aims of the movement. By mid-July, some of the younger, radical activists associated with groups like the PRD, Aldera and Pijar began to believe that they might be seeing the long-awaited 'momentum', the moment for a decisive struggle against the regime.<sup>1</sup>

In Jakarta itself immediately after the June 20 protest the focus shifted to PDI headquarters on Jalan Diponegoro.<sup>2</sup> By mid-July daily 'democracy forums' (*mimbar demokrasi*) there were attracting large crowds.<sup>3</sup> The mood became increasingly militant, with some speakers (like those from the PRD and other activist groups, or more outspoken PDI leaders like Aberson Sihaloho) condemning not only intervention in the PDI, but also President Suharto, ABRI's *dwifungsi* and other pillars of the political system.

In the regions, divisions began to emerge between cautious pro-Megawati branch officials and the smaller radical groups and PDI members who supported a more confrontational approach.<sup>4</sup> Informal action committees continued to organise demonstrations, which were in many places becoming larger and angrier. Local party leaders were typically more focused on legal challenges and shoring up support in regional party organs.<sup>5</sup>

One signal of the hardening mood was the behaviour of the PRD, which believed most strongly that the PDI crisis presented an opportunity for potentially decisive anti-regime mobilisation. Budiman Sudjatmiko, the PRD's chairperson, was a prominent speaker at the *mimbar demokrasi* at PDI headquarters.<sup>6</sup> The group also raised the tempo of protest actions by workers

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(a former HMI leader). See for example '24 Tokoh Populer Bikin Petisi Keprihatinan', *Jawa Pos*, July 4, 1996; 'Bila Kedaulatan Menjauh', *Tiras*, July 18, 1996, p. 87. As tensions mounted, the document's signatories announced that they were endeavouring to collect a million signatures: 'Sudah 10 Ribu Lebih Dukungan Pada "Pernyataan 1 Juli"', *Suara Pembaruan*, July 24, 1996.

<sup>1</sup> Many activists associated with these groups interviewed later in the year argued that Megawati's hesitance was the main reason why such a show-down did not eventuate.

<sup>2</sup> Megawati negotiated an agreement with the Jakarta regional Commander, Major General Sutyoso, that her supporters would be allowed to maintain control over the building, so long as they did not mobilise on the streets: 'DPP Mega Temui Pangdam Jaya', *Republika*, June 22, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> See for example 'Mega Sudah Jadi Milik Bangsa', *Kabar dari Pijar*, No. 004, July 1 1996 (internet edition).

<sup>4</sup> One common cause of dissension was whether to surrender branch offices to local authorities.

<sup>5</sup> Many student activists and PDI members interviewed later in 1996 indicated that there was a lack of clear direction from central and regional party leaders at this time. In the words of one PDI member interviewed in Yogyakarta: 'We were waiting for an order from Mbak Mega'.

<sup>6</sup> Various PRD activists interviewed in hiding in late 1996 claimed that they had participated in formal negotiations with the PDI leadership, including Megawati, concerning prospects for future collaboration.

through its labour organ PPBI.<sup>1</sup> Finally, on July 22, the PRD publicly launched itself as a party, in defiance of the Law on Political Parties and Golkar, in a fiery ceremony at the Jakarta LBH office (it had actually re-named itself a party at an April congress). At the launch it released a 95 page manifesto, which set out an essentially class-based analysis of the Indonesian regime, a strategy for its overthrow and a program for a ‘multi-party popular democracy’ led by a ‘popular democratic coalition.’<sup>2</sup>

### **5. The Failure of Elite Divisions**

Throughout this period, many PDI supporters hoped for a significant break in elite ranks which might assist Megawati, perhaps even greater than that which occurred in 1993.

As might be expected, there were indications of concern in both the old ‘*merah-putih*’ military camp and among some senior officials who were unsympathetic to ICMI. These, it was widely understood, included the head of Bakin, Moetojib, as well as Minister of the State Secretariat Moerdiono, and Ministers Sarwono and Siswono.<sup>3</sup>

Many PDI supporters particularly placed their hopes in Edi Sudradjat. Wild rumours circulated about him providing troops to guard Megawati, that he had offered his resignation and the like.<sup>4</sup> Sudradjat did express his reservations in public, telling a group of pro-Megawati DPR members that he could ‘truly understand’ their disappointment. At a time when most officials were

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After PRD leaders were arrested, Megawati claimed to have no knowledge of them or their organisation: *Detektif dan Romantika*, August 17, 1996, p. 14-15.

<sup>1</sup> On July 8 PPBI leader Dita Sari and over 20 other PRD members were arrested at a protest by some 20 thousand workers in an industrial area of Surabaya.

<sup>2</sup> PRD, 1996, p. 37. At the launch awards were also given to such political pariahs as jailed East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao and banned leftist novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Another party, PUDI, (*Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesian United Democracy Party) had been launched some weeks earlier by the ‘recalled’ PPP legislator and fierce critic of President Suharto, Sri Bintang Pamungkas. PUDI leadership bodies included several figures associated with various NGOs and student groups, as well as some former PSI and PNI politicians: ‘Sri Bintang Umumkan Berdirinya Uni Demokrasi Indonesia’, *Suara Pembaruan*, May 29, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> According to one PDI source, Moetojib expressed this view directly to Suharto, telling him that he could find no evidence that Megawati was engaged in subversive activities. It was also rumoured that Moerdiono expressed his reservations at a meeting of Politics and Security Ministers and that Syarwan Hamid and Yogie S.M subsequently blocked him from addressing the Medan congress. Siswono also (albeit elliptically) expressed his concern: see for example ‘Konflik Harus Diselesaikan Secara Beradab’, *Media Indonesia*, June 8, 1996 (although he later suggested that Megawati accept defeat: ‘Jadilah yang Kalah dengan Simpatik’, *Republika*, July 4, 1996). There were also unofficial reports that the Megawati camp received information about the military operations from sources in the Fraksi-ABRI and from the Marine corps: Anon, ‘Dibalik Bencana Politik 27 Juli’.

<sup>4</sup> After the July 27 attack on the PDI office, there were also reports that Sudradjat did not attend a special cabinet meeting on it: see, for example, ‘Muslim Intellectuals Hedge their bets’, *Australian Financial Review*, August 7, 1996. He also did not contribute to the subsequent anti-communist campaign: Human Rights Watch Asia / Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, 1996.

simply reiterating endorsement of Soerjadi's leadership, he also called for reconciliation between Megawati and Soerjadi.<sup>1</sup>

Megawati supporters also sent delegations to DPR speaker, Wahono, stating that he was still 'objective' concerning the PDI.<sup>2</sup> On July 19, Wahono made a well-publicised speech in which, without directly referring to the PDI, he commented on the spread of 'hypocrisy' including in 'the leadership layer, where words are often not the same as their deeds.' He also cautioned against undemocratic methods and 'engineering' which could endanger the nation as it approached leadership transition.<sup>3</sup> After the July 27 violence, he was particularly clear, calling on ABRI to reduce reliance on 'repressive reactions.'<sup>4</sup>

The dominant feeling in such elite circles was simply that Megawati did not represent a sufficient threat to justify moving against her. Doing it in such a 'vulgar' manner was only harming government and military legitimacy, and heightening dangers of political instability. As Fealy argues, there was a widespread feeling among some regime elements that 'allowing [Megawati] to remain as party leader...would have signaled a growing political openness and maturity', crucial for the inevitable political transition.<sup>5</sup>

However, beyond a few vaguely couched expressions of unease, and perhaps information, whatever assistance some of Megawati's supporters hoped for was not forthcoming. Megawati and the PDI were clearly not viewed as being sufficiently important by elite actors to warrant risking their positions to defend her more energetically. The choice of Megawati's replacement was also significant: it appears that many in the old Moerdani camp believed that, if Megawati had to go, it was desirable for her to be replaced by Soerjadi. He had historic links with these

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<sup>1</sup> 'Menhankam imbau kubu Soerjadi dan Mega bertemu', *Media Indonesia*, June 27, 1996. In the same DPR commission hearing he also expressed his concern regarding the impact of the congress on national unity and 'resilience'.

<sup>2</sup> See for example 'Pimpinan PDI Se-DKI pendukung Megawati datang Ketua MPR', *Media Indonesia*, June 26, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> 'Wahono: Suasana Sekarang Khas Siklus Kepemimpinan Berjalan Alamiah', *Jawa Pos*, July 20, 1996; 'Seperti Menepuk Air di Dulang', *Tiras*, August 1, 1996, p. 10-11. Earlier, YKPK members had met with Wahono to formally present him with the July 1 petition: 'Bermula dari Sebuah Sarasehan', *Paron*, July 13, 1996, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> 'Ketua DPR/MPR: ABRI Harus Kurangi Reaksi-reaksi Represif', *Kompas*, August 1, 1996. See also 'Wahono: DPR Prihatin dan Sangat Menyesalkan Kerusuhan 27 Juli', *Suara Pembaruan*, August 16, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Fealy, 1997, p. 36. One important active officer who apparently, at least in part, shared these views was Lieutenant General Soeyono, Chief of General Staff. There were reports that he was either unsympathetic to the eventual July 27 attack on the PDI headquarters or was deliberately cut out of its planning. In any event, he joined a motorcycle rally in North Sulawesi days before the riots, where he had an accident and had to be confined to hospital with a leg injury: Luwarso et al., 1997, p. 41-2. As a result, he was almost immediately removed from his post, a move he described as 'killing the sitting duck games [*sic*]': *Tiras*, August 22, 1996, p. 14-16. Soeyono was by no means politically liberal. He had been particularly hard-line on students and other activists during his tenure as Regional Commander in Central Java and was well-known for his harsh comments against opposition. At least by family ties, however (he was son in law to Minister for Social Affairs and MKGR leader Mien Sugandhi), he was aligned to the broad secular-nationalist, *merah-putih*, anti-ICMI group.



circles, and might still be an agent of influence for them.<sup>1</sup> There were even rumours that Suharto was highly displeased with Soerjadi's resurrection, and some Megawati supporters took encouragement from this.<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, discontented elite elements now lacked the kind of institutional resources, especially territorial ABRI command positions, which might have been utilised for Megawati's benefit. The fact that hopes were placed in Defence and Security Minister Sudradjat (who was not part of the ABRI command structure and had limited influence in the serving officer corps) partly underlined the paucity of Megawati's support in the key sectors of the political elite.<sup>3</sup>

In any case, by mid-July the campaign against Megawati had developed unstoppable momentum. Rumours circulated that the military was preparing to take the Jakarta PDI office by force, prompting hundreds of Megawati supporters to guard it around the clock.<sup>4</sup> On July 22 Feisal Tanjung warned that protests at the office were becoming subversive.<sup>5</sup> Syarwan Hamid appealed for Soerjadi to take it over and warned that the movement developing around the country was 'the old song of the PKI'.<sup>6</sup> Finally, on July 25, President Suharto received Soerjadi and told him that 'bald devils' were using the PDI for their own purposes.<sup>7</sup>

## **6. The July 27 Affair**

<sup>1</sup> According to one analysis which was widely circulated in Jakarta and on the internet in late 1996, Soerjadi sought Moerdani's advice on whether to accept the offer of the PDI leadership: Anon, 'Dibalik Bencana Politik 27 Juli'. There were also rumours that funding for the Medan congress came from circles associated with the Wanandi brothers. Although Soerjadi denied this, he admitted that the Wanandi brothers gave him 'moral support': 'Saya Masih Sayang Sama Mbak Mega', *Forum Keadilan*, August 26, 1996, p. 94-98, p. 98. To what extent these old loyalties still applied, however, is questionable. According to PDI sources interviewed in late 1995, Fatimah Achmad, at least, was already developing links with Habibie and Tutut.

<sup>2</sup> Certainly, after the Medan Congress, the President delayed for more than a month before receiving Soerjadi, which some of Megawati's supporters interpreted as a sign of disapproval: 'Tardjo: Pak Harto Menolak', *Jawa Pos*, July 6, 1996. An equally plausible explanation, however, was simply that the President was attempting to avoid associating himself too directly with the affair. Later in the year, when Soerjadi had difficulty asserting his authority over the party, there were again indications that the government might be willing to abandon him: 'Soerjadi Tantang Laksanakan KLB, Sekjen Depdagri: Ia Bisa Diganti, Kenapa Tidak?', *Jawa Pos*, November 23, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> In the words of one Jakarta activist interviewed in late 1996 'We were all waiting for Edi to speak out, but he did not': interview with Standarkiaa, December 16, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> See for example 'Jika Kantor PDI diserbu, kami siap mati!', PIPA, July 21, 1996, (Indonesia-L); 'Kantor PDI dibayang-bayangi tentara', PIPA, July 22, 1996 (Indonesia-L).

<sup>5</sup> 'Pangab: Mimbar Bebas PDI Mengarah ke Makar', *Kompas*, July 23, 1996. '...[T]he words on the banners [there] are not polite'; he added, 'That's not Indonesian anymore' (*Itu bukan bangsa Indonesia lagi*).

<sup>6</sup> 'ABRI sabar, bukan telmi: Kassospol Minta Soerjadi Segera Ngantor', *Jawa Pos*, July 25, 1996; 'Kassospol ABRI: Aksi-aksi akhir-akhir ini merupakan gerakan', *Suara Pembaruan*, July 26, 1996. Hamid added that those involved wanted to 'tempt the soldiers into shooting to give rise to victims in their scenario. With victims, there are martyrs, then the masses become out of control and so it goes.' The Jakarta Police Chief, Hamami Nata, and Military Commander, Sutiyoso, also ordered an end to the protests: *Kompas*, July 24 & July 26, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> The President specifically referred to MARI: 'Presiden Soeharto Terima DPP PDI Hasil Kongres', *Suara Pembaruan*, July 25, 1996; 'Presiden Terima DPP PDI Pembonceng Kasus PDI "Setan Gundul"', *Republika*, July 26, 1996.

The attack on the PDI office and subsequent rioting on July 27, have been described in detail elsewhere, so brevity is possible here.<sup>1</sup> In the early hours, several thousand uniformed police and soldiers cordoned off the area around the PDI headquarters and trucks disgorged perhaps two hundred men dressed in red T-shirts, it being subsequently revealed that many were specially hired manual labourers and street toughs.<sup>2</sup> Over subsequent hours they rained stones and other projectiles at the office, observed by uniformed police who blockaded the road and occasionally passed them stones. After some negotiations with those inside, at around 8:30 a.m. a large body of police spearheaded a final assault, and they and the red-shirts forced their way in. Although military sources denied anything untoward happened, the defenders talked of wild scenes of bloodshed.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, a large crowd had gathered beyond the military cordon. As rumours spread that many in the office had been killed, stone-throwing began. Although PDI leaders appealed for calm, sporadic clashes continued, with sections of the crowd at one point chanting 'ABRI are killers' and burning a nearby police post. The crowd grew for some hours, swelled by residents of nearby slum areas, high school students and other passers by. Around 2 p.m. troops made a concerted attack, using tear gas, water cannons and batons, but not firing. The crowds scattered, and from this point running battles and widespread rioting occurred through a large, but localised, part of Eastern Jakarta. Many thousands of poor *kampung* residents participated enthusiastically. Although activists from opposition groups were among them, those interviewed later in 1996 indicated that they were able to exercise little control.<sup>4</sup> Eventually,

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Luwarso et al, 1997, p. 22-35,43-6; YLBHI, 1997, p. 3-26; Eklöf, 1999, p. 41-48. Numerous 'chronologies' and eyewitness accounts also circulated on the internet, the above description partly draws on some of them and broadly follows the chronology I presented in *Inside Indonesia*, No. 48, p. 6. According to a later investigation by *Tempo* magazine ('Menyingkap Tragedi 27 Juli', August 1, 1999, p. 40-43) Suharto gave a verbal command to Tanjung, Yogie and Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, Soesilo Soedarman, to takeover the office. The Director General for Social and Political Affairs of the Interior Ministry, Sutoyo NK and Syarwan Hamid were the chief planners of the operation, while the Commander of the Greater Jakarta Kodam, Major General Sutiyoso held primary responsibility for coordinating operations in the field.

<sup>2</sup> Randall, 1998, Eklöf, 1999, p. 46. It was widely rumoured that Prabowo and his coterie (especially his classmates from the Magelang Military Academy) were chief instigators and executors of the attack: The Editors (*Indonesia*), 1997, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> In October, *Komnas HAM* released a list of 23 people who remained missing: YLBHI, 1997, p. 4-5. PDI members who had been there that morning believed the number was considerably higher. Although those present whom I interviewed did not witness them, they claimed to know others who saw stabbings and shootings. Eyewitness accounts were also eventually published in the international media: Richard Lloyd Parry, 'What really happened on 27 July', *The Independent*, December 16, 1996. According to *Tempo* magazine (August 1, 1999, p. 41), approximately 30 may have been killed.

<sup>4</sup> They were, however, easily able to discourage the crowds from attacking certain 'national assets', like the State Library. In contrast to rioting in 1998, the destruction seemed particularly targeted against government installations and obvious signs of wealth like banks, shopping centres and such like. There were no reports of specifically anti-Chinese violence, indeed, Indonesian-Chinese student activists and journalists I spoke to reported moving freely through the crowds. Contrary to some accounts (for example, Eklöf, 1999, p. 48) many eyewitnesses interviewed in late 1996 suggested that there was a high degree of antagonism directed toward security forces, especially the police, and that all police posts in the vicinity of the rioting were burned to the ground.

some 56 buildings were destroyed, more than 200 were arrested, and four (according to official figures) were killed.<sup>1</sup>

Troops mostly succeeded in cordoning off the violence and ending it by late evening (although minor clashes continued for some days). Although some participants in the rioting claimed that the Marines were sympathetic, there is little evidence to indicate that ABRI presented other than a united front.<sup>2</sup>

### **7. The Aftermath: Tiarap**

The July 27 riot was the signal for a comprehensive crackdown on dissent. Regime leaders from President Suharto down immediately launched a fevered propaganda offensive, reviving the communist spectre in a way not witnessed since the 1970s, accusing those responsible of being communists who had aimed to overthrow the government. Senior ABRI officers, especially Syarwan Hamid and Feisal Tanjung, singled out the PRD, denouncing it as a reincarnation of the PKI. In following weeks it became the target of a near-hysterical propaganda campaign and many PRD members were hunted down from hiding.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately 14 of them were tried in late 1996 and early 1997 under the catch-all anti-subversion provisions, with allegations focused on the content of their party's manifesto. All eventually received prison terms of between 18 months and 13 years (much lengthier than those typically meted out to student activists).<sup>4</sup>

A wide range of alegal, proto and semi-opposition was swept up into the crackdown, including the groups involved in MARI and many individuals from the PDI. There were raids on NGO offices in the regions, many activists were temporarily detained, some were abducted and tortured.<sup>5</sup> Mughtar Pakpakhan of the labour union SBSI was arrested, as was PDI legislator

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<sup>1</sup> Luwarso et al, 1997, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> There was considerable sympathy for Marines from many opposition actors, especially from the PDI and the Nationalist *aliran*. This largely derived from the Marines' Sukarnoist sympathies during the Guided Democracy period and their subsequent marginalisation by the Army. A number of important officers were active in the field on July 27, including Kopassus and Kostrad Commanders Prabowo and Wiranto.

<sup>3</sup> Golkar organisations and Islamic groups were mobilised to condemn the PRD and the 'the PKI revival.' There was even a television drama (entitled *Terjebak*: 'Trapped') which portrayed the story of a student activist ensnared by a sinister left-wing group. On the campaign against the PRD see for example Luwarso et al, 1997, p. 93-151, 294-318. For an early analysis of this crackdown see Human Rights Watch Asia / Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> The prosecution dropped key early accusations, including that the party was the 'mastermind' of the riots and, largely, that it was communist. The defendants also attempted to turn the trials into a forum for attacking the government, staging walk-outs, holding demonstrations in the court-room and in their defence speeches refusing to acknowledge the authority of the court, addressing themselves instead to the 'Indonesian people': Sudjatmiko and Haryato, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> For the experiences of student activist Hendrik Sirait of Yayasan Pijar, who was abducted and tortured, see Luwarso et al, p. 165-77. Senior officials also increased the tenor of their statements about NGOs, with Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, Soesilo Soedarman, stating that there were 32 'problematic' (bermasalah) NGOs, among which were LBH and WALHI: 'Daftar Baru LSM "Mbeling"', *Republika*, November 4, 1996.

Aberson Sihalo. 124 hapless individuals who had been in the PDI headquarters when it was attacked were also imprisoned, a case which quickly became a *cause célèbre* in the pro-Megawati PDI.<sup>1</sup>

Under these conditions, an atmosphere of fear blanketed unofficial opposition and many groups scaled back activities likely to invite repression. This was summed up in the word *tiarap* (literally to lie face down, with one's face hidden), which was how many groups described their attitude in late 1996.

## **8. Islam and the 1996 Crisis**

From the early 1990s, as we have seen in previous chapters, the changing tenor of relations between government and the Islamic community accentuated divisions in the potential support base of opposition. As modernist Islamic leaders entered the ICMI orbit many began to feel that they had a stake in the evolving political system and largely abstained from 'extra-systemic' opposition initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

This factor had a clear impact during the 1996 PDI crisis. Elements within NU, under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid did support Megawati. But the *aliran* complexion of the pro-Megawati forces essentially remained restricted to the secular-oriented 'rainbow coalition' which had coalesced in YKPK (with the addition of more radical student-based groups and NGOs). Very few significant Modernist organisations gave any support.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the PDI crisis provided an opportunity for 'green' military leaders (most prominently Syarwan Hamid) to attempt to consolidate a reactionary Army-Islamic alliance directed against secular opposition.<sup>4</sup> The new Army leadership had already been attempting to integrate Islamic appeals into their 'latent danger of communism' discourse.<sup>5</sup> Some Islamic groups had responded by supporting

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<sup>1</sup> See Tim Pembela Demokrasi Indonesia, 1997, for an account of this case by the team of legal defendants. Eventually even Megawati herself was called in for questioning at the attorney general's office.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in contrast to other Cipayung groups, HMI members were formally instructed not to participate in KIPP: interviews with KIPP activists, November 1996. There were, of course, exceptions for example, noted Modernist intellectual and former Chairperson of HMI, Nurcholish Madjid, was important in KIPP, but he was already disillusioned by the ICMI experience.

<sup>3</sup> The modernist Muslim leaders who actively participated in the campaign in defence of Megawati were mostly marginal players. Ridwan Saidi's new and small organisation, Masyumi-baru participated in MARI, but Saidi was a marginal figure: Fealy, 1997, p. 28. Similar was Sri Bintang Pamungkas and his new (secular) party PUDI. Pamungkas was already excluded from the Islamic mainstream, having been 'recalled' as a PPP legislator. In an interview in late 1996, Saidi explained his motivations by suggesting that he feared that modernist Muslims were in danger of becoming converted into a force in favour of the status-quo. This would deprive them of anti-regime credentials and mean they would be poorly positioned to intervene in the process of democratisation and regime transition when it eventually began: interview, November 27, 1996. Nurcholish Madjid in a press interview (*Ummat*, December 23, 1996, p. 20) made a variation on this argument, suggesting that ICMI was giving Islamic legitimacy to the '[power] structure', which was dangerous because 'Islam itself will lose its legitimacy.'

<sup>4</sup> Honna, 1999, p. 102-3 for Syarwan Hamid's role and the campaign more generally.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p. 95.

the campaign against communism in 1995.<sup>1</sup> Before July 27 some also actively participated, in a small way, in the campaign against Megawati.<sup>2</sup> It appears that Islamic intellectuals in CIDES provided Syarwan Hamid with an assessment of the PRD, which he used in designing the campaign against the group.<sup>3</sup> Mobilisation of Islamic opinion was especially central to the propaganda campaign after July 27. In a parody of the 1960s anti-communist military-Islamic coalition, there was a series of public statements and mass rallies organised by Islamic organisations to condemn the PRD and ‘the PKI revival’. Many such organisations, like MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars), were corporatist bodies long linked to government, but leaders of almost all the major modernist groups, including Muhammadiyah and HMI, also participated.<sup>4</sup>

The vehemence of such attacks was partly due to long-held feelings among ICMI sympathisers that opposition by the secular-oriented ‘rainbow coalition’ was motivated by resentment at Islam’s new place in the political sun. Many Islamic leaders expressed this view in the weeks following July 27. Among them was chief ICMI reformer, Adi Sasono, who evoked the bloody image of the 1984 Tanjung Priok massacre in one press interview:

The funny thing is that those who are abusing the government now are the people who just kept quiet when the Tanjungpriok incident occurred. Among those who are abusing the government now, there are even some who helped the party (*pihak*) which committed those killings at Tanjungpriok. So, it is as though the atmosphere then in the past was really ideal. Then [it was as if] there was no need for a Forum Demokrasi, no need for a KIPP, and no need for a 1 July [Statement of] Concern. Now, this makes me ask, why weren’t they concerned when the Tanjungpriok incident occurred? . . . the question emerges, doesn’t it. . . there are people there who were involved in massacres, people

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<sup>1</sup> Even Amien Rais had given some credence to the threat of ‘night communists’ and OTB: ‘Amien Rais: “Komunis Malam” Lebih Komunis dari PKI’ [‘Night Communists’ are more Communist than the PKI], *Republika*, October 24, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> For example, PPP leaders were part of the propaganda campaign which preceded the attack on the PDI headquarters, publicly complaining that the ‘democracy forums’ there disrupted their own nearby office and that speakers were insulting the PPP: *Gatra*, July 27, 1996, p. 34-5. NU PPP legislator (and Abdurrahman Wahid ally) Matori Abdul Djilil was formally reprimanded by the leadership of the PPP fraksi for signing the July 1 Petition. As fraksi head Hamzah Haz (who also had an NU background) put it: ‘we don’t approve of forming an extra-parliamentary institution’: ‘Silakan Mengundurkan Diri’, *Paron*, July 20, 1998, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> There were unofficial reports that documents about the PRD, which Syarwan Hamid distributed to journalists, included the fax address of CIDES, and Hamid had to hastily recall these when it was pointed out to him: Anon, ‘Dibalik Bencana 27 Juli, 1996’. Adi Sasono strongly denied that CIDES had anything to do with the campaign against the PRD: ‘Sekarang Masanya Maling Teriak Maling’, *Forum Keadilan*, September 23, 1996, p. 94-7, p. 95. At the same time, student activists recruited to CPDS, the think-tank run by a group of ICMI intellectuals linked to Prabowo and Hartono, operated as agents in the pro-Megawati movement, facilitating the arrests of several activists: confidential communications, December 1996.

<sup>4</sup> See for example ‘Presiden Terima ‘Sikap Umat Islam Indonesia’’, *Republika*, August 22, 1996; ‘Ini Dakwah bil Khair’ *Tiras*, September 5, 1996, p. 83. The HMI leadership endorsed a statement which called for the authorities to ‘investigate thoroughly and process [the PRD] in accordance with the law’ for ‘riding (*membonceng*) the riot action’: ‘Bukan Membuka Luka Lama’, *Tiras*, August 15, 1996, p. 84. Such behaviour led former HMI chairperson and head of Masyumi-baru, Ridwan Saidi, to later label HMI a ‘security guard’ for the government: *Ummat*, August 4, 1997, p. 34.

who were involved in very wicked political engineering? And now they are suddenly concerned. Where does all that come from?<sup>1</sup>

The barely-veiled implication was that Moerdani and his supporters were behind opposition. Indeed, in comments made to me in late 1996, several Islamic activists sympathetic to ICMI argued that Megawati simply owed her place to a conspirational alliance of Christian and Nationalist military officers and officials, who were desperate to frustrate Habibie and the rise of Islam.<sup>2</sup>

In a sign of the evolution of 'civilianisation' and 'demilitarisation' arguments previously used to justify involvement in ICMI, Sasono publicly downplayed the significance of the PDI affair, arguing strongly that the 'main current' in ABRI was still committed to 'a process of renewal oriented to openness and democratisation.'<sup>3</sup> He argued that political reform had been progressing steadily in preceding years.<sup>4</sup> It was precisely the impatience of the 'radical idealist group' which endangered this process.<sup>5</sup>

A good example of division between ICMI sympathisers and detractors was played out in the Petition of Fifty. The 1996 crisis brought to a head the tensions which had been brewing in this group from 1993 when prominent Islamic members like Anwar Haryono and A. M. Fatwa publicly stated their sympathy for ICMI. The first cause of conflict, which predated the PDI crisis, was General Hartono's statement of ABRI support for Golkar. ABRI-Golkar enmeshment had been a core concern of the Petition of Fifty since its formation, so it was not surprising that the group released a letter of condemnation and called for Hartono's removal. Fatwa and Haryono objected strongly and issued a 'minority note' suggesting that advocating Hartono's removal was interfering too far into the President's prerogative. They later also condemned the working group's denunciation of the attempted ouster of Megawati alleging that the group was 'taking sides,' and also needed to note the left-wing radicalisation which

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sekarang Masanya Maling Teriak Maling', *Forum Keadilan*, September 23, 1996, p. 94-8; p. 98; 'Mereka Kelompok Penekan', *Paron*, August 10, 1996, p. 21-3.

<sup>2</sup> 'They are the reactionaries, we are the revolutionaries', was how one young ICMI intellectual put it to me: confidential communication, December 1996. Among those blamed were Hendropriyono and Minister of the State Secretariat, Moerdiono.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mereka Kelompok Penekan', *Paron*, August 10, 1996, p. 21-3; p. 21. For similar interviews see 'Sekarang Masanya Maling Teriak Maling', *Forum Keadilan*, September 23 1996, p. 94-7 (where Sasono also fends off accusations by Abdurrahman Wahid that elements from CIDES were involved in the establishment of the PRD) and 'Itu Bukan Islamisasi Tapi Demokratisasi', *Tiras*, September 26, 1996, p. 39-46.

<sup>4</sup> He listed seven particular 'advances' from the preceding three years, including the entry of human rights into official discourse, reduction of military intervention in labour affairs, tolerance of strikes and demonstrations, loosening of political controls on campus, easing of restrictions on the Petition of Fifty group and reforms to the corporatist labour union, SPSI: 'Sekarang Masanya Maling Teriak Maling', *Forum Keadilan*, September 23 1996, p. 94-7; p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> 'Mereka Kelompok Penekan', *Paron*, August 10, 1996, p. 21-3; p. 21. Dr. Jimly Asshiddiqie, a deputy secretary of ICMI, similarly suggested that prior to July 27 it had been very likely that the anti-subversion law would be repealed. That it was now being used against those accused of responsibility for July 27 signified that democratisation had been 'disrupted' or 'made to go in reverse' by 'people who have no political patience': *Gatra*, August 17, 1996, p. 35.

contributed to the July 27 affair. In several press interviews Fatwa suggested that he and Haryono (who was sick and rarely attended working group meetings) felt like a ‘minority’ in the group and that its hard-line approach had been appropriate in the early 1980s, but not now that the ‘security approach’ was lessened. Eventually, Haryono resigned and Fatwa was expelled.<sup>1</sup> This effectively brought to an end the coalition between modernist Islam and secular dissidence which had been embodied in the Petition of Fifty since the late 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

It thus appears that Suharto’s initiative of co-opting part of the Islamic community through ICMI succeeded in dividing potential extra-systematic opposition. Because the figurehead leader of the coalescing opposition coalition, Megawati, lacked significant (modernist) Muslim support, it was difficult for her to appear as the embodiment of the whole of society against the regime like, say, Corazon Aquino had in the more homogeneous culture of the Philippines. So long as this fissure continued to divide opposition, prospects for society-initiated democratic transition would remain bleak.

