

THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC IN SUMATRA

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The establishment of a Republican government in Sumatra, between August and October 1945, was the result of an autonomous revolution, or series of revolutions, which echoed the revolutionary process in Java, but were quite distinct from it. The central Republican government had virtually no direct means of control over Sumatra until April 1946, when a delegation under the Defense Minister Amir Sjarifuddin toured the island. The teams of *pemuda* (youth) propagandists sent from Djakarta by Sjarifuddin in September formed an earlier direct link, but they do not appear to have reached West Sumatra until the end of October, and North Sumatra until November.¹ The desire on the part of the *pemuda* in Sumatra to imitate what little they knew of the Javanese example was a compelling one, but it was spontaneous and uncontrolled.

The autonomous nature of the early months of revolution in Sumatra makes it necessary to give the matter some separate attention. The excellent work on the early revolution in Java by Kahin, Smail, Anderson, Hatta, and the Waseda University team of Nishijima, Kishi, and Hayashi² has already made the general scenario familiar,

1. The Sumatran commander, General Tanabe, testified that these *pemuda* landed in South Sumatra in early September. Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Indisch Collectie (hereafter abbreviated as I.C.), 059351. However, they appear to turn up first in Palembang only on October 1, in West Sumatra on October 30, and in Atjeh about November 25. Kementerian Penerangan, Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan (Djakarta: n.p., 1954), p. 41. Kementerian Penerangan, Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah (Djakarta: n.p., n.d.), pp. 94-95. Semangat Merdeka (Kutaradja), November 27, 1945.
2. G. McT. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952); John R. W. Smail, Bandung in the Early Revolution 1945-1946: A study in the Social History of the Indonesian Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1964); Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics under the Japanese Occupation: 1944-1945 (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1961), and "The Pemuda Revolution: Indonesian Politics, 1945-1946" (unpublished thesis, Cornell University, 1967; Waseda Daigaku, Tokyo, Okuma Memorial Social Sciences Research Center (team led by Nishijima), Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Clearing House for Federal Scientific and Technical Information, Joint Publications Research Service, 1963); Mohammad Hatta, Sekitar Proklamasi 17 Agustus 1945 (Djakarta: Tintamas, 1969).

but the political balance among the actors was quite different. Most notably, the official Republican leadership was very much weaker in relation first to the Allies and later to the pemuda activists.

Japanese Policies

A major effect of the Japanese occupation of Sumatra was to decapitate all organizational activity there. On the one hand, the connection with Java was totally severed to insulate Sumatra, as far as possible, from the relatively advanced political climate of Java. On the other hand, as we will consider at the end of this section, organizational contact even within Sumatra above the residency level was made very difficult until the last six months of the occupation.

Early in the occupation a clear distinction was observable between Japanese planning for Java, and for the rest of Indonesia. Java, which was under the 16th Army, was considered capable of making political progress. The relatively sparsely populated islands of Borneo, Celebes, and the Lesser Sundas, administered by the Japanese Navy, were to be "retained in future for the benefit of the Empire."³ Malaya and Sumatra, united under the 25th Army, were described as "the nuclear zone of the Empire's plans for the Southern Area,"⁴ because of their strategic importance as well as their economic value as sources of oil, rubber, and tin. According to a Japanese policy statement of April 1942, Malaya and Sumatra were ultimately to revert to Japan,⁵ and as late as December 1942 a high Japanese official saluted the inhabitants of Penang as "the new Japanese people."⁶ Thus the Japanese permitted no talk of independence in Sumatra, nor any other political activity except propaganda for immediate Japanese purposes. All Indonesian political organizations there were suppressed within a few weeks of the Japanese occupation.

Only after April 1943, when Sumatra was separated from Malaya administratively, was there some reconsideration of this policy in light of the worsening war situation. But the 25th Army, which now administered Sumatra alone, consistently fought against any concessions in the direction of independence there and took the limited steps it did only reluctantly, under pressure from Tokyo or their more hard-pressed colleagues in Java. As General Shimura, who guided the Sumatra administration from January 1944, said:

3. Army-Navy Agreement, November 26, 1941, in Benda, Irikura, and Kishi (eds.), Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia: Selected Documents (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1965), p. 7. Also ibid., p. 29.

4. Instructions on the administration of Malaya and Sumatra, April 1942, in ibid., p. 169.

5. Ibid., p. 169.

6. Penang Shimbun, December 19, 1942.

Little effort was made in this direction [independence] in Sumatra, prior to May 1945, as the demand for independence was not nearly so strong as in Java. The opinion of the Japanese Army officials in Sumatra was that the people of that country were not sufficiently developed, socially and culturally, to take on themselves the responsibilities of self-government. They therefore approached the task in a "half-hearted manner."⁷

The commander in Sumatra, General Tanabe, insofar as he deigned to notice Indonesian politics at all, endorsed Shimura's picture.

Before the Japanese capitulation there was really little question of an Indonesian Independence movement, and very certainly not of help from the side of the Japanese military Government. . . . What this independence should consist of was not clear to me, probably something different to Manchukuo since the institution of a Volksraad is not known there. I must remark here that I have never been interested in politics, and thus I know little about it.⁸

At the first Imperial Conference on the question of Indonesia's future in May 1943, the 25th Army opposed any meaningful concessions, while the 16th Army in Java pressed for a commitment to independence. The compromise agreed upon was that no part of Indonesia would be permitted independence, but political participation could be granted to Java at once and other areas in accordance with their readiness.⁹ In Java this led to the rapid establishment of advisory councils in each residency, surmounted by the Central Advisory Council for all Java headed by Sukarno. Java-wide movements had already been founded or sanctioned early in 1943 as vehicles for the nationalist politicians (Putera, to be followed by Jawa Hōkōkai), and for the Muslims (MIAI, to be followed by Masjumi). Thus a Java-wide Indonesian leadership was to a considerable extent encouraged by the 16th Army. Its power was contained by balancing nationalists, Muslims and *pamong pradja* (bureaucracy) against each other at the all-Java level, rather than by regional checks.

In Sumatra the Japanese reluctantly agreed to the establishment of regional advisory councils (*Shū Sangi Kai*) in each of the ten residencies in November 1943. The councils met only twice a year to consider a politically innocuous list of questions submitted by the Japanese *chōkan* (resident). In those residencies which were

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7. Interrogation of General Shimura, I. C. 009403. Also I. J. Brugmans, H. J. de Graaf, A. H. Joustra, and A. G. Vromans (eds.), Nederlandsch-Indië onder Japanse Bezetting: Gegevens en documenten over de jaren 1942-1945 (Francker: Wever, 1960), p. 584.
 8. Interrogation of General Tanabe, I. C. 059351.
 9. Nishijima, et. al., Japanese Military Administration, pp. 122-124 and 372. Benda, Irikura, and Kishi, Japanese Military Administration, pp. 237-240.

considered potentially explosive, the Japanese were careful to balance the representation of *pergerakan* (popular movement, both political and religious) against that of the *pamong pradja* and *keradjaan* (traditional rulers).¹⁰ At about the same time propaganda organizations began to be set up in some residencies as a means of controlling the erstwhile politicians and Muslim reformers of the *pergerakan* and using them as a counterweight to the administrative authority of the *keradjaan*.¹¹ In Palembang, Lampung, West Sumatra, Tapanuli, and Atjeh, these sectional organizations were dissolved into a broader *Hökökai*, or *Badan Kebaktian Rakjat* (People's Loyalty Organization) in early 1945. These later organizations were modelled on the *Djawa Hökökai* headed by Sukarno, with the same double purpose of diluting the *pergerakan* while providing a broader front against the approaching Allies.¹² They differed from the Javanese model, however, in that like all other Indonesian organizations in Sumatra they were strictly confined to the residency level.

