BANDUNG IN THE EARLY REVOLUTION
1945-1946

A Study in the Social History of
the Indonesian Revolution

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MONOGRAPH SERIES
MODERN INDONESIA PROJECT

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Ithaca, New York

$3.50
CHAPTER I

HISTORY

The city of Bandung, next to Djakarta the largest in West Java and the third largest in Indonesia, lies about 2400 feet above sea level in an upland rice bowl, an oval about twenty-five miles long and ten miles wide surrounded by an impressive fringe of mountains reaching up as high as 7500 feet. Its original location was on the Tjitarum River on the site of the present-day town of Dayeuh Kolot (Old Capital) but in 1810 it was moved to its present location on slightly higher and less marshy ground at the northern edge of the bowl’s floor, at the foot of the slopes leading up to the locally-famous cratered volcano Tangkuban Prahu.

In August 1945, at the threshold of the Revolution, the city of Bandung was what it had been through most of the earlier years of the twentieth century and is today, an administrative and educational center. Like most cities in Indonesia it had little industry; in economic terms it depended on the services it performed for government and private offices and schools and for the plantations established during the previous six or seven decades in the mountainous areas around the bowl. Like any large city it was a transportation center: running next to each other through the center of the city were one of the two main east-west railroad lines on Java and an important trunk road, while a net of smaller roads radiated out from the city to every corner of the bowl. In August 1945, after three and a half years of Japanese occupation, the plantations were almost inactive, commerce and education were stagnant; in the city proper there lived, somewhat precariously, a population of about 437,000. (1)

Bandung can be divided roughly into three zones. (See map.) South of the main highway is the older part of the city, oriented toward the main square (alun-alun) on which the residence and office of the regent (bupati) fronts. Between the main highway and the railroad track and along the northern side of the latter is the main business district: the main city market (Pasar Baru--New Market) to the west of the square and the European downtown area, with shops, hotels and offices, to the east. North and east of the business district is the European suburban area, developed

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(1) [Municipality of Bandung], Perdirangan Kemerdekaan dalam Kota Bandung (Garut 1946) pp. 3-4 of the separately paginated appendix, which consists of a report on the state of the city in mid-September 1945. The figures given there and quoted here and below are based on municipal records compiled from reports of births, deaths and moves rather than on a census (the most recent having been made 15 years earlier, in 1930) and are therefore only approximately accurate. For this reason they have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.
mostly in the 1920’s and 1930’s, in which are located most of the schools, the Technical College and some of the more important office buildings.

Much the largest group in the population of the city in August 1945 was that of the Indonesians, numbering about 380,000. Most of them were Sundanese --the original inhabitants of the mountainous interior of West Java--but there was a relatively large group of Javanese and a sizeable number of Minangkabaus, Bataks and other ethnic groups native to the various islands outside Java. Roughly two-thirds of the Indonesians lived in the part of the city lying south of the railway tracks but about one-third lived in small neighborhoods (kampungs) scattered through the European business district and suburban area and around their fringes. (2) The 40,000 Chinese, most of them merchants, had their largest concentration around the main market, south of the tracks too, while the remainder lived in small pockets along the main streets and individually in most of the areas occupied by Indonesians.

The third major element in the population was that of the "Europeans"--pure Dutch, Eurasians and other nationalities--16,000 of whom were on the rolls of the municipality at this time. (3) In 1940, just before the war, there had been 27,000 in this category (4) but the Japanese had placed practically all of the Dutch and many of the Eurasians in the internment camps located in the suburban area itself and near the satellite town of Tjimahi to the west and those of course were still in the camps at the time of the Japanese surrender. Most of the 16,000, almost all Eurasians, lived in the suburban area but others were scattered, in the way the Chinese were, throughout the town.