However, the 1996 crisis also underlined the ambiguous nature of the co-optation of Islam. Those Islamic groups which the government called on for support had their own agendas. For example, a meeting of *ulama* in East Java in late July, attended by the governor and regional military commander, departed from the script when participants made additions to a prepared statement condemning the PRD and communism, calling for investigations of past massacres of Muslims.<sup>3</sup> In following weeks, there were many public calls (alongside a Komnas HAM investigation into the July 27 incident) for an investigation into the Tanjung Priok massacre.<sup>4</sup> This was obviously targeted at Moerdani and his supporters, and was doubtlessly partly intended to detract from the current crisis. But it suggested a far-reaching investigation of military methods of control which far exceeded anything desired by palace loyalists, and General Feisal Tanjung quickly ruled it out.<sup>5</sup>

As noted in chapter four, by the mid-1990s there was growing concern among some ICMI supporters that there were risks in identifying too closely with the government (especially the

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, ‘AM Fatwa Bantah Petisi 50 Pecah’, *Media Indonesia*, May 2, 1996; ‘Sudah Tak Sinkron Lagi’, *Tiras*, September 12, 1996, p. 85; ‘Merasa Jadi Minoritas’, *Paron*, September 14, 1996, p. 13; ‘AM Fatwa Dipecat dari Petisi 50’, *Republika*, September 22, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> A few modernist politicians, like Radjab Ranggasoli, remained active in the group, but they had never been as prominent as Haryono or Fatwa. The most prominent Masyumi leaders involved, notably Mohammad Natsir and Sjafruddin Prawariningara, had died some years earlier.

<sup>3</sup> Cases referred to were Tanjungpriok, the counter-insurgency campaign launched in Aceh since 1989, and the 1989 Lampung killings: ‘Bukan Membuka Luka Lama’, *Tiras*, August 15, 1996, p. 84-5.

<sup>4</sup> See for example ‘Mungkinkah Tanjung Priok Diteliti Lagi’, *Detektif dan Romantika*, September 21, 1996 (Tempo Interaktif version), ‘Komnas HAM Diminta Usut Peristiwa Tanjung Priok’, *Republika*, September 13, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Military Closes Book on Bloody ‘84 Riots’, *Straits Times*, September 17, 1997 (Kdp Net). Abdurrahman Wahid argued against such an investigation, saying that it would lead to misunderstanding between religions: ‘Pengungkapan Kasus Priok tidak Menguntungkan’, *Bisnis Indonesia*, September 19, 1996 (Indonesia-L). Important human rights organisations, notably LBH, supported the proposal: ‘LBH Dukung Dibukanya Kembali Insiden Priok’, *Republika*, September 17, 1996.

President) when it was becoming both manifestly less popular and more resistant to reform. Much participation in the post-July 27 condemnation of communism was thus highly qualified. For example, a September mass rally in Surabaya organised by *Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah Young Generation) to condemn communism, also called for ‘concrete and drastic steps to punish those who practice corruption and collusion.’<sup>1</sup> Muhammadiyah leader Amien Rais told the crowd that the organisation’s support for the government was not without reserve<sup>2</sup>:

Muhammadiyah members will support the government so long as the New Order is still straight (*masih lurus*), as long as the New Order can prove that it is able to eliminate corruption and prevent collusion.

Another important sign of equivocation was ICMI’s official statement on the riots, eventually released on August 8. Although this restated support for the New Order and condemned the PRD, it was very guarded in assigning blame, emphasising avoidance of ‘accusations made outside the courts’, and ‘the presumption of innocence.’<sup>3</sup>

ICMI sources indicated that this statement was largely due to the intervention of Adi Sasono, who was also careful to avoid publicly condemning the PRD.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the tone of *Republika* reporting shifted noticeably after July 27, with the paper running prominent, sympathetic reports on the PRD and interviews with its leaders.<sup>5</sup>

Prominent reformist ICMI figures like Sasono and Amien Rais used press interviews on the PDI/PRD affair to argue that economic and political reform was needed to prevent further unrest and radicalisation. Amien re-emphasised arguments he had made since 1993 about the urgency of Presidential succession, telling one magazine that recent political events had merely been an ‘external symptom’ of the ‘real disease’, which was that there was ‘an important organ in the body which is sick.’<sup>6</sup> In an interview two years later, Amien suggested that the July 27

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Apel untuk Orde Baru’, *Forum Keadilan*, September 23, 1996, p. 25

<sup>2</sup> ‘Apel dan Bisul Nasional’, *Tiras*, September 12, 1996, p. 86

<sup>3</sup> ‘ICMI:Dukung Orba, Junjung Tinggi Asas Praduga tak Bersalah’, *Republika*, August 9, 1996. The statement also noted that the riot should be a reminder to increase efforts for the ‘development of an economy oriented to the interests of the majority of the people’ and to overcome various other social problems.

<sup>4</sup> See for example ‘Itu Bukan Islamisasi Tapi Demokratisasi’, *Tiras*, September 26, 1996, p. 39-46; p. 43: ‘If there are young kids who are marxists, we don’t need to condemn them, even though we might regret why it turned out that way.’

<sup>5</sup> This occurred after it emerged that Budiman was from a pious *santri* family. See in particular, the interview, ‘Budiman Menyanggah: Kami bukan Ateis’ [Budiman denies: We are not atheists] *Republika*, December 3, 1996. The newspaper promised that this would be followed by a five days series covering the charges against PRD leaders, their responses, and a brief biography of Budiman. The following day a brief notice appeared on the front page (obviously inserted after pressure from the authorities): ‘The Budiman Sudjatmiko series we promised will be continued after the trial is complete. Sorry. (The Editors).’ See Hefner, 1997, for an interpretation of this coverage and the condemnation it aroused among Muslims associated with Dewan Dakwah.

<sup>6</sup> To make it absolutely clear that he was referring to the Presidency he stressed that ‘the main problem in the political field is indeed the question of succession in the national leadership’: ‘Suksesi Masalah Pokok’, *Tiras*, August 1, 1996, p. 85-6. In the same interview he called for leadership rotation in 1998 in a



affair was one of several incidents which suggested to him that substantive reform could not be pursued within the system while Suharto remained in charge and which motivated him to more publicly criticise the President.<sup>1</sup> Amien was now on a trajectory which would shortly see him emerge as the country's major opposition figure.

### **9. The Aftermath: A Crisis of Hegemony**

Overt reliance on coercion reflected the regime's growing inability to maintain hegemony by other methods. Signs of the unraveling of the co-option of modernist Islam were simply one indication of this. Another was the regime's obvious inability to convince the population of its version of the July 27 affair.

This was largely because of the highly anachronistic nature of the attempt. Warnings of communist infiltration had lost their power to convince, at least among more sophisticated parts of the urban population. Considerable incompetence in the handling of the campaign gave it an air of absurdity, as when the family of PRD leader Budiman Sudjatmiko was accused of PKI links, it subsequently emerging that they were pious Muslims affiliated to Muhammadiyah.<sup>2</sup>

Even immediately following the riots, newspapers printed readers' letters which openly questioned the official version. PRD leaders who remained at large gave press interviews, contemptuously dismissing government accusations.<sup>3</sup> In one opinion poll of 500 urban dwellers, only 13% of respondents agreed that the PRD was behind the riots, a large majority blaming the security forces, Soerjadi or the government.<sup>4</sup>

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way which would be 'smooth, elegant, constitutional and legal, and which need not give rise to a heated atmosphere manner, let alone lead to unrest in the *arus bawah*.' See also 'Amien Rais Ajak Pemuda Perbaiki Kekurangan Secara Reformasi', *Kompas*, July 30, 1996. Before long, however, it appeared that Amien had accepted that Presidential Succession was a virtual impossibility for 1998, and focused once more on the Vice Presidency: 'Wapres Mendatang Sangat Strategis', *Kompas*, December 4, 1996.

<sup>1</sup> Interview, July 15, 1998. Amien suggested that Suharto's attempts to divide and attack his enemies led him to reevaluate the previous 'same person, changed policy' approach, because it was now clear policy changes would not be possible while Suharto remained in control.

<sup>2</sup> Another example occurred when the PRD was said to 'resemble' the PKI because both parties had labour, peasant and other affiliated organisations (PRD members insisted they borrowed this structure from Golkar). According to Luwarso et al (1997, p. 42) the head of BIA, Major General Syamsir Siregar was blamed for some of the intelligence errors in constructing the government case, and was removed from his position in late August as a result.

<sup>3</sup> Komnas HAM also released findings on the affair, which explicitly contradicted the official version, stating that five persons were killed in the rioting, including one shot by security forces, that 23 remained missing, and that security forces were involved in the takeover of the PDI building: Luwarso et al, 1997, chapter 6, 'Listening to the Silent Majority', p. 69-77; 'Korban sebenarnya versi Komnas HAM', *Forum Keadilan*, September 23, 1996, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Luwarso et al, chapter 6, 'Listening to the Silent Majority', p. 269-292.

Despite the repressive atmosphere, various opposition elements continued to seek ways to challenge the regime. Megawati's PDI devoted much energy to legal challenges.<sup>1</sup> The groups which had borne the brunt of the post-July repression, meanwhile, began to re-organise. Although the PRD had decisively made the transition to illegal opposition, it began to re-build its organisation on an underground basis.<sup>2</sup> Before long, the group was holding public mobilisations using various 'front' organisations.

During fieldwork in late 1996 I was struck by the underlying optimism of many in NGO, student and other activist circles, even those in hiding. There was a growing feeling that the regime was turning in on itself, losing its ability to respond creatively to societal dynamics and approaching terminal crisis. *Pembusukan* (decay) was a term widely used to describe this phenomenon.

After July 27, the potentially explosive political role of the urban poor also became an important political factor. As Megawati's removal demonstrated, the blocking of institutionalised opposition inflamed mass sentiment while simultaneously depriving the disaffected poor of effective moderate leadership with a stake in the political system.<sup>3</sup> The presence of a restive urban population, liable to outbursts of violence against the security forces and symbols of wealth was further indicated by riots in Situbondo, East Java and Tasikmalaya in West Java in October and December 1996. These riots had an obvious inter-religious and ethnic colour, with the targeting of churches, Buddhist temples and 'Chinese' businesses. Although there were numerous stories of provocation of these riots for elite factional purposes, they also indicated that, notwithstanding accommodation between Islam and government at the elite level, the urban Islamic masses remained explosively discontented.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was carried out on a very large scale, in virtually all provinces, even in many kabupaten. By early 1997, according to its coordinator R.O. Tambunan, the legal team assembled by the PDI (*Tim Pembela Demokrasi Indonesia*, TPDI, Indonesian Democracy Defence Team) involved 'thousands' of lawyers around the country: Tambunan, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> During fieldwork in late 1996, I was struck by the efficiency and apparently smooth operation of this network in several of the major towns in Java. It was relatively effortless to be passed between groups and meet with a wide range of PRD members and sympathisers. The organisation had prepared for the possibility of illegality by developing different leadership layers. Those who were arrested were only the public or 'legal' leadership of the organisation. By operating openly, especially in networks with other groups, they had inevitably made contact with many informers and spies. (PRD members whom I interviewed in hiding in late 1996 indicated that those who were arrested were typically betrayed by contacts they had made in the PDI, who turned out to be intelligence agents). However, there was also a layer of underground leaders who operated essentially via a cell structure and had not exposed themselves by operating in public. They were thus able to maintain the continuity of the organisation.

<sup>3</sup> Many participants in the July 27 rioting clearly felt loyal to Megawati, while others were presumably venting other frustrations. Many of them failed to heed Megawati's repeated pleas to avoid violence. Some informants suggested to me that many of the buildings targeted during the rioting of July 27 had been erected on sites from which *kampung* people had been forcibly evicted in the past.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of the contending analyses of these riots and a more serious outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in West Kalimantan, see van Klinken, 1997; Eklof, 1999, p. 50-74. Sporadic rioting continued throughout the following year, including during the May 1997 elections (see below) but also later in the year. For example, there was a major riot in Ujungpandang in September 1997 in which three people were killed and over 1400 buildings damaged: Hendratmoko, 1998.

## **10. Abdurrahman Wahid's Rapprochement with the Government**

However, the new climate did bring some notable victories for the government. In particular, Abdurrahman Wahid suddenly initiated reconciliation with the palace camp. First, he advised Megawati to drop her lawsuit against the military leadership and to abandon confrontation. Next, Wahid held a series of meetings with General Hartono, the very officer who had attempted to unseat him in 1994. Finally, in November 1996, President Suharto himself attended an NU congress in Probolinggo, East Java, and publicly shook Wahid's hand, apparently symbolising the healing of the rift between the two.<sup>1</sup> In the months before the 1997 election, Wahid 'opened his constituency for Golkar's campaign' when he toured NU *pesantren* with the President's daughter, Tutut.<sup>2</sup> He also effectively backed her Vice-Presidential aspirations, repeatedly suggesting that she was 'figure for the future' (*tokoh masa depan*), with whom it was important for NU to develop links.<sup>3</sup>

These moves were greeted with relief by many *ulama* who had long been concerned by deteriorating NU relations with the government. Mietzner suggests that they also facilitated continued flow of development funds for *pesantren*.<sup>4</sup> However, they provoked confusion among many of Wahid's erstwhile sympathisers in the PDI, Forum Demokrasi and other secular opposition groups. There was even criticism from younger NU followers who had been active in anti-government campaigns in preceding years.<sup>5</sup>

Wahid offered several public explanations for his tactical reversal. For example, he said it was important to prevent PPP getting too many votes because this 'would have been interpreted internationally as a victory for political Islam.'<sup>6</sup> It seems likely, however, that the shift was partly driven by the changed political constellation in the ruling elite. Megawati's removal demonstrated that Wahid's own position was increasingly vulnerable (indeed, he argued that the riots in Situbondo and Tasikmalaya were 'engineered' to undermine NU and his own position).<sup>7</sup> With his previous sympathisers in ABRI growing weaker, it appears Wahid considered it necessary to make an adjustment toward those forces which were ascendant.

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<sup>1</sup> Wahid immediately affirmed that NU would support Suharto once more for the Presidency, if that was the will of the MPR: *Kompas*, November 4, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Mietzner, 1998, p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> For example, 'KH Abdurrahman Wahid: Tidak Ada Tawar-Menawar tertentu dengan Mbak Tutut', *Kompas*, April 5, 1997. In the approach to the 1997 election, important NU figures became Golkar candidates, and according to Wahid ally, Matori Abdul Djilil, 'almost all' *pesantren* were oriented to Golkar: *Tempo Interaktif*, edisi 50/01, February 2, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Mietzner, 1998, p. 181-2.

<sup>5</sup> See for example *Kompas*, April 5, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> This, according to Mietzner (1998, p. 186), was Wahid's explanation at the conference of NU branches and *kiai* held in Mataram in November 1997. Schwarz (1999, p. 332) quotes Wahid suggesting that a large vote for PPP (in the absence of a Megawati-PDI) would mean that his opponents would say 'the NU doesn't really support me', given his own well-known enmity with the PPP leadership. Certainly, relations between Wahid and the PPP leadership had reached a low point. Many NU *kyai* sympathetic to Wahid were excluded from the PPP list of DPR candidates: 'Andai Gus Dur Menggandeng Tutut, PPP Bertekuk Lutut', *Tempo Interaktif*, February 1, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Eklöf, 1999, p. 50-74.

By doing so, Wahid also aimed to block his modernist/ICMI foes from monopolising access to the authorities.<sup>1</sup> Indeed (remembering that elite critics of ICMI had long hoped that the pendulum of Presidential favour would eventually swing back in their favour), he suggested that Suharto's new receptiveness to NU was because the President now recognised that ICMI was 'captured' by 'militant Muslim activists.'<sup>2</sup> In any case, Wahid combined his rapprochement with Suharto with intensified attacks on Habibie and other ICMI leaders.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In some of his public statements, Wahid hinted at this. For example, at one seminar in January 1997, he suggested that it would be dangerous if the 'green' group in ABRI was able to make an alliance with 'Muslim sectarians' and thus influence succession: *Tempo Interaktif*, 49/01, February 1, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> He also suggested the President now realised that his support for ICMI meant that he was losing political support from NU and non-Muslims. 'Wong, Saya Enggak Pernah Berubah', *Detektif dan Romantika*, November 23, 1996, p. 56-61, at p. 57; 'PBNU Tidak Berharap Banyak', *Ummat*, November 25, 1996, p. 33. ICMI member Dawam Rahardjo may have had a more accurate assessment when he suggested that Suharto was looking to Wahid because he was increasingly distrustful of ICMI and, especially, Muhammadiyah under Amien Rais: 'Kisah di balik Pertemuan Genggong', *Tiras*, November 14, 1996, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> In 'Wong, Saya Enggak Pernah Berubah', *Detektif dan Romantika*, November 23, 1996, p. 56-61, Wahid reiterated that Habibie was 'not suitable' to be Vice President, because he was 'emotional' and 'liked to get his own way'. In turn, Habibie indicated that he had no interest in meeting Wahid. Wahid said that he was willing for a meeting only if Habibie made a statement that 'ICMI would no longer dominate political power': 'Menanti Jodoh Habibie-Gus Dur', *Ummat*, December 23, 1996, p. 29-30.

## **11. The 1997 General Elections**

Although Wahid's shift was clearly beneficial for the government (especially for Golkar in the NU heartland of East and Central Java), it was unable to mask the continuing decline in regime legitimacy. Many of the actions of the government seemed to reflect awareness of this problem. During the first months of 1997, there were numerous incidents of seemingly disproportionate repression against urban, middle class opposition.<sup>1</sup> Preparations for the May election occurred in an extraordinarily tense security climate, with frequent parades of military might in major cities. In a demonstration of the new air of unreality and desperation in political management, in a process called *kuningisasi* ('yellow-isation'), residents of much of Central and East Java were dragooned into painting trees, fences, buildings, and kerbs in Golkar yellow.<sup>2</sup> It is hard to imagine a policy which could alienate so many people for so little effect.

In the past, general elections had played an important legitimising function for the regime, not so much because the Golkar victories were viewed as genuine popular endorsements, but because they demonstrated the government's ability to assert its will over the population. The mobilisation of overwhelming financial and administrative resources, the humiliation wreaked on the parties, the ritualistic flavour, even the openness of the pressures brought to bear on voters, all seemed designed to communicate that even when the population was handed an opportunity to challenge, the government could remain impervious. Elections had also played an important role in maintaining the corporatist political system by ensuring that tolerated, semi-oppositional but mass-based political forces could maintain a stake, no matter how tenuous, within it.

The government's rigidity in dealing with discontent over preceding months meant that instead of coopting potential opposition, the 1997 election simply dramatised its exclusion, or at least that of Megawati's large following. The ultimate result was that the elections also largely failed to demonstrate New Order political control.

In the months before the election, Megawati initially maintained the fiction that her PDI, rather than Soerjadi's, remained within the formal system. Branches followed each stage of the election process: submitting lists of candidates, registering objections to the candidature of Soerjadi followers, and so on. Unheeded at every turn, at the outset of the campaign Megawati appealed to her followers to take no part in campaigning organised by Soerjadi.<sup>3</sup> In stark contrast to 1992, official PDI campaigns were thus virtually deserted. In many cases they degenerated into farce when Megawati supporters made their views known, as when, in Kediri,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the arrest of Sri Bintang Pamungkas and other PUDI leaders on subversion charges in March.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Walters, 'Java paint war reflects shifting political canvas', *the Australian*, March 13, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> *Pesan Harian Ketua Umum DPP-PDI*, May 2 (distributed by Indonesia-L).

they threw venomous snakes onto a platform where Soerjadi was speaking.<sup>1</sup> In many towns, Soerjadi-PDI candidates took to campaigning from trucks in case speedy exit was called for, elsewhere they cancelled campaigning altogether.

Certainly, this time around, pro-*golput* sentiment was greater than previously.<sup>2</sup> However, it was not until a week before the poll that Megawati announced she would not use her own vote and appealed to her supporters to follow their own consciences.<sup>3</sup> Although the message was clear enough, she stopped short of explicitly encouraging others not to vote, an illegal act. Given Megawati's reluctance to promote it, the boycott campaign once again failed to develop significant momentum. Instead, the PPP campaign became the chief outlet for popular frustrations and attracted large crowds. Despite their broadly pro-government sympathies, the PPP leadership ran a relatively spirited campaign, condemning (like the PDI in 1992) *korupsi* and *nepotisme*, even if only in general terms.

A striking phenomenon, which demonstrated a considerable degree of popular political creativity, was the transformation of many PPP rallies by what became known as the '*Mega-Bintang*' (Mega-Star) phenomenon, whereby many participants carried Megawati's portrait, or waved banners mixing the PPP's green star symbol with the PDI's red. This phenomenon was partly instigated by maverick PPP branch leaders, like Moedrick Setiawan Sangidoe in Solo.<sup>4</sup> A range of other illegal and alegal opposition groups, including the now underground PRD, also encouraged it.<sup>5</sup> Above all, it was promoted by PDI members who, without clear direction from Megawati, were seeking a means of involvement in the campaign. In any event, the phenomenon became such a cause for concern that the government declared it illegal.<sup>6</sup>

Another striking feature of the campaign was its violence. Approximately 400 were killed, most in motor vehicle accidents, but others during violent incidents. The worst was a large riot in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, where officials claimed some 123 'looters' perished in a

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<sup>1</sup> 'Snakes disperse PDI Rally', *Antara*, May 21, 1997. For similar reports see 'PDI Solo Hanya Kampanye di Rumah', *Suara Merdeka*, April 29, 1997; 'Tak Ada Pengunjung, Kampanye Batal', *Suara Merdeka*, April 29, 1997; 'Juru Kampanye PDI di Kupang Disambut Teriakan "Hidup Megawati!"', *Suara Pembaruan*, May 6, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Numerous opinion polls conducted by university students or commissioned by the press indicated this. Pro-boycott demonstrations were organised in many towns, many Megawati-PDI supporters also openly proclaimed their intention not to vote.

<sup>3</sup> *Pesan Harian Ketua Umum DPP-PDI*, May 22, 1997 (distributed by Indonesia-L).

<sup>4</sup> National PPP leaders mostly disassociated themselves from it. On Moedrick's role (he had first risen to prominence during anti-*kuningisasi* demonstrations earlier in the year) see 'Kuningisasi itu Digugat Warga', *Forum Keadilan*, April 7, 1997, p. 28; 'Mega-Bintang di Lautan Hijau', *Gatra*, May 17, 1997, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> According to PRD members interviewed in July 1998, the organisation distributed 500 thousand '*Aliansi Mega-Bintang-Rakyat*' leaflets in Jakarta alone. For a contemporary source see 'Commentary by Peoples Democratic Party: Mega-Bintang-the People: A broad mass coalition against the Soeharto dictatorship', *Asiet internet news*, May 20, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> 'Spanduk Mega-Bintang Dilarang', *Suara Pembaruan*, May 13, 1997.

shopping centre fire.<sup>1</sup> During the final week of campaigning in Jakarta, several poor districts became sites of virtual *intifada* as local youths battled it out with security forces and pro-Golkar *preman*.<sup>2</sup> Highlighting the government's failure to maintain 'politics as normal', the final day of campaigning was cancelled in the capital.

As final confirmation of the growing disjuncture between the popular mood and official politics, the election produced a record Golkar victory of 74.5 %. This result was simply not credible to much of the public. Rather than adding to the government's legitimacy, the election result further undermined it.<sup>3</sup>

## **12. Conclusion**

The events between Megawati's ouster and the 1997 election indicated that Indonesia's experiment with liberalisation earlier in the decade had given way to the kind of accelerating spiral of repression and resistance common in regimes experiencing legitimacy crises. To be sure, organised opposition remained institutionally weak and divided and mass unrest was sporadic and uncoordinated. The regime had been able to assert effective control by mobilising the security apparatus. But it was becoming increasingly clear that this control rested upon the use of force, rather than the consent of important social and political groups. Sporadic urban

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<sup>1</sup> Other observers feared a much higher death toll, and there were rumours that many of those who perished had been shot by troops before the building was set ablaze: 'Teka-teki Banjarmasin', *Suara Independen*, May-June 1997.

<sup>2</sup> At least one young PPP supporter was shot dead. Violence during the campaign was often sparked by the actions of Golkar-affiliated toughs, who would beat PPP supporters, while security forces stood idly by, leading to stone-throwing: 'Aparat Berpihak, Massa Mega-Bintang Melawan, Istana Nyaris Diserbu', *Siar*, May 19, 1997. At other times, violence was sparked by perceived slights to Islam, as with the Banjarmasin riot, which was triggered when Golkar security guards tried to force their motorcycles through crowds attending Friday prayer.

<sup>3</sup> This was demonstrated by isolated outbreaks of violence during voting itself or when the election results were announced, most dramatically on the island of Madura where widespread rioting occurred on voting day, after it became known that PPP scrutineers at some polling booths were not provided with monitoring forms. In an unprecedented move, a re-vote took place at 65 booths, although the non-participation / invalid vote was 48% of registered voters: 'Sejumlah Rekor: Pesan dari Sampang', *Suara Independen*, May-June, 1997.

unrest seemed to presage a deterioration of the regime's much vaunted ability to maintain stability. The political base of the regime was also narrowing (despite Abdurrahman Wahid's late conversion), with the exclusion of such important semi-oppositional groups as Megawati's PDI, and signs of tension in ICMI. Increased reliance on repression and the closure of channels for formal participation made it increasingly likely that the eventual political transition would be initiated from outside the official political system. As LIPI researcher Mochtar Pabotinggi argued in an especially far-sighted magazine article in August 1996, 'closing the door for a healthy transition in power, produces a risk of a very drastic change.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pabotinggi, 1996, p. 93.



## Chapter Nine

### The Fall of Suharto.

If by the mid-1990s the government was increasingly unpopular on political grounds, it was still able to deliver improvements in living standards to much of the population. The cataclysmic economic collapse from late 1997 removed this prop of performance legitimacy from beneath the Suharto presidency and ultimately propelled a range of social and political forces into action.

However, the economic crisis led to Suharto's resignation largely by exposing in stark form the political problems which had accumulated over previous years. The particular pathway by which it matured into a political crisis was likewise shaped by the preceding evolution of the regime's internal features and its structuring of state-civil society relations.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present a detailed account of the economic collapse or the crucial events leading to President Suharto's resignation on May 21, 1998.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the aim is to analyse the roles played by various opposition forces. It is argued that the increasingly sultanistic character of the regime precluded resolution of the political crisis from within the ruling elite. In a pattern typical of regimes where the hard-line element is strong, the initiative passed to the most militant and easily mobilised sectors. Mobilisation by university students and rioting by the urban poor greatly raised the cost of governing and increased the bargaining power of elite opposition actors. This precipitated the fracturing of the ruling elite and the abandonment of Suharto by a substantial part of it.

#### **1. Suharto's *Fin-de-règne* Sultanism**

According to Chehabi and Linz, the ideal type of contemporary sultanistic regimes is characterised above all by the 'personal rulership' of a single leader. In such regimes, loyalty to the ruler is based on 'a mixture of fear and rewards to his collaborators', rather than ideology or charisma, and the ruler 'exercises his power without restraint.'<sup>2</sup> As a result, 'corruption reigns supreme at all levels of society', the leader makes repeated arbitrary decisions and the ruling circle is comprised chiefly of individuals who owe their positions to 'their purely personal submission to the ruler...'<sup>3</sup> A crucial feature is the ruler's dominance over the state apparatus by patronage mechanisms. As Snyder suggests: '[t]he central role of patronage in these regimes

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<sup>1</sup> Other works perform both functions. For the economic collapse see: Robison & Rosser, 1998; Hill, 1999; Sadli, 1999. For a more detailed account of the events leading to Suharto's resignation, see the articles in Aspinall, Feith & van Klinken, 1999 and Forrester & May 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Chehabi & Linz, 1998a, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p. 7.

create an authority structure that is radial in nature, with the dictator occupying a central hub that is linked via patronage spokes to clients both within the state and in civil society.<sup>1</sup>

Chehabi and Linz stress that no regime fits the ideal type perfectly, but that ‘[t]he concept of “sultanistic regime” is not a genetic but an evolutionary one, in the sense that most such regimes develop out of other forms of rule.’<sup>2</sup> In particular, they suggest, a process of ‘sultanisation’ may take place toward the end of a ruler’s term in office<sup>3</sup>:

One of the biggest problems facing any nondemocratic regime is succession, since very few have any fixed and accepted rules to regulate the passing of power from one ruler to another. Authoritarian leaders thus often stay in office well beyond the point where they can effectively exercise power. Within the regime the lack of a widely accepted successor can then lead to an inertia where all involved agree to postpone the inevitable as long as possible. At this point those who enjoy the closest personal access to the aging ruler, often family members, can wield great influence behind the scenes, since they are in a position to manipulate him in ways that further their own interests. One might call this phenomenon *fin-de-règne* sultanism.

From the 1970s Suharto’s primacy in the New Order had been widely acknowledged by his critics. His skills contributed substantially to the design and longevity of the New Order. Initially, however, there was also a strong pluralist element in the regime’s upper echelons, provided by the collective leadership of the senior army leadership and the input of senior technocrats and other civilian politicians.

But the above passage from Chehabi and Linz describes almost perfectly the final years of Suharto’s rule. As noted in previous chapters, Suharto was aging, increasingly remote from his subordinates and beyond challenge.<sup>4</sup> His declining political judgement and poor decisions have been viewed by many observers as principal causes for the undignified manner of his exit from power.<sup>5</sup>

By mid-1997 the New Order regime was deep into the transition to a more sultanistic form of rule. This was evident, firstly, in the government’s relations with societal forces. The attack on Megawati bore the typical sultanistic hallmarks of pursuit of the ruler’s personal power at the expense of the longer-term interests of the government, regime or state. There were many other examples. Although Suharto had occasionally publicly attacked his critics since the 1970s, in the final years his public outbursts became more frequent and emotional. There was increased

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<sup>1</sup> Snyder, 1998, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Chehabi & Linz, 1998a, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Chehabi & Linz, 1998b, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> According to one former Minister, Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, he ‘dropped his old habit of listening to people, and just ranted at them’: interview: October 19, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Schwarz, 1999, p. 311; The Editors (*Indonesia*), 1999, p. 138.

persecution of relatively minor figures who appeared to be singled out not for their actual political threat but because of the offence they caused the President.<sup>1</sup>

Internal sultanistic elements in the regime were most obvious in the role of the first family. As is well known, its members' business interests were promoted with increasing disregard for legal nicety or public sensitivity in the final years. Bizarre schemes were devised to increase the family fortune and the President increasingly openly intervened on his children's behalf.<sup>2</sup> Suharto's children also exercised growing political influence. Tutut played a prominent role in the 1997 Golkar election campaign, while she and Bambang had major influence on membership in the final Suharto-era DPR/MPR. From the mid-1990s it was openly speculated that Tutut was being groomed for the Vice-Presidency. Such developments were accompanied by an air of palace decadence. There was open feuding between the children, as in the undignified squabble over the (bogus) Busang gold deposits. Increasingly grotesque rumours circulated about family greed in business affairs, illicit personal relationships, involvement in the drug trade and the like.

Suharto's decisions also appeared increasingly unpredictable, and he showed a new propensity to dismiss senior officials at will, without much clear explanation.<sup>3</sup> The base of the regime continued to narrow, the upper levels of military and government increasingly resembling the 'personal staff' typical of Sultanism.