The deteriorating Japanese military position during 1944 necessitated a revision of the May 1943 policy for Indonesia, with the result that Premier Koiso publicly promised on September 7, 1944 eventual independence of the East Indies. Although the territorial limits of the future state remained undecided because of objections by the Navy as well as the 25th Army, it was decided that Sumatra as well as Java would immediately be permitted to use the national Indonesian flag and anthem already popularized before the war.¹³ Mainly for this reason, the Koiso statement did have considerable impact in Sumatra, in marked contrast to previous Japanese concessions.¹⁴ But despite the extensive use of these

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10. Nishijima, et. al., Japanese Military Administration, pp. 171-172. Kita-Sumatora-sinbun (Medan), November 11, 1943. This balance was particularly necessary in Atjeh, East Sumatra, and West Sumatra, as all of those residencies had experienced tensions between the two groups at the time of the Japanese invasion.
 11. The East Sumatran body, formed on November 28, 1943, was known as BOMPA (*Badan Oentoeik Membantu Pertahanan Asia*). In Atjeh *Maibkatra* (*Madjelis agama Islam untuk bantuan kemakmuran Asia Timur Raja di Atjeh*) had been established for Muslim leaders in March 1943. Tapanuli had its *Bapen* (*Badan Pertahanan Negeri*) and West Sumatra its *Giyūgun Kōen-Kai*. The suspicion of all politicians in Palembang following mass arrests in September 1943 evidently prevented the formation of such a body there.
 12. Kita-Sumatora-sinbun, November 26, 2063 [1943]. Kementerian Penerangan, Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara (Djakarta: n.p., 1953), p. 21. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, pp. 79-80. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan, pp. 33-34. A. J. Piekaar, Atjeh en de oorlog met Japan (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1949), pp. 205-206 and 240-241.
 13. Nishijima, et. al., Japanese Military Administration, pp. 373-380, 642-644; Benda, Irikura, and Kishi, Japanese Military Administration, pp. 240-262.
 14. Hadji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah [Hamka], Kenang-kenangan Hidup (2nd ed.; Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1966), pp. 239-244. Dr. Amir's notes, June 14, 1946, I. C. 005964.

"Indonesian" symbols for propaganda purposes, the 25th Army continued to insist that Sumatra follow a separate path from Java. At the same time it delayed as long as possible any transfer of responsibilities to Indonesians.

The initial 16th Army plan in January 1945 for a Body for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence (Badan Penyelidik Kemerdekaan Indonesia, or BPKI) was that it should comprise "influential residents of Java and Sumatra."¹⁵ This would have provided the first opportunity for Sumatran leaders to consult with their more advanced colleagues in Java. However, no delegates from Sumatra were included when the BPKI composition was announced on April 29, presumably because of opposition from the Sumatra command. In the same vein General Shimura repeatedly refused permission for Sukarno to visit Sumatra because he feared that "the independence movement might get out of hand and not follow the path prescribed for it by the Japanese authorities."¹⁶ From early 1945, however, higher military authorities were convinced that Sumatra would have to be included in a credible Indonesian state. At a series of hasty meetings held in Tokyo and Singapore between April and July 1945 to clarify Japanese policy, the 25th Army's misgivings were repeatedly overruled, and it was instructed to make rapid preparations for Indonesian independence.¹⁷ But Tokyo conceded that although the independence of the whole former East Indies would be declared at one time:

Those areas which have not completed preparations shall gradually be transferred to the jurisdiction of the new independent nation in accordance with the progress of independence preparations.¹⁸

At least as late as June 1945, Sumatran leaders appeared to be understandably unsure whether the old slogan, *Sumatera Baru* (New Sumatra), or the new one, *Indonesia Merdeka* (Free Indonesia), more accurately represented Japanese plans for them.¹⁹

Besides sealing Sumatra off altogether from Java, the Japanese also made regular contact between residencies within Sumatra extremely difficult. Until the last two months of the occupation, all Japanese-sponsored organizations were strictly confined to the residency level, and the few nonpolitical prewar organizations like Muhammadiyah and Taman Siswa found contact beyond this level virtually impossible. Moreover, wartime conditions made communication

15. Benda, Irikura, and Kishi, Japanese Military Administration, p. 263.

16. Interrogation of General Shimura, I. C. 009405.

17. Interrogation of General Tanabe, I. C. 059351, and General Hamada, I. C. 059353. Benda, Irikura, and Kishi, Japanese Military Administration, pp. 265-274.

18. Decision of Supreme War Guidance Council, July 17, 1945, in Benda, Irikura, and Kishi, Japanese Military Administration, p. 274.

19. See for example the speeches hailing the Sumatra Chūō Sangi In in Kita-Sumatora-sinbun, June 27, 2605 [1945].

extremely difficult for Indonesians even on a personal or commercial basis. The only opportunities leaders of various regions had to compare notes came during the Syonan (Singapore) Islamic Conference in April 1943, the journeys of various delegations to Japan during 1943, and the elaborate ceremonies in Bukittinggi in October 1944 to "receive" the Koiso promise.²⁰ These gatherings contributed little to the emergence of a Sumatra-wide leadership because of the stifling political control maintained by the Japanese in Sumatra. For example, the Atjehnese Teuku Muhamad Hasan from Glumpang Pajong, appointed leader of the Sumatran delegation to Japan in the second half of 1943, was arrested and executed a few months after his return.²¹

This horizontal fragmentation notwithstanding, the differences between Japanese and Dutch divide-and-rule policies are more instructive than the parallels so stimulatingly drawn by Anderson.²² The Dutch colonial system in practice was highly centralized and subjected the Indonesian elite to economic, educational, legal, and administrative pressures which were all centripetal. Dutch strategies were based on Indonesia-wide calculations, whereby the growing power of the nationally-oriented urban intelligentsia was to be balanced by the encouragement of local political loyalties and concerns. They found ready support for this strategy among Indonesians resentful of the pace of centralization and suspicious of the larger or more advanced ethnic groups with which it brought them into contact. Japanese administration, on the other hand, was essentially fragmented. There was scarcely any coordination between the army and the navy, and not a great deal even between the 16th and 25th Armies. Even within Sumatra communication difficulties and the stress on economic self-sufficiency in each residency made it necessary for each Japanese chōkan to find his own solutions. Regional division became an objective fact, and the significant Japanese policies were framed at the residency level. Rather than balancing regional loyalties against each other or Java, the Japanese exploited wherever necessary the divisions *within* the residency, typically between the pergerakan and the keradjaan. This policy had serious consequences in the violent post-surrender confrontation of these balanced forces in several residencies, notably Atjeh and East Sumatra. But from the standpoint of Indonesian unity, the results of three years of Japanese rule were on balance positive. Almost every social and ethnic group in Sumatra was irked by the extreme isolation of the Japanese period. Only those with long memories were particularly conscious of ethnic and regional suspicions at the war's end. The enthusiasm of youth for unity above all was heightened by the fact they had never had the opportunity to enjoy it.

20. Atjeh Sinbun (Kutaradja), November 7-14, 2604 [1944].

21. Piekaar, Atjèh, pp. 214, and 231-232.

22. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "Japan: 'The Light of Asia,'" in Josef Silverstein (ed.), Southeast Asia in World War II: Four Essays (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1966), p. 17.

