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Communism, Nationalism, and the State: Ideological Debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary, 1945-1970

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Abstract

Sukarno as a figure nationalist-secular and Isa Anshary as a figure nationalist-Islamic political orientations has created political ideological debates in Indonesia. This research aims to analyze both figures' thoughts based on recorded ideological debates in historical events and their compromise under ideology of communism. This historical issue was analyzed using intellectual history and political approach and was grounded in ideology and state theories. This historical research was conducted through several stages: heuristic, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The findings indicate that the ideological debates between Sukarno and Isa Anshary arose due to intellectual influences that led to differences in their perspectives, particularly concerning the ideology of communism. Sukarno's thoughts about communism were interpreted as a philosophy of materialism used to fight imperialism and colonialism, then his thoughts about nationalism in the form of national equality to escape the grip of colonialists, and he articulated democracy as a state concept. Meanwhile, Isa Anshary, he believes that communism is an anti-God ideology that degrades the Islamic faith, then according to him nationalism is the concept of nationalism as integration (berjamaah), and voicing Islamic ideology in the concept of the state. Furthermore, the views of Sukarno and Isa Anshary on communism also had implications for their differing stances on nationalism, the state, and political attitudes during the period leading up to the 1955 elections. In addition, the ideological debate between the two had an impact on Indonesian politics, such as political polarization and conflict in Indonesian society until the end of the Old Order.

Keywords: Communism, Islam, Ideological Conflict, State Ideology.

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Introduction

The political situation in Indonesia before achieving independence, precisely from the 1920s to the 1930s, is often referred to as “ideological decade” because due to the emergence of various ideologies during this period. Several ideologies that surfaced and were considered the most ideal for application in Indonesia during this time included Islamic, communist,



and nationalist ideologies (Shiraishi, 1997, p. 126). The ideology of Islam, in general, came to the forefront during the national movement era through the thoughts of Muslim figures associated with various Islamic organizations such as Sarekat Islam (originally founded as Sarekat Dagang Islam in 1905), Muhammadiyah (1912), Persatuan Islam (Persis) (1923), and Nahdlatul Ulama (1926) (Kersten, 2017, p. 84; Susanto, 2022, p. 62). On the other hand, the communist ideology emerged and established its lines of struggle, marked by the establishment of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) in 1924, initiated by figures such as Semaun, Darsono, Alimin, and Musso (Sarah Nuraini Siregar, 2022, p. 107; Vey, 2017, p. 101). As for the nationalist ideology, it emerged with the ideas and attitudes of its prominent figures, such as Sukarno, who founded the Indonesian National Party (PNI) in 1927 (Soekarno, 1951, p. 63).

In the early 1940s, there were initial debates over the various emerging ideologies (A. Moechlis, 1940; Al-Lisaan, 1940; Soekarno, 1940), leading Indonesian and Western Muslim scholars to use the term “ideological dualism” to describe the divide between Islamic groups and secular-nationalist groups. After Indonesia’s independence in 1945, the Islamic group was represented by Masyumi, which advocated Islamic politics in the post-independence era, facing off against the secular-nationalist group that included the Indonesian National Party (PNI), the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Each group, whether Islamic or secular-nationalist, believed that their ideology was the most correct and ideal to serve as the foundation of the Indonesian state. The ideological struggles recorded in national history have led to ongoing dissatisfaction with Pancasila, the final ideology of the nation (Ismail, 2018, p. 36; Wahyudin, 2019, p. 109). This dissatisfaction is evident in various movements or actions among the Muslim community up to the present time (Musawar, 2021, p. 319; Zainal Arifin, 2019, p. 213).

Within the context of this ideological debate, specific differences emerge, particularly regarding communism and the state, stemming from one of Masyumi’s members, Muhammad Isa Anshary (hereinafter referred to as Isa Anshary), and Sukarno, who served as the President of Indonesia during the Old Order and was also the chairman of PNI. Isa Anshary was known as an unwavering advocate of Islamic politics, with no compromise towards the communists. In contrast, Sukarno embraced the communist faction with the slogan he coined, namely Nasakom (Nationalism-Religion-Communism). Isa Anshary, being anti-communist, consistently provided sharp criticisms towards Sukarno, especially during a period when PNI had a close association with PKI (Said, 2015, p. 92).

The historiography surrounding the ideological debate in Indonesia between Islamic and nationalist-secular factions, as well as the relationship between Islam and the state, has been extensively documented by historians. For instance, the debate within the Constituent Assembly on the state foundation, as discussed by Ahmad Syafi’i Maarif (Maarif, 1985) and Bahtiar Effendy (Effendy, 2011), remains within the realm of communal debate. Another significant study is Samsuri’s (Samsuri, 2004) examination of Masyumi’s struggle against the strong political forces of PNI and PKI during the era of Liberal Democracy. Subsequent discourse includes Anjar Nugroho’s (Nugroho, 2013) work on the ideological debate between Islamic and secular groups, resulting from the political elite’s inability to reconcile Islamic discourse within a state, with a case study on the thoughts of Sukarno and Natsir. Nugroho’s work is further affirmed by Ahmad Suhelmi (Suhelmi, 2014), discussing the dualism of thought between Islamic and nationalist-secular figures in the 1940s, particularly in *Pandji Islam* magazine between Sukarno and Natsir. Additionally, Pepen Irpan Fauzan and Fata (Pepen Irpan Fauzan, 2019) delve into internal issues within the Islamic community, focusing on differences in perspectives between Natsir and Isa Anshary within Persis

