

**Years of Dressing Dangerously: Modern Women, National Identity  
and Moral Crisis in Sukarno's Indonesia, 1945-1966**

by

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Dan and Margaret Sullivan. It is they who first took me to Indonesia, who answered my incessant questions, who taught me to love and notice culture, who helped me learn languages, and who insisted I see the worth and beauty of all people around me. During the long trip to completing this doctorate, they have also provided support in many ways, and always with love. When it came to parents, I won the lottery.

The dissertation is also in memory of my grandfather, Philip Beach Sullivan. His completed dissertation in Labor Economics from the University of Michigan, that used newspapers to trace the establishment of the labor movement in Shanghai in the 1920s, was left hidden in a false pillar beneath the family house on the campus of St. John's University, Shanghai when the Japanese army moved into the International Settlement in December 1941. It was never retrieved, and he was never granted his PhD. He did, nonetheless, go on to teach some of the first Asian Studies courses at the University of Michigan when he led the US Army Specialized Training Programs (ASTP) in Regional Administration and Construction (East Asia) during the war.

Finally, the dissertation is also in memory of my uncle, Ted Winfield, a victim of the novel coronavirus that is sweeping the globe in the days as I finish this work. Early on, Rudolf Mrázek suggested I take some time to "live like a monk" to get the project finished. It is ironic, and sad, that this has indeed happened, and at such a great cost. Ted and my Aunt Nancy had visited me during my fieldwork in Indonesia. We spent several weeks, with my parents as well, in Central Java and Bali. I have great memories of sharing my love of those places with them both, and of the food, laughter, and times we shared. *Om shanti shanti shanti Om.*

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I acknowledge that Deerfield, the site of a massacre of native peoples in 1704, sits on Nonotuck land that also neighbors other indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan and Pequot to the South, the Mohican to the West, and the Abenaki to the North.

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## **PREFACE: A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS, SPELLINGS, SPACINGS AND EMPHASES**

Reading Indonesian primary sources published from the 1930's-1960's can be a bumpy ride for the contemporary reader. The Indonesian language was a new and rapidly developing national language during that time, and there were various levels of standardization in place. Meanings of a word in 1940 may have undergone important changes by 1960, for instance, and more again by today. (See the discussion in the text of the words "*lacur*," and "*pelacuran*," around the concept of prostitution for instance.) In addition, an "older" spelling system than the current one was in place that used Dutch letter combinations for certain sounds: "dj" for the current "j," (So Djakarta, not Jakarta); and "oe" for the current "u," (So Soekarno, not Sukarno,) to cite just two examples. The language, particularly that of the Dutch-educated elite, and particularly earlier on, saw significant code-switching into Dutch for certain terms. English, and to a small degree French, also showed up regularly, sometimes glossed in Indonesian, sometimes not.

Even more visually jarring/engaging, print typography was also without set standards and of varying quality. Emphasis was a particularly free process, with many different solutions in a system that didn't use italicization. Sometimes—rarely—bold type was used. More often, CAPITALIZATION and e x t r a s p a c i n g were used to highlight sections of text. Following 1957, when the Dutch were largely expelled from Indonesia, the skill of typesetters seems to have fallen off, and it became more usual for magazine and newspaper text to have a rather shaky baseline, just as paper and ink quality, and the sharpness of photographs often declined.

Looking at these texts today can feel like reading in a gentle earthquake at times. The eye jumps and moves and must be forcefully refocused, forcing a particularly active reading style, but also a certain emotional experience that I found to be central to my research.

As a result, I have tried to maintain important elements of this experience in this dissertation. Where various forms of emphasis have been employed, I have maintained them in my translations as much as possible. I have italicized English words that appear in English in the texts to mark them off as original to the text. I have retained spacings and capitalizations, as well as the odd uses of non-capitalization to retain as much of the sense of reading as I can.

I have provided the original text for all my translations in the footnotes, retaining the old spellings. The standard practice in Indonesia today is largely to update old texts to the newer spellings when quoting them, so this is something which Indonesian friends who have read parts of this have never failed to note. When I use the same word in my own writing, however, I use the modern spelling, so *batik tjap* in a quotation becomes *batik cap* in the main text, and I use Sukarno and Jakarta rather than Soekarno and Djakarta when writing about them myself.

As I also note in the body of the dissertation, I am very grateful to the number of people who have helped with individual translations and my understanding of subtle points of language. In particular, Nancy Florida has given the translations from Indonesian in the dissertation an exceptionally close inspection and has pointed out errors and made suggestions for better English translations, and Laine Berman, Bonnie Triyana, Yosef Djakababa, Agustini and EP Theresia among others have also provided help quickly and happily at various times when I have put out a quick query on Facebook about a particular term or sentence. I thank all off them, but, of course, take full responsibility for the translations in the final analysis.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation on the role of women, modernity and moral crisis in the development of the Indonesian nation during the Sukarno Era (1945-1966), argues that a full understanding of the mass killings of the Indonesian left in the aftermath of the “coup” of September 30, 1965 is incomplete without an analysis of Indonesian women’s modernity at its center.

The idea of Indonesia was modern, based on a new “Indonesian national identity,” conceived of as “one archipelago, one language, one people.” The press played an important role in imagining the new nation. Women’s magazines played a particularly important role in providing a space where literate, mostly urban women could flesh out what it meant to be simultaneously “Indonesian” and “modern.”

Indonesian modernity was complex, attempting to “take the best” from western technical modernity without losing a cultural base of “authentically eastern” values. The result was a specific Indonesian way of being “*moderen*” (the Indonesian term,) which the dissertation analyzes as a “multiply enmeshed cultural web” of the interplay of both local and global influences.

Tensions that arose over what might be “too much” modernity were often conceived of as instances of “moral crisis” that put the future of the Indonesian nation at risk. Such crises often centered around women, their clothing and makeup, their bodies and their comportment. When oversteps were perceived as particularly blatant or salacious, violence was sometimes seen as an appropriate corrective.

Under Sukarno, Indonesia was also beset by both political and regional pressures that sought to tear the nation apart. However, politically active women worked together in coalition as “Mothers of the Nation,” connected across Indonesia’s various political “streams,” to advance a progressive political agenda aligned with Sukarno’s vision of the nation.

In October 1965, mounting political tensions in Indonesia exploded when a group of senior generals were kidnapped from their homes in the middle of the night and shot. The army blamed the Communist Party for the deaths, and exacted harsh revenge, leading to the destruction of the Indonesian Left, through the mass killings of at least half a million people.

To do this, the army invented and deployed a salacious story about Communist women who were present at the killings of the generals, alleging they had sexually tortured the generals before executing them. In the words of John Roosa, the story served as a “pretext” for the annihilation of the Indonesian left under the army’s command.

This narrative has received significant attention from historians. To date, however, there is little explanation of why it actually “worked” in an Indonesian cultural context. The dissertation proposes that the “Lubang Buaya Narrative” about Communist women is best read as a massive instance of moral crisis. The dissertation argues, therefore, that the narrative was constructed as a “post-text” of Indonesian cultural tensions about modernity.

Recent historiography has argued that the mass killings represent an instance of genocide. The dissertation asks how historians might use the details of the construction of Indonesian women as modern, including the web of cultural meanings imbedded in questions of clothing, beauty, comportment and motherhood in the pages of women’s magazines to serve as markers for reading the causes of the Indonesian killings as genocide. The Sukarno era, and particularly its bloody end, therefore, cannot be understood without a complex reading of the lives of Indonesian women.

## CHAPTER 1

### On Gendering Genocide: Mass Killing in Indonesia, 1965-66 as the “Post-Text” of Revolutionary National Identity

*Sikorban di tembak tiga kali kemudian djatuh; tetapi belum mati. Seorang berpakaian hidjau . . . memerintahkan pada Gerwani untuk maju. Semua melakukan seperti jang telah dibuat tadi menusuk-nusuk kemaluan korban itu; dan dengan pisau silet mengiris kemaluan dan badannja; sehingga ia mati. Waktu itu saja masih menanjakan pada kawan2 siapa orang jang telah dibunuh; demikian Djamillah; tetapi mulut kami malahan dipukul sehingga tak berani lagi kami menanjakan.*

*Sudah itu majat tadi dimasukkan kedalam sumur. Dalam keadaan takut dan gelisah kami lari kedepan rumah. Dari sinilah kami dengar bisik2 bawah jang dibunuh ialah seorang Djendral.*

The victim was shot three times, then he fell; but he wasn't dead yet. Someone in green clothes . . . ordered Gerwani to move forward. Everyone did what they had before, stabbing the genitals of the victim, and with the razors, sliced his genitals and body; until he died. At that time, I asked my friends who the person who had been killed was; said Djamillah; but instead, we were struck on our mouths so that we no longer dared ask.

After that the corpse was thrown in the well. In a state of fear and nervousness, we ran in front of the house. There we heard whispers that the one who had been killed was a General.

- Djamillah's Confession, *Api Pantjasila*,  
November 6, 1965, p. 2<sup>1</sup>

The events of September 30/October 1, 1965 mark a watershed in modern Indonesian history. In the middle of the night, the head of the Army, General Achmad Yani, and five other generals on the Army senior staff were abducted from their homes. The aide

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<sup>1</sup> The English translation of the Indonesian original here is my own, as is the case for nearly all the original Indonesian texts quoted abundantly in this dissertation. I am grateful for those friends who have helped with some of the more challenging bits of language, and I have been careful to note their aid in such circumstances. I am also privileged that my advisor, Nancy Florida, has paid close attention to matters and instances of translation in the dissertation as well. Of course, any shortcomings in these matters accrue fully to me. I have consciously retained as much of the original spacing, punctuation, emphasis and variation for the original sources as possible.

of a seventh general, mistaken for his commanding officer, was also seized. Two of the generals were shot and one was stabbed while being taken; two died on the spot. Their corpses were taken to a remote area known as Lubang Buaya,<sup>2</sup> in a remote area of Halim Airbase<sup>3</sup> on the outskirts of Jakarta. The other men were shot and killed there, and the bodies were dumped in a well.

Meanwhile, troops from the Army's Diponegoro Division—in the capital from Central Java to celebrate Armed Forces Day on October 5—took over most of Taman Merdeka.<sup>4</sup> The central square of both the city and the nation, Taman Merdeka is the site of the Presidential Palace, the Army Headquarters, the Ministry of Defense, the national telecommunications building, and the broadcast studios of Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI).<sup>5</sup> At its center lies the national monument, constructed under Sukarno's direction in the early 1960's. The Monas, as it is called,<sup>6</sup> was conceptualized as a stylized modern adaptation of Hindu *lingam-yoni*<sup>7</sup> drawn from pre-Islamic temple complexes. The square also brings together two important symbols of Javanese power, the *tugu*, or monument, and the *istana*, or palace, both placed on a single meridian of cosmological power.<sup>8</sup> Taman Merdeka was a space, therefore, that not only brought together the critical elements of Indonesian political power both ancient and modern, but that also infused them with nationalist meaning in an explicitly gendered form.

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<sup>2</sup> "*Lubang Buaya*" translates as "Crocodile Hole," or "Crocodile Well," but despite the ominous name, there were no crocodiles present. There was a well, however, down which the bodies of the soldiers were dumped. The well remains in place today, outfitted with garish colored floodlights down the hole, bathing the hole in a blood-red glow when visitors peer down into it.

<sup>3</sup> Of all the military branches, the Air Force was the most strongly connected to the PKI, despite also having enjoyed a strong training connected to the United States Air Force. John Roosa discusses these connections in depth in *Pretext for Mass Murder*. Omar Dani, the commanding officer of the Air Force, was present at Halim Air Base on October 1, 1965. Roosa argues that his presence, along with several members of the PKI Politburo, point to there being an alliance between a small cohort of the PKI leadership and elements of the military at play. Jess Melvin has also pointed out that Suharto almost certainly knew about the plans for kidnapping the generals in advance, given his ability to react to the events with such quickness. This scholarship will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> "*Merdeka*," the Indonesian word for "freedom," or "independence," was also the slogan and greeting of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

<sup>5</sup> The square is also the site of the US Embassy, which was blockaded but not entered by the troops. The battalions at Taman Merdeka did not, however, take over the east side of the square, the site of the headquarters of KOSTRAD, the *Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat*, or Army Strategic Command, commanded by Maj. Gen. Suharto.

<sup>6</sup> "*Monas*" is a contraction of "*Monumen Nasional*," or "National Monument."

<sup>7</sup> The *lingam-yoni* represents the unity of male and female, and the cycle of both creation and dissolution that the phallus and vagina cause together. Interestingly, an Indonesian friend who knows the United States well points out that the Washington Monument on the mall in the District of Columbia is only a *lingam* without a *yoni*. He wonders if this is why American conceptions of power and projection in the world might be out of balance.

<sup>8</sup> See Antony Sihombing, "The Transformation of Kampungkota," for an interesting and cogent analysis of the development of Taman Merdeka as a national space.

At 10 o'clock on the following morning, October 1, Lieutenant Colonel Untung, the commander of the Presidential Guard, spoke to the nation from the captured studios of the RRI. He announced that the *Gerakan Tiga puluh September* or "Thirtieth of September Movement," led by a group of officers "loyal to President Sukarno,"<sup>9</sup> had taken these actions to protect the president from a coup plot being planned by what was called a "Council of Generals."<sup>10</sup> The broadcast characterized the Council as a "subversive movement sponsored by the CIA that has been quite active in the time previous to this, beginning particularly when President Sukarno suffered a serious illness in the first week of August."<sup>11</sup> Lt. Col. Untung claimed that the pre-emptory counter-measures against the Council were necessary because the generals were planning to use the "concentration"<sup>12</sup> of large numbers of troops in Jakarta for the celebration of Armed Forces Day as an opportunity to lead a "counter-revolutionary coup"<sup>13</sup> against the president. The radio broadcast reported that Sukarno was "safe under the protection of the Thirtieth September Movement,"<sup>14</sup> which came to be referred to as G-30-S.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> "Dewan Djendral." It is doubtful that such a council existed.

<sup>11</sup> "gerakan subversif yang disponsori oleh CIA, dan waktu belakang ini sangat aktif terutama dimulai ketika Presiden Sukarno menderita sakit yang sangat serius pada minggu pertama bulan Agustus yang lalu." All quotations from this text are taken directly from a recording of the radio broadcast. The recording, which is available online in several versions, makes for interesting listening in this instance, with the professional reading of the radio announcer having been recorded coming off the radio in the listener's house. There are street sounds, the crowing of a rooster and the muffled reactions of members of the recorder's family in the background, so this is a version of the radio transmission as it was received, not simply as it was broadcast.

<sup>12</sup> "terkonsentrasi."

<sup>13</sup> "coup kontra-revolusioner." The charge of counter-revolution drew its context from the political rhetoric put forward by Sukarno in the early 1960's as part of his national philosophy of Guided Democracy and its increasing use of the Indonesian Revolution of 1945-1949 as a touchstone of an Indonesian national identity that still needed to be completed as a defense against Western neo-colonialism. Any element of politics or national culture that was seen as "Nekolim" (neo-colonialist-imperialist) was also inherently "kontra-revolusioner."

<sup>14</sup> "selamat dalam lindungan Gerakan Tiga puluh September."

<sup>15</sup> Fairly quickly, the movement came to be called by several contractions of this name. The military papers began referring to it often as "Gestapu," an intentional gloss on "Gestapo," with its Nazi connotations, but one that required the transposition of the words *tiga puluh* and *September* in the original Indonesian. Because the word order mimicked English patterns, some people have consistently suggested that the term was suggested by CIA or MI-5 agents, offering this as evidence that the coup attempt was actively supported by western intelligence bodies. In an attempt to remove the insinuations caused by the name Gestapu, Sukarno later began referring to the movement as "Gestok," for "Gerakan Satu Oktober," or the "October First Movement," since the kidnapping and killings actually took place after midnight, so therefore on October 1 rather than September 30. "Gestok" did not gain general usage. Fairly quickly, the military began to use the acronym G-30-S to refer to the movement and the events at Lubang Buaya in a less overtly inflammatory way, although they also attached the acronym for the Communist Party to the name, calling it G-30-S/PKI, thereby assigning responsibility for the murders of the soldiers to the party. The most neutral name remains G-30-S, which is, along with the name "Lubang Buaya," how this dissertation will refer to the events of September 30/October 1, 1965. For specifically referring to the leadership and its actions on the day, I also use John Roosa's formulation of them as the "Movement."

Untung's address explicitly challenged the existing military hierarchy in Indonesia, which he charged was elitist, privileged and out of touch with the nation's socialist values. The declaration called upon members of the military across the nation to "scrape away the influences of the Council of Generals and their henchmen in the military."<sup>16</sup> In particular, it alleged that those senior military men, who were "power-crazy and neglect the fate of their subordinates,"<sup>17</sup> were "living luxuriously and extravagantly atop the mass of sufferings of their subordinate, insulting women and squandering the nation's money."<sup>18</sup>

Newspapers and magazines were ordered to stop publishing without the express permission of the Movement. Tellingly, only *Harian Rakyat* ("The People's Daily,") the newspaper of the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, or PKI), along with the two military papers, published editions for the next day, October 2. *Harian Rakyat's* headlines and front page offered full support for the Movement's actions in protection of the President and the national Revolution.

The September Thirtieth Movement was swiftly subdued, however, and none of these plans came to pass. By the evening of October 1, Major General Suharto, the commander of the Army Strategic Command, who had not been a target of the Movement,<sup>19</sup> had used troops under his command to assert power over Taman Merdeka, and retake the radio station. He addressed the nation in a speech broadcast on the RRI at 10 PM.<sup>20</sup> In a style of language almost identical to Untung's earlier broadcast, Suharto used his speech to position both himself and the Army as the protectors of the Indonesian Revolution. President Sukarno, it was claimed, was "safe and sound"<sup>21</sup> under the army's care.

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<sup>16</sup> "mengikis habis pengaruh<sup>2</sup> Dewan Djendral dan kaki-tangannya dalam Angkatan Darat."

<sup>17</sup> "yang gila kuasa, yang menelantarkan nasib anak-buah."

<sup>18</sup> "yang di atas tumpukan penderitaan anak-buah hidup bermewah-mewah dan berfoya-foya, menghina kaum wanita, dan menghambur-hamburkan uang negara."

<sup>19</sup> And who also knew in advance about the planned events, or at least their intention. See John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, particularly Chapter 1, "The Incoherence of Facts."

<sup>20</sup> Suharto's ability to assert power so quickly and completely has been the subject of much historical speculation so that is worth noting here even though it is not particularly important to the narrative of this chapter. As addressed in Chapter 1, who was "behind" the movement has been perhaps the central historiographical question of modern Indonesian history, perhaps particularly because, as John Roosa points out, there was no time for the leaders of the movement to take next steps to introduce themselves to members of the press, much less to the entire nation. But Roosa also reminds his readers that Suharto had clearly been informed of the coming action against the generals before it occurred but does not appear to have done anything to stop the arrest of his fellow generals.

<sup>21</sup> "dalam keadaan aman dan sehat wal afiat." All quotes from Suharto's address are taken from a reprint of the speech that appeared on the front page of *Angkatan Bersendjata*, hereafter cited as *A.B.*, on October 2, 1965.

Less than twelve hours after the G-30-S troops took over Taman Merdeka, Suharto was in control of the capital, and the Movement in Jakarta had been quashed completely. Military elements that had supported G-30-S with small actions in Central Java were subdued by October 3.

Even so, the G-30-S's brief presence marked a critical shift in Indonesian history. Suharto's reaction to the movement led to a swift, fundamental and brutal realignment of the Indonesian political landscape. The military took advantage of the attack on its high command to seize functional control of the nation. They used the presence and apparent involvement of members of Pemuda Rakyat, the youth wing of the PKI, and of the leftist women's organization Gerwani,<sup>22</sup> who were training at Halim that night, to blame the events at Lubang Buaya on the PKI, and to call for an immediate ban on their activities. Suharto quickly claimed that G-30-S needed to be "crushed to the very roots" for its counter-revolutionary actions against the military, and because it was also, therefore, acting in opposition to the president and the nation.

It was not surprising that the military used the events of September 30/October 1 to target the Indonesian left. The PKI and the military leadership were long-time rivals. Playing a complicated chess match for control of the nation, each had been trying to manipulate elements of Sukarno's conception of "Guided Democracy,"<sup>23</sup> that dated to the second half of the 1950's, to out-manuever the other for political dominance. Their rivalry had intensified with the promulgation of the *Konfrontasi* campaign against Malaysia in the early 1960's.<sup>24</sup>

Tensions between the military and the left had increased significantly as Sukarno moved Indonesia away from a policy of non-alignment towards more radical policies of disengagement from the west in 1964 and 1965. The president specifically used his annual

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<sup>22</sup> Gerwani is an acronym for *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* or the Indonesian Women's Movement. Gerwani was one of the leading women's organizations in the Sukarno era, and worked in conjunction with women's organizations from other political "streams" to advance women's rights within the structures of the new nation. The women's movement more broadly, and Gerwani in particular, is discussed significantly in the body of this dissertation.

<sup>23</sup> Guided Democracy, (*Demokrasi Terpimpin*.) Sukarno's move to concentrate political power in a strong presidency, led to the end of the nation's initial period of liberal democracy. Sukarno presented Guided Democracy as being "better suited to Indonesian culture," in the words of Geoffrey Robinson. See Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 39, also referencing the work of both Daniel Lev and Herbert Feith.

<sup>24</sup> Opposition to the establishment of Malaysia from the states of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore and the British Crown Colonies in Borneo, which was carried out with British and US support in the aftermath of the Communist "emergency" on the Malay archipelago in the late 1950s became a principal rallying point in Sukarno's rhetoric that increasingly radicalized Indonesia's internal politics.

National Day speeches to the nation, that were listened to broadly on the radio, to build a fervor for “finishing the Revolution,” and for reaching the final stage of developing Indonesia as a socialist nation. His August 17, 1964 speech asked Indonesians for a “Year of Living Dangerously,” (*Tahun Vivere Pericoloso*, shortened to TAVIP,) in which the nation would actively move away from neo-colonial western intervention, whether military, political, economic or cultural. In the 1965 speech, he increased the calls for national self-sufficiency by insisting that Indonesia “stand on its own feet,” (“*berdiri di atas kaki sendiri*,” shortened to “*Berdikari*,” as the speech came to be called.)

The political—and heavily rhetorical—campaigns in support of these national goals seriously destabilized the economy and enflamed the politics around several divisive issues. In response, both the military and the PKI sought to bend the emergent national rhetoric to support their own aims.

On the PKI side, Communist-affiliated peasant unions agitated for the enforcement of a Land Reform Act that had been passed in 1960.<sup>25</sup> In 1964, the *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (BTI, or “Indonesian Farmer’s Union”) the PKI’s organization for peasants, instituted a policy of “unilateral actions,” (“*aksi sepihak*,”) supporting land seizures both from rich farmers, and of US and British properties and plantations.<sup>26</sup> Anthony Reid notes that the success of these actions varied locally, “depend[ing] on PKI strength and on the [political] affiliation of the local military commander.”<sup>27</sup> Reid also notes that the central government’s reactions to these actions was “weak and uncertain,” and that there was “no consistent attempt [from the central government] to prevent or disallow the forcible seizures.” As a result, he suggests, “[a]s far as landowners were concerned, the army was the only force to which they could appeal.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The Land Reform Act of 1960 restricted the ownership of *sawah*, or wet-rice paddy land, to five hectares, and provided for the distribution of the excess to peasants without land-holding privileges, that new ownership to be paid of over fifteen years. Land reform had long been an issue that divided peasants and larger-scale landowners. In Central and East Java in particular, this played into tensions between the *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (Indonesian Farmer’s Union, a communist-affiliated organization,) and local Islamic teachers, or *kyai*, who owned larger parcels of land that supported their Qu’ranic schools. In other regions, such as Sumatra, the tension was again between peasant activists and large plantations, many of which were controlled by the Army, and which provided the military with the income for their budget. So land reform as a question was at the nexus of Communist-Islamist-military tension. See Anthony Reid, *To Nation by Revolution*, pp. 185-186.

<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Reid, *To Nation by Revolution*, p. 186.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony Reid, *To Nation by Revolution*, p. 186.



Local attempts at *aksi sepihak* led to increased conflict between the PKI and both religious and nationalist movements, particularly the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (PNI) and their mass organizations on the ground, with such “conflicts occasionally result[ing] in physical clashes and casualties,” according to Geoffrey Robinson. He goes on to note that “[a]lthough the actual number of people killed or injured in those incidents was quite small, the clashes fueled antagonism between the groups, and formed a crucial backdrop to and precondition for the mass violence that followed the alleged October 1965 coup.”<sup>29</sup>

The tension between the military and the PKI grew in 1965 when the Chairman of the PKI, D.N. Aidit, suggested the creation of a “Fifth Force” of armed peasants and workers to enforce what Geoffrey Robinson refers to as “a number of increasingly militant positions that set the army leadership on edge.”<sup>30</sup> Alongside the idea of the fifth force, this included the PKI idea of “‘Nasakomization in all fields,’ including,” Robinson writes, “the military. . . . [with] the armed services [having] to accept the insertion of ‘advisory teams’ representing the three main streams of political life—nationalism, religion and communism—within their command structures.”<sup>31</sup>

The military responded in 1965 by spreading rumors that Chinese guns were being smuggled into the islands to support the PKI’s proposed Fifth Column. They also used the possibility of military action on the border with Malaysia as a justification for increasing the number of troops and arms under their own control, and to train local Islamic militias in the use of guns. From the left, insinuations were thick on the ground that a right-wing Council of Generals, trained by the US military, was preparing a coup against Sukarno in order to stop the rise of leftist power and policy.

As rice supplies dwindled and prices for many basic goods spiked—a reaction to Sukarno’s fumbled attempts at guiding the national economy—the tensions between the PKI and the military grew more fraught. With moles deposited deeply in each other’s

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<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 50-51.

<sup>30</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 50. Nasakom is a contraction for the three main streams of Indonesian national political conception under Sukarno’s Guided Democracy: nationalism, religion and communism. The concept will be explored at length later in the dissertation.

highest structures, the organizations' leaderships eyed each other warily, certain the other was planning to make definitive moves towards seizing control of the nation.

There was little doubt that the military was preparing for a showdown with the PKI. In a meeting with US "Civic Action" Advisor Col. George Benson<sup>32</sup> in July 1965, General Yani had told the Americans: "We have the guns, and we have kept the guns out of their [the Communists'] hands. So if there's a clash, we'll wipe them out."<sup>33</sup> In his new study, *The Killing Season*, Geoffrey Robinson argues convincingly that American and British policy and intervention in Indonesian politics during the early 1960s had been aimed precisely at preparing the military, the leadership of which skewed towards an alignment with the west even given Indonesia's non-bloc international orientation, to be prepared to take advantage of any opportunities that might allow the army to seize control of the government. Matching up with the western nation's Cold War interests, this seizure of power would, in this view, come at the expense of Indonesia's powerful leftist movement.

Lt. Col. Untung's broadcast on the morning of October 1 fully reflected these tensions. The G-30-S Movement was presented as an organization of lower-ranking officers from all four military branches. The list of its supporters (many of whom had no apparent connection to Untung or his plan,) had been carefully curated to suggest wide-spread support from within the armed forces. The Communist Party was not presented as being a part of the Movement. In its newspaper the next day, however, the PKI quickly gave political support to the movement's aims against the right-wing generals. John Roosa's scholarship also demonstrates that the highest leadership of the PKI and its special branch were directly involved in planning and executing the actions of G-30-S, though without the knowledge even of members of the Politburo, and certainly without the knowledge of the party rank and file.<sup>34</sup> But the publicly articulated goal of the movement, as noted above,

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<sup>32</sup> My father, Daniel Sullivan, was the Indonesia Desk Officer at the State Department in Washington in September and October 1965. He first met George Benson on October 1, 1965, when the colonel was brought into the State Department to help identify the cast of characters in the apparent coup, many of whom were not well known to American officials at the time. The State Department staff considered Col. Benson to be the person in Washington at the time who was most likely to have a sense of who these people might be and what might be going on. (Comment from my mother, Margaret Sullivan, August 2019.) This initial sense of not knowing what was happening on the ground is one that I have heard from many of the American diplomats involved in Indonesia at the time, mostly in informal and frank discussions among trusted friends around my family's dinner table over the years. I am highly aware of the privileged access I have had to their views on these questions when so many historians have worked hard to excavate the sources on the official American reaction to G-30-S and the creation of the New Order.

<sup>33</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 106, in turn quoting Theodore Friend, *Indonesian Destinies*, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> See John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, pp. 64-65.

was to protect the president, the nation and the on-going revolution from interference brewing within the military leadership.

The military, conversely, quickly put the events at Lubang Buaya to similar use. In the weeks following what they termed the “counter-revolutionary coup” of September 30-October 1, Suharto and the military put out gory propaganda about the killing of the military officers at Lubang Buaya. Most specifically, the military invented and disseminated a narrative that charged the Gerwani women present at Halim Air Base with sexually torturing the generals before the men were killed.<sup>35</sup> This allegation was at the base of a narrative that represented the Communist women as immoral and sexually deviant, an assertion that was further backed up with charges that the training camp at Lubang Buaya had been a site where Communist men and Gerwani women had transcended the bounds of proper gender relations, engaging in free love outside their marriages. This narrative was a pretext, in Roosa’s words, for the military to carry out the annihilation of the PKI and the Indonesian communist-affiliated left more generally, despite the fact that only a very small high-level group within the party was involved in the Movement.

It is important to note here that the ability of both the left and the military to put out starkly different interpretations of the events and for each of those explanations to be plausible. This marked a continuation of the what Geoffery Robinson refers to as the “contentious politics” of Guided Democracy,” which, “in the absence of elections, . . . increasingly took place in the streets.”<sup>36</sup> Indeed, in cities and towns in 1965, Robinson notes,

mass demonstrations and rallies grew increasingly frequent and angry, and sometimes turned violent. Although all parties made sure to invoke the approved language and symbols of the revolution—declaring their support for Sukarno and Nasakom, calling for the destruction of Malaysia, and so on—the differences among opposing groups were abundantly clear. On the left, demonstrators demanded an end to the US bombing in Vietnam, accused Western powers of interfering in Indonesian politics, called for the “re-tooling” of anticommunist figures including cabinet ministers, denounced communistophobia and corrupt “capitalist bureaucrats,” and called for the

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<sup>35</sup> One of the primary texts where this charge was presented is the excerpt from the “confession” of Djamilah, a young Pemuda Rakyat activist that serves as the epigraph for this chapter. The text was published in early November in newspapers across the nation. It, and other versions of what Indonesian historian Yosef Djakababa refers to as the “Lubang Buaya Narrative,” are closely traced in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

<sup>36</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 39.

banning of various political groupings . . . Meanwhile, on the right, demonstrators and the anticommunist press denounced the PKI's atheism, accused the BTI of "terrorizing" the population through aksi sepihak campaigns, warned that the revolution was drifting off course, and insinuated that the PKI and Sukarno had become puppets of China.<sup>37</sup>

The political rhetoric of the day, therefore, was highly malleable within a basic revolutionary framework, and the interpretation of events could be twisted to great political effect. Backed by the mobilization of crowds in the streets, narratives could be crafted to support particular political aims and views.

Following the events at Lubang Buaya, the Army did this with ferocious effect. Largely over the next six months, the military planned and directed the killing of at least half a million people said to be connected to the Communist Party.<sup>38</sup> They carried out the long-term imprisonment of many others, a process that included torture, rape and other forms of extended violence. Between October 1965 and March 1966, the armed forces also established themselves as the power behind the New Order government that would control Indonesia for the next thirty-three years, with Suharto as president. The PKI was banned. Former surviving members of either the party or many of its affiliate organizations, if not imprisoned, were kept under constant supervision with standing orders to report regularly to military offices.<sup>39</sup> Their national identity cards marked them as former political prisoners. They and later their children were refused access to higher-level education and jobs.

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<sup>37</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 52. Robinson does not italicize aksi sepihak in the original.

<sup>38</sup> Gerwani, for instance, was not formally a part of the PKI, but was part of a larger leftist/communist alliance with the party. This included other communist-oriented organizations such as the *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (Indonesian Peasants' Front, or BTI, a farmers' union at the forefront of the push for national land reform,) the *Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia* (The Council for the Mutual Consultation of Indonesian Citizens, or Baperki, a left-wing organization of ethnic Chinese Indonesians,) and the *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* (The Institute for People's Culture, or LEKRA, an artists' movement connected to the general leftist wing, that provided funding and sponsorship for writers, painters, playwrights, shadow puppeteers, and traditional performing artists among others. In conversation, Nancy Florida has compared LEKRA to the Works Project Administration, or WPA, which sponsored artistic projects across the United States during the depression.) Membership in any one of these groups was neither exclusive of, or required for membership in the others. Rather, together, they formed a dense web of leftist movements that had the general support of roughly 40% of Indonesians in 1965. Although the military centered its ire on Gerwani and the PKI (for instance, calling the events at Lubang Buaya as G-30-S/PKI,) members of the entire leftist/communist complex became targets for suppression and eradication under the New Order. It is important to distinguish between the use of "PKI" as a precise name for the structures of the Communist Party, and as an umbrella term for "commies." It was used both ways.

<sup>39</sup> For women, this was particularly fraught, as sexual favors were often required for them to be able to leave the offices. In that way, rape was institutionalized as an ongoing element of New Order control of the remnants of the Indonesian left. Politicized and associated with all the *aliran* for every single organization/life situation. Also how people were organized to know who to kill and who to lean on to kill.

This invented narrative of the events at Lubang Buaya became the cornerstone of the political legitimacy of the Suharto regime. Produced initially in newspapers,<sup>40</sup> then given a formal version by the army's historical branch, the Lubang Buaya narrative was used simultaneously to justify the destruction of the PKI and to buttress the necessity for the authoritarian control of the nation by the Army. It became institutionalized and memorialized, and was taught in schools, retold in a major motion picture and placed at the center of annual commemorations on October 1 each year. Lubang Buaya itself became a site of national pilgrimage, complete with a museum featuring dioramas of the night's events, a heroic memorial featuring larger-than-life statues of the seven martyred officers and a light installation inside the well itself that bathed its depths in an eerie red glow.

The PKI was consistently visible. A frieze portraying a version of Indonesian national history that showed the communists as a treacherous and violent force in the nation's past wrapped around the base of the memorial statues. The women of Gerwani were placed front-and-center in this visual representation of national betrayal, shown dancing provocatively while the generals were executed.

This was not happenstance. Rather, as this dissertation argues, representations of Indonesian womanhood have lain at the center of the construction of the nation from its very beginnings. It is not accidental, then, that images of Indonesian women were fully deployed, in complicated ways, at one of the nation's pivotal moments.

### ***Pretext as Post-text: Creating Necessity for Mass Violence***

Perhaps because of the major change in Indonesian governmental outlook—from socialist leader of the non-aligned movement with a brisk and combative internal political arena to the capitalist ally of the United States with a controlled one-party state and military dictatorship—many historians have tended to represent the events of September 30-October 1 as a sudden shift, a break in the course of Indonesian history.

Military efforts to shift control, certainly, were sudden indeed. Recent scholarship by Jess Melvin shows that by the morning of October 1, Suharto was already asserting a pre-designed plan for national control in reaction to the events of the early morning. While

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<sup>40</sup> The final chapter of this dissertation revolves around a detailed analysis of the content and timing of the evolution of the Lubang Buaya narrative in the Indonesian press between October and December, 1965.

these plans had been drawn up in case of a general event, Roosa's work, amplified by Melvin, argue convincingly that Suharto knew of the planned events of September 30 in advance. He was therefore fully prepared to act when the Movement struck.

By 10 o'clock that morning, Suharto sent telegrams to the army's regional commanders informing of them of the "coup" attempt in Jakarta. He ordered them to take action against the "counter-revolutionary forces" before the authorship of the communist party in the events had been established, much less asserted publicly.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, in his radio speech to the nation on the night of October 1, Suharto called for the Thirtieth September Movement—as yet not explicitly tied to the PKI—to be "destroyed down to the very roots," a phrase that historian Geoffrey Robinson shows was quickly taken up by leaders across the anti-communist spectrum in their denunciations of G-30-S.

The Movement was quickly labeled "counter-revolutionary,"<sup>42</sup> the ultimate betrayal of the revolutionary *zeitgeist* of Sukarno's Indonesia in the 1960's. The ultimate goal of the Guided Democracy movement was to "Finish the Revolution," thereby freeing the nation from the economic and cultural power of the neo-colonial imperialist West. Sukarno's method for finishing the revolution was to attend to the spirit of "Nasakom," a triune philosophy that brought together three national groups who could be at odds with each other—nationalists, Islamists and socialists—to form a unitary ideological backbone of the nation.<sup>43</sup> Suharto's swift and decisive morning reaction to the events that happened deep in the night only a few hours earlier, and the immediate call for the counter-revolutionaries to be liquidated throughout all levels of society—something that could not have been promulgated even days before—speaks to the suddenness with which Indonesia's political life was reversed.

The liquidation of the PKI, and indeed the Indonesian left, was quick and total. The vast majority of the victims of the killings were not high-level party functionaries. Rather, Robinson writes, they were

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<sup>41</sup> See Jess Melvin, *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide*, p. 112, and "Mechanics of Mass Murder," generally.

<sup>42</sup> See Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season* and "Down to the Very Roots," generally.

<sup>43</sup> "Nasakom" is a combination of these three ideologies in Indonesian: *Nasionalism*, *Agama* ("religion,") and *Komunism*. The construction of the idea of Indonesian national identity in these three streams, or national groups, dating back to the early conception of the Indonesian nationalist movement, along with the addition of a fourth stream, feminism, is discussed later in this chapter.

overwhelmingly poor or lower-middle-class people—farmers, plantation laborers, factory workers, school teachers, students, artists, dancers and civil servants—living in rural villages and plantations, or in ramshackle *kampungs* on the outskirts of provincial cities and towns. They were not, by any stretch, people with direct knowledge of involvement in the events of October 1.<sup>44</sup>

The implications of this pattern of killing are important. As portrayed by the army propaganda, the events of October 1 were not primarily about elite politics. The danger was not to be found in the killing of seven soldiers, with the PKI leadership attempting to decapitate the army general command. Rather, something more fundamental was at play, and much more than the lives of the military leadership was at stake.

The charges leveled against the PKI—charges necessitating their being “destroyed down to the very roots”—were not simply about who would be best to lead Indonesia into a new future. Rather, alongside the military actions to seize power, and in justification of it, the emerging Suharto regime concocted a narrative of the impending moral collapse of the nation that *would have* occurred should the PKI have been allowed to continue its attempts to gain political control of the nation.

This cultural argument for the shift in power to the army was not based in a new idea. Rather, it drew on the continuity and preservation of important national concepts that the emergent communist movement for power was said, in the narrative created by the military, to put at risk.<sup>45</sup> While the events of the night were a “pretext” in the words of John Roosa, the explanations of the necessity of the army’s actions might be considered a “post-text” of the Sukarnoist process of the creation of the Indonesian nation. Although it is not readily apparent in much of the historiography, I will argue that the role of women in the formation of Indonesia’s national identity was central this narrative.

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<sup>44</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p 122. *Kampungs* are the small villages for peasants and the poor working class that exist across the nation, both rurally and in large cities. They are the smallest, simplest, most basic and most ubiquitous level of Indonesian social organization, and, at some level, most Indonesians are imagined to have a *kampung* they belong to, even if they have always lived in a middle-class neighborhood in a city. The expression for to go back to one’s roots, or most basic connection to the nation is “*pulang kampung*,” or “to go home to the village.”

<sup>45</sup> For example, Pancasila, the five-pronged conception of the basis of the Indonesian state, formulated in the early days of the nation (see details in the footnote below,) remained a central element of New Order ideology, at least in both form and performance, though many critics of the New Order point out that it lost any real sense of cultural power in the 1980s in particular, becoming an empty vessel rather than acting as a dynamic idea as it had during the Suharto years. Though taught extensively in schools and proclaimed aloud regularly as a central element of state ritual, many Indonesians either simply exclaimed it in a rote manner or made fun of it with jokes from clever manipulation of its language.

Historians have spent significant time examining how the aftermath of the events at Lubang Buaya played out. There is important scholarship on the political, economic and religious tensions that led to the events of October 1, 1965. Historians have explored the legacies of the Gerwani-Lubang Buaya narrative. However, there has been little explanation of what allowed the invented story of Communist women's barbarity to actually have the effect it had—that is to make the eradication of the PKI not only possible, but even more importantly, necessary.

Perhaps because of the sexual nature of the alleged atrocities connected to the communist women, historians have taken the response to the stories of sexual assault and demasculation of the generals largely to be self-evident.<sup>46</sup> Most analyses that look at the Lubang Buaya narrative, excepting, importantly, that of Dutch feminist scholar Saskia Weiringa, even if they point out the fundamental falsity of the story, do not go on to ask about how and why this gendered element of the narrative was effective.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, historians of genocide and other forms of mass social violence have often pointed out that pre-text is important. There must have been socially cogent reasons, accepted by large swaths of the population, for why, if violence were to be carried out, it would not only be acceptable, but would also be necessary to protect or save the nation. A set of conditions must have already been in place, therefore, in order for a leader to be able to call for fellow citizens to be “eradicated down to the very roots” and to have them respond in kind.

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<sup>46</sup> This is even true of the small but emerging feminist historiography of 1965, which has often connected the treatment of Gerwani to a general sense of patriarchy, or, as Saskia Wieringa has called it, “masculine imagination.” To the extent this feminist scholarship has explored the development of Indonesian ideas of the “proper” role Indonesian women were called to play in the development of the nation, they have tended to focus on political debates and discussions within the women's movement. This dissertation, moving further along these lines, explores how these ideas were presented in mass media, where they also rubbed up against questions about such things as fashion, beauty, child rearing and homemaking.

<sup>47</sup> Saskia Wieringa's scholarship, most particularly in her critically important monograph *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, that explores the tensions and politics within Indonesia's women's movement in the 1950s and 1960s, proposes that the fundamental reason for the ability of the army to completely reconfigure Indonesian society lay in “Gerwani's politicization of gender interests [that] led to their virilization in conservative eyes, who saw their actions as a reversal of the ‘natural’ order of things.” Wieringa's scholarship has been critical to my ability to write this dissertation. Although I diverge from her analysis in several places, and much of my research uses a different set of primary sources, without her ground-breaking work, this dissertation would not have been possible. I owe her a great debt of gratitude.



## **Kaum Ibu: Women and the Formation of the Indonesian Nation**

This dissertation argues that in the case of Indonesia in 1965, a critical and fundamental element of this context is to be found in a decades-long discourse on the role Indonesian women played in the creation of the new nation. Indonesian women organized politically and socially from the early days of the nationalist movement. Initially, women's organizations were primarily local in nature. Like many men's organizations at the time, they were organized along lines of religious or social association. As such, they represented community efforts to address women's issues as much as they reflected nationalist thinking. But they were also, in general, progressive and "modern" in their outlook, just as joining formal associations was a modern thing to do. Many early women's organizations, for instance, focused their work on questions of literacy, education (particularly around "family" questions,) and social welfare. Often they defined themselves as being "non-political."

Yet women played a major role in the early nationalist movement. The sisters of Kartini,<sup>48</sup> for instance, were among the few women included in the initial membership of Budi Utomo, the first organization of the Indonesian nationalist movement, founded by Javanese *priyayi* elites.<sup>49</sup> Kartini's sister Roekmini was invited to the organization's first meeting in 1908.<sup>50</sup> Women began forming their own organizations aligned with

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<sup>48</sup> R.A. Kartini (R.A. is for "Raden Ajeng," a noble title often inaccurately translated as "princess,") was a daughter of the Regent of Jepara, a high position in the native colonial civil service. Her father, Sosroningrat, came from a mid-level aristocratic family. Kartini's mother, Ngasirah, did not come from a family with noble position, so their marriage was insufficient for him to become Regent. Sosroningrat therefore took a second wife, a direct descendent of the Raja of Madura, which qualified him to ascend to the regency. Once elevated socially and politically, Sosroningrat gave his children, including his daughters, excellent Dutch educations, reflecting his particularly progressive outlook. Following a Javanese aristocratic custom known as *pingrit*, however, Kartini was secluded at home from the age of twelve until her marriage. The Sosroningrat household frequently hosted visitors from both the Dutch and Javanese elites, with whom Kartini and her sisters struck up letter-writing friendships. These included both Dutch liberals and feminists and the young Dutch-educated Javanese aristocratic men who would found the nation's first nationalist organizations. Kartini's letters to several of these friends were collected after her early death in childbirth, and were published in Dutch in 1911 under the title *Door Duisternis tot Licht*, ("Out of Darkness Comes Light.") The letters were among the first Dutch language explications of an argument for the benefits of modernity from a "native" perspective. They were published in English as early as 1921 under the title *Letters of a Javanese Princess*. An Indonesian translation of the Dutch original was published in 1952 by Armijn Pané.

<sup>49</sup> The *priyayi* were the indigenous colonial elite, in charge of much of the daily running of the government, and were drawn largely from local nobilities. Members of prominent families from the *kratons* of Central Java, and the royal courts of Cirebon and Madura were particularly strongly represented among their numbers. They were also the group from which the small number of Indonesians with access to Dutch education, both in the Indies and for a very elite few in the Netherlands, were drawn. See Joost Coté, *Realizing the Dream of R.A. Kartini*, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> See Joost Coté, *Realizing the Dream of R.A. Kartini: Her Sisters' Letters from Colonial Java*, and "The Correspondence of Kartini's Sisters," in *Archipel*, 55, pp. 66-67, and *Realizing the Dream of R.A. Kartini*, p. 21. Coté points out that the sisters and other young male intellectuals resigned from Boedi Oetomo following their attendance of the first meeting "[w]hen they recognized that their vision of a new Java was about to be taken over by their more conservative elders."

nationalism in the early 1910's, at the same time as their male counterparts. Although not listed among the leaders of the event, representatives of women's organizations were present at the Second Youth Conference in 1928 at which the "Youth Pledge," the *Sumpah Pemuda*, first outlined the definitional concept of Indonesia as consisting of "one nation, one people, one language," ("*satu nusa, satu bangsa, satu bahasa.*") While referred to with only the word for male youth, *pemuda*, the pledge itself used language that was specifically inclusive of both genders, linking them as "we the sons and daughters of Indonesia" who took the pledge.<sup>51</sup>

Indonesian women came to be involved in this work as a collective group, reaching across boundaries of political affiliation, religious belief and region. The first National Women's Congress, held in 1928 in Yogyakarta only two months after the *Sumpah Pemuda* was taken, brought together over one thousand women from thirty organizations, primarily from Java and Sumatra. They discussed issues that women faced collectively, and in the analysis of Elizabeth Martyn, they sought "to establish a formal relationship so there was a united voice with which to represent Indonesian women."<sup>52</sup>

This did not mean that there were no ideological splits among various women's organizations. In particular, the question of polygamy—and in the post-colonial era, marriage laws related to it—was a source of division between religiously affiliated Muslim groups and those with Christian, Hindu and more secular orientations. However, the desire to foster unity over and above issues that divided various groups resulted in what the larger movement described as its fundamentally "non-political" nature.

Martyn argues, however, that there was "a contradiction inherent in the women's movement's perception of politics. The movement declared itself non-political but embraced the politics of nationalism. 'Non-political,'" she writes, "meant ideologically non-aligned and with an emphasis on social welfare rather than overtly political activities."<sup>53</sup> Non-political in this sense aligned with the idea of being what came to be called "*non bloc*," that is, not being affiliated with any particular political party or movement. Nonetheless, in

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<sup>51</sup> "*Kami, putra dan putri Indonesia*," which was used to introduce each of the three promises of the oath made by the nationalist youth in attendance. The *Sumpah Pemuda* is widely considered to be the first formal declaration of the Indonesian nationalist movement. Alongside the taking of the pledge, the 1928 Congress featured the first public use of *Indonesia Raya*, the song which became, and remains, the Indonesian national anthem.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 40.

<sup>53</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 41.

general political parties had women's affiliate organizations whose leaders were regular attenders at women's congresses and who often served as the primary organizers and conveners of those events.

A series of national women's congresses held regularly from the 1930's through the 1960's produced an important shared ideological orientation for Indonesian nationalist women, that of Indonesian women as "*Ibu Bangsa*," or "Mothers of the Nation." As *Ibu Bangsa*, women were responsible for fostering and assuring the emerging nation's social and moral health. In taking on this charge, despite its officially non-political status, much of the women's movement's social welfare agenda therefore had distinctly political implications. Martyn enumerates these, deriving from Kartini's writings, as "the status and progress of women, marriage and divorce laws, child marriage, women and Islam, social work, child care, education, health, economic and labour issues, nationalism, suffrage, and the responsibilities of women, especially as mothers."<sup>54</sup>

The politics women's organizations pulled into question did not necessarily align itself to any particular party platform. Rather, it reflected more the question of whether Indonesia would be progressive in its national outlook. Sukarno's nationalism was fundamentally based on building Indonesia as a socialist society. The basis of the political and cultural progress necessary to establish and perfect the nation was to be found in a Marxist dialectical approach in which each stage of the revolution would lead the nation forward to the next.

Sukarno's main publication during the 1945-1949 Revolution against the Dutch, *Sarinah*,<sup>55</sup> linked the Indonesian national struggle with the history of women's struggles for social and political equality, which he saw as representing different stages of progress for women being tied to the development of nations. Published in 1947 and connected to the on-going series of Women's Congresses that took place during the Revolution, the book's subtitle made Sukarno's intention clear: *Women [have] Obligations in the Struggle for the*

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<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 41. This list was drawn in particular from the agendas of the women's congresses in the mid-to-late 1930's, in which women to discuss how to address these issues in a more concerted and nationally unified manner, and not simply to work locally. The Australian spelling is in the original.

<sup>55</sup> The full title of the book was *Sarinah, Women's Obligations in the Struggle for the Indonesian Republic*. (*Sarinah: Kewajiban Wanita Dalam Perdjangan Republik Indonesia*.) The book was originally published in 1947 by 'Oesaha Penerbitan Goentoer', in Yogyakarta, and then subsequently republished twice, in 1951 and 1963 by the government printing house.

*Indonesian Republic*. Women, working in partnership with men (or perhaps *vice versa*,) would lead the Republic forward in addressing the issues central to women's needs alongside, and intertwined with, the issues central to the development of the new nation.

Women in turn used Sukarnoism to place what could be seen as quite a disruptive politics that challenged traditional gender power dynamics firmly within the central core of the national progressive agenda. Indeed, magazines produced by and for women, which are examined in depth in this dissertation, were often among the most ardent supporters of Sukarno, regularly including strong editorials and columns in support of his latest projects. Even when they were in strong disagreement with him, as for instance when he took his first concurrent wife in 1953,<sup>56</sup> their criticism, at least in print, was publicly subtle and oblique. At the same time, they created a situation in which to question such things as the right to education or the franchise was to question the revolution itself. Legally and structurally, as a result, Indonesian women enjoyed a relatively high position in Indonesian politics and society relative to women in many other post-colonial societies.<sup>57</sup>

Both sides of this alliance, the nationalist and the feminist, relied on the responsibilities, or obligations, of women—"especially as mothers," as Martyn writes—to justify their agendas for social and political change. "Family imagery," she says

implicit in . . . most national discourse, was strong and women continued to draw on it to subvert the role of motherhood and demand education and marriage rights in terms of the nation's progress. In the process, they increasingly defined Indonesian womanhood in terms of motherhood."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Fatmawati, Sukarno's wife at the outset of the Revolution, was Sukarno's third wife, but none of those marriages had overlapped. When Sukarno married Hartini in 1953, he began a pattern of polygynous marriage that lasted the rest of his life. In all he married five other women after his marriage to Hartini. The marriage to Hartini provoked important reactions from Indonesian women, and these are discussed later in the dissertation.

<sup>57</sup> The relative social power of Indonesian, and indeed Southeast Asian, women has been the subject of significant scholarship, beginning with the work of Anthony Reid in his landmark *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, Vol. I*. Laurie Sears provides a significant analysis of Reid and other scholars' work on this question in the introduction to her edited volume, *Fantasizing the Feminine*. See in particular the section entitled "Strong Women, Fragile Identities," pp. 30-43, which includes discussion of, among other things, the role of women in the economy of maritime trade routes, the intersection of race and women in colonial society occasioned by the practice of marriage into native families, Javanese royal women's response to male cultural attempts to constrict women's power. Not specifically mentioned in Sears' introduction, but also important, were various cultural arrangements across the archipelago in which women were able to own and inherit land in their own names, (a right that the dissertation points out later was potentially put at risk by the promulgation of a marriage law in the 1950s,) and the existence of matriarchal societies, such as the Minangkabau, where gender power structures are significantly different from those grounded in patriarchal gender hierarchy. Sears also points out that 1965 and its aftermath occasioned a shift in women's political power and social positioning in the New Order, drawing on scholarship of Julia Suryakusuma, among others. This is a critical element of the argument put forward by this dissertation as well.

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 41.

Because this sense of Indonesian womanhood and motherhood was explicitly connected to the Indonesian nationalist movement, it was woven into Indonesian nationalism's philosophy for the critical political goal of building national unity.

From before the independence era, therefore, Indonesian women were already establishing themselves not only as a generally progressive, socialist and revolutionary force, but also as an important national group at the center of the national project, and as generators of national unity. In doing so, they referred to themselves as a "*kaum*," an Indonesian term that describes a group in its 'groupness,' focusing on commonalities rather than differences in that group. So, it was Indonesian women as *kaum wanita* ("women,") and as *kaum ibu* ("mothers," but importantly also translatable as "women,") who principally were actively engaged in building the definitions and expectations of Indonesian national womanhood.

This point is critical. The question of who was and who was not a "national group" has emerged as central to the discussion about whether 1965 and its aftermath as a case of genocide.<sup>59</sup> This new scholarship argues that Indonesian national groups, in this case organized around ideologies rather than ethnicity, were the fundamental building blocks of Indonesian national identity. Indeed, the three national groupings or "streams" of the Indonesian Revolutionary movements comprised Marxist-Socialists ("*kaum sosialis*,") Muslims ("*kaum Islam*,") and Nationalists ("*kaum nasionalis*." ) This dissertation builds on Saskia Wieringa's argument the *kaum feminis* comprised a fourth national group<sup>60</sup> to suggest that Indonesian women—particularly those with a progressive and "modern" outlook—considered themselves to be a fourth national group: a *kaum wanita* or *kaum Ibu*, and that they were recognized as such to some extent as well.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, it asks how

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<sup>59</sup> This scholarship is discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>60</sup> Her assertion is discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>61</sup> Seeing the Indonesian nationalist movement as the confluence of the three largely male-oriented streams, or "*aliran*," is a standard formulation within the historiography of the Indonesian Revolution. The first nationalist mass movement, the *Sarekat Islam* (SI,) founded in 1912, was initially developed from trader and unionist organizations by several figures, but perhaps most importantly Tjokroaminoto, who was a teacher to many of the early nationalist leaders. As various of Tjokroaminoto's students adapted his teachings to their own viewpoints, the SI split into the three general streams of Indonesian nationalism: socialism led by Semaun, Islamicism led by Kartosuwirjo, and nationalism led by Sukarno. That "nationalist" *aliran* is often called this because Sukarno led the *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia*, ("Indonesian Nationalist Party," or PNI,) but sometimes is given other names in the scholarship. Robert Cribb, for instance, refers to the Sukarnoist stream as "developmentalist." (See Robert Cribb, *Genocide in Indonesia, 1965-66*, p. 222.) Saskia Wieringa, however, correctly includes feminism along with "nationalism, Islamic reform [and] communism," in what she calls the "four major strands in pre-war Indonesia" that reconstituted themselves at the center of the Indonesian political landscape following

scholars can use the concept of a *kaum wanita*, an identity Indonesian women actively cultivated themselves, and particularly its significant transformation and depoliticization in the New Order, to further interrogate the question of whether the killings of 1965-66 in Indonesia might be considered to be an act of genocide.<sup>62</sup>

### **Ibu Bangsa, Ibu Sejati: *Women as the Nation's Collective Moral Compass***

The position of women, particularly as archetypical “true mothers” and “mothers of the nation,”<sup>63</sup> was critical to Indonesian self-imagination. Nationalist gender ideology, largely advanced by Indonesian women themselves, gave women the specific duty to give birth to a new moral and pure Indonesian national identity. Indonesian women claimed and pursued this duty, which was also connected to their *kodrat wanita*, the God-given biological and cultural roles they played as women, to mark out a politically powerful place in the nation.<sup>64</sup>

Women’s, and by extension the nation’s morality was not merely a philosophical concern. As this dissertation amply demonstrates, the questions of what it meant to maintain a fundamentally “eastern” sense of morality while also working for women’s progress and in trying out “modern” ways of living was a source of constant discussion and self-theorizing among progressive, educated women in the first two decades of the nation.

The pages of women’s magazines were full of editorials, columns, commentaries and letters to the editor that discussed the subject through a multiplicity of lenses. The question could be central to articles about child raising, political representation, proposed marriage

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the revolutionary struggle against the Dutch. (See Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 98.) She does so, however, without making particular note of the novelty of her analysis.

<sup>62</sup> This question of definitions of genocide is exceptionally contentious. Indeed, it consumed a significant portion of the oral defense of this dissertation. I am not yet ready to state conclusively where I might finally land on the theoretical questions of the definition of genocide. Whether the killings of 1965-66 are labeled as such or not is less important to this dissertation than the examination of the role that the social constructions of women’s roles and proper femininity played in the ability of the military to prosecute what was, if not genocide, certainly mass murder intended to destroy a whole segment of Indonesian political society and to extract it from the definition of Indonesian national identity. But I do feel that looking at the question through the lens of gender substantially complicates the theoretical argument about Indonesia 1965-66 as genocide in a way that hasn’t occurred to date, and therefore, addressing this question is a critical addition to the argument of the dissertation itself.

<sup>63</sup> The concepts of “True Mothers,” (*Ibu sejati*,”) and of “Mothers of the Nation,” (*Ibu Bangsa*,”) and how they were employed by women’s activists to establish their position in the national political dialogue is explored in depth in Chapter 4 of the dissertation. It is helpful to note at this point that women’s moral purity, as wives and mothers, and their moral duties to both their families and the nation, were critical elements of these constructions of Indonesian national femininity.

<sup>64</sup> This is the subject of Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

laws and social etiquette. But it was also richly expressed in writing about “modern” culture: fashion and beauty, public comportment, Hollywood movies and movie stars, social dancing, and the like. The question of how to remain true, or “*sejati*,” (a term that encompassed not only women’s personal social and sexual lives, but also women’s collective political endeavors,) to their nationality and their femininity was a constant, and at times over-riding, concern for women involved in the national political space.

A potential danger lay in this connection of moral women to a modern Indonesian national identity, however. Moral lapses could rebound not only on individual women, but on women as a collective *kaum*. Incidents of sexual scandal, (for instance prostitution at the Africa-Asia Conference in Bandung in 1955, which will be addressed in Chapter 5,) were seen to besmirch the “good name” of Indonesian women collectively, all the more so because of politically active women’s common work on issues connected to the moral basis of the nation that reached across their individual political identities.

Indeed, another constant theme in women’s and other magazines of the day was the on-going possibility of a national “moral crisis,” (“*krisis moral*.”)<sup>65</sup> The complex of elements that might comprise a moral crisis was widely drawn. Most narrowly, it was a code word for sexual promiscuity, including prostitution. But it could also refer to the more benign expressions of public female sexuality: beauty contests, western-style social dancing or “excessive” fashion that showed off bare shoulders or too much cleavage. It also extended to make-up and hairstyles that were considered too flamboyant, or alternately, too severe. Most broadly, it was drawn to include such larger social and political problems as non-marital affairs, a rising divorce rate, overspending for new modern conveniences, corruption and price-gouging, all of which were seen to undermine the health of Indonesian families.

Tellingly, a significant source of these incidents of moral crisis was seen to originate abroad. In particular, Hollywood movies, replete with on-screen kisses, seduction, scantily clad starlets and the trappings of fancy “modern” lives, were considered to be a bad influence on young people who were “going too far” in adopting western ways. It is also important to note that both in Indonesian literature and in popular media, particularly in

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<sup>65</sup> Sometimes also spelled *krisis moril*.

editorial cartoons, often the ‘natural’ response to excesses and cultural betrayals was shown to be quick vigilante justice, usually carried out by packs of enraged men.<sup>66</sup> Stated more broadly, from the time of the Indonesian Revolution at least, one of the answers to moral crisis was visualized as mass violence, aimed at restoring moral balance in society.

Thus, based on these earlier visualizations, the alleged actions of Gerwani activists at Lubang Buaya—gender mixing, free love and then the sexually charged killing of the generals—were both presented and read as a serious stain on—possibly even the complete destruction of—Indonesian women’s collective moral standing. Given the role and political space Indonesian women across the ideological spectrum had already carved out together, this alleged major breach of Indonesian women’s morality was considered enough of a disruption of a fundamental tenet of Indonesian identity to put the safety of the entire nation at risk. The critically destabilizing element that allowed for the swift political transformation of the nation and the destruction of the Indonesian left, I argue, is to be found in the significant disruption of Indonesian gender ideology imbedded in the story created about Gerwani—and therefore about the PKI and the leftist movement as a whole—at Lubang Buaya.

### ***Indonesian Violences***

Another question arises, however, about what allowed for the swiftness and violence of the national reaction. The dissertation provides various sources which seem to suggest that mass violence was seen as a “proper” response to at least some incidents of social disruption. A 1950 short story about the assignation between a road-side prostitute and her client, included at the end of Chapter 5, *Sepanjang Djalan* (“All Along the Road,”)<sup>67</sup> suggests that prostitutes should be “eradicated, they’re as dangerous as an atomic bomb . . . .”<sup>68</sup> Cartoons from 1953 on the eradication of polygamy, included in Chapter 4 and from 1952 about an evening out dancing at a fancy western hotel, included in

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<sup>66</sup> Sylvia Tiwon offers a critical reading of gender and incidents of harshly reactive violence in times of crisis in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian literature in her book chapter, “Models and Maniacs: Articulating the Female in Indonesia,” in Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*. Tiwon’s chapter is discussed later in this chapter. Cartoons and a short story demonstrating the possibility of mass violent responses to incidents of perceived moral crisis are discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Wanita*, 1950, no. 15, pp. 264-65.

<sup>68</sup> “*harus diberantas juga, karena tak kalah bahajanja daripada bahaja bom atom.*” *Wanita*, 1950, no. 15, pp. 265.



Chapter 5, demonstrate ways in which public violence was seen as an expected possible response to incidents that challenged certain social mores.

Usmar Ismail's 1954 film, *Lewat Djam Malam, (After Curfew,)* discussed in the Cinematic Interlude following this introductory chapter suggests that one source of a tendency towards social violence was the aftermath of the revolutionary generation processing the violence they had sustained themselves during the Second World War from the Japanese and the Revolutionary struggle against the Dutch. The second also calls into question the long-term effects of the violence involved in the Dutch occupation, including the Aceh War (1873-1904), and the invasion of Bali in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with its infamous *puputan* (mass ritual suicide) responses from Balinese royal courts in 1906 and 1908.

Outsiders to "Malay" cultures, including those in Indonesia, have written at times about local tendencies toward violence. In particular, British colonial discourse in the Malay Peninsula included a significant discourse on *amok*, the process in which a native would become possessed to some degree, lose control and commit sudden acts of violence, often, at least in the literature, with a *keris*, or short Malay dagger. The concept became so engrained in the colonial construction of Malayness that it entered the English language in the phrase "to run amuck." Anthropologists studying Central Java have written about the concept of *rebutan*, in which crowds "riot," struggling to attain objects of spiritual value, which John Pemberton discusses as being the "negative structural opposite of *selametan*,"<sup>69</sup> or the cultural state within which "nothing is happening," that is, the forces of the universe are in balance, and there is no sense of crisis, at least for the moment.<sup>70</sup> The challenge here, of course, is that pulled away from cultural specificities, labeling an entire culture as intrinsically violent, (which the British colonial literature does, but which Pemberton explicitly does not,) runs the danger of simply being racist and, in the colonial, and for that matter the post-colonial contexts, of serving the controlling needs of those in power.

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<sup>69</sup> John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"*, p. 256. Pemberton discusses *rebutan*, fascinatingly and illuminatingly, within a framework of how the New Order took this element of Javanese (largely village) culture that involved instances of excess competition and absence of control and placed it within a concept of "ritual," that is, something that can in fact be controlled. He links this to the process of the New Order asserting strong cultural, and therefore political control over Indonesia.

<sup>70</sup> The *selametan* is one of the more widely discussed rituals in the anthropological literature on Javanese culture. In particular, Clifford Geertz put *selametan* at the center of his analysis of the Javanese culture in his critically influential work on *The Religion of Java*.

But in recent literature, including Pemberton's, the focus has been on placing incidents of violence within their local cultural contexts. In her book chapter on "Models and Maniacs: Articulating the Female in Indonesia,"<sup>71</sup> Sylvia Tiwon references examples of "frenzied women" losing control (some of them also explicitly violent,) from Indonesian literature. In particular, she discusses the short story *Surabaya* by Idrus, in which women refugees fleeing the city in the midst of a Revolutionary battle transform from individuals, "each with her own thoughts" in Idrus' words, into a vicious mob that stones a suspected male military deserter/coward to death.<sup>72</sup> Their collective violence places the situation back in proper order, even as the sounds of war echo around the women.

Tiwon also then discusses the Gerwani story from Lubang Buaya, which she notes includes the "rape" of the Generals by Gerwani women in at least one nationally published contemporary description of the events.<sup>73</sup> But in this case, she argues, the women are not made into heroes, but rather are constructed to be villains. "Clearly," she writes of the Lubang Buaya narrative, "the story has fallen back on the old theme of maniac behavior of women in crowds. But now, maniac behavior is something to be feared. Thus perverted, it does not create heroes but destroys them."<sup>74</sup>

Contrasting these Gerwani "maniacs" with the "model" of Javanese femininity embodied in Kartini, Tiwon proceeds to make a point that is central to this dissertation. She writes:

Kartini/Gerwani: the model/the maniacs. The model woman is the individual, her femaleness sequestered from other females by rank, by age, by social status. Her definition as *ibu* controls her and fixes her within a hierarchical web of ties and responsibilities. The converse of this model is women in a crowd in which all rankings fall away, as do age, family ties, and social status; their femaleness thus augmented, they become channels for power. *In a very real sense, then, political behavior is equated with sexual behavior: the one is presented as good and nurturing; the other is presented as a powerful but destructive and thereby evil force.*<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> In Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, pp. 47-70.

<sup>72</sup> Sylvia Tiwon, "Models and Maniacs," in Laurie J. Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, p. 63.

<sup>73</sup> She cites an article in *Kompas* from October 18, 1965. Chapter 7 of this dissertation examines the narrative of Lubang Buaya in *Kompas* and two other newspapers quite tightly. This is the only instance I know of in the literature in which the generals are said to have been "raped" ("*diperkosa*,") although their having been abused sexually is a clear and consistent element of the story put forth by the military.

<sup>74</sup> Sylvia Tiwon, "Models and Maniacs," in Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, p. 63.

<sup>75</sup> Sylvia Tiwon, "Models and Maniacs," in Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, p. 63. Emphasis added.

And, at the heart of this complex web of gender, individuality, group identity, hierarchy, sexuality and power, lies the possibility of the power of mass violence, which can be both destructive, or, importantly, re-constructive, depending on who wields it, and how. And understanding that, in turn, requires the application of thickly descriptive analysis of the violence, and of placing that description within the specific and autonomous historical understanding of Indonesia leading up to that time.<sup>76</sup>

This then raises the question of how we might understand the violence of 1965-1966. Therefore—engaging with a new scholarship that argues the Indonesian killings of 1965-66 constitute a case of genocide—I suggest that the gendered construction of the necessary reasons for the destruction of the Indonesian left create a possible case that could support of the proposition that the killings were focused on communists as a “national group.” In the aftermath of Lubang Buaya, non-Communist Indonesian women were required to distance themselves from the leftist women they had worked with previously in public denunciations of Gerwani and the PKI.<sup>77</sup> They were also made to walk back much of the political agenda they had worked on with Gerwani as well, and in doing so, had much of their political agency as women stripped away.

What remained in place, in the analysis of Indonesian writer Julia Suryakusuma, was a new relationship between women and the nation that she termed “State Ibusim.” In the New Order, women retained their position as *Ibu Bangsa*, but without the independent political agency that had accompanied it previously.<sup>78</sup> Rather, as non-Communist women

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<sup>76</sup> The intentional references here are to two seminal works of Indonesian Studies: the thick description of Clifford Geertz's *The Religion of Java* and John Smail's important early call for Southeast Asianists to write “autonomous histories” of the region that places our analysis within Southeast Asian cultural terms.

<sup>77</sup> To be sure, the relationships between leftist and more conservative women's groups were not always strong, but non-Communist women's groups were, nonetheless, linked to Gerwani and other groups through their common work on women's issues.

<sup>78</sup> Suryakusuma wrote her master's thesis on what she termed the “State Ibusim” that lay at the heart of the organization of the New Order. Rather than holding positions in their own rights, women in the New Order held political positions in local social organizations in direct reference to their husbands' positions in the state apparatus, a structure that had been used earlier in the organizations for military wives. While they continued to work on women's issues, women in the New Order were expected to support their husband's jobs more explicitly. So it was, for instance, the wives of village heads that came to lead much of Indonesia's attempts to install a national family planning program, whether that fit their own personal knowledge and skills or not, by being responsible for talking with and monitoring the reproductive plans of all the women in their husbands' districts. These expectations were formalized with the formation of *Dharma Wanita*, (“Women's Duty,” or “Women's Service,”) an organization for the wives of male civil servants, in 1974. *Dharma Wanita*'s internal structure matched the structures of the Indonesian civil service in a one-to-one relationship, with the women matching their husbands' ranks and positions within the organization. The agenda of *Dharma Wanita* was, therefore, largely driven by the political requirements of the husbands' work, flowing from the Suharto government, rather than by the women's own priorities. Participation was mandatory. See Suryakusuma, *State Ibusim*.

were specifically forced as women to extricate themselves from their work alongside Gerwani, they lost their political position within the state as well.

This complete reformulation of Indonesian national womanhood at the center of New Order Indonesia helps make the case that leftist women were not only targeted for their political affiliations, but also for their gender. This had an effect on Indonesian women as a whole, that is, as a *kaum*. During the anti-Communist purge, Indonesians of all stripes felt the need to show that they were not “*terlibat*,”—meaning “involved” or “embroiled,” but also, in this sense “implicated,” though the word doesn’t carry that direct meaning—in G-30-S. But several types of sources quoted in the dissertation’s final chapter—formal statements made by women’s organizations that condemned Gerwani, the questions asked of accused Gerwani activists in a series of “confessions” produced by the New Order, and the hagiographic profiles of Irma Nasution, the young daughter of the Chief of Staff of the Army who was killed in the attempt to arrest her father—make clear that all Indonesian women, no matter what their politics or social position, needed to demonstrate that they were not “*terlibat*” not only within a general sense that all Indonesians needed to as a whole, but also in their gendered space as women.

This gendered element of the move from the Sukarno era to the New Order has often been shunted to the side of the historiography of the Indonesian nation’s second act under Suharto. But as much as the justification for the legitimacy of the New Order was built on the destruction of Communism, so too it depended on the repudiation of liberal feminism.

This dissertation argues that the construction of Indonesian national womanhood was a critical element attacked by the New Order reformulation of Indonesian identity. Because women had organized themselves as the moral care-takers of the nation, and because national fears about modernity had been expressed in terms of moral crisis that largely centered around women, their bodies and their public presentation, it was the perceived moral failings of Gerwani that created a primary *emotional* justification for the destruction of the Indonesian communist movement. Thus the construction of Indonesian womanhood and the fears of national moral collapse that both gave meaning to the creation of a narrative of Gerwani’s sexual deviance and permitted, nay required, the mass destruction of the Indonesian left.

Looking at the gendered construction of the justification of mass murder, therefore, significantly firms up new arguments that the acts of killing in Indonesia in 1965-66 might constitute an example of genocide, particularly in the essential absence of killing based on race and ethnicity.<sup>79</sup> The challenge is that, until now, the cultural details of this construction of Indonesian womanhood have largely been absent from the standard historiography of the Indonesian nation.

The argument against Gerwani has certainly been made in gross and coarse terms. But, as this dissertation shows, the demonization of communist women was also perhaps more powerfully made in its subtle details: the inferences of certain styles of western clothing, the imputations of wearing too much makeup or too high a hairdo, even the meanings given to a smile or the look in one's eyes. But the cultural construction of moral crisis in Sukarno's Indonesia that led to this has yet to receive significant historical attention. Similarly, the history of Indonesian women's fashion and comportment in the 1950's and 1960's, though recognized on a broader level, has not been the subject of significant scholarship to date. The construction of Indonesian women's politics in the Sukarno era is, fortunately, already the focus of significant and important scholarship. But that scholarship rarely looks carefully at questions of fashion, bodies and the precise details of the social construction of sexuality. A dissertation that puts all of this at the center of one of the most important watersheds of Indonesian national history is, necessarily, one built over significant gaps in the historiography, to which I now turn briefly.

### **Silences and Voids: The Cultural and Gender Histories of the Sukarno Era**

The argument for the special place and critical role that the social construction of national motherhood played in the army's ability to justify genocide must rely on an analysis of Indonesian women's thought. But until relatively recently, women's voices have

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<sup>79</sup> As will be discussed later in this chapter, the new scholarship on the events in Indonesia as a case of genocide is dependent on making a case that the eradication efforts were focused on a "national group," rather than on an ethnic or racial minority. The academic politics surrounding this assertion among scholars working on genocide and mass killing are complex, but it is important to note that for a particular group of scholars, the lack of significant racial or ethnic killing would remove the events in Indonesia from consideration as a case of genocide. While some of the killing of Indonesian Chinese at the time offered some sense of this being genocidal, most scholars agree that those Chinese who were targeted were done so because of their connections to the Indonesian left more than for their being Chinese.

been largely absent from the history of Indonesian politics. This is particularly true of the fundamental scholarship in English on the new nation that was written beginning from the mid-1950s through the 1980's. The authors were almost exclusively men, and were largely non-Indonesians who had experienced Sukarno's Indonesia contemporaneously.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps because the world of party politics they wrote about took place in spaces they experienced that were significantly segregated along gender lines, their work rarely considered women and gender as a central lens for the analysis of the nation.

There were scholars of the post-World War II generation who did touch on gender. Some were either women themselves, or worked closely with women (often their wives, also scholars in their own rights,) on their projects. Others were anthropologists or scholars of art and culture, for whom the workings of family, kinship, religious practice and performance—all of which gave significant attention to gender analysis—were already central research interests. Cora Vreede-de Steurs, for one, wrote a rare monograph in 1960 on Indonesian women's "Struggles and Achievements."<sup>81</sup> Building on work that Margaret Meade and Gregory Bateson had carried out in the pre-war period, Hildred and Clifford Geertz both paid attention to questions of gender, sexuality and social dominance in their descriptions of Indonesian life.<sup>82</sup> James Peacock carried out his primary research on *ludruk*, a proletarian theater form, in which gender was highlighted precisely because women's roles were played by transvestite male actors. Claire Holt, an art historian, wrote importantly about both the fine and performing arts, where women, as both artists and subjects, were often on full display. Much of her work is enfolded with an analysis of gender. However, in that generation of scholarship, as was true for most types of history at the time, gender was not a central or primary concern.

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<sup>80</sup> The writers of the "canon" of Indonesian political and cultural history, among others Benedict Anderson, Harry Benda, Frederick Bunnell, Bernard Dahm, Herbert Feith, Donald Hindley, George Kahin, John Legge, Daniel Lev, Guy Pauker, Takashi Shiraishi, John Smail, Donald Weatherbee, W.F. Wertheim, rarely, and in some cases never, considered gender and women seriously in their work. Certainly, none of them devoted an entire manuscript or article to their female Indonesian contemporaries, even if they did occasionally touch on women as part of the analysis of a larger question. Ruth McVey, a female historian of Indonesian Communism, and co-author with Benedict Anderson of one of the central early manuscripts about G-30-S, rarely addressed gender issues in her own considerable scholarship.

<sup>81</sup> Cora Vreede-de Steurs, *The Indonesian Woman*.

<sup>82</sup> Unlike Meade and Bateson, however, the Geertz work examined life in both small and large cities 20-30 years later, rather than in a mountainside village in the late colonial era. The question of modernization, with all its gendered implications of social change, was therefore more present in their work.

A second generation of scholars, many of them women, some of them trained in an emerging field of “women’s history,” created an important scholarship on Indonesian women from the 1980’s forward.<sup>83</sup> Elsbeth Locher-Scholten in particular established a project in the early 1990’s to put Indonesian women “in focus,” although its initial publications were, in her own words, “an example of [the] primary research” that was coming out of women’s studies and women’s history programs at the time.<sup>84</sup> Her work progressed expansively. Her collection of essays published in 2000 on *Women and the Colonial State* in the Netherlands Indies provided detailed case studies of labor; racial ambivalence about domestic workers in Dutch colonial households; race, clothing and food; suffrage; and marriage.<sup>85</sup>

The collection also illuminates how scholarship on women was increasingly becoming a part of the emerging field of Indonesian cultural history. Locher-Scholten’s article on summer dresses and canned food, an exploration of changing racialization of Dutch colonial femininity in the 1920s, was first included in a collection of essays on clothing and the creation of the state in Indonesia edited by Henk Nordholt three years earlier in 1997.<sup>86</sup>

As the cultural history of Indonesia began to receive serious attention during this time, scholars began to pay attention to the implications of seemingly small, every day sources: colonial photographs, for instance, or an advertisement for a Phillips lightbulb.<sup>87</sup> In these newly explored sources, women and gender were significantly present and began

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<sup>83</sup> Susan Blackburn, Nancy Florida, Ann Kumar, Elsbeth Locker-Scholten, Aihwa Ong, Danilyn Rutherford, Laurie Sears, Ann Stoler, and Jean Gelman Taylor among others expanded the scholarly record on modern Indonesia to include women, even if women were not always the primary concern of their research.

<sup>84</sup> Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof, eds., *Indonesian Women in Focus*. The level of research in the collection is, unfortunately, both somewhat random and rather uneven, the result essentially of the publication of a series of papers from a seminar/conference at KITLV in the Netherlands. The paper on prostitution by Liesbeth Hesselink, for instance, makes no use of Indonesian sources, since the author could read neither Indonesian nor Javanese. It essentially looks through Dutch colonial legal sources and commentaries by Dutch women in the colonies, in which the author found very little material. As this dissertation will show, Indonesian women were discussing prostitution to a significant degree from the 1920’s on. On the other hand, some of the papers, including Peter Carey and Vincent Houben’s “Spirited Srikandhis and Sly Sumbadras,” that discussed the roles of women in Central Javanese courts in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Madelon Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis’ discussion of “Ibuisim and Priyayization,” and Myra Sidharta’s analysis of the “making of the Indonesian Chinese woman” reflected their author’s serious and long-term engagement with Indonesian cultural history.

<sup>85</sup> Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, 2000. All these questions are also reflected in the sources on Indonesian women in the Sukarno era that lie at the heart of this dissertation.

<sup>86</sup> Henke Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Outward Appearances*, 1997. Like Locher-Scholten’s collection of essays, *Indonesian Women in Focus*, Shulte Nordholt’s edited volume was a publication of the papers of a KITLV seminar that helped establish the scholarship on Indonesian cultural history. This scholarship on clothing will be addressed later in this chapter.

<sup>87</sup> See Henk Maier, “Maelstrom and electricity: Modernity in the Indies,” in Henk Schulte Nordholt, *Outward Appearances*.

to be seriously studied.<sup>88</sup> Women's sexuality beyond the scope of motherhood or prostitution began to receive attention, as did the state's interaction with women in that area. Laurie Sears edited a collection of essays on gender, identity, sexuality, violence and the state in 1996, for instance, that laid out questions around how the feminine had been "fantasized" in the Indonesian colonial and New Order imaginations of Indonesia.<sup>89</sup>

For reasons connected to the politics of the New Order, however, little of this work focused on the Sukarno era. In the aftermath of G-30-S, the Suharto regime produced an official state history of the attempted "PKI coup" with which it enforced public alignment. Written by historians attached to the Indonesian military, the New Order narrative of the events at Lubang Buaya became sacrosanct. As a result, it became much harder for historians, both Indonesian and international, to conduct research that questioned this official and officially enforced view. Those foreign scholars whose writings did so, such as Benedict Anderson, found themselves banned from entering the country. Carrying out serious historical research on the Sukarno era would, most likely, have painted a more complicated picture of Indonesian communism than the Suharto narrative would have allowed.

Thus, the Sukarno era became a black hole in the historiography of Indonesia for much of the New Order period. As a result, while the secondary literature on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was increasingly filled in to include and even center on women, the first two decades of the Republic received little attention in any form. As a result, until today, significant holes remain in the basic historical research of the 1950s-1960s.

This is not to say that Lubang Buaya and its aftermath did not loom large in the scholarly thinking on Indonesia. Indeed, like any black hole, the question of what happened at Lubang Buaya and afterwards held a strong pull in the thinking of many scholars of Indonesia.<sup>90</sup> While "politics" was a dangerous field for scholars during the New Order,

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<sup>88</sup> For example, in the same edited volume on clothing, Jean Gelman Taylor wrote an article on "Costume and gender in colonial Java, 1800-1940," and Rudolf Mrázek wrote about men's fashion in an article on the politics of clothing in the late colonial period "Indonesian dandy."

<sup>89</sup> See Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, 1996. Notably, the collection largely brackets the Sukarno era. The exceptions are Sylvia Tiwon's chapter on "Models and Maniacs" and Julia Suryakusuma's discussion of State Ibusim, both of which are discussed in this chapter.

<sup>90</sup> See a discussion around the lack of writing on the killings in the Introduction to Robert Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings*, entitled "Problems in the Historiography of the Killings in Indonesia," pp. 1-43.



“culture” was not. But, as many scholars of more recent Indonesian history have observed, in the New Order, Culture, with a capital “C” and as defined by the state, often became an empty shell, where form and presentation were critical, but where content was either obscured, or in some cases, made to vanish altogether.<sup>91</sup>

The cultural history of the Sukarno era was among the subjects that vanished nearly completely. For example, subjects such as Indonesian cinema and popular music in the 1950s and 1960s are only recently beginning to be addressed. In 2011, Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H.T. Lien edited a collection of chapters on Indonesian culture between 1950-1965, with an interesting focus on cultural missions abroad. It remains one of the few publications to look at such matters, primarily exploring formal cultural production, although Jennifer Lindsay’s introduction helpfully takes up a broader set of questions about cultural history in the Sukarno era.<sup>92</sup>

Little if any systematic attention has been paid to Indonesian publishing in the period. One of the challenges of this dissertation has been trying to understand the full breadth of Indonesian women’s magazines at the time. It has been a particular challenge to figure out who the publishers, editors and particularly the writers of some of the sources were. The writing about advertisements in this dissertation remains speculative in some important ways. Although it is clear that there was an active advertising industry working alongside magazine and newspaper publishers,<sup>93</sup> there is no basic research that I can find

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<sup>91</sup> Some cultural expressions and ritually important art forms, particularly those connected to the *kampung* or that were used by PKI to attract crowds to their rallies were actively suppressed in the New Order. *Ludruk*, the transvestite proletarian theater mentioned above, was largely wiped out, and what remained was heavily sanitized and bent towards spreading New Order ideology. *Reog Ponorogo*, a dance and martial arts form that centered around the spiritual and sexual power of the “strong man” at the center of each troupe, and which was also known for the homosexual relationships between the leaders and young male dancers who attended him, was reorganized into a feat exclusively of physical, and not spiritual, strength. Many of the older masters were killed after 1965. Itinerant spiritually powerful female dancers, whose sexuality was an important element of their craft, were also often arrested and their trade, which had been an important element of Javanese village culture, was essentially ended. The dance forms remained, but were transferred from the village to the state arts academies, where they were “preserved,” (“*dilestarikan*,”) but also emptied, and where they were entrusted to the heavily surveilled bodies of dance institute students. Older dancers, no longer able to make a living as they had before, often came to be labeled as prostitutes rather than as spiritually potent women. That said, the form did remain present in rural Java, with men vying and bidding for the ability to take the virginity of new young dancers, but the spiritual preparation and strength of the dancers seems to have waned significantly. Much of this footnote is based on multiple informal discussions I have had with Javanese artists over the past twenty years, often quietly, or late at night. It is still not easily discussable in public, at least not in all its aspects, even today. For more on the last example, however, see Rachmi Diyah Larasati, *The Dance that Makes You Vanish*.

<sup>92</sup> The collection was consciously written and published in two versions, one in Indonesian and the other in English. See Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H.T. Liem, eds., *Ahli Waris Budaya Indonesia: Menjadi Indonesia 1950-1965*, and *Heirs to world culture: Being Indonesian 1950-1965*.

<sup>93</sup> In an interview with me, the publisher and editor of *Keluarga* magazine, Herawati Diah talked briefly about there being several advertising agencies in Jakarta, and it is clear from the advertisements in the magazines themselves that their

on who owned these agencies or who their advertising account executives were, how ad campaigns were developed, who was in charge of framing their content and outlook, or who the artists creating the images were. While writing a dissertation that focuses on fashion and beauty, there was not much basic scholarship on the Indonesian fashion industry during the two decades following independence I could draw on. Much of what I know about these issues has come from discussions with individuals who lived and participated in those worlds rather than from documentary evidence or secondary scholarship.

Likewise, while some authors have referenced moments of moral crisis in the Sukarno era, no-one yet, at least to my knowledge, has looked at the development of the idea historically or taken into account the variety of ways in which the idea was employed over time. Of all the questions where there are gaps, this last instance is a particularly acute absence in the moment I am writing, when moral crisis and the fear of excessive modernity—this time brought to Indonesia from outside through the internet, pornography and “LGBT,” and accompanied by threats of mass corrective violence—are again at the epicenter of Indonesian political upheaval. Because of the persistence of New Order power centers, the current instances of moral crisis also continue to revolve around the politics of the national memory of 1965. One of the often-accused sources for current social decay is “*laten PKI*,” (“latent PKI”) imagined as an underground communist movement intent on returning to Indonesian political life, even though the party has not had any base in Indonesia for over half a century now.<sup>s</sup>

With that in mind, I would like to emphasize that I fully expect that some of the ways I have written about these questions will see significant revision in the future. I have found continuously in doing the research for this project that almost inevitably, there are Indonesians with significant knowledge of the minute details of many of these questions. On multiple occasions, I have been able to put out a question on social media, usually Facebook, about who a particular figure was, or what a particular situation was, and

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work was of very high quality. But there wasn't enough time in the interview to drill down further about who the artists and writers were, much less the advertising executives. I'm sure this research could be readily carried out. The point here is that, as far as I know, no-one has done so yet, and there is no basic work on this question and many others that could be easily referenced.

someone would know someone who would have a good sense—but necessarily often their own personal sense—of the situation.<sup>94</sup>

In presenting at conferences in Indonesia, and particularly in showing photographs of various fashion trends, it was not unusual for individual women in the audience to point out specific details about beauty that they had learned from their mothers. One woman, a professor at the university where I was speaking, for instance, told me about when a particular way of wearing a length of *batik* to show off one's ankles came into style. She also gave me information on the details of when jeans, called *janki*, (an Indonesianization of “yankee,”) came into and then faded from fashion. Two AV specialists, both older men working at one of my presentations at a major cultural institution in Jakarta filled me in on the politics behind which young urban men would be labeled “cross-boys,” a derisive term for rock-n-roll youth in the 1960s, and which ones were merely thought of as “stylish,” (“*bergaya.*”) They also told me that in several decades of working at this venue, they had never heard a speaker address the questions of fashion I was raising, but that my presentation resonated strongly with their own experiences as youth in the 1960's.

It is clear that the details of the cultural history of the Sukarno era aren't unknown. In fact, particularly with the advent of social media, there are any number of amateur fans of any particular style or issue who are connecting online and creating communities of knowledge. But, given that current Indonesian history education focuses largely on a “great man” approach that stresses the lives of “national heroes,” these questions aren't considered to be important within “official” Indonesian history, including in many university departments. As a result, the cultural history that is known in its delicious details by any number of people simply has not yet been written about systemically, a point of which many of the people who helped me with individual questions were keenly aware.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> For instance, when I once asked a question about who Dhewayani Pribadi, the super-model written about in Chapters 5 and 6 was, I not only had several answers in minutes, including from one woman who had been named for her, I was also connected with a close family friend of hers within half an hour who was able to fill me in on significant details of her life. He offered to ask her if she would grant me an interview, and he did, but she refused, not wanting to “relive those years,” when her first husband had been the aide to Air Marshall Omar Dhani, who was implicated in the G-30-S movement. Even 50 years later, there were people with significant memories of her as a young woman with a national profile.

<sup>95</sup> One of the most common tropes that comes up in Indonesian academic conferences currently is the need to “preserve Indonesian culture,” or “*melestarikan budaya Indonesia.*” There is a strongly felt sense that Indonesians are losing touch with the small things that make Indonesians Indonesian. Young people don't listen to gamelan, for instance, or go to watch *wayang*, some people will lament. Village culture, including dances, songs and toys, is being lost to the products of global

To an extent then, this dissertation carries the burden of helping begin an inquiry into questions about beauty, clothing and women's media in the Sukarno era, which, to date, has received little systematic attention. With that burden comes the distinct possibility that some of what I write about could be better understood, contextualized and analyzed, particularly by Indonesians themselves. Indeed, one of the things I look forward to most in completing this project is to get it out to readers who may, indeed, have significant knowledge about these questions, and to learn more from them.

### ***A Newer Scholarship on Indonesian Political Women***

This, of course, is not to argue that the history women involved in the political life of Indonesia has not seen significant work. Following the collapse of the New Order in 1998, there was an expansion of Indonesian women's political history focused on the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Several scholars built on the traditional political history canon to include the Indonesian women's movement that had previously been skipped over. Perhaps the lead scholar in this regard is Dutch feminist scholar Saskia Wieringa, whose 2002 monograph *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* reflected several decades of her scholarship on activist Indonesian women, and on Gerwani in particular. Her 1998 edited volume *Women's Struggles and Strategies* was one of the first collections to address the women's movement in Indonesia systematically. Her articles across the 1990s explored Indonesian feminism, gendered interests and political ideology. They supported her general claim that Indonesian women had played an important role in the development of the political landscape. Her work was marked by its Marxist-feminist orientation and was punctuated by her writings on Indonesian lesbianism, all of which placed her as an outsider from the more traditional historiography on Indonesian politics.

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commerce. Members of the audience, whether scholars or lay people, will often make comments on a speaker's presentation that are more a down-load of their knowledge on a particular subject more than they are a question about the paper itself, often prefaced with "there is something I'd like to bring information on." Indonesian history students at the university level primarily carry out projects of *dokumentasi*, or "documentation" on any particular question, looking for newspaper and magazine clippings on their subject, and quoting articles or chapters written by other scholars at length. They are not encouraged to analyze what they find in particular, at least not by more senior, older historians. They were continually fascinated by the idea I would give in presentations about history teaching in the United States (something I was asked to do regularly during my Fulbright grant year,) that they could use the social and economic history of something like coffee, tea or rice to look Indonesian history. There was also an unfortunate tendency to see me, a foreigner, as an "authority" on such questions.

Also critical to this era of scholarship was Indonesian writer Julia Suryakusuma's important analysis of the mechanics of New Order authoritarianism and coercive state control of women. As was noted earlier, she introduced the concept of "State Ibuism" to describe the central organizing principal of gender policy of in the Suharto era.

Wieringa and Suryakusuma's work was followed by writings by scholars who expanded their efforts to include women as important political actors and to use gender analysis as a critical lens in the history of the Indonesian nation. In 2004, Susan Blackburn published *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, which was followed by Elizabeth Martyn's 2005 work, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*. Martyn provided an excellent analysis of the work of politically active women in the Sukarno era, linking their efforts in that period to the pre-independence nationalist movement as well. In her 2013 monograph on Gayo women who fought in the Revolution, *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence*, Mary Steedly chose to write about what she called the "outskirts" of the nation, focusing on rural women in the highlands of Sumatra, rather than following the canon of "academic studies of Indonesia's War for Independence, [which has] continued to attend mostly to a small segment of the total national spectrum, focusing geographically on Java, politically on urban elites, and experientially on men."<sup>96</sup>

The expansion of this scholarship on Indonesian women began to include the question of Gerwani, critically from among Indonesian scholars and artists themselves. One of the first groups of scholars to do so wrote a report in 2007 for the National Commission on Violence Against Women, usually referred to by a shortened name, *Komnas Perempuan*, or the Women's National Commission. The report, *Kejahatan terhadap kemanusiaan berbasis gender: Mendengarkan suara perempuan korban peristiwa 1965*, (*Gender-Based Crimes Against Humanity: Listening to the Voices of Women Survivors of 1965*,) states in no uncertain terms that Indonesian women connected to Gerwani and the PKI were the subject of a state-led campaign of human rights abuses that targeted them both for their political affiliations and for their gender. It noted the false nature of the Lubang Buaya narrative about Gerwani, and how this was used by the state to persecute women in particular.

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<sup>96</sup> Mary Margaret Steedly, *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence*, p. 6.

Using 122 personal testimonies of female political prisoners, collected from various sources and then verified by the commission, the Komnas Perempuan report noted specifically that women from across the country reported specific identical forms of abuse while under arrest. “[A]ttacks [against civilian populations] were repeated,” the authors wrote,

and the same patterns took place in many locations against women who were accused of having links to *Gerwani*, *PKI*, or other groups. For example, victims from different regions report the same method of violence such as being stripped naked under the guise of looking for the Communist sickle and hammer symbol, rape in detention, and sexual torture during interrogation.<sup>97</sup>

The report’s conclusion—that the army and the government used the false narrative about *Gerwani* to justify the arrest, detention, torture and killing of Communists, particularly Communist women—marked two important departures from the New Order version of events. First, and generally, it placed the burden of human rights violations on the state, rather than seeing the killings as the reactions of enraged crowds. Second, and more specifically, it centered the testimony of women, “listening to the voices of women survivors,” as the report’s subtitle notes, to help understand the dynamics and history of a major event in Indonesian history. Both were radically new ideas in the public Indonesian discourse about 1965. This dissertation seeks to build on both these conclusions, which come from Indonesian women themselves.<sup>98</sup>

In 2011, Amurwani Dwi Lestariningsih’s work, *Gerwani*, examined the women’s internment camp of Plantungan in Central Java, where many of the “high value” female political prisoners were imprisoned. Writing about the details of daily camp life, Lestariningsih focused primarily on humanizing the women she wrote about. However, her work included few details of the women’s lives before 1965, or of their work in the Indonesian left. Equally, it largely skipped over questions of torture, rape and the execution

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<sup>97</sup> From the English version of the report, *Komnas Perempuan, Gender-Based Crimes Against Humanity: Listening to the Voices of Women Survivors of 1965*, p. 12.

<sup>98</sup> I have tried to figure out why this report was able to be published, given that New Order figures were still very much in control of much of the government at the time, and they had certainly interfered in the ability of various commissions to publish reports that might have been damaging to the government, particularly its leadership and high-level bureaucracy. One member of the Human Rights Commission I spoke with was not clear how and why the Women’s Commission report was published, while the report of his own committee, which was completed five years later, was suppressed.

of family and friends. But it did raise the question of the fundamental humanity of Gerwani political prisoners.

In 2013, Rachmi Diyah Larasati, now a professor of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota, wrote *The Dance that Makes You Vanish*, an analysis in English of her years as a Javanese dancer representing Indonesia internationally. The monograph also explored her personal history as the child of political prisoners, who was saved from the fate of many other children when a neighbor took her in as his own daughter, hiding much of her past from the army. Her work blends this personal history with a dense theoretical feminist analysis born of her work in Women's Studies in the United States. The result is a personal, emotionally searing yet thoroughly academic analysis of cultural reconstruction in what she refers to as "post-genocide Indonesia," built around the experience of Indonesian woman that also uses those women's voices.

In 2015, Annie Pohlman added on to the historiography of both Indonesian women and G-30-S when she published *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66*. Using interviews with women and extended transcriptions of their words, Pohlman placed women's experience at the heart of a new scholarship on 1965. She also explored questions of torture and sexual assault in their gritty details, while managing not to use them exploitatively.

To attempt to write the dissertation I have, therefore, has been to move between both some of the most highly addressed questions in Indonesian history, and to link them with others that have received almost no attention. There is, of course, an important historical literature on 1965. It began almost immediately after the events, drawing quick analyses both by foreign academics<sup>99</sup> and the western intelligence community.<sup>100</sup> Reflecting Vietnam era and Cold War tensions, the two analyses, both of them self-described as preliminary and full of doubt because of lack of sources, came to symbolize in

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<sup>99</sup> Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey shared a "preliminary analysis" of their best understanding of what happened privately with friends and colleagues in early 1966. Their writing is now often referred to as the "Cornell Report." See Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia*.

<sup>100</sup> Most importantly, these include an examination of the events written by the CIA, which offered a different reading of the role of PKI in the events than the Cornell analysis, and which came to be read in opposition to it. See *Indonesia—1965 The Coup That Backfired*.

shorthand a division between American academic and diplomatic views of the transition from the Sukarno to the Suharto eras.<sup>101</sup>

The official Indonesian view was also quickly produced. A monograph, published six weeks after the events and entitled *40 hari kegagalan 'G-30-S' 1 Oktober-10 November 1965*, (“*40 days of the failure of 'G-30-S' October 1-November 10 1965*,”) was a product of the Security Defense staff of the Historical Institute at the Historical Center of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>102</sup> Once it was made public, this analysis remained largely stagnant, unchallengable within Indonesia for three decades. This narrative was disseminated widely through the country, most importantly for the post-1965 generation through its 1984 film adaptation, *Penghianatan G-30-S/PKI*, (“The Treachery of G-30-S/PKI.”) Directed by Arifin Noer, the film became a mainstay of annual commemorations of October 1, when it was broadcast on television, and when students were taken to the cinema to re-watch the exceptionally long (3-hour and 40-minute) film each year.<sup>103</sup> The fight against a potential Communist take-over of the nation thereby became the principal founding justification for the New Order and the rigid control it exercised over Indonesian lives.

Thus, there was a significant period in the production of the history of Indonesia that was “stuck” about G-30-S. As has been the case with many instances of the historiography of mass violence, there was a lag between the events themselves and the ability for academics to study them properly. In part, perhaps, this is because it takes time to absorb and reflect carefully on the immensity of mass trauma. The history of the Holocaust, for instance, did not really begin to be addressed in a comprehensive manner

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<sup>101</sup> It is important to note that there were several people who straddled that divide. Both Barbara Harvey and Ann Swift were working diplomats who also studied at Cornell and were a part of that academic community. Daniel Lev was particularly able to be a part of both sides of the discussion, and fully respected everywhere. My own path as an historian of these questions meanders through both “camps.” My father was the Indonesian desk officer at the State Department in 1965, and I grew up knowing his colleagues, all central figures in the “diplomatic” side of things. My professors, teachers and academic mentors have significant personal connections to the Cornell “side,” and academically, I align with their interpretation of Indonesian history significantly. Family dinners, particularly when certain family friends have been over, have sometimes been quite interesting on occasion since I began graduate school.

<sup>102</sup> The first edition of the official version of the G-30-S narrative was primarily the work of two nationalist historians, Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh. The work saw a second printing in early 1966. An English translation, published under the authors’ names rather than as an unsigned product of the military historical service was published in 1968 under the title *The Coup Attempt of the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement in Indonesia*. Further editions, usually with only minor revisions, were published through the 1980s in both Indonesian and English.

<sup>103</sup> For an analysis both of the Notosusanto-Saleh history and of the film and of how it was employed in the creation of a national narrative about G-30-S, see Yosef Djakababa’s doctoral dissertation, *The Construction of History under Indonesia’s New Order: The Making of the Lubang Buaya Official Narrative*.



until the early 1960's when Hannah Arendt wrote about *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, even though she had been examining the roots of totalitarianism since the early 1950's. Not until the later 1970's did Lucy Dawidowicz and others began to write the initial seminal works of what has become its own historical genre. In the Indonesian case, this was compounded by the fact that the killers remain in power, using their position both to enforce the version of the events on the nation as a whole and to shut down the dissemination of any alternative understandings. Thus, there was to be no public reckoning with the trauma Indonesia suffered in 1965-1966 and following until much later.<sup>104</sup>

Robert Cribb edited a volume on *The Indonesian Killings 1965-1966* in 1990. The new scholarship presented in it was based on papers from a conference on "The trauma of Indonesia in 1965." Held in 1987 at Monash University in Australia, the conference was followed by a panel of papers presented at the Asian Studies Association of Australia the next year.

The chapters focused primarily on Central Java, long a primary focus of study by foreign Indonesianists, where their long-developed personal connections gave them more access to information and to sources, such as they were. A single paper also discussed violence in Bali. There were no contributions on the rest of the country, including Sumatra, which along with Java and Bali saw the worst of the killings. To publish such a work at the time was still, in the words of Cribb's forward to the volume, to take on a task "of unusual sensitivity. Both in Indonesia and among Indonesianists," he wrote, "there has been a deep reluctance to recall the killings and to examine them deeply or systematically."<sup>105</sup>

Other scholarly treatment of 1965-66 produced during the New Order that followed Cribb's work expanded the geographical focus of research. These included Geoffrey Robinson's *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali*, published in 1995. Robinson's work places the post October 1965 killings in Bali within the politics of Balinese society since the Dutch invasion of the island at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hermawan Sulistyono's 1997 doctoral dissertation from Arizona State University, *The Forgotten Years: The Missing History of Indonesia's Mass Slaughter, Jombang-Kediri, 1965-*

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<sup>104</sup> Filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer regularly makes the point in his public presentations that it is as if the history of the holocaust would have been had the Nazi Party remained in power until today.

<sup>105</sup> Robert Cribb, ed., *The Indonesian Killings, 1965-66*, p. xviii.

1966, also focused on the history of the killings in a particular case, in this instance in the area around two cities in East Java. Both these histories depended on the authors' own significant personal networks in the regions they wrote about.

The major problem facing scholars wishing to examine the events of 1965-66 in Indonesia, apart from the "unusual sensitivity" raised by such inquiry, was—and continues to be—a lack of sources. Many of the usual primary sources historians would have used were either silent on the matter or have been destroyed. The New Order state was responsible for much of the cleansing of archival resources that might have been produced, or of keeping sources on the military completely out of reach. In addition, many Indonesians themselves are said to have destroyed documents, whether personal diaries and letters; collections of magazines they had bought and kept during the 1950's and 1960's; or personal and family photographs; often out of a fear of being linked to the left.

In her work on photography and national modernity in Java, Karen Strassler discusses how the mere request to show personal documentation was seen as being powerful enough to expose PKI attempting to hide in plain sight. She writes among other things of a "small blurb" in a daily newspaper that "describes a woman who, upon being asked for her papers as she got on a bus, immediately burst into tears and revealed herself as a member of the outlawed Communist women's group Gerwani."<sup>106</sup> Strassler points out that new national identities became encoded in the New Order through the requirement beginning in 1966-1967 that all adults carry *Karta Tanda Penduduk*, ("[resident] identity cards," or KTP,) on themselves at all times. The KTP contained passport-style photographs ("*pasfoto*") of the bearer, providing "proof of identity" within the new state. While one set of personal documentation was being self-consciously destroyed, the New Order state furnished Indonesians with a whole new documentation of their new identities.<sup>107</sup>

Gerwani was a large national organization, with many local branches, much of its archives disappeared or were burnt, either by the military or at the hands of Gerwani members themselves.<sup>108</sup> The same is true for the PKI and other communist-affiliated

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<sup>106</sup> Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, p. 136.

<sup>107</sup> Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, pp. 135-141.

<sup>108</sup> The Gerwani National Headquarters in Jakarta, for instance, was burned down on October 12. See Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 305, citing *Angkatan Bersendjata* coverage on October 13.

organizations. There was also, of course, a significant loss of personal memories when the people who held them were killed, or when those still living felt it much safer to “forget what had happened,” at least officially or in the light of day.<sup>109</sup>

Many of the advances in the scholarship on 1965-66 came as historians accessed previously unused or unavailable resources, or used previously existing data in new ways. In 2006, John Roosa used a previously unexamined account from Major General Suparjo, one of the four supposed deputy commanders of the G-30-S movement, to reassess who was responsible for the “coup” in his important work, *Pretext for Mass Murder*. In 2008, Bradley Simpson published an exploration of the development of Indonesian authoritarianism and its connections to American Cold War diplomacy between 1960-1968 based on newly declassified American government documents in *Economists with Guns*.<sup>110</sup>

In 2012, Douglas Kammen and Katharine McGregor edited a volume on *The Countours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68* that examined the patterns and timing of killings across the nation, drawing their data from the schedules and movements of certain army battalions. These patterns made a compelling case that the Indonesian military was responsible for guiding and carrying out the extermination of the Indonesian left, even if this was an argument that couldn’t be made directly from military sources themselves.

Recently, Siddarth Chandra has used publicly available census data and new mapping technologies to demonstrate that district-level population losses in 1965-66 (which he connects to the killing of those suspected of association with the PKI) were significantly more pronounced in areas of East Java bisected by major roads. He argues this reflects the army’s increased ability to reach towns and villages in these districts. He has

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The only internal document from Gerwani I have seen during my research is the schedule and outline of a training seminar for Gerwani cadres that is now housed in the special collections of the Cornell University libraries. Reading it was fascinating, even though it dealt with the mundane matters of a training seminar lasting two weeks. It included, for instance, a directive for the women to do their own laundry rather than to hire someone to do it for them, an interesting expression of the class politics of the organization. The document also made clear to me in ways that others hadn’t quite that the Gerwani leadership was comprised of quite committed Communists, and not simply “progressive” women.

<sup>109</sup> The phrase used here, in Indonesian “*lupa yang telah terjadi*,” was used by several friends I have spoken to about their experiences during those years. Even recently, such discussions were held privately, when, after years of knowing someone, they would tell me their own stories. The personal stories I heard, even in 2014-2015, would arise suddenly, out of another conversation, from a friend who said that they knew I wanted to know, but in the words of one of them, that I was “like a Javanese, too polite to ask.” Often these discussions occurred at night. Indeed, even after the fall of the New Order, the unusual sensitivity of such matters remains largely in place. It should be noted that Joshua Oppenheimer reports a different experience in Sumatra, where he found people quite willing to talk rather openly about 1965-1966.

<sup>110</sup> Full disclosure: My father, Daniel Sullivan, was the initial author of some of those documents, dating to his time as a Political Officer in the US Embassy in Jakarta from 1967-1971. He was also, more than three decades later, one of the primary retired Foreign Service Officers to work on their declassification.

also shown that there was significant in-migration into districts not connected to the major roadways, as people who might be in danger sought to distance themselves from the army.<sup>111</sup>

## **Indonesian Voices on 1965**

Importantly, Indonesian academics and journalists began to publish about 1965 in a variety of formats, critically, in Indonesian. In 2006, Hersri Setiawan published a collection of profiles of ex-political prisoners, *Kidung Para Korban*, (“*The Victims’ Song*,”) that told the stories of their arrests, incarceration, torture and the challenges of their return to society. I Ngurah Suryawan, an anthropologist, explored mass violence in Bali in 1965 in his 2007 monograph, *Ladang Hitam di Pulau Dewa* (“*Black Fields on the Island of the Gods*.”) In 2013, Bernd Schaefer joined Baskara T. Wardaya in editing a bi-lingual English and Indonesian volume on *1965: Indonesia and the World/Indonesia dan Dunia* that explored the international politics of support for the suppression of the Indonesian communist movement. Hermawan Sulistyono’s 1997 dissertation on killings in Kediri-Jombang was published in an Indonesian translation, *Palu Arit di Ladang Tebu* (“*The Hammer and Sickle in the Sugarcane Fields*,”) in 2011.

Indonesian media and governmental human rights bodies began to pay attention to the killings, bringing the history to light in forms that were much more accessible to Indonesians outside the nation’s academic circles. In 2008, the Indonesian Human Rights Commission, an officially appointed governmental body, followed on the work of the Women’s Commission discussed earlier. It took the bold political step of initiating an investigation into the events of 1965 and their aftermath. In 2013, the commissioners wrote a report on the killings. Based on three years of active investigative research and nearly 350 interviews with observers, participants and victims of violence, the report specifically placed the blame for the events, which included not only killings, but also documented cases of rape, torture, enslavement and forced prostitution, on the military security apparatus functioning directly under President Suharto.

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<sup>111</sup> See Siddarth Chandra, *Mapping the 1965-66 Killings in Java*, published online at [www.newmandala.org/mapping-the-1965-66-killings-in-java/](http://www.newmandala.org/mapping-the-1965-66-killings-in-java/). (Accessed 10/1/2019).

The report suggested that military officers responsible for such actions should be arrested and held for trial, a particularly strong about-face from previous government positions. In the end, the government received but shelved the report—only a short synopsis is publicly available—again citing the same sets of social sensitivities as Robert Cribb noted fifteen years earlier. This action also tacitly recognized the continued strength of the Indonesian military within national politics. But the process of the delivery and suppression of the report was covered widely in Indonesian media, both breaking and reinforcing official silences that had governed the killings since 1965.

*Tempo* Magazine, one of the nation’s principal news feature publications, published special editions in 2012 and 2013 that focused on 1965 in both Indonesian and English versions. The special editions were published each year around October 1, consciously providing a counterpoint to the earlier national broadcasts of the *Penghianatan G-30-S/PKI* movie. The first, given the cover title of *Pengakuan Algojo*, or “Confession of an Executioner,”<sup>112</sup> explored local stories of killings across the country. The next year, the special edition focused on cultural issues, exploring the theme of *LEKRA and the Commotion of 1965*, (“*Lekra dan Geger 1965*,”) and discussing how the suppression of the Sukarno-era revolutionary artists’ program had led to the New Order control of the Indonesian cultural landscape.

At least partially in response to the enforced silence within Indonesia, an “International People’s Tribunal on the 1965 Crimes Against Humanity in Indonesia,” (“IPT,”) was convened in The Hague in November 2015. Not connected with the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court, both of which are organs of the United Nations, the IPT was a project of both Indonesian human rights activists and Indonesianist scholars. The prosecuting team consisted primarily of five Indonesian human rights figures, who were assisted by former staff from the Cambodian Genocide Tribunal. The judges were presented with a lengthy research report and three days of testimony from “factual” and “expert” witnesses, including both Indonesian and western scholars. Several of the Indonesian witnesses were given public pseudonyms to protect their

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<sup>112</sup> The title of the English language version was *Requiem for a Massacre*.

identities. In addition, two women who testified about rape, sexual abuse and forced disappearances did so from behind screens.

Having had their work suppressed in Indonesia, the Commissioners of both the Indonesian National Commissions on Human Rights and on Women briefed the Tribunal on their organizations' efforts on the issue. Representatives of the Indonesian government were absent, though they were invited to take their seats at the beginning of each session. The seats remained empty. The *Report of the Judges* published after the conclusion of the Tribunal held that the "the state of Indonesia [is] responsible in the commission of . . . crimes against humanity as the chain of command was organized from top to bottom of the institutional bodies,"<sup>113</sup> including the military, the police and the judicial system.

With the increased freedom of expression that came with the 1998 *Reformasi* movement that removed President Suharto from power, Indonesian writers began to address and explore questions around 1965 more openly. In doing so, many of them specifically addressed questions of women and gender.<sup>114</sup>

Ahmad Tohari was one of the few to have done so explicitly before that time in his 1982 trilogy, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*.<sup>115</sup> The novels, elegantly written, told the story of Srintil, a village dancer from Banyumas in Central Java,<sup>116</sup> whose beauty and spiritual power attracted the attention of powerful men, both within the Communist movement and the Army. The story of her eventual arrest and imprisonment by the army ran through the events of 1965 and stood as an example of the destruction of local communities and culture in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya.

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<sup>113</sup> Since I pulled this quotation from the online version of the Final Report, the text has become inaccessible for technical reasons on the website. I am unable to give a page citation now as a result

<sup>114</sup> The discussion of artists and works in the following few pages is not intended to be exhaustive or complete. Rather they are often works and artists with whom I have had personal interactions and discussions, or whose work I have seen personally. I do think, however, that they offer a fairly representative sampling of the nature of (mostly Javanese based) artistic expression about gender, violence and 1965.

<sup>115</sup> Literally translated, the title would be *The Dancer from Paruk Village*. In his 2003 translation of the trilogy into English, René Lysloff used the shortened title *The Dancer*. The word *ronggeng*, an itinerant dancer, might also, in a more Orientalist fashion, be translated as "dancing girl," which reflects its more populist and village social context to some degree. Though written and published in the 1980's, the novel reached more national prominence with a republication by Gramedia, one of Indonesia's leading publishers and booksellers in 2003.

<sup>116</sup> The PKI had a strong presence in Banyumas from the 1920's on, particularly among peasant farmers. It is also where Tohari was born and lived much of his life. As a result, the details of how leftist politics entered village life through spiritually potent cultural forms such as *ronggeng*, and how these interacted with an increasingly politicized modernity at the end of the Sukarno era are a fascinating element of the novels. More of this particular interaction between local and national culture at the village level is discussed in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

Eka Kurniawan's 2002 novel *Cantik Itu Luka*, ("*Beauty is a Wound*,") the story of a beautiful high-end prostitute Dewi Ayu,<sup>117</sup> her daughters and her grandchildren, uses local West Javanese places and histories to tell a tale that sweeps from the violence of colonialism and revolution through the Sukarno era to the violence of 1965. Laksmi Pamuntjak's 2012 novel, *Amba*, recasts the story of Amba and Bhisma from the Javanese version of the Mahabharata<sup>118</sup> into the history of 1965 and its aftermath. Bhisma, a doctor, is caught up in the Indonesian left and is sent to the political exile camp on the Island of Buru, from which he never returns, not dead, but hiding. In 2006, Amba, his wife, having lived a life of deprivation, goes to look for him, blaming him for her misfortune.

The Indonesian high arts scene, both in terms of performance and the representative arts, also began to explore themes of gender, sexuality and control that were a direct reflection of the issues that arose from 1965. At times, the connection between the artistic works and 1965 was subtle and indirect. In 2007 director Sulistyو Tirtو Kusumo, composer Toni Prabowo and writer Goenawan Muhammad,<sup>119</sup> three of the leading cultural figures of their generation, worked together on a dance project, *Panji Sepuh*. The work, which was a deconstructed, and then exploded, version of a sacred Javanese *bedhaya* form, explored the emotional landscapes of the sexualized cultural violence inherent in the inner sanctum of Javanese royal courts reaching back into pre-Islamic kingdoms.<sup>120</sup>

The piece called on female dancers<sup>121</sup> to use their bodies in graphic and pointedly sexualized ways that provided the piece's main critiques of sexual power dynamics in

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<sup>117</sup> The name translates as "Beautiful Woman."

<sup>118</sup> In the Mahabharata, Amba, the eldest daughter of the King of Kashi, sees Bhisma as the source of her personal misfortune and dedicates herself to his destruction.

<sup>119</sup> This was the first time Goenawan Muhammad published text in Javanese, his first language, rather than in Indonesian. Goenawan is one of Indonesia's most prominent writers, a journalist, poet, essayist and playwright. He was a member of the *Angkatan 1966*, or the "Generation of 1966," a group of young writers who hoped to establish a new and less controlled national intellectual life following the fall of Sukarno. Goenawan was the founder and editor of *Tempo* Magazine and came to be one of the more prominent critics of the New Order, in particular around issues of corruption and abuse of power.

<sup>120</sup> The Panji Tales are a cycle of stories originally from East Java that date back to at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Along with the Ramayana and Mahabharata, they are a source for the *wayang* complex of story-telling that can collectively be referred to as the *wayang purwa*. Several artists I know who have been working with the Panji Tales make the point that the characters in the cycle, unlike those in the two Indic cycles, "are our ancestors." In the dance form of the tales, the performers always wear masks specific to the characters they portray. The use of the masks is an important element of both the artistic form and philosophical content of the tales, and is a clear marker that the dance being presented is from the Panji cycle. *Panji Sepuh* uses masks as well, but in a way that anonymizes the female dancers at a particular point in the work, rather than giving them a specific identity. The effect is to mark the dancers as any woman and to generalize the gendered power dynamics being explored.

<sup>121</sup> Nine of them, in keeping with *bedhaya*, form a mandala around the power of the single male dancer, older, representing the king. There is deep resonance to Javanese ideas of sacral power at play in the work.

Javanese society. This was a rare, charged departure from the generally placid representation of sexuality in most Javanese cultural work, even in the *wayang purwa* world where rape and assault are a not-uncommon plot element.

Several of the dancers who performed the female roles in various of the versions of the piece were clear that even though on the surface, *Panji Sepuh* was an exploration of the *kraton*, for them, the piece was a general critique of the violence inherent in gender dynamics in both the New Order and afterwards<sup>122</sup> and a specific exploration of the gendered aftermath of 1965 in particular.<sup>123</sup> This connection was never made explicit in any of the descriptions or discussions of the piece, nor was it addressed specifically in Goenawan's text for the piece. Obliquely, however, it was an important theme of the work.

Since the late 1980's, Nindityo Adi Purnomo, a sculptor and visual artist from Yogyakarta whose work reaches significant international audiences, has devoted an important part of his work exploring gender and power in a Javanese context. Nindityo's ongoing project explores the power dynamics embedded in everyday objects and practices. He starts, he said, "from a specific object that I turn through my art into an idiom that comments on societal issues such as power, tradition, values, gender, and religion. I have worked intensively with Javanese hair, chairs, doors and megaphones, in order to reconfigure our perception towards the accepted interpretations of society and culture."<sup>124</sup>

Nindityo has worked on multiple occasions with the form and meaning of the *konde*, or formal Javanese woman's hairstyle, which also was an important part of women's official cultural "uniform" in both the Sukarno and Suharto eras.<sup>125</sup> His 2002 installation, *Behind the Modesty*, for instance, grouped volcanic stone carvings of different versions of *konde* on the floor, surrounded by framed photograph portraits of men, whose faces were obscured

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<sup>122</sup> In which the king figure represents both Army generals and high-level bureaucrats. I was able to speak with dancers in several of the versions of *Panji Sepuh* and to attend rehearsals and performances of the work in 2014.

<sup>123</sup> The formally trained professional dancers I spoke with about their work in *Panji Sepuh* articulated a clearly thought through discussion of the dynamics and sexual power and possible violence inherent in the history of the world they lived and worked in, in which court dancers in particular had often also been the consorts and minor wives of kings and princes, and that this was an expectation both from the men in court and their own families when they were delivered to live in the women's compound of the court during their training. This discussion went further with *Panji Sepuh* when several female dancers began discussing the piece as an allegory for 1965 and Gerwani with me. This was clearly a discussion they had previously had in depth amongst themselves. It also reflects Rachmi Larasati's experience in *The Dance That Makes You Vanish*.

<sup>124</sup> See <http://www.indonesianeye.com/artist/nindityo-adipurnomo>. Accessed 9/27/2019.

<sup>125</sup> The *konde*, its uses, meanings and history in the Sukarno era, is discussed significantly in several chapters of this dissertation.



by the false hairpieces used to build up the large rear buns of the *konde* itself. Calling the *konde* “a condensation of the hidden side of Javanese culture,” and “a metonym for ideals of women’s ‘proper place’ and erotic sensuality as defined by Javanese male desire,” the description of Nindityo’s work notes that it was not intended as a criticism of Javanese culture, but rather was “his attempt to reveal what lays beyond and behind self-perpetuating myths and cultural stereotypes” about Javanese gender and power.<sup>126</sup>

Paper Moon Theater, a ground-breaking puppet theater organization run by Yogyakarta-based artists Maria Tri Sulistyani and Iwan Effendi, moved from doing work primarily for children to pieces designed for adults in 2006 with the creation of a “politically and sexually charged story,” *Noda Lelaki di Dada Mona*, (“The Stain of a Man on Mona’s Chest”).<sup>127</sup> As Paper Moon developed a repertoire “based on social themes, to communicate with many different types of audience,” they also took on the legacy of 1965 in their 2013 work “Mwathirika.” Based on the family history of one of their company members, the piece told the story of a 12-year-old boy who, in Sulistyani’s description,

had to take care of his little brothers and sisters, after their father was taken away by government officials, and didn’t come back for 13 years. He had to catch frogs in the rice fields, for his family to eat. And how the family grew in the middle of these chaotic moments, with children with no parents, and no one in the village dared to help, because if they helped they might be caught by the army too.<sup>128</sup>

In discussing the work, Sulistyani noted that the publicity poster was intentionally misleading, featuring an image of two little boys holding a bright red balloon, certainly nothing that would suggest the seriousness of the piece’s subject matter. Seeing the poster, she said, “people will think about something sweet. They don’t have fear to come, they feel relaxed, they are open. It’s perfect.” And yet, while telling a difficult story in *Mwathirika*, Sulistyani said, “we are not pointing fingers; we are not saying that one person is right and one person is wrong. But we tell a story about the impact of political turmoil on those who lived through those terrible times and the huge effect it has had on the next generation.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> The text here is taken from the 2005 exhibition of Nindityo’s work at Cornell University, written by Amanda Rath. See <https://universes.art/en/nafas/articles/2005/taboo-and-transgression-in-contemporary-indonesian-art/taboo-and-transgression/adipurnomo>. Accessed 9/27/2019.

<sup>127</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/papermoon-puppet-theater- n\\_1865644](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/papermoon-puppet-theater- n_1865644). Accessed 9/27/2019.

<sup>128</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/papermoon-puppet-theater- n\\_1865644](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/papermoon-puppet-theater- n_1865644). Accessed 9/27/2019.

<sup>129</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/papermoon-puppet-theater- n\\_1865644](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/papermoon-puppet-theater- n_1865644). Accessed 9/27/2019.

Playwrite Faiza Mardzoeki took a more realistic and direct approach to exploring the gendered history of 1965 in her 2014 play *Nyanyi Sunyi Kembang-Kembang Genjer*, (“The Silent Song of the Genjer Flowers”).<sup>130</sup> Known for her adaptation of western plays with feminist themes into Indonesian language and contexts and for her exploration of Indonesian literature in approaches that center women’s experiences,<sup>131</sup> Mardzoeki used her own interactions and interviews with surviving Gerwani activists to craft a play in which women told their own stories of the life in the prison camp for female *tapol*<sup>132</sup> at Plantungan. Having survived arrest, interrogation, often torture and sometimes rape on top of the dissolution of their families, the women in Mardzoeki’s play, now old, find strength not only in telling their own stories, but even more importantly, in telling them to the granddaughter of one of their group. In doing so, they demystify the name of Gerwani for the audience, recasting the maligned group in the imagination of the younger generation.<sup>133</sup>

Mardzoeki’s approach to the telling of these women’s stories, and its effect on their families, was more direct than most previous treatments of 1965 in Indonesia. Built on her former efforts with Nawal Al Sadawi’s novel that bluntly tells the story of an Egyptian woman awaiting her execution, and with Henrik Ibsen’s *The Dollhouse* that explored the violence of everyday married life, Mardzoeki’s work is not oblique or shaded in its approach. And, while it doesn’t shy away from pointing fingers at the state—Mardzoeki’s other occupation has been as a labor and ecological activist—it finds its power in the history of 1965 as experienced at the personal level and in individual women’s voices.

Filmmakers also began to explore the era. In 2011 Ifa Infansyah’s movie *Sang Penari* (“The Dancer”), based on Ahmad Tohari’s novels, brought the story of Srintil to a wider national audience. Joshua Oppenheimer’s critically received 2012 film, *Jagal* (*The Act*

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<sup>130</sup> *Genjer-Genjer* is a song that tells the simple story of a woman and her son gathering and selling water spinach for families to eat during the Japanese occupation. In and of itself, it is fairly simple, and was written in 1942 under the direction of the Japanese occupation government to encourage Javanese to take on the challenges of life during wartime. But the song became an important element of Gerwani and PKI outreach to peasants during the Sukarno era, and it became linked in the public imagination with the Communist movement. As a result, it was banned from performance in the New Order, and performing or recording it now is still seen as a political statement.

<sup>131</sup> Examples of foreign adaptations include her 2002 work *Perempuan di Titik Nol*, based on Nawal El Sadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*, her adaptations of Henrik Ibsen, *Rumah Boneka* (“A Doll’s House,”) in 2010 and *Subversif!* (“An Enemy of the People”) in 2014-2015. Her work with Indonesian classics include a 2007 reworking of the first of Pramoedya’s *Buru Quartet*, *Bumi Manusia*, “This Earth of Mankind,” to focus on the novel’s principal female character, Nyai Ontosoroh, also the title of her play, and a piece on the letters of Kartini, “*Panggil Saya Kartini*,” (“Call Me Kartini,”) in 2012.

<sup>132</sup> An acronym for “*tahanan politik*,” or “political prisoner(s).”

<sup>133</sup> Mardzoeki is currently working on turning her play into a novel.

*of Killing*, in its English version,) explored the lives of executioners in Sumatra. The Indonesian language cut, in many ways more trenchant than the English language version without the mediation of subtitles, was both shown on university campuses across the nation, and made available free online for streaming. It received wide critical coverage in the Indonesian media, particularly when pro-military and Islamic groups tried to stop campus screenings.

Much of the film's international acclaim focused on its artistic innovation—Oppenheimer used former executioners to act out scenes of killings in various 1960s film genres. Part of its political power in Indonesia, however, came from explicitly linking Vice President Yusuf Kalla to nationalist militias involved in killings in Sumatra, and exposing his continued support and use of such militias to shore up his own political base. This explicit structural analysis focusing on high-level responsibility was a rare departure from most Indonesian language discussion of 1965-66. This was also true of his second film on the matter, *The Look of Silence*, (“*Sunyi*,” or “Silence” in its Indonesian title,) that was released in 2014, and documents the process of a family member of a victim of the 1965 killings as he chooses to confront the men responsible for his brother's death.

In many of these Indonesian cultural and artistic explorations of mass violence, the analysis and representation are built on the experiences of individual bodies and their stories, a focus that can avoid placing direct blame. Gathering *genjer* or catching frogs. Tying up one's hair in a *konde*. Dancing, either in the supremely controlled world of Javanese royal courts or in the more overtly expressive and sexual world of village *ronggeng*. Working as a prostitute by choice or by force. These are the lenses Indonesian authors and artists have used to explore the systemic and highly gendered violence of 1965 and its aftermath. Fingers are rarely pointed, but the lingering effects on following generations, often through enforced silences, are noted as a phenomenon. In Indonesian, 1965-66 is often referred to either as the *Trajedi 1965* (“The 1965 Tragedy,”) or, in an even more obliquely, as the *Peristiwa 1965* (“The 1965 Affair.”) Effects, rather than causes or responsibility, are the focus.

To date, much of the scholarship on the development of the Indonesian nation has largely ignored women's voices, as if sources for their views either didn't exist, were difficult to find, or were unimportant. This dissertation demonstrates, I hope, that such

sources exist not only in a gloriously diverse abundance, but further that their content provides a series of exceptionally vibrant lenses for understanding the cultural and political development of the new nation. I look forward to the day when biographies of Maria Ulfah, Supeni, Gusti Nurul, or Herawati Diah are written by scholars who have spent time thinking carefully about these and other women who played critical roles in the establishment of the Indonesian nation. I hope to argue successfully that readings of the early years of the nation that do not include women's voices in their primary sources or gender in their analysis should be seen as lacking a fundamentally important understanding of Indonesia's history.

It is for that reason that I have taken the time to explore not only the scholarly historiography on independent Indonesia, but also to examine Indonesian cultural sources on gender and violence. My intention has been to craft a dissertation that takes its lead from both cultural history approaches and reflects a sensitivity to the ways in which Indonesians have faced and begun to write this history. The dissertation tries to make use of the small, rich details of my sources. The documents I have selected to write about have often been chosen because they reflect the voices of Indonesians—principally women—writing at the time. As much as possible, I have tried to let their voices speak.

I am writing about trauma, but I am aware that it is not my trauma. Because of this, I have attempted to explore several larger social concepts found in the dissertation's title—Indonesian modernity, national identity and moral crisis—to provide a theoretical construct around which other historians might build their own analyses of the more difficult questions raised by this research.

To that end, and to lay the groundwork for providing a complex reading of women's sources as principal texts on the development of the Indonesian nation, the balance of this first chapter examines several critical concepts:

First, it explores the nature of Indonesian national identity, an idea that, although based in a community grounded to some extent in an imagined great past, was entirely modern. This emerging Indonesian modernity was exceptionally complex, a web of intermeshed cultural identities and sets of knowledge that was influenced from multiple directions. It was also impregnated with the possibility of failure based in incidents of moral crisis.

Second, it presents a description and analysis of how this idea of Indonesian identity was portrayed within magazines written by and for Indonesian women, of how this was linked to the national project, and of how there was important meaning given not only to feminist political and social agendas, but, significantly, to how this was expressed in fashion, beauty culture, etiquette and motherhood.

Third, it explores the newly emerging scholarship on the events following G-30-S as a case of genocide and outlines the general set of questions that are asked about this case in the dissertation. In particular, it suggests that looking at the argument for genocide through the lens of gender could complicate and strengthen the general reasoning in support of this important intervention in Indonesian historiography.

Therefore, to understand how the Lubang Buaya narrative put the future of the nation and of Indonesian identity at risk, this chapter must first look at these three concepts.

### **Kepribadian Nasional: *Modernity and Gender in Indonesian Identity***

During the nation's first two decades of independence, the development of Indonesian national identity, or "*kepribadian nasional Indonesia*," was a particularly dynamic and culturally fraught project. In the Sukarno era, what it meant to be "Indonesian" involved the intersection of a complicated set of questions. The Indonesian nation itself was a new concept, the product of "native" political, cultural and finally armed struggles against Dutch colonialism. The people who waged these struggles only recently considered themselves a "people." Largely, they were first grouped together by colonial racial policy, and, for many of the elite, by their Dutch colonial educations. *Bahasa Indonesia* had only recently been designated the national language, having been actively chosen among other options, including Javanese, using modern, western ideas of what was required for Indonesia to be a nation.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Bahasa Indonesia is essentially a variation of Malay. It had been used across the larger Malay world as a trade language for centuries, and had also been the language of the native civil service during the Dutch colonial period. As a result, many people for whom it was not a native language still had exposure and knowledge of it, although, ironically perhaps, several Dutch-educated Indonesians have told me about their experiences having to learn Indonesian as young adults, since they spoke Dutch at school and Javanese or other languages at home. Besides its ubiquity, Bahasa Indonesia had two other advantages to becoming a national language. First, it was not the language of the Javanese majority, that is, it didn't privilege the numerically and positionally advantaged group, giving the nation a more unified and unifying language to use. Secondly, Malay and Indonesian are more egalitarian in their syntax than is Javanese, which is based fundamentally

A key to being “Indonesian” came to be the ability to be “modern” while still maintaining a fundamentally “eastern” cultural outlook.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, to understand how the Lubang Buaya narrative put the future of the nation and of Indonesian identity at risk, this chapter must first look at several of these concepts, most importantly the question of what it meant to be simultaneously “modern” and “Indonesian.”

The transition from wartime and revolutionary footings to independence in Indonesia in 1949 was sudden and profound. In her essay about the national cultural journal *Mimbar Indonesia*, Els Bogaerts writes that by 1950, the

“physical and mental traces of the Japanese occupation and the revolution still lingered on, but the transfer of sovereignty to an independent nation made all the difference. Indonesians were now responsible for their own destiny, as they reinterpreted the past and actively responded to a present full of challenges and opportunities. 1950 was therefore a pivotal year, the beginning of a short period in Indonesian history when everything seemed possible, and the future was full of promise. Indonesia was in the process of formation . . .”<sup>136</sup>

Indonesians, at least the intellectual and cultural elite writing and reading *Mimbar Indonesia*, actively discussed what it meant to be Indonesian and modern. In this early discussion, Bogaerts argues,

“Freed from colonial domination, Indonesians stood ready to meet the rest of the world on equal terms, not as colonial subjects of a foreign queen but as citizens of an independent nation. Under these circumstances, Western European culture was no longer associated with colonialism, but with the modernity and progress that was the rightful aspiration of the nation state and its people.”<sup>137</sup>

But “modernity” and “progress” are not simple terms. “*Merdeka!*,” the revolutionary cry of “Freedom!” at least theoretically unified the nation. *Kemajuan*, or progress, was a

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on the use of different language levels that indicate the relative status of any two interlocutors. While Indonesian can be used in ways that show great respect for authority and position, it is not hard baked into the language in the ways social hierarchy are in Javanese. As a result, Indonesian is a more “democratic” language, and is more aligned with the modern socialist ideals of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

<sup>135</sup> The term “eastern” here is drawn directly from my sources, which often discussed what might reflect a “*sifat ketimuran*,” or “eastern affect.” An important part of remaining “eastern,” even while living a modern life was to be found in maintaining a fundamentally “oriental,” (another term often used,) sense of inner values, not matter how western one’s external life might be. The interplay between “inner” (“*batin*”) and “outer” (“*lahir*,”) provide an important analytical framework for the cultural analysis in this dissertation.

<sup>136</sup> Els Bogaerts, “Whither Indonesian Culture?: Rethinking ‘culture’ in Indonesia in a time of decolonization” in Jennifer Lindsasy and Maya Liem, eds. *Heirs to world culture, Being Indonesian, 1950-1965*.

<sup>137</sup> Els Bogaerts, “Whither Indonesian Culture?” p. 237.

stated goal for all strata of society. But the aspiration of being modern, or *moderen*, particularly if it were connected to Western European culture, was not equally accessible or available to all Indonesians. Nor was it equally desired by all of them if it came exclusively from western sources.

Modernity, as a culturally coherent experience for the newly independent nation, had historical context. Much of it was tied to previous access to first Dutch, and then Japanese colonial structures for a limited number of Indonesians. Hildred Geertz coined a term for this elite educated group's emerging way of life, calling it an "Indonesian metropolitan superculture" that, she noted, was still in the process of formation, being at most several generations old when she wrote about it in the early 1960's. This elite stood at one pole of urban Indonesian life, stretched in tension with "a large variety of traditional ethnic ways of life. The two dimensions . . . crosscut each other in complex fashion to produce an extremely variegated urban population."<sup>138</sup>

For some Indonesians "with the necessary education, occupation, income level and individual family background," she wrote, this metropolitan superculture represented "a coherent set of values and style of life" that was particularly well "elaborated [around questions of] political ideology, artistic styles and material culture."<sup>139</sup> But others, most others even, who lived in metropolitan centers such as Jakarta and Bandung,<sup>140</sup> were essentially "bicultural," Geertz claimed, "retain[ing] certain features of their original regional culture for some areas of their life—family relationships and religion, for example—while participating in the metropolitan superculture for other concerns."<sup>141</sup>

Modernity in Indonesia in this period, therefore, and perhaps even more what was *moderen*, was not a single cultural expression with a single set of readable markers. Rather, it represented a series of tensions and uncertainties—among metropole, regional center and village (*desa* or *kampung*)<sup>142</sup>; between levels of education, class and social status;

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<sup>138</sup> Hildred Geertz, "Indonesian Cultures and Communities," in Ruth McVey, ed., *Indonesia*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>139</sup> Hildred Geertz, "Indonesian Cultures and Communities," in Ruth McVey, ed., *Indonesia*, p. 36.

<sup>140</sup> The two cities where the majority of the primary sources for this dissertation were published. They are two of the six metropolitan centers that Geertz lists in her chapter, along with Surabaya, Medan, Palembang and Makassar. Hildred Geertz, "Indonesian Cultures and Communities," in Ruth McVey, ed., *Indonesia*, p. 34.

<sup>141</sup> Hildred Geertz, "Indonesian Cultures and Communities," in Ruth McVey, ed., *Indonesia*, p. 36.

<sup>142</sup> Under Dutch constructions of the Indies cultural structure, the village remained the most "original" or "pure" expression of "native" culture. Metropolitan leaders, including Sukarno in his speeches, particularly to peasant and village leaders, retained this vision of the village, often remembering his (somewhat imagined) simple childhood in the village, as well as his exile to several remote villages by the Dutch. This also is the role of the passing *tledèk* in several scenes of

between individuals, the family and the nation; between religion and political ideology; and importantly, between the roles played by women and men—that need to be understood in Indonesian cultural terms and within Indonesian historical contexts.

These tensions and uncertainties were not new to the 1950s. The pull of the European in the lives of elite Javanese girls who were also bound by local customs, particularly around marriage, was a central theme to Kartini's letters at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 1920s, Indonesian nationalists had been wrestling with how to be modern and Indonesian simultaneously.<sup>143</sup> This was no less true of the women involved in the creation of the Indonesian nation.

In *Sarinah*, Sukarno's 1947 book that explored Indonesian women's specific roles in both the Revolution and the new nation, the president presented an interesting, and perhaps not initially obvious idea: that modernity exacted a significant toll on women's bodies and appearance. He argued that women, increasingly subjected to men because of modern gender roles, were more dependent on their looks in the modern era, because that allowed them to attract husbands. "It was no longer identity that determined one's life," he wrote, "but one's beauty, one's loveliness, one's 'sex-appeal'. One's charm then became an economic weapon, and the function of the beauty became a function of the economy."<sup>144</sup> "In today's capitalist society," and particularly in the west, he wrote:

[a]lthough competent, although adroit, although diploma-ed, it is not guaranteed that a woman will find a husband. Only the most fit, the most clever, the most beautiful, the most attractive, those with the most 'sex-appeal'<sup>145</sup> have the hope of finding a mate. '*Struggle for Life*' today has also become '*Struggle for man*.'<sup>146</sup> Because of that, there has arisen—initially in America, where 'finding a husband' is the most difficult—a movement to 'enhance beauty', a *make-up-movement*,<sup>147</sup> which means studying and practicing how women might be attractive to men. Refining

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*Lewat Djam Malam*, the peasant as a steady base of something untouched by western modernity, which will be addressed in the "Interlude" between this chapter and the next. In the New Order, village inhabitants would remain a source of Indonesian cultural purity, even if, and perhaps specifically because of their lack of modern outlook, as Suharto's "floating mass" of the nation that the military was sworn to protect from Communist infection.

<sup>143</sup> In particular, see John Pemberton, *On the Subject of "Java"* for a discussion of how the Javanese *priyayi*, or bureaucratic functionary class, adapted to balance elements of what they learned working in the "efficient" world of the modern Dutch civil service with maintaining elements of their own Javanese identity. This is also a significant theme of the Buru tetralogy by Prameodya Ananta Toer, and particularly the first novel of the four, *Bumi Manusia*, (*This Earth of Mankind*).

<sup>144</sup> "Bukan lagi kepribadiannya yang kini menentukan hidupnya, tetapi ketjantikannya, kedjeltiaannya, 'sex-appeal'-nja. Keelokannya itu kini mendjadi fungsi ekonomi." Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 67.

<sup>145</sup> In English in the original text.

<sup>146</sup> Both expressions of struggle are in English, and with the added spacing for emphasis in the original text.

<sup>147</sup> In English, and with the added spacing for emphasis in the original text.



skin, arranging hair, reddening lips, choosing powder color, plucking eyebrows so that the brow becomes thin like a new moon, determining the color of cold cream, and removing that cream, arranging how one sits, how one moves the body while walking, all of this has become a 'science', which day and night turns over in the brains of women of the upper classes.<sup>148</sup>

This standard of beauty, specifically among the women of the upper class—"lovely skin, red lips and curved eyebrows"<sup>149</sup>—Sukarno noted, was no longer something that came from nature and accrued to one or two women. Rather, like any mass-marketed capitalist product, it could be purchased and applied to any face. While this sometimes worked well, he also noted it could "make women look like 'ghosts' because the 'stamp' on their face exceeds a basic simplicity."<sup>150</sup>

Recognizing that this makeup "movement" had already begun to spread in Indonesia, particularly "under the leadership of several ladies of the upper class,"<sup>151</sup> Sukarno argued that women's actions had yet to make the world a paradise. This, he said, would have to be the result of a revolutionary, socialist feminist movement. And this socialist feminism was, in his analysis, a third stage of women's struggle to regain status they had held in pre-industrial society.

In *Sarinah*, Sukarno spent a significant amount of time providing a long-range historical analysis of women's changing roles in society. He began by suggesting that women's initial positions in agrarian societies, such as those that would have been present in the Indonesian archipelago, had been the product of a "matriarchal era." In those eras, women, he suggested,

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<sup>148</sup> "Meskipun tjakap, meskipun tangkas, meskipun telah ber-diploma, belum-tentu itu mendjadi djaminan akan mendapat seorang suami. Hanya jang paling djempol sadjahlah, jang paling tjakap, jang paling tjantik, jang paling menarik, jang paling ber-'sex-appeal', mempunjai harapan akan mendapat djodo. 'Struggle for life' kini djuga mendjadi 'Struggle for Ma n'. Maka oleh karena itu, timbullah—mula-mula di Amerika dimana 'tjari suami' itu jang paling susah—, satu pergerakan 'menambah ketjantikan', satu m a k e - u p m o v e m e n t, jang maksudnja mempeladjadi dan mempraktekkan, betapakah tjara-mustinja perempuan menarik hati kaum laki-laki. Menghaluskan kulit, menatur rambut, memerahkan bibir, memilih warnanja bedak, metjabut bulu alis supaja alis ini mendjadi ketjil seperti bulan tanggal satu, mementukan warna crême [sic] dan menjapukan crême [sic], mengatur badan waktu duduk, menggerakkan badan waktu berdjalan, itu semuanya mendjadi satu 'ilmu', jang siang dan malam berputar didalam otaknja permempuan-perempuan fihak atasan itu." Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 85. This clearly represents issues facing upper and middle-upper class women living in urban spaces more than it does proletarian, peasant and rural women. This is challenge of much of the sources and which elements of Indonesian society are present and visible in the sources.

<sup>149</sup> "Kulit djelita, bibir merah dan alis melengkung". Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 86.

<sup>150</sup> "mendjadilah mereka itu djustru seperti 'hantu', karena 'tjap' diatas muka mereka itu terlalu melebihi-lebihi batasnja kesederhanaan." Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 86.

<sup>151</sup> "Djuga di Indonesia, ini 'movement' . . . sudah mulai mendjalar, tentu sadja dibawah pimpinan beberapa njonja dari kalangan atasan!" Soekarno, s, p. 86. Notice the use of "movement" in English.

because of their freedom, were large and spry of body, shrewd and agile, brave and broad-sighted,—not like the women of today, who are small and fearful. In the matriarchal era, there were not “the weak,” not “the ignorant,” the “narrow minded,” not “the fearful.” In that time, women were not merely “the people in the kitchen,” not merely “household flowers.” They were strong, they led society, controlled society, commanded society.<sup>152</sup>

As men took over a more industrialized society, Sukarno argued, women’s weakness and social constriction was not the result of their fundamental biological nature, but was a product that had come about as a reaction to the development of a society based on market-driven patriarchy.

Western women’s response to this, he proposed, was to develop feminist movements, to which Sukarno devoted a lengthy chapter in his book. Early women’s movements, a first stage of feminism he argued, represented a “movement to reform<sup>153</sup> ‘women’s things,’ which meant questions of cooking, sewing, adornment, chatting, caring for children and the like.”<sup>154</sup> He suggested that these women were enclosed in their houses, looking out windows at a male, capitalist world passing them by as they did their embroidery, a vision that clearly included the bourgeois class assumptions of the early women thinkers he referenced.<sup>155</sup>

With the arrival of the French and American Revolutions, Sukarno suggested, the western women’s movement entered a second stage, which he called the “Feminism Movement,” (“*Pergerakan Feminisme*” or “*pergerakan feminis.*”)<sup>156</sup> The primary focus during this time, he argued, quoting Dutch feminist Betsy Bakker-Nort,<sup>157</sup> was on the rights to work and to vote, for women to be considered “full human beings,” [*“manusia penuh,”*]

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<sup>152</sup> “karena kemerdekaan, adalah besar-besar dan sigap-sigap badan, tjerdas-terdas and tangkas-tangkas, berani-berani dan luas-luas penglihatan, —tidak seperti perempuan-perempuan dizaman sekarang, jang ketjil-ketjil dan takut-takut. Di zaman peribuan itu mereka bukan ‘kaum lemah’, bukan ‘kaum bodoh’, bukan ‘kaum sempit pikiran’, bukan ‘kaum penakut’. Dizaman itu perempuan bukan ‘kaum dapur’ sadja, bukan ‘bunga rumah tangga’ sadja. Mereka berkuasa, menduduki masjarakat, mengedali masjarakat, menguasai masjarakat.” Sukarno, *Sarinah*, 1963, p. 56.