Preparation for Independence

The first concession towards allowing the development of political leadership above the residency level in Sumatra was the announcement on March 24, 1945 that a Sumatran Central Advisory Council (Chūō Sangi In) would at last be set up--almost two years after that of Java. Fifteen members were elected by the ten regional advisory councils, and on May 17 the Japanese command in Bukittinggi appointed an additional twenty-five members. As usual, a careful balance was preserved between representatives of opposing groups in the key residencies.²³ At the end of May the Gunseikanbu (military administration) in Bukittinggi announced its appointees. Mohammad Sjafei,²⁴ founder of the experimental school at Kaju Tanam, West Sumatra, was appointed chairman of the forthcoming Central Advisory Council, with T. Njak Arif²⁵ of Atjeh and Mr. Abdul Abbas²⁶ of Lampung as vice-chairman. A substantial permanent secretariat for the Council was established, headed by the leading Sumatran journalist, Djamaluddin Adinegoro,²⁷ who moved from Medan to Bukittinggi and resigned his

23. See appendix for the composition of the Chūō Sangi In.
24. Engku Mohammad Sjafei (1901-1969), adopted son of a prominent Minangkabau teacher and writer, Marah Soetan, was educated in the Bukittinggi teachers' college. Subsequently in Batavia, and in Europe (1922-1924), he was especially drawn to the study of painting and educational theory. In 1926 he founded his Indische Nationale School (I.N.S.) for teachers in Kaju Tanam, West Sumatra, where the curriculum stressed self-expression and the arts and attempted to embody specifically Indonesian values. Politically Sjafei was associated with Indische Partij/Insulinde before visiting Europe and Hatta's PNI-baru thereafter. He was chairman of the West Sumatra Shū Sangi Kai (1943-1945) and Hōkōkai (1945), the first Republican resident of West Sumatra (1945), and was later named Minister of Education (June-October 1946).
25. Teuku Njak Arif (1900-1946), educated at the Bukittinggi Teachers' College and the OSVIA in Serang, was the Panglima Sagi of the XXVI Mukims in Atjeh Besar. He established himself as the most prominent Atjehnese nationalist during his period in the Volksraad (1927-1931). Despite his uncompromising opposition to some aspects of the Japanese regime, he was recognized by 1943 as the principal Atjehnese spokesman. He was the Republican resident of Atjeh until he was removed during the anti-ulèëbalang action of December 1945.
26. Mr. Abdul Abbas, of Mandailing origin, obtained his law degree in Holland. He was the prewar Parindra leader in Lampung and became Chairman of the Lampung Shū Sangi Kai, and first Republican resident of Lampung until he was "daulat"-ed by the pemuda in September 1946.
27. Djamaluddin Adinegoro (1903-?) was given the former name, but adopted the latter. Born in Sawahlunto, the son of a District Chief, he was closely related to both Dr. Amir and Muhammad Yamin. He studied medicine in Batavia (STOVIA) and journalism in Munich (1925-1929). From 1931 he was chief editor of the leading Indonesian daily in Sumatra, Pewarta Deli, and for many years a member of the Medan gemeenteraad (city council). He was the only

elected seat in the council. These four men were built up in the Japanese-controlled press during June and July as the *Empat Serangkai* of Sumatra, comparable with the Sukarno-Hatta-Ki Hadjar Dewantoro-K.H.M. Mansur team in Java.²⁸

The Japanese prepared an agenda of questions for the Central Advisory Council concerning means of strengthening the unity and resolve of Sumatrans in the Greater East Asia War.²⁹ But the questions were framed generally enough to permit the braver members to voice some of their demands for more educational opportunities, lower prices, and further progress towards independence. After meeting from June 27 to July 2, the Council passed a series of resolutions calling for further institutions at the all-Sumatra level, notably: (1) a preparatory committee for independence; (2) a Sumatera Hōkōkai, linking the residency propaganda organizations; (3) a higher Islamic college; (4) a liaison office to link the residency People's Guidance Bureaus; (5) a national banking system; and (6) a strong "people's army" (*lasjkar rakjat*) built on the foundation of the Japanese-trained Giyūgun (army volunteers) and Heihō (military auxiliaries). Dr. Gani called for a minimum strength of 500,000 men.³⁰ The newspaper reports of speeches and resolutions suggested a continuing uncertainty at the meeting between Sumatera Baru and Indonesia Merdeka. On the other hand Hamka holds in retrospect:

There the spirit of unity was firm. There the spirit of wanting to divide Sumatra from a united Indonesia was clearly opposed.³¹

The Japanese appear to have indicated their readiness to implement all the resolutions of the Council.³² They did announce the formation of a separate Sumatran Committee to Investigate the Preparation of Independence (Panitia Penyelidik Persiapan Kemerdekaan) with a heavy weighting of intellectuals calculated to bridge the gulf between pergerakan and keradjaan.³³ They also made a cautious start

resident Sumatran in a potential Indonesian Cabinet presented to the Japanese in March 1942 by the leading nationalist parties. The Japanese appointed him editor of the Sumatera-sinbun (later Kita-Sumatora-sinbun) and vice-chairman of the East Sumatra Shū Sangi Kai. Atjeh Sinbun, May 29, 2605 [1945]; Nishijima, et. al., Japanese Military Administration, p. 342.

28. Ali Hasjmy, in Atjeh Sinbun, July 24, 2605 [1945].

29. Atjeh Sinbun, June 28, 2605 [1945].

30. Ibid., June 29, July 3, and July 31, 2605 [1945]; Penang Shimbun, July 11, 1945.

31. Nishijima, et. al., Japanese Military Administration, p. 263.

32. Penang Shimbun, July 11, 1945.

33. Atjeh Sinbun, July 28, 2605 [1945]. For the membership of this body, which never met, see Appendix.

towards establishing a unified Islamic movement by extending the West Sumatran Madjelis Islam Tinggi (Supreme Islamic Conference) to other residencies,³⁴ and appointed Sjech Mohammad Djamil Djambek adviser on Islamic affairs for all Sumatra.³⁵ But all such cautious moves were rapidly overtaken by the rush of events in August.

The last-minute attempts to create a Sumatran leadership were significant. Sjafei and Adinegoro headed an embryo Sumatra bureaucracy with contacts throughout the island, and the press made their names familiar in every residency. On July 25 they were also appointed chairman and secretary respectively of the Committee to Investigate the Preparation of Independence, and on the following day they began a speechmaking tour of Sumatra.³⁶ In the closing months of the occupation the Japanese seem also to have recognized Dr. A. K. Gani's position as the only national-level prewar politician in Sumatra,³⁷ although he had been arrested and tortured during the razzia of September 1943. Hamka points out that at the Central Advisory Council it was the unofficial gatherings of leaders from different districts which were most important in establishing a unified approach to the problem of independence. In such gatherings, "M. Sjafei was recognized quite apart from his recognition by the Japanese as the leader to be put forward."³⁸ Hamka also considered Dr. A. K. Gani, T. Njak Arif, and Dr. Ferdinand Lumbantobing to have achieved positions of acknowledged leadership as a result of their

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34. E.g. to Riau in May 1945; Atjeh Sinbun, May 31, 2605 [1945]. The Madjelis Islam Tinggi in Bukittinggi continued this rôle after the proclamation, and succeeded in holding an all-Sumatra Islamic conference in December 1945.
35. Atjeh Sinbun, May 29, 2605 [1945].
36. Ibid., July 19, 1945; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan, p. 35. The plan was for a two-month tour of Sumatra from South to North, but the only major center they reached before the surrender was Palembang on August 1-4 where their visit gave rise to a local independence investigating committee.
37. General Shimura stated that Sjafei, Adinegoro, and Gani "were the Sumatrans' leaders in all negotiations with the Japanese," I. C. 009402. Dr. Adnan Kapau Gani (1909-1968), a Minangkabau, studied medicine in Djakarta. He was founder and chairman of Gerindo, the major socialist party (1937-1941), and secretary of the political federation Gapi (1941). He moved from Djakarta to Palembang in 1940. The Japanese initially distrusted him, presumably because of his association with Amir Sjarifuddin, and imprisoned him for several months in 1943. He rapidly returned to prominence after the Koiso statement, as chairman of the Palembang Shū Sangi Kai, deputy to the Japanese chōkan, and eventually the first Republican resident in Palembang. He entered the Republican Cabinet as economic minister in October, 1946, and was deputy premier in 1947.
38. Hamka, Kenang-kenangan Hidup, p. 262.

strongly nationalist stand.

Inexplicably, the Japanese abandoned the leaders they had been developing when they appointed Sumatra's delegates to the Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence--PPKI) in early August. Mr. Abdul Abbas was one of the delegates, but the other two were Medan intellectuals who had not even been members of the Central Advisory Council--Dr. Mohammad Amir³⁹ and Mr. T. M. Hasan.⁴⁰ It seems possible that the Japanese planners in Singapore or Djakarta distrusted the leadership developed by the intransigent 25th Army as too distinctly Sumatran, or too much the creatures of the Gunseikan.⁴¹ But on either count the most logical appointee would have been Dr. Gani. Whatever the reason, the consequences were more serious than anyone would have expected.