Various literature on ideological debates and the relationship between Islam and the state mentioned above, studies on the thoughts of Sukarno and Isa Anshary regarding communism and the state specifically have not yet been found. To address this gap, this research focuses on the ideologies of Sukarno and Isa Anshary, as manifested in their political stances, which significantly impacted Indonesia's political trajectory during the Old Order era. Therefore, this study specifically aims to explore the intellectual influences on Sukarno and Isa Anshary, as well as their political socialization regarding communism and the state. In addition to complementing the discourse on ideological debates in Indonesia, this research seeks to present new perspectives on the ideological debate itself. Existing discourses on ideological debates typically portray Sukarno representing nationalist politics vis-à-vis Natsir as the Islamic representative. However, such studies often only address the relationship between religion and the state and which ideology is suitable for adoption in Indonesia by nationalist and Islamic factions. Therefore, this research seeks to present an alternative perspective by examining a more specific debate on communism and the state by Sukarno, who held an accommodating view towards communist ideology, leading to his advocacy of Nasakom. On the other hand, Isa Anshary emerges as an anti-communist figure, resisting Sukarno and further solidifying the polarization between nationalist and Islamic groups.

The thoughts of Sukarno and Isa Anshary on communism and the state are crucial as they shape their political attitudes, particularly their influence on the socio-political landscape in Indonesia leading up to the 1955 elections and the end of the Old Order era. Furthermore, this research aims to uncover the compromise attitudes of these two figures towards communism and their implementation consequences in the political arena, making it a unique and significant discourse. Building upon the introduction, the research problem formulated is: "How did the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary regarding communism, nationalism, and the state unfold within the historical context of Indonesia?" This research question serves as the primary guide for the study.

Method

This article presents a historical research that utilized a historical method. It aims to provide description, analysis, and reconstruction of significant past events through four stages: source collection (heuristics), source criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Abdurrahman, 2019, p. 101). This study focused on the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary. In the heuristic phase, the author employed a literature review technique, tracing various libraries containing direct writings of Sukarno and Isa Anshary in their own books, writings in magazines, speeches in newspapers, and important documents obtained (Madjid, 2014, p. 222). Sukarno's writings were found in the National Library and private collections, while Isa Anshary's writings were sourced from the Library of the Indonesian Council of Islamic Propagation (DDII), and the Indonesian Tamaddun Library established by Persatuan Islam (Persis) cadres. Additionally, secondary sources such as journal articles and books were utilized.

Following the acquisition of primary and secondary sources, the author critically evaluated the sources' authenticity. Once deemed usable, the author conducted interpretation through analysis, breaking down the sources into historical facts, and synthesis, combining the sources with historical facts chronologically implemented in historiography. This study employed an intellectual history approach (Foot, 2013, p. 81) to analyze the intellectual influence of Sukarno and Isa Anshary on communism and the state, and a political approach (Fullbrook, 2002, p. 122) to describe the political attitudes of both figures. Through these approaches, this research aimed to go beyond a purely narrative approach and adopt a

descriptive-analytical approach (Ankersmit, 1987, p. 247).

Result and Discussion

This research discusses three main aspects. First, Sukarno's and Isa Anshary's Intellectual and Political Biographies. In this section, the author explores the intellectual influence received by Sukarno and Isa Anshary. Second, ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary. This section is an analysis of the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary on communism, nationalism and the state. Third, the impact of ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary on Indonesia's politic. This section explores the impact of the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary which has resulted in polarization and conflict in Indonesian society.

Sukarno's and Isa Anshary's Intellectual and Political Biographies

Sukarno was born in Surabaya on Thursday, June 6, 1901, corresponding to the 18th of Sapar in the Saka calendar, and his original name was "Kusno," which was later changed to "Sukarno." In 1905, Sukarno moved from Surabaya to his grandfather's residence in the Tulung Agung region. It was in this city that Sukarno began his education at the local village school. Shortly after attending the village school, Sukarno was relocated by his father to Europeesche Lergere School (ELS) in Mojokerto. Upon completing his education at ELS, Sukarno proceeded with his studies at Hogere Burger School (HBS) in 1915 and graduated in 1921. HBS was a prestigious institution at that time, which was due to the challenges faced by natives (inlanders) in attending this school. During his time at HBS, Sukarno was taught by his Western teacher. It was at HBS that Sukarno first became acquainted with various Western ideologies, including Marxism (Fahrudin, 2020, p. 51).

Through his education at ELS and HBS, Sukarno experienced significant differences between Dutch and indigenous students. At school, he felt belittled by the Westerners due to his darker skin color, while the Dutch students were of fair complexion. Furthermore, indigenous students at HBS were unable to complete their education fully, in contrast to Westerners who could pursue higher education and enter Dutch higher schools. These conditions planted the seeds of nationalism in Sukarno. His disdain for colonialism and imperialism gradually crystallized and significantly influenced his ideas in the future (Suhelmi, 2014, p. 15). The emergence of nationalism in Sukarno's spirit was also supported by his strong determination to read political books, especially during his stay at the residence of the prominent leader of Sarekat Islam (SI), Haji Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto (Niel, 1984. p. 37).

After graduating from HBS, Sukarno pursued higher education at Technische Hoge School (THS), which is now known as the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), in 1921. During his time at THS, Sukarno became involved in an organization called Jong Java, which later changed its name to Jong Indonesia. While in Bandung, Sukarno had the opportunity to meet various important figures, such as Sutomo, Inggit, Douwes Dekker, Tan Malaka, and Ahmad Hassan. Sutomo and Inggit imparted moderate nationalist ideas to Sukarno, while Tan Malaka and Dekker strongly influenced him with Marxist, socialist, and communist ideologies (Suganda, 2015, p. 50). The latter two figures became particularly significant in Sukarno's life, especially Tan Malaka, who was a communist associated with the Communist International (Comintern) (Hongxuan, 2018, p. 315). Tan Malaka was highly critical of Marxist ideology, and Sukarno was captivated by his critical spirit (Anderson, 2018, p. 269).