<sup>153</sup> The word used is “*menjempurnakan*,” which means “to perfect” or perhaps “to complete” or “to accomplish,” but the sense here is more “to refine.” In that sense it is evolutionary in his view, rather than revolutionary.

<sup>154</sup> “*Pergerakan menjempurnakan ‘keperempuanan’, jang lapangan-usahanja ialah misalnja memasak, mendjahit, berhias, bergaul, memelihara anak, dan sebagainya.*” Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 156.

<sup>155</sup> Sukarno’s analysis of this era of women’s development was based on the world of the social *salons* of women such as Mercy Otis Warren, Abigail Adams, Olympse de Gouges, Rose Lacombe and Mary Wollstonecraft, who he named specifically, dating largely to the American and French Revolutions.

<sup>156</sup> Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 158.

<sup>157</sup> Dutch writer and leftist politician, born in 1874, and died in 1946.

with the end goal being the complete equality between the two sexes, both in law and in culture.”<sup>158</sup>

But the third stage of women’s independence would only come, he wrote, from a “Socialist Movement in which women and men struggle together shoulder to shoulder to bring about a socialistic society in which women and men are equally prosperous and equally free.”<sup>159</sup> Soekarno noted, however, that proletarian men could often be considered just as “backward,” (“*kolot*,” also meaning old-fashioned) about gender questions as bourgeois men.<sup>160</sup> Women and women’s issues, therefore, played an important role, he argued in moving revolutionary men, and the entire revolutionary movement, forward.

In the shift to a more industrial way of life, along with the rise of proletarian consciousness, it was women who “immediately became politically aware. The awareness that was formed among the world’s people at the end of the nineteenth century,” he wrote,

brought about a strong movement of men and women that had never been manifested in history to that point. This awareness raised “women’s issues” up to a higher level, a level on par with social issues in general, which didn’t only consider and struggle on the situation of women alone, but which considered and struggled on the situation of women as one part of humanity that would be happy in totality.<sup>161</sup> This awareness led women to struggle not as a sex, but as one part of a single class.<sup>162</sup>

Sukarno suggested that two issues in particular should be germane to the construction of women’s revolutionary roles within the Indonesian nation: universal

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<sup>158</sup> “Pergerakan wanita itu paling tepat dapat digambarkan sebagai satu desakan wanita untuk dipandang dan diperlakukan [*sic: diperlakukan*] sebagai manusia-penuh. Tuduannya jang terakhir ialah: persamaan-samasekali antara kedua sekse itu, diatas lapangan hukum-hukum-negara dan adat-istiadat.” The original Dutch, which Soekarno quoted before translating it into Indonesian reads: “*De vrouwenbeweging is het best te karakteriseren als het stuwven der vrouwen als volwaardig mens te worden beshouwd en behandeld. En haar eihddoel: volkomen gelijkstelling in wetten en zeden van beide seksen.*” Soekarno, *Sarinah*, pp. 157-58.

<sup>159</sup> “Pergerakan Sosialisme, dalam mana wanita dan laki-laki bersama-sama berdjombang bahu-membahu, untuk mendatangkan masyarakat sosialis, dalam mana wanita dan laki-laki sama-sama sedjahtera, sama-sama merdeka.” Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 158.

<sup>160</sup> The marked irony here, of course, is that Sukarno’s own personal history with women was incredibly *kolot* and sexist, as is discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>161</sup> In making this argument, Sukarno relied exclusively, however, on women’s voices, citing the work of western socialist feminists such as Clara Zetkin, Arletta Jacobs, Rosa Luxemburg, Louise Zeitz, Emma Ihrer and Henriette Roland Holst.

<sup>162</sup> “Dan wanitapun segera sadar. Kesadaran inilah jang membuat dunia-manusia para silamnya abad kesembilanbelas mengalami satu pergerakan laki-perempuan jang hebat, sebagai jang belum dialamhannya dalam seluruh sedjarahannya jang terdahulu. Kesadaran inilah membawa ‘soal-wanita’ itu keatas satu tingkat jang lebih tinggi, satu tingkat jang mengenai soal-masyarakat seumumnya, jang tidak hanya memfikirkan dan memperdjombang kedudukan wanita sadja, tetapi memfikirkan dan memperdjombang kedudukan wanita sebagai satu bagian dari kemanusiaan jang berbahagia seluruhnya. Kesadaran ini membuat wanita berdjombang tidak sebagai sekse, tetapi sebagai saut bagian daripada satu kelas.” Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 199.

suffrage and the celebration of International Women's Day each December 1. Indonesian women were included in the suffrage from the beginning of the Republic. The celebration of International Women's Day continued in a fashion,<sup>163</sup> but was replaced in importance by *Hari Ibu* ("Mother's Day"),<sup>164</sup> and Kartini Day, both of which stressed the revolutionary role of women in Indonesian society during the Sukarno era.<sup>165</sup>

There are several internal contradictions that play out in this analysis, and which are important to the argument of this dissertation. Women are considered both the revolutionary vanguard, those who become "immediately politically aware" in contrast to men who could remain backward. Yet at the same time, women and men were supposed to work together, putting women's issues as "one part" of humanity. In a sense, while this entwined women's issues within a larger collective set of socialist goals, it also arguably subsumed them, making them a less distinct part, perhaps, of "social issues in general." Women's issues were certainly only one element of the higher development of class consciousness. Also, while women were granted the franchise on an equal basis with men, women were also encouraged to hold separate political and cultural meetings and events *as women*, which they did even as they also participated in the political lives of their own parties and party-based organizations.

The dissertation argues that women as unifiers, as central to the national construction but still somewhat set apart and treated differently than men, became a critical element that came into play in 1964-1966. Indeed, it suggests that this is a central element historians must include in their analysis of Indonesian political culture for that scholarship to be complete. It is important to note, therefore, that all these tensions were already included within what Sukarno argued it meant to be a modern Indonesian woman.

Even at that time, he wrote, as in Europe, elite Indonesian women would still feel a "fissure" ("*scheur*," in Dutch,) between their lives in a professional sphere as "journalists, traders, doctors and lawyers,"<sup>166</sup> and their role as wives and mothers in the household. This, he said, was leading to the development of a "neo-feminism, a new feminism" that

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<sup>163</sup> In the mid 1950's, Gerwani led an effort for Indonesia to participate in the global celebration of International Women's Day. This was opposed by the leadership of Kowani. This contretemps is discussed later in this chapter.s

<sup>164</sup> This is the focus of Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

<sup>165</sup> The role of these two celebrations became markedly different, and quite depoliticized, in the New Order.

<sup>166</sup> "*wartawan, peniaga, insinjur, adpokat.*" Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 86.

“places work in society as ‘number two’ but makes marriage, becoming a mother and leading a family as number one.”<sup>167</sup> He argued this was women’s role, their *kodrat wanita*, God-given, based in biology, but also the expression of a fundamentally eastern view of motherhood and family imbedded in what he imagined to be an ancient Indonesian experience, which pressed up against the expectations of modernity.

Although Sukarno wrote about the west and the struggle against capitalism as the primary sources of modernity pressing on Indonesian women’s lives, these were arguably not the sole sources of this emerging modernity. Rather, in the Indonesian case, there were multiple influences that led to competing views of what it meant to be modern.

A first influence, and arguably the one that held the most sway with the urban elite, continued—or perhaps re-appropriated—the colonial Dutch education that had been available to the select few, while also drawing somewhat on modernization movements already significantly underway in both China and Japan. Another derived from European, and later also Chinese radical influences, socialist, Marxist and feminist. A third influence came from Egypt, Turkey and the Indian subcontinent through modernist Islamic thought and practice that was itself a new idea born in response the modernity of European colonialism. Yet a fourth, taking particular influence from *swadeshi* philosophies of the Indian nationalist movement, appeared in the argument that Indonesia could base itself in an identity fully grounded in indigenous (and mostly elite Javanese) cultures and still be completely modern.

These influences and strains were not always, or perhaps even often, mutually exclusive. There was not simply a single source of “modernity” at play. Rather, there were multiple, and overlapping, ways to be “*moderen*,” making Indonesian modernity more of a web of various experiences and influences than the (admittedly highly “cross-cut”) cultural binary of Hildred Geertz’s formulation.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> “Kini timbul aliran neo-feminisme, feminisme-baru, yang menganggap pekerdjaan masyarakat itu ‘nomor dua’, tetapi perkawinan, mendjadi ibu, memimpin keluarga nomor satu.” Soekarno, *Sarinah*, p. 88.

<sup>168</sup> These different lenses for refracting modernity reflected a fundamental tripartite split in the Indonesian nationalist movement from the 1920s, when the first full-scale national organization, Sarekat Islam, separated into nationalist, Islamic and socialist/communist *aliran*, or streams. (See the discussion on the historiography of Indonesian national identity in Chapter 1.) The term *aliran* is complex, particularly in its sociological/anthropological genesis. Clifford Geertz used the term in his classic work, *The Religion of Java*, to describe three streams of Javanese culture as he saw them: *abangan* (based in a largely mystical Sufi-inflected Islamic practice, with roots largely in the countryside,) *santri* (a more modernist Islamic approach grounded in trader and entrepreneurial communities in towns and cities,) and *priyayi* (an elite culture imbedded in Javanese royal courts and colonial administrative) variants of a larger Javanese culture. While

In any case, modernity was a concept firmly entwined with the idea of Indonesia from its very beginnings. As a child born of a common Dutch colonial experience that united “natives” from across the Indies into citizens of the new nation built on territory brought together by the Dutch colonial project, Indonesia itself was only imaginable as some sort of reflection of European modernity. It is not a coincidence that Benedict Anderson’s deep knowledge of Indonesia led him to theorize nations as “imagined communities,” in which people with no direct knowledge of each other, through both a common anti-colonial experience and a shared language and print culture, could see themselves as part of a single new and inherently modern identity.<sup>169</sup>

Adrian Vickers, however, argues that the English “modern” and Indonesian “*moderen*” are not direct and interchangeable translations of each other. The *moderen*, he writes,

is a trope for a whole series of historical transformations, from the level of the self to the level of state development. The *moderen* may be taken as a form of Euramerican modernity, in that the sense of *moderen* came out of the experiences of colonialism and imperialism. But to see it simply as a variation on a theme is to marginalize Southeast Asia as coming to modernity in a late and derivative manner. It tells us nothing about for Southeast Asians, for Indonesians . . . to be *moderen*.<sup>170</sup>

The Indonesian experience of being *moderen*, then, reflected tensions in what might be called a set of “mutually enmeshed maps of cultural understanding,”<sup>171</sup> all of which were simultaneously tugging at what it meant to be an Indonesian living in a newly independent nation. Although the Revolution of 1945-1949 in some ways united various regional, ideological and religious streams against the Dutch—and this may have continued in some fashion into 1950, that “short period where everything seemed possible,”—these disparate

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Clifford Geertz himself took pains in his work to insist that these three streams were heavily intermingled, his distinctions took on a life of their own, even particularly among the Indonesian academic and political elite themselves. The concept of *aliran* was also then used in other contexts, such as above, though it doesn’t appear to have been used contemporarily in the 1920s to my knowledge, but rather in retrospect to describe these three critical groupings in the Indonesian political and cultural landscape.

<sup>169</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. The addition of a particularly important chapter on “Census, Map and Museum” to the second (1991) edition made clearer the Southeast Asian, and particularly Indonesian, roots of his thinking, although the work as a whole makes a world historical case.

<sup>170</sup> Adrian Vickers, “Modernity and Being ‘Moderen’: An Introduction,” in Adrian Vickers, ed. *Being Modern in Bali*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>171</sup> This is, as far as I know, my own terminology for the fundamentally intersectional experience of Indonesian modernity.

leanings reasserted themselves in the cultural and political life of the new nation, in what it meant to be properly *moderen*, and, alongside that, unifiedly Indonesian.

Indeed, much of the first decade of Indonesian independence was spent in attempts to solidify the newly formed nation against both regionally and religiously based separatisms. Women played a particularly important role in national unification however. From the beginnings of the formal Indonesian nationalist movement in the 1920's, women had worked together across political, religious and geographic identities in ways that their male counterparts found more difficult. Although there were some significant differences among groups of women, particularly around the question of marriage, there was also an important set of common concerns and goals that brought women together politically as well.

As Elizabeth Martyn writes, in the wake of Indonesian independence, "women's movements . . . sought to represent Indonesian women in the new nation-state and determine the character of the 'national' movement itself. It [became] clear that despite their diversity, Indonesian women continued to work together on women-specific issues."<sup>172</sup>

To be sure, Martyn notes that the 1950s were "plagued by political instability," and that "Indonesian society was, to some extent, polarized between Islam, secular nationalism and communism." This, she continues, "was duplicated within the women's movement, making it difficult for women to unite and win the societal and political support necessary to achieve change."<sup>173</sup>

But, Martyn argues, several factors made it possible for women to continue to work together across lines of political difference. First, she argues, women's organizations moved from being primarily local to national in nature, and this was true across the political spectrum. In addition, she notes, "Indonesian women's organizations shared strikingly similar objectives, activities and structures," and that "all Indonesian women's organizations shared the broad objective of advancing the position of women."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 55.

<sup>173</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 57.

<sup>174</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 59.

Women's organizations, therefore, were often able to "issue joint declarations, statements and resolutions in support of women in a particular town or district, indicating their combined support for various demands."<sup>175</sup> Beyond that, women continued to meet in national congresses that brought together the full spectrum of their organizations. They also continued to work together within the Indonesian Women's Congress, (*Kongres Wanita Indonesia*, or KOWANI, formed in 1946,) which was "developed as a politically and religiously non-aligned body to unite all women's organizations while respecting their diverse activities and ideologies."<sup>176</sup>

Saskia Wieringa's reading of the interactions among women's organizations at the time focuses more on the conflicts between them than does Martyn's. For instance, she notes that the 1949 contact body for Kowani leadership, representing the range of women's organizations was able to enumerate a large list of "far-reaching reforms: equal rights between women and men to be included in the Constitution of the Republic; all citizens to have the right to work; labour laws to be redrafted to protect women workers; and marriage laws to be drawn up in accordance with the stipulations of the different religions,"<sup>177</sup> and she continues with more examples. And yet, she goes on to point out, "[e]ven in the midst of war, tensions between Islamic and non-Islamic women's groups had constantly flared."<sup>178</sup> And after the Revolution she continues, "these differences formed a major stumbling block to unity."<sup>179</sup>

Wieringa notes that coming into the era of Guided Democracy, Gerwani, while attempting to gain more power within the Kowani structure, had begun to establish a "broad coalition of 'progressive' organizations and individuals called the 'mass movement'."<sup>180</sup> In particular, the progressives wanted to have a national celebration of International Women's Day,<sup>181</sup> strongly connected with international socialist movements,

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<sup>175</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 70.

<sup>176</sup> Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 70. The separation of Gerwani from Kowani in late 1965 is addressed significantly in the final chapter of the dissertation.

<sup>177</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 86.

<sup>178</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 87.

<sup>179</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 87.

<sup>180</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 120.

<sup>181</sup> Recall that in *Sarinah*, Sukarno saw participation in International Women's Day as one of two major markers of modern second wave feminism. The challenge to national women's unity, however, was that participation in this international celebration involved nominating and sending Indonesian delegates to international meetings. Gerwani had taken a lead in this process, to the disapproval, and perhaps jealousy of other women's organizations.



in Indonesia, but Maria Ulfah<sup>182</sup> “cut short” this idea. And although Wieringa notes that Maria Ulfah “saw the mass movement as divisive,”<sup>183</sup> she goes on to quote Ulfah extensively to the effect that Kowani remained intact nonetheless. She quotes Ulfah:

I called a meeting and asked the Gerwani members why they stabbed the KWI [Kowani] in the back like that.<sup>184</sup> I told them if they wanted to set up their own women’s federation they should go ahead. But then they had to choose, for nobody could be a member of both the KWI and an independent mass movement. No one left the KWI and that was the end of it. But I must say, apart from this short episode, Gerwani was always very cooperative in Kowani.<sup>185</sup>

As Indonesia approached the end of its first decade of full independence, the tensions that pulled at national unity re-asserted themselves. Largely in response to these centripetal forces seeking to pull the nation apart, in the late 1950s, Sukarno presented a conception of national unity based on a union of three basic elements, which he termed NASAKOM.

The acronym brought together the ideal of an Indonesian nation based in *NASionalism* (nationalism, that is a united single nation rather than a federation of regional states), *Agama* (religion, primarily Islam of course, but with space for Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism and Hinduism, and also with the expectation that all Indonesians would have a religion and that religious sensibilities would be important in what was to be a secular nation) and *KOMunism* (communism, by which he meant a broader socialist-based agenda concerned about building a “just and prosperous society”<sup>186</sup> that accounted for the welfare of poorer “ordinary” Indonesians in ways that did not exclude the other two nodes of his formulation). That Sukarno could not, in fact, hold all these in balance, and particularly that he could not forestall the tensions between the PKI and the army, is central to the later chapters of this dissertation. Women as a group were not explicitly included in this formulation, perhaps because women’s unity and their memberships in the

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<sup>182</sup> Throughout her work, Weiringa spells Maria Ulfah’s name with two “l”s: Ullfah. The spelling with one “l” is used in most sources I have seen.

<sup>183</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 120.

<sup>184</sup> The question had been about invitations to attend an Afro-Asian conference in Nairobi in 1958 that Gerwani was empowered to invite Indonesian women leaders to. Maria Ulfah had not been invited.

<sup>185</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 120.

<sup>186</sup> “*masyarakat adil dan makmur*,” a standard description of the goals of Indonesian social development during the Guided Democracy era.

various streams was assumed. But, as the dissertation shows, assumptions about women underlay this entire construction of the nation.

As Sukarno moved the Indonesian national project forward in the second half the 1950's, he extended the ideas of NASAKOM in a national "political manifesto," or *Manipol*, which called for the implementation of five critical paths the nation would need to follow in order to "finish the revolution," ("*menyelesaikan revolusinya.*") He named these five critical paths USDEK, with each letter representing one of the five requirements for the nation.

The first four were structural. *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* (for "U,") referred to the re-adoption of the 1945 Constitution, which gave strongest administrative power to the presidency, as opposed to an elected parliament. *Socialism à la Indonesia* (for "S,") allowed Sukarno an important flexibility in his interpretations of socialism to meet a variety of Indonesian contexts. *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (Guided Democracy, for "D,") provided that the national consultative assembly be appointed rather than elected, allowing Sukarno to give or remove favor from different groups as needed, with the goal of holding the nation in political balance around his presidency. Finally, *Ekonomi Terpimpin* (Guided Economy, for "E,") envisioned an economic system centered on nationally owned businesses and an Indonesia-centered economy, rather than a dependence on global corporations.

The fifth requirement, *Kepribadian Nasional* (National Identity, for "K,") however, was not structural. Rather, it expressed Sukarno's attempt to close the *scheur*, or fissure, he saw between the "original" or "*asli*" elements of and eastern culture, and the nation's *moderen* needs. It called for the development of a sense of self and of nation based on Indonesian sources rather than western ones. Sukarno specifically saw this as a modern, progressive identity, one that, like his *Socialism à la Indonesia*, was home grown.

A definition of *Kepribadian Indonesia*, in *Ensiklopedia Sosialisme* ("Encyclopedia of Socialism,") a general handbook and introduction of socialist ideas for ordinary Indonesians published in Surabaya in 1963, stated simply that "*Indonesia identity [sic] . . . were the overall features specific to Indonesia that differentiate the Indonesian nation from other nations.*"<sup>187</sup> It then listed these specifics as "the spirit of mutual assistance, family, Godliness, populism, humanity, justice, friendliness and the character of *Bhinneka Tunggal*

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<sup>187</sup> ". . . Indonesia identity. *Ialah keseluruhan tjiri-tjiri chas bangsa Indonesia jang membedakan bangsa Indonesia dengan lain-lain bangsa.*" S. Surjo Untoro, *Ensiklopedia Sosialisme*, p. 48.

*Ika*.”<sup>188</sup> While the term for “mutual assistance,” “*gotong royong*” in Indonesian and the national motto for “University in Diversity” are specifically Indonesian, the other elements are quite general and arguably widely shared by many cultures and nations. But the gloss is clearly local.

The idea of social justice was firmly imbedded with this concept. In the introduction to a collection of Sukarno’s speeches about *Kepribadian Nasional* first published by Hadji Achmad Notosoetardjo in 1962, the writer combined concepts of modernity and deep-held emotional national geography. “A just and prosperous society,” he stated, “is a society that is highly technical, completely modern to the peaks of its mountains, completely modern materially and culturally in a way that is enjoyed justly by the whole People.”<sup>189</sup> So even new ideas, if they became rooted in the local landscape, could become Indonesian.

Kowani continued to meet, and from 1958, like the rest of political Indonesia, it did so under the rubric of NASAKOM and USDEK, and then in the 1960’s, an increasing set of Sukarnoist slogans and initiatives designed to unify the increasingly tense nation. But Kowani remained one of the few organizations that reached horizontally across the three basic streams of Indonesian national identity, at least in a formal sense. And, as the final chapter of the dissertation discusses, Sukarno continued to use his address to KOWANI in December 1964 to stress the idea of an Indonesian national unity built among women.

This perceived sense of national unity based in women’s organizations came to have a specific consequence for Indonesian women. The final chapter of the dissertation argues that women involved in Kowani from outside the Communist stream were specifically called on not only to denounce Communism (as all organizations were,) but further to specifically distance themselves from Gerwani. This was precisely because unlike many other organizations—the military being a specific exception where there were politically diverse factions within a single organization—the coalition of women’s organizations in Kowani had explicitly worked together on a set of progressive goals and programs facing all Indonesian women. That created bridges among them in ways that organizations

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<sup>188</sup> “*semangat Gotong royong, kekeluargaan, ke Tuhanan, kerakjatan, keadilan, ramah-tamah dan sifat Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.” S. Surjo Untoro, *Ensiklopedia Sosialisme*, p. 48.

<sup>189</sup> “*Masyarakat adil dan makmur adalah masyarakat kang teknis tinggi, lengkap moderen sampai kepuntjak2 gunung, lengkap moderen materiil dan kulturil dengan pengetjapan oleh seluruh Rakjat setjara adil*.” H.A. Notosoetardjo, *Kepribadian Revolusi Bangsa Indonesia*, 1964, p. 29.

focused around men do not seem to have done,<sup>190</sup> and specific shared agendas around women's rights that needed to be undone.

### **Krisis Moral: National Identity and the Dangers of Modernity**

When the exposition of *kepribadian nasional* in speeches, magazine and newspaper articles *did* lay out an explanation of what was Indonesian, as often as not, the presentation of the idea relied on enumerations of what did “not align with Indonesian identity,” (“*yang tidak sesuai dengan kepribadian Indonesia*”). While some of what was to be discouraged or forbidden fell along the lines of self-enrichment and living extravagantly, and applied to both men and women, as was noted earlier in the discussion of Untung's charges against the military leadership on October 1, much of what was censored referred specifically to women and how they presented themselves in public.

This dissertation demonstrates ways in which the idea of Indonesian national identity was intimately paired with fears of moral crisis (“*krisis moral*,”) brought about by the sudden cultural changes that came along with becoming modern. It explores how these fears often centered on deracination and losing the nation's sense of unique identity. It also argues that in women's magazines, these fears were overwhelmingly expressed about women, their bodies and their sexuality, and were interpreted through questions of fashion and beauty.

What was considered to be excessive in women's beauty along such things as Hollywood movies and rock-n-roll music, in fact, became symbols of the encroachment of western imperialism on “true” Indonesian identity. Speaking to the Indonesian Women's Congress in 1964, at the height of his campaign against the west, Sukarno declaimed:

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<sup>190</sup> In working on the revisions of the dissertation, Nancy Florida has pressed me on this point. In particular she asked me to look at “*kaum laki-laki*.” I am open to doing so as I continue to refine this work, but to date I haven't found (or, to be clear, been in a position to be able to find, given the restrictions of COVID-19) significant discussion of men being brought together across organizations except in a much broader sense under NASAKOM generally. That is, the difference, it seems to me is that there was an attempt to bring men of the various *aliran* together; indeed that was the fundamental goal of NASAKOM and Manipol-USDEK. But there doesn't seem to be a similar constituted organization or alliance of men reaching across the various streams that led to Communist and non-Communist men being seen as having a shared identity that needed to be repudiated in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya, but yes as human beings, and Indonesians, and as citizens in the ways that women working together in Kowani were compelled to do. Perhaps I don't have knowledge of specific cases where that was indeed the case. What, for instance, might have been the requirements of say the national athletics federations? (This would be an interesting case to study, particularly since international level athletics were an important way through with Sukarno expressed his non-alignment. There is some discussion of athletics and those international tensions in Chapter 6 in the context of GANEFO, the Games of the New Emerging Forces, established as an alternative to the Olympic Games and hosted in Jakarta in 1963.)

... I am exceedingly ... happy ... that the Indonesian Women's Congress will also play an active role in smashing cultural imperialism. Yes teased and ratted hair, yes Beatle hair, yes tight skirts, yes rock-and-roll, yes Elvis Presley stuff, yes Nat King Cole stuff, all sorts of things, brothers and sisters. But above all we must be alert and vigilant towards political intervention and subversion. Beware, beware!<sup>191</sup>

The dissertation argues, therefore, that the shift in power in 1965-66 was possible not because Suharto's ascendance was a sudden reversal. Rather it was possible because, in important ways, the establishment of the New Order was initially based in continuations of cultural and political expression of a fear of cultural destruction that were central to Sukarnoist rhetoric and to the ways in which Indonesian national identity had been formed from the beginnings of the Republic. I assert that the events of 1965-1966 were, arguably, constructed as an enormous case of moral crisis. This included, importantly, centrally even, the nationalized rhetoric about women, national identity, and moral purity around which the Lubang Buaya narrative was specifically crafted.

This fundamental fear of uncontrolled, sexualized women then remained central to the mechanisms of social and political control that affected the entire nation during the New Order.<sup>192</sup> In that way, ironically, although looking at women's magazines in the 1970s shows they are full of mini-skirts, thigh-high boots and other markers of late 1960's and 1970's western influenced modernity, the place of women as a marker of Indonesian identity became even more narrowed to be most properly reflected in the image of elite women primped up and wearing nearly identical, if not uniform, *kain-kebaya* with proper *konde*, carrying *tas plastik*, which would remain the national fashion throughout the New Order.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> "... saja amat ... bergembira ... bahwa Kongres Wanita Indonesia djuga akan aktif sekali dalam memberantas imperialisme kulturil. Ja rambut sasak, ja rambut beetle, ja spanrok-spanrokan, ja twist-twist-an, ja rock-and-roll-rock-and-roll-an, ja Elvys Presley Elvys Presley-an, ja Nat King Cole Nat King Cole-an, matjam-matjam, Saudara-saudara. Tetapi terutama sekali kita harus waspada terhadap kepada intervensi dan subversi politik. Waspadalah, waspadahlah!" "*Wanita Indonesia Selalu Ikut Bergerak Dalam Barisan Revolusioner!*" Published by the Departemen Penerangan RI as Special Publication No. 332. Transcription of speech by Sukarno to the Kongres Wanita Indonesia, or Indonesian Women's Congress, July 24, 1964. This quotation also serves as the epigraph for Chapter 6 of the dissertation, which explores its temporal political context and their implications in detail, and notes that Sukarno called specifically on women, in that instance at least, to lead the charge against this cultural subversion.

<sup>192</sup> The creation of the Lubang Buaya narrative and the centrality of excessive, even barbaric Gerwani sexuality to it, as well as the process of having this carved and re-enacted into the monumentalization of G-30-S is discussed elsewhere in the dissertation.

<sup>193</sup> To be sure, this style of *kain-kebaya* remains frequently worn today in Indonesia under the proper official circumstances. But it is notable that older women in particular, who would have been children or young adults fifty years

As this introduction has already noted, both the G-30-S leadership and General Suharto framed the events of September 30-October 1 using the same style of language. Both reaffirmed their support for Sukarno's nationalist revolutionary program while charging their opponents with being "counter-revolutionary." Both Untung's and Suharto's October 1 broadcasts to the nation used nearly identical language to claim that they and their forces were protecting Sukarno from counter-revolutionary elements engaged in plotting a coup against the president, and therefore against the nation. Both leaders assured the national audience that their movements would continue to support *Pancasila* and to carry out all revolutionary elements of the *Ganyang Malaysia* ["Crush Malaysia"] campaign, which was the primary focus of Indonesian politics at the time. Rhetorically, then, both of the immediate contesting explanations for the events at Lubang Buaya were complete continuations of Sukarno's conception of the Indonesian nation and its primary political goals. Both also played on the fears induced by the idea of a moral crisis that could sweep the nation from its moorings.<sup>194</sup>

Perhaps this should not come as a surprise. In Sukarno's Indonesia, political rhetoric was not merely rhetorical. From 1958 forward, with the introduction of Guided Democracy, Sukarno's leadership of the nation increasingly relied on the imposition of revolutionary rhetoric on the Indonesian political and social landscape. Saskia Wieringa, noted that "[a]s presidential power increased [under Guided Democracy] and political and social chaos ensued, there was mounting pressure to couch everything in Sukarno's terminology"<sup>195</sup> to the point that most political struggles between political groups and ideological movements within Indonesia came to be expressed through dueling interpretations of the various slogans and propagandistic rhetoric Sukarno put forth in crafting his political conception of the nation.

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ago often wear a wide variety of *kebaya* with their *kain*, reflecting images discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of Indonesian women wearing the fashion of the entire Indonesian archipelago.

<sup>194</sup> In an early graduate school paper presented at the Southeast East Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) in 1991, I suggested that Americans involved in the study of Indonesia in the mid-1960s and American diplomats with connections to the country had both argued, while disagreeing vociferously about the situation on the ground in Indonesia in 1965-66, that they were defending their diverging interpretations of G-30-S by claiming important elements of American cultural senses of legitimacy: that their understandings of Indonesia in the day were based in their unbiased reading of the country based in their own first-hand knowledge of the country, its politics and culture.

<sup>195</sup> Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 104.

As this introductory chapter has already explored, Sukarno's conception of Indonesian nationalism wove together ideas around three streams: nationalism, religion and socialism. But Wieringa argues—I would say correctly—that there was a fourth fundamental ideological building block of Indonesian national identity, one that is regularly overlooked in the historical literature: Indonesian feminism, and the construction of Indonesian womanhood.<sup>196</sup>

### ***The Indonesian Nation and the Moral Lives of Women***

It is critical that both G-30-S narratives, from the Movement itself and from Suharto, employed discussions of women's morality. It is also important to underline that neither of these discussions concerned women as individuals. Rather, the conception of Indonesian women at play was that of them comprising a specific group—"mothers of the nation," (*"Ibu bangsa,"*)—who were responsible for upholding Indonesia's good moral standing.

This conception of national womanhood was not new. It had been proposed by women themselves in the earliest days of the nationalist movement and was tightly entwined with the nationalist construction of Indonesian identity. As already noted, Sukarno's first published book of the nationalist era, *Sarinah*, comprised a lengthy and complex political and cultural analysis of the proper role of strong women in the development of a socialist Indonesian nation.

The moral life of Indonesia's women, as a group, was a critical element of the nation's potential (*"potensi,"*) for health and prosperity. The word *"potensi,"* an Indonesianization of the English "potential," was an interesting marker of Indonesia's post-colonial and developmental identity. It carried the idea that Indonesia was not yet all it could be, that there remained large elements of the national landscape that needed to be strengthened, developed or improved, whether politically, economically or culturally. Indonesian politicians, artists, business leaders and cultural brokers made frequent mention of the nation's *potensi*, which continually seemed like it was almost in hand, but maddeningly just out of grasp. The desire to reach the nation's potential was the central

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<sup>196</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 98.

emotional tenet, at least, of Sukarno's call for the nation to "complete the Revolution" under Guided Democracy.

Often, what was thought to be standing in the way of the nation's *potensi* was not so much the adoption of the right policy or the implantation of the proper economic decision. Rather, what consistently seemed to block Indonesia's potential—at least in discussions of the question in speeches and magazine articles, in political cartoons or in the plots of Indonesian movies—was Indonesians making questionable moral choices when confronted with a new and modern way of living. Graft and corruption, nepotism, political favoritism, urban elitism and distance from Islam were all frequent targets of those who feared for the nation's future.

However, as this dissertation explores at length, cultural elements were also very much at play: rock-n-roll music, Hollywood movies, greed and coveting fancy clothing and household goods, western dancing, louche urban "free association" between men and women including prostitution, and western beauty influences that went against a perceived fundamental "eastern" modesty evoked strong reactions among many Indonesians. In sum, the temptations of a new, modern, big-city life were all possible causes for the nation's inability to reach its potential, all while modernity itself was critical to the endeavor.<sup>197</sup>

*Potensi*, therefore, was used as a measure of the possibility of contemporary moral failure as much as it was a vision of future possibilities. Modern life was, in one conception

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<sup>197</sup> This all remains significantly in play in contemporary Indonesia, as does the active use of the term *potensi*, though the sources and expressions of the failure to reach potential have shifted somewhat. *Dangdut*, a largely working-class national music form known for its highly sexualized young female stars has replaced rock-n-roll as a danger. (K-pop is less feared. Western rock-n-roll, though not unknown and with the interesting exception of heavy metal (Thanks to Michael Vann for that tidbit), remains largely outside urban Indonesia.) Hollywood is less feared now than it was, but movies are still censored to reflect squeamishness about overt sexuality on the screen. The internet is now seen as a major source of cultural "infestation," particularly for the easy access it provides to pornography. Louche sexuality is still an issue, but now the focus is much more on the presence of LGBT people in Indonesia, on gay sex parties and hidden lesbian couples than it is on heterosexual prostitution, which is openly available everywhere in Indonesia, as long as the police are paid proper "service fees" for the protection of sex work establishments. Proper women's attire in public remains heavily policed in certain public arenas, with many businesses and government offices and schools pressuring women to dress modestly and wear head coverings at work or making such things a *de facto* element of work uniforms for Muslim women and female students. Among cultural workers and artists, there is a rather constant evocation that their work is intended to "*melestarikan budaya Indonesia*," or "preserve Indonesian culture," by teaching young people local dance and music forms, by encouraging people to wear *batik* on Fridays, by mixing *gamelan* into modern musical expression, or by teaching young people to maintain regional languages and read old scripts. Again, all are seen as being somewhat hopeful and quixotic attempts to retain something "Indonesian" in what is considered a globalizing culture. The irony from an outside perspective is that only in Jakarta, and some highly touristy areas of Bali is significant amounts of western culture overtly evident in people's daily lives, and even then, only largely among elites. But the patterns of "moral crisis" around these issues today are not new. Rather, they were fully evident and centrally at play during the Sukarno era, a contention that is central to this dissertation, and a point that has rarely been made except in passing in the literature about the 1950s and 1960s.



that will be discussed later, “rickety and wobbly,” as it became unmoored from “tradition,” or at least from the definitions of local tradition that were derived, implemented and supported by the Dutch colonial state. The Sukarno era was full of attention paid to the possibility of ever-lurking moral crises, hidden as Trojan horses in the onslaught of modern life that “invaded” Indonesia in the early years following independence. As much there was a “short period in Indonesian history when everything seemed possible, and the future was full of promise,” there were simultaneously wide-spread concerns that some possibilities might go too far. Many of these concerns were about women.

The inclusion of alleged moral crises about women in both of the G-30-S narratives—that is the possible failure of both the army leadership and of Gerwani women—was neither idle nor trivial. Rather, it was central to each faction’s desire to stake a claim to one of Sukarno’s great national questions, “whether Indonesia will be glorious or whether Indonesia will be shattered.”<sup>198</sup>

In Indonesian, the charge Col. Untung made against the senior army leadership’s attitude toward women was only three words long. He said that they “*menghina kaum wanita*,” or “insulted women.” But the words, and their context, suggest that there was much more going on than simply some sort of degradation of individual women. Rather, it was Indonesian womanhood as a whole that had been denigrated. Indeed, Untung’s charge is importantly different from those leveled against Gerwani, because it calls men’s morality into question, and specifically that of men in positions of military leadership.<sup>199</sup>

The charge itself was included in the middle of a list of what might be considered the “moral crimes” of the generals. It was preceded by accusations that the generals were living extravagantly at a time when most Indonesians had been standing in lines to buy increasingly expensive staples such as rice, cooking oil, fabric and kerosene (used commonly for cooking fuel). The charge of extravagance, in line with a general leftist-communist critique of the Indonesian elite, would also have been read as insinuating that the generals and their families were living modern, urban and highly westernized lives in

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<sup>198</sup> “*soal Indonesia akan luhur atau Indonesia akan hantjur.*” Sukarno, in *Suluh Indonesia Mudah*, 1928, reserialized in 1965 in multiple publications. A longer version of the quote serves as the epigraph for the dissertation’s final chapter.

<sup>199</sup> General Yani in particular was famously and publicly criticized for his womanizing. Thanks to Nancy Florida for this detail. Although Sukarno is not challenged by Untung, his multiple marriages were also considered problematic by many progressives, and for many women across the ideological spectrum.

houses full of consumer goods that were simply unavailable to most Indonesians.<sup>200</sup> The charge about insulting women was also followed by another implied moral failure: that the generals were stripping the nation of its wealth and redirecting it to themselves, both individually and to their *anak-buah*, or protégés, and more importantly, to the military as an institution. Both these charges surrounding the mention of “insulting women” were presented as crimes waged against the Indonesian people as a nation.

One of the fundamental interventions of this dissertation is that it explores the ways in which Indonesian women were established as a *kaum* culturally. As the chapter has already explored, scholars have written about the development of women as a political group in early independent Indonesia. But in the details of discussions of fashion, makeup, beauty culture and running a household, we can also see the ways in which Indonesian women came to be imagined, by themselves as importantly as by anyone else, as a group with common experiences, interests and needs. This process, which one might call *kaumisasi*, (“*kaum*-ization,”) <sup>201</sup> was also attached to the concept of women as the Mothers of the Nation. The resulting cultural and political web within which Indonesian women existed was indeed complex. And, as the dissertation shows to some extent, this web of ideas, spun at the elite, urban level, nonetheless had long reach, affecting women at the regional and village levels, most particularly in the aftermath of October 1965.

Indeed, the charge of insulting women was not simply a criticism of individual women’s experiences of harassment and womanizing at the hands of the military elite. Rather, the charge was that the military was involved in an assault on women as a “*kaum*.” “*Kaum*,” as this chapter has already noted, is an Indonesian word that describes a group in its “groupness,” that is, as a distinguishable class with shared normative identity and characteristics. It can also carry the implication of such groups in their national, political

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<sup>200</sup> One fascinating example of this can be seen in the presence of advertisements for the restaurant in the newly opened luxury Hotel Indonesia in Jakarta that ran regularly in 1965 in *Angkatan Bersendjata*, the army newspaper. Prices for western-style meals were significantly above even average monthly incomes for teachers and mid-level civil servants. But the hotel regularly ran Indonesian language advertisements in military newspapers both before and after the 1965-1966 transition.

<sup>201</sup> This is not a real word in Indonesian. But given the fluidity and adaptability of the language, it would work to express the idea at hand, the way in which women were formed into a *kaum* of their own within the new nation. There would also be the possibility of using a causative construction of *kaum* to say women were “*dikaumkan*,” caused to become a *kaum*, or made into a *kaum* in specific ways at that particular time. One of the arguments about genocide will rest on an analysis of how a general *kaum wanita* or *kaum Ibu* was broken apart by the emergent New Order and replaced with a *kaum Ibu* that was different in fundamental ways than the *kaum Ibu* had been constructed during the Sukarno era.

standing. The charge against the generals, then, was that they were insulting not Indonesian women, but rather Indonesian womanhood, with the clear insinuation was that the charge of insulting women was also an attack on the nation as a whole.

The army's Lubang Buaya narrative put forward the same charge, but in that instance, against the women of Gerwani. The alleged depravity of these leftist women, both sexual and homicidal, was not merely constructed as an attack on the bodies of the seven soldiers. Rather, it was an attack on the nation, one that transformed the soldiers into "National Heroes," (*Pahlawan Nasional*;) around whose grotesquely imagined deaths the entire legitimacy of the New Order would be based. Furthermore, the charges against Gerwani would be interpreted primarily, particularly by non-Communist women activists, as a crime against the "good name" of Indonesian womanhood, again, against women considered as a *kaum* rather than as individuals.

This dissertation proposes that this inclusion of women as a national group at the center of one of the principal watersheds of Indonesian history is not coincidental. Rather, it explores how women were active and central participants in principal cultural questions of the Sukarno era: What did it mean to be Indonesian? What did it mean for Indonesians to be modern in a post-colonial setting? How were Indonesian identity and culture to be structured in order to keep the nation strong and protect it from both internal and external enemies who were seeking to destroy it through rebellion, capitalism and imperialism?

So far, few historical analyses, aside from Saskia Wieringa's, have put Indonesian women at the center of these important questions. For the most part, women's roles have been treated as a sidebar in discussion of the creation of the idea of an Indonesian nation. This dissertation, on the contrary, uses extensive analysis of materials produced by and for politically active and culturally elite Indonesian women to argue that these women not only placed themselves at the center of the discussion of national identity, but also that they did so explicitly.

Specifically, Indonesian women theorized their own senses of who they should be as a *kaum* in such a way that they became considered to be the moral pillars of the nation. Indeed, the charge of "insulting Indonesian womanhood," even if carried out by other women, became a central crime that the Army used to make the annihilation of the leftist-communist movement in Indonesia not only possible, but also necessary. Following that,

this charge, as seminal work by Julia Suryakusuma has shown, had a profound effect on the role Indonesian women were then confined to play in the New Order.<sup>202</sup>

Ideas of what might debase Indonesian womanhood were not new to 1965, however. Rather, their strength in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya laid precisely in the fact that the dangers Indonesian women faced in the modern world had already long been discussed in the vibrant and wide-ranging culture of women's magazines. In these publications, women themselves parsed the details of both the opportunities and dangers of their new modern national collective identity. It is to these sources that this introduction now turns.

### ***Women's Magazines: Indonesians Theorizing their Own Identities***

Most of the newer scholarship on Indonesian women's history discussed previously has been based largely on sources that could be described as political documents, or on interviews that seem to have focused on women's political activities. However, discussions about the place of women in the Indonesian nation were not only found in political tracts and theorizing, though certainly, these existed in abundance. Indeed, reports and proceedings of women's political congresses, which were a regular and important element of the Indonesian women's movement, have served the main source for several historians exploring the history of the Indonesian feminism.

These authors have rarely touched on women's magazines, however, despite the wealth of detailed information about Indonesian women they contain. Susan Martyn does reference *Wanita* and *Suara 'Aisjijah* in her work, but essentially only for their more specifically political editorials.<sup>203</sup> Saskia Wieringa does make use of the magazine *Api Kartini*, which was published by progressive women involved in Gerwani's movement to build kindergartens across the nation. She characterizes it mostly as "designed to draw middle-class housewives into the 'revolutionary family'," noting that the magazine "carried articles on cooking, dress-making and other general women's issues" alongside editorials

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<sup>202</sup> See the discussion of Suryakusuma's work earlier in this chapter.

<sup>203</sup> See the inclusions from both publications in the Bibliography to Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 236 (*Suara Aisjijah*) and p. 258 (*Wanita*.) She also makes significant use of *Suara Perwari*, that unfortunately I have not been able to read much of yet.

that “reflect[ed] the ideological preoccupations of [Gerwani].”<sup>204</sup> And she notes that the magazine was not greatly appreciated by Gerwani cadres, one of whom she quotes as saying “[i]t was not interesting for the women in the villages or in the city *kampung*.”

Although like Martyn, she mostly uses *Api Kartini* to track political stances and positions,<sup>205</sup> Wieringa also cites the magazine to discuss the use of women’s fashion in two occasions, once about the ambiguity of the magazine’s position about fashion model contests and glamor schools<sup>206</sup> and in the second instance in a discussion of ways in which “the majority of the Western fashion features were interpreted through socialist values; simple dresses rather than extravagant, luxurious clothes,” more in keeping with what she calls the “role models Gerwani provided from Soviet life [that] were more European than Indonesian.”<sup>207</sup> In that way, Wieringa also uses women’s magazines to a small extent to examine a broader question of women’s interactions with modernity, particularly in connection to the move to censor Hollywood influences, as part of her broader analysis of the Indonesian women’s movement.

But what authors have generally not included in their analyses, with the singular exception of Wieringa,<sup>208</sup> is the rich discussion of the national role being proposed for Indonesian women in other sections of women’s magazines. To be sure, women’s magazines *did* contain specific discussions of women’s politics and their role in the nation. But how Indonesian women viewed themselves, how they theorized their own identities, was also fully enmeshed in their discussions about fashion and beauty; marriage, motherhood, family life and the raising of children; the possible cultural influences of western movies and music; and the possible excesses of modern urban culture that were central concerns of the world of women’s magazines that flourished in Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s.

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<sup>204</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 22.

<sup>205</sup> See the variety of sub-categories under *Api Kartini* in the index to *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 382, which runs the gamut from education and feminist issues to the marriage law, socialism, Sukarno’s marriage and West Irian. It should be noted that one of the sub-categories, on the “call to ban Gerwani,” is actually to *Api*, a fiercely anti-Communist and entirely different publication, but seems to have been included under the *Api Kartini* entry by mistake.

<sup>206</sup> These are also discussed in Chapter 6 of the dissertation.

<sup>207</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 273. This calls for simplicity in *Api Kartini* are also noted in Chapter 6 of the dissertation, though without the connection to Soviet and Eastern European aesthetics, which is a question I will need to look at further in future versions of this work. I should note that among the magazines that I saw for sale in book kiosks in Indonesia on several occasions were English language copies of *Soviet Life* dating to the late 1950s and early 1960s.

<sup>208</sup> It should be noted, however, that Wieringa restricts her discussion to *Api Kartini*. In a similar fashion, her use of daily newspapers is essentially limited to *Harian Rakjat*, the PKI newspaper.

Indonesian women's magazines were not merely compilations of beauty tips, fashion advice and updated recipes, although they certainly included significant elements of all three. Rather, in Indonesia, as was also the case in Japan, women's magazines were (and still are) a rich, densely packed and complex source for lenses on the effects of modernity on a nation. As such, they demand a detailed, longitudinal reading.

In the introduction for her book on Japanese women's magazines in the 1920s and 1930s, Sarah Frederick wrote:

It is hard to imagine a richer source for the culture of prewar Japan than monthly women's magazines; paging through year after year is an amazing experience to which it is difficult to do justice. Every issue has something for everyone: fiction by long-forgotten writers, unknown works by famous ones, commentary on Japanese "Miss" contests by illustrious intellectuals, cutting-edge commercial art, architectural plans, sewing patterns, and recipes, as well as lively and sophisticated debates on birth control, the proper age for marriage, national identity, education, and the economy. Over the decades, changes in urban life, economic structure, and political structure unfold in a slow but visually dramatic way, as do related transformations in artistic movements, aesthetic tastes, and print technologies.<sup>209</sup>

This is equally true for the Indonesian women's magazines that serve as the principal primary sources for this dissertation. In discussions of how to decorate a modern house and lead a modern household, of which style of clothing to wear in which occasion, of the raising of children and specifically of daughters, of the politics of monogamy laws and of women running for office, of what it meant to be an Indonesian woman, and of solidarity among Indonesian women and with other women in the developing world, of women's roles in the nation, there emerges a complex, complicated and often contradictory reading of the development of what the dissertation terms a "web of modern Indonesian identity."

The cracks in the experience of modernity emerge most interestingly in the contradictions in these sources—the debates, for instance, about what it meant for a young woman to wear her hair too high on her head, or her skirts too high up her legs, while simultaneously supporting women's rights to dress in a modern fashion. Again, writing about Japan, Frederick writes, "[t]he contradictory effects of capitalism and modernity on

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<sup>209</sup> Sarah Frederick, *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan*, pp. vii-viii.

people's lives are sometimes clearest in representations of women, and are especially obvious in the pages of women's magazines."<sup>210</sup>

In Indonesian women's magazines, the same is true for the tensions inherent in lives that were seeking to be simultaneously "Indonesian" and "modern." Much of what was being defined as "Indonesian,"—particularly for women—was based on holding true to "eastern," or at least not fully western cultural ideas about femininity. In many respects, modernity was seen as a product of the west and of European colonialism. The construction of a modern Indonesian national identity was a process of mutually enmeshing multiple cultural maps into the web of identity mentioned above. This showed up, explicitly, in discussions of what clothing to wear on which occasions, what the limits of beauty culture should be, and how women who exceeded boundaries of appropriateness should be viewed.

The idea that fashion, identity and modernity formed a complex web was clear to Indonesian women themselves during the 1950s and 1960s. One important, but as yet undiscussed, analysis *by* an Indonesian woman *about* Indonesian women suggested—in 1952, significantly before many Western women were having similar discussions—that "in the matter of clothing, there are questions of history, culture, economics, religion, politics and art that have a basis or background that is exceptionally important . . ." <sup>211</sup> This awareness should not be surprising, given that a history of sumptuary laws in the archipelago had limited "native" women's ability to adopt western fashion wholesale beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>212</sup> Early 20<sup>th</sup> century colonial practices regarding the ability to wear western fashion in public became a marker of European legal status, of who was "European" or "Dutch" and who was "native." Elite young women who were given Dutch educations and "dressed Dutch" at school were otherwise expected to wear *kain-kebaya*, the default native women's clothing that was comprised of a length of *batik* worn wrapped around the hips and legs (the *kain*), and a long-sleeved blouse (the *kebaya*), in their daily lives outside of school.

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<sup>210</sup> Sarah Frederick, *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women's Magazines in Interwar Japan*, p. viii.

<sup>211</sup> Prija Chandra, "Pakaian Wanita Kita" ("Our Women's Clothing") *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155. This quotation also serves as the epigraph for Chapter 3.

<sup>212</sup> Generally, see Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*.

When some of the best scholars of modern Indonesia came together in 1997 to produce the one major collection of articles on fashion and history, *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, they discussed much of the basic contours of the development of fashion in the Indies. The editor of the collection, Henk Schulte Nordholt, carefully noted in his introduction that the authors of the chapters were more interested in reading clothing as a reflection of social and political structures than as a reflection of individual choice. Referencing western scholars mostly from the 1980s and 1990s, he wove a theoretical argument of the meanings of sartorial power in a colonial and modernizing space where lines of race and status were drawn legally and reinforced in the visuals of clothing.

Gender was given significant attention in the essays, as was the changing nature of which women wore which *kain* and *kebaya* in which spaces and how that shifted with major developments in the colonies, most particularly the arrival of large numbers of Dutch women in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the growth of the nationalist movement beginning roughly the same time. As was mentioned earlier, new source materials such as colonial photographs, advertising, mail-order catalogues and women's household manuals—the consultation of which Rudolf Mrázek called “exercises in reading colonial trash”—informed the scholarship.<sup>213</sup>

But even these scholars, the leaders of their generation, missed the rich materials available to them, which, I would argue, were right under their noses, available for sale in almost every used book kiosk or shop in Jakarta, Solo, Yogyakarta and Bandung, among other cities they likely spent time in. Several archival centers in the United States, Cornell in particular but also the University of Michigan, already held rich collections of these magazines. Nordholt went so far, even, as to note what they saw as a gap in the historical record. He wrote:

In terms of available source material the 1950s can be regarded as a ‘disappearing decade’ (McVey 1994).<sup>214</sup> Although we know quite a lot about political developments in those years, relatively little is known about everyday life. Moreover, memories of the 1950s are often deeply coloured by contemporary conventions. Asked what kind of dress she wore during her

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<sup>213</sup> Henk Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Outward Appearances*, Introduction, p. 7.

<sup>214</sup> The reference is to her article “The case of the disappearing decade,” in D. Bourchier and J. Legge, eds., *Democracy in Indonesia 1950s and 1990s*.



wedding in the 1950s, a rich woman answered Lizzy van Leeuwen that she was, of course, dressed in a beautiful traditional costume. Photos revealed the the couple was actually wearing 'traditional' Western wedding clothes, she in white, he in black.<sup>215</sup>

In fact, we can know a great deal about everyday life in the 1950s, if we know where to look. This is the bread and butter, or perhaps more accurately, the rice and *sambal* of women's magazines. For instance, even a quick reading of wedding fashion articles in *Wanita* or *Keluarga*, both principal sources for this dissertataion, would have made clear that women, particularly wealthy Javanese and Chinese women, often wore both western wedding dresses and "traditional" outfits at different points in their weddings. Thus the problem here may not actually have been the rich woman's memory, but rather the set of questions the western historian did not perhaps know how to ask completely. The larger issue—one that this dissertation hopes to begin to address—is that the "disappearance" of the 1950s in Indonesian historiography is not so much a question of lack of materials, but rather a problem born of the politics of writing Indonesian history throughout the New Order and continuing until today.

Nonetheless, the discussion of fashion and culture was omnipresent in and central to Indonesian women's discourse about the nation throughout the era of revolution and independence. And, as Nordholt, *et. al.*, note for other decades, discussions of fashion in Indonesia were never simply about clothing. This dissertation argues that these discussions extended also to be about clothing and hairstyles, about social dancing and going to the movies, about etiquette and manners and about how to host a dinner party. Consequently, they reflect the fine-grained nuances of the intricate webs of what it came to mean to be Indonesian in ways that the sources about men that lie at the center of the vast majority of the scholarship on Indonesian nationalism simply never address.

*Without* critical attention to the questions raised by Indonesian women's voices in the Sukarno era, I suggest, scholars cannot construct complete arguments about the nature of the Indonesian nation. Indeed, the questions raised in such critically important works as

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<sup>215</sup> Henk Schulte Nordholt, ed., *Outward Appearances*, Introduction, p. 8.

Takashi Shiraishi's *An Age in Motion*, and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*,<sup>216</sup> to name but two, could be re-worked to be significantly more complex and illuminating if women were to be put into the mix. Imagine how much more if they were to put women's voices, and women's fashion (writ large, so more than merely clothing), at the centers of their authority.

Examples of the variety of the magazines used in this dissertation demonstrate the richness of these sources. Among the first Indonesian women's magazine to be published in the new nation, in 1949, was *Wanita*, or "Woman." A title of Balai Pustaka, the state publishing house, the magazine was subtitled as being "for Indonesian mothers, wives and women in the household."<sup>217</sup>

*Wanita* was tightly connected to the cultural and political elite of the nationalist government.<sup>218</sup> Over its first five years, the magazine's editorial board included women with significant nationalist and political pedigrees including Zahra Hafni Abuhanifah<sup>219</sup> and Supeni Poedjoboentoro,<sup>220</sup> as well as the wives of prominent political and cultural figures such as Ruslan Abdulgani,<sup>221</sup> Wilopo,<sup>222</sup> and Armijn Pané.<sup>223</sup> Prominent female political leaders were contributors to the magazine. S.K. Trimurti<sup>224</sup> regularly wrote about politics,

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<sup>216</sup> Which, despite its desire to address the question of nationalism globally was largely based, and at its strongest, in Anderson's immensely detailed knowledge of his Indonesian sources.

<sup>217</sup> "untuk ibu, isteri dan wanita Indonesia dalam rumah tangga," *Wanita*, 1949, no. 1, 17 August, front cover. "Rumah tangga," translates both as "home" and "household." I have used both translations for the same term when either seemed more appropriate in context.

<sup>218</sup> In 1953, the magazine would move out from under Balai Pustaka and be published by its own *yayasan*, or foundation, though still with the same nationalist elites in charge.

<sup>219</sup> Called Nj. (Njonja, or Mrs.) Hafni Abu Hanifah in the masthead, she was a Dutch educated senior member of Masjumi, the modernist Islamic movement, who was elected to the party's executive committee in 1954, and to the Konstituante (national parliament) as a Masjumi representative for Central Java in 1955. For more on Ibu Abuhanifah, see Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, and Dzulfikriddin, *Mohammad Natsir Dalam Sejarah Politik Indonesia*.

<sup>220</sup> Also often referred to simply as Supeni, she was a politician, author on women's political issues, and was elected to the Konstituante in 1955 as a member of the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI).

<sup>221</sup> Secretary General of the Bandung Conference in 1955, Foreign Minister from 1956-57, head of the Supreme Advisory Council from 1959-1962 and Minister for Communications and Information in 1963-64.

<sup>222</sup> Prime Minister and leader of the "Wilopo Cabinet" in 1952-53, and Speaker of the Constitutional Assembly from 1955-1959.

<sup>223</sup> Author, playwright and translator of Kartini's letters into Indonesian, and Secretary General of the Ministry of Information in the early 1950s. Poedjiati A. Pané would be the magazine's chief editor until 1956, but was only referred to in her own name for a short while. By early 1950, the masthead read Nj. P. Armijn Pané. In the later 1950's the magazine was edited by author Lies Said.

<sup>224</sup> Trimurti was one of the most influential women in Indonesian politics of the twentieth century. Born in Solo in 1912 and provided a Dutch education, she became involved in the nationalist movement as a teacher in the early 1930s. In 1936, she was arrested and imprisoned by the colonial authorities for writing and distributing anti-colonial pamphlets. She left teaching, and with her husband, she established the newspaper *Pesat*, that was then in turn banned during the Japanese occupation. Having once been arrested by the Dutch, Trimurti was arrested and tortured by the Japanese as well. She was known in particular for her strong support of worker's rights and was appointed as Indonesia's first Minister of Labor from 1946-1947. In 1950, she was one of the founders of Gerwis, (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Sedar*, or the

Maria Ulfah<sup>225</sup> about the law, and Herawati Diah<sup>226</sup> about journalism and international relations, among others. The political and cultural projects of the wives of both President Sukarno and Vice President Hatta were subjects of regular reporting.<sup>227</sup>

Given its close connections to the Sukarno government, *Wanita's* political reporting and editorials provide an excellent source for research on Indonesian women's politics of the era. Indeed, this is exactly how Martyn uses the magazine in her work. But this political framework at the front of the magazines can also help historians read the significance of the cultural politics imbedded in other articles about the supposedly missing everyday lives of women in the 1950s.

Furthermore, there are other publications against which historians can triangulate *Wanita's* obvious position at the center of Sukarnoist authority, at least to some extent. Two other women's magazines began publishing in 1949 and 1950, *Dunia Wanita* ("Women's World,") and *Suara Perwari* ("The Voice of Perwari.")<sup>228</sup> Although I haven't been able to find enough copies of either from before 1952 to make as much systematic use

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Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women.) The leftist national women's organization was renamed Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, the Movement of Indonesian Women,) in 1954, and was linked to the Indonesian Communist Party (the *Partai Komunis Indonesia*, or PKI.) The history of Gerwani in 1965 and 1966 is, as Chapter 1 has noted, at the absolute center of this dissertation. Trimurti left Gerwani in 1965 following the events at Lubang Buaya. She was a vocal critic of the Suharto government at various times during the New Order. She outlasted the Suharto dictatorship and died in Jakarta in 2008. Her life was spent at the very heart of the Indonesian nationalist movement for almost the entirety of its first century.

<sup>225</sup> Maria Ulfah Santoso was born in Central Java in 1911, a daughter of the influential noble Djajadiningrat family. She received one of the most elite educations of Indonesian women of her generation, earned a law degree from Leiden University in the Netherlands in 1933, and in doing so became Indonesia's first indigenous female lawyer. With Adam Malik, she established the Indonesian News Agency, Antara, in 1934. She married in 1938, the same year she also led the national women's congress that promulgated the first demands for a modern marriage law and established *Hari Ibu*, or Women's/Mother's Day as a political statement of women's contributions to the nationalist movement. She became Indonesia's first female cabinet minister in 1946 as the Social Minister in the second and third Sjahrir cabinets. She was the head of Kowani, the *Kongres Wanita Indonesia*, or Indonesian Women's Congress, from 1950-1961, and head of the Film Censorship Board during that same period. She remained somewhat politically active during the early years of the New Order, and died in 1988.

<sup>226</sup> Herawati Diah was the first Indonesian woman to receive an American higher education, her parents having chosen to send her to college at Barnard in the 1930s, rather than to Holland for a "colonial" education. She became one of Indonesia's leading journalists, often represented the nation abroad, and was, among other things, the founder of *Keluarga* ("Family,") magazine that is covered in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

<sup>227</sup> Mohammad Hatta had only one wife, Rachmi Rachim. Sukarno had nine wives over the course of his lifetime. In 1949, he was married to his third wife, Fatmawati. He would take his first concurrent wife (his fourth overall) in 1953 when he married Hartini. The reaction of Indonesian women to his marriage to Hartini and its effect on debates over the marriage laws is discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>228</sup> *Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia*, or the Women's Federation of the Republic of Indonesia. The party was formed in 1945, as the by-product of a failed attempt to build a single national women's organization at the end of the war. Only two organizations, *Wani* and *Perwani*, both of which had generally elite socialist orientations, were able to find common cause and form Perwari. A second attempt at women's political unity in 1946 led to an agreement to form the *Kongres Wanita Indonesia*, Kowani, which was an association of women's organizations rather than a single unified national women's party. See Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, p. 49, which references Kartowijono, "The Awakening of the Women's Movement in Indonesia," and Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 24-25.

of them as I would like, the glimpses the few editions I could read help make the point that there is not only a variety of sources available to historians hoping to better understand women in the 1950s and 1960s, but also that these sources point towards differences of opinion, contention on political and cultural matters and significant variations in the lives and outlooks of different groups of Indonesian women. This is all the more important to remember because of the discussions this dissertation will engage in regarding the ways in which Indonesian women were fashioned into a single national group, complete with their own required uniforms and standards of beauty.

*Dunia Wanita*—a magazine that later used the slogan “From Women For Women,”<sup>229</sup>—began publishing in Medan, Sumatra in June 1949. From the beginning *Dunia Wanita* (“Women’s World,”) addressed a need for women to shape the discussions of women’s issues in the nation. “If we cast a look across all of Indonesia,” the introductory note of the first issue says,

one senses a dearth of magazines for women. This deficiency means there is a setback for women generally.

Because magazines that are published by men don’t publish much about issues connected to womanhood, the development that women would hope for isn’t in tune with the quickness of the advancement of the times.

Because of that, we are publishing this magazine because we feel that by bringing forth information in this magazine, we will contribute a service to the development of women.<sup>230</sup>

The magazine’s editor, Ani Idrus, was an established journalist who had worked in national-level publications since the early 1930s, including founding both the nationalist political magazine *Seruan Kita* (“*Our Cry*”) in 1938 and the daily newspaper *Harian Waspada* in 1947 with her husband, H. Moh. Said. With the establishment of the political party process, she joined Sukarno’s Indonesian Nationalist Party (“*Partai Nasionalis*”

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<sup>229</sup> “*Dari Wanita Untuk Wanita*,” the slogan seems to appear for the first time on the 1 March 1951 issue. Previously, the magazine appeared simply to be labeled as a “bimonthly popular magazine,” (“*Madjallah tengah bulanan populer*.”)

<sup>230</sup> “*Apa bila kita melajangkan pemandangan keseluruhan Indonesia, maka terasalah kekurangan madjallah untuk wanita. Kekurangan ini berarti satu kemunduran bagi wanita umumnja. // Sebab madjallah jang diterbitkan oleh laki-laki tidak banjak memual soal jang berhugungan dengan kewanitaian, sehingga kemandjuan jang diharapkan oleh wanita tidak selaras dengan tjepatnja kemandjuan zaman. // Oleh sebab itulah kami menerbitkan madjallah ini karena kami merasa insaf dengan djalan memberikan penerangan-penerangan dalam madjallah ini kami dapat menjumbangkan bakti untuk kemandjuan wanita.*” *Dunia Wanita* 1949, #1, 15 June, p. 5.

*Indonesia*,” or PNI), which aligned with her earlier membership in the youth political movement *Indonesia Muda* (“Young Indonesia,”) in the 1930’s.

The contents of *Dunia Wanita* aligns closely with that of *Wanita*. However, perhaps because it was published outside the world of the Jakarta elite, its approach appeared less flashy. This was particularly true in terms of fashion and beauty coverage, which it included, but more in terms of giving simple patterns for women to use rather than launching into extended discussions of fashion as a subject.<sup>231</sup> Notably, however, it ran almost exactly the same advertisements for beauty products as *Wanita*, in the same months, underscoring the web that existed among commercial women’s magazines and the beauty and advertising industries. Its first cover was also, like that of *Wanita* a few months later, a picture of Sukarno’s wife Fatmawati wearing *kain-kebaya*, and her two children at the time, Guntur and Megawati, in western play clothes.<sup>232</sup>

Perwari, the women’s political party, began publishing *Suara Perwari* in October 1950.<sup>233</sup> The single edition from before late 1953 I have seen is interesting, with articles on Perwari’s aims by Soepeni Poedjboentoro;<sup>234</sup> a pull-quote from the text of *Sarinah*; an analysis of the form and structure of the nation by Rasuna Said; a report on Perwari’s approach to the issue of marriage at the 1950 Women’s Congress; a multipage article on banning child and female prostitution and the publishing of smut; and thoughts on the driving principals of women’s organizations that could allow them to succeed both in the city and in villages by Nj. A. M. Pasuruan.

A lengthy article in the same edition on “Women as True Mothers,”<sup>235</sup> by Nj. Sunarto, a Perwari member from the organization’s branch in Magelang, Central Java, repeated Sukarno’s discussion in *Sarinah*, referencing the Prophet Muhamad, that “Women (mothers) are the *barometer* (the measure) of a nation.”<sup>236</sup> A thought held by “some

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<sup>231</sup> Again, I haven’t had access to nearly as complete a run of *Dunia Wanita* as I have of *Wanita*, but at all points where I can make direct comparisons, the tone and coverage of *Dunia Wanita* seems to be more simple in its approach and use of language, while not at all lacking in the nuance of its writing and analysis. There is one small attack on *Dunia Wanita* in the pages of *Wanita*, in the form of a letter to the editor, which suggests that *Dunia Wanita* was written by men but this doesn’t seem to be borne out by what I have seen in the pages of the magazine, and the challenge didn’t appear to be answered.

<sup>232</sup> The cover of the first edition of *Wanita*, published on August 17, 1949, is discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>233</sup> The title means “The Voice of Perwari.” The first copy I have seen is from May 1951, which is No. 8 of Year 1.

<sup>234</sup> Supeni was also a contributor to *Wanita* magazine, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>235</sup> “*Wanita sebagai Ibu sedjati*,” *Suara Perwari*, 1951, #8, May, p. 11. The article was the winner of an essay writing competition held for Kartini Day in Magelang.

<sup>236</sup> “*Kaum wanita (ibu) ialah barometer (ukuran) suatu bangsa*.” *Suara Perwari*, 1951, #8, May, p. 11.

people,” she wrote, that “[w]omen are the pillars of the nation, if women are good, of course the nation will prosper, and if women are base, certainly the nation will be damaged as well.”<sup>237</sup> It referred to women as “*Ibu sedjati*” or “true (or real) mothers,” a phrase that was used prominently as activist women staked their claims to political space as the moral arbiters of the nation.

A photo spread on the “Advancement of our Women”<sup>238</sup> showed that women could be government ministers, doctors and nurses, seamstresses, artists, stewardesses—“Why not?” the article asked<sup>239</sup>—and noted that women were also skilled at taking the wheel of a car.<sup>240</sup> A letter from a reader asked for clarification of an earlier article on the citizenship of children born to a woman outside of marriage.<sup>241</sup> The last page of the magazine published recipes for a biscuit tart and a noodle casserole.

The only nod to fashion was an advertisement on the inside back cover for various types of *batik* from the “Batik Trading Coy.” which had branches in Jakarta, Cirebon, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and Yogyakarta. The model in the ad wore a *kain* in a classic Central Javanese *batik* pattern, and a conservatively cut *kebaya*. Her hair was worn in a classic low bun, and she wore a string of pearls and simple earrings.<sup>242</sup> That is, she was shown in the uniform of the public national woman that would come to be imbued with significant meaning in the Sukarno years.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to read other copies of *Suara Perwari* from its earliest days. It seems to offer a more politically focused reading of Indonesian women than *Wanita* did at this time. It will be good to keep in mind while reading Chapter 2, which focuses on the first year of *Wanita*, that there was a somewhat countervailing voice to that politically central magazine. In particular, since *Wanita* was tied rather strongly to the Sukarnoist movement, initially at least, its editors seemed to avoid certain discussions that

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<sup>237</sup> “Dan ada pula setengah orang mengatakan: Perempuan<sup>2</sup> itu tiang negeri, djikalau perempuan itu baik, tentulah negerinja sedjahtera, dan djika perempuan<sup>2</sup> itu djelek, tentual negerinja rusak djuga.” *Suara Perwari*, 1951, #8, May, p. 11. This concept, and Suarkno’s use of it is discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>238</sup> “Kemadjuan Wanita<sup>2</sup> Kita,” *Suara Perwari*, 1951, #8, May, pp. 20-21.

<sup>239</sup> “‘Nona Udara’ mengapa tidak.” *Suara Perwari*, 1951, #8, May, p. 21.

<sup>240</sup> “Memegang setir mobil pandai djuga.” *Suara Perwari*, 1951, #8, May, p. 21.

<sup>241</sup> The reader was troubled by the possibility of women having children without being married, the former article had noted that the new constitution conferred citizenship on individuals based on their birth, not their mother’s marital status.

<sup>242</sup> Chapter 2 in particular offers a significant discussion of the wearing of *kain* (batik cloth) and *kebaya* (a blouse that can take a variety of forms.) As will be discussed in Chapter 2, this is a conservatively “classic” way of wearing *kain-kebaya*.

might create friction among the various women's organizations the nationalists were trying to unify.

Balai Pustaka published other magazines on national culture, such as *Mimbar Indonesia*, but they only occasionally addressed women's issues or women's culture specifically. While there are examples of local publications more akin to newsletters than magazines, they were often connected to individual organizations or political parties and appear to have limited scope, distribution and effect.

These magazines were not the first Indonesian women's periodicals. Several women's magazines that pre-date the Revolution had either an interrupted or limited presence in the early 1950s. *Suara 'Aisijah*, (*The Voice of 'Aisijah*), a nationally distributed modernist Muslim women's magazine of Muhammadiyah began publishing intermittently in 1926 but wasn't produced between 1942 and 1952. A Dutch language magazine, *De Huisvrouw in Indonesië*, (*The Housewife in Indonesia*), was revived in Batavia from a pre-war magazine, *Huisvrouwen te Batavia*, the publication of the Dutch wives' association in the colonial capital from 1930-1940. It came back into publication in Jakarta in April 1948 as the *Officeel Orgaan van de Vereniging van Huisvrouwen te Batavia*. (*Official Organ of the Association of Housewives in Batavia*)<sup>243</sup> and continued publication in Dutch until 1957, when its Dutch readership based in the Jakarta business community was largely expelled from Indonesia.<sup>244</sup>

In late 1952, for reasons I have not been able to pin down satisfactorily, there was an explosion of private magazine publishing in Indonesia. The new titles covered a wide spectrum of interests, sports, film, literature, and other smaller "specialist" subjects. Among them was an important national magazine, *Keluarga*, ("Family,") that burst upon the scene of women's magazines. *Keluarga's* editor and publisher was Herawati Diah, the first Indonesian woman to have received a college degree abroad, in journalism from Barnard

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<sup>243</sup> The first edition in 1948 reports on the meeting to re-establish the organization, held at the Hotel des Indes, the premier luxury hotel in Batavia, complete with tea, lemonade, cake and sorbet. Although the photos of the event show Mrs. S. Abdulkadir in *kain-kebaya* addressing the group, almost certainly in Dutch, the gathered women are overwhelmingly European (or likely also Eurasian with European legal identity,) and dressed in European fashion and with European hairstyles. During 1948, Batavia, soon to be Jakarta, was under Dutch control as part of the Renville Agreement. For a list of other local versions of *de Huisvrouw* in the colonial East Indies, see the bibliography of Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>244</sup> The expulsion of Dutch businesses in 1958 and its effect on Indonesian women's magazines is discussed in Chapter 6. In 1958, the magazine changed its name to *Warta dan Rumah Tangga* (*News and Home*) and began publishing in Indonesian, though still focused on a small cosmopolitan Jakarta elite.

College in New York. She was also the wife of Indonesian journalist B.M. Diah, a nationalist leader and the founder in 1945 of *Merdeka*, a primary nationalist newspaper during the Revolution and afterwards. Later, in 1953 at Sukarno's direct request, the Diahs together founded the English-language daily *The Indonesian Observer*. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, B.M. Diah was Sukarno's ambassador to Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom and Thailand.<sup>245</sup>

Herawati Diah held a public position in her own right at the epicenter of the Jakarta nationalist elite. Both her husband and her uncle, Subardjo, were among the Indonesian leaders present at the house of Admiral Tadashi Maeda throughout the night of August 16-17, 1945, when Sukarno and Hatta were threatened and cajoled by nationalist youth into proclaiming Indonesian independence. Subardjo was named Foreign Minister in the first Indonesian cabinet, and his house functioned as the ministry itself. Because of her English fluency, Herawati was asked to serve as his private secretary. She represented Indonesia abroad on various occasions from 1948 on, many times officially in her role as a journalist, but also often as a representative of Indonesian women. In many ways at the time, therefore, having spent six years in the United States, ensconced in the cultural center of New York City, Ibu Herawati was Indonesia's most prominent "international" modern woman.

*Keluarga's* first editions reflected both her social position and her significant time abroad. The magazine was presented as a reincarnation of her mother's pre-war magazine, *Dunia Kita*, (*"Our World"*)—"really more of a newsletter," Ibu Herawati said in an interview.<sup>246</sup> Her mother, S. A. Latip, wrote in an introduction to *Keluarga* that *Dunia Kita* had been aimed at the basic advancement of women in their households, "many of whom at that time needed a push or a guide post in their lives."<sup>247</sup> But the early 1950s were a new time, one in which many women were traveling abroad, either for education or as wives

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<sup>245</sup> Chapter 6 discusses that Ibu Herawati was clear that her husband's move into the diplomatic corps was occasioned by Sukarno's desire to silence his independent voice in Indonesia's media during the initial years of Guided Democracy.

<sup>246</sup> Personal interview, Herawati Diah. Jakarta, October 5, 2012.

<sup>247</sup> "Madjallah 'Dunia Kita' terutama ditudjukan kepada kemandjuan wanita kita jang pada waktu itu masih banjak membutuhkan pendorong atau petundjuk djalan dalam hidupnja." *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 3.



accompanying “government men from going back and forth to Europe, America and other places.”<sup>248</sup> For new times, a new magazine was necessary.

In her own introduction, “Not for Women Only,”<sup>249</sup> Herawati Diah envisioned the magazine meeting the needs of the “whole family . . . Mother, Father and Child.”<sup>250</sup> “For me—and maybe for many other Indonesian women” she wrote,

the time of just-for-women-only has passed. To borrow the words of Bung Karno, the women’s struggle is no longer in a phase of opposing men, rather it has already reached the level of struggling along with men.<sup>251</sup>

The interests of women would still be met, she noted, with “special pages for women. It must be recognized that although the women’s struggle has reached the same level as men’s, there are many issues that only just involve women. Such as the question of managing the household, women’s organizations, women’s clothing, etc., are outside the interests of men.”<sup>252</sup>

This was not actually how the shape of the magazine moved forward. Special pages for men<sup>253</sup> and children were included briefly in the magazine, but within the magazine’s first year, they had all but disappeared. Promised English-language pages never came to pass in any meaningful way. As with all new projects, initial visions often change when they are put into practice. In that vein, *Keluarga*, like *Wanita*, came to focus primarily on women’s issues.

One element of *Keluarga*’s approach that was immediately apparent was its strong connections to Indonesia’s intellectual leaders, who wrote lengthy, involved articles for the first issue. Dr. Seno Sastramidjojo, who had also written on marriage in the first year of

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<sup>248</sup> “Bapak-bapak dari golongan pemerintah mondar-mandir pergi ke Eropa, Amerika dan lain-lain tempat beserta isterinja.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 3.

<sup>249</sup> “Tidak Untuk Wanita Saja.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 6.

<sup>250</sup> “untuk seluruh keluarga . . . untuk Ibu, Bapak dan Anak.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 6.

<sup>251</sup> “Bagi saja—dan mungkin djuga bagi banjak wanita Indonesia lainnja—masa untuk-kaum-wanita-saja sudah lewat. Untuk memindjam perkataan-perkataan Bung Karno, perdjjuangan kaum wanita tidak lagi dalam fase melawan kaum laki-laki, akan tetapi telah mentjapai tingkat perdjjuangan bersama kaum lelaki.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 6. The reference to Sarinah is clear.

<sup>252</sup> “halaman-halaman khusus untuk kaum wanita. Memang harus diakui bahwa walaupun perdjjuangan kaum wanita telah mentjapai tingkat bersama kaum laki-laki, ada banjak soal2 jang meliputi dunia kewanitaan saja. Seperti soal mengatur rumah tangga, organisasi wanita, pakaian wanita, dsb.-nja, adalah diluar perhatian kaum bapak.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 6.

<sup>253</sup> The December 1952 issue included an interesting article for men, labeled tongue-in-cheek that it was “forbidden for women to read,” (“dilarang dibatja kaum wanita,”) that asked about the nature of men’s attractions to different types of women, “A wife who is beautiful or . . . ?, . . . Educated, but . . . , . . . A wife for the city?” (“Isteri jang tjantik atau . . . ? . . . Terpeladjar, tetapi . . . , . . . Isteri untuk kota?”). *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 17.

*Wanita*, was tapped for an extensive article on “Health and the Family,”<sup>254</sup> which stressed modern approaches to hygiene, housekeeping and building family harmony that he felt would result in a healthier nation. Siti Danilah, a prominent female journalist and co-founder of the important daily newspaper *Harian Rakjat* with her husband Sjamsuddin Sutan Makmur,<sup>255</sup> wrote about the legal rights of wives whose husbands may have entered second or even third marriages in a “secret” way. This not only addressed the question of men keeping mistresses under the cover of polygamous marriage, “secret marriage” was also a euphemism for going to prostitutes, who some Muslim men would “momentarily marry”<sup>256</sup> so as not to fall afoul, they would argue, of religious prohibitions against adultery.<sup>257</sup> Maria Ulfah wrote about the law, as she had for *Wanita*. Ki Hadjar Dewantara wrote a fascinating article on “Language in the Life of Man and Nation.”<sup>258</sup>

Dewantara’s writing is worth analyzing briefly here because of how it tied together issues of culture, the nation, fears of deracination and the possibility of impending moral crisis. The article described language as a “bridge” between inquiry and understanding. In any field—education, science, politics, history or the arts—

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<sup>254</sup> “Masalah Kesehatan dan Keluarga,” *Keluarga*, December 1952, pp. 18-21.

<sup>255</sup> Interestingly, the byline for the piece was “Nj. Siti Danilah St. M.,” in which her married status announced by the title Njonja, which also suggests her age and social seniority, while her husband’s last name is somewhat hidden by the use of initials. This is not an unusual formulation, however, for well-known and influential women at the time.

<sup>256</sup> “*nikah sementara*.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 12.

<sup>257</sup> “*Kalau Laki<sup>2</sup> Nikah Sembunji*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 12. The husbands would technically “marry” the woman before having sex, and then “divorce” them immediately afterwards. The technique is used as a part of the cultures of prostitution across parts of the Muslim world, but is also roundly criticized, most specifically on the theological grounds that a man needs to get the permission of his first wife before taking a second. This was an issue with Sukarno’s marriage to a second wife in 1953, and is discussed later in the dissertation.

<sup>258</sup> “*Bahasa dalam hidup manusia dan bangsa*.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, pp. 7-8, 31. “*Manusia*” means “mankind” or “humankind,” more broadly. Ki Hadjar Dewantara was one of the giants of the Indonesian nationalist movement. Born into Central Javanese royalty, the grandson of Pakualam III, Dewantara took advantage of his elite Dutch education to become one of the early native journalists in the Dutch East Indies. He was a central member of the *pergerakan* generation that initiated the idea of an Indonesian nation and began to agitate for independence from the Netherlands. He was particularly (im)famous for his 1913 article “If I were a Dutchman,” (“*Als ik eens Nederlander was*,”) that criticized a Dutch colonial subscription campaign to raise funds from their colonial subjects to celebrate the centenary of the Netherlands’ independence from France in the Napoleonic Wars. Fearing that his writings might incite rebellion, the Dutch arrested Dewantara and sent him to exile in the Netherlands. While in Europe, he studied education, and was particularly interested by the progressive model of Montessori education. He returned to Yogyakarta in 1919, and three years later he established a new school for indigenous students based in Montessori principals called *Taman Siswa*, (“Students’ Garden,”) which grew into a national educational movement. In my interview with her, Ibu Diah did not remember this particular article when I asked her about it. But when I showed her a copy of it, she found it fascinating, saying “yes, that’s right!”

those who use language (whether as a mode of communication, or as a bridge to research, or as an event itself,) will certainly have views that are particular about language.<sup>259</sup>

Paying close attention to language, therefore, allowed people to better understand its rich implications about themselves. “Language,” he wrote, “is the voice or expression of mankind, which is used to express all that is within mankind’s imagination.”<sup>260</sup> Together with movements of the body—the head, the eyes, the hands, etc.—and with other media—drawing, writing, and other ways of signifying—this gives rise to a set of “signals” or “cues”<sup>261</sup> for deeper understanding. “Between imagination and language,” he wrote, “there is a continuous and direct connection, a mutual exchange of influences and powers that create dynamic movement.”<sup>262</sup>

In a new nation, where both language and cultural identity were in the process of being formed, this was no small matter. “In whole,” he stated, “this means that *development* isn’t simply about the flowering of *language*, but also the blooming of human *imagination*,<sup>263</sup> of *human intellect*, in short, the *interior life* [“*hidup batin*”] of mankind.”<sup>264</sup>

The implication was that Indonesia needed to be on guard about both its language and its culture as the two developed alongside each other. “It can be seen,” Dewantara wrote, “that there are languages that contain levels of culture that are high, and that are low.”<sup>265</sup> And because the relationship between language and the formation of the self could be “reciprocal,”<sup>266</sup> “*the maintenance of language itself* . . . must be considered an absolute necessity for the development of national culture itself.”<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> “Pendek kata, didalam segala lapangan, jang menggunakan bahasa (baik sebagai alat pengantar, maupun sebagai djembatan untuk penjelidikan, atau sebagai atjara sendiri), tentu ada pandangan<sup>2</sup> jang khusus tentang bahasa.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7.

<sup>260</sup> “Bahasa adalah suara atau utjapan manusia, jang digunakan untuk melahirkan segala apa jang ada didalam angan-angan manusia.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7.

<sup>261</sup> “*isjarat*,” which can mean “sign,” “signal,” “cue,” or “intimation.” It can also carry a sense of foretelling or portent.

<sup>262</sup> “Antara angan<sup>2</sup> dan bahasa terus-menerus ada hubungan langsung pertukaran pengaruh dan daja<sup>2</sup> saling menggerakkan setjara dynamis.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7.

<sup>263</sup> Dewantara used the same word, “*perkembangan*”, with the word “*kembang*,” or “flower” at its root, in each instance, but that I have translated as “development,” “flowering,” and “blooming.”

<sup>264</sup> “*Itu selengkapnja jang menjebabkan adanja perkembangan, tidak sadja perkembangan bahasa, namun pula perkembangan angan<sup>2</sup> manusia, akal-budi manusia, pendek: hidup batin manusia.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7. Emphasis in the original text.

<sup>265</sup> “*Dapat disaksikan dalam hal itu, adanja bahasa<sup>2</sup> jang mempunyai nilai kebudajaan jang tinggi, dan jang rendah.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7.

<sup>266</sup> “*bertimbal-balik*,” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7.

<sup>267</sup> “*pemeliharaan bahasanja sendiri itu . . . dianggap keperluan mutlak untuk memadjukan kebudajaan kebangsaan sendiri.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7. Emphasis in the original text.

But this language, and the culture imbricated in it, was not merely something new, he argued. Rather, language “formed a *warehouse of a nation’s culture*, (an archive or a national cultural museum) for each people. To know a language already means to know the character of the nation to whom that language belongs.”<sup>268</sup> Such national character was “no different from the collection of the *kebatinan* (spiritual values,)”<sup>269</sup> that is, the Culture of that nation.”<sup>270</sup> It was therefore important to remain cognizant of ancient languages (“*bahasa<sup>2</sup> ‘kuna’*”)<sup>271</sup> . . . not just as a matter of scientific study, but also with the view of its civilization and morality that have many uses and benefits.”<sup>272</sup> This was particularly true, he wrote, because

there are many examples that may be observed about the presence of ‘decadence’ or the decline in the life of a nation, or of the disappearance of good traditions, or of the incorporation of new elements of culture that lower the level of humanity, that could all be known if people knew ancient languages, as if they had become a museum or archive of cultural identity.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> “*tiap<sup>2</sup> bahasa itu merupakan gedung persimpanan kebudjaan bangsa (archif atau muse’um kulturel nasional) bagi tiap<sup>2</sup> bangsa. Dengan mengenal sesuatu bahasa, itulah sudah berrati [sic] mengenal wataknya bangsa, jang memiliki bahasa itu.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 7.

<sup>269</sup> “*geestelijke waarden*” in Dutch in the original. *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 8.

<sup>270</sup> “*Dan watak-bangsa itu tidak lain dari pada sekumpulnja nilai<sup>2</sup> kebatinan (geestelijke waarden) ja’ini Kebudajaan atau Kultur dari bangsa itu.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 8.

<sup>271</sup> In his particular case, he is certainly referencing the rich Javanese and Old Javanese sources of the royal courts he grew up in, which were, indeed, the warehouses, archives and cultural museums of Central Javanese royal culture and authority. In the General Introduction to her four-volume work on Javanese literature, Nancy Florida points out that the history of Central Javanese court manuscripts (generalizing from her specific case of Surakarta,) and the perceived provenance of their content (which was often not understood by many of its “readers,”) is quite complex. Dating largely from after the mid-eighteenth century, the documents were “the products of [a] putative literary renaissance . . . [that] are today believed to represent a return of Javanese writing to its brilliant pre-sixteenth-century Golden Age of Indic (Hindu-Buddhist) classics” that “is thought to have been displaced by the cultural darkness which supposedly shrouded the era of Islamic conversion of the late fifteenth through early eighteenth centuries.” After 1755, “as the story goes, that courtly poets turned away from ‘foreign’ Islam . . . back to their ‘native’ Javanese (Hindu-Buddhist) origins. . . . The works of this Surakarta ‘Renaissance’ are often characterized by the adjective *adiluhung* (‘high and noble’) as the quintessence of a refined (or *alus*) and reserved court culture in contradistinction too the rough (or *kasar*) and lively culture of the countryside and the coarse (perhaps even more *kasar*) and ‘fanatical’ culture of the usually rural, and allegedly alien, Islamic educational institutions, or *pesantrèn*.” Nancy Florida, *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts, Volume I*, pp. 11-12.

It is important to note, and it is central to Florida’s work, that these court manuscripts are very much Islamic in nature. Although the historical distinction was between court-based Javanese culture and a form of Javanese Islam that pre-dated the modernist understandings of Muhammadiyah, then, the cultural split between the *Taman Siswa* and Muhammadiyah educators was not new. But some of the ways in which Javanese nobility came to perceive their own history and its documents was heavily influenced by Dutch philological views from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the prevalence of the idea that these manuscripts represented a Renaissance of a refined past. Rather, in a future project, I hope to examine, if I’m able to, how the translation project of older manuscripts into modern Javanese at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries might have represented a specific political project to undergird the cultural power and authority of the courts in an era where they had begun to lose actual political power.

<sup>272</sup> “*Tentang mengenali bahasa<sup>2</sup> ‘kuna’ . . . itu tidak sadja dianggap perlu sebagai usaha ilmu-pengetahuan, namun djuga dipandang dari sudut perikeadaban dan kesusilaan (etik dan moral) banjak guna serta faedahnja.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 8.

<sup>273</sup> “*Banjak tjontoh<sup>2</sup> jang dapat disaksikan tentang adanja ‘decadensi’ atau kemunduran dalam hidupnja sesuatu bangsa, atau tentang hilang-lenjapnja adat-istiadat jang baik<sup>2</sup>, atau termasuknja anasir<sup>2</sup> kebudajaan baru, jang merendahkan*

Indonesia, he posited, had an advantage over other post-colonial Asian nations, however, (he made specific reference to India and the Philippines,) because it had developed a national language as an integral part of the construction of the nation's identity. "If a nation doesn't have its own language, if it continues to use the language of another country, then that nation can only be said to be independent in political terms, while culturally it is still dependent on or still fused to that other nation."<sup>274</sup> By 1952, in the quarter century since the promulgation of the nationalist vision of "one people, one nation, one language," Indonesian had become a working and unifying national language, used in schools, meetings, places of worship, politics and government. "No longer," he wrote, "do we feel ashamed to use our own language, rather, we feel proud, it is unnecessary to use foreign language."<sup>275</sup>

### ***Magazines and the Periodization of Social Transformation***

One of the aspects of reading magazines, as Sarah Frederick noted about Japanese women's periodicals, is that they allow historians to track the slow unfolding of social transformation. As this dissertation also shows, they can help identify abrupt shifts in the social or political landscape as well. In particular, these continuities and watersheds can be read to suggest a general periodization of Indonesian women's experience across the 1950's and early-to-mid 1960's, which is outlined briefly below. The dissertation does explore some elements from the span of the Revolution from 1945-1949, and, to some extent also references the late colonial period. But the organization of the dissertation's chapters aligns primarily with the period in which women's magazines were published widely in the Sukarno era, that is from 1949-1966.

The earliest period discussed lasts from 1949-1955. Though 1950 was referred to earlier as that "brief period when anything was possible," this general sense of newness

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*derajat kemanusiaan, jang semua tadi dapat diketahui apabila orang mengenali bahasa<sup>2</sup> kuna, jang seolah-olah menjjadi museum atau archif kebudajaan batin itu." Keluarga, December 1952, p. 8.*

<sup>274</sup> "Kalau suatu bangsa tidak mempunyai bahasa sendiri, masih memakai bahasa dari negeri lain, maka bangsa itu boleh dikata hanja merdeka dalam arti politik, namun kultureel masih bergantung atau masih tergabung pada bangsa lain." *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 8.

<sup>275</sup> "Tidak lagi ada rasa malu<sup>2</sup> dalam memakai bahasanya sendiri, malahan kita merasa bangga, ta' usah menggunakan bahasa asing." *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 31.

and progress extended longer than that. Indeed, after the addition of new magazines on women and film in late 1952 in particular, the period leading up to 1955 appeared in women's magazines as a time of great choice for Indonesian women. There were many new options available: in how to raise families, in how to have a professional life, in how to participate in politics, and in how to dress. The question of what it meant to be Indonesian and how that should be expressed was central to women's discussions, but with a sense of exploration. This remained true even as the magazines documented instances of moral crisis around women and their self-expression.<sup>276</sup>

Nineteen-fifty-five marked the first major watershed in the history of fully independent Indonesia, with important developments in the political outlook of the Sukarno government both internationally and domestically. The Asian-African Conference brought the leaders of the world's non-aligned movement to Bandung in April of that year, and Sukarno used the occasion to raise his personal profile at home and abroad. His public investment in the broadly socialist movement and his basic nationalist outlook combined to shift the rhetoric of Indonesian politics to include a stronger appeal to Indonesian national and cultural pride. The Bandung Conference was, in important ways, Indonesia's coming out party to the world. The nation was self-consciously on international display, leading to several critical shifts in how Indonesians defined themselves both internally and externally.

That year also saw Indonesia's first national legislative elections, held in late September. Sukarno entered the polls expecting to be handed a clear mandate for his Indonesian National Party (PNI). Instead, unexpectedly strong results for both the "traditional" Muslim movement, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU,) and the Communist PKI limited Sukarno's perceived power, leaving the PNI in a virtual tie with the Masyumi Party that represented Indonesia's modernist Muslim movement.<sup>277</sup> Left in an uncomfortable political

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<sup>276</sup> In his 1959 National Day speech, Sukarno gave a brief periodization of the history of the nation in which he called 1950-1955 the period of "survival, meaning **still living, not dead,**" using the English word. "'survival' . . . *artinja tetap hidup, tidak mati.*" The text of the speech is included in Notosoetardjo, *Kepribadian Revolusi Bangsa Indonesia*, p. 74. The bold emphasis in the original.

<sup>277</sup> These parties were the only four of the nearly thirty parties and organizations which ran slates that polled in the double digits. The PNI took 22.3% of the vote, with Masyumi a close second at 20.9%. Both parties sat 57 delegates in the National Assembly. NU received 18.4% of the vote, gaining 45 seats. The big surprise of the day's results was that the PKI received 16.4% of the vote, earning 39 seats. Masyumi also showed particularly well outside of Java, while the other three parties' strength came overwhelmingly from the nation's most populous island, making it a particularly strong threat to Sukarno's desired hegemony. See Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, pp. 436-37.

position of having to make alliances with minor parties in order to control the government, Sukarno opened the first session of the People's Representative Council in March 1956 with a speech in which he outlined his new *konsepsi*, or "conception" of the nation based in an increasingly strong executive, leading to the end of the period of Liberal Democracy.

The second phase of the Sukarno era, then, lasted from 1955 through the end of 1959. During this period, Sukarno's power was seriously challenged by two regional rebellions, PRRI and Permesta. The rebellions, which joined together in 1958, were also supported by the leadership of Masyumi, (*Partai Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia*, or Council of Indonesian Muslim Associations.) One of the key demands of the PRRI was that Sukarno return to the Constitutional state instead of holding the new powers granted him under Guided Democracy. Masyumi was still strongly motivated by its agenda from earlier in the history of the new nation that Indonesia be an Islamic rather than a secular state. It was, as a result, also strongly anti-Communist, pressing therefore against a significant source of Sukarno's political strength coming from the PKI and the left in general.

PRRI-Permesta was rather quickly suppressed, and Masyumi was banned from participating in politics in August 1960. At least partially in response to these challenges, Sukarno worked more actively to create an Indonesia in line with his own political, cultural and economic visions. He strove to turn his *konsepsi* into reality both by increasingly wresting power from the nation's elected representatives, and by shifting the rhetorical construction of the nation. The goal became to move the Revolution forward into a period of Guided Democracy, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Finally, from 1960 through 1966, Sukarno moved Indonesia beyond the concept of Guided Democracy, into a period of heightened confrontation with the west marked by a hyperactive mass politics designed to strengthen his position by harnessing an increasingly energized revolutionary fervor. Alarmed by an increasing sense of American and British intervention in Southeast Asia, Sukarno's attention to the concepts of non-alignment to disengagement grew stronger, as did his calls for Indonesians to "finish the [Indonesian] Revolution." In 1963, the British brokered the creation of Malaysia as a new nation comprising the Malay Federation joined by Singapore, and—more importantly within the Indonesian view of things—two British Crown Colonies on Borneo, North Borneo and Sarawak. Sukarno had long thought that all of Borneo should be part of Indonesia, and he

vehemently opposed the creation of the new nation. This led to a policy of *Konfrontasi*, or “Confrontation,” with Malaysia. On the ground in Borneo, there was little actual armed confrontation with the Malaysians. But the policy became a powerful force for organizing and energizing political action within Indonesia itself. Thus, it was within the increasing revolutionary fervor of the day that the tensions that would lead to the events at Lubang Buaya and its aftermath festered.

One of the elements that women’s magazines add to the political scholarship on this era is that they were finely attuned to the subtlest social and cultural changes around them. The entertainment magazine *Varia*, for instance, was self-consciously modeled on its American namesake *Variety*, and was primarily created for women. *Varia* was published weekly from 1957 on, and as Chapter 6 shows, reached a significant national audience. Reading it provides ample opportunities to track the developments of Indonesian politics not so much through the coverage of speeches and rallies, but rather through the evolution of its cover art, changes in how it wrote about Hollywood films and stars, and shifts in the ways Indonesian women were represented in its pages.<sup>278</sup>

At several points in the early 1960’s Indonesian magazines, including *Varia* and the Bandung-based glamour magazine *Puspa Wanita*,<sup>279</sup> were subject to increasing governmental control and interference through a changing set of laws that increasingly regulated Indonesian publishing. The amount of clear government interference in the publication of *Varia* and *Puspa Wanita* can also be tracked to help historians chart important changes in the political atmosphere of increasing revolutionary zealotry of the early 1960’s, and to follow the dynamics of the ebb and flow of revolutionary rhetoric.

One key marker of these changes is the extent to which the representation of Indonesian women moved between being about women as individuals to being about ideal

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<sup>278</sup> *Varia*’s publisher, Hadely Hasibuan, was a political animal, and ended up as a minister in the transitional government between Sukarno and Suharto. As such, he was particularly sensitive to the changing directions of national politics, and often ahead of the curve when it came to making adjustments in the tenor of his magazine. *Varia* is therefore a particularly interesting source to look at in this period because it caught so much of what was going on politically quite quickly.

<sup>279</sup> *Puspa Wanita*, (roughly translated as “The Flower of Women,”) was the Indonesian women’s magazine most tightly connected to the world of Indonesian glamor. It was published out of Bandung, which had been called the “Paris of Indonesia” for its vibrant fashion scene. *Puspa Wanita*’s content largely focused on the community of senior Air Force and other military wives who lived in the city. Because many had the opportunity to travel abroad with their husbands, they were often seen as the most modern of Indonesian women. Several of them had developed modeling agencies and “glamour schools,” whose public events were widely covered in the pages of the magazine. An analysis of a particular stretch of *Puspa Wanita* from 1963-65 forms an important element of Chapter 6 of the dissertation.



revolutionary Indonesian women. As an analysis of *Puspa Wanita* in 1963 shows, this change was, at one particular point, both sudden and striking, the clear result of government interference. The more the nation itself was perceived to be in danger of falling apart, the stronger the use of Indonesian women as the idealized symbol of the nation grew in the pages of magazines.

This phenomenon began to crest in the year leading up to G-30-S. Following the changes in how women were represented creates a particularly strong context for understanding why the Lubang Buaya narrative was able to be successful. Indonesian society had already been flooded with a strong fear of national moral crisis embodied by women's potential moral failure leading up to October 1965. Read from this perspective, it is not surprising that stories about women lay at the emotional core of the Indonesian national implosion. But the fine-grained view of this phenomenon, readily visible in the pages of women's magazines, has yet to be explored by historians. I hope that this preliminary attempt to do so might be the dissertation's largest contribution to the field.

It would follow, therefore, that examining the new arguments about the Indonesian killings as a case of genocide through a specific lens about women might be useful as well. This introductory chapter now turns to an initial analysis of the possibilities raised by this lens.

### ***Indonesia in 1965-1966 as a Case of Genocide***

The newest scholarship on 1965-1966 has reopened a difficult question about the nature of mass violence in early New Order Indonesia. Specifically, scholars and cultural workers including Jeffrey Robinson, Katharine McGregor, Jess Melvin, Annie Pohlman, Andrew Conroe and Joshua Oppenheimer among others, have recently begun to assert that the killings of Indonesia's leftist-communist national group constitute an act of genocide.

This new scholarship differs from a general earlier conclusion among scholars that the Indonesian killings of 1965-66 did not rise to the level of genocide, most specifically because the mass murder was not primarily based along lines of ethnic difference. This is a challenging question for Southeast Asianists, since the region has been the site of two major incidents of government led mass-killing of its own citizens, in Indonesia and then in

Cambodia in 1975-1979, and neither case was primarily motivated by racial or ethnic animus.

Ben Kiernan, an expert on Cambodia<sup>280</sup> and the founding Director of the Yale Genocide Program,<sup>281</sup> for instance, did not include the Indonesian case in his magnum opus on comparative genocide, *Blood and Soil*. He did recognize it as an incidence of “mass slaughter” carried out by “brutal *military* dictatorships,” alongside similar events in Pakistand and Guatemala that “set out to annihilate large opposition movements . . . of political opponents,”<sup>282</sup> and recognizing that these movements also were targeted to some extent on “ethnic, national, or racial communities.”<sup>283</sup>

In the brief section he did include about Indonesia,<sup>284</sup> Kiernan notably did not refer to the events of 1965-66 specifically as genocide, although he did say that “these mass killings of a political opposition movement prefigured the genocide in Bangladesh five years later.”<sup>285</sup> After providing a brief summary of the Indonesian killings in 1965-66, Kiernan spent most of his entry discussing killings in East Timor rather than on the aftermath of Lubang Buaya. He also makes no attempt in the short entry to analyze the causes of the 1965-66 killings, that is, he fails to contextualize them historically in the ways he does for the Cambodian case.

But newer scholarship has begun to suggest differently. The general argument for Indonesia 1965-66 as a case of genocide is perhaps best laid out in a chapter at the front of a new collection of essays edited by Katherine McGregor, Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman

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<sup>280</sup> The analysis of Democratic Kampuchea as a case of genocide between 1975-1979 is both difficult and detailed. The main challenge of course is that the overwhelming majority of the killings were of Khmer by Khmer. In some ways, the Cambodian case, despite the fame of its “killing fields,” is only considered a case of genocide by some scholars because of the targeting of ethnic Vietnamese and Cham communities with Cambodia, while the main killings of Khmer would not qualify. Kiernan himself, however, points to ways in which the Khmer Rouge deracinated its Khmer victims by referring to them as having “Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds.” Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, p. 571. I also read his analysis as pointing to ways in which the Khmer victims were made to no longer be Khmer, that is, that they had been contaminated by modernity and outside influences that were different from the purity of the Khmer peasants. All of this is to say that the comparison of the Cambodian and Indonesian cases has interesting similarities that suggest the idea of race and ethnicity is more complicated in a Southeast Asian perspective than a rather strict interpretation of genocide necessarily including western concepts of “race” might be able to include. The section on Cambodia in Kiernan’s *Blood and Soil* is found on pp. 540-554.

<sup>281</sup> Notably, the Yale project website does currently list Indonesia 1965-66 among the cases it for which it provides documentation and discussion. See [gsp.yale.edu/case-studies/indonesia](http://gsp.yale.edu/case-studies/indonesia), accessed 7/3/2020. It is my memory that this was also true in earlier years when Kiernan was still leading the program as well.

<sup>282</sup> Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, p. 571. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>283</sup> Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, p. 571-572.

<sup>284</sup> Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, p. 576-582.

<sup>285</sup> Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, p. 577.

entitled *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965: Causes, Dynamics and Legacies*. The chapter, “A Case for Genocide,” written jointly by Melvin and Pohlman, begins by noting both the presence of different definitions of genocide in play in the Indonesian case and the ways in which the argument about whether 1965 in Indonesia is a case of genocide has been contested. This reflects a general “rift [that] has developed between scholars [of genocide more generally] who adopt the current legal definition of the crime of genocide and those who advocate on behalf of moving away from this legal definition in favour of a ‘sociological’ use of the term.”<sup>286</sup> In particular, they point out the 1948 definition of genocide adopted legally in the aftermath of World War II in the United Nations Convention on Genocide was, in essence, developed as a political compromise, and that it is therefore necessarily limited in what it includes as genocide.

In the case of Indonesia, this was compounded by American, British and Australian support for the New Order in the decades following the change in governments. There has been a tendency among those who have supported the New Order to characterize the killings, following the Suharto narrative at the outset of his regime, as cases of some sort of spontaneous exorcism of local social and political tensions and the settling of local scores rather than as a series of systematic executions carried out by the new state in service of its authority. This conception has largely been able to last so strongly not only because it aligned with the official narrative of the Indonesian government, but also because of the continuing problem of sources. There were simply very few documents directly linking the Suharto regime and the army to the killings, even if this was clearly the case in most oral histories of the events.

After the fall of the New Order in 1998, a few sets of documents tying the military directly to the killings did appear. Most importantly, they include the Army reports and accounts of the planning of killings in Aceh that are at the center of Jess Melvin’s scholarship. But in terms of popular culture, they also include Josh Oppenheimer’s first film, *The Act of Killing*, (2012),<sup>287</sup> that featured executioners directly boasting of their ties to the New Order state and his second film, *The Look of Silence* (2015),<sup>288</sup> that tied the

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<sup>286</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 28.

<sup>287</sup> The film’s Indonesian title is more direct. It is *Jagal*, meaning “butcher.”

<sup>288</sup> The Indonesian title is *Senyap*, which means “silent” or “quiet,” and can also mean “sound asleep.”

military directly to the killings. Evidence that the Suharto regime planned, carried out and paid for the executions contravened one of the primary arguments for why the Indonesian killings were not a case of genocide. They were, indeed, a state project, not simply a series of pogroms or random, individualized explosions of social violence.

Nonetheless, Melvin and Pohlman point to three principal reasons that the case of Indonesia should be considered genocide. First, they argue that recent scholarship shows that the “military’s target group was far broader than a political group.”<sup>289</sup> This is important in particular because one of the significant arguments against seeing the Indonesian case as genocide was that the legal definition of genocide in Article II of the 1948 Genocide Convention specifies that the actions must have been taken “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical [*sic*], racial or religious group, as such.”<sup>290</sup> Political parties did not rise to meet such a standard.

This was complicated by the assumption that ethnic and racial categorizations are based on stable immutable identities, and that to some extent, religion is attached to those, but that political affiliation is a choice. However, Melvin and Pohlman point out that Robert Cribb, who had not initially been supportive of the idea of the Indonesian case as genocide, nonetheless argued that “such an understanding of ethnic or racial group identity as somehow having ‘primordial or historically determined’ roots is seriously flawed and thus the legal definitions of the crime of genocide in the Convention of protecting only those types of ‘stable groups’ is based on an essentially fallacious logic.”<sup>291</sup>

According to Cribb’s argument, one must therefore look at how all group identity is constructed. In the Indonesian case, this includes the idea of the “pillarization” (in his language) of Indonesian political identity into three fundamental streams, or *aliran*, with deep and fundamental divides between Nationalists, Islamists and Communists, the three pillars of Nasakom.<sup>292</sup> Communism was therefore not merely a political affiliation, but

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<sup>289</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 31.

<sup>290</sup> Quoted in Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 31. The corrective note is from their text.

<sup>291</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 32.

<sup>292</sup> Melvin and Pohlman point out that Cribb himself refers to the “nationalist” group, probably more accurately, as “developmentalists,” that is a group mostly defined by its connection to growing urban lifestyles, and, also as the group most closely aligned to the military. Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 32.

rather a fundamental “national group” that emerged, along with the other two, as a product of origins of the nation itself. Melvin and Pohlman argue, following from Cribb, that the Indonesian left was a national group that was targeted for destruction “as such,” therefore falling fully under even the strictest legal definitions of the crime of genocide.

Secondly, Melvin and Pohlman introduce an argument based on a sociological approach to defining genocide. They discuss the purposes genocide fills within the process of social transformation, and argue that “the 1965 case in Indonesia provides a critical comparative study for understanding the social and transformative process of genocidal violence.”<sup>293</sup> Following on the work of Daniel Feierstein, who “asks us to reposition how we comprehend this violence to think of ‘genocide as a social practice—a mechanism capable of destroying and reorganizing the fabric of entire societies’,”<sup>294</sup> Melvin and Pohlman note that one of the ways to recognize genocide is to be aware of when a society radically transforms itself from within by ridding itself of elements of its collective community. “In this sense,” they write, “genocide can be understood as a creative process in which a society is remade without a part of its former self.”<sup>295</sup> Therefore, they write:

when we consider the eradication of the Left from Indonesia, it is not only the physical processes of mass imprisonment, murder and political repression that reveal the genocidal nature of these events, it is also the complete realignment of Indonesia’s polity.<sup>296</sup>

Finally, Melvin and Pohlman make a third argument, that in the formulation of the Indonesian nation, ethnicity held significantly less political importance than it did in many other cases. Indonesia, they note, was conceived of as a “modern nation,” based not on shared ethnicity but on a different modern definition of a nation. Its fundamental unitary concept—one people, one archipelago, one language—specifically worked against the idea of the nation as a conglomeration of ethnic enclaves, as did the national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, that roughly translates from Old Javanese as “Unity in Diversity.” The

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<sup>293</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 34.

<sup>294</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 34, quoting Fierstein, *Genocide as Social Practice*, p. 2.

<sup>295</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 35.

<sup>296</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 35.

fundamental organization of the nation, therefore, was built around the political pillars of Nasakom rather than around grids of ethnicity.

The Left, therefore, should be seen as a national “group,” a *kaum*, functioning essentially as ethnicity does in other cases. “This distinction is further strengthened,” they wrote, “by the fact that the military explicitly described its target group as ‘the communist group’ (*kaum komunis*) in its own internal documents.”<sup>297</sup> Again, they quote Cribb to the effect that “the nature of Indonesian national identity shows with unusual clarity how political cleansing can also be ethnic cleansing.”<sup>298</sup>

Taking all three arguments together, Melvin and Pohlman make a case that the Indonesian killings constitute a case of genocide. The resistance to this idea they note, is not so much theoretical as it is political. The Indonesian nation was successfully reconstituted without its Left pillar. To recognize that process of national reformulation as genocide would be to put into the question—again—the very nature of Indonesian identity.

But this argument can, and should, be made more complex. In her scholarship, as already laid out, Wieringa posits the presence of a fourth national group along the three “traditionally” constituted *aliran*: feminists. And she is, of course, correct. As this chapter has already discussed, and as scholarship on Indonesian national women has already argued, Indonesian feminists clearly form a national group in much the same ways, and at the same times, as nationalists, Islamists and communists, did. Rather than forming vertically, however, the *kaum wanita* was specifically conceived of acting across those vertical cleavages.

As this chapter has already explored, that did not mean that the *kaum wanita* or *kaum feminis* was firmly united across those other three groups. Scholars of the Indonesian women’s movement have noted the tensions between women from the various *aliran*, arguing specifically that these sources of division, and women’s own primary identities as flowing from within their own political and religious affiliations, kept the women’s movement from achieving as much as they might have.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in Katherine McGregor, *et. al.*, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 37.

<sup>298</sup> Robert Cribb, “Genocide in Indonesia, 1965-1966,” quoted in Melvin and Annie Pohlman, “A Case for Genocide,” in McGregor, Melvin and Pohlman, eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 37.

<sup>299</sup> See for example, Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 87, and pp. 126-131, and Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women’s Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, pp. 57-61.

And yet it is also important to recognize that women, as a group, did maintain connections across those streams, most particularly through their memberships in a national women's organization that was specifically and intentionally inclusive of women from a full range of organizations and affiliations. Furthermore, as the dissertation shows in Chapters 4, 6, and 7, women used this large-frame organization to move women's issues forward collectively at a national level. Similarly, Sukarno continued to address Indonesian women specifically as a group that cut across these other faultlines, and as a group that could reinforce national unity.<sup>300</sup>

So, if these Indonesian killings, the central act of establishing the authority of the New Order autocracy, were *indeed* a case of genocide, what is it we might see by looking specifically at how both the violence itself and the ways it was rendered necessary were gendered? I would theorize, if we read women as a "national group" that crosscut the vertical pillars, that the patterns in the process by which the *kaum wanita* was torn apart internally as the Indonesian left was amputated from the national body would be revelatory. In particular, if we consider genocide to be a process "in which a society is remade without a part of its former self," we would expect that women's place in society would be fundamentally reformed.

And, indeed this is what we see. In part, Chapter 7 examines the process through which Gerwani was expelled from Kowani. What becomes clear in the sources is not only were Communist and Leftist women expelled from the women's movement, both organizationally and as individuals, but also that activist Indonesian women, in distancing themselves from Communism—a process Nancy Florida correctly reminds me was required of *all* Indonesians—were also required to distance themselves from elements of their Revolutionary womanhood as well.

This is, of course, a phenomenon that both Wieringa and Suryakusuma place at the center of their arguments. Indonesian women, as a group, emerge from the transition to the New Order with their gendered space in Indonesian society significantly altered. Wieringa argues this is because Indonesian men "especially the military and religious-conservative men, became so disturbed by what they regarded as the castration of their voice by the

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<sup>300</sup> See the discussion, for instance, of Sukarno's speech to Kowani's national conference in Chapter 6.

articulate Gerwani that they transformed their fear into a fantasy of castration of that other organ of male power over women, their penises.”<sup>301</sup> Suryakusuma focuses her analyses on the New Order “ideology of ‘State Ibuism,’ which defines women as appendages of their husbands and casts female dependency as the ideal.”<sup>302</sup> But rather than seeing this re-formation of Indonesian women as the result of a frenzy of male sexual terror, Suryakusuma assigns the process to the dull, even stultifying processes of state bureaucracy. And of course, both processes can have been employed.

But what I argue would be most important, no matter what ways it may have come about, would be to note that the place of women relative to the Indonesian state changed drastically as a result of the killings of 1965-66, and that this process was put on women themselves to carry out. The former activist *kaum wanita* became reconstituted as a disempowered *kaum Ibu* within the context of New Order society. That is, in keeping with the idea of genocide as a reconstitution of society without a formerly present element, Indonesian society was reformed precisely without its former *kaum wanita*.

Instead, as is explained in Chapter 7, the word *wanita* itself ceased to be used to refer to women as a *kaum* in the New Order. It was replaced with the more matronly “*perempuan*,” also connected to one of the words for men, “*tuan*.” The connotation of “*wanita*” also changed to include the suggestion of women as a disorderly or disruptive force. So even linguistically, Indonesian women were re-constructed without their former identity as *wanita*, which had arguably been the central unifying term used to refer to women both individually and as a group to that point.

Although the whole of Indonesian society was depoliticized, Indonesian women were also—and in addition—forced to take a further step back precisely because the political possibilities made possible through the social construction of *kaum wanita* was destroyed in total. Indonesian women were left with only half of their former position in society, and, in official theory at least—individual lives are of course quite different—what remained in how they were placed in society was the more non-political elements of motherhood: their children, their families, their homelife, and their properly dressed

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<sup>301</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 327.

<sup>302</sup> Julia Suryakusuma, “The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia,” in Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, p. 98.



existence a step behind and in support of their husbands. And this applied to all women no matter what their pre-New Order political situation had been. Their position was taken away from all women *as women*, and not because of their political and religious affiliations.

What this dissertation examines therefore, which has not previously been done, and the question it asks, is how the cultural context, understanding, justification and necessity for this central act of mass transformative violence in Indonesian history were also gendered. Can gender, that is, serve as a critical marker for the exploration of genocide claims in Indonesia? Or, in another way of conceiving of this, can we better explain the pretext of the Indonesian genocide of 1965-1966 from the pages of women's fashion magazines?

The dissertation is presented in the following chapters and sections:

Prior to Chapter 2, there is a brief "Cinematic Interlude" that analyzes the 1954 Usmar Ismail film *Lewat Djam Malam (After Curfew.)* The film was the first piece of Indonesian cinema specifically created to be shown internationally as well as domestically. It explored the choices facing the Indonesian nation about its future on the eve of full independence in 1949. The film encapsulates many of the issues explored in the dissertation, including clothing, gender, prostitution, the cultural role of "good" women, and the role of violence in forming the Indonesian nation. It also makes a striking use of women's magazines and the dreams they engendered for some women. This prelude is dedicated to the memory of *alm.*<sup>303</sup> Jeff Hadler, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California-Berkeley, who pointed me to the movie, particularly its use of magazines, and then sent me a copy he probably shouldn't have. But that was Jeff, generous beyond measure, an excellent intellectual interlocutor, and an amazing friend.

Chapters 2-5 cover the period from 1949-1955, the period of liberal democracy that lasted roughly from 1949-1955. Together, they constitute what I see as a first half of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 examines the first year of the publication of *Wanita* Magazine, from August 1949 to August 1950. The chapter explores the complexly interconnected sets of issues that appeared in just that one magazine across that single year. It demonstrates that

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<sup>303</sup> *Almarhum*, a marker of a person having passed on.

all the issues at play in the dissertation were already fully present in Indonesian women's conceptions of themselves as a modern people at the beginning of the national era. It also sets up several small examples—the nature of a woman's smile, for instance—that came to be important markers of proper femininity in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya.

Chapter 3 expands on the previous chapter to look specifically at the question of clothing in a range of women's magazines between 1950-1955. It moves beyond *Wanita* to include other sources such as *Keluarga* and *Film Review*, and examines the ways women's clothing became a marker of national identity as Indonesia assumed a leading role in the non-aligned movement. It also examines the ways in which women theorized their own identities within a web of cultural tensions about modernity and what it meant to be Indonesian.

Chapter 4 examines the 1953 *Hari Ibu* ("Mother's Day,") celebrations that marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nationalist women's movement. On this occasion, *Hari Ibu* became classified as a national holiday and was celebrated as such. Various publications connected to the event demonstrated the ways in which Indonesian activist women laid claim to a central role in the nation as "*Tiang Negara*," ("Pillars of the Nation,") and "*Ibu Bangsa*," ("Mothers of the Nation,") by stressing their moral leadership and the special responsibilities given them by their God-given role as women, their *kodrat wanita*. It makes the critical point that these roles were not merely rhetorical, but that they represented a specific position that women consciously asserted in the political and cultural life of the nation, and that the nation also recognized officially in return.

Chapter 5 completes the discussion of the first half of the dissertation. The chapter looks at the concept of moral crisis as a reflection of fears of a fast advancing modernity that left Indonesians on a "rickety wobbly" bridge between older and newer constructions of their national identity. It makes the point that, overwhelmingly, the fears that combined to form Indonesian moral crisis were expressed through women, their clothing, their makeup, the bodies and their sexuality. Again, this lays important building blocks for the gendered analysis of genocide to be presented later on.

Chapter 6 moves the dissertation into its second half, covering the periods of Guided Democracy and Confrontation, from 1955-1965. Bringing together the elements of analysis laid out in the first chapters, it makes an argument that the cultural politics of the era

specifically and self-consciously harnessed issues around women and moral crisis to advance the Sukarno government's increasingly radicalized national politics. Questions that previously were subjects for discussion in magazines became organizational principles of the nation. They then were among the principal drivers of a more intense atmosphere where moral crisis was seen to be bringing about the nation's imminent destruction.

Chapter 7 examines the period of the Indonesian Killings from 1965-66. Beginning from a tight reading of the exposition of the Lubang Buaya narrative in national newspapers, the chapter argues that moral crisis centered on Gerwani women's bodies and sexuality served as the driving justification for the army to carry out what might be termed a genocide of the Indonesian left. It also drove a wedge between leftist and other women's groups, and it is in the process of dissolution in particular that changes in the gendered nature of the national identity pose interesting questions about seeing 1965-1966 as a case of genocide rather than simply of mass political violence.

The dissertation concludes with a photographic postlude that examines two images. One is of Gerwani activists gathered on a field in Central Java before being imprisoned. The other is of senior army wives in identical New Order uniforms of *kain* and *kebaya*. This suggests on-going issues that faced Indonesian women in the aftermath of the killings of 1965-66, and how they can still be examined through issues of clothing and beauty culture.

## Cinematic Interlude

### *Lewat Djam Malam* and the Sudden Arrival of Indonesia

Usmar Ismail's 1954 film *Lewat Djam Malam*<sup>1</sup> captured the social dislocation of Indonesia's quick transition from revolution to independence in December 1949.<sup>2</sup> Ismail, arguably Indonesia's most illustrious film director of the early 1950's, and a former soldier in the fight against the Dutch, crafted the film starring several of the biggest stars of the day in a realist style, as an exploration of social issues facing the young nation in its transition from revolution to sovereignty.

*Lewat Djam Malam* tells the story of Iskandar,<sup>3</sup> a former university student-turned revolutionary soldier (*pejuang*, literally, "struggler,") who returned home to the West Javanese city of Bandung<sup>4</sup> after the dissolution of the guerilla forces that had been fighting

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<sup>1</sup> *Lewat Djam Malam* [*After Curfew*], Directed by Usmar Ismail, written by Asrul Sani, distributed by Perfini, 1954. The film, long considered one of Indonesia's classics, was the first Indonesian film specifically prepared for an international audience, as it was intended to be screened at the first Tokyo International Film festival in 1954. The film was restored in 2012 by Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Foundation, and re-released both in Indonesia and at the Cannes Film Festival. The restoration was carried out in Italy, working with a moldy master copy that had been stored at Sinematek Indonesia, a national film archive established in the 1970s. Thanks to *alm*. Jeff Hadler for pointing me to this resource, and particularly to the presence of the scene in which women's magazines play such a critical role. Jeff, you are missed daily as I write. Your memory is for a blessing.

Usmar Ismail is widely considered the "founding father of Indonesian cinema," for directing one of the first films made in independent Indonesia, *Darah dan Doa*, (literally *Blood and Prayers*, but known in English as *The Long March*) in 1950, that told the story of the Siliwangi Division's march to West Java after the Dutch capture of Yogyakarta in 1948. More importantly, he also founded PERFINI (*Perusahaan Film Nasional Indonesia*, the Indonesian National Film Company,) the first Indonesian owned and managed film making company in 1951. One of the senior cameramen, Max Tera, said was the place of "young people with ideas" at the beginning of the nation. As in the film *Lewat Djam Malam*, PERFINI was full of new lives for ex-soldiers, as Ismail recruited many of his former comrades from the revolution-era army to join the company, including his principal partner D. Djakakusuma. See Lizabna Z. Rahman, "The Birth of Indonesian Cinema and its Pioneers (1950s-1960s) in *A Brief Cultural History of Indonesian Cinema*, pp. 56-83. For an excellent discussion of Usmar's career, including the politics of his neo-realist style coming up against Indonesian military censors and the culture of government oversight that developed in Indonesian cinema as a result, see Said, *Shadows on the Silver Screen*, pp. 51-58.

<sup>2</sup> Following significant United Nations pressure and a ceasefire announced on August 1, 1949, the dissolution of Dutch claims to sovereignty of the majority of the former Dutch East Indies was negotiated at a Round Table conference in the Hague from August 23 – November 2, 1949, with sovereignty of all territory but Papua being transferred formally to Indonesia on December 27, 1949. The connection between the Round Table Conference and the Indonesian women's movement is discussed in Chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> Played by A.N. Alcaff, one of the leading actors of the first generation of Indonesian film "stars." His career spanned over 30 years, from 1950-1981, and he was particularly noted for his long, lean features that combined a "western" leading man "look" with a clearly Asian heritage. He received the Best Actor Award for this role at the first Indonesian Film Festival in 1955.

<sup>4</sup> Bandung was a particular space in early independent Indonesia. Home to one of two technical and engineering universities established in the late colonial era, it is where the young engineer Sukarno and his cohort began to foment the idea of Indonesian nationalism. Because of the "modern" nature of the higher education offered, the city was considered to be a highly advanced place even in the 1920s and 1930s. As is discussed elsewhere in the dissertation, Bandung was considered the "Paris of Indonesia," and had a particular effect on "advancing" Indonesian women's fashion. For Bandung

in the mountains surrounding the city. Iskandar's interactions with the new world he emerges into, and particularly his choice of relationships with two very different women, were a reflection of the choices facing Indonesia as a nation. Most broadly put, would the nation choose a path of moral uprightness, or were the spiritual wounds of warfare such that it would make other choices, giving into patterns of corruption, greed and moral abandon?

Much of the power of the movie is drawn from the accuracy of its details. The film's opening sequence, for instance, shows Iskandar's feet walking through the city's deserted late night streets, which stop as he uses his flashlight to read a poster of the curfew order pasted on a wall, dated December 27, 1949, the day when the city came under official Indonesian sovereignty.<sup>5</sup> When a group of soldiers sees him out past curfew, he successfully eludes his chasers, and sneaks into his fiancée's house.

The appearance of both the house and the fiancée, Norma,<sup>6</sup> attest to her family's place among Indonesia's small, educated elite. The house has a modern kitchen with a refrigerator, shelves filled with books, a grand piano, and a feather bed, in which Iskandar finds it difficult to sleep because it is too comfortable. The house is surrounded by large gardens full of flowers. Norma dresses in *kain-kebaya* around the house, but sports sharply cut western-style dresses in town. She wears her hair in both a traditional bun, or *kondé*, and in western styles, to match her clothing. She always sits carefully following western etiquette. Norma's family wealth and position appear to have largely insulated them from the war. Iskandar made other choices.

Iskandar is also originally from the elite, having been a student at the Technische Hoogeschool te Bandoeng,<sup>7</sup> the foremost college of engineering in the Dutch East Indies. It

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during the particular era covered in this film, see John R.W. Smail's classic work, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945-1946*.

<sup>5</sup> On December 27, 1949, the Indonesian military commander in Bandung issued a decree that ended the Dutch curfew (*avondklok*). But, to help assure a stable transition following the transfer of power, he replaced it with his own version of the same regulations that ordered the general population off the streets between 10pm and 5am. Ismail was known for his attention to this type of detail in his work, and was specifically noted for having used his own experience as a soldier to make the film realistic. See Said, *Shadows on the Silver Screen*, pp. 51-58.

<sup>6</sup> Played by Netty Herawati. Herawati, (also spelled Herawaty,) was a stage actress who made an early transition to the screen, where she was most known for playing ingenue roles. She was prolific, appearing in more than fifty films between 1949-1986.

<sup>7</sup> The THB, today known as the Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), was a center of the Indonesian nationalist movement. In particular, it was the school Sukarno attended in the 1920s, and the young engineers of THB were particularly active in beginning the Indonesian student movement for independence from the Dutch.

is noted in passing that he had been in the army for five years, meaning he would have started serving in 1944, during the last year of the Japanese occupation. The implication, which would not have been lost on an Indonesian audience, was that he was a true nationalist, who had broken with the Japanese at the earliest possible moment. It is also noted several times in the movie that he could have made other choices, as other sons of elite families did.

The film makes clear fairly quickly that Iskandar had a rough time during the Revolution. Norma's father, feeling that young returning *pejuang* could easily go astray with nothing to do, decides that Iskandar should get back on his feet as quickly as possible. Playing on his political connections, he finds a job for Iskandar in the provincial governor's office, to begin the very next morning. Iskandar's post-war transition to "normality," like Indonesia's, is superficially sudden, indeed. Real transitions will take much longer and be much more complex.

Iskandar's transition is also quickly difficult, as he faces a rapid succession of destabilizing challenges in the single day covered by the film.<sup>8</sup> He has difficulties adjusting himself to the routine of the office and completing the deskwork that he has been assigned. Taunted by coworkers jealous of his connections to the governor and fearful for their own bureaucratic positions, Iskandar allows his temper to get the best of him. He and a coworker get into a fight over a bottle of spilled ink. The film suggests his lack of control is the lingering result of his exposure to combat, and in particular to an instance when his commanding officer ordered him to execute a family of "spies." Fired from the governor's office, Iskandar goes in search of other members of his guerrilla unit, hoping they might help him find work.

Puja, another former fighter, now a gambler, drinker and small-time pimp, introduces Iskandar to Laila,<sup>9</sup> the prostitute he is managing, who lives with him in a simple

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<sup>8</sup> The larger implied social question is whether the nation's will be as well, and the set of obstacles Iskandar faces—a bloated and intractable bureaucracy, advancement through personal connections, corruption, and the place of returning military men and their unresolved emotional challenges from combat.

<sup>9</sup> The role was played by Dhalia, one of Indonesia's leading actresses and singers of the 1950s. She had begun her career in her father's traveling theater troupe in Sumatra, and was educated in Muhammadiyah schools, as it was her father's intention that she attend Al-Azhar University in Cairo. But when she made the jump to film work, doing Japanese-funded propaganda dramas during the war, she also became known for her voice, and was famous as a singing actress. She had a long career, though mostly as a character actress in her later work. She received the 1955 Best Actress award for this performance.

house with woven bamboo walls. She is buxom, beautiful, and dresses exclusively in Indonesian clothing. But her *kain* and *kebaya* are excessively tight and, like her makeup, are quite gaudy. Her *kondé*, though pulled tight, also gives way to a spit-curl that falls loosely down toward her right eye. Laila is prone to leaning back seductively against walls and doorframes, and she smokes.

In spite of Norma's neat, modern beauty, and her evident chastity and fidelity, Iskandar feels himself pulled to Laila. Although she is presented as a morally flawed character, Laila's failings on this level are mitigated by Puja's assertion to Iskandar that she is "half-crazy."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Laila is presented as delusional both for waiting for a husband who left for war and has never returned, and for dreaming of a life full of the trappings of a new modernity that is beyond her reach. She carefully clips pictures from copies of LIFE magazine to paste both on the bamboo walls of the house and in a scrapbook of her dreams. Her moral failings match Iskandar's own sense of having crossed a line into moral crisis during his time in the guerilla forces by killing the family. It turns out they were not spies, but rather were in possession of a stash of gold that Iskandar's commander wanted to seize to help establish a post-war business.

In Ismail's construction of newly independent Indonesia, the two women represented choices facing both Iskandar and the nation. Would Iskandar and Indonesia choose a virtuous path, taking on the work of building a nation on a firm footing, (in this case represented by a job helping a former squad leader construct houses for returning veterans,) and marrying the innocent and good-hearted Norma? Or would his and the nation's future be less morally clear? Should Iskandar become an enforcer for his former commanding officer, now running his semi-shady business built on the seized gold and falling in with the exciting but self-centered and delusional Laila? Perhaps there might also be a middle way, accepting the need to work within the corrupt bureaucracy, that would, nonetheless, give Iskandar and Indonesia continued access to the modern virtues of Norma, while taking an occasional visit to the house where modernity is merely a set of cut out pictures pasted on the wall?

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<sup>10</sup> In the scene where Puja introduces Laila to Iskandar, he says she is "*setengah*" ("half") and then makes a gesture cutting down the middle of his forehead, an Indonesian symbol for "crazy" or "mentally imbalanced." The scene begins at 38:12 in the restored version. The implication is that because of this, she can be forgiven for having overstepped bounds of social propriety.

In the course of a single night, after the midnight curfew of the film's title, Iskandar is driven, both physically and emotionally, between the two women, and the two paths for his future that they represent.<sup>11</sup> In the end, again running towards Norma's house after curfew, almost delusional in his fevered indecision, Iskandar is shot by patrolling soldiers. He dies on the steps of Norma's house. Like Indonesia in 1953, he had not yet quite fully arrived safely home after the inner and outer conflicts caused by the violence of war.

Read from a male perspective that placed Iskandar at its center, *Lewat Djam Malam* was a rather straightforward film. Looking back at 1949 from the vantage point of the film's production in 1953, when some of the blush of Revolution had faded, Ismail's critique of questions of governance, the place of political and economic elites, the development of an entrenched bureaucracy, and the role of both graft and small-scale violence in the formation of an essentially corrupt system made clear that Indonesians looking to move forward in the new system had significant decisions to make. Indeed, these issues remain at the heart of Indonesian politics, and are at the core of both historical and social science literature on Indonesia to this day.

The one issue that Ismail raised in the film that went largely unexamined elsewhere concerns the legacies of the violence of the Revolution on individual veterans.<sup>12</sup> But otherwise, *Lewat Djam Malam* explored a set of issues about Indonesian political and economic culture that were also widely under discussion in the national press, and that also came to dominate Western scholarship on Indonesian politics of the time.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that there is also a third type of woman represented the film in passing, namely proletarian women working as *tlèdèk*, or dancers for hire in the night market. As Iskandar makes his way across the city Norma's house toward Laila's, he runs through the night market and these women dancing with their clients to gamelan music, which isn't heard anywhere else in the movie. As Usmar liked to do, the scene was shot on location, not on a set, and there is a briefly jarring recognition that this is a "real" scene of "real" women from a whole other social setting that isn't addressed much in either the film, or, unfortunately, much in the sources available for this dissertation. Like the dancers in *Lewat Djam Malam*, these women are present but rarely given voice in the sources of the day. The one significant exception will be in the presentation of young proletarian women attached to the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, or Indonesian Communist Party) in the aftermath of the events of October, 1965, but even there, words are put in their mouths by elite sources. They never speak for themselves, as is discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>12</sup> The study of Indonesian masculinities and violence has, thus far, largely confined itself to the effects of men's violence on others. Joshua Oppenheimer's film *Jagal*, [*The Act of Killing*], while significantly discussing the impunity with which the military and local militia and gangsters (*preman*) could oversee and promote cultures of masculine violence, also hinted at the effects of this violence on the men who perpetrated it. But, overwhelmingly, and particularly as the last of the Revolutionary generation of fighters is dying, Indonesian discourse, much like American language about the Great Generation of World War II, focuses almost exclusively on men's heroism.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, the work of two principal early scholars of the Sukarno era. John Legge, *Sukarno, A political biography*, and Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*.



When examined through the representations of women, however, the film presents a complicated and subtly nuanced view of the issues of social change and adjustment facing Indonesian society. For Norma, a certain type of western-style modernity was already a reality. Although she wore *kain-kebaya* sometimes at home, when she went out, and when she entertained, Norma wore fashionable western dresses. The party she threw to welcome Iskandar home, designed to last through the night's curfew, included couples dancing to jazz and big-band records. All the guests, both male and female, were dressed in western clothing, with the men wearing ties with their shirts and long trousers.

But this was also a modernity inflected with indigenous accents. Her father's house was decorated with symbols of an Indonesian identity from across the nation, including Balinese carvings that suggested an identity based in rather new ideas of a multi-cultural Indonesia stretching across the entire archipelago, rather than simply a life centered only in Sundanese West Java.

For Laila, however, any real connection to the new modernity was a dream, something she knew about only visually from magazines.<sup>14</sup> For her, a "modern" life was completely out of reach. Even through her "half crazy" lens, Laila possessed a firm sense of the items and clothing she aspired to own, and she knew that acquiring these material objects would mark her as a respectable middle-class woman.

But respectability would be a difficult achievement. As a previously married woman, Laila was not portrayed as being sexually virtuous. Although her work as a prostitute was presented as an economic necessity,<sup>15</sup> and although a respectable marriage might in some

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<sup>14</sup> The majority of the magazines in the stack Laila looks through are copies of LIFE, so even if she were literate (the movies is silent on this question,) she is not likely to speak English to be able to read the magazines. Instead, she is clearly reacting to the visual material in the magazines. There do appear to be a few copies of the Indonesian magazine *Wanita* in her stack. This is not an ahistorical detail, since *Wanita* began publishing in August 1949, three months before the events in the movie, but all the magazines that Laila focuses on as her source of inspiration are both lusciously full of photographs of American modern life and American advertisements, and are in English. *Wanita* and its contents will be examined in depth in following chapters.

<sup>15</sup> This corresponds with many Indonesian explanations for the reasons behind what was seen as an explosion of prostitution at that time. Charges of prostitution are also critical to the history of Communist women's moral failure in the wake of the events of October 1, 1965, and are discussed in Chapter 7.

ways have “cleansed” Laila of her sexual taintedness,<sup>16</sup> she was clearly not the type of women on whom Indonesians wished to build their new nation.<sup>17</sup>

*Lewat Djam Malam* views 1949/1950 from the moral landscape of 1953, reading back questions of a national set of crises about identity that were only just being formulated during the earlier time. In that sense, it perfectly encapsulates the concerns of this dissertation. What would it mean to be modern and Indonesian? And while men might feel this, why would this question be felt particularly by women? Did the dislocation and violence of war and revolution, only rarely talked about explicitly at the time, and that in Usmar’s work was actively constricted by military censors, instead show up as a series of moral crises centered around women, their bodies and sexuality, and particularly their clothing and self-presentation?

The answers, I argue, can be found, like Laila’s dreams, in the pages of women’s magazines. But rather than being simple cut-out visions of western material culture pasted on a wall and perhaps not even readable in their English form, magazines written in Indonesian, by Indonesian women for other Indonesian women, negotiated the question of what it meant to attempt to be simultaneously Indonesian and modern in exquisitely rich detail. Grounded in the daily lives women had to make for themselves and their families, women’s magazines essentially dealt in the real, or at least in the ways that reality ground up against the aspirations of the new nation.

Yet, as the dissertation shows, the development of the nation, its *kemajuan*, or “stepping forward” in Indonesian, was also comprised of cultural and political tension and uncertainty, expressed in small and large-scale moral crises about modernity and nationality. These can be seen particularly clearly through questions of appropriate Indonesian femininity that was the central question covered in women’s magazines. So it is to these incredibly elaborate sources that the dissertation now turns, to provide what I hope

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<sup>16</sup> On the idea of sexually compromised women being “saved” by marriage in particular, see both Annie Pohlman’s discussion of communist women in prisons and prison camps, most of whom were sexually violated by their captors who were “rehabilitated” when they agreed to marry soldiers who were guarding them, and Rachmi Diyah Larasati’s discussion of Javanese village women under orders to report to military offices weekly as part of their “rehabilitation” from communist influence who also were offered ways out of this social shame through marriage to their military supervisors. Annie Pohlman, *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965–66*, and Rachmi Diyah Larasati, *The Dance That Makes You Vanish*.

<sup>17</sup> Chapter 4 explores the idea of women as “*tiang negara*,” and as “*ibu bangsa*,” the pillars and mothers of the nation, at length.

will be a nuanced reading of the development of the Indonesian nation during the Sukarno era.



**Figure 1.1:** Norma (Netty Herawati) in her garden.  
Production Still, *Lewat Djam Malam*, 1954



**Figure 1.2:** Laila (Dhalia) with her magazine dreams pasted beside her mirror.  
Production Still, *Lewat Djam Malam*, 1954

## CHAPTER 2

### ***Wanita Magazine and the Emergence of the Indonesian Nation, 1949-1950***

*[W]anita membutuhkan madjalah sendiri, apalagi madjalah kita ini madjalah didalam kehidupan rumah tangga. Wanita sebagai Isteri dan Ibu dan . . . . . sebagai wanita. Wanita perlu petundjuk2 hal rumah tangga, tentang tjaranja mendidik anak2, tentang mode, tentang soal-soal kesukaran-kesukaran sehari-hari. Perlu pula menambah pengetahuan dan hiburan jang sesuai baginja sebagai 'menteri dalam negeri.'*

[W]omen need a magazine of our own, and this magazine of ours is a magazine about life in the home. For women as Wives and Mothers, and . . . . . as women. Women need advice about the household, about how to educate children, about fashion, about every-day challenges. We also need to increase our knowledge along with entertainment that is fitting [for us] as "ministers of the interior."

*Wanita*, 1949, no. 1, 17 August, p. 1.

*Wanita* magazine was "born" alongside independent Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> "*Merdeka!*"<sup>2</sup> (Freedom!) the opening salutation of the first edition read. "A new magazine! A women's magazine!"<sup>3</sup> *Wanita*, whose name could be translated as "Woman," but also as the plural "Women,"<sup>4</sup> was the principal Indonesian national publication for women for the first three years of full independence. Published initially by the state publishing house, Balai Pustaka,

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<sup>1</sup> Its inaugural issue was intentionally given a publication date of August 17, 1949, the fourth anniversary of Indonesia's Declaration of Independence in 1945, but less than four months after the official cease of hostilities between the Dutch and the Indonesians, and a week before the opening of the Round Table Conference that would officially recognize Dutch transfer of power to the new Republic. Cessation of hostilities was formalized on May 7 with the signing of the Roem-Van Roijen Agreement. The Round Table Conference was held in The Hague from August 23 – November 2, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> The signature cry of the Indonesian Revolution.

<sup>3</sup> "*Madjalah baru! Majdalah wanita!*" *Wanita*, 1949, no. 1, 17 August, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> This possibility of referring either to a single woman, or to women as a group will be the subject of critical analysis in the dissertation. One of the principal arguments that I make in future chapters is that Indonesian women were, in terms of building the nation, seen as a representative and generalized group, or "*kaum*." Further, I argue that it was this collective definition of women and their morality, built on elite standards, that were applied to all Indonesian women in the wake of the events of 1965, with disastrous consequences.

and edited by wives of men who were at the epicenter of the Indonesian nationalist movement, the magazine provided an important exposition of the thinking of the Sukarnoist wing of national politics.

An examination of the magazine's first year provides an interesting lens into the details of the cultural questions and assumptions of urban, elite, politically connected Indonesian women had about modernity and both their individual and collective identities at the beginning of the nation.<sup>5</sup> Mostly, these women, the literate and educated audience for *Wanita*, were examining what it might mean to live in a relatively unbounded world of modern femininity. As such, the magazine is a critical source for questions about women's roles in building the nation during Indonesia's first several years of sovereignty. Although the magazine gave occasional glances into the lives of women living outside Jakarta and several other urban centers such as Bandung and Surabaya or from outside the national elite, the view it offered of the lives of Indonesian women as a whole was largely limited to the national elite classes. It was also often engaged with a discussion of how things *might* be, as much of how things were.

The reference to women as "ministers of the interior" in their own homes in the quote from the magazine's introductory essay wasn't merely rhetorical. Rather, the household was presented as the building block of the nation. "Our world is our homes," the editorial continued, "but the household, together with other households, are the centers of vitality in our country. . . . In the home, children are born, children will grow up, the children of the coming era."<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the life of the home was positioned as a common shared experience for women and as a place of rest and rejuvenation from the busy, modern world.

*Wanita* itself was positioned as a site that could unite women across a nation separated along regional, religious, political and class lines, as a place that might connect women from household to household. The opening article continued:

In the concerns of our households, Indonesian women come together,  
without seeing region, without seeing religion, without seeing political

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 3 argues that in its second year, in response to both criticism and political developments, *Wanita* began to take on a more explicitly political tone about women's issues, particularly about voting and the proposed marriage law.

<sup>6</sup> "Dunia kita ialah rumah tangga kita, tetapi rumah tangga itu serta rumah tangga lainnja mendjadi pusat-pusat tenaga dinegara kita ini. . . . Didalam rumah tangga anak lahir, anak akan besar, anak zaman jang akan datang." *Wanita*, 1949, no. 1, 17 August, p. 1.

party. . . . Also in the home the leader, the average citizen,<sup>7</sup> the worker, the farmer, the merchant, find the time to rest and let their fatigue and thoughts go, and to find new energy [necessary] to live in this vast society.

All Indonesian women have the same interests in the questions of the household. Building a free and sovereign nation cannot not include the struggles of women, since we also are carrying and cultivating the spirit of freedom and sovereignty in the home.

Pulled along by this feeling, today we introduce the magazine “WANITA” to a lively audience. Our hopes are great that our readers, particularly women, would like to assist us in this, so that our magazine comes to life. . . .

Gradually members of the “Wanita” family will develop mutual feelings of respect for one another, becoming feelings of sisterhood<sup>8</sup>, so that the household of “Wanita” can become our home Together. That is our goal and the goal of our publisher as well.<sup>9</sup>

The nation- and community-building project of the magazine was not incidental. *Wanita* was tightly connected to the cultural and political elite of the nationalist government. Over its first five years, the magazine’s editorial board included women with significant nationalist and political pedigrees. Prominent female political leaders were contributors to the magazine.<sup>10</sup> The political and cultural projects of the wives of both President Sukarno and Vice President Hatta were subjects of regular reporting.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “*si rakjat*.” This is difficult to translate well into English. “*Rakyat*” means “the people” or “the masses,” and it is a politically potent and important word in Revolutionary Indonesian, much as “We, the People” is in the United States, and with similar implications. “*Si*” takes *rakyat* and individualizes it, giving it a meaning of the everyman or everywoman from the masses, each and every average Joe or Jane. Sometimes the same idea is represented by using an “average” name with the same prefix, *si Marhaen* or *si Sarinah*, although those two particular names took on political meanings in their own rights as well. Note here my usage of spelling differences. “*Rakjat*” is the old spelling in the original document. “*Rakyat*” is the modern spelling, used outside the direct quotation.

