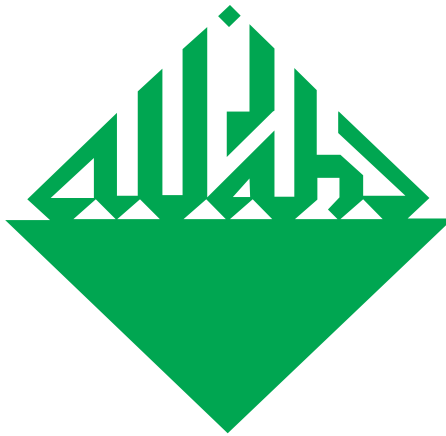


# STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

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## INDONESIA'S MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS AND THE OVERTHROW OF SUKARNO

Steven Drakeley

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## AN ARABIC MANUSCRIPT ON THE HISTORY OF *IṢLĀḤ* AND *IRSHĀD* 'REVOLUTION' IN INDONESIA

Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk

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## VARIATIONS ON AN EXEGETICAL THEME: *TAFSĪR* FOUNDATIONS IN THE MALAY WORLD

Peter G. Riddell

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*Steven Drakeley*

## Indonesia's Muslim Organisations and the Overthrow of Sukarno

**Abstract:** *This paper explores the role of Muslim organisations in the slow overthrow of President Sukarno between 30 September 1965 and 12 March 1967. It argues that their role in the process was far more important than is usually appreciated in the literature. But the primary focus here is on the surprisingly slow and hesitant evolution of the stances taken by Muslim organisations in this period on the question of Sukarno's presidency, as well as on the one hundred and eighty degree turn that they eventually executed. From almost unqualified support for Sukarno in 1965 Indonesia's Muslim organisations shifted, at markedly different speeds, to vehement opposition by early 1967. This article traces the shift and seeks to explain the complex of motivations and calculations that produced it and were also responsible for its varying pace. It thereby provides revealing insights into the political thinking and practices of Indonesia's Muslim organisations in this period of political transformation and flux.*

**Keywords:** Sukarno overthrow, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Masyumi, G30S/Gestapu, Soeharto, New Order.



**Abstrak:** Artikel ini menjelaskan tentang peran organisasi-organisasi Islam dalam penggulingan secara perlahan Presiden Sukarno antara 30 September 1965 dan 12 Maret 1967. Tulisan ini berpendapat bahwa peran organisasi-organisasi Islam dalam proses penjatuhan itu jauh lebih penting daripada apa yang biasanya digambarkan dalam buku-buku. Kendati demikian, perhatian utama di sini adalah perubahan sikap yang sangat lambat dan keengganan yang diambil oleh organisasi-organisasi Islam pada masa ini mengenai persoalan kepresidenan Sukarno, dan juga mengenai perubahan sikap 180 derajat yang akhirnya mereka ambil. Dari pendukung hampir tanpa syarat kepada Sukarno pada 1965, organisasi-organisasi Islam Indonesia berubah, dengan sangat cepat, menjadi penentang yang amat bersemangat pada awal 1967. Tulisan ini melacak perubahan itu dan mencoba menjelaskan ragam motivasi dan aneka perhitungan yang membuahkan sikap tersebut. Motivasi dan perhitungan itu juga mempengaruhi perbedaan pada setiap tahapannya. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini menyajikan pandangan-pandangan yang terbuka pada pemikiran politik dan praktik organisasi-organisasi Islam pada masa peralihan dan perubahan politik tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** Penggulingan Sukarno, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Masyumi, G30S/Gestapu, Soeharto, Orde Baru.

**الخلاصة:** يتناول هذا المقال موضوعاً عن دور المنظمات الإسلامية في العملية الانقلابية ضد الرئيس سوكارنو بشكل تدريجي في الفترة ما بين ٣٠ سبتمبر ١٩٦٥م و١٢ مارس ١٩٦٧م. يرى هذا البحث أن دور المنظمات الإسلامية في سير ذلك الانقلاب لم يكن بالأهمية التي كانت مصورة في الكتب. ومع ذلك، فإن الاهتمام هنا يتركز على الموقف الذي كان متباطئاً إلى درجة كبيرة وكان متغيراً ومشككاً فيه والذي اتخذته المنظمات الإسلامية إزاء قضية الرئيس سوكارنو، وكذلك موقفها المنقلب رأساً على عقب فيما انتهت إلى اتخاذه. فمن موقف المؤيد التام دور شرط للرئيس سوكارنو عام ١٩٦٥م، تغير ذلك الموقف للمنظمات الإسلامية الاندونيسية، مع اختلاف في سرعته، وتحول إلى معارضة مفعومة بالحماسة في أوائل ١٩٦٧م. يتابع هذا البحث ذلك التغير ويحاول أن يوضح مختلف الدوافع والاعتبارات التي انتهت بهم إلى اتخاذ ذلك الموقف. وكانت تلك الدوافع والاعتبارات تؤثر كذلك على مراحل التغير. ولذلك، يعرض هذا المقال للآراء المتفتحة في التفكير السياسي وممارسة المنظمات الإسلامية في ذلك العهد المتغير والتغير السياسي.

**الكلمات الاسترشادية:** الانقلاب ضد سوكارنو، المحمدية، هضبة العلماء، المشومي، حركة ٣٠ سبتمبر، سوهرتو، عهد نظام الحكم الجديد.

In early 1967 President Sukarno teetered on the brink of ignominious removal from office amidst a deafening chorus of political abuse and calls for his dismissal. After being revered for decades and lauded extravagantly with almost unquestioned authority between 1957 and 1965, this was a stark change in political fortunes. Prominent amongst those who had undergone this apparently dramatic change of heart were Indonesia's Muslim organisations whose behaviour is the primary focus of this article. More precisely, the focus is on what I will show to have been in the context a remarkably slow and unevenly paced *volte face*. This study aims thereby to shed further light on the political behaviour and nature of Indonesia's Muslim organisations in the mid-1960s. More broadly its purpose is to contribute towards a more nuanced understanding of the transition to the New Order, undoubtedly one of Indonesian history's most momentous turning points.

### **The Transition Narrative<sup>1</sup>**

It is widely accepted that Sukarno's political demise and the concomitant emergence of Soeharto's New Order flowed from the events associated with the 30 September Movement (G30S/Gestapu) affair.<sup>2</sup> General Soeharto's swift crushing of this movement in early October 1965 followed by the scapegoating and annihilation of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), in the wake of G30S/Gestapu, is seen as having fatally undermined Sukarno's political position.<sup>3</sup> This led to the toppling of Sukarno, to Soeharto's ascension to power, and to the accompanying sea change in Indonesian politics and society associated with the establishment of the New Order. In broad terms this narrative is unproblematic, although a somewhat inexorable tone appears in some of the more abbreviated expositions of it, giving the impression that Sukarno's presidency was doomed automatically by the failure of the G30S/Gestapu and the destruction of the PKI. Somewhat problematic for this view is the fact that Sukarno was not formally deposed for another eighteen months. Not until 12 March 1967 did the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) withdraw his mandate and name Soeharto Acting President.<sup>4</sup> Most accounts however recognise that Sukarno was not finished in October 1965, that a fierce political struggle between Sukarno and the Soeharto-led forces lasted up until 11 March 1966 when Sukarno was forced to sign the famous Presidential Order giving then army commander

Soeharto sweeping emergency powers. Sukarno's continued occupation of the presidency for another year after this date is generally not given much attention, understandably so since it is clear that Sukarno was no longer making policy decisions. Indeed he was effectively sidelined with his visitors monitored, movements curtailed, and the Presidential Guard (*Cakrabirawa*) replaced by military police loyal to Soeharto. Accordingly, the New Order's commencement is usually dated from 11 March 1966.

Other accounts, principally that of Crouch (1978), recognise that while Sukarno's political position after March was weak and increasingly so as the last year of his presidency unfolded, nevertheless he still retained some (albeit rapidly diminishing) political options and for some months at least some powerful supporters. This view of course can be disputed but either way, apart from the intrinsic importance of accuracy, it is necessary to have a sufficiently fine-grained analytical narrative of the eighteen month process whereby Sukarno was removed as president for two reasons. The first is that Sukarno's continued occupation of the presidency was clearly a significant issue in the ongoing and intense politicking across what was a complex and still broad political spectrum. We cannot fully comprehend the process through which the New Order was constructed and consolidated without factoring it in. The second reason is that while in retrospect we might judge that Sukarno's political position was hopeless after March 1966, or even earlier, retrospective vision is not a luxury that those engaged in the political combat of the period enjoyed. The uncertainty over the degree of Sukarno's continued political influence and whether or not he would retain the presidency, even in a figurehead role, impacted significantly on the decisions of political actors in the period. This needs to be appreciated if we are to properly understand those decisions.