Sukarno's encounter with Islam began when he lived in Tjokroaminoto's house. During this time, he also had the opportunity to meet Kyai Ahmad Dahlan, a modernist and the founder of Muhammadiyah. Through Ahmad Dahlan, Sukarno gained insight

into rationalism in Islam, leading him to oppose *takhayul* (superstition) *bid'ah* (religious innovation that has no root in Quran and Hadith), and *churafat* (supernatural beliefs), and *taqlid* (blind imitation) (Adams, 1966, p. 52). Another influential figure who introduced Sukarno to Islam was A. Hassan, an elite member of Persis. In 1929, Sukarno was exiled to Ende by the Dutch colonial government on charges of conspiracy. A. Hassan frequently visited Sukarno during his time in prison, and provided him with numerous Islamic-themed books. (Bachtiar, 2018, p. 208; Soekarno, 2016a, p. 325-343).

Sukarno's political journey began when he established PNI (Indonesian National Party) in Bandung on June 4, 1927. As the leader of the party, Sukarno emerged as a representative of the secular-nationalist group. PNI held substantial support and served as a strong force to guide Indonesia towards its independence. Despite the ideological differences with the Islamic group, Sukarno made efforts to unite the nationalist and Islamic forces to achieve Indonesia's independence (Kleden, 2020, p. 87).

However, Sukarno's political struggle shortly after Indonesia gained independence was not easy. Former colonial powers such as the Netherlands and Britain attempted to regain control of regions they previously ruled. They faced the full strength of the Indonesian nation, whether through physical warfare, as seen in the Battle of Surabaya, or through diplomatic means (Suryanegara, 2015, pp. 201–202). During the Liberal Democracy era, the political dynamics were a continuation of the previous problems, including ideological debates between political parties. These issues hindered the progress of development and led to other problems, such as the emergence of Darul Islam and the Indonesian Islamic Army (DI/TII), as well as the Permesta rebellion. In response to these rebellions, Sukarno established the Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution, but it did not yield results. Instead, in 1959, Sukarno issued the Presidential Decree (Dekrit Presiden) (Ricklefs, 2008, p. 525).

The second figure in this study is Isa Anshary. He was born on July 1, 1916, in Maninjau, West Sumatra. From a young age, Isa Anshary showed great interest in deepening his understanding of Islamic values (Mohammad, 2008, p. 111). He received his education at Sekolah Rakyat (SR) in the Agam Regency, West Sumatra. After completing his education at SR, Isa Anshary became a member of the Muhammadiyah branch in Maninjau. Additionally, he actively participated in the Indonesian Islamic Union Party (PSII) branch in Maninjau (Fauzan, 2019, p. 42). At the age of 16, Isa Anshary left his hometown to move to Bandung. In this city, he pursued non-formal education by attending religious schools and participating in forums on foreign language development, sociology, and political science. Isa Anshary's pursuit of knowledge also involved active participation in various organizations such as the Indonesian People's Youth (Partindo), the Indonesian Political Federation (GAPI), and the Muhammadiyah Preachers in Bandung (Fogg, 2023).

Among these organizations, Persis held the most significant importance in Isa Anshary's life. It was within Persis that he encountered influential figures who greatly shaped his thoughts, particularly Ahmad Hassan (A. Hassan). Besides A. Hassan, Persis was also home to M. Natsir, a prominent figure in both Persis and Masyumi. A. Both A. Hassan and Natsir were influential figures who served as powerful sources of inspiration for Isa Anshary. As a result, they together advocated for Islamic ideology in the national political arena (Bachtiar, 2018, p. 209). On December 7, 1949, Isa Anshary was elected as the chairman of Persis.

His leadership brought about a transformation in the organization's orientation, which was initially a religious organization, to a more political stance. This shift was driven by the spreading influence of communism and movements initiated by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) during the physical revolution. As a result, Persis became critical of President

Sukarno, especially towards the PKI (Wildan, 2015, p. 238). Isa Anshary's efforts in the field of Islamic preaching gained significant attention from all segments of society. Whenever he delivered speeches, thousands of people would attend the events to listen to him, even if they were not affiliated with Persis or Masyumi. Due to this charisma, Isa Anshary earned the nickname "the lion of the podium" ("De Negara Islam," 1954; "Herdenking Hemelvaart Muhammad Beroep Isa Anshary Op Islamietsche Partijen; Masjumi, NU En PSII," 1954; "Rapat Akbar Umat Islam Madjalengka," 1954; "Rapat Umum Masjumi Bandung," 1954; "Rapat Umum Masjumi Di Sukabumi," 1954).

As a politician, Isa Anshary was supported by the Muslim community, particularly the elite members of Persis and its sympathizers. He was actively involved in the Masyumi Party (Madinier, 2013, p. 1), the only political party with an Islamic character. The prominent Islamic identity in the Masyumi Party was evident in its articles of association, which were based on Islamic teachings, specifically the Quran and Hadith ("Masjumi 13 Tahun: Masjumi Partai Perdjuangan Umat Islam Berdasarkan Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits," 1958). Isa Anshary's political journey began when he became the Head of Information for the Masyumi Party in the Priangan (Bandung) region during the physical revolution. Later, he was appointed as the Chairman of the Masyumi Party for West Java from 1950 to 1954. Isa Anshary utilized this momentum to fight for the rights of the people, especially the Muslim community, within the parliament (DPR) (Anshary, 1966a, p. 312).