<sup>8</sup> “*persaudaraan*,” often translated as “brotherhood,” “comradery,” or “comradeship.” The root word “*saudara*” can mean both brother and sister, among other similar ungendered meanings. I have specifically chosen “sisterhood” in this case.

<sup>9</sup> “*Didalam soal-soal rumah tangga itu kita wanita Indonesia dapat bertemu, tidak pandang daerah, tidak pandang agama, tidak pandang partai politik. . . . Didalam rumah tangga pula si pemimpin, si rakjat, si buruh, si tani, si saudagar, mendapat waktunya beristirahat dan melepaskan lelah dan pikiran, dan mendapat tenaga baru untuk kehidupan dalam masarkat [sic] jang luas itu. // Semua wanita kepentingannya sama didalam soal-soal rumah tangga. Membangun negara merdeka dan berdaulat tidak boleh tidak membawa perjuangannya bagi wanita, membawa, memupuk semangat merdeka dan berdaulat itu pula didalam rumah tangga. // Terdorong oleh perasaan itu, maka hari ini kami perkenalkan madjalah ‘WANITA’ ini kepada chalajak ramai. Besar harapan kami, agar para pembatja, terutama kaum wanita suka memberi bantuan, supaja madjalah kita dapat hidup. . . . Lambat laun antara para anggauta keluarga ‘Wanita’ ini akan ada rasa paham memahami, mendjadi rasa persaudaraan, sehingga rumah tangga ‘Wanita’ ini akan djadi rumah tangga kita Bersama. Itulah tudjuan kami dan tudjuan penerbit pula.*” *Wanita*, 1949, no. 1, 17 August, pp. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> See this discussion of who some of these women were in Chapter 1.

<sup>11</sup> Mohammad Hatta had only one wife, Rachmi Rachim. Sukarno had nine wives over the course of his lifetime. In 1949, he was married to his third wife, Fatmawati. He would take his first concurrent wife (his fourth overall) in 1953 when he

The first year of *Wanita* was somewhat different from the years that followed, however. While in part this was because the magazine was developing as it grew, it also reflected its time, “the beginning of a short period in Indonesian history when everything seemed possible, and the future was full of promise”<sup>12</sup> as Els Bogaerts writes of 1949-1950. The first year of *Wanita* reflected this sense of promise well. Its content, particularly its political writing, was aspirational and organizational, and was theoretical more than practical. This would change with the arrival of real-world political concerns raised both by national elections and debates that began over a proposed marriage law in 1951.

But in the *Wanita*'s first year, many of the themes that would come to be politically and socially trenchant in future years were already completely established in the discussions elite women were having among themselves. In particular this included the national meanings assigned to various types of women's clothing, the implications for women's morality on the health of the nation, and the possible serious repercussions of women's moral laxness, for women individually and as a group, and for the nation as a whole. It is useful therefore, for the dissertation to begin with a detailed look at the various ideas on these matters that were expressed in the pages of *Wanita* in 1949 and 1950.

### ***Wanita: Women, Politics and the Nation***

*Wanita*'s inaugural edition opened with an article on first lady Fatmawati accompanied by a prominent photo of her and her two children at the time. The photo showed Fatmawati dressed in *kain-kebaya* holding her daughter Megawati in her arms, while her son Guntur rode a tricycle at her feet. Locating Fatmawati as the arch-representative of all Indonesian women, the story declared that “the jasmine blossom in the flower garden of Great Indonesia has a double role: wife and mother.”<sup>13</sup>

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married Hartini. The reaction of Indonesian women to his marriage to Hartini and its effect on debates over the marriage laws is discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>12</sup> Els Bogaerts, “‘Whither Indonesian Culture?’: Rethinking ‘culture’ in Indonesia in a time of decolonization” in Jennifer Lindsay and Maya Liem, eds., *Heirs to world culture*, pp. 232-33.

<sup>13</sup> “*Bunga melatih ditaman bunga Indonesia Raja merangkap: ibu dan isteri.*” *Wanita*, No. 1, 17 August 1949, front cover. The image of Indonesia as a flower garden, specifically tied to the presence of women, was a theme Sukarno used in a speech to Indonesian women in 1964 is discussed in Chapter 6.

The daughter of a *kyai*, or Islamic religious teacher from a fairly traditionalist family, Fatmawati was almost always seen in public wearing *kain-kebaya*,<sup>14</sup> often with a light scarf or *kerudung* over her head, although she was not wearing a head scarf in this particular picture. Wearing a *kerudung* was unusual among elite urban women, and this marked a particular form of Islamic piety for Fatmawati and others.<sup>15</sup> However, despite what initially read as a “traditional” gloss on Indonesian women, the first few issues of the magazine immediately explored aspects of the *moderen*, (particularly of the three elements Hildred Geertz named in her discussion of the developing Indonesian metropolitan superculture: political ideology, artistic styles and material culture.<sup>16</sup>) Discussions of these elements, all linked to the larger question of who a modern Indonesian woman should be, became more pronounced across the magazine’s first year.

*Wanita* clearly laid out an interest in the development of *moderen* material culture, not only with discussions of fashion, but also with articles on how women might decorate their homes in a neat and organized fashion. These articles also clearly assumed that this new culture was something that the magazine’s editors felt needed to be both taught—by cultural leaders of the elite, that is, the editors and their columnists, and by women living in Jakarta—and learned—by readers, including particularly women outside the metropole. In particular, the elite metropolitan women writing and written about in the pages of *Wanita* would themselves serve as the examples to women in other parts of the nation for how to live a modern life. The magazine would also repeatedly make the point that the choices women would make in running their households would be strongly tied to the future success of the emerging nation.

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<sup>14</sup> Among thousands of photographs I have seen of Fatmawati, I only saw photographs of her out of *kain-kebaya* in public on one occasion, during a state visit to the Philippines, in which she wore a *traja mestiza*, also called a Maria Clara, an intentional wearing of Philippine national dress in Manila. See *Wanita*, 1951, #5, March, Front Cover and p. 95. A second photograph of her in a western house dress, worn while receiving Gusti Nurul and other members of the Mangkunegaran family was included in a retrospective photo book of the Gusti’s life published by her children, and the photo was a private one held by the family. I have never seen it published elsewhere. Otherwise, I do not know of a single photograph of her *not* wearing *kain-kebaya*. Sukarno’s insistence on women representing Indonesia both overseas and within the nation is discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>15</sup> Women from Masyumi wore these light head coverings at national meetings and political rallies as a marker of their religious affiliation throughout this era. This was more visually evident in photographs after 1952, when the more Javanese-centered “traditionalist” or “orthodox” elements of the party withdrew from Masyumi over internal leadership struggles with its modernist wing. The “traditionalists” moved their political aspirations to Nahdlatul Ulama (“Revival of the Ulama,” or NU.)

<sup>16</sup> See the discussion of modernity in Chapter 1.



But the central concern of the magazine was the development of the new state. The national political project, and its connection to women, was addressed in one way or another in every issue of *Wanita* during its first year. In the magazine's second issue, dated August 30, 1949, the editors of *Wanita* began the issue with coverage of the All Indonesia Women's Congress that took place in Yogyakarta from August 26–September 2. One of the names for the gathering was *Permusyawaratan Wanita Seluruh Indonesia*, or the Consultative Gathering of Women from Across All of Indonesia.<sup>17</sup> This name emphasized efforts to bring Indonesian women from across the political and cultural spectrum together into a single national movement. While women were doing this work for and among themselves, Sukarno was also a partner in amplifying the process. Specifically, Sukarno sought to build support of his government's program at a time when tensions among various political parties and regional factions were very much in play at the national level, and when the men's side of the political structures were not strongly united.

One of the outcomes of this gathering was its use to demonstrate the advancement of the Indonesian women's movement and of national unity of the Indonesian state just as the Round Table discussions that established the final conditions for Indonesian sovereignty that were beginning in The Hague.<sup>18</sup> The agenda of the consultative women's gathering included discussions and proposals on a wide range of political and economic matters, including gender equality in the forthcoming republican constitution, the creation

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<sup>17</sup> *Permusyawaratan* is a term that references what was perceived to be the consultative nature of Indonesian village governance, where all heads of households could come together to discuss the issues facing the community. It carries a sense similar to "Town Hall Meeting" in American politics, though in this case, more at a national level. In that sense, it is a softer term than the more politically oriented term "*Kongres*."

<sup>18</sup> Technically, the Dutch ceded independence at the Round Table Conference to the *Republik Serikat Indonesia*, (United Republic of Indonesia, or RUSI,) which had a federal structure based in the 1945 Constitution that featured a strong executive. Many nationalists distrusted federalism as a Dutch attempt to weaken the Indonesian state by playing on the new nation's internal geographic and cultural divisions, though the federal approach had support from the outer island constituencies wary of the possibility of a centralized, Java- and Javanese-dominated nation. In 1950, the federal structure was replaced with the *Republik Indonesia* (Republic of Indonesia, or RI) based on a centralized republican structure but one in which the executive powers of the presidency were more limited by a strong parliament. During Guided Democracy beginning in 1958 (covered in Chapter 6,) one of Sukarno's goals was a return to the 1945 Constitution, which would have strengthened the powers of the presidency.

The notes of the meeting in Yogyakarta specify in particular that "decisions [made at the conference] were sent to: The delegation of the Republic of Indonesia and the delegation of the B.F.O. [the *Bijeenkomst voor Federaal Overlag*, or Federal Consultative Assembly, a committee established by the Dutch government to oversee the United Republic of Indonesia during the revolutionary period of 1945-1949,] to be championed at the K.M.B. [*Konferensi Meja Bunda*, or Round Table Conference,] with copies sent to the press and women's movements around the world." ("*Keputusan-keputusan ini dikirim kepada: Delegasi Republik Indonesia dan delegasi B.F.O. untuk diperdjoangkan di K.M.B. dan salinannja kepada pers dan gerakan-gerakan wanita diseluruh dunia.*") *Buku 1958*, p. 42. The theme of Sukarno exhorting women to promote national unity was also reported in *Wanita's* coverage of the Congress. See "*Kongres Wanita Seluruh Indonesia*," *Wanita*, 1949 #2, Front Inside Cover.

of marriage laws that stressed the equality of men and women while also recognizing different religious practices around marriage and divorce, literacy programs particularly aimed at women, and the adoption of labor laws and economic policies that were inclusive of women's needs.<sup>19</sup>

Saskia Wieringa, however, argues that the ability of the congress to move several pre-war agenda items forward was severely constrained by the focus on unity. "No consensus could be reached on the marriage law," she wrote,

and the pre-war demand for an end to polygyny . . . was dropped in an effort to maintain unity with the Islamic women's organizations (although the compromise did not relieve the underlying tensions). The formulations regarding women workers were similarly vague, underspecifying what 'protection' entailed. . . . In the interest of national unity, the fight against male sexism had been shelved.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps this tension helps explain *Wanita's* rather bland coverage of the Congress. The article discussed the work done by the organizing committee, that Sukarno gave the opening speech (though without sharing any of its specific content, which praised Indonesian women for their steadfastness in supporting the Revolution and for their willingness to work together as patriots across organizational lines,) and that other prominent male political leaders were among the attenders. It also stressed, in line with prominent political argument that the Congress was a display of the unity of Indonesian women.

The article, however, didn't mention the political tensions between various groups of women. Nor did it offer guidance about the realities of political work necessary to move a women's agenda forward.<sup>21</sup> But national unity remained a theme. The front cover of *Wanita* 1949 #5, published six weeks later showed two women, one of whom was Siti Wahyuni,<sup>22</sup> reading together off a clip-board, a clear image of women working together.

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<sup>19</sup> For more detailed description of the congress' agenda, see *Buku Peringatan 30 Tahun Kesatuan Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia*, pp. 42-43; Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 86-87; and Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia*, pp. 45-51.

<sup>20</sup> Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> This was not the case in *Wanita's* second year, as future chapters discuss.

<sup>22</sup> Also called Poppy, Siti Wahyuni was the sister of Soedjatmoko, one of Indonesia's important early diplomats and member of the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (PSI, or Indonesian Socialist Party), and the soon-to-be wife of Sutan Sjahrir, Indonesia's first Prime Minister, the founder of the PSI, and one of the primary intellectuals of the Indonesian revolution and nation. Thanks to Bonnie Triyana for his help in identifying Siti Wahyuni.

Referencing debates at the time about Indonesia's possible political structure, which was still in question, the caption on the photo underlined magazine's views on national unity, reading "Republican Woman? Federal Woman? No, Indonesian woman."<sup>23</sup>

Much of the political discussion in *Wanita's* first year would come in the form of a regular column about politics and democracy by Trimurti. The editors commissioned this series, entitled "Popular Politics," ("*Politik Populer*,") which addressed the general political challenges and choices facing the new nation. It was designed to offer basic primers on these issues for readers who "very much wish to know the ins and outs of politics."<sup>24</sup>

Trimurti wrote a series of articles that were generally educational rather than exhortational in nature, including a history of democracy from Ancient Greece forward,<sup>25</sup> and an explanation of basic political terms involved in the debate about the nation's political structure.<sup>26</sup> The next issue followed with an argument about why Indonesia would be better served by a unitary state structure rather than a federal one.<sup>27</sup> Aligned with her own and with Indonesia's general socialist outlook, Trimurti also explored the lessons Indonesian women might learn from May Day celebrations.<sup>28</sup>

The underlying current of her articles, though, was the argument that, structurally at least, women were able to be equals in the full range of Indonesian political life. "All elected representative bodies," she wrote, "beginning from the lowest up to the highest, are open to women."<sup>29</sup> Because of this,

women participate in determining the politics of the nation, that is to say, the politics of education, the politics of labor, development, etc. Girls can pursue education through university. Factories, offices and all branches of work are open to women. And women also demonstrate skills in all these areas.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "Wanita Republik? Wanita Federaal? Bukan, wanita Indonesia." *Wanita*, 1950 #5, October 15, front cover.

<sup>24</sup> "Para pembatja sangat ingin mengetahui seluk beluk politik." *Wanita*, 1950, #1, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> "Politik Populer," *Wanita*, 1950, #1, p. 13., and continued in #2, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> The terms discussed included "nasionalis," "republikain" and "negara federal," or ("federal state".) "Ruangan Politik," *Wanita*, 1950 #4, p. 58.

<sup>27</sup> "Kearah Negara Kesatuan," *Wanita*, 1950 #5, 15 March, pp. 75, 84. This was the position taken by Sukarno and Hatta.

<sup>28</sup> "1 Mei dan Wanita Indonesia," *Wanita*, 1950 #9, pp. 160-61.

<sup>29</sup> "[S]emua badan<sup>2</sup> perwakilan rajkat, mulai jang paling rendah, sampai jang paling tinggi, terbuka bagi kaum wanita." "Politik Populer," *Wanita*, 1950, #2, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup> "maka kaum wanita turut pula menentukan politik negara, misalnja, politik pendidikan, politik pekerdjaan, pembangunan, dsb. Anak<sup>2</sup> perempuan, boleh memasuki sekolah<sup>2</sup>, sampai sekolah tinggi. Pabrik<sup>2</sup>, kantor<sup>2</sup> dan semua tjabang pekerdjaan terbuka bagi wanita. Dan kaum wanita, menundjukan pula ketjapannja dalam pekerdjaan<sup>2</sup> ini." "Politik Populer," *Wanita*, 1950, #2, p. 26.

*Wanita's* political editorials continued to place the struggle for women's equality squarely within the national project. The editorial published in the first issue of 1950, for instance, was entitled "Heart Meets Heart."<sup>31</sup> Like the reporting on the Yogyakarta congress, it centered women's political work within a broad goal of building unity across divides. "1950 has begun with us as citizens of . . . the youngest nation in the world. Our struggle has changed as well, from fighting to development." Employing a series of images of the body, it continued:

The duty of women is already clear, as it was during the earlier era of struggle: to become the "*back-bone*"<sup>32</sup> behind the screen in a society that is busy moving towards the implementation of our ideals. There are those among us who without skills have emerged to the front, shoulder to shoulder with men.

Truly, women cannot be left out of events outside the home. . . . How far have our efforts already extended : advancing the standard of living of the common people : advancing education : improving health : overseeing the level of everyday life?

Maybe in this very simple magazine addressed to Mothers, wives and women in the home we will put forward the contents of our hearts, to be carried over the distance of thousands of kilometers. Hearts may meet hearts, the center becoming closer to the regions. That is our hope.

Women of Indonesia, make your efforts succeed in all fields!<sup>33</sup>

Some women, however, noted that systemic improvement for women could not simply rely on solidarity and heart-felt mutual connection. A March 1950 article on "Women in Politics" by B. Jusupadhi of Perwari<sup>34</sup> argued for a more politically active and

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<sup>31</sup> "*Hati Bertemu Hati*," *Wanita*, 1950 #1, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> In English in the original, with the Indonesian in parentheses following.

<sup>33</sup> "*Tahun 1950 telah mulai sebagai warga negara . . . [n]egara jang termuda didunia. // Perdjongan kita dengan begitu telah berubah pula, dari bertempur menjadi membangun. // Tugas wanita dalam pada itu sudah njata, seperti djuga dalam babak perdjongan jang lalu: menjadi 'back-bone' (tulang-punggung) dibelakang kelir dalam masjarakat jang sedang sibuk menudju kepenglaksanaan tjita-tjitanja. Ada diantara kita dengan ketjakapannya tampil ke depan, bahu-membahu dengan kaum laki-laki. // Memang, tak boleh wanita ketinggalan dalam segala kedjadian diluar rumah tangganya. . . . Sampai mana sudah kita bergerak kearah : kemandjuaan deradjat hidup rakjat kita : kemandjuaan pendidikan : perbaikan kesehatan : pengawasan tingkat hidup sehari-hari? // Kiranja dapatlah dalam madjalah kami jang serba sederhana ini, jang kami tudjukkan kepada Ibu, isteri dan wanita dalam rumah tangga, kita mengemukakan isi hati kita itu, dibawa djauh malalui djarak beribu-ribu kilometer. Hati bisa bertemu dengan hati, pusat mendekati daerah. Itulah harapan kami. // Wanita Indonesia, djadikanlah segala usahanmu berhasil dalam semua lapangan!*" *Wanita*, 1950 #1, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Saskia Wieringa describes Perwari as being a "radical and vocal advocate of women's rights, especially in marriage." Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 25. She devotes a significant portion of Chapter 4 of her book to the politics and political interaction of Perwari during the 1950s, in which she quotes Mrs. Siregar, First Secretary of Perwari in 1953 as

politically independent approach by women in the incomplete process of building the nation.<sup>35</sup> “Are independence or the national revolution already finished? Not yet,” she wrote. “Also, has Indonesian sovereignty become the destiny of the people generally? . . . Not yet! Again, not yet! This is still far away!”<sup>36</sup>

In keeping with the outlook of Perwari, Jusupadhi also stressed women reaching across barriers to each other, but in this instance reaching down from the center with guidance to the broader society. “The lines of social justice,” she wrote,

have not yet formed a definitive meaningful line within the frameworks of society and the nation, and because of that the interpretations of social justice are many, with various people holding their own interpretations.

So women have a desire to create a country with a certain kind of meaning. And it is desirable that we provide this line from above, while it is for the society below to receive and implement these lines.<sup>37</sup>

Simultaneously, however, she noted that while women sought to bring these improvements about, that changes for women would have to happen in a system where “it is men who in practice control Government. Men are at the center, and it is men who are guiding real democracy for the nation generally.”<sup>38</sup> Women, therefore, would need to take matters into their own hands. “In brief, it would be better if women, particularly our leaders, participated in a political party that is based on our own convictions.”<sup>39</sup>

In 1949-1950, however, a period when according to Herbert Feith, Indonesia was “groping for doctrines, policies and government methods to fill the *tabula rasa* of the new independence,”<sup>40</sup> Perwari’s approach to achieving women’s broad political sovereignty

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saying “Perwari was the only organization without links to men. All the others had, and these men influenced them.” p. 116.

<sup>35</sup> “*Wanita dalam politik*,” *Wanita*, 1950, March, p. 74. The article specifically references Perwari’s December 1949 national meeting in Bogor as a basis for her thinking in this article.

<sup>36</sup> “*Sudahkah kemerdekaan, atau revolusi nasional ini selesai? Belum. . . . Sudahkah pula kedaulatan Indonesia ini merupakan menjadi nasibnya bangsa umumnya? . . . Belum! Sekali lagi belum! Masih djauh!*” *Wanita*, 1950, March, p. 74.

<sup>37</sup> “*Garis keadilan sosial saja belum merupakan garis yang tertentu dan berarti bagi susunan masyarakat dan negara, oleh karena makna, interpretasi keadilan social itu banjak, masing-masing mempunyai interpretasi sendiri. // Djadi kaum wanita mempunyai keinginan merupakan negara yang tertentu maknanya. Dan hendaknja kita dapat pula memberi garis dari atas, sedang masyarakatnja dibawah menerima, dan melaksanakan garis-garis itu.*” *Wanita*, 1950, March, p. 74

<sup>38</sup> “. . . ditengah-tengah kaum laki-laki yang dalam praktiknja menguasai Pemerintahan. Ditengah-tengah kaum laki-laki, bersama-sama kaum laki-laki yang bertudjuan demokrasi tulen, guna negara umumnya.” *Wanita*, 1950, March, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> “*Dengan singkat lebih sempurnahlah kiranja kaum wanita, terutama para pemimpinnja, turut serta dalam partai politik menurut kejakinannya sendiri.*” *Wanita*, 1950, March, p. 74.

<sup>40</sup> Herbert Feith, “Introduction,” in Feith and Lance Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-1965*, p. 3. Also quoted in Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 97.

would not take root widely. Rather, women's groups would unite more successfully around specific issues, principally education and elections, but from within their own existing and differentiated political groups, even if that meant there was not always sufficient central control of efforts.

An early 1950 editorial, "A Few Words,"<sup>41</sup> which encouraged women to organize for the elections, began with a quote from Sukarno:

The destiny of women does not lie with men, not with me, not with Bung Hatta, and not with the Constitution, but the destiny of women lies with women themselves, with women's own initiatives and efforts.<sup>42</sup>

"We don't argue with this," the editorial continued, "that is why we organize, we unite ourselves in organizations or parties."<sup>43</sup> But, it noted, women's organizations still had a way to go in terms of effectiveness. "Our way of organizing," the author wrote, "is not yet as it ought to be."

True, we make broad plans beforehand, we want to do this and that, to massively eliminate illiteracy, but many of those plans remain mere intentions, or are only worked on in small bits and not '*in details*.' There is no control. . . . This is still very disappointing for our organizations.<sup>44</sup>

Notably, there was very little discussion of marriage in the first year, perhaps because polygamy remained a divisive issue among women leaders. Only two articles delved into marriage in any depth, and neither took a political stance on the subject. The first article on the subject, "Women as Wives,"<sup>45</sup> published in March 1950, was one of only a few articles in *Wanita* written by a male author, in this case, Dr. Seno Sastroamidjojo.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> "Sepatah kata," *Wanita*, 1950 #2, 31 January, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> "Nasib wanita tidak terletak pada kaum laki-laki, tidak padaku, tidak pada Bung Hatta, tidak pula pada Undang-undang Dasar, tetapi nasib wanita adalah pada wanita sendiri, pada iktiar dan usaha kaum wanita sendiri." *Wanita*, 1950 #2, 31 January, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> "Utjapan itu tak kita dapat kita bantah. . . . Karena . . . itu maka kita berorganisasi, kita mempersatukan diri dalam perkumpulan-perkumpulan atau partij-partij." *Wanita*, 1950 #2, 31 January, p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> "in details" is in English in the original. "Tjara kita berorganisasi memang belum sebagaimana mestitnja. Betul kita membuat rantjangan-rantjangan pandjang lebar sebelumnja, hendak mengadakan ini dan itu, memberantas butuh huruf setjara besar-besaran, tetapi kebanyakan rantjangan itu tinggal rantjangan belaka, atau apabila dikerdjakan hanja sebagian ketjil dan tidak 'in details'. Kontrolen pun tidak ada. . . . Hal ini masih sangat mengetjewan diorganisasi-organisasi kita . . ." *Wanita*, 1950 #2, 31 January, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> "Wanita sebagai isteri," *Wanita*, 1950 #5, 1 March, pp. 72-3.

<sup>46</sup> Bearing the Central Javanese royal title *Raden*, or Prince, (though it was not used with the article,) Sastroamidjojo was a physician whose elite background allowed him to train in western medicine. He wrote a large number of monographs about health and medicine in Indonesian context, including works on traditional medicine, on sex and marriage, and sexology. He also wrote a treatise on *wayang*, the Javanese arts complex that includes shadow puppetry, gamelan music, dance and theater, with stories drawn principally from the Javanese versions of the Mahabarata and Ramayana.

Rather than addressing marriage as a social and political institution, the article focused on marriage at the personal level, as an emotional and sexual union between husband and wife.

In terms of the relationship between married partners, Sastroamidjojo struck a rather egalitarian tone that matched much of Sukarno's writing in *Sarinah* on the relationship between men and women. "At its essence," Sastroamidjojo wrote, marriage should be based "on a feeling of mutual appreciation, respect and service, in short on the unconditional commitment of both parties, based on a pure abiding love between husband and wife in such a way as to create a firm and close relationship."<sup>47</sup>

In a rather progressive turn for the time, the article explicitly addressed issues of equality in the sexual lives of men and women, within a framework that seems based in a concept of marriage as a companionate arrangement.<sup>48</sup> It argued that women's sexual needs were as important as those of men, and that this was a critical element of promoting a strong union. "Between husband and wife," Sastroamidjojo wrote, "such relations form a central pillar in marriage."<sup>49</sup> He did consider virginity to be important for both the man and the woman coming into the relationship, so that they could have a "perfect marriage,"<sup>50</sup> in which a proper relationship could be developed. The goal was a union in which "all that is evil or ugly might be avoided. Such a marriage is a life partnership built on an erotic basis, in which everything is done following and with feelings of love."<sup>51</sup>

The maintenance of such a pure marriage in his view, however, fell strongly on the woman, whose bearing and beauty was key both to remaining attractive to her husband

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<sup>47</sup> "Didalamnja terkandung rasa saling harga menghargain hormat menghormati, abdi mengabdikan, pendek kata kasanggupan jang tidak bersjarat dari kedua belah pihak dan berdasar atas tjinta jang murni, jang kekal antara suami dan isteri, sedemikian rupa sehingga tertjiptalah suatu pertalian lahir-batin jang kokoh dan rapat." *Wanita*, 1950 #5, 1 March, p. 72.

<sup>48</sup> Chapter 3 also discusses the differences between "modern" and "traditional" marriages in terms of the etiquette *Keluarga* magazine suggested young couples making their own choices about marriage should follow in relation to their older relatives, who in other times would have negotiated and led the arrangement of marriages.

<sup>49</sup> "Antara suami dan isteri perhubungan itu merupakan suatu 'soko guru' dalam dunia perkawinan." *Wanita*, 1950 #5, 1 March, p. 72. A "soko guru," is one of the (usually) four pillars that stand as the central structure of a Javanese *pendopo*, or open-sided roofed structure. Nancy Florida discusses the dense cultural meanings attached to the organization of these structures, including to *soko guru* in the mosque in Demak, as described in the *Babad Jaka Tingkir*. See Nancy K. Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future*, particularly pp. 327-28.

<sup>50</sup> "perkawinan jang sempurna." *Wanita*, 1950 #5, 1 March, p. 72.

<sup>51</sup> "Semua jang bersifat djabat atau djelek didjauhkan hendaknja. Perkawinan sematjam itu merupakan suatu persekutuan hidup atas dasar erotik, jaitu segala sesuatu dikerdjakan menurut dan dengan perasaan tjinta." *Wanita*, 1950 #5, 1 March, p. 72.

and to maintaining her own good social standing. She must have “[a] face that is always beaming,” Sastroamidjojo wrote,

a sweet smile and interesting flicker in her eyes that can charm her husband’s heart. A sour face must be thrown far away, a harsh voice should never come out. Her voice should be melodious, her speech should be facile and fluent but refined. All parts of her body from her hair to her feet must be cared for properly, they must be neat and orderly. Her ‘make-up’<sup>52</sup> must be appropriate, she must not let it become like a dance mask or the face of Prabu Minak Djinggo,<sup>53</sup> meaning it must be simple, but attractive enough and should be in harmony with the features of her face. Her clothing and jewelry should also be simple, don’t let it be too garish. The color, design and cut of her *badju*<sup>54</sup> and *kain* must be in balance with each other. Her body should be cared for according to the requirements of scientific *hygiene* (health), it should not smell of sweat or smoke (from the kitchen),<sup>55</sup> or other odors that are not pleasant. Perfume worn must be well chosen, don’t just use any perfume. This all must be attended to carefully, because it results in raising a woman’s standard.<sup>56</sup>

The second article concerning marriage in the first year came not in the form of a theoretical treatise, but rather in an early example of celebrity journalism.<sup>57</sup> In July 1950, Gusti Nurul,<sup>58</sup> the daughter of the late Sultan Mangkunegara VII of the “lesser” Mangkunegaran royal house of Surakarta<sup>59</sup>, announced her engagement to an army cavalry

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<sup>52</sup> In English in the original.

<sup>53</sup> Mask here is “*topeng*,” which while it means mask in general, in this case clearly is referring to character masks used in some forms of Javanese and Balinese dance, and in Central Java particularly, for dance dramas from the characters from the Panji tales. The Panji cycle probably dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but were spread widely during the Majapahit Empire in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Panji stories are always danced with masks that are sharply carved and painted. Minak Djinggo is the King of Blambangan in the Panji tales, and, according to Arthur Beatty, is “a Javanese Richard III, . . . portrayed as demonic and horribly disfigured.” See Arthur Beatty, *et. al.*, *Varieties of Javanese Religion*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> “*Badju*” is a more general term for shirt or blouse, so a *kebaya* is a kind of *baju*.

<sup>55</sup> A woman smoking would certainly be unacceptable and a sign of moral looseness.

<sup>56</sup> “*Roman muka jang selalu berseri-seri, senjuman manis dan kedjapan mata jang menarik dapat menawan hati suami. Muka jang asam harus dibuang djauh-djauh, suara keras djangan dikeluarkan. Suara hendaknja merdu, kata-kata keluar dengan lantjar tetapi halus. Seluruh anggauta badan dari rambut hingga kaki harus mendapat pemeliharaan jang lajak, jang teratur dan tertentu. ‘Make-up’ harus pantas, djangan sampai seperti topeng [atau roman muka Prabu Minak Djinggo.] artinja sederhana, tetapi tjukup menarik dan selaras dengan keadaan roman muka. Pakaian dan perhiasan hendaknja sederhana pula, djangan terlampau menjolok mata. Warna, tjorak dan potongan badju serta kain harus seimbang. Tubuh hendaknja dijaga menurut kehendak ilmu hygiene (kesehatan), djangan berbau keringat atau asap (dari dapur) atau bau lainnja jang tidak sedap. Memakai minjak wangipun harus dipilih betul-betul, djangan asal minjak itu berbau sadja. Hal ini harus diperhatikan sungguh-sungguh, karena dapat mempertinggi deradjat wanita.”* *Wanita* 1950 #5, 1 March, pp. 72-3.

<sup>57</sup> “*Lega Rasa Hatiku*,” (“My Heart is Free,”) *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, pp. 219, 221.

<sup>58</sup> *Gusti* is a Central Javanese royal title meaning Prince or Princess, indicating the holder is a child through a wife of one of the rulers of the four Central Javanese royal courts.

<sup>59</sup> There are four royal courts in Central Java, two in Yogyakarta and two in Surakarta, all of them descendent from the Kingdom of Mataram, that the Dutch had worked to disaggregate through wars and political intrigue across much of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Initially the kingdom was split into two royal houses (whose rulers were relatives of each other,) one in each city. Each of these courts developed extensive spiritual-religious justifications for their foundings. As their actual political power diminished, these cultural understandings of their positions within the Javanese



officer, Lt. Col. Soejarso Soerjosoerarso. At the time, Gusti Nurul was perhaps the most famous of the younger generation of *bangsawan*, or nobility, and she was particularly noted for her modernity and visibility. “Who doesn’t know her?” the article asked.<sup>60</sup>

Gusti Nurul’s father had been quite progressive, educating his daughter in Dutch schools, taking her on official tours and missions—including one to Holland where, famously, she danced for the Dutch Queen<sup>61</sup>—allowing her to ride horses seriously<sup>62</sup> and to fly in an airplane.<sup>63</sup> Much of her young life, including her love of European fashion, was documented through their mutual hobby of photography<sup>64</sup> and was written about in the Dutch press in the Indies as an example of her father as a modern native leader.

The article began by noting Gusti Nurul’s long history of being in the public eye. “Our readers certainly still remember how free Sister Nurul was before during the Dutch period, when her late father was still at her side, free to move in the general populace.”<sup>65</sup> This had not been the case during the Japanese or early national periods, perhaps because of the conflicts or of royal traditions, but perhaps also “more because she had reached

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cosmological understanding of the world became increasingly complex. As part of their policy of “Divide and Conquer,” the Dutch had founded the Pura Mangkunegara, the “junior” royal house in Solo in 1757, and the Pakualaman, the “junior” house in Yogyakarta in 1812. First the Dutch, then briefly the French during the Napoleonic Wars, supported the Mangkunegaran’s military strength, as a way of keeping the power of the Kraton Surakarta in check. To some extent, the Mangkunegaran was less encumbered by this developing sense of Javanese royal “tradition,” and historically, both were more open to elements of Dutch modernity. Gusti Nurul’s extensive Dutch education and ability to travel with her father as a young woman were clear extensions of this relative positioning as a “lesser” court that was less encumbered by some of the restrictions necessary to maintain a certain cultural legitimacy on the part of the “greater” houses.

<sup>60</sup> “*Siapa jang tak kenal dia?*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 219.

<sup>61</sup> Gusti Nurul was a highly trained Javanese dancer, as was often the case with royal princesses, particularly in order to be able to take part in ritually important sacred dances called *bedhaya*. (For more on *bedhaya* see Judith Becker, *Gamelan Stories: Tantrism, Islam and Aesthetics in Central Java*, and Nancy K. Florida, “The Bahdaya Ketawang.”) On a state trip to the Netherlands for the wedding of Princess Juliana in 1937, Gusti Nurul performed for Queen Wilhemina and her family. The music was provided by the Mangkunegaran gamelan in Solo, which was transmitted live via radio from the Indies to the Netherlands, the first time such a technical feat was attempted in the Indies. This performance and its technical milestone are still well known to this day, and are cited as an example of Solonese modernity. It was mentioned to me a number of times during my research in Solo nearly seventy years later.

<sup>62</sup> These establishment of the Mangkunegaran cavalry in 1808 under the order of Napoleon included the creation of a battalion of women soldiers who, according to a Javanese poem, “wore Balinese style *keris* that were decorated with embroidered gold leaves and whose clothing was glittering,” (“... *bekta prajurit wanodya anuriga duwung cari Bali odong rene(n) dan apek rere(n) dan ting galebyar busanane.*”) See Iwan Santosa, *Legiun Mangkunegaran (1808-1942)*. The Javanese *macapat* verse is quoted on page 18.

<sup>63</sup> See *Lembar Kenangan Gusti Noeroel*, p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> Her family published a memoir of her life full of these photographs in 2011. See *Lembar Kenangan Gusti Noeroel*. Taken as a whole, the book offers a fascinating study in the choices of when Gusti Nurul would dress in western clothing and when she would dress in the sleek versions of *kain-kebaya* that served as a principal model for Indonesian women in the early 1950s. Noble women from Central Java who were present in Jakarta or Bandung in the 1950s with their politician or military husbands, and Gusti Nurul in particular, were a principal source for what would be considered the most proper ways of wearing *kain-kebaya*.

<sup>65</sup> “*Sdr. pematja tentu masih ingat betapa bebas sdr. Nurul dahulu dizaman Belanda, ketika almarhum Ajahnja masih disampingnja, bebas bergerak disamasjarakat umum.*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 219.

adulthood.”<sup>66</sup> But as she was approaching marriage, Gusti Nurul renegotiated her place in society as the future wife of an army officer. “You surely understand how much I enjoy, how much my heart feels free, when I am able to move about freely now,”<sup>67</sup> she said.

The question asked by the authors also implied that marriage would change the place she might take up in society. “Once you are already married,” they asked, “will you take an active role in the political struggle?”<sup>68</sup> Gusti Nurul answered that as a military wife, she wouldn’t be free to play a political role. “But that doesn’t mean,” she added,

“that I won’t take notice of it, not at all. But as the wife of a soldier, it would be more appropriate to do work on social issues, right? There is also much work to be done in cultural fields that we must all do together. We must remember that many of our younger sisters are still foreigners from their own culture.”<sup>69</sup>

The article underlined that marriage afforded women a transition in life, allowing them to take a more active role in society. Work in the political and social worlds was now more respectable, and, for wives of men with social position, even expected. Gusti Nurul had held some earlier institutional positions because of her royal status—the interview notes that she was a member of the Mangkunegaran branch of Perwari, and head of its social committee—but most of her work to that point, except for Perwari, was in receiving guests to the palace, and her time was spent “reading books, Indonesian magazines, as well as those from overseas.”<sup>70</sup>

In some ways, however, marriage would bring Gusti Nurul into a less public life. She commented that while her husband’s work would have him spending time in both Jakarta and Bandung, she would be choosing to live in Bandung, which was quieter and cooler.

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<sup>66</sup> “*lebih-lebih karena ia telah mentjapai usia dewasa . . .*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 219. Born in 1921, Gusti Nurul would have been in her early 20’s during the war. Traditionally, noble women of a marriageable age were often kept secluded within family compounds. For an exploration of the physical and emotional effects of this, see the writings of Kartini, translated in *Letters of a Javanese Princess*.

<sup>67</sup> “*Saudara tentu dapat mengerti betapa senang saja lega rasa hati saja dapat bergerak dengan bebas pada waktu ini.*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 219.

<sup>68</sup> “*Kalau saudara kelak sudah kawin, akan actiefkah sdr. bergerak dilapangan pergerakan?*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 219. Her uncle, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, was, at this time, the Minister of Agriculture, and this interview took place at his offices in Jakarta. Gusti Nurul often accompanied her uncle, who would become Indonesia’s second Vice President, on inspection tours across the nation during this time, as she had done with her father, so the question was quite apt.

<sup>69</sup> “*Dilapangan politik saja lebih suka tidak turut-turut, apalagi sebagai isteri tentara, bukan? Tapi itu tak berarti, bahwa saja tak akan memperhatikannya, sama sekali tidak. Hanya sebagai isteri tentara adalah lebih tepat bekerdja dilapangan sosial, bukan. Djuga dilapangan kebudajaan masih banjak jang harus kita kerdjakan bersama. Kita ingat sadja kepada adik-adik kita puteri jang masih asing dari pada kebudajaannya sendiri.*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 219.

<sup>70</sup> “*Saja djuga senang membuatja buku, madjalah-madjalah Indonesia maupun jang dari luar negeri.*” *Wanita* 1950 #13/14, July, p. 221.

During her years there, although she took part in the social work mentioned in the interview, she largely avoided playing too active a role in the social lives of military wives, and particularly of air force wives, that was a driver of women's fashion in the "Paris of the East," as Bandung was called. Her husband's work would take her and her children to Washington DC, where he served as military attaché, and she enjoyed being largely out of the spot-light, just one of the other embassy wives.<sup>71</sup>

Another important transition when she married and became fully adult was that she largely stopped wearing western clothing. Instead, *kain-kebaya* was her daily choice, even at home, or while grocery shopping in Washington.<sup>72</sup> While in part this was because, under Sukarno's orders, women representing Indonesia overseas were ordered to wear *kain-kebaya*, her children were also clear that this became her choice, something she saw as a reflection of her marriage and her family history, as well as her desire to represent Indonesia.

That these two articles are the sole extended discussions of marriage in the first year of *Wanita*, one explicit and the other imbedded, is telling. Complete with references both to modern medical hygiene and traditional Javanese examples, the article reflects an elite—indeed royal—Central Javanese outlook based in Dutch education and Javanology<sup>73</sup> rather than the socialist feminism that would guide much of the future discussion of marriage in the near future.

This lack of an explicit discussion of marriage as a political issue in the magazine, a discussion that was clearly happening inside women's organizations and congresses, reflects the same general approach *Wanita's* editors took in the *Ruang Politik* articles. The expressed need to build unity across women's organizations appears to have led the magazine to avoid the entire question of marriage entirely at first, rather than working yet

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with her children, Soelarso Basarah Soerjosoearso and Parimita Wiyarti, November 2013.

<sup>72</sup> In the *Lembar Kenangan*, the only pictures of Gusti Nurul out of *kain-kebaya* after her marriage are of her as a very old woman in an informal family portrait. Interestingly, there is a picture of Gusti Nurul with Fatmawati, both of them with children on their laps, in which Sukarno's wife, but not Gusti Nurul, is wearing a western dress with her hair pulled back simply rather than made up into a *sanggul*. It is a very rare view of Fatmawati out of *kain-kebaya*, and attests to the informality of the situation. *Lembar Kenangan Gusti Noeroel*, p. 77. This photograph is discussed earlier in the dissertation.

<sup>73</sup> For more on the development of this particular web of Indonesian modern identity, see John Pemberton, *On the Subject of Java*. Also see the discussion of modernity in Chapter 1.

“in the [most certainly disruptive] details” of the politics of promulgating a new marriage law.

On other political issues that were less internally divisive, on the other hand, the magazine got quite into the details of the matter, particularly about international affairs. In these cases, they expressed the left-leaning political views of the editors and the nationalist Jakarta elite. In the July 1950 issue, for instance, the editors published an extended discussion of the causes of the Korean War written by Trimurti.<sup>74</sup> Connections with women’s organizations from other nations were regularly reported on, often within a context of developing and enhancing solidarity and world peace. Referencing a speech by Sukarno, a May 31 editorial, “Women of Southern Asia, Unite!”<sup>75</sup> stated that “among the policies embraced by the Indonesian nation are the politics of peace. Peace within the nation itself, peace with our neighboring nations, and peace with the whole world.”<sup>76</sup>

In particular, Indonesia was quick to develop a strong relationship with India, including an early exchange of visits between Nehru and Sukarno in 1950, which led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in March 1951, and then to their partnership in building the non-aligned movement leading to the Bandung Conference in April, 1955. “One way to achieve peace,” the editorial suggested, “is [through] friendship, strengthening comradery and expediting connections with one another with all integrity and sincerity.”<sup>77</sup>

Women’s hopes, then, within their households, within their organizations, within the nation, and, for elite women at least, within the world, were, at this point, largely aspirational. As the chapter has argued so far, these discussions in 1949 and 1950, for various reasons—the desire to encourage unity across groups, and the newness and lack of concrete experiences—were often rather short “on the details.”

But complexities about the place of women in emerging Indonesia did fill the pages of *Wanita* nonetheless, as they were richly imbedded in the magazine’s extensive and complicated coverage of fashion and beauty. In the details of articles on clothing, makeup and hairstyles—that is, of how women located themselves and their own bodies in

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<sup>74</sup> “Soal Korea,” *Wanita*, 1950 #13/14, July, pp. 229-230, 242.

<sup>75</sup> “*Wanita Asia-Selatan, bersatuhlah!*” *Wanita*, 1950 #10, 31 May, p.169.

<sup>76</sup> “*antara politik jang dianut oleh negara Indonesia adalah politik damai. Damai didalam negeri sendiri, damai dengan negara-tetangga, damai dengan seluruh dunia.*” *Wanita*, 1950 #10, 31 May, p.169.

<sup>77</sup> “*Salahsatu djalan untuk metjapai perdamaian itu, ialah silaturachim, mempererat persaudaraan dan memperlantjar perhubungan satu sama lain dengan segala ketulusan dan keichlasan.*” *Wanita*, 1950 #10, 31 May, p.169.

society—and which were omnipresent in the magazine throughout its publication, we can read a complex story about women and national identity, complete with discourses on modernity, on female purity and on the moral crises that arose within the intricate web of what it was coming to mean to be a modern Indonesian woman.

### ***Wanita: Fashion, Modernity and National Identity***

*“Dapatkah kita di Indonesia pada waktu ini berbitjara tentang suatu mode untuk pakaian wanita dengan pengertian jang sama seperti di-negeri-negeri Barat?”*

Are we able in Indonesia at this time to talk about having a certain fashion for women’s clothing, with a meaning that is the same as in western nations?

*“Mode di Indonesia?”* [“Fashion in Indonesia?”]  
*Wanita*, November 1949<sup>78</sup>

*Wanita’s* discussion of fashion, of what was—and wasn’t—fashionable, of patterns for home sewing, of reports on fashion shows, of finding the style that best fit each woman’s silhouette, coloring and age—and the assertion that such matters were critically important to Indonesian women—was central to elite Indonesian women’s exploration of their lives as citizens of the newly independent nation. As a result, such discussions were a consistent element of every edition of the magazine in its first year and beyond.

In these discussions, Indonesian women were asking a question that was not critical to, or even particularly present in western magazines such as *Vogue* or *Glamour*. Indonesian women were engaged in an important discussion of national identity that was less critical to American, French or English women. The central question of fashion in the West at this time was about a return to softness and femininity after the boxy sturdiness of wartime fashions, of what it meant to be a woman “again” once the “boys were home.” For Indonesian women, however, the questions were different. Their discussions were primarily concerned with what it meant to dress as a “modern” Indonesian woman in the first place.

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<sup>78</sup> *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, pp. 80-81.

There were, however, of course, ways of dressing to refer back to. From the beginning, the principal discussion of what might constitute a national way of dressing concerned *kain-kebaya*. But within a national and modern context, this raised important questions. Was there a way of dressing that represented the entire nation and not simply a single region? Could those ways also be “modern” without losing an essential “eastern” sensibility, whatever that might be?

These questions facing Indonesian women were particularly well laid out in an article published in November 1949, the title of which asked the question of whether there was such a thing as “Fashion in Indonesia?”<sup>79</sup> Beginning a trend of articles on fashion that would pose theoretical questions about fashion, modernity and “Indonesianess” across the next fifteen years and beyond, the article noted:

Indigenous clothing (*pakaian asli*) for women, which takes many forms, can be said that a *sarong* or length of *batik* worn with a short *kebaya* is most preferred. We can probably say that the fashion (*mode*) in Indonesian women’s clothing right now is *kain batik* with a short *kebaya*.<sup>80</sup>

The word *asli*, (translated here as “indigenous,” but also meaning “original,” “genuine,” “native,” or even more importantly “authentic”) staked *kain-kebaya* in its various forms as a mode of dress unique to Javanese and other Indonesian cultures, and as an authentic way that Indonesian women dressed. But, the question was asked, could Indonesian women yet call the wearing of *kain-kebaya* “fashion,” or “*mode*,” using the French word imported through its Dutch use. The article also elided two uses of the term: one as “fashion” dictated through taste makers and designers and the other as “the popular current fashion, trend or way of dressing.”

The article immediately contrasted *pakaian asli*, which it also termed “*pakaian adat*,” or “traditional clothing,”<sup>81</sup> with women’s “daily” clothing. Noting that different regions had different traditional clothing that women wore on a daily basis—a hand-woven *sarong* and either a long or short *kebaya* in the eastern islands, a *sarong* of imported cotton

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<sup>79</sup> “*Mode di Indonesia?*,” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, pp. 80-81.

<sup>80</sup> “*Pakaian asli untuk wanita, jang berupa-rupa itu, boleh dikatakan sarung atau kain pandjang batik dengan kebaja pendek itulah jang paling disukai orang. Barangkali bolehlah kita katakan, bahwa mode dalam pakaian wanita Indonesia pada waktu ini ialah kain batik dengan kebaja pendek.*” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 80. The “short” *kebaya* however, placed the “fashion,” traditionally at least, within the sphere of Javanese and Balinese dress, rather than Sumatran clothing, where a longer blouse was more the norm.

<sup>81</sup> See Chapter 1 for a discussion of “*asli*” and “*adat*” and the historical and cultural freight the terms carry.

and a long *kebaya* in much of Sumatra, and various forms of *kain*, very often *batik*, and short *kebaya* in Java and Bali—the article suggested there was no single standard for national fashion. By then, *batik*, mostly based on Javanese patterns, was largely available across the archipelago. Within the previous ten years, the article noted, “*batik* cloth flooded the market everywhere, and everywhere as well, that cloth is worn by women for their ‘every day’ clothing.”<sup>82</sup> But since there were still places where *batik* had still not replaced hand-woven cloth in traditional dress, “*batik* as *pakaian adat* has not yet become the ‘fashion.’ (*mode.*)”<sup>83</sup>

In the West, the article noted, what was fashion was determined differently. Designers—“a few people with names like Lanvin, Schiparelli, etc.”<sup>84</sup>—who determine precisely what constituted “women’s clothing fashion” (“*mode pakaian wanita.*”) It was that small group “who decide the form and shape of clothing for a specific period, who set the length of dresses or the shape of sleeves and necklines.”<sup>85</sup> But Indonesia did not yet have either such influential designers or a sense that fashion should adjust with the seasons or years.

Rather, particularly before the Second World War, women depended on what they perceived to be “traditional” standards for wearing *kain-kebaya*. And, the article noted, they felt the “particular influence of Jogja and Solo in this matter.<sup>86</sup> Ways of wearing *kain* and dressing hair in buns necessarily followed closely to the Jogja and Solo style.”<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, Indonesia did not yet have a fashion infrastructure. “We at the very least need a ‘fashion house’ [*modehuis*” in Dutch,] and a ready-to wear business that once a year or more often is able to show off women’s clothing with a fashion show,”<sup>88</sup> the article

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<sup>82</sup> “Maka kain batik itulah dimana-mana membandjiri pasar, dan dimana-manapun djuga kain itu telah dipakai wanita untuk pakaian ‘sehari-hari.’” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 80.

<sup>83</sup> “Kain batik untuk pakaian adat belum medjadi ‘mode.’” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 80.

<sup>84</sup> “beberapa orang orang jang ternama seperti Lanvin, Schiparelli d.l.l.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 80.

<sup>85</sup> “Mereka itulah jang menentukan bagaimana rupa dan bentuknja pakaian untuk sesuatu waktu, merekalah jang menentukan pandjangnja rok atau bentuk lengan dan lehernja.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 80.

<sup>86</sup> That is, it followed the influence of the styles worn by the women of the royal courts, *bangsawan* such as Gusti Nurul, with all of its significations of social rank. Chapter 3 examines the continuing influence of women from the Central Javanese noble families in what is considered to be the “proper” way to wear *kain-kebaya* in Jakarta society throughout the first half of the 1950’s.

<sup>87</sup> “Sebelum perang dunia kedua terasa sekali pengaruh Jogja dan Solo dalam hal ini. Tjara memakai kain dan menjanggul konde harus mendekati tjara Jogja dan Solo.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 80.

<sup>88</sup> “Sekurang-kurangnja harus ada suatu ‘modehuis’ dan perusahaan confectie jang sekali setahun atau lebih sanggup memperlihatkan pakaian wanita itu dengan djalan mode-show.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

suggested. “Besides that,” the author wrote, “we must have a magazine intended solely to publish drawings of the clothing that represents the fashion of a particular time.”<sup>89</sup>

Absent these markers of western fashion industry—brand-name designers, *confectie* (ready-to-wear) boutiques, seasonal fashion shows, and fashion and pattern magazines—the author suggested that Indonesian women would need to rely on the emerging trends in several cities, particularly Bandung, “Indonesia’s Paris.”<sup>90</sup> Bandung before the war, she noted, was known for being “full of beautiful, modern women . . . who dared to wear beautiful clothing and whose *kebaya* were unusually colorful.”<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, women in Bandung were known for having pushed the bounds of the cut and fit of *kebaya*. “Who does not remember,” the article asked,

the period before the Second World War, when women from Bandung wore a variety of shapes of *kebaya*? *Kebaya* that were rather open to the back, *kebaya* with wide sleeves or that were rather elaborate up top? And who doesn’t still remember the type of *kebaya* that had bows at the neck?<sup>92</sup>

But with the exception of beginning to wear *kebaya* without gussets in the arms—another Bandung innovation—“people have returned to the ‘usual’ style of *kebaya* that has been the model from generation to generation.”<sup>93</sup>

But these possible choices of what would constitute “fashion,” were fraught with national meaning. Bandung led the way again. The article reported that women there had held “a ‘fashion show’ (*mode-show*)” of Indonesian clothing styles from across the nation. It was, the article claimed, the first time that Indonesian clothing was shown to the general public, worn by modern young women. What was displayed there is interesting to notice. It is a prediction of the direction in which “Indonesian fashion” (*mode Indonesia*) is headed,<sup>94</sup> the author suggested.

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<sup>89</sup> “Disamping itu harus ada suatu madjalah jang hanya memuat gambar-gambar dari pakaian jang menentukan mode untuk suatu masa.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>90</sup> “satu-satunya kota Paris untuk Indonesia” and “kota Paris Indonesia.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>91</sup> “oleh sebab Bandung penuh dengan wanita jang tjantik dan modern . . . wanita berani berpakaian indah dengan memakai warna-warna kebaya jang luar biasa?” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>92</sup> “Siapa jang tidak ingat akan suatu masa sebelum perang dunia kedua, dimana wanita Bandung memakai berupa-rupa matjam kebaya? Kebaya jang agak terbuka dibelakang, kebaya dengan lengan jang lebar sekali atau jang dikerenjutkan disebelah atas? Dan siapalah jang tidak ingat lagi sematjam kebaya jang diberi strik pada lehernja?” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>93</sup> “Orang kembali lagi kepada kebaya ‘biasa’, jang telah turun-temurun ditentukan modelnja.” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>94</sup> “Di Bandung itulah sudah dimulai dengan mengadakan ‘mode-show’ untuk pakaian Indonesia. Itulah pertama kalinya pakaian Indonesia diperlihatkan untuk umum, dipertunjukkan oleh gadis-gadis modern. // Apa jang dipertunjukkan disitu



What wasn't shown or given importance was special cuts of *kebaya*, rather in the *mode-show* we saw forms of Indonesian clothing from various regions. The idea is to unite the various types of clothing so that they may become the wardrobe of each Indonesian woman from whatever area of Indonesia as well!<sup>95</sup>

The author suggested that having such a collection at her disposal could "suggest a compromise" for what might constitute "proper clothing" to be worn when going out on the town, which was still clearly established as being "*kain batik* and *kebaja pendek*."

Clearly the 'distinction' of Jogja and Solo must carry weight, meaning that *kain batik* must be emphasized. For the cut of the *kebaja* you can choose the "Bandung cut," without a gusset, but still using a *bef*<sup>96</sup> in front.<sup>97</sup>

This could be worn "morning, afternoon or night . . . as clothing around the home, as clothing to go to the market, as clothing to go call at a friend's house, etc."<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, in these less formal situations, women might choose woven *kain*, printed cotton *sarong* lengths, or often "*kain Pekalongan* which is beautifully colorful."<sup>99</sup> "The meaning of this," the author wrote, "is that Indonesian women should own a wardrobe based on various kinds of clothing from across the Indonesian islands."<sup>100</sup>

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*ialah menarik perhatian. Sudah dapat diramalkan kearah mana 'mode Indonesia' hendak ditunjukkan." Wanita, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.*

<sup>95</sup> "*Disitu tidak dipertunjukkan atau dipentingkan potongan kebaja jang istimewa tetapi di mode-show itu diperlihatkan rupa-rupa pakaian Indonesia dari beberapa daerah-daerah. Ideenja ialah hendak menjatukan berrmatjam-matjam pakaian itu supaja dapat mendjadi garderober tiap wanita Indonesia dibagian Indonesia manapun djuga." Wanita, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.* The Dutch word *garderober* ("wardrobe") literally refers to a standing clothing closet, rather than wardrobe as a collection of clothing, but the usage here has some slippage between the two. The suggestion could either be that a woman's wardrobe consist of this variety of clothing from across the nation, or that such a collection could fill her wardrobe closet.

<sup>96</sup> A *bef* is a strip of fabric that connects the two front collars of a *kebaya* across the chest. In a *kebaya bef*, the cut doesn't bring the two front sides of the *kebaya* together, allowing the *stagen*, or waist-wrap that holds the *kain batik* in place to be seen. Most cuts of *kebaya* are such that the two front sides of the blouse are attached to each other down the center of the chest and waist, so wearing a *bef* was seen as particularly stylish and new.

<sup>97</sup> "*Suatu usul compromis untuk garderober wanita? // Sebagaian pakaian jang resmi dapat detetapkan pakaian kain batik dan kebaja pendek. // Hendaknja 'distinctie' Jogja dan Solo harus berpengaruh, artinja kain batiknya harus dipentingkan. Untuk potongan kebaja dapat dipilih 'potongan Bandung', tidak dengan geer, tetapi masih memakai 'bef' dimuka." Wanita, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.*

<sup>98</sup> "*Pakaian ini dapat dipakai pada siang hari, sore dan malam. Untuk siang hari pakaian itu dapat dibagi atas: pakaian rumah, pakaian untuk pergi kepasar, pakaian untuk pergi bertandang dirumah teman dsb." Wanita, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.*

<sup>99</sup> "*kain Pekalongan jang bagus warnanja." Wanita, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.* Pekalongan, on the north coast of Java, was Central Java's most important port and connection to global trade routes. It is known for its *batik* which uses modern brightly colored dyes, rather than the white, brown and black of Yogya and Solo.

<sup>100</sup> "*Maksudnja ialah supaja wanita Indonesia mempunjai garderober jang terdiri dari berbagai-bagai matjam pakaian dari seluruh kepulauan Indonesia." Wanita, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.*

The unifying possibilities of building a national wardrobe, and the nation's future, weren't lost in her analysis. "Couldn't this be looked at as a task that unites all Indonesian women?," she asked. "The Indonesian people generally are working to unite the nation, its people and its language.<sup>101</sup> And . . . . . we add its clothing!"<sup>102</sup> Whether this would happen however, in "this time when what daily clothing is has yet to be determined," would be up to young women ("*wanita pemudi.*") "For isn't the era that will come," she asks, "also in their hands as well?"<sup>103</sup>

Some of these ideas had already appeared in the pages of *Wanita*, in one of its earliest articles on the wearing of *kain-kebaya* that appeared in the third issue of *Wanita*, on 15 September, 1949.<sup>104</sup> Updating fashion advice on this older form of clothing, the article suggested Indonesian women try dressing in a "new style," using new multi-colored styles of *batik*, not simply *batik sogan*, the brown, black and white cloth from Central Java.<sup>105</sup> Women could also consider wearing hand-printed *batik cap* rather than more expensive hand-drawn *batik tulis*.<sup>106</sup> Or they could forgo *batik* altogether, instead wearing colorful lengths of printed *sarong* cloth,<sup>107</sup> or of *kain polos*, a length of cloth of a single color, perhaps embroidered with flowered patterns rising from the hem. It also suggested that women could easily use *kain polos* to make *kebaya* in colors that would complement their *kain*.

The focus on using both *batik cap* and *kain polos* may have been presented as expanded fashion options for women to choose from, but it also likely reflected a difficulty

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<sup>101</sup> This is a reference to an important nationalist slogan: "*satu nusa, satu bangsa, satu bahasa*" ("one archipelago, one people, one language,") that was part of the Youth Pledge discussed in Chapter 1.

<sup>102</sup> "*Apakah hal ini tak dapat dipandang sebagai suatu usaha untuk menjatukan semua wanita Indonesia? Bangsa umumnya sedang berusaha untuk menjatukan tanah airnya, bangsanja dan bahasanja. Dan . . . . . kita tambah lagi pakaiannya!*" *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>103</sup> "*pada zaman ini, dimana pakaian sehari-hari belum dapat terjamin? // Barangkali wanita-pemudi dapat menjawab pertanyaan ini. Bukankah masa jang akan datang ada ditangan mereka djuga?*" *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, p. 81.

<sup>104</sup> "*Mode: Kain dan kebaja,*" *Wanita*, 1949 #3, 15 September, p. 18.

<sup>105</sup> Batik styles from the northeast coast of Java were particularly known for using multiple colors, so batiks in reds, blues, purples and greens were not unknown following the introduction of modern dyes in the late colonial era. But brown, black and white *batik sogan* in traditional patterns was considered the "standard" batik to be worn when dressing properly in elite circles, largely reflecting the influence of Central Javanese court and administrative circles among the Dutch-educated Indonesian elite. In the early 1950's, Sukarno began to call for the creation of a new form of batik, "*batik Indonesia*," which combined the bright colors of Pekalongan batik with motifs based on Central Javanese fabric. His first "second wife," Hartini, often wore the new style, while Fatmawati is almost always seen in pictures in *batik sogan*.

<sup>106</sup> *Batik cap* uses large square plates that are dipped into melted wax and then stamped onto the cloth being dyed to create *batik* much more quickly and cheaply than the more traditional *batik tulis*, in which all the design is drawn by hand. *Cap* means "chop" or "stamp," and *tulis* means "write" or "draw." Acquiring *kain* lengths of *batik tulis* was a life-long investment for many women, and lengths of cloth were often part of trousseaus or dowry packages.

<sup>107</sup> For instance, the fabric used for men's sarongs.

in attaining *batik tulis* during this period. Fabric was notoriously short of supply during the latter years of the Japanese occupation and production of *batik* had almost completely stopped during that period. Since *batik tulis* production was incredibly time consuming, replacing *kain* that had been worn through during the war was both expensive, and lagged from the ability to buy both much more quickly and cheaply produced, and less prestigious, *batik cap*, or even cheaper imported cotton solids and prints. So these options for adjusting *kain-kebaya* very likely also corresponded to the realities of what was available to most women at the time.<sup>108</sup>

The variations of *kebaya* also received attention, with particular advice for their fabric selection and fit, often laid out in extensive detail. In particular, *kebaya pendek*, or short *kebaya*, which generally came just as far down as a woman's hip line, "which are generally worn by women for every day wear or for the evening,"<sup>109</sup> were in style.<sup>110</sup> An article from January 1950<sup>111</sup> differentiated which fabrics were appropriate to daytime, afternoon or evening wear: daytime *kebaya* from "popelin, tobralco,<sup>112</sup> various types of cambric, crepe or Bemberg silk<sup>113</sup>,"<sup>114</sup> and afternoon *kebaya* from "georgette, crepe, or various silks such as Bemberg, chiffon, etc."<sup>115</sup> If these shinier afternoon fabrics were *polos*, (in Dutch, *effen*, or plain,) that is of a single color without patterns, they could be "decorated

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<sup>108</sup> By the early 1950s, ads for *batik cap* mass produced in Yogyakarta and featuring a variety of traditional and newer motifs regularly appeared in the back pages of *Wanita*. See for instance the back inside cover of the 1950 #4 edition, 28 February. The ad from Batik Toko Toza promises thick cloth with an ivory/yellow base that "truly ornaments women's bodies." ("*jang sungguh bikin semarak tubuh Wanita.*") Prices ranged from 40 to 60 florins. By comparison, a quarterly subscription (six issues) to *Wanita* at the time cost 3 florins. In *Wanita* #10 of that year, it was announced that the subscription price would be raised to 4 florins both because of the rising cost of paper and because of the restructuring of the Indonesian currency. The first *rupiah* notes would not appear until June 1950. It is difficult to figure out conversions of prices in gulden at this point in Indonesian economic history, but in any case, the price of *batik cap* was significantly below that of *batik tulis*, which cost about 10 times more at the time, and was still difficult to attain. Interview with Herawati Diah, who was a significant collector of *batik tulis*.

<sup>109</sup> "*jang telah umum dipakai oleh wanita untuk sehari-hari atau untuk malam.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #1, 15 January, p. 18.

<sup>110</sup> Longer *kebaya*, which reached down to about mid-thigh, often with tapered cuts lengthening from the hip to the front thigh, were an "older" form of *kebaya* more fashionable in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For this generation of women, this might have been a style worn by their mothers or grandmothers. Sumatran dress styles often involved a longer upper garment as well. So, to some extent, *kebaya pendek* were already seen as a modernization of style.

<sup>111</sup> "*Mode: Kebaya Pendek.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #1, 15 January, pp. 18-19.

<sup>112</sup> Tobralco is a particularly soft and supple weave of cotton, also known as English cotton, and a trademark of the Tootal Broadhurst Lee Co. Ltd., in Birmingham, England. The cotton for Tobralco and other English cottons was largely grown in India, but processed in Britain, and was a focus of the Indian independence movement, highlighted in several ways, including a visit by Mahatma Gandhi to the Lancaster fabric mills in 1931, and the hand spinning of Indian cotton in the sub-continent in the *swadeshi* movement. *Swadeshi* philosophy would be referenced at times in efforts to strengthen efforts to support batik production in the face of English imports like Tobralco.

<sup>113</sup> Bemberg silk is actually not silk, but rayon, an industrial fabric made of regenerated cellulose fiber to mimic the softness of silk at a significantly lower price.

<sup>114</sup> "*popeline, tobralco, matjam-matjam batist, crepe atau sutera Bemberg.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #1, 15 January, p. 18.

<sup>115</sup> "*georgette, crepe, rupa-rupa sutera seperti Bemberg, chiffon dll.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #1, 15 January, p. 18.

with embroidery in various colors.”<sup>116</sup> But for evening, “if one is going to a party or reception,” women should make sure that their chiffon or crepe was of high quality, and that crepe should be the thicker type known as French crepe. Again, if the *kebaya* were of a single color, they could be decorated with embroidery, or with “colorful paillettes and beads.”<sup>117</sup> The article promised a future piece which would give more examples and patterns for decorating evening *kebaya*.

All other elements of dressing properly in *kain-kebaya* were also covered fully in articles across the first year, usually also stressing the necessity of making appropriate choices for a woman’s age, appearance and body type, and for the time of day and social situation involved. The articles often placed such things as wearing the proper jewelry or shoes in a broader social context, even if in passing comments. While a bride might borrow or rent gold jewelry for her wedding, for instance, for the everyday, “it is not necessary to wear too much. Meaning, wearing jewelry is not for showing off our wealth, rather jewelry should match our clothing. With a *kebaya pendek* open to the front, one should wear a necklace and a pin.”<sup>118</sup>

An article on *selendang*,<sup>119</sup> scarves worn over a single shoulder of either a short or long *kebaya*, noted that they had long been a feature of traditional women’s clothing in Sumatra, but “in Java, it can be said that *selendang* were only rarely worn.<sup>120</sup> But now . . . wearing *selendang* is becoming fashionable. Women going to a celebration or a reception wear various kinds of *selendang* that are interesting to see.”<sup>121</sup> The balance of the article, on *selop*, or low-heeled sandals, told readers that the shoes needed to be chosen carefully since they were plainly visible below the *kain*. Two factors were important in selecting

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<sup>116</sup> “dapat dihiasi dengan sulaman aneka warna.” *Wanita*, 1950 #1, 15 January, p. 18.

<sup>117</sup> “dengan paillette dan manik-manik berwarna.” *Wanita*, 1950 #1, 15 January, p. 19.

<sup>118</sup> “Tak perlu dipakai banjak-banjak. Maksudnja memakai perhiasan ialah tidak untuk memperlihatkan kekajaan itu sepadam dengan seluruh pakaian kita. Dengan *kebaya pendek jang terbuka disebelah muka dipakai kalung dan sebuah peniti.*” “Memakai perhiasan,” (“Wearing jewelry,”) *Wanita*, 1950 #13/14, July, p. 233.

<sup>119</sup> “Berselop dan berselendang!” (“Wearing sandals and scarves!”) *Wanita* 1950, #13/14, July, pp. 220-221.

<sup>120</sup> *Selendang*, also called *sampur*, were widely worn in Java and elsewhere as a method for carrying burdens, both market baskets and children. In Java, they form an important element of dance costumes, though in most cases tied around the waist. But several types of dancers, including the peasant class itinerant *telèdèk* mentioned in the analysis of *Lewat Djamb Malam* in the interlude before this chapter, would wear *selendang* over one or both shoulders, flicking the dance scarf teasingly and seductively at the men they were entertaining. But the question here is one of the uses of *selendang* as a fashion accessory. It is not clear to me from the sources why this was perceived as being “new” for Javanese women, at least in the writer’s view, or how this “new” practice began.

<sup>121</sup> “Di Djawa boleh dikatakan memakai selendang itu agak kurang. Tetapi pada waktu sekarang, boleh dikatankan memakai selendang itu telah menjadi mode. Para wanita jang pergi keperalatan atau kesuatu resepsi memakai beruparupa selendang jang menarik perhatian.” *Wanita* 1950, #13/14, July, p. 220.

*selop*. They needed to fit correctly, “neither too loose nor too tight,”<sup>122</sup> and to be chosen so that their color was “not too different from the color of the *kain*.”<sup>123</sup> The best *selop* came from Bandung, the article opined. “There is probably not another city in Indonesia that can match Bandung when it comes to *selop*. The models are extraordinary, in assorted colors that we can find in the stores.”<sup>124</sup>

So, wearing *kain* and *kebaya* to a Jakarta function in 1950, as originally envisioned by the writer of the “Indonesian Fashion?” article, a woman might choose an ensemble that included Central Javanese batik, a *kebaya pendek* made from imported rayon silk and embroidered by a local seamstress, a *selendang* of Sumatran influence, *selop* from Bandung in West Java, and two pieces of simple gold jewelry, most likely locally made. The overall look was largely based on the aesthetics of the Central Javanese court cities of Solo and Yogyakarta, but in its details, it began to have a national gloss.

With the addition of a “plastic purse”<sup>125</sup> and proper hair and makeup, a fairly standard version of “national dress” for women emerged in the pages of *Wanita* in 1949-1950. Women certainly had choices moving forward about selection of the colors, fabrics and patterns of their *kain* and *kebaya*, but the overall convention was set and remains in place to this day.

Expanding the wearing of *kain-kebaya* to include new fabrics, new colors and new accoutrements, however, was considered a way of making the look more modern. Whether aesthetically or economically motivated, this fashion trend, the first article on *kain-kebaya* noted, offered a place where various influences could come together, not only from within Indonesian itself. “For us,” the article noted,

East and West meet, and from this meeting arises something that is new, is pleasant to see and is harmonious. Eastern-style clothing with western fabrics and techniques that are modern! Yes, even the cloth of our blouses is already influenced by western fabrics. From these western fabrics, with our

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<sup>122</sup> “tidak terlalu longgar atau terlalu sempit.” *Wanita* 1950, #13/14, July, p. 220.

<sup>123</sup> “warna *selop* itu tidak boleh banjak bedanja dengan warna *kain*.” *Wanita* 1950, #13/14, July, p. 221.

<sup>124</sup> “Barangkali tidak ada kota lain di Indonesia ini, jang dapat menjamai kota Bandung dalam hal *selop* itu. Model-model jang luar biasa, dalam warna jang rupa-rupa dapat kita lihat ditoko-tokonja.” *Wanita* 1950, #13/14, July, p. 221.

<sup>125</sup> “*tas plastik*,” literally “plastic bag,” but referring to a modern designed hand clutch or purse. These are discussed briefly in Chapter 3.

beautiful national dress,<sup>126</sup> we see the creation of a combination that is truly sweet and attractive to see, if we are careful in selecting it.<sup>127</sup>

*Kain-kebaya* was not, however, the only option available to Indonesian women wanting to be modern, and the *Mode* column in *Wanita* did not focus solely on Indonesian clothing. Indeed, *Wanita* dedicated significant space to discussions of the wearing of western-style dresses. While these columns also stressed making the right choices for their body types and coloring, the aesthetics behind what made a proper choice were less clear to readers exploring a new way of dressing.

In the fourth issue of *Wanita*, the “*Ruang Rantjak*” or “Beauty Parlor” column,<sup>128</sup> entitled “Every Day Clothing,”<sup>129</sup> turned its attention to western dresses, proposing a pattern that was “quite simple, but not lacking in charm.”<sup>130</sup> The column’s introduction placed this advice within the emerging metropolitan superculture, demonstrating the “challenges and opportunities” as Bogaerts characterized this early period of national independence, facing Indonesian women trying to live a modern life. “Taking a peek at western fashion” the column noted that western dress was largely replacing *kain-kebaya* as many urban women’s daily wear. “Indonesian women,” the article began, “sooner or later become used to wearing dresses.”

After [wearing them] at school,<sup>131</sup> dresses were preferred for daily wear over *kain kebaya*. There are many reasons given for this: some say it’s because they are cheaper, while others think that they are more “practical,” etc. More and more, women in cities very much like to wear dresses.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> “*pakaian nasional*.” This is one of the first mentions of *pakaian nasional* in my post-independence sources, and it is used here without an apparent sense of the future debates over what would constitute such.

<sup>127</sup> “*Pada kita, Timur dan Barat bertemu, dan dari pertemuan itu timbullah sesuatu jang baru jang sedap kelihatan dan jang harmonis. Pakaian setjara timur dengan bahan dan teknik barat jang moderen! Ja, malahan potongan badju kita sudah terpengaruh djuga oleh potongan barat. Dari potongan barat ini, dengan pakaian nasional kita jang indah itu, dapatlah terdjelma suatu kombinasi jang sungguh manis dan menarik perhatian, kalau kita hati-hati dalam memilihnja.*” *Wanita*, 1949, #3, 15 September, p. 18. The questions of making the proper choices in such matters is covered in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>128</sup> *Ruang Rantjak* was a regular column in *Wanita*’s first several years, and it as much as any other part of the magazine, provides an important source not only on what Indonesian women were choosing to wear, but what their thinking was behind those choices. Another instance of the column is discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>129</sup> “*Mode: Pakaian sehari-hari*,” *Wanita*, 1949 #4, 30 September, p. 28.

<sup>130</sup> “*Sangat sederhana, tetapai tak kurang manisnja.*” *Wanita*, 1949 #4, 1 October, p. 28.

<sup>131</sup> “*lepas dari sekolah*,” literally, released from school. I read this as meaning that educated Indonesian women were used to wearing dresses as school uniforms, but aside from that, as other sources show, schoolgirls would primarily revert to wearing *kain-kebaya* at home during the late colonial period. Wearing dresses out was a new phenomenon.

<sup>132</sup> “*Sekali ini marilah kita menengok kemode barat. Wanita Indonesia lama ke lamaan biasa memakai bebe (gaun). Lepas dari sekolah, bebelah jang lebih disuakainja untuk dipakai sehari-hari dari pada kain kebaja. Matjam-matjam alasan jang dekemukakan. Ada jang mengatakan karena murahnja, ada pula jang berfikir sebab lehih “praktis” dsb.nja. Lebih-lebih wanita kota, sangat suka ia memakai rok bebe.*” *Wanita*, 1949 #4, 30 September, p. 28.

Yet the authors were also already aware of the potential that wearing western dresses had to reduce the Indonesian elements of women's identity, immediately following this preference for western dresses with the comment "But despite this, it doesn't yet mean that we are forgetting our eastern character, does it? That is not our wish."<sup>133</sup>

After situating the wearing of western dresses in broad cultural questions, however, the article immediately became quite practical. Since most women would be either making their own dresses or ordering them from local seamstresses, and choosing fabric themselves, the column discussed multiple possible variations that could be applied to fabric choice, sleeve length or collar style, so that it could fit each woman's style and body type. The drawing accompanying this article, for instance, showed a dress made with stripes running horizontally on the top, but running vertically in the skirt, beneath a single-colored lower bodice. This feature allowed the dress to be customized easily to individual women's tastes and needs. The dress could be made of single colored fabric instead of using stripes, the column noted, but in any case, the bias tape around the collar and the hem of the skirt whose color "must coordinate with the color of the dress. That is a white dress should be trimmed in red, green or blue. A yellow dress will be quite sweet if it is decorated with green trim, or the reverse, a green dress trimmed in light yellow."<sup>134</sup>

The column read as an entire primer for the readers on the basics of western fashion of the day. If a flowered pattern were chosen, no contrasting bias tape should be used, because the effect would be "too busy."<sup>135</sup> A stiff petticoat worn underneath would give the skirt better volume, and if detachable from the dress itself, would last longer since it wouldn't need to be washed as often. It also would protect a woman's modesty should the skirt itself fly up. The skirt could be lengthened if so desired, but the "*new look*, they say,"<sup>136</sup> was for skirts to be shorter than they had been previously.<sup>137</sup> Still, worn with low

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<sup>133</sup> "Tetapi meskipun demikian, belumlah berarti kita melupakan sifat ketimuran, bukan? Demikianlah hendaknya!" *Wanita*, 1949 #4, 30 September, p. 28

<sup>134</sup> "harus sesuai dengan warna bebenja. Misalnja bebe putih diberi bias merah, hidjau atau biru. Bebe kuning sangatlah manis apabila dihiasi dengan bias hidjau atau sebaliknja hidjau diberi bias kuning langsep." *Wanita*, 1949 #4, 30 September, p. 28.

<sup>135</sup> "terlalu ramai."

<sup>136</sup> "new look, *katanja*." There are similar uses of English throughout much of the fashion writing, perhaps because the initial source for many of these ideas are American and British fashion magazines. *Wanita*, 1949, no. 4. (1 October), p. 28.

<sup>137</sup> Interestingly, in Europe and America, the "new look" in the 1950s was for a longer skirt length than had been worn during the war. But Indonesia had, of course, missed the change to shorter skirts and dresses during the Second World

heels, the dress was “suitable to go to the movies or to call at a friend’s house,”<sup>138</sup> that is, to live a proper modern urban social life. To wear western clothing properly, that is modernly, Indonesian women needed to be aware of ever-developing styles and conventions and to make sure these styles matched properly with the place and time they would be worn. This was new information that Indonesian women needed to learn, since it was not readily apparent from their past.

But, nonetheless, there was a clear distance between what it meant to be *moderen* for women from metropole and those living in less developed regional centers and villages. These were apparent in the first set of responses to letters from readers, published in issue number six, on 31 October. The editors answered (unpublished) letters from women in regional cities across the nation, including Medan in North Sumatra, Palembang in South Sumatra, Tasikmalaya in West Java, Solo in Central Java and Banyuwangi in East Java all thanked the editors and appreciated the new magazine. Perhaps chosen specifically to demonstrate the geographical expanse in which *Wanita* was being received, the responses show that women had written the magazine about issues as basic as the colorful nature of their covers, and as complex as the challenges the magazine faced in reaching into the level of small towns and villages.

The editors’ response to Sugiarsih, from Tasikmalaya, for instance, thanked her greatly for her “moral assistance. That said,” they continued

we must make clear that truly your suggestions are already part of our plans, but we still lack the capacity to put these plans into effect. We would like to go to the villages and towns as you intend but until now we haven’t yet been able to. Truly, we need helpers in the regions outside Djakarta. Your letter opens a path to make good connections with your region. Could we help the editors with articles about the life and needs of women there? Until we meet.<sup>139</sup>

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War, so their comparison is to skirts from the late 1930’s which were, indeed, longer than the current skirt length shared by both western fashion and western dresses in Indonesia.

<sup>138</sup> “pantas untuk pergi ke bioskop atau berdjamu di rumah seorang teman.” *Wanita*, 1949, no. 4. (1 October), p. 28.

<sup>139</sup> “Kami utjapkan banjak-banjak terima kasih atas bantuan morel sdr. Tapi perlu kami terangkan, bahwa sesungguhnya usul sdr. itu telah masuk rantjangan kami, hanja kami masih kekurangan tenaga, untuk mengerdjakan rantjangan itu. Kami ingin pula pergi ke desa-desa dan kota-kota jang sdr. maksudkan itu tetapi hingga sekarang belum dapat terlaksana. Memang seharusnja kami mempunjai pembantu didaerah-daerah luar Djakarta. Sebab itu surat sdr. itu membuat djalan untuk mendapat perhubungan jang baik dengan daerah sdr. Sukahkah sdr. membantu redaksi dengan karangan-karangan jang mengenai penghidupan dan kebutuhan para wanita disana? Sampai bertemu.” *Wanita*, 1949, no. 6, (31 October), Front Inside Cover.



It was clear then, that the editors intended the magazine to be read as a source for introducing a specific and important political and moral agenda flowing from the metropolitan leadership of the nationalist movement in Jakarta to the regional centers. The columns in *Wanita* were not merely being written as some sort of lifestyle advice, but also as political guidance and even moral mandates in how the new nation should be formed.

But the gaps between Jakarta and the rest of the nation, both in terms of lifestyle and of the social status of the women in each space were clearly delineated here. While there were local aspirations towards modernity perhaps, they were not yet reality, at least in the early days of the nation in late 1949. Those, including a desire that the magazine met the realities of the lives of women outside Jakarta would have to wait “until we meet.”

### ***Wanita: Beauty Culture from Within***

What was also clear from the early days of the *Wanita* was that its treatment of fashion was not simply about how women could look beautiful externally. The second issue of *Wanita* saw the first of a recurring set of columns on beauty called “*Ruang Rantjak*,” or “Beauty Parlor,” that began discussions of beauty that that would be central to metropolitan Indonesian women’s identity and experience. This initial glamor article suggested that beauty, to a great extent, was a public performance, and that women needed to be conscious of the image they projected.

Having a good smile was particularly important in this, and women were admonished that a natural smile came from being beautiful not only externally, but also from being spiritually healthy within. The nature of a woman’s smile would reveal her inner thoughts and character.<sup>140</sup>

We mustn’t ever forget that our faces are a mirror of our thoughts and feelings. By themselves, the muscles of our face reflect what is hidden in our hearts. This cannot be prevented or resisted. Only our thoughts can be fixed a bit. So we must force ourselves not to have thoughts that are bad, feelings of

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<sup>140</sup> The issue of the genuineness, or in contrast the intentional falseness of a woman’s smile is discussed with particularly trenchant and difficult added meaning in Chapter 7, concerning Communist women in the aftermath of September 30, 1965.

jealousy, envy, anger, etc., that poison us. . . . [But if] we are happy, that joy will be reflected on our faces.<sup>141</sup>

If a woman could not master those feelings, “our bad thoughts will leave traces on a person’s face, around the eyes, mouth, etc., that can’t help but be seen, even when hidden behind a sweet smile. But that type of smile feels like a made-up smile, a false smile.”<sup>142</sup> The column concluded:

Most women use various tools to enhance or preserve their beauty, for instance crème, powder, lipstick, etc. But they don’t remember, what is far more important than all this external decoration is having a pure internal character. Internal beauty is much more important than all makeup. A pure and good internal character<sup>143</sup> is both a condition and a means for developing a beauty that is true, lifelong and abiding. And whoever doesn’t have such an internal character, work on it!<sup>144</sup>

In the next issue of the magazine, *Ruang Rantjak* expanded this analysis, explicitly discussing the question of beauty as part of an emerging modernity. As with the new look *kain-kebaya*, Indonesian glamour could draw on both eastern and western influences. Beauty, the author wrote, was certainly not a new concern to women in the archipelago. Rather, “care of the body from time immemorial has become our tradition (*adat*,) such as drinking herbal tonics and using various types of powders, such that the term *pemeliharaan ketjantikan*, or in foreign languages “*beauty culture*” or “*schoonheidsverzorging*”, is not a new concept.”<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> “Djanganlah sekali-kali kita lupa, muka kita itu tjermin bagi pikiran dan perasaan kita. Dengan sendirinja otot-otot muka membayangkan apa jang tersembunji dalam hati. Hal ini tidak dapat ditjegah atau dilawan. Hanja pikiranlah jang dapat kita atur sedikit. Kita paksakan diri supaja djanganlah pikiran jang buruk, perasaan tjemburu, iri hati, marah dsb. meratjuni kita. . . . Kalau kita berbahagia, kebahagiaan itu akan terbajang pada muka kita.” *Wanita*, 1949, no. 2, (1 September), p. 12.

<sup>142</sup> “maka pikiran jang buruk itu akan meninggalkan tjatjatnja dimuka orang, disekitar matanja, mulutnja dsb., jang tak boleh tidak tampak juga, meskipun tersembunji dibelakang senjum manis. Tetapi senjum sematjam ini terasa senjum jang dibuat-buat, senjum palsu.” *Wanita*, 1949, no. 2, (1 September), p. 12.

<sup>143</sup> “*batin jang murni dan baik*.” The word *batin*, here translated as “soul,” has a pair, “*lahir*,” which together are roughly translated as the “internal and external” elements of a person’s being. This section of the chapter concludes with a discussion of *lahir-batin* as a language that connected older Javanese/Indonesian ideas about the fundamental construction of a person with modern ideas about beauty culture.

<sup>144</sup> “Kebanjaknja wanita memakai berbagai-bagai alat untuk menambah atau memelihara ketjantikannya, misalnja crème, bedak, merah-bibir dsb. Tetapi mereka tidak ingat, jang djauh lebih penting dari pada segala perhiasan lahir ini ialah batin jang murni. Ketjantikan batin djauh lebih penting dari segala make-up. Batin jang murni dan baik itulah sjarat dan alat penambah ketjantikan jang benar, kekal dan abadi. Dan siapa tidak berbatin demikian, berusaha!” *Wanita*, 1949, no. 2, (1 September), p. 12.

<sup>145</sup> “pemeliharaan badan jang dari dulu kala telah mendjadi adat, seperti minum djamu dan memakai rupa-rupa bedak, maka perkataan pemeliharaan ketjantikan atau dalam bahasa asing “*beauty culture*” atau “*schoonheidsverzorging*”, bukanlah suatu penterian jang baru.” *Wanita*, 1949 #3, 15 September, p. 19.

But in the West, the article argued, beauty culture had truly become a matter of study that had moved towards being more scientific, such that “the culture of beauty in this modern era actually is the care of the health of the body by effective means.”<sup>146</sup> The goal of such modern beauty was not simply about health or looks. Rather, again, it stressed a woman’s interior character, so that her body and spirit<sup>147</sup> would together “to achieve the development of a *personlijkheid*<sup>148</sup> [“personality”] that is harmonious.”<sup>149</sup>

An article published in March 1950, written by Adiati from Solo, also stressed that the “Beauty”<sup>150</sup> of its title, while sought by all women, would come primarily from internal modesty and restraint. “Basically,” Adiati wrote, “all women are just the same, there is no difference. All women must want to be called pretty, beautiful. Even if they don’t want to admit it to the general public, nonetheless in their smallest of hearts that desire is present. In their heart, they admit it.”<sup>151</sup> “The proof?,” she asks.

She buys powder, *pondscream* or *hazeline snow* and lipstick. Or on the sly, she massages the blemishes that appear below her mouth. Other women scrub their faces with beaten egg whites in private to that their wrinkles disappear and the skin is smooth and tight. In short, there are a variety of methods.

Truly we women are all the same at base. We want to be called sweet, pretty, beautiful, *charmant* (enchanting,) <sup>152</sup> *djelita* and other epithets that all have the same meaning.<sup>153</sup>

But how is it, she asked, that some women are unforgettably beautiful? “Certainly it’s not her look, which can’t be said to be beautiful,” Adiati wrote, even as she went on to describe the perfect standard of fashion for the day:

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<sup>146</sup> “Pemeliharaan ketjantikan dizaman modern ini, sebetulnja ialah pemeliharaan kesehatan badan dengan tjara efektif.” *Wanita*, 1949 #3, 15 September, p. 19.

<sup>147</sup> In Indonesian, “*djiwa*,” also “soul” or “psyche.”

<sup>148</sup> The Dutch term for personality or identity, stressing the individual nature of each individual.

<sup>149</sup> “*untuk mentjapai perkembangan personlijkheid (pribadi) jang harmonis.*” *Wanita*, 1949 #3, 15 September, p. 19. That is, a harmonious balance of *lahir* and *batin*.

<sup>150</sup> “*Djelita*,” *Wanita*, 1950 #6, 31 March, p. 92.

<sup>151</sup> “*Pada dasarnya semua wanita itu sama sadja, tiada bedanja. Semua wanita pasti ingin dikatakan tjantik, aju. Biarpun ia tidak mau menagkui dimuka umum, namun di dalam hati ketjilnja keinginan itu ada. Dalam hatinja ia mengakuinja.*” *Wanita*, 1950 #6, 31 March, p. 92.

<sup>152</sup> The original in French, without proper adjectival agreement. The Indonesian equivalent in parenthesis is “*menawan hati*,” which can mean charming, a very direct translation, captivating, enchanting, enamoring or amusing.

<sup>153</sup> “*Buktinja? Ia membeli bedak, pondscream atau hazeline snow dan tjat bibir. Atau diam-diam dia pidjit-pidjit bisul jang tumbuh dibawa mulutnja. Wanita lainja diam-diam menggosok-gosok mukanja dengan kotjokan putih telur, supaja hilang kerutnja dan tegang litjin kulitnja. Pendek kata bermatjam-matjamlah usahanja. // Memang sebetulnjalah, kita wanita semua sama sadja pada dasarnya. Kita ingin dikatakan manis, tjantik, aju, charmant (menawan hati), djelita dan lain-lain djukulan jang sama artinja.*” *Wanita*, 1950 #6, 31 March, p. 92.

Her body is slim but filled out. Her blouse is made of light green crepe-georgette. The cut is good, fitting her body perfectly. It goes well with her *kain* in *parang klitik babaran* Solo.<sup>154</sup> She never forgets to carry a handbag and handkerchief, along with her *selendang* and shoes of appropriate colors and forms. She doesn't wear earrings, a necklace and ring that are flashy and have large stones, rather she wears diamonds that are small but shining.<sup>155</sup>

But beauty didn't derive from this, she noted, and even more, not from wearing clothing covered in gold or large stones, or because her lipstick and rouge were bright red, her powder was thick on her face or her hair was slicked back and shiny. "No, again and again, no."<sup>156</sup>

Beauty and knowing how to dress well at their most basic level are about simplicity, neatness and smartness that is aligned and in harmony with a fine mind and well-ordered manners. The way she speaks and chooses the subjects she speaks about, while smiling on occasion, all of that adds to her beauty, and gives the impression that she is a woman who is cultured,<sup>157</sup> a woman who is beautiful.<sup>158</sup>

This stress on the internal spiritual health of women was a strongly recurring theme in discussions of modern Indonesian beauty. But it was not simply a parallel to western concepts of inner beauty. Rather, the two terms at use here that I have translated as "outer" and "inner," that is "*lahir*" and "*batin*," have significant and deep roots within a non-Western context.

*Lahir* and *batin* are expressions of a core Islamic concept of being, that is, that all things have elements that are both manifest and non-manifest in the world.<sup>159</sup> In her

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<sup>154</sup> *Parang klitik* is a *batik* motif from Central Java that was previously reserved for female royalty. It specifically represented the wearer's femininity, her ability to remain calm and true to her principles, to demonstrate subtlety and wisdom. *Babaran*, meaning baby, implicates a particularly small and elegant version of the motif. In other words, this is one of the most beautiful and properly feminine *batik* motifs a woman could wear.

<sup>155</sup> "*Badanja ramping tetapi berisi. Badjunja dari crepe-georgette hidjau muda. Potongannja bagus, pas melekat pada tubuhnja. Selaras benar dengan kainnja parang klitik babaran Solo. Tas dan saputangan jang dipegangnja, selendang dan selopnja tak lupa dipantas warna dan rupanja. Giwang, kalung-medaliun dant tjin-tjin bukan dipakai gemerlapan dan besar-besar batunja, melainkan dari batu berlian jang ketjil tapi bersinar.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #6, 31 March, p. 92.

<sup>156</sup> "*Bukan, sekali-kali bukan.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #6, 31 March, p. 92.

<sup>157</sup> "*beradab*," here translated as "cultured," can also mean "civilized." Chapter 7 explores how one of the primary charges against Gerwani and other Communist-affiliated women was that they had all been rendered "*tak beradab*," or "not civilized" by the events at Lubang Buaya.

<sup>158</sup> "*Djelita, pandai bersolek dasar pokoknja ialah bersahadja, rapi, netjis serba sesuai dan selaras halus budi lakunja, teratur sikap dan lakunja. Tjara ia bertjakap-tjakap dan pokok pembijtaraan jang dipilihnja, senjum simpul pada waktunja, semua itu menambah djelitanja, dan memberi kesan bahwa ia adalah wanita jang beradab, wanita jang djelita.*" *Wanita*, 1950 #6, 31 March, p. 92.

<sup>159</sup> Ismail Fajrie Alatas explains: "Divine names such as the Manifest (*al-zāhir*) and the Nonmanifest (*al-bāṭin*)—both of which are Qur'anic terms—leave their traces in the universe through two basic orders of existence: what we see and what

translation of the *Babad Jaka Tingkir*, Nancy Florida explains “[t]he words *lahir* and *batin* . . . are Arabic loan words which denote the dualistic opposition of exteriority v. interiority; revealed v. concealed; expressed (born) v. reserved (hidden); material v. immaterial.”<sup>160</sup> And yet, the connection between the two is not a strict binary. Florida goes on to note “how that opposition is collapsed in the poem—which is the important point.” The *batin*, she wrote me, “always creeps out, coloring the *lahir*.”<sup>161</sup>

In Javanese thought, the worldly/external and the spiritual/internal, are the elements or regions of the self, and the two planes on which individuals express themselves. This idea and the language behind it were (and remain today) ubiquitously known concepts in Indonesia that were continuously reinforced culturally.<sup>162</sup> In didactic texts dating back at least to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, mastering the *batin* through restraint and spiritual practice was presented as a critical element of how Javanese women should achieve their full Javanese (and therefore, human) nature.<sup>163</sup> The concept extended into modern Javanese discussions of marital sexuality in the 1950s as well.<sup>164</sup>

*Lahir* and *batin* recurred constantly as a matched pair in discussions of beauty across *Wanita*'s first year, and continued to be used as such throughout the period covered by this dissertation. The terms appear to have been used with dual meanings. Often the two seem to be simple descriptions for what we might translate in English as ideas about

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we do not see. Dwelling in the absent/non-manifest plane are creatures like angels and spirits. Dwelling in the witnessed/manifest plane are inanimate objects, plants, and animals (inasmuch as they are simply bodies). But all have invisible, absent dimensions to their realities, so all are absent as well as witnessed.” Ismail Fajrie Alatas, personal correspondence, July 18, 2016. For more on this, Alatas also suggests seeing: William Chittick's "The Self-Disclosure of God" (particularly part II: The Order of the Worlds). Syed Naquib al-Attas also discussed this in detail in his *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (see: the last chapter, Degrees of Existence). *Kebatinan*, which can roughly translate as “the process of the inner” or “the process of *batin*,” is also a principal word used to name Javanese spiritual practices that blend (mostly Sufi Islamic, but also sometimes Roman Catholic or Protestant) religious beliefs with Javanese and Hindu-Buddhist practices of fasting, meditation and inner spiritual training and outwardly drawing from cultural practices including the complex of arts around gamelan, *wayang* and dance.

<sup>160</sup> Nancy K. Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future*, p. 189, fn 212.

<sup>161</sup> Nancy Florida, personal communication, January 2019.

<sup>162</sup> Particularly, and most importantly, through the asking of forgiveness of others at the close of the month of Ramadan, when Muslims in the Malay world “*mohon maaf lahir dan batin*,” or “ask for forgiveness, both externally and internally” for offenses they may have committed during the year.

<sup>163</sup> One of the expressions indicating that a young person is not yet fully mature is that they are “*durung Jawa*,” or “not yet Javanese.” That is, that they have yet to internalize the elements of personal control, or that their *batin* is not yet perfected. To that point, they are not yet fully civilized.

<sup>164</sup> See Edwin P. Wieringa, “A Javanese Handbook for Would-Be Husbands: The “*Sĕrat Candraning Wanita*,” and particularly his discussion of Bratakesawa, *Falsafah sex; (Asmaragama piningit) nerangake bah djedjodowan, karonsih, lan ambabarake tuwuh, adedasar kawruh lahir lan batin* (Philosophy of Sex: Hidden love-making, which explains the subject of marital union, sexual intercourse, and procreation on the basis of the knowledge of the inner and outer realities.) published in Surabaya (Djojo Bojo,) in 1953.

“inner” and “outer” beauty. But the terms were also always tied to a particular sense of being values that were “*asli*,” that is original and exclusive, to Indonesians.

This assertion on my part perhaps requires a few leaps in thinking. But in reading the “modern” sources on beauty in *Wanita* and other women’s magazines, and then in looking at the descriptions of Gerwani women in the aftermath of the events of Lubang Buaya that will be addressed in Chapter 7, I have been struck primarily by both how consistently and how matter-of-factly the terms were used. Their meanings were assumed. Perhaps, as I have noted, this was because of how ubiquitously the terms were used in Javanese thought and how well known they were. It is striking that in *Wanita* and elsewhere, the terms were almost never examined deeply or traced to their Javanese and Islamic philosophical roots.

But, simultaneously, other possible ways of expressing this in Indonesian were almost never used. While Dutch terms were often used to talk about individuality or self-esteem, *lahir* and *batin* were always a central element of descriptions of Indonesian beauty culture. This conception of beauty, it was noted earlier “from time immemorial has become [Indonesian women’s] tradition (*adat*,)” and was “not a new concept.” *Lahir* and *batin*, then, as concepts, were critically connected to ideas of how Indonesian women could maintain their sense of self while also exploring their modern options.

*Lahir* and *batin* therefore were doing double work. Not only were they used to express the importance of women working on their inner character, but they are also a marker of indigeneity, of “*asli*-ness.” They provided a resolution to the somewhat contradictory elements of a discussion of what it meant to be a proper modern Indonesian woman, beautiful but modest, educated but simple, western-influenced but—critically—eastern-based.

This idea that the *batin* was “always creeping into the *lahir*” was imbedded in the idea that women needed to retain an eastern “*batin*” even if their “*lahir*” was more western at any given time. The fear at play was that by focusing too much on the external, the internal might be fundamentally ruined or lost, whether that be in terms of an individual woman, women as a group or the nation as a whole. That is, by being modern in ways that went against a good internal character, Indonesian women would essentially lose their most central selves. And, as the dissertation explores in Chapter 7, one of the fundamental

charges against the Gerwani leadership was that, no matter how tightly they had controlled their exterior representation or *batin*, their *lahir*, poisoned by Communist ideological training, would peak through, exposed through a forced smile, or a suspicious look in their eyes.

To some extent, then, I posit that the widespread use of *lahir* and *batin* served as a warning to Indonesian women. The terms were a reminder of the idea that Indonesian women had long had their own standards of beauty that could stand up in a world full of *pondscream* and other western beauty products that were also a highly present element of this new magazine culture.<sup>165</sup> If one were “imitating” the beauty of Hollywood stars such as Joan Caulfield, this would be acceptable, as long as the imitation was only skin deep.

In reminding women to be true to their own eastern identity, the fundamental concept of an emerging Indonesian beauty culture was clearly the idea that Indonesian women needed to remain true to their “authentic” (“*asli*”) selves. Properly retaining the inner strength of their spiritual development would serve as a check against the temptations to “imitate” the west too strongly, or to remain overly focused on the external details of beauty.

This idea was at the core of an “open letter” written by a woman in Jakarta, “Marpurwa,” as a response to a letter from a fictional “Tuty,” who lived in the provinces. Published in *Wanita* in April 1950, the letter suggested that externally focused materiality posed a critical moral challenge for “conscious” or “aware” women. Tuty had clearly been anxious for news of all the newest looks and luxuries available in the city, but Marpurwa urged her friend to brush off the latest modern styles.

She was glad that Tuty had begun to notice that she had “impoverished neighbors in need of help, neighbors still ignorant in need of education, and neighbors who are still in the dark in need of enlightening.”<sup>166</sup> “You are asking,” Marpurwa wrote,

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<sup>165</sup> In both the second and third issues, and for many issues thereafter, for instance, an ad for Lux Soap invited Indonesian women to “imitate” (“*meniru*”) American actress and fashion model Joan Caulfield by using Lux to “maintain their beauty” (“*pemeliharaan ketjantikan*”) as Hollywood film stars did. See for example, one among many, *Wanita*, 1949, no. 2, (30 August) pp. 11-12. Chapter 6 traces changes in how standards of beauty in ads for beauty products shifted from having primarily western to primarily Indonesian representations at base.

<sup>166</sup> “*Engkau lihat tetanggamu jang melarat perlu dibantu, tetanggamu kang masih bodoh perlu peladjaran, tentanggamu jang masih dalam kegelapan perlu penerangan.*” *Wanita*, 1950, No. 8, (30 April), p. 142. The language of darkness and light reflects both nationalist language of the 1920s, and Kartini’s letters, originally published in Dutch by J.H Abendanon under the title *Door Duisternis Tot Licht* (“*Through Darkness to Light*,”) in 1911. The title was first rendered in Indonesian in

what this feeling is that has entered your innermost heart, that has changed your outlook. Eyes that only wanted to see the beautiful shape of a car, an elegant *kebaya*, luxurious furniture. Now your vision has risen above all that, you can see far looking around you. . . . You are no longer satisfied with your own luxury and sufficient means. Your heart is open, touched, ready to help.<sup>167</sup>

This increasing inner awareness, however, was not simply about Tuty's personal growth. To Marpurwa, the choice to see the world around her differently had a much larger national significance, tied directly to the development of women collectively. "It appears," she wrote, "the words of Bung Karno, 'the fate of women lies in the initiatives and efforts of women themselves' are already reverberating in your heart."<sup>168</sup> If Tuty's *batin* were strong, so too would be her ability to build the nation.

### **Wanita: Women, Beauty and Purity**

The presence of choice, however, also raised the possibility of making mistakes. A new *kain-kebaya* could only be attractive, after all, if women were "careful in selecting it."<sup>169</sup> Indeed, women in the Jakarta elite were clear that they walked in a social space which included many subtle judgements about the meanings of certain choices over others. In an interview, Herawati Diah discussed how women in Jakarta's elite in the early 1950's were hyper-conscious of the details of *kain-kebaya* worn by themselves and others at official functions, often to the detriment of less well-connected or well-tutored women. "We used to laugh at them," she said, when these women made choices that weren't considered on trend, or that didn't go well with their age and body types.<sup>170</sup>

But this sense of laughing at women whose sense of style was "off," wasn't merely a comment on their lack of knowledge. Rather, throughout the first year of *Wanita*, it was

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1922 as *Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang*. The collection was later re-edited by Armijn Pane in 1938 and issued by Balai Poestaka under the same title.

<sup>167</sup> "Engkau menanjakan perasaan apakah jang memasuki sanubarimu jang telah merobah pandang matamu. Mata jang hanja mau melihat bentuk motor jang indah, kebaja jang molek, perabot jang mewah. Kini pandanganmu mengatasi segala itu, djauh melihat sekelilingmu. . . . Engkau tak puas dengan kemewahan dan ketjukupan dirimu sendiri lagi. Hatimu terbuka, terharu, sedia membantu." *Wanita*, 1950, No. 8, (30 April), p. 142.

<sup>168</sup> "Kiranja utjapan Bung Karno: 'Nasib wanita terletak pada ichitjar dan usaha kaum sendiri', sudah berkumandang dihatimu." *Wanita*, 1950, No. 8, (30 April), p. 142. This same quotation from Sukarno was cited in a different source earlier in this chapter.

<sup>169</sup> *Wanita*, 1949, No. 3, 15 September, p. 18.

<sup>170</sup> As a result, one of the first articles published in her own magazine *Keluarga* in 1953 was about the necessity of developing an "etiquette" about wearing *kain-kebaya*. This is discussed in Chapter 4.



often suggested that when women were seen to have gone “too far” in their clothing or hair, this was as a sign that their internal moral compass, which needed always to remain primarily based in “eastern” values, was somehow broken.

This is an important example of how ideas of beauty and femininity were culturally coded in Indonesian-based cultural terms, or how, in Vickers’ construction, “*moderen*” and “modern” are not always synonymous. Even as Indonesian women explored the new choices available to them in beauty and fashion, it was very often measured, both by themselves and by others, by local—and now “Indonesian”—standards of what might be proper. Indeed, what was and wasn’t proper in all this would be the center of moral debates throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

There was a tension apparent then, in simply combining East and West. A letter from Nuraini in Wingfoot Sumatra to the editors of *Wanita* in issue no. 9 suggests a more complicated sense of what it meant to be *moderen*, and one that hinted at the possibility that certain ways of being modern could go too far. “Truly it is the case,” she wrote, that

the emancipation of women brings about “free association.”<sup>171</sup> But among us there are many who misunderstand what that means. For them “modern woman” means a woman who dresses in completely *moderen* fashion, curling their hair even if it doesn’t fit them, wearing excessive lip rouge or lipstick, smoking, dancing in a western fashion, hanging out with young men to the point that they overstep boundaries, forgetting about decency. We don’t find fault with them for this, because it is what they see around them every day, western people do it that way, and for them “modern” is a western influence, so what comes from the west they imitate. But why is it just that which they imitate, why don’t we [instead] take the essence which is good. To take as our exemplar that which is right, that is, their characteristic of always wanting to progress, always reaching for the highest possible levels. . . . We, Indonesian women, once we are married and have become mothers, pay no, or very little pay attention to the world of knowledge. . . . Modern also means to advance and raise our capacities, not just externally [*lahirnja*] but also internally [*batinnja*].<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Implying between the sexes, in Dutch, “*vrije omgang*” in the original. *Omgang* can mean “dealings, conversation, relations or intercourse, in the sense of social discussion.” The criticism here is of women breaking former limits on proper behavior with men, covered by the ability to be “modern.”

<sup>172</sup> “*Memang sebenarnja, emansipasi wanita itu menjebabkan “vrije omgang.” Tetapi diantara kita masih banjak jang salah pengertiannja tentang hal itu. Bagi mereka, “wanita modern” itu berarti wanita jang berpakaian serba moderen, mengeriting rambut walaupun tidak pantas, memakai merah bibir dan gintju keterlaluhan, merokok, berdansa, bergaul dengan para pemuda, sehingga melampaui batas, tiada ingat akan kesopanan. Hal-hal itu tidak dapat kita kesalahan kepada mereka, karena jang dilihat sehari-hari disekelilingnja, orang barat berbuat demikian, dang baginja “modern” itu pengaruh barat, djadi apa jang datang dari barat ditirunja. Tetapi mengapa jang ditiru itu jang itu-itu sadja, mengapa tidak*

In an article entitled “Protecting teenagers,”<sup>173</sup> published in March 1950, an opinion writer named Ibu Nany also worried about the effects of “free association,” but in this instance, particularly on the moral health of Indonesia’s youth. Raised in a different time, and under different limits than older generations, she suggested, teenagers could quite possibly lose touch with eastern sensibilities about such matters. It was therefore, she suggested, the particular responsibility of older women, (“*kaum ibu*,”) to keep an eye out for teenagers in this matter.

The implications and responsibilities in this matter, again, applied more broadly than just to individuals. Rather, women held a particular duty for the nation as a whole. “Women’s souls and bodies must be purified,” she wrote,

not only for a person’s good name, but for the good name of the People. Only women who are pure of body and soul, pure in their purpose [or ideals], who are aware [*“sedar,”*] and whose sense of justice is attuned to the upheaval of the times, it is these women who will give birth to a to a People who are noble and exalted. Only women who are healthy internally and externally [*“lahir-batinnja”*] will be able to bear a People who are also healthy.<sup>174</sup>

As they explored this newly emerging modernity, then, the elite and literate women reading *Wanita* in 1949-1950, whether in the cultural centers of Jakarta, Bandung, Solo and the like or further afield, were presented with a significant set of choices in how they might dress, and when, of what was appropriate and why.

To be sure, the editors of *Wanita* did not see fashion choices as the primary challenge facing women in their attempts to become modern. A whole other set of choices—about marriage, about political participation and forging a united front on issues important to women, and about social justice and the moral uplifting of the nation, for instance—were more important for assuming the just and prosperous future of both

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*kita ambil sarinja jang baik-baik sadja. Jang pantas kita tjontoh, jaitu sifat mereka jang selalu ingin madju, ingin mengkinkat setinggi-tingginja. . . . Kita, wanita Indonesia, apabila kita sudah berumah tangga, sudah medjadi ibu, kita tidak atau sedikit sekali memperhatikan dunia pengetahuan. . . . Modern itu berarti djuga memadjukan dan mempertinggi kepandaian, bukan hanja lahirnja tetapi djuga batinnja.”* *Wanita*, 1949, no. 9, (15 December), Back Inside Cover. As is not unusual in Indonesia writing at this time, there are two different spellings of modern, both modern and moderen in the original, without any apparent difference of usage.

<sup>173</sup> “*Mendjaga anak-anak remadja,*” *Wanita*, 1950, no. 6, 31 March, pp. 88-89.

<sup>174</sup> “*Kaum wanitalah harus dirmurnikan djiwa dan raganja bukan untuk nama kehormatan seseorang sadja, bahkan untuk kehormatan Bangsa. Hanja wanita jang murni djiwa-raganja, murni tjita-tjitanja, jang sadar dan insjaf sesuai dengan pergolakan djaman, wanita inilah jang dapat melahirkan Bangsa jang luhur dan mulia. Hanja wanita jang sehat lahir-batinnja dapat melahirkan Bangsa jang sehat pula.*” *Wanita*, 1950, no. 6, 31 March, p. 88.

Indonesian women and of the nation itself. But throughout this, the editors and their readers were also critically aware of trying to understand the limits of appropriateness, the implications of their choices of how they dressed, comported and carried themselves. The clear message, expressed in some form in every issue of *Wanita* in its first year (and beyond,) was that failure in such matters would affect the proper moral growth of the entire nation.

It was clear from contents of the first year of *Wanita* that from early on in the life of the new nation, Indonesian women were never simply seen as individuals whose choices about fashion and beauty would only accrue to them personally. Rather, in the social and political arena, women were already seen as a group, or *kaum*, whose shared characteristics—including their comportment—were an important marker for the health of the nation. Given the political pedigree of *Wanita*'s publishers, this critical awareness of the cultural implications of Indonesia's emerging beauty and moral culture was connected to the emerging conceptions of the Indonesian nation and people.

Finally, this particular role for women as arbiters and progenitors of a moral, and therefore just and prosperous Indonesia, was something women were called on at the highest levels to look after for themselves. Faced with the task of modernizing the culture of the nation while still holding on to an essential "eastern-ness," it was women who would be charged with engendering a sound national morality to serve as a bulwark against unhealthy and even dangerous outside influences. This ability to provide a certain spiritual protection to the nation would be based on the purity of their inner characters. And this purity and its fundamental "authentic" eastern nature, in turn, would clearly be reflected through the clear and unwavering aspect of their faces and bearing, and most easily be visible through their proper choices in clothing, makeup, hairstyles and adornment.

The possibility of failure in these arenas would begin to express themselves in terms of a set of "moral crises" about such matters—hairstyles, skirt-length, free association and going "too far,"—that would blossom in *Wanita* and other women's magazines in 1950 and beyond. But what was fundamentally at stake in these crises was the health and future Indonesian women and their political agenda, as well as of the nation itself. It is to this complex set of conditions about fashion, national identity, modernity and moral crisis between 1950 and 1955 that the next three chapters of this dissertation now turns.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Fashioning Themselves: Clothing and Identity in Indonesian Women's Magazines, 1950-1955**

*"[D]alam soal pakaian ini soal-soal sedjarah, kebudajaan, ekonomi, agama, politik dan kesenian mempunjai dasar atau latar-belakang jang sering sangat-sangat penting . . ."*

"[I]n the matter of clothing, there are questions of history, culture, economics, religion, politics and art that have a basis or background that is very important . . ."

Prija Chandra, "Pakaian Wanita Kita"  
("Our Women's Clothing")  
*Wanita*, March 1955.<sup>1</sup>

As they began their second year of publishing, the editors of *Wanita* took stock. They were proud of several accomplishments that they discussed in an editorial, "August 17—WANITA—1 year."<sup>2</sup> "[T]here is much we experienced and learned about the world of writing and publishing,"<sup>3</sup> they wrote. The magazine had expanded from its initial eight-page format to a thicker twenty-four pages. The editors were pleased with the amount of input they had received from their readers and how they felt the magazine was reflecting these women's lives. "Its content aligns with women's daily needs," they wrote, "presented in an easy and popular manner, not using grandiose words about politics and other such things."<sup>4</sup>

But they also noted that they had "received much criticism," explaining:

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<sup>1</sup> *Wanita*, 1955 no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155.

<sup>2</sup> "17 Agustus—WANITA—1 tahun," *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August 1, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> "banjaklah jang kami alami dan peladjari dalam dunia karang-menarang dan penerbitan." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August 1, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> "Isinja sesuai dengan keperluan wanita sehari-hari, dibentangkan setjara gampang dan populer, tidak mengadung kata-kata jang muluk-muluk tentang politik dan lain sebagainya." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August 1, p. 249.

There are many that say that our magazine isn't useful, that it's old-fashioned, that it causes a setback, because the contents are only about the household and children. The current era, they say, is an era of progress, a political era. Every woman must plunge into a party or organization. Because of that, magazines like *Wanita* aren't beneficial, even more, they bring us back to the past.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, the editorial also insisted that women were interested in their "standing as Mother and Wife," and that they needed access to information about the household, raising their children, and handling their marriages and their daily struggles. The editors insisted that doing so was part of their duty to "pay attention to society,"<sup>6</sup> and to "participate in the work of advancing and raising the status of women generally,"<sup>7</sup> a responsibility their readers expressed as well.

It is interesting that the editors of *Wanita* took this criticism seriously enough to make it the central element of the review of their first year. Most likely, the assessment represented the voices of other elite women who were intent on staking out a more independent space in the new Indonesian state whose form and focus was not yet fully established.<sup>8</sup> Quoting Herbert Feith, Saskia Wieringa underscores the exploratory nature of the times. "Indonesia," she wrote,

entered the 1950s 'groping for doctrines, policies and government methods with which to fill the *tabula rasa* of the new independence.'<sup>9</sup> . . . Political institutions were weak and there were divisions between the intellectual leaders who had negotiated independence, the army who had fought for it and the rural masses who harboured messianic expectations.<sup>10</sup>

Entering its second year, *Wanita* was still searching for its voice, as was its elite readership as a whole. Several political subjects, most particularly concerning the development of women's political organizations, continued to be a significant presence in

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<sup>5</sup> "Banjak kritikan jang kami terima. Banjak jang mengatakan, madjalah kita ini tak berguna, madjalah kolot, jang mengakibatkan kemundururan, karena isinja hanja mengenai rumah-tangga dan anak sadja. Zaman sekarang, katanja, zaman kemandjuan, zaman politik. Setiap wanita harus terdjun dalam partai atau perkumpulan. Sebab itu madjalah seperti 'Wanita' ini tak berguna, lagi pula mengembalikan zaman dulu." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August 1, p. 249.

<sup>6</sup> "memperhatikan masyarakat," *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August 1, p. 249.

<sup>7</sup> "turut berusaha memadjukan dan meninggikan deradjat wanita umumnja." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August 1, p. 249.

<sup>8</sup> See the discussion of Perwari in Chapter 1.

<sup>9</sup> Wieringa quotes Herbert Feith here, from the introduction to Feith and Castles, (eds.) *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965*.

<sup>10</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 97. See the discussion of Wieringa and other writers about 1965 in Chapter 1. British spelling in the original.

the magazine's pages from August 1950 on. Marriage, with its divisive implications among women, began to be discussed more than it had previously. But action-oriented approaches to the work of women's organizations were always tightly linked with a broader discussion of what Indonesian women's identity—at all strata of society—should be. For many elite women considering issues of identity, the question of what it meant to be Indonesian predominated, even if other elements of identity—religious, ethnic or political affiliations—were also an important element of those discussions.

The analysis of modernity and identity in the opening chapter of the dissertation centered on two arguments. The first, from the work of Adrian Vickers pointed to the importance of distinguishing between the “modern” and the “*moderen*.” That is, it is critical to try to understand the experience of modernity in this period in Indonesian cultural terms, assumptions and experiences. The second, which is my own theoretical assertion, is that post-colonial identity should be seen as a web of intermeshed sources and influences. This chapter examines how these two analytical frameworks can be seen at play in the cultural sources Indonesian women used in their exploration of what it meant to live a modern life. It argues that Indonesian women's discussions about and experiences around the question of how one should dress offer a particularly rich source for understanding that process. It also notes that these discussions turned on a common question: what it meant to be a proper, modern Indonesian woman.

There was a tension inherent in all these sources between the personal and the national. As this chapter explores, Indonesian women enjoyed a great range of personal choice in fashion during this period. Indeed, much of the fashion advice in *Wanita* and *Keluarga* centered on women making good choices to fit their own bodies and coloring, their age, and the time and place they were dressing for. Finding the right personal look, within a general set of “correct” parameters, and in ways that didn't betray a certain “eastern sensibility” was the general goal.

But there was also a critically important discussion of what the larger national implications of developing a specifically Indonesian fashion and beauty culture would be. Critically, as is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, the primary arena for the development of national identity focused on women's internal moral development and the space their moral positioning fashioned for them in society and the nation. In the pages of women's

magazines, these questions of women's personal and collective moral fitness were tied directly to discussions of both individual fashion choices and wider beauty culture, both of which stood as an outward reflection of women's drives for inner refinement. But what counted as "fitting" clothing itself was the subject of significant and detailed discussion.

Discussions of Indonesian beauty culture, as we have already seen in Chapter 2, ranged in two primary directions, looking back historically and culturally to distill essences of what was "eastern," while simultaneously exploring a future that was also expressed significantly in the form of western-style dresses. Choice was the order of the day, and the pages of *Wanita* from late 1950 forward were full of different presentations of choices about fashion and the meanings linked to them. Much of this discussion took the form of opinion pieces, but another important venue for the exploration of choice was found in the coverage of fashion shows.

"*Mode-shows*," as they were called, became a particularly important venue in which Indonesian women explored how to live out these options in ways that were externally harmonious with their internal sensibilities. Fashion shows became national and nationalizing events, initially experienced in person for the Jakarta, Bandung and Central Javanese elites, but then spreading through the pages of magazines to share these explorations more broadly with women elsewhere. A trend of fashion shows being included in women's gatherings spread across the nation. The fashions presented in such shows often looked backward to what was "*asli*," or "original" about women in the archipelago—now redefined as "Indonesian,"—while also suggesting new options and standards for the current day.

This discussion broadened as new magazines aimed at women that covered culture and entertainment began to be published in 1952. Whether focused primarily on subjects such as film, or on building modern families, discussions of beauty culture and fashion were a constant element of magazines published principally for women. This chapter examines how two rather different new magazines, *Film Review* and *Keluarga* ("*Family*"), both placed this discussion of women's fashion choices at the heart of their editorial content.

Modernity was not only a question raised by western clothing, however. Islamic movements often considered themselves to be fundamentally modern, and involved in the

process of modernizing the nation, while their women's branches in general retained dressing in *kain-kebaya* and other "*asli*" styles as their daily norm. For other Indonesian women who were Muslim, while expressing concerns that fashion should not be extreme, wearing western fashions was completely aligned with Islamic piety. A discussion of veiling that had begun in the 1920's continued to express the differences about how to be both Muslim and modern were experienced by women with different religious and cultural outlooks. In any case, it is important to remember that the large majority of women involved in these discussions, from all political viewpoints, were Muslim. But, keeping in mind Adrian Vickers' distinctions between "modern" and "*moderen*," it is important to remember that the discussion of fashion and of who Indonesian women were to be was not limited to those living in the metropolitan superculture alone. A variety of Indonesian women's lives were engaged in this national and nationalizing discussion.

As Indonesian women discussed adopting elements of western fashion, only a very privileged few were importing an occasional piece from Paris or New York. Most of the western looks they wore, whether in *mode-shows* or in daily life, were designed and sewn in Indonesia. They reflected the attempt, sometimes more or less successful, to adapt western fashion to Indonesian bodies and sensibilities. Dressing in western style largely involved a process of local adaptation more than one of foreign adoption.

The process, therefore, was one in which differing strands of experience and aspiration were woven into new webs of local identity. The process was neither merely a process of copying already existing western standards nor one of simply thinking and imagining something new out of whole cloth. Rather, as this chapter's analysis of advertisements for Singer sewing machines and Singer Sewing schools "across Indonesia" argues, Indonesian women were actively involved in producing their own national identities at least partially through the imagination and creation of new clothing options. One particular way to do this that emerged (first in *mode-shows*) was the development of western-style dresses made from *batik* or other indigenous cloth. A 1953 "*batikshow*" in Jakarta, for instance, grew to have particularly strong cultural legs, both nationally and across the globe.

What this chapter argues is that during these first years of the new nation, Indonesian women were heavily involved in the process that might be described as



“fashioning themselves.” An examination of this process through which elite women imagined themselves within the Indonesian national community reveals small but important details of their self-conception that would come to have a critical impact on the future of the nation as a whole.

### ***Fashioning Modern Indonesia***

*The lights shone bright in the room at the top of the Hotel des Indes, the hotel that has been called the gateway to the island of Java. There was no stop to the automobiles dropping off their passengers in front of the entrance that led to this upper room. They got out in pairs, women of various nationalities, accompanied by escorts who were always ready at their sides. There were also those who came by themselves. Everyone's faces seemed full of hope. It was if truly what they were about to see in a few minutes was only for them, the soft ones, the beauties.<sup>11</sup>*

The event described above, held with great pomp and style at the Hotel des Indes,<sup>12</sup> on an August evening in 1950, was a “*mode-show*.” But it was not simply a fashion show of the latest versions of *kain-kebaya* available to the smart set of the Jakarta metropolitan superculture. Rather, the event proposed to begin re-imagining what fashion for Indonesian women as a whole might be.

The show looked both backward, by showing “old fashioned” (“*kuno*”) wedding ensembles from various parts of the country, and forward, including both new proposals for regional clothing women might wear and presenting a set of western dresses from Indonesian fashion designers. But *kain-kebaya* were at the show's center.

The reviewer of the event in the pages of *Wanita*, S. Pudjo Samadi,<sup>13</sup> was particularly drawn to the possibilities of new mixtures of colors to create “a fantasy in putting together

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<sup>11</sup> “*Terang-benderang lampu-lampu diruangan atas Hotel Des Indes, hotel jang dinamakan pintu-gerbang pulau Djawa. Tak henti-hentinja mobil menurunkan penumpang dimuka djalan jang menudju keruangan atas itu. Berpasang-pasang keluarlah, wanita-wanita berbagai bangsa, diiringi oleh pengantar jang selalu sedia disamping mereka. Ada djuga jang datang sendirian. Semuanja kelihatan mukanja penuh harapan. Sebab sesungguhnya, jang akan mereka lihat sebentar lagi memang melulu untuk mereka, si kaum lemah, sitjantik-djelita.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272. A more literal translation of “*si kaum lemah*,” rendered here as “the soft ones,” would be “the weak ones.”

<sup>12</sup> The luxury hotel was the first stop on any colonial-era grand tour of the Indies, and it remained the highest prestige local hotel into the early republican era. In other words, this event occurred at the very center of elite Indonesian national social authority.

<sup>13</sup> The by-line on the article is “S.P.S.” Using initials only to refer to authors who were also on the magazine staff was a regular practice in *Wanita*, and S. Pudjo Samadi was listed second on the editorial list, behind Nj. P.A. Pane. This is almost

*kain-kebaya* pairings that are captivating.”<sup>14</sup> “Have you ever seen the combination of blue with green?,” she wrote, “but that really fits the one with the other?”<sup>15</sup>

It was her opinion that this demonstrated the organizers’ “bravery in showing several combinations that are not the same as usual.”<sup>16</sup> She considered that the fashion trends from Western Java were “the best to receive this new path.”<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, she acknowledged that for some women, the bright combination of colors would be too much. There were certainly women who still preferred more traditional outfits that featured the brown, black and white *batiks* from Central Java. “The average Indonesian woman,” she noted, “is still a simple soul.”<sup>18</sup>

The fashion show also included a display of western fashions, but, according to Ibu Pudjo, this was the “least successful section of the show.”<sup>19</sup> It “needed more careful study beforehand,”<sup>20</sup> she wrote, mostly because western style, both in clothing and makeup, was not yet securely a part of most Indonesian women’s experience. Her reasoning also showed a lingering sense that many Indonesians felt some sort of inferiority in the face of western fashion culture. “It is not a trivial matter,” she wrote,

to put out a collection of your own creations [based] on the clothing styles of another people, even more so when so many pairs of eyes from that culture are examining our abilities. . . . But I know that they will remember that we are still at the very early steps, and they certainly know that much is not yet as it should be.<sup>21</sup>

The issue at hand was not only, however, about a lack of full preparation. Rather, the display of western fashion raised serious questions for Ibu Pudjo about whether or not a

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certainly the same Ibu Pudjo who was the senior local staff person in the Cultural Section of the American Embassy in the 1960s. On a personal level, it was at Bu Pudjo’s house that I first began to study Javanese dance in 1969 at age five.

<sup>14</sup> “*tjara memilih warna maupun menggunakan fantasi dalam menjusun sepasang kain-kebaya adalah menarik hati.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272.

<sup>15</sup> “*Pernakah saudara melihat kombinasi warna biru dengan hijau? Tetapi jang sungguh bisa tjotjok jang satu dengan jang lain?*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 274.

<sup>16</sup> “*Kelihatan keberanian dalam mempertunjukkan beberapa kombinasi jang tak seperti biasa.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272. “*Tak seperti biasa,*” literally “not as usual,” has the strong connotation of “not the same old same old.”

<sup>17</sup> “*Pakaian Djawa Barat memang adalah paling baik untuk menerima aliran jang baru itu.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272.

<sup>18</sup> “*Sebab bagaimana djuga, rata-rata wanita Indonesia masih sederhana djiwanja.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272.

<sup>19</sup> “*bagian jang paling kurang dalam pertunjukkan itu.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272.

<sup>20</sup> “*pakaian barat namun . . . untuk mempertundjukkannya . . . haruslah diadakan peladjaran jang teliti lebih dulu.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272.

<sup>21</sup> “*Bukanlah suatu hal jang remeh, mengeluarkan buah tjiptaan sendiri tentang tjara pakaian bangsa lain, lebih-lebih djika sekian banjak pasang mata dari bangsa itu mengamati ketjakapan kita. . . . Meskipun . . . saja tahu, bahwa mereka akan mengingat bahwa kita masih dalam langkah permulaan sekali, sehingga tentu maklum akan banjak jang belum semestinja.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 272.

western way of dressing would fit Indonesian lives. "Certainly we cannot yet say that Indonesian women will quickly take to Western fashion, where there is the issue of wearing hats, gloves and stockings in our country that is so hot,"<sup>22</sup> she wrote.

Furthermore, the makeup and hairstyles demanded by a full-on presentation of western fashion were also problematic. The lipstick chosen was too brightly red against Indonesian skin and read unintentionally as a "vlek" (stain)<sup>23</sup> in the center of the face that "disturbed the harmony in showing a dress."<sup>24</sup> The "bobbed" and "pagekop" ("pageboy")<sup>25</sup> haircuts were not always appropriate for the dresses they were worn with. Most fundamentally, the bodies of the young Indonesian models didn't always fit well with the styles chosen. "Truly, was it profitable," she asked,

when a beautifully refined evening dress was worn by a young woman whose body wasn't ample enough? Even from behind, as I saw it, the evening gown, whose top only reached to the breasts, so that the shoulders and neck weren't covered at all, was worn by a girl who was rather thin, to the point that her spine was clearly visible every time she moved her arms. It's a pity, truly a pity. . . . .<sup>26</sup>

Nonetheless, Ibu Pudjo thought it was "good that we all get to know this fashion. Truly it can't hurt!"<sup>27</sup> She also noted that the dresses themselves "were truly made and arranged with refinement and choices that were appropriate."<sup>28</sup> They just didn't yet seem to match well with Indonesian women's sense of themselves.

Overall, the evening was considered a resounding success. Thanking the organizers, Ibu Pudjo was left imagining what the future might hold, and how the women present

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<sup>22</sup> "Tentunya belum bisa dikatakan bahwa wanita Indonesia akan lekas-lekas menerima mode Barat itu, seperti soalnya memakai topi, kaos tangan dan kaos kaki panjang dinegeri kita yang panas ini." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> "vlek," using the Dutch word. *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

<sup>24</sup> "pemerah pipi tidak merata-beratu dengan warna kulit muka. Dengan tak sengadja, pemerah pipi ditengah muka, sebagai suatu 'vlek,' terasa mengganggu persesuaian dalam pertundjukan sebuah pakaian itu." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

<sup>25</sup> "Bobbed" is in English, "page-kop," is in Dutch. Both are set off in quotation marks. *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

<sup>26</sup> "Sebab, menungtukanlah djika sebuah pakaian malam yang indah-halus dipakai oleh seorang puteri yang kurang gemuk badannya. Malahan kebalikkannya, seperti saja lihat, sebuah jupon malam yang bagian atasnya hanya sampai didada saja, sehingga pundak dan leher tak tertutup sama sekali, dipakai oleh puteri yang agak kurus, sehingga tulang rangka belakang tampak terang apabila ia menggerakkan tangannya. Sajang, sungguh sajang . . . . ." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

<sup>27</sup> "Tetapi ada baiknya djuga kita semuanya mengetahui mode itu. Sungguh tak akan merugikan!" *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

<sup>28</sup> "boleh dikatakan bahwa pakaiannya sendiri, sungguhlah dibuat dan disusun dengan halus dan pilihan yang tepat." *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 273.

might begin to think through the options the show presented. “Ibu Sud, Mrs. Tambajong and the others can be pleased with the results of the evening,” she wrote.

And we, the audience, should be pleased because we have seen the possibilities that are still face us to bring our own traditional Indonesian women’s clothing [*pakaian asli*] to the highest level, and which also is in line with our authentic selves [*djiwa asli kita*].”<sup>29</sup>

But at this point, the idea of an “Indonesian fashion” was much more a conjecture and an imagining than it was a reality. The ambiguous relationship many elite women felt towards western ideas—“elements that still needed study”—was pronounced, particularly since Indonesians were not yet sure who they should be themselves.

Between 1950-1955, women’s magazines were chock full of various versions of these existential questions. Often this discussion about identity, which was clearly about more than clothing, would still be addressed regularly within explorations of fashion. Following these various treatments of fashion and identity, we can see that elite Indonesian women were involved in a process of theorizing themselves and their identities in the new nation. In this process, it was the “simplicity of their souls,” that is, their inner characters full of authenticity so seemingly lacking among the women presented in European and American media, that were protecting them.

Looking back and moving forward, they sought a way of living that was simultaneously modern—in various uses of the term and coming from various sources—and that “fit”<sup>30</sup> some sort of essential or authentic—“*asli*”—eastern character. Finding themselves at the crux of this complicated web of identities, elite women would spend a great deal of effort and time theorizing on these questions—and the role of clothing in them—throughout the Sukarno era. But the questions were especially trenchant during the first years of the new nation.

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<sup>29</sup> “Ibu Sud, njonja Tambajong dan lain-lainja boleh senang dengan hasil malam jang telah lalu itu. Dan kami, para penonton, djuga patut bersenang hati karena dapat melihat kemungkinan-kemungkinan jang masih dimuka kita untuk membawa pakaian asli para wanita Indonesia kepada tingkat jang setinggi-tingginja, jang sesuai pula dengan djiwa asli kita.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 16, August 15, p. 274.

<sup>30</sup> The Indonesian word often used was “*sesuai*,” also meaning consistent with, suitable or appropriate, but in its passive form *disesuaikan* also means “adjusted.” The word comes back at several important junctures in the dissertation.

In an article entitled “The Advancement of Fashion,”<sup>31</sup> published in December 1950, Maria Amin<sup>32</sup> imagined a woman staring at herself in a full-length mirror, examining a new piece of clothing that didn’t quite fit her correctly. The woman was not pleased, and considered ripping it up and throwing it away. But “clothing is not simply for covering the body,” she wrote. “It is among the most important needs of life.”<sup>33</sup>

The article was not simply about an individual women’s reaction to her own reflection in the mirror, however. Rather, Maria Amin theorized,

“Internal advancement creates the civilization of a people. The advancement of fashion, that too influences our very selves. [“*djiwa kita sendiri.*”] The static nature of a people can be seen in the simplicity of their clothing, but for a people who are dynamic, fashion plays an important role.”<sup>34</sup>

It was important therefore, she felt, to not be afraid of changes in style. “For example, the shape of a *baju kurung*<sup>35</sup> can be improved. Or a *baju kebaya* can be adjusted here or there without losing its original shape,”<sup>36</sup> she wrote. This also reflected a longer and broader Asian tradition of women’s clothing that covered women’s bodies, including Japanese *kimono* and similar Chinese styles, that Indonesians had also adopted. Yet, she noted,

Changes in styles hold very little importance to our people. Probably they fear changes to its Eastern character, that is to always be on guard that parts of the body are not too exposed. And when there are those who are daring enough to change that Eastern character . . . older people who hold on strongly to traditions that forbid [such things] strongly, or at least reproach . . . those who wear such styles.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> “*Kemajuan Mode.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 24, December 15, pp. 444-45. “*Kemajuan*” has the word “*maju*,” meaning to advance or to move forward, at its base. The word is also often translated as “development” in the senses of both economic and social development.

<sup>32</sup> Maria Amin was an author known for writing symbolic literature, which was at the heart of a debate about symbolist v. realist approaches to representing the nation in the early 1950s. She was one of the few female writers considered to be part of a generation of authors that included Armijn Pané, Usmar Ismail, Chairil Anwar, Idrus and Dr. Abu Hanifa. Her work has disappeared from this canonical group however, and she is no longer a well-known member of this important group that established Indonesian national literature. See Yudiono K.S., *Pengantar Sejarah Sastra Indonesia*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>33</sup> “*Djadi pakaian itu bukan hanja penutup tubuh sadja. Ia masuk salah satu jang terpenting dalam kebutuhan penghidupan.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 24, December 15, p. 444.

<sup>34</sup> “*Kemajuan dalam membuat peradaban suatu bangsa. Kemajuan mode itupun membawa pengaruh kepada djiwa kita sendiri. Bangsa jang statis dapat kita lihat dalam kesederhanaan pakaiannya, tetapi bagi bangsa jang dynamis mode memegang rol jang penting.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 24, December 15, p. 444.

<sup>35</sup> The knee-length blouse worn over a *kain* in Sumatra and on the Malay peninsula, also called a “*kebaya panjang*,” or “long *kebaya*.”

<sup>36</sup> “*Upamanja badju kurung diperbaiki bentuknja. Atau badju kebaya diperbaiki disana-sini sehingga tidak mengurangi bentuk aslinja.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 24, December 15, p. 444.

<sup>37</sup> “*Perubahan model itu amat sedikit sekali dipentingkan oleh bangsa kita. Barangkali takut mengubah sifat ke Timuran jaitu selalu mengadja supaja tidak banjak terbuka bahagian tubuh serta anggotanja. Djika ada djuga jang berani mengubah*

In the end, she argued, Indonesian women would continue to wear *kebaya* because it was becoming the “national blouse” (“*badju nasional*”).

In exploring and attempting to resolve these tensions, the editors of *Wanita* often chose to look backwards, and in doing so, they imagined a new historical understanding of the past. In conjunction with Kartini Day in 1951, for instance, the magazine published an article by Nenek Hajati,<sup>38</sup> “Our Clothing since the era of R.A. Kartini,”<sup>39</sup> that discussed elements of the history of Indonesian women’s clothing since the early 1900s. The article first noted significant differences in fashion for elite women over the previous half-century. “At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,” she wrote,

privileged young women of the nobility were often heavily restricted by the normal traditions of that time, and even though they were educated until around the age of twelve, they only dressed in *kain-kebaya* as their daily clothing, which was never switched for another style.”<sup>40</sup>

The article noted that changes to this began to occur at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As more women were educated, and from a broader range of society, “[t]hese archaic beliefs that had hampered the advancement of women gradually were let go, and we saw that women became teachers, midwives, some even became doctors, lawyers, etc.”<sup>41</sup> This had a direct effect, Hayati wrote, on women’s dress and appearance, and even on their names.

Hair buns that had previously necessarily been neatly slicked back were felt to be less practical, so their hair was often just tied with a ribbon. Those who experienced more Western influence completely relinquished their traditional clothing [“*pakaian asli*”] and switched that up for dresses. We remember that during the “*normaalschool*” era,<sup>42</sup> women were required to

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*sifat ke Timuran jang dimaksud tadi maka dari pihak kaum tua jang sangat memegang teguh adat-istiadat melarang keras atau sekurang-kurangnya mentjela . . . jang memakai model seperti itu.*” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 24, December 15, pp. 444-45.

<sup>38</sup> “*Nenek*” means “grandmother,” and here is a form of address showing age and position, not a name. Hajati is a women’s name, but also means “biological,” “vital” or “to live.” “*Hayat*” is a word for “life.” Nenek Hajati became a regularly featured writer for *Wanita*, mostly of their advice column. Her columns on women, modernity and moral danger are discussed in the next two chapters. It remains unclear from the mastheads of *Wanita*, which were not always regularly included in the magazine’s issues in any case, exactly who she might have been. I have not found an instance referring to anyone on staff named Hajati. Rather, this appears to be a name like Abby of “Dear Abby,” a personality more than a person.

<sup>39</sup> “*Pakaian kita sejdak masa R.A. Kartini,*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, pp. 130, 135.

<sup>40</sup> “*Masa achir abad ke-19 dimana gadis-gadis istimewa dari kalangan bangsawan masih sangat terikat djiwannja oleh adat kebiasaan diwaktu itu, walaupun sudah boleh bersekolah hingga k.l. 12 tahun, hanja kain dan kebajalah jang mendjadi pakaiannya sehari-hari tidak pernah diganti dengan matjam pakaian lainnja.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, pp. 130.

<sup>41</sup> “*Angapan kolot jang menghambat kemedjuaan kaum wanita lambat laun dilepaskan dan kita lihat bahwa kaum wanita dapat diadakan guru, dukun beranak, bahkan sudah ada jang mendjadi dokter, meester in de rechten dsb.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.

<sup>42</sup> *Normaalschool*, or normal schools, were primary vocational schools that trained native teachers, nurses and technical instructors, with a larger set of courses of study available in western primary vocational education that was available to

wear dresses, and they often even needed to change their names to western names in order to be permitted to enroll in those schools.<sup>43</sup>

And yet this rarely led to a wholesale change in how these elite women dressed. Wearing dresses had “not yet become the norm, they were only worn to go to school. At home, the dress was changed back for *kain* and *kebaya*,”<sup>44</sup> Hajati noted. But the *kebaya* itself evolved, adapting from western dresses to become “less rigid, and more following the shape of the body.”<sup>45</sup>

Even the way of fastening them changed. *Kebaya* were given ‘*bef*,’<sup>46</sup> the cut of the neckline was lowered, and the look of the embroidery that was taught at schools decorated the hems of the *kebaya* or around the neck.<sup>47</sup> So *kain-kebaya*, while imagined in many pieces of writing as *asli* and somewhat static, had already clearly been through at least one significant era of adaptation to the modernity of an earlier day.

But to Hayati the changes in fashion and in what it allowed in the early 1950s seemed more revolutionary than earlier shifts. From Hayati’s perspective, western dresses were both easier for women to wear, and they afforded a new freedom. “For those who are in school or who are working in offices,” she wrote,

“wearing our traditional clothing [“*pakaian asli kita*”] truly doesn’t feel practical. Wearing dresses is much simpler. Wearing a dress, we can ride a bicycle, chase after a tram or a bus, and with a dress we can even play tennis or do other exercise.”<sup>48</sup>

Rather than simply offering a change in comfort or in the time necessary for preparation as had been the case with *kain-kebaya* half a century earlier, this move to

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the children of native elites and wealthy Chinese. The “*normaalschool*” era began in 1906 as part of a liberal era expansion of the educational system for “natives.”

<sup>43</sup> “*Gelung-gelung jang tadinja harus rapih dan litjin oleh gadis-gadis dirasa kurang praktis dan rambut itu sering diikat sadja dengan pita. Bahkan mereka jang lebih mengalami pengaruh Barat sama sekali melepaskan pakaian aslinja dan digantinja dengan rok. Kita ingat pada zaman “normaalschool” dimana wanita Indonesia boleh dikatakan diharuskan berpakaian rok, bahkan sering pula mereka berganti nama dengan nama barat, supaja diperbolehkan memasuki sekolah-sekolah tersebut.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.

<sup>44</sup> “*belumhlah mendjadi kebiasaan, hanya dipakai untuk pergi ke sekolah sadja. Dirumah pakaian rok itu diganti lagi dengan kain dan kebaya.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.

<sup>45</sup> “*Potongan kebaja mendjadi kurang kaku, lebih menuruti bentuk badan.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.

<sup>46</sup> See the description of *bef*, a strip of cloth that connected the two lapels of a *kebaya* in Chapter 2.

<sup>47</sup> “*Potongan kebaja mendjali [sic] kurang kaku, lebih menuruti bentuk badan, pun tjara memakai penitih dapat perubahan. Kebaja diberi ‘bef’, potongan leher lebih rendah dan rupa-rupa sulaman jang dipeledjari disekolah-sekolah menghiasi udjung kebaja atau disekeliling leher.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.

<sup>48</sup> “*Bagi mereka jang bersekolah atau bekerdja dikantor-kantor pakaian asli kita dirasa sekali tidak praktis. Memakai rok itulah jang lebih gampang. Dengan berpakaian rok kita dapat naik sepeda, mengedjar tram atau bus, dan dengan rok pula kita dapat bermain tennis dan berolah raga lainnja.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.

dresses and bobbed hair was a necessary adaptation to a new lifestyle. “The times have changed, and our daily needs have changed and grown as well,” she wrote. “Our clothing must be adjusted [*disesuaikan*] to our way of life.”<sup>49</sup>

This did not mean that traditional clothing would or should disappear. Instead, Hayati suggested it would come primarily to fill a more specific role as the proper uniform for important life events. “Even though women today are already modern and are adjusting ourselves to modern needs,” she wrote, “our regular traditions haven’t at all been let go. For weddings, for gatherings because of the birth of a child or a person’s death, or for other formal times, we still wear our original clothing.”<sup>50</sup> And, she noted, “this is truly pleasing, because our clothing is remarkably beautiful. We don’t need to worry that we will lose our clothing, in recent years there has even been tendency among women to change and improve the fabrics of our traditional clothing.”<sup>51</sup>

In Hayati’s thoughts, clothing was not simply adornment; rather, it was a legible reflection of social order at any particular time. At the time of her writing, changes in women’s clothing reflected a significant change in women’s freedoms and ability to engage fully in society. “If we compare the era of Kartini . . . with our own today,” she wrote,

in the case of clothing we see there have been changes. It appears that our clothing has been influenced by the advancement and changes of our society generally. It also appears that the freer and more independent we are in our character and our thoughts, the bolder and more modern we are in choosing and changing our clothing. And is it not the case that our character and thoughts can be imagined or shown by the way we dress and ornament ourselves?<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “Zaman telah berubah, kebutuhan sehari-hari berubah dan bertambah pula. Pakaian kita harus disesuaikan dengan tjara kita hidup.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130. Note the two spellings of the word “berubah/berubah” from one sentence to the next. This is not uncommon in writings of the day, and is an interesting reflection of an Indonesia where identities, processes and language are not yet fully standardized. Again, note the use of the word “disesuaikan.”

<sup>50</sup> “Lagi pula walaupun wanita sekarang telah modern, dan dapat menyesuaikan diri pada kebutuhan modern itu, adat kebiasaan asli belum sama sekali dilepaskan. Pada upatjara pernikahan, pada pesta karena ada anak lahir atau orang meninggal, atau lainnja jang bersifat resmi, pakaian asli masih dipakai.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130. Again, another use of one of the forms of “sesuai,” this time in the active, causative form, “menyesuaikan.”

<sup>51</sup> “Hal ini menggembirakan, karena pakaian kita itu bukan main indahnja. Kita tidak usah kawatir akan hilangnja pakaian kita itu, bahkan ditahun-tahun belakangan ini ada tendenz dilakangan kaum wanita untuk menambah dan memperbaiki bahan-bahan pakaian asli kita.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, pp. 130, 135.