Thus Crouch's detailed account of this period's politics, published over three decades ago, remains the best we have.<sup>5</sup> Dealing deftly with the multifaceted interplay between the numerous political forces, key individual actors and the complex circumstances, Crouch recognises that Sukarno's fall from the presidency was not inevitable in the wake of the G30S/Gestapu affair, or even after 11 March 1966. This nuanced narrative includes the evolving stances and calculations of factions and individuals within the armed forces (hereafter army) as

well as those of civilian forces, recognising that both played important and complementary roles in Sukarno's overthrow. As Crouch shows, civilian support provided general political cover for Soeharto's actions, as well as the necessary parliamentary numbers for the mechanics of what was thereby made to appear, semi-plausibly, as a constitutional regime change. This gave the New Order a degree of political legitimacy without which it would have appeared to be what it actually was, a seizure of power by the army, or more precisely by the emerging dominant faction in the army led by General Soeharto. Civilian forces in the form of a right-wing student movement also played a prominent stalking-horse role throughout the campaign to destabilise Sukarno. Unsurprisingly given his subject is the army in Indonesian politics, Crouch pays far more attention to the army than to the civilian forces in this drama. Consequently, the civilian role is not fully appreciated and that of the army (which was certainly the more important) is a little overstated. Unfortunately no one has yet dealt with the civilian forces with anywhere near the quality applied by Crouch to the army, let alone provided a thorough account that treats them both simultaneously. I hope to partly address this deficiency here by focusing on the Islam-based civilian forces in the form of various Muslim organisations that joined the anti Sukarno coalition. In particular I examine the process whereby the Muslim organisations moved from a supportive towards an openly oppositional position vis-à-vis Sukarno, examining their evolving stances and the motivations and calculations involved.

### **Abandoning Bung Karno, Slowly**

In March 1967 *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no.5, p.2), a mouthpiece of the mass Modernist Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah, pronounced Sukarno no longer the Great Leader of the Revolution (one of his many grandiloquent titles) but its great wrecker. Not to be outdone, Achmad Sjaichu, a leading member of the Executive Council of the mass Traditionalist Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), demanded that Sukarno's Islamic titles be withdrawn and replaced with 'Supreme Gestapu/PKI Leader' and 'Supreme Butcher' (*DM* 4 March 1967, *KB* 3 March 1967). Muslim organisation voices were also amongst the loudest of those then urging Sukarno's prosecution for involvement in the G30S/Gestapu (*Antara* 2 March 1967B, 6 March 1967B).<sup>6</sup> Effectively thereby they were demanding his execution since

all those tried for this offence received a guilty verdict and usually a death sentence. But these same organisations had sung very different tunes only two years earlier. Sukarno's *Nuzūl al-Qur'ān* commemoration speech at the Presidential Palace on 20 January 1965 was quoted with lavish approval in NU's newspaper *Duta Masyarakat* (25 January 1965). Similarly, Muslim organisations enthusiastically welcomed the conferral on Sukarno of the title Champion of Islam and Independence by the First Afro-Asian Islamic Conference held in Bandung in March 1965. Muhammadiyah, for example sent the President a telegram of congratulations. The following month Muhammadiyah awarded Sukarno the Bintang Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Medal) and in July, at its thirty sixth National Conference, bestowed on him the title Great Patron of Muhammadiyah and an honorary degree (Drakeley: 2009). As Siti Baroroh Baried on behalf of Aisijjah (Muhammadiyah's women's organisation) remarked, this was 'in gratitude from the bottom of our hearts from all Muhammadiyah members to God because we have a leader, a president with a great spirit, a believer, a Muslim who has performed such great service in developing Islam in Indonesia...' (Sambutan: 3). Sukarno's closing speech at the Conference was received with applause and laughter in all the right places and calls for more when he began to wind up (Muktamar: 8-22).

These effusive expressions of support for Sukarno in early 1965 might be explained as the products of political calculation. Since 1964 Sukarno had shifted noticeably to the left and was increasingly favouring the PKI which was markedly hostile to Muslim organisations. Bear in mind that the Muhammadiyah-linked Masyumi party (which had won 20.9 per cent of the vote in the 1955 General Elections) had been banned in 1960 on spurious grounds, followed by its youth movement GPII (Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement) in 1963. Other organisations, such as the Murba Party and (ironically) the Body to Support Sukarnoism were also banned in January 1965 and December 1964 respectively. Ominously, throughout 1965 the PKI and its allies stepped up calls for Sukarno to ban the vehemently anti-communist Islamic Student Association (HMI). Securing Sukarno's favour and protection made much sense in this increasingly threatening and unpredictable context. Indeed this is exactly the calculation that the Muhammadiyah leadership stated it had made when called upon in 1968 to account for its accommodationist stance in 1965 (Laporan:

5, Drakeley: 2009). As Muhammadiyah activist (and later Parmusi leader) Lukman Harun is reputed to have remarked in support of the policy: 'It is better to be behind the butt of the rifle than in front of the barrel where you are likely to become a target' (Hamka: 177). But the vociferous support expressed by Muslim organisations for Sukarno in 1965 cannot be attributed solely to the exigencies of the political situation at that time. More likely these circumstances merely account for the volume and effusiveness with which support was expressed in 1965 because pro-Sukarno gestures and sentiments from Muslim organisations were certainly not new. For example, the Muslim-party grouping in the MPRS, which comprised all Muslim organisations represented, was instrumental in effecting the 1963 MPRS declaration of Sukarno as president for life. In a letter to the MPRS Chairman at the time, the Islamic Union Party of Indonesia (PSII) leader Anwar Tjokroaminoto praised Sukarno as being 'one with the people as they are one with him, not for a day, not for a month, not for a year but for as long as Brother (Bung) Karno lives in the world' (*Usul*). Examples can also be found from the period of Parliamentary Democracy (roughly 1950-1959) when Sukarno was far less powerful, notably NU's initiative to have the National Ulama Council bestow the title *waliy al-amri dariuri bi shawkah* on Sukarno in 1954.<sup>7</sup> Effectively this legitimated Sukarno's right to rule in terms of Islamic law and, at least theoretically, made rebellion against him religiously illegitimate (Nakamura, 1996: 102-4).

Nor in the immediate aftermath of the G30S/Gestapu affair were there any public signs of a shift away from their robust pro-Sukarno stance. On the contrary, typical of a flurry of supportive pronouncements in both tone and content was the statement by the NU Executive Council released in early October 1965 calling upon the Muslim community to remain loyal and obedient to Sukarno while aiding the army in establishing security (*DM* 7 October 1965). Similarly the Islamic grouping in parliament declared on 15 October that it 'resolves to stand firmly behind your Excellency President Sukarno...' (Pernyataan p.1). If such expressions of support were insincere then certainly their authors, in NU at least, put considerable effort into generating the opposite impression. For example, a huge banner headline on the back page of the advertising section of *Duta Masyarakat* (9 October 1965) declared that Indonesia's '*ulamā'* (religious scholars) were prepared to

carry out Bung Karno's commands. And when First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Subandrio called for the formation of a 'Barisan Sukarno' (Sukarno Ranks) in January 1966, Djamaluddin Malik, NU Executive Council member, boasted of NU's long and close political relationship with Sukarno, declaring that NU had been a loyal Barisan Sukarno since 1945 (*Kompas* 28 January 1966). He went on to warn that anyone trying to remove Sukarno would have to confront twenty five million NU members who would give their all to defend him. Two weeks later NU General Chairman, Idham Chalid, asserted that 'day or night NU is ready to be used by (Sukarno) as a tool of the revolution' (*DM* 31 January 1966).