The three Sumatran delegates arrived in Djakarta on August 14, in the same Japanese bomber as Sukarno and Hatta. They remained to witness the dramatic proclamation of independence following the Japanese surrender and to play their part in establishing a constitution and a government. Both Amir and Hasan expressed their fears

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39. Dr. Mohammad Amir (1900-1949), another Minangkabau, studied medicine in Batavia (STOVIA, 1918-1923) and Utrecht (1924-1928), specializing in psychiatry. From his student days he was a prominent essayist and an editor of Jong Sumatra (1917-1922) and later Penindjauan. He appears not to have been a party man after the failure of the moderate Partai Rakjat Indonesia in 1930, though sympathizing with Parindra. Like many Indonesian intellectuals he was attracted to the theosophist movement in the 1920's, but became more involved than most, and married the daughter of Ir. Fournier, the leading Dutch theosophist in Java. He lived in Medan from 1934 and from 1937 was personal physician to the Sultan of Langkat. He appears to have been valued by the Japanese because of his links with both pergerakan and keradjaan and because his Dutch wife made him especially vulnerable. He was appointed minister without portfolio in Sukarno's first cabinet, and deputy-governor of Sumatra from December 1945 until his defection from the Republic the following April.
40. Teuku Mohammad Hasan (born 1906), eldest son of the ulèëbalang of Pineuëng, in the Pidië district of Atjeh, obtained his law degree from Leiden (1933). From 1936 he was attached to the commission investigating administrative decentralization in the outer islands, and in 1938 transferred to the new office of governor of Sumatra in Medan. Studious and devout, his relations with Medan ulama were good, though he was not completely trusted by the Atjehnese PUSA. During the Japanese occupation he was concerned mainly with rice production and distribution, but became a confidant of the East Sumatra chōkan during 1944-1945 and was eventually appointed Kōseikyokuchō (head of bureau dealing with petitions).
41. Dr. Amir stated that Yamaguchi, head of political affairs in Sumatra, was piqued that the choice of delegates had been made in Singapore or Djakarta without reference to the 25th Army; I. C. 005966. On the other hand Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, p. 83, claims it was the 25th Army who obstructed Sjafei's departure for the PPKI.

of Javanese centralism in the PPKI debates, Amir pleading:

that the maximum decentralization be allowed for the islands outside Java, that governments be set up there, and that the people there be given the right to manage their domestic affairs to the widest extent.⁴²

On August 19 the PPKI debated the structure of provincial government, and decided that Sumatra would constitute one province under one governor, dismissing the arguments of several members that the size and diversity of Sumatra necessitated three separate provinces, as in Java, or at least three deputy-governors in Medan, Bukittinggi, and Palembang. As Sumatran representative on the subcommittee which had met the previous night to settle these matters, Dr. Amir was able to secure the appointment of Mr. T. M. Hasan as governor and Medan as the capital. Hasan's prewar experience in the office of the Sumatran governor was the principal reason advanced for his selection, though the importance of Atjehnese support for the Republic cannot have been overlooked.⁴³ The third and final session of the PPKI on August 22 established the Partij Nasional Indonesia (PNI) as the state party, Komité Nasional Indonesia (KNI) at various levels as representative councils, and the Badan Keamanan Rakjat (BKR) as the armed force of the Republic.⁴⁴ The following day the three Sumatran delegates flew to Palembang on one of the last Japanese flights permitted by the Allies, with instructions to implement these decisions in Sumatra in cooperation with Sjafei and Adinegoro. Dr. Gani was specifically instructed to organize the PNI and Mr. Abbas the KNI in Sumatra.⁴⁵ Hasan as governor would appoint Republican residents, who would attempt to take the initiative in government from the Japanese.

The Obstacles

The task of the three returning delegates was a formidable one. The preparation for independence by the Japanese had been minimal in comparison with Java, and what there was had been centered in Bukittinggi. Mr. Hasan in particular had no reputation outside

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42. Muhammad Yamin (ed.), Naskah persiapan Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 (Djakarta: Jajasan Prapantja, 1959), I, 410 and 419. I have here translated from the seemingly more coherent text in Iwa Kusuma Sumantri, Sedjarah Revolusi Indonesia (Djakarta: n.p., 1963), p. 132. Dr. Amir's importance in stressing the need for a rapid independence proclamation is emphasized by Hatta, Sekitar Proklamasi, pp. 21-22.
43. Yamin, Naskah persiapan, I, 439-440, 450-453; Hatta, Sekitar Proklamasi, pp. 61-62. Interviews.
44. Koesnodiprodjo (ed.), Himpunan undang2, peraturan2, penetapan2, pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 1945 (Djakarta: Seno, 1951), pp. 117-120.
45. Dr. Amir's notes, June 14, 1946, I. C. 005966; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatra Selatan, p. 37; Hamka, Kenang-kenangan Hidup, p. 279.

Medan and Atjeh, and in establishing his headquarters in Medan he had to make a fresh start altogether. The various residencies remained isolated from each other, and within many of them existing social divisions had been exacerbated by the Japanese to the point where no cohesive action was possible.

To take advantage of these relative weaknesses on the side of the Republic, the Dutch presence was established earlier and more energetically in Medan than elsewhere in Java or Sumatra. An Anglo-Dutch Country Section (ADCS) of Force 136 was formed in Colombo early in 1945 and parachuted three small commando units into North Sumatra at the end of June. Their task was to gather information and make contacts which might be useful in Mountbatten's projected invasion of Malaya on September 9. A fourth unit, led by Naval Lieutenant Brondgeest, and like the others overwhelmingly Dutch in composition, landed near Pangkalan Brandan on August 25. At the end of August all of these units received instructions to leave their bivouacs and contact the local Japanese commands in Kutaradja, Rantau Prapat, Bagan Siapiapi, and Medan, respectively, in order to ensure the welfare of Allied prisoners of war and internees.⁴⁶ By September 1 Brondgeest was established in Medan's leading hotel, whence he made contact not only with the Japanese, but with the Sultans of Langkat and Deli and other prominent Indonesians who, while demanding some reforms, promised to cooperate with the Dutch.

Brondgeest quickly formed the opinion that little could be expected from either the British or Japanese, but that by acting independently with the support of local Ambonese and Menadonese the Dutch officers could control Medan and check any large-scale Republican movement until Dutch troops could land. Through his Dutch superior in ADCS, Admiral Helfrich, he obtained permission "to organize a police force to take power into our own hands over as extensive as possible an area of East Sumatra."⁴⁷ On September 14 another Dutch commando, the tough and subsequently notorious Lieutenant Westerling, and three Dutch sergeants were parachuted into Medan with 180 revolvers to train and equip this police force. By early October Westerling appears to have commanded a tolerably well-armed and trained force of almost two hundred men, with some hundreds more ex-POWs anxious to join it if arms could be found. The force set a watch on strategic installations such as electricity and water supply, and conducted regular patrols of Medan and the route to Belawan with a couple of commandeered Japanese armored

46. Tweede Kamer, Staten-Generaal, Netherlands, Enquête-commissie regeringsbeleid 1940-1945, militair beleid, terugkeer naar Nederlandsch-Indië (The Hague: Staatsdrukkerij- en Uitgeverijbedrijf, 1956), 8A and B, 585, 590, 593, and Appendix p. 126; Conrad E. L. Helfrich, Memoires (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1950), II, 237-238. Both Helfrich and the Enquête-commissie report state that Brondgeest's unit was dropped on August 15, but I have followed Brondgeest's written submission to the Enquête-commissie on this.