<sup>52</sup> “Djika kita bandingkan zaman R.A. Kartini . . . dengan zaman kita sekarang ini, maka dalam hal pakaian dapatlah kita lihat ada perubahan-perubahan. Rupanya pakaian kita dipengaruhi oleh kemajuan dan perubahan-perubahan masyarakat kita umumnja. // Rupanja pula makin bebas dan merdeka kita dalam djiwa dan fikiran, makin berani dan modern pula kita dalam memilih dan merubah pakaian kita. // Bukankah djiwa dan fikiran kita itu dapat terbajang dari tjara kita berpakaian dan berhias?” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 7, April 1, p. 130.



In discussing and debating clothing, then, and in providing meaning to what should be worn in what spaces and which circumstances, elite Indonesian women were explicitly theorizing their own identities. Clothing was not merely a costume, nor were the standards of beauty they discussed only about physical appearance. Rather, much more was recognized to be at play in these discussions, with various implications for individual, and more importantly, collective women's identities in the balance.

It is not surprising therefore that these discussions that explicitly linked women, clothing, beauty and identity continued to be prominent in *Wanita*, and that they also were quickly a feature in other women's magazines that began to appear on the market towards the end of 1952.<sup>53</sup> Two examples are illustrative here, *Film Review* and *Keluarga*, ("Family,") both magazines that were first published in December of that year.

The two magazines—one focused, clearly, on film, and the other on women and family in the home and society—both showed particularly strong influences from and connections to international materials and subjects. *Film Review* was intentionally designed to replace foreign English-language magazines on the subject with an Indonesian language option. *Keluarga*, published by Herawati Diah, consciously used her personal knowledge of western women's ways and etiquette as a model to enlighten and modernize Indonesian womanhood.

Both magazines explicitly adapted their global sensitivities towards an Indonesian market. They were also conscious of writing about their subjects in Indonesian with the goal of making their knowledge accessible to local audiences. It is quite telling that clothing appeared as an important item to be written about prominently in the very first early issues of both magazines. But, since both magazines were fundamentally interested in exploring the question of what a modern Indonesia should look like, and both were aimed primarily at female readers, this underlined that fashion was a central vector for these discussions of gender, nationality and modernity among elite Indonesian women at the

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<sup>53</sup> Despite looking as well as I could, I can't yet find out why December 1952 saw a sudden increase in the numbers of magazine titles. There doesn't appear to have been a change in the publication law, though there were perhaps adjustments in regulations, which are harder to trace. The limiting factors on earlier publications had certainly included access to print paper as well as the nation's printing plant capacity. But when these magazines did emerge, they did so, as did others at the same time, with well-composed pages, full use of photography and other graphics, and other elements of a fully functioning modern print industry, and at a level that was clearly advanced relative even to where *Wanita* had been until quite close to that time. *Gembira*, which is discussed in Chapter 5, also began publishing around the same time.

time. It is to the variations of these new discussions of femininity and Indonesian modernity found in the new publications that this chapter now turns.

### **Film Review: *Global Modernity Explodes on the Silver Screen***

“We live in the atomic age,”<sup>54</sup> the editors of *Film Review* wrote in the opening sentence of their first edition in December 1952, positioning themselves firmly within an era of global modernity. “In this era of progress,” they wrote,

a person would certainly want to know what has happened in the recent past days. It’s not just magazines that analyze cultural issues, literature, politics or sports that receive a warm welcome from those requesting them, but alongside that, don’t forget all the issues connected to films. We believe we will find a welcome that is just as large.”<sup>55</sup>

Film was certainly an important feature of the cultural life of mid-century Indonesia. Films were an important vector through which visions of modernity reached all of Indonesia. As is discussed below, Indonesians watched both foreign and domestic films, even down to the village level, at a significant rate. And as both this chapter and Chapter 6 show, the movies were a principal way in which many Indonesians interacted with ideas of modernity coming from outside Indonesia itself. As such, the cinema had a profound effect on what Indonesians saw as modern. As with issues of fashion, this led to tensions about what might constitute a morally sound cinema, and from the earliest days of independence, Indonesian censors shaped, at least to some extent, what this vision of acceptable modernity would include. Progressive Indonesian women were involved in this process from its beginnings.

With independence, local cinema itself began to change. Looking back at the birth of Indonesian cinema, Lisabona Z. Rahman noted that the 1950’s was “a period of special significance. . . . Prior to 1950, local cinema in Indonesia was considered low-quality

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<sup>54</sup> “Kita hidup dalam zaman atoom.” *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> “Dalam zaman kemedjuaan ini, sesuatu orang tentunja ingin mengetahui apa jang terdjadi dalam hari-hari jang paling belakang. Bukan sadja madjalah-madjalah jang menupas soal kebudajaan, kesastraan, politik ataupun olah-raga, mendapat sambutan hangat dari para pemintanja, tetapi disamping itu djangan dilupa, hal-hal jang bertalian dengan soal film-pun, kami pertjaja pasti akan mendapat sambutan jang sama besarnja.” *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 1.

entertainment, fit only for uneducated people.”<sup>56</sup> But beginning in the early 1950’s, a “new generation of local film makers made their debut . . . establishing the national cinema.”<sup>57</sup>

Between 1950 and 1957, Indonesian film companies produced 125 movies, over 40% of them made by the PERSARI studio.<sup>58</sup> PERSARI films were generally considered to have “relatively poor quality and style,”<sup>59</sup> largely because they often resembled what film critic M. Adran called “a photographed play.”<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, PERSARI was able to produce such a large percentage of Indonesia’s domestic films because it operated like a mini-Hollywood studio, having built a complex in a Jakarta suburb where films were shot, developed and processed. This allowed owner Djamaluddin Malik, a former stage actor during the late colonial era, to circumvent the queue for film processing at the government-owned lab, the only other venue for film finishing in the country.

But the local film industry was completely dwarfed by Hollywood’s presence in the country. In 1950 alone, Indonesia imported and screened 660 American films, followed by another 660 in 1951, and 675 in 1952.<sup>61</sup> Using a block booking system that compelled Indonesian film distributors to accept a whole list of films, rather than simply allowing them to bring in titles individually, Hollywood distributors held over 80% of screen time in Indonesian movie houses between 1950-1955. Furthermore, Hollywood films almost completely dominated the country’s “first class” movie theaters that primarily served local elites and expatriates.

It was not unusual therefore that *Film Review*, though explicitly written in Indonesian and for an Indonesian audience, primarily covered Hollywood films. The four-color front cover of the first issue, for instance, featured a studio head shot of “Esther Williams (M.G.M.)” whose red hair and green plaid jacket were muted in color, but whose red lips had been over-printed with the same shockingly bright red ink that was used for

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<sup>56</sup> The educated elite would likely have watched Dutch-language films, made either in the Indies or imported from the Netherlands.

<sup>57</sup> Lisabona Rahman, “The Birth of Indonesian Cinema and its Pioneers,” in *A Brief Cultural History of Indonesian Cinema*, p. 56.

<sup>58</sup> See Tanete Pong Masak, *Sinema Pada Masa Soekarno*, Statistical Appendix, Table 3, pp. 422-23. PERSARI stands for *Persatuan Artis Republik Indonesia*, or the Artists’ Union of the Republic of Indonesia.

<sup>59</sup> Salim Said, *Shadows on the Silver Screen*, p. 43.

<sup>60</sup> M. Ardan. “*Tragedi dalam Festival*.” *Star News*, III, 14, 1955, p. 34, quoted in Salim Said, *Shadows on the Silver Screen*, p. 43.

<sup>61</sup> See Tanete Pong Masak, *Sinema Pada Masa Soekarno*, Table 4.1, p. 166.

the magazine's title.<sup>62</sup> (See Figure 3.1). Williams was also the subject of a profile in the magazine that covered her life history, her recent movies, and that reported some of her personal likes.<sup>63</sup>

Publishing the personal details of an actor's life—or at least the life the studio wanted the public to see—was a standard element of Hollywood “meet the star at home” press coverage. Like its American counterparts, *Film Review* largely published material provided to them directly by the Hollywood publicity machine.<sup>64</sup> The majority of the magazine's content, in fact, not only almost exclusively covered American subjects, it also appeared to have come directly from American sources.



**Figure 3.1:** *Film Review*'s first cover, featuring Esther Williams and her bright red lips. *Film Review* #1, December 5, 1952

This American cultural dominance extended to many of the magazine's advertisements. The page facing the Esther Williams profile contained a full-page ad for

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<sup>62</sup> Whether this was read as a “stain” on her face or not we can't know.

<sup>63</sup> “*Meneropong Bintang<sup>2</sup> Ditabir Perak: Esther Williams*” (“Focusing in on the Stars of the Silver Screen: Esther Williams,”) *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 15. Her favorite role was in *Thrill of a Romance*, her favorite song was “Some Enchanted Evening.” Her favorite color was blue, and the meal she could not do without was steak and salad, which the editors translated as “*biefstik dan gado-gado*.” In using the name for a local vegetable dish with peanut sauce to mean “salad,” however, the editors informed their readers “But remember, this isn't *gado-gado* Jakarta.” (“*Tapi, ingat: bukan gado<sup>2</sup> Djakarta, para pembata—Red.*”) *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless, this general format was also adopted by Indonesian magazines about Indonesian movie starlets, particularly in the late 1950's, as is explored in Chapter 6.

Lux Soap, which, according to the ad copy was “used by 9 out of 10 film stars.”<sup>65</sup> It featured a head shot of Eleanor Parker, “star of the Paramount Film ‘Detective Story.’” The bar of soap was also described as being “white, pure, refined for ladies’ skin.”<sup>66</sup> Lux had used film actresses, including native actresses, to sell soap in the Indies during the 1930s, so this was not a new trope. But it was Hollywood stars who were now presented as a standard of beauty for Indonesian women. Along with the inundation of Hollywood movies also came a flood of Hollywood beauty influences.

Certain elements of *Film Review* reflected local needs. Several were advertisements for local businesses, which primarily appeared to be Jakarta enterprises owned by ethnic Chinese families.<sup>67</sup> Although the ownership of *Film Review* isn’t clear—there was no masthead—it appears, similarly to a significant number of Indonesian magazines about lifestyle and hobbyist interests at the time, to have at least been financed with capital from Indonesia’s ethnic Chinese business community.

The only primarily local content besides advertising in the magazine came in the form of a recurring set of columns on fashion, entitled simply “*Mode*.” Taking a page from Hollywood publicity, the fashion column in the magazine’s first edition featured a photo of an Indonesian film star. “How elegant is this beauty wearing national dress [“*pakaian nasional*,”] of a batik sarong, plastic purse and *kebaya*,” the column began. “A question:” it asked.

Who is this beauty? It’s not possible that this could be asked by a film lover, particularly of films coming out in our country. Because the answer is certainly that ‘She is Nana Mayo, a film star who has acted, among others, in films “Gadis Olahraga,” “Inspektur Rachman,” and others.’<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “dipakai oleh 9 dari 10 bintang<sup>2</sup> pilm.” *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> “LUX putih, murni, halus bagi kulit Njonja.” This does not appear to be an instance in which the soap is claiming to lighten the color of women’s skin, which was not yet a trope I have seen at this time. Rather the “white” here appears to describe the lack of dyes in the soap itself, and therefore its purity. *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 14. Nancy Florida notes that the use of “*Nyonya*” here leans towards white women.

<sup>67</sup> On the inside front cover, an ad for N.V. Woonan in Gambir, Jakarta, likely a Chinese-owned enterprise, (the firm’s ownership by Chinese Indonesians seems apparent from its name, an older spelling of Wunan), offered printing and binding services, writing implements and all needs for the modern office, including typewriters, stensils and various kinds of filing cabinets. An ad towards the back of the magazine for the Morning Glory Flower Shop, that specialized in formal wreaths, offered its services “in times of celebration and mourning.” (“*Dalam waktu bersuka ria dan berduka tjita*”), p. 17. Chinese characters in the ad, which even by 1952 were a rarity in Indonesian language magazines, gave the name of the shop as “Chenguang Florist,” or “Morning Flower Shop.” Thanks to Pär Cassel for help with the translation of the characters and their meaning.

<sup>68</sup> Note this is the same question asked in *Wanita* in 1950 about Gusti Nurul. “*Betapa eiloknja djuita ini dengan pakaian nasional jang berupakan sarong batik, tas plastik dan kebajanja. Pertanjaan tenang: siapakah sang djelita itu? rasanja tidak mungkin diadjukan oleh sesuatu penggemar film, terutama film-film keluaran negeri kita. Maka djawaban jang pasti kita*

The image of Nana Mayo was striking. Her *kebaya* was lavishly embroidered with a complicated pattern in what appeared to be metallic thread, and its waistline was tightly cinched to accentuate her figure. She wore her *kain*, bearing an elegant and dainty Central Javanese *parang* pattern,<sup>69</sup> wrapped tightly around her hips and legs. The cloth was finely pleated in the front, in keeping with the finest Solonese standards for wearing *batik*.<sup>70</sup> She stood in a slightly rotated stance, with one high-heeled foot in front of the other, helping to exaggerate the slimness of her silhouette. A light-colored *selendang* cascaded from her right shoulder, fully covering her right arm, while a dark purse hung from her left wrist. Together, these blocked a full view of her hips, again giving her a slim profile to the camera. Her hair was put up in a *sanggul*, but one with a modern coiffed look that rose above her head, rather than being pulled tightly back to form the bun. All told, this was quite a lavish look, appropriate for a fancy occasion, or, perhaps, a fancy actress.

After this rather quick discussion of Nana Mayo, the column turned abruptly in a different direction, discussing how their readers might understand appropriate options for wearing dresses. The editors of *Film Review* reported that “for women readers who are fond of western-style clothing, in the coming week we will offer examples, that is to say,

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akan dapat, 'diala Nana Mayo, bintang film kita jang pernah main antara lain dalam film-film 'Gadis Olahraga,' 'Inspektur Rachman,' d.l.l.'" *Film Review*, 1952 no. 1, December 5, p. 16. Nana Mayo was a stage actress who made her way into the movies in the 1940s, during the Japanese era. She was considered one of the pre-eminent early stars of Indonesian cinema. "*Gadis Olahraga*," ("Girl Athlete,") was produced in 1951 in conjunction with the National Sports Week, and featured the story of a young girl, Maria, (played by Nana Mayo) who is fostered out to wealthy relatives by her poor family. She is later accused of stealing a necklace by the jealous fiancée of her foster brother. She returns home to her village, trains hard and overcomes adversity to compete at the national track and field championships. "Inspektur Rachman" (1950) also featured a child, Rachman of the title, given up for adoption, but who becomes a police inspector only to break up a gang led by his biological father. The themes of family dislocation and triumph over diversity through hard work were common in the era, reflecting the family and personal dislocations of war-torn Indonesia in the 1940's. It is interesting that the magazine assumes knowledge of Hollywood stars but chose to introduce Nana Mayo with a question wondering if Indonesians might not recognize her instantly.

<sup>69</sup> "*Parang*," meaning sword, is a *batik* pattern that was traditionally reserved for royalty. Even though that was no longer the case in 1952, Mayo's *kain* would have been read as denoting a particular sense of elegance and style, in contrast to some extent with the flashiness of her *kebaya*.

<sup>70</sup> The pleating of the front edge of a *kain*, called *wiron*, is one of the elements that makes wearing *batik* complicated. The narrowness of the pleats and their number (which are always an odd number) help determine the perceived beauty of the way of wearing the *kain*. The way the front pleat is worn also distinguishes the Yogyakarta and Solo styles. Women wearing Solo-style fold the edge of the cloth behind an initial pleat, while the Yogyakarta style leaves the thin white undyed vertical leading edge of the *batik* visible. This is one of the ways of distinguishing in photographs whether women were wearing their *kain* in Jakarta in Yogyakarta or Solo style.

ways of making clothing to fit the shape of bodies that are tall, short, etc., so that each piece of clothing can be worn properly by the person concerned.”<sup>71</sup>

On the page opposite the photo of Nana Mayo in *kain-kebaya* were sketches of two dresses that were about the same size on the page as the photo of the actress.<sup>72</sup> The two western silhouettes emphasized the same cinched-waist aesthetic as Nana Mayo’s Indonesian outfit, placing them in clear comparison to the photo of the *kain-kebaya*. In this simple page layout, then, the options available to Indonesian women were made explicit. One could simultaneously both wear “national dress” and be “fond of western-style clothing,” all the while needing more information on how to select patterns for western dresses to fit the body properly.

The question was further complicated visually, however, by an ad on the facing page. (See Figure 3.2 for the full layout of the two facing pages.) Taken out by the *Gabungan Koperasi Batik Indonesia*, (GKBI, or the Federation of Batik Cooperatives of Indonesia,) an industry trade group that represented batik producers nationally, the ad featured an image of an ideal modern Indonesian woman. The model wore *kain-kebaya*, carried a *tas plastik* and wore high heels. Unlike Nana Mayo, she didn’t wear a *selendang*, her *kain* was not as tightly gathered around her hips or legs, and her *kebaya* hung straight from her shoulders, rather than being pulled in to accentuate her waistline. Her *konde* and the embroidery on her *kebaya* were simpler than Nana Mayo’s as well.

These two images of Indonesian women also formed a contrasting pair, though one perhaps unintended by the editors. The spangly movie star was placed in comparison with the proper, more simply dressed, but also beautiful, modern city woman. The ad, designed to foster the continued purchase of *batik* in the local market featured a jingly slogan that

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<sup>71</sup> “Bagi para pembatja wanita jang gemar pakaian tjara barat, dalam pekan j.a.d. kami akan sadjikan tjontoh-tjontoh, misalnja, tjara bagaimana akan membuat pakaian untuk badan jang tinggi, ketjil, dll., agar supaja tiap-tiap potongan pakaian tepat dipakai oleh seseorang jang bersangkutan.” *Film Review*, 1952, no. 1, December 5, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> Like many of the illustrations of western dress styles presented in Indonesian women’s magazines at the time, the images appear to have been taken directly from American pattern books or dress patterns. There are never sources mentioned for the many drawings of western dresses in women’s magazines, but they are instantly recognizable as matching both the fashion design and the drawing style used by various American women’s dress pattern companies that featured easier to sew designs such as *Simplicity* and *McCall’s*. Rita Adrosko, a retired curator of American textiles at the Smithsonian Institute’s American History Museum, and an employee of *Vogue Patterns* in the early 1950’s, where she wrote descriptions of dress patterns for both individual patterns and pattern books, supports the assessment of these particular patterns as likely coming from *McCall’s* or *Simplicity*. These two brands were the easiest and least expensive of American dress pattern makers, while *Butterick* was a step above those two and *Vogue* was both the most expensive and most style-driven of the mass market pattern makers in the US. Personal communication with Rita Adrosko, via Margaret Sullivan, March 12, 2018, and in person, May, 2018.



**Figure 3.2:** Nana Mayo in *kain-kebaya*, (far left), two dress patterns (center), and the “beautiful” woman who “always wears *batik*” (right.)  
*Film Review* #1, December 5, 1952, pp. 16-17.

gave its message: “*Wanita Indah Tjantik, Selalu Pakai Batik*,” (“Beautiful Women Always Wear *Batik*”).<sup>73</sup> The meanings of women’s clothing were constantly interacting, between “*nasional*” and “western,” between *kain-kebaya* and other forms of regional “*asli*” clothing, and within the ways and places for wearing *kain-kebaya*. In doing so, they pushed at and reflected the various nodes of modern national identity at play for elite Indonesian women.

<sup>73</sup> This was still the early days of the GKBI, which had been primarily concerned to that point with the equitable distribution of the limited stocks of fine cambric fabric available in Indonesia among different *batik* producers. But they were also charged with the need to increase the market for *batik* in general, particularly given the rise of imports from Holland, England, India and Japan, some of which also reproduced *batik* patterns in printed cloth specifically for the Indonesian market. By July 1954, *Wanita* ran an editorial that warned readers to “Be Aware of Imitation *Batik*.” (“*Awas Batik Imitasi*,”) in response to the growing supply of *batik*-style cloth being imported from overseas. *Wanita*, 1954, no. 13, July 5, p. 329. A later set of GKBI ads that tied *batik* more specifically to the development of both the national economy and national identity is discussed in Chapter 4.

Recent scholarship has also, interestingly, shown the ripples this campaign against imports had on other fabric markets, as Dutch textile printers, increasingly shut out of the lucrative Indonesian market, turned their eyes to sub-Saharan Africa. Although they adapted their designs to African aesthetics, they also introduced *batik* patterns into their offerings. My mother tells of an instance in 1975 in which our family got off a ferry somewhere in the middle of Mali on a trip up the Niger River, to see a local market woman wearing a print of an oversized *parang rusak* pattern produced in purple.



In its next several editions, *Film Review* followed a similar pattern. Its contents focused overwhelmingly on Hollywood films and stars, translating American film celebrity journalism and studio publicity for its Indonesian audience. The cover models were all bright-red-lipped female Hollywood stars, (including a repetition of the photo of Esther Williams from the first edition only three issues later). At the back of most issues, the “*Mode*” column continued, offering specific advice about wearing western dresses for women with different body types—“we begin with girls and women with tall bodies, dividing the word ‘tall’ to become (a) tall and thin, (b) tall and slender and (c) tall and large”<sup>74</sup>—on which silhouettes would best compliment their builds.

On several occasions, however, discussion of Indonesian film stars or Indonesian film culture was also included in the magazine’s pages. The second edition of *Film Review* featured a Hollywood-style profile of Nana Mayo, although it didn’t feature her on the cover. Notably, the studio photo of her that took up the first inside page of the magazine presented quite a different image of her than the picture of her in *kain-kebaya* in the “*Mode*” column in the previous edition. With her hair worn in fashionable and breezy brushed out pin curls *à la* Elizabeth Taylor, and wearing a sleeveless polka-dot dress that accentuated her bustline, Nana leaned sideways over a zebra print sofa, looking seductively past the camera in a classic Hollywood bombshell pose.<sup>75</sup> (See Figure 3.3).

The article on her later in the issue, “From the Album of Film Star Nana Mayo,”<sup>76</sup> matched the format of the earlier article on Esther Williams, discussing her family background, her most recent film roles and her preferences in colors and films.<sup>77</sup> The photos accompanying the article showed her as a local girl living the new, carefree, urban,

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<sup>74</sup> “Kita mulai dengan nona-nona dan njonja-njonja jang berbentuk tubuh tinggi, dengan membagi kata-kata ‘tinggi’ itu mendjadi: (a) tinggi-kurus, (b) tinggi-langsing dan (c) tinggi besar.” *Film Review*, 1953, no. 5, January 5, p. 28. The difference between “*kurus*” (“thin” or “skinny”) and “*langsing*” (“slender” or “lithe”) shows a subtle distinction in bodily aesthetics. Throughout the era, in both advertisements for beauty or diet aids, and in beauty culture discussions, being *langsing* was universally considered a positive attribute. *Kurus* carried implications of being bony, or perhaps underfed in discussions of war-time food shortages or among the urban poor. As a result, ads for such things as jamu, herbal tonics that while primarily concocted by women and sold door-to-door to be consumed immediately, had also begun to be mass-produced and sold bottled in stores, would ask if women wished to be “*langsing*” rather than “*kurus*.”

<sup>75</sup> See *Film Review*, 1952, no. 2, December 12, p. 1. Thanks to Lesly Saucedo for helping me identify the hairstyle.

<sup>76</sup> “*Dari Album Bintang Film Dana Mayo*,” *Film Review*, 1952, no. 2, December 12, pp. 4-5.

<sup>77</sup> Her favorite colors for clothing were red or green, or, in combination, red and black or red and gray. When she was a teenager, she enjoyed swimming, tennis, athletics and hiking, “although she was not professional in the field of athletics.” (“*tetapi ia bukan profesional dikalangan olahraga*.”) Her favorite films were *Gone With The Wind* and *Rebecca*, and she felt that “further along . . . Indonesian films will advance and attain good standing in the future.” (“*Lebih jauh ia berpendapat, bahwa film Indonesia akan beroleh kamadjuan dan kedudukan baik dimasa depan*.”) *Film Review*, 1952, no. 2, December 12, p. 5.



**Figure 3.3:** Nana Mayo in a Hollywood-style publicity shot. *Film Review* #2, December 12, 1952, p. 1.

and even international life of a modern film star.<sup>78</sup> It included a picture of Nana out on the town on a Saturday night with friends at “Airport” Restaurant. She wore a simple but elegant skirt and top, her hair pulled back loosely, as she danced in the western style (“*berdansa*”)<sup>79</sup> with a partner in a white dinner jacket. Nowhere in this spread was she presented in *kain-kebaya*.<sup>80</sup>

Such publicity puff pieces did not occur outside a broader context however. Indeed, what it meant to be an Indonesian actress was strongly connected to what Indonesian film itself should be. An article in one of the magazine’s first issues raised serious questions

<sup>78</sup> A publicity still from *Gadis Olahraga* showed her standing with co-stars Titin Sumarni and Grace on the athletics field. Nana and Titin wore shorts and track tops with their competition numbers on the front, and held javelins, while Grace wore fashionable high-waisted full long trousers and a striped short-sleeved top. All three women wore their hair short and curly. Other photos included a family portrait with her parents and younger siblings in Semarang in 1949, in which Nana was in a simple western dress, while her father wore a shirt and tie and her brothers and sisters were dressed in simple western clothing. A picture of Nana and friends relaxing on set in Manila showed them all dressed informally in western-style clothes.

<sup>79</sup> The moral perils of western-style partner dancing are discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>80</sup> Chapter 6 discusses how similar photo spreads of female Indonesian film stars published after the Bandung Conference in 1955, while largely showing a similar “modern woman at home” aesthetic almost without fail included a single photo of the star either in *kain-kebaya* or, for those who were recruited from the ranks of Javanese court artists, in dance costumes featuring *kain batik*. The notable exception of 1959’s “Miss Varia,” Dheayani Pribadi, is discussed at length.

about Indonesian cinema, both as a product and in terms of how it was experienced socially. Written by Sjarpin Rachman, the young founder of the Anai Film Company, the first film studio in Sumatra, the article, "May the Hopes of the Indonesian Film Industry Come to Be,"<sup>81</sup> noted that in his city<sup>82</sup> "we have 6 movie theaters that each night are completely full, flooded with viewers." This wasn't he said,

because the films being shown are always good. Rather . . . the Indonesian public is thirsty for spectacle. For a number of them, if they watch a film from overseas that isn't in Indonesian, there are many who don't understand [the dialogue.] They are attracted by beautiful half-naked young women, and by dance numbers, war scenes, capers, and the like.<sup>83</sup>

This was not simply an issue of Western movies, however. Rather, the "question of half-naked beautiful women [*perempuan-perempuan*]", songs, dances and out-of-place jokes already infect films from Malaya that in recent days have often been shown in Indonesia."<sup>84</sup> The films also rejected the neo-realist approach developing in Indonesian cinema. "Malayan films," Rachman noted, "are odd in that songs are out of place, meaning that in difficult circumstances, or in daydreams, they sing. This reminds us of Indian films from before the war."<sup>85</sup> In addition, he wrote, "Malayan films also very often contain dirty jokes that are inelegant and awkward."<sup>86</sup>

Rachman did note that there were some films from Indonesia that did not fall prey to these trends. And he "hoped that all national film lovers and film magazines in Indonesia will work hard to attract the attention of audiences to films produced domestically."<sup>87</sup> But, he noted,

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<sup>81</sup> "Semoga Jadi Harapan Pengusaha Film Indonesia," *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> Though the city was not named, it was most likely Medan.

<sup>83</sup> "Dikota kami ada 6 buah gedung bioscoop jang saben malam penuh sesak dibandjiri oleh penonton: ini bukan karena film-film jang diputar selalu bagus, akan tetapi . . . masjarakat Indonesia haus akan tontonan. Sebahagian dari mereka kalau menonton film luar negeri jang tidak berbahasa Indonesia, banjak jang tidak mengerti. Mereka tertarik oleh nona-nona tjantik setengah telandjang dan tari-tarian, perang, rompok dan sebagainya." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> "Soal perempuan-perempuan tjantik setengah telandjang, njanian, tarian dan lelujon-lelutjon jang tak pada tempatnja, sudah ketularan pada film-film keluaran Malaya jang dihari-hari belakang ini banjak diputar di Indonesia." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2. While the Malayan films were to be praised for producing new songs that became popular and that "were easily imitated by the Eastern tongue," ("*gampang ditiru oleh lidah Timur*"), they also were inserted in random places in the films that, in Rachman's opinion, they simply didn't fit.

<sup>85</sup> "Djanggalnja film-film Malaya ini pada njanjian jang tidak pada tempatnja, misalnja dalam keadaan susah atau mengelamun, bernjanji. Hal ini mengingatkan kita pada film-film India sebelum perang." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> "film-film Malaya sangat banjak pula terdapat lelutjon-lelutjon kotor jang djanggal." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> "Sangat diharapkan semua petjinta film nasional dan madjalah-madjalah film di Indonesia akan berusaha menarik perhatian para penonton kearah film keluaran dalam negeri." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2.

It's a great shame that the recently published *FILM REVIEW* was filled 99% with AMERICAN stars and films only. It should be otherwise, so that our Intellectuals will gradually want to watch our own people's films. These are usually only shown in third-class movie theaters.<sup>88</sup>

The editors responded, noting that they were in the early days of producing the magazine and that there were still clearly shortcomings in the publication. They pointed to the story on Nana Mayo as an example of their coverage of Indonesian films and movie stars. But they also noted that "we have not yet had contact from several executives and stars of our national film industry; thus far we haven't received the moral support and material that they have promised us."<sup>89</sup> They concluded, "So, by publishing brother Rachman's writing above, let us hope it may be an encouragement to the relevant parties to work as hard as possible to advance the stars and films coming out of our country."<sup>90</sup> Like many Indonesians exploring new modernities, the editors of *Film Review* were feeling their way forward, with aspirations of who they would like to be that didn't yet fully match the situation on the ground.<sup>91</sup> But what it meant to be a modern Indonesian and what sorts of moral expressions that could include were always at the center of their exploration.

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<sup>88</sup> "Amat sayang sekali *FILM REVIEW* jang baru terbit ini hanja berisikan 99% bintang dan film AMERIKA sadja. Hendaknja sebaliknja dari itu agar djuga para Intelectueelen kita beransur-ansur mau pula menonton film bangsanja. Jang biasa hanja diputar di bioscoop kelas kambing sadja." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 2. "Kelas kambing," translated here as "third class," literally means "goat class," and was the term for the lowest class of service on trains and other forms of transportation. The implications for crowded, hot, uncomfortable and smelly are clear. Also implied, however, was a lively, loud ("ramai") interactive audience. Laine Berman writes of the 1990s "I LOVED going to *kelas kambing* theaters in Jogja. 500 rps and you'd have to sit cross-legged on the seats so rats or roaches didn't scamper across your feet (shod in *sandal jepit* [flip-flops] of course.) The best thing was the audience interaction: the comments, shouts, impromptu dialogue and jokes, Made even the crappiest films so much fun." (Laine Berman, personal correspondence, March 3, 2018.) Thanks to various friends, including Bonnie Triana, Adrian Vickers and Brad Horton, for the lively Facebook discussion about the politics and implications for reading audiences inherent in translating expressions like "kelas kambing" from one language to another.

<sup>89</sup> "belum mendapat kontak dari beberapa fihak pengusaha dan bintang-bintang film bangsa kita, bantuan moril dan materiel jang didjandjikan-pun sampai sebegitu jauh belum lagi kami terima." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> "Maka dengan djalan memuat tulisan sdr. Rachman di atas, semoga mendjadi djuga suatu dorongan bagi fihak-fihak jang bersangkutan untuk berusaha sekuat-kuatnja memadjukan bintang-bintang dan film-film keluaran negeri sendiri." *Film Review*, 1952, no. 4. December 26, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> The question of Indonesian films showing in "first class" theaters would continue to be raised in the future, sometimes with a direct connection to the role that upper-class women should play in that process. A December 1953 article on "Women and Film" published in *Wanita* is discussed in Chapter 5, within the context of women and moral crisis in this same era.

## **Keluarga: *Global Etiquette for Indonesian Families***

A second new magazine that began publishing in 1952, *Keluarga* (“Family,”) also connected national identity to aspirational modernity. In many ways, *Keluarga*’s mission statement reflected the same desire to represent the entire nation that *Wanita* had focused on when it was founded three years earlier. Herawati Diah and her staff wanted to make the magazine’s pages pertinent to households across the county,

wherever they are. There will be a variety of content, and questions will cover all areas of life, including society, economics and other aspects from the viewpoint of the family. Readers will come to know families from all of Indonesia’s islands and from all layers of Indonesia.<sup>92</sup>

It is debatable whether *Keluarga* was able to accomplish this or not. Ibu Herawati was the magazine’s clear center. Her life in New York and her internationally influenced networks helped build the magazine’s focus in ways that sometimes feel rather distanced from an average Indonesian experience. In particular, her focus on etiquette, discussed in this section, drew overwhelmingly from elite American cultural sources in many instances. Although she intended the magazine’s audience to come from across the nation and from “all layers of Indonesia,” much of the magazine’s content was international in its influences and focus. The magazine hoped to broaden Indonesians’ worldview by writing about how families lived in “China, Turkey, Tunisia and other countries in the world.”<sup>93</sup> While promised English-language pages never actually came to pass in any meaningful way, the magazine did demonstrate a particular strength in terms of representing the world, and Indonesian women living out in it, to their readers.<sup>94</sup>

Largely, the magazine reflected the same elite, Jakarta orientation and cultural content as *Wanita*.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, Ibu Herawati was very close both personally and

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<sup>92</sup> “*Madjalah KELUARGA ini . . . diterbitkan dengan maksud untuk mengundjungi semua keluarga Indonesia dimanapun mereka berada. Isinja berbagai ragam, dan soal-soalnya meliputi segala tjabang kehidupan, baik sosial, ekonomi dan lain-lain aspek dipandang dari sudut keluarga. Berturut-turut pematja diperkenalkan dengan keluarga-keluarga dari semua kepulauan Indonesia dan dari segala lapisan di Indonesia.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> “*Bagaimana hidup keluarga di Tionghoa, Turki, Tunisia dan lain-lain negeri di dunia ini.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 6.

<sup>94</sup> In its first several years, the magazine regularly featured “reports” from overseas, including from Paris and Moscow, often written by the wives of Indonesian diplomats.

<sup>95</sup> A section of the magazine under the banner “Special Pages for Women’s Interests,” (“*Halaman<sup>2</sup> Khusus Bagi Perhatian Wanita*,” *Keluarga*, December 1952, pp. 23, 34,) featured an article by Maria Ullfah on “Cooperation Between Indonesian Women’s Organizations,” (“*Kerdja Sama Antara Organisasi Wanita Indonesia.*”) The article gave both a history of formation of Kowani, the *Badan Kontak* and the first Women’s Congress in 1950, as well as an update on the Second Women’s Congress that had recently been held in Bandung. The theme and desire of women working together “from a variety of streams” (“*dari berbagai aliran*,” p. 23,) within Indonesian society was reinforced with full details about the new

professionally with the editors of *Wanita*, though she also was clear in my interview with her to distinguish that her publications, both *Keluarga* and the English-language daily, *The Indonesian Observer*, which she published with her husband, journalist B.M Diah, were “independent.”<sup>96</sup>

When it came to articles on women’s clothing and the first of a regular set of columns on etiquette, *Keluarga* looked to western standards to guide the development of Indonesian women. The article on fashion in many ways re-trod the basic contention that Indonesian women needed to be mindful of their choices of clothing, particularly in selecting the right outfits for the right circumstances. But it also took this idea of appropriate fashion further, arguing that Indonesian women should look to international practice to establish standards for wearing *kain-kebaya*.

“International clothing has an etiquette,” the article stated. “that is, rules of ways of dressing that correspond to the place and time at hand.”<sup>97</sup> The reference points chosen to explain the concept were telling:

Meaning, overseas, if a woman makes a visit to someone’s house, she must take off her coat and gloves, but her hat must remain on. If she is attending a formal dinner, a long dress is required, but a hat isn’t worn, as is the case if you go to a high-class musical play (*opera*,) everyone wears a long gown, but not a hat.<sup>98</sup>

Formal dinners, nights at the opera, and sartorial standards of the European or American social elite as a comparison point suggest that the views of western culture expressed by Ibu Herwati were largely limited to the stultified and highly regimented world of international diplomacy and the New York cultural elite, where the rules of etiquette remained a critical body of knowledge.<sup>99</sup>

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structures for cooperation adopted in conjunction with the conference in Bandung. Nj. S. Kartowijono, the head of the Women’s Affairs and Social Education section of the Ministry of Education and Culture, wrote about the challenges facing women and their families at the village level, stressing their need for education, particularly around issues of creating and marketing handicrafts as a stream of household income. See “*Wanita Desa dan Keluarga*,” pp. 24-25, 33.

<sup>96</sup> That is, not formally linked to the Sukarno government or to any specific political party, even though the *Indonesian Observer* was founded at Sukarno’s direct request.

<sup>97</sup> “*Pakaian internasional mempunyai etiuquette, [sic] jaitu sesuai dengan tempat dan waktu jang dikundjungi.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>98</sup> “*Mitsalnja diluar negeri, kalau njonja berkundjung di rumah nona, mantel dan kaos-tangan harus ditinggalkan, sedangkan topi dipakai terus. Diwaktu makan malam jang bersifat resmi, rok harus pandjang dan topi tidak dipakai, begitu djuga kalau menonton sandiwara njanji (opera) di kelas jang tinggi, semua memakai rok pesta jang pandjang, dan tidak bertopi.*” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>99</sup> Before my mother, a young American Foreign Service wife in the 1950’s, went abroad for the first time, to Malaya in 1958, the State Department’s “Wives Course” taught the formal dress etiquette of the day, including the times to wear

But the sense of social judgment implied by breaking these rules was strong. “[Western] Women who don’t understand the rules that are called ‘etiquette’,” she explained, “are considered ‘ordinary’ or will be called ‘newly rich,’ (*nouveau riche*).”<sup>100</sup> So, the article continued, “[t]here must also be an etiquette for *sarong-kebaya*.”<sup>101</sup> “Despite the circumstances, there must be rules for dressing in the mid-day or evening, or for going to specific places. In this case, we offer the guidance that it isn’t quantity, but quality, that is important.”<sup>102</sup>

Since time and place were important variables for proper etiquette, what followed was a series of rules about women’s dress that covered a rather large range of such possibilities. The etiquette proposed for daytime fashion ran in two quite distinct directions. To go to a meeting or to go shopping in the morning, the province of housewives, women were told to “choose colors and makeup that gives a feeling that is cool and calm to people’s eyes, don’t try to add to the scorching brilliance of the sun with a dazzling color of your *kebaya*.”<sup>103</sup> For women who worked, however, “how good it would be if there were special clothing for women working in factories, or in other businesses, that corresponded to the nature of the work they were doing.”<sup>104</sup>

The appearance of factory workers and their clothing needs in the article, however, served to set off the rest of the examples as only meeting the needs of elite women. Advice given for appropriate choices in the afternoon was not the concern of most Indonesians. If

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which gloves—four-button or eight-button. “Stockings were expected,” she said, “but were not good in the tropics,” so my mother didn’t wear them. A few ambassador’s wives went beyond expecting the norms of proper dress required for specific occasions and required, for instance, that “her” wives not wear black to receptions or that they wear specific colors. About the Philippines between 1971-1974, she noted “People in Cebu [where she was the wife of the American Consul, and therefore rather visible socially,] paid much more attention to what I wore than they had in Indonesia [between 1967-1971]. But it was a standard they met for themselves: a new dress for every big event, and a visit to the ‘parlor’ to have your hair done and to gossip before.” Margaret Sullivan, personal communication, February 2018.

<sup>100</sup> “Wanita jang tidak mengerti akan aturan<sup>2</sup> jang ditentukan ‘etiquette’ itu dianggap ‘ordinair’ atau disebut ‘baru kaja’ (*nouveau riche*).” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>101</sup> “Etiquette sarong kabaja [sic] perlu djuga diadakan.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>102</sup> “Meskipun demikian keadaanja, perlu djuga diadakan aturan<sup>2</sup> untuk berpakaian diwaktu siang, malam atau untuk bepergian ke tempat<sup>2</sup> tertentu. Disinipun kita berpedoman bahwa bukanlah ‘kwantiteit’ akan tetapi ‘kwaliteit’ jang penting.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>103</sup> “pilihlah warna<sup>2</sup> dan lukisan (figuren) jang memberikan suasana jang tenang dan adem dimata orang, djanganlah mentjoba menambah tjahahnja mata-hari jang terik itu dengan pemandangan silau warna kebaja njonja.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>104</sup> “Alangkah baiknja kalau djuga diadakan pakaian istimewa untuk wanita jang kerdja di pabrik<sup>2</sup>, atau perusahaan<sup>2</sup> lainnja, jang sesuai dengan sifat pekerjaan jang dilakukan olehnja.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28. In a later article on managing household help with a sense of social justice, (“Pembantu,” *Wanita*, 1954, No. 20, October 20, pp. 531-32,) Wanita suggested that women working in households as maids be furnished two sets of clothing and proper hygiene products for their periods, so that these women could maintain proper standards of cleanliness. Clothing etiquette for maids did not appear in this article, however.

readers were meeting friends or going to the movies, they were advised “you don’t need clothing that is too dressed up.”<sup>105</sup> To “go to a ‘cocktail’ party or a formal occasion,”<sup>106</sup> they were told, one should wear a single color *kebaya* so their gem stones would show up more beautifully. The reference here was not to women from “all layers” of Indonesia.

Nonetheless, all women readers were coached to be aware of their surroundings when choosing their clothing. Returning to the admonishment to not appear “ordinary or newly wealthy,”<sup>107</sup> the article reminded women to only wear fancy, rich fabrics in appropriate situations, and not to show off their wealth ostentatiously. “The secret of dressing so that one always appears different from the others and remains interesting,” the article concluded, “doesn’t lie in expensive fabrics or outlandish designs, but rather is about a woman’s skill in choosing fabrics that are in sync with her skin color and stature.”<sup>108</sup> In the end, it opined, “it is better to be simple than simply too much.”<sup>109</sup>

The point of proper versus over-the-top choices was reinforced visually with the editors’ choice of illustrations to accompany the text. On the bottom left of the page, a thin, tall and elegant woman wore a simple *kebaya* and spare jewelry over her carefully wrapped *kain*.<sup>110</sup> She was spare, demure, and appropriate. In the upper right was an image of her opposite, a heavy-set woman wearing a garish and gaudy *kebaya*, with her hair set in Hollywood fashion. She was clearly shown as being over-dressed for the shopping she had been doing, given the market basket of food she carried at her side. This would be a clear representation of what it might look like to be “ordinair” or “nouveau riche.” (See Figure 3.4).<sup>111</sup> The implications of which woman had made the correct choices was exceedingly clear.

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<sup>105</sup> “tidak perlu pakaian jang terlalu mentereng,” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>106</sup> “untuk ber-‘cocktail’ atau undangan jang bersifat resmi.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

<sup>107</sup> “Kalau njonja tidak mau dipandang ‘ordinair’ atau ‘barukaja,’” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 29.

<sup>108</sup> “Rahasia untuk dapat berpakaian supaja selalu kelihatan lain dari pada jang lain tetap menarik, tidak terletak pada bahan jang mahal<sup>2</sup> atau model jang aneh<sup>2</sup>, melainkan kepada kepandaian njonja memilih bahan jang berirama dengan warna kulit dan perawakan njonja.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 29.

<sup>109</sup> “Lebih baik sederhana dari pada berlebih-lebihan.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 29.

<sup>110</sup> At a conference in Yogyakarta where I showed this image, one of the women in the audience told me afterwards that the wrapping of the *kain* in this image was quite particular. There was a brief moment, according to her, where women wore their *kain* higher above the ankle and with a visible slit at the bottom, showing a little more leg. Her mother, she related, had spent hours figuring out how to make this very particular look hold up from how she wrapped the *batik*. I haven’t seen any coverage of this trend in the magazines, but the *kain* in the image is worn distinctly in that way here.

<sup>111</sup> This matched much of the advice that had also been offered by *Wanita* a year earlier in January 1952. In a simple side-column headlined “*Varia Pakaian Wanita*,” a set of short various items of interest about women’s clothing, Poppy Mochtar listed ten short rules or pieces of advice, many of which essentially matched Ibu Herawati’s advice.



Herawati Diah made the idea of knowing how to behave properly in the right circumstances a central element of *Keluarga's* content. Her "Etiquette" column became a monthly staple in the magazine's first year. In particular, it underscored the need for



**Figure 3.4:** "Women and Clothing." Images of passing and failing etiquette. *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 28.

Indonesian women to understand international standards of behavior, primarily to serve as a marker of cultural competence in a global arena. The idea of being polite was, she noted, not at all foreign to Indonesia. The country, she argued "is known as a nation whose populace is, by nature, refined in character, which can be seen all the

way to its villages.”<sup>112</sup> Nonetheless, the column continued, in the modern world, Indonesia faced a need to develop new knowledge. She wrote:

Although we already have authentic customs and etiquette,<sup>113</sup> circumstances require us to use the etiquette that is kept by a large portion of the world’s nations whenever we come face-to-face with them.<sup>114</sup>

Herawati Diah’s intention with these regular columns was to “bring general knowledge to readers for whom the subtleties of international etiquette are still foreign.”<sup>115</sup> The goal for readers, though, was not simply to study etiquette. Rather, similar to the injunctions to women in *Wanita* about internalizing good moral character, the point of etiquette was for its “use to become a habit.”<sup>116</sup>

The implications for change in women’s behavior in adopting international etiquette were profound when it came to her suggestions about gender relations. “International etiquette,” Herawati wrote, “gives priority to women”<sup>117</sup> even if it was men who held more power in society. “When greeting others, entering or leaving a room, eating and drinking, etc., the motto is ‘*ladies first*,’”<sup>118</sup> although men were advised to take the lead when women needed help to open a car door or to enter a restaurant. How women and men might greet each other or mingle appropriately in public drew significantly from what Herawati had experienced during her student days at Columbia. Mixing, with proper limits provided by the rules of etiquette, was an important skill for Indonesian women to cultivate, she felt, if they were to be truly modern.

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<sup>112</sup> “Indonesia terkenal sebagai sesuatu negeri jang penduduknja pada hakekatnja berbudi halus, hal mana dapat dilihat sampai di desa-desa.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 27.

<sup>113</sup> “adat-istiadat dan tata-tjara jang asli.” Both terms underline the indigenous nature of these practices. “Adat” refers to “traditional” legal systems, albeit ones that were largely codified by Dutch colonial anthropology. “Tata-cara,” which can be translated as “the order/ordering of ways,” is a term with a complicated history around the development of hierarchical structures of social position in the rituals and public displays of the royal courts of Central Java, that became increasingly complex internally as the courts lost real political power to the Dutch in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. For more, see John Pemberton, *On the Subject of ‘Java.’*

<sup>114</sup> “Walapun kita sudah mempunjai adat-istiadat dan tata-tjara jang asli, keadaan memaksa kita untuk memakai tata-tjara jang di miliki oleh sebagian besar bangsa-bangsa di dunia ini, manakala kita berhadapan dengan mereka.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 27.

<sup>115</sup> “Maksud redaksi ‘*Keluarga*’ dengan ruangan etiquette ini, ialah memberi pengetahuan umum pada para pembatja jang masih asing terhadap selub-beluk [sic] tata-tjara internasional.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 27.

<sup>116</sup> “sehingga mendjadi kebiasaan dalam mamakainja.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 27.

<sup>117</sup> “Etiquette internasional memberi prioriteit kepada kaum wanita.” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 27.

<sup>118</sup> “Waktu memberi salam, masuk keluar suatu ruangan, makan dan minum, dsb., sembojannja ialah ‘*ladies first*.’” *Keluarga*, December 1952, p. 27.

The “Etiquette” column in *Keluarga*’s second issue, which addressed “Good Posture”<sup>119</sup> also focused on the question of the literal movement and carriage of bodies, that is on how one should inhabit space. How a person held their body, “including their hands and their face,” she wrote, “shows what is engraved on their heart. From someone’s posture it can instantly be seen whether that person is hesitant, vibrant, arrogant or forthright.”<sup>120</sup>

The idea of bodily etiquette was certainly not new to the archipelago. Etiquette within Javanese and Balinese royal courts revolved around power dynamics and meanings attached to bodily position, distance, gaze, head height and hierarchy in ways that were highly complex. Although the rules for such concerns were much simpler at the village level, this was similarly an important issue for village society as well. There were still significant ways in which the details of modern body etiquette reflected a combination of older practice and new guidance. “Be well aware,” the column concluded “of what is written above, because posture that is correct and orderly cannot be separated from proper politeness.”<sup>121</sup>

Taken as a whole, the Etiquette columns in *Keluarga* reflected the developing web of elite Indonesian identity that was simultaneously indigenous and cosmopolitan. At sometimes, the advice seems quite divorced from the average Indonesian woman’s life. The August column<sup>122</sup> addressed table manners, and particularly the proper use and way of holding forks, knives and spoons. Repeating advice offered any number of times in American etiquette columns, Herwati suggested that “if you don’t know what should be used first, just follow the example of the lady of the house.”<sup>123</sup>

At other times, the columns hit the center of the experience of the modern city-dwelling professional woman. The September column<sup>124</sup> on women working in offices

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<sup>119</sup> “*Sikap Badan Jang Baik*,” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 20. “*Sikap badan*” literally translates as the demeanor, comportment or bearing of the body.

<sup>120</sup> “*sampai tangan dan muka, turut menggambarkan apa jang terukir dalam isi-hatinja. Dari sikap badan seorang segera dapat dilihat, apakah orang itu bersifat ragu-ragu, bersemangat, tjongkak atau djudjur.*” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 20.

<sup>121</sup> “*Perhatikanlah dengan baik-baik apa jang tertulis diatas karena sikap badan jang tepat dan teratur tak dapat dipisahkan dari sopan santun jang baik.*” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 20.

<sup>122</sup> “*Tata Tertib Makan*,” (“A Code of Conduct for Eating,”) *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 23.

<sup>123</sup> “*Kalau tak tahu apa jg. harus diambil atau dipegang dulu, tjontoh sadjalah nonja rumah,*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 23.

<sup>124</sup> The column did not carry a title. *Keluarga*, September 1953, p. 7.

stressed that there should be “no differences of attitude between men and women”<sup>125</sup> at work, and that “women in the office shouldn’t be a decoration or a spectacle.”<sup>126</sup> Rather, while being both engaging and lively, they should make a clear distinction between their behavior during and after the workday, and should dress simply and neatly, while carrying their work out efficiently. Furthermore, since they would be working alongside men, they needed to “protect the honor of their name.”<sup>127</sup>

The October and November columns addressed an important way in which life in Indonesian cities was rapidly changing, discussing marriage proposals, first traditionally and then in the current day. Traditionally, this process was not, the first article stressed, an arrangement between two individuals, who may not even have known each other, but rather one made between two families, negotiated by the elders on each side. The second column, however, noted that engagements and weddings were changing to be by choice between the man and woman. It suggested that a new engagement protocol, and therefore also new approaches to the ceremonies were developing. But, it noted, an etiquette for such things was still necessary. In particular, the young couple needed to be mindful of how they would inform their parents that they wished to marry.

*Keluarga’s* approach to clothing mirrored Herawati Diah’s etiquette advice. Women were urged to move forward and to adjust their daily clothing practice, but to keep an eye to traditional senses of propriety while doing so. The basic approach, (as it also was for *Wanita*,) was for women to find new ways of being modern, to take and adjust what they needed from western ways, but to avoid anything extreme. They were urged not to lose touch with a fundamental eastern modesty in their choice of dress.

In its second issue, *Keluarga* published its first major article on western fashion. Written by Triska Anderson,<sup>128</sup> the article’s title, “Do Western Clothes Fit Me?”<sup>129</sup> asked an important question with multiple possible meanings. The Indonesian word “*cocok*,” like its English counterpart, “fit,” suggests both the sense of properly measured to the body and of

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<sup>125</sup> “Sebab didalam pekerdjaan tak ada pembedaan [sic] antara sifat laki-laki dan perempuan.” *Keluarga*, September 1953, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> “Wanita di kantor bukan merupakan perhiasan atau tontonan.” *Keluarga*, September 1953, p. 7.

<sup>127</sup> “mendjaga kehormatan namanja,” *Keluarga*, September 1953, p. 7.

<sup>128</sup> There is no information I could find on who she was, but the family name clearly points to a connection to western family, either by birth or marriage. The article is clearly, however, written from within an Indonesian cultural context.

<sup>129</sup> “Tjotjokkah Aku Berpakaian Barat?” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, pp. 22-23.

being appropriate. The majority of the article addressed the first meaning, first giving Indonesian women suggestions for how to gauge if a particular dress in a western pattern book might fit their bodies. “Normally,” Anderson wrote, “the [western] women in the images are slender, long-legged and have short hair. The body type for the pattern is precisely western. In many cases, those images don’t match the shape of Indonesian women, who are usually smaller . . .”<sup>130</sup>

As a result, Anderson offered drawings for three variations on a “dress-maker suit,”<sup>131</sup> that would be appropriate for professional Indonesian women. The suit “always appears neat,” (“*netjis*,”)<sup>132</sup> she wrote, and “is cut to the shape of the body,”<sup>133</sup> allowing smaller Indonesian women to adjust it to their needs. Variations on the basic design were offered both for office work and for afternoon and evening outings.

The importance of “fit,” however, was not merely about shape and cut. While Anderson noted that the dress patterns often didn’t work well for Indonesian women because of their smaller stature, she also pointed out that many westerners “are envious to see the shape of Indonesian women’s bodies”<sup>134</sup> because the smaller women “haven’t yet lost their feminine nature.”<sup>135</sup> “With differences that are so large,” she wrote, implying not simply differences of size but in some sort of fundamental femininity,

it is quite clear that some of the clothes that can be seen in fashion books aren’t fitting [*tjotjok*] for Indonesian women. . . . Without setting a rule, I would dare to say that generally, Western clothing that is rather “*extreme*” doesn’t fit the shape of Indonesian women’s bodies well. By “*extreme*” I mean too much of this and that to the point that it appears busy. Lace here, ribbons there, that doesn’t correspond [*sesuai*] to the Indonesian women’s spirit, which in general is quite tranquil.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> “*Biasanja wanita jang bergambar itu langsing, berkaki pandjang dan rambutnja pendek. Potongan badannja persis type orang Barat. // Dalam banjak hal gambar<sup>2</sup> itu tidak serupa kaum wanita Indonesia jang biasanja lebih ketjil . . .*” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 22.

<sup>131</sup> She used the English term.

<sup>132</sup> “*Netjis*,” is an Indonesian spelling of the Dutch word “*netjes*,” meaning “neat,” “orderly” or “put together.” It remained in regular use in Indonesian throughout the era, expressed a positive ideal for styles of dressing. Annemarie Toebosch helpfully points out that clothing that is *netjes* “borders on formal.” Behavior that is *niet netjes* on the other hand, is “rude or inappropriate.” (Annemarie Toebosch, personal communication, 12/22/2019). Gijs Parrel also suggests that term carries class implications, that the orderliness and cleanliness accrues to households of particular types of families. (Gijs Parrel, personal communication, 12/14/2019).

<sup>133</sup> “*jang kelihatan selalu netjis . . . jang dipotong menurut bentuk badan.*” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 23.

<sup>134</sup> “*Banjak orang Barat iri hati melihat bentuk badan kaum wanita Indonesia.*” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 22.

<sup>135</sup> “*belum hilang sifat<sup>2</sup> kewanitaan.*” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, p. 22.

<sup>136</sup> “*Dengan perbedaan jang begitu besar, maka terang sekali bahwa pakaian jang diperlihatkan dalam buku<sup>2</sup> mode sebahagian tidak tjotjok bagi kaum wanita Indonesia . . . Dengan tidak menetapkan suatu peraturan, saja berani menatakan bahwa pada umumnja pakaian Barat jang sangat ‘extreme’ itu, tidak tjotjok bagi bentuk badan wanita Indonesia. Dengan*

Proper Indonesian women, reflective of their nature then, would, instead, always choose ways of dressing that were “*netjis*.”

Figuring out this balance of fashion and suitability was similarly the subject of a regular series of articles that ran in *Keluarga* from its inception. Most months, the magazine featured a two-page fashion story of some sort, with photos or drawings of outfits and discussion of women’s clothing options. The discussion tended to be specific, and tailored to particular events or spaces.

Overall, *Keluarga* was the Indonesian magazine for women in which modernity was the least problematic. It was also, arguably, the one that was most removed from the average Indonesian woman’s experience. In Herawati Diah’s vision of a modernizing Indonesia, women always had choices. And if they knew and internalized the ideas behind etiquette, they would make choices that were both appropriate and flattering. This in turn would demonstrate the fitness of their character. While *Keluarga* may have been distant from the lives of Indonesian women, this particular assumption, certainly not unique to the thinking of Herawati Diah by any means, would come to be an important marker of proper Indonesian femininity in the following decade.

### ***Muslim Fashion: Veiling and Indonesian Modernity***

One space within which rules for dressing was already well-discussed among Indonesian women concerned fashion related to Islam. In particular, a significant debate about whether women were required by the Qu’ran or not reached back at least to the 1920’s. Just as with discussions of western dress, this became an area of both contention and adaptation in the 1950’s.

In time for the end of Ramadan, the June 1953 issue of *Keluarga* offered several options for “*Lebaran* Fashions in the Capital.”<sup>137</sup> *Lebaran* was a time in which western dresses were not appropriate for adult women. All the outfits shown were updated variations of *kain-kebaya*, mostly reflecting the strong influences of a Central Javanese

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‘extreme’ saja maksudkan terlalu banjak ini itu sehingga nampaknja ramai. Renda di sini, pita disitu tidak sesuai dengan djiwa wanita Indonesia jang pada umumnja aman tenteram itu.” *Keluarga*, January-February 1953, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>137</sup> “*Pakaian Lebaran di Ibu Kota*.” *Keluarga*, June 1953, pp. 18-19. *Lebaran* is the Indonesian term for *Id’l Fitri*, the end of Ramadan. An interesting side note, the term for the national capital is *Ibu Kota*, which literally translates as “Mother City.”

aesthetic. One outfit, and perhaps the most clearly traditional in its style, drew from Western Sumatran fashion, showing a long *badju kurung* worn over a dark-red silk *sarong* with gold threads woven in patterns into the fabric. “The sarong is rather expensively priced,” the caption read, “but it will last a long time, and because of its beauty it can be worn for afternoon wedding parties.”<sup>138</sup>

Modern cosmopolitan touches in all of the looks came from *tas plastik* and high heeled sandals, as well as the soft versions of *sanggul* worn by the models that showed their hair gently drawn back, often with a wave or curl near the forehead. Notably, none featured *kerudung*, or headscarves. A further touch of modern fashion came from the attribution of two of the outfits to a designer, Njonja Boenjamin, with the photo credit going to the magazine itself.

The fashion option *Wanita* had offered for teenage girls for Lebaran in 1951, on the other hand, held no expectation that young women would dress traditionally. “Lebaran has already arrived,” the editors wrote. “Our girls are already big, and are skilled at dressing themselves up. Look, they are making their own dresses. The design is simple and clean, and is sweet to behold.”<sup>139</sup>

What followed were descriptions of two simple short-sleeved, short-skirted western dresses, both of which were embroidered with simple floral patterns traced out on the bottom of the page. (See Figure 3.5). The drawings of the dresses showed the two models with short haircuts, one a bob and the other pulled back into a pony tail, without a mention or even implication of a head scarf being appropriate. The western dresses and look were clearly a marker of youth. Older women would regularly think to wear “traditional” clothing for religious holidays, even if without a head scarf. But they were also an indication that for youth at least, there was no apparent contradiction between wearing dresses and meeting the cultural requirements of Islam, as long, perhaps, as the dresses were simple and neat.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> “Sarong agak mahal hargannja, akan tetapi dapat bertahan lama, dan karena indahnja dapat djuga dipergunakan untuk pesta-pesta perkawinan dihari siang.” *Keluarga*, June 1953, pp. 18-19.

<sup>139</sup> “Lebaran telah tiba. Gadis-gadis kita sudah besar, sudah pandai berdandan pula. Lihatlah mereka membuat badju sendiri. Modelnja sederhana dan bersih, manis kelihatannja.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 12, June, p. 247.

<sup>140</sup> It is important to note that in the 1950’s, and indeed in the 1960’s and 1970’s when my family lived in Indonesia, Lebaran was celebrated widely, including by non-Muslims. Christians would visit their Muslim neighbors, bringing good wishes for the holiday season, and everyone would have new clothing for the occasion.





wondered if “this was an excess at the height of anti-Western sentiment, the aftermath of the discord between Iran and England over the issue of oil that has long been unresolved.”<sup>145</sup>

This was not to say that the wearing of *kerudung* was not also an issue in Indonesia. A series of debates about women’s clothing occurred in print between the editors of “*Al-Lisaan*,” the magazine of Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, or PERSIS),<sup>146</sup> an Islamist organization dating to the 1920’s that leaned hard-right, and what was called the *Aliran Baroe* or “new stream” of Islamic thought. The debates dated back to the 1930’s, and according to historian Etin Anwar, they were “heated,”<sup>147</sup> with PERSIS arguing that Islam required women to veil and *Aliran Baroe* arguing that no such requirement existed within the *Qu’ran*.

The debates continued into the modern nation. In 1954, *Al-Lisaan* published a second printing of two essays on the role of *jilbab* in proper Islamic fashion.<sup>148</sup> Taking *Aliran Baroe*’s assertions that wearing a *jilbab* or *kerudung* was not required one by one, the editors from *PERSIS* answered each assertion with specific interpretations of Islamic texts, printed in Arabic, with explications of the texts in Indonesian.

Writing about these debates, Indonesian historian Etin Anwar’s analysis of the social and political history of *hijab* points out that the term did not only refer to personal veiling practices. She argues that wearing *hijab* was considered a personal extension of the process of using *tabir*, or the hanging of a cloth to affect the separation of men and women in public. Anwar makes the point that in the 1920’s and 1930’s this was in many ways a progressive practice that allowed women to participate in public political debate and discussion. In other words, veiling can be seen as a choice that brought Indonesian women the option of actively engaging in modern society.

She notes, however, that colonial officials saw veiling as a retrograde practice and were particularly opposed to the use of *tabir* at the 1930’s conferences of ‘Aisiyiah, the

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<sup>145</sup> “Mungkin sekali ini adalah exces memuntaknja semangat anti Barat, sebagai akibat adanja pertentangan antara Iran dan Inggris mengenai soal minjak jang lama tidak beres-beres.” *Wanita*, 1952 no. 20, October, p. 458.

<sup>146</sup> In Indonesian, *persis* also means “precise,” quite in keeping with the exegetical practices of modernist Islam that sought to understand religious obligation and live lives based in tight interpretations of Islamic texts, both the *Qu’ran* and the *Hadith*.

<sup>147</sup> Etin Anwar, *A Genealogy of Islamic Feminism*, p. 92. Her work is a welcome addition to the discussion of women and Islam in Indonesia.

<sup>148</sup> *Jilbab*. *Al-Lisaan* and Persatuan Islam, Second Printing, 1954.

women's organization of Muhammadiyah. Nonetheless, Anwar points out, from the 1920's on "some Indonesian women adopted the veil as an essential part of being a Muslim woman, just as wearing traditional dress signified cultural identity." But she continues, "As Western dresses penetrated the majority of Indonesia, some women adopted such styles in their daily lives. The only times they wore traditional clothes, including the veil, is when they went to special events such as marriage ceremonies, religious celebrations or formal meetings."<sup>149</sup> So *kerudung* and *jilbab*, like *kain-kebaya*, in many instances acted as a form of cultural uniform as much as they were simply a fashion choice.

But this was not a fully accepted idea by all Indonesian women in the early 1950's. Although this is an early example of women's fashion being linked to anti-western politics in post-World War II Asia,<sup>150</sup> for the editors of *Wanita*, veiling instead primarily raised a question of gender equality. They concluded their note on wearing *kerudung* with a challenge back to men who supported the practice:

It wasn't clear which group was leading the pro-head scarf movement, but it should be reported that the "Organization of Women Who Wear *Kerudung*" have also demanded that this case should also apply to men, so that they follow old traditions now and must maintain mustaches and beards again.<sup>151</sup>

Again, we must remember that modernity had multiple sources in Indonesia. It was possible for as simple a thing as veiling to be seen simultaneously as a modern choice by some women and as feudal, sexist oppression by others, with both groups considering themselves to be modern-oriented, politically committed nationalists.

### **Suara 'Aisjijah: *The Voice of Modern(ist) Islamic Women***

When *Suara 'Aisjijah*, the Muhammadiyah women's magazine began publishing again in 1952,<sup>152</sup> its editors stressed the important role of women and Islam in building the nation. The principal article in the March issue of the magazine took on the form of a

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<sup>149</sup> Etin Anwar, *A Genealogy of Islamic Feminism*, p. 92.

<sup>150</sup> This is discussed at length in Chapter 5.

<sup>151</sup> "Tidak diterangkan golongan apa jang melakukan gerakan pro-kerudung itu, tetapi dikabarkan, bahwa "Perkumpulan Wanita jang memakai Kerudung" dalam pada itu telah menuntut djuga kepada kaum laki-laki, supaja mereka menurut tradisi dulu-dulu sekarang harus memelihara kumis dan djenggot lagi." *Wanita*, 1952 no. 20, October, p. 458.

<sup>152</sup> The magazine began publication in 1927, but had stopped being produced during the Japanese occupation. Like other magazines, it was primarily kept from publication until 1952 by a shortage of paper for printing.

sermon by Siti Badilah Zuber,<sup>153</sup> urging her readers to “Become a Servant of Allah who is Meritorious.”<sup>154</sup> Complete with Qu’ranic quotations in Arabic and explications (but not translations) in Indonesian, the sermon called on women to give proper “service,”<sup>155</sup> to the needs of the nation and the world. “Many people misunderstand,” she wrote,

that service depends on having a high position or much education or on wealth. Each person should offer their service to the nation and the people and to humanity according to their skills, talents and strengths, directly or indirectly.<sup>156</sup>

“During this era of development,” she continued, “the nation calls on its sons and daughters to work as hard as they can to carry out various tasks with a feeling of full responsibility to God.”<sup>157</sup>

Another article in the March 1952 issue reflected writings in other women’s magazines that women should be able to engage fully in society. Entitled “Where is a Woman’s Place?”<sup>158</sup> the author, H.W., from Karang Intan in South Sulawesi, suggested strongly that women could enter any element of society they wished. “People say,” she wrote,

that a woman’s place is in the kitchen, but now this is clearly not so. Women also run out of the house, to the office, to factories, and to be other things, such as laborers.

~ People say, it would be best if women would just become instructors, become teachers, but it is apparent that this is not the only place women put themselves. They run to compete in the field of politics, as the people’s representatives, and there are some who have become ministers and other such things.

~ People say, that in war, women’s place is in the back lines. But this is clearly not the case. Women joined in the cauldron of war, as comforters, as nurses, and there were even those who shouldered guns to kill the enemy.

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<sup>153</sup> Siti Badilah was one of a small cadre of seven female students of Ahmad Dahlan, who founded Muhammadiyah in 1912. Trained by Dahlan while also attending Dutch-language high school in Yogyakarta, Siti Badilah became the first editor of *Suara ‘Aisjijah*, and was also a teacher of *pengajian*, or Qu’ranic study sessions, often specifically sent by Ahmad Dahlan as a representative of Muhammadiyah.

<sup>154</sup> “*Djadilah engkau hamba Allah jang berdjasa.*” *Suara ‘Aisjijah*, March 1952, pp. 59-62.

<sup>155</sup> “*djasa*,” also the root word of “*berdjasa*,” translated in the title of the sermon as “meritorious.”

<sup>156</sup> “*Banjaklah orang bersalah faham bahwa djasa itu tergantung kepada kedudukan tinggi atau banjaknja ilmu atau kepada kekajaan. // Tiap manusia dapat menjumbangkan djasa kepada tanah air dan bangsa dan kepada ummat manusia sesuai dgn ketjakapan dan bakatnja serta kekuasaanja, langsung atau tidak langsung.*” *Suara ‘Aisjijah*, March 1952, p. 59.

<sup>157</sup> “*Dizaman pembangunan ini tanah air memanggil putera2nja untuk bekerdja sekuat tenaga dan mendjalankan tugasnja masing2 dgn rasa penuh bertanggung djawab kepada Tuhan.*” *Suara ‘Aisjijah*, March 1952, p. 60.

<sup>158</sup> “*Dimanakah lapangan untuk wanita?*” *Suara ‘Aisjijah*, March 1952, p. 65.

Truly, women are part of society. . . . Again, WOMEN, can not be separated from the interactions of society, because that is part of society.<sup>159</sup>

The women of Muhammadiyah were called then, like their sisters in other parties and organizations, to play a full and active role in the building of the nation. Even if their choices about dress, most particularly about veiling, were different from some others, they saw themselves as no less a part of modern Indonesian society.

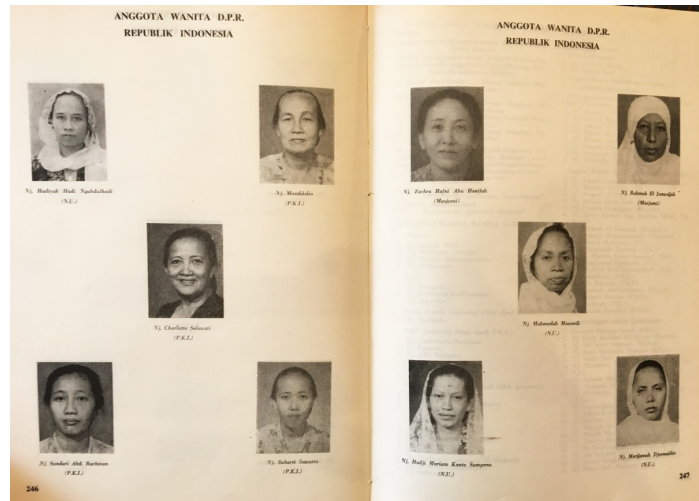
Within the political realm, however, the use of *kerudung* and *jilbab* was primarily to serve as a political marker. This can be seen clearly in the 1958 thirty-year commemoration book of the Indonesian women's movement. The official photo portraits of the 17 women members elected to the DPR in 1955 were republished, including members from the Nationalist Party, Masjumi, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Only the women from Islamic parties, NU and Masjumi, wore head coverings, mostly *kerudung*, though one Masjumi member, Nj. Rahmah El Junusijah,<sup>160</sup> wore *jilbab*, while another, Nj. Zachra Hafni Abu Hanifah<sup>161</sup> went with her head uncovered. (See Figure 3.6.) Though both were strongly connected into prominent Minangkabau families, these two women came from very different educational backgrounds, and while it can't be easily determined that this led to their choices about veiling, it does further illuminate that Indonesian women did possess significant personal choice on such matters.

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<sup>159</sup> “~Orang mengatakan, bahwa wanita itu tempatnja didapur, tetapi, kini kenjataan tidak. Wanita lari djuga keluar, kekantor, kepabrik, dan lain sebagainya, sebagai buruh. // ~Orang mengatakan, wanita sebaiknya mendjadi pendidik sadja, mendjadi guru, tetapi ternjata pula, tidak hanja kesitu wanita menempatkan diri, mereka lari berlomba-lomba di lapangan politiek, sebagai wakil ra'jat, pernah ada jang mendjabat menteri dan lain sebagainya. // ~Orang mengatakan, bahwa dalam peperangan, wanita digaris belakang tempatnja. Tapi, kenjataan tidak, wanita turut pula dalam kantjah peperangan, sebagai penghibur, djuru rawat, bahkan ada pula jang turut memanggul senapan membunuh musuh. // Memang, wanita adalah sebagian dari masjarakat. . . . Sekali lagi, WANITA, tak dapat dipisahkan dari pergaulan masjarakat, sebab itu bahagian pula dari masjarakat.” *Suara 'Aisjijah*, March 1952, p. 65.

<sup>160</sup> Minangkabau, from Padang Panjang in West Sumatra, Ramah El Junusijah (also spelled Yunusiyah,) was the founder of the *Perguruan Peniyah Putri*, or Women's Religious School, and a leader of women's Islamic education in both the colonial and independent eras. She was highly educated herself, but never attended formal schools after primary levels, studying instead in a traditional way by attending lectures and discussions by Islamic scholars, and studying privately with her uncle, who was a renowned legal scholar. For more, see Magdalia Alfian, “Rahmah El Yunusiah: Pioneer of Islamic Woman [sic] Education in Indonesia, 1900-1960's.”

<sup>161</sup> A member of the steering committee of Muhammadiyah, Zachra Hafni Abu Hanifa was Dutch-educated through the secondary level. She was the wife of author Abu Hanifah, (also known as El Hakim,) who was Minister of Education and Culture during the Republican period, and was later Ambassador to Brazil. She was the sister-in-law of filmmaker Usmar Ismail.



**Figure 3.6:** Women Members of the National Assembly, 1955.  
 Only women from Islamic parties wore head coverings, mostly *kerudung*, though one, Nj. Rahmah El Junusijah, upper right, wore *jilbab*.  
*Buku Peringatan 30 Tahun Kesatuan*, pp. 246-247.

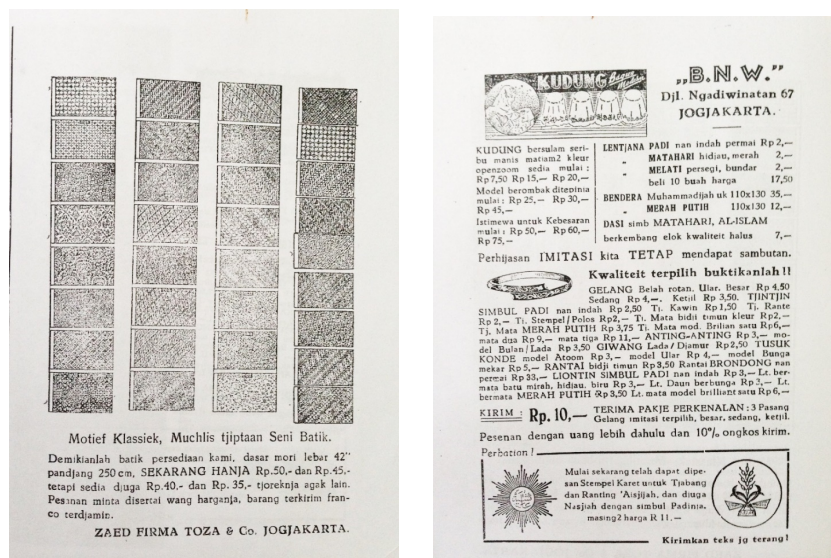
Unlike *Keluarga* or *Wanita*, *Suara 'Aisijah* did not include a fashion page. But what might have been considered appropriate fashion choices for Muslim women could be glanced through ads in the back of the magazine. Toza Batik from Yogyakarta, which had also advertised in *Wanita* beginning in 1950, ran a full-page ad featuring *kain batik* with “classic motifs”<sup>162</sup> from Yogyakarta that could be shipped to women across the nation. (See Figure 3.7). On the following page, B.N.W., a shop on Jalan Ngadiwinatan, a small road that ran just north of Kauman, the neighborhood that housed the headquarters of both Muhammadiyah and 'Aisiyah, also advertised its goods for sale by mail-order. Along with offerings of silver jewelry in various simple designs, including rings with stones of various colors, the offerings included both hanging and stud earrings, and pendants of various designs. Several of the elements were clearly marked by modernity, including “Atoom” brand hairpins, while others, including red-and-white rings and pendants, matching the colors of the national flag, celebrated Indonesian national identity.

Notably, in the upper left corner of this visually busy and crowded ad, BNW offered several styles of embroidered *kerudung* specifically worn during prayer that were described as both “good” and “modern.”<sup>163</sup> A simple version, described as “pretty” (“*manis*,”

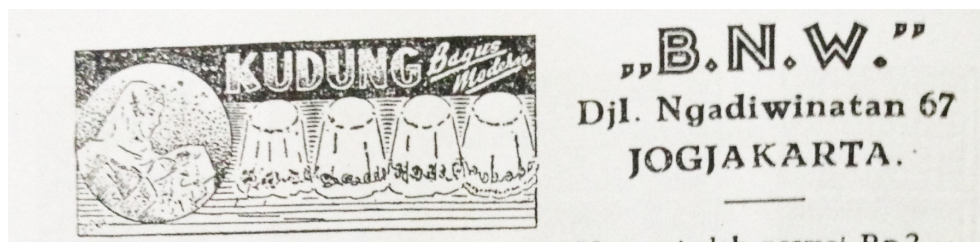
<sup>162</sup> “*Motief Klassiek*,” *Suara 'Aisijah*, March 1952, p. 73

<sup>163</sup> “*Kudung Bagus, Modern*,” *Suara 'Aisijah*, March 1952, p. 74.

the same adjective used to describe various patterns in *Keluarga* and *Wanita*,) and available in “various colors,”<sup>164</sup> cost between Rp 7,50 and Rp 20, depending on the size. A more decorated version, with “wavy edges,” ran between Rp 25 and Rp 45, or about the same prices as the *kain batik* on offer from Batik Toza. Finally, a special version for pregnant women<sup>165</sup> could be had for between Rp 50 and Rp 75. (See Figures 3.8 and 3.9). So, although *Suara 'Aisjijah* did not teach women to sew their own clothes, they nonetheless offered their readers across the country the necessary fashion elements and accessories to participate in a “pretty,” “modern” national Indonesian culture, albeit one clearly inflected with an explicitly Islamic tone.



**Figure 3.7 (left):** Classic *batik* motifs available for purchase by mail order, 1952.  
**Figure 3.8 (right):** Islamic Fashion and Accessory advertisements, 1952.  
*Suara 'Aisjijah*, March 1952, pp. 73, 74.



**Figure 3.9:** Detail of “good” and “modern” *kerudung* available from “B.N.W,” 1952.  
*Suara 'Aisjijah*, March 1952, p. 74.

<sup>164</sup> “*matjam<sup>2</sup> kleur*,” using the Dutch word for color rather than the Indonesian. *Suara 'Aisjijah*, March 1952, p. 74.

<sup>165</sup> These *kerudung* used exclusively during prayer drape fully over a woman’s shoulders and down to her knees, so that when she is in the various kneeling postures of the prayer sequence, they cover her entire body. The extra cost for a prayer headscarf for pregnant women, therefore, reflects the extra fabric required to fully cover her enlarged body.

### ***Taking the Best: Modern Kain-Kebaya and Batik Dresses***

The new ways of dressing and their meaning were frequently discussed in both *Wanita* and *Keluarga* in 1953, and the questions themselves were also being raised on the fashion runway in Jakarta. *Modeshow*'s began to take on a new form and explore a wider range of expressions. The question initially asked in 1949<sup>166</sup> —“Is there Fashion in Indonesia?”—was posed again in 1953.<sup>167</sup> It was answered, to some extent, in the pages of *Wanita* in May of that year.

Nel Hakim, *Wanita*'s principal fashion writer,<sup>168</sup> asked the question in an article that noted that “recently, we have seen activities in various social circles who have livened up their celebrations by holding a ‘*mode show*’.”<sup>169</sup> But, she noted, Indonesian fashion shows were stuck in a rut.

In Western nations, a *modeshow* is a presentation of new clothes that are put on by large fashion houses with the intention of showing and offering their new models. But we see that, up to now in our own country, in general a “*mode show*” is a presentation of various types of Indonesian women’s clothes from each region.<sup>170</sup>

While some Indonesian fashion houses were holding small shows, she noted, and these often presented slight changes in cut, or new colors, in general, “*Batik* cloth isn’t shortened or lengthened by its wearers, short *kebaya* remain short and long *kebaya* are just as long as they were from before. . . . Indonesian women’s clothing is always just the same.”<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> “*Mode di Indonesia?*,” *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, pp. 80-81, discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>167</sup> “*Adakah Mode di Indonesia?*,” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 9, May, pp. 194-95.

<sup>168</sup> There is no significant information I have been able to find about Nel Hakim in the 1950’s, and she wasn’t a particularly “known” person among the various people I was able to check in with about personalities. But she does appear in a 2008 fashion blogpost in a story about the marriage of a daughter of the “very glamorous Damais family—the first family of Anggawastra Chic Pan-Indonesian Fashion!” The older generation of women attending the wedding, who included former President Megawati Sukarnoputri, former First Lady Hasri Ainun Habibie, Herawati Diah and Nel Hakim, wore various combinations of maroon and purple, all in fashions that reflected Indonesian clothing styles from across the archipelago, but mostly either *kain-kebaya* or *kain* with *badju pandjang*. Catching a particular moment of generational change in 2008, “society decorator” Jaya Ibrahim was quoted as saying “None of the old guard ladies (Barisan Mbah) have covered heads,” but “look how the young ones are wearing headscarves.”

<http://wijayajournal.blogspot.com/2008/12/breaking-fashion-news-jakarta.html>, accessed April 10, 2018.

<sup>169</sup> “*Achir<sup>2</sup> ini dapat kita melihat kegiatan berbagai kalangan dalam meramaikan suatu perajaan dengan suatu ‘mode show’.*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 9, May, p. 194.

<sup>170</sup> “*Djika di-negeri<sup>2</sup> Barat mode-show itu adalah suatu pertunjukan pakaian<sup>2</sup> baru jang dipertunjukan oleh rumah<sup>2</sup> mode jang besar<sup>2</sup> dengan maksud memperlihatkan dan menawarkan model<sup>2</sup> baru itu, maka kita melihat, bahwa sampai sekarang dinegeri kita umumnja ‘mode show’ itu adalah suatu pertunjukan segala matjam pakaian wanita Indonesia dari tiap<sup>2</sup> daerah.*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 9, May, p. 194.

<sup>171</sup> “*Kain batik tak dapat dipandjang-pendekkan pemakaiannja, kebaja pendek tinggal pendek dan kebaja pandjan sudah tertentu djuga pandjangnja sedari dulu.*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 9, May, pp. 194-95.

Nel Hakim's answer to the problem, however, wasn't to fundamentally change Indonesian fashion. Rather, she proposed to redefine the term more broadly. Almost precisely mirroring the thoughts of the unsigned piece "Indonesian Fashion?" published in *Wanita* in 1949,<sup>172</sup> she suggested expanding Indonesian women's clothing options from within. Looking beyond *kain-kebaya*, she suggested, Indonesian women should begin to see regional clothing not simply as a costume to be worn on a catwalk in a fashion show, but as a source of fashion possibility for daily wear. "Why should only women from Sumatra wear *kebaya panjang*?" she asked.

Wouldn't it be fitting for women from other islands to wear? Clothing from Medan, where the *kebaya* and *kain* are the same color, is very beautiful to wear in the afternoon or to a celebration. . . . Woven cloth from Palembang with its beautiful colors and silver thread can be worn with a *kebaya panjang*. And finally, Balinese clothing, such as that which has already been shown in a *mode-show* in Jakarta, could be worn as an evening dress, replacing *strapless* gowns (with shoulders uncovered) that are often worn by Indonesian women now.<sup>173</sup>

In August/September 1953, however, both *Wanita* and *Keluarga* published articles on a new form that synthesized western and Indonesian aesthetic: giving western designs a local touch by sewing them from *batik*. The blurb at the top of the column in *Keluarga* suggested this was something of a new and perhaps controversial idea, asking "who says that *batik* can't be used as the fabric for dresses?"<sup>174</sup> The article, entitled "*Batik* is Beautiful for Dresses of All Kinds of Models,"<sup>175</sup> featured designs from the Shri Fatma dress shop in the Metropole Building in the fashionable Cikini neighborhood of Jakarta.

The commentary on the fashions reflected the subtle complexities raised by using *batik* for western-style fashions. The two designs for women older than twenty were rather elegant, with European-style silhouettes that would have not have been out of place in

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<sup>172</sup> The similarity of the titles of the pieces, and their suggested solution for expanding Indonesian national fashion leaves one to wonder if both pieces were written by Nel Hakim, even if three-and-a-half years apart.

<sup>173</sup> "Mengapakah wanita dari Sumatra sadja mau memakai kebaya pandjang? Bukankah wanita dari lain kepulauan pantas djuga memakai sekali? Pakaian Medan, jang kebaya dan kainnja sama warnanja, indah sekali untuk dipakai pada waktu sore atau kepesta gembira. . . . Kain tenunan Palembang jang indah<sup>2</sup> warnanja dengan benang perak dapat pula kita pakai dengan kebaya pandjang. Dan achirnja pakaian Bali, seperti telah pernah kelihatakan pada suatu mode-show di Djakarta dapat pula dipakai untuk pakaian malam, pengganti gaun<sup>2</sup> strapless (bahu terbuka) jang banjak sekali dipakai wanita Indonesia sekarang." *Wanita*, 1953 no. 9, May, p. 195.

<sup>174</sup> "Siapa berkata bahwa batik tidak dapat dipakai sebagai bahan japon?" *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 19.

<sup>175</sup> "Batik Tjantik untuk badju rok segala matjam Model," *Keluarga*, August 1953, pp. 18-19. The graphic design of the rather long title also emphasized the words "Batik" and "Model," so a second reading of the title is also "Batik Fashion."



London, Paris or New York. Visually, they were quite far from the silhouette of the standard *kebaya*.

Notably, both were also sleeveless.<sup>176</sup> The first was a dress that featured a full three-quarter-length skirt, cut with elegantly chic lines and a structured bodice. It used the placement of the batik motif to create contrasting lines in the high-straight collar and the cinched waistline. Intended to be worn with a shawl when going out for the evening, the dress was also seen as being appropriate for a certain level of cosmopolitan shopping, and not only in Jakarta, since, the writers suggested, “you can also wear it without a *selendang* while taking a walk down Braga,”<sup>177</sup> the high-fashion strip of road in Bandung that was home to some of Indonesia’s most fashion-forward dress shops.

The second design for older women was a “party dress made of colorful *batik*.”<sup>178</sup> Its tight bodice gave way to a generous full-length skirt that featured a gathered “train that appears busy, but that is what makes it a dress that is very pretty if it is worn at night.”<sup>179</sup> This would clearly be a party dress only suitable for quite formal events, and it would not have looked out of place at a European opera performance. This design, too, had both advantages and requirements. “Note that the dress appears to fall tightly” to the body because of the cut of the bodice, the caption said, “although it won’t restrict a lady from walking quickly (if that’s necessary.)”<sup>180</sup> But the sleeveless bodice also “requires that a *selendang* be brought to cover the upper body”<sup>181</sup> either retain a woman’s modesty, or to offer protection from the coolness of the evening.

Two other options featured in the article were specifically intended for younger, unmarried women engaged in a modern urban life. One suggested that girls who were “*si Tjantik 17 (Sweet 17)*”<sup>182</sup> could wear western clothes made of *batik cap*. The cheaper version of handmade *batik* was suitable to be cut and sewn,<sup>183</sup> and was available in many

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<sup>176</sup> As is discussed later both in this chapter and in Chapter 6, sleeveless dresses were considered rather risqué in some quarters, and provoked debates about morality.

<sup>177</sup> “*ini dapat djuga nona pakai sonder selendang untuk djalan-djalan di Braga.*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 18.

<sup>178</sup> “*Badju pesta dari batik berwarna.*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 18.

<sup>179</sup> “*Japon ini mempunyai ‘sleep’ jang kelihatan berbelit-belit tetapi itulah jang menjadikannya suatu rok jang sangat manis djikalau dipakai diwaktu malam.*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 18.

<sup>180</sup> “*Perhatikanlah sempit djatuhnya rok ini walaupun tidak menghalangi nona djalan tjepat (kalau perlu).*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 18. One feature of wearing *kain* traditionally is that it limits the size of the steps women can take.

<sup>181</sup> “*Perlu membawa selendang untuk menutup bagian atasnya.*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 18.

<sup>182</sup> The English translation is in the original. *Keluarga*, August 1953, p. 19.

<sup>183</sup> It was widely assumed at the time, and still is today, that more expensive hand-drawn batik, or *batik tulis*, should never be cut up for sewing, both because each piece is considered a piece of art on its own, and because it has value as a cultural

traditional motifs. These would not only look youthful when made into western clothing, they were also suitable to the girls' age and unmarried status. *Batik cap* could therefore be used for those who “still like to wear dresses to go to class, to meetings and to the movies,” while bringing an Indonesian flair to their modern city lives. For going on picnics, (another marker of young modernity,) the column proposed three-quarter length Capri pants made -



**Figure 3.10:** *Batik* fashion for modern women and girls. *Keluarga*, August 1953, pp.18-19.

from “plastron,”<sup>184</sup> or from cotton drill, to be worn with a sleeveless batik top in a square cut style that was “very modern.”<sup>185</sup> But this daring fashion statement came with restrictions, and a warning. “This model is for girls under twenty,” the caption read, and who “must be slender, not too short, and immune to criticism”<sup>186</sup> that was likely to come from wearing pants and baring their shoulders in public. (See Figure 3.10.)

heirloom. Sewing with *batik* would largely only be done with hand-printed *batik cap*, and later also with machine printed cloth with *batik* patterns.

<sup>184</sup> An imitation velvet or velveteen, which seems rather an odd choice for a picnic pant.

<sup>185</sup> “*sangat modern.*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, pp. 18-19.

<sup>186</sup> “*Model ini untuk gadis-gadis dibawah 20 tahun; sjarat-sjarat, langsing, djangan terlalu pendek, dan tahan dikeritik.*” *Keluarga*, August 1953, pp. 18-19.

In September 1953, *Wanita* also published an article on *batik* being used for western fashions, in an article called simply “*Batikshow*.” Reporting on a fashion show held in Jakarta on August 28, again at the Hotel des Indes, the article by Nj. S. Harjati Siagian<sup>187</sup> explored new developments for Indonesian women in the world of modern fashion, and also gave the use of *batik* for western fashions more significant cultural and national meaning than the article in *Keluarga*.

The “*batik-show*,” a term new enough that it was spelled both with and without a hyphen in the same article, was, according to an introductory note by the editors,

proof that not all that is high quality comes from overseas, that a *mode-show*, besides being a spectacle, can also hold practical value, and that good clothing has very little connection to an overstuffed wallet.<sup>188</sup>

Admitting that she herself prized a jacket she was able to buy in Paris when she accompanied her husband there, whose quality was “without limit,”<sup>189</sup> and that many women were of the opinion that fashion that “came from overseas was ‘special and so very goooood’,”<sup>190</sup> Sri Harjati was pleased to announce that the fashion show, prepared by various fashion houses and directed by Nj. M. Soenario<sup>191</sup> with the assistance of the Gabungan Koperasi Batik Indonesia, “proved that this was not true.”<sup>192</sup>

The *batikshow* appeared to be the answer to the aspirational questions posed by *Wanita* in its 1949 article “*Mode di Indonesia?*”<sup>193</sup> Here was a fashion show, coordinated by

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<sup>187</sup> Sri Harjati Siagian was a journalist and poet. She was an occasional contributor to *Wanita*. See for instance “*Dari Kesibukan Istri Wartawan dan Omong-omong dengan Nyonya Harjati Siagian* (“From The Busy Lives of Female Journalists and a Chat with Mrs. Harjati Siagian,”) *Wanita*, 1958 no. 22, November 22, p. 687. She was also the author, with her husband, Gajus Siagan, an author, screenwriter and theater critic, of a 1962 English-language book, *Djakarta Guide, A Year-Round Tourist City*, and contributed to a short collection of poems and songs, *Lagu dan sjair*, published in Jakarta in the early 1960s (there is no precise date,) that included illustrations by “Effendi,” (most likely the Communist poet Roestam Effendi.)

<sup>188</sup> “*Tentang batik-show tanggal 28-8-1953 di Hotel des Indes jang membuktikan bahwa tidak semua jang bagus-bagus datang dari luar negeri, bahwa mode-show itu ketjuali suatu tontonan djuga mempunjai nilai jang praktis, dan bahwa pakiaan [sic] jang baik itu hanja sedikit hubungannja dengan kantong jang penuh.*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>189</sup> “*mantel jang tak terhingga bagusnja,*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>190</sup> “*mode dari luar negeri itu istimewa dan baguuuus sekali,*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>191</sup> This is likely Dina Maria Soenario, the wife of Soenario, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1953-1955, and Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London from 1956-1961, (so the ambassador directly preceding B. M. Diah.) The two met at the Second Indonesian Youth Conference in 1928, when he was a representative from Bandung, and she was one from Manado in North Sulawesi.

<sup>192</sup> “*Bahwa pendapat itu tidak betul telah dibuktikan oleh batikshow . . .*” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>193</sup> *Wanita*, 1949 #8, 30 November, pp. 80-81, discussed in Chapter 2.

ten established design houses in Jakarta and Bandung,<sup>194</sup> that offered a wide variety of forward-looking fashion options for women, and that also featured a distinctly Indonesian “look” that included but went beyond *kain-kebaya*. It was also produced in cooperation with the national trade association of *batik* producers, which were still largely small-scale and entrepreneurial, and which represented the nation both in terms of cultural production and its nationalist history.<sup>195</sup>

The photo of models lined up for the runway that accompanied the article showed a wide variety of fashions, first with variations of *kain-kebaya*, and then with clothing for the beach in direct succession. The *kain-kebaya* options were not mentioned at all in the article. Without the picture, it would have appeared that the *batikshow* only focused on new options. Indeed, the description of the fashions shown were exclusively of the new clothes made from *batik*.

Doddy fashion and Maison Enoch showed fashions for the beach, for morning and mid-day, and for *cocktail parties*, each more interesting than the other. Marion among others made women’s *slacks* worn with wide belts, while Joyce Mouthaan came out with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  *slack* and *topper* and created the “*I love you*” model. Nj. Sudjono made models that were simple but that didn’t fail to be good, while Shri Fatmi appeared with *strapless* dresses that remind us of “*kemben*” (Jav.)<sup>196</sup>

The influence of western styles is clearly apparent in the use of language here; “*cocktail-party*,” “*slack*,” “ $\frac{3}{4}$  *slack dan topper*,” “*I love you*,”<sup>197</sup> and “*straplessnja*” were all used directly from English without any need for translation or explanation. But the comparison of strapless dresses to *kemben* was particularly interesting. *Kemben* needed to be labeled here

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<sup>194</sup> Doddy Fashion, Maison Enoch, Marion, Joyce Mouthaan, Nj. Sudjono, Shri Fatma, and Nj. Oei from Jakarta, and Van der Veen and Sampurna from Bandung. Nj. Oei is one of the rare Chinese names attached to the fashion industry in my sources, even if other concerns may have been Chinese owned.

<sup>195</sup> There is an important connection between *batik* and the birth of the Indonesian mass nationalist movement in 1912 in that the first mass nationalist movement, the Sarekat Islam, (Islamic Union,) began as the Sarekat Dagang Islam (Union of Islamic Traders,) who were initially an organization of indigenous *batik* sellers seeking to oppose what they saw as trade advantages given to Chinese merchants by the Dutch colonial government. (The use of “Islam” in the names signifies “not Chinese” rather than having any particular religious meaning.) *Batik* producers in the early 1950’s were actively involved in building an enduring national market for *batik* that could survive competition from cheaper imported fabrics most particularly by imbuing them with national meaning and significance.

<sup>196</sup> “*Doddy Fashion dan maison Enoch memperlihatkan pakaian<sup>2</sup> untuk pantai, untuk pagi, siang dan untuk cocktail-party, jang satu lebih menarik dari jang lain. Marion antara lain menjadikan slack wanita dengan centuur lebar, sedangkan Joyce Mouthaan sendiri keluar dengan  $\frac{3}{4}$  slack dan topper dan mentjptakan model ‘I love you’.* Nj. Sudjono membuat model-model jang sederhana tetapi tak kalah bagusnja pula, sedangkan Shri Fatma tampil dengan straplessnja jang mengingatkan kita kepada ‘kemben’ (Djaw.).” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>197</sup> It is not clear what the “I love you” model was, but the name, in English, is interesting.

specifically as being “*Djaw.*”, or Javanese, as if this term, but not the English ones, needed explanation.

Nonetheless, the article also expressed pride in the quality and value of Indonesian fashion within the global fashion scene. “Paris or New York, or London and Vienna cannot be denied their specialness in questions of fashion, but we are not left behind; we have proven it,” the article argued. “And we are all the prouder because the cost of our fashion isn’t as much as that for foreign fashion.”<sup>198</sup>



**Figure 3.11:** Models in *kain-kebaya* and *batik* beach clothes in the first “*batikshow*” in Jakarta, August 1953. *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

Sri Harjati further noted that the *batik-show* demonstrated that Indonesian fashion could now be practical. “It makes possible,” she wrote, “that we can make a housecoat or pajamas for our husbands from *batik* cloth for just a little money.”<sup>199</sup> But furthermore, her review showed that an Indonesian fashion that in 1950 was something to be imagined and aspired to, by 1953 had become something Indonesian women were able to put in place for

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<sup>198</sup> “Meskipun Parjis atau New York ataupun London dan Wenen tak dapat disangkal keistimewaannya dalam hal mode, tetapi kitapun tak ketinggalan; kita telah membuktikannya. Dan lebih bangga lagi kita karena uang untuk mode kita tak sebanjak untuk mode luar negeri.” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>199</sup> “Batik-show tadi memungkinkan kita membuat housecoat atau pijama untuk sang suami dari kain batik dengan uang jang sedikit.” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

themselves. “In just one spectacle,” she wrote, “the *batik-show* also made something clear about fashion in its most broad meaning. While watching and admiring, we can think about which one we’d like to make.”<sup>200</sup>

Most importantly, Sri Harjati wrote, Indonesian women could now imagine a world-class fashion that was fully their own. Indonesian fashion had reached a stage, she suggested, such that

[w]ithout rushing, and with the certainty that our wallets are going to be troubled because of it, we are able to dream of which piece clothing will come to be ours. . . . And in our thinking and dreaming, we can forget about dresses from America or from Paris; for the umpteenth time we know: WE ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND.<sup>201</sup>

Through this hybrid fashion, that both looked inward through *batik* and outward through cut, design and purpose, cosmopolitan Indonesian women were able to feel, and demonstrate to both themselves and an imagined international audience, that the nation, and its women, were simultaneously modern and authentically themselves.

### ***Dresses of Their Own: Sewing Modern Indonesian Identity***

Clearly, however, most Indonesian women would not be buying their new dresses from expensive shops in Cikini or Braga. Rather, fashion shows and photo spreads in both *Keluarga* and *Wanita* were intended for women to copy in their own homes, or with local tailors. Instructions on how to measure people properly for children’s dresses and play-clothes, or for teen-age outfits, were repeated across the pages of the magazines in a semi-regular rotation. Pattern making was covered consistently, as were instructions on the particularly challenging technical aspects of dress making, such as setting collars or sleeves correctly, or gathering skirts properly into a waist-band.

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<sup>200</sup> “Dengan tjara demikian, ketjuali suatu tontonan, batik-show tadi berarti djuga suatu penerangan mengenai mode dangan arti seluas-luasanja. Sambil melihat dan menagumi kita dapat memikirkan mana jang akan kita buat.” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

<sup>201</sup> “Dengan tidak tergesa-gesa dan kejakinan bahwa kantong kita tak akan terganggu karenanja kita dapat melamunkan pakaian mana jang akan mendjadi milik kita. . . . Dan didalam kita berfikir dan melamun, kita lupa akan jurk dari Amerika atau dari Parjis; untuk kesekian kalinja kita tahu: KITA TAK KETINGGALAN.” *Wanita*, 1953 no. 18, September, p. 404.

Keeping patterns simple, but with neat and attractive results, was a recurring theme. The *Wanita* fashion column in the second half of June 1950. “Fashion: Pretty and Neat,”<sup>202</sup> noted that

it is difficult to choose a pattern that is good and neat it appears. We have opened many pattern books, and looked at them one after the other, but we still hear from women’s mouths, which pattern should I use for my dress in silk or in cotton, that I can wear in the evening. Often what is pretty to the eye, when it is seen in the pattern book, but with a fabric that isn’t fitting. Yes, when we see it, it feels like it will be easy, but when we make it . . . . . it really isn’t.<sup>203</sup>

The words “*manis*” (“pretty” or “cute,”) and “*rapih*” (“neat” or “orderly,”) were used alongside each other repeatedly, along with the Dutch “*netjis*,”<sup>204</sup> (“smart,” or “put together,”) to describe the ideal aesthetic for Indonesian’s women’s western dresses. Together, they implied a look that was relatively simple and not overly worked while also being appropriate. Another adjective, “*praktis*,” (“practical,”) spoke to modern functionality.

But this column also pointed to the process for becoming modern. Women looked at examples, and, rather than buying them off the rack for the most part,<sup>205</sup> they chose a look and either had it sewn or sewed it themselves.<sup>206</sup> The use of an actual pattern, pre-measured to be cut to size, was rare. Instead, Indonesian women were creating their own looks, adjusting the examples to fit their own bodies and their own style, and choosing their own fabrics, or choosing styles to fit fabrics they already had in hand.<sup>207</sup> That is, they were

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<sup>202</sup> “Mode: Manis dan Rapi.” *Wanita*, 1950 #12, June, p. 207.

<sup>203</sup> “Susah memilih model jang bagus dan rapi kelihatannja. Banjak modeblad jang telah kita buka, kita perhatikan satu demi satu, tetapi masih ada djuga keluar dari mulut kaum wanita, model apakah jang akan saja ambil untuk bebe saja jang sutera atau jang katun ini, jang dapat saja pakai diwaktu sore. Kadang-kadang manis dipandang mata, apabila dilihat dimodelblad itu, tetapi dengan bahannja tidak pula tjotjok. Ja, waktu melihat dirasakan muda sadja, tetapi waktu membuatnja . . . . . sekali-sekali tidak.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 12, June, p. 207.

<sup>204</sup> Spelled *netjes* in standard Dutch, but *netjis* in nearly all my Indonesian sources.

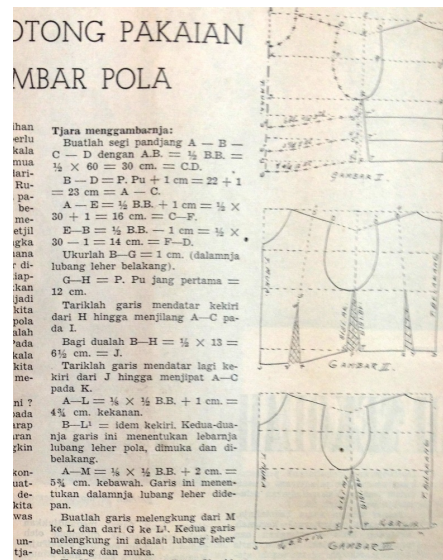
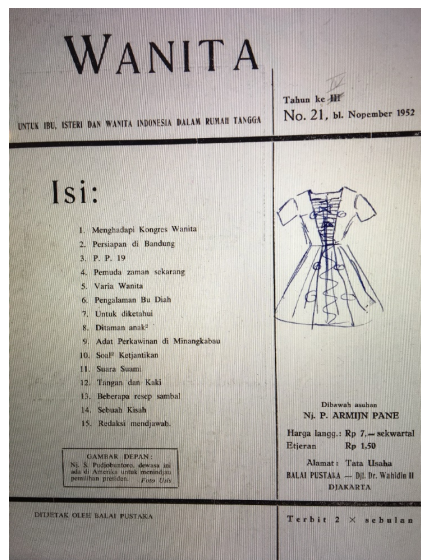
<sup>205</sup> An article in *Wanita* in 1952 explored the possibilities for “*pakaian konpeksi*,” (“confection clothing,”) or ready-to-wear fashions in Indonesia, based on the American fashion industry mass-market products, but concluded that this was not yet practical in Indonesia, even if it would help make fashion both cheaper and more accessible, because of the country’s lack of industrial sewing facilities. In Indonesia, sewing remained largely a cottage industry. See “*Pakaian Konpeksi*,” *Wanita*, 1952 no. 4, February, pp. 84-85.

<sup>206</sup> That is not to say there was not a history of buying pre-made clothing from catalogues in the archipelago. In particular, see John Pemberton’s fascinating analysis of the Sidho-Madjoe mail-order catalogue that offered elite *priyayi* men both “Javanese” and “Dutch” fashions, but also reached into the village level by offering such items as a “village headman’s hat with a Wilhelmina *W* sewn on the front” for “6 guilders.” His analysis explores the tensions that came from wearing mass-made clothing that was “at once patently progressive and thoroughly ‘Javanese’.” John Pemberton, *On the Subject of ‘Java’*, p. 134. The general discussion of ready-made Javanese bureaucratic fashion, and the extent to which Dutch colonial ideas of who Javanese “should” be, is largely found in Chapter 3 of the book, “Prophetic Conclusions”.

<sup>207</sup> This was also certainly true of many women in Europe, North America and Australia and New Zealand at the time.

conceiving of their own versions of modern clothing in all aspects. To a large extent, they designed their own looks.<sup>208</sup>

This process of creation intersected with a process of being modern, not only in choosing styles, but also in their execution. Sewing for oneself had always involved measurement and fitting, but pages in magazines showing mathematical formulaic adjustments for cutting pattern pieces and creating personalized general patterns were new.<sup>209</sup> (See Figure 3.13). The process of sewing itself was also modernizing, as could be seen in the recurring advertisements for Singer Sewing machines in both *Wanita* and *Keluarga*. Singer machines, which had been in the archipelago since the Dutch colonial era, were, nonetheless still a marker of modern ease and efficiency in independent Indonesia.



**Figure 3.12 (left)** Hand-drawn dress design on the Table of Contents page, *Wanita*, 1952 #21 (November) in the collections of Cornell University.

**Figure 3.13 (right):** Detail of general pattern and mathematical adjustments for cutting a bodice piece, *Keluarga*, September 1950, p. 30.

In 1952, Singer rotated a set of three ads through the pages of *Wanita* across much of the year. One showed a somewhat cartoonish male village tailor, Ali, sitting on the

<sup>208</sup> See an example of one person's conception of a new dress drawn on the Table of Contents page of a copy of *Wanita* magazine in Figure 3.12.

<sup>209</sup> This phenomenon is also discussed in relationship to sewing bras in Chapter 6.



ground in front of his clothing that hangs for sale on the woven bamboo walls of his shop. He sits tall, wearing a *peci*<sup>210</sup> on his head, as he rotates the quickly moving flywheel of the



**Figures 3.14 (left) and 3.15 (right):** Singer Sewing Machine ads in 1952. On the left, Ali the village tailor quickly and efficiently creates simple western style clothes for men, boys and girls, but notably not for women. On the right, a young woman learns new embroidery techniques at one of fourteen Singer Embroidery Schools across the country.

3.14: *Wanita*, 1952, no. 17, September, p. 401. 3.15: *Wanita*, no. 18, September, p. 425.

sewing machine by hand. The clothing behind him is all western: men’s long trousers and shirts, striped undershorts, boy’s shorts and short-legged overalls,<sup>211</sup> a little girl’s dress.

<sup>210</sup> A *peci*, or black fez-style cap, widely worn by Indonesian men at the village level, was originally a marker of Islamic identity, and was worn in conjunction with religious practice. During the Revolutionary period, however, it also became linked to the nationalist movement, and it was worn by many Indonesian men of the revolutionary generation, most notably Sukarno, even as the rest of his clothing was western, often a military-style jacket with epaulettes, worn over a shirt and tie, and with long pants and black shoes. In that way, the *peci* became a broader symbol of indigenous Indonesian identity for men, even as the rest of what they wore was western. This was true across different religious affiliations. The father of one of the families I lived with during my fieldwork, Bapak Sudarmanto, who was Catholic and had fought in the Revolution around Solo as a young man, wore his *peci* whenever he went out of the house. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, his *peci* was largely a marker of his age and position, not his religion. Among younger men now, however, it has regained its religious meaning, and is only worn by Muslims, often at times when they are engaged in religious activities, or are presenting themselves as Muslim within a social or political context. In the Singer sewing ads, though, the use of the *peci* mostly marked Ali as a villager, or at least a working class, rather than a rich city tailor, as did the fact that he was shown sitting on the floor to work.

<sup>211</sup> Sometimes called a sunsuit.

One men's shirt appears to be made from *batik* rather than plain cotton. Bolts of *jarik*, a locally produced striped cloth used for making everyday village-style clothing, lays behind him. The tagline on the ad noted that Singer had "branches throughout Indonesia."<sup>212</sup> Western style had clearly become the default, even at the village level, and across the entire country, at least in the world of Singer ads. (See Figure 3.14).

A second ad, for Singer Embroidery Schools, shows an older teacher, wearing *kain-kebaya*, instructing a younger female student, wearing a simple western dress, in the intricacies possible with Singer's special embroidery stitching, a sample of which is shown as a border in the upper right hand-corner of the image. This singer machine sits on a sewing stand, rather than the floor, and is powered by a foot treadle rather than by hand.<sup>213</sup> (See Figure 3.15).

The text of the ad offered both married and unmarried women a new possibility. "Make Use of this Opportunity!"<sup>214</sup> the headline read. The ad then continued on to stress opportunities for women to learn new and useful skills. "You are all looking to expand your knowledge in the art of embroidery that is beautiful and handy by taking courses at the Singer embroidery schools that are established in the following places."<sup>215</sup>

A February 1952 version of the ad listed ten cities where women could find these schools, eight in Java<sup>216</sup> and two in Sumatra.<sup>217</sup> A later version, published in September, listed fourteen schools, including one in Kalimantan Barat. The expansion of the schools is interesting, for although it showed a cluster of schools growing in West Java, nearest to the "fashion" cities of Jakarta and Bandung, there was growth in the "outer islands" as well,

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<sup>212</sup> "Tjabang-tjabang diseluruh Indonesia." *Wanita*, 1952, no. 17, September, p. 401

<sup>213</sup> These are "pre-war" models in an American context, according to my mother, Margaret Sullivan, who was taught to sew on a similar model in the early 1940's. I remember seeing similar foot-powered models throughout Southeast Asia still in use in the 1960s and 1970s, and even occasionally in the 1980s. Electric machines would largely be a thing of the future in an Indonesian context of the 1950s.

<sup>214</sup> "Pergunakanlah Kesempatan Ini!" *Wanita*, 1952 no. 4, February, p. 87. Also republished, with an expansion of the number of cities hosting Singer Embroidery Schools in *Wanita*, no. 18, September, p. 425.

<sup>215</sup> "Kamu sekalian dapat menambah pengetahuan dalam kesenian membordir jang indah dan berguna dengan djalan mengambil pelajaran disekolah bordir Singer pada didirikan pada tempat-tempat sebagai berikut:" *Wanita*, 1952 no. 4, February, p. 87.

<sup>216</sup> Surabaya, Semarang, Bandung, Cimahi (a suburb of Bandung,) Sukabumi, Serang and Jakarta.

<sup>217</sup> Medan and Palembang.



**Figures 3.16 (left) and 3.17 (right):** Singer Sewing School ads, 1953, The ad on the left promises a “Singer Teaching System” with modern and beautiful results in four months. The ad on the right is for a simpler short course to teach women to make a simple dress. 3.16: *Wanita*, 1953, no. 9, May, p. 192. 3.17: *Wanita*, 1953, no 21, November, p. 473.

though perhaps not “throughout Indonesia” as their machine shop branches were advertised as being. Nonetheless, it was an indication of an expanding national market for these new skills. Singer Sewing School ads continued through 1953, with the fashions shown in them displaying the full set of options women might choose to sew, from *kain-kebaya* to western dresses to modern designs in *batik*. (See Figures 3.16 and 3.17.)

By 1954, ads became more streamlined, and moved from full- to half-page formats. An ad in February 1954 offered a “SINGER COURSE—to become a clothing cutter with a diploma,”<sup>218</sup> scheduled to begin February 15 in Jakarta. The course was “new and flexible, lasting +/- 10 months”<sup>219</sup> and would cost Rp 60 per month, the first time a course cost was mentioned in one of the ads. It planned to cover “Adult Women’s clothes, children’s

<sup>218</sup> “KURSUS SINGER—untuk mendjadi coupeuse jang berdiploma.” *Wanita*, 1954, no 3, February 5, p. 60. The French word for piece cutter is used without explanation, but the graphic accompanying the ad does show a woman wearing *kebaya* laying out and cutting pattern pieces.

<sup>219</sup> “kursus baru dan luas, lamanja +/- 10 bulan.” *Wanita*, 1954, no 3, February 5, p. 60.

clothing for boys and girls, Women’s underwear, and men’s sport shirts.”<sup>220</sup> (See Figure 3.18). In the same issue of the magazine, Singer ran a second ad for an eight-month embroidery course that simply noted that “Women’s Clothing that are decorated with various types of embroidery are very much loved throughout Indonesia.”<sup>221</sup> (See Figure 3.19).

These new ads seem to have moved the Singer courses into a mode of offering professional formation, particularly given the longer and more specific course formats, more regular and routinely scheduled offerings, and the possibility of taking a professional diploma course that included a final exam. While the patterning class was listed as being specific to Jakarta, the embroidery course ad did not specify a particular city, but instead advertised the Singer schools as simply as being present “throughout Indonesia.”<sup>222</sup> A third ad, published in March, promised that students would be taught “according to a system that is **VERY EASY**, that is the **SINGER System**.”<sup>223</sup> The course had been lengthened to between 10-12 months. A new course began on the first day of each month, and was offered in Jakarta and Bogor. The image in the ad showed a woman wearing a western-style dress,



**Figures 3.18 (left) and 3.19 (right):** Singer Sewing School ads in 1954. On the left, for a new ten-month “coupeuse” course, and on the right for eight-month embroidery courses available “Across Indonesia.” Both ads are from *Wanita*, 1953, no. 3, February 5, pp. 60 and 73.

<sup>220</sup> “Atjara: Pakaian untuk Wanita Dewasa, pakaian anak-anak lelaki dan perempuan, pakaian dalam untuk Wanita, kemedja sport lelaki.” *Wanita*, 1954, no 3, February 5, p. 60.

<sup>221</sup> “Pakaian Wanita yang dihias dengan rupa-rupa bordiran, telah disukai sekali diseluruh Indonesia.” *Wanita*, 1954 no. 6, March 20, p. 143.

<sup>222</sup> “Sekolah BORDIR SINGER di SELURUH INDONESIA.” *Wanita*, 1954, no. 3, February 5, p. 73. Also published in *Wanita*, 1954 no. 6, March 20, p. 143.

<sup>223</sup> “menurut suatu systeem yang **AMAT MUDA**, jaitu Systeem **SINGER**.” *Wanita*, 1954, no. 6, March 20, p. 153.



**Figure 3.20:** Singer Sewing School ad in 1954, offering monthly starts for courses featuring the “Singer Sewing System” in Jakarta and Bogor Note the model wearing a western-style dress made of *batik*. *Wanita*, 1954, no. 6, March 20, p. 153.

apparently sewn from *batik*. (See Figure 3.20). In any case, Singer courses were bringing “modern” methods and technologies for measuring, cutting and sewing western clothes to women across the country, both for their personal and possible professional growth.

Of all the Singer ads, the third of the Singer ads in rotation in *Wanita* in 1952 was in certain ways the most striking, since it brought the nation’s women together visually. In the ad, a giant magnet sitting around the base of a giant table-top Singer sewing machine attracted women from across the archipelago. Women wearing various forms of *kain-kebaya* and other traditional dress walked expectantly towards the machine. The national scope of the women was made explicit by the inclusion of ethnic fashions from across the archipelago.<sup>224</sup> The iconography reflected imagery of regional clothing that began in the colonial era, and that was also recreated in “national dress” fashion shows of regional and ethnic clothing styles. These served as markers of what might be referred to as an

<sup>224</sup> One of the women wears a distinctly Minangkabau *tengkuluk tanduk*, a two-horned headdress folded from a single piece of fabric. Two other women wear various forms of head scarves, and one of those two also has a length of cloth wrapped around her body and one shoulder, another regional “traditional” form of women’s dress from Lampung or Riau, also in Sumatra, or from the “outer islands” in the east. The Minangkabau, or Minang, are a largely matrilineal society from highlands of West Sumatra. Of non-Javanese Indonesians, the Minang were particularly successful in gaining positions of importance in the new nation, perhaps in part because of a history of Minang men moving out and around the entire Malay speaking region of Southeast Asia in a process called *meranatau*, which literally translates as “to wander about,” but was a form of diasporic exploration, in their younger years. They were, as a result, quite prepared for the new demands of a multicultural nation. Like the Balinese, the Minang were among the peoples of Indonesia whose cultural expressions in clothing and architecture had been used in the colonial era to set them apart visually from the Javanese, so the appearance of a woman in *tengkuluk tanduk*, one of the few immediately recognizable non-Javanese or non-western styles in ad, is a definite marker here of Indonesian national diversity.

Indonesian national “multiculture,” an idea that the construction of the nation was made up of ethnically and linguistically distinct groups from across the archipelago.<sup>225</sup>

One woman stood out ethnically. Wearing a *cheongsam*,<sup>226</sup> with its high collar and slit skirt, and with her hair in a short straight bob,<sup>227</sup> the clearly ethnically Chinese woman was the lone figure in the ad who looked out towards the reader, and whose full face could be seen fully, complete with slanted, rather than round, eyes.<sup>228</sup> She was also the only one not rushing directly into the power of the Singer magnet.<sup>229</sup> Ethnically Chinese women might have been present in the nation, but in this rare appearance in Indonesian women’s magazines of the era, they also weren’t fully a part of it.<sup>230</sup> Also, interestingly, the only woman in western dress, while attracted to the magnet, seemed to trail behind her more traditionally clad sisters. (See Figure 3.21).

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<sup>225</sup> I am not aware of anyone having used the term “national multiculturalism” in relation to Indonesia before, at least not as I’m using it. It first came up as a typo here, but I’m struck by it. An initial and quick search shows that it is actually a term being used in some anthropological and theoretical discussions, largely in literature about Australia and France, and in the context of immigration of non-white and non-Christian peoples into the nation. One source discusses it more in the sense I am using it here, to refer to Cuba, but perhaps it is used more in the way Southeast Asianists often talk about syncretism, a blending of cultural sources into a new national culture. My idea is not that this necessarily actually exists in Indonesia. In discussing this with me, Mark Woodward points out that ethnicity is quite contested in many areas of Indonesia, and he is, of course, correct. This is about an imagination/construction of the nation, but one that is very strong, and that has been the subject of quite a bit of scholarship, most notably by John Pemberton in his treatment of “Java” and of Taman Mini in the New Order.

<sup>226</sup> Also called a *qipao*, the *cheongsam* developed as a symbol of Chinese identity internationally in the 1920s, particularly in the form that was tighter to the body and had a shorter skirt that developed primarily in Shanghai at that time.

<sup>227</sup> The hairstyle, in Chinese called a “*mei mei tou*,” or “little sister hair/head,” that in English might be called a “school girl bob,” or sometimes pejoratively referred to as a “China doll haircut,” is a frequent feature of stereotypical representations of Chinese women, most particularly because of the straight cut of the bangs. The hairstyle is used here despite the clear implication that the woman is an adult and not of student age. Thanks to Frances Kai-Hwa Wang for her help with the Chinese terminology and the age implications of the hairstyle.

<sup>228</sup> The only other women’s eyes we see, all from the side on the left side of the image, have a distinctly rounder shape.

<sup>229</sup> I will leave it to symbolic anthropologists and ethnic studies experts to analyze the implications for Chineseness in the national construction of Indonesia, but it is striking that the ethnic Chinese woman is the only one “out of step” or visually separate from the image of national unity here, while Singer was also clearly being inclusive of a potentially important market for their product.

<sup>230</sup> This is also largely true of the women in Indonesian women’s magazines at the time. The absence of Chinese Indonesian women in nationalist women’s magazines of the era is something I have noted consistently in my reading. Only one magazine I’ve read included Chinese women visually in its cover art, in the context of an explicitly multi-ethnic group of women. It was also a magazine principally aimed to include the international women’s community in Jakarta, and the cover art includes western and Indian women as well. It is a clear outlier in Indonesian women’s magazine culture, however. On occasion, mostly within the context of images of fashion shows, a woman appears in a *cheongsam*, but otherwise Chinese fashion is largely absent from the magazines. There are also occasional, but rare, columns on Chinese cooking in the magazines, and Chinese women’s names are almost never mentioned. One exception to this is the Miss Varia 1958 competition that is discussed at length in Chapter 6. This is an important subject, but is outside the scope of this current work except for raising the question for future thought.



**Figure 3.21.** Singer Sewing Machine ad, 1952, shows Singer machines as a magnet attracting women together from across the nation. *Wanita* 1952, no. 16, August, p. 377.

The text of the ad emphasized the reliability and strength of a Singer sewing machine as an important part of women’s family economics. “Ah . . . here is our friend who is strong and trusty,”<sup>231</sup> the headline read. The body of the text listed three reasons that the

<sup>231</sup> “Ah . . . inilah teman kami yang kuat dan setia.” *Wanita* 1952, no. 16, August, p. 377

women were happy: "Sewing clothes for their family is quick and neat; The cost of those clothes is cheap; For the life of the machine, they can get good *Singer Service*."<sup>232</sup> The ad concluded, "This is the result when you buy a SINGER sewing machine."<sup>233</sup> The place of Singer and the creation of clothing for one's family is central, and magnetic, the ad argued, both in household economies and in the emerging national culture.

### ***Looking Back and Moving Forward: Theorizing Themselves***

In 1954, the coverage of what modern Indonesian women's fashion should be slowed down significantly in most women's magazines. The reasons for this aren't completely clear to me. The year, in some ways, was a time of waiting. The highly anticipated elections for the national assembly, originally promised for 1954, were pushed back a year. Preparatory work for the Asian-African conference in Bandung was in full swing, but the event hadn't yet begun to capture the nation's collective imagination. It was also a year in which former driving elements for Indonesian women's politics had been "resolved" for the time being. Sukarno's marriage to his first concurrent wife, Hartini, in 1953, for example, had quashed the push for a marriage law. Perhaps, with the fashion goals of creating an Indonesian style having come to fruition to some extent in 1953, there was less of a case to be put forward. In any case, the year represents the first of several shifts in the rhythm of fashion discourse in women's magazines.

The articles on fashion and patterns that were presented for women to sew at home switched their focus very much to the "*praktis*" side of things, or to offer examples of clothing for specific uses.<sup>234</sup> Various *mode-shows* continued to be covered,<sup>235</sup> one of which

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<sup>232</sup> "Mereka gembira sebab: Pendjahitan pakaian<sup>2</sup> untuk keluarga mereka tjepat dan rapi. Harga pakaian<sup>2</sup> itu murah. Selama hidup dapat Singer Service jang baik." *Wanita* 1952, no. 16, August, p. 377

<sup>233</sup> "Inilah hasil kapan membeli sebuah mesin djahit SINGER." *Wanita* 1952, no. 16, August, p. 377

<sup>234</sup> In the first months of 1954, *Wanita*, for example, published articles on western-style maternity clothing "*Untuk Ibu jang hamil*," ("For Pregnant Women,") by Poppy Mochtiar. *Wanita* 1954, no. 2., January, p. 42, and warmer children's clothing for the rainy season, "*Untuk anak-anak kita: Musim Hudjan, Hawa dingin*," ("For our children: The Rainy Season, Cold Weather." *Wanita* 1954, no. 3, February 5, p. 61, on the page opposite one of the Singer Sewing School ads discussed earlier in this chapter. An article on dresses for little girls (with a photograph of three blonde European girls), "*3 Model rok untuk 3 Gadis ketjil*," ("3 dress Models for 3 little Girls.") *Wanita*, 1954, p. 95, was published opposite pictures sent in by readers/mothers of their children, dressed exclusively in western clothing, or girls' dresses that could be "Finished in One Hour." "*Selesai dalam 1 djam*." *Wanita*, 1954, no. 9, May 5, pp. 258-59.

<sup>235</sup> In May, *Wanita* ran a short article with photos of a *mode-show* of "Merchandise for Women" ("*Aneka warna: Gelanggang dagang untuk wanita*." by Jakarta designer Nj. Lilian Ducelle, that focused on ready-to-wear western fashions for "school children, teenage students, and office workers." ("*anak-anak sekolah, gadis-gadis peladjar, dan pekerdja<sup>2</sup> kantor*.")) *Wanita*, 1954, no. 9, May 5., pp. 250-51.



was a Singer *Modeshow* held in Jakarta that featured western dress styles covered in the Singer sewing courses worn by Indonesian models.<sup>236</sup> Another article in the same issues showed patterns for a beach vest and shorts to wear if you were “Going to the Shore.”<sup>237</sup> The outfit was described as being quite “*praktis*” for such an outing.

Columns on evening fashion or even *kain-kebaya* were also increasingly rare across the year, though a few were published that showed technical advances in the standard patterns.<sup>238</sup> A *kebaya* with three darts rather than two, allowing the blouse to tailor better to women’s bodies was said to be “pretty and quite modern.”<sup>239</sup> Only one article discussed *batik* fashion, but this time in the context of international relations, with coverage of “*Batik* Fashion in the Philippines.”<sup>240</sup>

In 1955, however, in the lead-up to the Africa-Asia Conference in Bandung, the idea of regional clothing as national fashion resurfaced again. As is discussed in Chapter 5, the Bandung Conference was a space within which *kain-kebaya* was firmly installed as the “national clothing” for Indonesian women. This period of presenting the nation to the world also occasioned a re-examination of Indonesian fashion as being more than just Javanese, and particularly Solonese, traditional dress.

*Wanita* offered a series of articles that placed Indonesian fashion within an increasingly complex historical context. The series offered both an explanation for why dresses had come to replace traditional forms of dress (not only for elite women but for Indonesian women more generally,) while also proposing a process of rediscovering fashion styles that had been lost or significantly changed over the earlier century.

Entitled “Our Women’s Clothing,”<sup>241</sup> the first of a series of articles on the history of women’s fashion began with a chance encounter of a map on display at the Museum *Gedung Gajah* at the *Lembaga Kebudayaan Indonesia* (Indonesian Cultural Council) on the

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<sup>236</sup> “*Singer Modeshow.*” *Wanita*, 1954, no. 18, September 20, pp. 476-77.

<sup>237</sup> “*Hendak ke pantai?*” *Wanita*, 1954, no. 18, September 20, pp. 490-91.

<sup>238</sup> An article in July showed a *kebaya* in a polka dot fabric and a matching western dress for her daughter using the same fabric. See “*Untuk dirumah.*” (“For at home.”) *Wanita*, 1954, no. 14, July 20, pp. 366-67. Interestingly, and revolutionarily, the *kebaya* also had pockets, which was a significant adjustment of the traditional design. A second article with a pattern for a *kebaya* featured a lace top and three darts in the bust rather than the normal two, allowing the pattern to accommodate more women’s bodies. See *Ruangan Mode: Untuk Ibu.* (“Fashion Column: For Women.”) *Wanita*, 1954, no. 21, November 5, pp. 572-73

<sup>239</sup> “*Manis dan tjukup modern.*” *Wanita*, 1954, no. 21, November 5, p. 572.

<sup>240</sup> “*Mode Batik di Filipina.*” *Wanita*, 1954, no. 12, June 20, pp. 306-07.

<sup>241</sup> “*Pakaian Wanita Kita,*” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155.

west side of *Taman Merdeka*.<sup>242</sup> While visiting the museum, the article's author, Prija Chandra,<sup>243</sup> came across a map of the Indies decorated with drawings of "members of all the peoples of our nation: from the Achenese to various peoples of Irian, in couples."<sup>244</sup> The map was old, she reported, perhaps from a half-century earlier, because if the fashions were compared to the styles visible at the time across the nation, "almost nothing matches."<sup>245</sup>

What she and her friends found particularly interesting was the richness and distinctiveness of the types of clothing and the ways women decorated themselves. Things were quite different from one region to the other, she noted. "Perhaps this was because back then, we were still foreign to each other,"<sup>246</sup> she suggested. "But today, at most we see this clothing only when there is a big event. The world revolves, times change, and we can't be left behind, particularly in terms of our clothing."<sup>247</sup>

Prija Chandra then offered three reasons for why Indonesian women's fashion had changed, and why it had done so particularly quickly. Unlike other writers, who traced wearing dresses or other non-Indonesian fashions primarily to the Dutch educational experience of the elite, Chandra suggested that the largest change had come from the realities of the later Japanese and Revolutionary periods.

First, she argued, there was an economic necessity behind women wearing dresses. "We remember how hard it was to find cloth during the Japanese period and the

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<sup>242</sup> Dating to 1862, when the Dutch colonial government first built the museum to hold and display its collections in the arts and sciences, the *Gedung Gadjah*, or "Elephant Building," so named because of a bronze statue of an elephant in the front courtyard of the Greek Revival building, given to the Batavia government by Siamese king Rama V (Chulalongkorn) in 1871. The museum was home to a significant repository of colonial archeological finds, particularly carved stone statues from across the islands' historical eras. In 1962, the organization was brought under the control of the central government, and became the *Museum Pusat* ("Central Museum"). In 1979, it was re-cast as the *Museum Nasional*, or National Museum.

<sup>243</sup> Despite several significant attempts, I can find nothing about her, and none of my connections in either the Indonesian historical or fashion worlds have heard of her. This is indeed a shame, because her writing on fashion in the three articles in *Wanita* is among some of the most incisive I have found in my research.

<sup>244</sup> "*angauta-angauta segenap suku-suku bangsa kita: dari suku bangsa Atjeh sampai suku-bangsa Irian masing-masing sedjodoh.*" *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 154. Such maps became iconic in New Order Indonesia, most famously being included at Taman Mini, the national "theme park" built by Suharto, and discussed at length by John Pemberton in his work on "Java."

<sup>245</sup> "*Kami tak tahu dengan pasti bilamana gambar-gambar ini dibuat, akan tetapi sudah terang bukan buatan baru, sebab djika kita semakan atau kita tjojokkan gambar-gambar dengan wudjud pakaian kita diseluruh Nusantara kita hampir-hampir tak ada jang tjojok lagi.*" "*Pakaian Wanita Kita,*" *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154.

<sup>246</sup> "*di waktu suku-suku bangsa kita masih terasing satu sama lainnja.*" *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 154.

<sup>247</sup> "*Tetapi pada zaman-zaman ini paling-paling dapat kita lihat pakaian-pakaian itu hanya pada waktu-waktu ada . . . upatjara besar sadja. Dunia beredar, zamanpun berubah, dan kitapun tak hendak akan ketinggalan pula, terutama tentang pakaian kita.*" *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 154.

Revolution,” she wrote. “We had to exchange *kain* and *kebaya* for summer dresses (*jurk*,)”<sup>248</sup> or people wore *mompé*, long Javanese baggy trousers, or pants. Secondly, she noted that during the Japanese period in particular, it was important for women to dress “for dexterity or practicality.”<sup>249</sup> Women were often required to “*ikut bertaiso*,” take part in group exercises or massed gymnastics, or to do “volunteer work” (“*berkinro hosji*”) around their towns.<sup>250</sup> Wearing *kain* with *wiron*, or even more, *baju kurung*, was an “obstacle”<sup>251</sup> to these sudden and unpredictable orders to work that could not be avoided. “So . . . .” Chandra wrote,

what could we do: we tried wearing dresses. It turned out that dresses were truly quite practical. Even more so if we remember this was a time we had to flee during the recent colonial war.<sup>252</sup>

The third reason Chandra gave for changes in Indonesian women’s fashion, on the other hand, was based squarely in the politics and urges of the national era. In the Republic, there was a “feeling or eagerness for unity.”<sup>253</sup> She noted that this was more easily seen in men’s fashion than in women’s. Men had a variety of western options for “national dress” easily available to them. One was the uniform-like “Wavellpak.”<sup>254</sup> The other was to dress

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<sup>248</sup> “*Dalam masa perang, apalagi selama pendudukan Djepang dan kemudian zaman revolusi, kita semua pernah mengalami bagaimana sukarnya memperoleh bahan pakaian. Terpaksa kita tjari djalan penghematan. Jang tadi-tadinja belum pernah mengenakan rok, terpaksa mengganti kain dan kebajanja dengan jurk, malahan ada djuga jang memakai mompé atau tjelana.*” “*Pakaian Wanita Kita*,” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155. “*Jurk*” is a Dutch word for an every-day dress or frock, usually with short sleeves and a skirt to the knees, made of simple cotton, the simple basic dress worn as a summer dress across Europe and North America in the 1930s and beyond. The Dutch word “*japon*,” borrowed from the French, is also used with the same meaning.

<sup>249</sup> “*untuk ketangkasan atau praktisnja.*” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155.

<sup>250</sup> The phrases she used was “*ikut bertaiso*,” or “to go *tais*,” and “*berkinro hosji*.” In Japanese, “*kinro hoshi*” means to do unpaid work on the imperial palace grounds. Here it implies forced *corvée* labor that could include working on roads, clearing wooded areas, harvesting crops, or doing other work in support of the Japanese war effort. This was distinct from forced labor away from one’s home, often overseas, from which many Indonesians, mostly men, never returned during the war. For women, it was also distinct from forced sexual service as “comfort women” to Japanese troops.

<sup>251</sup> “*penghalang.*” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155.

<sup>252</sup> “*Djadi . . . apa boleh buat: tjoba-tjoba kita pakai jurk. Ternjata jurk benar-benar sangat praktis. Lebih-lebih kalau kita ingat akan zaman kita mengungsi-mengungsi selama perang kolonial baru-baru ini.*” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155. “*Apa boleh buat*,” (“What can one do?”) is a standard phrase in Indonesian expressing doing a particular thing because of a lack of other options. The verb “*mengungsi*,” translated here as “to flee” could also be rendered as “to evacuate.”

<sup>253</sup> “*Rasa atau hasjrat persatuan.*” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155. “*Rasa*” means an internally cultivated feeling in this sense, though it can also be translated as “flavor” or “aroma,” the essence of food, or of music. “*Hasjrat*” means a deeply held wish, desire or eagerness, a powerful will or emotion that moves a person’s decisions and actions forward.

<sup>254</sup> An outfit based on the World War II era uniform of Archibald Wavell, the First Earl Wavell, as his Field Marshall uniform in India, which Chandra described as being cut like a pyjama, using a *shoulderlap*, or shoulderstrap attached to the belt outside the jacket.

like Bung Sjahrir<sup>255</sup> in a short shirt with a pair of pockets on the chest, worn with the ends not tucked into the pants, but “fluttering”<sup>256</sup> outside them. That is, men could simply adopt the essence of western clothing—long pants and a collared shirt of some sort—and be both modern and unified in their dress when representing the nation.<sup>257</sup>

Women’s fashions were also becoming more unified, Chandra suggested, but “without their perhaps being fully aware of this.”<sup>258</sup> Rather, she said, women’s style came from the social hierarchies at elite parties where women of all Indonesian ethnicities would gather, and overseas at Indonesian embassies. “It is clear,” she wrote,

that Solonese style is the basis for unifying a way of dressing: a pleated *kain batik*, held closed with a multicolored waist wrap, a *baju kebaya* and *selendang*, (also multicolored.) Even the foreign-born wives of our diplomats (including the ones with auburn hair) wear this.<sup>259</sup>

Internationally, Indonesian women did not come up short, Chandra argued, “although we dress differently than the general ‘Eternal Feminine.’ Our women—like Eastern women in general—are modest in character.”<sup>260</sup> Re-visiting tropes about the nature of certain peoples in the archipelago that were the mainstay of Dutch colonial anthropology—the same work that produced the map of regionally costumed partners that

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<sup>255</sup> Sutan Sjahrir had been an early nationalist leader, a leader of the resistance against the Japanese, and was named Indonesia’s first Prime Minister in 1945. He was a protégé of Vice President Hatta, and a major and very visible leader of the nationalist movement. He was the founder, in 1948, of the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia*, (Indonesian Socialist Party, or PSI,) that he set up as a leftist opposition to the Indonesian Communist Party. The PSI was influential within Jakarta political circles, largely because of the education and social positioning of its leadership, but it was not successful in the 1955 elections and never gained any actual political power. The party was banned by Sukarno in 1960, and Sjahrir was arrested in 1962 and charged with conspiracy against the revolution.

<sup>256</sup> “berkibar-kibar.” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155.

<sup>257</sup> In an early issue of *Keluarga*, a reader wrote in about a “scandal” that the Indonesian ambassador to Washington, (most likely Ali Sastroamidjojo,) had attended a function there wearing Javanese traditional clothing, that is in floor-length *kain* with a jacket over it. The writer was upset that the ambassador had not worn “national dress,” which they took to mean long pants and a shirt, tie and jacket, which represented Indonesia as a modern nation. Herawati Diah replied that the Javanese look was also “national dress,” but this underscored the sense that Indonesian men represented the nation best in various forms of western clothing, whether based on military uniforms, as Sukarno did, or in coat and tie.

<sup>258</sup> “walaupun tiada disadari.” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 155.

<sup>259</sup> “Djelas betul, bahwa stjl Solo menjadi dasar persatuan tjara berpakaian itu: kain batik berwiron, tutup setagen pelangi, badju kebaya dan selendang (djuga pelangi). Bahkan isteri-isteri para diplomat kita jang berasal keturunan asing (ada pula jang berambut pirang) ikut-ikut djuga berpakaian seperti ini.” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 155.

<sup>260</sup> “Dalam pada itu harus diakui, bahwa pada umumnya wanita kita tidak kalah dengan wanita-wanita dinegeri manapun djuga dalam soal menghias diri disamping satu sifat jang umum, jang universeel, jaitu ‘das ewig Weibliche’, yakni siasat-siasat atau daja penarik jang dimiliki oleh wanita sebagai karunia alam, sekalipun wanita kita—seperti wanita Timur umumnya—bersifat ‘ingetogen’.” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 155. She uses the German, “*das ewig Weibliche*,” a quotation from Goethe’s last line in *Faust*, “*Das Ewig-Weibliche zicht uns hinan*.” (“The Eternal Feminine draws us upward.”) The expression for being modest or subdued in character was “*bersifat ingetogen*,” using the Dutch word for “modest, retiring or subdued.”

led her into this discussion—Chandra noted that women from Bali and from Deli in North Sumatra were particularly pretty (“*manis*,”) in terms of their simplicity, an element Indonesian women needed to recover. “So let us travel the across the Motherland,”<sup>261</sup> she proposed, so Indonesian women might reacquaint themselves with what were now their own fashion traditions, no matter where they came from in the nation.

Because in the matter of clothing, there are questions of history, culture, religion, economics, politics and art that have a basis or background that is often very important.<sup>262</sup>

Indonesian women came into the era of the Bandung Conference, when Indonesia first took its position as a major player on the international political stage, facing a series of personal sartorial decisions. What to wear, in which circumstances, and the etiquette of dressing was much discussed. There were certainly ways in which women outside the central circles could “get things wrong,” but dressing was nonetheless very much an issue of personal circumstances and individual choice. To be sure, etiquette suggested that remaining “restrained” or “modest” was essential to retaining an “eastern character.” But within that general restriction, and sometimes even pushing against it, Indonesian women in the first half of the 1950’s enjoyed a wide variety of choices.

However, as the chapter has already begun to point out, and as the next two chapters explore, Indonesian women were also called to represent the nation. In this arena, women’s choices were to become much more strongly circumscribed. What national values an Indonesian woman should represent, and how these should be expressed in “national dress” (“*pakaian nasional*,”) would be strongly directed from the national center, including from Sukarno himself.

When women stepped out of line, or “went too far,” the implications came to affect not merely the individual women themselves, but rather Indonesian women as a collective whole. Women representing the nation were therefore subject to a particularly potent set

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<sup>261</sup> “. . . saudara akang kami adjak berkeliling seberapa diseluruh bumi Ibu Pertiwi kita,” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, p. 155. The term “*bumi Ibu Pertiwi kita*” that I have translated as “our Motherland,” is evocative. *Ibu Pertiwi* refers to “Mother Earth,” but in the Indonesian case holds a specific meaning as the mythical mother of the nation. The full phrase itself then, translates as “let’s travel throughout the earth of our *Ibu Pertiwi*.” The sense is of a search for long-engrained local knowledge.

<sup>262</sup> “Bahwa dalam soal pakaian ini soal-soal sedjara, kebudajaan, agama, ekonomi, politik, dan kesenian mempunjai dasar atau latar-belakang jang sering-sering sangat penting.” *Wanita*, 1955, no. 6, March 20, pp. 154-155.

of moral crises, and were also called on in response to protect the “good name” of Indonesian womanhood. It is to these two elements of the first half of the 1950’s that we now turn in Chapters 4 and 5.

## CHAPTER 4

### ***Tiang Negara: Ideal Mothers as Pillars of the Indonesian Nation, The 1953 Turn***

*Lagu “Hari Ibu” / Mother’s Day Song, 1953<sup>1</sup>*  
Verses 1, 3 and 4

<i>Bunga Melati, bunga harum</i>	Jasmine Flower, fragrant flower
<i>Peni nan sutji bersih</i>	Beautiful, holy and clean
<i>Bunga Melati, “Bunga Ibu”</i>	Jasmine Flower, “Mother’s Flower”
<i>Hiasan indah puteri</i>	A girl’s beautiful adornment
<i>[O, Melati nan halus</i>	[Oh, Jasmine so refined
<i>Puspita putih pudjaan putri] 2x</i>	White blossom, the girls do laud] 2x
...	
<i>Ibu kita harapanku</i>	Our mothers, my hope [you’ll be]
<i>Pembimbing bangsa budi</i>	Guides for a wise and virtuous people
<i>Bagai melati putih harum</i>	Like the jasmine, white and fragrant
<i>Semberbak sutji wangi</i>	Spreads its virtuous holy perfume
<i>[Bahagia ibuku</i>	[Happy is my mother
<i>Bagai wanita ibu sedjati] 2x</i>	To be a woman, a mother true] 2x
<i>Dipangku Ibu bangsa</i>	In the lap of the Mother of the people
<i>Tjahja lambang negara</i>	Shines the symbol of the nation
<i>Pada Ibu nasib bangsa</i>	With Mothers lies the fate of our people
<i>Pendukung dradjat [sic] kita</i>	Supporters of our [high] standard
<i>[Kebangkitan tertudju</i>	[[Our] awakening directed
<i>Kebahagiaan nusa dan bangsa] 2x</i>	To the happiness of [our] nation and people] 2x

The sources on fashion and an emerging Indonesian national identity contained an important set of assumptions linking women’s roles as wives and mothers to their role in the development of the nation. Women’s political identity within the nation was a complex

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<sup>1</sup> Published, with notation, in *Wanita*, 1953, no. 23/24, December, p. 544. The poetry is by Sri Murti Kamarudin Noor, and the music by Dharma Arko. “*Hari Ibu*” could, of course, also be translated as “Women’s Day,” given the dual uses of the word “*Ibu*.” Thanks to Nancy Florida for her help in rendering the poetic translation.

matter. This element of the new national political culture that linked the moral success of the nation specifically to women's comportment assured that women's political identities were imbedded in a cultural web that was highly contested, as earlier chapters in this dissertation have already explored. The precise ways in which the definition of a "good woman" was constituted, for instance, were not only influenced by intricate negotiations with both colonial legacy and modernity, but these perceptions also varied among ethnic groups and between social classes.<sup>2</sup>

Saskia Wieringa describes *kodrat wanita*, (in her translation "women's destiny,") as "Indonesia[s] . . . own discourse in which expectations of women's behavior are encoded." *Kodrat wanita*, she argues, "serves as both a regulating mechanism covering the social relations between the sexes and as an instrument of power."<sup>3</sup> That is, the roles women played in society that were believed to be God-given as part of their biological role in reproduction and child-rearing, were used primarily as a method of control to retard women's social and political equality.

But, Wieringa also notes, "[s]truggles over the meaning and content of this code, or over the differing emphases aspects have received, have been constant throughout Indonesian history."<sup>4</sup> As is discussed in Chapter 1 for instance, Wieringa suggests that in pre-independence Indonesia, "the modern woman was an important trope in the discourse of those advocating the 'progress' Western civilization would bring to 'feudal' Java."<sup>5</sup> One result of this progressive stance was that from the 1910's on, women involved in the anti-colonial movement combined ideas about nationalism and citizenship with elements of Dutch feminism to argue the rights of citizenship in the new nation should apply equally to men and women, and they used those ideas to demand equal political rights.