Possibly these statements reflected only the sentiment (or calculations) of NU's leadership and not those of ordinary members. This is difficult to gauge of course. But there is evidence to suggest that rank and file NU support for Sukarno also remained strong (Bruinessen, 1994: 88). Speaking at a mass rally at the end of January 1966 commemorating NU's fortieth anniversary Sukarno referred to a statement made years earlier by Wahab Chasbullah, NU *rais am*, or President General. Wahab had nominated three essential pre-requisites for presidential candidates: they must be Indonesian citizens, Muslims, and able and astute (*cukup dan cakap*). Sukarno continued that obviously he was an Indonesian citizen and a Muslim who loved Islam, but whether he was able and astute was not for him to say. On cue: 'President Sukarno is able and astute!' the crowd responded (*DM* 31 January 1966). Apparently these sentiments extended beyond NU. At the *Idul Fitri* celebrations at Senayan stadium in Jakarta on 22 January the massive audience was so moved by Sukarno's oratory that placards critical of the government were quickly lowered and the predominantly 'young audience repeatedly stood and cheered' (Paget: 372-73). Significantly, both of these incidents occurred during the famous wave of anti-government protests by 'the student movement' which were in fact orchestrated by the Indonesian Students Action Front (KAMI), a coalition of anti-communist student organisations dominated by HMI.

NU expressions of support for Sukarno continued throughout February. At the end of the month the title Supreme Leader of the All Indonesia Islamic Scholars (*Pembimbing Agung Alim Ulama Se-Indonesia*) was bestowed on Sukarno by NU-associated 'ulama' (*DM* 28 February 1966). Similarly, in early March Gerwapsii, PSII's women's

organisation, awarded Sukarno the title: Pioneer of Independence and gave him a commemorative medal (*NP* 2 March 1966). PSII Vice President Harsono Tjokroaminoto insisted that PSII 'had never deviated from being amongst Bung Karno's supporters, both as President and as Great Leader of the Revolution' (*NP* 5 March 1966). Apparent affection and support for Sukarno from Muhammadiyah was also still evident. An article in *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no. 9 November 1965) boasted that Muhammadiyah had influenced a fifteen year old Sukarno when he attended a *Tabligh* by Ahmad Dahlan, Muhammadiyah's founder. And an editorial in the February-March 1966 (no. 4-5, p.3) edition praised Sukarno lavishly for his decision granting Muhammadiyah a role in state political institutions and allowing publication of a daily newspaper. The editors declared that this should make clear to doubters that Sukarno was a faithful member of the Muhammadiyah. Similarly, the 'Bung Santri' column in the March edition (no. 6) remarked indignantly that assertions that the anti G30S/Gestapu forces 'are not completely loyal to Bung Karno' are a 'gross libel'. And on the eve of the 11 March Order Muhammadiyah's newspaper *Mertju Suar* (9 March 1966) editorialised that its readers should 'carry out Bung Karno's commands, implement his political strategy and understand and absorb his teachings'.

It could be pointed out that while the main Muslim organisations maintained at least their ostensible support for Sukarno between October 1965 and March 1966, their youth wings and umbrella Muslim youth organisations like HMI exhibited a more critical if not oppositional posture, albeit usually from behind front organisations like KAMI. But here too matters were not so clear cut. HMI, the real force behind KAMI, certainly contained many ardent anti-Sukarnoists, but it did not commit to removing him immediately after 1 October. Indeed in December 1965, after a debate so heated that pistol shots were fired into the ceiling, HMI decided on the prompting of its General Chairman Sulastomo to attempt a tacit deal with Sukarno (Interviews: Madjid, Syachruddin, Idris). HMI would support Sukarno on condition he modify his policies; principally that he would ban the PKI (which all Muslim organisations had been pressing for since early October.) The stance was partly motivated by the (prescient) fear that Sukarno's removal would result in an army power monopoly within an even more authoritarian political system no less inimical to Islamic



interests than Sukarno's Guided Democracy regime (Interviews: Madjid, Syachruddin, Idris). Sulastomo remembers these events slightly differently, as more a decision not to switch the target from the PKI to Sukarno at that juncture. He takes the responsibility/credit for the decision, giving as his main motives the desire to protect HMI in a still uncertain political situation, one in which support for Sukarno was still strong and the army's position towards Sukarno still unclear (Sulastomo, 1989: 44-46). Certainly HMI withdrew temporarily from anti-government demonstrations and accepted Sukarno's invitation for a delegation to attend a function at the Bogor Presidential Palace on 18 December. There they 'listened respectfully to a chastening speech, presented (Sukarno) and ....Hartini (arguably Sukarno's most controversial wife in the eyes of many Muslims) with a HMI *peci* (Muslim hat) and joined in dancing and other entertainment until late at night' (AB 20 December 1965, Interview: Madjid).<sup>8</sup> A representative of Kohati, HMI's women's wing, even awarded Hartini the title 'Kohati Agung' (Great Leader of Kohati) (Interviews: Madjid, Syachruddin).<sup>9</sup> Relations between HMI and Sukarno remained cordial enough in January for HMI to issue and for Sukarno to accept (in principle) an invitation to attend HMI's forthcoming conference (*Kompas* 26 January 1966).<sup>10</sup> But if he ever seriously considered it, Sukarno certainly did not fulfil his end of the bargain. Consequently HMI resumed its key role in the student demonstrations that were an important component of the political pressure that forced Sukarno to sign the 11 March Order.

No doubt this was a momentous strategic defeat for Sukarno since Soeharto chose to interpret the wide powers given him under the terms of the 11 March Order as a transfer of power. But even after this major weakening of Sukarno's position it is striking that the Muslim organisations did not rush to attack him. Indeed *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no. 6, March 1966) reiterated Muhammadiyah's love for Sukarno in its editorial welcoming the 11 March Order and Sjaichu insisted that NU's loyalty to Sukarno remained unchanged (*DM* 16 March 1966). Although public criticisms of Sukarno by Muslim leaders increased over the next few months with few exceptions they remained mild and were delivered politely, and circuitously. For example, in late April HMI leader and Sukarno critic Mar'ie Muhammad called on the MPRS to correct deviations from the 1945 Constitution, citing its provision for a vice president (a position unoccupied since 1956), its lack of provision

for presidential decrees and, more pointedly, the MPRS's appointment of Sukarno as President for Life (*Antara* 25 April 1966A). But whether out of lingering respect or political caution, it seems he felt obliged to lessen the sting by insisting Sukarno was not to blame, claiming that the appointment was a product of machinations by Sukarنوist Chairul Saleh who wanted to become MPRS Chairman for Life. (This is a dubious claim given it appears to have been a PSII initiative (*Usul*).

NU's criticisms were even milder. In May Chalid Mawardi, General Secretary of NU's youth organisation, Pemuda Ansor, while acknowledging that Sukarno 'was not free from guilt and errors' stressed that he 'should be maintained as President because the nation and the revolution still needed him' (*Antara* 9 May 1966B). Similarly, while calling for Sukarno to be put in his proper constitutional place, another Pemuda Ansor leader, Jahja Ubeid, at a mass rally in Semarang, also reiterated the nation's need for Sukarno's leadership (*Antara* 15 May 1966AB). Even the NU firebrand anti-Sukarنوist, Subchan Z.E., remained circumspect enough to conclude his public speeches with 'Long Live Bung Karno' at this juncture (*DM* 16 April 1966). The Surabaya branch of the NU-linked Union of Indonesian Muslim Workers (Sarbumusi) flatly called on the MPRS to 'maintain Bung Karno as President', adding the helpful suggestion that NU's Idham become Vice President (*Antara* 15 June 1966A). Wahab not only insisted that NU continued to support Sukarno as President, but added that it would 'nominate him at every general election' (*Antara* 9 June 1966A, *Kompas* 9 June 1966). Furthermore, on the eve of the June MPRS Session which formally endorsed Soeharto's powers stemming from the March 11 Order, explicitly reduced Sukarno's powers and asserted its constitutional authority over him NU remained supportive. NU 'ulamā' in East Java reiterated that Sukarno remained *walīy al-amri darūri bi shawkah* and declared that he had done nothing to warrant stepping down from the presidency (*DM* 14 June 1966, 16 June 1966). The PSII, or at least its Arudji faction, voiced a similar position (*NP* 17 June 1966) in an editorial entitled 'Maintaining President Sukarno'. For its part *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no.11-12, June 1966) published a gently critical but respectful essay in honour of the President's sixty fifth birthday. Entitled 'Sukarno as a Human Being', it assessed Sukarno's strengths and weaknesses, gently urging him to engage in some 'self-correction'. The same issue editorialised that Muhammadiyah deplored

the emergence of division between pro and anti-Sukarno groups (both of which it implied were extremists endangering national unity), and declared that ‘there were no members of the Indonesian people who were not behind Bung Karno’.

