

IN MEMORIAM: SJAFRUDDIN PRAWIRANEGARA (1911–1989)

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Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, a man who played central roles in both the political and economic leadership of Indonesia, died of a heart attack at just short of his 78th birthday in Jakarta on February 15, 1989. During the revolution and until the end of 1957—as minister of finance and economic affairs and then as head of the National Bank, he had great influence on the country's economic policy. And it was he who, immediately following the Dutch assault on Yogyakarta and capture of most of the Republic's top-level political leaders, led the Republic's Emergency Government from the interior of Sumatra until those leaders were able to return. In 1958, as a top civilian leader of the PRRI (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia—Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) rebellion, he helped restrain a group of reckless military leaders from planning to set up a separate Sumatran state. Never tainted by corruption and with a reputation for honesty, forthrightness, and solid integrity, he emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as one of the most courageous and respected critics of the Suharto government.¹

Born on February 28, 1911, in Anger Kidul, Banten, of a Bantenese father, then Camat of Muncang, and a Bantenese-Minangkabau mother, Sjafruddin graduated from the ELS in Serang and then in 1931 from the AMS in Bandung. Family finances did not permit him to go to Leiden for advanced study as he had hoped, but he then entered the Law Faculty in Jakarta, graduating as a Meester in de Rechten in September 1939. In Bandung he had met Tengku Halimah (Lily), daughter of the Camat of Buabatu (Bandung), a descendant of the Minangkabau Rajah of Pagaruyung, and married her on January 31, 1941. Briefly in 1939–1940 he served as editor of *Soeara Timur*, a journal sponsored by Soetardjo Kartohadikoesoemo (a member of the Volksraad and author of the famous 1936 petition requesting self-government from the Dutch). Neither the modest demands of that petition nor the relatively moderate position of Gappi (Gabungan Partai Partai

¹The fullest biography of Sjafruddin is Ajip Rosidi's *Sjafruddin Prawiranegara : Lebih Takut kepada Allah SWT* (Jakarta: Idayu, 1986).

Politik Indonesia), an association of nationalist political parties, suited his strong nationalist feelings, and in 1940 he refused to join the Dutch-sponsored Stadswacht. He did, however, take a job in the NEI Department of Finance in 1940 and continued to work there during the Japanese Occupation, when he was assigned as tax inspector in Kediri.

On August 24, 1945, only a week after Indonesia's proclamation of independence, he became one of the first members of the Priangan KNI (Indonesian National Committee) and shortly afterwards emerged as one of the fifteen members of the Working Committee of the Republic's national representative body, the KNIP (Central Indonesian National Committee). He played an active role in that powerful organ of government and came to know well its chairman, Sutan Sjahrir, and vice chairman, Amir Sjarifuddin. Joining the Masjumi Party in 1946, Sjafruddin, along with Mohammad Natsir, led its influential religious socialist wing, and with the publication in 1948 of his book, *Politiek dan Revolusi Kita*, Sjafruddin increased his influence among those in the party who espoused Modernist Islamic views. In effect, the religious socialists within the Masjumi provided the bridge that made possible its cooperation with the Partai Sosialis led by Sutan Sjahrir. This was evidenced by Sjafruddin's serving as deputy minister of finance in Sjahrir's second cabinet (March 12–October 2, 1946), and minister of finance in his third (October 2, 1946–June 27, 1947), as well as being minister of finance in the non-party cabinet of Mohammad Hatta (January 29, 1948–December 27, 1949).

Anticipating an all-out Netherlands effort to overrun Republican-controlled areas of Java, the leaders in Yogyakarta had decided that, in this eventuality, Prime Minister Hatta would head the Republic's government from central Sumatra. In early December he went with Sjafruddin to prepare for the establishment of what would be called an Emergency Government there. In the midst of these preparations a crisis in the UN-sponsored negotiations with the Dutch then underway in Kaliurang (near Yogyakarta) dictated Hatta's immediate return to Java to participate in these talks. Upon leaving Bukittinggi, he turned over full authority to Sjafruddin to lead an Emergency Government if a Dutch attack should prevent his own return. While pretending a serious interest in the negotiations, the Dutch launched their attack much sooner than expected. Following their blitz assault against Yogyakarta of December 19, 1948, in which Sukarno, Hatta, and most of the cabinet were captured, Sjafruddin promptly set up an Emergency Government for the Republic in a remote, defensible area of West Sumatra. Then by radio he established a branch ("Commissariat") in Java headed by those cabinet members who had been able to avoid capture there. With the *fait accompli* of the incarceration of the top Republican leaders on Bangka, the Dutch had assumed that they would be able to convince the United Nations and the major powers that there no longer existed a government of the Republic with which to deal. Now, however, not only were the armed forces of the Republic mounting a highly visible guerrilla resistance, but the Republic also had a legitimate political voice on Indonesian territory free of Dutch control. By December 23, Sjafruddin was already sending instructions to the Republic's delegation at the UN—incorporating conditions for any negotiations with the Netherlands that were considerably stiffer than those obtaining before the Dutch attack. As a consequence of this and of mounting Republican military successes, Mohamad Roem was in a relatively strong bargaining position when he represented the Republic in negotiations, held under UN auspices in April and May of 1949, with the Dutch delegation headed by J. H. Van Royen. Sjafruddin's Emergency Government maintained its political pressure until, under prodding from the UN and Great Powers, the Dutch released Sukarno and Hatta, who were able to return to a Republican-controlled Yogyakarta.