In the military, the purge of Moerdani-era officers was by 1997 essentially complete. Some of the Suharto loyalists who had dominated the military for the preceding five years were shifted

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<sup>1</sup> One example in mid-1997 was the disproportionate response to a book written by Soebadio Sastrosatomo (Sastrosatomo 1997), an aging critic of the President and former leader of the long-disbanded PSI. Although Soebadio included some very harsh criticisms of Suharto, he was a marginal figure, and his book was accessible to only a limited circle of highly committed activists. But the book apparently prompted the President's ire, Soebadio was accused of insulting the President, and considerable publicity was generated. An earlier example was the strangely written document *Prima Dosa* ('Prime Sin') by the eccentric Sukarnoist, Wimanjaya Liothe. This attacked Suharto for his alleged complicity in the September 30 movement and later massacres, and would not have attracted any public attention had Suharto himself not brought attention to it. He did so in early 1994, triggering something of a media sensation: '*Primadosa, Setelah Mencuat dari Tapos*', *DeTik*, February 2-8, 1994, p. 4-5. Wimanjaya, too, was arrested in late 1997 after announcing his 'Vice-Presidential candidacy.'

<sup>2</sup> Examples included the infamous national car project, whereby a raft of special tax and other concessions were granted to Suharto's youngest son, Tommy. Another scheme required elementary school children to buy shoes manufactured by the President's grandson, Ari Sigit: 'Ngaconya Ari Sigit: Gerilya Jual Sepatu', *Suara Independen*, September 1997, p. 29. Another example was Suharto's mid-1997 unprecedented rejection of a DPR bill on broadcasting which limited broadcasts by private television stations to only 50% of the nation's territory. Suharto's children owned two of the country's five private television stations, and had substantial holdings in two of the other three. See for example: 'Harto Batalan RUU Penyiaran', *Siar*, July 16, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Examples included the removal of Satrio Budiardjo ('Billy') Joedono in December 1995 as Trade minister, or, in the military, the removal of Wismoyo Arismunandar as Army Chief of Staff in 1995, and that of Soeyono as Chief of the General Staff in 1996. Chehabi & Linz (1998a, p. 12) suggest that even senior officials under sultanism 'enjoy little security: they are promoted and dismissed at will and enjoy no independent status.'

to executive and legislative positions. Syarwan Hamid became chief of the Fraksi-ABRI in the DPR/MPR in 1997, Hartono replaced Harmoko as Minister of Information.

In the serving officer corps, Presidential son-in-law, Prabowo Subianto, who was appointed Kostrad Commander in February 1998, was increasingly influential. Whatever secret ambitions he may have harboured, by nature of his family ties, his repressive reputation and his endeavours to cultivate a clientele among militant Muslim groups, he was the obvious leader of a palace guard in ABRI. Among his camp-followers were Majors General Zacky Anwar Makarim, head of BIA from August 1997, Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, who took over the crucial Jakarta Military Command, and Muchdi, Prabowo's successor as Kopassus commander. Together, Prabowo and his allies by early 1998 controlled much of the internal security apparatus and the chief strategic commands in and around Jakarta.<sup>1</sup>

This group continued to be balanced by that around Suharto's former adjutant General Wiranto, who became Army Chief of Staff in June 1997 and Armed Forces Commander in February 1998. He was surrounded by a coterie of officers, like Bambang Yudhoyono who became Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs in March 1998. As noted in the previous chapter, these officers were viewed with some hope by many secular intellectuals, and were distinguished from their chief rivals by their continuing adherence to ABRI's mainstream secular traditions and suspicion of political Islam.<sup>2</sup>

As we have seen in previous chapters, Suharto had prevented the emergence of any coherent soft-line, reform element in the regime, by purging Golkar, ABRI and state institutions since the early 1990s. In 1997 it appeared that the plan to broaden his support base via ICMI was also being seriously revised. Some 'ICMI reformers', especially Amien Rais, had become increasingly openly critical of aspects of government policy. The threat from the Moerdani group, which had partly accounted for Presidential backing for ICMI, had now largely passed. These factors, plus Suharto's reconciliation with Abdurrahman Wahid, made the conciliation of former modernist Islamic critics through ICMI less important, and they began to fare badly. The most dramatic incident was Amien's forced resignation from the ICMI Council of Experts, after he criticised policy (i.e. the President and his family) on the Freeport mine and the Busang scandal.<sup>3</sup> Suffering the fate of Wahono's group five years before, in 1997 ICMI also fared badly

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<sup>1</sup> The Editors (*Indonesia*), 1998, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, for example, Wiranto 'sent messages of sympathy' to Abdurrahman Wahid, assuring him that they had similar views on the relationship between religion and politics: Mietzner, 1999, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> See Basyaib & Ali-Fauzi, 1997. According to Amien Rais (interview, July 15 1998) President Suharto directly instructed Habibie to ensure Amien's removal. Habibie came to Amien and discussed his dilemma. Amien agreed to step down in order 'to save ICMI from an attack from Suharto.' At the same time, according to Amien, Suharto instructed Harmoko to initiate a campaign to unseat him from the leadership of Muhammadiyah, but these attempts failed because Amien had secured his base in the organisation.

in the allocation of Golkar seats in the DPR/MPR.<sup>1</sup> Parni Hadi was removed as chief editor of *Republika*, apparently because Suharto disapproved of its increasingly critical tone.<sup>2</sup>

If Suharto's direct intervention prevented any significant reform group emerging near the centre of the regime, the inertia produced by his dominance was transmitted down to the lowest levels of the state apparatus by the same patrimonial mechanisms which had previously contributed to the regime's stability, unity and effectiveness. Because even the lowliest bureaucrat was dependent for personal advancement on displaying loyalty to their immediate superiors/patrons, who were in turn under the same pressure from above, there was a tremendous in-built inflexibility in the system. An editorial in a controversial issue of the magazine *Detektif dan Romantika* (controversial primarily because its cover featured a picture of President Suharto rendered as the King of Spades) thus argued during the March 1998 MPR general session that exaggerated vigilance against even minor political challenges in 1997-98 was because officials feared losing their economic privileges if they alienated the President:

Isn't that fear [that Golkar votes would decline in the 1997 election or that there would be an 'interruption' during the MPR session] really fear of the highest leader of [Golkar], namely the Chairperson of the Board of Patrons [Suharto]. . . they are afraid of losing the benefits which they have obtained up to now. . . This reminds us of a saying which perhaps sounds like a classic, if not a cliché: in America people first become rich and then engage in politics, while in Indonesia people engage in politics in order to seek (and maintain) riches.<sup>3</sup>

Even so, the ruling elite was not blind to the looming political crisis. On the contrary, even many senior officials privately believed that Suharto's increasingly erratic style was endangering, not only a stable political transition, but also rational policy formulation and the mundane business of government.<sup>4</sup> Some began to make concrete preparations for the post-Suharto era. For example, a team of intellectuals around Habibie began to draft various blueprints for political and economic reform.<sup>5</sup> According to Honna, some serving ABRI officers also had growing concern about Suharto's erratic rule, clumsy political management by the senior military leadership and the implications of both for the military's long-term institutional

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<sup>1</sup> Among those who were allegedly removed as MPR candidates on Suharto's insistence were Adi Sasono and Dawan Rahardjo: *Suara Merdeka*, August 10, 1997; *Suara Pembaruan*, August 12, 1997. According to ICMI intellectual, Tamsil Linrung, ICMI activists felt very gloomy about Habibie's prospects at this stage: interview, July 10, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> 'Pak Harto gusar: Parni Hadi dicopot', *Siar*, June 6, 1997; 'Pelajaran dari Parni', *Suara Independen*, September 1997, p. 13. There were also rumours that General Secretary Adi Sasono would shortly be sidelined: 'Soal Isu Didubaskan Adi Sasono: Saya di Sini Sampai Tahun 2000', *Republika*, September 14, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> 'Presiden', *Detektif dan Romantika*, March 7, 1998, p. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> For example, former Environment Minister Sarwono Kusumaatmadja said that he finally lost faith in Suharto when, amidst the calamitous forest-fires of 1997 he approached the President for assistance, only to find Suharto entirely uninterested in the subject: interview, October 19, 1998. As a Cabinet Minister, however, Sarwono continued to be most circumspect in his public comments, counselling against radical reform: 'Reformasi Politik Harus Dilakukan Secara Hati-hati', *Kompas*, December 31, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> John McBeth & Michael Vatikiotis, 'Behind the man', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 25, 1998, p. 24-25.

role.<sup>1</sup> Some officers, especially those associated with the Wiranto-Yudhoyono group, made speeches which raised the prospect of reform, albeit in extremely vague terms, once the President left his post.<sup>2</sup> There were thus many groups in the ruling elite who were privately disillusioned and ready to take advantage of the eventual collapse of the Suharto presidency. As we shall see, their role was crucial to the final unfolding of the crisis.

However, while political conditions remained 'normal' and Suharto's power preponderant, such groups were unable to take independent initiative. Even as the economic crisis deepened in early 1998, no significant individual in the government's inner circle, let alone any group or faction, had sufficient courage to, say, urge the President to prepare for succession or propose meaningful political reform. It remained the role of far more marginal players to do such things. To the extent that factionalism persisted in the upper levels of the regime, it thus remained a struggle to gain Presidential backing. Most were still mesmerised by Suharto's reputation and believed that he would always be able to outwit challenges. Others believed that it was futile to spark conflict before he passed from the scene. The key was to be positioned to take advantage of the eventual vacuum.

### 1.1 Implications for Regime Change

The sultanistic evolution of the regime in its later years had important consequences for the manner of its eventual demise. Perceptions of palace venality greatly undermined regime legitimacy and fuelled the explosiveness of the transition.<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, the regime's identification with, and domination by, Suharto's personal interests largely ruled out a negotiated or gradual solution to the final crisis.

As Synder argues of many sultanistic regimes, '[w]hen state institutions are thoroughly penetrated by the dictator's patronage network, the political space for the emergence of regime soft-liners is minimal, and the ruling clique and the state are essentially fused into a unitary, hard-line actor.'<sup>4</sup> In such cases, the dictator is generally unable to separate his long-term interests from those of the state or regime and is thus unwilling to cede power. His dominance

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, Honna suggests, as well as the hardline Feisal-Hartono leadership, it was possible to discern 'moderate' and even 'progressive' positions on political reform in writings in internal military journals and papers written by officers, although these were expressed in muted form: Honna, 1999, p. 113-20.

<sup>2</sup> For an example, see Yudhoyono, 1996. This is a speech made by Yudhoyono in late 1996, where he concedes that greater demands for democratisation will be a major challenge faced by Indonesia. But he puts this in equivocal language and makes clear he is talking about a challenge which will be faced 'entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'.

<sup>3</sup> This is a common feature in transitions from sultanistic regimes, although it was perhaps exacerbated by particular aspects of Javanese/Indonesian political culture, notably the injunction against open pursuit of *pamrih* (translated by Anderson as 'concealed personal motive'). According to Anderson (1972, p. 51) '... the *pamrih* of the administrator or the military man is really a threat to his own ultimate interests, since the indulgence of personal, and therefore partial, passions or prejudices means interior imbalance and a diffusion of personal concentration and Power.'

<sup>4</sup> Synder, 1998, p. 53.

also prevents the emergence of soft-liners with sufficient authority to initiate regime decompression or meaningfully negotiate with opposition forces. Even otherwise moderate opponents thus see little alternative to overthrowing the government. For this reason, most sultanistic regimes ‘end in a more or less chaotic way.’<sup>1</sup> Thompson<sup>2</sup>, for example, argues of the Philippines:

. . . Marcos had to be brought down because he would never step down. Marcos clung to power because the personal character of his rule meant that he had no outside interests that could be retained if he relinquished authority. . . Marcos had neither an institutional base nor extensive popular support. He, his family, and his friends *were* the regime. . . His personalism ruled out an authoritarian-initiated transition, making his overthrow necessary if democratization was to take place.

Indonesia was in a transition toward a sultanistic regime-type and this transitional state had some important consequences. There were significant pockets of relative autonomy in the state apparatus (especially in the army). As we shall see, this allowed for important sections of the ruling elite to defect from Suharto in the final days. Democratic opposition forces also remained stamped by the previous experiences of semi-opposition, more resembling the disunited, hesitant, and organisationally weak array of forces associated with authoritarian semi-pluralism, rather than the determined, underground and maximalist opposition which often emerges under sultanistic regimes proper.

But, as in the Philippines, Suharto’s dominance of the state apparatus prevented a regime-initiated transition. The reimposition of Suharto’s control in the ruling elite, especially the army, over the previous decade had prevented the gradual evolution of a significant soft-line element. In the end, there was thus little alternative to society-initiated regime change.

## **2. The Economic Crisis and its Impact**

There has been much debate concerning the causes of the financial crisis which swept through much of East Asia from mid-1997.<sup>3</sup> Although it impossible to address these perspectives in detail, an element of ‘financial panic’ or ‘contagion’ was clearly involved. The July 1997 collapse of the Thai currency caused rapid reassessment of risk by lenders and investors

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<sup>1</sup> Chehabi & Linz, 1998b, p. 37. Indeed, ‘sultanistic regimes are more vulnerable to revolutionary overthrow than liberal democracies or inclusionary authoritarian regimes’: *ibid*, p. 41, Goodwin & Skocpol, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, 1995, p. ix-x.

<sup>3</sup> In the neoliberal view, associated with the IMF and World Bank, the crisis was ultimately due to the market distortions inherent in the so-called ‘Asian model’ of state-led economic development. Academic critics have suggested that the crisis was essentially a financial panic exacerbated by under-regulation of financial sectors and capital flows, as well as by the IMF’s own contractionary policies. For one early critique of the neoliberal position see Wade, 1998.

throughout the region.<sup>1</sup> Pressure on the Indonesian rupiah began almost immediately, because it was widely recognised that Indonesia's economy resembled Thailand's in certain respects, including high corporate foreign debt and under-regulation of the financial sector.<sup>2</sup> It was also widely understood that there was greater economic distortion in the Indonesian economy due to corruption than in other East Asian economies. Private banks, in particular, became milch cows for their owners and politically well-connected borrowers, leading to a ballooning of bad loans.

Put another way, the severity of Indonesia's crisis was due to a conflict between its increasingly 'rational', globalised and liberal economy and its ossified political structure. In the end, the patrimonial framework for organising the polity and domestic economy proved unable to withstand the market scrutiny and vulnerability to capital flows associated with integration into the world economy.

Conflict between the market imperative and political structure became very clear after Indonesia requested IMF assistance in early October 1997. In the words of Robison and Rosser, 'it soon became clear that the *quid pro quo* for IMF assistance would be a series of neoliberal reforms which would strike at the heart of the politico-business and conglomerate power...'<sup>3</sup> Business interests associated with the first family were targeted in the IMF rescue package announced on October 31. Sixteen banks, including several owned by Suharto family members or associates, were closed by Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad.<sup>4</sup>

The family immediately mounted a counter-offensive. Numerous decisions were made which went against the spirit, if not the letter, of the IMF agreement. The bank closures triggered an extraordinary outburst by Suharto's son, Bambang Trihadmodjo, whose Bank Andromeda was amongst those affected. He railed that the closures were a 'political movement 'aimed at ensuring 'Father is not elected again as President', and threatened to 'confront whoever is behind Pak Mar'ie.'<sup>5</sup> In late 1997 it became increasingly evident that Suharto's children were exercising growing influence on economic policy and appointments of chief economic bureaucrats.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> McLeod (1998, p. 336) is careful to note, however, that such panic was not 'irrational.' Once the currency began to fall in a country with high level of private foreign debt, it is obvious that economic players will attempt to minimise their exposure by rapidly selling the local currency.

<sup>2</sup> Schwarz, 1999, p. 317. Hill (1999, p. 61-67), however, is cautious on this score, noting that the level of non-performing loans was lower than in Thailand. He thus concludes that although Indonesia's 'under-regulated and over-guaranteed' financial sector did contribute to the crisis, it was a 'contributing variable, rather than the key explanator.'

<sup>3</sup> Robison & Rosser, 1998, p. 1600.

<sup>4</sup> Garra, 1998, p. 144.

<sup>5</sup> 'Likuidasi, Rekayasa Politik', *Detektif dan Romantika*, November 15, 1997, p. 16-18. He threatened court action, but later withdrew the threat, and eventually reopened his bank under a new name.

<sup>6</sup> For example, it soon became clear that Mar'ie would not be reinstated as Finance Minister: 'Perseteruan Bambang Tri-Mar'ie', *Xpos*, January 10-16, 1998 (email version) Tommy Suharto also criticised tight monetary policy: 'Tommy Soeharto: Perlu Reformasi Kebijakan Moneter', *Suara Pembaruan*, December 18, 1997. A clearer example came in early 1998 when Suharto developed enthusiasm for a Currency Board system for fixing the exchange rate, after his children introduced him to Harvard economist Stephen Hanke: Schwarz, 1999, p. 344.



The crisis was also increasingly tied to uncertainty about succession. In Thailand and South Korea, governments held responsible for financial collapse were replaced in late 1997, leading to partial recoveries in confidence. In contrast, in Indonesia increasingly fevered rumours circulated concerning Suharto's worsening health and mental acuity. In early December it was announced that the President needed a ten-day rest, and a scheduled visit to Iran was cancelled.<sup>1</sup> Several days later, rumours that he had suffered a stroke or even died triggered an 11% plunge in the rupiah in a single day's trading.<sup>2</sup> Prabowo's brother, businessman Hasjim Djojohadikusumo, next denied that the army was planning a coup and several senior officers followed suit.<sup>3</sup> From this point the rumour mills, amplified and accelerated by electronic communication, became increasingly frenzied.

The final collapse of the economy occurred in January 1998. In the week after Suharto's January 6 announcement of the budget, the rupiah dropped through the 10,000 to the dollar mark.<sup>4</sup> The government was again forced to call in the IMF and on January 15 President Suharto signed a more stringent deal, with IMF director Michel Camdessus looking on with arms folded. Even so, amid reports that massive private loan defaults were imminent and that Habibie would become Vice-President, the rupiah plunged once more, on January 22 touching 17 thousand to the dollar, one seventh of its pre-crisis value.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, in the first weeks of 1998, the full effects of the crisis began to hit home on both the middle classes and the poor. Bankruptcies spread through the economy, consumer goods prices rose rapidly and unemployment soared.<sup>6</sup> The most severely affected sectors were precisely the modern industrial and services sectors which had been the driving force of the export-led boom from the mid-1980s.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This announcement was made after the President had completed a 12 day overseas trip: 'Mensesneg Moerdiono: Presiden Perlu Istirahat Penuh,' *Kompas*, December 6, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> 'Suharto's health rumour puts rupiah in free fall,' *South China Morning Post*, December 10, 1997. Although a television appearance by the President temporarily allayed fears, an announcement that he was canceling a planned trip to Malaysia caused the rupiah to plunge to another record low of 5225 to the dollar: 'Indonesia's Succession Issue Spurs Economic Uncertainty,' *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Harsono, 'Jakarta in grip of coup rumors,' *The Nation*, December 18, 1997; 'Rumors of a coup attempt baseless: Edi,' *Jakarta Post*, December 18, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> For a useful summary of the crisis to this point see John McBeth, 'Ground Zero,' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 22, 1998, p. 14-17.

<sup>5</sup> Even so, there were soon more signs of stonewalling in the reform program, with indications that monopolies on cloves (Tommy Suharto) and plywood (Presidential favourite Bob Hassan), were being resurrected in new form: Richard Borsuk, 'Indonesia hints different system could replace clove Monopoly,' *Wall Street Journal*, February 24, 1998; Greg Earl, 'Soeharto cronies get feet back in door,' *Australian Financial Review*, February 26, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> By the end of December 1997, there were already reports that one million workers had been dismissed. 'Sejuta Pekerja di-PHK,' *Kompas*, December 30, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> It is thus perhaps not surprising that the middle class economists, intellectuals and professionals, who had prospered and become the ideologues of the liberalised, modern, 'rational' sector should blame the crisis on the 'irrational', backward and corrupt political framework.

The initial societal response was muted. The urban working class was greatly constrained by the job losses and through 1998 it played little role as an organised political force.<sup>1</sup> The first middle class reaction was panic, evidenced by an early January rush on supermarkets in Jakarta and other towns. In contrast, the urban poor seemed restive, and from early in the crisis Indonesia was swept by increasingly apocalyptic predictions of violence focusing on this group. In January and February there was a spate of riots targeting ethnic Chinese shopkeepers in several towns, mostly along Java's northern coast.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.1 The Political Response

Suharto responded to the crisis with the tactical instincts of the military man, albeit an increasingly erratic one. Faced with an economy in free fall, he gave tactical concessions to the markets by agreeing to the demands of the IMF. At the political level he moved to shore up his base.

In the second half of 1997 Suharto went through the familiar ritual of claiming that he would be willing to step down if 'the people' no longer supported him.<sup>3</sup> However, Golkar Chairperson Harmoko insisted that the organisation would renominate Suharto, and ABRI and the two minor parties followed suit.<sup>4</sup>

In late 1997 there was some uncertainty about Suharto's choice of Vice-President, with a muted proxy competition conducted through the press.<sup>5</sup> Initially, it appeared that Habibie's star was waning, not least because of his reputation for fiscal irresponsibility.<sup>6</sup> However, presumably in order to pre-empt a repeat of 1993, Suharto indicated a full two months before the MPR session that Habibie was his preferred candidate. ABRI, still led by Habibie ally Feisal Tanjung, fell in line.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Aspinall, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Some were also at least partly directed against the military and police. See for example 'Kerusuhan Anti-Aparat Terjadi Empat Kali Dalam Seminggu', *Siar*, January 9, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> In an October speech he indicated that he would be prepared to step aside and become a *pendito* (sage): 'Soal Sukses: Saya Anut Falsafah Pewayangan', *Media Indonesia*, October 20, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Jenny Grant, 'Golkar backs Suharto for new term', *South China Morning Post*, August 27, 1997; 'ABRI Juga Dukung Pak Harto', *Kompas*, September 2, 1997; 'PPP dan PDI Dukung Kesediaan Pak Harto', *Media Indonesia*, January 21, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> This was sharpened after Deputy Governor of Lemhanas (National Resilience Institute) Juwono Sudarsono suggested that civilians were not yet ready to lead the country. Among those who reacted negatively to the statement were Vice-Presidential contenders Ginandjar Kartasasimata (who although having a military background, had seen most of his service in the civilian bureaucracy) and Habibie: see for example 'Saya Tak Percaya Sipil Tak Mampu', *Suara Merdeka*, September 11, 1997; 'Habibie Bantah Argumentasi Juwono Sudarsono', *Siar*, September 10, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Crouch, 1998. At this point (mid-January, 1998) Crouch argues that Habibie, 'an early civilian frontrunner' had lost ground: 'At a time when the IMF is demanding huge cutbacks in expenditure, Habibie's appointment would send the wrong signals and could even endanger the IMF bailout.' News of Habibie's candidacy did indeed worsen the economic crisis.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Walters, 'Jakarta military anoints Habibie', *The Australian*, February 19, 1998.

From late 1997, a particularly repressive security atmosphere prevailed. Public officials from the President down warned that ‘small’, ‘certain’, ‘radical’ or ‘impatient’ groups were attempting to utilise the monetary crisis to bring down the government.<sup>1</sup> As the MPR session approached, warnings became increasingly explicit, as when Feisal Tanjung warned in early January that ABRI would deal with ‘whoever was anti-government.’<sup>2</sup> Through January-February, in Jakarta and other cities, virtually every anti-government street demonstration, no matter how tiny, was broken up and their participants arrested. The press was warned, anti-government groups raided, even critical economists were called to BIA.<sup>3</sup> From early February, Kopassus troops under the command of Prabowo conducted a campaign of disappearances targeted especially at the PRD and activists from some other small pro-democracy groups.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, elements from the military establishment and Suharto himself made ill-disguised attempts to fan anti-Chinese sentiment. Suharto and various ‘green’ officers blamed price rises and scarcities on ‘speculators’ and ‘hoarders’ and talked of conspiracies to undermine the rupiah.<sup>5</sup> Prabowo, and the Islamic groups around him, were the most obvious source of this campaign.<sup>6</sup> It was widely rumoured he was behind the anti-Chinese riots in January-February.<sup>7</sup> The most ambitious plan was an attempt to implicate Sofyan Wanandi of CSIS and, by implication, Benny Moerdani, in a PRD bomb-plot.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, government and ABRI leaders continued to state that they did support ‘change’, even sometimes ‘renewal’ (*pembaruan*) or ‘reform’ (*reformasi*). The crucial ideological ground that things could not remain the same had been conceded. But because Suharto gave no signal of interest, official pronouncements on reform remained vague. Their

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the security officials were a little more specific, with the target of choice usually still the PRD: ‘Pangdam Jaya: Ada Kelompok Yang Memperbesar Kekeruhan’, *Suara Pembaruan*, January 11, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> ‘ABRI Antisipasi Situasi Darurat: Pengacau akan Dibabat’, *Media Indonesia*, January 6, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> See for example ‘Gelombang Penangkapan Aktivistis Pro-Demokrasi Makin Tinggi’, *AJI News*, February 15, 1998; *Arrests of Activists in Connection with the March 1998 Presidential Election*, Amnesty International, February 25 1998 (distributed by Kabar dari Pijar). Those targeted were the boldest elements of the alegal opposition which had emerged over the preceding five years, and which attempted to organise some public anti-government activities in late 1997 and early 1998. They included Yayasan Pijar, Aldera, PUDI, SBSI and AJI.

<sup>4</sup> See Eklöf, 1999, p. 165-70.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, ‘Yunus Yosfiah: ABRI Melihat Kemungkinan Konspirasi Politik di Balik Krisis Rupiah’, *Republika*, January 26, 1998. Wiranto, in contrast, warned against those who sought to manipulate inter-ethnic and religious tensions: ‘KSAD: Isu Itu Sampah’, *Jawa Pos*, February 10, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> See Schwarz, 1999, p. 345-8; Mietzner, 1999, p.72-73; Sidel, 1998, p. 180-185; Eklöf, 1999, p. 134-147; Human Rights Watch Asia, 1998b.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Schwarz, 1999, p. 345; Jenny Grant, ‘Rioters Paid to Initiate Anti-Chinese Violence, Police Say’, *South China Morning Post*, February 18, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> On January 18 a bomb exploded in an apartment in Central Jakarta. Military investigators claimed to find documents in the apartment outlining a bombing campaign against shopping malls and similar targets, and suggesting that Sofyan Wanandi and Benny Moerdani were behind a plan to topple the government: Eklöf, 1999, p. 134-5; Mietzner, 1999, p. 72, Human Rights Watch, 1998b. While the vastly different political outlooks of the PRD and the Wanandi brothers made such a political alliance an impossibility, the conspiracy had an attractive logic for those who sought to construct an authoritarian military – Islamic alliance. It enabled the democratic opposition to be simultaneously equated with the bogeymen of leftism, the Chinese, Catholicism and Moerdani.

main theme was instead that change had to be ‘gradual’, ‘constitutional’ and via the ‘existing system.’ Indeed, the insistence on ‘gradual reform’ became a means to threaten those who wanted more rapid political change.<sup>1</sup>

### **3. The Stirring of Opposition**

Despite its evolution in an increasingly sultanistic direction, the regime retained a considerable element of pluralism, with a broad spectrum of semi and alegal opposition scattered through various institutions. Unlike more clearly sultanistic regimes, like Somoza’s Nicaragua or the Shah’s Iran, revolutionary groups could thus not assert hegemonic influence over anti-government activity (although it is possible that groups like the PRD would have become increasingly influential had the stalemate continued). Instead, from late 1997 there was a rising tide of criticism from diverse sources.

Some of this followed a familiar pattern. For example, YKPK apparently still had hopes to position Vice-President Try Sutrisno for succession. In a petition in late December 1997 its leaders called on the MPR, in almost effusively polite terms, not to re-nominate Suharto for the Presidency.<sup>2</sup> Bambang Triantoro told the press that Suharto’s most appropriate replacement was Try Sutrisno.<sup>3</sup> However, if Suharto was re-elected, then Try should retain the Vice Presidency.<sup>4</sup> Figures like Minister Siswono, and some Golkar KINO, also made half-hearted attempts to promote Sutrisno’s Vice Presidential candidacy.<sup>5</sup> But the tightening of loyalist domination prevented a repeat of 1993. After Suharto’s preference for Habibie became clear, and with Harmoko and Syarwan Hamid in charge of Golkar and Fraksi-ABRI, there was little choice but to accede, and Sutrisno himself announced that he was not prepared to be re-nominated.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Lieutenant General Yunus Yosfiah, speaking at a seminar in January said that the term ‘*reformasi politik*’ should be replaced with *pembangunan politik*, or ‘political development.’ This was because the first term ‘does not depict positive thinking [by suggesting] as though at this moment we do not have a suitable political format.’ ABRI certainly rejected ‘total’ reform, he went on, because that would lead to a fate like that experienced by the Soviet Union: ‘ABRI Dukung Reformasi Gradual’, *Kompas*, January 27, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> They called on the MPR not to ‘sacrifice [Suharto] by again forcing him to shoulder’ [the Presidency], because he ‘has struggled and served in a range of tasks continually for over 50 years, his age is advanced, he has various health impediments, and because he is longed for by his closest family.’ See ‘MPR Jangan Paksa Pak Harto’, *Inti Jaya*, January 9-13, 1998, p. 12 for the full text. The group did not criticise Suharto for the economic crisis, or for anything else, and suggested that the MPR take his suggestions into account as to who would be an appropriate successor. In January YKPK leaders presented their views before PPP and Golkar legislators: ‘YKPK: Jangan Paksa Presiden Soeharto’, *Kompas*, January 8, 1998; ‘Calon dari Para Mantan’, *Gatra*, January 24, 1998, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> This was because he was ‘the Vice President and is also close to Pak Harto, is clean and is an experienced statesman’: ‘Ketua Umum YKPK Bambang Triantoro: Jika Bukan Pak Harto Ya Pak Try...’, *Suara Merdeka*, January 15, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> By this stage, however, YKPK was very isolated. Some YKPK members seemed to recognise this when they criticised the statement, arguing that it would alienate Try from Suharto, by suggesting that he ‘desired to become President’: *Suara Merdeka*, January 19, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See for example ‘SOKSI to propose Reelection of Soeharto, Try Sutrisno’, *Antara*, November 21, 1997, ‘Siswono: Pak Try Layak Dicalonkan’, *Jawa Pos*, February 11, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> For an indication of the limited political horizons of the Moerdani-group in the military, see the interview with Harsudiono Hartas, ‘Perlu Reformasi Total Tetapi Secara Bertahap’, *Tempo Interaktif*,

There were also increasingly strident calls for change from the expected range of alegal and proto-opposition groups. The Petition of Fifty called for Suharto to be replaced and Forum Demokrasi advocated rapid political reform.<sup>1</sup> NGOs intruded directly on the political arena like never before. For example, in January, LBH released a list naming 13 officials whom it considered ‘oppose human rights.’<sup>2</sup> LBH and other human rights NGOs called for a special session of the MPR to hold Suharto accountable for the economic collapse and remove him from power.<sup>3</sup> Numerous academics, especially economists, also ridiculed government attempts to resolve the economic crisis and called for political reform.<sup>4</sup> In January, 19 political researchers from the National Institute of Sciences, LIPI, called for the election of a new president.<sup>5</sup>

One illustration of the kind of initiatives taken by middle class critics in early 1998 was *Suara Ibu Peduli* (Voice of the Concerned Mothers). This was formed by a group of UI women academics and activists from major women’s NGOs and feminist groups. In February, defying the ban on street protests, several of its members demonstrated in central Jakarta against price rises, especially of powdered milk. The heavy-handed response by the security forces, plus the nature of the issue involved (which members described as involving ‘relegitimation of motherhood’) gained extensive media coverage and greatly dramatised the repressive climate.<sup>6</sup>

Some criticism came from sources closer to the ruling elite. For example, former Finance Minister (and Prabowo’s father) Soemitro Djojohadikusomo, condemned the ‘institutional disease’ of ‘excessive protection, bribery, monopolies, collusion and corruption’ in the

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January 24, 1998. Among other things, Hartas still argued against deregulation of the party system, because a multi-party system would lead to ‘ineffectiveness’; the addition of one party alone would be sufficient for the ‘long term’.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Dissident Group Opposes Suharto’s Re-election’, AP-Dow Jones, December 16, 1997; Forum Demokrasi, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Grant, ‘13 leaders who ‘oppose human rights’ named’, *South China Morning Post*, January 6, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Petisi Ornop/LSM Indonesia untuk Penyelesaian Krisis Ekonomi Secara Konstitusional’ (dated January 21, 1998, distributed by *Kabar dari Pijar*). Those which endorsed the petition included LBH, PBHI, INFID, YLKI and KIPP. A few weeks earlier, INFID had released a statement calling for urgent political reform, including review of the five political laws: Panitia Pengarah INFID Indonesia, ‘Neraca Akhir Tahun: ‘Pembaharuan Jangan Ditunda’’ (dated December 29, 1997, distributed by *Kabar dari Pijar*).