After his unrepentant Nawaksara speech ‘reporting’ his actions as president to the June MPRS session, criticisms of Sukarno became more pointed. But still the Muslim organisations refrained from committing to the anti-Sukarno camp. For Muhammadiyah it seems the turning point came in the wake of Sukarno’s Independence Day speech on 17 August 1966. The speech had been widely perceived as the last opportunity for Sukarno to display an apparently widely hoped for recalibration of his politics to accord with the new political reality. But Sukarno’s ‘Never Leave History’ speech was a defiant reiteration of vintage Sukarno. *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no.15-16 August 1966, p.15) dismissed it as ‘past oriented’ and an ‘apology for the Old Order’, complaining that Sukarno was trying to regain his (pre-June MPRS session) ‘dictatorial powers’. It went on to declare that it did not want to remove (*mendongkel*) Bung Karno ‘but his power in that period (1959 to June 1966) was that of a tyrannical regime (*kekuasaan tirani*)’. From this point Muhammadiyah remained openly critical of Sukarno. At this juncture too Sukarno’s speech widened the factional division within PSII. *Karya Bhakti* (18 August 1966, 30 August 1966), the Marhaban faction’s mouthpiece, condemned it as a ‘poisonous message’, while the Arudji faction’s *Nusa Putera* (19 August 1966) remained more circumspect. Others, such as the Masyumi front organisation, Coordinating Body for the Deeds of Muslims (BKAM) also took a much harder line thereafter.<sup>11</sup> On this occasion BKAM demanded withdrawal of Sukarno’s ‘Champion of Islam’ title and accused him of slandering Muslim organisations (*Antara* 26 August 1966B).

From NU however, Sukarno’s speech evoked a more mixed response. Pemuda Ansor leader Jusuf Hasjim remarked caustically that Sukarno’s reputation as the mouthpiece of the people has faded (*Antara* 18 August 1966B). More sharply, a statement from the Bandung branches of five NU-linked organisations: Pemuda Ansor, Sarbumusi, Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (PMII), League of Muslim Artists and Artisans (Lesbumi) and Secondary School Students Association (IPNU), openly condemned the speech. Declaring their lack of confidence in Sukarno as head of state they called on the MPRS to revoke all his

official functions, referring to him insultingly as merely 'Engineer Sukarno', omitting all of his laudatory titles (*Antara* 18 August 1966B). But NU's national leadership repudiated this statement. Mohammed Dahlan, NU First Vice Chairman, remarked tersely: '(p)arty policies are determined by the Executive Council' (*Antara* 19 August 1966B, *DM* 20 August 1966). NU's official response released on 19 August expressed dissatisfaction with Sukarno's speech but in a restrained tone, regretting that 'some of it was less objective and might cause instability' but noting it 'contained positive sections' (*Antara* 22 August 1966B, *DM* 22 August 1966).

Sukarno damaged himself again in early September 1966 with the ill-considered remark that his speeches should be collected as the Prophet Muhammad's discourses were collected to become the Qur'an (*FEER* 22 September 1966, p.549). Indonesian Muslim Youth (PMI) demanded a retraction because Islam could allow no comparison between God's teachings and those of a mere human being (*KB* 6 September 1966). The West Java branch of the HMI-dominated Youth and Secondary School Students Action Front (KAPPI) complained that Sukarno frequently compared himself with the prophets, which was unacceptable because they (unlike Sukarno) 'were always the same in their lives and speeches' (*Antara* 8 September 1966B). KAPPI also urged the MPRS to appoint an Acting President to replace Sukarno pending a general election (*Antara* 7 September 1966B). PSII's Marhaban commented that Sukarno's statement made him ineligible for the title *waliy al-amri daruri bi shawkah* and a week later asserted that removing Sukarno as head of state was a religious obligation (*KB* 18 September 1966, 15 September 1966).

A few days later Sukarno further alienated neutrals and some supporters too with a speech defiantly reiterating that he was a Marxist and mocking the MPRS for its decision to ban Marxism. This prompted a flurry of calls for Sukarno's Islamic titles to be withdrawn, because, as Islamic scholar Arsjad Thalib Lubis put it, Sukarno's admission to being a Marxist 'gives him no right to be recognised as the Champion of Islam' (*Antara*, 16 September 1966A, *HK*, 15 September 1966, 22 September 1966, *Antara*, 12 September 1966A) Now more belligerent, *Karya Bhakti* (13 September 1966) 'reported' that certain religious circles connected to it regarded Sukarno as thereby constituting an apostate (*murtad*). Thus, it continued, efforts to topple him were

obligatory by religious law. Three Muhammadiyah-linked organisations: Muhammadiyah Secondary School Students Association (IPM), Muhammadiyah Artists and Artisans Association (ISBM) and the Senen Jakarta Branch of Muhammadiyah Youth (PM), called not only for the withdrawal of such titles but, significantly, for Sukarno's expulsion from Muhammadiyah (*HK* 9 September 1966, 4 October 1966). In the same month Muhammadiyah University Students Association (IMM) demanded that Sukarno be punished if he was guilty of involvement in the G30S/Gestapu affair (*HK* 14 September 1966). *Karya Bhakti* (27 September 1966) went further, openly accusing Sukarno of being the real leader of G30S/Gestapu. Again in marked contrast, NU while evincing growing disquiet still did not repudiate Sukarno. Jahja Ubeid stated that Pemuda Anzor would continue to recognise Sukarno as head of state as long as he abided by the people's demands as laid down in decisions of the MPRS (*Antara* 20 September 1966A). Similarly, Chalid Mawardi declared that although Pemuda Anzor was ready to criticise Sukarno whenever he deviated from the 1945 Constitution or MPRS decisions, these 'corrections.... did not constitute an attempt to topple Bung Karno, nor a manifestation of antipathy towards him, but rather were a manifestation of Anzor's love for him' (*Antara* 21 September 1966A). Idham concurred: 'If ...NU corrected Bung Karno it was done out of love' (*Antara* 22 September 1966A).

Sukarno's tenuous political position deteriorated further in September and October due to the Mahmillub (Special Military Court) show trials of his close associates Subandrio and Jusuf Muda Dalam (former Minister for Banking Affairs). Increasingly damaging 'revelations' provided his enemies with abundant ammunition, prompting further attacks on Sukarno from Muslim quarters. For example in mid-October the North Sumatra branch of the IPM urged Muhammadiyah to withdraw the title Great Patron of Muhammadiyah (*Antara* 13 October 1966A). Likewise, on behalf of the PII, Umar Burhanuddin called for Sukarno's religious titles to be withdrawn 'because Moslems (sic) can only be led by somebody who is devoted to God' (*Antara*, 20 October 1966B, *HK*, 21 October 1966). West Java KAPPI declared that not only did it no longer recognise Sukarno's titles but it also no longer recognised him as president (*Antara* 13 October 1966B). And in November, in response to Mahmillub developments, further calls were made by Muslim organisations for Sukarno to account for the G30S/

Gestapu affair (*Antara*, 15 November 1966A, 22 November 1966B). At best this was code for demanding that he unequivocally condemn G30S/Gestapu and the PKI; at worst it was tantamount to accusation of involvement in the affair.

In December, the detrimental insinuations arising from the Mahmillub trial of Omar Dhani (former Air Force commander) further eroded Sukarno's tottering position. The hitherto pro-Sukarno PSII Arudji faction was prompted to shift its position at this point, accusing Sukarno of at least foreknowledge of the G30S/Gestapu affair (*NP* 15 December 1966, 16 December 1966). KAPPI and the Islamic Student Front, a federation of West Java Islamic university student associations, demanded that Sukarno be put on trial (*Antara*, 22 December 1966B, 27 December 1966B). A few days later BKAM issued a statement protesting against plans to hold *Nuzul al-Qur'an* celebrations in the Presidential Palace on 29 December (*Antara* 27 December 1966B). Ominously for Sukarno the Minister for Religious Affairs, NU's Saifuddin Zuhri, obliged, announcing that the celebrations would not be held in the Palace as usual (*Antara* 30 December 1966A). Only a few years earlier, in 1963 while occupying the same office and with the approval of the NU leadership, he had been close enough to Sukarno to marry Sukarno to Haryati in an intimate ceremony in a pavilion at the Palace, and to oblige Sukarno again the following year by marrying him to Ratna Sari Dewi (Zuhri 1987, pp.531-35). At the end of December HMI's Yogyakarta branch issued a statement declaring Sukarno guilty of involvement in G30S/Gestapu and called for him to be punished (*Antara* 31 December 1966A). *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no. 2 January 1967, p.22) concluded that Omar Dhani's trial proved 'that Sukarno at least gave his blessing to the attempted communist coup'. HMI's West Java branch warned that even if Sukarno did unequivocally condemn G30S/Gestapu and the PKI (as he was expected imminently to do) he could not be trusted because 'as a Marxist (he) justifies any means to achieve his purpose' (*Antara* 2 January 1967A).