Following Indonesia's achievement of full independence from the Netherlands, Sjafruddin continued to work closely with Hatta, serving as minister of finance both in the cabinet he led from January 1 to September 6, 1950, and in the successor cabinet of Mohammad Natsir, September 6, 1950 to March 20, 1951. He was then appointed Governor of the Bank of Indonesia, a post he held until the end of 1957.

A series of developments during 1957 and early 1958 led to Sjafruddin's break with Sukarno and the head of his non-party cabinet, Djuanda Kartawidjaja. Sjafruddin was strongly opposed to Sukarno's concept of Guided Democracy. He shared Sukarno's outrage at the Netherlands' refusal even to permit UN discussion of the dispute over West Irian, but he was, nevertheless, outspokenly critical of the precipitate and economically highly disruptive seizure (by labor unions and then the army) of Dutch economic enterprises and inter-island shipping—measures promptly approved, if not initiated, by Sukarno. Sjafruddin's strong criticism of these actions before Sukarno and the National Economic Council in early December 1957, set off a barrage of harassing phone calls and a campaign of scurrilous attacks against him both in newspapers close to Sukarno and to the Communist Party, accusing him of trying to protect Dutch interests. Leaving for Sumatra at the end of the month, he discussed economic and political matters in Palembang with the dissident South Sumatra regional commander Colonel Barlian. From that city on January 15, 1958, he wrote an open letter to Sukarno, calling on him to abandon his "fascist" Guided Democracy, return to the Constitution, and permit a truly national cabinet led by ex-Vice-President Hatta and the Sultan of Yogyakarta.

Thus began one of the most controversial episodes in Sjafruddin's life. Arriving in Padang later in January, he emerged with Mohammad Natsir (driven from Jakarta by harassment of his family) as one of the two most prominent civilian leaders in a regionalist militant movement for political autonomy, which soon embraced most of Sumatra and parts of Sulawesi. The movement reflected growing local discontent because of Jakarta's Javacentric economic policies, heavy Javanization of the governmental administration, and a lack of effective regional representation in the capital. This dissatisfaction was heightened by Hatta's resignation as vice president, and by Sukarno's moves away from Parliamentary government towards Guided Democracy, his tolerance of the Indonesian Communist Party [PKI], and his insistence that it not be completely excluded from government.²

The by-now virtually autonomous area of central Sumatra, headed by Lt. Colonel Ahmad Husein, provided the principal base for the several military commanders who were striving for increased autonomy in their own regions and/or greater power. Sjafruddin originally envisaged that sufficient pressure could be exerted on Sukarno to exact concessions from him, which would provide for greater regional autonomy, a national government where the president's power would be diminished, and a cabinet more representative than that headed by Djuanda, under the leadership of Hatta and the Sultan of Yogyakarta. This calculation was predicated on the fact that the central government's airforce and navy were critically dependent upon the oil of south and central Sumatra and the refinery near Palembang, and it assumed that Colonel Barlian, the military commander of the pivotally important province of South Sumatra, was solidly in the rebels' camp. But there was a fundamental weakness in this proposition which Sjafruddin soon discovered in his talks with Barlian. That pragmatic commander,

²The reasons for the rebellion were considerably more complicated than this, but space does not permit further treatment.