As is discussed in Chapter 1, this vision was key to Sukarno's own conception of gender roles in the new nation. "Once again," he wrote in *Sarinah*, "there are differences between men and women. But once again, I repeat here that these differences are ONLY because of and for the purposes of women's *kodrat*, that is, ONLY because of and for the

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<sup>2</sup> Saskia Wieringa discusses these issues in *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 33.



goals of marriage and motherhood alone.”<sup>6</sup> Wieringa also quotes Ibu Mangoenkoesoemo, the wife of the founder of *Boedi Oetomo*,<sup>7</sup> as writing in 1918 that “the general nature of the sexes is different . . . but not inferior.”<sup>8</sup>

This chapter argues that the social power imbedded in conceptions of *kodrat wanita* were not only used to diminish women’s position. Rather, politically active Indonesian women adopted a rhetoric of gendered purity imbedded in ideas about *kodrat wanita* and motherhood to argue for the centrality of their position as “*Ibu Bangsa*,” or “Mothers of the Nation.” They argued that their status as the purveyors and engenderers of high standards of national morality, and as the bearers of the next generation tied them inextricably to the success of the national project. They reasoned, therefore, that their *kodrat* as women provided them with a powerful role in the formation of the nation that was in addition to, *not instead of*, their roles and rights as citizens.

In the early days of the Republic, even though the idea of the intersection of women’s rights and the formation of the nation already carried political resonance, for the most part, the idea was expressed within a broader cultural discussion about modernity and national identity. The special place of women, while part of the nationalist rhetoric, was not yet, strictly speaking, a part of explicitly expressed state ideology. This began to change in 1953, however, when “*Hari Ibu*,” translatable either as “Mothers’ Day” or “Women’s Day,”<sup>9</sup> became an official state commemoration.

*Hari Ibu* was first celebrated on December 22, 1938, the date having been chosen by women’s organizations to mark the tenth anniversary of the first Indonesian Women’s Congress in December 1928.<sup>10</sup> A remembrance of the event published in *Wanita* in 1951 noted that the day was marked “by women’s organizations every year since then,”<sup>11</sup> but it

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<sup>6</sup> “*Sekali lagi: ada perbedaan antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Tetapi sekali lagi pula saja ulangi disini, bahwa perbedaan-perbedaan HANJALAH karena dan untuk tudjuan kodrat alam, yakni HANJALAH karena dan untuk tudjuan perlaki-isterian dan peribuan sadja.*” Soekarno, *Sarinah*, 1963, p. 25

<sup>7</sup> The first nationalist movement in Indonesia, formed by members of the Central Javanese nobility in 1908. See the discussion in Chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> The dual-play of the term is important to keep in mind, and is why I have chosen to primarily refer to the celebration by its Indonesian name, rather than translating it into English in the body of the chapter.

<sup>10</sup> See the discussion of the 1928 Congress, held in Yogyakarta (Mataram) in Chapter 1. The decision to celebrate *Hari Ibu* took place at the Second Women’s Congress held ten years later in Semarang. See *Wanita*, 1951, no. 23, December, p. 473, for the magazine’s editorial on the history of *Hari Ibu*.

<sup>11</sup> “*Sedjak itu tiap-tiap tahun pada tanggal 22 Desember organisasi-organisasi wanita memperingati hari tersebut sebagai Hari Ibu.*” *Wanita*, 1951, no. 23, December, p. 473

is not fully clear what those intervening years' celebrations entailed.<sup>12</sup> *Hari Ibu* was marked during the Japanese period, though the relative roles played by women's organizations and the Japanese government has not yet been researched that I know of. The few sources we do have seem to imply that commemorations were carried out primarily at the local level, and that the programs for these local celebrations varied significantly.<sup>13</sup> But we do also see examples of large, formal gatherings with speeches and programs that match the general format of the events of 1953 in these sources, suggesting a continuation of some sort from the commemorations of *Hari Ibu* during the Japanese period to the national one.

The sources I have seen on how the day was celebrated during Revolution are less clear.<sup>14</sup> Notably, immediately after the conclusion of the Revolution, there does not appear to have been a national celebration of *Hari Ibu*. *Wanita* made no mention of the day's celebration in either December 1949 or in January 1950 editions, an absence that extended even to a story about the various women's political and social events held in Jakarta that first December of full independence.<sup>15</sup>

By December 1950, however, *Hari Ibu* had reappeared, this time at a national level. *Wanita* published an article entitled "Why Do We Have *Hari Ibu*?"<sup>16</sup> that laid out the

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<sup>12</sup> This question could be readily researched, I just haven't had the chance to. It would likely make an interesting journal article in the future.

<sup>13</sup> Brad Horton, an American scholar teaching Southeast Asian history in Japan, looked into the Japanese press sources on this question quickly for me. He found articles and photographs about commemorations of *Hari Ibu* in both the Indonesian (*Asia Raja* and *Pandji Poestaka*) and Japanese (*Jawa Shimbun*) language press, with such coverage increasing from 1942 to 1944. Photographs in *Pandji Poestaka* in December 1942 show a large, well-attended meeting held in Jakarta, with both men and women in attendance. Coverage of events in 1942 in *Asia Raja* described public observances in Yogyakarta, Malang, Bandung, Semarang and Solo, that focused on a variety of issues including infant health and the role of mothers in raising healthy families, maternal health and providing services to the poor, including providing food to indigent families on the day itself. The commemorations appear to have focused, therefore on "social" issues, those more connected to *kodrat wanita*, than to questions of Indonesian political autonomy and sovereignty. But the extent to which content was controlled by the Japanese, how propagandistic that might have been, and how that might have shifted over time would take more research.

<sup>14</sup> I haven't found any coverage in the more limited press sources of the period, but I haven't given those sources a comprehensive read. What we can note is that during the revolutionary years, 1945-1949, the various national women's congresses did not line up with *Hari Ibu*. The two 1946 congresses took place in Solo on February 24-26, and in Madiun on June 14-16. With the centralization of the movement into the *Kongres Wanita Indonesia* (Kowani,) the meetings reduced to once a year beginning in 1947, in Magelang on July 14-16. The 1948 congress was held in Solo again on August 26-28, and the 1949 congress, which was labeled as the Consultative Council of Indonesian Women ("*Permusjawaratan Wanita Indonesia*,") was held in Yogyakarta from August 26-September 2, in conjunction with the timing of the Round Table talks, as was discussed in Chapter 2. So, to that point, the only national women's meetings that had occurred on December 22 was the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference in 1938. Of course, under conditions of war, as was the case during the Revolution, symbolic reasons were likely very low on the list of importance in establishing possible dates and locations for national meetings.

<sup>15</sup> The editorial in the December 1953 edition of *Wanita* asserted that the magazine had recognized *Hari Ibu* for each of the five years it had published, but there is no mention of the celebration in 1949. But the memory of marking the day each year was firmly engrained in the construction of the holiday.

<sup>16</sup> "*Mengapa ada Hari Ibu?*," *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434-35.

rationale for “women having a ‘special’ day on which the meritorious services of women from all levels [of society] are respected and honored.”<sup>17</sup> The commemoration was not primarily a celebration of women’s maternal or even matriarchal roles within their own families. Rather, the author argued that the day was principally a marker of women’s struggles as Indonesian patriots during the anti-colonial movement, the Japanese occupation and the revolution. The day also celebrated women’s equal rights with men and their roles and responsibilities as citizens, a viewpoint that was repeated in 1951 and 1952 in women’s magazines.

All of these early post-independence celebrations of *Hari Ibu* stressed women’s roles as a collective whole rather than as individuals. The fundamental question at play was about who women as a group should be in relation to the nation. In 1953, however, the focus on women’s experiences in the Japanese war and anti-Dutch revolution was replaced with a conception that the day should celebrate the role of women as “Mothers of the Nation.”<sup>18</sup> Further, this role was adopted as a part of state ideology and ritual, cementing this position for women in the imagination of the emerging Indonesian body politic.

The Indonesian term for a group of people linked by a particular characteristic is “*kaum*.” It carries a sense of the grouping of people in their ‘groupness’. That is, it designates collective characteristics of a group, at the specific expense of individuality, (or at times, even variation) within the group. As this dissertation discusses later, two particular such groups—*kaum wanita* and *kaum komunis*—would face particular scrutiny in the aftermath of the events of September 30/October 1, 1965. In important ways,

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<sup>17</sup> “*bahwa Ibu harus mempunyai hari ‘istimewanja’, dimana tepat pada hari itu djasa-djasa Ibu dari segala lapisan dihormati dan dihargai.*” *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>18</sup> It is striking that in the documentary history of the 1953 celebration published five years later in the *Buku 1958*, there is little more than passing reference to the Japanese era, and that while the Revolutionary years are discussed (only) somewhat more, for both eras, the discussion is focused on the structural history of the women’s movement. In the over 100 reports from around the nation of how and why *Hari Ibu* was celebrated in 1953, none of them referenced the suffering of Indonesian women during the 1940’s. There was a stronger sense of reference to the 1928 national women’s conference, but this was also because 1953 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that first meeting of a national women’s movement. There was also little reference to the details of the national meetings held in the 1930’s. None of the greetings from the various political parties, national newspapers or political leaders specifically focused on women’s suffering during the 1940’s as a reason for the day’s celebrations, though they may have referenced women’s revolutionary struggle (“*perjuangan*”) during the same period. On the other hand, references to the role women should play collectively in building a strong nation were mentioned in most descriptions of the goals of the new national holiday. See *Buku 1958*, Chapters II and III, where the original texts are reprinted fully.

however, 1953 and the nationalization of *Hari Ibu* marked a shift in how women as a *kaum*, as a collective group, were linked to the conception of the Indonesian nation.<sup>19</sup>

*Hari Ibu* and discussions of women as *kaum Ibu* had sartorial implications. As this dissertation has already discussed, the image of Indonesian femininity expressed through fashion in the early 1950's was wide-ranging and full of possibility. For women as individuals, this would remain very much the case. But, as Indonesia increasingly represented itself on the international stage, presidential expectation and command brought a specific style of modern Indonesian woman to the fore as the representation of Indonesians collectively.

*Kain-kebaya* became a uniform of "Indonesianness" to the world, a way of distinguishing the country from other emerging nations. No longer simply Javanese, *kain-kebaya* became *pakaian nasional*, "national dress," a particular category of fashion that expresses a dual focus, one international and the other internal. In both directions, national dress proclaims "this is who we people are." Its wearing as representational symbols becomes linked to specific spaces and occasions where the nation itself is on display.

Beginning in the early 1950s, the wearing of *kain-kebaya* took on a new, national meaning. It became explicitly linked to formal ideas of citizenship and national identity. As national dress, it was, for the first time, placed in equal comparison to the national dress of women of other nations, rather than being placed in subordination to the western fashion that had demarcated European status during the colonial era. Yet it simultaneously

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<sup>19</sup> Besides *Hari Ibu*, there was also a second national celebration of women within the nation, *Hari Kartini*, or Kartini Day, celebrated annually on April 21. Its celebration is particularly connected to the wearing of *kain-kebaya*. I have not included it in the analysis here, however, because the sources in my materials on the day are less developed and less historically grounded, and I don't feel I can make a strong statement about the day and its role yet. This will have to be for future versions of the project. It is clear, however, that *Hari Kartini* was used by Indonesian diplomats as an opportunity to present Indonesia to the world, and, in doing so, to point out the relative emancipated position of Indonesian women while still using such things as classical Javanese dance performances and *batik* fashion shows to simultaneously present these same women as being imbedded within an ancient (and somewhat exotic) culture. See, for instance the "*Antara Kita*" ("Among Us,") column in *Keluarga*, 1955, no. 6, June, pp. 5-6, which features a photograph of Nona Sentanu Supomo, the daughter of the Indonesian ambassador to the United Kingdom performing *Tari Golek*, a Javanese court dance of a young woman beautifying herself, and a dance particularly noted for its grace and slow-moving fine control, for an audience at the *Hari Kartini* celebrations at the Indonesian Embassy in London. My mother also notes that in the early New Order years, *Hari Kartini* was very much a focus of women's official commemoration, while *Hari Ibu* was much less important in the diplomatic women's social cycle in Jakarta. To some extent, this would make sense. *Hari Ibu* reflected the progressive socialist agenda of activist women, who, as the dissertation explores somewhat in Chapter 7, found their thinking, (if not their selves,) out of favor in the new masculinist political order. *Hari Kartini*, however, which could be glossed to be about early national patriotism and wearing traditional *kain-kebaya*, was much more in keeping with the ethos of the New Order.

referred back to an earlier age, most specifically and explicitly linked to Kartini, the early nationalist and re-styled “Mother of the Nation.”

As uniform, therefore, *kain-kebaya* was not merely an expression of the sartorial choices of individual women, it also served both as an imagined collective history to women across the nation and as a representation of that nation to the world. This was made particularly apparent in the ways both *batik* and *kain-kebaya* were employed as national symbols during the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung in 1955, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

As was discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, *kain-kebaya* also served a role in unifying women from across the nation in a national *kaum wanita*. Although Central Javanese women had an advantage in some ways in this arena, since their versions of *kain-kebaya* were seen as the most *asli*, or original, women from across the country adopted *kain-kebaya* not only as a form of national dress, but also as the uniform of the women during their public political work. Clothing, therefore, was a critical marker of women’s collective roles in the political system, and properly worn *kain-kebaya* became its uniform.<sup>20</sup>

### ***The Development of Hari Ibu in Wanita Magazine***

When *Wanita* first discussed *Hari Ibu* in December 1950, the article describing it, “Why Do We Have *Hari Ibu*?”<sup>21</sup> by S. Menarasaidah,<sup>22</sup> was steeped in the details of Indonesian women’s experience during war. While the article repeated the substance of the *hadith* that “women, and especially ‘MOTHERS’ are the pillar of the nation,”<sup>23</sup> the author did not base this distinction merely in ideas about women in their *kodrat* or God-given role in the family. Rather, building on the challenges that women-as-mothers had faced within their families during the birthing of the Indonesian nation, Menarasaidah made specific

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<sup>20</sup> In nearly every photograph of women’s formal political meetings from the 1950’s-1960’s, the vast majority of women are shown wearing *kain-kebaya*. Sukarno’s speech to a national meeting of women in 1964, discussed in Chapter 6, makes clear that at that point, women were wearing either *kain-kebaya* or military and police uniforms, drawing a parallel between the two forms of dress. By then, *kain-kebaya* had explicitly become group uniforms, with all the women from a single organization dressed in the same color.

<sup>21</sup> “Mengapa ada Hari Ibu?”, *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434-35.

<sup>22</sup> Another writer about whom I can find no details. She did describe herself in the article as a “*puteri Indonesia jang telah dewasa*,” a “daughter of Indonesia who is already an adult,” that is a young, unmarried adult woman, and the article pledges the loyalty of the younger generation to continue the work set out by their mothers.

<sup>23</sup> “Benar pula djika dikatakan, bahwa wanita, teristimewa ‘IBU’ ialah tiang negara.” *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434. Again, the translation of “IBU” takes some consideration.

references to the histories of women's suffering and service to the nation outside their households during both the Dutch and Japanese colonial eras, and to their actions during the Revolution, as members of a colonized people in their own right.

The Japanese period, she noted, was a time when a "heavy burden was borne by the 'Indonesian Mother',"<sup>24</sup> in her role as keeper of the family sphere. "We were forced to eat rice mixed with corn," she noted, "of which the portions were insufficient, and we were forced also only to eat *'gerek'* (salt fish) as a side-dish."<sup>25</sup> But as mothers, women also "no matter how difficult it was to find and buy their own food . . . found the resources to serve enough food for their husbands and children."<sup>26</sup> Since this work went on "unceasingly for 3-½ years, in every Indonesian household, and at all levels as well,"<sup>27</sup> it was women's labor, both physical and emotional, in this analysis, that held both the family and the emerging nation together.

Such work, tending both to the family and the needs of the nation at the expense of her own needs and feelings, continued during the Revolution. "The 'Indonesian Mother' strengthened her heart and reinforced her faith to run her household," Menarasaidah wrote. "Despite the boom of cannons and the explosion of grenades at the beginning of our revolution, Mothers expended their energy, not only in the home, but also in public kitchens."<sup>28</sup> Again, Menarasaidah drew attention to the emotional strength of mothers, who let their husbands and sons—and even their daughters—head off to war. Her own emotional reserve at the occasion was also noted: "Mother's tears didn't flow at that time, and even Mother's feelings at the time were only felt by the Mother herself."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Pada waktu itulah terasa benar beban berat 'Ibu Indonesia'." *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>25</sup> "Kita dipaksakan memakan nasi bertjampuran djagung, jang amat tidak mentjukupi porsinja, dan kita dipaksakan pula hanja memakan 'gerek' (ikan asin) sebagai lauknja." *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>26</sup> "akan tetapi, bagaimanapun djuga susahnja untuk mendapat dan membeli makanan 'Ibu' tetap dapat mentjari akal untuk mentjukupi sadjian makanan bagi suaminja dan anak-anak." *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>27</sup> "terus-menerus terdjadi selama [sic] 3½ tahun, ditiap-tiap rumah tangga Indonesia dari lapisan manapun djuga." *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>28</sup> "Ini pula berarti bagi 'Ibu Indonesia' untuk tambah menguatkan hati dan meneguhkan imannja untuk mengurus rumah tangganja. Walaupun ada dentuman meriam dan letusan granat pada permulaan revolusi kita, sang Ibu tetap mengerahkan tenaganja, tidak hanja dirumahnja akan tetapi djuga didapur umumnja dan berbagai dapur perjuangnja." *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>29</sup> "dan air mata Ibu tidak dapat mengalir pada waktu itu, akan tetapi perasaan Ibu pada saat itu, hanja dapat dirasakan oleh seorang Ibu sadja." *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

The Mother who “remains silent no matter how great her sufferings and difficulties”<sup>30</sup> was presented as the ideal Indonesian Mother who belonged to and cared for the entire nation. The expression used, “*Ibu sejati kita*”—“our true Mothers”—was one that attached women to the source of the nation’s morality.<sup>31</sup> Women were *tiang negara*, “pillars of the nation,” on whom either strength or decay would be built. The deployment of the language of “*Ibu sejati kita*” raised all Indonesian women, and indeed Indonesian women as a *kaum*, to being “exemplary” mothers, not only mothers of their own households but of the whole nation.

Overlaid on this sense of calm self-denial was an additional layer of purity that did not address some of the ways women may have managed to care for their families. Indeed, there were important absences and silences in Menarasaidah’s article about women’s sufferings during the war. Playing in the black market, hoarding and stealing, or offering sexual favors for food and the like were not unheard-of strategies for keeping family and home together. There was, for instance, a complete silence, not only in this article, but also in almost all other women’s sources from Indonesia in the 1950’s and 1960’s, about women forced into sexual service for Japanese soldiers as “comfort women,” even within the plethora of articles that were written about prostitution during the period. Thus, the purity of “*Ibu sejati kita*,” (“our true Mothers,”) was exemplary and ideal as much as it was real, and was full of important and pregnant silences.

Ideal, exemplary womanhood and motherhood became a central element of the construction of the Indonesian nation, as the dissertation will continue to argue. While the image of the *Ibu sejati* would not necessarily be a true representation of real women, she would become a standard to which real Indonesian women would be tightly held. Further, as with when the bombs burst and grenades exploded from 1945-1949, it would be precisely at times when the Nation and the Revolution were felt to be under siege from outside that perceived attacks on exemplary Indonesian femininity would be most strongly

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<sup>30</sup> “*Memang sifat seorang Ibu tetap berdiam sadja bagaimanapun besarnya pengorbanan dan kesusahannya.*” *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 435.

<sup>31</sup> See the discussion of *Suara Perwari* in Chapter 1 for another instance of this construction of ideal Indonesian national motherhood as “*ibu sedjati kita.*”

deployed as a call to the defense of the nation.<sup>32</sup> Conversely, it seems that at times when the pressures were inward facing, say in the leadup to elections or during heightened periods of regional insurrection, the necessity of representing the nation didn't fall on women in the same ways.

This exemplary motherhood was not a heavily dissected idea. It was a construction of motherhood that was assumed to reach back into "history," an element connected to beliefs about women's *kodrat*. Rather than being examined and questioned, in Menarasaidah's sense of it, such ideal motherhood was primarily "felt":

This is our true Mother [*"Ibu sedjati kita,"*] and it is fitting that we are proud to have Mothers who have remained strong and firm across the ages, with a love and affection that can't be written about here, it can only be felt [*"dirasakan"*] by all of us.<sup>33</sup>

By 1953, however, the construction of *Hari Ibu* had expanded from being sensed and felt, and became a structural element of the construction of the nation. December 22, 1953 occasioned a national commemoration of *Hari Ibu* on three fronts, all under the rubric of a "Commemoration of a Quarter Century of Unified Indonesian Women's Movement."<sup>34</sup> Two events, one in Jakarta—a program of speeches at the Presidential Palace—and the other in Yogyakarta—the laying of a foundation stone for the construction of a building to house the *Hari Ibu* Foundation<sup>35</sup>—were presented as national rituals, or *upacara nasional*. Local celebrations took place across the nation's different regions, forming a second level of commemoration. Finally, events were held at Indonesian embassies and missions overseas, leading the literature on the event to describe the day as an anniversary that was celebrated both "inside and outside the nation."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The contention that the phenomenon of women's purity becoming heightened during times the nation perceived itself to be under attack from outside, that is directly from European and American sources, political, military and cultural, will be revisited in Chapters 6 and 7.

<sup>33</sup> "*Beginitlah Ibu sedjati kita dan patut pulalah kita bangga mempunjai seorang Ibu jang tetap kuat dan teguh disepanjang masa, dengan kasih-sajangnja jang tak dapat dituliskan disini, akan tetapi hanja dapat dirasakan kita semua.*" *Wanita*, 1950, no. 24, December, pp. 434.

<sup>34</sup> "*Peringatan Seperempat Abad Kesatuan Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia.*" See in particular Chapters II and III of the *Buku 1958*, for an expansive view of the 25-year celebrations of the first women's congress, as seen from five years later. The 1958 book notes that there had been plans to publish a commemorative volume of the events in 1953, but that this was put off because of a lack of budget.

<sup>35</sup> "*Jajasan Hari Ibu,*" *Buku 1958*, p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> "*Peringatan didalam dan diluar negeri.*" *Buku 1958*, p. 62. In some ways, this claim is a stretch. The book focuses primarily on events held in Penang and Cairo, and mentions events held in Manila, London and Paramaribo briefly.



The national-level events were attended by the nation's highest political figures—Sukarno and his wife Fatmawati in Jakarta and Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo in Yogyakarta—and the day sent the clear and explicit message that *Hari Ibu* would henceforth be a celebration connected directly to the national project. The attendance at the events, and particularly in the evening at the Istana in Jakarta, which included 1500 women from over 60 organizations that spanned the full breadth of the Indonesian women's movements, helped stress that the commemoration was aimed at building a further sense of unity and inclusion for women across political, religious and cultural spectra.

The national and nationalizing scope of the commemoration was evident in the various speeches given that day, as well as in the official greetings sent to the national organizing committee by leading women, political parties and organizations, high-ranking politicians, and the editorial boards of newspapers. The principal speech in Jakarta was from Nj. Sri Mangunsarkoro,<sup>37</sup> the chair of the national organizing committee for the events in the two cities. It was read in her absence—she was overseeing the commemoration in Yogyakarta—by Nj. Tuti Harahap. December 22, the speech suggested,

is a national day, on the same level as other national days. We do not agree that the Day of December 22, which we have named "*HARI IBU*" is only a day for Women. If our nation knows May First as Workers Day, then December 22 is *Hari Ibu*. Because it was on December 22 that the United Indonesian Women's Movement began its path of service for the People and the Nation.<sup>38</sup>

Nj. Sri enumerated the specifics of the early women's movement, highlighting the way in which members of the Indonesian women's movement saw their role in the new state. While they were wives and mothers, with responsibilities in the family, they were also free economic and social actors with the right to affect their own lives and produce their own wealth. Simultaneously, they were full political actors in the building of a new society, as they had been since the beginning of the nationalist movement. This emphasis of

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<sup>37</sup> Sri Mangunsarkoro was the founder in 1945 of *Partai Wanita Rakjat* ("Women's People's Party,") which Saskia Wieringa describes as the nation's "first (and only) Indonesian women's party," and a "militant organization, with nationalism and monogamy as its two major principles." Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>38</sup> "*hari 22 Desember adalah hari nasional, sederajat kedudukannya dengan hari-hari nasional jang lain. Kami tak dapat menjetudjui, kalau Hari 22 Desember jang kita namakan "HARI IBU" itu hanja mendjadi harinja Ibu-ibu sajda. Kalau bangsa kita mengenal Hari Satu Mei sebagai Hari Buruh, maka Hari 22 Desember adalah Hari Ibu. Karena djustru hari 22 Desember itulah Kesaturan Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia membuka djalannya kearah pengabdian Bangsa dan Negara.*" Buku 1958, p. 63.

the twinned and connected roles of women as both mothers and citizens would not have been lost on either the women in attendance or the nation's political leadership. Indeed this particular point was prominently re-asserted in the coverage of the event in both *Wanita* and *Keluarga* magazines, so the point would have been driven home to women across the nation as well.

Nj. Sri's speech then took an important turn, stressing women's unique abilities and gifts to the nation. The Unified Indonesian Women's Movement, she offered, had done their work in a way that was "honest and sincere," ("*djudjur dan ikhlas*,") precisely because "for a quarter century, [we] have maintained a *characteristic* positive attitude, that is that each and every membership organization has held fast to *lofty morals, patience and endurance*."<sup>39</sup> As a result, women had been effective at maintaining unity among themselves

because it is apparently easier for women to carry this out than it is in men's circles. This is, because of their *kodrat*, women are more governed by the refinement [*"kehalusan"*] of their feelings, and within the household, every day they already practice holding fast to a climate of unity.<sup>40</sup>

Women, she suggested, because of their very essence and nature, and precisely because of their high moral refinement, were the critical element holding the new nation together.

At the time, with issues about the governance of various regions still in play, the nation was not yet fully realized or fully unified. "It is just at times when schism breaks out in all of Indonesia, such as right now,"<sup>41</sup> she wrote, "that the integrity of the Unified

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<sup>39</sup> "*Kesatuan Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia selama seperempat abad itu mempunyai sifat positif karakteristik, jaitu dalam berpegang teguhnja terhadap ketinggian moraal, kesabaran dan ketabahan dari satu dan lain organisasi anggauta kesatuan.*" *Buku 1958*, p. 63. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>40</sup> "*Pendjagaan terhadap keutuhan persatuan itu rupa-rupanja bagi wanita lebih mudah dilaksanakan dari pada dikalangan kaum laki-laki. Sebab wanita-wanita menurut kodratnja lebih terperintah oleh kehalusan perasaanja dan didalam rumah tangganja tiap-tiap hari sudah berlatih memegang teguh suasana persatuan.*" *Buku 1958*, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> In 1953, the *Darul Islam* uprisings against the Jakarta government were, in the words of historian Chiara Formichi, were "totally burning." (Personal communication, February 2020.) The *Darul Islam* (meaning "House of Islam," or "Islamic State,") was first proclaimed in West Java on August 7, 1949, two days after the United Nations-ordered cease fire in the Indonesian Revolution. Led by Sekarmadji Mardjani Kartosuwiryo, who had commanded a specifically Islamist militia in Java both during the Japanese era and the Revolution, the *Darul Islam* movement sought to establish an Islamic Republic of Indonesia. The proposed (and in fact, declared but never realized) state was to be organized in Islamic law rather than in Pancasilaist socialism. Kartosuwiryo had worked with the nationalist forces during the first three years of the Revolution. But when Sukarno's forces withdrew from West Java in 1948 as part of the Renville agreement with the Dutch, the *Darul Islam* militias broke from the national coalition. From that point forward, they were in armed rebellion against the Indonesian state. The *Darul Islam* movement expanded beyond Java to Sulawesi in 1951-52, and in September 1953, that is, just months previous to this speech, Teungkuh Daud Beureueh, the Military Governor of Aceh declared that the province would join the *Darul Islam* movement.

Indonesian Women's Movement . . . becomes a *stimulus* for societal unity that is strong and tangible, and that is clearly necessary for the perfection of our National Revolution."<sup>42</sup>

Setting the perfection of the completion of the revolution—which would also be the central focus of the rhetoric of Sukarno's Guided Democracy<sup>43</sup>—as a goal for which women were particularly suited also allowed the women's groups to claim a sense of revolutionary dynamism and a role in the ongoing development of the nation that they alone could fulfill. Again, this would rely on their skills connected to *kodrat wanita*, as the work would be successful because "peace and happiness fill the household, such that the Unified Indonesian Women's Movement will become "MOTHERS OF THE PEOPLE" ("*IBU MASJARAKAT*,") responsible for holding fast to the spirit of unity and strength of society, and therefore the peace and happiness of the Nation and People as a whole."<sup>44</sup>

The dynamism of the times, Nj. Sri, argued, demanded a response based in a strong sense of moral discernment. Because the situation around them was always in flux, with frequent shifts in both culture and politics, it was necessary for the nation to "adjust ourselves to the circumstances of life in the world today."<sup>45</sup> This would require negotiating significant change, Nj. Sri suggested, and the adoption of new ways of living and of a progressive outlook. "Let us let go of teachings and all things that are obsolete and moldy and no longer fit with the direction of the times," she wrote, "and let us together be brave in facing the new era that is coming with all sorts of healthy change."<sup>46</sup>

But although she called for the nation to be open to significant adjustments, Nj. Sri did not call for all old ways to be thrown out: "we should continue those things that align with the demands of the age, and we need not discard them,"<sup>47</sup> she wrote. But, she warned,

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<sup>42</sup> "Djustru pada waktu proses perpetjahan diseluruh Indonesia meradja-lela seperti pada waktu sekarang ini, maka keutuhan Kesatuan Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia jang telah berumur seperempat Abad menjadilah stimulan jang kuat dan njata untuk keutuhan masjarakat, jang amat diperlukan untuk kesempurnaan Revolusi Nasional kita itu." *Buku 1958*, p. 64. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>43</sup> The desire to "menyelesaikan revolusi," or "complete the revolution" during the late 1950's and early 1960's is an important element of Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

<sup>44</sup> "demi keselamatan dan kebahagiaan seisi rumah tanggannya, demikianlah hendaknya Kesatuan Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia sebagai 'IBU MASJARAKAT' berkewajiban memegang teguh keutuhan suasana dan kekuatan masjarakat, demi keselamatan dan kebahagiaan Negara dan Rakjat seluruhnya." *Buku 1958*, p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> "menjesuaikan dirinya kepada kenyataan-kenyataan hidup dunia pada waktu ini." *Buku 1958*, p. 64. Again, note the use of the need to "sesuai" or adjust oneself with new realities.

<sup>46</sup> "Lepaskan adjaran-adjaran dan segala sesuatu jang lapuk dan tak tjotjok lagi dengan tuntutan zaman dan marilah kita bersama-sama berani menghadapi zaman baru jang akan datang dengan segala gaja-gaja permaharuannya jang sehat." *Buku 1958*, p. 64.

<sup>47</sup> "Meskipun dasar-dasar hidup jang lain masih dapat tjotjok lagi dengan tuntutan-tuntutan hidup dunia jang baru ini dapatlah kami teruskan dan tidak usah kami buang." *Buku 1958*, p. 64.

“we must remain aware, because the truth of life doesn’t know old and new. Let us remember that the truth of life always demands a dynamic in its own shape and form, aligned with the demands of the times, and because of that, it always changes.”<sup>48</sup> It was Indonesian women specifically, she argued, who needed to take the lead in this arena of negotiating social change, using their abilities given to them by their *kodrat wanita* to unify the nation, their knowledge of keeping the family together, and their moral strength to keep the nation pure. Women, the pillars of the nation, would keep society from collapsing inward as it negotiated the changes in the world around it.

The establishment of *Hari Ibu* as a national holiday in 1953, therefore, was not simply about honoring women’s historical place in the nation. Nor was it primarily focused in a recognition of women’s war-time suffering. Rather, in Nj. Sri’s vision, *Hari Ibu* looked forward. The day was intended both to celebrate and encourage a clearly defined, politically dynamic role that activist women were staking out in the new nation, particularly as a source of national unity, as its moral center and as a bellwether for guiding change in the modern world.

These were not new ideas. The Women’s Congress held in Jakarta in 1935, for instance, had been based on four characteristics shared by all the groups attending: nationhood (“*kenasionalan*”), social concerns (“*kesosialan*”), neutrality (“*kenetralan*”),<sup>49</sup> and “womanlihood,” (“*keperempuanan*.”)<sup>50</sup> *Keperempuanan* was defined as “That the work of the Congress [that] must focus on *opening all paths* to Indonesian women *in the direction of development and a high [moral] standard*, to advance our responsibilities as “*Mothers of the Nation*. (“*Ibu Bangsa*”).”<sup>51</sup> By 1953, however, this was not merely the intention of those women “who congressed,” (“*wanita-wanita jang ber-kongres*,”) but of women as a class, as a *kaum wanita*, within the political imagining of the nation and the state. Thus, *Hari Ibu* was

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<sup>48</sup> “tetapi kita harus sadar, bahwa kebenaran hidup tidak mengenal lama dan baru. Ingatlah, bahwa kebenaran hidup selalu menuntut dynamiernja dalam bentuk sendiri, sesuai dengan tuntutan zaman dan karena itu selalu berubah sikapnja.” *Buku 1958*, p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> This tenet essentially required that each member respect the varying opinions taken by different women’s groups, mostly in an attempt to keep the Congress united despite religious and political differences about marriage laws and polygamy.

<sup>50</sup> The English translation is taken from Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*.

<sup>51</sup> “Bahwa pekerdjaan Kongres harus ditudjukan kepada pembukaan segala djalan bagi perempuan Indonesia kearah kemajuan dan ketinggian deradjatna untuk mendjalankan kewadjabannja sebagai ‘Ibu Bangsa’.” *Buku 1958*, p. 29.

transformed into an official recognition of this role, and a means of transferring this duty onto all women through their relationship to the state as citizens.

This role for women as “*Ibu Bangsa*” was amplified by official and semi-official publications that were aimed both domestically and internationally, as well as in women’s magazines. In all these arenas, and to differing audiences, Indonesian women were presented and discussed as a group with a definition and role that was both nationalized and idealized. Two publications from 1953—a bilingual Indonesian-English book of essays and photographs on Indonesian women published by the Ministry of Information, and an extended essay on Indonesian women and *Pancasila* published by a private foundation—are particularly interesting in this regard. Both demonstrate how the same basic connection between women’s roles as true, pure mothers and national strength came to be a core element of the definition of the emerging Indonesian national identity and self-vision. Both also fundamentally discussed women in generalized and idealized terms, laying out how women as a *kaum* were connected to an emerging vision of Indonesian national identity in both its cultural and political spheres.

### “**Wanita di Indonesia**”

The first of the two publications, *Wanita di Indonesia/Women in Indonesia* was not connected directly to the national celebration of *Hari Ibu* in 1953<sup>52</sup> Published earlier, in May, it was a project of C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, a Minangkabau women’s leader and later a candidate for a seat in the People’s Council in 1955. In the 1930’s, she had been active in combatting prostitution, a social evil that she saw as having two distinct and separate causes. While many women were driven to sex work by economic necessity, she thought, others entered into the life because of “vanity, laziness and frivolity.”<sup>53</sup> But she saw both causes as a diminishment of Indonesian women’s natural moral condition. She was also a major campaigner against polygamy, which was connected to prostitution, Susan

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<sup>52</sup> Although, interestingly, there was a half-page ad for the book published in the December 1953 *Hari Ibu* special edition of *Wanita*.

<sup>53</sup> See Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 74.

Blackburn notes about Toemenggoeng and others, as part of a “struggle against illicit sex on all fronts, the aim being to restrain lust.”<sup>54</sup>

Her book, therefore, was intended to highlight that natural moral standing. The “Mothers of our people [should be] given the attention and esteem which they fully deserve,”<sup>55</sup> she wrote. So that she could “place the Indonesian mother and woman in the foreground and draw . . . attention both at home and abroad, to her special qualities,”<sup>56</sup> the book was produced bilingually, with the Indonesian text followed in each instance by a full English translation.

Primarily, *Wanita di Indonesia* was a collection of photographs of Indonesian women from across the nation, representing a wide range of circumstances. It was curated from a variety of sources and photographers, both Indonesian and western, though all the images shared a black and white photojournalistic style. A short essay introduced each of the chapters, which covered daily life, the household, the social position of women in Indonesia, women as workers, and women in their cultural and religious lives. Further context was provided in the captions that accompanied each image.<sup>57</sup>

Although economic difficulties were addressed, and both peasant and city women were included in the selected photographs, there was no sense of “vanity, laziness and frivolity” in any of the images. The book was not an analysis of the challenges facing women, but rather a presentation of the women of the nation, both visually and in text, as the nurturers of “the great progress made by my people, of their talents and the way in which these have been developed, of the part they play in the cultural life of the nation and of its cultivated manners.”<sup>58</sup>

In her foreword, Datoe Toemenggoeng primarily reflected Indonesian women as mothers. It “filled [her] with pride that motherhood in our country is characterized by such a gentle nature,” although it was also “one which is both strong and resolute in all aspects whenever the country or its people are concerned.” “The Indonesian Mother is a real

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<sup>54</sup> See Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, p. 121. In making this point, Blackburn references Toemenggoeng’s 1958 publication, *30 Tahun Menentang Polygami*, (“*Thirty Years Opposing Polygamy*”).

<sup>55</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> I have not included any of the images in the dissertation because of a lack of clarity about their ownership. But they are nearly all available for viewing online at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Wanita di Indonesia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Wanita_di_Indonesia).

<sup>58</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 5.

mother,” she wrote—“*ibu sedjati*” in the Indonesian text—“she is patient, full of love and self-denial. As a mother, she constitutes the central figure in society, carefully watching over and full of care for her offspring.”<sup>59</sup>

This style of imagery about Indonesian women was not new to western audiences. *Life*, for instance, had published a photo-essay on Indonesia by Henri Cartier-Bresson in 1950 that had focused significantly on women.<sup>60</sup> The photographic style of the images chosen for *Wanita di Indonesia* closely matched Cartier-Bresson’s photojournalistic approach. This was an attempt to show Indonesian women “as they were,” but that was also wrapped firmly in text that described them through the idealized lenses through which Indonesian women were actively being presented.

The Indonesian title for the book’s first chapter was “*Wanita Indonesia pada Umumnja*,” (“Indonesian Women in General,”) while the English title posed a question, “How Does the Indonesian Woman Live?” In an odd set of bookends, perhaps drawing parallels between an individual day and a lifetime, the short essay began by discussing the need for many women to get up early to complete work before the sun got too hot, and concluded by examining sources of women’s spiritual strength, particularly in the face of death and funerals.

The central elements of the essay focused on Indonesian women’s “very sensitive nature”<sup>61</sup> and within that context, primarily discussed clothing. It noted that the Indonesian woman “likes dressing well and making herself as attractive as possible.”<sup>62</sup> The text went on to observe that the quick changes were happening in terms of fashion in the new nation, and were based in elements drawn from women’s surroundings:

It is quite remarkable how she has developed this taste since Indonesia became a sovereign state. She now realizes that her clothing and appearance can play an important part in accentuating her personality and she takes

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<sup>59</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> None of whom were shown wearing western dress. See *Life*, February 13, 1950, pp. 82-95 and front cover. “The New Nation of Indonesia,” was the cover article for the issue. The cover featured a photograph of a peasant woman from Central Java, dressed in *kain-kebaya* with a light head scarf on her head, staring over her left shoulder directly into Cartier-Bresson’s lens. Famously, the photographs also included an image of a young Balinese woman, her breasts bared, shopping at the market in her village. The majority of the photos focused on Central Java and Bali, with a few from Sumatra. They specifically did not include any images from Jakarta, or of women in western dress, but mostly presented the new nation as moving in transition from traditional noble leadership to democracy, and the focus of the images was on “ordinary” people. The issue of photographs of Balinese women with their breasts uncovered is discussed in passing in Chapter 5.

<sup>61</sup> The Indonesian text is “*bersifat lembut hati*,” or “tender-hearted character.”

<sup>62</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 10.

advantage of this to demonstrate her natural taste and distinction. Like the nature around her on all sides, she too has learnt to appreciate the effects of sharply contrasting colours, which so admirably suit her.

Naturally, the tropical climate influences her choice of clothes. A visitor from overseas is almost bound to feel that her dress, a sarong and kabaja with long sleeves, is rather warm, but the Indonesian women knows that this form of dress is effective and one which protects her adequately from the sun's warm rays. In addition, this dress is discrete and completely in harmony with the deportment and bearing of the wearer.<sup>63</sup>

Datoe Toemenggoeng attributed the general presence of *kain-kebaya* in the nation to the arrival of Islam “long ago,” and noted regional variations in the length and fit of the *kebaya*. She also contrasted the similarities of wearing *kain-kebaya* across the country with the “most striking” differences visible in “so-called ‘adat’ clothing—the festive dress worn on ceremonial occasions.”<sup>64</sup>

The photos that followed illustrated this articulation of Indonesian women “in general.” Images of women in “*adat*” clothing from areas with distinctive traditions—Toraja, Palembang, Minangkabau and even Central Java (the latter within the context of weddings)—were contrasted with women from a wide variety of backgrounds—Javanese peasants, Balinese women carrying temple offerings in procession, women getting on a bus in Jakarta, a street scene in Yogyakarta, and elite women sitting on mats for a wedding feast—all wearing forms of *kain-kebaya*. Two photographs of young women in *kain-kebaya* that both appear to have been taken at fashion shows identified the models as “modern.” One of the women, wearing a Pasundan (West Java, or Bandung)-style bright *kebaya* also carried a purse that was specifically identified as foreign: “Plastic handbag is Western.”<sup>65</sup>

But these *tas plastik* in the two “modern” images were the only trace of any Western clothing in the entire first chapter. Even the women climbing on the bus in Jakarta and the women in the street scene in Yogyakarta were only shown wearing *kain-kebaya*. This must almost certainly have been an editorial choice, since other contemporaneous photographs of street scenes in both Jakarta and Yogyakarta published elsewhere principally show women wearing western dresses. The curation of Indonesian women wearing “traditional”

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<sup>63</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>64</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 27.



clothing, including in their “*adat*” and “modern” forms, was clearly intentional—how Datoe Toemenggoeng intended Indonesian women to be represented “in general” to the world.

Indeed, of the nearly 150 photographs chosen for the book, over three-quarters of them showed women exclusively in *kain-kebaya* or other traditional dress. Among those that did show women or girls in western clothing, there were several patterns. First, young girls, mostly elementary age students, were most often shown wearing western-style sun dresses or pinafores. The exceptions to this were of peasant girls working in the fields, carrying offerings to Balinese temples with their mothers, going to Koranic instruction class in Padang, Sumatra, or performing Javanese or Balinese dance. One photo of young children in Minangkabau dress broke the journalistic mode, showing them dressed up for an occasion and posed for a group portrait. But in general, young girls in the book were shown wearing dresses.

Adult women in specific professions—teachers, nurses, policewomen, secretaries in an office, university students, a chemist—were shown in western clothing, the appropriate uniforms for their work. Athletes preparing for the Asian Games wore their athletic kit and their dress uniforms for the Opening Ceremonies, below-the-knee skirts with blazers. A diplomat at the United Nations wore a women’s formal dress-suit appropriate to the place and occasion. A movie star in a studio publicity still was shown wearing a western blouse.

Western clothing was only discussed explicitly in one set of photographs. The images were of classes at the Textile Institute (“*Jajasan Textiel*,”) where students studied fashion design and production. One image in particular showed a female teacher in front of the class, wearing a simple but well-cut dress while lecturing to her students, all of whom wore skirts and blouses or short-sleeved dresses, their hair often set in braids. The instructor appeared to be discussing two images, drawn on the blackboard with impeccable artistry, showing the drape and movement of an up-scale western dress. A sample model of a simpler western house-dress enrobed a dress form at the front of the class.

The caption was telling. “Though native dress is very much worn at home,” it read, “girls have to get the know-how of Western dresses and modern design.”<sup>66</sup> Western

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<sup>66</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 71.

clothing, then, was presented as an external subject, something that needed to be studied and learned. This knowledge was a necessity, but one that was left behind once women re-entered their “natural” space at home. By 1953, as we have seen in previous chapters, this was no longer how young women were living their daily lives, however. Wearing *kain-kebaya* was as much the exception for them as it was the rule.

*Kain-kebaya* was also the dress of the political class at representational activities. In pictures of Eleanor Roosevelt’s 1951 visit to Jakarta, prominent Indonesian women, including Fatmawati and Gusti Nurul, sat on sofas together, all in exceptionally elegant *kain-kebaya*, laughing as they evidently listened to someone out of the lens giving remarks. Behind them, back against the wall and in the shadows, a female staff member stood quietly, facing directly into the camera, her expression blank. She wore a simple dark dress, with just a touch of her legs showing in the photograph.

In a series of pictures of a “household exhibition” in Jakarta, the dignitaries wore *kain-kebaya*, as did some of the women attending. But Madame Iki, “an Indonesian beauty-specialist”<sup>67</sup> demonstrated her products wearing a western-style dress that appears to be made from *batik*, her fashion statement on trend with the latest developments. In a photo of the crowd walking through the exhibit hall full of booths, the names of mass-market modern products such as Blue Band margarine and Tootal tooth paste prominently visible, showed young women almost exclusively wearing western skirts and dresses, their hair loose or in braids, as they examined the displays. In this instance, it was a pair of women wearing *kain-kebaya* who peeked out from the side of photo, one of them looking straight to the camera as she took a bite of a snack. The *konde* of a third woman barely inhabited the lower corner of the image.

The most strikingly different image in the book was one of young women in a medical school classroom in Jakarta. Taken from above, looking down at an angle on the students, the image actually centered on several unused wooden chairs in the lecture hall. A row of female students looking down at their papers sat at a table in the upper half of the image, their heads partially cut off by the framing of the image. Given the intense focus on

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<sup>67</sup> Madame Iki was the founder of a spa and cosmetic company that still exists in the elite neighborhood of Menteng, Jakarta today. The firm’s marketing and slogan today is “*Perawatan Kulit Secara Timuran,*” or “Skin Care in the Eastern Style.”

their writing, perhaps they were taking an exam. One woman was completely in frame, sitting at the end of the row of chairs. Another one of the young women, her hair gleaming blonde, appeared to be European. All wore simple western cotton short-sleeved dresses, fitting for university students. The woman on the upper left of the image sat with her legs crossed, her body curled over her examination paper.

But her legs took over the image. Peeking out from behind the table she was working at, both knees and the lower thigh of her left leg drew the eye. It was such an unusual element of photos from the era—a woman’s body un-self-consciously on display as she went about the task at hand.

The final chapter of *Wanita di Indonesia*, on culture and religion in women’s lives, returned to themes that would be prominent in the rhetoric of *Hari Ibu*. It engaged in a particularly tight construction of women as moral beings within the family and the nation. Two short essays that led off the chapter<sup>68</sup> stressed Indonesian women as an ideal type firmly connected to the ancient spiritual life of the new and modernizing country.

Emphasizing the first pillar of *Pancasila*—the belief in a unitary God—Datoe Toemenggoeng wrote,

Religion in Indonesia is still chiefly of an educational nature; religion, after all, is a spiritual culture which influences the forming of a person’s character and which leaves its mark on everyday life.

A pious Mother will be able to run her house and look after the welfare of her family by allowing all her thoughts and deeds to be based on the belief in One God. It is indeed fortunate that, generally speaking, the woman of Indonesia is both pious and religious.<sup>69</sup>

Going on to discuss the beauty of seeing women stopping in fields, along the road or by rivers to pray in groups or alone, she noted, “A Mother, who surrenders herself to God five times a day in this way, is certain to possess a quiet, peaceful nature.”<sup>70</sup>

The majority of the images in this chapter, however, were not of women praying. The essay on cultural life mentioned various forms of cultural expression. Datoe

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<sup>68</sup> The Indonesian titles of the two short essays are “*Wanita dan Kebudayaan*,” (“Women and Culture,”) and “*Kebudayaan Djiwa*,” an interesting phrase that translates as “Culture of the Soul,” or “Culture of the Spirit.”

<sup>69</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 107.

<sup>70</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 107.

Toemenggoeng constituted Indonesians as “a race with many artistic talents and strong creative abilities.”<sup>71</sup> This was constantly visible, she argued, in the beautiful decoration of everyday articles with “designs and motifs that generally have a symbolic significance.”<sup>72</sup> The majority of the essay, however, addressed traditional forms of dance. “The Indonesian woman,” she wrote,

has played an important role in the art of dancing since long ago. The Indonesian dances date chiefly from the Hindu era and most of them have a symbolic significance. . . .

The old Javanese dances are extremely distinguished, a form of art which fills all those who see them with wonder and admiration. Every movement in the dance has a deep significance: the hands and head all playing a part, moving in time with a mysterious yet beautiful rhythm.<sup>73</sup>

This embodiment of mystical practice, perceived to be ancient and transmitted through “lengthy training at the hands of well-known and experienced teachers,” reflected a discipline of “stature and facial expression”<sup>74</sup> that stressed an inner discipline that needed to be carefully learned and mastered.

This construction of the description of both the dance and the dancer is fascinating, particularly in its English version. The trope of bodies full of meaning moving slowly to a “mysterious yet beautiful rhythm” of the *gamelan* came straight out of Dutch Javanology, in which Javanese deep culture remained a fount of esoteric knowledge and spiritual strength, inaccessible to westerners, and even to some degree to natives themselves.

Notably, the Indonesian text didn’t play into this image. Instead, it instructed the reader to “Look at the movements of the hands and head that are so refined and beautiful!”<sup>75</sup> Inscrutability remained a trait to be expected for outsiders. But in either case Indonesian, and particularly Javanese women dancing were taken to be the expression of something particularly sublime and pure—what the Javanese themselves refer to as “*adiluhung*”—the most *halus*, or refined, elements of Javanese culture. Dance elements that

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<sup>71</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>72</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>73</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>74</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106. Note the discussion of facial composure in Chapter 2, which also returns in Chapter 7.

<sup>75</sup> “*Lihatlah gerak tangan dan kepala jang amat halus dan indah itu!*” C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

were *adiluhung*, like the expressiveness of the dancers' hands<sup>76</sup> or the downward cast of a dancer's gaze contained an "*arti dalam*," or "deep meaning." This showed up in gesture, gait and posture, but emanated from the dancers' essential character, honed through years of dedicated practice.

The sacrality and ritually purifying nature of two of Javanese court dances, the *bedhaya* and *serimpi*, were underscored in that they originally were "only allowed to be performed in former days by virgins of noble birth,"<sup>77</sup> referred to as "*wanita jang sutji*" in the Indonesian text.<sup>78</sup> The dances were traditionally performed to reinforce the sacral protection of the courts, connecting them, for instance, to the spiritual powers of Kangjeng Ratu Kidul, the spiritual Queen of the South Seas who is the ritual consort of the Sultan of Surakarta.

These dances had since become more democratized. "Today . . . they are much more widespread and everyone dances them,"<sup>79</sup> Datoe Toemenggoeng noted. But this form of dance clearly remained a marker of purity and carefully studied internal refinement, now available to "everyone." She observed that their power now accrued to Indonesian women as a whole, and had become a part of women's fundamental nature in the new national context, as long, that is, as they worked to properly control their inner nature.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Unlike Indian *mudra* hand positions, Javanese dance hand positions do not carry any specific or literal meanings, nor do they tell specific stories as in *hula*. While they may have a visual "tone" to them, some longer and more languorous and others stronger and more energetic, matching the style of the character being danced, and at times they can reflect actions, such as looking in a mirror, or drawing on makeup, the movement of the hands carry no specific message or narrative. But they remain, arguably, the most fluidly expressive element of the dancer's body.

<sup>77</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>78</sup> "*Suci*" means "virginal" and "chaste," but also "holy," "sacred," "saintly," and "pure." In this case, it definitely refers to Ibu Toemenggoeng's suggestion that women who danced *bedhaya* in the court would have been virgins. (They were also, however, often sexual partners or potential sexual partners of the king). While this is no longer the case, and married women do participate in the ritual, the dancers are expected to not be menstruating, and understudies prepare in case one of the dancers begins her period before the ceremony. *Suci* is a word with complex culture usage, including in the *wayang* stories, where it refers in particular to the inner purity of certain characters in the stories. One of the more popular and spiritually complex *lakon* (episodes) in the Javanese Mahabharata sequence is *Dewa Ruci*, also called *Bima Suci*, in which Bima, the physically strongest of the five *Pandawa* brothers, takes a mystical journey through his own ear and inside his own soul, the quintessential exploration of *batin*.

<sup>79</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>80</sup> An article in *Wanita* 1953, No. 19, 5 October, entitled "*Wanita Solo*" also discussed the role women from outside the *kraton* were increasingly taking in the life of the court, most specifically the "daughters of the *rakyat*" who were brought in to dance, even the ritually important sacred dances that had previously only been performed by daughters of the royal family. So, the current of sacrality was not only from the *kraton* outwards, but also from society inwards. The article also noted another change in the relationship of the outside society and the court. Families from around the *kraton* were now much less willing for their daughters to join the *kraton* as *selir*, or royal concubines. A sexual role for peasant women that had once been prized, or at least respected officially, was now considered disreputable at best.

The modern world nonetheless was having an effect on Indonesian women as well, Datoe Toemenggoeng wrote. They were “also interested the theater and films to no less a degree.”<sup>81</sup> But, she argued, it was the internal spiritual beauty of Indonesian women that led the way in this, as it was “a case of the natural ability of the people, their beauty and grace which have attracted so much attention at home and abroad and which have already resulted in a number of striking successes.”<sup>82</sup> This grace remained, like the *bedhaya* and *serimpi* dances, a kind of protective talisman in the face of potentially destructive external forces, such as excessive modernity. “Though the influence of American and European films may now and then be felt in the daily lives of Indonesians,” she argued,

we yet conserve our original type of dancing which is based in our own strict rhythmic music; an evolution in folkdance is always perceptible in due time, which is of course also the case with our Indonesian dances. . . . The ancient legends will always provide enough material for plays and dramas.<sup>83</sup>

“Modern tendencies will slowly replace the older ones,” she wrote, “yet here too, the Indonesian woman has realized and is showing a new interest in the expressions of her own culture, which will certainly stand up favourably to that which the West has to offer.”<sup>84</sup>

### **“Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila”**

The fundamental strength of Indonesian cultural expression in the modern world was also at the heart of the second source I am discussing in this context. The small book *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, published by the *Jajasan Pantasila* in Yogyakarta came with an interesting provenance. The *yayasan*, or private foundation, whose stated goal was to “develop and elevate knowledge that is beneficial to the development of Indonesia and the advancement of Indonesian culture,”<sup>85</sup> had held a competition for manuscripts on the question of “Indonesian Women,” (“*Wanita Indonesia*,”) because “this matter is considered quite important in this era of development.”<sup>86</sup> An eminent jury of seven judges that

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<sup>81</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>82</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>83</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 108.

<sup>84</sup> C.S. Datoe Toemenggoeng, *Wanita di Indonesia*, p. 106.

<sup>85</sup> “*tudjuan Jajasan Pantja-Sila ialah mengembangkan dan mempertinggi ilmu pengetahuan jang berguna untuk pembangunan Indonesia dan memajukan kebudayaan Indonesia.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> “*karena masalah ini dipandang amat penting dalam masa pembangunan ini.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 3.

included Mariah Ulfah, Rasuna Said, Trimurti and Nj. Mangunsarkoro then selected one of the manuscripts for publication from among the fourteen that were submitted for consideration.

The best submission was judged to be from a rising young male academic, Sagimun Mulus Dumadi, who would go on to become a prolific historical writer, focusing largely on biographical books of Indonesian national heroes (“*pahlawan nasional*.”)<sup>87</sup> The book was officially published on December 22, 1953, in conjunction with the national events for *Hari Ibu* in Yogyakarta, of which the *Jajasan Pantja-Sila* was an official participant. So, although privately published, the book that discussed women and their role in state philosophy was strongly connected to the epicenter of the state-building project, and to *Hari Ibu* specifically.

Three forewords, written by several of the judges, discussed the intent of the project in different but complementary ways, each reflecting the variety of women’s viewpoints present on the jury. Sri Mangunsarkoro, whose background was in the Taman Siswa movement that concerned itself with education and the development of an Indonesian national culture, stressed the role women would play in forming a “national society that is democratic and dynamic.”<sup>88</sup> In particular, she noted that the book explored the economic

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<sup>87</sup> The *pahlawan nasional* are the basis of history instruction in Indonesian schools, where students are taught about the nation’s past through the examination of the lives of these (mostly) men and (few) women. Particularly following the events of 1965, Indonesian historiography became extremely stilted. The history of the Sukarno years came to be called the Old Order (“*Orde Lama*,”) but only after the creation of the Suharto’s New Order. (How could there be an Old Order until there was a New Order in any case, or an *ancien régime* until there is a current regime?) To avoid the questions that might be raised about the shift from Old to New, including mass killings, Indonesian historians and history teachers turned to teaching the lives of great fathers (and some mothers) of the anti-colonial movement. Since regional representation was important to national unity in this project, each province and district was able to submit its own “heros” to be considered for adding to the officially sanctioned list. This process continues until today, with a recent interesting twist. Hartini, Sukarno’s first “second wife” was nominated by her home area for inclusion in the list. Since Fatmawati is already a national hero, the admission of Hartini would put Sukarno’s polygamy clearly on display to the nation’s school children. The prospect provided some interestingly uncomfortable moments for the nation’s history teachers, who considered how they might handle that eventuality. To date, Hartini has not been included on the list.

There is another interesting element about the teaching of *pahlawan nasional* as the vector for teaching national history. During my research periods in Indonesia for this project, I was often invited to talk about the teaching of history in American schools, and I would contrast “big man” history with more socially focused approaches. Indonesian history students and professors often honed in on this distinction in the discussion section of the presentations, particularly since the teaching of social history is still a new conception in Indonesian history pedagogy, as I have noted in Chapter 1. One professor made a particularly interesting comment. He was interested in including social and cultural historical approaches, but didn’t want to lose the national hero approach history because that was, in his view, the space in which Indonesian schools taught students how to be moral and upstanding people, by encouraging young people to examine the examples of major personalities who had struggled for the nation’s success.

<sup>88</sup> “*kearah bentuk masyarakat nasional yang demokratis dan dinamis.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 4.

challenges faced by women, and that it “had a meaning, as a *starting point* in the direction of resolving women’s problems in a nation filled with the spirit of Pancasila.”<sup>89</sup>

Trimurti, in alignment with her more radical views that would lead to the founding of Gerwani, the women’s movement that came to be affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party, focused her remarks on the areas of difficulty that still faced Indonesian women because of structural impediments. Education, work, marriage, family relations, children’s issues, and challenges within the household were questions that in her view “until now, still are not yet well known by the general public.”<sup>90</sup> She hoped that this book would be just one of many that would address these issues, and that it would be useful in “the improvement of women’s fate.”<sup>91</sup> But fundamentally, she saw the issues facing women as largely unreflected in serious writing to that point.

Rasuna Said, in keeping with her Minangkabau matriarchal Islamic outlook, saw the book as a monumental starting point for equality between the sexes. She wondered, if “men, the sons of Indonesia, know who and how their sisters, Indonesian women, are?”<sup>92</sup> Perhaps men saw women as their mothers, or even as the mothers of the nation to be protected, “*Ibu Bangsa* who remain pure, thereby protecting the [quality of the] future descendants of their Nation.”<sup>93</sup> But aside from these idealized views of women, she wondered if Indonesians—both men and women—knew who women “actually were and should be.”<sup>94</sup>

The content of the manuscript was, in many ways, both a distillation and extension of Sukarno’s writings in *Sarinah*. The book’s principal argument was that women’s issues in the new nation were indivisible from the challenges facing men, and that together these

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<sup>89</sup> “buku ‘Wanita-Indonesia’ ini mempunyai arti, sebagai suatu detik permulaan kearah penjelesaian soal wanita dalam negara jang bersemangat Pantja-Sila.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> “Soal-soal wanita, sampai sekarang, masih banyak jang belum diketahui oleh chalajak ramai.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 5. Again, note this idea of the problems and challenges facing Indonesia as being, somehow, unknown, even to the people experiencing them. In this case, however, Trimurti was referring more to an analysis of the problems, rather than the knowledge of the problems themselves, as seemed to be the case in Abdulgani’s description of Datoe Toemenggoeng’s collection of photographs, above.

<sup>91</sup> “Mudah-mudahan, ada djuga gunanja, bagi perbaikan nasib wanita.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> “Pula kaum laki2, putera Indonesia, kenalkah mereka siapa dan betapa saudaranya, wanita Indonesia, itu? . . . siapa dan betapa Wanita Indonesia sebenarnya dan semestinja.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> “supaja Ibu Bangsa itu tetap kesutjiannja, mendjaga keturunan Bangsanja dimasa jang akan datang.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 6.

<sup>94</sup> “mengenal siapa dan betapa Wanita Indonesia jang sebenarnya dan semestinja.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 6.



formed a single agenda for national development. Sagimun based this argument on a historical analysis of gender that followed directly from Sukarno's work, citing many of the same cases and personalities as those covered in *Sarinah*. He then extended the argument further to discuss Asian cases more specifically than Sukarno had, particularly taking into account the revolutionary movement in China and the independence struggle in India. But essentially, he made the same basic Marxist-inflected argument based in an analysis of the stages of economic development and their effect on gender and national identity found in *Sarinah*. Sagimun's discussion of women and Islam was also very much in line with Sukarno's writings that emphasized the fundamental equality of men and women in Islamic theology.

Perhaps because he was writing at a time when the Indonesian nation was then a reality rather than merely an aspiration (as was the case when Sukarno was writing *Sarinah*), Sagimun's treatment of the history of the Indonesian women's movement, and of empowered women in the archipelago in general, was more expansive than Sukarno's. Sagimun also reached back to the histories of indigenous female rulers in various stages and spaces in the region's past, connecting them to the new nation as a legacy of an Indonesian way of doing things that was unspoiled by Dutch colonialism.

But Sagimun also noted the history of women as *selir*, or concubines, in the royal courts, and the more recent history of the sequestration of noble women who were not allowed to work. In this branch of his argument, he amplified the writings of Kartini, and directly quoted the theme of "From Darkness to the Light," the title given to the edited versions of Kartini's letters first in Dutch and then in Indonesian. His history of the women's movement from the founding of *Wanita Utomo* and other women's organizations beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was quite complete, as was his coverage of the fundamental 1928 *Kongres Perempuan Indonesia*. Women's experiences in the Japanese period and during the Revolution were covered from a perspective of their being the "Unknown Heroines,"<sup>95</sup> which discussed women's service and suffering without calling

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<sup>95</sup> "SERIKANDI JANG TIDAK DIKENAL," Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 60. Note the reflection of the idea that women remained silent in their suffering that was put forth in the description of *Hari Ibu* from immediately following the war in 1950. Srikandi is the name of a female character in the *wayang*. She is the daughter of Drupada, and the wife of Arjuna. Trained as an archer, she exhibits a character and behaviors that are considered classically male, including speaking her mind forcefully and challenging moral failures in others. Most importantly within the whole cycle, she is a fierce warrior, fighting, and killing Bisma, the Kurawa commander in the *Baratayudha*, the final battle between the

their sexual morality into question. In all essential points, Sagimun's book laid out the orthodox progressive feminist analysis of the history of women's rights to equality directly, clearly and eloquently.

Looking forward from 1953, towards the evolving role of women in the nation and how honing close to *Pancasila* would benefit them, Sagimun presented an argument about economic determinism that was also quite in line with the progressive socialist thinking that was the mainstream ideology of the women in the nationalist elite most closely aligned with Sukarno and his government.<sup>96</sup> Women were divided into three essential groups, he argued, reflecting the economic spheres in which they were living: in the village, in small towns and cities, and in the large principal cities of the nation. Each group was presented with different challenges by the intersection of their sex and their geographical and class situations.

The village, based in peasant agriculture, offered a hard life for women, while also presenting difficult social questions imbedded in traditional social practice, such as the child marriage of younger girls to older men. Women were also particularly taxed by lack of education, specifically around issues of women's health and childbirth, and poverty often ensured that their lives included sex work. "It is not surprising that prostitution runs wild," Sagimun wrote. "But this is not a biological question that cannot be taken care of by economic solutions, but rather it is FORCED, again forced by economic pressures."<sup>97</sup>

But this analysis assured that women pressed into such circumstances remained essentially pure, since this was a reflection of circumstances, and not a sign of the failure of the women's fundamental morality. Indeed, in Sagimun's argument, the village remained a critical source for purity of the future of the nation and of *Pancasila*. "Leaders and candidates for the leadership of Indonesian women!" he exhorted.

"The majority of our society comes from village society. Village society is the potential of our society and our nation! Lovers of the Indonesian people! In

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two sides. The use of the word "*Srikandi*" to denote heroines, then, is one that is deeply culturally rooted. As the dissertation discusses in Chapter 7, the term was also used, derisively, to describe *Gerwani* women, who were called "*Srikandi Lubang Buaya*" in some accounts, suggesting that their coarse male characteristics had overwhelmed their inner refinement.

<sup>96</sup> These were also the women who selected his manuscript for publication.

<sup>97</sup> "Tidak heran djikalau pelatjuran meradjalela. Bukan karena soal biologis jang tak dapat dipetjahkan oleh soal ekonomis, kata orang2 pandai, tetapi karena TERPAKSA, sekali lagi dipaksa oleh tekanan ekonomi." Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 65.

the village there are still many source materials for a genuine *Pancasila* that needs to be maintained, fertilized and guided.”<sup>98</sup>

The image of peasant women, and of village society that was pure in its essence, despite continuing problems of prostitution and child marriage, of the village as a site that held something fundamental that needed to be maintained, preserved and upheld by national leaders, was one that would be maintained throughout the Sukarno era.

Women in small cities lived in a rather different world than women in villages, Sagimun argued, one that was in some ways closer to the life of women in the principal metropolitan areas. The differentiation between these women and their cousins in the villages was their access both to education and to work in the larger economy. Whether these women were laborers in small enterprises or family businesses, or whether they were civil servants of various sorts, they were uplifted by the ability to provide for their families, and by the work of other women activists around them.

The small city gave them access to more freedom than existed in the villages, allowing for more initiative, such as the creation of crèches to provide childcare, or of women’s organizations that could assume leadership on issues of social equality. Although the conditions of labor were still quite “saddening,” the future, with efforts focused on the principles of *Pancasila* would be bright. But in terms of the level of cultural exposure and outlook, life in these small cities was still often strongly colored by the nearby villages, from which many of these women had recently moved, or where they still had family. Women leaders were encouraged to keep these women and their needs fully in their sights as they planned their future work, because the need for guidance from the center was still strong.

Women living in the large cities, Sagimun argued, faced a different set of challenges from either the women in the villages or small towns adjacent to them. While life in villages and small towns “didn’t know much variation, and the wait for the arrival of some variation or entertainment was wearying,”<sup>99</sup> the opportunities for city women were dizzying. The

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<sup>98</sup> “Pemimpin<sup>2</sup> dan tjalon<sup>2</sup> pemimpin wanita Indonesia! Sebagian besar masyarakat kita terdiri dari masyarakat desa. Masyarakat desa mendjadi potensi masyarakat dan negara kita! Para pentjinta [sic] bangsa Indonesia! Didesa masih banjak sumber bahan<sup>2</sup> Pantja-Sila jang murni jang perlu dipelihara, dipupuk dan dibimbing.” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 64.

<sup>99</sup> “Djika penghidupan wanita-desa tidak banjak mengenal variasi dan pajah menanti datangnja selang-selingan atau hiburan,” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 74.

array of options, both for entertainment and for political and social development, created a situation that was “quite difficult, particularly for people who were not well off.”<sup>100</sup>

The challenge at hand, in Sagimun’s analysis, was the difficulty of self-moderation in the face of a smorgasbord of unaffordable modern luxury. This was particularly true for women, whose reactions to the seductions of modernity he portrayed in a particularly unflattering light. Women in larger cities, he wrote,

desire a set of chairs in the new style, a radio and the like, which are all a heavy burden for people who don’t have much. This is a misfortune for those who can’t place limits on themselves and can’t adjust their desires to their circumstances. That is the disposition of human beings, particularly women. *‘I don’t want to lose out!’* . . . In all matters, even more so in how one dresses, in arranging the household, they don’t want to be bettered. This is felt even more in the city. They see their neighbors wearing new styles, with new radios, new cars, new . . . yeah, all sorts of new things, so that they whine, and they mope (usually the wife,) that everything should be new.<sup>101</sup>

Sagimun argued that western fashion played a particularly challenging role within this dynamic. “But what we find most interesting,” he wrote,

is the way in which women in big cities imitate Western ways in clothing, makeup, arranging their houses, and even copying traditions that are hard for our Indonesian soul and world to accept. *Make-up*, lipstick, shaving their eyebrows, clothes that imitate Western women whether that be Parisian fashion or *à la* Hollywood film stars. We don’t forbid or oppose this, and we very much agree that Indonesian women should care for and increase their beauty. But in imitating and trying out all that, we must also recognize and know the limits. And we should also remember that the phrase: “*eenvoud is het kenmerk van het ware*” (=simplicity is a sign of authenticity or truth) in this case, always feels completely true.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> “*Tetapi oleh karena semuanya itu pulalah hidup di kota besar itu sangat beratnja, terutama bagi orang2 jang tidak mampu.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 74.

<sup>101</sup> “*Mereka menghendaki kursi setelan jang model baru, radio dan sebagainya jang semuanya amat berat bagi orang2 jang tidak berpunja. Tjelakalah mereka jang tidak dapat membatasi dirinja dan tidak dapat menjesuaikan keadaannya dengan keadaan jang idam-idamkannya. Sudah demikian watak manusia, terlebih-lebih kaum wanita: ‘Tidak mau kalah!’ . . . Didalam segala hal, demikian pula didalam berpakaian, didalam mengatur rumah tangga, mereka tidak mau kalah. Hal itu lebih terasa dikota besar. Melihat tentangga berpakaian baru, berradio baru, bermobil baru, ber..... ja, segala-galanja serba baru, maka merengek-rengeklah, bermurunglah mereka (biasanja isteri) hendak bersegala-galanja serba baru pula.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>102</sup> “*Tetapi jang sangat menarik perhatian kita ialah tjara wanita2 dikota-kota besar itu meniru-niru tjara2 orang Barat didalam berpakaian, berdandan, menatur rumah tangganya, bahkan meniru-niru adat-istiadat jang sukar diterima oleh djiwa dan alam kita bangsa Indonesia. Makeup, mentjat bibir, mentjukur alis, tjara model pakaiannya banjak jang meniru-niru wanita Barat baik setjara mode Paris maupun a la bitang pilem Hollywood. Kita tidak melarang atau menentang, bahkan sangat menjetudjui wanita2 Indonesia memelihara dan menambah ketjantikannya. Tetapi didalam meniru dan mentjontoh itu hendaklah pula tahu dan mengenal batas-batasnja. Dan hendak pula diisnjafi bahwa kalimat: ‘eenvoud is het kenmerk van het ware’ (=kesederhanaan itu tanda keaslian atau kebenaran) didalam hal ini selalu terasa betul bebenarannya.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 75. The direct translation of the Dutch into English

In the final analysis, Sagimun placed this desire to imitate the West within a history of colonial cultural domination. It was a symptom of an illness of “sense of lack of self-respect,”<sup>103</sup> for which he also gave the Dutch term “*minderwaardigheidscomplex*,” or “inferiority complex.” He saw this fundamentally as a reflection of a lack of internal strength, one that “signifies that the soul is not yet free.”<sup>104</sup>

The worst possible effect of this lack of self-control or sense of inferiority, however, was not to be found in rampant over-spending or in over-dressing. Rather, the real danger was that city women would lose their sense of eastern propriety in terms of behavior, that they would adopt western practices that conflicted with a basic ‘Eastern-ness.’ “There are many of our people,” he wrote,

who call themselves educated, modern, advanced and the like in all ways, and in their customs and way of living they wish to imitate Westerners. If they go out or meet their husbands or their fiancés, they hold hands or kiss each other like Western people. In their own feelings, they are already completely Western (=advanced?), and no matter how they try to fully westernize themselves, nonetheless, their “*ineptness*” remains evident in this, a clumsiness that cannot conceal that they are Eastern souls, creations of the Eastern world.<sup>105</sup>

So, in Sagimun’s view, one that was shared by many politically “aware” women, there existed an interior core, an element of *batin*, that would always remain uncomfortable with any actions that were too far removed from an Eastern essence. And tellingly, the actions he found most distanced from this easternness involved public displays of affection and a closing of physical distance between men and women.

This was why, in Sagimun’s view, keeping *Pancasila* and its home-grown values central to Indonesian women’s development was critical. His final thoughts stressed that

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would be “Simplicity is the hallmark of truth.” “Waar,” that Sagimun misspells here, carries the meanings of “true, real, or authentic,” so it is a Dutch version of “sejati,” or “asli.” Sagimun picks up on the implications for “authenticity” when he chooses to explain the Dutch saying with the term “tanda keaslian,” or “sign of authenticity.”

<sup>103</sup> “*rasa kurang menghargakan diri.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 76.

<sup>104</sup> “*menandakan bahwa djiwanja masih belum merdeka.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 76.

<sup>105</sup> “*Banjak pula bangsa kita jang sudah menamakan dirinja terpeladjar, modern, madju atau sebagainya, didalam segala-galanja, didalam adat-istiadat dan tjara hidupnja hendak meniru-niru orang2 Barat. Djikalau mereka keluar atau bertemu dengan suaminja atau tunangannja mereka bergendengan tangan dan brtjiuman [sic] seperti orang Barat. Meskipun pada perasaan mereka itu, mereka sudah serba Barat (=madju?) dan bagaimanapun djuga mereka berdaja-upaja hendak menjerba-baratkan dirinja, namun masih tampak djuga “ketjanggungan” didalamnya, ketjanggungan jang tidak dapat menyembunjikan dirinja sebagai djiwa dan hasil tjiptaan alam Timur.*” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 76. Emphasis in the original.

women should use their internal cultural barometers to help find a progressive and modern, yet quintessentially Indonesian way forward in the modern world. “As a closing thought,” he wrote:

in searching for a path or choosing a form that is good and proper for Indonesian-Women in a *Pancasila* society, it is right, true and worthy to use the words of Ki Hadjar Dewantara as a guide, when he wrote the following: “Don’t rush to copy modern or European ways, and also don’t be bound by conservative or narrow feelings, but make all things fit their *kodrat*.”<sup>106</sup>

### **Wanita December 1953: The Hari Ibu Issue**

While the official speeches in Jakarta and Yogyakarta and both of these special sources on women laid out this fundamental idea about the place of women in the Indonesian national space, the coverage of *Hari Ibu* 1953 in women’s magazines spelled out the ripples such a position was having in society. In particular, *Wanita* dedicated almost the entirety of its December 1953 double-edition<sup>107</sup> to a commemoration of *Hari Ibu*. The issue looked backwards at the twenty-five years of the Indonesian women’s movement, and projected forward through analyses of the issues facing women in Indonesia. But it also caught the feeling of that current moment in an article on the representation of women in Indonesian films and in an article and several cartoons that addressed the debates over polygamy and the marriage law.

In its opening editorial, the magazine’s coverage of *Hari Ibu* cast the event within a history of the development of women’s political thought, referring to it as “*HARI KESADARAN kaum wanita*,” or the “DAY of Women’s CONSCIOUSNESS.” To be *sadar*—conscious, awake or mindful—was, in the political language of 1920’s and 1930’s to be a part of the generation that was “aware” of the nationalist imperative Indonesian political elites felt was emerging from the darkness into the light. So, for *Wanita* magazine, labeling the day as such forged a specific connection between *Hari Ibu* in 1953 and women’s

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<sup>106</sup> “Dan sebagai penutup rasanja, didalam mentjari djalan atau memilih tjorak jang lajak dan baik untuk Wanita-Indonesia didalam masjarakat Pantja-Sila, tepat benar dan patut dipakai sebagai pedoman kata2 bapak Ki Hadjar Dewantara jang pernah beliau tulis sebagai berikut: ‘Djanganlah tergesa-gesa meniru tjara modern atau tjara Eropa, djangan pula terikat oleh rasa konservatif atau rasa sempit, tetapi tjoktjokanlah semua barang dengan kodratnja.’” Sagimun M.D., *Wanita-Indonesia dan Pantja-Sila*, p. 76.

<sup>107</sup> The December issue included both volumes 23 and 24, published as a single magazine.

political roles that reached back to the pre-independence nationalist movement. In doing so, they strengthened the call for women to continue to be “*sadar*” as they fashioned their roles in building the new nation.

The extensive history of the women’s movement,<sup>108</sup> and profiles of women who had participated in it,<sup>109</sup> that comprised the principal articles at the center of the *Wanita* special edition, placed women’s advancement within a rubric of women’s interactions with each other. In full detail, these articles presented a view of women’s organizations both coming together and splitting apart in a quarter century of struggle to establish Indonesian independence. The primary source of division, in the instances it occurred, according to these articles, was most closely linked to the question of polygamy, which some women saw as being old-fashioned and oppressive, while others considered it a religiously ordained right for men, even if it was not something they agreed to in their own lives.

In their final analyses, both articles also stressed that the Indonesian Revolution and the women’s movement existed within a larger framework. “In this direction humanity [is taking],” one article noted, “the struggle for Indonesian independence connects with the struggle for humanity of the whole World. And, because of that as well, the Indonesian Women’s Movement is a movement of humanity, which is guided by the voices of women’s hearts”—that is, by the strength of their *batin*—as “*IBU BANGSA.*”<sup>110</sup>

The idea that women were a bulwark against cultural excess and the effects modernity might have on Indonesian society was central to an analysis of Indonesia’s expanding film culture, the one “cultural” article, on “*Wanita dan Film,*” (“Women and Film,” included in the *Hari Ibu* edition. The article was written by RM Harjoto<sup>111</sup> the director of the *Perusahaan Film Negara* (PFN, literally the “State Film Corporation,”) within

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<sup>108</sup> See “*Meninjau 25 Th. Pergerakan Wanita,*” (“Reviewing 25 Years of the Women’s Movement,”) *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, pp. 522-525.

<sup>109</sup> See “*Menemui beberapa pemuka Wanita,*” (“Meet Several Women Leaders,”) *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, pp. 528-531.

<sup>110</sup> “*Dalam tudjuan kemanusiaan inilah, perjuangan kemerdekaan Indonesia bertemu dengan perjuangan kemanusiaan dari seluruh Dunia. Oleh sebab itu djuga, pergerakan wanita Indonesia adalah pergerakan kemanusiaan, jang didjalankan menurut suara kalbunja wanita sebagai “IBU BANGSA.”* *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 525.

<sup>111</sup> RM is the contraction for Raden Mas, a high-level title among the nobility from the courts of Central Java, very loosely translatable as “Prince.” It is roughly the male equivalent of Raden Ayu, which was Kartini’s title. Harjono also became Secretary General of the Ministry of Information in the Guided Democracy period.

the Ministry of Information. The PFN was the latest incarnation of state film-making boards that reached back to the Dutch colonial period.<sup>112</sup> As such it was as much involved with considering the overall shape of film making within the islands as it was in the production of specific films. In particular, since the Dutch era, it had housed various forms of the film censor board that was concerned with monitoring the proper content of films shown in Indonesia.

As a result, the content of the article was actually not as much about the role of women in Indonesian movies as it was about the role women should play in shaping their content and standards. The article argued that Indonesian films needed the investment, both financially and in terms of moral leadership, of the Indonesian cosmopolitan elite, the “educated and tie-wearing circles of Indonesian men,”<sup>113</sup> and “women of equal rank”<sup>114</sup> who came with them. This group, the “upper branch”<sup>115</sup> of Indonesian society, Harjoto argued, had not yet shown much interest in national film, both because Indonesian cinema was considered to be of low quality, and because of the social and physical discomfort of cramming into the “low class movie theaters, called people’s theaters”<sup>116</sup> where such movies were shown.<sup>117</sup>

If Indonesian films were to reach a more advanced level, both to attract the attention of the Indonesian elite and to draw praise internationally that would elevate<sup>118</sup> the name of Indonesia overseas, he suggested, the educated classes, and women in particular, would need to lead a new “conception” (“*konsepsi*,”) of Indonesian films. In particular, while Harjoto suggested that although the men’s involvement might be both

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<sup>112</sup> Perhaps best translated as the “State Film Board,” the PFN was the latest configuration of state-run film organizations, reaching back through the Revolutionary and Japanese eras to the late Dutch colonial period. Although the names of the various organizations changed, and the focus shifted politically and ideology, much of the staff appears to have remained the same across the eras, and they remained the principal source of technical knowledge about film making and processing in Indonesia at this time.

<sup>113</sup> “*kaum prija Indonesia dari kalangan terpeladjar dan berdasi*,” *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 532.

<sup>114</sup> “*kaum wanita dari kalangan jang sepadan*,” *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 532.

<sup>115</sup> “*tjabang atas*,” *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 532.

<sup>116</sup> “*bioskup-bioskup klas rendah, katakanlah bioskup rakjat*,” *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 532.

<sup>117</sup> See the descriptions of “*kelas kambing*” (“goat class,”) theaters in Chapter 3.

<sup>118</sup> The Indonesian term was “*mengharumkan*,” which translates technically as something like to “enfranchise.” “*Harum*,” means the sweet fragrance of flowers, such as jasmine. Note the lyrics of the *Hari Ibu* song published in this same edition of *Wanita* that use the same image.



financial and artistic, it was women who were called on to keep an eye on the moral construction of the nation through the improvement of the new national cinema.<sup>119</sup>

The cultural and political place of women as a group, however, was front and center in much of this special edition of *Wanita*. A long article on the history of marriage laws in the Indies and other Islamic areas argued for women's legal equality with men in marriage, and particularly for an end to polygamy, on both "modern" and Islamic bases. Interestingly, there was little in this special edition of *Wanita* that explicitly outlined a course of political action. The single long article on the principal political issue of the day for women, the promulgation of a new marriage law,<sup>120</sup> was primarily an exploration of the history of colonial marriage laws still in place in the country. The argument was written by lawyers, and took a fundamentally structural approach to looking at marriage, examining laws and precedents, rather than the lives of individual women.

Under the Dutch, the article noted, marriage for non-Christian natives was carried out under the rubric of local *adat* law. For political reasons intended to control the influence of Islam, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch had broken the colony into multiple "*Adatrecht*," or "Traditional Law Areas," stressing the variety of local, indigenous practices over Islamic elements that might have been seen as a unifying cultural force across the archipelago. Marriage procedures and descendant lines were therefore distinct in different areas, and could fall into patriarchal, matriarchal, dual parent, or either parent models, all drawn from "traditional" practice. In function, this meant that women's rights for divorce, inheritance and parental rights varied significantly across the nation. Even more challenging in the more mobile new nation was that not all marriages occurred within a single ethnic group, so when a Javanese man and Minangkabau woman married in Jakarta, it was unclear which set of practices should predominate.

To further complicate things, the authority for *adat* marriages was left at the local level, and little of what was expected was actually codified and written down. There was,

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<sup>119</sup> In the 1960's *Konfrontasi* period, the film censorship board, led by Maria Ulfah, and a project very much held within the progressive women's movement and including *Gerwani* members, restricted the majority of Hollywood films from being shown in Indonesia. Though perhaps easily overlooked in Josh Oppenheimer's important film about the killings in 1965-1966, *The Act of Killing*, it was the wholesale banning of films that had dislocated the "crossboys" in Medan, who made much of their living by reselling film tickets. The censorship of American films during that period is addressed in passing in Chapter 6, but this is one of the initial flurries into this arena that showed up in the sources for the dissertation.

<sup>120</sup> "*Wanita dalam Hukum Perkawinan*," ("Women in the Marriage Law,") by Mr. Soemiati Sajid Mangunjudo. *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, pp. 540-543. "Mr." here indicates that Soemiati, a woman, held a law degree.

for instance, no standard way of registering marriages with the state, to prove that a marriage had occurred, to end a marriage that may not have aligned with the laws, or to record the dissolution of marriage either because of death or divorce. The push for a new marriage law, the article noted, as much as anything, was about standardizing women's rights in marriage.

Specifically, the proposed law sought to bring those rights in line with the more precisely defined practices the Christian women had access to, since their marriages were regulated under the same colonial laws that had governed European marriages. This was particularly true in regards to divorce, since Christian marriages could not be dissolved simply by the husband pronouncing the end of the marriage three times, as was permissible under some versions of Islamic practice in the islands. That said, there was also a desire for women to retain some of the "traditional" rights they enjoyed about inheritance, retaining their own property rights and the like, rights that the authors pointed out were superior to those of most European women.

In any case, the large question about marriage remained whether polygamy would be retained or not, and if so, with what conditions. While the formal articles in this issue of *Wanita* tended not to be prescriptive of a solution, two cartoons included in the issue



**Figure 4.1:** Marriage Law Cartoon, *Wanita*, December 1953

pointed towards the editors' actual strong support for ending polygamy. One, imbedded directly in the article on marriage, showed a determined woman, barefoot and wearing *kain-kebaya*, with her hair pulled back in a *konde* holding a sign that read "The marriage law should be sent immediately to Parliament."<sup>121</sup> The message is signed simply, "Wanita," or all women, in general. A man wearing trousers a shirt and glasses is shown staring at the sign, bent over in shock at the demand for immediate action by the nation's women.

The second cartoon was set aside on its own, below the conclusion of an article outlining the history of the twenty-five years of the women's movement. Entitled "Polygamy Must Be Eradicated!"<sup>122</sup> this cartoon also showed women in *kain-kebaya* insisting on the end of polygamy, though this time more forcefully. One of the two women in the cartoon drags a man, beaten up and exhausted, by his hair, while another appears to threaten him with a sign that exclaims "Eradicate Polygamy!"<sup>123</sup>



**Figure 4.2:** Polygamy Eradication Cartoon, *Wanita*, December 1953

<sup>121</sup> "Undang<sup>2</sup> Perkawinan harap segera dimajukan kepada parlemen." *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 543.

<sup>122</sup> "Polygami Mesti Diberantas!" *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 525.

<sup>123</sup> "Berantaslah Poligami!" *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 525.

The extensive text below the image also argued that women themselves were fundamentally in control of the question. It reads:

Is this caricature true? Who is wrong?

1. Is it the man

2. Is it the women themselves?

If women don't want to, aren't willing to have a co-wife,<sup>124</sup> polygamy wouldn't occur easily.

The only path not to pin one's fate on a man, is [having] inner strength ["*kekuatan bathin*"] and the skills to be able to stand on one's own.

Because of that, the eradication [of polygamy] lies in women's own hands.<sup>125</sup>

The two cartoons caught a particular moment in Indonesian activist women's history that occurred just before *Hari Ibu*. On December 17, 1953, Perwari organized public demonstrations by women's organizations, "not only in the capital, Jakarta, but in other places."<sup>126</sup> The public marches brought together women from across the activist political spectrum to "speed up the creation of a just Marriage Law."<sup>127</sup> The photos of these events published in the first edition of *Wanita* in 1954 show women dressed both in *kain-kebaya* and western skirts and dresses marching with banners demanding the movement of the marriage law outside the presidential palace. These are the earliest pictures of women holding public demonstrations specifically in support of women's political aims I have found in my sources. Even if they are not the first time such protests occurred, they mark a shift in the coverage of women's politics in magazines.

While the photos of the demonstrations were rather straightforward, even in their captioning, the cartoons published in late December 1953 took the basic image of women protesting and wrapped them in an important layer of cultural meaning. The women in both cartoons were presented as aggressive—and therefore as shocking, and even

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<sup>124</sup> The Indonesian term is "*dimadu*." *Madu* means both "honey" and "co-wife," an interesting co-meaning. Again, the flexibility of Indonesian language plays a role here, taking a noun, *madu*, and turning it into a passive verbal form, so a literal translation of "*sudi dimadu*" would be "willing to be co-wived."

<sup>125</sup> "Apakah karikatur ini benar? Siapakah jang salah? 1. apa laki-laki 2. apa wanita sendiri? Kalau wanita tidak mau, tidak sudi dimadu, polygami tidak gampang terdjadi. // Djalan satu2nja supaja tidak menggantungkan nasibnja kepada seorang laki2, ialah kekuatan bathin dan kepandaian untuk dapat berdiri sendiri. Karena itu pemberantasannja ada terletak ditangan wanita sendiri." *Wanita*, 1953, #23-24, December, p. 525.

<sup>126</sup> "Tidak sadja di Ibu Kota Djakarta, tetapi djuga di lain-lain tempat," *Wanita*, 1954, # 1., January, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> "untuk mempertjepat diwujudkannja Undang-Undang Perkawinan jang adil." *Wanita*, 1954, # 1., January, p. 1.

dangerously violent—to men. Indeed, this overtly activist approach was even questioned in the second cartoon as possibly being “wrong,” (“*salah*”). And the answer the cartoon proposed was that women develop both inner spiritual strength and economic independence from men, rather than resorting to aggressive and violent public demonstrations, (even though there is no evidence that the women from Perwari and other groups were violent at all.)

Women in the streets were seen as being different from women who met nicely and in an orderly fashion within the meeting halls of women’s congresses. And while perhaps it was one thing for women to have participated in the public demonstrations for the nationalist movement in the *pergerkerakan*, or in protests about food shortages that effected the whole nation, this public demonstration in support of an activist women’s agenda certainly came with different possible perceptions of those women presented in the cartoons.

What this final issue of *Wanita* in 1953 demonstrated, then, was that as Indonesia was moving into a more fully democratic moment, beginning to approach the first national legislative elections that would be held in September 1955, and as the mechanics of forming the nation began to include the motions of reforming laws, women were increasingly seen as a political and cultural block, that is, as a *kaum*. As such, the representations of Indonesian women were particularly subject to what one might refer to as “ideal-typing.”<sup>128</sup>

My use of this term in this fashion is not intended as a gloss on Max Weber. I assume that Sukarno and other Dutch-educated elite leaders were familiar with, or at least had been taught by those who were familiar with Weber’s use of ideal types to drive historical analysis. And certainly, colonial racial policy and anthropology were both based on ideas that certain “types” and their attributes, which were “characteristic” of them,<sup>129</sup> offered the primary explanations for the “way things were.” These were also reflected in the basic assumptions behind *Women in Indonesia* and *Wanita dan Pantjasila*, addressed earlier in this chapter. But “ideal-typing,” as I am using it here, a phrase that I am not aware of there

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<sup>128</sup> In Indonesian, I would suggest the term be *kaumisasi*, or “kaumization,” or *dikaumkan*, “made into a kaum,” again using the flexibility of Indonesian syntax to highlight the constructive property of the process of abstract group identification.

<sup>129</sup> See the use of the word “*karakteristik*” to describe women’s positive attitudes aligned with *kodrat wanita* earlier in this chapter.

being a scholarship on, serves as a particular type of stereotyping, where the various ideal attributes of a single group, in this case Indonesian women, are put in opposition to each other. In that process, the ideal types take over the rhetoric about that group, erasing individual expressions of its members, and the group is discussed and thought of as a collective in its extreme, and often highly unrealistic, forms.

Several of the ideal types of Indonesian women will be critical to this dissertation's analysis of the aftermath of the events at Lubang Buaya in October 1965. But we can clearly see from the sources already discussed in this chapter that several of these—particularly the Mother of the Nation, The Village Woman and the Javanese Dancer—were already firmly established as tropes of Indonesian national femininity by 1953. Importantly all three were seen as bulwarks and defenses against the excesses of modern/Western cultural influences that might over-run the new nation. But two other ideal types, the Naive Young Woman and the Prostitute, carried with them the clear possibility of Indonesian society being over-run and transformed into something that would not be “in accordance with” eastern values.<sup>130</sup>

The fear that Indonesian society could be swamped by western culture lies at the heart of the argument of this dissertation. What is clear from my sources, as I have stated previously as well, is that these instances of moral crisis, which is how Indonesians referred to it, were fundamentally gendered. Furthermore, the expression of gender in naming moral crisis depended on ideal types more than it did on the actions of individuals. As this chapter has demonstrated, the construction of Indonesian women as a *kaum Ibu* linked this ideal type to the moral success of the nation. It was mothers, as “guides of a wise and virtuous people” and the “fate of our nation” lie, who were formally enshrined within the construction of the nation with the celebration of *Hari Ibu* in December 1953.

But within this construction of the moral nation built on ideal-types, however, it was also fully possible that women as a group might perhaps fail morally. In doing so, they might bring the nation down with them. The fears that this could happen, that women would be pulled away from elements of themselves that were fundamentally moral, eastern and, increasingly, Indonesian, was expressed in terms of the idea of *krisis moral*, or moral

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<sup>130</sup> Two other ideal types are discussed in Chapter 6: The Bossy Professional Political Leader and The Uniformed Defender of the Nation.

crisis. It is to the expression and understandings of moral crisis in women's magazines during the first half of the 1950's that the next chapter now turns.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Rickety, Wobbly Nation: Indonesian Women and Moral Crisis, 1950-1955

*“[S]oal perempuan adalah memang satu **s o a l-m a s j a r a k a t** jang teramat penting. Dan tidakkah Nabi Muhamad s.a.w. pernah bersabda, bahwa: ‘Perempuan itu tiang negeri. Manakala baik perempuan, baiklah negeri. Manakala rusak perempuan, rusaklah negeri?’”*

“Women’s issues are truly a **s o c i e t a l-i s s u e** of utmost importance. And did not the Prophet Muhamad s.a.w. who once pronounced that:

‘Women are the pillar of the state. If women are good, the state is good. If women are broken, the state is broken?’”

- Sukarno, *Sarinah*, 1947<sup>1</sup>

Chapter 4 explored a linkage between *kodrat wanita* and women’s place in the construction of national identity in discussions of *Hari Ibu* 1953. Layered on top of this linkage between gender and national identity was another set of assumptions that connected women’s moral purity with the moral health of the nation. Clothing and its meanings were important markers common to both these webs, a way in which the two might be thought of as being “mutually inter-meshed.”

This intermeshing of various ideas about morality, proper femininity and the nation was not new with the birth of the Indonesian state. Nor was it merely a product of the struggle for independence. Rather, as Sukarno pointed out in *Sarinah*, his discourse on the responsibilities of women in the Indonesian national struggle, the conflation of women’s purity with the strength of a nation reached back at least to the Prophet Muhammad in a set of *hadith* about women and their moral role in Islamic society. The concept was well

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<sup>1</sup> Sukarno, *Sarinah*, p. 14, in the 1963 third printing. Emphasis in the original.



known and often cited in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia,<sup>2</sup> and had been expressed as an early and integral element of Sukarno's construction of the national revolution.<sup>3</sup> The linkage had been discussed within women's organizations dating to the 1920's,<sup>4</sup> and was adopted explicitly as a basis for women's engagement in the nationalist struggle in the 1930's.<sup>5</sup>

This informal cultural linkage of the moral success of the nation specifically to women's comportment assured that women's political identities were imbedded in a cultural web that was highly contested, as earlier chapters in this dissertation have already explored. What constituted who a "good woman" might be was influenced by the intricate negotiations with modernity and colonial legacy that Indonesians undertook as they explored their potential identities within the new nation.

But definitions of and assumptions about moral rectitude were also deployed in various ways by different groups. Some Muslim scholars used the various *hadith* on women's sexual morality, for instance, to argue that women's roles should be limited to assure their continued purity.<sup>6</sup> However, both Sukarno and women's organizations, including Muslim women's organizations, leveraged the concept of women as the mothers of the nation to argue for the emancipation and general equality of women within the emerging political order.

As was discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, differences in clothing choice were important markers of social position that were 'read' down to the minutest detail. These details were potent precisely because the 'incorrect' choices had consequences. Initially, these were linked to social hierarchy, and the mistakes were about being "nouveau riche." More importantly, mistakes could also be taken to demonstrate a lack of understanding of proper modernity on the part of the wearer.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, the reference in the writing of Nj. Sunarto from Perwari in 1951, discussed in Chapter 1. The reference is also discussed in Chapter 4 in a section about the establishment of Mothers' Day (*Hari Ibu*) as a national observance in 1953.

<sup>3</sup> See Sukarno's writings in *Suluh Indonesia* in 1928, quoted at the beginning of Chapter 7 of the dissertation, where the concept is expressed as a general assumption, without the direct quotation of the hadith itself.

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion of the content of the 1928 Congress in Chapter 1, and later in this chapter.

<sup>5</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 1, the Second Indonesian Women's Congress included "*keperempuanan*," ("womanlihood" in Saskia Wieringa's translation of the term,) or women's high ethical standards, as a basis for women being able to be "*Ibu Bangsa*," or "Mothers of the Nation."

<sup>6</sup> This argument lies at the heart of more conservative theological positions on veiling in all its forms, that are discussed in Chapter 3, and are a reason that discussions about clothing are so revealing, as it were.

But these ‘mistakes’ also quickly came to be read, particularly at times of national uncertainty, as expressions of a lack of moral knowledge or standing. In official spaces, Indonesian women took on the image of the *batik*-wearing wife, mother and purveyor of modern civilization as a marker of their own moral fitness to represent the nation. Alongside fashion, this set of discussions about social change and women’s position in the new era—about what was appropriate and what was “gaudy” or went “too far”—became prominent in women’s magazines.<sup>7</sup> Women’s error in fashion choices thus also became a possible marker of moral error, not only on the part of the woman herself, but as a potent reflection on the moral fitness of the nation.<sup>8</sup>

Concerns about the moral meaning of Indonesian womanhood were strongly reflected in the pages of *Wanita* from 1949 on, as the previous three chapters have discussed. Moral meaning also then entered the pages of new magazines such as *Keluarga* and *Gembira*,<sup>9</sup> as well as others such as *Suara ‘Aisjijah* that were gradually revived after the Revolution.<sup>10</sup> Anxieties about questions of what was “too far” that had been present in the *Wanita*’s first year blossomed into a full-on discussion about the nation’s “moral crisis”<sup>11</sup> beginning in 1950-1951.

The specifics of what was in crisis varied. The lives of young women working outside the home in one article.<sup>12</sup> The fear of prostitution and sexual license among women in another<sup>13</sup> or the effects of Hollywood films and the need for a film censor board in a third.<sup>14</sup> Or, in some cases, the concerns were more generally about government corruption.

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<sup>7</sup> Later, as is explored in Chapter 6, these “errors” were no longer simply an issue in magazines. They jumped to being something that was actively corrected by both police and mobs in order to preserve the health of the nation.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout these debates on clothing and the morality of the nation, men simply wore western trousers and shirts both when representing the nation and at home, sometimes dressed up with a jacket and tie. The single marker of their nationality and nationalism would be wearing a *peci*, a simple black brimless cap that Sukarno and other nationalists had adopted as a marker for the nationalist movement during the colonial era.

<sup>9</sup> *Gembira*, (“Happy”), was a *hiburan*, or entertainment magazines particularly well known for its large section of cartoons and comics. The *Pak Kromo* series that is discussed later in this chapter is one. Another that I have not included for space was a rather serious series centered on women’s lives, in which two friends are confronted with the moral quandary of realizing a female neighbor is carrying out an affair with a married man. The series was drawn in a realist rather than comic style, reinforcing its intent to be a rolling commentary on issues of the day.

<sup>10</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>11</sup> The expression “*krisis moral*,” also sometimes spelled “*krisis moril*,” was the predominant term used, but “*achlak moral*” was also used at times.

<sup>12</sup> See “*Surat dari Ibu*,” (“A Letter from Mother,”) *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, pp. 105-06. This letter is discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>13</sup> See Nj. T. S. R. Sujatno, “*Pembangunan Moreel*,” (“Moral Development,”) *Wanita*, 1951 no. 3, February, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> See the discussion in a series of readers’ letters in “*Tanja Djawab*,” (“Questions and Answers,”) *Wanita*, 1951, no. 4, February, Front Inside Cover.

The extravagant lifestyles and sources of wealth of the metropolitan elite were always suspect at some level. The possibility of youth being corrupted, particularly before they had fully developed morally, was a regular concern.<sup>15</sup>

To be sure, the connection of women and the possibility of their corruption outside the home was not a new concept, as the dissertation has shown in previous chapters. There is ample evidence of women being concerned about the issue of prostitution and similar dangers as they created the national women's movement in the 1920's, a concern that undoubtedly predated the movement itself.

Indeed, the discourse of women's moral purity was front and center in the program of the 1928 Indonesian Women's Congress. In the opening evening, a largely cultural affair, one of the two "*tableau[x]*" presented was the episode from the Ramayana of "*Dewi Sinta membakar diri*," ("Sinta immolates herself,") in which the heroine walks through fire unscathed to prove to her husband Rama that she remained sexually chaste during her years of captivity in the palace of his enemy, Rawana.<sup>16</sup> In the first working session the next day, immediately following the introduction of the purposes of the Congress, the various presentations focused on women's moral level and development, discussing "The [moral] level and self-worth of Javanese women,"<sup>17</sup> "The [moral] level of women,"<sup>18</sup> and "Women's [moral] refinement," the last discussion led by Nji Hadjar Dewantara, the wife of the leader of the *Taman Siswa* movement.<sup>19</sup> The other two presentations concerned possible moral pitfalls facing women: issues of marriage and divorce, and child marriage.<sup>20</sup>

But the use of the term "moral crisis" to address these concerns seems to be a product of the period of the new nation. While Sukarno discussed both the moral bases of the nation and their connection to women, and the various crises facing Indonesia in

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<sup>15</sup> One of the ways Javanese say that a young person is not yet grown up is that they are "*durung Jawa*," that is, "not yet Javanese." The implication is that they have not yet mastered the social control of oneself (both *lahir* and *batin*,) required of a Javanese adult. As perhaps is the case with many cultures, youth are seen as being particularly susceptible to dangerous outside influences. This was certainly the case in Indonesia during the period of this dissertation, and it remains so today.

<sup>16</sup> See *Buku 1958*, p. 19. The second *tableau* was about Srikandi, the woman warrior of the Mahabharata stories. The dramatic pieces were presented by the *Perikatan Isteri Indonesia*, or the Union of Indonesian Wives.

<sup>17</sup> "*Deradjat dan harga diri perempuan Djawa*," presented by representatives of *Putri Budi Sedjati* ("Daughters of a True [Moral] Character,") from Surabaya. *Buku 1958*, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> "*Deradjat Perempuan*," presented by Sdr. Siti Mundjiah of *Aisjiah*. *Buku 1958*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> "*Adab perempuan*," *Buku 1958*, p. 19. See the discussion of Ki Hadjar Dewantara at the end of Chapter 3.

<sup>20</sup> "*Hal perkawinan dan pertjeraan*," also presented by representatives of *Putri Budi Sedjati*, and "*Perkawinan kanak-kanak*," by Sdr. Mugarumah. For more on discussions of the issue of early marriage in the late colonial period, see Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, Chapter 3, pp. 57-83.

*Sarinah*, he doesn't discuss "moral crisis" as a concept. Nor is this a term that scholars working on women's history in the nationalist period, including Susan Blackburn and Saskia Wieringa, seem to have used in their scholarship, although both clearly were writing about the construction of the moral position of women within the emerging nationalist consciousness.<sup>21</sup>

By the early 1950's, however, the term was in common use in my sources, with clear references to the variety of issues discussed above. Indeed, Usmar Ismail's most successful film financially, and the first to play in "first class" movie theaters, was his 1953 work simply entitled "*Krisis*." The comedy explored the implications of when a family newly arrived in Jakarta from the provinces, and needing housing, moves in with a single, young woman, whose big-city social life is at clear odds with the family's experiences and expectations.<sup>22</sup>

This social crisis however, though widely assumed and noted as a problem in the early years of the republic, was not specifically defined in any of the primary sources I have seen. Writing about Balinese literature from the 1950's, I Nyoman Darma Putra says that the expression "*krisis moral*" referred specifically to the problems of teenage permissiveness and pregnancy outside marriage.<sup>23</sup> While the first is prevalent in the magazines I have read, I have never seen an explicit reference to pregnancy of unmarried women in my sources, which is, in and of itself, an interesting gap.

Rather, in the sources at the heart of this dissertation, "moral crisis" appears to have functioned as a catch-all phrase for various fears about the possible undesired effects of rapid modernization, particularly among the younger, not-yet-married generation, and among those most attracted to elements of western culture in clothing and entertainment. That is, it was concerned with those people who had wandered furthest from older standards of socially acceptable behavior, specifically among the younger generation. Quite often, these fears were expressed in terms of women, their behavior, their bodies and their

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<sup>21</sup> It is, of course, possible that either or both have, and that I have not noticed the reference in my reading, but the term doesn't show up in the indexes of either Blackburn's *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, or in Wieringa's *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, their principal monographs, and "moral crisis" is not framed as a principal concept in either of their works, at least not using that term.

<sup>22</sup> See David Hanan, *Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film*, p. 66. A copy of the film itself no longer exists, but according to Hanan, the script is still extant. (There is a review of the film complete with studio stills, somewhere in my sources from 1953, but I can't find the notes for it. It wasn't in either *Wanita* or *Keluarga* that I could find.)

<sup>23</sup> See I Nyoman Darma Putra, *A Literary Mirror*, p. 194.

clothing. It is important, however, to note that the fear expressed was not merely about youth, but about the good name and reputation of all Indonesian women, *kaum ibu*—and by extension the Indonesian nation—as a whole.

The discussion of moral crisis seems to have reached a fevered pitch following the conclusion of the Revolution, that time of social instability explored in *Lewat Djam Malam*<sup>24</sup> when “everything seemed possible.” But it was also a time perhaps that some of the possibilities were not uniquely perceived as positive. By the time women’s and entertainment magazines other than *Wanita* began publishing in late 1952 and early 1953, the fevered pitch of individual instances of moral crisis had diminished. Perhaps by the time *Lewat Djam Malam* was filmed in 1954, there was enough cultural space to look back at the formational years of the nation more analytically.

But nonetheless, even in the years leading up to 1955, as economic turbulence began to calm, as the political shape of the nation became clearer, and as Indonesia took on a more active role in the global politics of non-alignment, moral crisis remained an important theme in national political and social discourse. The fear of moral crisis was, however, becoming institutionalized in the process of governing, and was used by women to object to policies they considered to be against their shared interests.<sup>25</sup> We should examine, therefore, how this might also have been reflected in the institutionalization of cultural expressions at the heart of the moral construction of the nation, such as *Hari Ibu* or the role of women as *Ibu Bangsa*, or (“Mothers of the Nation.”)

Perhaps as a result of these processes of nationalization and institutionalization, moral crisis would often be expressed less acutely, reflecting an assumption of cultural conditions and social structures that included a general sense of crisis, rather than just as individual incidences or flares. The fear of moral crisis certainly lay at the heart of two important social concerns—prostitution and polygamy—that were much discussed in women’s magazines and elsewhere at the time, and that were seen as systemic challenges to women’s equality and security in Indonesian society. As discussed in Chapter 1, women’s

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<sup>24</sup> See the “Cinematic Interlude” following Chapter 1.

<sup>25</sup> In 1952, for instance, the government introduced a policy that paid government pension benefits to widows to include second, third and fourth wives. The policy brought swift and significant resistance from many women’s groups, including street demonstrations discussed in passing later in this chapter. See also Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, p. 129.

struggles against sexual immorality inherent in both social concerns was principally expressed in terms that can be seen as expressions of a fear of moral crisis.<sup>26</sup> The fear also surfaced in interesting ways in two specific incidents—women’s reactions both to Sukarno taking a second concurrent wife, Hartini, in 1953, and to the notable presence of prostitution at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955.

In these instances, claims of moral crisis were no longer simply a reaction to events of the day, but rather were an explanation for systemic problems that needed to be addressed by policy and the law. That is, both of these nationally prominent instances had implications for the status of women that reached beyond the events themselves. By the middle of the decade, wariness of situations that were considered to have denigrated the name and reputation of Indonesian women, and strong reactions to them, had become firmly imbedded in Indonesian political culture. And it is to those processes of the nationalization and institutionalization of the concept of Indonesian women’s morality as an indicator of the nation’s strength that this chapter now turns.

### ***Moral Crisis in Wanita Magazine: Protecting the Good Name of Indonesian Women***

In November 1951, an article in *Wanita* was one of the first in the magazine to address “Moral Crisis,” a topic that was to become an important theme in periodicals, and particularly women’s magazines, throughout the Sukarno era. Simply entitled “*Krisis Moral*,” the article, written by the magazine’s etiquette and ethics writer under the pseudonym Hajati,<sup>27</sup> explored the nature and causes of an increasing sense in Indonesia that the nation was entering a period of serious moral decline. “MORALS [*MORIL*],” Hajati wrote,

or there are also those who call it *akhlak*,<sup>28</sup> is a character or behavior<sup>29</sup> that is elevated, which every human being should have. A high character is the

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<sup>26</sup> See the discussion of the linkage of these two issues in Chapter 1.

<sup>27</sup> Despite multiple attempts, and asking many people, I have not been able to find out who Hajati was. Her columns, which later called her “Nenek Hajati,” or “Grandmother Hajati,” came to also take on a “Dear Abby”-style advice column format, mostly answering questions from younger unmarried women, but also from married women about various elements of work, marriage and family. Often the questions explored the limits of acceptable ethical and moral behavior for young women living, or trying to live, modern lives, and the tensions that raised with the expectations that placed on their behavior, dress, adornment and lifestyle. While this dissertation will use Hajati’s columns in passing, it should be noted that they could form a highly informative source for future research on young women, coming of age, and early marriage during this period.

<sup>28</sup> *Akhlak* translates as “morals,” but also “[moral] character,” or “ethics” and “ethical behavior.” It is an Arabic term that refers to virtue, morality and manners in Islamic discourse.

<sup>29</sup> The term used here is “*budi-pekerti*.” It expresses a high level of refinement of personal character and comportment.

source of all greatness. From that moral elevation issues love, peace, security, prosperity and happiness.

But now, people say, within our society there is the appearance, or perhaps what might more accurately be called the infection of the illness of *krisis-moril*. In a rough but emphatic way, it can be said that many members of our society have morals that are “depraved,” and because of that, their entire way of living in society is becoming wobbly and rickety.<sup>30</sup>

In order to know what might constitute rickety moral depravity, Hajati suggested one must first discuss what would amount to morals that were “firm.”<sup>31</sup> This basically came down to three elements: First, a firmly moral person would take responsibility for themselves and all those around them, from the level of the family to the larger society and the entire nation. Secondly, she would respect and honor the freedom and rights of other people. And thirdly, she would “have piety to God, obey the government, follow all applicable regulations, and have self-discipline.”<sup>32</sup>

The explicit link between religious piety, proper obedience to government and personal self-control would have important consequences later, when the principal charges against the Indonesian Communist Party would precisely be that they were “*tak ber-Tuhan*,” or Godless, and that their women in particular had lost all sense of self-discipline and sexual morality. The events at Lubang Buaya would be presented, explicitly, as an enormous case of Moral Crisis with the fate of the proper governing of the nation hanging in the balance when the other two pillars of morality were said to be trampled beyond any acceptable standard. But all elements of that later grand Moral Crisis were already fully present in this, and other, discussions of moral crisis that filled women’s magazines from the early 1950’s on.

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<sup>30</sup> “MORIL, ada djuga jang mengatakan ahlak ialah budi-pekerti jang tinggi, jang seharusnya ada pada setiap manusia. Ketinggian budi-pekerti itulah mendjadi sumber dari segala kedjajaan. Dari ketinggian moril itulah terbitnja tjinta-kasih, perdamaian, keamanan, kemakmuran dan kebahagiaan. // Tapi sekarang, kata orang, dikalangan masjarakat kita sedang terbit atau lebih tepat dikatakan berdjangkit penjakit krisis-moril. Setjara kasar tetapi tegas, boleh dikatakan, bahwa banjak diantara anggota masjarakat kita jang morilnja ‘bedjat’, karena demikian, seluruh peri-hidup didalam masjaraktpun mendjadi gojah dan rehot.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 22, November, p. 464. In his lectures and classes on the early Indonesian nationalist generation, Rudolf Mrázek often described their lives as being built on a “wobbly, rickety” bridge between their family backgrounds and the modern cultures of their Dutch educations. The use of those specific words is reflected in my notes from those classes.

<sup>31</sup> “*utuh-teguh*,” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 22, November, p. 464.

<sup>32</sup> “*Ia takwa kepada Tuhan, patuh kepada pemerintah, menurut kepada segala peraturan jang berlaku dan berdisiplin kepada dirinja sendiri*.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 22, November, p. 464. The use of the gender neutral third person singular pronoun “*ia*” makes no distinction in the gender of the person being moral.

The irony of the situation would be that many if not most of those associated with the PKI were, themselves, Muslim, and the PKI membership was particularly known for its self-discipline and attention to right action while carrying out their party business. The party strictly enforced a rather puritanical code of sexual mores as well. Members were expelled, for instance, for entering into polygamous marriages or even for having extra-marital affairs. Additionally, the PKI was noted for its loyalty to Sukarno and his government. But the dangers of moral crisis were strong enough to be used, in the end, to overwrite that basically square and composed reputation completely.

The important argument of this dissertation, first presented in Chapter 1, is not only that the sense of moral crisis evoked by the military in October 1965 was not something new, or made up, but also that the cultural space for receiving such an argument had been laid out from the earliest days of the new nation through a long series of small episodes of moral crisis that were seen to attack both the spiritual health and public good name of the Indonesian nation. While moral failure might be an individual experience, moral crisis was a collective one, with serious implications for the entire society. These instances of moral crisis were also often fundamentally gendered, with women as the ones whose failures would render the nation “wobby and rickety,” and in need of a fundamental and brutal (New) re-Ordering.

The fascinating element of Hajati’s discourse on Moral Crisis, however, was that it was not simply expressed in nationalist Indonesian terms. Rather, as with many arguments coming out of the cosmopolitan elite, it was inflected with a variety of influences from outside Indonesia proper, reflecting the sense of Indonesian elite identity being an intermeshed web of various cultural maps. Hajati’s religious argument, though likely seen as being inclusive of Protestants, Catholics and Hindus, was shot through with Arabic Islamic terms. Having proper faith was referred to with the term “*iman*,” and piety to God was “*takwa*.” God himself was both “*Allah*” and “*Tuhan*.”<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, many of the words she used to explore the psychological, internal experience of morality were Dutch—*normaal*, for instance, described regularly acceptable standards of behavior—concepts that

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<sup>33</sup> Although recently conservative Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore have insisted that “*Allah*” can only be used by Muslims, and that others who use the term are committing blasphemy, until recently, the word was accepted generally as meaning God. It was, and still is, often used in Indonesian language Christian services and Biblical translations, alongside *Tuhan*, a word meaning “Lord,” that is also in general use among all believers in a unitary God.



might be new to the Indonesian language were followed by their Dutch equivalents to provide a clarity of understanding to the educated reader. So, “*dakwaan pribadinja*” (“personal recrimination,”) was also glossed as “*zelfverwijt*,” (meaning “self-reflection,”) but also “self-reproach” or “self-blame,”) and “*kemurnian hati ketjilnja*,” (meaning “purity of conscience,”) was also rendered as “*reinheid van geweten*,” (“cleanliness/purity of conscience.”)

This language of internal retrospection lay at the heart of Hajati’s discussion of moral crisis. A vendor with a strong sense of morals, she said, would not offer low quality goods for sale at a “super-quality” price. Instead, the vendor would inform the woman shopping that “This item is shoddy, so its price is low, but if madam would like a nice one, I have them, but the price is expensive, here it is.”<sup>34</sup> He or she would do so, however, not simply because this would be good for their reputation and business, but primarily because “a person whose morals aren’t rotten . . . would feel ashamed to do something that isn’t *halal*.”<sup>35</sup> A weak sense of morals, or of moral brazenness, rose to crisis when it was used by those with systemic power: a bureaucrat’s wife who used her husband’s office car to do the shopping, or the bureaucrat himself who used his position to enrich himself, his family and his friends. But the ability to do exterior damage to society was, first and foremost in Hajati’s view, the result of an unexamined or broken interior by both women and men.

None of Hajati’s examples in this instance were tied to illicit sexual behavior. Rather, the morality in question was raised by a variety of issues. But, as Chapter 7 discusses, the questions of abuse of this social power were still regularly linked to actions that were seen to denigrate the good name of Indonesian women as well.

This was clear in a column Hajati had written a year earlier, in August 1950. She wrote about moral crisis, although without using that term explicitly. In this former instance, she outlined what would come to be a rather standard construction of the issue: young Indonesian women were being corrupted by the glitz and glamour of western women’s lives, without paying attention to the effects that might have on their internal

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<sup>34</sup> “*Barang ini djelek, sebab itu harganja murah, tapi kalau njonja mau jang bagus ada, harganja mahal, ini barangnja.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 22, November, pp. 464-5.

<sup>35</sup> “*orang jang morilnja tidak bedjat, pasti mempunjai rasa malu untuk berbuat sesuatu jang tidak halal.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 22, November, p. 465.

moral compasses. The article, entitled “*Budi dan Susila*,” or “Character and Morality,”<sup>36</sup> centered on her analysis of an unnamed article she had read that described the “depravity” (“*bedjat*”) of western societies, specifically of women there, and that furnished images as “proof” (“*bukti*.”) This depravity principally showed its effects though “sex outside marriage, which they no longer see as a problem.”<sup>37</sup> But, Hajati noted, it was expressed publicly primarily through a misplaced sense of priorities:

The source of their dignity doesn’t come from the pureness of their soul, nobility of character and firmness of their morality, but rather from their wealth and material possessions. Good clothing, delicious food, fully appointed households, lots of money and pleasures of their hearts’ desire, those are the measures of their respectability.<sup>38</sup>

The challenge to young Indonesians, according to Hajati, came about because “normally, when we see or hear about Westerners, its usually only about their mental facility, technical achievements, their music, dance, fashion, pompadours and the like.”<sup>39</sup> “As long as we can choose and differentiate between good and bad, none of this is the least bit dangerous,” she wrote. Then she continued:

But what I fear is that not all our young women are able to distinguish what is beneficial and what is filled with poison. And [what I] fear even more is if those who [only] ‘half know’ then slip into the imitation of the West, until they slide into a horrible danger.<sup>40</sup>

It was not, Hajati argued, that young Indonesian women shouldn’t imitate western fashion. Rather, she feared that their interior sensibilities wouldn’t be able to properly govern their actions. Their choices needed to be made “within limits that are *halal* and high-minded.”<sup>41</sup> The defense against these possible sources of moral corruption were, in

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<sup>36</sup> *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August, pp. 254-55.

<sup>37</sup> “Perhubungan diluar nikah, bagi mereka tidak lagi mendjadi satu soal.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August, p. 254.

<sup>38</sup> “Letak kemuliaan mereka bukan pada kemurnian djiwa, keluruhan budi keteguhan susila, tetapi pada harta-benda dan djenis barang. Pakaian bagus, makanan enak, rumahtangga jang lengkap, uang banjak dan pelesir sepuas hati, itulah ukuran kemuliannya.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August, p. 254.

<sup>39</sup> “sebab jang biasa kita lihat dan dengar dari orang Barat, biasanja hanja kepintaran orangja, hasil tekniknya, musiknya, dansanja, mode-nja, djambulnja dan sebagainya.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August, p. 254. The inclusion of the pompadour, or *jambul*, literally the crest of a bird, helps demonstrate just how specific sources of western cultural invasion could be. Young urban men’s pompadours, along with their tight pants and love of rock-n-roll would become specific targets of morality police in the 1960s, are discussed in Chapter 6. Thanks to Laine Berman for the translation of the term.

<sup>40</sup> “asal kita dapat memilih dan membedahkan antara baik dan buruk, memang sedikitpun tiada ada bahajanja. Tapi jang saja chawatirkan, ialah karena diantara gadis-gadis kita tidak semua dapat memilih mana jang berguna dan mana jang mengandung ratjun. Dan lebih chawatir lagi kalau jang ‘setengah-tahu’ lantast terpeleset dalam meniru-niru Barat, sehingga ia tergelintjir kebahaianja jang buruk.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August, p. 255.

<sup>41</sup> “tetap didalam batas-batas jang halal dan berbudi tinggi.” *Wanita*, 1950 no. 15, August, p. 255.

her view, properly minding the guidance of Islam (or, at least, some other recognized religious teaching,) and maintaining a strong and self-critical character.

These combinations of concerns showed up consistently in multiple articles in *Wanita* between 1950 and 1955. Moral Crisis, in one expression or another, along with discussions of the marriage law, elections and women's leadership in society, was one of the prevalent recurring issues contained in the pages of the magazine. Often the concerns were tied to the twin problems of the lack of Indonesian economic development and the quick growth of urban landscapes. The editorial for National Day in 1951,<sup>42</sup> for instance, focused on the moral implications of rising prices and an inflationary national economy. With everyone's family budgets stretched, government workers would skip the office and find other jobs, leaving important work undone while they collected two salaries. "Productivity in the office is lacking,"<sup>43</sup> the editorial noted. Beyond that, when the public could find workers in the office, it often seemed to require bribes to actually get work done. "Responsibility towards one's own self and to the nation is falling," the writers continued. "Respect for the law almost doesn't exist. Their inner selves have nothing to hold onto, morality is dwindling."<sup>44</sup>

A short story by N. Kaskojo in the same issue recounted the difficulties that a young wife "Sri," also called Ibu D, was having in balancing the new ways of life as they came to Solo.<sup>45</sup> Getting paper receipts for purchases was difficult, for instance, because inevitably, sales people were skimming off the top of the set prices. The problem of excessive modernity was more difficult in Jakarta where modern life was more expensive, the story noted, than in Solo, "where it is normal to see women dressed in *kain-kebaya* of only a few styles, just simple, their hair drawn slick and straight back from their face."<sup>46</sup>

This was changing, however, even in Solo. As women perhaps remained in *kain-kebaya*, they were slowly changing their hairstyles to permanent waves, the "creations of

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<sup>42</sup> "17 Agustus, Kita mengindjak ke-7 tahun Merdeka." ("August 17, We enter the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Freedom.") *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 293.

<sup>43</sup> "Productiviteit dikantor kurang." *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 293.

<sup>44</sup> "Tanggung jawab terhadap diri sendiri dan negara berkurang. Penghargaan terhadap hukum mendjadi tidak ada. Djiwannja mendjadi tidak punja pegangan, moralnja merosot." *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 293.

<sup>45</sup> "Suasana Kota Besar," ("Big City Atmosphere.") *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, pp. 309-310.

<sup>46</sup> "Di Solo, dimana ia biasa melihat wanita-wanita berhiaskan kebaja jang tidak banjak model, sederhana sadja, rambutnja disanggul litjin lurus dari muka kebelakang." *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 309.

modern hair salons.”<sup>47</sup> The process of change, or adjustment followed a particular dynamic: “from this surprise it then became an influence, and finally became normal.”<sup>48</sup> This changed the fabric of women’s daily lives, Kaskojo wrote. “The contents of [a woman’s] closet build up” she explained,

and they change, from *bledak*, *parang klitik* and *madu bronto* batiks<sup>49</sup> they change to become *new-look* gowns,<sup>50</sup> dresses for [western-style] dancing, brocade, satin and all types [of fabrics], multi-colored *selendangs* from Bali have turned into all sorts of belts and handbags that match her blouses. Her long black hair has changed to become short and curly, hair that is normally slicked back into a bun in the Solo style has become a hairstyle in the way of Shirley Temple or Claudette Colbert.<sup>51</sup>

With this new style<sup>52</sup> came some danger of losing older culture, and in very specific ways. To be able to afford to buy the “clothes that were required now” to not be left behind in the advancement of the women around, Sri considered selling off fine old *batiks* and bits of Javanese family jewelry. The new social style also had an effect on Sri’s husband, who, “although he was not anti-women’s emancipation,” often griped that when “a women emancipates herself, then tells her husband to fetch his own rice while his wife goes to the women’s club, or to exercise, or to learn to drive a car with her friends along, Mr. D who very much loves his wife often loses his patience.”<sup>53</sup> Although there clearly was some effect

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<sup>47</sup> “*tjptaan kapsalon jang modern.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 310.

<sup>48</sup> “*Dari keheranan ini kemudian mendjadi pengaruh, dan achirnja mendjadi biasa.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 310.

<sup>49</sup> *Bledak* is a style of *lasem* motif batik. *Lasem* is decorated with various styles of flowers, and the *bledak* variant is made with a white or cream background, rather than the colored backgrounds of most *lasem*. It is considered particularly soft and feminine, and less showy than the colored style. *Parang klitik*, also discussed in Chapter 2, is a batik motif that represents a woman’s subtle wisdom and her calm and cool outlook on life. *Madu bronto*, which translates directly as honeybee, is a motif that represents a feeling of longing for a loved one. Taken together in this case, they clearly represent the restrained standards of feminine love and compassion emanating from a traditional Javanese understanding of the ideal women’s role in society, quietly keeping the home held together with an abiding sense of love for her family.

<sup>50</sup> The expression is in English, but with Indonesian word order: “*gown new-look.*”

<sup>51</sup> “*Isi almarinja bertambah hari makin berubah, dari kain bledak, parang klitik, madu-bronto dsb. berubah mendjadi gown new-look, japon untuk dansa, brocaat, satijn dan segala rupa; dari selendang pelangi Bali mendjadi segala matjam centuur dan handtas jang seragam dengan badjunja. Rambutnja jang pandjam hitam, berubah menjadi pendek berikal-ikal, rambut jang biasa litjin disanggul setjara Solo mendjadi kapsel setjara Shirley Temple atau Claudette Colbert.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 310.

<sup>52</sup> Nancy Florida points out that both Shirley Temple and Claudette Colbert were stars in the 1930’s. But their films, along with other 1930’s Hollywood titles, were still screened in the 1950’s, and were therefore well known in Indonesia at the time.

<sup>53</sup> “*meskipun ia bukan anti emansipasi-wanita, tetapi djika wanita beremansipasi lalu menjuruh suaminja mengambil nasinja sendiri, waktu sang isteri baru kedamesclubnja, baru berolah-raga, atau beladjar setir mobil dengan teman-teman sepergaulannja, tuan D. jang sangat tjinta kepada isterinja sering djuga habis kesabarannja.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 310.

on his outlook from the change in household dynamics, the story primarily presented him as worrying about the finances of these new social requirements.

This fear of financial misjudgment, in the story at least, brought Sri back into line. Reading one night, the story continued, "Sri's eyes were opened, and she was suddenly aware that her lifestyle of late was beyond her husband's means. . . . She did not like that her husband was being plunged into the misery of the currents leading towards corruption like the majority of other civil servants who had that opportunity."<sup>54</sup> He husband was then "overjoyed,"

when the next day he learned of his wife's realization, and he would be even happier, when Sri would care for their child with all sorts of love, sacrificing the large part of her own enjoyment.<sup>55</sup>

In the face of all the temptations of the "new-look" society, it was motherhood and a wife's proper concern for her husband's morality that brought Sri back in line. It was her own sense of shame that righted her course, and her internal moral growth that helped her adjust her outside expression to a correct standard.

If an already married woman was at risk for falling too far under the influence of the expensive new cultural opportunities of modern life, even in Solo, this was thought to be even more true of young single women living apart from their families in Jakarta. Yet again, the best safeguard against falling prey to temptations was the love of a good mother. In a "Letter from Mother,"<sup>56</sup> published in *Wanita* in March 1951, an unnamed mother responded to a letter from her daughter in the city. The daughter, Ti,<sup>57</sup> had fallen in love, and was in the midst of a low point of the emotional challenges this posed.

"I thought earlier," the mother wrote, "that when one day Love would come to you,

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<sup>54</sup> "Pembitjaraan sesore tadi membuka mata Sri sekarang baru sedarlah ia bahwa penghidupannya terlampau melanggar batas kekuatan suaminya. . . . ia tidak suka suaminya terdjerumus kedalam arus kenafsuan korupsi seperti kebanyakan pegawai lainnya jang mempunjai kesempatan." *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 310.

<sup>55</sup> "Suaminya akan girang sekali, djika esok harinja mengetahui keinsjafan isterinja ini, dan akan bertambahlah berbahagiannya djika Sri kelak memlihara anak mereka dengan segala ketjintaan, dengan mengkorbankan sebagian besar dari kesenangannya." *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 310.

<sup>56</sup> "Surat dari Ibu," *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, pp. 105-06.

<sup>57</sup> The name is a shortened version of any number of women's names that end in "ti," which makes clear the named person is a woman or a girl. So, in this case, Ti can represent any young woman. The mother only addresses herself as "Ibu," so the letter is clearly intended as a general pronouncement on the issues at hand, rather than as a letter addressing a specific situation.

... you would welcome it with happiness in your whole heart, which meant you would also forget about the realities that are sometimes cruel.”<sup>58</sup> The misfortune of love the mother referred to, however, was not about the emotional *sturm und drang* between husband and wife, but rather centered around the sense of sacrifice that marriage would require of the young women of Ti’s generation. “Really, it’s true what you’re saying, Ti,” she wrote,

This new generation is different from earlier ones. And their views on the values of life are different as well. What was held high in my time today is violated. Modern life with school and work brings new problems that young women in the old days never knew. Fashion and entertainment have become *urgent* things<sup>59</sup> for young women. Old traditions that narrowed their steps have been thrown out and stamped as already obsolete in these modern times. Even I have been trying to follow in this stream, but occasionally I find myself confused. I am envious and proud to see how young women these days are demanding advancement, are going into all fields of work, are agitating for their rights. But sometimes I feel worried, when I hear news that is not so pleasant caused by this new path.<sup>60</sup>

Ti’s mother is aware of her daughter’s “inner struggle” (“*perdjoangan batinmu*,”) over the suggestion that as part of marriage and motherhood, Ti would be required to give up all this life of freedom, of how “[b]oiling rice and doing the laundry must become the center of your life,”<sup>61</sup> and how “everything must be let go, to come back into the household, and to submit to someone.”<sup>62</sup> And the life of a wife and mother was hard, she noted, always calling for self-sacrifice and of keeping a cheerful disposition, even on difficult days.

However, Ti’s mother was not only anxious for her daughter, but for young women as a whole. “I worry and fear when I see young women today,” she wrote.

How easily they play with what they call ‘love.’ It’s a pity, that while these young women improve their exteriors [“*memperbagus lahir*,”] they forget to

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<sup>58</sup> “Kukira dulu, kalau pada suatu ketika Tjinta akan datang djuga padamu, . . . engkau akan menjambutnja dengan gembira dengan seluruh hatimu jang menjebabkan engkau lupa pada kenjataan-kenjataan jang kadang-kadang bengis itu.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, p. 105.

<sup>59</sup> The text uses the English word urgent: “*barang urgent*.”

<sup>60</sup> “Memang betul jang kaukatakan, Ti. Generasi baru berlainan dengan jang dulu. Pandangan terhadap nilai hidup mereka berbeda pula. Apa jang dalam zaman ibu dijdudjung tinggi kini dilanggar sadja. Hidup modern dengan sekolah dan pekerdjaan membawa soal<sup>2</sup> baru jang tidak pernah dikenal oleh gadis-gadis zamam dulu. Mode dan hiburan mendjadi barang urgent bagi gadis. Adat istiadat jang lama jang mempersempit langkah mereka dibuang dan ditjap telah usang dalam zaman modern ini. Ibupun berusaha agar dapat mengikuti aliran ini, tetapi kadang-kadangpun bingung sendiri. Ibu iri dan ibu bangga melihat betapa gadis-gadis sekarang menuntut kemajuan, memasuki segala lapangan, merebut hak-haknja. Tetapi kadang-kadangpun timbul rasa chawatir, jaitu kalau mendengar kabar-kabar jang kurang menjenangkan akibat aliran ini.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, p. 105.

<sup>61</sup> “Bertandak nasi dan metjutji harus mendjadi pusat penghidupanmu.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, p. 105.

<sup>62</sup> “harus melepaskan itu semua, dan kembali kedalam rumah tangga, serta tunduk kepada seorang.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, p. 105.

improve their inner characters [*“memperbagus batinnja.”*] To see young women who are beautiful and smart presenting themselves well, that is truly pleasant, but it is a pity that most of them are lacking the qualities that adorn a woman. The qualities of knowing one’s value, being willing to sacrifice, being gracious, of encouraging, being helpful and comforting, in the best sense aren’t yet possessed by the majority of these young women.<sup>63</sup>

An entire generation, and by extension the whole nation, therefore, was at risk as young women only focused on part of what made a woman both beautiful on the outside, and not on what would make them strong and refined internally.

These same concerns were expressed more specifically in a set of thoughts on western fashion, published in a recurring column in *Wanita* called *“Tjubitan”* in August 1951.<sup>64</sup> In this particular column, *“Kakak Tua,”* (“Old Sister,” but also, strikingly, “Cockatoo,”) <sup>65</sup> commented on the ways in which “Fashion Today” seemed to her to be going too far. A question was raised in her heart, she said, when she saw what Western women were wearing these days: “Just where will the limits reach later?”<sup>66</sup> She was concerned that strapless dresses were showing off women’s shoulders and that their backs were open down to the waist. Even more, swim suits “only cover just what is necessary.”<sup>67</sup>

With her long memory, this provided an interesting reversal. In earlier days, Westerners had looked down their noses, he remembered, when Indonesian women bathed in the Ciliwung River that flowed through the canals of Batavia. Europeans saw this as “shameless”<sup>68</sup> at the time, but now it was proper Indonesian women who raised their noses when confronted with how skimpy Western women’s bathing suits were. Proper

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<sup>63</sup> *“Ti, ibu khawatir and takut melihat gadis zaman sekarang. Betapa mudahnya mereka bermain-main dengan apa yang dinamakan ‘tjinta’ itu. Sajang, bahwa dewasa ini disamping gadis-gadis itu memperbagus lahir, mereka lupa memberbagus batinnja. Melihat gadis-gadis yang tjantik dan pandai bersolek, memang senang, tetapi sajang bahwa kebanyakan dari mereka kurang adanya sifat<sup>2</sup> yang menghias wanita. Sifat-sifat tahu-harga-diri, suka berkorban, ramah, mendorong, menolong dan menghibur dalam arti yang baik belum dimiliki oleh kebanyakan gadis-gadis dewasa ini.”* *Wanita*, 1951 no. 6, March, p. 105.

<sup>64</sup> *“Tjubitan,”* *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316. *“Tjubitan”* means “pinches,” and the graphic at the top of the column showed a woman in *kain-kebaya* and *kondé* dropping a letter in surprise as she is pinched on the rear end by the hand of another woman, which could be inferred since the arm of the pincher is in the sleeve of a *kebaya*. The column tended to feature short pieces designed to ask provocative questions or to take stands that might challenge the prevailing thinking or goings-on among women.

<sup>65</sup> *“Kakak”* means sibling, and given the description of the title illustration above, I have chosen to translate it here as “sister.” The play on words in the name of the writer with reference to a long-living chatty bird most known for both brilliant displays of its head-crown feathers and its ability to repeat words it hears, is brilliantly intentional.

<sup>66</sup> *“Sampai dimana batasnja ini nanti?”* *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316.

<sup>67</sup> *“Apalagi badju mandinja, yang hanya menutup yang seperlunya sadja.”* *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316.

<sup>68</sup> He used the Dutch word *“schaamteloos,”* which she also translated into Indonesian as *“tidak punya malu,”* or “not having shame.” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316.

Indonesian women were also concerned about their poorer sisters bathing and going to the bathroom in rivers as well, although Kakak Tua didn't address this point in her writing. As was often the case when they assessed moral standards, western-educated Indonesians often adopted ideas and attitudes from their colonial teachers, even while directly opposing other elements of what they had been taught.<sup>69</sup>

Interestingly, women who defended their choice to “wear *strap-less*” also reversed attempts to shame them for lack of modesty by reminding their critics that in the colonial era, many Javanese women had often previously only worn a breast wrap on their upper bodies. “*Strap-less*” itself, they therefore argued, was already a traditional local style, even if it now came from Western sources. These examples clearly demonstrate that the relationship between colonial, native and now independent sources of just “what the limits that would be reached later” were indeed complex.<sup>70</sup>

Kakak Tua also saw another important source in establishing proper limits, namely Islam. Making a fascinating reference to racial typing in passing, she wrote “I don't agree with these types of revealing fashion<sup>71</sup> not only because the color of our people's skin is not always good to be exhibited, but also because remember that our religious law has clearly written limits.”<sup>72</sup> It was not, Kakak Tua thought, that Indonesian Muslim women were required to “cover their bodies like Arab women,”<sup>73</sup> but it was also clear that “Muslim

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<sup>69</sup> This is a common occurrence in the history of colonial and post-colonial Southeast Asia. Indonesian nationalists, for instance, adopted Dutch anti-homosexual language when opposing the relationships between Dutch and Indonesian men in several noted cases in Bali in the 1930s, and Filipino *nacionalistas* adopted American racial categories and hierarchies in asserting their right to “uplift” their “own” non-Christian little brown brothers from the 1910's forward. Former British colonies around the globe adopted British anti-sodomy laws in their post-colonial constitutions, to the point that the legal language around such issues in places as far apart as Malaysia and Nigeria is almost identical. In each of these cases, the cultural expression of these colonial values was indigenized, but the effects of certain types of “legitimacy politics” meted out on local elites by their colonial masters was also clearly visible. I have already written about the Filipino case, and I hope to explore this question comparatively in future work.

<sup>70</sup> An important instance of this in the first years of the Indonesian nation, which I wish I had the materials to address properly in this dissertation, involved the nationalist leadership in Bali banning the (mostly foreign) photography of bare-breasted Balinese women in the early 1950's, and their attempts to get Balinese village women to cover up at the same time. What seems to have been at play was their sense that Balinese women's breasts showing in public marked Bali as backwards, undeveloped, and sexual. A similar urge had struck Filipino legislators in the 1910's, when the legislature passed a bill banning the nude photography of members of mountain tribes. They did this out of the fear that their American colonial masters would use the photographs to claim that Filipinos were as yet uncivilized, and therefore in need of continuing colonial administration, which some American colonial functionaries indeed went on precisely to do.

<sup>71</sup> The author used the term “*mode serba terbuka*,” which literally translates as “open style fashion,” but *terbuka* here also is a reference to opening one's *aurat*, or the private parts of one's body, which should be kept “*tutup*,” or closed.

<sup>72</sup> “*Kakak tidak setuju dengan mode serba terbuka ini bukanlah sadja karena warna kulit bangsa kita tidak selamanja bagus untukk [sic] dipertontonkan, tetapi djuga karena mengingat hukum agama kita jang mengadakan batas<sup>2</sup> surat jang tertentu.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316.

<sup>73</sup> “*supaja tiap<sup>2</sup> wanita Islam harus menutup badannja seperti wanita Arab,*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316. Note the use of the word “*tutup*,” or to close, to refer to the covering of the body.



guidance must not be let go altogether.”<sup>74</sup> “Such an attitude,” she concluded “would not be fitting of a people that professes its nation to be a nation of Islam!”<sup>75</sup>

Women who defined themselves first and foremost as Muslim shared many of these concerns about which elements of the new non-Islamically focused modernity might take women “too far.” In November 1951, for instance, *Suara ‘Aisjijah*<sup>76</sup> offered some particularly interesting discussions of events that were a cause for moral concerns among their culturally more conservative readers. Although magazines such as *Wanita* note and discuss the crisis, often blunting the criticism of women’s freedom and modernity implicit to their construction, *Suara ‘Aisjijah* actively questioned certain decisions about fashion and lifestyle. In one particular article, about a “competition” in Jakarta for women with their hair in various forms of *kondé*, the writer saw such an exhibition as a slippery slope for the exhibition of women’s bodies in public. The writer of the article wondered if,

after this *konde* pageant, maybe another time there will also be, gosh . . .  
(pardon me) breasts. Which are the most conical . . . the biggest, those are  
the ones that would draw the eye most. Goshhhh, our women are truly good  
at causing an uproar . . . .<sup>77</sup>

How much of one’s body was shown, and in what context, was clearly a marker of the grounds of the debates on female propriety in which women could take differing opinions and see the same events within different contexts. Two ideal types of women, the “*Ibu Bangsa*” and the “*Pelacur*,” the “Mother of the Nation” and the “Prostitute,” marked the extremes of Indonesian womanhood that would be most critical to the cultural dynamics that would bring about the mass violence that ended the Sukarno era and brought about

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<sup>74</sup> “*tetapi hendaknya pedoman Islam itu djangan dilepaskan sama sekali.*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316. “*Pedoman*” translated here as “guidance,” has a breadth of meanings: guidelines, guidance, directives, compass, orientation, or precepts, for instance. But it also refers to a handbook or guidebook, often about moral issues, many of which had been written for upper class Javanese and other Indonesian women in large numbers from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on. There were also *pedoman* written for young couples about the complexities of married life, including its sexual side. Very often, *pedoman* cited either traditional practice (“*adat*,”) or written sources on morality from both Javanese and Arabic writers as their sources. So, the idea that Kakak is reminding her readers that “we have written limits” on this is quite in keeping with older traditions for teaching young women about the proper limits of their bodies and sexuality.

<sup>75</sup> “*Sikap jang sematjam ini sungguh tidak lajak bagi bangsa jang mengakui negaranja sebagai negara Islam!*” *Wanita*, 1951 no. 15, August, p. 316. The political position on Islam taken here is notable, and clearly conservative.

<sup>76</sup> The women’s magazine of the modernist Islamic Muhammadiyah movement, see Chapter 3.

<sup>77</sup> “*baru perlombaan konde, mungkin djuga lain waktu adu . . . . (ma’af) buah dada. Mana jang paling kerutjut . . . . paling munjuk, itulah dia jang paling menarik mata. Aduhh kok pandai betul ni, wanita kita bikin gemper [sic] . . . .*” *Suara ‘Aisjijah*, December 1951. Much thanks to Bramantyo Prijosusilo and EP Theresia for helping tease out the translation of some of the less-than-common descriptive words for the breasts themselves.

the New Order. It is not surprising that this particular dichotomy—a classic of patriarchal social order, that Sylvia Tiwon refers to as being about “models and maniacs,”<sup>78</sup> and that would come to be central to the creation of the Lubang Buaya narrative— was already fully in place in sources on Indonesian women by *Hari Ibu* 1953. The chapter now turns to a discussion of this phenomenon briefly.

### ***Mother of the Nation and Prostitute: Moral Crisis in a Gendered Macrocosm***

The previous chapter has already discussed the concept of the Ideal Mother at some length, so that element of the dichotomy will not be discussed here in much detail. But several details of the *Hari Ibu* song from 1953 quoted earlier in Chapter 4 are a helpful reminder of the high moral task accorded to women as mothers. The phrases “Our mothers, my hope [you’ll be] Guides for a wise and virtuous people,” and “With Mothers lies the fate of our people, Supporters of our [high] standard,” as much as any other source on national motherhood, point out exactly what those women at the forefront of creating an official role for women within the nation felt was at stake should women’s morality fail.

Women’s magazines and other sources from 1949 on contained a plethora of materials that contrasted both ideal mothers and prostitutes. The principal dynamic that played out in them, not surprisingly, was a concern by those seeking a society based in ideal motherhood that those women engaged in sex work in various forms would diminish the value of women in society in general.

Much of the writing on prostitution addressed its causes, making an important distinction between women who engaged in some forms of sexual labor out of economic necessity and those who were morally broken in some way.<sup>79</sup> Discourses on Indonesian femininity also set up a comparative distinction between proper mothers and prostitutes that served to protect women in general from being stained by the moral depravity of prostitution. It did this by stressing that most women entering prostitution were doing so under duress, that is out of their circumstances rather than because of some internal flaw.

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<sup>78</sup> This is the central organizing element of Sylvia Tiwon’s book chapter “Models and Maniacs,” in Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine*. See the discussion of her work in Chapter 1.

<sup>79</sup> This was the essential narrative tension in *Lewat Djam Malam*, discussed in the Cinematic Interlude following Chapter 1.