The chorus of attacks on Sukarno by Muslim organisations continued in January 1967. The Action Front of Indonesian Mosques (KAMSI) urged Sukarno to resign from the presidency in the interests of the nation (*Antara* 5 January 1967A). PSII joined calls for the convening of an extraordinary MPRS session so that Sukarno's alleged

involvement in G30S/Gestapu and deviations from the MPRS's mandate could be discussed (*Antara* 9 January 1967B). Pemuda Ansor concurred, but bluntly stated that the purpose of the extraordinary MPRS session should be to review its decision appointing Sukarno as president (*Antara* 10 January 1967B). *Suara Muhammadiyah* (no. 2, January 1967) editorialised that society was waiting with 'rapidly beating hearts' for the army to act against Sukarno. Its Bung Santri column declared that Sukarno should not be allowed to resign because then he would escape punishment, which it hinted should be death.

Sukarno's last chance to shore up the vestiges of his support lay with the supplement, which he had agreed grudgingly to provide, to his Nawaksara speech which the MPRS had deemed unsatisfactory. Although markedly conciliatory compared with the bellicose speeches he had delivered throughout 1966, the supplement, submitted in writing on 10 January 1967, did not go far enough to stem the tide. HMI flatly declared that Sukarno had thereby admitted his failures and had 'betrayed and abandoned the Indonesian people' (*Antara* 12 January 1967AB). The Islamic Trade Union Federation (Gasbiindo) expressed its disappointment and urged the MPRS to convene immediately, with the clear implication that it should remove Sukarno from the presidency (*Antara* 16 January 1967B). West Java's *ulamā* and religious leaders endorsed calls for convening the MPRS, declaring that they no longer recognised Sukarno as president or any of his religious titles (*Antara* 21 January 1967B). PM, followed a few days later by the Muhammadiyah itself, issued a statement rejecting Sukarno's supplement and calling for the MPRS to convene in order to 'end the dualism in the leadership of the government' (*Antara*, 18 January 1967B, 23 January 1967B, *SM* no.4, February. 1967). PSII's Anwar Tjokroaminoto branded the supplement 'a clever infantile state speech' (*Antara* 21 January 1967A). PSII youth and student organisations (PMI, SEMMI, and SEPMI) issued a joint statement rejecting the supplement and calling on the MPRS to 'take firm steps' (*Antara* 23 January 1967B). Marhaban called for Sukarno to be tried by the Mahmillub and urged General Nasution to remove Sukarno (*KB* 17 January 1967). At the beginning of February, Anwar Tjokroaminoto called for the process of removing Sukarno to be speeded up; adding that if the MPRS could not act soon enough then Soeharto should act 'to accelerate the stepping down of Sukarno' (*Antara* 3 February 1967A).

But compare these strident responses to the Nawaksara Supplement with those from NU. Mohammed Dahlan merely noted that it 'failed to satisfy the people's hopes' (*Antara* 17 January 1967B). Similarly, NU's official statement, issued well after those of other Muslim organisations, confined itself to rejecting 'the contents' of Sukarno's supplement (*Antara* 30 January 1967B). That at a moment of such profound political significance it took NU almost three weeks to provide an official statement hints at NU's paralysis due to an agonising internal debate. All other Muslim organisations had completely abandoned Sukarno over the previous months, leaving NU uncomfortably exposed. Under these circumstances NU's leadership struggled to restrain its subsidiary organisations and some leading figures began to break ranks publicly. For example, Dahlan and Sjaichu both stated that Sukarno's involvement in the G30S/Gestapu affair was clear from the Mahmillub trials (*DM* 26 January 1967, 6 February 1967). The latter even described Sukarno as a tyrant (*fir'aun*) (*SM* no. 5 March 1967, p.21). Yet still NU's leadership hesitated to formalise a final break with Sukarno, until finally, and with evident regret the NU Syuriah (Religious Council) signalled on 4 February that it would do so. Its statement stressed that NU had tried repeatedly to persuade Sukarno 'to eliminate the influence of communist teachings, atheism and Marxism ..... But absolutely no signs of the slightest progress have appeared' (*Antara* 4 February 1967A). But even then it went on to express the wistful hope that Sukarno would 'become conscious of his responsibility to really obey the constitution of the state and honestly and consistently carry out the decisions' of the MPRS 4th General Session'.

On 9 February 1967 the parliament adopted a motion declaring that Sukarno's Nawaksara supplement did not meet the MPRS's requirements, and called for the MPRS to convene in a Special Session by March, at which Soeharto was required to report on Sukarno's role in the G30S/Gestapu affair. Appended to the resolution was a memorandum, penned by Nuddin Lubis (head of the NU parliamentary faction) accusing Sukarno of being the G30S/Gestapu mastermind and blaming him for the state of the economy and the decline in morals. It called on the MPRS to dismiss him from office, put him on trial, and appoint an Acting President in his place (Prawotohadikusumo, pp.135-40, 145-166). As if to make up for its previous foot-dragging the



resolution was sponsored by NU. The MPRS was duly convened and Sukarno deftly removed from the presidency and replaced by Soeharto. Neatly encapsulating the political *volte face* of Muslim organisations, the motion was moved by the NU's Masjkur (a former Sukarnophile) on behalf of the parliament's Muslim-party grouping (Fealy, 1998: 265).

### Historiographical Problems

The above survey reveals some interesting patterns, which in turn raise some intriguing and important questions. But first the historiographical problem of the sources must be addressed. Working on this period in the Indonesian national archives (ANRI) reveals a sudden absence of documents upon reaching late 1965 in collections that are rich up until this point. I am referring particularly to the Muhammadiyah and NU collections, but the comment is widely applicable, and the documents of other organisations such as the PSII, PNI, Masyumi, let alone the PKI, are simply absent entirely. While hoping for more documentation to emerge memoirs, biographies, and interviews with key figures can be utilised. But of course such accounts while valuable are problematic for a number of reasons, including the fallibility and tendentiousness of memory. There is a common inclination to reconstruct (consciously or unconsciously) a narrative that paints oneself or one's party in a favourable light. This constructed narrative is also likely to shift over time depending on the prevailing political circumstances and 'national mood'. Highly relevant here is the dramatic shift in attitudes towards Sukarno whose popularity has returned to high levels; indeed his reputation began to be rehabilitated from its nadir in March 1967 not long after his death in 1970. Thus Sukarno's grave, now an elaborate mausoleum on the outskirts of Blitar, East Java, has become an increasingly popular site for visits. It never receives less than a 1,000 visitors per day and has at times received 25,000 per day. Amongst the visitors are many devout Muslims who visit partly or principally to perform *ziyārah*, a spiritual practice involving visits to tombs seeking intercession (*tawassul*) (Quinn: 2009). Thus one suspects that many of those who called for Sukarno's blood (literally) in early 1967 would rather this inconvenient fact be overlooked by historians. Imagine if their demands had been acted on and Sukarno tried and executed! In exactly the same way, and perhaps some of the very same people, found

it inopportune in the late 1960s to be reminded of their support for Sukarno during Guided Democracy, finding themselves referred to as 'Kyai Nasakom or Kyai Orla' (Old Order) for instance (Rifai, 2010: 121).

Autobiographical accounts relevant to the study of this period also tend to suffer from these deficiencies associated with the constructed nature of memory. They also tend to heavily emphasise the personal and to gloss over the more politically contentious aspects; almost all of them exclude discussion of internal debates within parties and organisations. The many biographical accounts that have emerged in recent years, usually compilations of reminiscences by friends and colleagues, are also generally of relatively little use to the historian. They tend to be highly hagiographic and similarly evasive where controversial episodes are concerned. All of these sources can be trawled for insight, for snippets, and for atmosphere, but the 'catch' is limited.