47. Brondgeest in Enquête-commissie, p. 588.

cars.⁴⁸ The Dutch claimed, with considerable exaggeration, that they controlled the city until the arrival of the British.⁴⁹

During the first month following the Japanese surrender Allied radio control and air supply was much better with Sumatra than with Java. From August 21 leaflets began to be dropped in various parts of Sumatra on behalf of NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration).⁵⁰ Within a few weeks of the surrender a provisional NICA administration for Sumatra, under Allied military auspices, was formed under Dr. Beck and Resident Bruggemans, both brought from the Dutch camp at Rantau Prapat. On October 3 about sixty key men from the prewar administration were brought from the camp to Medan to begin in secret the reconstruction of a modified *ancien régime*.⁵¹ In West Sumatra Resident Bosselaer went even further towards re-establishing a NICA administration and attempting to send official instructions to the *demang* (Indonesian district heads).⁵²

The public announcement of the Japanese surrender on August 22 was generally taken to mean that the old masters would return, and internal adjustments would have to be made accordingly. Dutch detainees in their camps were inundated with gifts and visits from Indonesian well-wishers, both genuine and opportunist. Chinese everywhere rejoiced at what they believed to be a victory for their fatherland. The *keradjaan* element which had lost some power and status at the hands of the Japanese made no secret of its hope of regaining both under the Dutch. The ending of the Muslim fast on September 7 became the occasion for many attempts to mend fences with outstanding pro-Dutch figures. As late as October 6, an

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48. *Ibid.*, pp. 588-594; Helfrich, Memoires, II, 237-238; Raymond Westerling, Challenge to Terror (London: W. Kimber, 1952), pp. 38-50. While Helfrich states and Westerling implies a strength below 200 for the police force, Brondgeest claimed that the 800 men of the 26th Indian Division landed on October 12 were "fewer than I now had at my own disposal."
49. Helfrich, Memoires, II, 269, whose purpose was polemical, claimed that the force "completely controlled Medan and its immediate environs. There was peace and order." Another Dutch commando, who spent four days in Medan at the beginning of October en route to become Allied representative in Atjeh (October 5-November 15), said of it, "The situation there was tense, but was controlled by a very able police commandant--Raymond Westerling." "Contact met Atjeh," Vrij Nederland, January 19, 1946.
50. Seksi Penerangan, Dokumentasi Komite Musjawarah Angkatan 45, Daerah Istimewa Atjeh, Modal Revolusi 45 (Kutaradja: 1960), p. 28; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, p. 39.
51. Enquête-commissie, pp. 585-586; Willem Brandt, De Gele Terreur (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1946), pp. 215-219; Oostkust van Sumatra Instituut, Kroniek, 1941-1946 (Amsterdam: 1948), pp. 45-46, and 52.
52. Enquête-commissie, p. 598. Mohammad Said, Empat Belas Boelan Pendoedoean Inggeris di Indonesia (Medan: Kantor Berita Antara, 1946), p. 32.

estimated crowd of 30,000 attended the installation of the new Sultan of Deli, whose well-known skepticism of the Republic was apparent in the official seating arrangements.⁵³

Those who had more to lose by the Dutch return were initially more demoralized than militant. An Indonesian doctor who had headed the Simelungun BOMPA branch committed suicide in Pematang Siantar after having been questioned by a Swiss Red Cross team. Many others fled to other parts of Sumatra or to Java, fearing retribution from the enemies they had made through association with the Japanese. Sjafei, the pre-arranged Sumatran leader, withdrew from his Bukittinggi office to Kaju Tanam to await developments. The vast majority of the population waited in passive hope that the surrender would bring an end to the terrible shortage of food, clothing, and medical attention. The plight of plantation laborers in particular was so desperate that they would have supported anyone who could rescue them from starvation.⁵⁴

The acute social and ethnic divisions of East Sumatra made this a particularly difficult place for Hasan and Amir to attempt to establish a government. The two leaders themselves, after driving north from Palembang discussing the PPKI decisions with a handful of leaders along the way, were shaken by the reports coming from their own residency. Hearing in Tarutung that the sultans were planning to arrest all those they regarded as collaborators, Dr. Amir feared for his life. These reports soon proved to be based only on some meetings among the sultans, popular leaders such as the communists Karim M. S. and Luat Siregar, and the Japanese about the preservation of order in the interregnum. Nevertheless Amir withdrew quietly to Tandjung Pura during September, despite his appointment to Sukarno's first cabinet. To some friends he dismissed the whole proclamation affair in Djakarta as a *sandiwara* (play-acting).⁵⁵

Far from leading the revolution, Medan lagged behind other centers. Although he returned to the city on August 27, Hasan could not get the elite group to meet until September 3. Then, and again two weeks later, they declined even to constitute a Komite Nasional because of opposition from the sultans. Real progress was not made until the end of September.⁵⁶

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53. Pewarta Deli, October 6, 1945 and interviews. Allied (British and Dutch) and Japanese representatives were given places of honor while the new Republican governor was given a front seat in the public section.
54. Piekaar, Atjèh, pp. 246-247; Brandt, De Gele Terreur, pp. 208-209; Insider [S. M. Amin], Atjeh Sepintas Lálu (Djakarta: Archapada, 1950), pp. 5-7; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, p. 22; Hamka, Kenang-kenangan Hidup, pp. 270-277; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, p. 255; Abdullah Hussain, Peristiwa (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1965), pp. 33-34.
55. Dr. Amir's notes, June 14, 1946, I. C. 005967. Interviews.
56. "Pandangan Mr. Teuku M. Hasan," in Amanat Satoe Tahoen Merdeka (Pandang Pandjang: Penaboer, 1946), p. 60; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, p. 27.

The slowness of Medan accentuated the problem of all-Sumatran leadership which some PPKI members had foreseen. Both Bukittinggi and Palembang felt they had as much right as Medan to lead the Sumatran revolution. Bukittinggi's claim rested on its leadership during the last months before the Japanese surrender. During August Adinegoro was active there cabling news and advice to key men throughout the island. On August 29 Sjafei acknowledged and accepted the independence proclamation "on behalf of the Indonesian people of Sumatra," while Bukittinggi pemuda formed a PRI (Pemuda Republik Indonesia) executive for Sumatra as well as for West Sumatra.⁵⁷

Dr. Gani's claim in Palembang rested on his nationalist credentials and leadership of the PNI state party. Although Sukarno had suspended this state party on August 31, Sumatra became aware of this only much later. Gani meanwhile appointed political leaders by telegram to the executive of a Sumatran PNI, including such diverse people as the communist Karim M.S. and the Atjehnese Teuku Njak Arif. At the end of November the PNI was still talking of itself as a state party led by Sukarno, though it gained little popular momentum outside Gani's South Sumatra.⁵⁸ Gani also felt that he deserved primacy because he had shown greater political initiative than the other Japanese-sanctioned leaders. When he heard officially that Hasan had been appointed governor, Gani sent a personal messenger to Sukarno protesting that "since the beginning of the revolution not a single report has been heard about the seizure of power in the north."⁵⁹

It has been suggested⁶⁰ that one of the reasons for the slow beginning of the independence movement in Sumatra was the different attitudes of the 25th and 16th Armies after the surrender. It is true that many Japanese in Sumatra were personally very skeptical about the chances for *merdeka* and probably conveyed this mood to their Indonesian acquaintances. It is also true that there was no Admiral Maeda in Sumatra to act as protective midwife at the Republic's birth, although there were prominent Japanese defectors to the nationalist side. But it remains true that the Japanese in Sumatra proved as reluctant as their colleagues in Java to carry out Allied instructions at the expense of a clash with the Indonesians. General Tanabe's non-interference policy was well expressed in a three-point telegram to one of his officers on October 7:

1. The Japanese Army must take a strictly neutral attitude towards the Indonesian independence movement.
2. Troop movements of the Japanese army must be directed mainly at the maintenance of law and order.

57. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, pp. 84-85, 500, and 544.

58. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan, pp. 50-51, and 189; Semangat Merdeka, November 17, 20, and 29, 1945.

59. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan, p. 40.