<sup>4</sup> See for example ‘Wawancara Feisal Basri: ‘Buat Rakyat, Deregulasi Kemarin Belum Cukup’, *Tempo Interaktif*, November 8-12, 1997. It is remarkable that there was very little criticism of the IMF and its policies in most of the press or middle class opposition. Instead, most middle class critics viewed the IMF reforms as a way to enforce greater transparency, openness and deregulation on the Suharto oligarchy’s stranglehold on the economy. See for example comments from Amien Rais in *Suara Pembaruan*, April 19, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Sikap Lain dari LIPI’, *Gatra*, February 7, 1998, p. 68. Alumni associations at important institutions like ITB did the same. ‘Alumni ITB Tegaskan Tolak Soeharto’, *Kabar dari Pijar*, February 10, 1998. Academics from CSIS also joined the barrage of criticism, though not so forcefully: ‘Experts join call for greater govt transparency’, *Jakarta Post*, December 23, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, Gadis Arivia, July 20, 1998.

economic system.<sup>1</sup> Some major entrepreneurs became outspoken, significant given the importance of political connections for business success.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, in an important indication of what was to come, from late 1997 there were student protests in several towns.<sup>3</sup> Well-publicised polls of student opinion on several campuses found that most students rejected Suharto's reappointment.<sup>4</sup> Established student-based groups like Yayasan Pijar and the Cipayung organisations held demonstrations or released statements calling for a new President.<sup>5</sup> Although still underground, the PRD also sought ways to sharpen anti-regime sentiment, both on campus and by other initiatives.<sup>6</sup>

As the oppositional mood spread during early 1998, many looked to two figures for leadership: Megawati Soekarnoputri and Amien Rais.

### 3.1 Megawati and the PDI

It had required great expenditure of energy and political resources for Megawati to survive thus far with her party's organisational structure partly intact and its mass base almost entirely so. In late 1997 Megawati and fellow party leaders thus remained mostly focused on internal party matters.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sumber Krisis itu Bernama Penyakit Instiusional', *Detektif dan Romantika*, January 17, 1998, p. 28-9. When asked if there needed to be a change in national leadership, he replied that, 'as a father', he would not answer. Former technocrat cabinet minister Mohammad Sadli called for the replacement of the government: Raju Gopalakrishnan, 'More calls for Indonesia's Suharto to step down', *Reuters*, January 9, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Among the first to speak out was, not surprisingly, Sofyan Wanandi. See for example 'Dr Hartoyo Wignowijoto: Tak Perlu IMF, Cukup dari Kantong Soeharto', *Kabar dari Pijar*, January 9, 1998, which reports on a meeting held by the Catholic student organisation, PMKRI, where Sofyan Wanandi challenged students to repeat the feats of the 1966 generation. Around the same time, prominent indigeneous businessman Arifin Panigoro was accused of taking part in a 'subversive' meeting with Amien Rais: *Detektif dan Romantika* March 28, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> These included Yogyakarta, Semarang, Ujung Pandang, Palu, Manado, and Surabaya. See for example 'Unjuk Rasa Mahasiswa Marak', *Inti Jaya*, December 17-18, 1997, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> 'Yang Muda Tolak Jago Tua Golkar', *Xpos*, January 3-9, 1998; 'Mereka Ingin Menjaring Suara', *Detektif dan Romantika*, February 21, 1998, p. 26-7.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, 'Demo Pijar Tuntut Presiden Baru', *Kabar dari Pijar*, January 9, 1999. Pijar put forward a 'Tritura 1998': Reduce prices, stabilise the Rupiah; restructure cabinet; a new president.

<sup>6</sup> In 1997, the organisation attempted to break out of its political isolation by initiating a group called *Dewan Penyelamat Kedaulatan Rakyat* (DPKR, Council for Saving People's Sovereignty). But it was unable to involve many from beyond its own ranks, except for some of the more radical Sukarnoist elements, such as those from the GRM or the informal protest networks which had evolved in 1996. Many PRD activists were also relocated to urban slums in Jakarta after the May 1997 general elections: Lane, 1999, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> In particular, much energy was devoted to the large number of legal suits demanding annulment of formal recognition for Soerjadi's leadership. By the end of 1997, however, the party was beginning to reach the end of the litigation road. The courts had refused to hear 58 of 62 suits: 'Analisa Hukum dan Demokrasi 1997 TPDI', *Inti Jaya*, January 7-8, 1998, p. 11. A case brought by 98 victims of the July 27 violence was also thrown out of court: 'Massa Mega Marah, Hakim Kabur', *Inti Jaya*, December 17-18, 1997, p. 11. Megawati herself maintained a busy schedule, visiting branches throughout the country, often despite attempts by local authorities to prevent her: see for example 'Megawati Soekarnoputri: Nabi Muhammad SAW Membawa Perubahan', *Inti Jaya*, January 7-8, 1998, p. 12.

As the economic crisis deepened, Megawati almost reluctantly turned her attention to the broader canvas. In several speeches between late December 1997 and February 1998, she said she was breaking her ‘long silence.’<sup>1</sup> Although still using the familiar Pancasila terminology, she criticised the government very directly, blaming it for the economic crisis. ‘Arrogance of power,’ ‘rampant greed in the life of the political and economic rulers’ and ‘lack of transparency and the murder of democracy’ were all responsible. She called for those responsible to be tried. In January, for the first time, she announced that she was willing to serve as President.

Her criticisms focused directly on the President, also for the first time. She condemned the ‘cult of the individual’, which meant that ‘all aspects of national and state life have become very unhealthy because they are very dependent on the person of President Suharto.’<sup>2</sup> Evoking his role in deposing her father, she argued that Suharto should not become de-facto ‘President for life.’<sup>3</sup> She also reminded her audience that people who had believed her father was indispensable were proved wrong and that he had ‘willingly and sincerely let go of all his positions and sacrificed all that he owned in order to fulfill the demands of the time.’<sup>4</sup>

However, there was some division within the PDI about how to develop a Presidential campaign in conditions where Megawati and her party were separated from the appropriate constitutional instruments. Some, especially Megawati’s husband Taufik Kiemas urged caution, while others like Haryanto Taslam, favoured greater mobilisation.<sup>5</sup> ‘*Posko gotong-royong*’ (‘*gotong royong* coordination posts’), small shacks draped with PDI symbols, were established in urban areas to dramatise the party’s mass support and act as grassroots coordinating centres. Party branches around the country held public meetings supporting Megawati’s candidature. Several alegal opposition groups with tenuous links to the party also demonstrated, endeavouring to stiffen her resolve.<sup>6</sup> Briefly, in-mid February it appeared that the chief

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<sup>1</sup> There were three important statements. The first was an ‘end of year’ message delivered in late December (Soekarnoputri, 1997, also reported substantially in ‘Megawati Soekarnoputri: Hanya Satu Jalan, Perubahan dan Perbaikan’, *Inti Jaya*, December 26-30, 1997, p. 11). Next was a January 10 speech before a large gathering of her supporters at her home to mark the anniversary of the PDI (Soekarnoputri, 1998b). The third was a speech given to her supporters at her home in early February in a post-*lebaran* function (Soekarnoputri, 1998a).

<sup>2</sup> Soekarnoputri, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Give him time to rest, give him also time to live again as one of the ordinary people. Because I am fully convinced that he does not wish himself to become President for life, even though he is always re-elected every five years. I state and am convinced of this fact, based on his own attitude when he did not want the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Bung Karno, to be appointed President for life. As an officer with a noble spirit, he will certainly not do something which he once opposed and made taboo’: Soekarnoputri, 1998b.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* In February, she also called for an investigation into a recent report in *Forbes* magazine that put Suharto’s private wealth at \$US 16 billion: Soekarnoputri, 1998a.

<sup>5</sup> Even before Megawati’s declaration there had been many small demonstrations around the country supporting her candidacy. See for example ‘Aksi Pendukung Mega Pekalongan’, *Inti Jaya*, December 17-18, 1997, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> These included the Bandung-Jakarta based group Aldera, which, it will be remembered, had demonstrated in early 1993 to pressure the PDI to keep campaign promises to nominate an alternative

challenge on the streets might come from the PDI, when several hundred people linked to the party protested in the capital, calling for punishment for corrupt officials and businesspeople responsible for the crisis.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, hard-line elements in ABRI around Prabowo viewed the PDI as a threat, reflected in the March abduction by Kopassus of Haryanto Taslam.<sup>2</sup>

However, beyond stating her readiness to take power, Megawati did little to promote her cause. Although she continued to criticise the government in her regular addresses to supporters, she did not attempt to mobilise them. This was partly because she still wished to give the impression that she would only become President as an expression of popular will. As party leader Kwik Kian Gie put it, Megawati had declared her willingness to stand for the Presidency, it was now up to ‘society’: ‘Mega herself will not take any action whatsoever.’<sup>3</sup>

Megawati’s passivity also reflected her continuing stress on constitutional propriety. From the start Megawati’s challenge had depended on her party’s ability to maintain its foothold within the electoral system. Now that it was excluded, all she was willing to contemplate was moral pressure on the government. By reiterating calls for the constitutionally mandated authorities to resolve the crisis, Megawati had become something of a dissident, making moral appeals to those in power.<sup>4</sup> Her unwillingness to mobilise her mass base and reluctance to intervene in wider politics meant that she was largely isolated from political developments in the final months of Suharto’s reign.

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President: ‘Aldera bertemu Mega’, *Kabar dari Pijar*, January 14, 1999. Another group was SIAGA (*Solidaritas Indonesia untuk Amien – Mega*, Indonesian Solidarity for Amien-Mega), which was led by playwright Ratna Sarumpaet. As well as demonstrating in her (and Amien’s) favour, SIAGA also formally made various suggestions to Megawati and Amien, for example urging them to form a united front of all pro-democracy groups: SIAGA, ‘Usulan Untuk Amien Rais dan Megawati’, January 1998 (distributed by *Kabar dari Pijar*). According to media reports, Megawati was very curt when receiving them at her home: ‘Megawati: Wajar Pak Harto Bersedia Dipilih Kembali’, *Kompas*, January 24, 1998.

<sup>1</sup> Those who held this action were a group called the ‘Ranks of the Red and White’ (*Barisan Merah-Putih*) which was led primarily by local Jakarta PDI leaders. 146 were arrested: ‘Barisan Merah-Putih Dipukuli dan Dibubarkan Aparat dengan Kekerasan’, *Siar*, February 11, 1998, ‘146 orang diamankan: Aksi Unjuk Rasa Merebak Lagi’, *Inti Jaya*, February 13-17, 1998, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Haryanto Taslam remained in incommunicado detention between March 2 and April 17.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Sebuah Langkah Mundur’, *Tiras*, January 26, 1998, p. 90-91; p. 91. Elsewhere, he specifically ruled out street demonstrations: *Kompas*, January 13, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> For example, in February she called on members of the legislature to hold the government to account for the economic crisis: Soekarnoputri, 1998a. In the same speech, she also appealed to the military, asking whether they still abided by their commitment to support ‘purification of the implementation of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila’, as in 1966, when they ‘so tenaciously supported the movement for renewal...’



### 3.2 The Challenge from Amien Rais

From late 1997, in contrast, Amien Rais developed a profile as *the* chief opposition figure.<sup>1</sup> Although forced from the ICMI leadership, he maintained tremendous authority as Muhammadiyah chairperson. At a seminar at LBH in September he accepted a challenge by the ‘paranormal’ Permadi to accept ‘Presidential nomination’. Although he stated he had no illusions he could become President, he also suggested that his ‘candidacy’ had symbolic and educative importance.<sup>2</sup>

In a series of press interviews Amien carefully acknowledged Suharto’s years of service to the nation, but called on him to stand aside and to initiate a negotiated transition, making way for ‘some form of collective leadership.’<sup>3</sup> The core of Amien’s message was thus not dissimilar to his own earlier intervention, and those made by figures like General Soemitro.<sup>4</sup> Its tone was far more urgent, however. In his comments directed at the President he now used words like *seharusnya* (should) and *harus* (must). In November, he accused Suharto of running a ‘one man show’ and suggested that his children should be ‘included in the category of those who commit economic crimes.’<sup>5</sup> In a January interview with an underground magazine, he said Suharto’s leadership had ‘produced social, political and economic diseases which now appear quite chronic, indeed have already become a terminal cancer.’<sup>6</sup> He also began to appear at large mass meetings attended by students or Muhammadiyah members.<sup>7</sup>

Amien Rais now depicted Suharto’s continued hold on the Presidency as the root of Indonesia’s problems, in terms identical to those used by Forum Demokrasi intellectuals half a decade earlier:

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<sup>1</sup> From 1997, there was a veritable Amien Rais publishing boom. Several books contain collections of press interviews and articles by and about him during 1997-98. For some of the most useful, see Basyaib & Ali-Fauzi, 1997; Hasyim, Alwustho & Effendi, 1997; Najib, Supan & Sukardiyono, 1998; and Najib & Sukardiyono, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> *Detektif dan Romantika*, October 4, 1997, p. 90; *Forum Keadilan*, October 20, 1997, p. 84

<sup>3</sup> ‘Pimpinan Golkar yang Ngotot Mempertahankan Pak Harto’, *Detektif dan Romantika*, November 29, 1997, p. 63-66; at p. 66. See also, for example: ‘Amien Rais: ‘Apakah Habibie itu *Well Qualified?* Jawaban Saya, Yes.’, *Forum Keadilan*, October 20, 1997, p. 80-84; at p. 82; ‘Krisis ini Sudah di Ambang Batas’, *Suara Independen*, Vol. 1V, No. 1, January 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Ironically, Soemitro was now suggesting that Indonesia needed Suharto’s reappointment, because only someone with his qualities of calmness and firmness could deal with the economic crisis. Suharto would then be able to hand over to his Vice-President some years down the track: ‘Kita Harus Dari Nol Lagi’, *Gatra*, January 3, 1998, p. 34-5. This was also favoured by Rudini: ‘Kalau Kekalutan Ini Makin Parah, Bisa Saja Muncul Pahlawan Lagi’, *Forum Keadilan*, January 26, 1998, p. 94-98.

<sup>5</sup> *Detektif dan Romantika*, November 29, 1997, p. 65, 66.

<sup>6</sup> He called on the MPR to replace the President with a presidium which would include figures like himself and Megawati, as well as military, bureaucratic, business and other figures: ‘Krisis in Sudah di Ambang Batas’, *Suara Independen*, No. 1, vol. 1V, January 1998. (email version: KdP net); ‘Crisis a time bomb for govt, Amien says’, *Jakarta Post*, January 15, 1998; ‘Amien Rais: Sekarang Legitimasi Pemerintah Sudah Rendah’, *Forum Keadilan*, January 26, 1998, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> One such gathering in Yogyakarta on February 15 was attended by tens of thousands: ‘Tabligh Akbar Muhammadiyah: Sepuluh Harapan pada Pemerintah dan Rakyat’, *Kompas*, February 16, 1998.

My thesis is simple: it is not possible for us to hope for a change in the style of leadership, state management, central or regional government administration, if there is no replacement of the president. So, it's not possible to change the system without changing the president. As I have repeatedly said, it's precisely the 'person' (*sang figur*) who influences the system. And the 'person' perpetuates the system to maintain the *status quo* for all time. It is an illusion if people hope that, with his advanced age, Pak Harto can carry out fundamental or drastic reform.<sup>1</sup>

He also attempted to develop a more inclusive nationalist image, appearing with prominent non-Muslims and downplaying earlier statements which might alienate non-Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Most important, however, was that Amien's challenge drove a wedge into the nexus between the President and the modernist Muslim community which had developed over the last decade.<sup>3</sup>

As in the past, the centrepiece of Amien's appeal was for a negotiated transition. In particular, he insisted that ABRI would have to be a crucial player in any political settlement, calling for a 'grand and clean coalition' between military officers, technocrats, 'technologists', businesspeople, intellectuals, religious leaders, politicians, bureaucrats, managers, and community/NGO activists.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Dr Amien Rais: Tak Mungkin Mengganti Sistem tanpa Mengganti Figur', *Forum Keadilan*, January 12, 1999, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 68; 'Uskup-Amien Rais menjalin kerja sama pemberdayaan rakyat', *Suara Pembaruan*, February 20, 1998. His appeal was directly aimed at the educated middle class: 'Amien Rais: Rakyat Terdidik Harus Selamatkan Indonesia', *Kompas*, February 10, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Margot Cohen, 'Daring to say No', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 8, 1998, p. 18 on the enthusiastic gathering of Muslim intellectuals and leaders when the magazine *Ummat* conferred on Amien the title of 'man of the year' for 1997.

<sup>4</sup> 'Tabligh Akbar Muhammadiyah: Sepuluh Harapan pada Pemerintah dan Rakyat', *Kompas*, February 16, 1998. By the term 'technologists' (*teknolog*) Amien was referring to the 'engineers' and other supporters of a state-supported leap into advanced technology who congregated around Minister Habibie (in contrast to the more economically liberal 'technocrats'). See also 'Crisis a time bomb for govt, Amien says', *Jakarta Post*, January 15, 1998. Amien was only one of many prominent government critics advocating military cooperation in a regime transition. This was also, for example, a very prominent theme in public statements by noted academic Arief Budiman. See for example 'Wawancara Arief Budiman: Koalisi Sipil-Militer untuk Kepemimpinan Politik' ['A Civilian-Military Coalition for Political Leadership'], *Tempo Interaktif*, January 2-10, 1998.

### 3.3 Opposition at an Impasse: January-February 1998

Sultanisation of the regime, economic catastrophe and the succession crisis created convergence in opposition aims. Reformers had held different positions on the ‘Suharto question’ in the past. By early 1998, however, it seemed obvious that Suharto’s removal was necessary for regime change and to overcome the economic crisis.<sup>1</sup>

However, although political tensions were building and oppositional sentiment was widespread, organised opposition remained weak in certain crucial respects. There was no vehicle which could present itself as a ‘viable alternative’ to authoritarian rule by uniting a broad spectrum of opposition actors on an explicit democratic platform. A wide range of semi, alegal and proto-opposition groups existed, but, as argued in previous chapters, these typically had a wide range of interests which weighed more heavily on them than the struggle for democratisation per se. The dispersed and largely unorganised character which had helped protect critics in the past, now greatly undermined their bargaining power. Dissident-style criticisms and appeals to those in power continued to erode regime legitimacy, but were unable to precipitate major concessions. In short, opposition continued to be marked by the structural weaknesses and ineffectiveness associated with New Order semi-pluralism and semi-freedom. Some kind of initiative was needed to break the political impasse.

One such step was taken by ICMI Secretary-General Adi Sasono who in early January proposed a ‘national dialogue’ between government and military figures, ICMI-aligned modernist Muslims like Amien Rais, and other ‘critical figures’ like Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati. Sasono depicted this a means to open negotiation on the economic crisis, Presidential succession and a new political format, a way to ‘reduce the level of radicalisation in society and prevent the possible occurrence of social upheaval.’<sup>2</sup> Although Sasono was attempting to play an intermediary role between government and opposition, he was too marginal a figure in the ruling elite to be able to initiate a negotiated regime-transition.<sup>3</sup> Government and military leaders were mostly dismissive of his initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Amien Rais’s attacks on Suharto were one early indication of this, given the preceding tactical alliance between much of modernist Islam and the palace.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Adi Sasono: Sudah Waktunya Dengarkan Pendapat Tokoh-tokoh Kritis’, *Kompas*, January 5, 1998. See also ‘Adi Sasono: Dialog Lebih baik daripada Aksi Radikal’, *Forum Keadilan*, January 26, 1998, p. 19. In this interview Sasono also calls (though using less direct language than Amien Rais) for Presidential succession.

<sup>3</sup> During the early months of 1998, CIDES organised many seminars and other functions which brought together critical figures like Amien Rais, Kwik Kian Gie, and Ali Sadikin with government and military officials. Although their impact was not great, these functions did serve as an opportunity for communication between government and opposition figures, and hence presumably reduced some tension in the transition. See for example: ‘Amien: Habibie Sudah Dipingit. Gagal Dipertemukan dengan Emil di Utah CIDES’, *Jawa Pos*, February 24, 1998.

However, the initiative also had potential to create greater unity in opposition ranks. Amien Rais promoted it as a means to find a common platform to unite himself, Megawati and Wahid, the three leaders with the largest mass followings.<sup>1</sup> As Mietzner notes, such an alliance between traditionalist and modernist Muslims, plus Sukarnoists, would have constituted a significant threat to Suharto.<sup>2</sup>

However, even as a means of uniting opposition, the 'national dialogue' eventually proved abortive. In part, this was because of Suharto's unexpected designation of Habibie as his preferred running mate, which 'split the Habibie group from the potential coalition'.<sup>3</sup> Before this, Abdurrahman Wahid had effectively dismissed the proposal, saying that the government, especially President Suharto, saw no need for dialogue, so there was no point. A mass-based political alliance between himself, Megawati and Amien, would trigger an authoritarian backlash: 'ABRI and all social-political organisations which support the government will unite and confront such an alliance.' It was best to be patient, avoid alliance building, and wait for the government to initiate dialogue.<sup>4</sup>

Wahid soon had a stroke, which put him out of action for much of the coming crisis. Mietzner argues that with Wahid incapacitated several groups strove for influence in NU.<sup>5</sup> A group around Secretary General Ahmad Bagja, and youth organisations like PMII attempted to play an anti-Suharto role.<sup>6</sup> However, overall the accommodationist position was dominant, symbolised by a February leadership statement that NU would support whoever the MPR appointed President. Overall, Mietzner argues, NU's role was 'reactive, if not passive' and characterised by a desire 'not to ruin relations with the New Order government.'<sup>7</sup>

In the weeks before the MPR session, there was another significant initiative, this time from a figure who had once been even closer to the centre of power. Former technocrat and Environment Minister Emil Salim was approached by NGO contacts, who wanted to him to run

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<sup>1</sup> 'Amien Rais siap Bergandengan dengan Gus Dur dan Megawati', *Kompas*, January 7, 1998. Amien, of course, also supported dialogue with the government.

<sup>2</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 71. In mid-January, a much publicised meeting between Amien and Megawati, along with other elite dissidents did take place: 'Amien Rais dan Megawati Bertemu', *Kompas*, January 16, 1998. Amien's participation in this meeting was criticised even by his allies from Muhammadiyah, like vice-chairperson Syafii Ma'arif: 'Impian Amien dan Mega', *Gatra*, January 24, 1998, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 70. Mietzner suggests that Sasono 'called off his planned national dialogue on Habibie's instructions.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Gus Dur Tolak Ajakan Amien Rais Bentuk Kelmopok', *Media Indonesia*, January 8, 1998; 'Gus Dur: Pemerintah Belum Merasa Perlu Berdialog dengan Masyarakat', *Kompas*, January 9, 1998; 'Koalisi Moralitas Gus Dur, Amien Rais dan Megawati sangat positif', *Suara Pembaruan*, January 10, 1998 (in which he suggests initiating such an alliance would be like 'waking a sleeping tiger'); 'Gus Dur Skeptis Dengan Gagasan Dialog Nasional', *Kompas*, January 19, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Mietzner, 1998, p. 189-91.

<sup>6</sup> Wahid ally Matori Abdul Djalil, for example, was among those who presented the YKPK view on the Presidency to the MPR. The West Java branch of the organisation also nominated Edi Sudradjat as Vice President, earning Wahid's criticism: 'Gus Dur Bilang, Kebablasan', *Gatra*, November 8, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Mietzner, 1998, p. 198. NU ulama also supported the government's efforts to overcome the financial crisis by donating gold to the state: 'Ulama Serahkan Emas ke Presiden', *Jawa Pos*, January 19, 1998.

for the Presidency.<sup>1</sup> He viewed this as too confrontational, but on February 11 launched a Vice-Presidential campaign, with a declaration signed by 128 academics, NGO activists, former technocrats and retired civil servants, who labelled themselves ‘*Gema Madani*’, or ‘Echo of Civil Society.’<sup>2</sup>

This challenge came from the heartland of the technocratic-intellectual-middle class milieu which had been one early social foundation of the New Order, and demonstrated the hunger for alternative leadership in middle class circles.<sup>3</sup> However, his caution meant that it was no more than a moral and symbolic challenge. His supporters ‘saw with horror how in one public meeting after another, Emil was sidelined by his unwillingness to speak out.’<sup>4</sup> He refused to criticise the President directly, and begged his supporters not to act ‘outside the system’.<sup>5</sup>

The failure of Sasono’s ‘national dialogue’ indicated that elite opposition capacities were still greatly weakened by disunity. There were personal dimensions to the distrust between Amien Rais, on the one hand, and Wahid and Megawati on the other, although it also reflected deep suspicions dividing modernist Islam from Islamic traditionalists and nationalists. However, elite opposition’s inability to cohere into a united front also reflected the persistence of the semi-oppositional pattern, and President Suharto’s continued ability to split the coalition of interests against him by offering some measure of participation within the system. The bait of a Habibie Vice-Presidency (hence succession) was still enough to bring those modernist Muslim most committed to ICMI into the fold. The earlier challenge from NU under Wahid had been neutralised by the promise of cooperation at the grassroots.

The criticisms made by Amien, Megawati, NGOs, and other elite opposition actors had contributed greatly to undermining the legitimacy of Suharto’s rule. However, in making the transition toward what Stepan describes as the next major functions of democratic opposition – raising the costs of authoritarian rule and presenting a viable alternative – they faced very real dilemmas.<sup>6</sup> They lacked access to the constitutional instruments for bringing about change, but knew that a more confrontational approach involving mobilisation of their followers could

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> See for example ‘Emil Salim Semarakkan Bursa Calon Wapres’, *Suara Pembaruan*, February 12, 1998. Among those who signed the initial petition were INFID leader Asmara Nababan, Zumrotin K. S. and Tini Hadad both of the Consumers’ Foundation, YLKI, prominent economist Faisal Basri, psychologist and doyen of women’s studies Saporinah Sadli, former technocrat ministers, Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, Sadli and Subroto, former Bank of Indonesia Governor Arifin M. Siregar, widows of former Vice-Presidents, Nelly Adam Malik and Rahmi Hatta, former PSI figures like Rosihan Anwar and prominent Islamic intellectual Nurcholish Madjid: *Gema Madani petition to the MPR*, dated February 14, 1998 (distributed by *Kabar dari Pijar*). Minister Sarwono praised Emil highly, though he denied he was a ‘supporter’: *Kompas Online*, February 19, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Within weeks, 10 thousand signatures were collected on a petition. Emil’s supporters promoted his candidacy in a large part on the basis that was a ‘person who is clean of all forms of collusion, corruption and nepotism’: ‘1.500 Tokoh Dukung Emil Salim’, *Suara Pembaruan*, February 20, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Harrison, 1999, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> See for example ‘Emil Salim: Jangan Dukung Saya kalau di Luar Sistem’, *Suara Merdeka*, February 22, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Stepan, 1993, p. 65-67.

invite repression. They also genuinely feared that chaos might ensue if they mobilised their supporters, and that this might play into the hands of hard-liners. At the same time Suharto still enjoyed a near-mythical reputation as a political tactician. Many had written him off too soon in the early 1990s. There was thus also a question of deeply ingrained habit. Figures like Salim, Wahid and even Amien were used to operating within the parameters of semi-opposition, focused on incremental gains and speaking the language of euphemistic criticism.<sup>1</sup>

As the MPR session neared and it looked as if the familiar political rituals would be played out, a mood of despondency began to effect many in elite opposition circles.<sup>2</sup> There was a wide understanding that the long-awaited ‘momentum’ might be arriving. But there was also acute awareness that opposition lacked the institutional channels or mass strength for a meaningful challenge. Even Amien Rais, as Mietzner notes, seemed to lack confidence and considerably softened his stance.<sup>3</sup> He called on his followers not to demonstrate and disassociated himself from those who wanted to ‘disrupt’ the MPR.<sup>4</sup> He told supporters that he had met Habibie who had explained that the President was working ‘all out’ to resolve the economic crisis. He called on his followers to give the President a last chance and pray for him.<sup>5</sup> If after six to twelve months the new cabinet did not overcome the economic crisis, he told the foreign press, he would lead a ‘people power’ movement.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4. The Turning Point: the MPR Session and the New Cabinet**

The MPR session in March was the ‘smoothest’ in New Order history. Within the assembly, there was no meaningful dissent against Suharto’s re-election. In his accountability speech Suharto calmly listed the ‘successes’ of government development programs, barely mentioning

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<sup>1</sup> A striking example of this was the air of reluctance in many of the discussions by Amien Rais and Megawati concerning Presidential succession. Amien, for example, said it was ‘unthinkable’ that he could become President, and suggested that regime figures like Habibie, Hartono, Ginandjar and others were well-qualified for the job: *Forum Keadilan*, October 20, 1997, p. 84. Megawati likewise announced her willingness to be nominated with characteristic indirectness, stating that she would do so only if several officials she named did not have the boldness to nominate themselves: Soekarnoputri, 1998b.

<sup>2</sup> For an insight into the mood of despondency in opposition circles at this time, see Harrison, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Amien Rais: Orang Bisa Saja Mengeksploitasi Nama Saya’, *Republika*, February 8, 1998; ‘Amien: Saya Tak Akan Mundur’, *Suara Merdeka*, February 12, 1998; ‘Pangdam Dukung Imbauan Amien Rais’, *Jawa Pos*, February 20, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> He denied, however, that he had made any ‘commitments’ with Habibie: ‘Sikap Amien Rais Setelah Bertemu dengan Habibie’, *Jawa Pos*, February 11, 1998; ‘Beri Pak Harto Kesempatan Lagi’, *Jawa Pos*, February 19, 1999. It is worth remembering that Amien Rais had long maintained good personal relations with Habibie, viewing him as a person of considerable integrity: interview with Amien Rais, July 15, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Peter Hartcher, ‘Islam puts Soeharto on notice’, *Australian Financial Review*, February 23, 1998. He was more vague to the domestic press, saying only that a ‘political explosion’ might occur: ‘Amien Rais: Ledakan Politik Bisa Terjadi Jika Krisis Moneter Tak Dapat Diatasi’, *Suara Pembaruan*, February 27, 1998.

the economic crisis.<sup>1</sup> His unanimous reappointment, even if it papered over serious reservations then developing, nevertheless illustrated his extraordinary dominance of the political elite.