Here I have used the few available documents, supplemented by some interviews and numerous biographies and memoirs, but primarily I have turned to newspapers, especially those of the Muslim organisations. They are of course also a tricky source because of their intrinsic bias towards their respective organisations. There is also the challenge of the self-censorship applied in a dangerous and uncertain political environment. Especially in such a context we can assume the contents reflect only what was considered judicious as well as opportune to say at any given point. Notwithstanding these difficulties, that the coverage exists throughout the entire period makes them very useful, but particularly advantageous is that unlike memories the newspaper contents cannot be retrospectively altered. Moreover the material's major weakness (the self-censorship) can actually be employed as a valuable analytical tool. Because we are aware of it and have the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to allow for it with a fair degree of accuracy (just as we do the intrinsic bias) and to glean much understanding by tracing the contents chronologically in close association with attention to the unfolding political events.

### **Patterns, Problems, and Questions**

Obviously the public position of Muslim organisations towards Sukarno completely reversed over the course of the eighteen months examined here. But what is interesting is that the pace at which

this transition from apparent adoration to antipathy occurred was surprisingly slow if the adulation was purely a pretence dictated by political necessity. Furthermore, while the direction was consistent across the spectrum, the speed with which Muslim organisations and elements within them moved to an oppositional position, (or were prepared to reveal it) was far from uniform. Generally those associated with Masyumi and Muhammadiyah moved towards a more critical and then openly hostile position more quickly than those associated with NU and PSII. Clearly also younger Muslims generally shifted more quickly and more openly, often far more so, in an anti-Sukarno direction than their elders. How can these patterns be explained?

To a significant extent, especially for the first several months, the slow overall pace of the switch was probably due to fears that Sukarno would emerge victorious. Since (unlike those writing afterwards) they could not know the outcome, it is understandable if Muslim leaders were reluctant to take the enormous risk of opposing Sukarno publicly, even if they disapproved of him and his politics intensely. At least for several months there was good reason for them to suppose that Sukarno's chances of outmanoeuvring the relatively unknown Soeharto were good. But such fears cannot constitute a full explanation for what in hindsight appears a generally very tardy political adjustment. Their fears of Sukarno's wrath must have declined sharply after the 11 March Order, and yet as we have seen from the survey above, publicly at least, Sukarno continued to enjoy substantial support from almost the entire spectrum of Muslim organisations for several more months.

Apart from residual but receding fears of retribution from Sukarno, fear of, or at least a distinct lack of enthusiasm for, the looming alternative regime is probably another explanatory factor. HMI activists were surely not alone in reasoning that Sukarno's removal was likely to result in more power for the army, a prospect that while far preferable to a PKI regime would not have been relished by any of the Muslim leaders. They were well aware that most senior army officers regarded them with suspicion or worse, especially those associated with Masyumi. The army's track record clearly indicated that a military regime would constrain the activities and influence of Muslim organisations generally and would be particularly unreceptive to their political aspirations. Sukarno, for all his faults, had protected and rewarded those parties and other mass civilian organisations willing to cooperate with him

during Guided Democracy because he needed them to balance against the army. By early 1966 (with the PKI well on the way to obliteration) if Sukarno were to retain power he would need the remaining civilian forces even more than before and so would be obliged to deliver more concessions than hitherto in exchange for their support. Thus the continuation of a chastened Sukarno in power, with a status quo much improved by the removal of the PKI, must have appeared an attractive scenario for most Muslim political leaders at this juncture. It offered potentially major gains combined with the least change to what they knew and, importantly, probably seemed to involve the least risk, especially if Sukarno was likely to survive anyway. But after Soeharto's decisive strategic victory over Sukarno in March 1966 and as Sukarno continued to demonstrate obstinacy on key political questions (primarily his refusal to condemn the PKI), the Muslim organisations were compelled to reassess their positions. Initially their re-evaluations manifested publicly in increasing qualification in their expressions of support for Sukarno, which may also have been partly geared towards pressuring him to move in the desired political direction. Eventually they opposed him outright and supported Soeharto. HMI made this move relatively early, opposing Sukarno and effectively embracing Soeharto in February 1966. Muhammadiyah and those associated with it abandoned Sukarno for Soeharto in August.

While Sukarno's Never Leave History speech on 17 August, as discussed above, certainly provided considerable impetus for Muhammadiyah to turn decisively away from Sukarno, other factors were surely involved. Muhammadiyah's leaders had been consciously pursuing a strategy of rapprochement with Sukarno since early 1965, designed to avoid the organisation being marginalised (*disingkirkan*), or even banned (*SM* no. 11-12 June 1966, p.32, Laporan, p.2). The strategy bore fruit when Sukarno responded in November 1965 to their lobbying by granting Muhammadiyah official recognition as an 'ormas' (mass organisation) and the right to publish a newspaper (*SM* no. 4-5, February-March 1966, pp.3, 11). Ormas status allowed Muhammadiyah representation in various organs of the state at central, regional and local levels, thereby ending the isolation and pressures it had been experiencing. It also reduced the advantage in this regard enjoyed by its rival NU. Not only had the banning of Masyumi left Muhammadiyah without political representation, but Masyumi's

association with Muhammadiyah had left the latter with some of the taint of Masyumi's 'crimes'. Under these circumstances with better access to state resources (including the Ministry of Religion) and enjoying government favour, NU had been better able to compete for influence within the Muslim community. Thus as mentioned above, the official receipt of the president's decision elicited strong expressions of support for Sukarno from Muhammadiyah's leadership in early 1966 which must have felt that its strategy of rapprochement with Sukarno had been vindicated.

At this point, some elements in the Muhammadiyah leadership sought to extract even further advantage in the circumstances by proposing what would effectively have been a Muhammadiyah political party (*MS* 25 April 1966, 12 May 1966, 19 May 1966, Samson 1973). The name of a defunct political party (Indonesia Islamic Party, PII) founded by Muhammadiyah in 1938, was suggested (Syamsuddin, 1991: 46, 228). But this proposal was opposed by another powerful group within Muhammadiyah, those against the strategy of accommodation with Sukarno and who were at the time pursuing the rehabilitation of Masyumi through delicate overtures towards Soeharto and other army figures (Ward, 1970: 21). The proposal was also opposed by traditionalists who regarded it as incompatible with Muhammadiyah's original socio-religious identity and mission. In May the Central Executive released a statement reiterating that Muhammadiyah 'is not and will not become a political party' (*MS* 20 May 1966). This defeat for the 'accommodationist' (and pro-Sukarno for that reason) current in Muhammadiyah presaged the abrupt abandonment of the Sukarno rapprochement strategy in August.<sup>12</sup> Sukarno's weakened position coupled with his continued refusal to bend with the political wind was already making it redundant in terms of any utility for Muhammadiyah. But the decisive factor came with the release from prison between May and July of former Masyumi leaders like Mohammad Natsir and Prawoto Mangkusasmito who added great authority to the anti-Sukarno ranks within Muhammadiyah. Imprisonment had only hardened the attitudes of these implacable Sukarno opponents for whom Sukarno was a 'dictator', and their martyr status enhanced their considerable influence over organisations formerly affiliated with Masyumi (like Muhammadiyah and HMI) (Mangkusasmito, 1972: 167).

As we have seen, the Marhaban faction of PSII also abandoned Sukarno in August 1966, but the PSII-Arudji faction did not do so until December. Strikingly, NU did not turn against Sukarno until February 1967. Long after it was safe to attack him, indeed long after it became politically costly not to do so, NU either refrained from attacking Sukarno or made only relatively mild criticisms. By August 1966 it must have been obvious that this stance involved risking the ire of the emerging Soeharto regime and thus the loss of many benefits obtained through NU's accommodationist policies since independence. This self-induced exposure to great risk is very interesting because NU had acquired a reputation for political pragmatism to the point of opportunism.