In 1954, he was elected to the Central Leadership Council of the Masyumi Party. His position in the elite of the Masyumi Party motivated him to strive for a seat in the Constituent Assembly to participate in the formulation of a new constitution and laws from 1956 to 1959. During the sessions of the Constituent Assembly, ideological tensions that had previously emerged before Indonesia's independence resurfaced. The conflict arose between the nationalist-Islamic group, advocating Islam as the state ideology, and the secular-nationalist group, advocating Pancasila as the ideology (Feith, 1962, p. 275). Isa Anshary was the most vocal figure advocating for the implementation of Islamic law (sharia) in the governance of the state (Orsan, 2019, p. 63).

However, his political role within the Masyumi Party faced increased pressure when there were rumors suggesting that some Islamic groups, including Isa Anshary, were planning to assassinate the president and vice president. Due to these rumors, Isa Anshary, along with other Islamic groups, was imprisoned in 1951. Additionally, there were allegations that Isa Anshary was involved in the DI/TII and PRRI Permesta movements, which led to his second imprisonment in 1958 (Wildan, 2015, p. 249).

Based on this sub-chapter, the author argued that the intellectual influence and political socialization experienced by Sukarno and Isa Anshary form the basis for their differing views on communism, nationalism, and the state. The process of political socialization for both Sukarno and Isa Anshary was heavily influenced by the intellectual figures they studied and directly experienced. Their intellectual journeys and political experiences resulted in contrasting political orientations and behaviors.

Ideological Debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary About Communism

The ideologies of Sukarno and Isa Anshary regarding communism can be observed from three aspects. *First*, the philosophical ideology of communism. In this regard, both figures agreed that the philosophical ideology of communism originated from the materialist philosophy articulated by Karl Marx (Anshary, 1956, p. 5; Soekarno, 1963, p. 21). Materialist philosophy is a doctrine that asserts that all movements, progress, and human actions are measured through material values (Hamka, 1958; Lubis, 1976, p. 2).

Referring to the definition of materialist philosophy above, Sukarno argued that materialist philosophy teaches concrete implementation and provides clear opportunities to combat colonialism, imperialism, and exploitative capitalism, which have detrimental effects on economic, social, political, and cultural aspects. For Sukarno, Indonesia was an agrarian and semi-feudal country. As a nation that had experienced colonization, Sukarno believed that the communists could effectively organize themselves to resist all forms of imperialism (Sukarno, 1965b, p. 11).

However, Isa Anshary held a different perspective on the understanding of materialist philosophy. According to Isa Anshary, materialist philosophy was a philosophical doctrine that failed to provide guidance on the meaning of the struggle against imperialism. For Isa Anshary, the materialist philosophy, serving as the basis for communist teachings, was solely oriented towards material aspects. The communists rejected any metaphysical power, which they perceived as mere illusions for those who believed in them. According to Isa Anshary, the true meaning of the struggle against imperialism becomes complete when it can harmonize the teachings of Islamic philosophy, which believe in both materialistic and transcendental forces (Anshary, 1956, p. 8).

Second, in the ideology of communism, there exists the concept of revolution based on Marx's materialist philosophy. The communists' idealistic goal is to achieve justice for all layers of society, eliminating class distinctions. The ideology of communism aims to bridge the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the owners of capital and the laborers. From this idealistic perspective, a revolutionary movement becomes the tangible implementation of the materialist philosophy's teachings (Central Komite PKI, 1954, p. 3; DN Aidit, 1955, p. 55; Njoto, 1962, p. 2). In this regard, Sukarno had his own viewpoint on the revolution as envisioned in the Nasakom ideology. Sukarno stated:

“The Indonesian Revolution, which they try to distort and destroy. Our revolution, which is based on the principles of anti-imperialism, the principles of Nasakom, that they fear. Brothers, it is true what they say, and what I am saying now, that I am the one most considered by the neo-colonialists as enemy number one – enemy number one, the number one enemy of imperialism – because Indonesia possesses the spirit of the Indonesian Revolution” (Sukarno, 1965a, pp. 20–22).

Based on the above quote, Sukarno believed that the concept of revolution within Nasakom provided a pathway to counter imperialism. Through his Nasakom ideology, Sukarno sought to accommodate the strength of the communist movement to conduct a revolution against the capitalist system that oppressed Indonesian society. He firmly believed that the combined efforts of the communist, nationalist, and religious forces could create justice, prosperity, and equalize the social structure without discrimination (Sukarno, 1965b, p. 10).

Isa Anshary, however, disagreed with Sukarno's perspective. According to Isa Anshary, the revolution within communist ideology represented a class struggle based on the desire for survival (struggle of life) and guided by the law of the jungle, namely “survival of the fittest.” Furthermore, Isa Anshary stated that within communism, the revolution utilized the laborers and farmers as tools to oppose the landowners. The contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeois is not aimed at seizing power and creating a classless system, but it only gives rise to vengeful actions that undermine human values (Anshary, 1956, p. 12).

Third, the object and purpose of communist ideology. The communist ideals are to achieve justice, prosperity, and to address all social, economic, and political issues while

gathering strength to combat imperialism. The communists aspire for every individual to experience freedom without any social classes (CC PKI, 1960, pp. 7–9). In this regard, Sukarno stated:

“I myself am a nationalist who has been heavily influenced by Marxism. Our struggle now must be in combating foreign imperialism with our national strength, with all our national energies” (Soekarno, 2016, p. 138).