As final confirmation of the degree to which the regime was turning in on itself, the cabinet formed immediately after the MPR session had the narrowest representation of elite opinion yet under the New Order. Suharto excluded ministers from the preceding cabinet who were most respected in middle class circles (for example Mar'ie Muhammad and Sarwono Kusumaatmadja) and kept those most tainted by corruption scandals (for example Haryanto Dhanutirto and Abdul Latief). His daughter, Tutut, became Minister of Social Affairs. Several family favourites were given posts, most extraordinarily, long-time Suharto crony and timber tycoon Mohammad 'Bob' Hassan.<sup>2</sup>

By encapsulating Suharto's rejection of political reform, the cabinet caused further alienation. Economists and figures like Amien Rais publicly ridiculed its members' capacity to deal with the economic crisis. It also deepened divisions in the ruling elite. For example, the absence of ICMI reformers meant that 'Soeharto lost ICMI's support in the crucial phase of the crisis'.<sup>3</sup>

## **5. The Student Uprising**

Suharto's recalcitrance, and his dominance over the ruling elite, set Indonesia on the path of society-initiated regime change. However, the continuing weaknesses of elite semi, alegal and proto-opposition discussed above meant that the initiative passed to societal groups which were better able, and more inclined toward, mobilisation. In particular, student protests played a crucial role in galvanising wider forces to act.

It is often suggested that students are more liable to play an influential political role in societies undergoing rapid social change where politics are relatively uninstitutionalised.<sup>4</sup> The inability of political institutions to oversee a political transition was the crux of the 1998 crisis. In such circumstances, students' susceptibility to opposition politics – their relative independence from obligations of employment and family life, access to critical thinking and so forth – enabled them to play a role disproportionate to their numbers. Moreover, as we have seen, student activism had developed a substantial organisational and philosophical base during the 1990s. Although a truly mass student movement had not emerged, groups and modes of action which were born during this period had critical input into the upheaval of 1998.

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<sup>1</sup> The only real concession made to the crisis was the revival of an old law which authorised the president to enact virtually any emergency measure he saw fit.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Jenkins, 1999b. There were some exceptions, for example the new Justice Minister, Muladi, a former member of Komnas HAM was something of a reformer and promised review of the subversion law: 'UU Antisubversi akan Disempurnakan,' *Republika*, March 30, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 74. In one respect, the cabinet still represented an attempt to win Islamic support: all but one of its members were Muslims, the narrowest religious spread in any post-independence cabinet.

<sup>4</sup> Emmerson, 1968b, p. 413-4; Altbach, 1989, p. 13.

The historical legacy was also important. Students were raised in a political environment where it was deemed entirely natural that they could 'save' the nation during crisis. From late 1997, numerous commentators bemoaned the lack of student reaction to the economic and political crisis.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the 'legacy' of 1966 had sometimes previously been viewed as an obstacle by more radical student activists, it was of obvious importance through 1998, with many student activists speaking in terms of fulfilling their historic 'duty.'<sup>2</sup>

A final important factor was students' social location at the point where the middle class had expanded and consolidated. The 1980s-90s university boom had been essential for the expansion of the middle class. The numerous smaller, less prestigious private institutions had provided unprecedented access into the ranks of the elite for the children of ambitious lowly public servants, rich peasants and small traders. Tertiary education had very important social meaning for this transitional layer.<sup>3</sup> For the more prosperous, quality tertiary education was transformed from a recognised privilege into something taken for granted, a natural *accoutrement* of the middle class lifestyle.

If the relative quiescence on campuses in the 1980s and early 1990s reflected the government's success in providing continuing economic growth, the economic collapse destroyed the foundations of this stability. Students' living expenses soared, as did the prices of books, paper and other study requirements. Many began to receive greatly reduced allowances from home, for some they stopped altogether. By September 1998, the government was reporting that 300-400 thousand students nationally were unable to pay their fees.<sup>4</sup>

This crisis impacted particularly on the first generation of the university educated, threatening the inter-generational consolidation of the middle class. But it also rocked even more comfortable students' expectations. Following the pattern set since the late 1980s, the most radical activism was centred mostly in smaller provincial campuses which attracted more lower

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<sup>1</sup> See for example 'Depolitisasi Mahasiswa Selama 30 Tahun Berhasil', *Kompas*, January 14, 1998. In early February, even Megawati, presumably not without some bitter irony made an appeal for a resumption of the kind of student movement which in 1966 had led to the overthrow of her father: Soekarnoputri, 1998a. She also took the opportunity to harshly criticise those former activists who had accused her father's administration of corruption in 1966 but were silent amidst the current crisis because they had become corrupted by riches or positions.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the year student protests deliberately echoed (often with a twist) the symbolism of the 1966 generation, as in the many attempts to put forward new *Tritura* (the 'Three People's Demands' of 1966). Key nationalist milestones which had involved students as central players, like the formation of Budi Utomo on May 20 1908, or the Youth Pledge of October 28 1928, were likewise commemorated by demonstrations.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson (1977, p. 17), for example, argues that the proliferation of universities in Thailand in the 1960s served as 'a kind of symbolic confirmation that the boom was not fortune but progress, and that its blessings would be transmitted to the next generation within the family.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Ratusan Ribu Mahasiswa Terancam Putus Kuliah', *Republika*, September 1, 1998; 'Dulu Primadona, Kini Sepi Mahasiswa', *Detektif dan Romantika*, October 3, 1998, p. 37.



status, upwardly mobile students. However, the 1998 movement mobilised students from the full spectrum, including many from the large elite campuses of Jakarta.

### 5.1 Student Protest: February-May 1998

The 1998 student movement was detonated by several protests at the Depok and then Salemba campuses of University of Indonesia (UI) between February 19 and 26, a few days before the MPR session began. Given UI's decisive role in 1966, these protests attracted considerable press coverage and almost immediately triggered a rush of demonstrations around the country (indicating the extent to which functioning activist networks were already established).<sup>1</sup>

These first demonstrations typically called for reduction in prices of basic commodities and the rejection of *korupsi*, *kolusi* and *nepotisme*, and *reformasi* in all spheres. Many protests also rejected Suharto's reappointment as President: a sentiment expressed most vividly by the burning of an effigy of the President at a demonstration at Yogyakarta's Gadjah Mada University.<sup>2</sup>

After the MPR session, the wave of demonstrations accelerated. By late March it was already being called the largest student movement in Indonesian history,<sup>3</sup> eventually reaching remote centres like Jayapura in Irian Jaya and Kupang in West Timor. In many places students began to try to take their protests outside of campus grounds, often resulting in violent confrontations.<sup>4</sup> By April 24, Medan students were throwing molotov cocktails at security forces.<sup>5</sup> In all, between March 11 and May 2 there were violent clashes between students and security forces in at least 14 different towns in Java, Sumatra, Bali and Lombok.<sup>6</sup>

From the start, the government failed to present an effective united front to the students. Some officials, particularly those in the new cabinet, attempted to maintain a hard line. Education and Culture Minister Wiranto Arismunandar called on University rectors to enforce the ban on

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<sup>1</sup> Until the end of the MPR session on March 11 large protests occurred on major campuses in Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Semarang, Bandung, Solo, Malang, Manado, Ujungpandang, Denpasar and Padang, even spreading to smaller regional centres like Kudus and Purwokerto: *Kompas*, February 20, 1998; *Gatra*, March 7, 1998, p. 34. These demonstrations often involved very large numbers of students: some reports suggested 30 thousand students mobilised at UGM on March 11: 'Bila Mahasiswa Peka Lingkungan', *Detektif dan Romantika* March 14, 1998, p. 26-7. This article, also 'Demo Marak Kampus Bergerak', *Forum Keadilan*, March 23, 1998, p. 18-20, provide useful summaries of the first weeks of student campaigning.

<sup>2</sup> 'Patung Soeharto Dibakar di Yogyakarta', *AJI News*, March 12, 1998 (distributed by *Kabar dari Pijar*)

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, 'Aksi Mahasiswa '98', *Detektif dan Romantika*, March 28, 1998, p. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Among the most serious of the early clashes were those in Solo on March 17 and Lampung two days later, when students threw stones at security forces who attempted to prevent them leaving campus: Human Rights Watch, 1998a; 'Perang Batu di dua kota', *Gatra*, April 4, 1998, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> 'Potret Gerakan Berwarna-warni', *Detektif dan Romantika*, April 11, 1998, p. 66-7.

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch: 1998a, p. 102-17. McRae (1998, p. 226-31) lists 48 separate violent clashes between March 11 and May 4.

‘practical politics’ on campuses.<sup>1</sup> Kopassus operatives under Prabowo conducted a campaign of disappearances against the most radical student elements. Wiranto and most senior officers, however, responded more gingerly and refrained from all-out repression. They also rarely condemned the students outright, instead typically welcoming their protests as ‘positive contributions,’ warning them against ‘manipulation’ by radical forces and suggesting more ‘constructive’ means of conveying their views.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Wiranto insisted that protestors should not leave campuses. When they tried to do so, troops used all means at their disposal short of live ammunition – including tear gas, beatings, rubber bullets, even throwing rocks – to prevent them.

As an alternative, Wiranto proposed dialogue between students, ABRI and government leaders. In the 1970s such dialogues broke down in acrimony when students read out their demands or walked out. In 1998 the proposals did not get even this far. Most students believed they were an attempt to side-track their movement, and that these officers would be unable to offer significant reform while Suharto remained in office.<sup>3</sup> The first attempt at dialogue, in early April, failed altogether because the students who were invited refused to attend. The most radical simply rejected outright the idea of dialogue with what they considered to be an illegitimate government, while others insisted that they would only meet with Suharto. The meeting which finally occurred on April 18 was boycotted by leaders from the most important campuses.<sup>4</sup>

## 5.2 Student Groups

The student movement of 1998 was not homogeneous. Its rapid, mushrooming growth necessarily gave it a high degree of fluidity and spontaneity. Students with widely differing political views and backgrounds often came together on the streets and in activist groups. Nevertheless, to a large extent it remained stamped by the divisions which had marked student activism through the preceding decade, and it is possible to identify three main classes of organisations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Kegiatan Politik Dilarang di Kampus’, *Kompas*, April 5, 1998. The Minister had previously earned a reputation for harshness as rector of Bandung Institute of Technology, suspending and expelling students accused of political activism.

<sup>2</sup> See for example ‘Pangab: Dialog dengan Mahasiswa Harus Jalan’, *Jawa Pos*, April 10, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> After all, even the most reformist ABRI officers could not offer much than very vague promises that the students’ ideas (indeed, only the ‘positive’ ones) would be taken into account. As Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Bambang Yudhoyono put it, ABRI’s aim was to seek a ‘vehicle’ through which the aspirations developing on campus could be ‘structured and communicated in an orderly fashion via appropriate mechanisms and using appropriate etiquette. In this way, such ideas, if indeed positive, logical, and realistic can become input into the process of decision-making and policy formulation.’ He added that it was the role of ABRI participants in dialogues to rebutt ‘unrealistic’ demands: ‘Letjen TNI SB Yudhoyono, Kassospol ABRI Dialog untuk Proses Komunikasi Politik’, *Republika*, March 30, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley, 1998; Eklöf, 1999, p. 163-64.

<sup>5</sup> Even so, it is important to bear in mind while reading the following discussion that such a categorisation involves an inevitable degree of simplification and that there was often considerable overlap between the three classes of organisation. My thanks to Dave McRae for emphasising this point.

### 5.2.1 Militant Activist Coalitions

The activist groups which dominated student protest politics in the early 1990s were described in chapter six as ‘liberal-populists’ and ‘popular-radicals.’ By the mid-1990s they had established a new ethos of militant anti-authoritarianism and anti-militarism, street protest, commitment to political democratisation and, at least in the case of popular-radical students, mobilisation of the poor. In early 1998 many groups within these two traditions already existed on many campuses. Their members were experienced at producing and disseminating propaganda, organising networks and holding demonstrations. As protest spread, similar groups sprang up on more campuses and many ad hoc city-wide networks were formed. For example, the activist coalition responsible for many of the largest mobilisations in Jakarta and its surrounds was *Komunitas Mahasiswa Se-Jabotabek* (All-Jabotabek Student Community), more commonly known as *Forum Kota* (City Forum, Forkot), which by May 2 claimed support on 46 campuses.<sup>1</sup> This was a heterogeneous, loosely organised body which united students from a wide range of backgrounds, including the militant radicals, activists from new campus action groups, and many with Cipayung Group backgrounds (especially from PMKRI, GMNI, PMII and GMKI, which, as explained in previous chapters, developed an increasingly anti-government outlook over the 1990s). Such activist networks existed in all the major towns and initiated many of the first protests of 1998, especially those which pushed outside campus grounds and made more confrontational demands.<sup>2</sup>

The most militant wing of the activist-based groups remained based around the PRD. Although this organisation remained small, it had maintained surprisingly intact underground networks. During 1998, a sizeable part of the student movement in several towns was directly or indirectly linked to the PRD.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Komunitas Mahasiswa Se-Jabotabek, 1998a. Jabotabek was the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasi urban area.

<sup>2</sup> For a survey of some of the more radical activist groups, see ‘Membangun Basis Perjuangan Rakyat’, *Detektif dan Romantika*, May 2, 1998, p. 69-70. McRae (1998) and Widjojo & Nurhasim (1999) also present very informative cases studies of groups in various towns.

<sup>3</sup> This network was particularly visible in Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, Purwokerto, Lampung, Manado, Palu, Medan, Bogor, Surabaya, Malang as well as in Jakarta.

### 5.2.2 Student Senates and Other Representative Bodies

During the repressive political conditions before 1998, only the most committed activists engaged in public anti-regime activities. This imparted to student protest a radical flavour which did not reflect the spread of opinion in the entire student population. During the generalised upsurge in 1998, many students who held moderate political views became politically active. The student senates and other elected bodies which were formally recognised by campus authorities, and long criticised by more radical students, became increasingly active in anti-regime activities.

Although, in the words of UI Senate leader Rama Pratama, the senates tended to be ‘more bureaucratic and slower’ than less formal groups, once they moved into action they were ‘more legitimate’ because they were based on clear representative mechanisms.<sup>1</sup> They thus assisted the student protest movement spread nationally and acquire a mass character.<sup>2</sup> Although Student Senates tended not to organise the very first protests, they became more important after March, with senates on virtually all the major campuses organising protest seminars, delegations and rallies.

### 5.2.3. Islamic students

As noted in Chapter Six, an important Islamic element contributed to the rebirth of student activism from the late 1980s. During 1998 the enmeshing of Islamic and secular activism continued. Many of the important activist coalitions like Forkot incorporated informal groups from Islamic campuses. The NU-aligned PMII was also integrated into the general student movement through campus-based protest and alliances with other Cipayang bodies.

A distinct, explicitly Islamic-identified strand of student protest was also visible during 1998.<sup>3</sup> This was partly based in the modernist Islamic student activism which had emerged earlier in the decade. It was also partly based on HMI which, as described in chapter six, had partly been insulated from the radicalisation of the 1990s by the ICMI-led Islamic rapprochement with the government.

In early 1998 there were signs that Islamic groups like HMI remained cautious.<sup>4</sup> However, as student protest spread they slowly moved into action, eventually organising many of the largest

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, July 20, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Widjojo, 1999, p. 10. In different cities ‘Communication Forum’ of student senates - like the *Forum Komunikasi Senat Mahasiswa Jakarta* (FKSMJ, Jakarta Communication Forum of Student Senates) were particularly important means of cross-campus organising.

<sup>3</sup> For a study of Islamic student activism in Yogyakarta during 1998 see Madrid, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> For example, when 16 student and youth organisations and NGOs released a statement on January 9 which called on the MPR not to renominate Suharto as President, HMI was the only Cipayang organisation not to sign: ‘Seruan Sukses Damai dan Terbuka untuk Keselamatan dan Masa Depan Rakyat

demonstrations of 1998.<sup>1</sup> In part this was due to mobilisation by HMI.<sup>2</sup> HMI partly channeled its members' activities through the student senates, most of which were dominated by students with backgrounds in HMI, campus mosques or Islamic study groups. Its members also operated in collaboration with other Muslim activists via informal Islamic student fronts.<sup>3</sup>

A significant development came in late March, when a new national organisation *Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* (KAMMI, Indonesian Muslim Students' Action Front) was formed in Malang after a meeting of campus *dakwah* bodies from some 60 campuses around the country.<sup>4</sup> This was based on a network of campus mosque groups of the type which had underpinned the large anti-SDSB protests of 1993. KAMMI went on to organise some of the largest demonstrations of April-May.<sup>5</sup>

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dan Bangsa Indonesia [An Appeal for Peaceful and Open Succession, for the Safety and Future of the Indonesian People and Nation]', Jakarta, 9 January (3 page typescript petition).

<sup>1</sup> In general, in the months leading to Suharto's resignation, the content of their demands differed little from other groups, except that they tended to be more cautious and moderate. This is a central conclusion of Madrid's (1999) study. Madrid (p. 24) notes that there was 'remarkable consensus on the political demands' among both Islamic and non-Islamic groups. The key differences were on tactics, discussed below.

<sup>2</sup> As Madrid (1999, p. 32, note 18) notes the division between HMI-MPO and the 'official' wing of the organisation, which accepted Pancasila as 'sole basis', had declined in importance during the 1990s, under the impact of the rapprochement between Islam and the government.

<sup>3</sup> Such bodies included *Liga Mahasiswa Muslim Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta League of Muslim Students, LMMY) which organised several demonstrations in that city.

<sup>4</sup> 'KAMMI Agendakan Berantas "KKN"', *Jawa Pos*, April 1, 1998; 'Potret Gerakan Berwarna-warni', *Gatra*, April 11, 1998, p. 66-7. Mietzner suggests that this group had links with Prabowo although it later abandoned him: Mietzner, 1999, p. 79, 88. Madrid (1999, p. 23) notes that the organisation had links to KISDI, which was in the Prabowo orbit, and that some KAMMI leaders made a 'serious error' (although no further explanation is given as to motives) when they invited Prabowo to its founding conference.

<sup>5</sup> An example was a demonstration in Jakarta's Al-Azhar mosque on April 10, which was estimated by the media to have attracted 10-20 thousand participants: 'Al-Azhar Berubah Jadi Lautan Jilbab', *Jawa Pos*, April 11, 1998; 'Mereka Telah Keluar Kampus', *Gatra*, April 18, 1998, p. 64-5. According to these reports, the demands expressed by speakers and written on placards at this demonstration were general calls for reform and an end to violence. According to Madrid (1999, p. 24) KAMMI demands were similar to most other groups, except that they avoided mentioning *dwifungsi*, believing 'it was not time to challenge the military head on.' National KAMMI documents also did not call for Suharto to stand down until May 20, although regional branches did so from much earlier (ibid, p. 24).

### 5.3 Differences of Vision and Strategy: Purity and People Power

The organisational heterogeneity of the student movement was mirrored by a wide spectrum in political views and strategies. Although there were exceptions, the Student Senates and the larger Islamic-identified groups were mostly more moderate, while some of the activist groups adopted very militant positions.<sup>1</sup>

Differences in political outlook were partly obscured by a common platform summed up in general slogans like ‘reduce prices’, ‘*reformasi*’ and ‘end repression.’ However, from the start the more militant groups added more radical demands, not only openly calling for Suharto’s removal (which many senates and Islamic groups initially shied away from) but also for fundamental restructuring of government.<sup>2</sup> The most radical groups, especially but not exclusively those associated with the PRD, also demanded elimination of *dwifungsi* from the outset. More moderate groups tended to use more euphemistic language, avoided some topics, especially *dwifungsi*, and echoed the ‘ABRI return to the people’ slogan of the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> By early May, however, the demands of almost all groups had converged on one overriding immediate goal: as a pamphlet produced by Forkot on May 18 put it: ‘We have only one enemy: Soeharto.’<sup>4</sup>

The spread of mobilisation beyond the militant circles of the early 1990s meant that there was a marked revival in 1970s-style ‘moral force’ discourse. The UI Senate leader Rama Pratama, for example, replied to a question in an April interview about whether students had their own ‘concepts’, by describing the student movement as a disinterested moral force concerned only to monitor and advise the government:<sup>5</sup>

We don’t want to fight over concepts, because the concepts have already been discussed by many experts before. After all, the government has many expert staff of its own, who are cleverer than us. The problem is, how can those concepts be implemented. Students aren’t arrogant. If the government already has its concepts, please put them into practice. We’ll criticise them. That is

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<sup>1</sup> A major Indonesian study of the 1998 student movement by Widjojo and Nurhasim (1999) argues that there were essentially two wings to the movement, the more militant ‘Anti – New Order Movement’ (*Gerakan Anti Orde Baru*) and a more moderate ‘Correct the New Order Movement’ (*Gerakan Koreksi Orde Baru*). The first group consisted essentially of the liberal-populist and popular-radical groups discussed in Chapter Six, while the second was based more on ‘campus institutions’ and ‘Islamic groups.’ This categorisation thus generally accords with my own distinction between ‘militant’ or ‘radical’ and ‘moderate’ groups in this chapter (with the latter category essentially comprised of the senates/representative bodies and the Islamic groups).

<sup>2</sup> And so, for example, in early May students at the Philosophy Faculty at UGM, long a base of radicalism, called for the entire MPR to be dismantled and replaced by a body freely elected by the people: ‘Bila Mahasiswa Peka Lingkungan’, *Detektif dan Romantika*, March 14, 1998, p. 26-7, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> See for example ‘Pernyataan Sikap Keluarga Besar Mahasiswa Kertanegara’, Jakarta 5 Mei, 1998 (1 page typescript). According to Rama Pratama of FKSMJ, senates tended to avoid attacking the military’s dual function, because they believed that this would make the military unite against them: interview July 20, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Komunitas Mahasiswa Se-Jabotabek, 1998b.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Hati Nurani yang Menunggangi’, *Gatra*, April 11, 1998, p. 68.

what we mean by a moral and intellectual movement. Don't think students are Superman, who can do everything.

The moral tone was also reflected in a widespread emphasis on 'purity' (*kemurnian*). As Hadiz notes, even for some militant students, the notion of student 'purity' implied rejection of collaboration with all other political forces.<sup>1</sup> This applied above all to elements from the ruling political elite. There is certainly very little evidence for any significant contemplation by students of 1966-style collaboration with ABRI or other elements of the government. Many students, however, also rejected collaboration with elite political opposition as well as mobilisation with the urban poor or other subordinate groups.<sup>2</sup>

Set against the emphasis on morality and purity, but sometimes co-existing uneasily with it, was a more radical vision of student activism, which had grown out of the rejection of all things associated with the New Order which developed in activist circles from the late 1980s. In 1998, the most militant students did not conceal that they aimed to build a 'people power' movement uniting students with the lower classes. Contrast the above statement by Rama Pratama with the following extract from a flyer distributed by the PRD-linked student group *Komite Perjuangan Rakyat untuk Perubahan* (KPRP, People's Struggle Committee for Change) after running street battles in early May<sup>3</sup>:

Come on, advance and resist!!!' that's the cry of the people of Yogyakarta, who don't tremble when they confront the attacks of the security forces who support the *koruptor* Suharto... Our slogan is 'OVERTHROW SOEHARTO'. That's what we'll cry when we take to the streets.

The main expression of the tension between 'purity' and 'people power' was thus in tactics. The most important division, which occurred even inside some of the activist groups like Forkot, centred on whether students should protest outside campus and join with non-student masses.<sup>4</sup>

Many senate leaders took great pains to stress the non-violent and gradualist nature of their movement, early on denying that students would *turun ke jalan* (take to the streets).<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Hadiz, 1999, p. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup> For example, many UI students (especially those from the senate) rejected the 'manoeuvres' of the UI Alumni Association which organised many of the first demonstrations at that campus, in part because it was headed by a retired military officer, YKPK member and relative by marriage of Try Sutrisno, Hariadi Darmawan: interviews with UI students, July 1998. At one point during the occupation of the DPR/MPR building, even Amien Rais was barred from addressing students from their stage, eventually being forced to do so from the top of his car: interviews, July 1998. See also, the discussion by McRae (1998, p. 120-26) on the conflict between 'purity' and alliance building among student groups.

<sup>3</sup> KPRP, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the dispute over this became very bitter: at one point Universitas Kristen Indonesia (UKI) students rallied outside the Salemba campus of UI taunting a crowd of student protesters inside and calling on them to come out and join them: 'Ya Dialog, Ya Demo', *Detektif dan Romantika*, April 25, 1998, p. 50; interviews with UI-Salemba student activists, July 10, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example 'Aksi Mahasiswa Yes, Petualang Politik, No', March 14, *Gatra*, p. 24-7; p. 26.

massive protests organised by KAMMI and allied Islamic groups also tended to be confined within campuses or mosques. Such students feared that if they took to the streets, they would be joined by non-students and rioting might result. This was what military leaders constantly warned them against (even if what students perhaps most feared was that military provocateurs would infiltrate their ranks and incite clashes in order to discredit them). By early May, previously cautious students began to venture outside campus gates, even so they still strove to avoid confrontation, for example by distributing flowers to troops. Student marshals were often deployed to separate students and non-student onlookers, and protesters often wore their university jackets to achieve the same end.<sup>1</sup>

For more radical students it was crucial to leave campus grounds. In most cities some groups distributed pamphlets in bulk to the general population explaining their demands and encouraging them to take action. To combat the danger of military provocation, some of the pamphlets exhorted the population not to attack Chinese owned businesses but to instead ‘damage military facilities’.<sup>2</sup>

The most militant students believed that confrontation with security forces could be beneficial. Students in Solo reportedly prepared four ‘layers’ of activists for demonstrations: first a group would attempt to push through army lines and when force was used against them, three more groups would be ready with stones, catapults and, finally, molotov cocktails.<sup>3</sup> Such students argued that physical clashes between the army and students were a tactic to win the sympathy of the people.<sup>4</sup>

Such confrontational tactics never achieved majority support among student groups in the months leading to the fall of Suharto. During that period, it was the Islamic groups, student senates and other representative bodies which organised the largest demonstrations (inside campus grounds). Although the militant wing of the student movement also organised some large protests, their role as pace-setters was more important. By late April, not only was the tenor of student demands increasingly blunt, but students on many campuses were attempting to venture beyond campus gates. This development dramatically increased pressure on the security forces, and played an important role in triggering the final crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> This approach caused further controversy during the student occupation of the DPR/MPR, when students collaborated with the military in ‘screening’ those who entered to ensure that they were students: Anisa, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Yogyakarta students, July, 1998. The KPRP leaflet cited above (KPRP, 1998) exhorted the people to create ‘directed mass radicalisation, which does not burn shops or places of worship, which does not damage public facilities which we ourselves own...’ Many groups also utilised pre-existing links with NGOs, labour and farmers’ organisations to invite politicised groups onto campus and to street protests.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with Yogyakarta students, July, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> In Yogyakarta, for example, local residents sometimes joined demonstrations (as opposed to simply watching them) when they witnessed students being assaulted, or were assaulted themselves by security forces pursuing students through *kampung*.



## **6. The escalation of opposition.**

The historical legitimacy of student activism in Indonesia, plus students' middle class origins and the responsible image many of them cultivated, explains the government's difficulties in dealing with student protest. It also partly accounts for the almost feverish sense of anticipation in much of the media from early March 1998, when it was repeatedly asked whether a new 'Generation of 98' was being born.<sup>1</sup>

The student movement garnered much support from other political actors, eventually becoming the vociferous centrepiece of a broad middle class coalition. This was most apparent in the role of intellectuals and alumni associations, (themselves often led by participants in earlier waves of student activism), which initiated the first protests on some campuses. Rectors, deans and lecturers addressed numerous student demonstrations. Critics of the regime of every description – NGO activists, retired generals, PDI-Megawati leaders, Muslim figures – did the same. Artists organised a month long 'earth exorcism' festival, which used art as 'the medium of liberation' and involved over 170 cultural performances in numerous towns between early April and May.<sup>2</sup> *Suara Ibu Peduli* even eventually adopted a logistical 'support' role, coordinating the delivery of food and others supplies to the students who occupied the MPR building in mid-May.<sup>3</sup>

One particularly important initiative came in response to the disappearances of anti-government activists (later revealed as being the work of Kopassus troops under Prabowo's orders). Several NGOs, led by LBH, formed *Kontras* (*Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Tindak Kekerasan*, Commission for the Disappeared and Violence) to investigate and campaign on the issue.<sup>4</sup> The publicity this generated put intense pressure on ABRI, especially after several victims resurfaced and made dramatic public testimony.<sup>5</sup> At a time when ABRI was struggling to contain student protest, senior officers were forced to make embarrassing denials of responsibility.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See for example 'Aksi Mahasiswa '98', *Detektif dan Romantika*, March 28, 1998, p. 3-4; p. 4. The echoes of history were also apparent, for example, in the media representations of those killed at Trisakti, with their transformation into *pahlawan reformasi* (heroes of reform) reminiscent of the cult which surrounded slain student Arief Rachman Hakim in February 1966, and even that around the military officers killed on the night of September 30 / October 1 1965. See for example 'Selamat Jalan Pahlawan Reformasi', *Gatra*, May 23, 1998, p. 36-7; 'Syuhada Reformasi dari Kampus Trisakti', *Detektif dan Romantika*, May 23, 1998, p. 52-3.

<sup>2</sup> Clark, 1999, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> For the extraordinary logistics of this exercise, see Diarsi, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> *Kontras* was established as a kind of task force by LBH: 'Lebih Jauh Dengan Bambang Widjojanto', *Kompas*, July 18, 1999. Its director, Munir, was also operational secretary of LBH.

<sup>5</sup> Komnas HAM effectively accused the military of involvement: 'Penghilangan Paksa Oleh Kelompok Terorganisir', *Kompas*, May 1, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> See for example 'Kassospol ABRI: Tidak Ada Perintah Pangab untuk Menculik Aktivistis', *Suara Pembaruan*, April 26, 1998; 'Tak Ada Kebijakan ABRI Menghilangkan Orang', *Kompas*, April 30, 1998.

The escalation of student protest from late February fundamentally changed the political environment in which other political actors operated. In effect, students became proxies for other elements of elite opposition. The changing content of comment by Amien Rais was one measure of this. He was the leading figure who first and best recognised the potential impact of the student mobilisations, making a tour of campuses almost immediately after the MPR session.<sup>1</sup> By mid-April he was beginning to talk openly of 'people's power', telling one student audience: 'If democratic means to bring about change have reached a dead-end, there is no other way except a mass movement.'<sup>2</sup>

Megawati's PDI similarly released a statement rejecting Suharto's accountability speech at the MPR.<sup>3</sup> However, in following weeks the party became partially paralysed, and reports of Megawati's activities virtually disappeared from the press.<sup>4</sup> The abduction of party leader Haryanto Taslam by Kopassus caused considerable trauma in its leadership circles.<sup>5</sup> Although Megawati did later make some appearances (notably at the Trisakti rally the day after the shootings in mid-May) and other PDI leaders addressed student protests, overall, Megawati played a minimal role in the final anti-Suharto upsurge. For example, she did not appear during the student occupation of the MPR (although her brother Guruh and other PDI leaders did so) mainly because the party had received 'credible information' from military sources that Prabowo intended to 'frame her' by triggering further rioting.<sup>6</sup>

Elite opposition leaders also carefully observed developments within the regime. As in the past, they knew that they would eventually have to deal with the question of the military, and that ABRI still had the capacity to use greater repression.<sup>7</sup> Many elite opposition players continued to promote a negotiated transition as a solution to this conundrum, and political actors of all

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<sup>1</sup> He ridiculed the cabinet, almost immediately implying that Suharto should be removed: 'Aksi Mahasiswa Masih Berlanjut, Terjadi Lemparan Batu', *Suara Pembaruan*, March 12, 1998; 'Amien Rais Ajak Pakar Ekonomi UI Membentuk Tim Penilai Kabinet', *Suara Pembaruan*, March 13, 1998; 'Unjuk Rasa Mahasiswa dan Amien Rais di Ujungpandang', *Suara Pembaruan*, March 21, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> 'ABRI Tolak Dialog mengenai Presiden', *Suara Merdeka*, April 12, 1998. See also, 'A Sense of Disgust', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 14, 1998, p. 26-8. Amien Rais was of course not the only figure who hardened his demands. For example, YKPK now called for a special session of the MPR, suggesting removal of the President: *Harian Terbit*, April 24, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> 'Pernyataan Politik DPP PDI 1993-1998: Tolak Pertanggung Jawaban Presiden', *Inti Jaya*, March 6-10, 1998, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Following the MPR session, the next bout of extensive media coverage for Megawati did not come until early April, when her daughter was married.