As Fealy has shown this view of NU, if not entirely false, is certainly far from fair (Fealy: 1998). NU's generally moderate, flexible and pragmatic approach to politics is closely associated with its adherence to classical Sunni-Syafi'i theology (Fealy, 1994: 90; Fealy: 1998; Muhajir, 2007: 61-138). It involves the application of several key principles of Islamic jurisprudence: including pursuit of benefit, avoidance of harm (with the understanding that the latter generally takes precedence over the former), enacting good and preventing evil, and choosing the lesser of two evils (Fealy, 1998: 272). Employing this approach involves weighing the potential benefit versus harm and risk for Islam and the Muslim community (especially for the NU and its constituency) associated with any given situation. Thus NU's paramount politico-religious priority has always been attaining and preserving a context in which Muslims can live safely and attend to their religious obligations unhindered. In practice, at least during the 1950s and 1960s, securing political influence was seen by NU's dominant leadership group as the prime means by which this central objective could be met and, moreover, as entirely in accordance with NU's theological-political principles. Accordingly throughout this period NU participated in government whenever possible and quickly accommodated itself to major changes in political circumstance, despite at times intense Masyumi-Muhammadiyah disapproval. A major example is NU's pragmatic acceptance, in exchange for a continued place in government, of Sukarno's unconstitutional replacement of parliamentary democracy with his Guided Democracy dictatorship in 1959. Thus NU's tardiness in the removal of Sukarno was not only in marked contrast with

the well-established pattern, but apparently also contrary to NU's theological-political principles. Putting it baldly, abandoning Sukarno and securing its place in the emerging Soeharto regime once the latter's victory was assured, was entirely consistent with NU political practice and ideology, but making this move so belatedly and well after its rivals had done so seems utterly incompatible with them. Clearly NU's uncharacteristic behaviour between (approximately) September 1966 and February 1967 warrants further explanation.

Unfortunately we have been provided with few details of NU's internal politics during 1966 over the appropriate stance to take towards Sukarno. For example the official NU biography of Wahab Chasbullah discretely jumps from NU's actions against the PKI in late 1965 to Wahab's death in 1971 without mentioning the Sukarno issue (Noor and Ahmad, 1995: 54-56). A similar pattern is repeated in the memoir by Saifuddin Zuhri (1987: 564-66) which jumps from June 1966 to mid-1967. Up until June his account is full of details of personal interactions with Sukarno set against the political background and NU's efforts to steer Sukarno in the desired direction. Nevertheless we can reasonably infer the broad outlines of the internal debates. Several prominent NU figures (including M. Dachlan, Imron Rosjadi, Bisri Syansuri, and Achmad Siddiq) had long resisted NU's cooperation with Sukarno's agenda (Fealy, 1998: 266; Fealy, 1994: 96). Their arguments had been consistently trumped however by those (particularly Wahab and Idham) who evoked the principles outlined above to justify the pragmatic approach. Until 1965 this pro-Sukarno strategy had been consistently vindicated by NU's success. But as events unfolded throughout 1966 these principles became less credibly employable by those who preferred to persist with Sukarno. On the contrary the theological-political principles now lent considerable weight to the arguments of those who favoured joining the growing push against Sukarno and switching NU's allegiance to the emerging power of the New Order (Fealy, 1998: 264).

A key and related issue to the question of the application of NU's theological-political principles that rose to the fore in the post G30S-Gestapu context was that of Sukarno's relationship with the PKI. Influential elements within NU had acquired a deep visceral hatred of the PKI ever since the killings of many prominent NU figures during the failed attempt by the PKI to seize power in 1948 known

as the Madiun affair (Interviews M. Munasin Ali 26 November 1994, Tosari Widjaja 23 November 1994). These feelings intensified sharply during the battles of 1963-65 associated with the PKI's unilateral land seizure campaign (Interview Munasin Ali 26 November 1994; Fealy, 1998: 240-245; Mortimer: 1972; Lyon: 1970). Thus it is unsurprising that NU was amongst the first Muslim organisations to call publicly for the PKI to be banned, doing so on 5 October 1965 (*DM* 7 October 1965, Pernyataan cited in Fealy 1998 p.248).<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly also, NU militants were heavily involved in the large scale killings of PKI supporters after the G30S/Gestapu failure. Against this background, the G30S/Gestapu affair vindicated those opposed to NU's accommodationist policy towards Sukarno because one of their main arguments was that his agenda favoured the PKI. At this time the PKI was being thoroughly demonised, not only as completely alien to the Indonesian nation, but as the absolute antithesis of Islam (Drakeley: 2007). As Mohammed Dahlan emphasised, the PKI had to be outlawed, not only because it had rebelled against the government but above all because it was 'against God' (*Antara* 24 November 1966B). Under these circumstances Sukarno's obduracy on the PKI banning issue throughout 1966 made the position of his defenders within NU extremely difficult. His growing closeness to the PKI during the early 1960s had already become awkward for NU's leadership, but his refusal to condemn the party in the post G30S/Gestapu context increasingly became not only politically but also religiously intolerable. The tipping point came when the Mahmillub trials appeared to confirm suspicions of Sukarno's involvement with the PKI in the G30S/Gestapu affair. It was one thing to appear blind to the PKI's crimes and the acute danger that it posed to Islam and to implore Muslims to forgive the PKI following the example of the Prophet Muhammed, it was quite another (as it now appeared) to be one of the architects of the crime; that is to constitute part of the danger itself (Saifuddin 1991 p.44). Thus in late 1966 Sukarno in the eyes of many within NU became axiomatically equated with the PKI and its threat to Islam and the NU community. Significantly perhaps, these were amongst the extreme conditions under which rebellion against a ruler could be justified in terms of NU theology. There is no concrete evidence that the *waliy al-amri daruri bi shawkah* title was a significant issue in NU's internal debate over Sukarno. The possibility is suggested strongly however by a



flurry of public statements from NU quarters in February 1967, on the eve of NU's official abandonment of Sukarno, declaring that they no longer recognised the title.<sup>14</sup> As Dahlan put it, religion forbids Muslims to accept a leader who 'leads us into wickedness' (*DM* 6 February 1967). It is noticeable that while all other Muslim organisations had repudiated Sukarno's *waliy al-amri daruri bi shawkah* status some months earlier NU only did so at this point, suggesting a strong link between the theological concept and NU's change of stance.

We are still left with the intriguing question of why it took several months for these arguments to be resolved. Indeed the above discussion highlights the puzzle. No doubt they were weighty questions requiring careful deliberation in the light of scripture. But there was considerable urgency involved with much at stake and NU had displayed its capacity to make such decisions promptly and pragmatically in the past. Ultimately the reason for the inordinate delay did not lie in the obligation to work through complex theological arguments. Nor beyond a certain point, probably around October 1966 at the very latest, could it be attributed to continued political miscalculations related to Sukarno's prospects. Rather it was because of the persistence of affection and respect for Sukarno within NU. Even Subchan Z.E., perhaps Sukarno's harshest critic within NU and somebody heavily involved in the political campaign to remove him from power, acknowledged Sukarno's great contributions to Indonesia (Mandan, 2001: 185). It took some time for this reservoir of affection and respect to drain sufficiently to tip NU to the anti-Sukarno position. But it seems that the process was slowed further by the close personal relationship between Sukarno and key NU leaders, notably Wahab, as well as Idham and Saifuddin Zuhri (Feillard, 1996: 52-53; Fealy, 1994: 96; Saifuddin, 1991: 58). NU's principal shaper and political leader and one of its co-founders, Wahab enjoyed enormous prestige. He was also the most senior *kyai* (religious authority) and had held NU's most powerful leadership position of *rais am*, chairing the Central Religious Council, since the death in 1947 of co-founder Hasjim As'jari. Thus it was all but impossible for NU to change its public position on this fundamental question without his consent. It seems that long after other key NU leaders were convinced of the need to do so Wahab hesitated to turn his back on Sukarno.

Similar personal factors also probably account for the persistence of support for Sukarno from the PSII's Arudji faction. Two of its principal

leaders, the brothers Anwar and Harsono Tjokroaminoto were sons of the legendary Sarekat Islam leader Umar Said Tjokroaminoto, an early mentor of Sukarno. Sukarno had boarded with the family in Surabaya in his late teens where he had become an elder brother figure to Harsono and Anwar (Soebagijo, 1985: 224-29). Indeed briefly he had been their brother law during his marriage to their sister Siti Oetari Tjokroaminotoputri.

While the NU's is an extreme case, the existence of similar sentiments also helps to explain the generally slow pace with which all Muslim organisations abandoned Sukarno. In other words, some, perhaps much, of the adulation of Sukarno from many within most Muslim organisations before G30S/Gestapu and lasting until mid-1966 was genuine. Certainly throughout his career Sukarno as a secular nationalist had often clashed with Muslim leaders, particularly with the exponents of an Islamic state. Nevertheless he had remained on good terms with most Muslim leaders and always insisted that he was a sincere Muslim (Sukarno, 1966: 325). Certainly Sukarno could claim some impressive Muslim credentials. His political career had begun in the early 1920s within the mass Muslim organisation Sarekat Islam. Later he joined Muhammadiyah and taught at a Muhammadiyah school, even marrying into a Muhammadiyah family in 1943. He also became a *haji* in 1955 and regularly visited mosques to pray and gave talks to Islamic gatherings. But above all Sukarno was the pre-eminent leader of the struggle for independence and the greatest articulator of the Indonesian national idea. Thus, while he might have been beloved more ardently and less critically by other Indonesians, he was also a hero to most devout Muslim Indonesians. It was no small thing in 1966 to set aside the man who had declared Indonesia's independence in 1945 and the only president that Indonesians had ever known. The genuineness of the esteem in which Sukarno was widely held also accords with the already mentioned relatively swift rehabilitation of his reputation after his death.