with a potentially hostile garrison of Javanese troops at Palembang's airfield, and with the southernmost reaches of his large territory across the narrow Sunda Straits from the firmly held central government Banten area of West Java, feared that, if Jakarta decided to fight, his territory would be the first to be attacked. With Barlian refusing to make any firm commitment of support, Sjafruddin felt that, at least until after the return of Sukarno and attempts at negotiation, it would be foolish to provoke the central government with the sweeping and uncompromising five-day ultimatum demanded by the more hawkish Sumatran military leaders—Colonels Husein, Zulkifli Lubis, Maludin Simbolon—and Colonel Sumual from Sulawesi. The colonels, however, with their own previously agreed upon agenda and commitments, remained adamant, and despite Sjafruddin's refusal to sign on, went ahead with their plans. Telling Sjafruddin, Natsir, and Burhannudin Harahap (the former Masjumi prime minister who had now joined them), "the die has already been cast" (more literally translated: "the rice has been turned into porridge"),³ Colonel Husein and Colonel Simbolon, supported by the other military leaders, minus Barlian, broadcast their provocative demands to Prime Minister Djuanda on February 10—six days before Sukarno was due to return from abroad. Declaring Sukarno's government unconstitutional and Djuanda's cabinet illegal, the rebel proclamation gave Djuanda just five days to step down in favor of a cabinet led by Hatta and the Sultan of Yogyakarta. When Djuanda refused, the dissidents announced on February 15, 1958 the establishment of a counter government for all Indonesia—the *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* or PRRI, with Sjafruddin appointed as its prime minister.

No one can be sure what the outcome would have been if Sjafruddin had succeeded in blocking an ultimatum until after Sukarno's return and discussions with him had been held. But if Sjafruddin and his supporters had prevailed, the outcome might have been less disastrous for the peoples of Sumatra and Sulawesi than was the uncompromising challenge represented by the gauntlet which the colonels flung down. More clear-cut, and more fundamental, was the issue in which he, Natsir, and Burhannudin did prevail, when they successfully opposed the inclination of some of the colonels to go for broke by forming a separate state of Sumatra. And thus the PRRI was defined as an Indonesia-wide movement strictly opposed to any secessionist diminishment of Indonesia's territorial integrity.

The PRRI rebellion failed, and Sjafruddin came in from his jungle headquarters on August 25, 1961 to surrender to the central government's army—well after the erstwhile bellicose dissident Sumatra-based colonels had worked out their own terms for doing so. Jailed for almost five years, he was released on July 26, 1966.

While supportive of many economic measure advanced by Widjojo Nitisastro, Mohamad Sadli, and other technocrats in the new government headed by President Suharto, Sjafruddin was soon vocal in criticizing the growing corruption, often express-

³This rigidity of the colonels and their own principal civilian agent, Dr. Sumitro, undoubtedly partly reflected promises they had earlier made to American and other foreign agents representing governments critical of Sukarno in return for funding and arms. Covert US plans envisaging a possible break-up of Indonesia were opposed by the US Ambassador, John Allison, whom US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles abruptly transferred to Prague to get him out of the way. The poor level of the CIA's intelligence at this time—upon which the Dulles brothers relied rather than that provided by the US Embassy—is suggested by the fact that CIA reports were envisaging the likely imminent loss of Java to Communist control and the probable accommodation of General Nasution, Prime Minister Djuanda, and President Sukarno to Communist Party dominance. (Allen Dulles, it will be recalled, then headed the CIA.)

ing himself through Friday sermons in Jakarta mosques. In 1970, he waged an at least temporarily successful battle against the extensive fraud and corruption involved in government-controlled shipping for pilgrims making the Haj. He became a leader among the *Petisi 50* (Petition of 50) group, the most prestigious opponents of political and economic corruption in the Suharto government. In 1983 he incurred the government's further wrath by leading a spirited—and courageous—offensive against its decree that all political parties and social organizations, including religiously oriented ones, accept the state ideology of Pancasila as their *azas tunggal* (sole foundation or principle). In this struggle, his open letter to Suharto of July 7, 1983 constituted probably the most cogent and eloquent argument mounted by the ultimately defeated opponents of this regulation.⁴ This earned him the further enmity of the Suharto regime, and he was forbidden to travel abroad unless for urgent medical treatment.

Despite serious health problems Sjafruddin maintained an informed and courageous criticism of corruption and abuses of government authority to the very end. Increasingly frail, he resigned himself to approaching death, writing in his last letter to my wife and me on December 5, 1988: "After the decease of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX⁵ who was—and still is—very near and dear to us because of all the help he extended to Lily and our four children (at that time) while I was away in Sumatra,⁶ I am more than ever aware that the time is nearing that the Angel of Death will fetch me and join me with all other friends and comrades in arms who have preceded us to the other and hopefully better world."

⁴For an English version of this letter, see *Indonesia* 38 (October 1984): 74–83.

⁵For Hamengku Buwono's obituary by Selo Seomardjan, see *ibid.* 47 (April 1989).

⁶Sjafruddin is here referring to the time he headed the Emergency Government in 1948–1949, when he had to leave his family behind in Yogyakarta. In 1958 his wife, Lily, and his children stayed with him in the jungle.