60. Aneta I. D. D., May 31, 1946, pp. 21-22.

3. We must strive with all strength to avoid a conflict with the Indonesians.⁶¹

Mr. Hasan and Dr. Amir both noted the friendliness of the Japanese in Bukittinggi, who evidently told them on their way home from Djakarta that they would transfer all government functions to Indonesians. General Tanabe, true to his military type, added, "In this revolution, make sure the army is well trained and well led, and has good spirit."⁶² At no point did the Japanese in Sumatra use force to prevent an assertion of independence in Sumatra, except where this involved a serious threat to their own security. Instances of draconian Japanese action, notably in Tebing Tinggi and Langsa in December, occurred after the Allied landings, either as a result of specific Allied directives or as pure revenge killing.

Establishing the Republic

The instructions of the PPKI were first revealed to the small elite of politicians and administrators prominent during the Japanese occupation and grouped together through the various Hōkōkai or their equivalents in each residency. By the end of August this group in almost every residency knew either from Amir and Hasan or by telegraph that they were expected to form a KNI, a PNI, and a paramilitary body. They did not, on the other hand, have any guidance from above as to who should take the initiative in these ventures or in governing. But where there was an obvious nationalist leadership, the Hōkōkai group transformed itself into a KNI (in Atjeh in late August, in West Sumatra on August 30, in Palembang on September 3, and in Tapanuli in late September). Government continued much as before the surrender, with Japanese department heads continuing to come to their offices and fly the Japanese flag, though they naturally took little interest in the decisions made.

Only in Palembang was there a coherent policy by the elite group to take over power from the Japanese. Dr. Gani was one of the two fuku-chōkan (deputy-residents) who had taken office during the Japanese period of preparation for independence, and he had the added advantage of a credibly anti-Japanese image. He acted confidently to form a Pusat Pemerintahan Bangsa Indonesia (Government Center of the Indonesian People) on August 23, which obtained Japanese recognition as a subordinate authority responsible for restraining ethnic Indonesians from clashing with celebrating Chinese. From September 6 Gani began encouraging government officials to contact him directly, and on September 26, after requesting and obtaining authorization from Djakarta, the KNI declared Gani resident and asked government officials to cease recognizing their Japanese superiors. The following two weeks saw the nationalists gradually persuade office staff, by a mixture of exhortation and intimidation, to defy their superiors and to force them to give up coming to the office.⁶³

61. Interrogation of General Tanabe, I. C. 059351.

62. Interview.

63. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan, pp. 37-41.

In Palembang it was militant pemuda who were responsible for intimidating senior officials into supporting the Republic during the first three nights of October. In other residencies the initiative was with the pemuda from the beginning. As one official publication rightly acknowledged, "these first months of the revolution were the pemuda months."⁶⁴ Without the pressure they brought to bear, a viable Republican government in Sumatra before the Allied landings would have been inconceivable.

Benedict Anderson has well defined the special pemuda identity at the end of the Japanese occupation and the effect which Japanese models had on them.⁶⁵ In Sumatra the Japanese had done much less than in Java to mobilize youth for the war effort. But there nevertheless existed a well-defined pemuda elite group, old enough to have had some prewar secondary education but not to have had a stake in the prewar establishment and trained by the Japanese for positions of special responsibility in Sumatera Baru. The most important component of this group were those who had undergone officer training as *Giyūgun*, *Heihō*, *Tokubetsu Keisatsutai* (police reserve to guard coasts, bridges, etc.), *Tokubetsu Hikōjō Kinmutai* (police reserve to guard airfields), and similar organizations. The most important of these, the *Giyūgun* or *lasjkar rakjat* (known as *Peta* in Java), was established in Sumatra in November 1943 as the basis of a separate Indonesian army with its own officer corps up to the rank of captain. The soldiers were trained and quartered near their home districts. The total strength in Sumatra was probably about 30,000 men at the surrender, although it was proportionately much larger in some areas such as Atjeh (5,000-6,000) than in others like East Sumatra (1,400). By August 1945 the first few dozen officer trainees had reached first lieutenant rank, and a second group second lieutenant. As in Java, the combination of intense discipline and racial discrimination by the Japanese made these *Giyūgun* officers strongly nationalist. Many of them had agreed among themselves that in the event of an Allied invasion they would attack the Japanese first and deal with the Allies later. In July 1945 *Giyūgun* Lieutenant H. Sitompul staged an abortive revolt in the Pematang Siantar barracks.⁶⁶ Between the 19th and the 21st of August, before any news of the surrender had been made public, all the *Giyūgun* were disarmed and sent back to their homes. They were too bewildered to attempt any resistance.⁶⁷

The other source of pemuda leadership was the group of educated young men associated with Japanese propaganda, news, or communications media. They were the first to receive reports of the exciting developments in Java and became natural centers of the information networks which sprang up. In the atmosphere of uncertain expectancy, pemuda from the military, the police, and those Japanese offices gathered at

64. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, p. 87.

65. Anderson, "The Pemuda Revolution," pp. 1-35.

66. Kita-Sumatora-sinbun, November 18 and 25, 2603 [1943]; Piekaar, Atjeh, pp. 219 and 238; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, pp. 79-80. Interviews. Atjeh and West Sumatra were the first residencies to provide *Giyūgun*, though the remainder followed by early 1944.

67. Modal Revolusi 45, pp. 64-65.

certain points to exchange what news there was about the Republic in Java or the intentions of the Allies. The hostel at Fuzi Dori (Dj1. Djakarta) 6 in Medan was one example. Rumors of what the Dutch intended to do to punish Japanese collaborators gradually encouraged a mood of defiance, which was sharpened in street brawls with incautiously exuberant Chinese in many towns. During September these informal gatherings and information networks were transformed into distinct organizations. Toward the end of the month leaflets began to be printed advertising the proclamation, and the pemuda began to show their impatience with the inactivity of the older generation of politicians.⁶⁸

Medan was an extreme case of a residency capital where no clear leader had emerged above the conflicting interest groups during the Japanese occupation. Despite their limited contacts with left-wing politicians and Taman Siswa teachers, the Medan pemuda were handicapped by not even knowing until mid-September that Mr. Hasan had been appointed Republican governor. They formed their Barisan Pemuda Indonesia (BPI) on September 21 entirely on their own initiative. Their mounting determination to resist the Allied return found an appropriate focus only when the first post-war newspaper, *Pewartu Deli*, appeared on September 29. It reproduced an Australian radio report that the Allies had put a police guard on Sukarno's home, which in the prevailing mood was taken to mean that Sukarno had been arrested and the Republic dissolved. The pemuda rushed from one leader to another trying to establish the truth of the matter, in the course of which they put additional pressure on Hasan and the cautious older generation. At a mass BPI meeting the following day at the Taman Siswa school the offending editor, Mohammad Said, was made to apologize for printing a provocative report, Hasan spoke about the independence proclamation in Djakarta, and pemuda and radical leaders began the public campaign for independence. The pemuda urged Hasan to proclaim the Republican government on the spot. He stalled discreetly on the rather artificial grounds that he carried written authority only as a *wakil mutlak* (plenipotentiary) of Sukarno rather than as Republican governor (though the appointment of governors had been announced in Djakarta in August). Hasan later telegraphed Djakarta for confirmation and received a reply on October 2. Meanwhile General Christison's statement of October 1 that the Allies would not remove the Republican government must have dispelled what doubts the older leaders still felt. Hasan got the support of the leading politicians at a meeting on October 2 and began issuing formal statements and decrees the following day.⁶⁹ One of his first acts was to appoint Republican residents who in every case except East Sumatra itself were the leaders advanced to prominence during the latter part of the Japanese period.⁷⁰

68. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, pp. 87-89 and 542-549; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, p. 29; Modal Revolusi 45, pp. 41-42, 54-56, 65-66, 72-73. Interviews.

69. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, pp. 29-30; Mengenangkan Hari Proklamasi (Medan: 1956), pp. 84-85; M. K. Djusni and Aminuddin Nasir, "Kenang-kenangan Repolusi dikota Medan," (typescript); Mohammad Said in Dobrak (Medan), August 25, 1970. Interviews. I am indebted to Mr. M. van Langenberg for the typescript source.