Prostitutes were broken women, but, critically, they were often broken from the outside rather than the inside.

In my sources, this was not merely an occasional discussion. Rather, in some form or another, prostitution, prostitutes, their moral character and their economic circumstances were a regular and ongoing concern for activist women during this period.<sup>80</sup> But the question was almost always discussed in a larger systemic way and in conceptual language. The prostitutes as women were only rarely discussed as individuals or had their specific individual circumstances described. Rather, prostitution was largely treated as a problem for women and a danger to the nation in general. It was a social ill that seemed ever present, and quite nearby. “I myself come across it and see it everywhere,” one commentary noted, “at the Night Market, at the Movie Theater, in the streets.”<sup>81</sup> a danger to the good name of Indonesian womanhood, but one often discussed without specifics.

Part of what wasn’t specific was what was meant by the word for prostitution, “*pelacuran*.” Though clearly taken generally in its common sense of sex work, the term was also often tied women having sex outside of marriage more generally. The base word “*lacur*” is defined in the 1961 national dictionary as meaning “wretched, failed, not successful [or not having occurred, or not fully formed,] unlucky.”<sup>82</sup> Its second definition was “improper behavior (prostitute, re: women.)”<sup>83</sup> Nancy Florida points out that “*lacur*” holds both meanings, but that *pelacuran* refers uniquely to prostitution in its various forms.<sup>84</sup>

The variety of things that could constitute *pelacuran* was reflected in an extensive discussion of prostitution in an article in *Wanita* from February 1951 entitled “Once again about prostitution.”<sup>85</sup> The article was written, at the request of the editors, by Soenario

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<sup>80</sup> See for example: From 1950: Sukeni, “*Deradjat Wanita*,” (“Women’s [Moral] Level,”) *Wanita*, 1950 No. 18, p. 323; from 1951: Nj. T.S.R. Sujatno, “*Pembangunan Moreel*,” (“Moral Awakening” or “Moral Development,”) *Wanita* 1951, No. 3, p. 51; and from 1953: “*Perjuangan melawan krisis achlak*,” (“The struggle against moral crisis,”) *Wanita*, 1953 No. 16, pp. 358-361, for just a few examples of many.

<sup>81</sup> “*Saja sendiri mengetahui dan melihat di Pasar malam, di Bioscoop, didjalan-djalan*.” Nj. T.S.R. Sujatno, “*Pembangunan Moreel*,” *Wanita* 1951, No. 3, p. 51.

<sup>82</sup> “*tjelaka; gagal; tidak djadi; sial*.” W.J.S. Poerwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia*. Third Printing, 1961, p. 513. Thanks also to Adrian Vickers, who in an online discussion of this article and its conception of *pelacuran* pointed out that in earlier Malay sources, “*lacur*” had a very strong sense of economic and situational misery to it, rather primarily a sense of moral failing, or even a direct connotation of prostitution.

<sup>83</sup> “*tidak baik kelakuan (sundal tt perempuan)*,” W.J.S. Poerwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia*. Third Printing, 1961, p. 513.

<sup>84</sup> Nancy Florida, personal communication, April 2019.

<sup>85</sup> Soenario Prawirodihardjo, “*Sekali lagi tentang pelatjuran*,” *Wanita*, 1951, no. 4, pp. 68, 77.

Prawirodihardjo, the Director of the Social Office in the Demak Regency, Central Java. Next to the northern coastal port city of Semarang, Demak, (along with Semarang,) was cited on several occasions as having undertaken particularly strong efforts at the social rehabilitation of former prostitutes from the revolutionary period. These included a mass marriage of such women who had been “retrained” in “moral questions” and then matched up with unmarried men in need of wives. His discussion of the question addressed both definitions and causes of *pelacuran*, and described what he saw as its effects on society, and prescribed methods to prevent and reduce prostitution.

Prawirodihardjo’s article defined *pelacuran* quite broadly. He described the phenomenon as “lustful/sexual deeds that are not legitimate (not within marriage) according to: a. Religious Law, b. National Law, and c. Traditional Law.”<sup>86</sup> He then, despite grounding his definition in all three strains of legal precedence at play in modern Indonesia, went on to make a distinction between two types of *pelacuran*, the first being “illegal,” and the second being “legal.” The first took place in spaces that were “not easily discovered” by the general public, and often had “horrible effects,” such as abortion and infanticide. “Legal” *pelacuran*, on the other hand, took place under the public guise, and this type was more likely to be discussed positively by those who were attracted to it.<sup>87</sup> In this sense, *pelacuran* seemed to apply as much to things such as extra-marital affairs as it did to sex work in exchange for money, food or other valuables. What is clear in his discussion is that the term *pelacuran* could be quite elastic, covering a wide variety of situations in which women provided sex outside of marriage in some form of exchange.

Prawirodihardjo provided a list of twelve causes of *pelacuran*. Taken together, they demonstrate the complexity of factors that were seen as driving this web of sexual misconduct. Notably these were almost entirely laid at the feet of the women involved. The causes were:

- a. Because of economic stress.
- b. Because of neglected moral education.

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<sup>86</sup> “*Pelatjuran ialah: perbuatan sjahwat jang tidak sjah (tidak dengan kawin) menurut: a. Hukum Agama, b. Hukum Negara, dan c. Hukum Adat.*” *Wanita*, 1951, no. 4, p. 68.

<sup>87</sup> Though the text itself is not completely clear, the “legal” version most likely included situations in which the state allowed for the establishment of “localized” sexual commerce with “known” prostitutes working in specific areas or spaces.

- c. Because of comingling, which is considered modern, but which exceeds limits (*free association*).<sup>88</sup>
- d. Broken heart, the consequence of forced marriage etc.
- e. Because of lust that cannot be controlled.
- f. The consequence of war, many widows etc.
- g. Because of the activities of *brothel owners*<sup>89</sup> (madams).
- h. The consequence of the ease of marriage and divorce.
- i. The consequence of usury, gambling and other immorality.
- j. Because of illness (*sexual hysteria*).<sup>90</sup>
- k. Because of the insufficient internalization of the teachings of Religion.
- l. Because of readings and performances that arouse lust (novels etc.)<sup>91</sup>

Prawirodihardjo also suggested that the negative effects of *pelacuran* fell overwhelmingly on women. Prostitution had multiple such outcomes in his view, including the loss of peace in the family, divorce, bickering, fighting, “engendering and transmitting SYPHILIS,”<sup>92</sup> destroying the body and the family, injuring innocent children and even causing death. But the effect at the top of his list was that it “1. Lowers the status of women in particular, and the nation in general.”<sup>93</sup>

In Prawirodihardjo’s conception of *pelacuran*, then, we see the entire set of issues creating a national *krisis moral* in microcosm. Neglected morals and forgotten religious education, free association, the aftermath of war and revolution both economic and social could have effects on both women and men. But when combined with lust, sexual hysteria and coercion, these became the specific province of women, as well as their particular

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<sup>88</sup> The gloss is in Dutch, “*vrij omgang*.”

<sup>89</sup> The term is in Dutch, “*bordeelhoudster*.”

<sup>90</sup> Again, the gloss is in Dutch, “*sexueel histerie*.” The presence of Dutch terms in this list and what they pertain to is quite interesting. The connection of free association, brothels and sexual hysteria seems to place more structural elements of *pelacuran* within a Dutch/colonial frame.

<sup>91</sup> “*Jang menjebabkan adanja pelatjuran ada bermatjam-matjam, ialah:*

- a. *Karena tekanan ekonomie.*
- b. *Karena terlantar pendidikan budi-pekertinja.*
- c. *Karena pergaulan, jang dianggapnja modern, tetapi melampaui batas. (vrij omgang).*
- d. *Patah hati, akibat kawin paksaan dsb.*
- e. *Karena nafsu jang tak dapat dikendalikan.*
- f. *Akibat pertempuran, banjak djanda dsb.*
- g. *Karena kegiatan dari bordeelhoudster (embok-embokan).*
- h. *Akibat mempermudah kawin dan bertjerai.*
- i. *Akibat korban woeker, perjudian and kemak-sikatan lainnja.*
- j. *Karena penjakit (sexueel histerie).*
- k. *Karena kurang mendalamnja peladjaran Agama.*
- l. *Karena batjaan dan pertundjukan jang dapat membangunkan nafsu sjahwat. (roman dsb.)”*

*Wanita*, 1951, no. 4, p. 68.

<sup>92</sup> “*menimbulkan dan mendjanghkitkan SYPILIS,*” *Wanita*, 1951, no. 4, p. 68.

<sup>93</sup> “*Merendahkan deradjat wanita chususnja, dan bangsa pada umumnja.*” *Wanita*, 1951, no. 4, p. 68.

responsibility to cure. Prawirodihardjo called on women's organizations to offer special assistance in reanimating moral education, limiting free association and providing sexual education to high schoolers. He also called on the censoring of lustful reading materials and performances,<sup>94</sup> and even more of films in theaters, all of which should also, he suggested, significantly be the work of women's organizations.

In considering prostitution, there was a highly gendered version of moral crisis that emerged in Indonesian cultural thought.<sup>95</sup> It also took a central position within the web of the discussion of *national* moral crisis. Prostitution was the most easily visible example of behavior that was specifically taken to be an affront to women's status and dignity specifically while also endangering the vigor and health of the nation more generally. This particular form of moral crisis also linked the moral status of women and the health of the nation together explicitly. Multiple forms of moral crisis might ruin the nation, likely affecting women as a part of that collective. But the sexual ruination of women would undoubtedly destroy the nation all on its own.

The "vaccination" against such possible ruin and destruction would entail maintaining specific, limited roles for women in society. It was, in this view, the extension and strengthening of a rather conservative concept of *kodrat wanita*, that is, the elevation of women's morality in their roles as wives, mothers and managers of the household, the roles given to them by marriage, that would inoculate the nation from the excesses of modernity, the scourge of poverty and the rejection of religious guidance. Women, then, were the locus of the possibilities of both the nation's greatest moral danger and destruction and, simultaneously, of its renewal, development and strengthening.

Men were almost completely absent from Prawirodihardjo's vision. This was also the case in the vast majority of other sources on sexually based moral crisis, where men were rarely included. When Prawirodihardjo did include men, as he did in passing, it was

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<sup>94</sup> The idea that publications and performances were enflaming sexual passion was a regular theme. See for instance the Editorial in *Wanita*, 1954 no. 11, 5 June, calling for the restriction of ads for medicines that contained "sexual" pictures, since they created lustful feelings among male readers. The most common ad of this type was likely the ubiquitous one for "A-Peak," an herbal tonic designed to increase both the size and pertness of women's bustlines, and the image attached to it showed an amply endowed woman showing off her (fully covered) breasts that were indeed both large and perky. The editorial also was one of the first calls for women to be involved in censoring movies from overseas, so that Indonesia could be a moral society.

<sup>95</sup> This was not, of course, only the case in Indonesia. But it is clearly present in the sources for this dissertation within an Indonesian context.

largely limited to their roles as religious teachers or as the block and neighborhood captains who formed the backbone of the surveillance apparatus of the state.<sup>96</sup> On occasion, young unmarried men, particularly soldiers on leave or veterans who had not settled well after the Revolution, were considered a part of the problem. But men usually only failed morally, in his view, because they fell prey to the uncontrolled sensuality of sexually hyperactive and morally degenerate women.

Because of this complex of reasons, politically active women were particularly vigilant about situations that called the social and moral position of Indonesian women into question. Women's magazines regularly discussed such events that occurred at a local scale, whether that be *Suara 'Aisjijah* protesting the *kondé* pageant in Jakarta, or a mother publishing a letter written to her daughter about the possible dangers of love and courtship. This vigilance showed up in some form in every etiquette or advice column, almost without fail. It was a constant concern of editorials, and a regular thread of columns about women's social concerns.

Women's moral purity—the node to which all other threads of the web of the women's movement attached—was therefore a central women's concern in Indonesia during the Sukarno era. Moral purity was not only required of women in political leadership, it also reached down to the most basic and elemental structures of society, the family and household. As a result, if women's moral purity were somehow challenged, as this dissertation discusses in Chapter 7, it could create an existential crisis both women as a group and the nation as a whole.

### ***Moral Crisis at the Nation's Center: Sukarno's Marriage and Prostitution in Bandung***

The possibility of moral collapse and the destruction of the good name of Indonesian women was not simply anecdotal and generalized. Rather, this larger-scale linkage between women, morality and the nation was already evident by the mid-1950's in two

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<sup>96</sup> The RT (*Rukun Tetangga*, or Neighborhood Council) and RW (*Rukun Warga*, or People's Council, which is a compilation of several RT, up to the village level,) are the fundamental civil-political units of the Indonesian state. The head of each of these, almost always male, is referred to as "*Pak RT*," or "*Pak RW*." He is, however, always assisted by his wife, who oversees women's social campaigns, including those on combatting illiteracy, providing child care, and carrying out state-mandated family planning education schemes and monitoring. The system, and the neighborhoods and villages the cover, were codified during the Japanese era as a principal method for disseminating information, effecting surveillance and enforcing control at the most local of levels, and, notably, even over women's reproductive practices and their bodies.

nationally prominent events that became incidents of moral crisis for the Indonesian national woman: Sukarno's marriage to his first plural wife, Hartini, in 1953; and the eruption of a national scandal about prostitution at the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955. And while the first was about polygamy and the second about prostitution, both put the good name of Indonesian women at risk, at least in their own assessment of the situation.

Sukarno's decision to take a concurrent wife was important national news, reaching far beyond its implications for the president's celebrity. Sukarno's actions—coming in the midst of a major push by women's groups to pass marriage reforms, which for many included prohibiting or at least seriously disadvantaging taking second wives—was perceived by many activist women as a direct attack on the Indonesian women's movement. Their reaction was complicated further by both the timing and implications of Sukarno making the decision to marry again.

Under Islamic law and Indonesian custom, men are required to gain the permission of their first wives before taking a second concurrent wife.<sup>97</sup> When Sukarno asked this of Fatmawati, who was already presented and accepted as the "Mother of the Nation," many activist women saw this as an affront to "true" national mothers, that is, those women involved in bring forth the new nation at all levels. The situation was made worse by the fact that Sukarno made the request of Fatmawati only two days after she gave birth to his second son and fifth biological child, Guruh, (whose name, like that of his eldest brother Guntur, meant "Thunder" in Javanese.<sup>98</sup>) Fatmawati, once renowned for her youthful beauty, had transformed into an elegant, but no longer slim mother of five. Indonesian activist women therefore saw Sukarno's taking the younger, thinner and very beautiful Hartini as a wife as a repudiation of one of their central duties, to bear children for their families and the nation.

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<sup>97</sup> Given the variety of "local" customs around marriage, however, this was not always and everywhere the case. See Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, particularly Chapter 3 on "Early Marriage," and Chapter 5 on "Polygamy."

<sup>98</sup> Sukarno had five children with Fatmawati: son Guntur, daughters Megawati (who served as Indonesia's fifth President from 2001-2004,) Rachmawati, and Sukmawati, and son Guruh. He had also adopted the two children his second wife Inggih brought to their marriage, and had two children with Hartini. All told, Sukarno had nine wives over the course of his life, up to six of them concurrently. He fathered a total of ten children with five of his wives.



*Wanita* magazine offered a muted and indirect but scathing response to the situation and published what appears to be their first criticism of Sukarno in the pages of the magazine.<sup>99</sup> In their July 1, 1953 edition, published just before Sukarno's marriage to Hartini on July 7, the editors selected as their cover image a picture of Fatmawati, wearing *kain-kebaya*, sitting with Guruh in the Presidential Palace. The caption for the image, published on the inside front cover, simply read "Guruh, the youngest son of the President, on his mother's lap."<sup>100</sup>

Towards the front of the edition, they ran an unusual article about Sukarno, focusing on his personal health and vigor—a question addressed rarely, and then only when he seemed to be ill, which he wasn't at this time. In fact, the article, entitled "Bung Karno in the middle of his family"<sup>101</sup> noted that for a man of 52 years old, the president had a clear bright and smiling face and evident physical fitness and vigor. The article suggested that Sukarno's strength came from a disciplined personal regime built around rising early, eating regularly and healthily, following a strict daily schedule that included time for reading the Qu'ran, and finally, spending time with his family. Two of the three pictures that accompanied the article showed Sukarno with his children: cutting up dinner on a plate for one of his daughters in one, and playing gamelan *en famille* in the other.<sup>102</sup>

The article's third picture, positioned in the upper left corner of the page, carried the editors' zinger. The photo showed Sukarno and a maternal Fatmawati looking at a painting, part of the President's famous collection of Indonesian art. The painting was a life-size portrait of Fatmawati as a younger woman painted by Basuki Abdullah<sup>103</sup> in 1943. The

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<sup>99</sup> Remember that *Wanita* was in many ways a mouthpiece of Sukarno's Indonesian Nationalist Party, published by the wives of the president's close associates. It was certainly the women's publication that was most closely connected to the Sukarnoist movement, and the magazine had not criticized the president to any extent that I have seen before this.

<sup>100</sup> "Guruh, putera bungsu Presiden dipangkuan Ibunda." *Wanita*, 1953, no. 13, front inside cover (not a numbered page.) "Bungsu" means the youngest, but as Margaret Sullivan notes, "Indonesian for the last rain of the monsoon, *yang bungsu* is also the colloquial term for the last child born in a marriage, particularly if there is a gap of several years between the other children." Margaret Sullivan, *Fragments from a Mobile Life*, p. 296. As a young boy in Indonesia, (and afterwards for many years as well.) I was the one referred to as "*yang bungsu*" within my family. The use of the expression in front of them always raised a certain chuckling laughter among my parents' Indonesian friends.

<sup>101</sup> "Bung Karno ditengah-tengah keluarganya." *Wanita*, 1953, no. 13, p. 282.

<sup>102</sup> See the discussion about polygamy in Chapter 1, and how one of the major criticisms of polygamy was that it disrupted family harmony.

<sup>103</sup> Basuki Abdullah was one of a group of prominent Indonesian painters, trained primarily by the Dutch in a realist style, whose work was taken as representing the new nation in ways that were modern yet still Indonesian. Basuki was a particular favorite of Sukarno, who commissioned him to paint portraits of both Fatmawati and himself, and later of several of his subsequent wives as well. Basuki became particularly noted for painting Indonesian women from a wide variety of situations, including a famous painting of Kangjeng Ratu Kidul, the mystical Queen of the Southern Ocean, and the consort of the Sultans of Surakarta.

portrait employed Javanese cosmological allegory and depicted Fatmawati as a force of nature. Dressed in *kain-kebaya* and *kerudung*, the slim and beautiful young wife gazed out from an Indonesian shorescape. The waves behind her pounded on the beach. A volcano loomed in the background. The clouds around the mountain were painted to be towering and menacing, the source of thunder perhaps, as she was herself.

The photo of Sukarno, Fatmawati and the Basuki painting was attributed to the Ministry of Information (*Kementerian Penerangan*, or KEMPEN) photo collections. In other words, the editors had specifically pulled the photo from government image files to accompany the article. The caption carried the magazine’s oblique criticism of the President: “. . . are they reminiscing about the time when ‘Guntur’s Mother’ was still a beautiful young woman, still slim?”<sup>104</sup> Without mentioning either Fatmawati or Hartini by name, the caption, floating high above the rest of the text, at the top of the page, clearly called Sukarno’s actions that put his family at risk, and the reasons for his new marriage into question.



**Figure 5.1:** Fatmawati (1943,) Painting by Basuki Abdullah.



**Figure 5.2:** “Bung Karno in the midst of his family.” *Wanita*, 1953, no. 13, p. 282.

<sup>104</sup> “. . . apa sedang mengenangkan zaman ‘Ibu Guntur’ masih gadis jelita, masih langsing?” *Wanita*, 1953, no. 13, p. 282.

Activist women did not leave their criticism of the marriage to Hartini at that, however. Instead, they also used the conception of the “First Lady,” for whom their model was Eleanor Roosevelt, to insist on the establishment of a hierarchy between Sukarno’s two wives. In a series of meetings held with representatives of the President’s office towards the end of 1953, leaders of the women’s movement insisted that Indonesia could only properly have a single First Lady, Fatmawati. Hartini, they said, should be barred from ever representing the nation officially. To allow her to do so, they argued, would make it seem that Indonesian women were insufficiently modern, particularly on the international stage. In support of this argument, they insisted that Hartini should never take up residence in the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, even though Fatmawati had moved herself and her children to a private residence in the city following the marriage to Hartini.

Following this, Hartini was essentially expelled from having a public life in Jakarta, and certainly one inside its elite social circles. She decamped to a presidential residence in Bogor, in the mountains outside the capital. While she traveled with Sukarno to events internally on occasion, she remained notably excluded, at the insistence of politically prominent and connected women, from playing any public role in large-scale and prominent national events, including the *Hari Ibu* celebrations discussed in the previous chapter, and at the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955.

Thus, nationally prominent women used the political pressure they were able to exert as true mothers to shape what they would accept as a proper arrangement for the President’s wives. While Sukarno, and therefore other men were free to take concurrent wives as part of their personal, private lives, when it came to representing the nation, only Fatmawati, the singular “Mother of the Nation,” would be recognized. Again, activist women sought to enforce a gap between the personal and the national so that the good name of Indonesian women would not be slighted in public by this second marriage, either domestically or internationally.

The good name of Indonesian women also came to be front and center at the Asia-Africa Conference in April, 1955, which is particularly striking because the conference itself paid scant attention to women’s issues. Sukarno intended the Bandung Conference to be Indonesia’s breakout as a major player on the world stage. Bringing together the leaders of 29 “non-aligned,” and mostly socialist nations, the conference attempted to stake out a new

role for these countries and their leaders within the developing international Cold War framework that asked newly independent post-colonial states to declare whether they would primarily orbit around America or the Soviet Union.

Bandung, therefore, was intended to create a new centrifugal field within which these new leaders could control much of their own national paths on an international level, forging new bonds of both economic and cultural cooperation between “non-aligned” nations. The conference’s final communiqué outlined specific ways in which the countries could build such bonds, while also strongly condemning the use of “racialism” as a means of cultural and economic suppression and the continuation of a colonial outlook by western powers. But while the final communiqué discussed race and racism in detail, it did not contain a single reference to women or “women’s issues.” Nor were these concerns discussed at any length during the proceedings. The vast majority of national leadership that attended the conference were men, some accompanied by their wives, others not.

It is interesting that men’s fashion played a role here. Most of the Asian men in attendance wore western clothing, though Indian, Pakistani and Burmese *swadeshi* fashion<sup>105</sup> were the notable exception. The Indonesian hosts, however, specifically commented multiple times that African leaders, most notably those from Ghana, Guinea and Saudi Arabia, wore what was called “authentic” (“*asli*”) African and national dress, (although photos of the conference itself show that many of the members of support delegations from Africa dressed in western suits, so those men were able to use western fashion to play an interesting game about their legitimacy as both African and modern leaders.) The same photos show that wives, however, who mostly attended a series of social and cultural events rather the working sessions of the conference itself, were almost exclusively dressed in some form of “national dress.”

This was largely true of the Indonesian delegation as well. Sukarno wore his military uniform while the other official Indonesian representatives donned suits and ties. Indonesian women were a significant presence at the conference, but they were not a part of the official delegation, and were charged most particularly with performing the duties of

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<sup>105</sup> “*Swadeshi*” is a Hindi/Sanskrit term that is the equivalent of *asli*. In the Gandhian movement, Indian nationalists wore *swadeshi* clothing, that they also made the fabric for themselves, as a repudiation of the English colonial extraction involved in the cotton industry, and as a rejection of English claims of cultural superiority.

hostesses and social organizers. In these roles, and by presidential order, they exclusively wore *kain-kebaya* and *konde*.

The conference was an important occasion at which Indonesian women were expected to represent Indonesia as an efficient, but also refined and fundamentally eastern nation. Multiple international sources remarked on the presence and style of these Indonesian women representing their country, noting that although the political outcomes of the conference only somewhat served Indonesia's direct interests, that the "efficiency and flair" of the women who oversaw the conference's "gracious hospitality" was something with which foreign visitors "could not fail to be impressed."<sup>106</sup> A French journalist was said to have reported the sight of Indonesian hostesses in *kain-kebaya* was quite "lovely," ("*manis.*")<sup>107</sup>

The Indonesian women clearly worked diligently to produce a series of events apart from the official conference proceedings that they referred to as "social events" intended both to entertain and to enlighten their foreign visitors about Indonesia. Ellaka Mohamad Ali, the wife of the Pakistani Prime Minister, for instance, was taken to visit an orphanage in Bandung by her Indonesian hostesses, and *Keluarga* magazine noted that Mrs. Ali made a donation of Rp. 1000 to support the home's work.<sup>108</sup>

The Indonesian women's main social event for their visitors, however, was a fashion show. *Keluarga* reported for its readers who couldn't come to Bandung for themselves that the exhibition "drew the attention of many people." The show, though not a formal part of the proceedings, was intended to "demonstrate how Indonesian women dress in certain circumstances."<sup>109</sup> The show, "which was boldly called a '*batikshow*,' exhibited authentic

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<sup>106</sup> Boyd R. Compton, "Indonesia and the Bandung Conference," a report to the Institute of Current World Affairs, New York. Dated June 15, 1955, Modjokerto, East Java, pp. 1-2.

<sup>107</sup> See "Bandung That Lovely City," the title in English, in *Wanita*, 1955, no. 9, 5 May, pp. 221-225.

<sup>108</sup> See "*Antara Kita*" ("Amongst Us,") in *Keluarga*, 1955, no. 6, June, p. 7. The accompanying photo shows Mrs. Ali wearing Pakistani clothing, including a head scarf, and her four Indonesian hostesses wearing *kain-kebaya* with *selendang*, their hair all in tight *kondé*, although the hair style of one of the four, who also appears to be younger than the other three Indonesians shows a modern *kondé* style in which the hair is parted and mounded on top of her head, rather than being slickly drawn back. The style was considered to reflect a Hollywood, and particularly Claudette Colbert, sensibility.

<sup>109</sup> "*Jang menarik perhatian banjak orang. . . Tetapi untuk lebih meriahkan pekan Asia Afrika itu, maka diluar atjara diadakan pameran pakaian Indonesia untuk menundjukkan bagaimana wanita Indonesia berpakaian pada saat2 tertentu.*" "*Pameran Pakaian Selama Pekan Asia-Afrika*," ("A Fashion Show for Asia-Africa Week."). *Keluarga*, 1955, no. 6, June, p. 21.

Indonesian clothing, as well as dresses made from authentic fabric, our *kain* that is famously known to be beautiful.”<sup>110</sup>

One of the photos included in the *Keluarga* report showed two young women dressed up in bridal fashion, reflecting patterns in fashion show programs discussed in previous chapters. The caption read “Note the long blouse that is worn by the beautiful bride. Old-style wedding clothing is always sweet to see. Her attendant is wearing *kawung*,<sup>111</sup> typical of Jogjakarta. She is not wearing a blouse. This is an old style.”<sup>112</sup> In the midst of representing the nation to the world, of providing what they termed an “open door”<sup>113</sup> on Indonesia, the politically elite women who organized this exhibition intentionally used *batik* in both traditional and modern styles. Thus, they represented Indonesian women as simultaneously modern and traditional, while remaining fully “*asli*” because they were using *batik*. At the same time, they managed to fire a small shot at those who considered strapless fashion to be morally questionable. The playing field of the moral crisis debate was ever-present.

Yet Indonesian women soon found themselves in quite a different moral crisis provided for them by Indonesian men and their attempts to provide a certain set of social entertainment as well. A scandal regarding prostitution broke out during the conference. The scandal was referenced obliquely in several women’s magazines, but it came to my attention through the report American researcher Boyd Compton wrote for the Institute of Current World Affairs in New York.<sup>114</sup> His writing about the Bandung Conference was unusual for English language sources in that his first concern was not the political outcomes of the conference, but rather its implications for Indonesia’s self-image. Perhaps

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<sup>110</sup> “Demikianlah pada pameran pakaian, jang dengan gagah disebut ‘batikshow’ dipamerkan pakaian asli Indonesia, dan djuga gaun2 jang dibuat dari bahan asli, kain kita jang terkenal indah itu.” *Keluarga*, 1955, no. 6, June, p. 21.

<sup>111</sup> *Kawung* is a distinctive *batik* pattern based on elongated ovals that form into squares. It is one of the oldest *batik* motifs, and was one whose use was originally limited members of the royal family. It is particularly connected to Sakti, the Hindu goddess of creation. The philosophy behind the pattern is linked to the sacred creation of human life, that is, it reflects the special place of moral motherhood in creating a strong kingdom.

<sup>112</sup> That is, she was only wearing a breast cloth. “Perhatikan badju pandjang jang dipakai penganten aju itu. Pakaian penganten setjara kuno selalu manis dilihatnja. Pengiringnja memakai kawung, typis Jogjakarta. Tidak memakai badju. Inipun suatu tjara kuno.” *Keluarga*, 1955, no. 6, June, p. 21.

<sup>113</sup> “pintu terbuka,” *Keluarga*, 1955, no. 6, June, p. 21. The term was used in several women’s magazine articles to describe Indonesian women’s intentions for their programming at the Bandung Conference.

<sup>114</sup> Boyd R. Compton was a Princeton graduate in the Class of 1946, and was a fellow of the IFWCA between 1952-1957. During this time, he turned out a fascinating set of occasional reports on Indonesia, Islam, politics, elections and Sukarno, and was always attentive to the nuances of local place and language. The datelines of his reports show that he first stayed in a university student hostel in Jakarta when he arrived for about a year, and then appears to have settled largely in Modjokerto, East Java, though also traveling significantly to Sumatra, including to Aceh.

because unlike other foreign journalists covering the conference, he was resident in Indonesia, his reporting is much more attuned to the dynamics of Indonesian identity at play in bringing “the world” to Bandung.

Although his report ended with a lengthy discussion of the role the People’s Republic of China was able to stake out at the conference, (certainly the information his New York-based sponsors were most interested in), Compton began his own report with a significant discourse on “Prestige at Home.” This beginning noted that many Indonesians had “clear enough ideas on the conference aims (‘lessen world tension’, ‘opposition to colonialism’, ‘promote world peace’).” But he noted, “outside the conference area, the meeting seemed to be another mystery and wonder to the illiterate millions who are little influenced by government posters and banners proclaiming great purposes in high, stilted Indonesian.” Only local inhabitants seemed to “catch the spark of excitement that burned for ten days in Djakarta and Bandung, as many of the notables of the world sped through town escorted by screaming sirens and police motorcycles.”<sup>115</sup>

Yet behind all the arrangements and pageantry, Compton reported, the most important outcome was a boost in the self-esteem of the metropolitan Indonesian elite. On this he quoted Herawati Diah, who had written in *The Indonesian Observer* that,

Those who were doubtful of the conference’s achievement now talk differently and are completely convinced that in spite of ideological differences Asians and Africans have something in common . . . The Asian-African Conference has helped a few people to get rid of their inferiority complex of being an Asian. This I would call the greatest achievement of the Asian-African Conference.<sup>116</sup>

It is clear that in the minds of the Indonesian national elite that planned the event, Indonesian national prestige was on full display to the rest of the world. This was as equally true for the women as for the men. With that lens in mind, Compton’s lengthy observations about the prostitution scandal, which he addressed before taking on any real analysis of the global politics of the meetings, are interesting. He wrote:

It was certainly for the sake of appearance and ‘face’ that the Bandung police rounded up and detained over five hundred prostitutes and vagrants before

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<sup>115</sup> Boyd R. Compton, “Indonesia and the Bandung Conference,” p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Boyd R. Compton, “Indonesia and the Bandung Conference,” p. 3. The quote from Herawati Diah was attributed to the April 29 edition of the *Indonesian Observer*, the Jakarta-based English language newspaper Ibu Herawati and her husband founded and published at Sukarno’s direct request.

the conference. Old timers in Bandung remarked on the dearth of usual ‘night butterflies’<sup>117</sup> soliciting strangers from dark doorways and corners. Unfortunately, however, the relative absence of private prostitutes contributed indirectly to the now famous “hospitality committee” scandal.

According to the opposition press,<sup>118</sup> a “hospitality committee” [*sic.*] was set up to provide delegates with prostitutes selected and sponsored by the government. One newspaper published documentary evidence in great detail, and the existence of some such organization can hardly be doubted. As far as I know, however, these services were only provided at the loud insistence of foreign delegates who could not find what they wanted in the “purged” city.

Such an arrangement would cause little stir in a more cosmopolitan country, but Indonesian society is generally puritanical. . . . Religious, youth, and women’s groups reacted vigorously and spoke out against the government with indignation. . . .

For more than a week, items on the scandal overshadowed other Asian African stories in the national press.<sup>119</sup> With almost sadistic enjoyment, the government’s tormentors let it be known that the outside world was laughing at the government’s folly, while the Indonesian world was deeply shocked at its lack of Eastern morality.<sup>120</sup>

Women’s magazines did not pick up on the scandal explicitly over the long term. I only found a single reference to the ways in which Indonesian women’s “good name” had been besmirched in Bandung in *Wanita*. But there is little doubt that such events would have been experienced by Indonesian women activists as a clear and embarrassing incident of moral crisis, and as a repudiation of all their work on building not only their personal, but more importantly their collective identity as the moral guardians of the nation.

### ***Sudden violence as a Response to Moral Crisis: Pak Kromo Mau Internasional Minded***

Several sources, including Boyd Compton’s report, and cartoons and short stories in women’s and entertainment magazines, suggest that responses to incidences of moral crisis such as the Bandung Conference “hospitality committee” scandal were quite lively, or

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<sup>117</sup> This is the English translation of a standard Indonesian expression for prostitutes, “*kupu-kupu malam*.”

<sup>118</sup> Despite several attempts, I have unfortunately not yet been able to find any examples of this “opposition press” coverage of the scandal yet.

<sup>119</sup> This was not the sense I got in reading the Indonesian newspaper accounts that are available in the collections at Cornell.

<sup>120</sup> Boyd R. Compton, “Indonesia and the Bandung Conference,” pp. 4-5.



“*ramai*.” In particular, these somewhat unfiltered responses in the media such as cartoons reflected a particular cultural reaction to moral crisis. That is, they suggest that a fundamental response of ordinary people in these circumstances included sudden bouts of mob violence aimed at the perceived sources of the crisis. This reaction was also central to Sylvia Tiwon’s analysis of various literary sources in which women were assigned the role of “maniacs.”<sup>121</sup>

The previous chapter discussed two anti-polygamy cartoons published in *Wanita* in December 1953.<sup>122</sup> Both cartoons used women’s (righteous) anger at men as their foil to make their point about polygamy. The cartoons also suggested that physical violence was a part of the social response fueled by this anger. The second cartoon, which called for polygamy to be “eradicated” (“*diberantas*,” the same word one would use for infestations of vermin or insects,) depicted the women having beaten up the man one of them was dragging through the streets, an action very much at odds with the stated behavioral expectations of good Indonesian wives and mothers.

This was not the only instance of such a reaction in the cartoons of the day, which were often included in the Indonesian versions of the “funny pages” in the back of entertainment magazines. A particularly illustrative example of this is the comic strip “Pak Kromo” (a Javanese name roughly translatable as “Old Fuddy Duddy”) that ran weekly in *Gembira* magazine in 1952, a time which as we have seen was approaching the height of the early instances of national moral crisis over modernity.

The character Pak Kromo, who wore old-style Javanese men’s clothing of a *kain*, *jas* (jacket) and *blangkon* (wrapped *batik* head cloth), lived in a world where, as at the Bandung Conference, cars were something officials sped by in on the street and where the incomprehensible layers of the new bureaucracy were a constant source of bewilderment, (even while new layers of bureaucratic corruption were completely expected.) Pak Kromo spoke in Indonesian rather than Javanese, so in that way he represented old fogies everywhere, not just in Java, who found themselves confronted with the strange new world they now lived in. Pak Kromo, an Indonesian Mr. Magoo, was blindly and somewhat

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<sup>121</sup> See Sylvia Tiwon, “Models and Maniacs,” in Laurie Sears, ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine*, and her discussion of violent crowd reactions both in Idrus’ short story *Surabaya*, about the aftermath of a Revolutionary battle (discussed on pp. 62-64,) and the Lubang Buaya narrative (discussed on pp. 64-65.) Her argument is discussed in Chapter 1 of the dissertation.

<sup>122</sup> See Figures 4.1 and 4.2 in Chapter 4.

blissfully unaware of the changes swirling around him, and represented the social dislocation felt by much of Indonesia's masses that were left out of the country's quick modern urban development.

In one episode, however, Pak Kromo flipped the playing field. The strip was entitled "*Pak Kromo Mau International Minded*," or, roughly, "Pak Kromo Wants To Be International Minded."<sup>123</sup> In it, Pak Kromo decided he wanted to go out on the town for an evening at a fancy hotel restaurant, so he dressed up in a suit and tie (while retaining his *blankon*), and had his friend serve as chauffeur. While Pak Kromo was inside the Hotel Du Pavillion,<sup>124</sup> his friend/driver stood outside with the car, and was shocked to see Pak Kromo through the hotel's large plate glass window dancing "western style" with a young woman who wore a dress, her hair styled in a smart western bob. (See Figure 5.1).

Suddenly, the reader could see a sense of shock register on Pak Kromo's face. He turned away from his dance to see an angry crowd of men descending on the hotel, their arms raised in protest and their mouths open, shouting and yelling. In the cartoon's next frame, Pak Kromo was being carried by his driver, clearly having been beaten up by the mob, which continued to fight in the background, outside the hotel. The cartoon's final frame showed the driver speaking the only words of the entire strip, as he scratched his head and said, in English, "No comment!"

While probably mostly intended by the cartoonist<sup>125</sup> as a commentary on the separation of the lives and morals of the elites from the men in the street, this particular piece also demonstrated that the idea of a mob attacking an instance of moral crisis was so easily understandable that it could be used as the central element of a cartoon without any explanation whatsoever. This reaction was also be seen later in cartoons from the early 1960's during another national moment built on a large-scale perception of national moral crisis, Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* campaign.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> See *Gembira*, 1 March, 1952, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> While the cartoon is not explicitly situated in any particular Indonesian city, the Hotel du Pavillion was the primary colonial era first-class hotel in Semarang.

<sup>125</sup> The strips are unsigned, and none of the current Indonesian cartoon artists I spoke with about the strip knew who had drawn it.

<sup>126</sup> These other examples are discussed in Chapter 6.



**Figure 5.3: Pak Kromo Mau International Minded**  
*Gembira*, March 1, 1952, p. 13.

The possibility of violence being directed against morally failed women was addressed in a short story in *Wanita* in its first year, in August 1950.<sup>127</sup> The short story by Tien Pranjoto,<sup>128</sup> “*Sepanjang Djalan*,” (“All Along the Road,”) published in *Wanita*, therefore, serves as an appropriate conclusion to this chapter, and the first section of the dissertation on the early 1950’s. It needs little discussion.

<sup>127</sup> *Wanita*, 1950, no. 15, pp. 264-65.

<sup>128</sup> I can find nothing on this author, but the name is a woman’s, and it most likely Javanese.

### *All Along the Road*

Madiun<sup>129</sup> . . . . . at night . . . . .

Her cheeks thickly chalked, not less thick than the chalk on the wall of a prison cell.

Her lips painted red . . . like the flag of Viet Nam waving in the air.

Her eyes seek an opponent, resembling the search light of a patrol car.

A sweet smell invades the nose like five Chinese bridal couples passing by in a row . . . . .

A small titter . . . . sometimes a loud laugh. The electric light is dim on the road's edge, a strategic place to find a mate. Who knows whether it's to satisfy lust, or to look for something to fill an empty stomach . . . . . only they know.

. . . . . The night grows deeper. People making their way home become fewer. The electric light remains dim.

Whispering, fondling . . . paired in action, giving up nothing to the moves of Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland on the silver screen . . . .

—“What a shame,” says the saté vendor on the side of the road.

—“What is?” asks his friend the ginger tea seller, while lighting a cigarette.

—“That, that big guy, wearing nice clothes, being trapped by the night butterfly,<sup>130</sup> who's hanging around like a bee when the flowers are in bloom.”

—“Hiiiiih . . . . . that's hideous . . . . . society's trash needs to be thrown out.

They just need to be crushed, like you'd squash a bedbug . . . . .”

—“Remember though, brother, why is it they're doing that? Are they being driven by the effects of the war . . . . or do they really have the soul of a lady of the evening . . . . . But . . . . . they really do need to be eradicated, they're as dangerous as an atomic bomb . . . . .

—“Just wait for the government to take action . . . . .”

An empty silence . . . . becoming more quiet . . . . only their laughter that then gives way to their lust under the trees, deep into the night . . . .

A prostitute, society's trash, entraps a well-off Indonesian man with moves learned from a Hollywood film. Perhaps she was injured morally by the war, the two Indonesian every-men wonder, but nonetheless, she needs to be “eradicated.” Like an atomic blast, she and her ilk could destroy the nation. In the artwork accompanying the story, the woman is dressed in a nice *kain*. Her hair is pulled back in a *konde*. Her *kebaya*, on the other hand, is perhaps too flashy. But the look of her face betrays her. Her eyebrows are carefully drawn

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<sup>129</sup> A provincial city in East Java, and the site of a Communist rebellion in 1926 and of particularly strong fighting and violence during the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949.

<sup>130</sup> In Indonesian, “*kupu-kupu malam*,” the expression for a prostitute discussed earlier in this chapter.



**Figure 5.4: *Sepandjang Djalan***  
*Wanita*, 1950, no. 15, pp. 264-65.

in high arches. Her lips are carefully rouged. Most importantly, her eyes are searching, as she glances engagingly—ensnaringly?—towards her potential client. These subtleties of representation point to the danger she poses. She is a broken woman, who can in turn break society with her ruined internal character.

The next two chapters of the dissertation explore the decade from 1955-1965. They look first at the cultural expression of gender in Indonesia and its increasing connection to national identity and politics, and then at the use of a story about female sexual immorality as the lynchpin for justifying genocide.

But, in reviewing the previous four chapters that have explored the multiple layers of the developing web of modern Indonesian national identity between 1949 and 1955, it is important to see the parallels of *Sepandjang Djalan* with the story of *Lewat Djam Malam*, with their late night assignations with a prostitute by a well-situated young man who then must deal with a possible violent outcome as a result. In Ismail's film, it is the young returning veteran who becomes the victim of violence, but out of confusion and through some form of mistake. In *Sepandjang Djalan*, however, it bears stressing that it was not the sexually impure young man but rather the sexually impure woman who was the potential

victim of violence, and rather than being shot mistakenly and in confusion, she was likely to be eradicated. In both cases, the root cause of the violence was the result of women's sexual impropriety.

On the same day as the opening of the Asia-Africa Conference, the Indonesian film industry held its first national awards. The prizes for best actor and actress went to the stars of *Lewat Djam Malam*, A.N. Alcaff as the returning veteran Iskandar, and Dahlia as the mentally unstable widow/prostitute Laila. Even at the highest level of Indonesia's cultural production, then, a film specifically intended to be shown overseas and to demonstrate the nation's modernity, and fêted just as the world's leaders arrived in Jakarta, the central cultural experience being explored was moral crisis. It revolved around women, their choices about clothing and morality, the display or covering of their bodies, and their sexuality. Their beauty and allure, if misused, held destructive potential for the nation. This danger came at times when the future of the nation was most in question, when the world felt most particularly rickety and wobbly. And violence by masses of the people, or its threat, was considered to be an acceptable possible solution to that danger.

This pattern would be repeated at several instances between 1955-1965, but increasingly magnified in its scope and intensity, until it erupted in the violent reaction to the narrative created and propagated by the military about the events at Lubang Buaya. It is to this process of repetition, magnification and intensification that the final two chapters of the dissertation now turns.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Tall Hair, Short Skirts and Moral Crisis: The Politics of Beauty and of Confrontation, 1955-1965**

*... saja amat ... bergembira ... bahwa Kongres Wanita Indonesia juga akan aktif sekali dalam memberantas imperialisme kulturil. Ja rambut sasak, ja rambut beetle, ja spanrok-spanrokan, ja twist-twist-an, ja rock-and-roll-rock-and-roll-an, ja Elvys Presley Elvys Presley-an, ja Nat King Cole Nat King Cole-an, matjam-matjam, Saudara-saudara. Tetapi terutama sekali kita harus waspada terhadap kepada intervensi dan subversi politik. Waspadalah, waspadahlah!*

... I am exceedingly ... happy ... that the Indonesian Women's Congress will also play an active role in smashing cultural imperialism. Yes teased and ratted hair, yes Beatle hair, yes miniskirts, yes the twist, yes rock-and-roll, yes Elvis Presley stuff, yes Nat King Cole stuff, all sorts of things, brothers and sisters. But above all we must be alert and vigilant towards political intervention and subversion. Beware, beware!

—Sukarno, to the delegates of Kowani,  
July 1964<sup>1</sup>

During an eight-day span in July 1964, President Sukarno gave speeches at the opening ceremonies of two national congresses of Indonesian women's organizations in Jakarta. The first, given on July 16 to the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of *Wanita Demokrat Indonesia*,<sup>2</sup> was entitled "The Indonesian Revolution Will Not Succeed Without Women!"<sup>3</sup> The second, "Indonesian Women Are Always Active in the Revolutionary Ranks!"<sup>4</sup> opened the 10<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "*Wanita Indonesia Selalu Ikut Bergerak Dalam Barisan Revolusioner!*" Published by the Departemen Penerangan RI as Special Publication No. 332. Transcription of speech by Sukarno to the *Kongres Wanita Indonesia*, or Indonesian Women's Congress, July 24, 1964. Yosef Djakababa commented that the "-an" suffix in this case conveys a strong sense of the modified elements as being fake, or not real. The term "*mobil-mobil-an*," for instance, means a toy car rather than a real, full-sized *mobil*. Personal correspondence, 12/7/2019.

<sup>2</sup> Indonesian Democratic Women, the women's wing of Sukarno's *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Party,) or PNI.

<sup>3</sup> "*Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berjalan Tanpa Wanita!*" Published by the Departemen Penerangan RI (Department of Public Information of the Republic of Indonesia) as Special Publication No. 329.

<sup>4</sup> "*Wanita Indonesia Selalu Ikut Bergerak Dalam Barisan Revolusioner!*" The verb "*bergerak*" literally means "to move" in the sense that a political movement is referred to by the noun based on the same word, "*gerakan*," as in *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*.

national meeting of the *Kongress Wanita Indonesia* (Indonesian Women’s Congress, or Kowani,) on July 24.

Both speeches reflected the hyper-active political energy and rhetoric of the day, in which Sukarno exhorted Indonesians to “finish” their national revolution. A month after these two speeches, responding in particular to the *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation)<sup>5</sup> campaign against Malaysia, Sukarno famously called on Indonesians to embark on a “Year of Living Dangerously,”<sup>6</sup> in which the then nearly 20-year-old nation would strive to completely throw off the yoke of western imperialism and neo-colonialism. He called on Indonesians to reject Western interference in the nation, whether it came in political, economic or cultural forms.

But in these speeches in July 1964—alongside the exhortations to “go to hell with this ‘Malaysia,’”<sup>7</sup> and to “build a new world, and to expel all imperialism and colonialism from this world”<sup>8</sup>—Sukarno paid attention to what might seem to be an insignificant detail: the clothing and beauty of the women assembled. “When I see women gathered,” he said to the Kowani delegates,

with their variously colored *kebaya*, when I see their very best *batik* cloth, see their radiant faces, see their eyes that shine like stars in the eternal sky, at those times I say, I have the feeling that I am engaged in revolutionary struggle inside a beautiful garden. . . . Here I see the color blue, but instead I see what looks like the painting of a Kartini blossom, with a stalk and a white flower. Hey comrades from West Irian, [you] are the stalk, the women police officers from Sukabumi [you] are the green leaves, the stalk moves upward, on the top there is white, which is the flower. . . . See, over there is red, and then blue again, here I see the color yellow from the Women Military

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<sup>5</sup> The *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) with newly independent Malaysia was based on the British inclusion of two regions of Borneo, Sabah and Serawak, in the Malaysian nation. Indonesia, which controlled the majority of the island, saw this as a continuation of British imperialism on their sovereign space.

<sup>6</sup> “*Tahun Vivere Pericoloso*,” shorted to “*Tavip*,” which would be the title of Sukarno’s National Day speech on August 17, 1964. The phrase however, was already in use at this time, including in the concluding paragraph of the *Wanita Indonesia* speech.

<sup>7</sup> In English in the original. Sukarno, *Revolusi Indonesia* speech, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> “*membangun satu dunia baru, . . . membuang segenap imperialisme dan kolonialisme didunia ini.*” Sukarno, “*Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berjalan Tanpa Wanita!*” p. 24.



Volunteers<sup>9</sup> and the Women Ministers, here again I see colors that are very beautiful, I see brilliant greens from the comrades from West Irian.<sup>10</sup>

Why, in the midst of inherently political speeches, did Sukarno take time to note the quality of the women's colorful clothing, the radiance of their complexions and the brilliance of their eyes? As the discussion in previous chapters of this dissertation would suggest, there was significantly more than either simple flattery or some sort of patriarchal condescension at play in his descriptions of these women's appearance. Rather, Sukarno was deploying a politics of feminine beauty that linked Indonesian women's appearance with a conception of Indonesian modernity and national identity. Most importantly, this politics concerned their inner character and moral strength and their collective identity as women. In doing so, it deployed a web of definitions of proper national femininity that had been developing since the beginnings of the Indonesian nationalist movement in the early 1920s.

Sukarno was also connecting this beauty politics to the revolutionary politics of the day. The types of women he chose to highlight—women police and military officers, and comrades from West Irian, (a region that recently “retaken” from the Dutch), about which Sukarno had created a significant rhetorical campaign<sup>11</sup>—reflected the tighter connections that had developed between beauty and the ideal representation of the nation. The references to political situations were particularly cogent and emotionally resonant at the time.

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<sup>9</sup> As part of the mass mobilization of Indonesian society during *Konfrontasi*, each of the military branches either began or expanded special women's detachments referred to as *sukarelawati*, or “volunteers.” These women's detachments received significant coverage in women's magazines, particularly for their training exercises, which included training in riflery and other firearms. There were also women in the national police force, whose brigades saw increased militarization of their training at this point as well. Beyond this, many of the various political parties and organizations put together “volunteer” brigades as well, some of which also engaged in various sorts of training exercises. This provided the general circumstances under which Gerwani women were present at Lubang Buaya on the night of September 30-October 1, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> “. . . kalau saja melihat wanita-wanita berkumpul dengan badju kebabanja jang pantjawarna atau aneka-warna, melihat kain batiknja jang bagus-bagus, melihat mukanja jang berseri-seri, melihat sinar matanja jang laksana sinar bintang dilangit jang abadi, pada waktu itu saja berkata, saja mempunjai perasaan bahwa saja ini berdjoang dalam taman-sari jang indah. . . . melihat sana ada warna biru, sana malahan melihat ada lukisan bunga Kartini . . . tangkainja ada, bunganja putih. Hé Saudara-saudari dari Irian Barat, itu tangkai itu, polisi wanita dari Sukabumi, daunnja hidjau, tangkai terus mengatas, diatas ada putih, itu bunga . . . Melihat di sana ada merah, biru lagi, melihat disini warna kuning daripada Ibu-ibu Sukarelawati, Ibu-ibu Menteri, melihat disinipun warna-warna jang amat indah, melihat hidjau-hidjau tjemerlang daripada saudari-saudari dari Irian Barat.” Sukarno, “Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berdjalan Tanpa Wanita!”, p. 7. Recall the description of the nation as a garden, with Sukarno at its center, that was included in the first issue of *Wanita* in August 1949, discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion of Trikora later in this chapter.

The politics of beauty Sukarno used in July 1964 had developed beyond the version that had been at play at the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955. Women's beauty was no longer merely a projection of a strong moral nationalism. By 1964, it was also evoked as a protective talisman against specific dangers of the modern world: the "*Elvis Presley-Elvis Presley-an*"s and "*rock-and-roll-rock-and-roll-an*"s,<sup>12</sup> and, as this chapter will explore in particular, the "*spanrok-spanrok-an*" ("mini-skirt stuff,") that threatened to diminish the morals of young Indonesians, female and male. Beauty politics therefore were no longer only a positive attribute supporting the nation; they had come to form a dike that, if breached, would lead to the complete inundation of the nation by imperialist forces.

Following the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in April 1955, the discussion of fashion in Indonesian women's magazines entered a new phase. Largely, the magazines demonstrated that elite, cosmopolitan women still enjoyed a significant set of sartorial options from 1955 to the early 1960's. In 1955, following the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, however, Sukarno began to refocus his and the nation's attention on the development of a new politics that included more stress on developing an Indonesian national identity. From that point on, representations of women in magazines increasingly deployed ideal types that reflected the developing interests of the Sukarno regime.

The prevalence of these ideal representations was connected to the ebb and flow of Sukarno's political control of the nation. During periods when Sukarno asserted less *de facto* control, and the central government was more focused on political or military maneuvering, the images of women aligned less to narrowly cast types. But when impulses towards internal political control and its enhanced rhetoric grew firmer, these ideal types connected to national identity were recruited more heavily. This was not a random process. Sukarno managed it through a creeping strictness in changes in the press laws, as newspapers and magazines were increasingly required to reflect and promote the cultural and political interests of the state at various specific times.

In October 1956, Sukarno introduced a new conception ("*konsepsi*") of the Indonesian state to the nation. He proposed that Indonesia enter a system of "Guided

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<sup>12</sup> This construction in Indonesian, which I translated in the opening quotation as "Elvis Presley stuff," was used by Sukarno in a highly evocative manner. The rhetorics of it, discussed in fn#1 of this chapter, allow the things being criticized to be both specific and generalized at the same time.

Democracy,” in which the presidency would be strengthened. The modern, national elements of the economy, still largely under Dutch ownership and control, were largely nationalized through a series of unilateral workers’ actions in 1956-1957 as part of the campaign against the continuing Dutch presence in West Papua.<sup>13</sup> Though the occupation of nearly every Dutch-owned business was led largely by worker’s unions affiliated with the PKI, when the businesses were nationalized, they were taken over by the army, which then used the most advanced sectors of the economy to finance the military.

Politically, the strength of political parties was undercut as the legislature was appointed to represent “functional groups” rather than being elected directly from party lists. Indonesian “national identity” was deployed as the source for political and cultural processes, which were increasingly focused on “finishing the Indonesian Revolution,” that is, on a building a nation that was not dependent, culturally, politically or economically, on the west. Several incidents—an ongoing Islamic guerrilla movement,<sup>14</sup> regional rebellions that lasted from 1957-1961,<sup>15</sup> and a period of Martial Law in 1957<sup>16</sup>—impeded, or perhaps stoked the process of insisting on centralized control. In any case, despite strong backing for the *konsepsi* from both the army and the PKI, Sukarno was unable to begin the full implementation of Guided Democracy until 1959-1960.

The critical structural political change of Guided Democracy was the devolution of the official structures of political power to the presidency—and therefore to Sukarno—through the re-adoption of elements of the 1945 Constitution that had originally provided for a strong executive. This was reflected in Sukarno’s promulgation of his Political

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<sup>13</sup> See Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 26. Dutch managers were expelled from the country. This showed up interestingly in women’s magazines, when regularly running full-page advertisements for some of these Dutch companies were suddenly left empty.

<sup>14</sup> From 1949 on, the Jakarta government was actively opposed by the *Darul Islam* movement, which called for the establishment of Indonesia as an Islamic Republic. Born out of Islamic guerilla movements during the Revolution, *Darul Islam* was particularly strong in rural areas of West Java, South Sulawesi and Aceh, and carried out intermittent guerrilla actions against the central government in those regions.

<sup>15</sup> Permesta, (*Piagam Perjuangan Semesta*, or the Universal Struggle Charter,) was a regionally based rebellion against the central government declared on March 2, 1957 by civil and military authorities in the eastern islands of Indonesia. The regional leadership not only felt cultural distance from the Republic’s Javanese center, they also felt that their economic advancement was being limited by central government policies that privileged Javanese advancement. The PRRI (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*, or Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) was a rebellious government declared in opposition to the Sukarno government on February 15, 1958. It was centered in Sumatra, and was also largely focused on opposing the Javanese center of power in the nation. The two movements recognized each other formally, and their efforts are referred to jointly in the historiography as PRRI-Permesta.

<sup>16</sup> In March 1957, nominally in response to the Permesta rebellion but also because of the continuing incursions of Darul Islam forces, the military, under the leadership of General Nasution, began to exert political control regionally.

Manifesto, (*Manifesto Politik*, or Manipol.) Saskia Wieringa described the substance of the 1959 National Day speech in which Sukarno laid out Manipol as follows:

In vague terms ('the demands of the Indonesian people must be met in an overwhelmingly revolutionary manner') it outlined certain government priorities—food and clothing for the people, internal security and the continuation of the struggle against imperialism—and long-term objectives, including a 'just and prosperous society.'<sup>17</sup>

But, she also noted, "As presidential power increased and political and social chaos ensued there was mounting pressure to couch everything in Sukarno's terminology, such as Manipol, 'socialism à la Indonesia', 'unfinished revolution.' Yet the boundaries of these concepts shifted and inter-party polemics turned into a struggle over the interpretation of Sukarno's words."<sup>18</sup>

In his canonical work on Guided Democracy, Daniel Lev argued that although "it was not always evident, because of the dominating figure of Soekarno, the main driving force behind Guided Democracy was the army."<sup>19</sup> Although the army did not take over the actual running of the government, "[o]ffices of particular importance . . . quickly came under direct army control. But the martial law administration was enabled to intervene anywhere and at any time it chose."<sup>20</sup> There was resistance to the military control of the nation, particularly from the Indonesian Communist Party and its affiliated unions and organizations, as well as from elements of Islamic leadership. The military, on the other hand, used its power to control union activism, and to assert martial law at various times, and even to detain PKI members in political prisoner camps when it felt its authority was endangered.<sup>21</sup>

Merle Ricklefs, however, writing a generation later than Lev, described Guided Democracy as "a fluid system, born of crisis and constantly changing through one of the most disturbed periods of Indonesian history."<sup>22</sup> His analysis places Sukarno in the middle of this consistently shifting political landscape, although "joined by others in maintaining his central position. But this," he writes, "was all in support of a political balance that not

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<sup>17</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 294.

even Sukarno could maintain, one which represented a compromise among irreconcilable interests and was therefore satisfactory to no one.”<sup>23</sup>

Sukarno, therefore, with his significant rhetorical ability to “define” the country, set about creating a national ideology with which he attempted to keep divergent powers in check. His goal was to play the three main *aliran* off against each other by binding them all together in a platform of loyalty towards his new plans for the nation. This was dependent on the promulgation of a cult of loyalty to himself as president, based on his status as the “Great Leader of the Revolution.”<sup>24</sup>

To do this, Sukarno created a national unity ideology known as NASAKOM, an acronym that combined Indonesia’s three broad political groupings,<sup>25</sup> and in which all three elements—nationalism, religion and communism/socialism—were held to be central to the nation’s core belief system. But all three revolved in orbit around Sukarno, the revolution’s central star. Ricklefs describes Sukarno’s oratorical power. Sukarno, he wrote,

was a skilled manipulator of men and of symbols. He could harangue a crowd or charm a potential adversary with equal ease, although he was also very adept at hating his enemies. He offered Indonesians something to believe in, something which many hoped would give them and their nation dignity and pride.<sup>26</sup>

What Sukarno offered Indonesians as something to “believe in,” was a five-point plan connected Manipol and intended to assure its general implementation. Known as USDEK, the plan stressed five areas in which the government would assert new powers politically, economically and culturally.<sup>27</sup> While stressing the centralized control of both politics (democracy) and the economy and the renewed political position of the presidency, USDEK also included two elements that referred specifically to the installation of

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<sup>23</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 294.

<sup>24</sup> There are various ways historians interpret the balance of power among Sukarno and the three major *aliran* during this period. Daniel Lev, as quoted above, draws the military and its increasing control of the economy as the major driving force of the era, to which Sukarno must react. Max Lane, on the other hand, sees the PKI and union and peasant activism as driving the national dynamic, and suggests Sukarno was moving strongly leftward from the late 1950’s on, in part in reaction to the growth of the military power. (See Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, pp. 36-38.) Anthony Reid focuses his explanation of the period on the tensions between the regions and the center, and on Sukarno’s use of Guided Democracy to address those geographical tensions more than to hold various political groups at bay. (See Anthony Reid, *To Nation by Revolution*, p. 139-140.)

<sup>25</sup> Nas (*nasionalis*, or nationalist, which specifically accounted for the political power of the armed forces), A (*agama*, or religion, though mainly here referring to the large Islamic groups Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama), and Kom (*komunis*, or communist, which included not only the PKI, but also Gerwani and other leftist political organizations.)

<sup>26</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 294.

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion of USDEK in Chapter 1.

Indonesian cultural elements as bases for the political and cultural transformation of the nation. The first was the adoption of “socialism *à la Indonesia*,”<sup>28</sup> which was to some extent an adoption of elements of Mao Zedong thought that stressed the necessity for Chinese socialism to adapt to the cultural and political realities of 1950s China. The other key element was the necessity of the development of an Indonesian national identity (“*kepribadian nasional*”) as the core of the nation’s self-expression in all areas.

In the introduction to a collection of five speeches Sukarno gave about *kepribadian nasional* in 1959, Hadji Achmad Notosoetardjo reflected earlier language about the necessity of making good choices about modernity and identity that had concerned Indonesian women from the earliest days of the new nation. “We are always modern,” he wrote,

because we want to live in tune with [*sesuai dengan*] the climate of the times, we are always infatuated with developments that are equal with those peoples who are already more advanced . . . This is a sign of progress, of moving forward. . . [But] in the upheaval of catching up to the terms “modern” and “advanced” we must not let go of our own Indonesian identity.<sup>29</sup>

The fear of losing critical elements of local culture to the “upheaval” of modernity remained an important part of how Indonesians conceived of their own experience. As part of USDEK, under the rubric of *kepribadian nasional*, it had then also become a formal element of national ideology.

Manipul-USDEK, as much as anything, was expressed through a set of slogans and ambitions. Political action revolved around Sukarno as a person and figure rather than around political parties and institutions, and suffered in its implementation as a result. The one arguable exception to this was the promulgation of Operation Trikora,<sup>30</sup> from November 1961-August 1962, which resulted in the end of Dutch control of West Irian and

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<sup>28</sup> As was mentioned in the quote from Saskia Wieringa above.

<sup>29</sup> “*Kita senantiasa modern, karena kita ingin hidup sesuai dengan iklimnya zaman, kita senantiasa gandrung kepada kemajuan jang setaraf se-tidaknja dengan bangsa-bangsa jang telah lebih maju . . . Itu tandanja progress, itu tandanja maju . . . Didalam pergolakan mendedjar istilah ‘moderen’ dan ‘maju’ kita tidak bisa terlepas daripada kepribadian Indonesia sendiri.*” Notosoetardjo, *Kepribadian Revolusi Bangsa Indonesia*, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> “Trikora,” an acronym for “*Tri Komando Rakjat*” or “The People’s Triple Command,” was the popular name Sukarno’s military and political efforts to claim the western half of Papua for Indonesia and to liberate it from Dutch colonial control. The campaign lasted from December 1961 to August 1962, when the region was annexed into the Indonesian Republic. This was the first of his two such major pushes by Sukarno during the early 1960’s, the second of which was *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia, also referred to as “Dwikora,” short for “*Dwi Komando Rakjat*,” or “The People’s Double Command.

the region being annexed into the Indonesian state in 1962. Trikora was carried out largely by the military, however, one of the few institutions capable of implementing large-scale projects at the time, and essentially to meet its own needs.

But the period was accompanied by what Indonesian analyst Soedjati Djiwandono referred to in 1966 as a policy of “progressive mobilization” of the people.<sup>31</sup> In this arena specifically, Manipol-USDEK strongly affected the tenor of an increasingly revolutionary rhetoric, the usage of which became increasingly required in the public sphere at several key points.

With much of politics enveloped in rhetoric, an important element of Sukarno’s extension of political control involved a major revision of the national press law in November 1960. The new regulations required magazines and newspapers to adopt approaches that were specifically in line with Manipol, and to “serve as tools to drive the masses to finish the Indonesian revolution towards a just and prosperous society.”<sup>32</sup> All publications were obligated to apply for new permits in a process that included a review of the political reliability of their staff and the appropriateness of their editorial content.<sup>33</sup>

Women’s magazines largely focused on the last of the five USDEK conceptions, *kepribadian nasional*. The magazines increasingly featured Indonesian models and actresses or patriotic subjects on their covers while the coverage of Hollywood fashion and style diminished. More importantly, the images of Indonesian women within magazines

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<sup>31</sup> See J. Soedjati Djiwandono, *Konfrontasi Revisited: Indonesia’s Foreign Policy Under Soekarno*, p. 135.

<sup>32</sup> “. . . dapat dipergunakan sebagai alat penggerak massa untuk menyelesaikan revolusi Indonesia menuju pada masyarakat adil dan makmur.” In order to receive a SIT (*Surat Izin Terbit*, or Publishing License), publishers were required to sign onto 19 principals affirming their support of Manipol-USDEK. The order is cited in full in H. Soebagijo, *Sejarah Pers Indonesia*, pp. 121-125. This quote from p. 121. The new spelling system is from the source. This book is part of a series edited by Nugroho Notokusanto, one of the authors of the “official” history of Lubang Buaya, and it proffers a New Order interpretation of the Guided Democracy era. Soebagijo notes that the announcement of this new press policy coincided with a ban on all political activity in the military district including Jakarta between September 15 and November 1, 1960.

The two concepts here, “*menyelesaikan revolusi Indonesia*,” (“finishing the Indonesian revolution,”) and building a “*masyarakat adil dan makmur*,” (“just and prosperous society,”) which were often presented in Sukarnoist rhetoric as a matched pair, were, in Max Lane’s analysis, at the core of the socialist conception of the nation, and therefore somewhat at odds with the continued power sought by the military and the nationalist urban elites who made up a significant element of the “nationalist” group. See Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> One of the distinct fears that emerged during Guided Democracy was that Indonesia was beset by not only by external enemies, but critically, by internal ones as well. One set of these were Islamist forces involved in both the Darul Islam and PRRI Rebellions. Masyumi, the political party that had encompassed both the modernist Muhammadiyah and the more traditionally Javanese Nahdlatul Ulama began to divide over the question of what to do with its members who had been involved in the PRRI rebellion. NU-oriented members largely withdrew, and the party itself was banned. *Suara Aisjijah* did not publish for several years, but the women in charge of their archive insisted several times to me that they had never been banned during this period.

were increasingly tailored to reflect “Indonesian values.” Elements of western culture, particularly those that were not considered to be “aligned with Indonesian identity” were increasingly criticized.

Although many of the exterior forms under attack were clearly originally western, what was at play were their Indonesian expressions. Wearing western clothing remained quite acceptable, particularly in daily life. But it was important for women to understand what wearing a miniskirt or teased hair or dancing the twist meant in a revolutionary Manipol-USDEK context, and more importantly, what it meant about being Indonesian. It was critical to know why those particular expressions were to be avoided, and eventually, forbidden.

A stronger version of the press law went into effect in 1963, connected directly to the explosion of revolutionary zeal that Sukarno deployed as an important element of *Konfrontasi*. While the rhetoric of *Konfrontasi* was, in theory at least, aimed externally and internationally at Malaysia, its overwhelming effect was internal and national. If anything, the minor border skirmishes against Malaysia in Borneo, and popular attacks on the British Embassy in Jakarta<sup>34</sup> were a pretense for Sukarno’s attempts to hold an increasingly fractious alliance of nationalists, Islamic religious organizations and communists together under the rhetoric of NASAKOM.

The attempts at unity however, remained largely rhetorical, dependent more on language and sloganeering than on actual policy. On the ground, the economy paid a heavy price. Rice supplies were tight, lines to buy that and other staples were frequent and long, prices were volatile, and rice riots were not unheard of. Unable to actually affect economic change and growth, with the basics of both a Guided Democracy and a Guided Economy failing, the energy behind USDEK was poured into *Sosialism à la Indonesia*, increasingly expressed through the large-scale adoption of various political slogans, and through the promulgation of a more “revolutionary” Indonesian national identity.<sup>35</sup> Magazines and

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<sup>34</sup> As part of a mass demonstration against the British and Malaysian embassies in September 1963, the British embassy was over-run and burned to the ground. This is an important example of mob violence being focused against enemies of the revolution. Following these demonstrations, Indonesia broke political ties with both nations. The American embassy was also a frequent target of demonstrations, but the crowds that would gather in front of the compound, which sits on the south side of Merdeka Square (discussed in Chapter 7,) never made serious attempts to breach the gates.

<sup>35</sup> My argument for the contingency of the increase of various elements of USDEK over others given historical shifts in politics will form a critical element of the argument of Chapter 7, and is based originally on Arno Mayer’s work on timing



newspapers, again, were a primary site in which this increasingly sloganized revolutionary ethos was expressed.

This is why Sukarno obsessed about Indonesian expressions of western culture in his speeches to women. Women's choices about certain styles of clothing were a particular area of focus because, as the dissertation has shown in earlier chapters, women's clothing was freighted with national meaning. Women's clothing became—to a much greater extent than ever before—the subject of both political punditry and on-the-street measures of control, a morality play acted out in the public political and revolutionary national realm of a country living dangerously. In the global context of the Cold War, Indonesian women's "proper" appearance and comportment, that which was in line with national identity, were increasingly framed as a critical bulwark against the cultural invasion of the west, a world of teased hair, miniskirts, dancing the twist to Elvis Presley, and listening to the Beatles.

It would be easy—in fact simplistic—to analyze Sukarno's attention to western culture and fashion as merely a nationalist reaction to political imperialism. Although that was also clearly at play, I would suggest that such a reading would ignore the local and national dynamics of the cultural politics of the formation of the Indonesian nation. Instead, I argue that it is important to see Sukarno's focus on female beauty overwhelmingly as a product of national rather than global forces and tensions.

Indeed, this deployment of ideological reactions to women's fashion was one of the more visible cultural elements of building the new Indonesian national identity. Women's magazines were instructed to adjust their editorial content, which they did if they wished to continue publishing. Women's magazines became an important space in which groups and types of women were upheld as important examples for all women to either emulate or avoid, for the sake of the success of the revolution. Because they involved women and their position in revolutionary society, the national identity elements of the Guided Democracy complex were increasingly expressed in relation to various ideal types of national women, rather than in relation to individual women themselves.

This chapter of the dissertation traces these changes of representations of Indonesian women in national magazines between 1955-1965, and their increasingly

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of the development of the Nazi impulse towards the annihilation of Europe's Jews in his monograph *Why Did The Heavens Not Darken?*

strong connection to Sukarno's national political project. It makes the argument that as the President ramped up the revolutionary rhetoric of Guided Democracy and *Konfrontasi*, representations of Indonesian women in the media increasingly relied on ideal types connected to a discourse of women's moral fitness. What came to be discussed in women's magazines, then, was not Indonesian women themselves, but rather, the images of what Indonesian women were either expected or feared to be. What was at play was not the lives or experiences of real women, but the ideological health of the nation. This transposition happened during a time of particular political tension, freighting it with additional meanings that would come to bear during the events of September/October 1965. It is to this transposition in the decade from 1955-1965 that the dissertation now turns.

### ***"Traditional Clothing is Popular Again"***

In the aftermath of the Bandung conference in 1955, women's magazines exhibited a renewed interest in the subject of Indonesian national fashion. Coverage of western fashion did not disappear during the move to an increasingly non-aligned (and arguably the start of an anti-Western) cultural space beginning in 1955. But magazines began to stress greater options for "dressing Indonesian." *Wanita*, for instance, adjusted the flow of its regular patterns and designs of western fashions to offer a month's worth of design options for *kebaya*, a subject it had barely broached in 1954.

In a similar issue, *Keluarga* began exploring new uses for traditional clothing to replace western fashion in certain circumstance. A 1956 article in *Keluarga* was entitled "Regional Clothing is Most Popular Again!" ("*Pakaian Daerah Terpopuler Lagi!*") The article suggested that traditional Acehnese clothing which consisted of a long *kebaya* worn over trousers rather than a *kain* could "also be worn to go picnicking, instead of American 'jeans.'"<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> "*boleh djuga untuk pergi pick-nick, daripada memakai 'jankee' Amerika.*" The use of "*jankee*" here, to mean jeans or long pants, is interesting, and is specifically derived from "*yankee*," or American soldier. The term is used in several articles about clothing across magazines, sometimes only referring to jeans, and other times to any version of women's long trousers. There is also at this same time a modern architectural style that begins in Indonesia, called "*jengki*," with the term signifying a "distinctive architecture is an expression of the political spirit of freedom among the Indonesians. . . The spirit of freedom translated into an architecture that differs from what the Dutch had done. The modern cubic and strict geometric forms are transformed into more complicated volumes, such as pentagons or other irregular solids. Roofs are pitched, the surface and composition are festive. These characteristics are not commonly found elsewhere in Europe and America." See Josef Prijotomo, "When West Meets East: One Century of Architecture in Indonesia (1890s-1990s)."

Earlier chapters of the dissertation have suggested that while North Sumatran fashion had not likely been particularly “popular” in the rest of the archipelago, it, along with other “regional” and “authentic” clothing styles had been widely presented in fashion shows in Jakarta and other major cities from the early 1950s on. But this new use, to replace jeans on a picnic, underlined a growing sense that cultural elements from across the archipelago now “belonged” to all Indonesians, no matter what their own ethnic identities might also have been.<sup>37</sup> The ability to claim clothing styles from across the nation as their “own” was a critical way in which Indonesian women were formed into a national group, no matter where they came from.

Building on the success of the various “*batikshow's*,” the magazines began featuring photo spreads of *batik* clothing with western style and cut that allowed women increased options that read simultaneously as both Indonesian and modern. But the idea of wearing *batik* western-style was not simply an issue of personal choice or self-expression. Alongside articles on fashion shows featuring batik used for western style dresses, from September-December 1955, *Keluarga* carried a series of advertisements from the *Gabungan Koperasi Batik Indonesia* (GKBI, Association of Indonesian Batik Cooperatives.)<sup>38</sup> The ads featured photographs of western dresses, pajamas, home furnishing and the like, all made of *batik*. The ads specifically tied the delight of wearing *batik* to the love of one’s own culture, to nourishing the growth of the national economy and providing work for hundreds of thousands of batik workers. (See Figures 6.1. and 6.2.)

Nonetheless, simultaneously, magazines in the late 1950s and early 1960s continued to show a large and culturally varied world within which both elite and the growing numbers of urban middle-class Indonesian women lived. Hollywood films and their American and European movie stars were markedly present, but so too were actresses from Indonesia’s emerging film industry. These young Indonesian women were

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<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Lindsay also discusses this in terms of the performing arts, particularly among dancers from across the nation who learned “each other’s” dances when preparing for overseas artistic missions. Indeed, she notes, when donning costumes not “one’s own,” “this appears not to have been a major concern. The image the cultural missions presented of Indonesia made up of various different regions was not one of mutual exclusivity. Rather, being Indonesian allowed for an embracing of other regions as one’s own. This was the sense of liberation from one’s own ‘*suku*’ [“ethnicity”] and the leap to national consciousness . . . the regions were not denied, but they now belonged to all.” Jennifer Lindsay, “Performing Indonesia Abroad” in Jennifer Lindsey and Maya Liem, eds., *Heirs to world culture, Being Indonesian, 1950-1965*. p. 210.

<sup>38</sup> This is the same organization that ran the ad in *Film Review* in December 1952 featuring an ideal Indonesian woman wearing *kain-kebaya* that is discussed in Chapter 3.



**Figures 6.1, 6.2:** *Batik* pajamas and dresses for culture and the economy. The text reads “Delighting in wearing batik means: Loving one’s own culture! Nourishing the national economy! Bringing work to hundreds of thousands of laborers!”<sup>39</sup> *Keluarga*, October 1955, p. 27, and December 1955, p. 4.

represented as hip and modern, yet wholesome, both in new film magazines such as *Varia*<sup>40</sup> as well as magazines such as *Wanita*.

When new actresses were introduced to the public, they were usually photographed wearing western clothing while carrying out a young modern life: chatting on the phone with girlfriends, listening to records, or riding their motorcycles. But, almost without fail in such features in 1959 and 1960, they were also shown either wearing *kain-kebaya* in at least one photograph, or, for those who were also Javanese dancers, in dance costume that also featured *kain batik*.<sup>41</sup> (See Figure 6.3).

<sup>39</sup> “Gemar memakai batik berarti: Tjinta kebudayaan sendiri! Memupuk ekonomi nasional! Memberi lapangan bekerdja ratusan-ribu kaum buruh!” *Keluarga*, October 1955, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup> *Varia*, which began publication in 1957, initially based loosely on and drawing its title from the American movie publication *Variety*. Though strictly speaking it was an “entertainment” (*hiburan*) magazine, it is a strikingly rich source about women and modernity. Its focus on film reflects the wide-spread presence and influence of the cinema in Sukarno-era Indonesia, and its effects on perceptions of modernity by Indonesians. *Varia* was a one of a series of titles published by Keng Po, an ethnic Chinese-owned media consortium, mostly aimed at the entertainment market. The magazine was founded by Hadely Hasibuan, a political chameleon of a journalist who possessed a striking ability to shift editorial directions with the prevailing political winds. Given the particular character and aims of its editor, whose own biography suggests he sought to move close to whomever was in power, *Varia*—“the magazine with the pretty women on the cover”—serves as a tightly calibrated bellweather of both the shifting politics of both the late Sukarno era and the early New Order. See Hasibuan, Hadely. *Hadely Hasibuan : memoar mantan menteri penurunan harga*. (*Hadely Hasibuan: Memoir of a former Minister for the Reduction of Prices*), and the discussion of *Varia* in Chapter 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Varia* No. 65 (July 15, 1959), p. 14.



**Figure 6.3:** "Film star Roosilawaty doesn't yet want to be called a star . . . Her ambition is to dedicate herself to art." *Varia* No. 65, July 15, 1959, p. 14

The overwhelming image projected of these young stars, however, was not very different from those of Hollywood actresses in similar profiles churned out by American film studios. The publicity output about stars from the Hollywood public relations machine continued to be reprinted in Indonesian movie magazines through the late 1950s, with the original English translated into Indonesian. These profiles used the same photos as

American entertainment news sources, so the visual style and content flowing from this was well established in Indonesian magazines by the early to mid 1950s.

The formula was used for Indonesian stars as well, although, it should be noted, almost exclusively with young women.<sup>42</sup> A principal feature of both the American and Indonesian versions of this celebrity layout was the pretense of seeing these stars “at home” and in their “everyday lives,” so there were ample photos in both versions of informally posed domestic and family photos. There was almost always a more formal “glamour” shot in both versions as well. In the Indonesian case, this was almost always taken with the star wearing *kain-kebaya*, and her hair in a *konde*. She needed to remain an Indonesian beauty, an aspirational national model for other young Indonesian women.

### ***‘Adjusting’ (to) Indonesian Modernity***

Some elements of fashion journalism remained quite practical, however, even as they projected aspirations of modernity. A 1956 spread on lingerie in *Keluarga*, for instance, opined that “if a woman wishes to be called modern, it’s not only the exterior that must appear modern, dapper and neat, but even your underwear must be ‘adjusted’.”<sup>43</sup> (“*disesuaikan.*”) The article addressed the need to make the correct choice of undergarment, based on what dress or skirt a woman chose to wear. As with previous articles on bras, the drawings showed structural darts and were presented in a way that would allow a woman to make her own versions at home. (See Figure 6.4) Occasional articles on how to sew one’s own underwear, including increasingly technical drawings of bras, remained a regular feature of many magazines concerned with women’s fashion into the early 1960s and beyond.

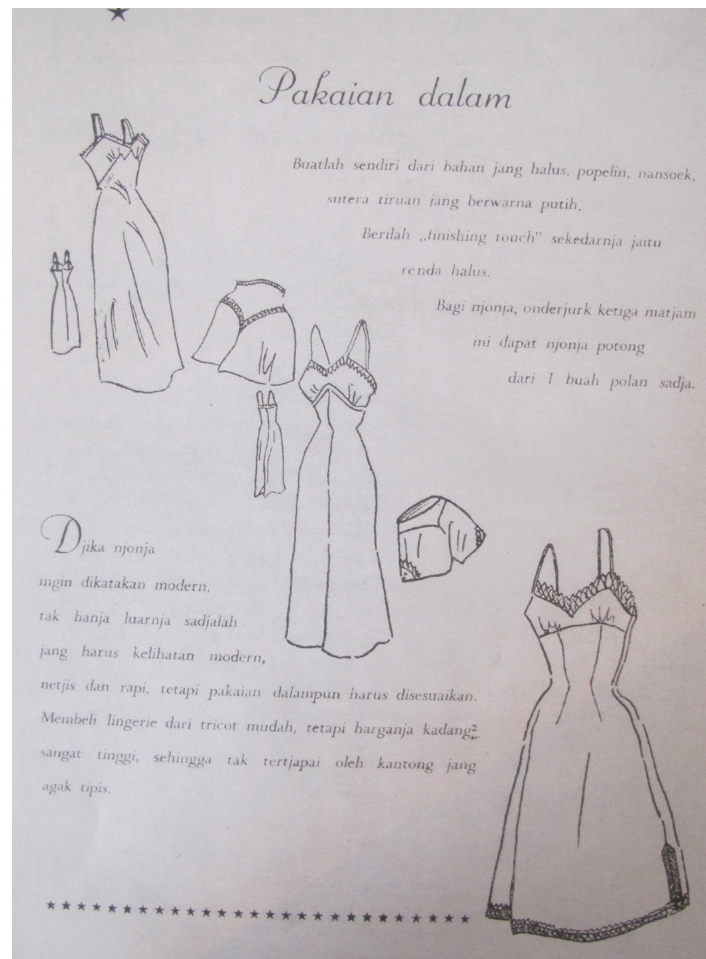
Elite Indonesian women, therefore, continued to be presented with a series of fashion choices and variations within which they were encouraged to find their own looks, their own personal expressions of being modern. Whether wearing western dresses made from *batik*, going picnicking in Acehnese pantsuits, or wearing new-style *kebaya*, they were

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<sup>42</sup> I have seen very few “star” articles written about male Indonesian actors. As female stars aged, or became more established, they only received the “young star” treatment on rare occasions. In any case, the appetite among readers for information about and photos of the newly emerging stars seems to have been significant, based on the reader letter sections of the magazines that consistently requested information on new actresses as they made their film debuts.

<sup>43</sup> “*Djika njonja ingin dikatanakan modern, tak hanja luarnya sadjalah jang harus kelihatan modern, netjis dan rapi, tetapi pakain dalampun harus disesuaikan.*” *Keluarga*, March 1956, p. 23. Again, notice the use of “adjusted” (“*disesuaikan.*”)

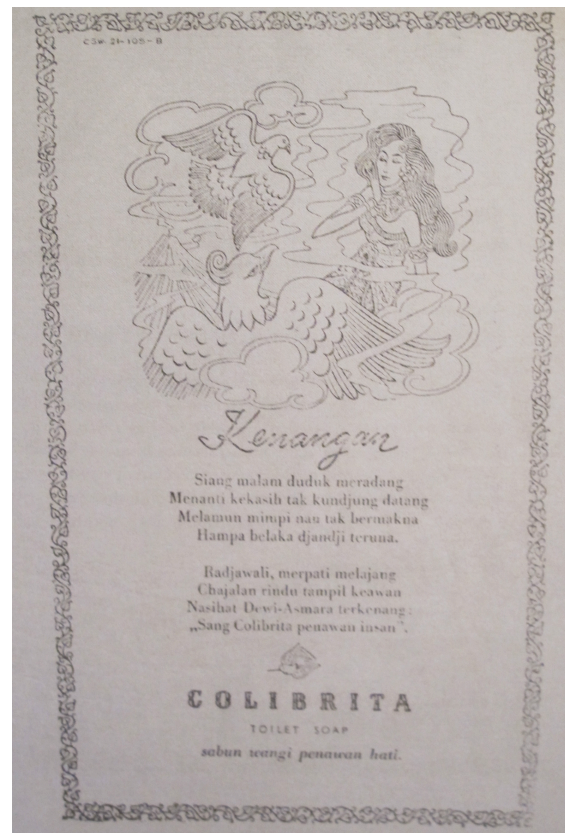
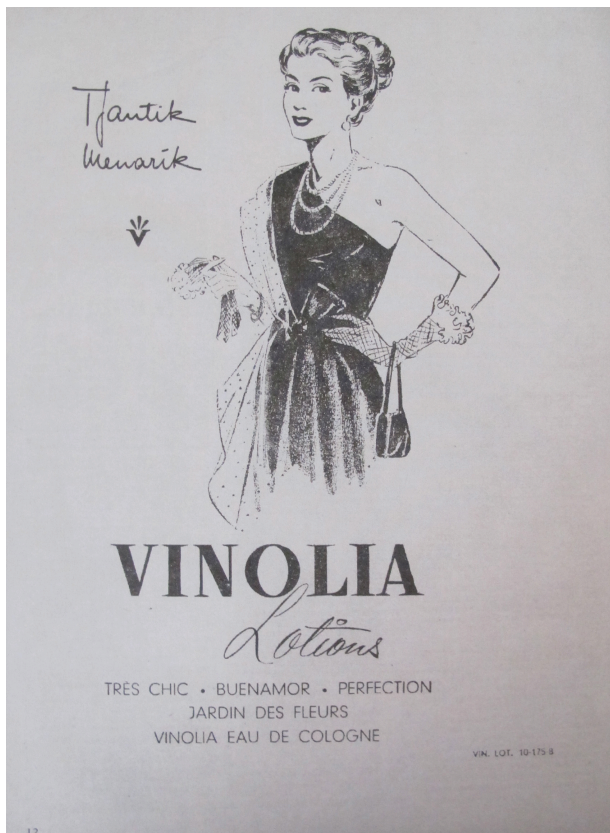
largely free to play in a wide range of choices, which, as long as they were properly made, remained an acceptable way of expressing their modernity and their Indonesian identity without creating internal conflicts over who they were.



**Figure 6.4:** “If you want to be considered modern, even your underwear must be adjusted.” *Keluarga*, March 1956, p. 23.

An important shift in beauty standards, perhaps most easily seen through changes in advertising, occurred between 1955 and 1960. Although beauty product advertising initially focused on western movie stars, as the dissertation explored in Chapter 2, beauty standards became more broadly expressed in the mid-1950's. Both western and eastern influences were visible, demonstrating that Indonesian women had access to multiple influences for being beautiful.

Two sets of advertisements for perfume and lotions that often ran near, and sometimes directly opposite each other in the pages of *Wanita* and *Keluarga*, provide an interesting example of such a contrast. The tagline for Vinolia, a European beauty brand offering a range of lotions, soaps, cold creams and scented oils, was simple: “*Cantik, Menarik*,” which translates as “Beautiful, Attractive.”<sup>44</sup> The ads showed various images of a woman looking over her shoulder at the reader, wearing a chic western dress, with her hair piled up on her head. (See Figure 6.5). Colibrita, another European-made perfumed toilet soap, on the other hand, chose to use images reflecting women as Javanese goddesses and multiple-stanza Indonesian-language poems as an inspiration for beauty in their ads. (See Figure 6.6).



**Figure 6.5:** Vinolia, “Beautiful, Attractive.” **Figure 6.6:** Colibrita: Indonesian Goddesses  
*Keluarga*, April 1956, p. 12 *Keluarga*, March 1957, p. 4

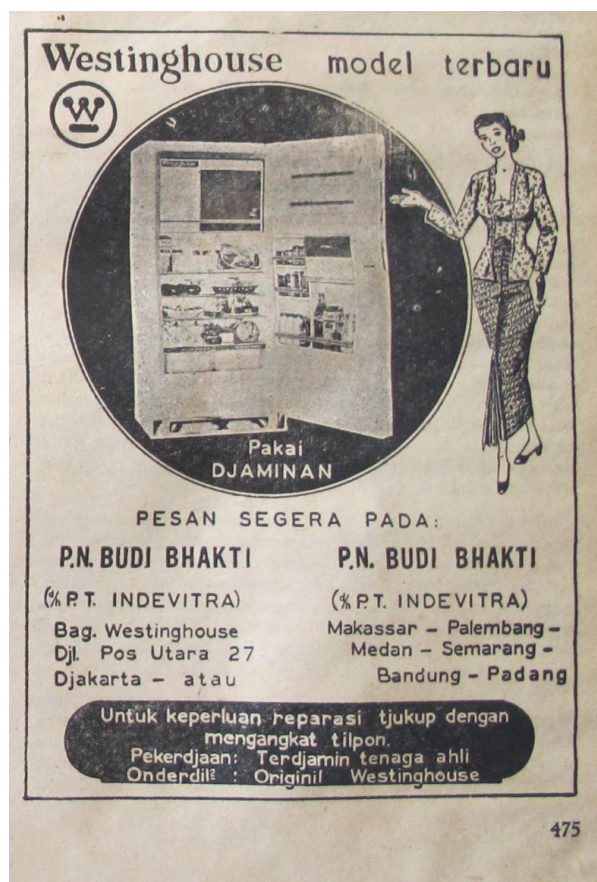
<sup>44</sup> Or, alternatively, “Beautiful, Interesting.”



By the early 1960's, responding to the changing political and cultural milieu, Vinolia altered the imagery it used, switching the picture to that of a woman more clearly Indonesian in her features, wearing *kain-kebaya*. Their tagline, however, remained the same. (See Figure 6.7.) When women were identified as mothers in advertising, on the other hand, (usually for items like margarine or laundry soaps, but even in ads for modern household goods such as refrigerators, and reaching back to the early 1950s) they were nearly always shown wearing *kain-kebaya*. (See Figure 6.8). Women as mothers and women as beauty figures clearly spoke to slightly different versions of national beauty, but ones that converged as the importance of national identity increased.



**Figure 6.7:** Vinolia in *kain-kebaya* *Wanita*, December 15, 1961, p. 734



**Figure 6.8:** Modern Westinghouse Mother *Wanita*, August 15, 1961, p. 475.

## ***Miss Varia 1959***

As late as September 1959, a major women's magazine could still explore glamour without actively appealing to a nationalized style of beauty. The "Miss Varia 1959" contest provides an interesting example. *Varia* magazine, which ran the contest, solicited entries from young women across Indonesia who felt they could be the next big movie star. The editor, Hadely Hasibuan's, stated goal was to identify the first potential Miss Indonesia candidate, with the hope of taking her to represent the nation in the Miss Universe pageant. Given a generally negative view of pageants in Indonesia at the time,<sup>45</sup> this was, in and of itself, an audacious proposal. But at the time, *Varia* was one of the most Hollywood-inflected publications in the country.

Each entrant was asked to submit two professionally taken photos of themselves, one a headshot, and the other a full body photo. Twenty finalists from across the country were chosen, and were introduced over the course of several issues of the magazine beginning in May, 1959. Readers were then invited to clip ballots from the magazine to mail in their choice for Miss Varia over the course of several months. In the end, *Varia* received over 36,000 votes in the contest, each of which needed to be accompanied by a coupon.<sup>46</sup>

The photos of the finalists are particularly interesting because of both the clothing and the backgrounds the young women and their photographers chose.<sup>47</sup> These include both studio shots, and photos taken outdoors both in "nature" and in front of cars and scooters, with an observable regional variation. Candidates from Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya, including ethnic Chinese women, tended to dress more in a western vein, and to present themselves as active, athletic, modern young women. Candidates from more conservative areas such as Central Java or Sumatra more often chose photos in which they wore *kain-kebaya*, in some cases with a head covering as well. (See Figure 6.9) It was quite

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<sup>45</sup> See the discussion of the *konde* competition in Jakarta in 1953 in *Suara 'Aisjijah* in Chapter 5. Indonesia was quite different in this respect than the Philippines, where beauty pageants were (and remain) an important, and highly popular, arena of national femininity. Filipino beauty pageant promoters had been trying to bring pageant culture to Indonesia since the early 1950's, without any success at all. Indonesian women generally rejected these proposals, saying they were too showy, and would reflect badly on the character of the young women who would be tempted to participate in them.

<sup>46</sup> In an interesting intersection of traces of real life interrupting the settledness of the archive, one of the copies of *Varia* in the University of Michigan collections from this time has the ballot carefully clipped out of the bottom of the page.

<sup>47</sup> See Karen Strassler's work on photography in Java, particularly the role of photograph studios in building a culture of fashion glamor shots as representing the skill of the photographer, and of the uses of headshots ("*pasphoto*," or the photos taken and used for identity passes in the New Order). Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*.

clear that in 1959, women involved in the world of Indonesian glamor were still able to express significant personal variation in their self-presentation.



**Figure 6.9:** Fashion variation in the Miss Varia 1959 headshots of 16 of 20 finalists. *Varia*, No. 75, September 23, 1959, pp. 2-3.

The winner of Miss Varia 1959, by an overwhelming margin, was Dhewayani Pribadi, the young wife of an Air Force officer from Bandung.<sup>48</sup> Her victory was announced in the September 23, 1959 issue, when the names and hometowns of all twenty finalists were also revealed. The issue also took pains to demonstrate the transparency of the vote tabulation process, including photos of the counting process and several pages of tabulated data matching each candidate's votes to the cities in which they were cast.<sup>49</sup> In the same issues, the continuing popularity of Hollywood was demonstrated by a full-page production still of a bare-chested Tony Curtis in the 1958 United Artists film *The Vikings*. (See Figure 6.10.)



**Figure 6.10:** Miss Varia 1959 announced and accounted for, with Tony Curtis looking on. *Varia*, No. 75, September 23, 1959, Front Inside Cover and p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Dhewayani received 13,349 votes from across the country. This was more than the number of votes received by the runner-up, Soetji Relowati, from Surabaya, (6,771 votes), and the second-runner up, Lanny Tijam, also from Bandung (5,589 votes) combined. The information provided in the pages of *Varia* reported the number of votes that were cast for each of the candidates of the over 36,000 ballots mailed in.

<sup>49</sup> The auditor's report listed what the votes were from each of the cities named from across the nation, providing a fascinating possible case study on the regional and ethnic variations of beauty in Indonesia at that time. A list of 220 "thank you" prize recipients, drawn at random from those who mailed in ballots, was also published with their names and addresses. The data offers a rare glimpse at who the readership for the magazine was. It markedly included a significant number of ethnic Chinese readers. An extended analysis of this data, a project for the future, would provide interesting insights on the reach of *Varia* and other similar magazines. Coincidentally, the publication permit for the magazines was published on the bottom of the facing page of the announcement of the contest winner. It noted that the total publication run was 61,000 copies per issue.

In the next issue, on September 30, in keeping with their desire to crown a new star, *Varia* published a “meet the celebrity at home” photo story that showed Dhewayani with her Air Force officer husband. They were living a life of late 1950s modern splendor that could have been lifted out of an American magazine, down to the furniture and the curtains of their Scandinavian-design-looking house. Deetje, as she was called, was shown riding her Vespa, playing tennis and swimming at the Bandung Country Club. She modeled a swimsuit poolside in Hollywood pinup-style poses, hung out casually at home with her friends or her husband, and helped him type his office paperwork on her portable typewriter. Interestingly, she was not shown in *kain-kebaya*, or, for that matter, in any form of *batik* at all in the layout. (See Figures 6.11 and 6.12.)



**Figure 6.11:** Miss Varia 1959, the modern Indonesian pin-up girl. *Varia* no 76, September 30, 1959, p. 15.

The Miss Varia 1959 contest marked a high point of the images of modern Indonesian woman on a western model in *Varia*, which was soon to undergo a significant change. The western-ness of Dhewayani's beauty was presented quite unproblematically, including her comments about not having, or wanting to have, children for the moment. The photo spread demonstrated a variety of tropes of modernity common to Indonesian media at the time—the young girl on the Vespa, or listening to records with a friend—and one in particular—the swimsuit pinup shot—that was well known from Hollywood. This was, however, quite rare, and exceptionally daring within most Indonesian cultural contexts. The tight mimicking of a Hollywood “at-home” shoot, the Air Force Officer husband, and the life in Bandung were all markers that Dhewayani was living a life far out of reach for most Indonesian women.



Figure 6.12: Miss Varia 1959, the batik-less Air Force wife at home and going out *Varia* no 76, September 30, 1959, pp. 16-17.

The pictorial marked the edge to which Indonesians might go, but even then, perhaps only if they received the exceptions granted to movie stars who were allowed to be flashier than the average woman.<sup>50</sup> Within a year, such a contest would no longer be possible. Despite the clear intent in 1959 to hold a Miss Varia 1960 contest, this would no longer be politically possible, and the second contest never took place.

### ***Magazines to Finish the National Revolution***

The new Guided Democracy press law was passed on October 12, 1960, less than two weeks after Sukarno addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 30 in a speech in which he called on UN member states to “Build the World Anew.” His UN speech built on themes addressed in his August 17, 1960 National Day speech “Toward Freedom and the Dignity of Man.” Late summer 1960 was a period when, Fred Bunnell noted, Sukarno had finally been able to “consolidat[e] his own power and erect . . . the institutions of Guided Democracy,” thereby freeing himself up to “follow his predictions for a vigorous confrontation foreign policy.”<sup>51</sup> The changes in the press law were occasioned by Sukarno’s desire to exert a higher degree of ideological control over the nation’s media, and went into effect on November 1.

Guided Democracy was not a new idea in 1960, but the instability of the Sukarno government between 1957-1960 had allowed magazine editors to explore a variety of content. Although Sukarno announced his “*konsepsi*” (conception) for Guided Democracy in 1957, it was not until 1959 that he was able to largely put his concept into effect. Further, as Bunnell notes, he was not able to fully effect control over this new governmental format until late 1960, at which point he became more interested in shaping the content of

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<sup>50</sup> I tried to interview Ibu Dhewayani about this period of her life. She lives in Jakarta, but refused my requests for an interview, saying she didn’t want to talk about “politics.” Her husband from those days was an aide to Air Marshall Omar Dani, who was implicated in the events of 1965. She divorced him soon after Lubang Buaya, and married a shipping and concrete magnate. She stated that she “did not want to relive those days” and “had nothing to be proud of,” and was now devoting her attentions to her church. I have not been able to find out what happened to her first husband after the events of 1965-66. (Personal communication, October 2013, via Philip Soelistyo.)

<sup>51</sup> Fred Bunnell, “Guided Democracy Foreign Policy: 1960-1965 President Sukarno Moves from Non-Alignment to Confrontation.” p. 45. Nonetheless, there were still lingering elements of various regional civil wars on-going in Indonesia, which helps explain some of Sukarno’s desire to control the press. The Darul Islam, PRRI and Pemesta rebellions ended between April and October 1961. In terms of controlling the press, Sukarno’s government had essentially closed the country’s Chinese language press, allowing only 11 Indonesian Chinese language newspapers to continue publishing, and forcing foreign-owned Chinese publications to adopt new Indonesian language names. See Tribuana Said, *Sejarah Pers Nasional dan Pembangunan Pers Pancasila*, pp. 109-110.

magazines toward his “revolutionary” aims. While some publications were closed, there does not appear to have been direct censorship of the content of magazines that remained in print. Rather, magazines began to alter their own content, either in agreement with Sukarno’s new directions, or in an attempt to stay ahead of him.<sup>52</sup>

A particularly interesting example of this quick adjustment to the changing political landscape can be seen in the covers of *Varia* magazine. Hadely Hasibuan was not a particularly ideological journalist, but he was highly attuned to the changes in political winds. The new press regulations went into effect on November 1, and the magazine, published weekly, had a rather quick production cycle. Leading up to November 1960, *Varia* had featured both Hollywood and Indonesian stars on its covers, but western actors and actresses had predominated. The November 2 cover featured Indonesian actress Ratna Djuita. The November 9 cover was of Hollywood actor Dirk Bogarde, but also carried the magazine’s new publication permit number on the cover as well. The November 16 cover used a photo of another Indonesian actress, Ida Nustantry. The magazine only featured a western actor or actress on its cover once again, notably on the first edition published after October 1, 1965, when Hungarian actress Erbzebet Hazy, blonde haired, blue eyed and bare shouldered, made an unusual appearance on the front cover. (See Figures 6.13-15.)

Some magazines, particularly those connected with the Indonesian left, were already ahead of the curve on these issues. *Api Kartini*,<sup>53</sup> a magazine connected to Gerwani, was a prominent source of education and commentary about the new revolutionary formulations put forward with Guided Democracy. *Api Kartini* also regularly published about western women’s fashion, with a particular proletarian focus on keeping clothing simple, neat and orderly. They also regularly commented on issues of *kepribadian nasional*.

The magazine ran regular advice columns for mothers, for instance, and in this venue, women expressed a series of moral concerns, (though not quite yet raised to the level of moral crisis,) about their daughters. One mother, for instance, inquired about the

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<sup>52</sup> There is not good material on this in the historiography, and this claim takes some reading into the primary documents. In my 2012 interview with Herawati Diah, she suggested that Sukarno did try to meddle with publications at times after 1957, though somewhat indirectly. She attributed her husband’s own appointment as Indonesian ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1959 (and then on to England in 1962 and to Thailand in 1964) as an attempt to quiet the independence of B.M. Diah’s own journalistic voice. But she also insisted that their editorial content was never subject to direct review or control by the government in any of their publications.

<sup>53</sup> “Fire of Kartini,” a magazine from Gerwani that was focused on women involved in the organization’s kindergartens and child care centers, but was widely read by progressive women.





**Figures 6.13, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16:** *Varia*'s Last Hollywood Cover, Dirke Bogarde (November 9, 1960,) between Indonesian actresses Ratna Djuita (November 2,) and Ida Nusantry (November 16.) The magazine's new permit number is visible above the red *Varia* logo for the first time on the November 9 cover. The cover for October 13, 1965 was the first to portray a European actor since the Bogarde cover, but of a safely socialist Hungarian actress, Erzsébet Hazy in the immediate aftermath of Lubang Buaya.

tension she felt between allowing her daughter to follow fashion trends and feeling that these whims might keep her from advancing properly as a revolutionary Indonesian:

Question: the problem is with my eldest child, a girl, who is now almost 15 years old. She loves to primp and preen, trying out whatever trends are "now" like wearing her hair in a pony tail, the latest dresses, all of this she likes to go along with. Within some limits, I go along with her desires . . . I

fear she will become too backward and behind in her advancement to the point that she won't keep up with the progress of society today.<sup>54</sup>

The editor's response cited a familiar trope connecting gender to fears of the moral crises of modernity:

Answer: We agree with you that we need to take the right attitude in guiding the development of our girls. We shouldn't be too restricted, but on the other hand it is also a mistake to follow all our children's desires lest they become victims of the various excesses of today's 'modern' society.<sup>55</sup>

In this case, an interesting switch occurred. The mother's fear was that by dressing according to western fashion trends, her daughter would "be behind in her [socialist] advancement" and "not keep up with the progress of society." The leftist moral crisis was developing to a place where women might be both too sexual and too western *and* be behind the times simultaneously. But there was a clear sense still that modern society brought with it the possibility of dangerous excess.

*Api Kartini* reflected the progressive thinking of the socialist vanguard, and took a lead among women's magazines in ridding itself of western content.<sup>56</sup> Other magazines lagged behind to some extent in this matter, but over the course of the next two years, 1960-1962, the primacy of the Hollywood content in magazines like *Varia* diminished. Magazines took a broader perspective on international film, particularly increasing their coverage of film from socialist countries. Gerwani began to formulate objections to the salaciousness of Hollywood offerings from positions they had sought and achieved on the Indonesian Film Censor Board.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "Pertanyaan: masalah anak saja jang sulung, perempuan, sekarang sudah hampir 15 tahun. Ia suka sekali bersolek, model apa sadja djaman sekarang seperti rambut buntut-kuda, jurk model sekarang dsb. ingin sekali ia ikati. Dalam batas2 tertentu saja turuti kemauanja . . . saja takut djika ia mendjadi terlalu terbelakang dan terlambat kedadjuannya sehingga djuga tidak sesuai dengang kedadjuan masjarakat sekarang." *Api Kartini*, October 1960, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> "Djawaban: Kami sependapat dengan Njonja bawha kita harus mengambil sikap jang tepat dalam memimbing perkembangan gadis kita. Tidak boleh terlalu mengekang, dan sebaliknja djuga salah djika kita terlalu menurut kemaun anak sehingga ia menjadi korban berbagai ekses masjarakat 'modern' sekarang ini." *Api Kartini*, October 1960, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> It did not, however, come across as strictly Communist. Saskia Wieringa writes that "*Api Kartini* was designed to draw middle-class housewives into the 'revolutionary family.' Its editors included women who were not members of Gerwani, and the magazine carried articles on cooking, dress-making and other general women's issues. While this periodical seldom reported on the daily activities of Gerwani, its editorials do reflect the changing ideological preoccupations of the organization. Through its short stories and articles, a particular ideological climate was created, with many optimistic stories about communist countries." Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> Again, note the irony that it was Gerwani, who took one of the more puritanical approaches to the public expression of sexuality, who would in turn, have the puritanical construction of women's sexuality used against them.

These general rumblings about building the revolution became an out-and-out explosion in the late summer of 1963. This was a time when, according to Fred Bunnell, under Sukarno's strong political guidance, "Indonesia adopted a policy of all-out confrontation not only toward Malaysia but toward the International Olympic Committee, the United Nations, and other manifestations of what Sukarno viewed as Western domination of the new nations."<sup>58</sup> In an article on Sukarno's political temperament, Peter Hausdewell notes there was a "radical trend in both domestic and foreign policy which marked Guided Democracy after the 'watershed' of late summer 1963."<sup>59</sup>

But very little actual energy was focused on the border between Malaysia and Indonesia in Kalimantan itself that was in theory at the center of the *Konfrontasi* policy. Instead, the era's political energy was centered on shoring up Sukarno's position in a domestic political arena increasingly polarized by competing claims to political power by the military and the PKI, and on an economy shaken by a serious financial crisis. As a primary tactic to maintain political control of the nation, Sukarno sought to control the media more directly than he had previously, and insisting that journalists increase the energy behind their coverage of revolutionary cultural projects and slogans.

From late 1963 on, the representations of women in almost all Indonesian magazines changed. Instead of representing individuals, the images of women in magazines began to reflect several stock categories, the ideal types that were connected to the construction of moral crisis. As they had before, women were shown as being neat and orderly, and images of traditional Javanese dancers, representing Indonesian women as holders of traditional reserve also made a resurgence. But overwhelmingly, material about women took on a highly nationalist bent, in which images of women as symbols and national archetypes took over from the more varied and relaxed images of women that had filled magazines previously.

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<sup>58</sup> Bunnell, "Guided Democracy Foreign Policy: 1960-1965 President Sukarno Moves from Non-Alignment to Confrontation." p. 45.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Christian Hauswedell, "Sukarno: Radical or Conservative? Indonesian Politics 1964-5," in *Indonesia*, No. 15, p. 114. In his dissertation on the nationalization of western businesses by Sukarno, Will Redfern also argued that 1963 was a watershed in the politics and political economy of Indonesia. See Will Redfern, *Sukarno's Guided Democracy and the Takeovers of Foreign Companies in Indonesia in the 1960s*, p. 3.

## ***Puspa Wanita: The Move from Glamour Model to Model Indonesian Woman***

This juxtaposition and intertwining of the national and the feminine, as well as the politically enforced nature of the content, can be seen particularly well in *Puspa Wanita*,<sup>60</sup> a fashion and lifestyle magazine from Bandung. Even following the new press laws of 1960, *Puspa Wanita* had not concerned itself significantly with the politics of the ongoing national revolution. While it had a national distribution, the magazine focused significantly on the women's social scene that had grown up around Bandung's fashion industry. Of all the fashion-centered magazines I have seen in my research, *Puspa Wanita* was the most up-to-date with developments in western fashion, and with American fashion in particular. In part, this likely reflected the presence of Air Force officers' wives, whose husbands, while stationed in Bandung, frequently traveled to the United States for training, sometimes accompanied by their wives.

In any case, the pages of *Puspa Wanita* regularly reported on the latest fashion shows from Braga Street designers who had created the leading edge of "modern" Indonesian fashion since the 1930s.<sup>61</sup> It also regularly covered the social world that revolved around local institutions like the Marion Glamour School, which trained young women to be models, and the *Lembaga Wanita Sempurna*, (or the "League of Refined Women,") an organization that instructed young military wives on the details of fashion and etiquette. The covers of *Puspa Wanita* regularly "introduced" the city's new models or emerging "Refined Women" to the magazine's readers.

But in response to Sukarno's ramped up campaign to "Crush Malaysia," and the new press regulations of May 1963 that accompanied it,<sup>62</sup> the content of *Puspa Wanita* changed radically over the course of three issues. Issue "No. 3," which is undated, but that was published before August 1963,<sup>63</sup> matched much of the content of previous issues of the

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<sup>60</sup> "Flower of Womanhood" is probably the best translation, though strictly the title means "Flower Woman."

<sup>61</sup> See the discussion of the forward-looking and exploratory nature of Bandung fashion in Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Konfrontasi* was also referred to as "*Dwikora*," an acronym for "*Dwi Komando Rakyat*" or "The People's Double Command," with the clear intention of linking the opposition to the Federalization of Malaysia and its accompanied border disputes in Borneo to the successful annexation of West Irian from the Dutch in the Trikora campaign in 1962. The new regulations essentially were put in place to require all publications to seek a new permit, and to allow an opportunity for political review and control of their content by the Sukarno government. For the text of the regulations, see PenPres no 6/1963. [http://www.pta-makassarkota.go.id/peraturan\\_perundangan/PENPRES/PENPRES\\_1963\\_6.pdf](http://www.pta-makassarkota.go.id/peraturan_perundangan/PENPRES/PENPRES_1963_6.pdf).

<sup>63</sup> Putting dates to the issues of *Puspa Wanita* from 1963 on is a challenge. Unlike many magazines, *Puspa Wanita* did not use publication dates, so formally, this is issue is "Year VII, No. 3," and it carries a 1963 publication year on its cover. While this might seem to indicate a March date, the Year VII, No. 4 issue has a new publishing permit attached to it, dated July 29, 1963, so, at earliest, No. 4 is an August issue. The new press law, PenPres no. 6/1963, had been issued by

magazine. The articles on fashion were largely locally sourced and focused. The lead article profiled Nj. E. Kusumanegara, the leader of the Marion Glamour School Bandung. She had begun her career in glamour and fashion at the school's Jakarta branch in 1955, and had spent a year in Europe learning more about fashion and makeup in 1957-1958 before returning to Indonesia and opening the Bandung school, which quickly "had many students."<sup>64</sup>

The life of the school took an interesting turn in 1961, when "[c]onnected with the heated spirit of Trikora at the end of 1961, all activities were halted for a while."<sup>65</sup> Nj. Kusumunegara used the opportunity to travel to the Philippines, the article noted, and carry out special training in the latest techniques in hair-dressing and makeup. The profile also reported that Nj. Kusumanegara had recently organized a fashion show as a fundraiser for the victims of the explosion of Gunung Agung in Bali.<sup>66</sup> The magazine carried a story

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Soekarno on May 15, without an apparent lag put in place for the law to be implemented. Perhaps no editions were printed in the intermittent months while the magazine waited for its permit finally issued in late July?

*Wanita* magazine only published 13 issues in 1963, rather than its normal 22-24, and they were, for the first time in the magazine's history, undated, except for the year. *Varia* changed its permit, but did not miss an issue. But the *Varia* publisher was by that time rather close to the Sukarno camp, and the content of *Varia* had already shifted gradually over the course of the previous three years to be supportive of Sukarnoist rhetoric and worldview.

We do know that Issue No. 3 was published prior to August, while No. 4 cannot have been published before the end of July. However, issue No. 5 clearly references an event on October 19, 1963, the naming of Fatmawati, Sukarno's first and senior wife, as "*Ibu Agung*" or "Great Mother" of the nation. The editor's note below the feature reads "Bandung, *Oktober* 1963." Whatever the actual publication dates may be, there are clear "before" (No. 3), and "after" (No. 5) issues, with No. 4 hanging in some sort of inter-space. The dates for "Year VII" then move into 1964, beginning with No. 6, and No. 11, still in "Year VII," is a "New Years and Lebaran 1965" issue (There were two Ramadans in 1965, one in early February, and the other in late December), that also features a short story on Christmas. The New Year's article, on the political future of *Konfrontasi* and *Nekolim*, reads "The New Year 1965 has already arrived." So it appears that the magazine came out intermittently at best. Sometimes content allows us to locate a particular issue more closely, sometimes it is less precisely visible.

<sup>64</sup> "mendapat siswa banyak." *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 211.

<sup>65</sup> "Berhubungan dengan hangatnja semangat Trikora akhir 1961 segala kegiatan untuk sementara dihentikan." *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 211.

<sup>66</sup> The eruption of Gunung Agung in March 1963 provides a fascinating study of the interplay of modern Indonesian politics and the persistence of traditional belief. The volcano is the primary mountain on the island of Bali, and the "mother temple" of Balinese Hinduism, Besakih, lies on its southwest slope. A once-in-a-century ritual at the temple, Eka Dasa Rudra, which involves the mass sacrifice of animals, including rare ones such as eagles and anteaters that have cosmological significance. When the mountain started "belching" in early 1963, the temple priests postponed the ritual, scheduled for February, taking the mountain's seismological activity as a portent that the Gods were not pleased. Sukarno, however, had invested a significant amount of political capital in inviting world leaders to Bali for the ceremonies as an example of the strength and depth of Indonesian national identity and culture, and he commanded the priests to continue with the originally scheduled ritual. The eruption of the volcano killed 1500 people, and lava flows just barely missed the temple complex itself, all before the full cycle of the ritual could be completed. In Bali, this was taken as a sign that the world had entered a "time of troubles," and it led to significant social unrest. Whether this unrest added to the particularly violent and expansive nature of the killings in Bali in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya is a question that historians have debated. But when speaking with older Balinese about their lives, the eruption of the mountain is one of the clear markers of time and transition in their memories, along with the Japanese era. The eruption of Gunung Agung though is also often used as a coded way of referring to the killings in late 1965 and early 1966 without actually mentioning them. For older Balinese, the two events remain linked. I hope to carry out future research about this connection sometime in the near future, while the older generation that remembers them is still present and able to be interviewed.

about the fashion show later in the issue, including pictures of Marion Glamour School models wearing “new” on-trend western dresses presented without any nod to “Indonesian” fashion.<sup>67</sup> (See Figure 6.17.)



**Figure 6.17:** An all-western “new” fashion lineup in Bandung, May 1963. *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, pp. 216-217.

The forward and western focused outlook of *Puspa Wanita* was also evident in a number of articles in the issue that addressed questions of child rearing and sexuality, and were direct translations of American magazine articles. The article on sexuality was particularly unusual for Indonesian women’s magazines since it directly addressed several questions—homosexuality and masturbation were just two examples—that I never saw discussed in any other instances in my research. In providing answers from “experts about the 20 most frequently asked questions about SEX,”<sup>68</sup> the translation of an article by Phyllis W. Goldman reflected progressive positions on sexuality, even within an American social

<sup>67</sup> “Mode Baru Bermuntjulan di dalam FASHION SHOW Gunung Agung.” (“New Fashions Shown at the Gunung Agung FASHION SHOW.”) *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, pp. 216-217.

<sup>68</sup> “Djawaban para ahli atas 20 pertanyaan tentang SEX yg paling sering ditanjakan,” *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 226-27.

context, not to mention Indonesia's significantly more sexually conservative worldview.<sup>69</sup> The issue also included a long article on "*Abortus*," meaning miscarriage rather than abortion, which, though written by a local doctor, Sujono Hadi, reported the latest theories from American scientists about the psychological effects of women losing pregnancies to miscarriage.<sup>70</sup> In Issue No. 3, then, *Puspa Wanita* covered materials and presented women in ways that were significantly out of line from the images of revolutionary Indonesian women that had already largely been the norm in magazines such as *Varia*.

The (likely) August or September 1963 edition of *Puspa Wanita*, No. 4, showed both continuities and several significant changes from the previous issue. The front matter on the inside front cover of the magazine continued, as it had previously, to introduce the cover model for the issue and previewing the highlights of that month's magazine. In No. 4, the copy discussed Dheywani Pribadi, shown on the cover in *kain-kebaya* and *konde*, four years after her *batik*-less photo shoot as Miss *Varia* 1959. It read:

— We introduce—Nj. Dheywani Pribadi—in a pose—captivating—who can't be envious—who was caught—by our photographer—previously—at an interesting event—the braga festival—where she—served—as—a model.<sup>71</sup>

The introductory text continued with a discussion about the interplay between fashion and models, something it said was "pleasing." It then invited readers to peruse the fashion pages at the middle of the issue.

<sup>69</sup> On homosexuality: "How can you tell if your child is a homosexual?" (Answer: if by age 8 they only want to play with children of the other sex, this is a sign. By this age, children prefer strongly to play with children of their own gender. Most important here is a strong relationship between father and son. "*Hubungan baik antara ayah dan anak laki2 adalah terpenting.*") The answer did not address same-sex attraction among girls specifically. On masturbation: "Does 'does masturbation cause harm?' (*mengganggu?*) Answer: Not if it's done in 'normal' amounts, it's only a problem when it's 'unusual (not normal),' (*luar biasa (tidak normal)*), and then it's 'very bothersome.' (*mengganggu sekali.*)" *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 226-27.

<sup>70</sup> "*Abortus: Pertolongan dan Pentjegahan*," ("Abortion: Help and Prevention.") *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, pp. 229-230. The article noted that there were two other forms of "*abortus*," "medical abortion for medical reasons, and medical abortion for non-medical reasons, the latter which was 'illegal according to the constitution.'" ("*jang dapat dihukum menurut undang2 dasar*,") and which the article expressly did not write about further.

<sup>71</sup> —*Kami perkenalkan—Nj. Dheywani Pribadi—dalam pose—menawan hati—siapa tak iri—jang didjupati—jurupret kita—dalam atjara menarik—braga festival—dimana dia—bertindak—selaku—pergawati. // —bitjara tentang—pergawati—masalah mode—merupakan—soal—jang—hangat—karena—pergawati dan mode—merupakan—dua hal—jang saling berhubungan—satu dengan lain—maka perhatikanlah—hidangan PW—nomor—ini—dihalaman—tengah— // —pakaian dan wanita—djuga—seperti—suatu masalah—jang erat sekali—angkut—paunja—namun bagi mereka—jang—naik—remadja—peristiwa alamiah—menstruasi—bukanlah—peristiwa—jang mesti—ditjemaskan.*" *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 4, Front Inside Cover. The long dashes are in the original text. The cover image showed Dheywani dressed in *kain-kebaya*, but also wearing the crown and sash of a beauty contest winner. She had indeed used her Miss *Varia* 1959 crown to move into the world of professional modeling, but this time, clearly also wearing Indonesian clothing as well. The Braga Festival was a prominent annual celebration held in Bandung, focused on the city's main business thoroughfare from which it took its name.

These pages featured four new western-style creations specifically made for teenagers, one of them sleeveless (called a “you can see”), which the article said was “*nota bene* up until now well-liked by a large number of our young women because of Indonesia’s climate, which is probably too hot???”<sup>72</sup> The front matter then mentioned that something else related to teenagers was the approach of menstruation, and pointed to an article on the subject also included in the issue. The facing page featured an article on Nj. E. Supardi, an Air Force wife, and leader of the *Lembaga Wanita Sempurna*, (or the “League of Refined Women,”) an organization that instructed young military wives on the details of fashion and etiquette. (See Figure 6.18).

But aside from this, the Bandung-focused content was noticeably reduced in amount and in scope, consisting largely of short stories by male Indonesian writers. These had not been a particular feature of earlier issues of *Puspa Wanita*, although it was a staple of many other women’s magazines. In place of local content, the issue featured more Indonesian language translations of American articles on women’s health, a profile of Brigitte Bardot,<sup>73</sup> translations of European short stories, an article on Chekov, and a three-page spread of western fashion with drawings of white, western models.

The overwhelming presence of short stories, rather than features, showed a markedly different profile to the magazine, as if the editors were putting content “on hold” while they sorted out the emerging political situation. Notably, this edition also featured a new publishing permit number, dated July 30, 1963, reflecting the issuance of a new press law signed by Sukarno on May 15, 1963.

In the next issue, No. 5., published in October 1963, the tenor of the magazine’s front space changed completely. The issue took on a whole new—and much more political—language and tone, one completely in line with Sukarno’s cultural and political projects attached to the *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia. While much of the content of the magazine followed *Puspa Wanita*’s previous style, the front few pages were dominated by articles in a new vernacular that interrupted the earlier feel of the magazine, both rhetorically and visually.

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<sup>72</sup> “*jd notabene sampai sekarang ini masih digemari sebagian besar gadis2 kita karena iklim Indonesia jang barangkali terlalu panas???*” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 4., p. 263.

<sup>73</sup> While many western actresses would become anathema in publications in the last years of Sukarno’s presidency, Brigitte Bardot, known for her socialist leanings at the time, remained a favorite, and acceptable sexy western model.





Figure 6.18: *Puspa Wanita* Front Matter, August 1963, with Dewayani Pribadi, upper left, in *kain-kebaya*. The new publication permit information is visible on the upper right of the first page.

The cover description still introduced the model, Ineke Karamoy Loho, who was shown wearing a sleeveless yellow dress, with a pearl necklace and a cascading western hairstyle. But it used a completely different rhetoric to describe her:

—we—introduce—her name is Ineke Karamoy Loho—young woman—  
 [from] Bandung—with her—smile—sparkling—towards—the future—  
 homeland—Indonesia—that is currently—striving to finish/complete—its  
 national—revolution—to—attain—a society—to [of] Indonesian—socialism—  
 that doesn't know—the exploitation of man—by—man<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> —kami—perkenalkan—namanya Ineke Karamoy Loho—dara—bandung—dengan—senjuman—tjemerlang—  
 menghadapi—masa—depan—tanah air—indonesia—jang kini—sedang—berjuang menjelesaikan—revolusi—  
 nasionalnja—untuk—mentjapai—masjarakat—sosialisme—indonesia—jang—tidak—mengenal—exploitation l'home  
 [sic]—par—l'home [sic]—” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover. The long dashes are in the original text.  
 “Exploitation l'homme par l'homme,” was a Sukarno catch-phrase, which he sprinkled into many of his speeches and  
 writings, using the French.

The column continued with similar language, stressing the special roles women had to play in the revolutionary process. As part of their duties to build an “Indonesian national revolution” and to “awaken a new world,”<sup>75</sup> the editors suggested that “we as Indonesian women must of course not remain silent in making Ganefo<sup>76</sup> a success.”<sup>77</sup> The text then took a rambling, but highly informative, turn.

Ganefo I must be successful. That is the blessing of Indonesian women [“*kaum wanita Indonesia*”] that today has an exalted mother [“*ibu agung*”<sup>78</sup>], Ibu Fatmawati, *the first lady Indonesia*,<sup>79</sup> who has rendered so much service for the advancement of our women [“*kaum wanita kita*”] and has also worked greatly to uplift religion and humanitarianism.

The emancipation of our women [“*kaum wanita kita*”] must point towards constructive measures for the advancement of the nation, and because of that, we follow the correct advice of the great leader of our revolution<sup>80</sup> who

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<sup>75</sup> “—*membangun—dunia baru—*” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover. This is the same language Sukarno used in the 1964 speeches discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>76</sup> GANEFO, the Games of the New Emerging Forces, held in Jakarta in November 1964, was Sukarno’s latest large-scale project to build the non-aligned movement internationally. GANEFO was intended to provide a level playing field in athletics for countries from Asia, African and Latin America, and from other socialist countries. Sukarno initiated the project as part of the anti-Olympic plank of his New World platform, and it occasioned the building of a great deal of infrastructure around Jakarta. The International Olympic Committee had suspended Indonesia from the Olympic Games in February 1963, in response to an incident in which the Indonesians failed to provide visas to athletes from Israel and “Nationalist China” (Taiwan) for the 1962 Asian Games that were also held in Jakarta. Fifty-one national teams attended GANEFO, some official government delegations, and other unofficial. The games occasioned the building of Jakarta’s first by-pass over Blvd Djendral Soedirman, which was covered in multiple magazines, including *Varia*. Schools were shut for two weeks so students could act as guides and ushers, and electricity was rationed ahead of the games to make certain there would be sufficient power to light the games during their duration. For a period of intensifying economic pressure, both in terms of infrastructure and general expenses, GANEFO represented a huge investment of real and political capital by Sukarno and the Indonesian government. Politically, the games were linked to both an analysis of the New Emerging Forces (Nefos) v. the Old Established Forces (Oldefos) and their “imperialistic” outlook. Furthermore, Sukarno directly linked GANEFO to the “Crush Malaysia” efforts, and a ubiquitous slogan at the games was “*Sukseskan GANEFO Ganjang Malaysia.*” (Make GANEFO a success Crush Malaysia), which RAND analyst Ewa Pauker pointed out, put these two separate ideas together without any intermediary punctuation. See Ewa T. Pauker, *GANEFO I: Sports and Politics in Djakarta*.

<sup>77</sup> “—*kita—sebagai—wanita—Indonesia—tentu—saja—tidak—tinggal—diam—dalam—mensukseskan—ganefo.*” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover.

<sup>78</sup> “*Agung*” is a Sanskrit word shared in both Javanese and Balinese that means “high,” “exalted” and “large/mighty,” with the connotation of being above all others. The largest gong in a *gamelan* ensemble, which strikes at the beginning and end of each piece, and each cycle within a piece (and in the cyclical structure of *gamelan* music, those first and last tones happen at the same “time” in the cycle), is called “*gong agung.*” The word can be reverential and replete with cultural meaning. The term implies that Fatmawati was the highest mother of all mothers.

<sup>79</sup> This phrase is in English, reflecting its origins in Indonesian political debates about Fatmawati’s place in the nation in the aftermath of Sukarno’s marriage to Hartini in 1953, discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>80</sup> Normally, this formal title would be capitalized. In keeping with the format of *Puspa Wanita*’s formatter, however, I have left it uncapitalized here.

emphatically says—*stop*<sup>81</sup>—*beauty*—oh my—contests because they are not in line [*“sesuai”*] with our identity and the rhythm of our revolution.<sup>82 83</sup>



Figure 6.19: Fatmawati accorded the title of the “High Mother” of the nation. *Puspa Wanita*, October 1963, No. 5, p. 283.

It is important to keep in mind that *Puspa Wanita* was the most glamour-focused of the women’s magazines. Of all the women’s magazine’s they were the most likely to have championed and supported beauty pageants as an appropriate expression for young Indonesian women’s beauty. So, whether the interjected “*aduh*”<sup>84</sup> is an exclamation of loss

81 “Stop” in English.

82 “*ganefo l—harus sukses—itulah—doa restu—kaum wanita—indonesia—jang kini—sudah—pula—memiliki—ibu agunja—ibu fatmawati—the first lady indonesia—jang sudah—banjak—djasanja—untuk—kemajuan—kaum wanita kita—dan banjak—pula usahanja—dalam—membangkitkan—semangat—beragama—dan peri—kemanusiaan—//—emansipasi—kaum—wanita—kita—haruslah—diarahkan—kepada—usaha2—konstrup—pada—kemajuan—bangsa—oleh—karena—tepat—andjuran—pemimpin—besar revolusi—kita—jang—tegas2—mengatakan—stop—kontes2-an—adu—ketjantikkan—karena—tidak—sesuai—dengan kepribadian—dan iramanja revolusi—kita—” Puspa Wanita, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover.*

83 The entire text, like the versions immediately above, is divided by long dashes. For ease of reading here, I have reproduced the text without them, but did choose to insert them back in around the interjection—“*adu*,” translatable as “oh my,” or “my gosh”—where the flow of the idea is somewhat broken.

84 With the “h” on the end it its more prevalent spelling.

over a treasured idea or of a newly found “revolutionary” tut-tutting about outdated past practices wasn’t fully clear here. Perhaps it was both, but it most certainly was a marker of sudden change.

On the facing inside front page, readers were greeted by a large photograph of a smiling Fatmawati, along with a large headline proclaiming that she had been given the title of “*Ibu Agung*,” or “Supreme Mother” of Indonesia.<sup>85</sup> Though shown wearing Indonesian fashion and a light, sheer head covering that had long been her standard dress at public events, Fatmawati also sported a pageant-queen sash with her new title embroidered on it, an interesting appropriation of beauty queen imagery for a middle-aged mother and first-lady of the nation. (Again, see Figure 6.19).

The most explicitly political article of the issue appeared on the next page. It exhorted women to help bring about the success of GANEFO. The GANEFO slogan, “Onward, No Retreat”<sup>86</sup> ran (in English) in large print across the bottom of the page, while other slogans (in Indonesian) ran in a column down the left side of the facing page. Visually, the pages of *Puspa Wanita* were turned into a billboard for the games and its revolutionary messaging.<sup>87</sup> (See Figure 6.20).

Reflecting Sukarno’s “many public appeals asking that everyone do all that is in [their] power to make GANEFO a success,”<sup>88</sup> *Puspa Wanita* called on its female readers specifically as women to do their part in that national effort, writing:

WE Indonesian women cannot keep silent. We will make GANEFO I successful in all areas that are necessary. It is not only our female athletes and our women artists who will make a splash directly in the various fields of the festival of sport and the arts, but we, Indonesian women as a whole must pray that GANEFO I is a success, that it runs smoothly according to plan, and that there are no deficiencies. We wish, with a hope that is sincere and holy, that God the Most High will bestow all bounty upon the Indonesian people who are in the midst of completing their revolution, and of organizing

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<sup>85</sup> The title was given to her on October 4, 1963, by the *Ikatan Pegawai Wanita*, (Association of Women Civil Servants) in a specifically tailored event in Jakarta for her work on “social, women’s and humanitarian issues.” Nancy Florida notes that “*Ratu Agung*” is the title given in Central Javanese *kratons* to the mother of a king.

<sup>86</sup> Pauker points out that the slogan went on to become a principal slogan for the Crush Malaysia campaign. See Ewa T. Pauker, *GANEFO I: Sports and Politics in Djakarta*, p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> Similar adaptations are also visible in *Wanita* and *Varia*. Clearly all magazines were expected to help exhort the Indonesian people to “*Sukseskan GANEFO*.”

<sup>88</sup> See Ewa T. Pauker, *GANEFO I: Sports and Politics in Djakarta*, p. 12. She continues “In this way everyone was made to feel that he was in some way contributing personally to the success of the Games, and, thereby, to the prestige of his country. It was very effective.” The use of male assumed gender in Pauker’s language belies the content of *Puspa Wanita*.

GANEFEO I, which we hold to be a manifestation of the national philosophy of Indonesia of building a new world.<sup>89</sup>

*Kaum wanita Indonesia ikut mensukseskan :*

# GANEFEO I

— Gagasan Bung Karno yang telah menjadi milik dunia.

— Sebagai manifestasi falsafah negara Indonesia dalam membangun dunia baru.

Oleh: Staf Redaksi P.W.

KITA sukseskan Ganefo I.

KITA kaum wanita Indonesia tidak boleh tinggal diam. Kita sukseskan Ganefo I disegala bidang yang diperlukan. Bukan sadja atlet2 puteri kita dan seniwati2 kita yang berketjimpung langsung dibidangnja masing2 dalam pesta olah raga dan seni, tapi kita kaum ibu Indonesia harus mendo'akan, agar GANEFEO I ini sukses, berdjalan lantjar menurut rentjana semula, dan tidak kurang suatu apa. Kita berharap dengan harapan yang tulus dan sutji, semoga Tuhan Jang Maha Esa, tetap melimpahkan segala karunia2nya kepada bangsa Indonesia yang sedang menjelesaikan revolusinja, dan dalam penjelenggaraan Ganefo I ini, kita menganggapnja sebagai suatu manifestasi: falsafah negara Indonesia dalam membangun dunia baru.

RALAT: Lihat iklan pada omseth halaman ke 3

Dapat pula dilihat pada:

Dibawah SURABAYA dijumpai: DEN PASAR: Apotheek "GANA", di Oelalinda 26  
DI BANDUNG: tamiah Toko "Lima D" Makasar: "LINA" Coon Work & Toko "EUROPA".  
Bupati Jonan SAMARINDA dihapuskan  
JOGJAKARTA toko "AGUNG" & TV  
KUDUS dihapuskan diganti TJJRE BON toko "MEDAN" Pasuketan 72

Selamat datang Pahlawan<sup>2</sup> GANEFEO

\*  
GANEFEO harus SUKSES sebagai Manifestasi Pembangunan DUNIA BARU

\*  
Hiduplah semangat persatuan Olahragawan<sup>2</sup> DUNIA BARU

\*  
Dengan GANEFEO kita galang Perdamaian dunia

\*  
Redaksi Puspawanita

isi hati ISTERI

Titatan Redaksi:  
RUBRIK ini adalah rubrik tetap yg dapat djuga diisi oleh para pembaca, atau se-kurang2nja mengirinkan bahan-bahan yang baik untuk dikomika kan lewat rubrik ini, yang anda pikir banyak gunanya untuk diketahui oleh pembaca2 kita lainnya, khususnya oleh kaum pria, baik yang telah maupun yang akan menjadi suami.

Nah, selamat menikmati rubrik baru, dan kami menantikan ide2 pembaca yang lainnya.



Ketika kami masih bertunangan, sa ia menajuka bahwa didunia ini, dialah sifaznja pria yang paling keajaifaznja yang galanc- nika m- ngalah dan selalu memondjukkan kerendahan hatinja, membuat tjinja saja kepada- nja menjadi bersemi dengan meph- nja. Saja beranggapan bahwa sajilah satu2nja wanita yang paling berbahagia didunia ini.

Akan tetapi setelah perkawinan dilangsungkan, sebulan dua bulan mualah muntjil perubahan2 yang mengawattarkan. Sifaznja yang galanc da hulu itu mulai hilang, menjadi sifaz yang hanya memontjikan diri sendiri sadja. Sifaznja yang aseli mulai muntjil dan suka marah2. Tapi2 hari se lalu sadja ada kesalahan2 saja yang di-orek2nja, kesalahan tekek bengkok yang sebenarnya bisa dimafkan tan memasuki sebuah rumah tangga yang membahagikan ber-angsur2 djadi le-

Seorang saja djadi soka ngelaman, soka mengembalikan diri kepada masa-masa yang lalu, ketika kami masih bertunangan, sehingga saja merasa bertunangan lebih bahagia dan lebih meera dari perkawinan. Apakah memang saja ini benar atau tidak lah sudah jang saja alami.

Jang saja paling inginkan dalam berumah tangga sekarang ialah, seorang suami yang dapat menjabatkan dirinya dari nafus2 amarah, dan dapat menghibur isterinja daripada segala masalah yang menderai halinja. Jang saja inginkan supaya sifaz2 galanc itu baik ketika masa pertunangan dulu itu terus diabaikan dalam perkawinan, djangan hanya manis ketika permulaan saja, kemudian djadi pahit setelah memperolehja. Dia tidak soka lagi mem-mudj2 hiasan rambut saja seperti dulu, tidak soka lagi memperolehkan sendapat2nja tentang gasn yang saja panti dulu. Djika saja tanjakan kenapa tidak soka ngontrol lagi djawabnja per- cek, sikit. Saja djadi soka dan masa sendiri.

Jang saja inginkan ialah supaya suami saja tetap mengagumi saja seperti pada masa2 kami bertunangan, dan sa ja ingin supaya suami saja tetap mau djadi pomas, dan satu2nja manusia jang saja tjinjai.

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## ONWARD - NO RETREAT.

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Figure 6.20: Puspawanita becomes a billboard for the "sukses" of GANEFEO Puspawanita, no. 5, October 1963, pp. 284-285.

Puspawanita's female readers, therefore, were being explicitly called to play a specifically gendered role in "succeeding" the national revolution. They were tasked with prayer (something everyone was capable of doing, but also an interesting rhetorical intervention in the previously non-religious tone of Puspawanita) to assure everything would go smoothly in that regard. This ran alongside articles providing advice on which necklace to wear or how to dress for an outing in the country.

<sup>89</sup> "KITA kaum wanita Indonesia tidak boleh tinggal diam. Kita sukseskan Ganefo I disegala bidang yang diperlukan. Bukan sadja atlet2 puteri kita dan seniwati2 kita yang berketjimpung langsung dibidangnja masing2 dalam pesta olah raga dan seni, tapi kita kaum ibu Indonesia harus mendo'akan agar GANEFEO I ini sukses, berdjalan lantjar menurut rentjana semula, dan tidak kurang suatu apa. Kita berharap dengan harapan yang tulus dan sutji, semoga Tuhan Jang Maha Esa, tetap melimpahkan segala karunia2nya kepada bangsa Indonesia yang sedang menjelesaikan revolusinja, dan dalam penjelenggaraan Ganefo I ini, kita menganggapnja sebagian suatu menifestasi: falsafah negara Indonesia dalam membangun dunia baru." Puspawanita, no. 5., October 1963, p. 284.

Over the course of the next several issues of *Puspa Wanita*, reaching into early 1965, several important and highly divergent new images of Indonesian women also emerged. While retaining some elements of its earlier layouts, editions of *Puspa Wanita* increasingly featured articles and images of women as ideal types, rather than as individuals, that is, as various expressions of a *kaum wanita*.

The December 1964 edition, a “Combined Special New Years and Lebaran”<sup>90</sup> version, was exemplary in this regard. The cover image was of a model dressed as an ideal beauty. She wore an elegant sheer green *kebaya* with a tailored *bef*, and a fine *kain batik* in a refined *parang rusak* motif. Over her shoulder lay an exquisite green silk *selendang*. Her gold jewelry was spare and refined, a gold and diamond necklace, two gold pins and gold earrings. On her head, she wore a gold fabric crown, as she was crowned the queen of the Braga Festival. The title holder was none other than Dhewayani Pribadi, whose transformation from ultra-modern fashion model to proper Indonesian woman was now complete. (See Figure 6.21).



**Figure 6.21:** *Puspa Wanita* celebrates New Year and Lebaran 1965. Dhewayani Pribadi as a winning model from the Braga Festival in Bandung.

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<sup>90</sup> “*Nomor Gabungan Istimewa Tahun Baru dan Lebaran 1965.*” 1965 was an odd year in the cycle for Lebaran, with two incidents of the fasting month, one at the beginning of the year, celebrated here, and the other, as is noted in Chapter 7, coming in December 1965.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Tall Hair, Short Skirts and Moral Crisis: The Politics of Beauty and of Confrontation, 1955-1965**

*... saja amat ... bergembira ... bahwa Kongres Wanita Indonesia juga akan aktif sekali dalam memberantas imperialisme kulturil. Ja rambut sasak, ja rambut beetle, ja spanrok-spanrokan, ja twist-twist-an, ja rock-and-roll-rock-and-roll-an, ja Elvys Presley Elvys Presley-an, ja Nat King Cole Nat King Cole-an, matjam-matjam, Saudara-saudara. Tetapi terutama sekali kita harus waspada terhadap kepada intervensi dan subversi politik. Waspadalah, waspadahlah!*

... I am exceedingly ... happy ... that the Indonesian Women's Congress will also play an active role in smashing cultural imperialism. Yes teased and ratted hair, yes Beatle hair, yes miniskirts, yes the twist, yes rock-and-roll, yes Elvis Presley stuff, yes Nat King Cole stuff, all sorts of things, brothers and sisters. But above all we must be alert and vigilant towards political intervention and subversion. Beware, beware!

—Sukarno, to the delegates of Kowani,  
July 1964<sup>1</sup>

During an eight-day span in July 1964, President Sukarno gave speeches at the opening ceremonies of two national congresses of Indonesian women's organizations in Jakarta. The first, given on July 16 to the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of *Wanita Demokrat Indonesia*,<sup>2</sup> was entitled "The Indonesian Revolution Will Not Succeed Without Women!"<sup>3</sup> The second, "Indonesian Women Are Always Active in the Revolutionary Ranks!"<sup>4</sup> opened the 10<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "*Wanita Indonesia Selalu Ikut Bergerak Dalam Barisan Revolusioner!*" Published by the Departemen Penerangan RI as Special Publication No. 332. Transcription of speech by Sukarno to the *Kongres Wanita Indonesia*, or Indonesian Women's Congress, July 24, 1964. Yosef Djakababa commented that the "-an" suffix in this case conveys a strong sense of the modified elements as being fake, or not real. The term "*mobil-mobil-an*," for instance, means a toy car rather than a real, full-sized *mobil*. Personal correspondence, 12/7/2019.

<sup>2</sup> Indonesian Democratic Women, the women's wing of Sukarno's *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Party,) or PNI.

<sup>3</sup> "*Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berjalan Tanpa Wanita!*" Published by the Departemen Penerangan RI (Department of Public Information of the Republic of Indonesia) as Special Publication No. 329.

<sup>4</sup> "*Wanita Indonesia Selalu Ikut Bergerak Dalam Barisan Revolusioner!*" The verb "*bergerak*" literally means "to move" in the sense that a political movement is referred to by the noun based on the same word, "*gerakan*," as in *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*.

national meeting of the *Kongress Wanita Indonesia* (Indonesian Women’s Congress, or Kowani,) on July 24.

Both speeches reflected the hyper-active political energy and rhetoric of the day, in which Sukarno exhorted Indonesians to “finish” their national revolution. A month after these two speeches, responding in particular to the *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation)<sup>5</sup> campaign against Malaysia, Sukarno famously called on Indonesians to embark on a “Year of Living Dangerously,”<sup>6</sup> in which the then nearly 20-year-old nation would strive to completely throw off the yoke of western imperialism and neo-colonialism. He called on Indonesians to reject Western interference in the nation, whether it came in political, economic or cultural forms.

But in these speeches in July 1964—alongside the exhortations to “go to hell with this ‘Malaysia,’”<sup>7</sup> and to “build a new world, and to expel all imperialism and colonialism from this world”<sup>8</sup>—Sukarno paid attention to what might seem to be an insignificant detail: the clothing and beauty of the women assembled. “When I see women gathered,” he said to the Kowani delegates,

with their variously colored *kebaya*, when I see their very best *batik* cloth, see their radiant faces, see their eyes that shine like stars in the eternal sky, at those times I say, I have the feeling that I am engaged in revolutionary struggle inside a beautiful garden. . . . Here I see the color blue, but instead I see what looks like the painting of a Kartini blossom, with a stalk and a white flower. Hey comrades from West Irian, [you] are the stalk, the women police officers from Sukabumi [you] are the green leaves, the stalk moves upward, on the top there is white, which is the flower. . . . See, over there is red, and then blue again, here I see the color yellow from the Women Military

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<sup>5</sup> The *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) with newly independent Malaysia was based on the British inclusion of two regions of Borneo, Sabah and Serawak, in the Malaysian nation. Indonesia, which controlled the majority of the island, saw this as a continuation of British imperialism on their sovereign space.

<sup>6</sup> “*Tahun Vivere Pericoloso*,” shorted to “*Tavip*,” which would be the title of Sukarno’s National Day speech on August 17, 1964. The phrase however, was already in use at this time, including in the concluding paragraph of the *Wanita Indonesia* speech.

<sup>7</sup> In English in the original. Sukarno, *Revolusi Indonesia* speech, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> “*membangun satu dunia baru, . . . membuang segenap imperialisme dan kolonialisme didunia ini.*” Sukarno, “*Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berjalan Tanpa Wanita!*” p. 24.



Volunteers<sup>9</sup> and the Women Ministers, here again I see colors that are very beautiful, I see brilliant greens from the comrades from West Irian.<sup>10</sup>

Why, in the midst of inherently political speeches, did Sukarno take time to note the quality of the women's colorful clothing, the radiance of their complexions and the brilliance of their eyes? As the discussion in previous chapters of this dissertation would suggest, there was significantly more than either simple flattery or some sort of patriarchal condescension at play in his descriptions of these women's appearance. Rather, Sukarno was deploying a politics of feminine beauty that linked Indonesian women's appearance with a conception of Indonesian modernity and national identity. Most importantly, this politics concerned their inner character and moral strength and their collective identity as women. In doing so, it deployed a web of definitions of proper national femininity that had been developing since the beginnings of the Indonesian nationalist movement in the early 1920s.