<sup>5</sup> The party also became increasingly pre-occupied with internal divisions once more, as both the Megawati and Soerjadi groups began congress preparations. See for example 'DPP PDI Mega Juga Siapkan Kongres', *Jawa Pos*, April 13, 1998; 'Mega Imbau Warganya Tak Terpancing Soerjadi', *Jawa Pos*, April 16, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> She also was unwilling to mobilise her followers, because she feared that they would respond to provocation with violence: interview with Laksamana Sukardi, July 17, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, prominent leaders like Amien Rais experienced petty harassment which seemed designed as warnings against further action. The most serious case came when businessman Arifin Panigoro was accused of subversion after he allegedly proposed a 'people power' movement in a meeting attended by Amien in February: John McBeth, 'A Warning Shot', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 2, 1998, p. 23.

descriptions appealed for the military to support reform.<sup>1</sup> Amien Rais remained a particularly vigorous proponent. He maintained close links with several senior ABRI officers and arranged well-publicised meetings with, amongst others, Army Chief of Staff General Subagyo Hadisiswoyo and Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Lieutenant General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. These officers publicly praised the ‘mature’ and ‘wise’ character of his criticisms.<sup>2</sup> According to Mietzner they warned him ‘not to overstep the clear line between criticism of Soeharto and the mobilisation of the masses against him.’<sup>3</sup>

Early on, after his meetings with officers, Amien stated that restraint was called for and that such meetings marked the beginning of potentially fruitful dialogue to resolve the political impasse.<sup>4</sup> However, as student protest spread, Amien was clearly aware of the increase in opposition bargaining power. He began to openly appeal to ABRI to distance itself from the President. By late April he was publicly calling on it to choose between defending the Suharto family or the nation.<sup>5</sup> He suggested that he had discussed this with the officers he met, and that they told him they would take the latter path.<sup>6</sup>

## **7. The Denouement: Trisakti, the Jakarta Riots and their Aftermath**

After initially maintaining a hard-line, by early May Suharto and his senior officials began to concede that some measure of political reform was necessary.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the military was

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<sup>1</sup> NU, to cite just one example, eventually appealed for the military to support the students’ calls for reform: Mietzner, 1998, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> See for example ‘KSAD: Kritik Amien Rais Dewasa dan Bijaksana’, *Kompas*, March 26, 1998; ‘Kassospol ABRI Minta Amien Rais Tetap Kritis’, *Kompas*, March 28, 1998; ‘Amien no enemy of the military, says Subagyo’, *Jakarta Post*, March 30, 1998; ‘ABRI Percaya Integritas Amien Rais’, *Kompas*, April 23, 1998. These officers clearly afforded Amien some degree of protection. After one meeting with Yudhoyono and other officers Amien announced an official ‘end’ to the pall of suspicion which had been cast over him since the Arifin Panigoro subversion allegations: ‘Kasus Arifin Panigoro Dianggap Selesai’, *Suara Pembaruan*, March 28, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 69-70. It is worth noting that the only mass demonstrations organised by Muhammadiyah were inside sports stadiums, mosques and the like. Effectively, leaders like Amien could utilise the pressure exerted by student demonstrations, but avoid risking their own followers on the streets.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Pertemuan ‘Otak dan Hati’ Sikap Kritis Amien Rais Dibutuhkan’, *Suara Pembaruan*, March 28, 1998; ‘Kassospol ABRI Minta Amien Rais Tetap Kritis’, *Kompas*, March 28, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Amien Rais: Reformasi Dari Kampus Jangan Dianggap Enteng’, *Suara Pembaruan*, April 19, 1998; ‘Students have reached point of no return: Amien’, *Jakarta Post*, April 20, 1998; ‘PP Muhammadiyah Dorong Upaya Reformasi dan Menjaga Persatuan’, *Suara Pembaruan*, April 20, 1998; ‘Amien Rais dan Nurcholish Madjid Tentang Sidang Istimewa MPR’, *Tempo Interaktif*, April 21, 1998; ‘Jangan ‘Panas-panas Tahi Ayam’’, *Suara Kaltim*, April 22, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Menentukan, Peran ABRI dalam Reformasi’, *Riau Pos*, April 20, 1998; ‘Amien Rais dan Nurcholish Madjid Tentang Sidang Istimewa MPR’, *Tempo Interaktif*, April 21, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> For example, on May 1, Interior Minister Hartono announced that Suharto had told him that political reform must wait until after 2003, the year of the next scheduled MPR session. This immediately caused a further upswing in protest, forcing a ‘clarification’ the very next day by Interior Minister Hartono and Information Minister Alwi Dahlan who suggested that Suharto was open to political reform, so long as it did not contradict the decisions made by the most recent MPR. Also at the beginning of May, DPR speaker Harmoko indicated that student protests were positive and that the legislature would endeavour to accommodate their demands and initiate a review of the political laws: ‘Disepakati, Tiga UU Politik Akan Ditinjau’, *Suara Merdeka*, May 6, 1998. However, he and Fraksi-ABRI head Syarwan Hamid still rejected calls for an extraordinary session of the MPR or change in national leadership: ‘Harmoko: Permintaan Untuk Sidang Istimewa MPR Tidak Mendasar’, *Waspada*, May 5, 1998.

showing increasing strain. It was under unprecedented public attack for the disappearances of activists. The attempt to keep student protests corralled inside campuses was beginning to fail, with some local commanders beginning to allow students to demonstrate on the streets.<sup>1</sup>

On May 4 the government announced rises in electricity and fuel prices. This announcement immediately caused larger and more violent demonstrations, frequently involving non-students. In Yogyakarta, for example, clashes between students and security forces escalated when thousands of residents from surrounding *kampung* joined in attacking the security forces.<sup>2</sup> In Medan, clashes with students triggered destructive rioting which engulfed the city and surrounding areas for several days.

Once more, elite opposition intensified. Amien Rais called for the President to step down immediately and his appeals to the military became even more direct.<sup>3</sup> Signs of rupture close to the core of the governing elite also became visible. For example, ICMI leader Achmad Tirtosudiro, on May 6 called for a special session of the MPR, implying support for the replacement of the President.<sup>4</sup> Even the tame legislature began to show unaccustomed vigour, with a DPR Commission calling on the government to reverse the price rises.<sup>5</sup>

The long-awaited denouement finally occurred at Jakarta's Trisakti University, which was well known for the elite social origins of its students. It had been a site of enthusiastic, but by no means radical, activism since late February. On May 12, when Trisakti students were prevented from marching to the DPR/MPR they sat in the road and distributed flowers to the soldiers. As they were returning to campus, firing began and four students were killed.<sup>6</sup>

Over the next two days, on May 13-14 the most serious rioting yet in modern Indonesian history took place. Many of the main commercial centres in Jakarta were destroyed, countless citizens – mostly of Chinese descent – were robbed, beaten or raped. According to Komnas HAM, some 1188 people lost their lives, most of whom were looters trapped in burning shopping centres.<sup>7</sup> Serious rioting also occurred in Solo in Central Java.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes regional commanders (*pangdam*) made this decision, notably Agum Gumelar in South Sulawesi: 'Noisy student demos continue in many cities', *Jakarta Post*, April 21, 1998; Mietzner, 1999, p. 75. Sometimes students were allowed outside campuses after negotiations with relatively junior police and army officials.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Yogyakarta student activists, July, 1998; McRae, 1998, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> He also announced an attempt to overcome the lack of united opposition, saying that he would shortly form a 'People's Leadership Team' with broad representation: Jim Della Giacoma, 'Pressure on Indonesia's Suharto builds', *Reuters*, May 11, 1998; 'Amien Rais Ingin Bentuk Tim Kepemimpinan Rakyat', *Republika*, May 8, 1998; 'Amien Rais akan Umumkan Tim Kepemimpinan Rakyat', *Republika*, May 12, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> *Kompas Online*, May 7, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> 'Komisi V DPR Desak Pemerintah Cabut Kenaikan BBM dan TDL', *Antara*, May 8, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Richburg, 1999a.

<sup>7</sup> *Kompas Online*, June 3, 1998. As Jakarta burned around them, students rallied inside campus grounds. In some places crowds on the streets called on students to come out and join them, but mostly this did not occur. On the same day, violence was also reported in other towns, with over thirty killed in the Central Javanese town of Solo, *Kompas Online*, June 6, 1998.

The Trisakti killings and subsequent riots had an important impact. Media representations of the Trisakti victims stressed their respectable and devout middle class backgrounds. Interviews with distraught parents, photographs of the victims surrounded by neatly clad family members, and reports of their youthful idiosyncrasies, hobbies and aspirations filled the press.<sup>2</sup> There was an unprecedented outpouring of national grief and anger, and those killed were immediately transformed into *pahlawan reformasi*, heroes of reform. The next day, prominent opposition activists came to the campus and addressed the crowds, while government officials scrambled to express their condolences.

The violence in Jakarta had an even greater impact. The New Order's claim that only it could prevent political disorder, was utterly discredited. It was very clear that the continued existence of the regime in its present form, or at least Suharto's presidency, was bringing Indonesia to the precipice.

The violence played an important role in motivating active middle class support for Suharto's removal. From early on, opposition leaders like Amien Rais had argued that political reform and negotiation was essential in order to prevent chaos. Now that chaos had arrived, the pressure on Suharto increased greatly. As a statement signed by Abdurrahman Wahid and other religious leaders put it: 'For the sake of saving the Indonesian nation and state from chaos and division, the President should consider taking the best step.'<sup>3</sup>

Elite opposition began to get more organised. On May 14 Amien Rais announced the formation of *Majelis Amanat Rakyat* (People's Mandate Council) which combined a wide range of ICMI and other Muslim figures like Adi Sasono, Nurcholish Madjid and Dawam Rahardjo, former ministers including Emil Salim, Mohammad Sadli and Siswono, prominent intellectuals, like Goenawan Mohamad of *Tempo*, Arbi Sanit and Faisal Basri of UI, dissidents like Ali Sadikin, and leaders of NGOs, including LBH. PDI and NU representation in it was, however, minimal. Amien suggested that the group could be the embryo of a 'kind of collective leadership... a kind of presidium consisting of all manner of components of the nation', which could take over from Suharto when he resigned.<sup>4</sup>

However, this move dramatised the divisions within elite opposition. There were immediate denials of involvement from some of those listed as members. The next day, another organisation, *Forum Kerja Indonesia* (Indonesian Working Forum) was announced. This body included many who were also listed as members of MAR, but the representation of NU and PDI

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Jakarta student activists, July 1998.

<sup>2</sup> See for example 'Selamat Jalan Pahlawan Reformasi', *Gatra*, May 23, 1998, p. 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> 'Pimpinan Agama Minta Pak Harto Memilih Langkah Terbaik', *Kompas*, May 17, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> 'Para Tokoh Bentuk Majelis Amanat Rakyat: Siap Pimpin Bangsa Secara Kolektif', *Kompas*, May 15, 1998.

figures was much greater. Megawati and Abdurrahman Wahid were listed as members of its advisory board.<sup>1</sup>

As opposition leaders struggled to react, on May 18 a delegation of student senate leaders visited the DPR to demand that its leaders convene a Special Session of the MPR. Seventy five of them insisted that they would stay overnight (and were allowed to do so with the guarantee of Syarwan Hamid, head of the Fraksi ABRI<sup>2</sup>). The next morning, busloads of students arrived, and the occupation of the DPR/MPR building began. Within 24 hours the image of thousands of students dressed in their university jackets swarming even over the roof of the building had already become an iconic image of *reformasi*.

As the ruling elite finally began to fracture (see below) the wave of mobilisations continued to peak around the country. Immediately after the Trisakti killings, very large student demonstrations took place in numerous cities. These began to pioneer new forms of action, for example in Surabaya, Semarang and Padang students occupied *Radio Republik Indonesia* (RRI) stations, forcing them to broadcast their demands. May 20 had long been planned as a national day of action. In Jakarta Amien Rais cancelled a planned million-person rally at the National Monument after being warned off by the military, but in Yogyakarta over half a million students and others converged on the town centre. Demonstrations initiated by students, but often involving many tens of thousands of others, also occurred in Bandung, Semarang, Solo, Ujungpandang, Samarinda, Lampung, Medan, Padang and other towns.<sup>3</sup> Indonesia was clearly undergoing its moment of ‘popular upsurge.’<sup>4</sup>

By the end, the mood of disaffection spread to virtually all social sectors. Several days before Suharto’s resignation there even occurred that consummate symbol of bourgeois disaffection: a demonstration by traders at the stock exchange.<sup>5</sup> Journalists, too, became increasingly bold in reporting the political crisis, with a rapid (although not complete) breakdown of government control after the Trisakti killings. The major Islamic organisations, including those which had hitherto been cautious (like NU) and those which were close to Prabowo (like Dewan Dakwah and KISDI) called for Suharto to step down.<sup>6</sup> So, too, did leaders of Golkar KINO and affiliated organisations like Kosgoro, MKGR, KNPI, KADIN and FSPSI.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The group appealed for the population to peacefully protest at legislatures around the country, endorsed Suharto’s reported comments from Cairo (which he had ill-advisedly visited) that he was willing to stand aside (a statement which the President later ‘corrected’) and appealed to ABRI not to obstruct the people from expressing their aspirations: ‘Terbentuk, Forum Kerja Indonesia’, *Kompas*, May 16, 1998; ‘Berlomba Menggenjot Reformasi’, *Media Indonesia*, May 17, 1998. Although Amien Rais was reported as being an early supporter of the group, he did not sign the declaration.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Mereka Menduduki Kantor Para Wakilnya’, *Forum Keadilan*, June 15, 1998, p. 16-18; p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Peringatan Hari Kebangkitan Reformasi di Indonesia’, *AJI news*, May 20, 1998. (Indonesia-L).

<sup>4</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Broker BEJ pun Berdemo’, *Jawa Pos* May 20, 1998. Some days earlier there was a demonstration by two thousand doctors, nurses and other staff of Surabaya’s major hospital: ‘Dokter, Perawat, Karyawan RSUD Soetomo Unjuk Rasa’, *Kompas*, May 9, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Umat Dukung Presiden Soeharto Lengser Keprabon’, *Republika*, May 17, 1998. Note, however, that according to Najib and Sukardiyono (1998, p. 59) on May 18 Anwar Haryono of DDII, and formerly of

### 7.1 The Final Fracturing of the Ruling Elite

The societal upsurge provided the context for the final abandonment of Suharto by the core ruling political elite. The most dramatic development came on May 18 when former Suharto loyalist, Golkar chairperson and DPR/MPR speaker Harmoko called on the President to step down.<sup>2</sup> In response, Suharto frantically attempted to reach a compromise and retain power. In a last attempt to utilise the appeal of Islam, on May 19, he invited prominent Islamic leaders, notably Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid, to meet him at the palace. During a private meeting he proposed to form a 'reform committee', reshuffle the cabinet, hold a general election and resign thereafter. His speech was broadcast nationally, with the leaders looking on. Even if they had privately suggested to the President that he step down, the leaders publicly endorsed the proposal, as a means to avert further bloodshed. Wahid appealed for an end to protests.<sup>3</sup>

However, students continued to occupy the DPR building and elite support continued to evaporate. Habibie himself approached the President and advised him to step aside.<sup>4</sup> On May 20, heckled and harassed by students, Harmoko gave Suharto a deadline of three days, after which the DPR would begin impeachment proceedings. That evening, fourteen cabinet ministers informed him that they would not be willing to serve in his reshuffled cabinet. According to some sources, it was at this point that Suharto finally recognized his position was untenable and decided to resign.<sup>5</sup>

It is ironic that the elements of the ruling elite which moved most decisively against Suharto in those last days included those viewed as 'loyalists': Harmoko, Syarwan Hamid, even,

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the Petition of Fifty, suggested to Amien Rais and other Islamic leaders that it might be best to support Suharto's proposal to stay in power in order to 'carry out reform', remembering his many policy concessions to the Islamic *umat* over the 1990s.

<sup>1</sup> 'Belasan Pati ABRI '45 Mengharap Pak Harto Mundur', *Republika*, May 16, 1998; 'Meningkat, Tuntutan Sidang Istimewa MPR', *Kompas*, May 16, 1998; 'Giliran MKGR Minta Pak Harto Mundur', *Jawa Pos*, May 17, 1998. Kosgoro and MKGR, it will be remembered were two of the Golkar KINO discussed in chapter four, KNPI was the National Committee of Indonesian Youth, KADIN, the Chamber of Trade and Industry and FSPSI was the corporarist labour union federation.

<sup>2</sup> Przeworski explains sudden cracks in regimes in favour of democratisation by referring to the shifting 'expectations of success', especially after a key 'signal' (like the death of a ruler, an economic crisis or such like): Przeworski, 1986, p. 55. In Indonesia's case, the twinned signals were the Trisakti killings and subsequent riots.

<sup>3</sup> 'Cak Nur: Ini Hasil Terbaik', *Jawa Pos*, May 20, 1998. In one of the ironies of 1998, Amien Rais, who in the past had been accused of sectarianism by Abdurrahman Wahid, attacked Suharto for using Islam in this way, accusing him of attempting to 'play off' religious groups and endangering societal pluralism: 'Amien Kecewa Pak Harto Tak Mundur', *Jawa Pos*, May 20, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Z. A. Maulani, July 18, 1998. Maulani said that Habibie gave the President a four page, handwritten letter (so he could be certain that it was Habibie's own work) on the night of May 19. See also Waldman, Pura & Brauchli, 1999, p. 90-91.

<sup>5</sup> See for example the interview with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, the University of Indonesia Professor of Administrative Law who spent the last evening with Suharto: *Forum Keadilan* June 15, 1998, p. 65.

eventually, Habibie. The reason is obvious: because Habibie was Vice-President and these other figures close to him, they presumably calculated that they were well-positioned to secure power in a successor government.<sup>1</sup>

The situation in the military, which had the capacity to keep Suharto in power by force, was more complex. In certain respects, the entire military leadership maintained a hard line until the last. On May 19, immediately after Harmoko called on the President to step down, General Wiranto shocked many when he dismissed Harmoko's views as merely those of an 'individual', saying that Suharto remained Indonesia's constitutionally appointed president.

Nevertheless, there was clear division within ABRI. Officers associated with General Prabowo took a particularly hard line. They were widely believed to be responsible, not only for the abductions of political activists in early 1998, but also for the Trisakti shootings, and for mobilising provocateurs to foment the rioting of May 13-14. It had long been apparent that Prabowo and his supporters harboured political ambitions of their own and were moving to undermine the Wiranto group.<sup>2</sup>

The other key group, centred on Wiranto and Bambang Yudhoyono, also remained officially loyal to Suharto, as Wiranto's May 19 remarks indicated. However, on the whole, they attempted to appear more sympathetic to the pro-reform mood. From the start, they had promoted dialogue with students. Bambang Yudhoyono cooperated with civilian intellectuals on designing reform plans.<sup>3</sup> As the crisis entered its final days, this group sent out some clear signals of support for political change. For example, on May 16 Bambang Yudhoyono attended a political meeting with retired officers and other prominent figures, accepting a petition from them which called for Soeharto's removal from office. As he did so, he told them that he hoped the petition would constitute 'valuable input, not only to ABRI itself, but also to the nation and state'.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, it is remarkable that, after many weeks of violent confrontations at university gates between student protestors and troops, students were allowed to occupy the DPR building on May 18.<sup>5</sup> Over following days they were effectively protected by troops beyond the control of the Prabowo group.

Clearly, therefore, sections of the ABRI leadership retained a level of autonomy sufficient to put the army's institutional interests above those of the patriarch. Despite the preceding history

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<sup>1</sup> This proved to be untrue only for Harmoko, who was too discredited by his reputation for slavish loyalty to Suharto to be able to secure a significant political career during the Habibie Presidency.

<sup>2</sup> On the day of the riots, according to Marcus Mietzner (1999, p. 79) Wiranto confronted Jakarta Commander Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin and ordered him to take action to restore order in the capital.

<sup>3</sup> Richburg, 1999b, p. 77; Mietzner, 1999, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> 'Tokoh-Tokoh Reformasi Masuk Kabinet? Presiden Segera Lakukan Reshuffle', *Jawa Pos*, May 17, 1998; 'Bangsa Berada pada Titik Sejarah yang Menentukan', *Kompas*, May 18, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Student activists interviewed in Jakarta in July 1998 indicated that they were surprised that ABRI allowed them to enter the DPR/MPR grounds so easily, but insisted that there had been no prior signals that this would happen.



of intervention by Suharto into the senior officer corps, pockets of the military retained a corporate identity and integrity greater than the ‘servant’s loyalty’ typical of Sultanism proper.<sup>1</sup> Abandoning Suharto became a means to short-circuit the political crisis and prevent further damage to the institutional interests of the state as a whole. For Wiranto and his group, it was also a way to pre-empt a move for power or other precipitate action by Prabowo.<sup>2</sup>

By far the most important contribution by the Wiranto leadership was refraining from, indeed refusing, the path of extreme coercion. Wiranto, for example, blocked the President from declaring martial law.<sup>3</sup> Other alternatives were open: some officers apparently informed Amien Rais that they were prepared for a ‘Tiananmen’ solution.<sup>4</sup> That Wiranto refused such a path was obviously of crucial importance to the end of Suharto’s presidency.

Signals of the erosion of military support for Suharto also formed a positive feedback loop with growing civilian opposition. Many students and other activists took heart from the rumours that the military was wavering.<sup>5</sup> For more conservative organisations, the influence was even greater. As Mietzner notes, many key Muslim organisations and leaders were prepared to openly attack Suharto only when ‘they were sure that Soeharto had lost the backing of the armed forces.’<sup>6</sup> A similar process was also at work with the Golkar organisations and government politicians who eventually abandoned Suharto.<sup>7</sup>

However, the senior ABRI leadership did not take more open action against Suharto (for example there was no open call for him to step down nor more explicit encouragement of civilian politicians). In part this was because of the erosion of military autonomy – the transformation into Suharto’s ‘fire brigade’ – which had occurred in the last years of Suharto’s reign. This meant that senior military officers lacked independent political experience and initiative; in Liddle’s term they were ‘relatively weak actors’ in the final days.<sup>8</sup> In any case, it

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<sup>1</sup> Snyder (1998, p. 53-54) notes that the degree to which the ruler is able to subvert the autonomy of the military through patronage is a crucial variable in transitions from sultanistic regimes. Where the military is unable to act independently of the dictator, violent and revolutionary overthrow is the usual outcome (Snyder cites Iran, Nicaragua, Cuba and Zaire). Where segments of the military have not been thoroughly co-opted their defection, most dramatically through a coup (he cites the Philippines, Romania and Haiti), may forestall revolution.

<sup>2</sup> Immediately after Suharto resigned, Wiranto secured the dismissal of Prabowo from his post as Kostrad Commander: John McBeth, ‘Soldiering On: Military Chief faces down one threat but others loom’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 4, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Vatikiotis, 1998, p. 160; Mietzner, 1999, p. 81; interview with Z. A. Maulani, July 18, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Amien Rais Ingin Tagih Janji ABRI’, *Jawa Pos*, May 21, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, Standarkiaa, July 19, 1998; Rama Pratama, July 20, 1998. As a perhaps apocryphal, but widely circulated, story put it, students had been informed that ‘if there is a thousand of you, we will repress you, if there are ten thousand we will watch you, but if there are a hundred thousand, we will join you.’

<sup>6</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Mietzner (1999, p. 81) suggests that Harmoko was only willing to move against the President after he had been deceived by Habibie ally and chief of the Fraksi-ABRI, Syarwan Hamid, into believing that he would have the backing of the Armed Forces leadership.

<sup>8</sup> Liddle, 1999, p. 104. Liddle (*ibid*, p.107) suggests that a ‘very senior general’ informed him that the military would have been ready to repress the demonstrations if so ordered by the President.

would appear that at least Wiranto (who had served for three years as a Presidential adjutant and was widely believed to be close to the President's family) remained highly deferential toward Suharto until the last, even if he could see that Suharto's position was hopeless.<sup>1</sup> Equally important were the divisions in the officer corps. Wiranto and his allies' room to manoeuvre was greatly constrained by the constant possibility of being replaced by factional enemies. Wiranto's May 18 statement of support for Suharto was thus made after Suharto offered Army Chief of Staff Subagyo emergency powers.<sup>2</sup> In short, Suharto's divide and rule policies did largely succeed in forestalling a military move against him. As a result of all these factors, as Vatikiotis suggests, the ABRI leadership was 'hesitant and divided' in the final days.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, although the loss of military support was important, it is important not to lose sight of the basic societal impulse which underlay the change of attitude. Senior officers were essentially reacting to events beyond their control. They knew that they had the physical repressive capacity, at least in the short term, to bring the anti-government movement to heel. Unconstrained force had not yet been used against the students, nor even against rioters in Jakarta and Solo. However, they also knew that the movement's repression could only be achieved at great cost. After all, it was the use of lethal force at Trisakti University which triggered the rioting of May 13-14.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Amien Rais and many other elite figures were appealing almost desperately for the military not to take the path of repression.<sup>5</sup> In short, opposition – of both the elite and, especially, the mass variety – largely succeeded in neutralising the military factor.

As O'Donnell and Schmitter argue, it is precisely at times of maximum disorder and opposition mobilisation that 'the soft-liners are forced . . . to reveal their predominant interest' against

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<sup>1</sup> From the start Wiranto would have kept Suharto well-informed of the deteriorating security situation. According to some sources he also finally brought himself, on the evening of May 20, to suggest privately to the President that the time had come to step down: Walters, 1999, p. 81; interview with Z. A. Maulani, July 18, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Mietzner, 1999, p. 82-3. The offer was for a revived Kopkamtib (Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order), the extra-constitutional authority under which the military carried out much of its internal security operations during the regime's first three decades.

<sup>3</sup> Vatikiotis, 1998, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> It is important also to note that this paralysis also affected the Prabowo group. For example, it appears that in the final days of the crisis Suharto ordered Prabowo to arrest Amien Rais. Prabowo passed this order on to his Chief of Staff Kivlan Zen. Although initially willing to carry it out, Kivlan lost his nerve after he spoke to contacts in Muslim organisations and realised that the impact this move would have on political conditions (and, presumably, on his own future career prospects): confidential interviews, Jakarta, July 1998.

<sup>5</sup> For example, at the massive protest in Yogyakarta on May 20, the Sultan called on ABRI to 'protect the people and the reform movement': 'Di Yogya, Sultan Baca Maklumat Ajak ABRI Lindungi Gerakan Reformasi', *Suara Pembaruan*, May 21, 1998. Senior retired ABRI officers, including Ali Sadikin, Kemal Idris, and Kharis Suhud, visited the DPR on May 19, where they met ABRI and Golkar legislators, Sadikin declaring: 'We hope ABRI will help save this nation': 'Imbauan Jenderal Senior ABRI: Jaga Agar Aksi Tetap Damai, dengan Kawalan ABRI', *Kompas*, May 20, 1998. Amien Rais similarly appealed for ABRI to think of the 'long-term', suggesting that 'power based on armed force will not last long': 'Amien Rais Ingin Tagih Janji ABRI', *Jawa Pos*, May 21, 1998.

attempts by hard-liners to seize power or otherwise enforce a return to reactionary policies.<sup>1</sup> It might be suggested that in the Indonesian case opposition pressure succeeded in forcing a significant soft-line element into being (even if the cracks along which most of the final splits occurred had long been visible).

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<sup>1</sup> O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986, p. 27.

## **8. Conclusion**

In the years which followed *keterbukaan*, Suharto's domination prevented the initiation of political reform, or the emergence of any group in the ruling elite able to begin such a process. On the contrary, a process of sultanisation narrowed the base of the regime and made it increasingly hostile to societal opposition. As a result, the process of splintering away from Suharto followed a sequence of disaffection typical of regimes where the hard-line, 'standpatter' element is strong.<sup>1</sup> First, as we have seen, the most liberal groups in society, like students, intellectuals and already-alienated dissidents, began to mobilise, followed by other middle class elements. Concurrently, more unfocused discontent mounted among the lower classes. More conservative establishment figures, such as former technocrats and entrepreneurs, next voiced their disquiet. Finally, after intense pressure from below, the ruling elite began to desert the President, eventually including much of the military leadership.

The events leading to the fall of Suharto thus had all the turbulence and suddenness usually associated with processes of regime 'replacement.' There was the long-build up of opposition, the mass mobilisation, the great violence, and the dramatic fracturing of the ruling elite. However, when the Suharto government finally collapsed, it was replaced by what was essentially a reconstituted version of itself. Suharto was succeeded by his hand-picked Vice-President, whose cabinet was filled with individuals who had held high office under Suharto. The reasons for this, which largely related to the weaknesses of institutional opposition, are explored in greater depth in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion broadly follows the typical sequence of disaffection in regime 'replacements' described by Huntington (1991, p. 144-5).

## Chapter Ten

### Conclusion.

During the first two decades of the New Order most open opposition emerged directly from the New Order coalition, as students, intellectuals, Muslim leaders and former officials used their 1965-66 credentials to wring a degree of tolerance from the government. The blood-letting of 1965-66 resulted in the effective elimination of the communist left, the enfeeblement of Sukarnoist nationalism and proscription of political organisation among the lower classes. Because those who could speak out were the new government's former allies, their criticisms were often hesitant and ambivalent, with the main exception being certain Muslim groups. Critics were rarely inclined to condemn the regime in blanket terms or attack core doctrines. Semi-opposition, the blurring of the boundary between state and society, was all pervasive.

This occurred in conditions where the middle class remained small and lacked political confidence, and society remained divided. Middle class critics remained nervous of the danger of lower class unrest, while the cleavage between political Islam and its opponents still impeded opposition. Unity of sorts could be achieved in narrow groups like the Petition of Fifty, but the government could still play to the fears of minority and secular-oriented citizens by manipulating the dangers posed by the Islamic 'extreme right.'

Up to 1974 there was significant factional competition in the army and government. This provided many political opportunities to the allies-turned-critics. But after *Malari* the regime became increasingly unified. Suharto created an increasingly powerful Presidency, consolidating his personal control over military and government. Declining space for opposition activities was partly a byproduct of this process: critics were less able to find sympathetic sponsors in officialdom, military officers were less inclined to tolerate critics for fear of offending real or imagined patrons. The government became increasingly intolerant, culminating in the crackdown on dissent in 1978 and the decade of repressive conditions which followed. During these years opposition seemed more cowed than ever, with little public protest and a wholesale retreat into ostensibly 'apolitical' civil society.

## **1. Repression and Opposition**

Direct repression of critics continued even during the height of *keterbukaan*, although it was often inconsistently applied. What was one day tolerated could trigger a harsh response at a later date or in a different province. Student activists found it impossible to predict in advance what kind of response their demonstrations would elicit. Public meetings addressed by prominent critics were broken up in a seemingly erratic fashion. Ultimately of course, seemingly random acts could usually be ascribed to particular factors: the proclivities of local military commanders, attempts by field operatives to prove their effectiveness, the influence of elite conflict and so on. Nevertheless, the overall impact of the unpredictability of repression was to increase its efficacy by inclining critics toward extra caution.