Sukarno’s statement illustrates that being a Marxist means uniting national strength to combat foreign political ambitions (imperialism) and foster unity. As a Marxist, Sukarno accommodated the communists and gathered political strength with them to eliminate all forms of colonization in Indonesia (Soekarno, 1963, p. 12). In this context, there is a similarity between Sukarno and Isa Anshary regarding the object and purpose of the communist movement. Isa Anshary mentioned that “kesamaan antara Islam dan komunisme hanyalah objekt dan sasaran, seluruh dunia dan manusia” (“the commonality between Islam and communism lies in their object and purpose, the entire world and humanity.”). Isa Anshary provided an underline and boundary to affirm that communism and Islam still share common ground despite their many differences. In truth, the ideology of communism aims to eliminate the shackles of ownership that burden society. This objective aligns with the principles of Islam, which also advocates justice, humanity, and rejection of imperialism (Anshary, 1956, p. 23).

Furthermore, Isa Anshary’s thoughts on communism also share common ground when it comes to cooperating with Sukarno and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) regarding the claim over West Irian (now West Papua). Isa Anshary explicitly stated that despite ideological differences with communism, he agreed with the communists’ stance in wanting to retain West Irian due to the lack of conducive foreign policies and to preserve Indonesia’s territorial integrity (“Isa Anshary Waarschuwt Voor de Communisten,” 1954). In the pursuit of West Irian, Sukarno established Trikora (Three Commands of the People) in 1961 and sent delegations to the United States to pressure the Netherlands to hand over West Irian to Indonesia. Sukarno’s firm stance led to heightened tension in his relationship with the U.S. President, John F. Kennedy, as Indonesia purchased ammunition from Moscow to exert pressure on the Netherlands, which was under U.S. protection. Based on these historical facts, the authors argue that despite the ideological differences and frequent political tensions between Sukarno and Isa Anshary, instances of compromise between them can still be found, particularly reflected in their defense of West Irian. This is significant because Sukarno and Isa Anshary were central figures in nationalist and Islamic circles who could find common ground on issues of national sovereignty.

About Nationalism

Sukarno’s thoughts on nationalism are based on his intellectual experiences with societies that were unable to stand on their own. Feelings of oppression, suppression, and the inability to achieve independence laid the foundations for his ideas on nationalism (Kahin, 2013, p. 37). Regarding Sukarno’s thoughts on nationalism, two important aspects of his ideas can be highlighted. The first concept is national integration. Sukarno stated “Nationalism is an intention; a consciousness of the people that they belong to one group, one nation!” (Soekarno, 1963, p. 8).

Sukarno’s statement emphasizes that nationalism serves as a unifying force for the nation. Through nationalism, various ethnic groups, races, religions, and cultures can be integrated holistically. Nationalism has the capacity to gather immense strength by uniting all layers of society as one group and one nation. According to Sukarno, only through unity

can a nation grow into an independent state by reducing individual interests in favor of collective interests (Soekarno, 1963, p. 9).

The second concept is socio-nationalism. According to Sukarno, socio-nationalism represents nationalism within society. Socio-nationalism strives to improve the conditions of oppressed communities towards stability. It rejects all forms of bourgeoisie and aims for economic and political self-reliance within society (Soekarno, 2016, p. 139). Sukarno emphasizes that as long as the people are not capable of managing their own economic and political systems, they will be confronted with interests that do not align with their own and may even contradict their interests (Soekarno, 1951, p. 65).

In his book titled "Islam and Nationalism," Isa Anshary expresses his thoughts on nationalism. When discussing nationalism, there are two important aspects in his ideas. The first aspect is nationalism as integration (*berjamaah*). Isa Anshary wrote:

"The prevailing and accepted definition of nationalism today is the feeling of unity (solidarity) that grows among a group of people due to their shared fate, shared history, and shared place of residence. Through these three shared elements, they develop a common desire, a common will, and a common love to live as a nation within one country. Our Islamic state system does not recognize the term discrimination, nor do we recognize the terms majority and minority. What exists is only living in unity" (Anshary, 1955, p. 7).

Isa Anshary's thoughts affirm that he agrees with the term nationalism but only within the framework of Islamic values. The concept of nationalism as integration, according to him, is based on the Qur'anic notion that humans are created in diverse nations (*syu'ub*), tribes (*qaba'il*), and possess different languages, customs, and cultures. Furthermore, Isa Anshary states that Islam not only acknowledges the existence of nationalism and nationality but also recognizes regional identities, even in the smallest matters. In this context, nationalism functions to live together, to unite, to direct collective aspirations, and to prioritize humanity (Anshary, 1949, p. 11).

The second aspect is the concept of nationalism-patriotism. Isa Anshary states that Islam has taught to love the homeland. Outwardly, humans have feelings of love for others (*hubb*) and love for the homeland where they were born (Anshary, 1955, p. 16). As Muslim citizens in Indonesia, Isa Anshary firmly declares that patriotism or love for the homeland is something natural, and there should be no doubt about the patriotic spirit among Indonesian Muslims.

Isa Anshary explicitly highlights the commitment to nationalism shown by the Muslims of the archipelago through their patriotic spirit, as demonstrated by figures such as Pangeran Diponegoro, Imam Bonjol, Sultan Ba'abullah, and others. Nationalism-patriotism serves as the core principle to protect the homeland from ideological attacks that are deemed to erode moral values within society, as well as physical attacks that would lead to dehumanization. For Isa Anshary, nationalism-patriotism represents devotion to Allah swt, to safeguard the entrusted land of Indonesia. Through the struggles of past Muslim patriots, today's Muslim community has the responsibility to continue their legacy by nurturing the unity of the Indonesian nation (Anshary, 1948, p. 48).