The rural surroundings of the city of Bandung can best be described in terms of their administrative organization. The city was, as it had

(2) I have used the railroad tracks as the dividing line here because they served this function in the troubled period between December and March, at a time of large-scale population movement. Using this line I have calculated the distribution of the Indonesians from figures for the 19 wards (desas) of the city given in Perdjoangan Kota Bandung (Appendix) 2-3. The figures given there cover all population groups, not only Indonesians, and have therefore been adjusted on the rough assumption that one-fourth of the Chinese and four-fifths of the "Europeans" lived to the north of the tracks.

(3) This figure includes about 700 non-Dutch Europeans, and the pre-war figure given below also includes an unstated but demographically not very important number of non-Dutch. In August 1945 there were also about 300 Indians and 600 Arabs in Bandung, adding a round thousand to the grand total for the city.

(4) L. van der Pijl (ed), Bandoeng en haar Hoogvlakte (Bandung ca. 1949) 36. This figure is not fully comparable to the 1945 one because the boundaries of the municipality had been extended several times during the Japanese occupation, taking in new areas whose European population did not appear in the pre-war totals for the city. The numbers involved could not have been more than a few thousand, however.
been since the 1860’s, the capital of the residency (keresidenan) of Priangan, one of five in West Java. Three provinces--West, Central and East Java--had been formed between 1926 and 1930 but the Japanese occupation authorities on Java had abolished them and in 1945 the residency was, as it had been before 1926, the highest level of administration below the central one. The resident, in Dutch times always a Dutch official, was a Japanese but beneath him, in a new post created by the Japanese, was an Indonesian vice-resident.

At the next level down, Priangan residency was divided into six parts: five regencies (kabupatens), each headed by a regent (bupati), and the city of Bandung itself, headed by a mayor. (5) The regency of Bandung, which along with the city is the area we are chiefly concerned with here, occupied virtually the whole area of the Bandung bowl, its boundaries following the watershed line of the mountain fringe quite closely. Excluding the city, enclave within it, Bandung Regency in 1945 had well over a million inhabitants, almost all Sundanese; it was the largest of the five regencies, having about a third of the population of the residency. (6) It was divided into nine districts (kewedanans), headed by district officers (wedanas), and twenty-seven subdistricts (ketjamatans), headed by subdistrict officers (tjimatans). The subdistrict was the lowest administrative unit headed by an appointed official of the pamong pradja corps; below it was the village (desa), averaging about ten to each subdistrict, headed by an elected headman (lurah).

The mountainous interior of West Java--Priangan in the broad geographical sense, rather than the narrow administrative one--began the transition from pre-history to history in the sixteenth century, considerably later than the main areas of central and east Java. Sparsely occupied by the Sundanese, still practicing shifting cultivation over wide areas in the hills, this region was little influenced by Indian civilisation as represented in the Sundanese trading states of Taruma (5th-7th centuries A.D.) and Padjadjaran (14th-16th centuries A.D.) located in the area of modern Bogor in the foothills to its north. More powerful and sustained forces were needed to open up this remote and almost empty area and these were generated by the dynamic movements in Javanese society in the more highly developed centers to the east in the 16th and 17th centuries. First,

(5) The five regencies of Priangan were, and are, Tjiamis, Tasikmalaya, Garut, Sumedang and Bandung. Bandung regency, though it had its seat in the city, is not to be confused with the latter. The regency office, as mentioned above, was on the main square, in the southern, and predominantly Indonesian, part of town, while the municipal and residency offices were in the north, reflecting their Dutch origins. The regents and the mayor, like all the officials mentioned below, were Indonesians--Sundanese to be more precise.

(6) The 1930 census gave a figure of 1,203,288 for Bandung Regency. Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie, 2nd ed, vol 8 (The Hague 1939) 1751. No estimates for any date between 1930 and 1945 are available and in view of the disruption and boundary changes of the Japanese period it would be misleading to give more specific figures.
around the middle of the 16th century, came Islam, carried by the newly founded Javanese harbor states of Tjirebon (Cheribon) and Banten (Bantam) on the north coast of West Java, and soon sinking deeper roots among the Sundanese than among the Javanese themselves. Then, around the turn of the century, the rising power of the central Javanese state of Mataram began to be felt in the Sundanese interior, introducing the Javanese economic, social and cultural system along with its political dominance.