Thus while Sukarno's behaviour since independence combined with the disappointments of Guided Democracy and his leftwards tilt had worn off much of his gloss, he yet retained sizeable reserves of political capital in 1965, not least simply because he was Sukarno. The explanatory significance of this factor cannot be overlooked when considering the protracted nature of the political battle involved in toppling him. This

applies to the army with its many Sukarno loyalists (as Crouch has shown), as well as to civilians including the Muslim organisations that have been the focus here. It is precisely because of this deep reservoir of respect and affection for Sukarno that the manipulations of the Mahmillub show trials were needed, one of their prime purposes being to link Sukarno with PKI and with G30S/Gestapu in order to drain the reservoir and so generate sufficient momentum to remove him from office. The persistence of respect and affection for Sukarno also helps to explain the pattern of generational divergence. The young Muslim activists of HMI and Pemuda Ansor did not have the same depth of emotional connection with Sukarno associated with his indispensable role in the creation of Indonesia and attainment of independence during their lifetimes. They were born into Sukarno's Indonesia as a given and knew him mainly for his political and economic failings, his ostentatious womanising and vainglory, and above all for his protection of the left and subjugation of Islamic political ambitions. Consequently they were relatively immune to Sukarno's biggest asset and did not experience the emotional quandary of their elders. To this we can probably add the general impatience of youth and its propensity to see political questions in simpler and more dramatic terms, as well as youth's greater willingness to take risks.

These youth-associated factors are perhaps sufficient to explain the pattern whereby younger Muslims prodded their elders towards an explicit anti-Sukarno position. We should also note however that the pattern whereby Masyumi-Muhammadiyah associated organisations moved more quickly than those associated with NU imposed itself greatly on the generational pattern. The Islamic youth organisations that took the most prominent vanguard role were those with a Masyumi orientation, such as the HMI and the PII. Younger NU leaders such as Subchan Z.E were also important and outspoken critics of Sukarno; but the anti-Sukarno pressures from NU youth were with few exceptions, successfully contained internally until as late as the beginning of 1967 and their activism on this issue generally confined within organisations like KAMI.<sup>15</sup>

Although much work remains to be done on these important events in Indonesian history, this study lends support to those accounts of Sukarno's overthrow which recognise the complexity and contingency of the process. The focus here has been Indonesia's Muslim organisations,

which made up an important part of the forces that coalesced behind Suharto's bid for power. This study shows that the forces necessary for the overthrow of Sukarno and his replacement with Soeharto had to be won to the cause, many of them after first being detached from Sukarno. This was neither a simple nor a smooth process. Nor was the outcome inevitable. The levels of pre-existing animosity towards Sukarno within Muslim organisations were actually relatively low, while it appears that levels of affection and political support were generally surprisingly deep and resilient. To this dimension of complexity has to be added an understanding of the intricate and volatile mix of fears and calculations evinced by the Muslim organisations' leaders as the protracted national political battle unfolded. This convoluted process whereby the Muslim organisations shifted unevenly and with much hesitation to an oppositionist position vis-à-vis Sukarno also reveals much about them. Not for the first time their disunity and deep seated ideological and cultural differences were displayed. Eventually they all arrived at the same point. But the principle of Islamic solidarity played little part in that ultimate coalescence; rather it was almost entirely due to their individual and understandably pragmatic political calculations in a context of dangerous flux.

## Endnotes

1. Following the fall of Soeharto we have been greatly enriched by a burst of publications dealing with the historical events of the mid-1960s, notably the G30S/Gestapu affair and the killings/repression of people associated with the PKI. These works include Roosa, 2006, John Roosa, Ayu Ratih & Hilmar Farid (eds.), 2004. Arbi Sanit, 2000, Hermawan Sulisty, 2000, Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor (eds), 2012. These studies, however, have paid little attention to the political process leading to Sukarno's removal from office.
2. Gestapu is a disparaging acronym (close to Gestapo, the sinister Nazi security police) for 30 September Movement coined by army propagandists.
3. Roosa's careful account (2006) suggests that PKI leader Aidit was indeed the principal instigator of the G30S/Gestapu but that most of the party leadership (and the mass membership) was ignorant of it.
4. Soeharto formally became president on 27 March 1968.
5. Amongst the few other extended narratives of Sukarno's removal are: Nawaz B. Mody, *Indonesia Under Suharto*, APT Books Inc. New York, 1987, and Jusuf M. van der Kroef, *Indonesia Since Sukarno*, Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press Pte Ltd, Singapore 1971.
6. A and B are original abbreviations signifying morning and afternoon editions respectively, AB signifies only one edition was published that day. Sukarno was placed under house arrest for the remainder of his life but never put on trial, largely because of the political dangers this would have entailed for Soeharto.
7. NU's complex motivations in this regard were not primarily intended to curry favour with Sukarno according to Fealy, (1998: 139-41).
8. Well known for left-wing views, Hartini was infamous for her affair with Sukarno prior to divorcing her husband. Her marriage to Sukarno also signalled Sukarno's estrangement from Fatmawati, his Muhammadiyah-linked wife.
9. Shortly afterwards militant anti-Sukarno students graffitied Hartini's house calling her *Lontje Agung Istana* (supreme palace whore) and *Agung Gerwani* (supreme leader of Gerwani, the PKI-affiliated women's organisation implicated in the allegedly sadistic murder of six Generals during the G30S/Gestapu affair). See Soe-Hok-gie 1983 pp.193,198, Drakeley 2007.
10. Sukarno replied: 'Insya Allah', if God wills it.
11. BKAM, a coalition of eighteen Muslim organisations, was formed in December 1965 to pursue resurrection of Masyumi.
12. The term 'accommodationists' was used to describe this current by Samson (1972: 106-9).
13. Several NU sources claim the NU demanded the banning of PKI on 3 October, for example Zuhri (1987: 557). But the NU's newspaper *Duta Masyarakat* reports that the statement of the NU Executive Board was released on 5 October. In retrospect a number of organisations vied for the honour of being the first to call publicly for the PKI to be banned. Interviewed former HMI leaders were proud to claim (probably correctly) that HMI was the first to do so on 4 October.
14. For instance the West Java NU Syuriah's declaration, cited in Feillard (1996, p.50) and the statement by South Sulawesi NU leader Abdul Hafid Jusuf (*Antara* 6 February 1967A).
15. Feillard (1996: 48-49) claims that NU youth were responsible for pushing NU's leadership to change its position on Sukarno.

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7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

Letters: ' , *b, t, th, j, ḥ, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ḏ, ḡ, f, q, l, m, n, h, w, y*. Short vowels: *a, i, u*. long vowels: *ā, ī, ū*. Diphthongs: *aw, ay*. *Tā marbūṭā*: *t*. Article: *al-*. For detail information on Arabic Romanization, please refer the transliteration system of the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines.

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تم اعتماد ستوديا اسلاميكا من قبل وزارة التعليم والثقافة بجمهورية اندونيسيا كدورية علمية بقرار المدير العام للتعليم العالي رقم: 56/DIKTI/Kep/2012.

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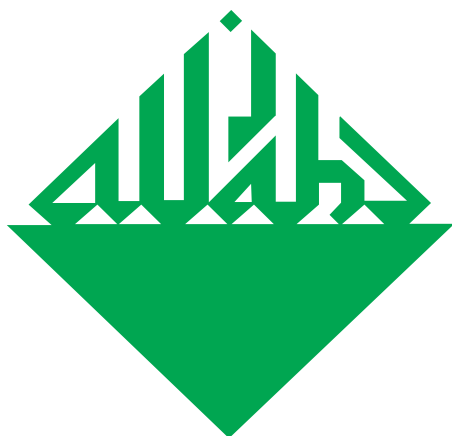
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السنة الحاءى والعشرين، العءء ٢، ٢٠١٤



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