About State

The first important aspect of Sukarno's concept of the state is that he envisions an ideal state that is complex and pluralistic. He emphasizes that an ideal state should not be limited by specific ideologies or religious beliefs. Sukarno wrote:

“What Turkey does is no different from what Western countries do. No different from England, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and others. In these countries, too, religion is left to the individual, religion is allowed to remain a personal matter, and it is not handed over to the state. Not handed over to the state, not made a state affair, not made a state religion” (Soekarno, 2016, p. 423).

Based on the above quotation, there are two important aspects of Sukarno’s concept of the state. *Firstly*, Sukarno aspired for Indonesia to modernize like Western countries, exemplified by Turkey. The modern state he envisioned was based on secularism, which involves desacralizing politics and state affairs from matters related to religion (Kamil, 2013, p. 27). Sukarno aimed to separate religious and political issues. In this regard, he adopted a rationalistic approach in understanding the relationship between religion and the state. According to Sukarno, the modernity of a country concerns the welfare of the people. Through a modern state, society would be accommodated without religious barriers (Soekarno, 2016, p. 427).

Secondly, Sukarno sought to establish Pancasila as the state ideology. His ideas about secularism and the desire for Indonesia to modernize like Turkey were influenced by the intellectual impact of Ali Abd al-Raziq. Raziq argued that there was no scriptural basis for an ideal state in religious texts. Sukarno’s rationality regarding Islam and his belief in the need for earnest contemplation (*ijtihad*) and consensus (*ijma*’) were reflected in his efforts to formulate an ideal foundational framework for Indonesia (Darojat, 2019, p. 80).

Through the process of *ijtihad* and *ijma*’ during the BPUPKI (Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence) and subsequently PPKI (Central Indonesian National Committee), Pancasila was established as the state ideology (Zubaidi, 2023, p. 162). According to Sukarno, Pancasila serves as the philosophical foundation (*philosophische grondslag*) or fundamental worldview (*weltanschauung*) and is an ideology that could accommodate diverse cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Through the ideology of Pancasila, Sukarno envisioned building a modern state, free from the dominance of any particular religion. By adopting Pancasila as the state ideology, the nation embraces a democratic system, which allowed for governance amidst a pluralistic society. Sukarno’s democratic vision aimed at creating a nation formed by the people and for the people (Assyaukanie, 2011, p. 75).

Another significant aspect of Sukarno’s thinking after adopting Pancasila as the state ideology was the concept of “Nasakom.” Through Nasakom, Sukarno sought to unite nationalist, religious, and communist factions. The seeds of unifying these three major ideologies emerged when Sukarno was young and wrote about Nationalism, Islamism, and Marxism. Based on Sukarno’s ideas about Nasakom, there were assumptions that he became anti-God and anti-religion due to his alignment with communist forces (Soekarno, 1963, p. 19). In response to those assumptions, Sukarno conveyed:

“Those who do not believe in God, cursed! Pancasila can also unite all human beings in one unity, unite all Indonesians in one unity, and as the foremost, unite in faith to the One Almighty God. We all must have a religion, we must, everyone must believe in a religion, we all must worship the One Almighty God, and even our nation must be based on this belief. Cursed are those who do not believe in God, cursed!” (Sukarno, 1964, pp. 13–14).

Based on the quote above, it is evident that Sukarno did not deny the existence of God and religion. Sukarno regarded religion as a spiritual force that provided inspiration for human beings to act in accordance with the teachings established by God. However, using

religion as a legal-formal or standardized rule for a state is what Sukarno rejected (Suhelmi, 2014, p. 77).

In contrast to Sukarno, Isa Anshary also has his own views on the concept of the state. Isa Anshary's main idea about the state is essentially one: the establishment of Islamic ideology. He interprets the struggle of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which successfully revolutionized mankind through what he called "*syari'ah ijtima'iyah*" (Anshary, 1958, p. 11). Isa Anshary believes that only through the establishment of Islamic ideology, Islamic law (*hukumah Islamiyah*) can be the foundation for a revolution, leading to justice, welfare, and societal independence within a nation (Anshary, 1952, p. 11).

In interpreting sacred texts, there are differences between Sukarno and Isa Anshary. While Sukarno belongs to the rationalist Islamic camp, Isa Anshary tends towards scriptural Islam. This is because Isa Anshary interprets texts in a formalistic and idealistic manner (Martensson, 2011, p. 37). His views were heavily influenced by the intellectual ideas of three Middle Eastern reformist figures: Jamaludin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, and Rasyid Ridha (Laffan, 2003, p. 39; Tambunan, 2019, p. 20). As a result, Isa Anshary holds a fundamental or puritanical perspective, with a rigid approach to always return to the Quran and Sunnah (the practices and teachings of Prophet Muhammad).

According to Isa Anshary, state affairs cannot be separated from religious terms. In fact, Isa Anshary explicitly explains that it is obligatory for Muslims to actively engage in politics because it is part of Islamic da'wah (preaching) (Anshary, 1954). He emphasizes that the political ideology of Islam must be advocated because it is an absolute mandate and message given by Allah SWT to strive in forming an Islamic state, in order to achieve "*baldatun thayyibatun wa Rabbun ghafur*" (a good land with a forgiving Lord).

Isa Anshary's perspective on the state has implications for the ideology of Pancasila as the foundation of the Indonesian state. Initially, Isa Anshary accepted Pancasila as the state ideology. Isa Anshary's acceptance of the Pancasila ideology can be found in his statement as follows:

"In his speech, Kjai Hadji Isa Anshary provided an exposition of Pancasila in relation to Islam, stating that it is not in conflict with Islamic teachings. He reminded that the outcome of the upcoming elections would determine the fate of Muslims in Indonesia, regardless of their affiliation to organizations such as PSII, NU, or Masyumi. He insisted on unity among Muslims in their voting decisions" ("Isa Over Pantja Sila," 1954).