It is nevertheless possible to discern some patterns in the way that the regime distinguished between tolerated and non-tolerated opposition. First, was the extent to which a particular group or individual explicitly challenged the government. Groups which found some niche in civil society and focused their work on one carefully de-limited area (the environment, women's rights, etc) generally secured broader freedom of movement and could even make forthright criticisms in their area of expertise. Conversely, even politically moderate groups which made general and comprehensive critiques of the system of government (the Petition of Fifty group remains the best example) were liable to be treated in a more hostile fashion. A subsidiary criterion, similarly consistent with long-standing New Order practice, was formal adherence to state ideology. Groups which cast their criticisms in the stilted language of 'Pancasila discourse' were more likely to survive, while the regime was liable to move with little compunction against those which did not.<sup>1</sup>

The second, and most crucial, criterion was the extent to which opposition groups attempted to organise and mobilise mass constituencies, especially among the lower classes. Even groups which made more general political criticisms were subject to mostly minor forms of harassment if they did not organise mass support.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, it did not matter that Megawati strove to maintain strict legality and made her criticisms in the vaguest Pancasila terminology. The challenge implied by her popularity was enough to prompt violent efforts to neutralise her.

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent example was provided by the 1993 banning of the Islamic sect *Al Arqam*, a Malaysian based group which avoided explicitly political matters, its members instead striving to build inward looking and self-reliant communities: 'Di Balik Larangan Politik Al Arqam', *Forum Keadilan*, September 1, 1994, p. 94-96; 'Mengharamkan Gerakan Al Arqam', *Forum Keadilan*, September 15, 1994. Conversely, the leaders of the main modernist Islamic organisations in the 1970s and 1980s adjusted to New Order realities by abandoning aspirations for an Islamic state and formally adopting Pancasila as 'sole basis,' setting the scene for the political reconciliation which began in the late 1980s.

<sup>2</sup> Members of the Petition of Fifty group were thus economically and politically isolated early in the 1980s, but they mostly maintained their liberty and remained able to meet and produce statements regularly. Individuals associated with the group were arrested only following their 'association' with the Tanjung Priok unrest of 1984.

Finally, it was generally observable that repression tended to be harsher in the hinterland: the further away from Jakarta, Java and urban centres (and thus from the gaze of the press), the more repressive political conditions became. This was most obvious, of course, at the periphery of the nation-state, in places like Aceh, West Papua and East Timor, where repression was worst of all.

The widespread use of repression had obvious impacts on opposition. In an earlier chapter I described the ‘dissident niche’ which emerged in the early New Order. After many years critics tended to develop an almost instinctive awareness of the boundaries over which it was unwise to step. Many cautious, non-confrontational strategies evolved as means to promote political and social change while co-existing with the authoritarian state. An example was the gradualist, ‘empowerment of civil society’ approach employed by many NGOs. Of course, many kinds of opposition groups attempted during *keterbukaan* to widen the range of tolerated political action. This is discussed further below. However, many understandably remained nervous of risking repression and tended toward cautious readings of the political situation.

Repression was clearly important, but it is important to avoid a skewed picture: the stick of repression was effective largely because it was complemented by the carrot of limited pluralism. Participation within the system remained viable for many critics of the government, provided they observed certain limits. The combination of niches within the system with repression for those who stepped outside it resulted in the prevalence of the many hesitant forms of participation-opposition which have been discussed in this thesis. The choice presented to critics of the government by such a combination was summed up by a senior journalist I interviewed in late 1995, who suggested that ‘In Indonesia today there are but two real choices: to be a ‘critical partner’ or to be an underground subversive. . . Most people, choose the former.’<sup>1</sup>

Thus, despite the growth of opposition during and after *keterbukaan*, until, and even during, the final crisis in 1998 opposition remained poorly institutionalised, divided, predominantly cautious and widely dispersed. No single political party, alliance or other institution emerged as the pre-eminent vehicle for societal actors who favored democratisation, despite rudimentary alliance building attempts.

## **2. Semi-opposition**

Many of the most serious conflicts regarding Indonesia’s political future were thus not zero sum contests between society and state. Instead they were played out in the ambiguous, grey

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Panda Nababan, November 27, 1995.

area between the two. Critical voices came not only from outside the formal political system but also from within a range of institutions more closely integrated with the state.

Preceding chapters presented a range of the ambivalent, contradictory, patterns of opposition which resulted. We have touched on the emergence of groupings with critical views within core state institutions (ABRI, Golkar) and the mirror image of this process, attempts by societal elements to colonise parts of the state apparatus or affiliated institutions (ICMI). There was the PDI, a classically semi-oppositional organisation which participated in the highly constrained electoral system. The attempt by PDI members to reinvigorate their party was partly an assertion of societal autonomy. Yet the Megawati leadership tried desperately to maintain the party's position inside the corporatist political system, even after it was effectively expelled from it.

Beyond all such formal structures, there was also a web of informal and personal ties between individuals in opposition and state. De facto or tactical alliances, more conspirational links and less serious flirtations further complicated the state-society distinction.

The ubiquity of such phenomena in Indonesia reinforces the need, as suggested by Linz, Ding and others, for caution in applying a simplistic state-society model in analyses of opposition in non-democratic regimes. An important conclusion implied by the Indonesian case is that in polities where repression limits open contestation in the societal domain, where there are low levels of political institutionalisation, a persistent patrimonial and personalistic element in the organisation of political life, and, especially, serious disunity inside the state, the 'grey zone' between state and society may be an important locus of resistance and reform.

It is important, however, not to overstate the power of semi-opposition. Working within institutions affiliated to, or dominated by, the state had numerous pitfalls. As the PDI's experiences illustrate, endeavouring to assert the independence of such bodies could result in long and debilitating struggles for control. So all-consuming was the conflict in this case that the Megawati leadership was never able to seriously address broader political issues. But to avoid such a fate, potentially crippling compromises could be required. This was the dilemma faced by many reformers inside ICMI, concisely summed up for me by a young CIDES staffer in late 1996, who stated that his main concern was that 'whatever happens, we mustn't let ICMI be like the PDI or PRD.' He feared that if ICMI activists were too 'vulgar,' the organisation might rapidly lose official favour and pro-reform elements be excised from it. He concluded that to avoid such a fate, its reformist members should carefully moderate their activities and nurture military allies.

The dilemma, of course, was that such compromises often discredited the group concerned in the eyes of other political activists and the broader political public. Many government critics



viewed ICMI as little more than a doorway into the halls of power for ambitious Islamic leaders.<sup>1</sup> The cynicism extended to Megawati and her PDI, which were often derided as feeble products of the New Order political system.<sup>2</sup>

Such cynicism partly flowed from the difficulties of distinguishing those working for ‘transformation from within’ from those who were merely co-opted by the many benefits which resulted from working within the system. Such benefits, after all, accrued equally to the genuine reformers and the merely opportunist.

In chapter nine, I argued that mobilisation in the final months of Suharto’s rule was primarily driven by forces located outside the formal political system, especially students. This would suggest, at first sight, that semi-oppositional *strategies* of democratisation were largely unsuccessful. In particular, reformers failed to secure strategic positions in the state from which they could initiate gradual reform. The PDI’s attempt to work within the electoral system came to a particularly spectacular end in 1996, and was shown clearly by the 1997 election result. ICMI reformers were likewise unable to oversee the gradual opening of the regime they originally claimed to be pursuing. Adi Sasono’s February 1998 attempt to effect such a process by initiating ‘national dialogue’ failed largely because he remained marginal within the political elite.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps these attempts would have had a greater chance of success in a regime with a greater level of pluralism at the apex of power and, consequently, a more far-sighted perspective on regime change and Presidential succession. But Suharto’s dominance was a great obstacle. When elements in PDI and ICMI began to transgress the bounds of normal corporatist behaviour, question the President and attract societal support, moves against them began, eventually resulting in Megawati’s ouster and the sidelining of ICMI reformers.

Ironically, however, the ‘failure’ of these attempts did make an important contribution to the downfall of Suharto. The aura of victimhood which developed around the PDI and Megawati contributed greatly to the legitimacy crisis of the regime. It is possible, too, that Amien Rais would not have emerged as the pre-eminent leader of *reformasi*, had he not achieved the public profile conferred by his involvement in ICMI and subsequent ‘demotion’ in 1997. The frustration of attempts to promote measured and gradual change from within did much to undermine New Order claims of legality, presumably convincing many students, intellectuals

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<sup>1</sup> A common joke was that ICMI stood for *Ikatan Calon Menteri Islam* (Association of Islamic Ministerial Candidates).

<sup>2</sup> One may also note the tremendous press cynicism in mid-1993 when it appeared that the Petition of Fifty group was about to be *dirangkul* (‘embraced’) by Minister Habibie.

<sup>3</sup> It also failed because of Suharto’s offer of the Vice-Presidency to Habibie: an obvious example of the conflict which could arise between pursuit of position and reform. A more decisive break with the President came in May 1998 when ICMI called for a special session of the MPR. But by this time the entire ruling elite was crumbling, and the ICMI contribution was simply part of a growing chorus for change.

and others that mobilisation was necessary to achieve reform. Put differently, the decline of pluralism within official political structures and the closure of paths for semi-opposition (argued previously as a product of ‘sultanisation’) ultimately set the scene for the more direct confrontation between state and society which occurred in 1998.<sup>1</sup>

There is one area where the ICMI strategy clearly did succeed. With Suharto’s resignation, ICMI reformers were already positioned to win the positions of influence they had long pursued. Under the Habibie Presidency, ICMI scions like Adi Sasono entered cabinet and played an important role in the transitional government which oversaw Indonesia’s transition to democracy over the following 15 months. ICMI operatives finally had the opportunity to put into practice many of the reform ideas they had nurtured over the previous decade.<sup>2</sup>

A final caveat is necessary before proceeding. Even if deliberate semi-oppositional *strategies* of colonising strategic assets in the political system was not a driving force for the democratic breakthrough, the semi-oppositional *phenomenon* remained all pervasive, including in the final crucial months. For example, many of the intellectuals who contributed to the final societal upsurge were government employees, working in state research institutions like LIPI and state universities. Even many of the students who were centrally involved in the 1998 protests had been derided by their more radical contemporaries for participating in the ‘co-opted’ student senates. As mobilisation gathered pace, individuals from a much wider range of corporatist, official and state institutions emerged to play a role.

### **3. Alegal and Proto-Opposition**

If semi-opposition remained common, alegal and proto-opposition was equally so. These were the groups which existed on the margins of legality, exploiting legal ambiguities (like the *yayasan* format) and skirting the boundaries of tolerance. Dissident groups were few in number, but ‘civil society’ organisations which represented limited constituencies or focused on particular issues were prolific. NGOs were able to flourish even during (partly because of) the relatively repressive conditions of the early 1980s. During *keterbukaan* other kinds of

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<sup>1</sup> It remains difficult to assess the overall effectiveness of these attempts in other ways. For example, how can one judge the overall contribution made by the various ICMI initiatives – numerous seminars, publications and so forth – to the general decline of regime legitimacy and popular desire for reform? Surely they were important, but perhaps not much more than the plethora of similar initiatives taken by other groups.

<sup>2</sup> The Habibie Presidency lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Even so, it seems impossible to view the Habibie-era reforms in isolation from the dramatic collapse of the preceding regime’s legitimacy and the continuing pressures from students and others. It seems likely that if Sasono and others had not been positioned for power, the outcome would not have been much different. If one takes a slightly longer view, it is also possible to argue that the PDI strategy was also a success in terms of positioning Megawati and her supporters for power. The formidable reputation for patience, responsibility and victimhood built up by Megawati prior to Suharto’s fall also contributed greatly to the large vote for her PDI-Perjuangan (PDI-Struggle) in the June 1999 general elections (even if Megawati was later unable to translate this into securing the Presidency).

organisations - student groups, labour unions and such like - became sources of particularly overt challenges to the government. By 1996 there were even attempts to break with the civil society model altogether by establishing political parties outside the corporatist system.

During *keterbukaan* there was also a sharper ideological break with the New Order than in previous decades, when the memory of 1966 had so often imparted a strongly nostalgic air to opposition thinking. Many (though not all) government critics abandoned the euphemistic language of the past, putting forward clearer critiques of the government and alternative programmes. These ranged from the conservative, but nevertheless unambiguous, reform proposals advanced by members of the established political elite like retired General Soemitro, through the bolder liberal critique in intellectual and NGO circles, to the apparent rejection of bourgeois society by radical student groups like the PRD.

There was also an escalation of political action and increasing boldness of style. Again, this was visible in a broad spectrum of opposition, ranging through the increasingly vigorous and effective human rights advocacy of NGOs to the new mass mobilisation strategies pursued by students and others. The increased frequency of demonstrations, strikes and such like was perhaps the most tangible sign of the spread of the oppositional mood.<sup>1</sup>

However, alegal and proto-opposition remained weak in several crucial respects. First, its institutional base, though far stronger than in the 1970s, remained weak and divided. NGOs were by far the best funded, longest established and most politically significant variety of proto-opposition. But the most outspoken rarely had more than a dozen or so staff members (although networking increased their weight). Dissident groupings like Forum Demokrasi never became more than informal discussion groups for prominent individuals. New groups which endeavoured to mobilise lower class groups were forced to lead semi-underground existences which greatly hampered their organising efforts. In many alegal and proto-opposition groups, it was less the formal, institutional level which counted but rather informal and personal ties. NGOs for example were shot through with many informal networks and cliques, while student groups often relied on friendship ties for their coherence.

Second, organised alegal opposition retained a relatively narrow social base, primarily in the urban middle class. Most tolerated critics outside the system were lawyers, intellectuals, students, journalists and the like. Sukarnoist nationalism and Islam had more substantial mass bases, but these had been historically more vulnerable to repression and were associated mostly with semi-opposition. Although the spread of political unrest to urban lower classes was an important feature of the *keterbukaan* period, there were still few institutionalised links between

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<sup>1</sup> In 1988 a single street march by a few hundred university students was such a rarity that it warranted major press coverage as a signal of the 'rebirth of the student movement'; by 1996 public protest was re-established as such a commonplace feature of the political landscape that even the major crackdown from the middle of that year brought mobilisation to only a temporary halt.

organised opposition groups and these sectors. Attempts to systematically organise lower class groups began, but remained vulnerable to repression. Even the links between Megawati's PDI and the amorphous mass of her supporters were largely mediated by highly informal, personalistic ties, while the more militant groups like the PRD had limited reach.

Because political and other forms of organisation remained weak among the lower classes, their political and social frustrations were not mediated by interest groups or the party system. The result, of course, was the propensity for explosiveness in the lower classes, indicated by the series of riots after 1996. Moderate opposition leaders like Amien Rais or Megawati had few means to enforce restraint on their followers, partly explaining their great reluctance to order street mobilisations even during 1998.

A third weakness related to the extreme caution which continued to mark much alegal and proto-opposition. In part, this was simply a function of repression and the 'dissident niche' discussed above. It also rather more particularly related to the location of much opposition in the domain of civil rather than political society. Organisations typical of civil society - religious bodies, NGOs, professional organisations and the like - were often driven by interests which weighed more heavily on them than interest in political democratisation per se. This contributed to often profound internal conflicts of interest. This was clearly the case with many NGOs which, in seeking to achieve specific aims, were driven to seek cooperation with government agencies. It was even more so for the massive Islamic organisations like NU and Muhammadiyah which ran hundreds of *pesantren*, universities, schools, hospitals, orphanages and similar institutions.<sup>1</sup>

There were good reasons for caution. When groups attempted to move beyond the established boundaries of the dissident niche, for example by building support bases in the lower classes or by promoting political mobilisation against the regime, they could easily make the short jump to harassed and illegal opposition: the example of the PRD illustrated this.

#### **4. The Opposition Impact: Erosion, Escalation, Construction**

Chapter one noted several important functions performed by opposition forces in achieving democratisation. We are now in a position to make an assessment of these in the Indonesian

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<sup>1</sup> According to Amien Rais, Muhammadiyah ran 40 institutions of higher learning, dozens of hospitals, hundreds of clinics and approximately 17 thousand schools: *Forum Keadilan*, August 4, 1994, p. 83. As he became openly critical of the government from the mid-1990s, Amien was thus frequently subjected to pressure from his support base, many of whom feared that his attitude would endanger the other interests of the organisation. Hence, for example, the failure of Muhammadiyah in December 1993 to endorse Amien's 'criteria' for succession. For a similar example, see 'Gara-gara Ceramah Amien Rais, Kader Muhammadiyah Resah [Because of a lecture by Amien Rais, Muhammadiyah Cadres are Restless]', *Media Indonesia*, February 26, 1996, which describes how Muhammadiyah members who were civil servants in East Java were being pressured by those above them after Amien gave a speech indicating that at the last election he had voted for PPP.

case. First, despite, and perhaps partly because of, the dispersed character of opposition, it clearly did play an important role in performing what O'Donnell and Schmitter referred to as 'corroding the normative and intellectual bases of the regime'. As civic and opposition organisations grew more numerous and assertive, their impact on public consciousness increased. Protests, legal challenges and other forms of advocacy campaigning, especially when publicised by the press, came to dominate public political discussion during and after *keterbukaan*. Although many critics of the government harboured dreams of eventual regime transformation, even overthrow, only the most radical were open about this. The explicit and immediate aims of most middle class opposition groups were instead summed up in terms like *penyadaran masyarakat* ('community consciousness raising', a term popular among many NGOs) or *membangun opini publik* ('building public opinion', a slogan of moderate student activists in the late 1980s).

A wide range of political theorists assert that it is within the multiplicity of organisations which constitute 'civil society' where the 'rules of the political game', 'political legitimacy' or 'hegemony' are manufactured, mediated and popularised.<sup>1</sup> Many opposition actors (especially in student groups and NGOs) increasingly conceptualised their activities in this way, as indicated by the growing interest in discussions of 'counter-hegemonic strategies' and 'civil society'. As one LBH leader put it in early 1994:

The NGO strategy is a step by step struggle of ideas (*pertarungan ide*), that is what is meant by a counter-hegemonic movement. For example, human rights used to be illegitimate, now they're entering [the official discourse], the regime can no longer simply deny that violations take place.<sup>2</sup>

Such activities did have an important impact, slowly but perceptibly altering the terrain of political legitimacy under the government's feet. The clear shift in government discourse on human rights and democratisation over our period was one result.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1980s these terms had still had the taint of subversion about them, a decade later (although government spokespersons still warned against those who used them for destructive ends) blanket hostility was not possible. Officials made increasing symbolic and rhetorical concessions to 'democratisation.' These further exacerbated the legitimacy problems, allowing critics to highlight the contradiction 'between words and deeds' (as during the campaign against Megawati). The shift in public discourse also deeply impacted on the wider political public, by

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Harbeson, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Mulyana W. Kusumah, March 11, 1994. He went on to explain that opposition was still limited to this level of battling over ideas, because of organisational weaknesses and philosophical heterogeneity, which meant that groups could not unite on a common platform. But they could do so for issue-based campaigns.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to deny that other factors, notably international pressures, may have contributed significantly to this shift.

turning many passive supporters of the regime into passive opponents and thus laying the ground for the dramatic shift in overt mass political behaviour in 1998.<sup>1</sup>

The next step was reducing fear: turning passive opponents into active ones. Some opposition leaders viewed this as a primary aim (as we have seen, it was one of Megawati Soekarnoputri's constant themes). It is also important to note the crucial role played by the more radical elements, especially students, who pioneered street protest and other forms of mobilisation despite personal risks. The spread of protest through the *keterbukaan* years was related directly to their exemplary role.

By 1994 leading officials, especially Suharto, were sufficiently concerned about the spread of the oppositional mood to respond with increased coercion. However, by this stage, repression was becoming counter-productive. Attempts to wind back *keterbukaan* triggered the first significant attempts to make broad action-oriented alliances, in response to the 1994 press bannings and the moves against Megawati. To be sure, the brief fluorescence of opposition optimism in mid-1996 was swiftly terminated by concerted repression. However, reliance on coercion implied legitimacy problems, damaging the image of the government in the eyes of important segments of the populace and thus further preparing the ground for the 1998 upsurge.

The 'decline of fear' reached critical mass only in the final weeks of Suharto's rule, when protests became very large and many elite actors shed their prior reluctance to openly criticise the President. The economic crisis was clearly an important triggering event, but again the role of the early pioneers of protest that year (mostly, but not exclusively, students) was also crucial. The Trisakti killings and subsequent riots were the final signal which led to a sudden shift in expectations of success, fuelling the final spiral of mobilisation.

Another opposition function which Stepan suggests is important for democratic transition is the 'creation of a viable democratic alternative.' However, the opposition behaviours and structures which developed under Suharto's rule – in particular, fragmentation of opposition and government exploitation of divisions therein – made opposition in Indonesia ill-suited to this task. There were often great hopes that the latest elite-level initiative, like Forum Demokrasi in 1991 or MAR in 1998, would 'finally' be a vehicle for uniting opposition against the regime. But such organisations proved largely unable to overcome opposition disunity (although they contributed substantially to the task of corroding regime legitimacy). As shall be argued below, this had important consequences for the nature of Indonesia's political transition.

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<sup>1</sup> See Stepan (1993, p. 62) on this transformation of passive supporters into passive opponents as 'signs of weakening among the forces of authoritarianism' become evident. Of course it remains questionable to what extent the New Order regime ever had widespread political legitimacy deeper than that directly related to economic performance: Liddle, 1999, p. 103.

## **5. Regime Disunity, Opposition and Liberalisation before 1998**

As noted in chapter one, much democratisation literature suggests that the appearance of division between regime hard-liners and soft-liners is crucial for explaining processes of political liberalisation, associated increases in opposition activity and subsequent democratisation. Based on the discussion in preceding chapters - and in line with other observers of Indonesian politics - I conclude that conflict within the ruling elite was clearly an important pre-condition for the limited political liberalisation which began in the late 1980s and the associated rise in oppositional activities.

However, the precise contours of elite factionalism always remained obscure. The pre-eminent figure of Suharto was practically the only constant, towering over a mess of cross-cutting and ever-shifting allegiances. This made it difficult for any group within the ruling bloc to present themselves as a reformist, soft-line element. Those which did (for example the more liberal ABRI and Golkar legislators around 1989, or some associated with ICMI) were vulnerable to marginalisation.<sup>1</sup> Until almost the very end there was no definitive split within the *servicing* state apparatus. Figures who retained important posts in the military or government did not vigorously promote political reform or otherwise break with the President until the final days.

Keeping such reservations in mind, it is possible to identify two core groups which engaged in what Stepan describe as the ‘courtship of civil society.’<sup>2</sup> The first was the substantial group in the ABRI leadership which was disgruntled with President Suharto and some of his proteges. Elements from the military initiated liberalisation in 1989 and sometimes seemed to adopt a softer approach to political dissent in the years thereafter. The second was the ‘Palace camp’ centered around the President and some key lieutenants (first Sudharmono, later Habibie). Suharto and his followers courted the Islamic community and initiated a number of (mostly cosmetic) political reforms.

Nothing demonstrates the extent to which elite disunity underpinned initial liberalisation better than the timing of the reversal from mid-1994. As we have seen, increased use of coercion against critics from this time was partly assisted by Suharto’s re-imposition of control over

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<sup>1</sup> One remarkable feature of Suharto’s New Order was its long-standing and consistent tendency to alienate members of the core ruling elite. This process began virtually as soon as the regime was established and in subsequent decades it resulted in the formation of such groups as the Petition of Fifty and YKPK, as well as successive generations of disillusionment in the military elite. Such alienation was an almost inevitable result of the centralisation of power in the hands of the President and, later, of the oligarchic group around him. Equally remarkable, however, was Suharto’s ability to identify disgruntled elements and swiftly isolate them from the important levers of state power. The result that it was almost always *after* they had been removed from office that such individuals openly challenged the President or promoted political reform (any number of examples come to mind: General Soemitro, the Petition of Fifty, the Moerdani group, YKPK, and so on). This pattern remained consistent until the end of the Suharto Presidency.

<sup>2</sup> Stepan, 1988, especially chapter three, p. 30-44.

ABRI. The decline in disunity meant the end of official liberalisation, though not the end of opposition mobilisation.

### 5.1. Opposition Responses to Regime Disunity

Noting the correlation between intra-regime disunity and liberalisation policies does not itself explain the precise relationship between such disunity and the escalation of opposition.

Overall, it seems clear that disunity in the ruling elite had an important stimulant effect on opposition. We have seen that a wide range of opposition actors carefully scrutinised the shifting constellation of forces within the military and government. There was a general belief that serious disputes within the ruling elite produced a more favourable climate for opposition initiative. This mood was especially strong in 1993 when friction between the Palace camp and military elements was at a peak.

However, it is hoped that this thesis has demonstrated that the relationship between elite factionalism and the escalation of opposition was largely indirect. There was no *dalang* (the puppeteer of Javanese *wayang* shadow theatre) manipulating and orchestrating opposition (even if Benny Moerdani played this role in the imagination of many of his elite and Islamic opponents). Certainly, there were many occasions when elite conflict impinged very directly on opposition. We have seen, for example, how military officers made approaches to student activists early in *keterbukaan*. There were also contacts with the Megawati leadership of the PDI, although their extent and character remains unclear. Such approaches gave opposition actors greater political confidence. But it did not mean that they had simply been transformed into agents of military influence.

Opposition groups were not the passive play-things of elite factions. Instead, groups in society made their own readings of elite conflict, endeavoured to identify the opportunities and spaces so afforded them, and utilise them for their own ends. A variety of methods were employed to do this, ranging from simply escalating mobilisation to actively seeking allies within the ruling elite. Most approaches lay somewhere between these two extremes.

The most radical groups, especially those with origins in the student movement, but also many in NGO circles, took a strong line against any hint of conciliation, ‘conspiracy’ or flirtation (*main mata*) with elite groups. They endeavoured to use all and any space afforded by elite conflict to initiate mobilisation. Some groups took this a step further and carefully selected the targets of their activities with one eye to elite conflict, hoping to minimise repression (like students who targeted Suharto in 1993, believing that discontented military officers would allow them to do so). Other groups, such as the PRD, believed that even this carried the seeds



of opportunism and that increased popular mobilisation on all manner of fronts was the appropriate method to split the ruling bloc.

Even if many dissident, alegal and proto-opposition groups did not take such an extreme position, there was certainly a broad consensus that if they wanted to influence the political transition which would accompany the end of Suharto's rule, they needed to have greater bargaining power. Virtually all groups in favour of reform thus argued that they had to marshal their forces in preparation for this, even if they had different strategies for doing so. Most positions entailed some combination of avoiding 'premature', frontal conflict with the state while building up opposition resources. The gradualist NGO strategies studied in chapter five, based on concepts like 'empowerment of civil society', 'building public opinion' and so on were often privately described in these terms, as preparations for future regime change.

In chapter one, I suggested that one important function played by democratic opposition in transitions from authoritarian rule is 'strengthening the reform impulse' within the state. Although those who took the kinds of approaches described above rarely conceptualised them in these terms, it is clear that, by building opposition resources, they aimed to undermine regime legitimacy, raise the costs of rule and thus confront the rulers with a choice between reform and escalation of unrest.

Indeed, that neither side in the elite conflict of the 1990s was genuinely soft-line should alert us to the crucial role of societal agency in pushing forward the liberalisation process. After tentative official signals in favour of liberalisation in 1989 something akin to the 'resurrection of civil society' identified by O'Donnell and Schmitter took place.<sup>1</sup> A widening range of societal groups became increasingly active and assertive. Many engaged in running battles along the boundaries of New Order legality, continually testing, transgressing and sometimes stretching the boundaries of tolerance. This was the crucial mechanism by which the space for political activity was expanded.

However, it is important also to note that many middle class and elite opposition actors went further. One reason why many of them so carefully scrutinised elite conflict was that they were effectively engaged in a continual search for sympathisers, negotiating partners or allies within the ruling elite. The Islamic activists who joined ICMI and looked to Habibie and Suharto for protection, and others who sought to forge more tentative links with discontented military elements (for example via YKPK) were the most obvious examples.<sup>2</sup> Even leaders of alegal dissident groups and NGOs often carefully monitored elite politics and attempted to establish

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<sup>1</sup> See for example O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> But even they were not merely 'co-opted', but believed themselves to be making necessary trade-offs to win desirable political and social goals. As Mainwaring (1989, p. 186) notes, it is important to avoid simplistic assessments regarding cooptation. Benefits of participation might well include greater political influence: 'A discussion of autonomy/cooptation should therefore focus on trade-offs rather than simply positing the importance of 'autonomy' in some undefined sense.'

lines of communication with potentially sympathetic officials. They often met critical members of the ruling elite at seminars, DPR Commission hearings, even social functions, or invited them to their own functions.

The tendency for parts of middle class opposition to orient towards elite conflict in this way was itself an unsurprising product of the authoritarian combination of limited pluralism in state institutions with repression for extra-systemic opponents. Where society appears weak and opposition costly, it is natural that some societal actors who desire reform will seek to utilise groups in the ruling elite who appear sympathetic to their arguments or desire their support. The state is the obvious site of political power, and making links with powerful groups therein may bring a measure of protection, access to financial and other resources, and manifold other benefits. It might also allow opposition actors to have some direct influence on power-holders, thus contributing to the 'reform impulse' within the state. At the very least, it may appear prudent for opposition actors to avoid overt confrontation until serious internal conflict affects the state's unity of purpose and ability to pursue coercive policies.

Several specific features of the Indonesian case gave even greater force to the search for sympathisers within the ruling elite. First was the legacy of the 1966 coalition. As we have seen, much of Indonesia's opposition could trace its roots directly to the civilian-military alliance which accompanied the birth of the New Order and many of its leading figures had themselves closely cooperated with military and other officials in those years. Often they maintained ties thereafter. For example, when Adnan Buyung Nasution was accused by young activists of deal-making after he met with Minister Habibie and Lieutenant General Hartono after the 1994 press bannings, he defended himself thus:

When I was in LBH I always did this, I have had this kind of practice for 30 years. Now, many people in NGOs have an allergy to meeting with people in the government. They believe things should be black and white, there should be no bridge, no discussions, no dialogue. I think this is wrong, it has been my practice for 30 years. I would even meet with Ali Moertopo at lebaran events *after* Malari. In 1977 I went to the marriage of Prabowo, Suharto was there, I even shook hands with him. Although I was condemned for this by some people I always believe that although you may be enemies in politics, socially you must not cut off communication.<sup>1</sup>

The historical experiences of many reformers pre-disposed them against adopting a position of outright enmity to the regime and its leaders. Social background had a similar effect. Although Indonesia's social elite was far larger and more variegated than in the 1960s. It was still not uncommon during *keterbukaan* for leaders of elite opposition to know personally many of their adversaries within government. Often they had shared political experiences in the 1960s, been

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, December 5, 1995.

to the same schools or universities, met through business activities or simply met one another on the Jakarta social circuit.<sup>1</sup>

Third, the *fin-de-règne* atmosphere which developed from the late 1980s also encouraged many societal actors to seek allies within the state. Most believed that once Suharto left the scene major political restructuring was possible, and they hoped to position themselves to influence this process. Developing links with various power centres from an early point was an obvious means to do so. Again, those who joined ICMI simply took this logic to its furthest extreme.<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, and linked to the last point, many in middle class opposition circles believed that democratisation would both preferably and necessarily entail negotiation between democratic forces and the government (especially the military). To cite just one example, a leading member of the Petition of Fifty suggested in 1995:

We believe that once Suharto goes, we will be faced by ABRI and we sincerely believe that we will be able to talk with them, that we will be able to develop a timetable together by which ABRI will be able to withdraw gradually from the political system without losing face.<sup>3</sup>

Because sections of opposition were pre-disposed to gradual, negotiated processes of regime change, they frequently emphasised their moderation on key questions like the social-political role of the army. This was usually linked to assessments of opposition weakness and military strength, and sometimes to unease about confrontational methods and mass unrest (see below). Opposition actors with such views of the likely future pattern of political transformation often believed that while societal groups should maintain pressure for reform, it was equally important to maintain lines of communication with potentially sympathetic elements in the bureaucracy and army. This sometimes resulted in strategies which combined mobilisation from the outside (often with very particular targets, related to elite conflict) with cultivation of sympathetic elements within the regime.<sup>4</sup>

A fifth, and particularly important, reason for the enmeshment of regime disunity and opposition was its coincidence with deep societal divisions about the proper role of Islam. Suharto's moves to seek support in the Islamic community from the late 1980s had a

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<sup>1</sup> For example the judge in the suit brought by *Tempo* staff after its 1994 banning happened to be a former university class mate of the magazine's editor, Goenawan Mohamad. Shared backgrounds of this kind were in the nature of things far less common among younger activists (there are no 25 year old generals or judges), which helps explain their greater propensity to radicalism.