70. For details of the first residents, see Appendix.

Once the pemuda and the older leaders had belatedly found each other, Medan could at last begin to function as the Sumatran capital it was intended to be. The governor's decrees, publicized by the official Republican newspaper, *Soeloeh Merdeka*, beginning October 4, were a spur to widespread action. In the remoter residencies his telegram appointing a resident was the effective beginning of the Republican movement. Where the pemuda were already mobilized, it provided a necessary additional legitimation for the cautious older generation. The week between the governor's taking office and the Allied landings was an extremely critical one. Mass rallies were held to salute the *Merah-Putih*, and at one office after another the flag was run up and the Japanese head discouraged from attending. The relationship between the top Indonesians and Japanese in most districts was still good, enabling them to ensure in advance that there would be no serious violence. The only weapon the Japanese attempted to use was bluff, and when the bluff was called, at least some Japanese officers appeared genuinely delighted that the Indonesians were showing some spirit.⁷¹ By the time the 26th Indian Division occupied Medan, Padang, and Palembang (October 10-14), the government machinery of these three towns was in Republican hands, and Republican control in the remaining key areas was well on the way to being established (in Atjeh by October 14 and in Tapanuli by October 17). Republican strength in some areas had yet to be tested in relation to that of the Allies and of the separate bureaucracies operated by the generally pro-Dutch keradjaan. But it was a great victory that the central bureaucracies formerly under Japanese direct control were now taking orders from Republican leaders.

The same critical week saw a rationalization of the pemuda movement in most areas. In response to early Republican policy to form a BKR (from October 5 known as TKR--Tentara Keamanan Rakjat) as an armed force built primarily from Japanese-trained units, the pemuda groups split. Those with formal military training formed a TKR division in each residency, usually accepting a fair degree of control from the local Republican officials. The remaining civilians rapidly declared themselves part of an Indonesia-wide youth movement and adopted the names which had already become famous in Java. The Angkatan Pemuda Indonesia (API) of Djakarta was copied in Lampung and Djambi and by some pemuda in Palembang. Throughout West and North Sumatra the accepted title was Pemuda Republik Indonesia (PRI), like that of the then dominant pemuda group in Surabaya. All of these Sumatran organizations dutifully declared themselves branches of Pesindo (Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia) following the merging of the Java API and PRI into that new group at the Youth Congress in Jogjakarta on November 9. In reality the Sumatran pemuda groups had little in common with the API/PRI/Pesindo element in Java. The network of anti-Japanese contacts organized by Sjahrir during the war among educated youth had not extended outside Java. Virtually unrepresented in Sumatra was the strongly anti-collaborationist youth, which, with a hard core of students rallying specifically behind the Sjahrir-Sjarifuddin leadership, was the most vital element of Javanese politics in the first six months of independence. The essence of API/PRI/Pesindo in Sumatra was not a link with any of the

71. See especially Hussain, Peristiwa, p. 71.

rival Djakarta politicians in particular but a desire to embrace all youth in a common struggle, to reject the regional groupings of the past, and to stress as emphatically as possible a new pan-Indonesian pemuda identity. Changes in the titles of these groups were usually announced proudly with the words "on instructions from Java." Only Palembang was out of step with this trend. There the influence of Dr. Gani predominated in the early BPRI group which he was able to fashion later into Napindo, the powerful youth wing of the Sumatra PNI, without parallel in Java.⁷²

Both the TKR and the PRI/API groups quickly organized along military lines and attempted to gather all possible arms from the Japanese. But whereas the TKR was relatively cohesive and responsive to official control, the civilian pemuda movement became a loose federation of fighting gangs, often competing for control of territory. Though individual members of the older political elite had varying degrees of influence over these gangs, the Republican leaders could not rely on their support during internal crises.

The balance of power between the TKR and the PRI/API varied considerably from one residency to another. In Atjeh, Tapanuli, and Palembang a significant concentration of Giyugun and early backing from the resident made the TKR relatively strong, though not in a position to dictate. The Republic was especially fortunate in Palembang because the resident also had a personal following among the civilian pemuda. At the other extreme the East Sumatra TKR was just one of many fighting organizations and weaker than PRI/Pesindo as a whole.

The violent phase of the revolution in Sumatra began immediately after the Allied landings in October, when the pemuda clashed with Dutch ex-prisoners, Ambonese, Japanese, and eventually with Allied troops themselves. This phase is outside the scope of this article. Yet already by early October many of the essential features of the revolution on Sumatra were becoming clear. In comparison with Java, the central fact about Sumatra was the weakness of the Republican leadership. It was much less able to assert its authority over, or prevent internecine fighting among, those who had the guns and felt themselves, with reason, to be the vanguard of the revolution. Despite great variation among residencies, with the South approaching Javanese conditions most closely, it would be a fair generalization to say that the level of intra-Indonesian violence was considerably higher in Sumatra during the early revolution. In particular the social revolution which affected Sumatra much more profoundly than Java in late 1945 and early 1946 was beyond the power of the Republican authorities to prevent or control. Even more than in Java, the revolution was made and the pace was set by pemuda with a rather low estimate of officialdom.

The Question of Sumatran Political Identity

Only once in history has the island of Sumatra had a meaningful legal and political identity. Its evenly-balanced major

72. Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Tengah, pp. 542-549; Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Selatan, pp. 49-50.

communities--Minangkabau, Batak, Atjehnese, and Palembang--were brought together only by the wider authority of Batavia/Djakarta. But for precisely a decade, 1938-1948, successive Dutch, Japanese, and Republican authorities did choose to treat the island as an administrative unit. One of the avowed reasons the Dutch established a governor of Sumatra in Medan was "the awareness of a Sumatran unity, already germinally present and to be further developed by the establishment of one [Sumatran] Province."⁷³ This was a thoroughly artificial and unsuccessful attempt to divert the Indonesian popular movement into regional channels. Its major importance was as an example for later Republicans and a training ground for officials such as Mr. Hasan.

The complete and effective separation from Java under the Japanese brought a quite new situation. For three years propaganda had been directed primarily toward building Sumatera Baru. The Japanese 25th Army undoubtedly had the opportunity to exploit and encourage whatever Sumatran sentiments existed by building up a distinct Sumatran leadership. Fortunately for Republican unity, the Japanese were not interested in building any leadership whatever until their last two months of power, and even then to a very limited degree. Nevertheless it is not surprising that the Japanese period did encourage some leaders to think that an autonomous Sumatra was a practicable ideal. Most affected were the small elite old enough to have been members of Jong Sumatra together during their student days in the 1920's and filling prominent positions under the Japanese. For the more conservative aristocratic leaders this was primarily a negative rejection of Java as the source of political extremism and Islamic heresy. There were, however, genuine Republicans for whom Sumatra had a positive meaning. The majority of these seem to have been Minangkabau, particularly Minangkabau living in other parts of Sumatra than their homeland. The most outspoken example was Dr. Amir, one of the most eloquent defenders of the cultural unity of Sumatera Baru during the war years.⁷⁴ As deputy-governor of Sumatra from December 1945 he remained anxious to build up a highly autonomous government apparatus in Medan. After his alienation from the Republic the following April, he made Javanese domination the central theme of his criticism.

Up till now this unitary question has not been publicly discussed. We three, who attended the meeting of the Committee for the Preparation of Independence in Djakarta in August 1945, hoped that Sumatra would obtain autonomy concerning external and internal affairs outside the Republic, but we were admonished not to form a separate state with its own departments, etc.⁷⁵

73. S. van der Harst, Overzicht van de bestuurshervorming in de Buitengewesten van Nederlandsch-Indië, in het bijzonder op Sumatra (Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1945), p. 46.

74. E. g. Kita-Sumatora-sinbun, June 27, 2605 [1945].

75. Dr. Amir, "Nieuw Sumatra," De Opdracht, October 1946, p. 9. After the transfer of sovereignty Mohammad Sjafei also became one of the leading critics of Javanese centralism; G. S. Maryanov, Decentralization in Indonesia as a Political Problem (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1958), p. 41.