During the three centuries from about 1500 to 1900 the main theme in the social history of Priangan is found in the spread and rooting of these Javanese patterns in Sundanese society. The key to this process was the network of petty vassals, later called regents, set up here as elsewhere by Mataram. The regents themselves easily accepted not only the Javanese political system so favorable to their interests but also the refined culture of Java. Their courts (dalements), modelled on that of Mataram, became centers of Javanese literature and arts; in them it was chiefly Javanese, a language whose layered structure reflects and reinforces a strong sense of social hierarchy, which was used until well on in the 19th century. (7) It was through the regents' courts that Javanese influence spread and around them that the Sundanese of Priangan very slowly began to settle down, giving up shifting cultivation for permanent sawah (irrigated field) cultivation of wet rice, and thereby changing from mountaineers to peasants as the Javanese had before them.

Once started, this process continued on its own, unaffected by the breaking of the political connection with Mataram. In the late seventeenth century, its strength declining fast, Mataram transferred Priangan to the Dutch East India Company whose headquarters had been established at Batavia (Djakarta) early in the century. For a time the Dutch paid little attention to their new territory but in the early eighteenth century they discovered that it was well suited for the growing of coffee. Within a few decades they had developed the production of Priangan coffee to the point that it had become their most valuable export, a position which it held for more than a century.

The Dutch obtained their coffee through the regents by requiring the planting of coffee bushes and levying forced deliveries against low prices. Otherwise, until late in the 19th century, they concerned themselves little with the internal affairs of Priangan, leaving most matters to the regents. The latter profited greatly from the connection, receiving large sums for their services in connection with the production of coffee and getting Dutch support and the right to tax and administer their regencies as they chose. The strong position of the regents, the peace enforced from a distance by the Dutch—between the mid-seventeenth century and 1945 Priangan was almost entirely quiet—and the coffee money passing out from the regents' courts all contributed to the development of a more Javanese pattern of

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(7) Javanese, like Sundanese which it has influenced, may be viewed as a set of interlocking dialects, different ones of which are used according to the relationship between the speaker and the person he addresses: the tu-vous principle carried to an extreme. For a good brief description see Geertz, The Religion of Java 248-60.
society, with a growing base of sawah-cultivating peasants and a small superstructure of prijaji (aristocrats) centering on the regents. (8) By the end of the 19th century Sundanese society in Priangan had taken its place as little more than a variation on the main Javanese system. (9)

As this process reached its climax, however, a new cycle of change was beginning. Hitherto Dutch influence in Priangan had been felt only in a demand for coffee and a measure of outside control imposed on the regents—factors which under the circumstances promoted Javanization rather than Westernization—but the 19th century expansion of the West brought far more powerful forces to bear. Economic penetration came first: the first railroad line connecting Djakarta and Bandung was opened in 1884 and the two or three decades before 1900 saw the appearance of increasing numbers of private plantations growing tea, cinchona, and coffee in the mountainous areas of Priangan. About the turn of the century the impact of the modern West began to be felt on a broader front. This process is best illustrated by the rapid growth of the town of Bandung. (10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indonesians</th>
<th>&quot;Europeans&quot;</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>41,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>167,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>164,000</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>217,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>437,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Including Indians and Arabs

(8) "Aristocrats" covers the prijaji's hereditary status, their military origin and their knightly ethic but fails to indicate the fact that they were not independent barons but officials or agents serving the regents, and later the Dutch, in an administrative hierarchy. The prijaji class fell into two quite distinct parts: upper prijaji (the regents and their closer relatives—called menak in Sundanese) and lower prijaji.