Sukarno was also connecting this beauty politics to the revolutionary politics of the day. The types of women he chose to highlight—women police and military officers, and comrades from West Irian, (a region that recently “retaken” from the Dutch), about which Sukarno had created a significant rhetorical campaign<sup>11</sup>—reflected the tighter connections that had developed between beauty and the ideal representation of the nation. The references to political situations were particularly cogent and emotionally resonant at the time.

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<sup>9</sup> As part of the mass mobilization of Indonesian society during *Konfrontasi*, each of the military branches either began or expanded special women's detachments referred to as *sukarelawati*, or “volunteers.” These women's detachments received significant coverage in women's magazines, particularly for their training exercises, which included training in riflery and other firearms. There were also women in the national police force, whose brigades saw increased militarization of their training at this point as well. Beyond this, many of the various political parties and organizations put together “volunteer” brigades as well, some of which also engaged in various sorts of training exercises. This provided the general circumstances under which Gerwani women were present at Lubang Buaya on the night of September 30-October 1, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> “. . . kalau saja melihat wanita-wanita berkumpul dengan badju kebabanja jang pantjawarna atau aneka-warna, melihat kain batiknja jang bagus-bagus, melihat mukanja jang berseri-seri, melihat sinar matanja jang laksana sinar bintang dilangit jang abadi, pada waktu itu saja berkata, saja mempunjai perasaan bahwa saja ini berdjoang dalam taman-sari jang indah. . . . melihat sana ada warna biru, sana malahan melihat ada lukisan bunga Kartini . . . tangkainja ada, bunganja putih. Hé Saudara-saudari dari Irian Barat, itu tangkai itu, polisi wanita dari Sukabumi, daunnja hidjau, tangkai terus mengatas, diatas ada putih, itu bunga . . . Melihat di sana ada merah, biru lagi, melihat disini warna kuning daripada Ibu-ibu Sukarelawati, Ibu-ibu Menteri, melihat disinipun warna-warna jang amat indah, melihat hidjau-hidjau tjemerlang daripada saudari-saudari dari Irian Barat.” Sukarno, “Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berdjalan Tanpa Wanita!”, p. 7. Recall the description of the nation as a garden, with Sukarno at its center, that was included in the first issue of *Wanita* in August 1949, discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion of Trikora later in this chapter.

The politics of beauty Sukarno used in July 1964 had developed beyond the version that had been at play at the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955. Women's beauty was no longer merely a projection of a strong moral nationalism. By 1964, it was also evoked as a protective talisman against specific dangers of the modern world: the "*Elvis Presley-Elvis Presley-an*"'s and "*rock-and-roll-rock-and-roll-an*"'s,<sup>12</sup> and, as this chapter will explore in particular, the "*spanrok-spanrok-an*" ("mini-skirt stuff,") that threatened to diminish the morals of young Indonesians, female and male. Beauty politics therefore were no longer only a positive attribute supporting the nation; they had come to form a dike that, if breached, would lead to the complete inundation of the nation by imperialist forces.

Following the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in April 1955, the discussion of fashion in Indonesian women's magazines entered a new phase. Largely, the magazines demonstrated that elite, cosmopolitan women still enjoyed a significant set of sartorial options from 1955 to the early 1960's. In 1955, following the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, however, Sukarno began to refocus his and the nation's attention on the development of a new politics that included more stress on developing an Indonesian national identity. From that point on, representations of women in magazines increasingly deployed ideal types that reflected the developing interests of the Sukarno regime.

The prevalence of these ideal representations was connected to the ebb and flow of Sukarno's political control of the nation. During periods when Sukarno asserted less *de facto* control, and the central government was more focused on political or military maneuvering, the images of women aligned less to narrowly cast types. But when impulses towards internal political control and its enhanced rhetoric grew firmer, these ideal types connected to national identity were recruited more heavily. This was not a random process. Sukarno managed it through a creeping strictness in changes in the press laws, as newspapers and magazines were increasingly required to reflect and promote the cultural and political interests of the state at various specific times.

In October 1956, Sukarno introduced a new conception ("*konsepsi*") of the Indonesian state to the nation. He proposed that Indonesia enter a system of "Guided

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<sup>12</sup> This construction in Indonesian, which I translated in the opening quotation as "Elvis Presley stuff," was used by Sukarno in a highly evocative manner. The rhetorics of it, discussed in fn#1 of this chapter, allow the things being criticized to be both specific and generalized at the same time.

Democracy,” in which the presidency would be strengthened. The modern, national elements of the economy, still largely under Dutch ownership and control, were largely nationalized through a series of unilateral workers’ actions in 1956-1957 as part of the campaign against the continuing Dutch presence in West Papua.<sup>13</sup> Though the occupation of nearly every Dutch-owned business was led largely by worker’s unions affiliated with the PKI, when the businesses were nationalized, they were taken over by the army, which then used the most advanced sectors of the economy to finance the military.

Politically, the strength of political parties was undercut as the legislature was appointed to represent “functional groups” rather than being elected directly from party lists. Indonesian “national identity” was deployed as the source for political and cultural processes, which were increasingly focused on “finishing the Indonesian Revolution,” that is, on a building a nation that was not dependent, culturally, politically or economically, on the west. Several incidents—an ongoing Islamic guerrilla movement,<sup>14</sup> regional rebellions that lasted from 1957-1961,<sup>15</sup> and a period of Martial Law in 1957<sup>16</sup>—impeded, or perhaps stoked the process of insisting on centralized control. In any case, despite strong backing for the *konsepsi* from both the army and the PKI, Sukarno was unable to begin the full implementation of Guided Democracy until 1959-1960.

The critical structural political change of Guided Democracy was the devolution of the official structures of political power to the presidency—and therefore to Sukarno—through the re-adoption of elements of the 1945 Constitution that had originally provided for a strong executive. This was reflected in Sukarno’s promulgation of his Political

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<sup>13</sup> See Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 26. Dutch managers were expelled from the country. This showed up interestingly in women’s magazines, when regularly running full-page advertisements for some of these Dutch companies were suddenly left empty.

<sup>14</sup> From 1949 on, the Jakarta government was actively opposed by the *Darul Islam* movement, which called for the establishment of Indonesia as an Islamic Republic. Born out of Islamic guerilla movements during the Revolution, *Darul Islam* was particularly strong in rural areas of West Java, South Sulawesi and Aceh, and carried out intermittent guerrilla actions against the central government in those regions.

<sup>15</sup> Permesta, (*Piagam Perjuangan Semesta*, or the Universal Struggle Charter,) was a regionally based rebellion against the central government declared on March 2, 1957 by civil and military authorities in the eastern islands of Indonesia. The regional leadership not only felt cultural distance from the Republic’s Javanese center, they also felt that their economic advancement was being limited by central government policies that privileged Javanese advancement. The PRRI (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*, or Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) was a rebellious government declared in opposition to the Sukarno government on February 15, 1958. It was centered in Sumatra, and was also largely focused on opposing the Javanese center of power in the nation. The two movements recognized each other formally, and their efforts are referred to jointly in the historiography as PRRI-Permesta.

<sup>16</sup> In March 1957, nominally in response to the Permesta rebellion but also because of the continuing incursions of Darul Islam forces, the military, under the leadership of General Nasution, began to exert political control regionally.

Manifesto, (*Manifesto Politik*, or Manipol.) Saskia Wieringa described the substance of the 1959 National Day speech in which Sukarno laid out Manipol as follows:

In vague terms ('the demands of the Indonesian people must be met in an overwhelmingly revolutionary manner') it outlined certain government priorities—food and clothing for the people, internal security and the continuation of the struggle against imperialism—and long-term objectives, including a 'just and prosperous society.'<sup>17</sup>

But, she also noted, "As presidential power increased and political and social chaos ensued there was mounting pressure to couch everything in Sukarno's terminology, such as Manipol, 'socialism à la Indonesia', 'unfinished revolution.' Yet the boundaries of these concepts shifted and inter-party polemics turned into a struggle over the interpretation of Sukarno's words."<sup>18</sup>

In his canonical work on Guided Democracy, Daniel Lev argued that although "it was not always evident, because of the dominating figure of Soekarno, the main driving force behind Guided Democracy was the army."<sup>19</sup> Although the army did not take over the actual running of the government, "[o]ffices of particular importance . . . quickly came under direct army control. But the martial law administration was enabled to intervene anywhere and at any time it chose."<sup>20</sup> There was resistance to the military control of the nation, particularly from the Indonesian Communist Party and its affiliated unions and organizations, as well as from elements of Islamic leadership. The military, on the other hand, used its power to control union activism, and to assert martial law at various times, and even to detain PKI members in political prisoner camps when it felt its authority was endangered.<sup>21</sup>

Merle Ricklefs, however, writing a generation later than Lev, described Guided Democracy as "a fluid system, born of crisis and constantly changing through one of the most disturbed periods of Indonesian history."<sup>22</sup> His analysis places Sukarno in the middle of this consistently shifting political landscape, although "joined by others in maintaining his central position. But this," he writes, "was all in support of a political balance that not

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<sup>17</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 294.

even Sukarno could maintain, one which represented a compromise among irreconcilable interests and was therefore satisfactory to no one.”<sup>23</sup>

Sukarno, therefore, with his significant rhetorical ability to “define” the country, set about creating a national ideology with which he attempted to keep divergent powers in check. His goal was to play the three main *aliran* off against each other by binding them all together in a platform of loyalty towards his new plans for the nation. This was dependent on the promulgation of a cult of loyalty to himself as president, based on his status as the “Great Leader of the Revolution.”<sup>24</sup>

To do this, Sukarno created a national unity ideology known as NASAKOM, an acronym that combined Indonesia’s three broad political groupings,<sup>25</sup> and in which all three elements—nationalism, religion and communism/socialism—were held to be central to the nation’s core belief system. But all three revolved in orbit around Sukarno, the revolution’s central star. Ricklefs describes Sukarno’s oratorical power. Sukarno, he wrote,

was a skilled manipulator of men and of symbols. He could harangue a crowd or charm a potential adversary with equal ease, although he was also very adept at hating his enemies. He offered Indonesians something to believe in, something which many hoped would give them and their nation dignity and pride.<sup>26</sup>

What Sukarno offered Indonesians as something to “believe in,” was a five-point plan connected Manipol and intended to assure its general implementation. Known as USDEK, the plan stressed five areas in which the government would assert new powers politically, economically and culturally.<sup>27</sup> While stressing the centralized control of both politics (democracy) and the economy and the renewed political position of the presidency, USDEK also included two elements that referred specifically to the installation of

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<sup>23</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 294.

<sup>24</sup> There are various ways historians interpret the balance of power among Sukarno and the three major *aliran* during this period. Daniel Lev, as quoted above, draws the military and its increasing control of the economy as the major driving force of the era, to which Sukarno must react. Max Lane, on the other hand, sees the PKI and union and peasant activism as driving the national dynamic, and suggests Sukarno was moving strongly leftward from the late 1950’s on, in part in reaction to the growth of the military power. (See Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, pp. 36-38.) Anthony Reid focuses his explanation of the period on the tensions between the regions and the center, and on Sukarno’s use of Guided Democracy to address those geographical tensions more than to hold various political groups at bay. (See Anthony Reid, *To Nation by Revolution*, p. 139-140.)

<sup>25</sup> Nas (*nasionalis*, or nationalist, which specifically accounted for the political power of the armed forces), A (*agama*, or religion, though mainly here referring to the large Islamic groups Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama), and Kom (*komunis*, or communist, which included not only the PKI, but also Gerwani and other leftist political organizations.)

<sup>26</sup> M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 294.

<sup>27</sup> See the discussion of USDEK in Chapter 1.

Indonesian cultural elements as bases for the political and cultural transformation of the nation. The first was the adoption of “socialism *à la Indonesia*,”<sup>28</sup> which was to some extent an adoption of elements of Mao Zedong thought that stressed the necessity for Chinese socialism to adapt to the cultural and political realities of 1950s China. The other key element was the necessity of the development of an Indonesian national identity (“*kepribadian nasional*”) as the core of the nation’s self-expression in all areas.

In the introduction to a collection of five speeches Sukarno gave about *kepribadian nasional* in 1959, Hadji Achmad Notosoetardjo reflected earlier language about the necessity of making good choices about modernity and identity that had concerned Indonesian women from the earliest days of the new nation. “We are always modern,” he wrote,

because we want to live in tune with [*sesuai dengan*] the climate of the times, we are always infatuated with developments that are equal with those peoples who are already more advanced . . . This is a sign of progress, of moving forward. . . [But] in the upheaval of catching up to the terms “modern” and “advanced” we must not let go of our own Indonesian identity.<sup>29</sup>

The fear of losing critical elements of local culture to the “upheaval” of modernity remained an important part of how Indonesians conceived of their own experience. As part of USDEK, under the rubric of *kepribadian nasional*, it had then also become a formal element of national ideology.

Manipul-USDEK, as much as anything, was expressed through a set of slogans and ambitions. Political action revolved around Sukarno as a person and figure rather than around political parties and institutions, and suffered in its implementation as a result. The one arguable exception to this was the promulgation of Operation Trikora,<sup>30</sup> from November 1961-August 1962, which resulted in the end of Dutch control of West Irian and

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<sup>28</sup> As was mentioned in the quote from Saskia Wieringa above.

<sup>29</sup> “*Kita senantiasa modern, karena kita ingin hidup sesuai dengan iklimnya zaman, kita senantiasa gandrung kepada kemajuan jang setaraf se-tidaknja dengan bangsa-bangsa jang telah lebih maju . . . Itu tandanja progress, itu tandanja maju . . . Didalam pergolakan mengedjar istilah ‘moderen’ dan ‘maju’ kita tidak bisa terlepas daripada kepribadian Indonesia sendiri.*” Notosoetardjo, *Kepribadian Revolusi Bangsa Indonesia*, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> “Trikora,” an acronym for “*Tri Komando Rakjat*” or “The People’s Triple Command,” was the popular name Sukarno’s military and political efforts to claim the western half of Papua for Indonesia and to liberate it from Dutch colonial control. The campaign lasted from December 1961 to August 1962, when the region was annexed into the Indonesian Republic. This was the first of his two such major pushes by Sukarno during the early 1960’s, the second of which was *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia, also referred to as “Dwikora,” short for “*Dwi Komando Rakjat*,” or “The People’s Double Command.

the region being annexed into the Indonesian state in 1962. Trikora was carried out largely by the military, however, one of the few institutions capable of implementing large-scale projects at the time, and essentially to meet its own needs.

But the period was accompanied by what Indonesian analyst Soedjati Djiwandono referred to in 1966 as a policy of “progressive mobilization” of the people.<sup>31</sup> In this arena specifically, Manipol-USDEK strongly affected the tenor of an increasingly revolutionary rhetoric, the usage of which became increasingly required in the public sphere at several key points.

With much of politics enveloped in rhetoric, an important element of Sukarno’s extension of political control involved a major revision of the national press law in November 1960. The new regulations required magazines and newspapers to adopt approaches that were specifically in line with Manipol, and to “serve as tools to drive the masses to finish the Indonesian revolution towards a just and prosperous society.”<sup>32</sup> All publications were obligated to apply for new permits in a process that included a review of the political reliability of their staff and the appropriateness of their editorial content.<sup>33</sup>

Women’s magazines largely focused on the last of the five USDEK conceptions, *kepribadian nasional*. The magazines increasingly featured Indonesian models and actresses or patriotic subjects on their covers while the coverage of Hollywood fashion and style diminished. More importantly, the images of Indonesian women within magazines

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<sup>31</sup> See J. Soedjati Djiwandono, *Konfrontasi Revisited: Indonesia’s Foreign Policy Under Soekarno*, p. 135.

<sup>32</sup> “. . . dapat dipergunakan sebagai alat penggerak massa untuk menyelesaikan revolusi Indonesia menuju pada masyarakat adil dan makmur.” In order to receive a SIT (*Surat Izin Terbit*, or Publishing License), publishers were required to sign onto 19 principals affirming their support of Manipol-USDEK. The order is cited in full in H. Soebagijo, *Sejarah Pers Indonesia*, pp. 121-125. This quote from p. 121. The new spelling system is from the source. This book is part of a series edited by Nugroho Notokusanto, one of the authors of the “official” history of Lubang Buaya, and it proffers a New Order interpretation of the Guided Democracy era. Soebagijo notes that the announcement of this new press policy coincided with a ban on all political activity in the military district including Jakarta between September 15 and November 1, 1960.

The two concepts here, “*menyelesaikan revolusi Indonesia*,” (“finishing the Indonesian revolution,”) and building a “*masyarakat adil dan makmur*,” (“just and prosperous society,”) which were often presented in Sukarnoist rhetoric as a matched pair, were, in Max Lane’s analysis, at the core of the socialist conception of the nation, and therefore somewhat at odds with the continued power sought by the military and the nationalist urban elites who made up a significant element of the “nationalist” group. See Max Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> One of the distinct fears that emerged during Guided Democracy was that Indonesia was beset by not only by external enemies, but critically, by internal ones as well. One set of these were Islamist forces involved in both the Darul Islam and PRRI Rebellions. Masyumi, the political party that had encompassed both the modernist Muhammadiyah and the more traditionally Javanese Nahdlatul Ulama began to divide over the question of what to do with its members who had been involved in the PRRI rebellion. NU-oriented members largely withdrew, and the party itself was banned. *Suara Aisjijah* did not publish for several years, but the women in charge of their archive insisted several times to me that they had never been banned during this period.

were increasingly tailored to reflect “Indonesian values.” Elements of western culture, particularly those that were not considered to be “aligned with Indonesian identity” were increasingly criticized.

Although many of the exterior forms under attack were clearly originally western, what was at play were their Indonesian expressions. Wearing western clothing remained quite acceptable, particularly in daily life. But it was important for women to understand what wearing a miniskirt or teased hair or dancing the twist meant in a revolutionary Manipol-USDEK context, and more importantly, what it meant about being Indonesian. It was critical to know why those particular expressions were to be avoided, and eventually, forbidden.

A stronger version of the press law went into effect in 1963, connected directly to the explosion of revolutionary zeal that Sukarno deployed as an important element of *Konfrontasi*. While the rhetoric of *Konfrontasi* was, in theory at least, aimed externally and internationally at Malaysia, its overwhelming effect was internal and national. If anything, the minor border skirmishes against Malaysia in Borneo, and popular attacks on the British Embassy in Jakarta<sup>34</sup> were a pretense for Sukarno’s attempts to hold an increasingly fractious alliance of nationalists, Islamic religious organizations and communists together under the rhetoric of NASAKOM.

The attempts at unity however, remained largely rhetorical, dependent more on language and sloganeering than on actual policy. On the ground, the economy paid a heavy price. Rice supplies were tight, lines to buy that and other staples were frequent and long, prices were volatile, and rice riots were not unheard of. Unable to actually affect economic change and growth, with the basics of both a Guided Democracy and a Guided Economy failing, the energy behind USDEK was poured into *Sosialism à la Indonesia*, increasingly expressed through the large-scale adoption of various political slogans, and through the promulgation of a more “revolutionary” Indonesian national identity.<sup>35</sup> Magazines and

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<sup>34</sup> As part of a mass demonstration against the British and Malaysian embassies in September 1963, the British embassy was over-run and burned to the ground. This is an important example of mob violence being focused against enemies of the revolution. Following these demonstrations, Indonesia broke political ties with both nations. The American embassy was also a frequent target of demonstrations, but the crowds that would gather in front of the compound, which sits on the south side of Merdeka Square (discussed in Chapter 7,) never made serious attempts to breach the gates.

<sup>35</sup> My argument for the contingency of the increase of various elements of USDEK over others given historical shifts in politics will form a critical element of the argument of Chapter 7, and is based originally on Arno Mayer’s work on timing



newspapers, again, were a primary site in which this increasingly sloganized revolutionary ethos was expressed.

This is why Sukarno obsessed about Indonesian expressions of western culture in his speeches to women. Women's choices about certain styles of clothing were a particular area of focus because, as the dissertation has shown in earlier chapters, women's clothing was freighted with national meaning. Women's clothing became—to a much greater extent than ever before—the subject of both political punditry and on-the-street measures of control, a morality play acted out in the public political and revolutionary national realm of a country living dangerously. In the global context of the Cold War, Indonesian women's "proper" appearance and comportment, that which was in line with national identity, were increasingly framed as a critical bulwark against the cultural invasion of the west, a world of teased hair, miniskirts, dancing the twist to Elvis Presley, and listening to the Beatles.

It would be easy—in fact simplistic—to analyze Sukarno's attention to western culture and fashion as merely a nationalist reaction to political imperialism. Although that was also clearly at play, I would suggest that such a reading would ignore the local and national dynamics of the cultural politics of the formation of the Indonesian nation. Instead, I argue that it is important to see Sukarno's focus on female beauty overwhelmingly as a product of national rather than global forces and tensions.

Indeed, this deployment of ideological reactions to women's fashion was one of the more visible cultural elements of building the new Indonesian national identity. Women's magazines were instructed to adjust their editorial content, which they did if they wished to continue publishing. Women's magazines became an important space in which groups and types of women were upheld as important examples for all women to either emulate or avoid, for the sake of the success of the revolution. Because they involved women and their position in revolutionary society, the national identity elements of the Guided Democracy complex were increasingly expressed in relation to various ideal types of national women, rather than in relation to individual women themselves.

This chapter of the dissertation traces these changes of representations of Indonesian women in national magazines between 1955-1965, and their increasingly

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of the development of the Nazi impulse towards the annihilation of Europe's Jews in his monograph *Why Did The Heavens Not Darken?*

strong connection to Sukarno's national political project. It makes the argument that as the President ramped up the revolutionary rhetoric of Guided Democracy and *Konfrontasi*, representations of Indonesian women in the media increasingly relied on ideal types connected to a discourse of women's moral fitness. What came to be discussed in women's magazines, then, was not Indonesian women themselves, but rather, the images of what Indonesian women were either expected or feared to be. What was at play was not the lives or experiences of real women, but the ideological health of the nation. This transposition happened during a time of particular political tension, freighting it with additional meanings that would come to bear during the events of September/October 1965. It is to this transposition in the decade from 1955-1965 that the dissertation now turns.

### ***"Traditional Clothing is Popular Again"***

In the aftermath of the Bandung conference in 1955, women's magazines exhibited a renewed interest in the subject of Indonesian national fashion. Coverage of western fashion did not disappear during the move to an increasingly non-aligned (and arguably the start of an anti-Western) cultural space beginning in 1955. But magazines began to stress greater options for "dressing Indonesian." *Wanita*, for instance, adjusted the flow of its regular patterns and designs of western fashions to offer a month's worth of design options for *kebaya*, a subject it had barely broached in 1954.

In a similar issue, *Keluarga* began exploring new uses for traditional clothing to replace western fashion in certain circumstance. A 1956 article in *Keluarga* was entitled "Regional Clothing is Most Popular Again!" ("*Pakaian Daerah Terpopuler Lagi!*") The article suggested that traditional Acehnese clothing which consisted of a long *kebaya* worn over trousers rather than a *kain* could "also be worn to go picnicking, instead of American 'jeans.'"<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> "*boleh djuga untuk pergi pick-nick, daripada memakai 'jankee' Amerika.*" The use of "jankee" here, to mean jeans or long pants, is interesting, and is specifically derived from "yankee," or American soldier. The term is used in several articles about clothing across magazines, sometimes only referring to jeans, and other times to any version of women's long trousers. There is also at this same time a modern architectural style that begins in Indonesia, called "*jengki*," with the term signifying a "distinctive architecture is an expression of the political spirit of freedom among the Indonesians. . . The spirit of freedom translated into an architecture that differs from what the Dutch had done. The modern cubic and strict geometric forms are transformed into more complicated volumes, such as pentagons or other irregular solids. Roofs are pitched, the surface and composition are festive. These characteristics are not commonly found elsewhere in Europe and America." See Josef Prijotomo, "When West Meets East: One Century of Architecture in Indonesia (1890s-1990s)."

Earlier chapters of the dissertation have suggested that while North Sumatran fashion had not likely been particularly “popular” in the rest of the archipelago, it, along with other “regional” and “authentic” clothing styles had been widely presented in fashion shows in Jakarta and other major cities from the early 1950s on. But this new use, to replace jeans on a picnic, underlined a growing sense that cultural elements from across the archipelago now “belonged” to all Indonesians, no matter what their own ethnic identities might also have been.<sup>37</sup> The ability to claim clothing styles from across the nation as their “own” was a critical way in which Indonesian women were formed into a national group, no matter where they came from.

Building on the success of the various “*batikshow's*,” the magazines began featuring photo spreads of *batik* clothing with western style and cut that allowed women increased options that read simultaneously as both Indonesian and modern. But the idea of wearing *batik* western-style was not simply an issue of personal choice or self-expression. Alongside articles on fashion shows featuring batik used for western style dresses, from September-December 1955, *Keluarga* carried a series of advertisements from the *Gabungan Koperasi Batik Indonesia* (GKBI, Association of Indonesian Batik Cooperatives.)<sup>38</sup> The ads featured photographs of western dresses, pajamas, home furnishing and the like, all made of *batik*. The ads specifically tied the delight of wearing *batik* to the love of one’s own culture, to nourishing the growth of the national economy and providing work for hundreds of thousands of batik workers. (See Figures 6.1. and 6.2.)

Nonetheless, simultaneously, magazines in the late 1950s and early 1960s continued to show a large and culturally varied world within which both elite and the growing numbers of urban middle-class Indonesian women lived. Hollywood films and their American and European movie stars were markedly present, but so too were actresses from Indonesia’s emerging film industry. These young Indonesian women were

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<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Lindsay also discusses this in terms of the performing arts, particularly among dancers from across the nation who learned “each other’s” dances when preparing for overseas artistic missions. Indeed, she notes, when donning costumes not “one’s own,” “this appears not to have been a major concern. The image the cultural missions presented of Indonesia made up of various different regions was not one of mutual exclusivity. Rather, being Indonesian allowed for an embracing of other regions as one’s own. This was the sense of liberation from one’s own ‘*suku*’ [“ethnicity”] and the leap to national consciousness . . . the regions were not denied, but they now belonged to all.” Jennifer Lindsay, “Performing Indonesia Abroad” in Jennifer Lindsey and Maya Liem, eds., *Heirs to world culture, Being Indonesian, 1950-1965*. p. 210.

<sup>38</sup> This is the same organization that ran the ad in *Film Review* in December 1952 featuring an ideal Indonesian woman wearing *kain-kebaya* that is discussed in Chapter 3.



**Figures 6.1, 6.2:** *Batik* pajamas and dresses for culture and the economy. The text reads “Delighting in wearing batik means: Loving one’s own culture! Nourishing the national economy! Bringing work to hundreds of thousands of laborers!”<sup>39</sup> *Keluarga*, October 1955, p. 27, and December 1955, p. 4.

represented as hip and modern, yet wholesome, both in new film magazines such as *Varia*<sup>40</sup> as well as magazines such as *Wanita*.

When new actresses were introduced to the public, they were usually photographed wearing western clothing while carrying out a young modern life: chatting on the phone with girlfriends, listening to records, or riding their motorcycles. But, almost without fail in such features in 1959 and 1960, they were also shown either wearing *kain-kebaya* in at least one photograph, or, for those who were also Javanese dancers, in dance costume that also featured *kain batik*.<sup>41</sup> (See Figure 6.3).

<sup>39</sup> “Gemar memakai batik berarti: Tjinta kebudayaan sendiri! Memupuk ekonomi nasional! Memberi lapangan bekerdja ratusan-ribu kaum buruh!” *Keluarga*, October 1955, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup> *Varia*, which began publication in 1957, initially based loosely on and drawing its title from the American movie publication *Variety*. Though strictly speaking it was an “entertainment” (*hiburan*) magazine, it is a strikingly rich source about women and modernity. Its focus on film reflects the wide-spread presence and influence of the cinema in Sukarno-era Indonesia, and its effects on perceptions of modernity by Indonesians. *Varia* was a one of a series of titles published by Keng Po, an ethnic Chinese-owned media consortium, mostly aimed at the entertainment market. The magazine was founded by Hadely Hasibuan, a political chameleon of a journalist who possessed a striking ability to shift editorial directions with the prevailing political winds. Given the particular character and aims of its editor, whose own biography suggests he sought to move close to whomever was in power, *Varia*—“the magazine with the pretty women on the cover”—serves as a tightly calibrated bellweather of both the shifting politics of both the late Sukarno era and the early New Order. See Hasibuan, Hadely. *Hadely Hasibuan : memoar mantan menteri penurunan harga*. (*Hadely Hasibuan: Memoir of a former Minister for the Reduction of Prices*), and the discussion of *Varia* in Chapter 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Varia* No. 65 (July 15, 1959), p. 14.



★ Beginilah Roosilawaty di-ka hendak bepergian. Manis bukan? Dika pembatja se-pendapat maka dialah Ava Gardner Indonesia.

★ Diwaktu tak ada shooting sedang waktu ferluang, Roos mentjaba mengatur kembali hiasan<sup>2</sup> rumahnja agar tampak lebih indah.

★ Dika urusan dapur telah selesai, menjusullah gi-liran Roosjanita untuk di-timang<sup>2</sup> ibunya. Demikianlah sebagai seorang ibu, Roos mentjurahan kasih sajangnja.

## Roosilawaty

Bintang jang belum mau disebut bintang . . . . .  
Tjita<sup>2</sup>nja ingin mengabdikan pada seni.

(Susunan Djic.)

**P**UTERI Solo dengan senjum manis jang sedjak usia mudanja kira<sup>2</sup> sembilan tahun dibesarkan dilingkung-an seni tari<sup>2</sup>an dengan asuhan Miss Ri-but.

Selama ini Roos belum merasa puas dengan peran<sup>2</sup> jang telah diberikan ke-padanja serta untuk sementara belum mau disebut bintang. . . . . "Mahu sih kalau disebut bintang, padahal belum apa<sup>2</sup>. . . . ." Memang Roosilawaty adal-ah bintang jang benar<sup>2</sup> ingin memper-sembahkan bakatnja dibidang seni de-

ngan tak bosan<sup>2</sup>nja senantiasa mentjari suatu titik kesempurnaannya.

Kini Roos beladjar tentang senidrama pada Gelanggang Kesenian "Tjahaja Timur" jang dipimpin oleh Andjar As-mara. Dalam gelanggang ini Roos me-rupakan anggota jang termuda usia-nja, dimana terdapat pula pemain<sup>2</sup> old crack seperti Ali Yugo, Astaman, Tan Tjeng Bok dll.

Roos ber-tjita<sup>2</sup> untuk terus berketjim-pung dalam lapangan film dan teruta-ma sekali ia bertudjuan guna mengab-

dikan diri pada seni. Jang selalu men-djadi harapannya ialah agar bisa men-djadi pemain watak jang baik.

Langkah pertama didepan camera.

**S**ETELAH clash kedua berachir Roos segera meninggalkan kota kelahirannya, Solo dan memulail dengan halaman baru di Djakarta. Oleh guru tarinja, Miss Ribut, kemudian ia diadjudikan untuk bermain dalam film "Musim Me-lati" dibawah pimpinan Thio Tek Djin. Tetapi ternyata pembuatan film tsb. menemui kegagalan serta terbengkalai begitu sadja. Dengan demikian lenjap-lah harapan jang di-idam<sup>2</sup>kan itu. Namun begitu bintangnja masih tetap tje-merlang, karena beberapa waktu kemud-ian ia ditawarkan pula untuk bermain dalam "Melarat Tetapi Sehat", seba-

(Bersamb. dhal. 25)

★ Roos adalah pentilinta lagu<sup>2</sup>, maka tak heranlah dika platnja bertumpuk-tumpuk. Disini tampak Roos sedang memamerkan platnja kepada kenalanja jang sedang bertamu dirumahnja.

★ Dengan radjin Roos mengasuh anaknja dan dibawanja Roosjanita kepinggir sungai untuk menikmati udara sedjuk dipagi hari.

**Figure 6.3:** "Film star Roosilawaty doesn't yet want to be called a star . . . Her ambition is to dedicate herself to art." *Varia* No. 65, July 15, 1959, p. 14

The overwhelming image projected of these young stars, however, was not very different from those of Hollywood actresses in similar profiles churned out by American film studios. The publicity output about stars from the Hollywood public relations machine continued to be reprinted in Indonesian movie magazines through the late 1950s, with the original English translated into Indonesian. These profiles used the same photos as

American entertainment news sources, so the visual style and content flowing from this was well established in Indonesian magazines by the early to mid 1950s.

The formula was used for Indonesian stars as well, although, it should be noted, almost exclusively with young women.<sup>42</sup> A principal feature of both the American and Indonesian versions of this celebrity layout was the pretense of seeing these stars “at home” and in their “everyday lives,” so there were ample photos in both versions of informally posed domestic and family photos. There was almost always a more formal “glamour” shot in both versions as well. In the Indonesian case, this was almost always taken with the star wearing *kain-kebaya*, and her hair in a *konde*. She needed to remain an Indonesian beauty, an aspirational national model for other young Indonesian women.

### ***‘Adjusting’ (to) Indonesian Modernity***

Some elements of fashion journalism remained quite practical, however, even as they projected aspirations of modernity. A 1956 spread on lingerie in *Keluarga*, for instance, opined that “if a woman wishes to be called modern, it’s not only the exterior that must appear modern, dapper and neat, but even your underwear must be ‘adjusted’.”<sup>43</sup> (“*disesuaikan.*”) The article addressed the need to make the correct choice of undergarment, based on what dress or skirt a woman chose to wear. As with previous articles on bras, the drawings showed structural darts and were presented in a way that would allow a woman to make her own versions at home. (See Figure 6.4) Occasional articles on how to sew one’s own underwear, including increasingly technical drawings of bras, remained a regular feature of many magazines concerned with women’s fashion into the early 1960s and beyond.

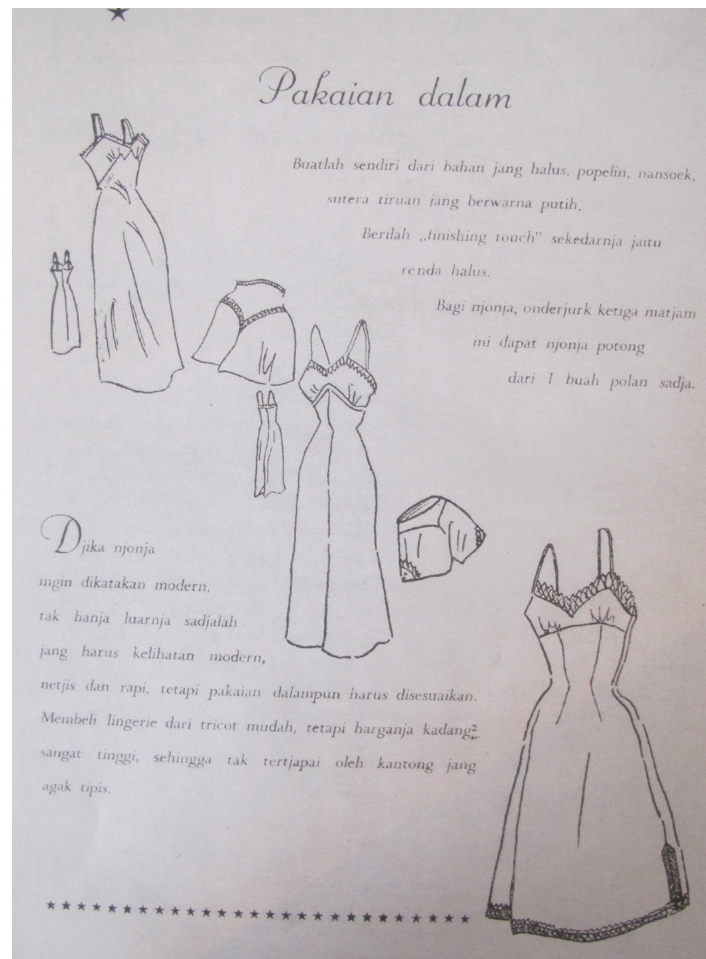
Elite Indonesian women, therefore, continued to be presented with a series of fashion choices and variations within which they were encouraged to find their own looks, their own personal expressions of being modern. Whether wearing western dresses made from *batik*, going picnicking in Acehnese pantsuits, or wearing new-style *kebaya*, they were

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<sup>42</sup> I have seen very few “star” articles written about male Indonesian actors. As female stars aged, or became more established, they only received the “young star” treatment on rare occasions. In any case, the appetite among readers for information about and photos of the newly emerging stars seems to have been significant, based on the reader letter sections of the magazines that consistently requested information on new actresses as they made their film debuts.

<sup>43</sup> “*Djika njonja ingin dikatanakan modern, tak hanja luarnya sadjalah jang harus kelihatan modern, netjis dan rapi, tetapi pakain dalampun harus disesuaikan.*” *Keluarga*, March 1956, p. 23. Again, notice the use of “adjusted” (“*disesuaikan.*”)

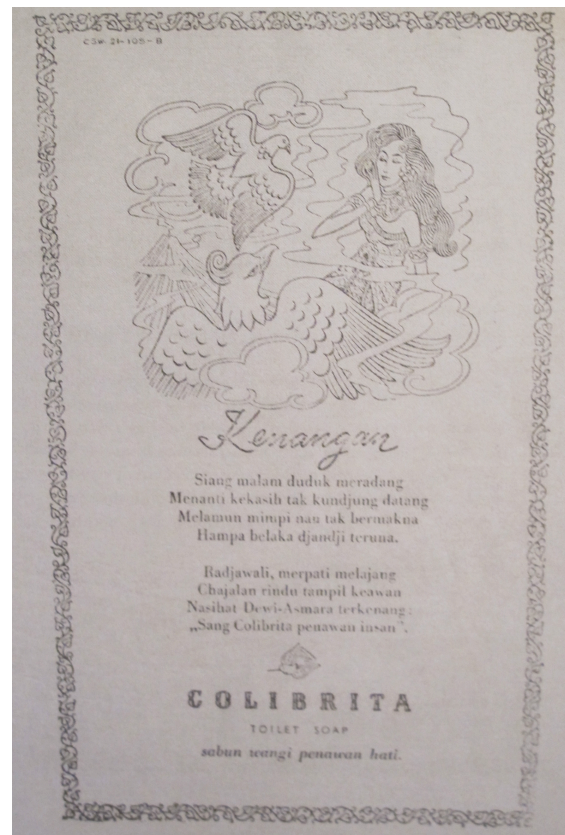
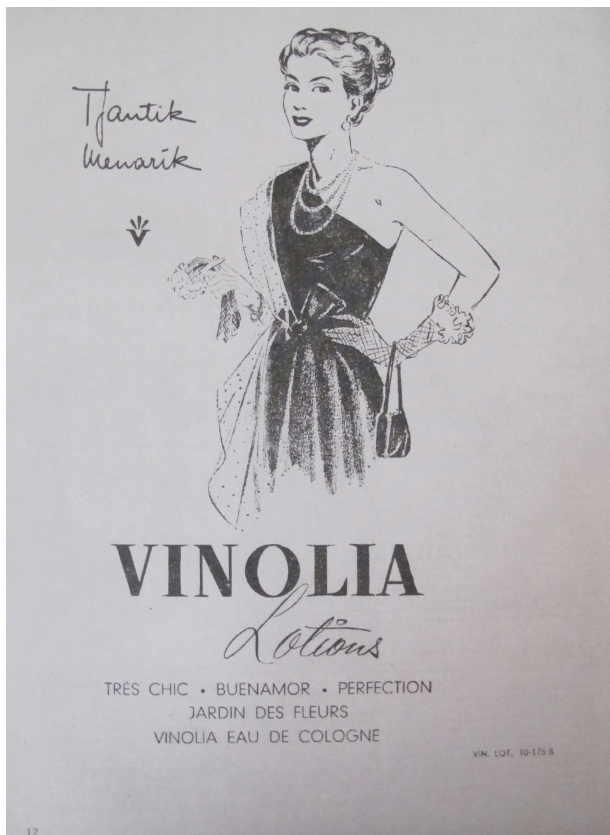
largely free to play in a wide range of choices, which, as long as they were properly made, remained an acceptable way of expressing their modernity and their Indonesian identity without creating internal conflicts over who they were.



**Figure 6.4:** “If you want to be considered modern, even your underwear must be adjusted.” *Keluarga*, March 1956, p. 23.

An important shift in beauty standards, perhaps most easily seen through changes in advertising, occurred between 1955 and 1960. Although beauty product advertising initially focused on western movie stars, as the dissertation explored in Chapter 2, beauty standards became more broadly expressed in the mid-1950's. Both western and eastern influences were visible, demonstrating that Indonesian women had access to multiple influences for being beautiful.

Two sets of advertisements for perfume and lotions that often ran near, and sometimes directly opposite each other in the pages of *Wanita* and *Keluarga*, provide an interesting example of such a contrast. The tagline for Vinolia, a European beauty brand offering a range of lotions, soaps, cold creams and scented oils, was simple: “*Cantik, Menarik*,” which translates as “Beautiful, Attractive.”<sup>44</sup> The ads showed various images of a woman looking over her shoulder at the reader, wearing a chic western dress, with her hair piled up on her head. (See Figure 6.5). Colibrita, another European-made perfumed toilet soap, on the other hand, chose to use images reflecting women as Javanese goddesses and multiple-stanza Indonesian-language poems as an inspiration for beauty in their ads. (See Figure 6.6).



**Figure 6.5:** Vinolia, “Beautiful, Attractive.” **Figure 6.6:** Colibrita: Indonesian Goddesses  
*Keluarga*, April 1956, p. 12 *Keluarga*, March 1957, p. 4

<sup>44</sup> Or, alternatively, “Beautiful, Interesting.”



By the early 1960's, responding to the changing political and cultural milieu, Vinolia altered the imagery it used, switching the picture to that of a woman more clearly Indonesian in her features, wearing *kain-kebaya*. Their tagline, however, remained the same. (See Figure 6.7.) When women were identified as mothers in advertising, on the other hand, (usually for items like margarine or laundry soaps, but even in ads for modern household goods such as refrigerators, and reaching back to the early 1950s) they were nearly always shown wearing *kain-kebaya*. (See Figure 6.8). Women as mothers and women as beauty figures clearly spoke to slightly different versions of national beauty, but ones that converged as the importance of national identity increased.



**Figure 6.7:** Vinolia in *kain-kebaya* *Wanita*, December 15, 1961, p. 734



**Figure 6.8:** Modern Westinghouse Mother *Wanita*, August 15, 1961, p. 475.

## ***Miss Varia 1959***

As late as September 1959, a major women's magazine could still explore glamour without actively appealing to a nationalized style of beauty. The "Miss Varia 1959" contest provides an interesting example. *Varia* magazine, which ran the contest, solicited entries from young women across Indonesia who felt they could be the next big movie star. The editor, Hadely Hasibuan's, stated goal was to identify the first potential Miss Indonesia candidate, with the hope of taking her to represent the nation in the Miss Universe pageant. Given a generally negative view of pageants in Indonesia at the time,<sup>45</sup> this was, in and of itself, an audacious proposal. But at the time, *Varia* was one of the most Hollywood-inflected publications in the country.

Each entrant was asked to submit two professionally taken photos of themselves, one a headshot, and the other a full body photo. Twenty finalists from across the country were chosen, and were introduced over the course of several issues of the magazine beginning in May, 1959. Readers were then invited to clip ballots from the magazine to mail in their choice for Miss Varia over the course of several months. In the end, *Varia* received over 36,000 votes in the contest, each of which needed to be accompanied by a coupon.<sup>46</sup>

The photos of the finalists are particularly interesting because of both the clothing and the backgrounds the young women and their photographers chose.<sup>47</sup> These include both studio shots, and photos taken outdoors both in "nature" and in front of cars and scooters, with an observable regional variation. Candidates from Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya, including ethnic Chinese women, tended to dress more in a western vein, and to present themselves as active, athletic, modern young women. Candidates from more conservative areas such as Central Java or Sumatra more often chose photos in which they wore *kain-kebaya*, in some cases with a head covering as well. (See Figure 6.9) It was quite

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<sup>45</sup> See the discussion of the *konde* competition in Jakarta in 1953 in *Suara 'Aisjijah* in Chapter 5. Indonesia was quite different in this respect than the Philippines, where beauty pageants were (and remain) an important, and highly popular, arena of national femininity. Filipino beauty pageant promoters had been trying to bring pageant culture to Indonesia since the early 1950's, without any success at all. Indonesian women generally rejected these proposals, saying they were too showy, and would reflect badly on the character of the young women who would be tempted to participate in them.

<sup>46</sup> In an interesting intersection of traces of real life interrupting the settledness of the archive, one of the copies of *Varia* in the University of Michigan collections from this time has the ballot carefully clipped out of the bottom of the page.

<sup>47</sup> See Karen Strassler's work on photography in Java, particularly the role of photograph studios in building a culture of fashion glamor shots as representing the skill of the photographer, and of the uses of headshots ("*pasphoto*," or the photos taken and used for identity passes in the New Order). Karen Strassler, *Refracted Visions: Popular Photography and National Modernity in Java*.

clear that in 1959, women involved in the world of Indonesian glamor were still able to express significant personal variation in their self-presentation.



**Figure 6.9:** Fashion variation in the Miss Varia 1959 headshots of 16 of 20 finalists. *Varia*, No. 75, September 23, 1959, pp. 2-3.

The winner of Miss Varia 1959, by an overwhelming margin, was Dhewayani Pribadi, the young wife of an Air Force officer from Bandung.<sup>48</sup> Her victory was announced in the September 23, 1959 issue, when the names and hometowns of all twenty finalists were also revealed. The issue also took pains to demonstrate the transparency of the vote tabulation process, including photos of the counting process and several pages of tabulated data matching each candidate's votes to the cities in which they were cast.<sup>49</sup> In the same issues, the continuing popularity of Hollywood was demonstrated by a full-page production still of a bare-chested Tony Curtis in the 1958 United Artists film *The Vikings*. (See Figure 6.10.)



**Figure 6.10:** Miss Varia 1959 announced and accounted for, with Tony Curtis looking on. *Varia*, No. 75, September 23, 1959, Front Inside Cover and p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Dhewayani received 13,349 votes from across the country. This was more than the number of votes received by the runner-up, Soetji Relowati, from Surabaya, (6,771 votes), and the second-runner up, Lanny Tijam, also from Bandung (5,589 votes) combined. The information provided in the pages of *Varia* reported the number of votes that were cast for each of the candidates of the over 36,000 ballots mailed in.

<sup>49</sup> The auditor's report listed what the votes were from each of the cities named from across the nation, providing a fascinating possible case study on the regional and ethnic variations of beauty in Indonesia at that time. A list of 220 "thank you" prize recipients, drawn at random from those who mailed in ballots, was also published with their names and addresses. The data offers a rare glimpse at who the readership for the magazine was. It markedly included a significant number of ethnic Chinese readers. An extended analysis of this data, a project for the future, would provide interesting insights on the reach of *Varia* and other similar magazines. Coincidentally, the publication permit for the magazines was published on the bottom of the facing page of the announcement of the contest winner. It noted that the total publication run was 61,000 copies per issue.

In the next issue, on September 30, in keeping with their desire to crown a new star, *Varia* published a “meet the celebrity at home” photo story that showed Dhewayani with her Air Force officer husband. They were living a life of late 1950s modern splendor that could have been lifted out of an American magazine, down to the furniture and the curtains of their Scandinavian-design-looking house. Deetje, as she was called, was shown riding her Vespa, playing tennis and swimming at the Bandung Country Club. She modeled a swimsuit poolside in Hollywood pinup-style poses, hung out casually at home with her friends or her husband, and helped him type his office paperwork on her portable typewriter. Interestingly, she was not shown in *kain-kebaya*, or, for that matter, in any form of *batik* at all in the layout. (See Figures 6.11 and 6.12.)



**Figure 6.11:** Miss Varia 1959, the modern Indonesian pin-up girl. *Varia* no 76, September 30, 1959, p. 15.

The Miss Varia 1959 contest marked a high point of the images of modern Indonesian woman on a western model in *Varia*, which was soon to undergo a significant change. The western-ness of Dhewayani's beauty was presented quite unproblematically, including her comments about not having, or wanting to have, children for the moment. The photo spread demonstrated a variety of tropes of modernity common to Indonesian media at the time—the young girl on the Vespa, or listening to records with a friend—and one in particular—the swimsuit pinup shot—that was well known from Hollywood. This was, however, quite rare, and exceptionally daring within most Indonesian cultural contexts. The tight mimicking of a Hollywood “at-home” shoot, the Air Force Officer husband, and the life in Bandung were all markers that Dhewayani was living a life far out of reach for most Indonesian women.



Figure 6.12: Miss Varia 1959, the batik-less Air Force wife at home and going out *Varia* no 76, September 30, 1959, pp. 16-17.

The pictorial marked the edge to which Indonesians might go, but even then, perhaps only if they received the exceptions granted to movie stars who were allowed to be flashier than the average woman.<sup>50</sup> Within a year, such a contest would no longer be possible. Despite the clear intent in 1959 to hold a Miss Varia 1960 contest, this would no longer be politically possible, and the second contest never took place.

### ***Magazines to Finish the National Revolution***

The new Guided Democracy press law was passed on October 12, 1960, less than two weeks after Sukarno addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 30 in a speech in which he called on UN member states to “Build the World Anew.” His UN speech built on themes addressed in his August 17, 1960 National Day speech “Toward Freedom and the Dignity of Man.” Late summer 1960 was a period when, Fred Bunnell noted, Sukarno had finally been able to “consolidat[e] his own power and erect . . . the institutions of Guided Democracy,” thereby freeing himself up to “follow his predictions for a vigorous confrontation foreign policy.”<sup>51</sup> The changes in the press law were occasioned by Sukarno’s desire to exert a higher degree of ideological control over the nation’s media, and went into effect on November 1.

Guided Democracy was not a new idea in 1960, but the instability of the Sukarno government between 1957-1960 had allowed magazine editors to explore a variety of content. Although Sukarno announced his “*konsepsi*” (conception) for Guided Democracy in 1957, it was not until 1959 that he was able to largely put his concept into effect. Further, as Bunnell notes, he was not able to fully effect control over this new governmental format until late 1960, at which point he became more interested in shaping the content of

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<sup>50</sup> I tried to interview Ibu Dhewayani about this period of her life. She lives in Jakarta, but refused my requests for an interview, saying she didn’t want to talk about “politics.” Her husband from those days was an aide to Air Marshall Omar Dani, who was implicated in the events of 1965. She divorced him soon after Lubang Buaya, and married a shipping and concrete magnate. She stated that she “did not want to relive those days” and “had nothing to be proud of,” and was now devoting her attentions to her church. I have not been able to find out what happened to her first husband after the events of 1965-66. (Personal communication, October 2013, via Philip Soelistyo.)

<sup>51</sup> Fred Bunnell, “Guided Democracy Foreign Policy: 1960-1965 President Sukarno Moves from Non-Alignment to Confrontation.” p. 45. Nonetheless, there were still lingering elements of various regional civil wars on-going in Indonesia, which helps explain some of Sukarno’s desire to control the press. The Darul Islam, PRRI and Pemesta rebellions ended between April and October 1961. In terms of controlling the press, Sukarno’s government had essentially closed the country’s Chinese language press, allowing only 11 Indonesian Chinese language newspapers to continue publishing, and forcing foreign-owned Chinese publications to adopt new Indonesian language names. See Tribuana Said, *Sejarah Pers Nasional dan Pembangunan Pers Pancasila*, pp. 109-110.

magazines toward his “revolutionary” aims. While some publications were closed, there does not appear to have been direct censorship of the content of magazines that remained in print. Rather, magazines began to alter their own content, either in agreement with Sukarno’s new directions, or in an attempt to stay ahead of him.<sup>52</sup>

A particularly interesting example of this quick adjustment to the changing political landscape can be seen in the covers of *Varia* magazine. Hadely Hasibuan was not a particularly ideological journalist, but he was highly attuned to the changes in political winds. The new press regulations went into effect on November 1, and the magazine, published weekly, had a rather quick production cycle. Leading up to November 1960, *Varia* had featured both Hollywood and Indonesian stars on its covers, but western actors and actresses had predominated. The November 2 cover featured Indonesian actress Ratna Djuita. The November 9 cover was of Hollywood actor Dirk Bogarde, but also carried the magazine’s new publication permit number on the cover as well. The November 16 cover used a photo of another Indonesian actress, Ida Nustantry. The magazine only featured a western actor or actress on its cover once again, notably on the first edition published after October 1, 1965, when Hungarian actress Erbzebet Hazy, blonde haired, blue eyed and bare shouldered, made an unusual appearance on the front cover. (See Figures 6.13-15.)

Some magazines, particularly those connected with the Indonesian left, were already ahead of the curve on these issues. *Api Kartini*,<sup>53</sup> a magazine connected to Gerwani, was a prominent source of education and commentary about the new revolutionary formulations put forward with Guided Democracy. *Api Kartini* also regularly published about western women’s fashion, with a particular proletarian focus on keeping clothing simple, neat and orderly. They also regularly commented on issues of *kepribadian nasional*.

The magazine ran regular advice columns for mothers, for instance, and in this venue, women expressed a series of moral concerns, (though not quite yet raised to the level of moral crisis,) about their daughters. One mother, for instance, inquired about the

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<sup>52</sup> There is not good material on this in the historiography, and this claim takes some reading into the primary documents. In my 2012 interview with Herawati Diah, she suggested that Sukarno did try to meddle with publications at times after 1957, though somewhat indirectly. She attributed her husband’s own appointment as Indonesian ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1959 (and then on to England in 1962 and to Thailand in 1964) as an attempt to quiet the independence of B.M. Diah’s own journalistic voice. But she also insisted that their editorial content was never subject to direct review or control by the government in any of their publications.

<sup>53</sup> “Fire of Kartini,” a magazine from Gerwani that was focused on women involved in the organization’s kindergartens and child care centers, but was widely read by progressive women.





**Figures 6.13, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16:** *Varia*'s Last Hollywood Cover, Dirke Bogarde (November 9, 1960,) between Indonesian actresses Ratna Djuita (November 2,) and Ida Nusantry (November 16.) The magazine's new permit number is visible above the red *Varia* logo for the first time on the November 9 cover. The cover for October 13, 1965 was the first to portray a European actor since the Bogarde cover, but of a safely socialist Hungarian actress, Erzsébet Hazy in the immediate aftermath of Lubang Buaya.

tension she felt between allowing her daughter to follow fashion trends and feeling that these whims might keep her from advancing properly as a revolutionary Indonesian:

Question: the problem is with my eldest child, a girl, who is now almost 15 years old. She loves to primp and preen, trying out whatever trends are "now" like wearing her hair in a pony tail, the latest dresses, all of this she likes to go along with. Within some limits, I go along with her desires . . . I

fear she will become too backward and behind in her advancement to the point that she won't keep up with the progress of society today.<sup>54</sup>

The editor's response cited a familiar trope connecting gender to fears of the moral crises of modernity:

Answer: We agree with you that we need to take the right attitude in guiding the development of our girls. We shouldn't be too restricted, but on the other hand it is also a mistake to follow all our children's desires lest they become victims of the various excesses of today's 'modern' society.<sup>55</sup>

In this case, an interesting switch occurred. The mother's fear was that by dressing according to western fashion trends, her daughter would "be behind in her [socialist] advancement" and "not keep up with the progress of society." The leftist moral crisis was developing to a place where women might be both too sexual and too western *and* be behind the times simultaneously. But there was a clear sense still that modern society brought with it the possibility of dangerous excess.

*Api Kartini* reflected the progressive thinking of the socialist vanguard, and took a lead among women's magazines in ridding itself of western content.<sup>56</sup> Other magazines lagged behind to some extent in this matter, but over the course of the next two years, 1960-1962, the primacy of the Hollywood content in magazines like *Varia* diminished. Magazines took a broader perspective on international film, particularly increasing their coverage of film from socialist countries. Gerwani began to formulate objections to the salaciousness of Hollywood offerings from positions they had sought and achieved on the Indonesian Film Censor Board.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "Pertanyaan: masalah anak saja jang sulung, perempuan, sekarang sudah hampir 15 tahun. Ia suka sekali bersolek, model apa sadja djaman sekarang seperti rambut buntut-kuda, jurk model sekarang dsb. ingin sekali ia ikati. Dalam batas2 tertentu saja turuti kemauanja . . . saja takut djika ia mendjadi terlalu terbelakang dan terlambat kedadjuannya sehingga djuga tidak sesuai dengang kedadjuan masjarakat sekarang." *Api Kartini*, October 1960, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> "Djawaban: Kami sependapat dengan Njonja bawha kita harus mengambil sikap jang tepat dalam memimbing perkembangan gadis kita. Tidak boleh terlalu mengekang, dan sebaliknja djuga salah djika kita terlalu menurut kemaun anak sehingga ia menjadi korban berbagai ekses masjarakat 'modern' sekarang ini." *Api Kartini*, October 1960, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> It did not, however, come across as strictly Communist. Saskia Wieringa writes that "*Api Kartini* was designed to draw middle-class housewives into the 'revolutionary family.' Its editors included women who were not members of Gerwani, and the magazine carried articles on cooking, dress-making and other general women's issues. While this periodical seldom reported on the daily activities of Gerwani, its editorials do reflect the changing ideological preoccupations of the organization. Through its short stories and articles, a particular ideological climate was created, with many optimistic stories about communist countries." Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> Again, note the irony that it was Gerwani, who took one of the more puritanical approaches to the public expression of sexuality, who would in turn, have the puritanical construction of women's sexuality used against them.

These general rumblings about building the revolution became an out-and-out explosion in the late summer of 1963. This was a time when, according to Fred Bunnell, under Sukarno's strong political guidance, "Indonesia adopted a policy of all-out confrontation not only toward Malaysia but toward the International Olympic Committee, the United Nations, and other manifestations of what Sukarno viewed as Western domination of the new nations."<sup>58</sup> In an article on Sukarno's political temperament, Peter Hausdewell notes there was a "radical trend in both domestic and foreign policy which marked Guided Democracy after the 'watershed' of late summer 1963."<sup>59</sup>

But very little actual energy was focused on the border between Malaysia and Indonesia in Kalimantan itself that was in theory at the center of the *Konfrontasi* policy. Instead, the era's political energy was centered on shoring up Sukarno's position in a domestic political arena increasingly polarized by competing claims to political power by the military and the PKI, and on an economy shaken by a serious financial crisis. As a primary tactic to maintain political control of the nation, Sukarno sought to control the media more directly than he had previously, and insisting that journalists increase the energy behind their coverage of revolutionary cultural projects and slogans.

From late 1963 on, the representations of women in almost all Indonesian magazines changed. Instead of representing individuals, the images of women in magazines began to reflect several stock categories, the ideal types that were connected to the construction of moral crisis. As they had before, women were shown as being neat and orderly, and images of traditional Javanese dancers, representing Indonesian women as holders of traditional reserve also made a resurgence. But overwhelmingly, material about women took on a highly nationalist bent, in which images of women as symbols and national archetypes took over from the more varied and relaxed images of women that had filled magazines previously.

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<sup>58</sup> Bunnell, "Guided Democracy Foreign Policy: 1960-1965 President Sukarno Moves from Non-Alignment to Confrontation." p. 45.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Christian Hauswedell, "Sukarno: Radical or Conservative? Indonesian Politics 1964-5," in *Indonesia*, No. 15, p. 114. In his dissertation on the nationalization of western businesses by Sukarno, Will Redfern also argued that 1963 was a watershed in the politics and political economy of Indonesia. See Will Redfern, *Sukarno's Guided Democracy and the Takeovers of Foreign Companies in Indonesia in the 1960s*, p. 3.

## ***Puspa Wanita: The Move from Glamour Model to Model Indonesian Woman***

This juxtaposition and intertwining of the national and the feminine, as well as the politically enforced nature of the content, can be seen particularly well in *Puspa Wanita*,<sup>60</sup> a fashion and lifestyle magazine from Bandung. Even following the new press laws of 1960, *Puspa Wanita* had not concerned itself significantly with the politics of the ongoing national revolution. While it had a national distribution, the magazine focused significantly on the women's social scene that had grown up around Bandung's fashion industry. Of all the fashion-centered magazines I have seen in my research, *Puspa Wanita* was the most up-to-date with developments in western fashion, and with American fashion in particular. In part, this likely reflected the presence of Air Force officers' wives, whose husbands, while stationed in Bandung, frequently traveled to the United States for training, sometimes accompanied by their wives.

In any case, the pages of *Puspa Wanita* regularly reported on the latest fashion shows from Braga Street designers who had created the leading edge of "modern" Indonesian fashion since the 1930s.<sup>61</sup> It also regularly covered the social world that revolved around local institutions like the Marion Glamour School, which trained young women to be models, and the *Lembaga Wanita Sempurna*, (or the "League of Refined Women,") an organization that instructed young military wives on the details of fashion and etiquette. The covers of *Puspa Wanita* regularly "introduced" the city's new models or emerging "Refined Women" to the magazine's readers.

But in response to Sukarno's ramped up campaign to "Crush Malaysia," and the new press regulations of May 1963 that accompanied it,<sup>62</sup> the content of *Puspa Wanita* changed radically over the course of three issues. Issue "No. 3," which is undated, but that was published before August 1963,<sup>63</sup> matched much of the content of previous issues of the

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<sup>60</sup> "Flower of Womanhood" is probably the best translation, though strictly the title means "Flower Woman."

<sup>61</sup> See the discussion of the forward-looking and exploratory nature of Bandung fashion in Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Konfrontasi* was also referred to as "*Dwikora*," an acronym for "*Dwi Komando Rakyat*" or "The People's Double Command," with the clear intention of linking the opposition to the Federalization of Malaysia and its accompanied border disputes in Borneo to the successful annexation of West Irian from the Dutch in the Trikora campaign in 1962. The new regulations essentially were put in place to require all publications to seek a new permit, and to allow an opportunity for political review and control of their content by the Sukarno government. For the text of the regulations, see PenPres no 6/1963. [http://www.pta-makassarkota.go.id/peraturan\\_perundangan/PENPRES/PENPRES\\_1963\\_6.pdf](http://www.pta-makassarkota.go.id/peraturan_perundangan/PENPRES/PENPRES_1963_6.pdf).

<sup>63</sup> Putting dates to the issues of *Puspa Wanita* from 1963 on is a challenge. Unlike many magazines, *Puspa Wanita* did not use publication dates, so formally, this is issue is "Year VII, No. 3," and it carries a 1963 publication year on its cover. While this might seem to indicate a March date, the Year VII, No. 4 issue has a new publishing permit attached to it, dated July 29, 1963, so, at earliest, No. 4 is an August issue. The new press law, PenPres no. 6/1963, had been issued by

magazine. The articles on fashion were largely locally sourced and focused. The lead article profiled Nj. E. Kusumanegara, the leader of the Marion Glamour School Bandung. She had begun her career in glamour and fashion at the school's Jakarta branch in 1955, and had spent a year in Europe learning more about fashion and makeup in 1957-1958 before returning to Indonesia and opening the Bandung school, which quickly "had many students."<sup>64</sup>

The life of the school took an interesting turn in 1961, when "[c]onnected with the heated spirit of Trikora at the end of 1961, all activities were halted for a while."<sup>65</sup> Nj. Kusumunegara used the opportunity to travel to the Philippines, the article noted, and carry out special training in the latest techniques in hair-dressing and makeup. The profile also reported that Nj. Kusumanegara had recently organized a fashion show as a fundraiser for the victims of the explosion of Gunung Agung in Bali.<sup>66</sup> The magazine carried a story

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Soekarno on May 15, without an apparent lag put in place for the law to be implemented. Perhaps no editions were printed in the intermittent months while the magazine waited for its permit finally issued in late July?

*Wanita* magazine only published 13 issues in 1963, rather than its normal 22-24, and they were, for the first time in the magazine's history, undated, except for the year. *Varia* changed its permit, but did not miss an issue. But the *Varia* publisher was by that time rather close to the Sukarno camp, and the content of *Varia* had already shifted gradually over the course of the previous three years to be supportive of Sukarnoist rhetoric and worldview.

We do know that Issue No. 3 was published prior to August, while No. 4 cannot have been published before the end of July. However, issue No. 5 clearly references an event on October 19, 1963, the naming of Fatmawati, Sukarno's first and senior wife, as "*Ibu Agung*" or "Great Mother" of the nation. The editor's note below the feature reads "Bandung, *Oktober* 1963." Whatever the actual publication dates may be, there are clear "before" (No. 3), and "after" (No. 5) issues, with No. 4 hanging in some sort of inter-space. The dates for "Year VII" then move into 1964, beginning with No. 6, and No. 11, still in "Year VII," is a "New Years and Lebaran 1965" issue (There were two Ramadans in 1965, one in early February, and the other in late December), that also features a short story on Christmas. The New Year's article, on the political future of *Konfrontasi* and *Nekolim*, reads "The New Year 1965 has already arrived." So it appears that the magazine came out intermittently at best. Sometimes content allows us to locate a particular issue more closely, sometimes it is less precisely visible.

<sup>64</sup> "mendapat siswa banyak." *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 211.

<sup>65</sup> "Berhubungan dengan hangatnja semangat Trikora akhir 1961 segala kegiatan untuk sementara dihentikan." *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 211.

<sup>66</sup> The eruption of Gunung Agung in March 1963 provides a fascinating study of the interplay of modern Indonesian politics and the persistence of traditional belief. The volcano is the primary mountain on the island of Bali, and the "mother temple" of Balinese Hinduism, Besakih, lies on its southwest slope. A once-in-a-century ritual at the temple, Eka Dasa Rudra, which involves the mass sacrifice of animals, including rare ones such as eagles and anteaters that have cosmological significance. When the mountain started "belching" in early 1963, the temple priests postponed the ritual, scheduled for February, taking the mountain's seismological activity as a portent that the Gods were not pleased. Sukarno, however, had invested a significant amount of political capital in inviting world leaders to Bali for the ceremonies as an example of the strength and depth of Indonesian national identity and culture, and he commanded the priests to continue with the originally scheduled ritual. The eruption of the volcano killed 1500 people, and lava flows just barely missed the temple complex itself, all before the full cycle of the ritual could be completed. In Bali, this was taken as a sign that the world had entered a "time of troubles," and it led to significant social unrest. Whether this unrest added to the particularly violent and expansive nature of the killings in Bali in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya is a question that historians have debated. But when speaking with older Balinese about their lives, the eruption of the mountain is one of the clear markers of time and transition in their memories, along with the Japanese era. The eruption of Gunung Agung though is also often used as a coded way of referring to the killings in late 1965 and early 1966 without actually mentioning them. For older Balinese, the two events remain linked. I hope to carry out future research about this connection sometime in the near future, while the older generation that remembers them is still present and able to be interviewed.

about the fashion show later in the issue, including pictures of Marion Glamour School models wearing “new” on-trend western dresses presented without any nod to “Indonesian” fashion.<sup>67</sup> (See Figure 6.17.)



**Figure 6.17:** An all-western “new” fashion lineup in Bandung, May 1963. *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, pp. 216-217.

The forward and western focused outlook of *Puspa Wanita* was also evident in a number of articles in the issue that addressed questions of child rearing and sexuality, and were direct translations of American magazine articles. The article on sexuality was particularly unusual for Indonesian women’s magazines since it directly addressed several questions—homosexuality and masturbation were just two examples—that I never saw discussed in any other instances in my research. In providing answers from “experts about the 20 most frequently asked questions about SEX,”<sup>68</sup> the translation of an article by Phyllis W. Goldman reflected progressive positions on sexuality, even within an American social

<sup>67</sup> “Mode Baru Bermuntjulan di dalam FASHION SHOW Gunung Agung.” (“New Fashions Shown at the Gunung Agung FASHION SHOW.”) *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, pp. 216-217.

<sup>68</sup> “Djawaban para ahli atas 20 pertanyaan tentang SEX yg paling sering ditanyakan,” *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 226-27.

context, not to mention Indonesia's significantly more sexually conservative worldview.<sup>69</sup> The issue also included a long article on "*Abortus*," meaning miscarriage rather than abortion, which, though written by a local doctor, Sujono Hadi, reported the latest theories from American scientists about the psychological effects of women losing pregnancies to miscarriage.<sup>70</sup> In Issue No. 3, then, *Puspa Wanita* covered materials and presented women in ways that were significantly out of line from the images of revolutionary Indonesian women that had already largely been the norm in magazines such as *Varia*.

The (likely) August or September 1963 edition of *Puspa Wanita*, No. 4, showed both continuities and several significant changes from the previous issue. The front matter on the inside front cover of the magazine continued, as it had previously, to introduce the cover model for the issue and previewing the highlights of that month's magazine. In No. 4, the copy discussed Dheywani Pribadi, shown on the cover in *kain-kebaya* and *konde*, four years after her *batik*-less photo shoot as Miss *Varia* 1959. It read:

— We introduce—Nj. Dheywani Pribadi—in a pose—captivating—who can't be envious—who was caught—by our photographer—previously—at an interesting event—the braga festival—where she—served—as—a model.<sup>71</sup>

The introductory text continued with a discussion about the interplay between fashion and models, something it said was "pleasing." It then invited readers to peruse the fashion pages at the middle of the issue.

<sup>69</sup> On homosexuality: "How can you tell if your child is a homosexual?" (Answer: if by age 8 they only want to play with children of the other sex, this is a sign. By this age, children prefer strongly to play with children of their own gender. Most important here is a strong relationship between father and son. "*Hubungan baik antara ayah dan anak laki2 adalah terpenting.*") The answer did not address same-sex attraction among girls specifically. On masturbation: "Does 'does masturbation cause harm?' (*mengganggu?*) Answer: Not if it's done in 'normal' amounts, it's only a problem when it's 'unusual (not normal),' (*luar biasa (tidak normal)*), and then it's 'very bothersome.' (*mengganggu sekali.*)" *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, p. 226-27.

<sup>70</sup> "*Abortus: Pertolongan dan Pentjegahan*," ("Abortion: Help and Prevention.") *Puspa Wanita*, Year VII, No. 3, pp. 229-230. The article noted that there were two other forms of "*abortus*," "medical abortion for medical reasons, and medical abortion for non-medical reasons, the latter which was 'illegal according to the constitution.'" ("*jang dapat dihukum menurut undang2 dasar*,") and which the article expressly did not write about further.

<sup>71</sup> "*Kami perkenalkan—Nj. Dheywani Pribadi—dalam pose—menawan hati—siapa tak iri—jang didjupati—juruptret kita—dalam atjara menarik—braga festival—dimana dia—bertindak—selaku—pergawati. // —bitjara tentang—pergawati—masalah mode—merupakan—soal—jang—hangat—karena—pergawati dan mode—merupakan—dua hal—jang saling berhubungan—satu dengan lain—maka perhatikanlah—hidangan PW—nomor—ini—dihalaman—tengah— // —pakaian dan wanita—djuga—seperti—suatu masalah—jang erat sekali—angkut—paunja—namun bagi mereka—jang—naik—remadja—peristiwa alamiah—menstruasi—bukanlah—peristiwa—jang mesti—ditjemaskan.*" *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 4, Front Inside Cover. The long dashes are in the original text. The cover image showed Dheywani dressed in *kain-kebaya*, but also wearing the crown and sash of a beauty contest winner. She had indeed used her Miss *Varia* 1959 crown to move into the world of professional modeling, but this time, clearly also wearing Indonesian clothing as well. The Braga Festival was a prominent annual celebration held in Bandung, focused on the city's main business thoroughfare from which it took its name.

These pages featured four new western-style creations specifically made for teenagers, one of them sleeveless (called a “you can see”), which the article said was “*nota bene* up until now well-liked by a large number of our young women because of Indonesia’s climate, which is probably too hot???”<sup>72</sup> The front matter then mentioned that something else related to teenagers was the approach of menstruation, and pointed to an article on the subject also included in the issue. The facing page featured an article on Nj. E. Supardi, an Air Force wife, and leader of the *Lembaga Wanita Sempurna*, (or the “League of Refined Women,”) an organization that instructed young military wives on the details of fashion and etiquette. (See Figure 6.18).

But aside from this, the Bandung-focused content was noticeably reduced in amount and in scope, consisting largely of short stories by male Indonesian writers. These had not been a particular feature of earlier issues of *Puspa Wanita*, although it was a staple of many other women’s magazines. In place of local content, the issue featured more Indonesian language translations of American articles on women’s health, a profile of Brigitte Bardot,<sup>73</sup> translations of European short stories, an article on Chekov, and a three-page spread of western fashion with drawings of white, western models.

The overwhelming presence of short stories, rather than features, showed a markedly different profile to the magazine, as if the editors were putting content “on hold” while they sorted out the emerging political situation. Notably, this edition also featured a new publishing permit number, dated July 30, 1963, reflecting the issuance of a new press law signed by Sukarno on May 15, 1963.

In the next issue, No. 5., published in October 1963, the tenor of the magazine’s front space changed completely. The issue took on a whole new—and much more political—language and tone, one completely in line with Sukarno’s cultural and political projects attached to the *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia. While much of the content of the magazine followed *Puspa Wanita*’s previous style, the front few pages were dominated by articles in a new vernacular that interrupted the earlier feel of the magazine, both rhetorically and visually.

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<sup>72</sup> “*jd notabene sampai sekarang ini masih digemari sebagian besar gadis2 kita karena iklim Indonesia jang barangkali terlalu panas???*” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 4., p. 263.

<sup>73</sup> While many western actresses would become anathema in publications in the last years of Sukarno’s presidency, Brigitte Bardot, known for her socialist leanings at the time, remained a favorite, and acceptable sexy western model.





Figure 6.18: *Puspa Wanita* Front Matter, August 1963, with Dewayani Pribadi, upper left, in *kain-kebaya*. The new publication permit information is visible on the upper right of the first page.

The cover description still introduced the model, Ineke Karamoy Loho, who was shown wearing a sleeveless yellow dress, with a pearl necklace and a cascading western hairstyle. But it used a completely different rhetoric to describe her:

—we—introduce—her name is Ineke Karamoy Loho—young woman—  
 [from] Bandung—with her—smile—sparkling—towards—the future—  
 homeland—Indonesia—that is currently—striving to finish/complete—its  
 national—revolution—to—attain—a society—to [of] Indonesian—socialism—  
 that doesn't know—the exploitation of man—by—man<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> —kami—perkenalkan—namanya Ineke Karamoy Loho—dara—bandung—dengan—senjuman—tjemerlang—  
 menghadapi—masa—depan—tanah air—indonesia—jang kini—sedang—berjuang menjelesaikan—revolusi—  
 nasionalnja—untuk—mentjapai—masjarakat—sosialisme—indonesia—jang—tidak—mengenal—exploitation l'home  
 [sic]—par—l'home [sic]—” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover. The long dashes are in the original text.  
 “Exploitation l'homme par l'homme,” was a Sukarno catch-phrase, which he sprinkled into many of his speeches and  
 writings, using the French.

The column continued with similar language, stressing the special roles women had to play in the revolutionary process. As part of their duties to build an “Indonesian national revolution” and to “awaken a new world,”<sup>75</sup> the editors suggested that “we as Indonesian women must of course not remain silent in making Ganefo<sup>76</sup> a success.”<sup>77</sup> The text then took a rambling, but highly informative, turn.

Ganefo I must be successful. That is the blessing of Indonesian women [“*kaum wanita Indonesia*”] that today has an exalted mother [“*ibu agung*”<sup>78</sup>], Ibu Fatmawati, *the first lady Indonesia*,<sup>79</sup> who has rendered so much service for the advancement of our women [“*kaum wanita kita*”] and has also worked greatly to uplift religion and humanitarianism.

The emancipation of our women [“*kaum wanita kita*”] must point towards constructive measures for the advancement of the nation, and because of that, we follow the correct advice of the great leader of our revolution<sup>80</sup> who

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<sup>75</sup> “—*membangun—dunia baru—*” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover. This is the same language Sukarno used in the 1964 speeches discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>76</sup> GANEFO, the Games of the New Emerging Forces, held in Jakarta in November 1964, was Sukarno’s latest large-scale project to build the non-aligned movement internationally. GANEFO was intended to provide a level playing field in athletics for countries from Asia, African and Latin America, and from other socialist countries. Sukarno initiated the project as part of the anti-Olympic plank of his New World platform, and it occasioned the building of a great deal of infrastructure around Jakarta. The International Olympic Committee had suspended Indonesia from the Olympic Games in February 1963, in response to an incident in which the Indonesians failed to provide visas to athletes from Israel and “Nationalist China” (Taiwan) for the 1962 Asian Games that were also held in Jakarta. Fifty-one national teams attended GANEFO, some official government delegations, and other unofficial. The games occasioned the building of Jakarta’s first by-pass over Blvd Djendral Soedirman, which was covered in multiple magazines, including *Varia*. Schools were shut for two weeks so students could act as guides and ushers, and electricity was rationed ahead of the games to make certain there would be sufficient power to light the games during their duration. For a period of intensifying economic pressure, both in terms of infrastructure and general expenses, GANEFO represented a huge investment of real and political capital by Sukarno and the Indonesian government. Politically, the games were linked to both an analysis of the New Emerging Forces (Nefos) v. the Old Established Forces (Oldefos) and their “imperialistic” outlook. Furthermore, Sukarno directly linked GANEFO to the “Crush Malaysia” efforts, and a ubiquitous slogan at the games was “*Sukseskan GANEFO Ganjang Malaysia.*” (Make GANEFO a success Crush Malaysia), which RAND analyst Ewa Pauker pointed out, put these two separate ideas together without any intermediary punctuation. See Ewa T. Pauker, *GANEFO I: Sports and Politics in Djakarta*.

<sup>77</sup> “—*kita—sebagai—wanita—Indonesia—tentu—saja—tidak—tinggal—diam—dalam—mensukseskan—ganefo.*” *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover.

<sup>78</sup> “*Agung*” is a Sanskrit word shared in both Javanese and Balinese that means “high,” “exalted” and “large/mighty,” with the connotation of being above all others. The largest gong in a *gamelan* ensemble, which strikes at the beginning and end of each piece, and each cycle within a piece (and in the cyclical structure of *gamelan* music, those first and last tones happen at the same “time” in the cycle), is called “*gong agung.*” The word can be reverential and replete with cultural meaning. The term implies that Fatmawati was the highest mother of all mothers.

<sup>79</sup> This phrase is in English, reflecting its origins in Indonesian political debates about Fatmawati’s place in the nation in the aftermath of Sukarno’s marriage to Hartini in 1953, discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>80</sup> Normally, this formal title would be capitalized. In keeping with the format of *Puspa Wanita*’s formatter, however, I have left it uncapitalized here.

emphatically says—*stop*<sup>81</sup>—*beauty*—oh my—contests because they are not in line [*“sesuai”*] with our identity and the rhythm of our revolution.<sup>82 83</sup>



Figure 6.19: Fatmawati accorded the title of the “High Mother” of the nation. *Puspa Wanita*, October 1963, No. 5, p. 283.

It is important to keep in mind that *Puspa Wanita* was the most glamour-focused of the women’s magazines. Of all the women’s magazine’s they were the most likely to have championed and supported beauty pageants as an appropriate expression for young Indonesian women’s beauty. So, whether the interjected “*aduh*”<sup>84</sup> is an exclamation of loss

81 “Stop” in English.

82 “*ganefo l—harus sukses—itulah—doa restu—kaum wanita—indonesia—jang kini—sudah—pula—memiliki—ibu agunja—ibu fatmawati—the first lady indonesia—jang sudah—banjak—djasanja—untuk—kemajuan—kaum wanita kita—dan banjak—pula usahanja—dalam—membangkitkan—semangat—beragama—dan peri—kemanusiaan—//—emansipasi—kaum—wanita—kita—haruslah—diarahkan—kepada—usaha2—konstrup—pada—kemajuan—bangsa—oleh—karena—tepat—andjuran—pemimpin—besar revolusi—kita—jang—tegas2—mengatakan—stop—kontes2-an—adu—ketjantikkan—karena—tidak—sesuai—dengan kepribadian—dan iramanja revolusi—kita—” Puspa Wanita, 1963, no. 5, Front Inside Cover.*

83 The entire text, like the versions immediately above, is divided by long dashes. For ease of reading here, I have reproduced the text without them, but did choose to insert them back in around the interjection—“*adu*,” translatable as “oh my,” or “my gosh”—where the flow of the idea is somewhat broken.

84 With the “h” on the end it its more prevalent spelling.

over a treasured idea or of a newly found “revolutionary” tut-tutting about outdated past practices wasn’t fully clear here. Perhaps it was both, but it most certainly was a marker of sudden change.

On the facing inside front page, readers were greeted by a large photograph of a smiling Fatmawati, along with a large headline proclaiming that she had been given the title of “*Ibu Agung*,” or “Supreme Mother” of Indonesia.<sup>85</sup> Though shown wearing Indonesian fashion and a light, sheer head covering that had long been her standard dress at public events, Fatmawati also sported a pageant-queen sash with her new title embroidered on it, an interesting appropriation of beauty queen imagery for a middle-aged mother and first-lady of the nation. (Again, see Figure 6.19).

The most explicitly political article of the issue appeared on the next page. It exhorted women to help bring about the success of GANEFO. The GANEFO slogan, “Onward, No Retreat”<sup>86</sup> ran (in English) in large print across the bottom of the page, while other slogans (in Indonesian) ran in a column down the left side of the facing page. Visually, the pages of *Puspa Wanita* were turned into a billboard for the games and its revolutionary messaging.<sup>87</sup> (See Figure 6.20).

Reflecting Sukarno’s “many public appeals asking that everyone do all that is in [their] power to make GANEFO a success,”<sup>88</sup> *Puspa Wanita* called on its female readers specifically as women to do their part in that national effort, writing:

WE Indonesian women cannot keep silent. We will make GANEFO I successful in all areas that are necessary. It is not only our female athletes and our women artists who will make a splash directly in the various fields of the festival of sport and the arts, but we, Indonesian women as a whole must pray that GANEFO I is a success, that it runs smoothly according to plan, and that there are no deficiencies. We wish, with a hope that is sincere and holy, that God the Most High will bestow all bounty upon the Indonesian people who are in the midst of completing their revolution, and of organizing

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<sup>85</sup> The title was given to her on October 4, 1963, by the *Ikatan Pegawai Wanita*, (Association of Women Civil Servants) in a specifically tailored event in Jakarta for her work on “social, women’s and humanitarian issues.” Nancy Florida notes that “*Ratu Agung*” is the title given in Central Javanese *kratons* to the mother of a king.

<sup>86</sup> Pauker points out that the slogan went on to become a principal slogan for the Crush Malaysia campaign. See Ewa T. Pauker, *GANEFO I: Sports and Politics in Djakarta*, p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> Similar adaptations are also visible in *Wanita* and *Varia*. Clearly all magazines were expected to help exhort the Indonesian people to “*Sukseskan GANEFO*.”

<sup>88</sup> See Ewa T. Pauker, *GANEFO I: Sports and Politics in Djakarta*, p. 12. She continues “In this way everyone was made to feel that he was in some way contributing personally to the success of the Games, and, thereby, to the prestige of his country. It was very effective.” The use of male assumed gender in Pauker’s language belies the content of *Puspa Wanita*.

GANEFEO I, which we hold to be a manifestation of the national philosophy of Indonesia of building a new world.<sup>89</sup>

**Kaum wanita Indonesia ikut mensukseskan :**

# GANEFEO I

— Gagasan Bung Karno yang telah menjadi milik dunia.

— Sebagai manifestasi falsafah negara Indonesia dalam membangun dunia baru.

Oleh: Staf Redaksi P.W.

**Kita Sukseskan Ganefo I.**

KITA kaum wanita Indonesia tidak boleh tinggal diam. Kita sukseskan Ganefo I disegala bidang yang diperlukan. Bukan sadja atlet2 puteri kita dan seniwati2 kita yang berketjimpung langsung dibidangnja masing2 dalam pesta olah raga dan seni, tapi kita kaum ibu Indonesia harus mendo'akan, agar GANEFEO I ini sukses, berdjalan lantjar menurut rentjana semula, dan tidak kurang suatu apa. Kita berharap dengan harapan yang tulus dan sutji, semoga Tuhan Jang Maha Esa, tetap melimpahkan segala karunia2nya kepada bangsa Indonesia yang sedang menjelesaikan revolusinja, dan dalam penjelenggaraan Ganefo I ini, kita menganggapnja sebagai suatu manifestasi: falsafah negara Indonesia dalam membangun dunia baru.

**RALAT:** Lihat iklan pada omset halaman ke 3

Dapat pula dilihat pada:

Dibawah SURABAYA dijumpai: DEN PASAR: Apotieck "GANA", di Oelalinda 26

Di BANDUNG: tamah Toko "Lina" Di MAKASSAR: "LINA" Coon Work & Toko "EUROPA"

Bupati Jonan SAMARINDA dihapuskan

JOGJAKARTA toko "AGUNG" & Tu KUDUS dihapuskan diganti TJJRE BON toko "MEDAN" Pasuketan 72

Selamat datang Pahlawan<sup>2</sup>

## GANEFEO

\*  
GANEFEO harus SUKSES sebagai Manifestasi Pembangunan DUNIA BARU

\*  
Hiduplah semangat persatuan Olahragawan<sup>2</sup> DUNIA BARU

\*  
Dengan GANEFEO kita galang Perdamaian dunia

\*  
Redaksi Puspawanita

### isi hati ISTERI

Tinjauan Redaksi:

RUBRIK ini adalah rubrik tetap yg dapat djuga diisi oleh para pembaca, atau se-kurang2nja mengintikan bahan-bahan yang baik untuk dikomika kan lewat rubrik ini, yang anda pikir banyak gunanya untuk diketahui oleh pembaca2 kita lainnya, khususnya oleh kaum pria, baik yang telah maupun yang akan menjadi suami.

Nah, selamat menikmati rubrik baru, dan kami menantikan ide2 pembaca yang lain2nya.



Ketika kami masih bertunangan, dia lah suda2nja pria yang paling kecewa sifa2nja yang galanc- nika m- ngalah dan selalu memondjukkan kerendahan hatinja, membuat tjinja saja kepada- nja menjadi bersedih dengan meph- nja. Saja beranggapan bahwa sija lah satu2nja wanita yang paling berba- hgia didunia ini.

Akan tetapi setelah perkawinan di- langungkan, sebulan dua bulan mu- lailah munjil perubahan2 yang meng- hawatirkan. Sifa2nja yang galanc da- hulu itu mulai hilang, menjadi sifa2- yang hanya memondjikan diri sendi- sadja. Sifa2nja yang asli mulai mun- tjil dan sika marak2. Tapi2 hari se- laila suda2 sika kesalah2 sija yang di-orek2nja, kesalahan tekek bengak yang sebenarnya bisa dimanfaatkan tan- memasuki sebuah rumah tangga yang membahagikan ber-angsur2 djadi le-

Seorang sija djadi sika ngelaman, sika mengembalikan diri kepada ma- sa-masa yang lalu, ketika kami masih bertunangan, sehingga sija merasa bertunangan lebih bahagia dan lebih meera dari perkawinan. Apakah pem- dagat sija ini benar atau jujuk lah- inlah yang sija alami.

Jang sija paling inginkan dalam berumah tangga sekarang ialah, se- orang suami yang dapat mendjarkan dirinya dari nafsu2 amarah, dan dapat mengubur isterinja daripada segala masalah yang menerbit halnja. Jang sija inginkan supaya sifa2 galanc sija- baik ketika masa pertunangan dulu itu terus dibawa dalam perkawinan, djuga- ngan hanya manis ketika permulaan saja, kemudian djadi pahit setelah memperolehja. Dia tidak sika lagi me-mud2 hiasan rambut sija seperti dulu, tidak sika lagi mengembulkan sendapa2nja tentang gasin yang sija paki dan tidak sika lagi ngobrol2 se- tidak sika ngobrol lagi djawabnja per- cek2 sika. Saja djadi sopi dan me- rassa sendiri.

Jang sija inginkan ialah supaya su- ami sija tetap mengagumi sija seperti pada masa2 kami bertunangan, dan sa- ja ingin supaya suami sija tetap mau djadi pomas, dan satu2nja manusia yang sija tjinjai.

ISTERI

# ONWARD - NO RETREAT -

284 285

**Figure 6.20:** *Puspa Wanita* becomes a billboard for the “sukses” of GANEFEO *Puspa Wanita*, no. 5, October 1963, pp. 284-285.

*Puspa Wanita*'s female readers, therefore, were being explicitly called to play a specifically gendered role in “succeeding” the national revolution. They were tasked with prayer (something everyone was capable of doing, but also an interesting rhetorical intervention in the previously non-religious tone of *Puspa Wanita*) to assure everything would go smoothly in that regard. This ran alongside articles providing advice on which necklace to wear or how to dress for an outing in the country.

<sup>89</sup> “KITA kaum wanita Indonesia tidak boleh tinggal diam. Kita sukseskan Ganefo I disegala bidang yang diperlukan. Bukan sadja atlet2 puteri kita dan seniwati2 kita yang berketjimpung langsung dibidangnja masing2 dalam pesta olah raga dan seni, tapi kita kaum ibu Indonesia harus mendo'akan agar GANEFEO I ini sukses, berdjalan lantjar menurut rentjana semula, dan tidak kurang suatu apa. Kita berharap dengan harapan yang tulus dan sutji, semoga Tuhan Jang Maha Esa, tetap melimpahkan segala karunia2nya kepada bangsa Indonesia yang sedang menjelesaikan revolusinja, dan dalam penjelenggaraan Ganefo I ini, kita menganggapnja sebagian suatu manifestasi: falsafah negara Indonesia dalam membangun dunia baru.” *Puspa Wanita*, no. 5., October 1963, p. 284.

Over the course of the next several issues of *Puspa Wanita*, reaching into early 1965, several important and highly divergent new images of Indonesian women also emerged. While retaining some elements of its earlier layouts, editions of *Puspa Wanita* increasingly featured articles and images of women as ideal types, rather than as individuals, that is, as various expressions of a *kaum wanita*.

The December 1964 edition, a “Combined Special New Years and Lebaran”<sup>90</sup> version, was exemplary in this regard. The cover image was of a model dressed as an ideal beauty. She wore an elegant sheer green *kebaya* with a tailored *bef*, and a fine *kain batik* in a refined *parang rusak* motif. Over her shoulder lay an exquisite green silk *selendang*. Her gold jewelry was spare and refined, a gold and diamond necklace, two gold pins and gold earrings. On her head, she wore a gold fabric crown, as she was crowned the queen of the Braga Festival. The title holder was none other than Dhewayani Pribadi, whose transformation from ultra-modern fashion model to proper Indonesian woman was now complete. (See Figure 6.21).



**Figure 6.21:** *Puspa Wanita* celebrates New Year and Lebaran 1965. Dhewayani Pribadi as a winning model from the Braga Festival in Bandung.

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<sup>90</sup> “*Nomor Gabungan Istimewa Tahun Baru dan Lebaran 1965.*” 1965 was an odd year in the cycle for Lebaran, with two incidents of the fasting month, one at the beginning of the year, celebrated here, and the other, as is noted in Chapter 7, coming in December 1965.

Two other groups of exemplary Indonesian women also graced the pages of the issue. One group were military protectors of the nation. *Sukarelewati*, or women “volunteers” who joined newly formed paramilitary units attached to the military and to various political parties or religious or social movements,<sup>91</sup> donned military uniforms, trained in marksmanship and military tactics and, potentially, prepared to be sent to the front with Malaysia.<sup>92</sup> In *Puspa Warna* No. 6,<sup>93</sup> these women had been referred to, using Sukarno’s appellation, as “complete patriots,” (*patriot komplit*) for their willingness to



**Figure 6.22:** *Puspa Wanita* celebrates “the activity of our female volunteers.” *Puspa Wanita*, December 1964, p. 500

<sup>91</sup> See the discussion of *sukarelewati* earlier in this chapter.

<sup>92</sup> Sukarno called for the development of such groups in his August 17, 1963 national day speech, and women’s organizations from across the political spectrum responded, including elite women. Both Herawati Diah and Gusti Nurul, for instance, were members of *sukarelewati* groups, and were photographed in training exercises. A picture Herawati Diah included in her book, which must have been taken in Thailand in 1964, or perhaps during home leave during reassignment, shows her group of women dressed in matching *kain-kebaya*, standing in formation. The *kain* appear to be *sarong* cloths, rather than batik. See Herawati Diah. *An Endless Journey: Reflections of an Indonesian Journalist*, p. 184. Gusti Nurul’s children also remember a photo of their mother with her *sukarelewati* group of military wives in Bandung. No *sukarelewati* groups were ever actually dispatched to participate in the border skirmishes.

<sup>93</sup> Likely a January 1964 issue. One of the first articles is about horoscopes for the new year 1964, including what color dresses are best for women of each astrological sign, and the article on *patriot komplit* reports on a training by members of the *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia* (HMI, or the Indonesian Muslim Students Association,) that took place from December 21-27, 1963.

sacrifice themselves for the defense of the motherland.<sup>94</sup>

The December 1964 article on these complete patriots included pictures of *sukarelwati* training—in this case marching in formation and breaking down weapons while blindfolded—just one of several editions to do so. (See Figure 6.22). “In these pictures below,” the article exclaimed “readers can see what nowadays inflames the breast of each Indonesian revolutionary woman.”<sup>95</sup>

The third form of ideal woman presented in the December 1964 edition of *Puspa Wanita* was the Javanese dancer, specifically the quartet of young and beautiful dancers of *serimpi*, a spiritually potent dance form used to align the powers of the macro-cosmos with those of the micro-cosmos of a Javanese *kraton*. (See Figure 6.23). The article noted that the four dancers would have been ritually cleansed through a *ruwatan* ceremony<sup>96</sup> and that they would be “beautiful,” (“*tjantik-djelita*.”) Indeed, within the story of the first *serimpi*, that the article said was performed for the God Brahma, the god was struck by the “beauty” (“*keelokan*”) of both the dancers and their refined movements. The purpose of the *serimpi* is to put the energy of the universe back in good order, aligning good and evil, the healthy and the broken. “There is a war between the forces of the earth and the heavens,” the article notes, “or between that which is broken and that which is good. It is a war without end, rather it must occur repeatedly over and over, so that the balance of nature endures.”<sup>97</sup> The *serimpi*, then, and ritually purified female dancers who perform it, are a powerful way of mitigating times of moral distress. And the beauty of the dancers, of both their faces and the comportment of their bodies, is central to its power.

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<sup>94</sup> The full definition from Sukarno’s speech to the HMI volunteers is: “*seseorang jang karena katjintannya kepada tanah airnja, bangsa dan negaranja dengan ichlas bersedia mengabdikan diri dan mengorbankan apa sadja bahkan djika perlu djiwa raganja untuk membela menjelamatkan dan mengagungkan demi kebesaran Tanah Air Negara dan Bangsanja itu.*” (“A person who because of their love for the nation, people and state is whole-heartedly ready to devote themselves and sacrifice anything, if necessary, body and soul, to defend and exalt the greatness of the Nation and its People.”) *Puspa Wanita*, 1963, no. 6 [likely published January 1964], p. 325.

<sup>95</sup> “*Dalam gambar<sup>2</sup> dibawah ini akan tampaklah kepada para pembatja apa jg kini sedang menggelorakan setiap dada wanita revolusioner Indonesia itu.*” *Puspa Wanita*, December 1964, p. 500.

<sup>96</sup> A *ruwatan*, sometimes badly translated as an “exorcism,” is a ceremony performed to remove obstacles from individuals based on various characteristics they may have at any given time. The ritual involves the performance of a specific *lakon*, or story in the *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry) repertoire, that is generally only performed by certain and quite powerful *dalangs* or puppet masters. The performance happens, unusually for *wayang kulit*, during the day rather than after sundown, and the story itself is rather short. Those attendees specifically seeking to be made “*ruwat*,” or “healthy,” come to the event having prepared themselves ritually as well.

<sup>97</sup> “. . . *peperangan antara kekuatan bumi dan langit atau buruk dan baik. Peperangan ini tak berkesudahan, bahkan harus berlangsung terus berulang kali, agar keseimbangan alam tetap abadi.*” *Puspa Wanita*, December 1964, p. 516.





Figure 6.23: *Puspa Wanita* explains the power of the *serimpi* dance across time. *Puspa Wanita*, December 1964, pp. 516-517.

**1965: Ideal Indonesian Women Protecting—or Endangering—the Revolution**

These images of Indonesian women as ideal types who protected the nation in various ways that filled the pages of *Puspa Wanita* in December 1964 were not singular to that issue. Indeed, from the 1963 *Konfrontasi* press changes forward, Indonesian women began to show up in pages of women’s magazines in various types of uniforms. While this was not unusual for the members of the newly created women’s military and police brigades, it also expanded to include the members of various social and political organizations. Various pictorials showed the women of Nahdlatul Ulama learning to shoot rifles (a common element of “training” as part of the Dwikora mobilizations,) all wearing identical *kain-kebaya*. Gerwani members were shown marching in street demonstrations in identical *kain-kebaya*, wearing a specially designed *batik* pattern that featured strong

female figures drawing on iconography from Javanese *wayang*, but with modern touches.<sup>98</sup> (See Figure 6.24). The wives of the staff of the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok, led by Herawati Diah, gathered for drill in *kain sarung*, white *kebaya* and matching military hats, as members of the Tjakrawati Civil Defense Force, connected to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (See Figure 6.25).



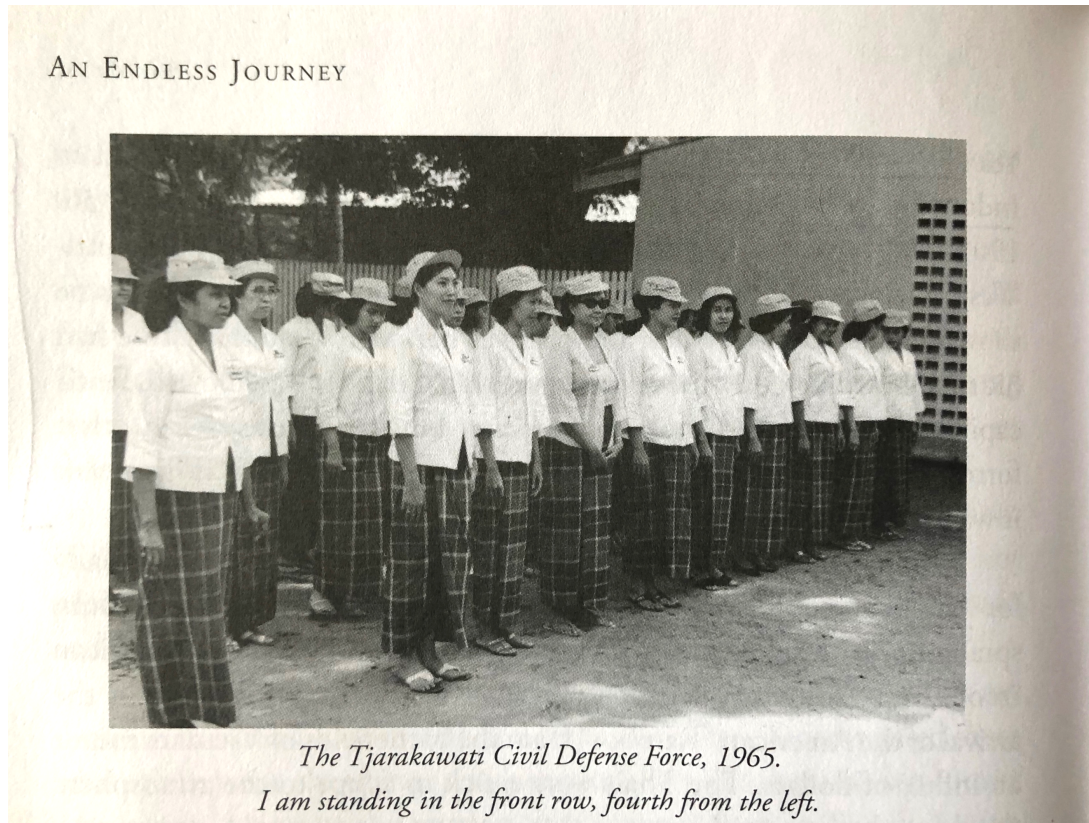
**Figure 6.24:** “Batik Gerwani-PKI.” Or at least that is how it is labeled at the Danar-Hadi Museum in Solo. The piece shows heroic female *wayang* figures, but notably in short skirts. Two of the characters are wearing their hair in ponytails.

Sukarno’s description of the various women of Kowani as elements of a garden that began this chapter could be described through color blocks precisely because the women from various organizations and areas were wearing identical uniforms, rather than because they each chose an outfit that best accentuated their own features and skin tone. So, while

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<sup>98</sup> The batik design was intended to help Gerwani cadres bridge cultural gaps to Javanese peasants, and the pattern featured elements of *wayang* stories that emphasized the power of peasants and other “ordinary” people in groups. Though not discussed in this dissertation, LEKRA, the communist arts organizations, had worked specifically with *dhalangs*, or puppet masters, to craft *wayang* performance styles that de-emphasized the royal and court-centered expositions that were characteristic of many stories. The long, slow opening scenes would often describe the court and the characters at length, extolling the virtues of the king and of kingship. The PKI often used cultural performances, and *wayang* specifically, to draw large crowds to their political rallies. Several *dhalangs* and *wayang* aficionados I spoke with during my research periods recounted that a significant deconstruction of the traditional, rather “set” form of the *lakon* (*wayang* tale) structures occurred during the early 1960s, as LEKRA *dhalangs* needed to cut significant sections of the story on the fly when the political speeches by PKI cadres went significantly longer than expected.

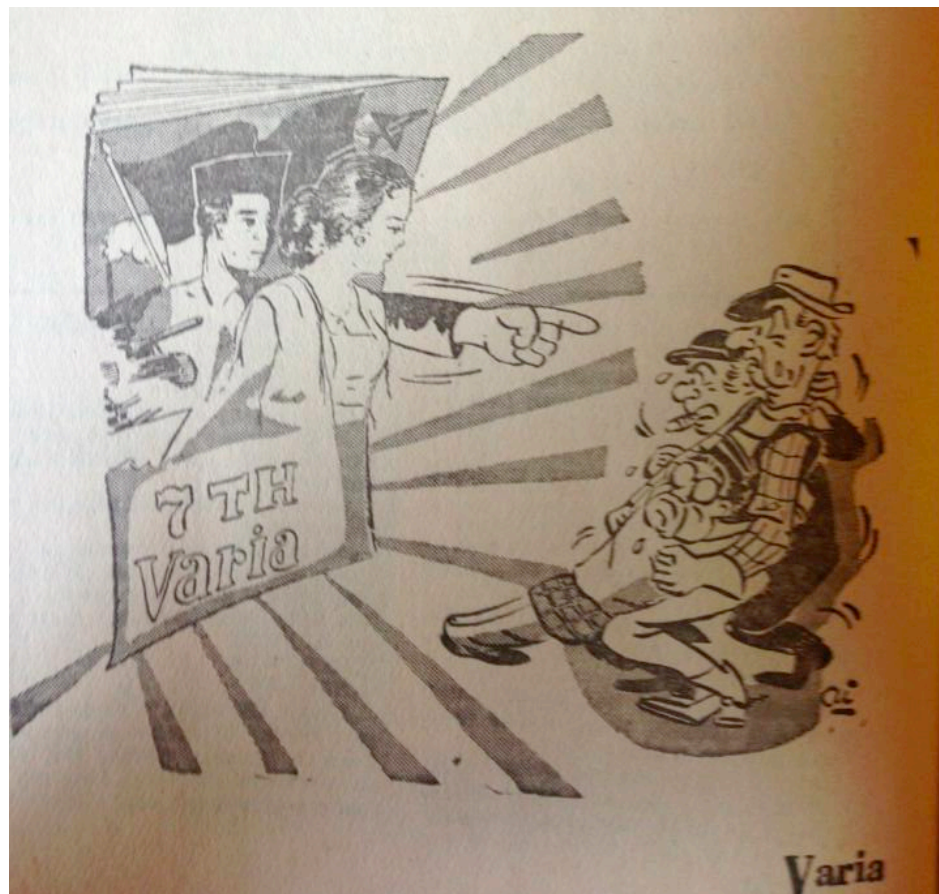
*kain-kebaya* had served, to that point, as a form of *pakaian nasional*, with the advent of a certain type of political theatrics of domestic radicalization that was part and parcel of the new culture of *Konfrontasi*, Indonesian women were now grouped together not only by politics, but by uniform fashion.



**Figure 6.25:** Herawati Diah as *sukarelawati*. In uniform with the Indonesian Embassy wives in Bangkok. As Ambassador's wife, her outfit is slightly different. Her *kebaya* is with *bef*, and she wears dark glasses. Herawati Diah, *An Endless Journey*, p. 184.

This would become a regular feature of the New Order, and is discussed at the end of Chapter 7. But it is clear from the pages of women's magazines that this practice dates to the era of *Konfrontasi*. Clothing became not just an expression of individual identity, but, in the wearing of exact matching outfits, of the transition of women into a *kaum* not only in theory, but in terms of fashion. As such, uniformed women clearly came to represent collective identities in the political world of *Konfrontasi*, symbolically representing the revolutionary nation.

Revolutionary political art placed the idealized Indonesian woman as the front-rank defender of the nation. On the occasion of its seventh anniversary in April 1965, *Varia* published an image that captured the revolutionary zeitgeist of the *Konfrontasi* moment. A larger-than-life cover of *Varia* showed the various forces opposing Malaysia: the army, navy and air force, Indonesia's industrial capacity and its national pride exemplified in the national flag. An ideal Indonesian man was also represented, but leading all these elements of the revolutionary nation was an exemplary Indonesian woman. She wore a *kebaya*, with her hair pulled back in a *konde*, as she stared down the frightened Malaysian leader, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who collapsed into the grasp of an American cowboy (President Lyndon Johnson) and a British banker (Prime Minister Harold Wilson). Although it is the *peci*-wearing ideal Indonesian man who pointed an accusing finger at the neo-colonial imperialist forces threatening Indonesia, his arm came from behind the ideal Indonesian woman, who lead the revolutionary charges from the front. (See Figure 6.26.)



**Figure 6.26:** Indonesian forces aligned in *Konfrontasi*, with the ideal Indonesian woman in the lead. *Varia*, April 1965

But these images of the ideal Indonesian woman also appeared alongside images of their obverse, the “sexually dangerous” woman. Examples appeared in both *Varia* and *Puspa Wanita* in late 1964 and early 1965. Echoing the earlier constructions of “moral panic,” these sexually promiscuous women were decidedly western in their clothing, and were shown in styles that were suggestive of both Hollywood starlets and Indonesian glamour school students. But unlike women who wore western fashion in ways that were *netjis*, *rapih* and *bersih*, these women’s hair had become too high, their skirts too tight and too short, and their necklines too plunging to meet proper standards for revolutionary Indonesian women.



**Figure 6.27:** “Not in keeping with Indonesian identity.” *Varia*, September 2, 1964, p. 7.

A *Varia* article, from September 1964, featured illustrations from the Jakarta police department, distributed to give examples of women's clothing that would be in violation of a newly promulgated local regulation aimed at controlling inappropriate dress and grooming by both women and men.<sup>99</sup> The high hair, plunging neck and back lines, and short, tight skirts of the illustrations, joined by men's pompadours and "Beatle" haircuts were all said to be "Not in line with Indonesian identity."<sup>100</sup> (See Figure 6.27).

A *Puspa Wanita* article, from January/February 1965 did not mention any specific regulations, but it showed a more artistic version of the same drawings from *Varia* the year earlier of women whose hair was too high and whose legs and breasts were too visible. The text made clear these were not simply no longer in keeping with Indonesian identity. Rather, that these styles were now "Forbidden!" ("*Dilarang!*") (See Figure 6.28).

The full page included other material that made clear that women dressing this way was considered an attack on and impediment to the development of an Indonesian revolutionary identity. Titled "*Mode dan Kepribadian*" ("Fashion and Identity,") the article discussed images taken from behind of two women wearing tight short skirts, the *spanrok-spanrokan* of Sukarno's July 1964 speech to Kowani. The brief text suggested that neither woman was dressed properly, but that the skirt with the back slit in it was the worse of the two options.

The implications of such choices were fully connected to the fate of the nation. "Indonesian women must take warning," the text cautioned, "for the sake of finishing the revolution!"<sup>101</sup> Reflecting the imagery of Hollywood movie stars, these forbidden women

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<sup>99</sup> Men's fashion violations included wearing jeans that were too tight to the leg and pompadour hairstyles. Both are associated with rock and roll singers such as Elvis Presley, whose music Sukarno had recently (and still to this day famously) referred to as "*ngak ngik ngok*," for his onomatopoeic representation of what he felt was the jangling nature of music by such artists as Presley, the Beatles and Nat King Cole. The initial use of *ngak ngik ngok* was in Sukarno's August 17, 1959 National Day speech, though it was tied generally to rock-and-roll and the cha-cha at that time, and less to specific artists. (See Steven Farram, "Wage War Against Beatle Music!" p. 249.) I have been told stories of men going out wearing tight jeans who would be stopped by policemen, and, if a *kecap* bottle (a fairly skinny, narrow condiment bottle,) could not fit between the jeans and their wearer's calf, the police would slit the legs of the jeans open with scissors. I've also been told stories of men having their hair forcibly cut if it was too pompadour-esque. A cartoon from *Varia* in 1964, without any captioning, shows a young man in James Dean-style tight jeans, leather jacket and pompadour proudly leaving his village house, only, in a second frame, to come back bent over and running home, his jeans and hair cut and his jacket gone. That this could run without any further context makes clear the extent to which the policing of young western fashion that had gone "too far" was an understood phenomenon by late 1964. It also is another example of the ability for cartoonists to include violence as a response to such violations without needing to offer an explanation.

<sup>100</sup> "*Jang tidak berkepribadian Indonesia.*" *Varia*, September 2, 1964, p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> "*harus mendapat perhatian kaum wanita indonesia, demi penyelesaian revolusi.*" The text is next to two comparative photos of women's hips and legs from behind, both women wearing tight skirts. The one on the right, which is shorter, tighter and features a slit up the back, is expressly forbidden. The one on the left, which is longer than the other, and has



**Figure 6.28:** Fashion and Identity: Forbidden!  
 Imbedded in an article on Makassar that discusses the presence of “cross-boys”  
 and young women dressed in “inappropriate clothing.”  
*Puspa Wanita*, January/February 1965, p. 538.

no slit is nonetheless “still doubtful.” (“*diragukan lagi.*”) The article gives the source of this analysis as “*Laporan Marthinus Kopa,*” a report I have not yet been able to track down, or even find any information on.

played on fears of what Sukarno had begun to refer to in his speeches as “*gila-gila-an*” or “craziness” that was emanating directly from the adoption of the “forbidden” elements of western culture.

In Sukarno’s view, and reflecting the language of earlier episodes of Indonesian “moral panic,” Hollywood movies and rock and roll music were initial entry points for western political imperialism, by which he literally meant the west’s intention to invade Indonesia. The leftist attack on western cultural influences was championed by Gerwani.<sup>102</sup> Sukarno’s public adoption of it occasioned important shifts in Indonesian national identity that were specifically linked to appropriate gender representations of both men and women, and to a strong sense of what should be a proper version of women’s sexuality.

At either ends of the revolutionary spectrum, the woman volunteer and the sexually dangerous woman, however, both appear as “types” much more than they do as individual women. These “types” the mother, the young modern girl, the movie starlet and the Javanese dancer in particular, though now presented in ever-idealized forms, were not new. They were firmly part and parcel of the politics of feminine beauty and the moral panic attached to it that reached back to the earliest days of the Indonesian Republic.

Within this context, let us return to Sukarno’s speech to revolutionary women in 1964 at the national conference of Wanita Indonesia Demokrat. Following Sukarno’s laudatory introduction and an extended recapitulation of his theory that the national revolution would be impossible to achieve without women, his speech took a rather haranguing turn. Discussing youth fashion and cultural trends of the day, Sukarno forcefully expressed his opinion that the Democratic Women in his audience were yet doing enough to bring about a new class of revolutionary women. In particular, he felt that on these questions, he was “struggling alone”<sup>103</sup> to foster “a new type of women who is aligned with Indonesian identity.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The hedonistic western youth “craziness” is also covered with appropriate disapproval in *Varia* at several points from late 1964 on. A *Varia* cartoon from late 1964 shows a *jamu* seller (*jamu* is a Javanese herbal tonic, made and sold primarily by women, who walk through neighborhoods, invariably wearing a simple version of *kain* and *kebaya* and carrying their potions on their heads and backs) who sees a western-dressed woman with exceptionally highly teased hair, and calls out to her “I have something to take care of that bump on your head!”

<sup>103</sup> “*berdjoang sendiri*.” Sukarno, *Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berdjalan Tanpa Wanita!*,” p. 13.

<sup>104</sup> “*wanita djenis baru jang sesuai dengan kepribadian Indonesia*.” Sukarno, *Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berdjalan Tanpa Wanita!*,” p. 14.



*"I am fighting alone. . . . I am a single fighter<sup>105</sup>. . . . But you women and mothers do nothing. . . . Nah, that is just left to me. That is to say, sisters, why is it I, I, I, a man lho, I am a man, why is it that I, a man must eradicate teased hair? . . . What are you? Woman, woman, woman, woman, woman, woman, why is it that a man, a Father, must eradicate teased hair? . . . why is it that I, a man lho, this man, must eradicate miniskirts, skirts that fall above the knee? . . . Oh my, oh my, oh my . . . Lha, this doesn't fit with Indonesian identity, sisters. . . . Lha, once again why is it that I myself have to struggle, oppose, eradicate this. Women, why aren't you joining in eradicating it?<sup>106</sup>*

Women, again, were being held directly responsible for upholding a special role in establishing the nation's revolutionary identity. In failing to do this, they were, themselves, implicated in the potential failure of the revolution as well.

The personal choices so clearly available to Indonesian women in the early 1950's about how to be both Indonesian and modern, had, by this time clearly been co-opted, not only by an increasingly politicized Sukarnoist sense of what served as an appropriate Indonesian national identity, but more precisely by what it meant to be progressive-revolutionary women. Even among some of the nation's most active women, choice was now sublimated to Sukarno's visions of Indonesian national identity, and his scolding tirades.

As I said at the outset of this chapter, when Sukarno concerned himself with questions of women's beauty, there was much more at stake in these speeches than either simple flattery of women or patriarchal condescension on his part. Instead, what was at play was the entire question of what modern Indonesia would be. Wrapped up in uniform *kain-kebaya* and *konde*, women and their appropriate public comportment came to represent the sanctity and purity of the Indonesian half of a "modern-Indonesian" national identity. And, as I have argued, moral crises about these same questions did not reflect fears of foreign cultural invasion as much as they did a sense of panic about the possible failure of the nation from internal causes and weaknesses.

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<sup>105</sup> These phrases were spoken in English.

<sup>106</sup> "I am fighting alone . . . I am a single fighter . . . *Lha kok engkau, wanita ibu-ibu itu tidak berbuat apa-apa. Nah, sana, serahkan kepada Bapak sadja. Misalnja, Saudara-saudara, kenapa kok saja, saja, saja, orang laki lho, saja ini laki, kenapa kok saja orang laki harus memberantas rambut sasak. Kamu apa, wanita, wanita, wanita, wanita, wanita, wanita, apa kok laki, Bapak sadja harus memberantas rambut sasak. Hajo, terus terang sadja, kenapa kok saja orang laki lho, laki saja ini, harus memberantas spanrok, rok sepan jang diatas lutut itu. . . . Aduh, aduh, aduh . . . Lha, sekali lagi saja bertanja kenapa kok aku sendiri harus berdjoang, menentang, memberantas itu. Kaum wanita, kenapa engkau tidak ikut-ikut memberantas?" Sukarno, *Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berjalan Tanpa Wanita!*," p. 14.*

While a traditional scholarship of the history of political parties and platforms, of the expansion military force and of international confrontations, that is of the world of men, has told us how Indonesia came to be, looking at women tells us much more about how Indonesians came to be. Reading Indonesian history through this lens, of women, of underwear, of hairstyles, of dresses and of make-up, then, actually gives us a particularly sensitive reading of a politics of which many historians, to this point, have only examined half.

With this in mind, the next chapter of the dissertation addresses what is arguably the central episode of modern Indonesian history, the events of the evening of September 30/October 1, 1965. It offers a reading of the events at Lubang Buaya and their aftermath that tries to make sense of the gendering of the story. It does not simply assume, as many scholars have, that an attack on the generals by Gerwani was sufficient to plunge the nation into genocide.

Rather, I argue that the gendered version of the killings of the generals was necessary for genocidal violence to explode, precisely because the gendered patterns of moral panic about the future of the nation were expressly put into play. While political intrigue and rivalry, Cold War tensions and economic and religious stresses were clearly all important to the failure of Sukarno's Indonesia, the explosion of violence was dependent on the recruitment of ideas of moral crisis. In Indonesia to that point, moral crisis was principally about women's moral health and the moral health of the nation. Without accounting for this gendered reading, scholars of Indonesian history have, indeed, only been seeing half of the story. It is only with the inclusion of a gendered reading that the story makes full sense.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Mother of the Nation or Godless Whore: Images of Indonesian Women at the Birth of the New Order, 1965-1966**

*De man heeft grote kunstwerken geschapen; de vrouw heeft de mens geschapen; en grote moeders maken een groot ras.*

*Memang: Didalam pertanyaan: Besar atau tidak besarnya kaum ibunya, didalam pertanyaan itu buat sebagian adalah terletak jawabnya pertanyaan akan selamat atau tjelakanja sesuatu bangsa. Ibu-ibu kita Besar atau ketjil, ibu-ibu kita sadar atau ibu-ibu lalai—itulah buat sebagian berisi jawaban soal Indonesia akan luhur atau Indonesia akan hantjur.*

Man has created great works of art; women have created men; and great mothers make a great race.

Truly: Within the question: whether or not our mothers are great, within that question there is in part the answer to the question of whether a people will be blessed or face misfortune. Whether our mothers are Great or small, whether our mothers are wise or our mothers are negligent—that is what forms part of the answer to the problem of whether Indonesia will be glorious or whether Indonesia will be shattered.

- Sukarno, 1928. Re-serialized, 1965<sup>1</sup>

This dissertation began with an account of the events of the night of September 30-October 1, 1965, commenting on the quickness with which the army, under the command of soon-to-be-President Suharto, assumed control of the nation. As the military asserted this control, it initially continued Sukarno's nationalist rhetoric and cast itself as the protector of both the President and his on-going revolution. While Suharto gradually

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<sup>1</sup> From a Sukarno article originally published in the nationalist magazine *Suluh Indonesia Muda* in 1928, the year of the founding of the Indonesian women's movement. It was reprinted in serialized form in newspapers in 1965 as "*Adjaran Pemimpin Besar Revolusi Bung Karno*" ("The Teachings the Great Leader of the Revolution Bung Karno.") Newspapers and magazines ran these columns daily, all using this same title and a shared graphic from 1964 forward as part of new press requirements in the *Konfrontasi* era. They cycled through a set of colonial-era texts, though not synchronously among different publications. This particular article, addressing the growing women's movement in 1928 was republished in *Angkatan Bersendjata* in July, 1965, with the quote appearing in the July 13 edition, p. 2, but in *Api Pantajasila* in November, with the quote appearing in the November 13 edition, p. 3. The date of the original helps to explain the extended use of Dutch in the text, since Sukarno would, at that time, have been addressing an audience whose education was largely in Dutch. But Sukarno continued, up to 1966, to inflect his speeches with phrases in Dutch, English, French, German and Javanese, mixed in with the Indonesian.

ascended to political power in what John Roosa refers to as a “creeping coup d’état,”<sup>2</sup> the violence against the generals came to be reconstructed as an assault on the Indonesian nation. But Suharto did not—at first—fundamentally dismantle Sukarno’s rhetorical construction of the country and its revolution.

Rather, as this dissertation notes previously, employing language almost identical to that of Col. Untung and the September Thirtieth Movement earlier in the day, Suharto used the speech on the night to October 1 to position himself and the army as President Sukarno’s protectors. Further, Suharto asserted that the military would carry out the same functions as the revolutionary councils proposed by Col. Untung and G-30-S earlier that day, to safeguard the revolution “in the center as well as in the regions.”<sup>3</sup>

Suharto *did* immediately implement one significant change to the construction of the on-going revolution, however, as he excluded whoever had carried out the attacks from the nation, as of that point not yet fully identified, and called for their “eradication.”

“Listeners all,” he said in his speech to the nation over the radio:

With this [information just shared about the movement], it is clear that their actions are Counter-Revolutionary and must be eradicated down to the very roots.

We are confident that with the full help of the progressive revolutionary masses, we can truly crush the counter-revolutionary Thirtieth September Movement, and that the Unitary Nation of the Republic of Indonesia that is based on Pancasila will certainly remain triumphant under our beloved leader His Excellency President/Commander-in-Chief of the Military/Great Leader of our Revolution, Bung Karno.<sup>4</sup>

As the shifts of overall power as a result of the events of September 30/October 1, the process would require a gradual manipulation of existing revolutionary ideas rather than their simple replacement. The New Order would arise in some ways as a gradual

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<sup>2</sup> John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> “baik di pusat maupun di-daerah2.” *Angkatan Bersendjata*, 10/2/1965, p. 1. *Angkatan Bersendjata* was one of two military daily papers published nationally. It was intended for a general audience, while the other, *Berita Yudha*, although available generally, was the army’s “internal” paper focused on a military readership. Hereafter, *Angkatan Bersendjata* is referred to as *A.B.* in the footnotes.

<sup>4</sup> “Para pendengar sekalian. Dengan demikian, djelaslah bahwa tindakan2 mereka itu Kontra Revolusioner jang harus diberantas sampai keakar-akar2nya. // Kami yakin dengan bantuan penuh dari masa rakjat jang progresif revolusioner, gerakan kontra revolusioner 30 September pasti dapat kita hantjur leburkan dan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia jg, berdasarkan Pantjasila pasti tetap djaja dibawah Pimpinan PJM Presiden/Panglima Tertinggi ABRI/Pemimpin Besar Revolusi kita jang tertjinta Bung Karno.” *A.B.*, 10/2/1965, p. 1. This is the original instance of many, pointed out by Geoffrey Robinson, of the trope of “eradication down to the very roots.”

reimagination of Sukarno's Revolutionary Indonesia rather than as its immediate wholesale repudiation. It would be reimagined, however, without one of its three principal pillars, Indonesian Socialism, that is, without Communism writ large, and with its "fourth pillar," feminism, torn asunder.

Furthermore, the Indonesian nation would also be re-formed in ways that completely depoliticized its public culture, ending the politics of mass mobilization that had marked the final years of the Sukarno era. In New Order Indonesia, the potentially dangerous peasantry was transformed into a heavily monitored "floating mass." Islamicist, and indeed Islamic identity was de-emphasized, one of the interesting signs of which was that women were strongly discouraged from wearing head scarves. Chinese Indonesians were required to adopt "Indonesian" names, and the use of Chinese characters and the celebration of Chinese festivals were suppressed. The language of National Revolution disappeared by the middle of 1966, and was replaced by the philosophy of *Pembangunan Nasional*, or National Economic Development.

This fundamental realignment all rested, as Chapter 1 explores, on the story of the "treachery" and "barbarity" of the PKI at Lubang Buaya, a narrative that emerged quickly and took its essential final shape within several weeks of the killings of the generals. That is, even if there were continuities of thought between the Old and New Orders, the important shifts aimed at discrediting the PKI began immediately, with the made-up story of Gerwani's sexual torture of the generals as its primary evidence. This new narrative was then manipulated and shaped as necessary, first to meet evolving situations on the ground in the first several months after October 1965, and then to cement and monumentalize the New Order's need to provide continuing secure control over the nation for three decades.

The rhetoric about Gerwani that transformed the PKI into a barbaric, counter-revolutionary force can be followed by tracing the tight changes in the language used in the media to describe the September Thirtieth Movement's perceived crimes over the course of several months in late 1965. As descriptions of "what happened" at Lubang Buaya, including who carried out the events and why, were manipulated—sometimes subtly, but always intentionally—the shape of the nation's internal enemies and dangers, against which it was critical to act decisively, was given fuller form. As the dissertation has noted,

the story that was developed was fundamentally false, and it relied on the sexual demonization of communist women for its fundamental logic.

This chapter analyses the story invented about Gerwani and its deployment in three ways. First, it traces the development of what I, joining other scholars such as Yosef Djakababa, refer to as the “Lubang Buaya Narrative.” Following daily changes how the events at Lubang Buaya and their aftermath were described in three national newspapers, the chapter demonstrates that the fundamental falsity of the narrative can be seen simply in the shifting language of the narrative as it developed. That is, it is clear from reading the story tightly that the daily and then monthly changes in the story were being made up or produced, clearly by the Indonesian military. Furthermore, it demonstrates that new elements of the narrative were added to meet specific goals at specific times between October and December 1965. We can trace how the charges brought against Gerwani in the Lubang Buaya narrative were leveraged and given specific new focus at particular junctures by the military to meet specific needs of moving the campaign against the PKI forward in its first months.<sup>5</sup>

On the broadest level, the narrative about G-30-S demonstrates that Suharto’s initial central charge of being “counter-revolutionary” faded across 1966, as the New Order regime re-oriented Indonesia’s relations with the west and its place in international politics. As the crime of counter-revolution diminished and was replaced with a more generally expressed accusation of “treachery,”<sup>6</sup> the charges of religious and gendered crimes against the nation, embodied in descriptions of Communist women and which had already been put firmly in place, moved increasingly to the fore.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This section of the dissertation was originally written in 1994 as a seminar paper in graduate school, although I have revised it since, particularly with respect to the idea of the chronology of changes in the story being released at specific points in the early campaign against the PKI. It is important to note that there is significant overlap in the primary sources used in this section of the dissertation with those used in Saskia Wieringa’s analysis in the section of *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* on “The Defamation of Gerwani,” pp. 301-317. We read the sources similarly, although I suggest a different final interpretation than she does as to why the killings were possible.

<sup>6</sup> “*Penghianatan*,” which was connected directly to the Communist Party in the phrase “*Penghianatan G-30-S/PKI*,” a standard construction for the crimes against the state revealed by the events at Lubang Buaya.

<sup>7</sup> The idea of various twinned constructions of the enemy of a state shifting relative to each other so one gains prominence as another recedes, and its effects on the where violence would be focused, is drawn from Arno Mayer’s arguments about why the mass-murder of Jews in the Holocaust happened at the time and in the spaces that it did. His discussion in *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?* posits that National Socialism was built on opposition to two enemies of the German Volk: Jews and Communists, both of whom were attacked both within Germany and outside it as the German armies invaded Eastern Europe. The timing of the decision to proceed with mechanized mass killing of Jews, however, only occurred as the fight against the Russians, and therefore against Communism, stalled out on the Eastern Front in Winter 1941-42. Mayer argues that this led all the Nazi Party energy around enemies of the people to transfer fully onto the eradication of

On a level slightly closer to the ground, the chapter demonstrates that the two principal new revelations related to the narrative were tied to specific watersheds in the national campaign against the PKI. The first, a series of coerced and completely invented “confessions” by Gerwani members, and which focused on the nature of Gerwani’s alleged actions that would separate them from the community of other Indonesian women, were deployed just at the time that the rest of the women’s movement was publicly pressured to denounce Gerwani in early to mid-November. These also happened at a period that showed an uptick in killings in Central Java in particular.

The second was the nationally prominent story about the death of the five-year-old daughter of General Nasution, Irma Ade, who was shot during the raid on her house as her father escaped the attackers over the back wall of his garden. The story of Indonesia’s “Little Hero” was published in late December, both in conjunction with the end of the first week of Ramadan that was also approaching Christmas, and at a time when Sukarno was pushing back publicly on the demonization of Gerwani.

Second, the chapter then goes on to make the dissertation’s important novel claim: that we can begin to better understand *why* the Lubang Buaya narrative was able to succeed in prompting and supporting the mass killing of the Indonesian left if we look at it through the lens of Moral Crisis. This claim, I argue, moves our understanding of 1965-66 forward in two important ways. First, it connects the reasoning for the killings to an important—indeed central—set of national conversations that were replete with the possibility of the failure of the nation, and that earlier chapters of the dissertation have demonstrated were already largely in place by 1949. Second, it provides solid reasoning for why women found themselves at the center of what could otherwise have been a largely male-dominated political fight between parties. In addition, building on work by Julia Suryakusuma, it strengthens the arguments about why Indonesian women found their position limited in specific ways with the establishment of the New Order.

Third, and in more of an exploratory nature, this chapter asks how this gendered reading of the justifications for the killing of the Indonesian Left might enhance new historical arguments that Indonesia 1965-66 might be read as a case of genocide. In

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European Jewry. It explains, in his view, the timing of the expansion of the death camp network and the beginning of mass deportations from ghettos to the extermination camps in the early spring and summer of 1942.

particular, it offers a reading of the patterns by which the Indonesian *kaum feminis* was pulled apart, and how this dismemberment of Indonesian feminism led to the *kaum wanita* as a whole being reconfigured. In doing so, it suggests that these patterns match what one might expect to see in the process of the reformation of the nation without one of its former social components, a critical element of the sociological definition of genocide put forward by Daniel Feierstein.

### ***Expansions of the Lubang Buaya Narrative and the Chronology of Eradication***

The first reading of the Lubang Buaya Narrative provided in this chapter examines how the army's charges against Gerwani were rolled out episodically across the months of October-December 1965. The charges were brought to the fore in different forms at specific times, tailored to meet specific political needs and intended to produce specific reactions at those times.

The first presentation of the Lubang Buaya narrative occurred between October 5-11, that is, immediately as the nation's newspapers were allowed to begin publishing again and with strict military control of their content. The narrative's treatment of the alleged actions of Gerwani served as *the* critical element of the initial revelation of the crimes of the Communist Party as the military was just beginning to assert control of the nation. This story of Gerwani, presented in increasingly lurid detail day-by-day, provided the principal justification for the military's actions. We know that these details were entirely fictional.<sup>8</sup> We can read them therefore as a representation of what the military believed was necessary to justify their move to take power, since that is clearly why the narrative was created.

Despite the initial charges involved in the story being lodged against "counter-revolutionary" forces, the initial narrative soon pivoted to include the mention of Gerwani. This provoked almost immediate public actions against the PKI. Indeed, Geoffrey Robinson writes that "within hours of the appearance of these false reports [about Gerwani], large

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<sup>8</sup> The principal evidence against the stories of sexual torture and castration lie in the reports of the autopsies carried out on the bodies after their exhumation. The soldiers were clearly all killed by gunshots, and there is no evidence of slash wounds from razor blades or other knives. Additionally, each report lists whether its subject was circumcised or not, so their penises also clearly remained fully intact. See Benedict Anderson, "How Did the Generals Die?" for a discussion and translation of these documents. Sukarno himself also made these points in a speech to the nation's governors in December 1965.



crowds began to form in Jakarta and throughout the country, first calling for the banning of the PKI, then ransacking the party's offices, and eventually attacking and killing PKI members themselves."<sup>9</sup>

The initial charges against Gerwani had their desired effect of beginning the exclusion of the PKI, while making violence against the Indonesian Left possible and understandable. Demonstrations against the PKI took place across the nation, and PKI, Gerwani, BTI and other Communist-affiliated offices were looted and/or destroyed in multiple cities. David Jenkins and Douglas Kammen, for instance, note that beginning "on 8 October, the Army and anti-communist forces began to attack PKI offices and homes in Jakarta: mass detentions soon followed."<sup>10</sup>

The first major "expansion" of the Gerwani elements of the narrative took place in early- to mid-November, beginning on November 5, through the publication of several "confessions" by women said to have been present at Lubang Buaya. The most important "confession"—by a 15-year-old young mother named Djamilah, that gave the initial detailed description of sexualized killings of the seven soldiers—was published on November 6. A second critical "confession"—this time by Ibu Trimo, a Gerwani cadre who was not said to have been present at Lubang Buaya, but who was produced alongside Djamilah and who decried Gerwani's sins—was published on November 14.<sup>11</sup>

The new critical element of the confessional narrative was that it supplied lurid descriptions, supposedly in the words of the leftist women confessing, of the processes by which the women were described as having violated the captured soldiers sexually before castrating them with penknives. This greatly enhanced the argument that these women—and the PKI by extension—were inhuman and godless.

Saskia Wieringa's research has shown that these confessions were fundamentally false and were "distributed" to the press by the army.<sup>12</sup> This is most easily seen in that various newspapers printed the stories of the confessions using identical language. Their release aligned with two important shifts in the post-October 1 landscape. First, on the

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<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 61.

<sup>10</sup> David Jenkins and Douglas Kammen, "The Army Para-commando Regiment and the Reign of Terror in Central Java and Bali," in Douglas Kammen and Katherine MacGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68*, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> These two confessions are examined in detail later in this chapter, in the discussion of how the Gerwani narrative was constructed as an instance of moral crisis.

<sup>12</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*. p. 308.

same day as the release of the confessions, women's organizations that formerly worked with Gerwani were re-organized into the womens section of a national group, the "Coordinating Body of the Action Command to Crush Gestapu," (the "*Badan Koordinasi Keesatuan Aksi Pengganyangan Gestapu.*") Wieringa writes that women from various non-Communist organizations then organized a mass demonstration reported in the press the following day, in which, they presented a resolution that

"condemned Gerwani's actions, which had lowered the prestige of women, and urged the President to ban the PKI, Gerwani and the other mass organizations as soon as possible, in order to safeguard the young generation from the decadent influences and the ferocity which these organizations represented.<sup>13</sup>

The second element the confessions aligned with was the military mobilization of civilian militias to carry out executions in Central Java during the first two weeks of November 1965, one of the first times civilians appear to have been used to round up and kill members of the PKI. On November 13, certainly with a delay from when the events themselves had begun to occur in Solo, the US Embassy cable traffic reported the Army had "equipp[ed] some 24 thousand Moslem youth for action against communists."<sup>14</sup>

The timing of the beginning of militia-connected killings in Solo to the publishing of the confessions is less exact than the connection to women's political reactions. Douglas Kammen and Katherine MacGregor write that although military brigades (RKPAD) under the command of Col. Sarwo Edhie, that would go on to lead the first killings in Central Java, had arrived in Solo<sup>15</sup> in mid-October,<sup>16</sup> Edhie

"believed he had too few troops to establish his authority in the surrounding rural areas, many of which enjoyed strong PKI support. When he contacted Suharto to ask for reinforcements, he was told that the additional troops

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<sup>13</sup> Saska Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 308. The quotation is Wieringa's translation of reporting from *Angkatan Bersendjata* on November 9.

<sup>14</sup> See Telegram 1435, US Embassy Jakarta to State Department, 13 November 1965, POL 23-9, INDON, NARA, quoted in Douglas Kammen and Katherine MacGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>15</sup> Solo was the first target of the Edhie command for several reasons, principally that it had been the site of military action in support of G-30-S on October 1. But the city had a reputation as a particularly "red" city, strongly supportive of the PKI, as did the rural areas around it, Col. Untung was from Solo originally as well. When Aidit fled from Jakarta to hide, he went to Solo, where he was eventually found, hiding in a well. A taxi driver I used regularly in Solo during my research there, once he understood part of what I was talking about, offered to take me to the house where the well still exists, but the owners were not home, so I haven't yet visited the site. But that this geography is still known locally is interesting.

<sup>16</sup> RKPAD, the brigade under Sarwo Edhie's command, arrived in Solo on October 22, and began arrests and executions on October 23. The exact timing of the "delay" before the training of the militia is less clear, but is generally taken to have been at least a week, that is into the month of November, before youth militia were recruited and trained and then began to participate in the killings. Personal communication with John Roosa, 7/15/2020.

would not be available until the end of the month. He then asked for permission to ‘arm and train youths from the religious and nationalist organizations’.”<sup>17</sup>

After a delay, Sarwo Eddie was given the green light, presumably by Suharto. Kammen and MacGregor continue: “‘We decided,’ Sarwo Eddie recalled, ‘to encourage the anti-communist civilians to help with the job. In Solo we gathered together the youth, the nationalist groups, the religious organizations. We gave them two or three days’ training, then sent them out to kill the communists’.”<sup>18</sup> The arrests and interrogation, followed by killings involving militias in the Solo area probably began in the first and second weeks of November.<sup>19</sup> The arrests and killings in Solo are known to have settled into a long, prolonged process that lasted into December.<sup>20</sup>

The initial “confessions” then, in which the highly provocative charges of Gerwani sexual depravity were sensationalized, and which took over the national media completely, were published precisely during the period these trainings and their concomitant large-scale killings first took place in Central Java. The following “confessions” continued to come out as this locally focused violence was organized by the military as they moved across East

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<sup>17</sup> Douglas Kammen and Katherine MacGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68*, p. 88. The important intervention in the historiography provided by Kammen and MacGregor’s book is that the chronology of the intensification of “local” killings can be matched to the dates that RKPAD, under Sarwo Edhie, moved from Central Java, across East Java and then into Bali. It provides an important piece of evidence for the military’s responsibility for the Indonesian killings.

<sup>18</sup> Douglas Kammen and Katherine MacGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68*, p. 88. The internal quote from Sarwo Eddie is drawn from John Hughes, *The End of Sukarno*, p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> This allows for the initial delay following the arrival on October 23, the process of requesting further help, and then the training of the youth militias themselves. In a short story translated by Harry Aveling, the writer Usamah recounts his interactions with people he already knew when he began working as an “intelligence assistant” for the local branch of the “Action Command to Crush Gestapu,” (that is, the same organization that the women’s organizations joined as they were called to speak out against Gerwani.) Usamah wrote that this happened at “the beginning of November.” Usamah, “War and Humanity,” (*Perang dan Kemanusiaan*,”) translated by Harry Aveling in *Gestapu: Indonesian Short Stories*, p. 13. Later in the story, he notes an incident in which several women, including his classmate Sri, were executed because of the army’s anger at Sukarno’s attempt to distance Gerwani from the killings in what Usamah refers to as his “Mother’s Day Speech.” Usamah, “War and Humanity,” in Harry Aveling, *Gestapu*, p. 18. Wieringa refers to a Mother’s Day speech given on December 21, but the editor of a collection of speeches given by Sukarno following G-30-S doesn’t include it in his collection, and doesn’t remember having seen a copy of it. (Bonnie Triyana, personal communication, 7/16/2020). Sukarno did make a speech to mark the anniversary of Perwari on December 17, which was a full-throated defense of Manipol-USDEK and other progressive policies. (The full text of this and all of Sukarno’s post-October 1, 1965 speeches has been compiled in a collection by Budi Setiyono and Bonnie Triyana in *Revolusi Belum Selesai* (“The Revolution Is Not Yet Finished.”) Sukarno’s speech in which he defended Gerwani was made on December 13, 1965 at the opening of the Conference of Indonesian Governors, held at the Presidential Palace on December 13. So Aveling’s memory of the context of the speech may be incorrect, but it marks out the chronology of the killing in Solo, and the continuing effect the Gerwani narrative had on provoking and enabling killings.

<sup>20</sup> Details of the events in Solo, presented in the form of testimonies and memories by various of its victims can be found in Hersri Setiawan’s *Kidung Para Korban*. Some accounts cite dates, while others don’t, but the general flow of the local history of arrests and killings in Solo can be gleaned from the accounts.

Java and into Bali. Just at the point mass violence was called for, the military produced evidence of the PKI as a source of significant moral crisis that put the very nature of the nation at risk because of the “ferocity” of the PKI. It is highly unlikely that this timing was coincidental.

A third expansion of the narrative that was critical to drawing Gerwani’s actions as an instance of moral crisis came with the lionization of Irma Ade Nasution, the daughter of General Abdul Nasution in December. Irma died as a result of gunshot wounds suffered during the attempted abduction of her father. As the chapter discusses later, “Little Irma” was represented in the press as an ideal Indonesian mother, despite only being five years old at the time of her death.

The series of articles that transformed her into the nation’s “Little Hero” were published on December 20-21, 1965. This coincided with the end of the first week of Ramadan, just as the first stage of the fasting month, which focuses on the idea of mercy, was reaching its apex, as well as with the arrival of the Christmas season. It was also the two days prior to *Hari Ibu*, and as noted previously, a week after Sukarno’s ill-received speech to the nation’s Governors in which he attempted to distance Gerwani from the Lubang Buaya narrative. In particular, he was resisting both the army’s attacks on Gerwani and their attempts to “dictate” his actions and pronouncements. It was a resistance that would prove futile.

The narrative about Irma concluded with an exhortation for Indonesian women to learn from her example and to firm up their moral status, particularly by paying attention to their religious duties and obligations. It specifically reinforced their role as *tiang negara*, the pillars of the nation, on whom the moral standing of the nation was erected. It also was clearly intended to evoke great sympathy for General Nasution and his wife and family, at a time calculated to lift the profile of the army leadership to the nation.

Each of these three narratives came at what were arguably the critical turning points in the three months following the events at Lubang Buaya. The first stories of Gerwani “depravity” were linked to the army’s initial moves to assert control over the nation. The “confessions” timed to both the calls for women’s organizations to repudiate Gerwani and to the beginning of their use of youth militias in Central Java to carry out the seizure and execution of accused PKI members for the first time. Finally, the “Little Irma”

story linked to the beginning of the Army's moves to diminish Sukarno's political position and role in the nation.

In each case, the narrative that was leveraged centered on the proper role of women in Indonesian society. In each case, the danger that faced the nation was constructed as a possible instance of moral crisis in which the good name and reputation of Indonesian women had been critically injured by Gerwani's actions.

Taken together, these shifts and expansions of the Lubang Buaya Narrative connected to the specific times they were deployed, suggest that the story of sexual depravity of Gerwani, though false, was already seen as a powerful tool by the military as they sought to maneuver the aftermath of G-30-S. But in looking not only at when the military shifted elements of the narrative, but at *how* the narrative was shifted as well, I argue that the story was constructed primarily as an instance of moral crisis.

In particular, this helps strengthen and extend the arguments about *why* the killings were able to take place by locating them it within a broad social argument about fears of excessive modernity, what Indonesian identity should look like and who Indonesians should be within a modern framework. I suggest this concept of a broad-based fear of impending moral collapse offers a robust explanation for the reasons the Lubang Buaya narrative worked on a cultural level, which to this point has been a significant weakness in the scholarly arguments of the reasons the killings were not only possible, but also carried out so forcefully, and in similar ways across the nation.

It also helps explain why women and gender ideology were placed at the center of the army's strategy to eliminate the PKI. The definition of Indonesia as a strong nation held moral women at its center. It would follow, therefore, that the story the army put forward in positing the necessity of their defense of a nation-at-peril would also center women, though in this case constructed as so fundamentally immoral that they put the nation at risk of moral failure. Those women, and by extension the whole Indonesian Left, therefore, needed to be eliminated. The chapter now turns to a tight reading of the ways in which the Lubang Buaya Narrative was fundamentally gendered, and how it used a gendered reading of moral crisis as a cultural weapon against the progressive left.

### ***Gendering Moral Crisis: The Shifting Nature of the Charges Against the PKI***

It should be noted that the idea that Lubang Buaya evoked a moral crisis based in gender was not, of course, the only arrow in the army's quiver. The first charge against the PKI was the idea that the movement had put the concept of the Indonesian nation as a product of an on-going revolution in danger. In the first weeks, the most frequent charge against the plotters of G-30-S, and then the PKI, was that they were "*kontra-revolusioner*," or counter-revolutionary. This category of treachery to the nation was already well established in the national discourse in particular in connection to the paranoia about foreign infiltration of the *Konfrontasi* era.<sup>21</sup>

The charge of being counter-revolutionary was firmly in place in Suharto's speech of the evening of October 1, as it had also been in the pronouncements of the Thirtieth of September Movement earlier that day. The charge was repeated the next day in the headlines of the military newspapers. Being "counter-revolutionary" would remain an important element of the construction of the PKI as evil throughout 1965 and roughly through August 1966. After that, the revolutionary construction of Indonesian identity would give way completely to the establishment of the New Order. The construction of Indonesia as a society based in an ongoing process of revolution did not disappear at a particular moment. Rather, it gradually diminished as an element of national discourse over the course of 1966 as the military formalized its command of the nation and established the New Order. But, as this chapter will explore, building on the work of Saskia Weiringa, the meaning of the symbols and rhetoric of Sukarno's revolutionary ideology would be adjusted in critical ways, even as the language itself remained in use.