<sup>2</sup> Many in the organisation (privately) argued that their short term aims were merely to establish the organisation as a central component of the power structure in order to position it to be a key player in the negotiations which would follow Suharto's departure. Whatever ICMI might achieve while Suharto remained in power was of secondary importance: confidential interviews, November 1995 & 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Chris Siner Key Timu, October 30, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> For example, one may point to the role of ICMI activists gathered in institutions like CIDES, who maintained links with students and other networks, which were then utilised in cases like the SDSB protests or those against 'leaking of state secrets' in the Dhanutirto affair.

contradictory impact. On the one hand, it grafted a narrow elite conflict onto deeply embedded societal divisions. The formation of ICMI and other concessions were seen as an historic opportunity by many Islamic modernists. But they generated fear and resentment among some secularists and members of minority groups, including from the core of the ruling elite. From this point, the conflict was no longer merely a matter of support for this or that elite faction, but also turned on differing notions of Islam's proper place in the political system. As such, wider social and political forces were inevitably drawn in.

Although it thus stimulated mobilisation, reconciliation with Islam concurrently divided potential opposition. Political alliances were not based only on shared views about political reform, but also on attitudes to ICMI and the dangers of 'exclusivism.' Those aligned with ICMI effectively adopted a tactical alliance with Suharto-Habibie, while many secularists looked for a counterweight in the military (even if a similarly formal alliance was never cemented). Key dissident groups (notably Forum Demokrasi and YKPK) were designed as critics of ICMI as much as vehicles for political reform. Tensions resulted even in long standing opposition groups like the Petition of Fifty. The full implications were revealed during the 1996 PDI crisis, when substantial parts of modernist Muslim opinion abstained from the campaign in defence of Megawati and joined the campaign against her. It thus remains possible to view the ICMI strategy as an extension, albeit in radically new form, of long-standing New Order attempts to divide potential opposition along communal lines (even though in the 1970s this had involved playing to minority fears of militant Islam). At least in the short term, the reconciliation with Islam shored up the regime's societal support base.

In any case, as *keterbukaan* drew to a close, it was increasingly clear that the stimulus provided by elite conflict was severely limited by its failure to mature into an open break between hard-liners and soft-liners. Although many opposition actors hoped to negotiate with, or even receive the backing of, reformist elements inside the regime, no group emerged with whom they could deal. Elite critics could invite critical-minded army officers to their functions, or seek out private audiences with Ministers, but while Suharto remained dominant, such officials had little ability to meaningfully deepen the reform process.

Indeed, the rulers of the New Order knew that opposition groups hoped for a split within the ruling bloc, especially in the military. This was expressed, for example, by Lieutenant General Soeyono immediately before the 1996 attack on PDI headquarters, in typically blunt style:

That it what the people who shout outside the PDI headquarters, those people on the streets, hope for. A split in ABRI would be the key to their success. That's what they hope for. It's like when the PKI formed a fifth column in the old days. They could do that because they succeeded in splitting ABRI. But how could that be possible these days? Could they really get people in ABRI to

revolt? No way. You can see for yourself, nowadays ABRI is solid. How could they possibly split us?<sup>1</sup>

We can assume that the President was even more acutely aware of the importance of unity within the governing elite for maintaining wider social control. Thus, by 1994 he had largely restored control over the senior ranks of the military, bringing substantial elite conflict, and *keterbukaan*, to an end.

The lack of a clear division between regime soft and hard-liners, combined with the great store much elite and middle class opposition put on just such a division, had profound effects. It kept much middle class opposition in a state of constant prevarication. During *keterbukaan*, some opposition actors took important initiatives (such as the establishment of Forum Demokrasi, or even LBH's assumption of the mantle of 'locomotive of democracy') at least partly based on assessments that elite conflict was intensifying and greater political openness was thus possible. When the conflict failed to develop, many such initiatives floundered (one thinks particularly of Abdurrahman Wahid's *volte-face* in 1997).<sup>2</sup>

For all these reasons the *keterbukaan* period, and its immediate aftermath, was characterised, for many opposition actors, as much by waiting as by positive political action. There was a widespread belief that short term caution was essential, precisely because major changes were likely only once Suharto departed.<sup>3</sup> When I asked many opposition activists about such matters, I was often answered with the phrase: '*kami menunggu momentum*' (we are waiting for the momentum). Many groups believed they needed to carefully identify the appropriate time for concerted action, and to avoid premature and potentially costly action in the meantime. In late 1993, for example, I asked leading HMI members why more radical students often accused their organisation of conservatism. They responded that they did not want to risk the destruction of their organisation by making premature moves, but that when 'the time came', they would 'harvest the fruits' of their patient cadre-building approach and mobilise their large following.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sudah Jelas Itu Cara-Cara PKI', *Forum Keadilan*, 12 Agustus, 1996, p. 17. The event which marked the reversal of *keterbukaan* - the banning of *Tempo*, *Editor*, and *DēTik* - may also be interpreted as a warning to societal forces to cease endeavouring to exacerbate tension in the ruling elite. When Suharto spoke out against these magazines days before they were banned, he warned that they had been 'playing off' one Minister against another.

<sup>2</sup> Likewise, before 1996 some in the PDI leadership had hoped that they would be supported by senior army figures in case of a crisis. No significant support was forthcoming, and this greatly contributed to the indecision and ineffectiveness of the response by the party leadership at this time.

<sup>3</sup> Opposition actors often described the sense of looming political crisis which overshadowed the political landscape as at least superficially similar to the atmosphere of the mid 1960s, as Sukarno's health declined and tensions mounted between the PKI and the army. There was a similar air of expectation, of possibly massive future change, and half-hidden manoeuvring by elite factions. Many activists (half-jokingly) used the old PKI phrase, '*Republik hamil tua*' (the Republic is in the advanced stages of pregnancy) to describe the atmosphere.

<sup>4</sup> Discussion with students at PB HMI (HMI national headquarters), December 23, 1993. Of course, 'waiting for the momentum' could sometimes be used as a rationalisation for cooptation, or as a simple excuse for inaction.

Although opposition actors clearly did face a genuine dilemma, it is difficult to avoid a conclusion that such attitudes trapped much potential opposition in a kind of vicious circle. On the one hand, there was never a sufficiently deep split in the ruling coalition to precipitate meaningful bargaining or otherwise constitute ‘momentum.’ On the other hand, waiting for signs of sharper conflict contributed to the failure of existing fractures to deepen, and made the hoped-for crisis more distant.

Before moving on, it is important to note that even the decline of overt regime disunity from 1994 had a contradictory impact on opposition. The ease with which Suharto re-asserted control, even if it encouraged short term disorientation, also caused re-evaluation in opposition strategies. As the process of ‘sultanisation’ proceeded, it was increasingly clear that Suharto constituted the chief obstacle to reform, leading to re-evaluation by figures like Amien Rais in ICMI, and setting the scene for the 1998 convergence of opposition demands on Suharto. As argued in chapter nine, by closing the path to regime-initiated reform it also (after the intervention of the economic crisis) resulted in a societal/mobilisation-led transition.

## 5.2. The Impact of Opposition on Regime Disunity

As argued in chapter three (and noted above), this study agrees with the thrust of much of the comparative democratisation literature, and some of the literature on Indonesian *keterbukaan*, by concluding that official liberalising moves from the late 1980s were conditioned by elite disunity, even used as weapons of elite competition. They were certainly not ‘forced’ on the regime by societal mobilisation.

However, one conclusion suggested by the Indonesian case is that even where initial liberalising moves seem to emanate wholly from within a ruling elite and are related to internal factional competition, it is still crucial to locate them in the broader context of social change and escalating societal demands. The initiation of *keterbukaan* in 1989 was clearly related to military disgruntlement with the President. But it was also conditioned by Fraksi-ABRI members’ concerns about growing societal unrest and their conclusion that reforms were needed if ‘Pancasila democracy’ was to survive.

In part, promotion of reform by elite factions was thus ‘anticipatory’ in character. This was also largely the case with the Palace camp’s accommodation of the Islamic community. In this case a section of the regime identified a growing and potentially powerful social group (the Islamic middle class) and sought to co-opt it at a time when the political challenge posed by Islam had largely been contained. As *keterbukaan* progressed, other reforms were made in response to manifest and explicit societal demands

The slow gravitation toward reformist postures in parts of the ruling elite prior to 1997 was also greatly influenced by the uncertainties surrounding Presidential succession. Virtually all members of the political elite believed that some measure of political reform would inevitably be required after Suharto left the scene. Establishing reformist credentials and building societal support bases was thus simple prudence for officials whose ambitions stretched into the post-Suharto era. Habibie was the obvious example, but so too were Golkar reformers like Sarwono Kusumaatmadja or Marzuki Darusman and even military officers like Hendropriyono and Agum Gumelar (the chief actors in Megawati's 1996 installment as PDI leader), all of whom benefited from their 'reformist' credentials after the fall of Suharto and ended up with cabinet posts. The difficulty, of course, was that while Suharto still dominated, it was very difficult to build such credentials while maintaining one's position. Thus some officials who promoted themselves as reformers to certain constituencies often concurrently took very hard-line positions against others (witness the role of ABRI Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Syarwan Hamid, who did much to build a reformist image in ICMI circles, yet led the pursuit of the PRD).

The essential overall point is that societal pressures had a clear influence on the way intra-elite conflicts were played out. Conflict would not have fed into support for political liberalisation in the absence of escalating societal demands or at least a societal audience whose allegiance it was politically advantageous to win. Instead it would have remained contained within the political elite. In the words of former Golkar legislator Marzuki Darusman in late 1995: 'this is the key change during the last few years, public opinion is now an important ingredient in Indonesian politics.'<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between elite conflict, political liberalisation and the emergence of opposition was clearly complex (Stepan refers to the 'complex dialectic between regime concession and societal conquest').<sup>2</sup> In the Indonesian case, elite conflict both facilitated the expression of, and was shaped by, societal demands for change. Conflicts within the elite certainly had an independent dynamic, but they would not have generated a process of even tentative political liberalisation in the absence of society's growing restlessness and expectations of reform.

As societal unrest escalated through the mid-1990s, its impact became even more obvious. Suharto's return to repressive policies from 1994, and the associated moves to reassert control over the ruling elite, was an obvious indication of his concern that opposition was becoming dangerous.

## **6. Opposition and Social Structure**

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<sup>1</sup> Interview, November 29, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Stepan, 1988, p. 39.

Chapter one noted the long-running debate in the comparative and historical literature about the relationship between social structure and democratisation, and the identity of the key societal agents in democratisation. While it has been beyond the scope of this thesis to present a detailed class analysis of opposition or regime, I have endeavoured to ground my case studies within a broader social context. It is thus appropriate to end with some conclusions on this score.

In many respects, the increased vigour of opposition during *keterbukaan* clearly did reflect the growth and new political assertiveness of the middle class. Numerous examples could be cited: the increased boldness of the press in response to its largely middle class readership, the ever-increasing range of private and voluntary associations, or the increased vigour of liberal political ideas in intellectual and opposition circles. In many ways, Indonesia seemed to be undergoing the pattern propounded by classic modernisation theory: economic growth giving birth to a larger middle class with interests in greater democracy.

This conclusion is reinforced by the experience of 1998. The middle classes supplied not only the leadership but also many of the foot-soldiers for the *reformasi* movement. Students, intellectuals, NGO activists and artists all played a part. There were eventually even demonstrations by professionals like doctors and stockbrokers. The middle class character of much of the *reformasi* movement concurrently made it more powerful (witness the reaction to the Trisakti murders) and less threatening to the ruling elite than the urban mob.

However, that the pre-condition for the middle class upsurge was the economic crisis of 1997-98, which so dramatically impacted on middle class economic security, immediately suggests some important qualifications. During the *keterbukaan* years of continued growth, the majority of the middle class was not inclined toward opposition. The most obvious product of the middle class boom was instead brash and confident consumerism. Private wealth became more socially legitimate and the newly prosperous took obvious pleasure in their new lifestyles. Many remained directly or indirectly dependent on the state for their prosperity. And overall, the middle class remained a small minority of the population. The government continued a ceaseless propaganda barrage stressing that economic development would be endangered if the iron fist was loosened. All this produced deep currents of political conservatism and apathy in the middle classes. It provided organisations which stood for the status quo (Golkar etc), or which promised gradual change in partnership with the state (like ICMI), significant societal support. It meant that anti-government student activism remained a minority phenomenon on campuses, and that most opposition groups had great difficulty obtaining funding.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NGOs were thus typically obliged to seek sources of funding outside the societal sphere altogether. In the 1970s even LBH, the most important vehicle of liberal dissent, was financially dependent on the state rather than individual donations. As the organisation became alienated from the New Order, it became equally dependent on funds from foreign donor organisations, rather than on domestic sources.



As indicated in chapter one, political ambivalence is a common characteristic of middle classes in developing, authoritarian regimes like Indonesia. Resentment with petty and arbitrary abuses and bureaucratic control produce desire for political reform. But these resentments are often balanced by uncertainties related to the class's intermediate social position and sense of insecurity.

Much of Indonesian middle class opposition was greatly coloured by this ambivalence. The accumulation of much opposition along the blurred divide between state and society, and the many hesitant forms of participation-opposition, reflected deeper middle class ambivalence regarding authoritarianism, democracy and political change.

In much opposition there was a barely concealed subtext of fear of social and political disorder. During discussions with leaders from a wide variety of groups I was frequently struck by their great concern about the possibility that destructive mass unrest (*gejolak*) might accompany (and endanger) future political democratisation. As a result, some saw the rise of the 'undercurrent' (*arus bawah*) in politics as a potentially double-edged sword. From the mid-1990s leaders of groups like YKPK and the PDI spoke incessantly of the looming danger of '*disintegrasi bangsa*' (national disintegration), a phrase which gave vent to a broad gamut of fears. For some, the primary concern was that once political transformation began the nation-state would break up. Others spoke more generally about the decline in 'national unity', pointing to the re-emergence of *aliran* politics and ill-defined inter-group tensions. Very often, such talk was a means to express concern about resurgent Islam and, so the argument went, ICMI's role in fuelling potentially violent sectarian tensions.<sup>1</sup>

Concern about unrest could have a contradictory effect. Many members of Indonesia's middle class and political elite who advocated reform argued that government actions – corruption, unresponsive government, repression, manipulation of religion and so forth – were inflaming social tensions and increasing the potential for disorder. Disaster could only be averted by rectifying bad policies and 'channeling' (*menyalurkan*) the people's aspirations through peaceful, institutional channels (i.e. via political reform). Repression, it was often argued, would ultimately result in explosions.<sup>2</sup> The most spectacular example of such views occurred on a mass scale in 1998, when middle class and elite opinion turned decisively against Suharto because it seemed obvious that his continued occupancy of the Presidency was leading the country toward chaos.

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<sup>1</sup> Underlying this were the long standing fears held by many members of minority groups and others committed to a secular-pluralist vision of society, that social inequality (in conditions where the poor were usually Muslim, and the wealthy disproportionately non-Muslim and Chinese) could easily explode in the form of sectarian rioting or the growth of puritanical and intolerant popular Islamic politics.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Pabotinggi, 1996.

However, while unrest from below remained a vague fear, it could greatly exacerbate caution in middle class opposition. The starkest illustration was those members of the political elite who were disheartened by the new honeymoon between the government and Islam (including some in groups like YKPK). Often these people were highly nervous about broadening political conflict into society, because they were members of minority groups (typically Christians) themselves or were acutely aware of the dangers of sectarian violence. The extreme hesitance of members of minority groups was simply the clearest example of a more general phenomenon. Megawati Soekarnoputri, for example, frequently stressed that above all she sought to avoid clashes involving her followers. Understandable though this was, it greatly contributed to her highly cautious response to the crisis of mid-1996, and to her virtual absence during the final stages of the societal upsurge in 1998.

Such concerns are common in middle class opposition to authoritarian regimes. In the Indonesian case, they were intensified by the country's experiences of political, class and communal conflict prior to the New Order and continuing ideological campaigns on the dangers of unrest (though it is too convenient to dismiss such concerns as products of New Order 'hegemony'; they also reflected genuine structural insecurity). They were also consistent with the tradition of opposition which emerged out of the 1966 New Order coalition, partly defined by hostility to radicalism from below.

However, economic growth produced not only a stronger middle class but also a larger, historically novel industrial working class, and exacerbated social inequalities in rural areas and among the swelling urban poor. Increased mobilisation of lower class groups was important for the spread and escalation of opposition during *keterbukaan*. Many examples could be cited, starting with the student-farmer demonstrations of 1988-89 which heralded the return of protest as a normal part of political life. Similarly, the energisation of the PDI was largely driven by the activation of the party's previously passive populist base, often dragging Megawati and other party leaders in its wake.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of lower class political action on middle class consciousness was substantial. The campaigning by farmers, workers and other lower class groups from early in *keterbukaan* greatly contributed to a widespread and deep sense of social injustice in national political discourse, summed up in the wide currency of such terms as *kesenjangan sosial* (the social gap). The middle class press provided extensive coverage of labour and other forms of lower class discontent. There were exceptions, but in general the tone of reportage was sympathetic. As we have seen, many NGOs – the ideological engines of middle class reform – were particularly concerned about the empowerment of the poor. Although such bodies were widely dismissed as marginal and ineffectual players at the time, in retrospect it appears that they were

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the 'Megawati for President' campaign initiated in late 1995 was essentially a grass-roots initiative, begun by activists from various branches in Central and West Java.

crucial in encouraging a widespread middle class sensibility which combined general sympathy for the disadvantaged with resentment of the deprivations of the ruling elite and desire for political and legal reform. The existence of such a pervasive, but largely hidden, sensibility helps to explain how so many relatively privileged university students and others could so quickly switch from political passivity to active opposition in the weeks after March 1998.

The spread of political activity among the lower classes partly involved the re-awakening of old political forces which had never been part of the New Order, especially Sukarnoism. But it was also facilitated by forces which evolved directly from the New Order dissident tradition. The most vivid example was furnished by the radical students who emphasised mobilisation of the poor, consciously breaking with the 1970s traditions. But the new discourse of popular empowerment affected many other groups, including such clear products of the old 1966 coalition as LBH.

Rueschemeyer et al point to the crucial role which may be played by the democratic-coalition between middle and lower class groups (their focus is the working class). They stress, however, that possibilities for such alliances are historically constituted and that middle class groups will ally with whatever force (including the authoritarian state) appears most likely to advance their interests at a given historical moment. In retrospect, it seems that the *keterbukaan* years marked the beginning of the decisive breakdown of the historic alliance between the New Order state and the middle classes which had been cemented in the 1966 coalition against the left. In subsequent years it had begun to crumble, as the threat from the left dissipated and the middle class grew larger and more confident. But even in the late 1970s, as argued in chapter two, it did not entirely deteriorate. Endeavours by middle class activists to organise and lead lower class groups from the mid-1980s signaled the beginnings of the constitution of a historically new, cross-class democratic coalition.

However, this alliance was not completed even during the key months of 1998. In the tumultuous weeks leading to the fall of Suharto, the social sectors where middle class activists had been most active (the organised working class and the rural population) played little direct role. Mobilisation by the urban poor was, however, pivotal.<sup>1</sup> There were key moments of genuine cross-class mobilisation (one thinks of the huge demonstration of May 20 in Yogyakarta<sup>2</sup>). But on the whole, the middle class and the urban masses were essentially uncoordinated, even often at cross-purposes, with the former partly driven by fear of the latter.

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<sup>1</sup> Although it has been beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the role and political behaviour of the urban poor in any detail, this is obviously a group which has been crucially important for contemporary Indonesian politics, and one which is under-researched.

<sup>2</sup> The massive protests which coincided with the general assembly of the MPR in November 1998, during the Habibie Presidency, were an even clearer example.

Although rioting by the urban poor thus played an important role in splitting open the ruling elite, the *reformasi* movement which produced the fall of Suharto was essentially a middle class phenomenon. In the subsequent transition to democracy, political parties led by sections of Indonesia's social and political elite (especially PDI-Perjuangan) became the means for integrating the frustrations of the lower orders into the new democracy. In the short term, this was beneficial for the democratic transition (as Rueschemeyer et al conclude '[t]he dominant classes accommodated to democracy only as long as the party system effectively promoted their interests.'<sup>1</sup>) In the longer term it implies, in a pattern typical of many third wave democratisations, future struggles by lower class groups to develop independent organisational capacities and win social and economic gains.

## **7. Opposition and the Fall of Suharto**

We are now in a position to address an apparent paradox in the final events leading to Suharto's resignation. These events included many features normally associated with processes of regime 'overthrow' or 'replacement.' There was a sudden collapse of the solidarity and authority of the ruling elite, a dramatic societal upsurge and much violence. However, Suharto handed power to a transitional government composed of representatives of the old regime. Despite the obvious turbulence in the transition, there was a high degree of continuity between the two governments.

A starting point for explaining this apparent paradox is that, as Bermeo argues, much depends not on the mere presence or absence of violence and radicalism in the transition process, but on elite predictions about likely political outcomes, set against their assessments of the costs of maintaining the *status quo*:

When the known costs of governance rise, the projected costs of democracy will seem relatively low if pivotal elites predict that nonextremist forces will take control of the new democratic regime.<sup>2</sup>

As argued in chapter nine, the process of 'sultanisation' had set the scene for a society-led process of regime change. The urban unrest and the student mobilisations fulfilled the most crucial role of opposition: raising the costs of rule. Despite the intricate web of ties which bound the ruling elite to Suharto and the system he had established, its members were eventually confronted with a stark choice between political reform (i.e. abandoning Suharto) or a spiral of unrest. In Indonesia in mid-May 1998, the 'costs of governance' were rising rapidly indeed. After the rioting of May 13-14, fresh outbreaks of violence seemed imminent. With

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<sup>1</sup> Rueschemeyer et al, 1992, p. 287. Witness the stream of donations from big business which flooded into the coffers of the major parties, especially PDI-Perjuangan, after the fall of Suharto (in stark contrast to the situation while he maintained control).

<sup>2</sup> Bermeo, 1997, p. 316.

students singing for the ‘hanging’ of Suharto, Harmoko and other members of the ruling elite, and with the houses of Harmoko and chief Suharto crony Liem Sioe Liong burned down by mobs, the choices could not be clearer. In the words of one figure who was requested to join the reform committee which President Suharto proposed on May 19 as part of his attempt to stay in power: ‘Are you crazy? The people will burn down my house.’<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, certain features of opposition offered a path for elements of the ruling elite to extricate themselves from the crisis. First, there were no strongly organised radical political forces which articulated the explosive mood among the poor. In part, this was due to repression. But it was also because the persistence of semi-pluralism had, at least until recently, provided critically inclined individuals with many legitimate outlets for constrained political activism. This had forestalled the domination of opposition by strong left-wing or Islamist movements based in the lower classes. Unlike in many countries undergoing democratic transitions (for example, Portugal or the Philippines) where working class radicalism or peasant-based insurgencies shadowed the democratisation process, no radical groups based in the lower classes could remotely stake a claim to political power and there was no serious prospect of an overturning of the social system, beyond a purge of the most corrupt elements of the ruling elite.

Second, even if ‘sultanisation’ had set Indonesia on the path of a society-led transition, the middle class and elite groups which dominated opposition remained stamped by the ambivalence and contradictions which Linz long ago argued was typical of opposition under authoritarian regimes. Semi-pluralism and hopes for ‘reform from within’ had resulted in a largely poorly organised and fractured opposition. Attempts to unite came very late in the day, and were largely unsuccessful. Amien Rais’s MAR initiative in mid-May 1998, was immediately followed by public bickering about its membership. Although Amien continued to make half-hearted appeals for some form of collective leadership to replace Suharto, in reality opposition forces were far from being able to form an emergency government.<sup>2</sup> The willingness of Abdurrahman Wahid and others to appear with the President on national television on May 19, apparently endorsing his plan to remain in power until general elections were held (a process which might have taken months, if not years) further illustrated the continuing divisions in potential opposition.

However, as Stepan notes, for the final democratic breakthrough:

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Vatikiotis with Adam Schwarz, ‘A Nation Awakes’, *Far Eastern Economic Review* June 4, 1998, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Reshuffle Kabinet Belum Dapat Kembalikan Kepercayaan Masyarakat’, *Kompas*, May 18, 1998. Indeed, after Prabowo accused it of being unconstitutional, Amien was forced to deny, a week before Suharto’s eventual resignation, that MAR was intended as a ‘competitor’ of the government: ‘Amien Rais: MAR Bukan Tandingan Pemerintah’, *Republika*, May 16, 1998.

A crucial task for the active opposition is to integrate as many antiauthoritarian movements as possible into the institutions of the emerging democratic majority. . . . If the opposition attends only to the task of erosion, as opposed to that of construction, then the odds are that any future change will merely be a shift from one authoritarian government to another, rather than a change from authoritarianism to democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Because there was no ‘credible democratic alternative’ the only viable successor regime was a reconstituted version of the existing one. Although abandoning Suharto entailed risk, for all but those most tainted by their association with him there was still the possibility of a political future.

Third, despite the spread of mass mobilisation and calls for thorough-going reform, the overall tone of middle class opposition remained very moderate in certain crucial respects. Prominent opposition leaders stressed that they desired a peaceful and negotiated transition (*reformasi damai* or ‘peaceful reform’, as one of the catch-cries of April-May put it). They were mostly careful to focus their opprobrium on Suharto and his coterie. Almost the entire spectrum of opposition forces (except for radical student groups) were careful to avoid attacking the military as an institution, even as they criticised particular acts of military brutality. As the political crisis peaked, Amien Rais and others continued to keep open lines of communication with the military and other regime leaders, stressing their desire for a negotiated transition.

In effect, opposition forces pursued an ultimately successful two-pronged attack. The spread of mass mobilisation dramatically raised the costs of governing, presaging a head-on confrontation between state and society. But by focusing on Suharto’s removal, the opposition offered the political establishment, especially the military, a path to extricate itself from the crisis. Amien Rais could hardly have put it more plainly when, speaking at the memorial service for the murdered Trisakti students on May 13, he told the assembled crowd (as paraphrased by *Republika*) that ABRI now had a choice between ‘choosing to defend the interests of the people or the interests of a certain family’.<sup>2</sup>

### **8. Habibie and Democratisation**

These features of opposition made it possible for the bulk of the old governing elite to abandon Suharto, as a concession to the societal upsurge, yet retain power. To be sure, the hard-line elements most closely identified with the former President were excluded from the Habibie government (symbolised by Prabowo’s expulsion from the military). But the military-

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<sup>1</sup> Stepan, 1993, p. 67. Adam Przeworski (1986, p. 52), similarly suggests: ‘A regime does not collapse unless and until some alternative is organized in such a way as to present a real choice for isolated individuals.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘Amien Rais tentang Gugurnya Mahasiswa: Jadikan Semangat Perjuangan Reformasi’, *Republika*, May 14, 1998.

bureaucratic base of the regime remained. There were only minimal attempts to broaden the government by including figures from ICMI and the two political parties in cabinet, and to attract certain critical intellectuals to more junior advisory posts.

Under Habibie, the long-postponed democratisation process finally began. In the weeks and months following Suharto's resignation, typical of *ruptura* cases of democratisation, the country experienced a phenomenon which the Indonesian media labeled 'political euphoria.' Demands which had been repressed or postponed while Suharto remained in power came to the fore. A spirit of protest spread across the country. Farmers occupied land which had long ago been taken from them, protests in regional centres forced resignations by corrupt local administrators, regional aspirations for greater economic, and cultural autonomy, even political independence were voiced, and dozens of new civil society organisations and political parties were formed.<sup>1</sup>

Barely keeping pace with this outpouring, the Habibie government hastily embarked on a process of liberalisation, releasing political prisoners, loosening restrictions on the formation of labour unions and political parties, and dismantling press controls. Although there were still qualifications (such as a restrictive October 1998 law on public demonstrations) this process went immeasurably further than the half-hearted and ultimately abortive *keterbukaan* experiment of earlier years. The speed and depth of Habibie's capitulation must primarily be explained by the intensity of societal mobilisation both before and after Suharto's resignation, again underlining that this was essentially a society-led transition.

In these conditions, there occurred that complicated ballet of bargaining, concession, confrontation and mobilisation typical of third wave democratisations. As Arief Budiman argues, the Habibie government essentially attempted to manage a process of top-down regime transformation, involving transition to more open electoral competition, while maintaining elements of the political system advantageous to the old governing elite.<sup>2</sup> More radical elements, especially many students, still campaigned for the immediate dismantling of the regime, encapsulated by their demand for the government's replacement by a presidium consisting of leaders of societal forces, and for immediate abolition of the military's dual function. This culminated in massive street mobilisations in Jakarta coinciding with the extraordinary session of the MPR in November 1998. Although the military and governing elite had been able to concede to societal demands in May by abandoning Suharto, their radical opponents were now demanding their virtual liquidation. In response, the ruling elite, especially the military, once more closed ranks.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In parts of rural Java protests became so frequent that village heads themselves held demonstrations demanding that the security forces protect them from their own citizens: 'Ratusan Kades "Show of Force" Keliling Alun-alun', *Suara Merdeka*, July 15, 1998; 'Perangkat Desa Ancam Mogok', *Suara Merdeka*, December 5, 1998

<sup>2</sup> Budiman, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Hadiz, 1999, p. 111-12.

However, most sectors of elite opposition, as Liddle argues, were persuaded by Habibie's concurrent offer of a general election 'to stop trying to overthrow Habibie through civil disturbance, as they had just overthrown Suharto, and to start planning for elections.'<sup>1</sup> Although there was no explicit pact between opposition and government, as occurred in some of the Latin American transitions over a decade earlier, an implicit compromise was thus reached. The government, under pressure from mobilisations by students and other opposition radicals, conceded a large degree of liberalisation and a timetable for democratic elections. Mainstream leaders of opposition (notably, Megawati, Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid) in turn agreed to accept this framework and abandoned attempts to overthrow the government by extra-parliamentary means.

This set the scene for the June 1999 elections, the defeat for Golkar they entailed, and the political manoeuvres which occurred in subsequent months. During this period, deal-making, negotiation and horse-trading came even more to the fore, ultimately resulting in Abdurrahman Wahid's final election to the Presidency as a compromise candidate supported by elements of the old regime and the main Islamic-based parties.

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<sup>1</sup> Liddle, 1999, p. 111.