(9) The main sources for Priangan up to about 1900 are F. de Haan, Priangan, de Preanger-Regentschappen onder het Nederlandsch Bestuur tot 1811, 4 vols (Batavia 1910-12) and J. W. de Klein, Het Preangerstelsel (1677-1871) en zijn Nawerking (Delft 1931). The memoirs of P. A. Achmad Djadjadiningrat, Herinneringen (Amsterdam/Batavia 1936) give an excellent picture of life in West Java in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

(10) Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie, 1st ed, vol 1, 98; ibid., 2nd ed, vol 5, 355 and vol 8, 1753-4; Pijl (ed), Bandoeng en haar Hoogvlakte 9, 10, 36, 71; Perdjoangan Kota Bandung (Appendix) 3-4. The great increase in Indonesian and Chinese population between 1940 and 1945 is accounted for by substantial enlargements in the territory covered by the city between those years, while the decrease in the European population, as mentioned above, is due to internment by the Japanese.
The nine Europeans in Bandung in 1846 and the few dozen there some thirty years later were a minority even within the small elite of Bandung: they fitted themselves into special niches in the larger society and to a great extent adapted themselves to its culture. But another thirty years later, in 1905, there were 2,000 Europeans in the town of Bandung alone and, quite aside from their preponderant political and economic position, there was no question of absorbing such numbers into the old social system. Indeed within the elite of the regent's capital it was now the Sundanese prijaji who were a minority and the question was what place they (and other Indonesians) would take in the new urban society and what adjustment, if any, they would make to its European culture.

The first four decades of the 20th century saw a radical transformation of the Indonesian elite in Bandung. The most important influence behind this change was that of Western education which became increasingly available for Indonesians—though there were never enough schools to satisfy the demand—after about 1910. Western education broke down parochial barriers both intellectually and socially; it provided another criterion for prestige besides birth and Islamic learning; above all it was a passport to the small number of better jobs made possible by the developing economy: as clerks in private businesses and government offices, as civil servants, as teachers, as doctors, lawyers and engineers.

These two factors, education and new jobs, tended to break down the single hierarchical prijaji class. Among Indonesians, the members of the upper prijaji families were given preferential access to Western education, particularly in the better schools—a fact which caused a great deal of bitterness. But lower prijaji, if only because of their greater numbers, were probably a majority of those who obtained this education, and considerable numbers of non-prijaji did too. The broader range of jobs open to members of this new educated class had the same effect. The pamong pradja (general administrative service) remained a prijaji stronghold, dominated by the quasi-hereditary regents. (11). But the other government services, particularly the government school system, and above all the professions, did not have this special class character.

Finally, as has already been indicated by the use of "Indonesian" instead of "Sundanese" above, the educated class developing in Bandung was no longer homogeneous. In the broader sense, this was true of the whole Netherlands Indies where the breaking down of parochial barriers was promoting the development of a single national elite but in Bandung it was true in a more limited sense as well. Considerable numbers of Javanese and Sumatrans came to Bandung, which was becoming an educational center of national importance, to go to school and some stayed on in various occupations. The normal processes of appointment and transfer

(11) On friction within the pamong pradja between upper prijaji, blocking the way to promotion to the higher positions, and lower prijaji, see generally R. A. A. Soeria Nata Atmadja, De Regenten Positie (Bandung 1940) (giving the upper prijaji position) and Sewaka, Djorat-Tjoret dari Djimaan ke Djaman (Bandung 1955) (giving the lower prijaji position). The latter, Sewaka's memoirs, gives a good picture of the West Java pamong pradja world in the interwar period.
brought many non-Sundanese, particularly Javanese, to the large government offices in Bandung, some of which like the railways and the Post, Telegraph and Telephone service had their national headquarters there. The educated elite which grew up in Bandung in the early twentieth century, while predominantly Sundanese, thus had strong minority ethnic elements in it, a circumstance which had an important effect on politics there.