Based on the above quote, it is evident that Isa Anshary initially accepted Pancasila as the state ideology. Moreover, he asserted that Pancasila does not contradict Islamic teachings. However, his acceptance of Pancasila later underwent a complete transformation. Isa Anshary rejected Pancasila and extensively advocated for the ideology of Islam. The primary and fundamental factor behind this ideological transformation in Isa Anshary was the presence of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which embraced Pancasila as its ideology ("PKI Menerima Pantjasila Sebagai Dasar Politik Republik Indonesia, DN Aidit: Persatuan Nasional Bukan Soal Insident," 1954). As an anti-communist scholar, Isa Anshary was unwilling to collaborate with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) under the ideology of Pancasila. He quoted a verse from the Qur'an, Surah Al-Maidah verse 2, which means:

"Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression" (Anshary, 1966a, p. 112).

Through this verse, Isa Anshary believed that accepting the ideology of Pancasila

would be sinful as it involved cooperating under its framework. Moreover, he stated that the PKI merely exploited the Pancasila ideology to follow the instructions of the international communist (Komintern) agenda. Isa Anshary's rejection of the Pancasila ideology was also driven by numerous instances where PKI members exhibited revolutionary behavior towards Muslims, issuing threats, engaging in terror, and even committing dehumanizing acts. These rational reasons led Isa Anshary to reject the ideology of Pancasila, oppose democratic principles, and vocally advocate for the ideology of Islam.

The Impact of Ideological Debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary on Indonesia's Politic

Firstly, this debate led to political polarization in the lead-up to the 1955 elections. Prior to the inaugural 1955 elections in Indonesia, the socio-political condition was characterized by intense ideological conflicts demonstrated by political elites between nationalism and Islam ideologies. As the ideological struggles had not found a common ground, discussions about the 1955 elections to elect the People's Representative Council (DPR) and the Constituent Assembly were prevalent. In general, people tended to support parties aligned with their adopted ideologies. This was because the parties they supported in the elections represented their beliefs. Political parties' elite conducted various manifestos for campaigning, such as delivering speeches and distributing pamphlets, which often intensified the polarization (Anri, 2019, p. 8).

For example, Sukarno's political speech in Amuntai on January 27, 1953, is illustrative. One of the central points in Sukarno's speech was his question to the people of Amuntai about choosing between a "National State or an Islamic State." Sukarno acknowledged that Indonesia was predominantly Muslim, but in various regions of Eastern Indonesia, the majority was not Muslim. He warned that if Indonesia were to adopt Islam as the state ideology, the communities in the eastern regions might secede from the nation ("De President Op Reis: De Overval Op Tembarangan," 1953). Therefore, Sukarno advocated for Indonesia to remain a National State and proposed the Nasakom concept as an effort to unite the nation. Upon deeper analysis, there were rational reasons why Sukarno delivered such a speech. He believed that the ideological debate had not concluded and addressing this issue was crucial to avoid further division within the nation. Furthermore, there were movements that indicated opposition to the government, using Islamic ideology, such as Darul Islam (DI) led by Kartosuwiryo and Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) led by Daud Beureuh and Kahar Muzakkar (Sanusi, 2022).

Isa Anshary responded to Sukarno's speech in Amuntai with strong criticism. He asserted that Sukarno displayed undemocratic practices in his political approach. Isa Anshary believed that Sukarno failed to acknowledge the reality that the Muslim majority in Indonesia exhibited a strong political will to actively participate in parliamentary law-making ("Isa Anshary Protesteert Tegen Presidentieele Uitlatingen," 1953). According to Isa Anshary, Sukarno's actions had exacerbated the socio-political situation in Indonesia. The speech was delivered during the political years leading up to the 1955 elections, which were marked by noticeable divisions, further accentuating the polarization between the nationalist-secular bloc and the nationalist-Islam bloc.

Furthermore, Isa Anshary responded to Sukarno's concept of Nasakom (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism) He perceived that the concept aimed to weaken the political power of Masyumi, which was based on Islam. Furthermore, the Nasakom concept provided a favorable environment for PKI to compete in the electoral contest, as communism ideology was fully supported by Sukarno. Consequently, various political narratives emerged from PKI, which often appeared provocative, especially when directed towards Masyumi. As an

example of PKI's provocative campaign, they claimed that choosing Masyumi was equivalent to choosing DI/TII ("Memilih Masjumi Berarti Memilih D.I.," 1955), or selecting Masyumi meant choosing imperialism ("Masjumi Merupakan Imperialisme!," 1955). Observing such circumstances, in 1954, Isa Anshary founded the Front Anti Komunis (FAK) as an effort to counter PKI's political narratives. FAK proved to be highly useful in supporting Masyumi and challenging PKI's provocative narratives, which raised concerns for Aidit about the declining electability of PKI. As a result, Aidit requested Sukarno to disband FAK ("Djika Tolerant, Bubarkan Front Anti Komunis Dan Front Anti Marhaenis!," 1955; "Front Anti Komunis Mengatjau!," 1955).

Secondly, post the 1955 elections, conflicts emerged within various layers of Indonesian society. The inaugural elections in Indonesia in 1955 resulted in PKI obtaining the fourth position with a total of 6,176,914 votes (16.4%), followed by NU in third place with 6,955,141 votes (18.4%), Masyumi in second place with 7,903,886 votes (20.9%), and PNI in the first place with 8,434,653 votes (22.3%) (Feith, 1999, p. 35). Post-election, PKI gained a stronger foothold in parliament and displayed a more revolutionary stance. Under the guided democracy, the political climate became unstable as PKI sought to dominate the political landscape and engaged in various confrontations, leading to conflicts in various aspects of society. For example, PKI initiated land reforms (CC PKI, 1961, p. 42; CC PKI, 1965, 10-11), which involved seizing land from landlords, the majority of whom were Muslims, including kyais and santris. This often led to disputes between kyais, santris, and PKI over land-related issues. In their movements, PKI did not hesitate to persecute and even kill kyais and santris whom they perceived as obstacles (Sunanto, 2017, p. 74).