The formal shift of power to Suharto came with the issuing of the *Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret* ("The Order of the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, also known by its acronym "Supersemar") in March 1966.<sup>22</sup> Sukarno signed the Supersemar document, giving Suharto the authority to take actions he deemed fit since it was "necessary to assure calmness and stability in

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<sup>21</sup> See the discussion of counter-revolution as a politics of fear-building in Chapter 6, which directly involved women's clothing as a possible sign of imperialist cultural intervention.

<sup>22</sup> The acronym plays on the name of one of the important clown characters in the *wayang*, Semar, who is both a servant to the Pandawa princes and an incarnation of the gods. Semar is a rare character who is able to speak to gods in the *wayang* as an equal. He is often the holder of important, but generally hidden knowledge upon which the plots of some of the tales, or *lakon*, turn. The evocation of his name here was replete with cultural power and reference here, then, particularly for Javanese.

Government and the course of the Revolution.”<sup>23</sup> Although there are several versions of the Supersemar letter, (and a historical controversy over its authenticity and provenance) the continuation of the revolution was cited in all versions as a critical reason for extending power to Suharto. However, by August 1966, when Indonesia renewed diplomatic relations with Malaysia and by September 1966 when it rejoined the United Nations, the continuing revolution was no longer cited as a fundamental basis for the nation.<sup>24</sup>

While charges of “counter-revolution” drifted away, two other prongs of the initial charges against the PKI remained strongly intact. Both were based in the assertion that Indonesian national identity, rather than being based in revolution, would continue to be based in Pancasila, Sukarno’s five-legged state philosophy.<sup>25</sup> The charges against the PKI included that they had violated the first two prongs of Pancasila: the first stating that the movement was “godless,”<sup>26</sup> while Indonesia is a nation built on the “Belief in the One and Only God;”<sup>27</sup> the second that members of PKI-linked movements, and particularly Gerwani, were “immoral”<sup>28</sup> and “uncivilized,”<sup>29</sup> while Indonesia was to be based on “just and civilized humanity.”<sup>30</sup>

The charge of being godless was leveled against the entire secular Communist movement, even though the majority of Indonesian Communists were themselves Muslim. The charges of immorality and lack of civilization, however, were leveled specifically and almost uniquely against women, based on the highly inflammatory and completely invented story that claimed Gerwani women had sexually mutilated the soldiers before they were killed at Lubang Buaya.

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<sup>23</sup> “Sukarno, *Revolusi Indonesia Tidak Dapat Berjalan Tanpa Wanita!*,” The text of the order is available on multiple websites.

<sup>24</sup> Thanks to Bonnie Triyana and Adrian Vickers for helping me figure out the outlines of this phenomenon.

<sup>25</sup> The recitation of *Pancasila* remained an important element of political socialization throughout the New Order. In particular, students would recite the five prongs while lined up in ranks in school courtyards, with a student leader calling the number, for instance “*Satu!*” (“One!,”) and the massed students replying loudly in unison “*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa!*” (“Belief in the One and Only God!”). Numerous friends have recounted that being chosen to be the leader for proclaiming Pancasila was a great honor, and that the job was taken very seriously. Equally, however, many recount that, particularly by the mid-1970s, the process had become empty of any real meaning or emotional power, something that was also true of the social and political education classes on *Pancasila* that were a requirement at all stages of Indonesian education.

<sup>26</sup> “*tak ber-Tuhan,*” in its primary form, which is discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>27</sup> “*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa,*” the first prong of Pancasila.

<sup>28</sup> “*asusila.*”

<sup>29</sup> “*tak beradab.*”

<sup>30</sup> “*Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab,*” the second prong of Pancasila.

Because progressive women, including Gerwani, had been working together across political affiliations, the charge of immorality needed to be addressed by activist Indonesian women as a group, and not just by Communist women. However, non-Communist women, in distancing themselves from the idea that activist women were sexually wanton, were forced into accepting a more inferior position relative to men in society and politics than they had enjoyed during the Sukarno era. The new status would be derived exclusively from their role as mothers—of families and of the nation—and as wives walking behind rather than next to their husbands, rather than as co-leaders of the New (military) Order.

The concept of *Ibu Bangsa*, which women had used to argue for an increased role in the political life of the nation, was repurposed, taking on a new meaning that used to remove women from much real organizational power. Instead, at an official level at least, women would be reduced to their roles as *Ibu sejati*, ideal, and ideally quiet, mothers in charge of the home and family. Writer Julia Suryakusuma makes a significant argument that this retrenchment of women, which she referred to as “State Ibuism,” came to serve as a fundamental building block of the New Order. I argue that the development of Ibuism was a direct result of the evocation of moral crisis by the military in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya, as non-Communist women were placed in a moral bind by their activist connections to Gerwani. In this way, ideas about women’s idealized identity, born in elite women’s discourse, came to affect all women in Indonesia. Ironically, it was a result of the manipulation of ideology that women themselves had used to advance their own position.

These charges of immorality and lack of civilization stemmed from stories of “what happened” at Lubang Buaya, and of how the generals were said to have been killed. They were fantastic and gory. This section of the chapter explores the story tightly. It argues that the way in which the details shifted and changed are yet further evidence that the story about Gerwani was completely made up.

The consequences of this story were not simply about the future political role of Indonesian women in the New Order, however. This chapter’s primary argument is that the Lubang Buaya story, while leading to the dissolution of Gerwani and the establishment of a new gendered order, provided the army its central justification for carrying out killings of the left on a massive scale. Without the Lubang Buaya narrative’s focus on gendered sexual



violence, there would have been no evocation of moral crisis, and without that, no required broad response from the military and no mass eradication of the Indonesian Left.

To be certain, there were multiple tools that the army used to build support for the need to arrest and kill Communists. It crafted a general narrative of Communist viciousness across Indonesian history. It also circulated stories, mostly at the local level of PKI lists of its opponents to be killed, and of the presence of holes already dug to receive the bodies of the to-be-slaughtered opponents of the Party. There is also clear evidence of the army creating conditions under which local youth militia, and citizens in general, were forced to participate in the roundup and killings of Communists in fear for their own lives if they refused military orders to act.

But without the evocation of moral crisis, there would have been neither the “permission” nor indeed the “necessity” for the killings, most specifically on a broad scale. In particular, the evocation of a moral crisis affecting the very definition of the nation allowed for the nation-wide scale of the promulgation of mass violence, mass murder or massacre, as recent scholars have referred to the killings in the titles of their books on the aftermath of Lubang Buaya.<sup>31</sup>

Fears about women, their clothing and their bodies and the possibility of their unleashed sexuality had been central to the development of Indonesian national identity since the beginning of the Republic. In this construction, moral crisis, unanswered, would have brought about the collapse of the nation. In this construction as well, sudden popular violence was a possible and appropriate response necessary for the restoration of order. The Lubang Buaya narrative provided all these elements. Thus, the Lubang Buaya narrative, and particularly the ways in which it was gendered, made the eradication of the PKI both possible and necessary.

The justification for the violence that established the New Order was not woven of a wholly new cloth. Rather, it re-worked threads already well-known and dyed into the

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<sup>31</sup> The titles by non-Indonesian historians I am referring to avoid the word “genocide,” even though they all, to varying degrees, make the case that the events of 1965-66 do, indeed, constitute such a phenomenon. See John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, Douglas Kammen and Katherine McGregor, *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68*, and Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-66*. As discussed in Chapter 1, two works have also centered women’s experience during this period. Annie Pohlman’s title refers to *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966*. Indonesian author Rachmi Diyah Larasati’s title, *The Dance That Makes You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-Genocide Indonesia*, is the only one that evokes genocide explicitly.

Indonesian national fabric. The motifs chosen to do this were built around a central story about morally failed and sexually dangerous Communist women, which are detailed below.

### ***An Overview of the Lubang Buaya Narrative***

The narrative about Gerwani at Lubang Buaya originally evolved primarily in newspapers between October 4 and 11, 1965. Partially because the magazine production cycle wouldn't have allowed for it, but also for other reasons to be discussed later in the chapter, the story was almost completely absent from the magazines that have been at the center of the dissertation thus far. This part of the chapter, therefore, examines how the story was presented in the first ten days following October 1 in three Jakarta-based daily newspapers: *Angkatan Bersendjata*, published by the Armed Forces, *Api Pantjasila*, an anti-Communist newspaper produced by the Union of the Supporters of Indonesian Independence (*Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, or IPKI, a political party founded as an Army front organization by General Nasution in 1952) and *Kompas*, a Roman Catholic paper.<sup>32</sup>

In the first reports, Gerwani was not implicated in the deaths of the soldiers, or in the “terror” (“*teror*”) to which the “victims” (“*sang korban*”) were subjected. As the week progressed, new details increasingly tied Gerwani to the reported “humiliation” (“*mempermainkan*”) and “heavy torture” (“*siksaan berat*”) of the kidnapped soldiers. More and more, press articles asserted that the women were involved in a sexually charged and bestial ritual that clearly demonstrated they had left the company of civilized society. By October 11, the Gerwani women had become both “Godless” (“*tak ber-Tuhan*”) and “without humanity” (“*tak berkeperimusiaan*”).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hereafter, along with *A.B.*, they are cited as *K.*, and *A.P.* respectively. I also consulted several other newspapers. *Berita Yudha*, the “internal” army newspaper published in Jakarta tended to be significantly less sensationalistic in its coverage than *Angkatan Bersendjata*, but at times gave much more detail about what the army was doing to recover the bodies at Lubang Buaya. Regional newspapers, particularly from areas with high levels of anti-Communist violence such as Central Java and Bali also provide interesting views. The two I have had an opportunity to examine somewhat are *Suara Muhammadiyah*, the magazine of the modernist Islamic movement, published in Yogyakarta, and the *Surabaya Post*. *Suara Muhammadiyah*, which was historically firmly anti-Communist included rather sensational coverage of the role of Gerwani, though tellingly, *Suara 'Aisjija*, its sister publication, printed at the same press, did not, as is discussed later. The *Surabaya Post* reported on Gerwani, but did not publish the more prurient elements of the Lubang Buaya story. Missing completely from this chapter, simply because I cannot find the source materials, is an analysis of how the Gerwani narrative was presented and disseminated in radio broadcasts.

<sup>33</sup> Literal translations of the phrases would be “not with-God” and “not with humanity.” The prefix *ber-* implies to possess or be intimately connected to something, and is often used with traits or characteristics (*sifat*) that tie people to the larger

A second presentation of the Lubang Buaya story came in early November through several “confessions” by Gerwani members and others said to have been present at the killings. Given significant, and clearly coordinated coverage in the newspapers, these confessions merit close examination because, in my view, they provide a more problematized version of the political and social implications that arose for women as Gerwani’s role became central to the Lubang Buaya story.

The details of this confessional literature, which were “produced” in Saskia Wieringa’s descriptions,<sup>34</sup> clearly reinforced the conglomerated narrative presented in the press during the two weeks following the events at Lubang Buaya. But they exceed that initial narrative in important ways. These confessional narratives became the vehicle through which ideas about proper womanhood were reinforced and the language of G-30-S as an instance of moral crisis was evoked, as is discussed in detail below. Gerwani leaders, specifically, were presented in ways that suggested they were no longer proper Indonesian women. Their faces, the stories recounted, remained calm, but the Gerwani leaders’ eyes betrayed that their fundamental interior character, their *batin*, had been overtaken by Communist ideology.

Drawing on similes that had significant resonance in Sukarno-era constructions of morality, Communist women were often described along the lines of one of two “stock” images from Indonesian proletarian theater: the young, powerless and gullible peasant, or the older, conniving, manipulating and emasculating modern woman. This is another way in which the narrative can clearly be seen to have been “produced.” But, importantly, the confessions also provided a space in which peasant women connected to Gerwani, to some extent at least, could be re-humanized.

These confessions, further, exposed a critical distinction between communism and sexuality as the fundamental source of Gerwani’s “depravity.” Several possibilities lay in the gap between sexuality, ideology and religion. If communism were the primary dehumanizing influence, some Gerwani women, particularly those with less communist

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community, so to be religious is to be “*beragama*” (“with-religion,”) or to have a family is to be “*berkeluarga*.” In this sense then, to be not “with” God or humanity is also to define Gerwani and the PKI as being outside society.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 8, “Gerwani Defamed, Sukarno Overthrown,” (pp. 280-335,) and particularly the sub-section entitled “Defamation of Gerwani,” (pp. 301-317,) of Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*. Wieringa’s description and analysis of the process are an important element of our understanding of these processes.

formation, might be rehabilitated, regaining their humanity through tearfully repenting for their communist ways, accepting religious stricture, and reclaiming proper female internal self-control. Indeed, this seemed to be a path offered in particular to peasant women, whose involvement in the PKI could be attributed, as their engagement in prostitution had been earlier, to economic necessity.

A second possibility, however, if progressive sexuality paired with feminist activism lay at the source of this betrayal, was that many more Indonesian women might somehow be implicated in the moral crisis striking the nation. This would be particularly true for non-Communist women who had been working in Kowani, in which Gerwani had played a major leadership role. Restoring the “good name” of Indonesian womanhood—that is, calming the moral crisis over potentially deviant female sexuality—became a significant task and responsibility for these activist women.

A problem arose from this, however. Called on to repudiate Gerwani publicly, in no uncertain terms, Indonesian women found that any discussion of the proper role of women in New Order society was bounded by the same masculine sexual politics that spawned the imagining of Lubang Buaya. The moral crisis evoked by Lubang Buaya, was after all, an amplification of previous, though lesser, moral crises about proper modern femininity that Indonesian women had been engaged with (and that has been the subject of the previous chapters of this dissertation.) The landscape of proper Indonesian womanhood, as I have argued previously, was intimately connected with conceptions of what constituted a strong Indonesian nation. With the revolution putatively under stronger internal attack than ever before, the cultural reaction to defend the nation drew strongly on ideas about appropriate femininity as a marker of the strength of the nation.

Complicating this problem was that in the wake of G-30-S, the initial “ideal” New Order woman, however, was not a woman, but a little girl. The eighth victim of G-30-S was the “Little Hero,” Irma, the five-year old daughter of General Nasution, who was shot in the attack on her house, while her father slipped over the garden wall, evading capture. Lionized in the press, Irma was presented, despite her young age, as the quintessential Indonesian woman and, despite her presumed virginity, as an ideal mother. It was the image—quite clearly unreal—of one exemplary Indonesian daughter that provided the counterpoint to images of the depravity—also unreal—of Gerwani. Indonesian women

found themselves caught, then, between two polarized sets of ideal but completely unreal images: the “true mother” and the “godless whore.” It is to the specifics of tracing the process through which Indonesian women balanced between the images of ‘Gerwani *Tjabol*’<sup>35</sup> and of ‘*Ibu sejati*’ that the chapter now turns.

### **“What Happened” at Lubang Buaya**

“What happened” at Lubang Buaya first appeared in the Indonesian press between October 4 and 11. Although the seven soldiers had been kidnapped and killed on the night of September 30/October 1, 1965, there was essentially no press coverage of the event for two days. The newspapers for October 1 had been put to bed before any news of the night’s events was available, so the press on that Friday morning was no different than any other day. On October 2, while the political situation was still fluid, only the left-wing newspapers, including the Communist papers, and the military paper *Angkatan Bersendjata* published editions.<sup>36</sup>

*Angkatan Bersendjata*’s headline stated that the 30<sup>th</sup> September Movement, which it branded as “counter-revolution,” (“*kontrarevolusi*,”) had been “crushed.”<sup>37</sup> The paper assured readers that the intended attack against Sukarno, as they classified the movement, was “paralyzed,”<sup>38</sup> and that any radio transmissions from those “who called themselves the ‘Revolutionary Council’ were lies.”<sup>39</sup>

In *Angkatan Bersendjata* that day, there was no specific mention of the Communist Party as the source of the events of the previous days. Rather, the paper focused on distancing the military from the 30 September Movement and its Revolutionary Council. Most particularly, it asserted that the “Council of Generals” was not real and that the generals listed on it were loyal to the Revolution. In a public declaration, the commander of the Navy, E. Martadinata, was careful to assert that the movement “was not just an internal

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<sup>35</sup> “Gerwani Whore,” a slogan Wieringa notes that anti-communist student demonstrators began using in the immediate aftermath of the publication of the Djamilah confession. Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 308.

<sup>36</sup> The content of the October 2 edition of *Harian Rakjat*, the PKI daily, and particularly its editorial in support of the “Revolutionary Council” which had staged the kidnappings, formed a central piece of evidence against the PKI in many histories of the coup. A picture of the newspaper’s front page from October 2 was published on the front page bottom of *Angkatan Bersendjata* on October 4, along with claims that the PKI had “*dinodai rakjat*,” check text. or “tainted the people.”

<sup>37</sup> “‘Gerakan 30 September’ (*kontrarevolusi*) ditumpas.” *A.B.*, 10/2/1965, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> “*lumpuh*.” *A.B.*, 10/2/1965, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> “*Semua siaran dari apa jg menamakan diri ‘Dewan Revolusi’ adalah bohong*.” *A.B.*, 10/2/1965, p. 1.

problem of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia, but was a National problem that endangered the Revolution.”<sup>40</sup>

Maj. General Suharto, who had named himself the head of the Armed Forces, positioned the military, along with the people, as the defenders of the Revolution and the protectors of Sukarno, promising to take strong actions in that regard. “It is clear,” he said in the speech that was published in *Angkatan Bersendjata*,

that the actions [of the movement] are Counter Revolutionary and must be eradicated to their very roots.

We are confident that with the full help of our progressive revolutionary society that we can surely destroy and scatter the counter-revolutionary 30<sup>th</sup> September [movement] and that the Unified Nation of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila will remain triumphant under the leadership of His Excellency the President/Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces/Great Leader of the Revolution . . . Bung Karno.<sup>41</sup>

As was noted in Chapter 6, Sukarno’s use of the “counter-revolutionary” label was well established within Indonesian political discourse during the *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia. It carried with it a specific concern about “internal enemies” who threatened the health of the nation and its ability to finish the revolution. The military therefore was not introducing a new idea into the political landscape. Rather, they were building directly on the rhetoric of the time.

By October 3, *Harian Rakjat*, the PKI paper, had been shut down, and all non-military newspapers had been ordered to suspend publication by the army. Only the army dailies were allowed to publish on October 4 and 5. On October 4, *Angkatan Bersendjata* began to present a narrative about Lubang Buaya and the death of the soldiers. It published portraits of the missing generals, and the accompanying headline asked: “SHOT TO DEATH? Where is the grave? The people demand [to know]!”<sup>42</sup>

This article was only a preface to the story of the events at Lubang Buaya that would be presented over the next week. As yet, there were no bodies, no torture and no

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<sup>40</sup> “GERAKAN 30 SEPTEMBER’ tidak sadja merupakan persoalan intern Angkatan Darat Republik Indonesia, tetapi telah merupakan persoalan Nasional jang membahayakan Revolusi,” A.B., 10/2/1965, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> “djelaslah bahwa tindakan2 mereka itu Kontra Revolusioner jang harus diberantas sampai keakarakanja. // Kami yakin dengan bantuan penuh dari masa rakjat jang progresif revolusioner, gerakan kontra revolusioner 30 September pasti dapat kita hantjur teburkan dan Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia jg berdasarkan Pantjasila pasti tetap djaja dibawah Pimpinan PJM Presiden/Panglima Tertinggi ABRI/Pemimpin Besar Revolusi kita . . . Bung Karno.” A.B., 10/2/1965, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> “DITEMBAK MATI? Mana kuburnya? Rakjat menuntut!” A.B., 10/4/1965, p. 1.

atrocities.<sup>43</sup> But the headline raised two issues—the deaths of the generals and the relationship of their killings to the “people” (*rakyat*) and the nation—that remained central to the story as it unfolded in the newspapers.

By the next day, October 5, the kidnapped soldiers’ bodies had been exhumed from the well where they had been dumped. Photographs of the corpses were splashed across the front page of the military newspaper, along with the pronouncement that the bodies had been “thrown in an old well at Lubang Buaya.”<sup>44</sup> The photographs were of poor quality. Since the by-then four-day-old corpses were in an advanced state of putrefaction, what may have happened to the bodies was not immediately clear. There was not yet any talk of atrocity beyond the murders themselves, but the presence of Gerwani and Pemuda Rakyat<sup>45</sup> members and their connections to the PKI were both noted. Lubang Buaya itself was referred to as a “slaughtering place”<sup>46</sup> in the army editorial for the day.

On the following day, October 6, newspapers aligned with the organizations and political movements not implicated in or connected to the PKI or “Gestapu” (as the events were being called by then), were allowed to resume publication. *Kompas*, the Roman Catholic daily, was filled with news of the previous five days. The paper ran the same photos of the bodies that had run in *Angkatan Bersendjata* the day before, and published the “Story of excavating the corpses at ‘Lobang Buaja,’”<sup>47</sup> which included the first hints of torture and sexual mutilation:

The bodies of the dead lead one to imagine that they had suffered severe torture before they were killed. Some have ruined faces, and are missing their genitals, their eyes and their fingers and toes.<sup>48</sup>

Even so, there was not yet any explicit connection between these acts and Gerwani, although the paper reported the presence of activists from the women’s group at Lubang

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<sup>43</sup> The bodies of the generals and the lieutenant were exhumed from the well later that same afternoon.

<sup>44</sup> “dilempar kedalam lobang sumur tua di Lobang Buaja” *A.B.*, 10/5/1965, p. 1

<sup>45</sup> *Pemuda Rakyat* (People’s Youth) was the youth movement of the PKI. *Pemuda*, meaning “youth,” is an Indonesian term with a specific historical and political meaning. It refers to the activist wing of a political organization, that is those people, mostly young, who went into the streets and got things done. *Pemuda* were instrumental in the Indonesian Revolution, and youth party wings remain important in Indonesia today.

<sup>46</sup> “tempat penjembehan,” *A.B.*, 10/5/1965, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> “Kisah penggalian djenazah di ‘Lobang Buaja,’” *K.*, 10/6/1965, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> “Tubuh para djenazah membayangkan bahwa mereka telah mengalami siksaan berat sebelum dibunuh. Ada yang rusak wajahnja, hilang tanda kelaminnja, matanja dan djarin2nja.” *K.*, 10/6/1965., p. 2.

Buaya. Nor was there any account of how the various appendages came to be “missing.” These details would, indeed, still need to be imagined.

The first explicit connections were made the succeeding day, October 7. *Angkatan Bersendjata* ran a front-page story that both discussed the torture and linked it to Gerwani. The headline read: “Vile Torture by Godless people: Revolutionary Heroes have their Eyes Gouged Out, their faces destroyed to the point that they cannot be recognized.”<sup>49</sup> The principal aim of this article was to identify the various corpses, which were described as having “faces which were already rather damaged,”<sup>50</sup> and “eyes which are gouged out,”<sup>51</sup> and one of which was described as having a “broken neck.”<sup>52</sup> Because of the “torture,”<sup>53</sup> the identification process was difficult:

Next from below were raised two victims who had been tied together to become one. Although the condition of the bodies was already very damaged as a consequence of the torture by the “September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement” group, which was aided by the Pemuda Rakjat and Gerwani, the victims could still be recognized as Maj. Gen. S. Parman and Maj. Gen. Suprpto.<sup>54</sup>

This article marked the beginning of three important trends in the revelation of the story of Lubang Buaya. First and most important was the link between Gerwani and the torture of the Revolutionary Heroes, even if to this point they were only seen to “have helped”<sup>55</sup> the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement. This connection came to serve as the centerpiece of “what happened” at Lubang Buaya. The second and third trends are important because of the implications that would follow from them and the type of responses to the events at Lubang Buaya that would then not only become allowed, but indeed be seen as necessary.

The second was the connection of the events at Lubang Buaya to “godless people” as both Gerwani and the *Pemuda Rakyat* were characterized. The linkage to godlessness had several important consequences, the first of which is that it began the process of dehumanizing Gerwani, implying that the people who carried out such actions were not

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<sup>49</sup> “Penjiksaan Biadab oleh orang tak ber-Tuhan: Pahlawan2 Revolusi di Tjunkil Matanja, dirusak wajhinja hingga tak dapat dikenal,” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> “mukannja jang sudah agak rusak.” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> “mata ditjunkil,” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> “lehernja rusak,” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> “siksaan,” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> “Kemudian dari bawah diangkat lagi dua korban jang diikat djadi satu. Walaupun keadaan tubuh korban sudah sangat rusak akibat siksaan dari golongan “Gerakan 30 September” jang dibantu oleh Pemuda2 Rakjat dan Gerwani para korban masih dapat dikenal sebagai Majdjen S. Parman dan Majdjen Suprpto.” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> “dibantu,” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1.



whole people. The further consequence of having no God was that it distanced such people from being good Indonesian nationalists, since the first tenet of the national revolutionary ideology of *Pancasila* was belief in one God. While both these processes (of dehumanization and de-nationalization of Gerwani) became much more explicit in later reporting, this marked their beginning.<sup>56</sup>

The third trend began the grouping of the generals and lieutenant into a single collective victim, all the more apparent in this *Angkatan Bersendjata* article because it is one of the few versions of the event that tried to identify each man separately. Yet in this story we also see “two victims who had been tied together to *become one*.”<sup>57</sup> Although a few newspaper articles published later focus on several of these men individually,<sup>58</sup> in most of the subsequent reporting on Lubang Buaya, the seven men were not treated as individuals. Rather, they became referred to collectively as the “Seven Revolutionary Heroes” or “the victims,” and in that way, they quickly melded into an ideal type, a small *kaum*, the “*sang korban*,” or the victims of Gerwani atrocity. They were accorded a common funeral and a common national monument to their martyrdom. As such, they served as a common, singular and most importantly *male* representation of the nation: the collective and ultimate victim of “Gestapu.”<sup>59</sup>

The process of dehumanization and de-nationalization of Gerwani continued over the next four days, October 8-11, in *Angkatan Bersendjata*. The paper ran a series of articles entitled “Here is the story of the bestiality of ‘Gestapu’.”<sup>60</sup> In setting up the narrative of the

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<sup>56</sup> The charge of Communists not believing in God is one that dates back to the early days of Indonesian nationalism, and the split in Sarekat Islam (SI) between members of Muhammadiyah and those men who transformed the “Red SI” into the PKI. See Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, particularly Chapter 6, and M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*.

<sup>57</sup> “*dua korban jang diikat djadi satu*,” *A.B.*, 10/7/1965, p. 1. Emphasis mine. There were also only six pictures published of the corpses, because one of them was of the two bodies that were shown, still bound together.

<sup>58</sup> This was particularly true of Lt. Tendean, who was an unknown quantity before the killing.

<sup>59</sup> Throughout their coverage of the events following October 1, and not just in coverage of Lubang Buaya, the newspapers continually list the names of all seven soldiers, usually in the same general order: Yani, Parman, Suprpto, Harjono, Panjaitan, Sutojo and Tendean. Often the names were linked by hyphens: Yani-Parman-Suprpto-Harjono- etc. The repetitive nature of this roll-call of the dead served to turn the names collectively into a New Order charm, more than it recalled them each individually and separately. Perhaps this is because the soldiers were now more use to the emerging New Order as bodies (*tubuh*), corpses (*djenazah*), and victims (*sang korban*), or as Revolutionary Heroes (*Pahlawan Revolusi*) whose names became a totem, than there were as individual people. They, too, had become an idealized *kaum*.

<sup>60</sup> “*Inilah tjerita kebinatangan ‘Gestapu’*,” *A.B.*, 10/8/1965, p. 1. The word *kebinatangan*, translated here as “brutality,” could also be translated as “bestiality” (though not in its English sexual meaning), since the root word is *binatang* or “animal.”

kidnappings and killings, the articles labeled the people in the movement as ungodly, evil and bestial, that is as both *kasar*<sup>61</sup> and un-Indonesian:

The corpses of the Seven Heroes of the Revolution who were kidnapped, tortured, killed and had their faces destroyed in a vile manner and were thrown the hole of an old well by the “Gestapu” terror band have clearly already proved the savagery and brutality of the “Gestapu” band which is blood-thirsty and which could only be carried out by Godless people. . . . The counter-revolutionary “Gestapu” terror band has clearly already left behind and even trampled on Pancasila, humaneness and the teachings of Religion. . . . “Gestapu” has lost a moral base, has lost humanity. All that is left is a blood-thirsty brutality.<sup>62</sup>

This first article of three, published in *Angkata Bersendjata* on October 8, did not mention Gerwani specifically. Rather, it was primarily concerned with the initial kidnappings in which Gerwani members were not reported to have been involved. But it clearly established the framework within which future revelations about Gerwani’s role would be judged.

These revelations were made explicit for the first time the next day, October 9, in the second piece in the series. This article clearly connected Gerwani with the story reported about Lubang Buaya. It also placed the communist women firmly at the center of the action, claiming that Gerwani activists sexually molested and humiliated the kidnapped soldiers before they were killed:

Of the so many humiliating things which GESTAPU carried out against the officers who were victimized, several of the officers who were still alive were humiliated by Gerwani volunteers who had been assigned the task by the Gestapu of filling up the slaughter hole with dirt and trash. In the course of humiliating [the officers], they played with the genitals of the victims while exposing their own genitals. Soon thereafter the honored victims were killed with all sorts of tortures and cruelty.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Kasar*, literally “coarse,” is the opposite of the Javanese social ideal of being *halus*, or refined, both externally and internally. To call someone *kasar* is to imply that they are, essentially, uncivilized.

<sup>62</sup> “Djenazah dari Tudjuh Pahlawan Revolusi jang telah ditjulik, disiksa, dibunuh dan dirusak wadjahnja setjara biadab dan dilempem kedalam lobang bekas sumur oleh gerombolan terror “Gestapu” . . . telah membuktikan kebuasan dan kebinatangan gerombolan “Gestapu” jang haus darah dan jg hanja mampu dilakukan oleh orang2 jang tak Ber-Tuhan. . . . Gerombolan terror kontra-revolusioner “Gestapu” sesungguhnya meninggalkan, bahkan mengindjak2 Pantjasila, perikemanusiaan dan adjaran2 Agama. . . . “Gestapu” telah lenjap dasar kesusilaannja, telah lenjap perikemanusiaanja. Jang tinggal hanja kebinatangan jg haus darah.” *A.B.*, 10/9/1965, p. 1.

The same article also makes the first clear comparison between “Gestapu” and “Gestapo,” stating that the Indonesian movement had the “same standing with . . . the Nazi Secret Police . . . the instrument of Hitler that did not know God.” (“setanding kedjamnja dengan . . . Polisi Rahasia Nazi . . . alat Hitler, yang tak mengenal Tuhan itu.”) *A.B.*, 10/9/1965, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> “Dari sekian kedadjan penghinaan jang dilakukan oleh GESTAPU terhadap Perwira2 jang dijadikan korbannja, beberapa orang Perwira jang sewaktu tiba di Lobang Buaja masih hidup, telah dihinakan oleh aunggauta2 sukarelawati Gerwani jang

This fully established the connection between torture and the Gerwani women's reported sexual abuse of the soldiers.

More was still to be said about the nature of this Gerwani sexuality. The next article in the series scapegoated the Gerwani women even further. Published two days later on October 11, the third article in *Angkatan Bersendjata* focused on the story of Lt. Tendean, the aide to General Nasution, who had been captured in his place. Implying that Tendean was tortured particularly hard because the torturers believed that his capture had allowed Nasution to escape, the article reported that Tendean, "who had his feet and hands tied, then became the 'obscene plaything' of the 'evil women' of Gerwani who with their actions had lowered the status of Indonesian womanhood."<sup>64</sup>

This was the first press coverage where a derogatory description—"evil women"—was tied directly to Gerwani. More importantly however, it also marked the first accusation that the Gerwani women derived some sort of sexual pleasure from their actions once Tendean became their "vile plaything." This was not only a crime against Tendean, it suggested, but also against the entire nation—specifically against the "dignity of Indonesian womanhood." The demonization of Gerwani had therefore entered a new stage. The connection between their reported actions, the torture of the soldiers, and "obscene" or "deviant" sexuality and crimes against proper Indonesian women, and indeed against Indonesian womanhood ("*kaum wanita Indonesia*") had all been established and linked.

The charges that the events at Lubang Buaya were principally shaped through expressions of Gerwani's sexuality were also evident in the reporting in *Kompas* on the same day, October 11. In its coverage, the paper quoted directly and almost completely from the *Angkatan Bersendjata* article of October 9, which claimed that the Gerwani activists had played with or handled the soldier's genitals. For the first time, *Kompas* made the Gerwani actions the focus of reporting, entitling their story "Gerwani's Morals."<sup>65</sup> In a

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ditugaskan oleh GESTAPU untuk menimbun lobang pendjagalan tanah dengan tanah dan sampah, dengang djalan mempermainkan, memegang2 kemaluan sang korban, sambil memamerkan kemaluannya sendiri; kemudian baru sang korban dibunuh dengan segala siksaan dan kekedjian." *A.B.*, 10/9/1965, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> "jang diikat tangan dan kakinja telah mendjadi 'permainan tjabul' dari 'ibu2 djahat' Gerwani jang dengan perbuatan mereka itu telah merendahkan martabat kaum wanita Indonesia." *A.B.*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> "Moral Gerwani," *K.*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

report based on “sources that can be believed,”<sup>66</sup> *Kompas* furthered the claims that Gerwani activists had been involved in some sort of sexualized frenzy. “The Gerwani members,” the article claimed, “danced in front of the victims completely naked, which reminds us of cannibalistic rituals that were carried out by primitive peoples tens of centuries ago.”<sup>67</sup> In this formulation then, Gerwani women had also ceased to be modern.

The emphasis on Gerwani in the *Kompas* version of the article was accentuated by switching which organization’s name is in capital letters: in the *Angkatan Bersendjata* original, the organizations are GESTAPU and Gerwani, while in *Kompas*, they are Gestapu and GERWANI. The story also completed the dehumanization and “primitivization” of both Gerwani and their sexuality, comparing the women to “cannibals” involved in some pre-historic ritual. In this image, the women become *kasar*, barbaric and sexually out of control, the complete antithesis of Indonesian women as *Ibu Sejati* and by extension *Ibu Bangsa*.<sup>68</sup> And in doing so, it furthered their removal from a proper and orderly *kaum wanita*.

In the eight days from October 4 to 11, then, the story of “what happened” at Lubang Buaya expanded. Beginning from the simple question of where the bodies were, the narrative veered to general stories of execution and torture, and then settled on accounts that linked Gerwani to the sexual exploitation of the living victims. As each new piece of the story surfaced day-by-day, Gerwani women were increasingly and more luridly implicated in what came to be viewed as a betrayal of God, the Revolution and the good name of Indonesian womanhood. They were also rendered as fundamentally primitive and inhuman; perpetrators of a disgusting violation of human decency that could only have been carried out by people who had completely lost both their morals and their humanity in a total surrender to both Marxist ideology and sexually deviant desires.

By October 11, however, the reports of Gerwani’s actions were still incomplete. As Gerwani members were captured and interrogated over the succeeding weeks, further details and embellishments of the stories continued to emerge. In particular, a series of “confessions” by Gerwani women presented increasingly explicit stories of the sexual

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<sup>66</sup> “sumber2 jang dapat dipertjaja,” *K.*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> “anggauta2 GERWANI itu menari2 dihadapan korbannja dengan dalam keadaan telandjang-pandjang jang mengingkatkan kita pada upatjara kanibalis jang dilakukan oleh suku2 primitip puluhan abad jang lalu.” *K.*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> This is the contrast Sylvia Tiwon refers to as “Models and Maniacs.” See the discussion in Chapter 1.

mutilation of the officers. These confessions, which were published in these same newspapers from the end of October through the middle of November, (precisely as the army-led killings first in Central Java and then in East Java began) not only further implicated Gerwani activists as being inhuman and barely above the level of animals, but also this time by their “own” admission.

### ***The “Confessions”***

The first major confession to appear in the papers was from a male “executioner”<sup>69</sup> named Simun. It is important to begin with Simun’s story more for what is *not* there than for what it is; the story stood in great contrast to the accounts of Gerwani involvement that were brought forward later.

Simun’s confession appeared in all three newspapers—*Angkatan Bersendjata, Api Pantjasila*, and *Kompas*—on the same day, October 29, almost a month after events at Lubang Buaya.<sup>70</sup> All three accounts were essentially the same. The stories described the affiliations and process that brought him to “training”<sup>71</sup> at Lubang Buaya for about one month before G-30-S. “About two days before October 1,” the papers reported, “Simun and his friends were informed by their leader that they should train hard because they were to face a difficult task,”<sup>72</sup> for which Simun and his comrades were given “green uniforms”<sup>73</sup> and “various types of weapons.”<sup>74</sup>

The task assigned to them may have been difficult, but the actual killing was passed over fairly quickly in all three accounts. *Kompas* reported it in one short paragraph:

At dawn on October 1 several trucks and jeeps arrived full of people wearing uniforms. Next shots were heard fired at the seven people who were brought

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<sup>69</sup> “*algodjo*,” *K.*, p. 1; *A.B.*, pp. 1 and 3; and *A.P.*, p. 3, all on 10/29/1965.

<sup>70</sup> See *K.*, p. 1; *A.B.*, pp. 1 and 3; and *A.P.*, p. 3, all on 10/29/1965.

<sup>71</sup> “*latihan*,” *K.*, p. 1; *A.B.*, pp. 1 and 3; and *A.P.*, p. 3, all on 10/29/1965.

<sup>72</sup> “*Kira-kira dua hari sebelum tgl. 1 Oktober Simun dengan kawan2nja mendapat keterangan dari pemimpinja supaya sungguh2 berlatih karena akan dihadapkan dengan tugas berat.*” This is the version from *K.*, 10/29/1965, p.1. The other two versions are almost identical.

<sup>73</sup> “*pakaian seragam hijau*,” *K.*, 10/29/1965, p.1, that is, the activists were made to appear to be soldiers, rather than members of youth groups. The uniforms provide an interesting detail about the role of Gerwani at Lubang Buaya, that is addressed below.

<sup>74</sup> “*sendjata dari pelbagai djenis*,” *K.*, 10/29/1965, p.1.

down from a truck. Simun joined in the shooting and he even joined in dumping the corpses into the well.<sup>75</sup>

The rest of the story went on to relate Simun's escape route and eventual capture.

Most of the account of Simun's action was concerned with establishing the details of his background, his training at Lubang Buaya and his escape after the collapse of the movement. Little was written about the treatment of the soldiers, who appeared in the article only as "seven people" who were shot at and who then became "corpses" that were dumped in a well. There was no sense of torture or mutilation. There were no women dancing naked around sanctified victims of a cannibalistic ritual. There was no sexual mutilation. There were, notably, *no* women present in Simun's story at all. Neither atrocity nor harsh reaction was noted. Simun was finally stopped and handed over to "the authorities"<sup>76</sup> who determined that he was a "cruel and despicable executioner who went along in the slaughter of our Army officers."<sup>77</sup> The final phrase was the total measure of any part of the story that might be considered sensationalistic.

A second confession, again by a man, appeared in *Kompas* the next day, October 30. Entitled "I regret participation in training at Lubang Buaya . . .,"<sup>78</sup> the article recounted the story of a twenty-five-year-old member of the *Pemuda Rakyat*, MSN, who received instructions to go to Lubang Buaya on the morning of October 1. There he noted the presence of a "woman that he knew was named Ibu Djumono from the National Central Committee of Gerwani."<sup>79</sup> She was among "several leaders of Lubang Buaya"<sup>80</sup> who were conferring in a tent while in another tent two corpses could be seen, one of which was in pajamas. These corpses appeared smeared with blood. Nearby stood five men who were guarded with weapons pointing at them. At the time, they seemed happy and were singing spiritedly.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "Tanggal 1 Oktober subuh tiba beberapa truk dan jeep jang penuh berisi orang jang berpakaian seragam. Kemudian terdengar tembakan terhadap 7 orang jang diturunkan dari truk. Simun ikut menambakinja dan iapun ikut memasukkan majat2 itu kedalam sumur." *K.*, 10/29/1965, p.1.

<sup>76</sup> "yang berwadajib," *K.*, 10/29/1965, p.1.

<sup>77</sup> "algodjo kedjam dan kedji jang ikut mendjagal para perwira TNI kita," *K.*, 10/29/1965, p.1.

<sup>78</sup> "Saja menjesal mengikuti latihan di Lubang Buaja . . .," *K.*, 10/30/1965, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> "seorang wanita jang dikenalja bernama Ibu Djumono dari DPP [Dewan Pimpinan Pusat, or Central Leadership Body] Gerwani," *K.*, 10/30/1965, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> "beberapa pemimpin Lobang Buaja," *K.*, 10/30/1965, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> "perundingan2 didalam kemah, sedang di lain tenda terlihat 2 majat satu diantaranya berpakaian pajama. Majat2 ini tampak berlumuran darah. Didekatnja berdiri 5 orang dan didjaga dengan todongan sendjata. Dalam pada itu, mereka tampak bergembira dan menjanji2." *K.*, 10/30/1965, p. 1.

Following that, the two corpses were thrown in the well, and the five who were still alive were shot one by one and thrown in the hole as well. The people then “sang while filling the well with trash, banana tree logs and dirt.”<sup>82</sup> Although this confession contained both references to Gerwani’s presence and to a general celebratory mood among the people involved in the killing of the kidnapped soldiers, again there was no apparent torture, explicit atrocity or sexual deviance mentioned as part of the events at Lubang Buaya.

The contrast with the description of women in stories that focus on Gerwani, however, is striking and important. This was visible in the previous day’s edition of *Kompas*, which filled the space at the end of its article on Simun with an account of the capture of a Gerwani member in Siantar, North Sumatra. The woman, who was a “graduate of the training at Lubang Buaya,”<sup>83</sup> was seized at her house by the “masses of the people.”<sup>84</sup> They then fought with her because “the people were mad”<sup>85</sup> and burned her house down. The story closed by noting that several “eye gouges”<sup>86</sup> were found in her house.

In even a short story about Gerwani, then—one that was tagged on at the end of the story of Simun’s confession at that—Communist women were implicated in the torture of the victims at Lubang Buaya, and evidence of such—“eye gouges,” whatever the objects may actually have been—was produced. Additionally, all this was seen as justifying the people’s violent response. In the women’s confessions that were produced later, both these elements—atrocity and the justified vengeful reaction of the people—combined to complete the demonization of Gerwani.

Importantly, the contrast between the linked but highly differentiated stories about Simun and the un-named Gerwani member suggest an important distinction about how stories of Communist men seem to have been framed quite differently from those that were written about Communist women. Women were constructed as the bringers of terror, as a fundamentally destabilizing force that required strong reactions. This is related to the patterns, as is discussed later in this chapter, involved in the constructions of moral crisis

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<sup>82</sup> “menjanji ber-sama2 menimbun sumur dengan sampah2 batang pisang dan tanah.” *K.*, 10/30/1965, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> “lulusan pendidikan Lubang Buaja,” *K.*, 10/29/1965, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> “massa rakjat,” *K.*, 10/29/1965, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> “rakjat marah.” *K.*, 10/29/1965, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> “pentjunkil mata,” *K.*, 10/29/1965, p. 1.

that was fundamentally gendered at its core. And this gendering was visible in the “confessions” from women that followed.

The most important and most explicit confession by a woman appeared in the story of Ibu Djamilah, published on November 6 in *Api Pantjasila*, a week after Simun’s account appeared. The article claimed that Djamilah was part of a group dubbed the “heroines of Lubang Buaya”<sup>87</sup> by their fellow members of the Pemuda Rakyat because of their “role in carrying out the slaughter.”<sup>88</sup> It also clearly linked Gerwani to the reported sexual mutilation of the kidnapped soldiers’ bodies.

The headline to the story read: “Mrs. Djamilah, who joined in the killings of the Generals: We were given knives to stab the generals who were killed at Lubang Buaya.”<sup>89</sup> The story contained the “confession”<sup>90</sup> given by Djamilah to the armed forces upon her capture. It began much like that of Simun, with the story of how Djamilah came to be at Lubang Buaya. She told her army questioners that she was fifteen years old, married and three months pregnant. Both she and her husband were members of the *Pemuda Rakyat* of Tanjung Priok, the port area of Jakarta, who had been ordered to attend “training”<sup>91</sup> at Lubang Buaya, where she was part of the group that “carried out and witnessed”<sup>92</sup> the actions against the captured officers.

Her confession continued with an account of *Pemuda Rakyat*, Gerwani and other forces gathering together at Lubang Buaya. They were led by the platoon commander who told them they should be “on guard”<sup>93</sup> because the “destruction of the Neocolonialists and the Capitalist Bureaucrats was about to begin.”<sup>94</sup> At around five in the morning there was a “roll call,”<sup>95</sup> and at six, everyone gathered together, “about 500 people, among them 100 members of Gerwani.”<sup>96</sup> The members of Gerwani, “including Djamilah herself were given

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<sup>87</sup> “Srikandi Lobang Buaja,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2. The term “Srikandi” infers military heroism by women. Srikandi is a prominent female character in Javanese *wayang* theater. See discussion of the term in Chapter 6.

<sup>88</sup> “pegang peranan dalam melakukan pemjembelihan2,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> “Nj. Djamilah jang turut membunuh Djendral2: Kami diberi pisau until menusuk djendral2 jang dibunuh diLubang Buaja.” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> “pengakuannya,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>91</sup> “latihan,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> “melakukan demikian dan menjaksikan,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> “waspada,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> “pengganjangan Nekolim dan Kapbir akan segera dimulai.” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2. *Nekolim* (an acronym for “neo-colonialists”) and *Kapbir* (short for “capitalist bureaucrat”) were politically potent terms used by Sukarno during the Guided Democracy era to identify the enemies of the Indonesian people and their revolution.

<sup>95</sup> “apel,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> “kira2 500 orang. Diantaranya 100 orang anggota Gerwani.” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.



pen knives and razor blades. 'We were only given razors at that time,' noted Djamilah."<sup>97</sup> They then saw the arrival of someone in an army uniform whose hands and eyes were bound with red cloth.

The story continued, quoted here at length:

The platoon commander ordered us to beat this person; then to stab this person's genitals with the penknives. The first people we saw beating and stabbing the person's genitals was the leader of Gerwani from Tanjung Priok named S. and Mrs. Sas. Next several other friends [went]. The ones I knew were Si and A who did that. After that, we ourselves joined in torturing that person. All the women, not less than 100 people, did that and witnessed it. Next we saw the victim brought close to the well by people wearing camouflage uniforms . . .

The victim was shot three times, then he fell; but he wasn't dead yet. Someone in green clothes . . . ordered Gerwani to advance. Everyone did what they had before, stabbing the genitals of the victim, and with the razors, sliced his genitals and body; until he died. At that time, I still asked my friends who the person who had been killed was, said Djamilah, but instead, we were struck on our mouths so that we no longer dared ask.

After that the corpse was thrown in the well. In a state of fear and nervousness, we ran to the front of the house. There we heard whispers that the one who had been killed was a general.<sup>98</sup>

Djamilah's confession explicitly tied Gerwani to the torture and killing of at least one of the Seven Revolutionary Heroes. In this version, not only were the Gerwani women present at the killing of this general, but under the orders of the platoon commander and the leadership of a Gerwani official, they actually became the ones who performed the slaughter and bloodletting, eventually killing the general even after he had been shot three

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<sup>97</sup> "Kepada anggota Gerwani termasuk Djamilah sendiri dibagi2kan pisau ketjil atau pisau silet. Kami hanja dibagikan pisau silet pada waktu itu: demikian Djamilah." A.P., 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> "Dan Ton memerintahkan me-mukul2 orang tersebut; kemudian menusuk-nusuk dengan pisau ketjil kemaluan orang tsb. Jang kami lihat pertama me-mukul2 dan menusuk-nusuk pisau pada kemaluan orang itu ialah pimpinan Gerwani Tanjung Priok bernama S. dan Nj. Sas. Kemudian teman2 lain; jang saja kenal ialah Si dan A melakukan demikian. Sudah itu kami sendiri jang turut menjiksa orang tersebut. Semua anggota wanita jang tak kurang dari 100 orang itu melakukan demikian dan menjaksikan. Kemudian kami melihat sikorban dibawa kedekat sumur oleh orang2 berpakaian seragam loreng2 . . .

Sikorban di tembak tiga kali kemudian djatuh; tetapi belum mati. Seorang berpakaian hidjau . . . memintahkan pada Gerwani untuk madju. Semua melakukan seperti jang telah dibuat tadi menusuk-nusuk kemaluan korban itu; dan dengan pisau silet mengiris kemaluan dan badannja; sehingga ia mati. Waktu itu saja masih menanjakan pada kawan2 siapa orang jang telah dibunuh; demikian Djemilah; tetapi mulut kami malahan dipukul sehingga tak berani lagi kami menanjakan.

Sudah itu majat tadi dimasukkan kedalam sumur. Dalam keadaan takut dan gelisah kami lari kedepan rumah. Dari sinilah kami dengar bisik2 bawah jang dibunuh ialah seorang Djendral." A.P., 11/6/1965, p. 2.

times. The entire story had the air of some sort of crazed ritual sacrifice, in which the women descended *en masse* on the hapless general, hacking away with their extended penknives and razors as they went.<sup>99</sup>

Interestingly, there was no mention of the women dancing in a frenzy in front of the general, “playing” with his body, or exposing and manipulating their own genitals, all details from the October 11 version of the story. But, as I argue below, one of the effects of Djamilah’s confession was to transfer the guilt of killing the officers from the specific women at Lubang Buaya and onto Communist women as a whole, the link between the individual and the collective being conceived of as their shared ideological formation.

The intitation of the frenzy in the story—the point at which social order breaks down most fundamentally—was attached therefore to a “leader of Gerwani from Tanjung Priok named S. and Mrs. Sas.” There then was a gradual entry into the frenzy, where a few of Djamilah’s friends are identified by their initials, before the whole group descended *en masse*. Interestingly, none of them is individually named as having danced nude, an interesting omission that seems to have left a space within which a broader charge of depravity against the women as a group, and against Gerwani as a whole—even those who were not present—could be lodged.

To be sure, this was only the story of the execution of one general, and not of the other officers killed at Lubang Buaya that night. But given that the victim was only finally identified as “a general” after the fact, and given the previous note on how the generals were often fused symbolically into one person in the press at the time, it was clear that, by extension, Gerwani was being made responsible for the killing and torture of all the victims. And, since Gerwani members present were all given penknives and had “we ourselves joined in the torturing”<sup>100</sup> Gerwani *as a whole* was implicated by Djamilah’s confession.

There are conflicting tensions apparent in this confession. In the language, there was a strong sense that Djamilah and her “friends” were being given orders from above: the platoon commander “ordered”<sup>101</sup> them to beat the general, and someone in a green uniform

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<sup>99</sup> I would like to be clear that I am not suggesting here that some sort of “running *amok*” was taking place, or that the idea of “*amok*,” discussed in Chapter 1, offers a possible explanation for the killings of the officers. I am, rather, pointing out an element of how the story seems to have been constructed. There is a discussion of this idea, citing the work of Sylvia Tiwon, later in this chapter.

<sup>100</sup> “*kami sendiri jang turut menjiksa*,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> “*memerintah*,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

“ordered”<sup>102</sup> them to advance on the recently shot victim. This sense of Djamilah being ordered or commanded was also made clear in the first sentence of the article which said that “she was ordered from above to carry out such vile actions.”<sup>103</sup> In this conception of the events, then, individual Gerwani members were not responsible for conceiving and carrying out the plan on their own. Furthermore, Djamilah appeared coerced into following the orders when she was struck on the face for asking who was being killed.

But as they were reported, the description of the events following the generals’ death also suggested a force beyond coercion at work in the Gerwani actions. There was a strong sense that the Gerwani women were overtaken by a mass trance or hypnosis, to use both terms loosely, leading up to the killing. While actually involved in the attack, the Gerwani women did not seem concerned with who their victim was, or in his reactions. Djamilah did not mention any screams or protestations from the man being sliced open, nor did she convey a sense of his being actively silent. The lack of description of his reaction to pain reinforced the story’s focus on the massed members of Gerwani “carrying out such [actions] and witnessing”<sup>104</sup> them. Djamilah’s focus was narrowed on the mob and its own sense of what it was doing corporately, from which the victim was, in an odd sense, excluded. This sense of collective frenzy, therefore, appears to come in the form of the explosion of an interior lack of moral control that was brought from within the women. That is, their *batin rusak* (“ruined internal morality”) was pulled forth in all its destructive power.

By contrast, questions of what actually happened and to whom only come to the fore upon the actual death of the general. It was precisely “at that time”<sup>105</sup> that Djamilah asked her friends who the man was, and that the sense of coercion to what the women are doing, which had disappeared during the ‘mass trance,’ returned to the narrative.<sup>106</sup> This return to individual consciousness became even clearer once the body had been dropped in the well, when the women, so recently fearless, ran to the front of the house “in a state of fear and

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<sup>102</sup> Again, “memerintahkan,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> “dia diperintahkan oleh atasnja untuk melakukan perbuatan biadab tsb.” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> “melakukan demikian dan menjaksikan,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2, as also cited above.

<sup>105</sup> “waktu itu,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> Again, I am noting this element of the narrative as it is presented, not suggesting this as an explanation apart from this narrative.

nervousness,”<sup>107</sup> where they “heard whispers”<sup>108</sup> that the person killed had been a general. It was as if the death of the general broke the spell created by the frenzied mob action. The women returned to a more self-controlled state, in which they could again feel what should have been be their ‘natural’ feelings of fear and nervousness at such audacious action.

This confession, then, presented the possibility of removing total blame from individual members of Gerwani. Djamilah was described as a woman who was very young, married and recently pregnant, and from the poorer strata of society.<sup>109</sup> While she was involved in the events at Lubang Buaya to the extent of becoming a “heroine,” she also seemed to a large extent to have lost her autonomy in the situation. She was, perhaps like the daughters whose mothers worried about them as they moved to the city, not yet fully morally formed, despite being already married. These mitigating descriptions did not mean that the repercussions for her actions would not be stiff,<sup>110</sup> but Djamilah did not take ultimate responsibility for the reported actions of Gerwani.

Rather, that was reserved for the leadership “forged”<sup>111</sup> over the years in the ideology of the Indonesian Communist Party. A different kind of confession came from Ibu Trimo, of the national leadership of Gerwani. Published in *Angkatan Bersendjata* on November 14, eight days after Djamilah’s confession, Ibu Trimo’s “interview” with the press was striking for the fact that the person confessing wasn’t even present at Lubang Buaya.

The heading, “Gerwani, come back to the true path. Ibu Trimo’s message while crying—with Djamilah at her side,”<sup>112</sup> implied a sort of repentance on the part of Ibu Trimo. Described as part of the “brains” of Gerwani, to whom was given the duty of making the organizational program successful,<sup>113</sup> Ibu Trimo had been arrested in the roundup of PKI leaders following the collapse of G-30-S. She was interrogated, and as part of this process,

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<sup>107</sup> “dalam keadaan takut dan gelisah,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>108</sup> “dengar bisik2,” *A.P.*, 11/6/1965, p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> One central element of New Order ideology became the idea that Indonesia’s large mass of poor peasants and low-level laborers were “floating,” that is, unconnected from the nastiness and brutishness of politics. Given that land reform was at the center both of PKI activism and pre-coup social disruption, this de-politicization of the masses was a critical element of New Order policies of control during the late 1960s and early 1970s and beyond.

<sup>110</sup> Saskia Wieringa does point out, however, that none of the girls who furnished confessions were brought to trial.

<sup>111</sup> “*gemblengan*,” which also implies “indoctrinated.”

<sup>112</sup> “*Gerwani kembalilah kejalan benar. Ibu Trimo berpesan sambil nangis – Dengan Djamilah disampingnja.*” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, pp. 1, 3. The first sentence is an exhortation, implying that a return to the “true path” could in fact be a possibility.

<sup>113</sup> “*salah satu ‘otak’ Gerwani pada siapa diserahkan tugas mensukseskan program organisasi,*” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 1.

she met with Djamilah, who passed on her account of “what had happened” at Lubang Buaya. Ibu Trimo was then presented to the press alongside Djamilah for an interview about the role of Gerwani in the whole affair.

The article quoted the detailed questions and answers Ibu Trimo gave about the reported events at Lubang Buaya:

- Do you agree with the actions of Gerwani at Lubang Buaya?
- No I don't agree with it!
- Do you find it true if you are told that the actions of Gerwani are quite cruel?
- Yes, that's it. Djamilah already told me the stories. (Tears begin to flow).
- Isn't it with these actions of Gerwani that the name of Indonesian womanhood is also spoiled? As well, isn't Gerwani's struggle disgraced and defeated?
- Yes. . . . . (she wipes away tears).
- Should Gerwani be maintained?
- I would like that it just be disbanded. (Her tears flow more rapidly).
- People are demanding that the PKI be disbanded. If that is already the way it is, there is not another way except to disband, she answered faintly.<sup>114</sup>

The view of Ibu Trimo was of a defeated leader tearfully asking for some sort of forgiveness and seeking a moderate reaction for actions taken by her organization that she did not know about.

However, the description of Ibu Trimo that surrounded this set of responses made clear that the reporter/interviewer considered her regret and repentance to be, at least in part, an act. Instead, her true character was visible through her face and her comportment. The article's introduction of Ibu Trimo noted her “hesitant”<sup>115</sup> handshake, her “forced

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<sup>114</sup> “-Apakah Ibu setuju dgn perbuatan Gerwani di Lubang Buaka?

- Tidak. Saja tidak setuju.

- Apakah Ibu dapat membenarkan kalau dikatakan bahwa perbuatan Gerwani itu kedji sekali?

- Ja itulah. Djamilah sudah tjerita pada saya. (Airmatanja kembali berlinang2).

- Tidakkah dengan perbuatan Gerwani ini nama wanita Indonesia djuga tjemar? Disamping perdjjuangan Gerwani djuga turut ternoda dan ala2.

- Ja . . . . . (Menghapus airmata)

- Apakah Gerwani dapat dipertahankan?

- Saja ingin supaya bubar sadja (Airmata makin deras)

- Orang menuntut supaya PKI bubar. Kalau sudah demikian tidak ada djalan lain ketjuali bubar. Djawabnja lemas.”

A.B., 11/14/1965, p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> “ragu2,” A.B., 11/14/1965, p. 1.

smile”<sup>116</sup> and “her gaze full of suspicion that couldn’t be hidden,”<sup>117</sup> all signs of her disingenuousness, and, I would argue in addition, of her broken morality, that she carefully and intentionally hides. “These features that are distinctively PKI,” the author continued, “show clearly in her. These are the results of indoctrination which has gone on for years, the results of perseverance and diligence in handling the demands and discipline of a strict organization.”<sup>118</sup> In the writer’s eyes, this Communist indoctrination made Ibu Trimo guilty, even if it did appear that she “knew nothing at all about the plans for Gestapu.”<sup>119</sup>

It is important to remember that these elements of both character and inner beauty—the quality of her smile and the look in her eyes reflecting the true nature of her inner morality—were the first ones discussed in *Wanita* magazine’s initial article on beauty in 1949. The implication, clearly, is that Ibu Trimo’s *batin* had been seriously affected by her Communist indoctrination, leaving her no longer properly Indonesian, or properly moral.

The apparent strength and influence of this communist formation on Ibu Trimo’s character was most visible in the contrast the reporter drew between Ibu Trimo and Djamilah as they sat side by side:

When we take note of the faces of Ibu Trimo and Djamilah “Heroine of Lubang Buaya,” there is the feeling that there are characteristics that that separate the leader from the follower. Besides her attitude that is too guarded, one moment stiff, one moment friendly, Ibu Trimo is not able to hide the look in her eyes that is full of suspicion. Djamilah does not possess a gaze like that, because she is not yet hardened, she hasn’t yet been strongly force-fed party doctrine.<sup>120</sup>

The importance of Ibu Trimo’s confession lies within this difference between the party leader innocent of atrocities but “guilty” of years of Communist formation and the young follower “guilty” of the terror carried out against the officers, but still innocent in her as-yet unhardened spirit. There are clearly different ways in which Communist women

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<sup>116</sup> “*senjum jang dipaksakan*,” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> “*sorot mata penuh tjuriga tak dapat sembunjikan*,” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 1.

<sup>118</sup> “*Tjiri2 watak jang chas PKI terlihat djelas dalam dirinja. Ini adalah hasil gemblengan jang bertahun2, hasil dari kegigihan dan ketekunan dalam menaggulangi [sic] tuntutan2 dan disiplin organisasi jang keras*.” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> “*tidak tahu menahi tentang rentjana Gestapu*.” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> “*Bila kita perhatikan wadjah2 Ibu Trimo dan Djamilah ‘Srikandi Lubang Buaja’ terasa ada tjiri2 jang membedakan seorang pemimpin dan anak buahnja. Disamping sikapnja jang terlalu waspada, sebentar kaku, sebentar ramah, Ibu Trimo tidak dapat menjembunjikan sorot mata jang penuh tjuriga. Djamilah tidak mempunjai sorot mata seperti ini karena ia belum gemblengan, belum begitu hebat ditjekoki doktrin partai*.” *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 1.

could be labeled as guilty in the aftermath of the events at Lubang Buaya, but there are also ways in which they could be seen as victims. In the opinion of the reporter who produced the article on Ibu Trimo, at least, the Communist inculcation seemed to be the worse of the two crimes.

It is interesting, however, that both Djamilah and Ibu Trimo were presented to some degree as stock images. In a book on proletarian *ludruk* theater based on fieldwork in Surabaya in 1962-63 (though published after 1965), American anthropologist James Peacock noted that almost all female roles in *ludruk* fell into one of few types, two of which were the “middle-aged nagging wife” and the “thirtyish villainess wife.”<sup>121</sup> Ibu Trimo was presented as a combination of the two, with an implied meddlesome mouth and an aggressive forward manner that was, in the opinion of the interviewer, barely contained. The thirtyish villainess wife in *ludruk* also had a tendency to kill her husbands and lovers.

Many of the plot synopses Peacock presented in his work also included young peasant women who had been summoned to work in the modern, urban houses in which most *ludruk* plots occurred. These women, like Djamilah, were often presented as naïve and unprepared for the intrigues in which they would soon be involved. There are also two “good” characters, the long-suffering hero’s mother, and the beautiful young mistress. Peacock argues that these characters “either protest against or compensate for the male’s position in the matrifocal household,”<sup>122</sup> that is, they were either the cause of or the solution to a situation in which men’s proper authority had been usurped.

That all women’s roles in *ludruk* were played by male transvestites only serves to highlight the stock nature of the “characters” these two Gerwani women are drawn as.<sup>123</sup> It is also important to remember that in popular media since 1963, Indonesian women had largely been drawn as stock ideal-type characters, most particularly in relation to their position in the representation of the nation.

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<sup>121</sup> James Peacock, *Rites of Modernization*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>122</sup> James Peacock, *Rites of Modernization*, p. 78.

<sup>123</sup> The irony of including Peacock’s work in this analysis is that *ludruk* was another victim of the New Order campaign against communism. In the Suharto era, *ludruk* troops, which had often been linked to proletarian arts movements, were disbanded and the theater form ceased to exist. The transvestite actors were often pressured, as were Indonesian women, to “cleanse” themselves and assume “appropriate” (male) gender roles, including stopping having men as sexual partners. Many *ludruk* actors, particularly those who played the women’s roles, are reported to have been killed in the massacres of late 1965 and early 1966.

In the confessional literature, both Ibu Trimo and Djamilah were presented more as ideal types than as individuals. As such, they played roles in the national discourse on Lubang Buaya that went far beyond their personal experiences. In “producing” the confessions of a fundamentally false narrative, the military explicitly used constructions of women who were “implicated” in the killings of the seven national heroes in ways that were *intended* to invoke a serious incident of moral crisis at a national scale and with national consequences.

The presence of the possibility of some degree of innocence in each of these women, and the more general types of women they represented, however, necessitates further discussion about what, in fact, made women potentially culpable in the wake of the killings. In any case, the more hard-cut stock images of the Gerwani women as frenzied cannibals, *kasar* savages and morally depraved activists, which filled the initial reports of Lubang Buaya had at least partially been softened by more complicated and full—if in some ways more horrific—images of Communist women whose fundamental eastern and Indonesian character had been transformed by indoctrination.

These did not stand by themselves. Rather, these more complex views of Gerwani were presented in contradistinction to images of non-Communist women. In particular, five-year-old Irma Ade Nasution became an important symbol of the purity of Indonesian womanhood against which the stains of Gerwani could be measured.

### ***Irma, the Little Heroine***

Irma Ade Surjani Nasution, the second daughter of General A.H. Nasution, was an omnipresent figure in the Indonesian press after the events of G-30-S. Shot in the crossfire aimed at her father, Irma became the eighth victim of G-30-S when she died later in the hospital. Her last photograph, a formally posed shot of a sweet little girl in a light-colored pinafore, was published at least several times in each of the three newspapers. Her funeral with full military honors on October 7 received significant coverage as well. Her father’s words to her at her graveside were printed in both *Kompas* and *Angkata Bersendjata*,<sup>124</sup> as were prayers recommending her soul to heaven and words of consolation to her mother.

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<sup>124</sup> See *A.B.*, 10/8/1965, p. 1, and *K.*, 10/8/1965, p. 1.



She became the ultimate victim of the “ferocity and savagery”<sup>125</sup> of G-30-S, standing in stark contrast as the ultimate symbol of female innocence against which Gerwani had sinned.



**Figure 7.1** Irma Ade Nasution, 1965.

The heartfelt loss of a father was a clear factor in the beatification of Little Irma. At her graveside, he addressed her saying: “My most beloved child. You have preceded, falling early as a shield for your father. And you have preceded all of us in facing Allah. . . . Have a good journey my child. Have a good journey, until we meet again, because we will follow you.”<sup>126</sup>

Indonesians responded to his loss, taking it on as their own. For several months, the newspapers were full of advertisements taken out to express the condolences of various organizations, army battalions and private companies towards the Nasution family, to pray that Irma would find a place with God, and to excoriate the counter-revolutionary terror of Gestapu that had caused the death of the “Little Hero.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> “keganasan dan kebuasan,” *A.B.*, 10/8/1965, p. 1.

<sup>126</sup> “Anak saja jang tercinta, Engkau telah mendahului gugur sebagai perisal untuk ajahmu. Akan tetapi engkau mendahului kami semua menghadap kepada Allah SWT. . . . Selamat djalan, anakku. Selamat djalan, sampai ketemu, karena kami akan menjusulmu.” *K.*, 10/8/1965, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> “Pahlawan ketjil.” *K.*, 10/8/1965, p. 1, but the term was used broadly.

Irma's life was lionized for popular consumption in a series of articles published in *Angkatan Bersendjata* on December 20 and 21. In this short biography, Irma was painted as an exemplary young girl, who lived up to her name Surjani, meaning the sun, which "brings radiance and happiness."<sup>128</sup> But her relationship to everyone she knew was represented through her nickname, Adik, meaning "younger sister,"<sup>129</sup> and she was "cute and lively to all who knew her."<sup>130</sup>

But she was not presented in the series primarily as a younger sister. Rather, Irma was described principally as a future mother. Her great concern for her friends at school prompted her teacher to observe that she "possessed maternal characteristics,"<sup>131</sup> and that she would bathe her doll with several friends. Moreover, the hagiography noted, she possessed the motherly quality of putting the needs of other before her own:

She even paid more attention to the interests of other people than to her own. If a friend or any other child from her family was crying Adik would comfort them with the sweet words "Don't cry, OK?"<sup>132</sup>

Irma was also a good daughter and granddaughter. When her father's mother was being nursed in the hospital for an eye infection, she visited her grandmother regularly and watched the doctors carefully as they treated the older woman. Once her grandmother returned home, Irma followed her around and "busied herself waiting on her grandmother's needs."<sup>133</sup> She "never forgot to visit"<sup>134</sup> her maternal grandmother in Bandung during her vacations, (as if a 5-year-old would have agency in such a thing,) and upon leaving, gave her grandmother a doll in case the woman would miss Adik, saying that "Grandma mustn't be sad. Adik will come back soon."<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> "memberi tjahaja/kebahagiaan," *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>129</sup> "Adik," means both "younger sister" and "younger brother," and is used as a direct form of reference to a young member of a family, sometimes also shortened to "dik." Its use signals closeness to the younger relative on a personal level. So, to some extent, in reading about Irma in Indonesian referred to as Adik extended that sense of familiarity to the entire country. She became the nation's younger sister.

<sup>130</sup> "lutju dan ramah terhadap semua jang dikenalnja." *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1. "Lucu" literally means funny, but it is a word often used to describe young children in the sense that they are funny, but cute in both appearance and bearing. Indonesians would never describe a child as beautiful, though. That might attract bad luck, and culturally, it is not done. So, women hovering over a newly born baby and its mother will invariably describe the child as "lucu," while clearly being absolutely entranced by the new arrival.

<sup>131</sup> "memiliki sifat keibuan," *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> "Iapun lebih banjak memperhatikan kepentingan orang lain daripada dirinja sendiri. Kalau temannja atau salah seorang putra dari keluarganja menangis Adik manghibur dengan kata2 manis 'Djangan menangis, ja?'," *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> "berusaha melajani kebutuhan nenek," *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> "tidak pernah lupa mengundjungi," *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> "Oma djangan sedih ja. Adik lekas kembali." *A.B.*, 12/20/1965, p. 1.

The story reported that Irma used to welcome her father home when he returned from affairs of state, and would sometimes ride around the city sitting in his lap “constantly talking and asking him about all sorts of things. Quite satisfied, Pak Nas always answered his little daughter, without feeling even a little tired.”<sup>136</sup> And with her mother, she was so good that it was difficult for the woman ever to be mad at Irma.

Her mother also reported that Irma was quite the young beautiful-woman in training. In a description that clearly reflects the development of modern Indonesian women’s glamour culture discussed in various women’s magazines as laid out in previous chapters, by age five, Irma,

who was still little, wore *lipstick* and paid attention to beauty. She owned a collection of children’s *lipsticks*, which had been specially bought for her by Ibu Nas . . . and her favorite shade was mocha polka.<sup>137</sup>

She also had an innate sense of fashion and style. She often picked out her mother’s clothes or lipstick, and “according to Ibu Nas, really sometimes Adik’s choices were appropriate and proper.”<sup>138</sup>

In the peaceful days before the shooting—though imagined after it—Irma was the absolute symbol of Indonesian womanhood: mother, daughter, and younger sister. Irma was intelligent, ambitious and not afraid of the future. While watching her grandmother’s eye treatment, against the wishes of her mother, Irma defended her actions saying “Adik wants to become a doctor, mama, so I must watch so that later I will know.”<sup>139</sup> The biographer sees this as a good thing. “It appears,” he wrote, “that this little girl possessed a courageous nature.”<sup>140</sup> Yet this adventurous streak was balanced by her desire to be beautiful and her concern with makeup and fashion, which would make her appealing in the eyes of others. But both these attributes were secondary to her concern for others and her “maternal characteristics.” She was, above all, born to be a mother.

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<sup>136</sup> “tak henti2nja berbitjara dan bertanja tentang segala sesuatu. Dengan senang hati Pak Nas selalu melajani puteri ketjilinja ini, tanpa merasa lelah sedikitpun.” A.B., 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> “jang masih ketjil itu ialah memakai lipstick [sic] dan memperhatikan keindahan. Ia mempunyai koleksi lipstick anak2, jang khusus dibelikan oleh Ibu Nas . . . dan warna kesukaanja ialah moccha polka.” A.B., 12/20/1965, p. 1. Note the two different spellings of “lipstick.”

<sup>138</sup> “menurut Ibu Nas, memang kadang2 pilihan Adik itu tepat dan pantas.” A.B., 12/20/1965, p. 1. In other words, Irma as a “good” Indonesian woman, even if just by sartorial standards.

<sup>139</sup> “Adik mau mendjadi dokter mama, djadi mesti melihat supaja nanti tahu.” A.B., 12/20/1965, p. 1.

<sup>140</sup> “Ternjata gadis ketjil itu memiliki watak pemberani.” A.B., 12/20/1965, p. 1.

If she were ideal in her daily life, the forbearance and concern for others with which Irma was credited after being shot was truly incredible. The story reported the violence of the night of September 30/October 1 as follows:

Ibu Nas for a moment carried Adik who was smeared with blood. The sweet little one did not cry or even moan a little bit. When her mother asked "Are you hurt?" she answered, "I'm hurt mother." Ibu Nas asked again: "Are you still alive?" "Alive, mama, I'm still alive' Mama." . . . [After her operation] she saw her older sister crying, then she said: "You must not cry, I will recover soon." To her mother she asked "Why was Daddy shot, mama?"<sup>141</sup>

Not only, then, did the mortally wounded young girl reportedly not cry after being shot during a noisy and confusing late-night raid on her house, she also took the time and effort to reassure her mother that she was still alive, even though she was in pain. She made an effort to comfort her older sister and to inquire after her father, and as she grew weaker and could only nod her head, she still dutifully answered when her mother asked if she was feeling sick.

Irma was presented in this biography as an example of moral excellence, and particularly of the type of behavior that good Indonesians should show in times of trouble:

Adik was only a little child. But what lessons can we find to take from her, precisely because her death happened when she was so young?

For children the same age as her, Adik left behind good characteristics that are proper to follow. Give preference to the needs of others and always be ready to help. . . . friendly to whomever without differentiating. Diligent and obedient at school. Truly she was one of the smart children.

To her family and to all the people of Indonesia, Adik implanted the conviction that each person must be resolute, even in the face of critical moments.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> "Ibu Nas seketika mendukung Adik jang berlumuran darah. Si ketjil mungil tidak menangis ataupun mengerang sedikitpun. Waktu ibu bertanja 'Adik sakit?' ia menjawab: 'Sakit mama,' Ibu Nas bertanja lagi: 'Adik masih hidup?', 'Hidup mama, Adik terus Mama.' . . . ia melihat kakanja menangis, lalu ia berkata 'Kakak djangan menangis. Adik akan lekas sembuh.' Kepada Ibu Nas ia bertanja: 'Mengapa Ajah ditembak, mama?,' A.B., 10/21/1965, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> "Adik hanjalah seorang anak ketjil. Tetapi peladjaran apa kita ambil dari padanja, djustru kepergiannja dalam usia jang demikian muda?

Untuk anak jang sebaja dengan dia, Adik meninggalkan sifat2 baik jang patut ditiru. Medahulukan kepentingan orang lain dan selalu sedia membantu. . . . ramah tamah terhadap siapa sadja tanpa membeda2kan. Radjin dan patuh disekolah. Kebetulan pula ia termasuk anak jang tjerdas.

Pada keluarga dan seluruh masjarakat Indonesia Adik telah menenamkan kejakinan bahwa setiap orang harus tabah, walaupun dalam menghadapi saat2 jang kritis." A.B., 10/21/1965, p. 3.

The “little hero”<sup>143</sup> became an equal totem in the newspapers to the “Seven Heroes of the Revolution.” She also became the image of the perfect Indonesian woman, and a clear counter-image to the women of Gerwani. While they were portrayed as coarse and sexual, or as calculating, she was elegant and genuine, and, at five years old, she was presumably sexually innocent. While they were bossy, she was obedient. While they had taken the lives of seven soldiers, she had been her father’s “shield.” While they eventually ran from their actions in fear and nervousness, she faced her death with calm, dignity and concern for others. While they were “*orang tak ber-Tuhan*,” she was clearly not only Godly in her character, but also now, was in his presence in body and spirit, delivered to face Allah with the prayers of her father and the nation.

Thus, the images of Gerwani as they are presented in the press must be seen in contradistinction to the images projected of Irma Ade Nasution.<sup>144</sup> As part of their perceived attacks on the various distinct parts of Indonesian society, the Gerwani women were also seen as attacking the young girl. A call for the dissolution of Gerwani by the head of the *Gerakan Wanita Korban Negara*, (Women’s Movement of the Sacrificial Heroes of the Nation), for instance, noted that:

As a women’s organization, Gerwani committed treason against the family, the People, the State, the Nation, the Indonesian Revolution, and directly against . . . the Great Leader of the Revolution Bung Karno . . . the seven revolutionary heroes and a female revolutionary hero Miss ADE ERMA SURJANI NASUTION, second daughter of . . . Gen. A.H. Nasution.<sup>145</sup>

Both sets of images drew distinctly on ideal types of Indonesian women that had been actively used in defining the moral success of the nation, and in the answers to the question Sukarno asked in 1926 of whether Indonesia would be glorious or Indonesia would be shattered.

What we can see in this close reading of the various successive iteration of the Lubang Buaya narrative between the second week of October and the end of December,

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<sup>143</sup> “*pahlawan ketjil*” *A.B.*, 10/21/1965, p. 3.

<sup>144</sup> These contrasting images are not only created through text, they can also be seen in the photos of captured Gerwani women as they contrast with the famous photo of Irma.

<sup>145</sup> “*Sebagai organisasi wanita, “Gerwani” telah berchianat terhadap/kepada keluarga, Masyarakat, Negara, Bangsa, Revolusi Indonesia dan langsung kepada . . . Pemimpin Besar Revolusi Bung Karno . . . 7 pahlawan2 revolusi dan seorang pahlawan revolusi wanita Nona ADE ERMA SURJANI NASUTION putri kedua . . . Djendral A.H. Nasution.*” *A.B.*, 10/18/1965, p. 3.

therefore, is that each new expansion and adaptation of the narrative showed a marked and increasing use of specific elements of earlier moral crisis narratives that the dissertation explores earlier.

What was being manipulated, the moral constructions of national women, were a critical, central element of the construction of Indonesian national identity. And these manipulations, all fully constructed by the military, were designed to show that the very essence of the nation was put at mortal risk by the actions of Gerwani. When read in relation to the context of how moral crisis had been constructed over the previous twenty years, this manipulation begins to show what the Lubang Buaya narrative placed at risk should G-30-S have succeeded, namely the continued fundamental moral strength on which the nation had been built.

### ***Moral Crisis and the Strengthening of the Historiography of the Indonesian Killings***

It was this evocation of moral crisis, I argue, that was critical to activating the intent towards mass killing. It provides, I argue, an explanation for *why* this reaction could occur that is fully imbedded within already extant central forces within Indonesian cultural and social politics. It is an explanation that reflects the tensions of Indonesians looking to be *moderen*, and not simply modern.

It also provides important supplementation to two of the best explanations of the *why* of the killings that have been provided by historians. Both Geoffrey Robinson, most recently, and Saskia Wieringa earlier, have presented important arguments about the causes of the killings from within an Indonesian cultural context. Importantly, both of them have placed these explanations within contexts of Indonesian society and history seen largely in Indonesian terms, eschewing explanations of the killings as some form of mass *amok* that flow from an Orientalist interpretation of the region. I argue that adding Moral Crisis as an important lens for understanding 1965-66 strengthens each of their arguments in important ways.

In his new work on Indonesia's "*Killing Season*," Geoffrey Robinson observes that there is a problem in much of the historiography on this era, namely that "none of the competing interpretations of the movement—including the official one—can possibly

explain, much less justify, the mass killing and incarceration of 1965-66 that followed.”<sup>146</sup> Along with other new scholarship discussed in Chapter 1, Robsinson takes an exceptionally clear stance on who was responsible for the killing. The “resort to mass killing and detention,” he writes, “was neither inevitable nor spontaneous, but was encouraged, facilitated, directed and shaped by the army’s leadership.”<sup>147</sup> Further, he argues, “the mass violence of 1965-66 was the product of a particular *interpretation* of the movement that blamed the killing of the generals on the PKI, and portrayed the party as guilty of murder and treachery.”<sup>148</sup>

In order to build an explanation for the justification of the killings, Robinson suggests that they must be understood through three “broad claims” that both “account . . . for the variations and particularities of the Indonesian case . . . while also making possible its comparison to other instances of mass killing and detention.”<sup>149</sup> His first two claims are broadly structural: that the army leadership played a “pivotal role . . . in provoking, facilitating, and organizing it,”<sup>150</sup> and that “the actions of powerful foreign states—especially the United States and the United Kingdom—together with aspects of international context were instrumental in facilitating and encouraging the army’s campaign of mass violence in 1965-66.”<sup>151</sup> These first two claims are critical to understanding how the larger structural patterns of the events was achieved, but neither explains *why* the killings were able to work on an autonomous cultural level.

Robinson addresses this problem of “*why*” in his third broad claim, namely that specific historical conditions “made the killings in Indonesia much more likely to happen. They did so,” he wrote, “by influencing political ideas and conflicts, shaping key political institutions, and structures, and providing the basis for politically powerful historical reconstructions and memories.”<sup>152</sup> In other words, the Indonesian killings he argues, and I

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<sup>146</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 80. He is referring here to the same various interpretations of the G-30-S movement’s genesis that are outlined in Chapter 1.

<sup>147</sup> Geoffery Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 19. This is the first of three arguments he makes that form what he calls his “new account” of the events of 1965-66.

<sup>148</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 81.

<sup>149</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 19.

<sup>150</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 19.

<sup>151</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 21.

<sup>152</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 24.

fully agree, must be seen and understood fundamentally from within an Indonesian historical context.

Robinson names five of these specific historical contexts. First was the existence of a strong political fault line between the Left and Right as a result of “bitter ideological differences”<sup>153</sup> between the two poles that reached back to the 1920’s. Additionally, the events at Madiun in 1948<sup>154</sup> had led to the “emergence of a perception within the army and the political Right more generally that the PKI represented an existential threat to army unity and to the nation.”<sup>155</sup> He also argues that the process of state formation during World War II and the Revolution gave rise to a conservative army and a highly militarized state, and the “early development of an army doctrine and practice of mobilizing civilian militias to combat domestic enemies.”<sup>156</sup> The army became capable, as a result, of mobilizing civilian militias as needed, including in 1965-66.

Finally, Robinson notes that these tensions between left and right and the army’s desire to consolidate power were “accelerated by the polarizing logic of the Cold War,” including Sukarno’s increasingly “sometimes-bellucose language . . . of anticolonial nationalism.”<sup>157</sup> Indonesia in the first half of the 1960’s he writes, was marked by “a politics notable for its militancy and high levels of mass mobilization,” which, it should be noted, was true across the Indonesian political spectrum and in all three *aliran*. The dynamism of the time was important. He does “not mean to suggest,” he writes,

that the mass killing and incarceration were preordained, or planned from start to finish. On the contrary, it is worth emphasizing that the violence emerged and changed in response to conditions on the ground.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 24.

<sup>154</sup> In 1948, during the height of the Revolution, the PKI actively supported peasant rebellions against landowners in the Madiun Regency in East Java. The army, under the orders of Sukarno and Hatta, suppressed the actions and attacked the PKI. PKI Chairman Aidit fled Central Java and went into hiding in Jakarta. The Madiun Affair exasperated the tensions between the Army and the PKI, including personally among individual members of the leadership of the two organizations, and the suspicions between the army and the communists in the 1960s often reflected some of its roots in the “Madiun Affair.”

<sup>155</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 24.

<sup>156</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 25.

<sup>157</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 25.

<sup>158</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 26.



But the conditions were, in fundamental ways, Indonesian conditions, and the tensions were Indonesian tensions that need to be understood, and I fully agree, within a fundamentally Indonesian framework.

This chapter has suggested an additional source of tension. Namely, it argues that the army unveiled its attacks against the PKI, and the left more generally, ultimately as a case of national moral crisis. Further, it argues that this was centrally dependent on their sexualization and bestialization of Gerwani activists in the various iterations of the Lubang Buaya narrative. To some extent, this offers an explanation for *why* that suggests a deep pattern of what was “at stake” culturally and politically that helps, I would argue, complicate and enrich Robinson’s analysis. His argument looks more at *how* the killing was able to be carried out so effectively, and doesn’t, to my reading at least, offer a full explanation for why the killings appears to have been *necessary*.

In placing gender at the center of this question, the dissertation is not, of course, the first writing to do so, far from it. In particular, and as I have noted previously, Saskia Wieringa’s scholarship has that question at its very center. And the treatment of Gerwani is, of course, something that Robinson and other scholars not only recognize but emphasize.

“In no case,” Robinson writes, “were the intentions of this official vilification [of the PKI and its affiliates] so evident and the consequences so grave as in the demonization of Gerwani.”<sup>159</sup> Yet, Robinson’s analysis does not exceed arguments previously advanced by other scholars. “Apart from casting the Gerwani women as inhuman witches,” he writes,

the story [of sexual torture of the generals] powerfully evoked male anxieties about castration. Moreover, as Saskia Wieringa has convincingly argued, it played on the particular anxieties of conservative men, for whom the ostensibly uncontrolled sexuality of Gerwani women—not to mention their autonomy and lively political engagement—represented an unacceptable threat to their patriarchal position and worldview.<sup>160</sup>

Indeed, as the dissertation notes in Chapter 1, Wieringa finishes up her work squarely in an analysis about male castration anxiety. “Men,” she wrote, especially the military and religiously conservative men, became so disturbed by what they regarded as

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<sup>159</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 167.

<sup>160</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 167.

the castration of their voice by the articulate Gerwani that they transferred their fear into a fantasy of castration of that other organ of male power over women, their penises.”<sup>161</sup>

This argument gets repeated, as Robinson has done, and it may indeed be correct.

Certainly, as this dissertation argues fully, the fears of what *might have happened* had the military *not* destroyed the Indonesian left were centered on a false narrative of the power of a destructive and morally broken feminist engagement with modernity. This certainly provides a logical *why* to the analysis of the killings. But this is also not, I believe, the best expression of Wieringa’s argument.

I have long been wary of the explanation about gender lying in an argument about castration anxiety. Castration certainly lay at the center of the Lubang Buaya narrative, to be sure. And there is plenty of evidence, both historical<sup>162</sup> and literary,<sup>163</sup> that the particularly violent responses aimed at Communists, both male and female, too often seemed to reflect a particularly male anger that was particularly, and often sexually, vicious.<sup>164</sup>

One of the elements of her argument I wish that Wieringa had offered direct evidence for, however, is about the ways in which “male anxieties about castration” among conservative men were expressed. I haven’t seen an explicit discussion of castration anxiety itself in the sources I have looked at. I didn’t see discussions of it in the myriad discussions of the fears of a burgeoning Indonesian modernity in the sources on the 1950s and 1960s. That is, of course, not to say it isn’t there, but if it was, it does not appear to have been a consciously expressed element of the Indonesian discussion of national identity or

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<sup>161</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 327, the final page of the main text of her work, and the central argument of her conclusion, although there is an interesting Epilogue in which she writes about the Indonesian feminist movement that had “matured significantly” a generation after Gerwani’s destruction, and coming out of the New Order dictatorship.

<sup>162</sup> See in particular, see the discussion of Rachmi Diah Larasati’s *The Dance that Makes You Vanish*, and Annie Pohlman, *Title*, on the ways in which patterns of the oppression, rape, internment, torture and execution of women were gendered, and centered around male violence in the aftermath of 1965-66. Usamah’s short story “*Perang dan Kemanusiaan*” gives a spare but powerful example of women being specifically targeted for execution out of soldiers’ anger at Sukarno’s defense of Gerwani in a December 1965 speech, likely to the nation’s Governors.

<sup>163</sup> See the discussion of gendered literary views of the violent social reaction by men in response to female power in such novels as Ahmad Tohari’s *The Dancer* and Eka Kurniawans *Beauty is a Wound* in Chapter 1.

<sup>164</sup> Though I do not have time and space to write about it here, a not uncommon feature of the execution of Communist men involved castration, with the penises being nailed or strung up in public afterwards. The sexually violent elements of the torture and execution of women, including rape with sharpened bamboo poles and other highly sexually violent practices is also something that points to the gendered sexually violent nature fundamental to the army’s destruction of the Indonesian left.

of moral crisis. So I am not completely comfortable placing it at the center of the explanation of *why* the killings happened.

While castration and other sexual power anxieties might perhaps help address another of Robinson's as-yet unanswered questions—"why were methods like disappearance, bodily mutilation, corpse display, and sexual violence so common?"—and while Annie Pohlman's research on the interrogation and torture of Gerwani prisoners makes absolutely clear that the army's response to communist women depended centrally on the deployment of sexual violence against them, the case for male castration anxiety as a sufficient answer to explain "the *why*" seems to me to be a difficult one to make from existing sources, even as castration lies at the center of the Lubang Buaya narrative.

Rather, it seems to me that the the use of the castration anxiety argument has become an inference and assumption that has crept into the analysis without much critical analysis of its assertion. In any case, the evocation of witchcraft, male castration anxieties and reactionary patriarchal fear still do not provide a full explanation for why the broader killings became possible, even when taken together.

I would suggest, to the contrary, that the largely unexamined explanation of castration anxiety may in fact have contributed to a general lack of refinement of the gendered explanations about why killings were possible. In providing a plausible but not fully supported reasoning for the reaction against Gerwani, the argument about castration anxiety has not prodded scholars to ask deeper questions about the details of how Gerwani women were demonized, and how they might have made sense in the cultural and political contexts of mid-1960's Indonesia. It remains an assumption, and one that while provocative, and likely even true, does not yet further our insights about the cultural specifics at play.

Indeed, if we are smart to contrast "modern" and "*moderen*," as Adrian Vickers calls us to, should we should also probably attempt to distinguish between "patriarchy" and "*patriarki*," and between "castration anxiety" and "*kecemasan kastrasi*," which might have been given the Dutch gloss of "*castratie angst*" by an Indonesian evoking the concept at the time in any case.<sup>165</sup> In any case, we need further examination of those concepts within

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<sup>165</sup> As has been seen in previous chapters, when Indonesian writers addressed psychological matters in 1950's magazines, they usually reverted to provided Dutch terminologies alongside newly invented Indonesian language for such concepts.

1950's and 1960's Indonesia in order for us to strengthen our analysis of the sexualized nature of the 1965-66 killings and the justifications for it.

Indeed, Wieringa documents other readings of the social dynamics at work. In particular, without using the language of "moral crisis" specifically, she writes about the political aftermath of G-30-S among women's organizations in ways that support this reading.

She documents, for instance, that some women's organizations took on active roles in the suppression of G-30-S. In writing about the women's groups that joined the women's section of the *Badan Koordinasi Kesatuan Aksi Pengganas Gestapu Pusat*, (the Central Coordination Body of the Action Front to Crush Gestapu,) established in early November, her examples of the public pronouncements by the women's organizations themselves, and by Gen. Suharto in response, both center of a discussion of the failure of proper national femininity and its consequences.

The organizations that joined the Central Coordination Body included the religiously oriented women of Nadhlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and Wanita Katolik, among others.<sup>166</sup> At a mass demonstration organized by the women's section of the Coordination Body<sup>167</sup> and led primarily by its youth/student members, the resolution drafted by the 25 women's organizations "condemned Gerwani's actions, which had lowered the prestige of women."<sup>168</sup> The statement also called that the PKI and Gerwani be banned "as soon as possible, *in order to safeguard the young generation from the decadent influence and the ferocity*" of the communist movement.<sup>169</sup>

Wieringa then quotes Suharto, at length, from his speech to "the 30,000 women present," that carried the general message that "without women's help the safety of the nation could not be safeguarded."<sup>170</sup> I suggest that the quotation, taken from Wieringa, represents a particularly clear expression of the ways in which the expected response of

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In any case, I have never seen any contemporary sources use either *patriarki* or *kecemasan kastrasi* or other similar terms in their discussions of Lubang Buaya. This is all post-event analysis.

<sup>166</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 308.

<sup>167</sup> Notice that in the creation of the organization, which had only just occurred, a "women's section" had been established, along with a youth/student wing, and that the women were called on specifically to address this issue of Gerwani.

<sup>168</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 308.

<sup>169</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 308. Wieringa's translation from an article in *A.B.*, 11/9/1965. My emphasis.

<sup>170</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 309. Her language and analysis.

Indonesian women was expressed in terms of gendered moral crisis. She quotes Suharto saying Gerwani had

left behind our special identity, for they have damaged the identity of Indonesian women . . . and because women as mothers possess a special importance in the education of children, our young generation has to be *rescued from the moral deviation the counter-revolutionaries have plunged it into*; they must be taught to become Indonesian patriots who obey the Lord.<sup>171</sup>

In the Epilogue to her monograph, an argument I must admit I had missed in my initial re-reading of her work for this dissertation, Wieringa also makes the argument that the history of the Indonesian women's movement is best read through looking at through the examination of small shifts in what it meant to be an Indonesian woman. Perhaps because her writing in this instance strikes a different tone, or because it discusses rhythms of change about gender dynamics in Indonesian society, I find her argument in the Epilogue to be significantly more satisfying than the conclusion of the monograph's central text about castration. I would therefore like to quote this bit of her argument at length:

The history of the Indonesian women's movement reveals at certain points a process of restructuring gender relations. In my exploration of this history I have not employed the concept of gender so much in the context of what people do. I have not focused, for instance, on the changing sexual division of labour between women and men. Rather I have searched for changing definitions of gender—for instance, those contained in the naturalizing [of]<sup>172</sup> women's *kodrat*—and how these are embedded in social, cultural, and political processes of signification. At times these changes were barely perceptible. At others the processes of gender definition and redefinition were violent and could entail moments of conscious manipulation. This raises interesting questions about agency. It is not only the women's movement (or its various organizations) that takes the issue of changing gender relations to heart. Other actors, in this case the military, political and religious groups, also see gender as crucial in a process of social regulation. In Indonesia women are granted the symbolic power to save (give birth to) and devour (or castrate) men.<sup>173</sup>

This argument, in its essence, is completely reflective of the processes I have written about in this dissertation, and from different sources than Wieringa uses herself. Indeed,

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<sup>171</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 309. Wieringa's translation from an article in *Berita Yudha*, 11/9/1965. My emphasis.

<sup>172</sup> The word seems to be missing in the original text.

<sup>173</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 338.

following this paragraph, Wieringa goes on to reference many of the specific shifts in the history of what I refer to in the dissertation as Indonesian women's "theorizing of themselves." She also notes the question of rhythms and amplitudes in these shifts about the construction of gender, sometime gradual and other times sudden, sometimes small and other times larger. And importantly, she notes moments of both seemingly organic change and others that reflect conscious political and cultural manipulation.

These are all elements I have written about in the dissertation, based on my reading of women's magazines. As I point out, I came to these conclusions without being aware of the argument of her Epilogue until after I began my revisions, a clear shortfall on my own part. I say this not to "claim position" or to write, somehow, against having "been scooped." Rather, I am gratified that what I was seeing in my sources, independently, Wieringa also lays out so clearly.

In other words, my sources also support her important argument. And perhaps, ideally even, they provide insights into thoughts about modernity, gender and the construction of Indonesian national identity that suggest future research that can strengthen both of our general positions. I particularly would argue that seeing the killings of 1965-66 as a moral crisis—which can of course also include questions of conservative male fear and anxiety, something I have not yet looked at in detail—for which this dissertation offers significant evidence, would expand the ways in which future scholars can engage these fundamental questions that need to move to the center of the analysis of the development of the Indonesian nation during the Sukarno era and beyond.

### ***Caught in the Middle: Indonesian Women and the Fracture of Kaum Wanita***

A third, and final, reading of the Lubang Buaya narrative and its aftermath concerns the forced fracture of the Indonesian feminist/activist movement and its effects on Indonesian women as a whole. One of the concepts presented earlier in the dissertation suggests that Indonesian identity that emerged in the Sukarno era took the form of a complex web of mutually inter-connected cultural influences. The dissertation also explores multiple ways in which women found ways of being simultaneously "Indonesian" and "modern." It notes that one central way in which this seemingly hybrid identity was achieved was by centering "eastern" concepts of women's morality as a principal internal,

spiritual marker of a proper indigenous or *asli* femininity. As long as they held on to a properly focused *batin*, Indonesian women, particularly through the 1950's, enjoyed significant latitude in their choices about how to express their modernity, often in harmony with other elements of their identity and the communities in which they lived.

One of the advantages of reading this sense of identity as a web is that it helps move our understandings away from seeing Indonesian women's identities as binary: left v. right, rural v. kampung v. metropolitan; modern v. traditional, or even old-fashioned; religiously pious v. politically ideological. Rather, these elements and others, overlapped and expressed to differing degrees and from different influences, provide us ways of understanding the multiple points at which Indonesian women could stand in that web, whether individually or in relationship to some collective identity, and all while still remaining "modern Indonesian women."

When threads of this collective web of female identity were drawn taught in the aftermath of Lubang Buaya, most specifically those connected to Communism and other leftist political identities, then, they brought tension into the whole web of women's identity. In particular, the military narrative cast Marxism as a foreign and hyper-modern identity, while simultaneously attacking Gerwani as hyper-sexualized, uncivilized and savage, that is, as those who took part in "cannibalistic rituals that were carried out by primitive peoples tens of centuries ago." The military narrative about the PKI attacked women in a particular way, while the sexual narrative dehumanized them from a different direction. But while this second line of attack focused principally on Gerwani and other leftist women, it had implications for Indonesian women and their collective identity as a whole.

It is understandable that different communities of women responded to these pressures in different ways, and on different schedules. Quite interesting in this was the response of some Gerwani women themselves, for whom the answer was to move away from the Marxist pole through a return to "traditional" religious values that stressed women's roles as wives and mothers. A story in *Angkatan Bersendjata* on November 5 reported that several communist women in Bandung had chosen to "repent and want to

pray<sup>174</sup> like they did before entering Gerwani”<sup>175</sup> After saying that they hoped to “come back to the true path”<sup>176</sup> and that they would help the Armed Forces “restore security,”<sup>177</sup> the women “shed tears”<sup>178</sup> because of their actions, “apologized”<sup>179</sup> and “repented to God that they would be pious and pray as they did before they entered Gerwani.”<sup>180</sup> Having taken these appropriate measures of contrition, shed true tears (as opposed to Ibu Trimo’s false ones) and asked for forgiveness from both the people and from God, these women could return, via a particular performative piety, to the true path of acceptable Indonesian womanhood.<sup>181</sup>

But the ways in which Gerwani had been demonized also required a response from “good” Indonesian women as well. In its “*Moral Gerwani*” article from November 5, *Kompas* made the same claim that Sukarno had during his talk to Kowani in December 1964 about teased hair and tight skirts. Pronouncing moral judgment against Gerwani activists was, it was made clear, women’s work. “It is up to women,” the *Kompas* editors wrote, “to judge the morals of the GERWANI women who are more depraved than animals.”<sup>182</sup> This also aligned with Suharto’s address to the mass meeting of the members of the Central Coordination Body, discussed in the previous section, when he exhorted the crowd present that, as women, they carried a “special identity” that Gerwani had rejected. That is, that as a *kaum ibu*, they “possess[ed] a special importance in the education of children, our young generation has to be rescued from the moral deviation . . .”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> The word used is “*sholat*,” which refers specifically to Islamic prayers, i.e., five times a day on a specific schedule, facing Mecca, following ritual ablutions, and, for women, with restrictions during menstruation. The implication is more than just returning to some sort of personal religious practice, but rather, to one fully imbedded within social structures that are accompanied by measures that assure a proper femininity.

<sup>175</sup> “*Tobat dan mau Sholat seperti sebelum masuk Gerwani.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> “*akan kembali kedjalan jang benar.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2.

<sup>177</sup> “*memulihkan keamanan.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> “*mentjutjurkan air mata.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2.

<sup>179</sup> “*minta maaf.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2.

<sup>180</sup> “*bertobat kepada Tuhan serta akan beribadat sembahjang seperti sebelum masuk Gerwani.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2.

<sup>181</sup> This is a culturally cogent practice in Indonesian Islam, specifically at Lebaran, the end of Ramadan. People “*mohon maaf lahir batin*,” or ask for forgiveness both externally and in spirit. There are several possible readings of the use of the term, which are recognized by Indonesians in this. “*Lahir*” or “*batin*” here can refer to the nature of the sins committed, or, similar to the Christian Act of Contrition, “for things done and things left undone,” but imagined. They can also refer to the forms in which people are offering their repentance, but in external forms and with internal intention. For example, people kneel before their parents, place their heads on their parents’ laps, and ask forgiveness for any offenses and mistakes made during the previous year. In these acts of contrition by Gerwani activists, therefore, there is at least some possibility of this representing a sincere repentance on their part asked in a way that allows for cleansing in some form.

<sup>182</sup> “*Terserah kepada kaum wanita untuk menilai moral kewanitaan GERWANI2 tsb jang telah bedjat melebihi binatang.*” *A.B.*, 11/5/1965, p. 2. “*Menilai*,” translated here as “judge,” can also mean “to measure” in the sense of to assess or evaluate.

<sup>183</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 309, quoting *Berita Yudha*, 11/9/1965.



It is important to note here that this re-emphasis of women's *kodrat wanita*, their "special identity" as women, was, again, connected to the idea of raising a moral nation. The argument that progressive women had used to carve out a space for themselves in the Sukarno era, one that gave them a particular path for establishing a form of political power, in Suharto's hands, became a specific way of limiting women's agency.<sup>184</sup>

Wieringa points out that different women's groups took anti-Gerwani stances earlier than others, and that Wanita Katolik and conservative Islamic groups were among the first to distance themselves from the Communists.<sup>185</sup> The women of 'Aisjijah seem to have been the first to publicly condemn Gerwani, on October 11, at the end of the first week of revelations of torture and the initial suggestions of sexual abuse and mutilation. In a public statement, the leadership of 'Aisjijah called for the dissolution of Gerwani, which, the Muhammadiyah women said, had "clearly soiled . . . the standing of Indonesian Women."<sup>186</sup> In making their case, the leadership of 'Aisjijah denounced

the despicable actions that were carried out by the women of Gerwani in the terror of the September 30<sup>th</sup> movement at Lubang Buaya, where before the victims met their end, they were handled in an immoral fashion, were ridiculed and degraded in a vile and despicable way, then through mass action the victims were killed with all types of torture and baseness.<sup>187</sup>

This was a fairly standard formulation of the events of Lubang Buaya as they were being reported on that day, though perhaps without some of the gruesome details furnished elsewhere. But the article went on to assert a concern that was largely reserved for women's comments on the event: That "such actions could only have been carried out by women who were without morals, and it clearly stained the status of Indonesian women who are famous for their lofty character and their high personal integrity—based on Pancasila."<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> To be sure, *kodrat wanita*, while being used by women to claim a space in Indonesian political culture, had also always provided limits on their participation as well. But the shift in this instance went from the argument about *kodrat wanita* going from supporting women's participation in general to making them take a step back relative to men.

<sup>185</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 312-313.

<sup>186</sup> "jang njata2 mentjemarkan . . . martabat Wanita Indonesia." *K*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

<sup>187</sup> "tindakan kedji jang dilakukan oleh anggauta2 wanita Gerwani dalam terror Gerakan 30 September di Lobang buaya, di mana sebelum para korban tersebut menemui adjalnja telah diperlakukan setjara a-susila dipermainkan dan dihinakan setjara biadab dan kedji, kemudian setjara meramai2 sangkorban dibunuh dengan segala siksaan dan kekedjian." *K*, 10/11/1965, p. 3. The November/December 1965 edition of *Suara 'Aisjijah*, however, is completely silent about not only Lubang Buaya, but about the entire political situation.

<sup>188</sup> "tindakan ini hanja mungkin dilakukan oleh wanita2 jang tak bermoral, dan djelas menodai martabat wanita Indonesia jang terkenal berbudi luhur dan kebribadian tinggi – berdasarkan Pantjasila." *K*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

It is important to note that in contrast to the lurid discussions of the alleged physical details of the killings of the officers in the various newspapers during the previous few days, the women of 'Aisjijah used more measured rhetoric.<sup>189</sup> The references to the "immoral fashion" in which the "corpses met their end," and of how they were "degraded in a "vile and despicable way," were significantly softer than the descriptions in *Angkatan Bersendjata*, *Kompas* and *Api Pantjasila*.

Yet as other women's organizations began to make public proclamations, even as soon as a week later, they did not include specific mention of the alleged sexual torture out of their descriptions of "what happened" at all. In particular, the condemnation of Gerwani by women's organizations took the form of calls for the organization to be expelled from Kowani, the Indonesian Women's Congress, and the argument was about Gerwani's failure to be good Indonesian women.

These calls did not occur randomly. Rather, they were part of a coordinated campaign to attack the PKI that was led, at least partially, by the newly appointed National Front Minister, Sudibjo.<sup>190</sup> But as these public condemnations by women's groups about the role of Gerwani progressed, the specific mention of atrocity faded into the background. Instead, women's public rhetoric focused on the idea of Gerwani as failed national women, the result of their impure actions at Lubang Buaya, that in some occasions, at least was also connected with their Communist grooming.<sup>191</sup> But in these condemnations by other women, the overwhelming sin Gerwani was said to have committed was to have put the "good name" of Indonesian women—and therefore the moral formation of the whole nation—at grave risk.

The general calls for Gerwani's removal from Kowani began on October 20. The women's wing of Nahdlatul Ulama, the national organization of "traditional" Islamic scholars, urged that Gerwani be kicked out of Kowani "because Gerwani was clearly

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<sup>189</sup> Again, it is worth pointing out here that *Suara Muhammadiyah* and *Suara 'Aisjijah's* offices were (and remain today) less than a block apart in Yogyakarta, and the general newspaper and the women's periodical, while produced independently, were the products of a single community of the national leadership of the modernist Islamic movement. Indeed, as noted earlier in the dissertation, the editor of *Suara 'Aisjijah* was often sent on missions for *dakwah*, or Islamic religious education within the Muslim community, by the leaders of Muhammadiyah. The two publications were also printed at the same printing house. So the comparison between the two publications carries interesting implications.

<sup>190</sup> See Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 310-311. She notes that when Sudibjo addressed the women's organizations that made up Kowani on October 28, discussed below, he was "in military uniform" while he "lectured the women in his audience that women's ultimate role should be to fulfill" Sukarno's revolutionary political goals.

<sup>191</sup> As has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

implicated in the counter-revolutionary affair 'Gestapu'.<sup>192</sup> They called on Kowani to "cleanse itself"<sup>193</sup> of all counter-revolutionary influences to "protect Kowani's purity as a constructive revolutionary tool for People and Country."<sup>194</sup> The NU statement did not include any explicit discussion of Gerwani's actions or retelling of the narrative of Lubang Buaya.

Also on October 20, Ibu Subandrio,<sup>195</sup> the President of Kowani, argued in an article in *Angkatan Bersendjata* that all connections between Gerwani and Kowani should be cut "because that women's organization [Gerwani] clearly helped 'Gestapu'."<sup>196</sup> The actions of the Gerwani women, she claimed "were not appropriate with the character of our Indonesian nation or with the authority we have as women."<sup>197</sup> There was no discussion of the details of sexual misconduct or of atrocity in Ibu Subandrio's statement. Only at one point were the actions of Gerwani at Lubang Buaya described as "barbaric,"<sup>198</sup> which was one of the common epithets for Gerwani at the time.

This pattern was repeated in the various calls for Gerwani's dispersal in general and banishment from Kowani specifically that were printed over the next several days. On October 23, for example, Wanita Katolik, the Roman Catholic women's organization, published a similar appeal, stating that Kowani should ban Gerwani because

"the Gerwani organization went along in an active way with the 'September 30 movement' incident and [because] the actions of the Gerwani members at Lubang Buaya showed an attitude that trampled the moral principles of God

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<sup>192</sup> "karena Gerwani njata2 telah terlibat dalam petualangan kontra-revolusioner 'Gestapu'." *A.B.*, 10/20/1965, p. 2.

<sup>193</sup> "membersihkan dirinja," *A.B.*, 10/20/1965, p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> "mendjaga kemurnian Kowani sebagai alat revolusi jang konstruktif bagi Bangsa dan Negara," *A.B.*, 10/20/1965, p. 2. The word *kemurnian*, translated here as "purity," can also mean "chastity," so there was an implication that Kowani should protect itself from being perceived as sexualized, and that by doing so, it could remain a useful part of the revolution.

<sup>195</sup> Hurustiati Subandrio, one of the first female medical doctors in Indonesia, was a major leader of the progressive wing of the women's movement throughout the Sukarno era. In particular, she advocated for issues of women's health, including their right to choice in family planning. She was also the wife of Sukarno's Foreign Minister, Subandrio. She was not a member of Gerwani, at least not publicly. Subandrio (the husband) was convicted of being involved in the movement by the Extraordinary Military Court. He was initially sentenced to death, but this was commuted to exile, and he remained in prison until 1995. Saskia Wieringa notes that as late as 1999, Ibu Subandrio continued to be publicly accused of membership in Gerwani. See Weiringa, "Reformasi, Sexuality and Communism in Indonesia,"

<sup>196</sup> "karena organisasi wanita tsb dengan terang2an membantu 'Gestapu'." *A.B.*, 10/20/1965, p. 2.

<sup>197</sup> "tidak sesuai dengan kepribadian bangsa kita Indonesia, apabila dengan kewibawaan sebagai wanita." *A.B.*, 10/20/1965, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> "biadab," *A.B.*, 10/20/1965, p. 2.

and Humanity and which lowered the position and level of the women of Indonesia.”<sup>199</sup>

Kowani began the process of formally stripping Gerwani of their membership in the coalition on October 29 at a public meeting in Jakarta. Wieringa notes that in his address to the gathered women, National Front Minister Sudibjo “lectured his audience that women’s ultimate role should be to fulfill the President’s Dwikora program and to struggle against the Nekolim and Gestapu,”<sup>200</sup> adding the G-30-S movement into the list of established enemies of the revolution. Wieringa writes that in response, Ibu Subandrio “explained that it would only be fitting in relation to the ‘Great Guide of the Indonesian Revolutionary Women’s Movement’, President Sukarno, that Kowani join in throwing out the swines of the Gestapu Movement.”<sup>201</sup> The Minister, Wieringa noted, “concluded his speech by urging the women to be ‘both active in constructive mass actions and in creating a quiet and orderly climate.’”<sup>202</sup>

When Kowani actually did take formal action to ban Gerwani from membership in the organization two days later on November 1, they did so, they announced, as part of an effort to “cleanse Kowani”<sup>203</sup> of organizations that were involved in G-30-S. The Communist women were therefore expelled because “Gerwani was clearly implicated in the counter revolutionary September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement,”<sup>204</sup> that is, for their alleged political actions.

Again, it is notable that there was no dwelling on Gerwani’s carnal sins in the Kowani statement. Rather, the announcement focused on the role Kowani would play moving forward, stating specifically that Kowani should “protect and foster unity and association of women specially and of the Indonesian people generally, to raise the struggle against neo-colonialism for the sake and success of the Indonesian Revolution.”<sup>205</sup> That is, Kowani saw itself as largely playing the same role it had previous to Lubang Buaya, connecting women across organizations, and thereby serving as a source of unity for the

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<sup>199</sup> “organisasi Gerwani telah turut setjara aktif dalam peristiwa ‘Gerakan 30 September’. Dan bahwa perbuatan anggota Gerwani di Lubang Buaja telah menundjukkan sikap jang mengindjak-ngindjak sila2 Ketuhanan dan Perikemanusiaan serta menurunkan martabat dan deradjat wanita Indonesia.” *K*, 10/23/1965, p. 1.

<sup>200</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>201</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 311.

<sup>202</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 311.

<sup>203</sup> “membersihkan Kowani,” *A.P.*, 11/3/1965, p. 2.

<sup>204</sup> “Gerwani njata2 terlibat dalam kontra-revolusi Gerakan 30 September,” *A.P.*, 11/3/1965, p. 2.

<sup>205</sup> “memelihara dan memupuk kesatuan dan persatuan wanita chususnja, bangsa Indonesia umumnja untuk meningkatkan perdjolongan melawan nekolim demi suksesnja revolusi Indonesia.” *A.P.*, 11/3/1965, p. 2.

nation as a whole. But the organization proposed do this having cleansed itself of the stains of Gerwani.<sup>206</sup> That is, the women of the nation would re-form themselves, but without the presence of a formerly important element of their collective identity.

As I have noted earlier in the chapter, it is important to note the continuation of Sukarnoist revolutionary rhetoric throughout the process of Gerwani's expulsion from Kowani. Wieringa makes a similar point, which underscores the transition that occurred in the construction of Indonesian political women. "This ceremony" on October 29, she writes,

showed the same symbols in use as prior to October 1965 but the tone had completely changed. Gestapu was added to the revolutionary pantheon of enemies Indonesian women should challenge and the same slogans were used but with their implications totally different.<sup>207</sup>

For women who were not a part of Gerwani, but who instead had organizational connections to the group before the killings through Kowani, therefore, the path away from their association with Gerwani held some danger. Wieringa writes that Perwari "manoeuver[ed] very carefully in this situation." She notes that while in Jakarta and at the national level, Perwari and Gerwani had often been in conflict with each other, that "at the local, especially urban level, members of both organizations had cooperated and there were instances of double membership" by some women. Perwari, she concludes, was "therefore . . . vulnerable to charges that its members were sympathetic to communism."<sup>208</sup>

Kowani's leaders included many wives of politicians and high-ranking army officers, and certainly some of them found safety in those personal and systemic connections. But that also depended on the political alignments of their husbands. Ibu Subandrio, for instance, found herself excluded from Kowani when her husband, Sukarno's Foreign Minister and Chief of Intelligence,<sup>209</sup> and the architect of his leftward swing in foreign

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<sup>206</sup> This was even the hope of Ibu Trimo, if for other reasons, who said in her confession that she "hoped Gerwani could come back to the true path from having lost its way all this time. Our enemy is still Malaysia. Because of that among our peers we don't need to have any dissension or even more so hostility as we do now." (*"harap agar Gerwani kembali kedjalan jang benar dari kesesatannja selama ini. Musuh kita sebenarnja adalah Malaysia. Karena itu antara sesama kita tak perlu ada pertjahan apalagi bermusuhan seperti sekarang ini.*) *A.B.*, 11/14/1965, p. 3.

<sup>207</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, p. 311.

<sup>208</sup> Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 312-313. Wieringa goes on to note that on their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in December 1965, Perwari took pains to "remind its audience that it had never aligned itself with any political party."

<sup>209</sup> This was just one among several of his appointments in the Sukarno administration. Subandrio had been Sukarno's envoy in Europe during the Revolution, and had been named Foreign Minister in 1956, when he was recalled from being the Ambassador to the Soviet Union. He also became the Second Deputy Prime Minister in 1960 and the Minister for Foreign Economic Relations in 1962. He served in all three capacities until his arrest in 1966.

policy, was arrested, charged with having prior knowledge of the “coup,” tried and sentenced to death by the Mahmillub, (*Mahkamah Militer Luar Biasa*, or Extraordinary Military Court.)<sup>210</sup>

Politically active women had to establish a workable definition of what constituted a ‘good’ Indonesian woman in the wake of the killings of the Seven Revolutionary Heroes. If the name of all Indonesian women had indeed been “soiled”<sup>211</sup> by the actions of Gerwani as Ibu Trimo had agreed, then these women had to find a way to “cleansed” their organizations and to clear their own names, while still holding on to as much progress on women’s issues made in coalition with Gerwani as they could.

One way to do so was to fuse this aberrant sexuality with communism to some degree—that is to re-enter the discussion of what constituted “proper” femininity. The femininity of Communist women would be deviant, not so much because of the sexual implications of the Lubang Buaya narrative, but rather because of the possibility that their eastern attributes, that is, their *batin*, the source of their fundamental Indonesian identity, had been corrupted by Communist ideology. If Gerwani members’ femininity were to be re-grounded in proper values and beliefs, their internal moral strength, could perhaps be “cleansed.” To achieve this, both Gerwani women and those other activist women they had worked in congress with ended up placing themselves firmly within elements of gender ideology that labeled their primary responsibilities to society in terms of their roles as wives and mothers.

But in protecting themselves through the *Ibuism* that would come to dominate women’s political culture in the New Order, Indonesian women would also need to distance themselves from the political activism that were at the heart of their united stances within national politics. That is, the national *kaum wanita* would cease to play their role roles as a “national group” in the same way they had been previously, and they would be re-

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<sup>210</sup> The Mahmillub was the specially convened court in which “the most important political show trials were held for both civilian and military suspects,” in Geoffrey Robinson’s description. Although he was in Sumatra on September 30 and October 1, Subandrio was nonetheless charged with having knowledge of the uprising. But, Robinson notes, the “clear purpose of these political trials was to implicate Sukarno’s closest allies and inflict irreparable political damage on Sukarno himself, and in so doing pave the way for the complete eradication of the Left.” Geoffrey Robinson, *The Killing Season*, p. 63. In the end, Subandrio’s death sentence was not carried out, at the request of the British crown, given his long association with the British government over the previous twenty years as Subandrio led much of Indonesia’s high-level foreign policy.

<sup>211</sup> “*tjemar*” *K*, 10/11/1965, p. 3.

constituted into a *kaum Ibu* that, besides lacking some of its former members, was also significantly constrained in the positions they could take and in what they could achieve both politically and socially.

The irony is that Indonesian Communist women were reputed, originally, to be particularly morally straight. Gerwani consistently stressed to its cadres that they needed to live examined lives, that they should dress simply and neatly, avoiding frippery, and that they should bear the responsibility of demonstrating this orderliness as an example to other women. Gerwani also took the lead in calling for the censorship of Hollywood films that were too licentious. Unique among Indonesian political parties, the PKI had a history of expelling members for entering polygamous marriages or engaging in extra-marital affairs. Communist women were, in many ways, the most ideal of ideal Indonesian women.<sup>212</sup>

The goal of non-communist activist women was to reclaim a place in the Indonesian political arena. Having clearly been affected by the actions of Gerwani, these women had to distance themselves from that organization. But to do so by bringing up the litany of atrocities with which Gerwani had been smeared would only renew the stains of uncontrolled power that might be used against any activist women. So they turned the focus onto Gerwani's betrayal of Pancasila, People ("*Bangsa*," ) and State ("*Negara*") as part of the PKI-led "September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement." In other words, they attempted to shift the nation's gaze from the sexual realm to the ideological.

This shift is made most clear by a proclamation of "women volunteers" ("*sukwati*") from groups outside the army, which was published in *Api Pantjasila* on December 6:

WE, the Women of Indonesia in general, and volunteers especially, who are part of the Republic of Indonesia with its base in Pancasila, [remain] sincere and do not accept it when the good-name of Indonesian women in general and the good name of volunteers specifically were flawed and stained by the actions of a group of women who called themselves Indonesian woman-volunteers as was done by members of the Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani) in their god-forsaken actions as a part of the actions of "G-30-S" which clearly formed a hindrance and a deviation from the national

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<sup>212</sup> Cornell University possesses a rare Gerwani document in its Special Collections, the outline of a Gerwani cadre training course held at various times in the 1960's. Each of these elements is reflected in the training course, along with a class schedule that was quite heavy on reading and discussing Marxist theory.

revolution.<sup>213</sup>

In order to continue as “volunteers,” that is, specifically as militarily trained volunteer troops, but also as women with an agenda on social issues, activist women in the aftermath of G-30-S would have to base their actions and identities within acceptable gender roles and a constricted field in which they could maneuver.

This meant they would largely have to live up to their public reputation of being “noble in character, refined in speech, bright of face, full of energy, lofty of heart and soul and friendly and simple in behavior.”<sup>214</sup> Only by retreating to be *Ibu sejati* and *Ibu Bangsa*, by serving as the proper bulwark against the nation’s most serious incidents of moral crisis, would they be able to continue their work, the essence of which was emblazoned on a banner at the Twentieth Anniversary Meeting of the Organization of Indonesian Women (*Persatuan Wanita Indonesia*) on December 17 “Women are Capable of Bringing About their Mandate [of ending] the Suffering of the People.”<sup>215</sup>

In accepting this position, women were placed within a framework created by Sukarno in which they had “the same rights . . . and the same rank as Indonesian men,”<sup>216</sup> but one in which, under Suharto’s New Order, men and women had increasingly distinct political roles. The men would largely be leaders while the women would be expected to be well-ordered followers charged with the special duty to be “good mothers” at the crux of whether “Indonesia would be glorious” or “Indonesia would be shattered.” And while it is important to note that *all* Indonesians found their identities depoliticized within the New Order, women were doubly so, both by the general process of political neutralization within the Suharto regime, and in the necessity of imposing *kodrat wanita*, perhaps better

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<sup>213</sup> “KAMI, Wanita Indonesia umumja, sukarelawati chususnja, jang bernegarakan Republik Indonesia dengan dasar Pantjasila . . . iklas dan tidak rela nama-baik wanita Indonesia umumnja, nama baik sukarelawati chususnja diberi tjatjat dan noda oleh tindakan sekelompok manusia perempuan jang menamakan dirinja sukarelawati-wanita Indonesia seperti dilakukan oleh anggauta Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Gerwani) dalam tindakan mereka jang tertutuk sebagai bagian dari pada tindakan “G-30-S” jang njata<sup>2</sup> merupakan panghalang dan penjelewengan revolusi nasional.” *A.P.*, 12/6/1965, p. 1.

<sup>214</sup> “berbudi luhur, berbahasa halus, berwajah tjerah bergaja ampuh, berhati mulia dan berkelakuan ramah-sederhana.” *A.P.*, 10/16/1965, p. 1.

<sup>215</sup> “Wanita Sanggup Melaksanakan Amanat Penderitaan Rakjat.” The slogan is clearly visible on a photograph in *A.B.*, 12/18/1965, p. 1. This was during the period that Sukarno was specifically defending Gerwani from the attacks against it, one of the elements that helped lead to his increasing loss of political power.

<sup>216</sup> “sama haknja . . . dan sama deradjatnja dengan kaum bapak Indonesia,” *A.P.*, 11/8/1965. This is, in some ways, an interesting restatement of the essence of the Communist movement, which had as an early slogan in the 1920’s a formulation taken from Islamic teaching: “*sama rasa, sama rata*,” very loosely translated to mean that all people who in the Islamic sense of the term, were one before Allah, should also have “the same feeling, the same rank” in a democratic, anti-feudal new national society as the PKI proposed it. See Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*.



described as *kodrat Ibu*, or in Julia Suryakusuma's term "State Ibuism" on all their actions as well.

The term "*wanita*" to refer to women would lose its centrality in New Order Indonesian rhetoric. While "Ibu" would remain in use, the general term for "women" switched to the term "*perempuan*," that linguistically connected women to men, or "*tuan*." "*Wanita*" took on connotations of "feminist," but in the sense of disorderly and disruptive women who asked for unwanted change, similar to "nasty women" in the current conservative American usage.

Moving forward, men's positions in the New Order would significantly dictate the political roles their wives would play. Although politically engaged women would continue to work together most specifically on the promulgation of a new marriage law in the early 1970's, the wives of politicians and military officers would be required to implement New Order gender policies down to the village level.<sup>217</sup> For the sake of the Revolution, their ongoing work, and their continued political viability, then, activist women would need to remain mothers first, a little less powerful and forceful than they were before, a little more the "women creating the men who create great art," and "the mothers of a good race."

### ***Gerwani's New Order, or, Reading Markers for Gendered Genocide***

The women of Gerwani were not to be included among the good mothers of New Order Indonesia. They and their entire organization were labeled counter-revolutionary by the military establishment, and they were marked as traitors. As part of a national program of "total cleansing" (*pembersihan total*) from the "stains" of counter-revolution, the military regime oversaw a significant campaign against the PKI, including Gerwani. Large numbers

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<sup>217</sup> The most intrusive of these was "*Keluarga Berencana*," ("KB," or "Family Planning,") which began in the early 1970s. The wives of village headmen and neighborhood chiefs were trained to become family planning monitors who not only carried out public health education initiatives, but who also consulted with all the women in their areas of geographic responsibility. For each woman, the monitors would record their method of birth control and take note of any pregnancies. In some instances, the results, whether real or invented, were tabulated publicly on black boards, with the rates of compliance also reported up the line and then evaluated by their husbands' superiors. This particular practice ended with the overthrow of the New Order in 1998, but public health initiatives are still disseminated in a similar fashion. While I was carrying out my research in Solo, the officer at the National Press Monument, who had been very helpful to me and had become a friend, was absent for a week. When he returned, he told me he had been at "training," (here called "*sosialisasi*,") for a new program to encourage people to use water rather than toilet paper to clean themselves after they used the bathroom. He also noted that his wife had been trained, and it was her responsibility to educate the women on the organization's staff. Since I was under his care officially while I was present almost daily at the archive, he also "socialized" me.

of Gerwani women were rounded up and arrested. Some were executed. Many were tortured and interrogated with methods that included rape and starvation. Others spent up to between 15 and 25 years in prison or detention camps.<sup>218</sup> Many of those not imprisoned were required to present themselves regularly to police offices for examination, which sometimes included providing sexual services. Others were excluded from the legitimate economy and reduced to poverty to the point that the term “Gerwani” would be synonymous with “prostitute” or, perhaps more accurately, “whore.”<sup>219</sup>

Indeed, from the immediate aftermath of G-30-S, the name Gerwani quickly became synonymous with the word “whore.” And this relationship would come to be actualized over time. Several new historical works on communist women in the early days of the New Order also document that ex-Gerwani members were often put into the position of having to barter sexual favors, or even forced marriage to soldiers, in order to avoid the harshest surveillant practices of the New Order state.<sup>220</sup> And this matches with the idea from Benedict Anderson, noted earlier in the dissertation, that, with their husbands disappeared or sent into exile, many Communist women were forced to turn to prostitution to support their families beginning in the early 1970s.

In the end, Gerwani women became an important symbol in the New Order. Their accused treachery lay at the base of the authority of the Suharto regime. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the official New Order narrative of Gerwani and Lubang Buaya was monumentalized in several important ways. The image of Gerwani as dancing torturers and killers at Lubang Buaya was placed front and center on the frieze of the *Monumen Pancasila Sakti Lubang Buaya Jakarta*, (“The Sacred Pancasila Monument at Lubang Buaya, Jakarta,”) the national monument to the Seven National Heroes erected in 1969 on the site of the

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<sup>218</sup> For an account of the executions, see the short story by Usamah, “*Perang dan Kemanusiaan*,” translated in Harry Aveling, *GESTAPU: Indonesian Short Stories*. For information on the jailings, see Wieringa, “Aborted Feminism,” 1988. The longer figure for incarceration comes from conversations with Rudolf Mrázek.

<sup>219</sup> Ben Anderson once told me that it was important to distinguish periodicity when making this connection. He said that references to Gerwani as prostitutes in the early days were rhetorical. He suggested that by the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, and most specifically after 1971, however, severely constricted economic circumstances for people who were “*terlibat*,” or “implicated” in being PKI led ex-Gerwani cadres to prostitution as one of the few ways left for them to support their families, when they were shut out of the legitimate economy. He also suggested this was particularly true if their husbands had been killed or were in prison. (Conversation with Ben Anderson, Ithaca, Summer 1991.) For an account of women turning to prostitution in this way, see Gerson Poyk’s short story “A Woman and Her Children,” translated in Aveling, *GESTAPU: Indonesian Short Stories*.

<sup>220</sup> See Rachmi Larasati, *The Dance That Makes You Vanish*, particularly Chapter III, “Historicizing Violence,” and Annie Pohlman, *Women, Sexual Violence and the Indonesian Killings of 1965-66*, specifically Chapter I, “Women and Violence Following the following the 1965 Coup.”

killings. Beginning with the Suharto regime, the commemorative ceremony has been held at Lubang Buaya has been televised nationally each year on October 1.<sup>221</sup> It continues to be the case today.<sup>222</sup>

The official version of the Lubang Buaya narrative also provided the key scene of the 1984 film *Pengkhianatan G-30-S/PKI* (“*The Treachery of G-30-S/PKI*,”) directed by Arifin Noer that was shown annually on television and in schools.<sup>223</sup> Every year in the 1980s and 1990s, and in spite of activist women’s early efforts to shift the nation’s gaze away from them, images of uncontrollably sexual women committing crimes against Indonesian men and the military order they represented remained at the forefront of the narrative of the legitimacy of the New Order’s conception of the Indonesian state.

The story of Gerwani at Lubang Buaya was a New Order creation, and a male military fantasy as well. The story of “evil women” cutting at generals’ genitals in a frenzy of ungodly madness became one of two foundational violences against which the New Order came to be organized. The second was the remembered “potential” bloodletting that is widely said would have occurred had the “communist” coup succeeded. Neither of these two great communist violences actually occurred, while the mass arrest, torture, exile and killing of those branded (correctly or not) as PKI did occur, yet were officially forgotten and silenced.

What was remembered, however, was the imagined occurrence of a moral crisis. Because of its political sensitivity, the intentional creation of false memories on the part of the New Order remains largely undiscussable in Indonesia, even to this day. The New Order policed these memories fiercely, and little hard documentary evidence remains of either the Gerwani story or the mass killings of the PKI.<sup>224</sup> Historians then, faced with official

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<sup>221</sup> Being chosen to participate in the annual ritual was a great honor for school children in particular. Yosef Djakababa told me that in elementary school, he practiced the mouth accordion diligently in an attempt to be selected to perform at the commemoration. His elder sister had been chosen previously, and this was something he was quite envious of at the time.

<sup>222</sup> It is possible this was not the case during the administration of Abdurrahman Wahid.

<sup>223</sup> For further information on both these New Order monuments to the killings, see John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*. Josef Djakababa’s 2009 PhD dissertation from the University of Wisconsin, “The Construction of History Under Indonesia’s New Order: The Making of the *Lubang Buaya* Official Narrative,” provides a major source of Indonesian scholarship on these questions.

<sup>224</sup> The most important development in the historiography of the transition to the New Order is arguably the recent work of Jess Melvin, in which she discusses the set of primary documents outlining the Army’s actions in Aceh beginning on the morning of October 1. That she was given access to these documents remains a singular exception to the ability of historians to document the military’s plans for mass killing of Communists directly from primary sources.

stories, must resort to mining other sources of evidence as we seek to discuss “what happened” in one of Asia’s bloodiest political transitions in the twentieth century. A close reading of gender in the sources that do exist, however, allows us to read between the gaps in the official stories that presented women as stock characters rather than as real people.

This pattern of authoritarian regimes creating and employing official, and very often “produced” memories of violence is not unique to New Order Indonesia. Rather, it is an issue across Asia, where large-scale violence, regime change and created origin myths have often been close partners. My hope is that this dissertation has demonstrated, however, that in the close reading of even the foundational accounts of intentionally misremembered official histories, we can begin to see that the process of the creation of the stories themselves often relies on the fantastical deployment of patently unreal imagery of either deviant or idealized women.<sup>225</sup> Recognizing that these stories are often the creation of Wieringa’s “masculine memories, hopes, and humiliations,” we can also begin to understand why certain stories based on a masculine sexual politics not only can, but almost always will, be told in the creation of new order after mass violence.

One interpretation of the Indonesian violence, offered both by the Indonesian military and by the CIA/western scholars, was that the killings were “spontaneous.” We now know quite clearly, however, that this contention is false. The most important cause for violence was the presence of the army in a region. The military itself did not carry out all the killings; indeed, they were quite successful at mobilizing local youth militias, particularly from Islamic organizations, to carry out both roundups of local Communists (or those accused of being Communist,) and their executions.

The narrative of the violence—and even “cleansing”—against the PKI as a spontaneous popular reaction only makes sense within the idea that the “events” at Lubang Buaya were a massively destabilizing incidence of national moral crisis. Indeed, the intent of producing the story of Gerwani depravity was precisely to evoke moral crisis, and thereby to render the violent solutions to it as not only possible, but more importantly, necessary. Without the evocation of moral crisis and its potential to destroy the nation

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<sup>225</sup> And, I would add, though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, of non-gender-compliant men as well.

from within, there was no easily acceptable rationale for mass killings, and particularly for mass killings that took place across the nation in relatively similar ways.<sup>226</sup>

If we come to see the Indonesian killings of 1965-1966 as a case of moral crisis, it also helps explain the breadth of the violence. Actions of moral crisis of that imagined severity in any one place put the entire nation at risk. The “crime” of which Communists were accused went beyond individual guilt. People could be involved without having been present or doing anything specific. They became “*terlibat*,” or implicated, simply because of their connection to a group, and were targeted because of it. In this case, the *kaum komunis* became *terlibat* largely because of the actions with which Gerwani women were charged. Within this framework, we can also ask to what degree it makes sense to see the killings as an act of genocide. Communists, as a *kaum*, a national group, were targeted in whole, and the nation was re-ordered anew without them in it.

But there was a second national group—the *kaum feminis* in both its progressive and radical incarnations—that was also targeted. After the violence, the nation was re-formed with their political position and power significantly altered. Leftist women were not merely excluded, they were made to disappear. Progressive non-Communist women found their political position significantly changed, even the wives of ministers and military officers. Importantly, it was women themselves who were tasked with carrying out the exclusion from their own ranks, though, to be clear, they were not made responsible for the disappearances.

Indonesian women, as a whole, therefore, whether they were *terlibat* or not, saw their place in Indonesian society significantly altered. Even the word used to describe them as a group changed. As noted above, the term *wanita*, containing echoes of revolutionary nationalism that reached back to the 1920s gave way to the distinctly New Order term *perempuan*, with its strong implication of women as wives attached to *tuan*<sup>2</sup>, or men. The word *Ibu* would continue to be used, but with a significantly adjusted meaning.

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<sup>226</sup> There are two other reasons that are cited as having had an effect, though neither has been written about much. Both offer reasons that play out on a local level, but seem to have been put into effect in provinces across the nation. Both are also demonstrably false. The first is that the PKI had drafted “hit lists” of people to be killed, and that people’s families were on the imagined list. This led to a “kill or be killed” effect on the local level. The second were rumors, backing of up the idea of the PKI extermination lists, that holes had already been dug by the PKI for the corpse-to-be. Again, this was a rumor that occurred on local levels across the nation. So while this may explain local actions in some places and to some extent, on balance, they don’t explain the national scope of the killings, or the need for a national purge to the same extent.

This re-formation of Indonesian women as a group fulfills important elements of Feierstein's sociological definition of genocide. As discussed in Chapter 1, Daniel Feierstein suggests genocide "essentially" comprises "a partial destruction of the perpetrator's own national group—a destruction that is intended to transform the survivors through the annihilation of the victims." It is a "power strategy" in which "the ultimate purpose . . . is not the destruction of a group as such but the transformation of society as a whole."<sup>227</sup> Or, as Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman explain it "genocide can be understood as a creative process in which the nation is remade without a part of its former self."<sup>228</sup>

As this dissertation has argued, in the Indonesian case, this transformation of national identity depended critically on the creation of a moral crisis that threatened the continuation of the nation itself. The dissertation also has demonstrated that the patterns of moral crisis invoked were both already firmly encoded in Indonesia's experience of the tensions inherent in becoming a modern nation, and that this idea of crisis revolved particularly strongly around the moral position of women as a *kaum wanita*. I argue that in the aftermath of the events at Lubang Buaya, it was most importantly the invocation of a moral crisis centered on the alleged sexual deviance of Gerwani that made the Indonesian killings possible, and that this invocation brought about serious implications for Indonesian women as a whole, no matter what their own cultural affiliations and sub-identities might have been.

Whether or not the killing, imprisonment, rape, torture and impoverishment of leftist women constitutes its own case of genocide, or whether it is a distinct subset of a larger process focused on Indonesian communists, is perhaps not the most important question. Rather, the pattern of fallout for Indonesian women as a whole, in any case, suggests enough differences from the experience of men—the sense of non-Communist women needing to personally repudiate other women by adjusting their own identity in particular—that it is worth repeating the assertion that a full understanding of the aftermath of Lubang Buaya must place women's experiences at their center. This would also be true for scholars seeking further support for the idea that the killings in Indonesia

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<sup>227</sup> Daniel Feierstein, *Genocide as Practice*, p. 68, quoted in Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, "A Case for Genocide: Indonesia, 1965-1966," Katherine McGregor, et. al., eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 35.

<sup>228</sup> Jess Melvin and Annie Pohlman, "A Case for Genocide: Indonesia, 1965-1966," In Katherine McGregor, et. al., eds., *The Indonesian Genocide of 1965*, p. 35.

constitute a case of genocide. I would suggest further that looking at genocide specifically through the lens of gender in global comparative cases would also offer a profitable and expansive line of analysis.

This dissertation shows, nonetheless, that gender offers historians a marker of the possibility of genocide in the Indonesian case. Reading women's magazines from the New Order, for instance, would demonstrate the absolute disappearance of activist leftist women as a force in the construction of Indonesian national identity in the Sukarno era. Their only appearance would come in their annual deployment each October 1 as ideal types of sexually wonton and patriotically dangerous women—that is, as potential destroyers of the nation. They would also serve as ghostly reminders of the ever-lurking potential for massive moral crisis in any women who would do too much and stray too far from the path of proper national femininity.

The details of this massive shift in Indonesian national identity, I suggest, would be most visible in such things as fashion, film and advertising for women. There would be much to be learned from parsing the details of the how New Order women were expected to wear *kain* and *kebaya*, of how they represented the nation in fashion shows at home and abroad, of how they reacted to the close monitoring of their reproductive lives, and of how the place in the nation of Ibu Tien, Suharto's wife. It would also need to take into account the explosion of "mod" fashion, with short skirts and thigh-high boots that can be seen all over Indonesian women's magazines in the 1970's. Indeed, I am not suggesting a simple explanation of reductionist gender roles. Perhaps one of the longer term effects of the way the New Order gendered itself was that the call for national identity was to become less pressing in some ways, and in particular in how women dressed in their own lives. But that would be an interesting question for further research.

Taken together, along with many others, this would allow scholars to closely examine the constitution of Indonesian identities once socialism was no longer included as a component. It would also allow, for instance, for a particularly complicated reading of the New Order's obsession with suppressing Islamist movements (in part visually through banning significant public wearing of the veil), or of the growing stultification and emptiness of official New Order culture. Reading those details in comparison with the Sukarno era would allow scholars to trace instances of continuity and change in what it

meant to be a modern Indonesian in the 1970's-1990's. Seeing the present-day political situation through a lens of fears of moral crisis tied to rapid modernization and women's and gay men's sexuality would also be productive.

In short, if both Indonesian and foreign scholars are to understand Indonesia as well as we possibly can, we would be well served to put the cultural politics of gender at the center of our analysis. Certainly there are more interesting questions than the one Sukarno asked in 1928, of whether Indonesia would be glorious or Indonesia would be shattered. But just as certainly, he was correct that some of the answers to those and other important queries would lie within the serious examination of lives of Indonesia's women.



### **Visual Postlude: Two Images of Ideal Indonesian Women**

Two images of ideal Indonesian women summarize the new realities that faced *kaum wanita* with the violent arrival of the New Order.

The first image is of Gerwani activists gathered on a field outside the Central Javanese communist-dominated city of Solo, most likely on October 18 or 19, 1965, in the days following the arrival of army brigades in the city. It shows the women, surrounded by their neighbors, before they were likely taken to prisons from which many of them, likely, were executed.<sup>229</sup> Please note that they are immaculately, though simply, dressed, in both *kain* and *kebaya*, and in western dresses, their hair pulled back cleanly. They are, visually, the epitome of “proper” Indonesian women in the Sukarno era.

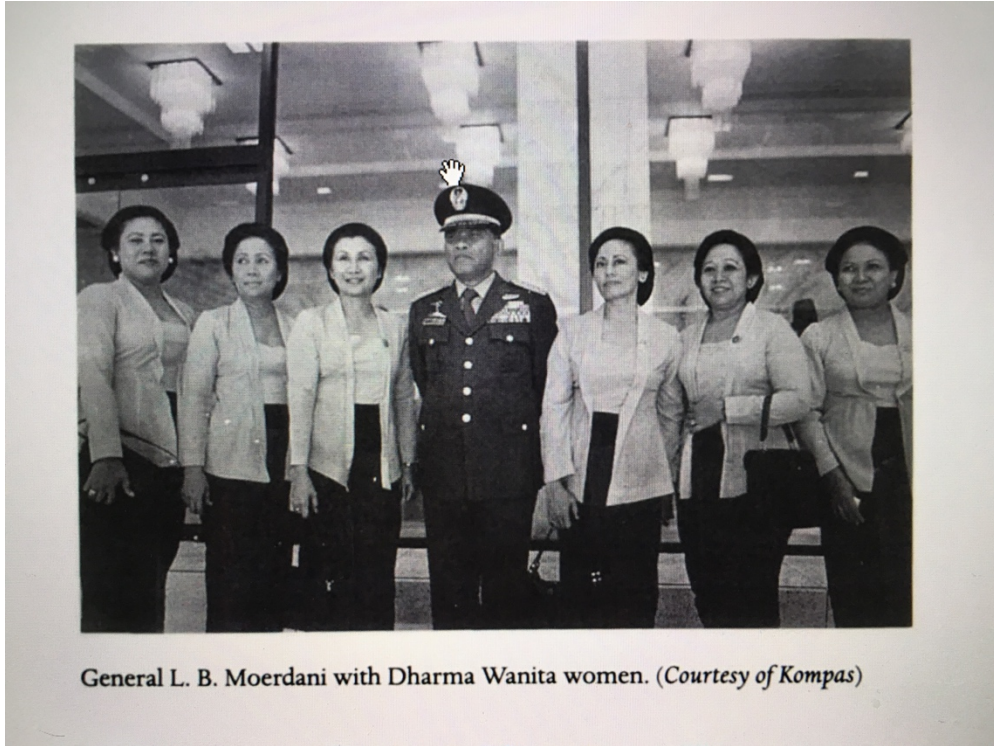
The second image is taken from Julia Suryakusuma’s work on Ibuism in *Fantasizing the Feminine*. The women, wearing uniform *kain-kebaya*, are also immaculately dressed and coiffed, almost to the point of not being easily distinguished. They are the leadership of *Dharma Wanita*, the national organization of Civil Service wives established under the Suharto regime. They are gathered together alongside General Benny Moerdani, the commander of ABRI, the Indonesian Armed Forces, between 1983-1988.

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<sup>229</sup> I have tried to identify some of the women in the photograph, and think, with time and patient connections to the community in which it was taken, that I will be able to know more about them individually. But I do not as yet. These types of stories only come forward quietly, cautiously and slowly from those who know about them. But I do have very general stories about what happened there from one of my Javanese language teachers in Solo, whose house is near the particular village where this photo was taken.



**Figure 7.2:** *Ibu-ibu yang terlibat PKI di Kartosuro, Kab. Sukoharjo di kumpulkan di Lembaga Penerbangan dan Antariksa Nasional (LAPAN)gan.*  
Women accused of supporting or belonging to the Indonesian Communist Party are gathered together in a public field in Kartosuro. Solo, October 1965  
Photo by: W. Sutarto, caption and use of the image courtesy of The Lontar Foundation.



General L. B. Moerdani with Dharma Wanita women. (Courtesy of Kompas)

**Figure 7.3:** From Julia Suryakusuma, “The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia,” in Laurie J. Sears, ed. *Fantasizing the Feminine*, p. 100.

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<b>CORN</b>	Cornell University Libraries (Ithaca)
<b>HORT</b>	Personal Archive, Brad Horton (Tokyo)
<b>ISEAS</b>	Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore)
<b>KEMALA</b>	Personal Archive, Kemala Atmojo (Jakarta)
<b>LABADIE</b>	University of Michigan, Labadie Collection (Ann Arbor)
<b>MICH</b>	University of Michigan Libraries (Ann Arbor)
<b>MONPERS</b>	Monumen Pers Nasional (Solo)
<b>NIOD</b>	NIOD Institut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- and Genocidestudies, (Amsterdam) [electronic archive: <a href="http://www.niod.nl">www.niod.nl</a> ]
<b>PERPUSNAS</b>	Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, Koleksi Majalah Langka (Jakarta)
<b>SUAS</b>	Kantor <i>Suara 'Aisyiyah</i> (Yogyakarta)
<b>SULL</b>	Personal Archive, Charles Sullivan (Lawrence)

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