So far we have been considering only the social and cultural changes within the secular elite in Bandung as it broadened out from a culturally traditional Sundanese aristocracy whose sole occupation was rural administration into a Western-educated national urban elite spread out over a variety of white-collar and professional occupations. But this Indonesian elite was only part of a larger urban elite whose dominant element was Dutch and which also included a sizeable number of Eurasians and some Chinese. Out of the social tensions produced throughout this complex plural elite by the rapid changes of the 20th century there emerged a number of political movements. The most important of these for our purposes was the Indonesian nationalist movement. (12)

The term is somewhat misleading for it suggests a movement more exclusively political than it actually was. Thus the Pagojoeban Pasoe-dan (Sundanese Association), founded in 1914 and the most consistently active nationalist organization in Priangan up to 1942, devoted at least as much effort to founding and running some fifty schools, a savings bank and cooperative and other economic and social projects, a women’s auxiliary and scout movement and drill club, and a daily newspaper, as it did to political activity as such. (13) This is not to speak of the many formally non-political associations which were formed in the 1920’s and 1930’s and took their part in the same broad social movement. (14) The pre-war nationalist movement had as much Samuel Smiles as Samuel Adams in it.

(12) From the large literature on the nationalist movement, see particularly George McT. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (Ithaca 1952) 1-100; W. F. Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition, 1st ed., (The Hague 1956) 65-74 and 312-18; Robert Van Niel, The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite (The Hague 1960); and the works by Blumberger, Pluvier and Benda cited in notes 13 and 16 below.


(14) For example, Himpunan Saudara (Fraternal Association), the largest and most successful of a class of benevolent societies, deposits in which built up individual burial and education funds and ordinary savings accounts; Taman Siswa (Garden of Pupils), the Javanese independent school movement, which operated a number of schools in Bandung; Persis (Persatuan Islam--Islamic Union), a fundamentalist Islamic organization, with its national center in Bandung, which produced two of the most important post-war Islamic political leaders, Mohamad Natsir and Isa Anshary.
Insofar as it was political the nationalist movement was not simply a matter of campaigning for the removal of the Dutch. During the 1920’s and 1930’s most educated men in Bandung came to think of themselves as Indonesians, but nationalism as an ideology or a political slogan had a very different appeal to different groups among them. For those to whom it appealed most strongly---those who joined the political parties of the nationalist movement, both "non-cooperative" like the PNI and "cooperative" like Pagojoeban Paoendan (15)---it was a powerful weapon against Dutch colonial rule. But it was also a weapon which these men, who can be labeled the nationalist politicians, (16) could use in domestic politics against groups whose political claims rested on different grounds—notably the pamong pradja, particularly the regents, whose position rested on their aristocratic status, and the Islamic elite. For that matter it was used by nationalist politicians against each other: by non-cooperators against cooperators, and by the more strictly national parties against those, like the Pagojoeban Paoendan, which though avowing their nationalism were frankly based on a single ethnic group. (17)

The developments described here were almost entirely confined to the urban elite, chiefly in the city of Bandung itself but also to some extent in the smaller regency and district towns in the residency. In the early decades of the twentieth century change was taking place in the villages, mainly because of population pressure, but it took the form of what has been called the "rococo elaboration" of the traditional rural system. (18)

(15) The PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia---Indonesian National Party) founded by Sukarno in 1927 was the first and most famous of the fully nationalist parties. The terms "non-cooperative" ("non") and "cooperative" ("co") were used mainly in the 1930’s, the chief formal distinction being that the former were unwilling and the latter willing to take part in elections for the various legislative councils, particularly the Volksraad (People’s Council) at the national level.

(16) Harry J. Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun; Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation (The Hague 1958) uses the term "secular nationalists" for this group. This term, along with "nationalists," will be used occasionally below for variety. Typically, but not invariably of course, the nationalist politicians were lower prijaji by social origin and teachers or members of the professions by training and occupation.

(17) This issue was raised against the Pagojoeban Paoendan by the PNI in the late 1920’s and by the Bandung branch of Parindra (Partai Indonesia Raja---Greater Indonesian Party) in the late 1930’s. It should be noted, however, that this Parindra branch was led by Javanese and that the main public rivalry in Bandung politics in the period thus took the form of competition between ethnic cliques. Earlier the proto-nationalist organization Boedi Oetomo (Noble Endeavor), formed in 1908, had had to have two branches in Bandung, one for Javanese, the other for Sundanese. Blumberger, Nationalistische Beweging, 38.