Amir and the other members of Hasan's "cabinet," despite frequent protestations of solidarity with Java, did make their own decisions on most issues without consulting Djakarta at least until Amir Sjarifuddin's visit. Had they been stronger as a group, they would very probably have resisted the gradual erosion of their autonomy thereafter by the central government. But it was the pemuda who had made the Republic possible in Sumatra and who retained physical power. For the pemuda unity with Java was all important. Java was the heroic model for struggle, showing the way to liberation from the otherwise certain Dutch restoration.⁷⁶

The Dutch, in adopting their postwar federal strategy were counting on the ethnic and regional sentiments of the older generation. They knew so well. The logical superstructure for the *Negara* (member states) they later sponsored in Sumatra was an all-Sumatra grouping, to balance against Java and East Indonesia. But quite apart from its unacceptability as part of Dutch colonial strategy, the Sumatran idea was found to have no appeal in South Sumatra and little for the highly autonomous Atjehnese and Batak.⁷⁷ The Mukhtamar Sumatra sponsored by the federalists in March-April 1949 was a predictable flop. The brief moment for Sumatran unity had passed, and Dutch pressure was unlikely to succeed in reviving it.

76. The most striking indication of the strength of the popular, pemuda-inspired desire to follow Java was the experience of Atjeh. Before the war it still resembled a conquered country rather than a part of the Netherlands Indies body politic. The leadership of the dominant popular force, PUSA, indisputably thought in Atjehnese and Islamic rather than Indonesian terms. Yet even PUSA needed the Republican enthusiasm of the pemuda to escape a restoration of Dutch and uleëbalang rule. In the first year of the revolution Atjeh was a model of outward loyalty to the central government.

77. Directeur-Generaal voor Algemene Zaken to Lt. Gouverneur-Generaal, February 27, 1947 (Bundle 22/6 in the postwar Indonesian archive in The Hague).

APPENDIX I

Members of Sumatra Central Advisory
Council (Chūō Sangi In)

I have roughly categorized representatives of Islamic movements by (I), of political movements by (P), and of the keradjaan, some of whom were also moderate nationalists, by (K). Most of those not fitting into such categories were Japanese-appointed officials with no particular following. In Tapanuli the antagonism between Christian North and Muslim South took precedence over any other distinctions.

Atjeh

- Elected: T. Njak Arif (K), Chairman, Atjeh Council
Tgk. Mohd. Daud Beureu'eh (I), Chairman of PUSA
- Appointed: T. Tjut Hasan (K), Vice-Chairman Atjeh Council
T.P.P. Mohd. Ali (K), Panglima Sagi XXII Mukim
Tgk. Mohd. Hasbi (I), Deputy Chairman of Maibkatra, and
Muhammadiyah leader

East Sumatra

- Elected: Djamaluddin Adinegoro (P), Editor *Kita-Sumatora-sinbun*
and Vice-Chairman East Sumatra Council (resigned seat
after election)
Tgk. Damrah (K), Serdang royal family
- Appointed: Tgk. Othman (K), Crown Prince of Deli
Radja Kaliamsjah Sinaga (K), Radja Pg. Tanah Djawa
Dr. R. Pirngadi (P), prewar Parindra leader
Hamka (I), Consul Muhammadiyah Sumatra Timur
Hsu Hua Chang (Chinese), Chairman of Medan Hohkiaw

Tapanuli

- Elected: Dr. Ferdinand Lumbantobing (North), Chairman Tapanuli
Council
Firman Rangkuti gelar St. Soripada Mulia (South)
- Appointed: Radja Saul Lumbantobing (North)
Hadji A. Aziz (South)

West Sumatra

- Elected: Mohd. Sjafei (P), Chairman W. Sumatra Council
Chatib Suleiman (P), Vice-Chairman W. Sumatra Council
- Appointed: Datuk Perpatih Baringek (K), leader of *adat* organization
A.R. Sutan Mansur (I), Consul Muhammadiyah W. Sumatra
Dr. Mohd. Djamil

Riau*

Elected: Aminoedin (P), Chairman Riau Council

Appointed: Orang Kaja Mohd. Djamil (K), relative of Sultan of Siak
Sjamsoeddin, gunchō (district officer)

Djambi

Elected: Abdoel Manan, Chairman Djambi Council

Appointed: Abdoel Katab
Makalam, Vice-Chairman Djambi Council

Palembang

Elected: Dr. A.K. Gani (P), Chairman Palembang Council and
prewar Gerindo leader
Abdoel Rozak (P)

Appointed: Tjik Mat (P)
Kiai Hadji Tjik Wan (I)
Ir. Ibrahim (P), Vice-Chairman Palembang Council

Bengkulen

Elected: Abdoellah

Appointed: Ir. Indra Tjahaja, Chairman Bengkulu Council
Mohd. Jasin

Lampung

Elected: Radja Pagar Alam (K)

Appointed: Mr. Abdul Abbas (P), Chairman Lampung Council
St. Rahim Pasaman, Head of Bureau of Popular Petitions
(Kōseikyokuchō)

Bangka-Billiton

Elected: M. A. Sjarif (P), Chairman Bangka-Billiton Council

Appointed: Oen Lam Seng (Chinese), Vice-Chairman Bangka-Billiton
Council**

* Mainland Sumatra only; the archipelago was united with Singapore.

** Sources: Kita-Sumatora-sinbun, June 27, 1945; Atjeh Sinbun,
May 19, 1945.

APPENDIX II

Members of Panitia Penyelidik Persiapan
Kemerdekaan (Sumatra)³

Chairman: Mohd. Sjafei

Secretary: Djamaluddin Adinegoro

Members

Atjeh:	T. Njak Arif Tgk. Mohd. Daud Beureu'eh
East Sumatra:	Dr. Pirngadi Dr. Amir Mr. T. Mohd. Hasan Hamka Tgk. Saibun Abdul Jalil Rahmat Sjah, Sultan of Asahan Hsu Hua Chang
Tapanuli:	Dr. Ferdinand Lumbantobing Mr. Azairin
West Sumatra:	Dt. Perpatih Baringek A. R. Sutan Mansur Chatib Soeleiman Sjech Mohd. Djamil Djambek
Riau:	Aminoeddin
Djambi:	Dr. A. Sjagoff
Bengkulen:	Ir. Indra Tjahaja
Palembang:	Dr. A. K. Gani Ir. Ibrahim K. H. Tjik Wan
Lampung:	Mr. Abdul Abbas
Bangka-Billiton:	M. A. Sjarif

3. Source: Atjeh Sinbun, July 28, 1945.

APPENDIX III

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First Republican Residents in Sumatra

Residency	Resident	Position during Japanese Occupation	Served until
Atjeh	Teuku Njak Arif	Chairman, Atjeh Council and adviser to chōkan	January 21, 1946
East Sumatra	Mr. Mohd. Joesoef	Assistant to Japanese mayor of Medan	October 29, 1945 (to become mayor of Medan)
Tapanuli	Dr. Ferdinand Lumbantobing	Chairman, Tapanuli Council and Hōkōkai, and fuku-chōkan	September 1947
West Sumatra	Mohd. Sjafei	Chairman, W. Sumatra Council and Hōkōkai, and Chūō Sangi In.	November 15, 1945 (on grounds of "illness")
Djambi	Dr. A. Sjagoff	Member PPPK (Sumatra)	December 1945 (arrested by Japanese)
Riau	Aminoeddin	Chairman, Riau Council	October 1945 (at request of KNI)
Bengkulen	Ir. Indra Tjahaja	Chairman, Bengkulu Council	May 1946 (at request of KNI)
Palembang	Dr. A. K. Gani	Chairman, Palembang Council and Hōkōkai, and fuku-chōkan	May 1946 (to become vice-governor)
Lampung	Mr. A. Abbas	Chairman, Lampung Council and Hōkōkai	September 1946 ("daulat"ed by pemuda)
Bangka-Billiton	M. A. Sjarif	Chairman, Bangka-Billiton Council	February 1946 (Dutch occupation)