In the realm of arts, the Lembaga Kesenian Rakyat (Lekra) (Y. Ismail, 1972, p. 8), a cultural institution owned by PKI, organized performances with themes such as "*Matine Gusti Allah*" (God is dead), "*Rabine Gusti Allah*" (God got married), "*Gusti Allah Dadi Manten*" (God becomes a groom), and "*Gusti Allah Mantu*" (God marries off his son). These performances were seen as insulting to Islam. To confront such insults, NU deployed Banser forces to disperse the performances conducted by Lekra, although clashes with PKI eventually became unavoidable (Mun'im, 2013, p. 83). In the military aspect, the ideology of communism had infiltrated the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI), particularly within the ranks of the Indonesian National Army (TNI). Various members of the TNI adopted communist ideology (Aidit, 1963a, 1963b; Anshary, 1957), further exacerbating the social-political situation, leading to a lack of control. The culmination of all the issues caused by PKI occurred on September 30, 1965 (Gestapu), when an attempted coup was made, resulting in the deaths of 6 Generals and 1 Officer (Ticoalu, 2015, p. 15).

This event marked the end of Sukarno's rule, and PKI was subsequently disbanded. The termination of Sukarno's leadership also resulted in the discontinuation of the Nasakom concept that he had been advocating. Upon Sukarno's ouster, Isa Anshary expressed his opinion as follows:

"Alhamdulillah! All this time, all anti-communist fortresses and defenses have been destroyed in the name of revolution! Democracy is brought to the gallows. The Constituent Assembly and the people's elected Parliament are dissolved in the name of revolution! Masjumi, PSI, Liga Demokrasi, and GPII are abolished in the name of revolution! Enemies of the PKI are hunted down everywhere because they are 'enemies of the revolution.' Islamic fighters with a democratic spirit are thrown into prisons or exiled for a long time." (Anshary, 1966b, p. 7).

From the quote above, it is evident that Isa Anshary felt that his struggle during his political career had yielded results. He had been critical of Sukarno's promotion of communist ideology through Nasakom. Sukarno himself was not a communist, but he was a thinker who sought to unify Indonesia and gather political strength by accommodating communist factions through his Nasakom concept (Hakim, 2023, p. 158). However, Sukarno denied the revolutionary nature of the communist movement worldwide, which often resorted to various tactics and caused bloodshed (Holdo, 2016). Ironically, towards the end of his political career, it was the communist factions that initiated a revolutionary movement, leading to the downfall of Sukarno's regime.

The political polarization between nationalist and Islamic factions and the resulting conflicts generated by the PKI after the 1955 elections are real implications of the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary regarding communism, nationalism, and the state. The main findings of this study suggest that the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary, as manifested in their political stances, is the result of their intellectual journeys. Both Sukarno and Isa Anshary played significant roles in nationalist and Islamic circles, influenced by the political socialization processes they experienced. Through their intellectual influences, Sukarno and Isa Anshary articulated their thoughts based on nationalism accommodating communist forces, while Isa Anshary resisted communist ideology and the PKI in pursuit of Islamic ideology.

Conclusions

The ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary about communism, nationalism, and the state occurred due to the political socialization experienced by both figures. Sukarno's intellectual influence, stemming from Mustafa Kemal At-Taturk and Ali Al-Raziq, led him to lean towards rational and secular understanding. On the other hand, Isa Anshary was influenced by Egyptian reformists such as Jamaludin Al-Afghani, Abduh, and Rasyid Ridha, shaping his scriptural understanding of Islam and rejection of ideologies incompatible with Islam, particularly communism. The debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary about communism displayed its own distinctive characteristics: Sukarno, representing the nationalist faction, adopted an accommodating stance towards communism, while Isa Anshary took an anti-communist position against the PKI. Regarding Pancasila, Isa Anshary initially accepted it as the state ideology but eventually rejected it due to the association with the PKI, staunchly refusing to compromise with communist groups under the Pancasila ideology and advocating for Islam instead. This disagreement between Sukarno and Isa Anshary challenges existing historiography, which predominantly focuses on the relationship between Islam and the state. In this regard, the authors contend that the debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary has its distinctiveness, particularly regarding communism, which impacts their political thoughts and stances in governance. This challenges the historiography of ideological debates in Indonesia, which predominantly focuses on the relationship between Islam and the state.

Moreover, the ideological debate between Sukarno and Isa Anshary had implications for political polarization leading up to the 1955 elections, with political elites disseminating provocative manifestos and pamphlets, and conflicts arising due to Sukarno's Nasakom concept until the end of the Old Order. Various ideologies proposed by Sukarno and Isa Anshary concerning communism, nationalism, and the state are reflected in their accommodating or rejecting political stances towards communism. Sukarno's accommodating stance towards communism seemingly provided an opportunity for the PKI to ascend, prompting Isa Anshary, a champion of Islamic politics, to consistently oppose the Old Order government, especially the PKI. Despite appearing to have conflicting views on communism, nationalism, and the state, Sukarno and Isa Anshary could compromise for the nation's sovereignty, particularly

regarding West Irian. Nonetheless, discourse on Sukarno and Isa Anshary should continue to evolve in future research, particularly exploring the dynamics of their relationship post-Old Order collapse, to offer a comprehensive study.

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