

# MASS EDUCATION: ELITE'S CITIZENSHIP PROJECT AND THE MAKING OF PUBLIC INTELLECTUALITY IN EARLY INDEPENDENT INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the government policy on 'mass education' (*pendidikan masyarakat*) during the Indonesian state formation of the 1950s. The mass education program was launched by the government as a medium for the making of citizenship. The aim was to improve the people's knowledge and consciousness of becoming citizens. The program was thus an instrument of nation-state building. Today, in the post-*Reformasi* era, as identity politics is strengthening to result in the crisis of shared citizenship, a discussion on the mass education program re-gains a relevance. Using the concept of public intellectual, this paper argues that the mass education program of the 1950s was an effective medium for the making of citizenship because it enhanced participatory engagement between the elite and the people. However, the program also reflected the policy makers' strategies for disseminating Pancasila, the state ideology, thus promulgating the elite's ideologization of the people.

Keywords: Indonesian citizenship; mass education; the 1950s; state formation

## ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji kebijakan pemerintah tentang pendidikan masyarakat dalam periode awal pembentukan negara Republik Indonesia pada dekade 1950an. Program pendidikan masyarakat diluncurkan oleh pemerintah sebagai medium untuk membentuk sikap kewargaan. Tujuannya adalah meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kesadaran rakyat tentang 'bagaimana menjadi warga negara'. Program ini dengan demikian merupakan instrumen pembangunan negara (*state building*). Pada era pasca-Reformasi saat ini ketika politik identitas kembali menguat sebagai krisis atas sikap kewargaan, diskusi tentang program pendidikan masyarakat tahun 1950an memperoleh konteks relevansinya kembali. Menggunakan konsep 'intelektual publik', artikel ini menegaskan bahwa program pendidikan masyarakat tahun 1950an menjadi medium efektif bagi pembentukan sikap kewargaan karena program tersebut memacu keterlibatan dan keterhubungan antara kaum elit dan rakyat. Namun, program pendidikan masyarakat tahun 1950an juga mencerminkan strategi para pengambil kebijakan tentang cara menjabarkan Pancasila sebagai ideologi negara, dan karena itu program tersebut mencerminkan proses ideologisasi yang dilakukan oleh elit penguasa atas cara berpikir dan cara bersikap warga negara.

Kata kunci: kewarganegaraan, Pendidikan massa, tahun 1950an, pembentukan negara.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of the New Order in 1998, the idea and the format of *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia* (NKRI or the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, USRI) has been increasingly challenged by such fundamental issues as identity politics (Nordholt, 2008:1–21). Pancasila (Five Principles of Statesmanship) as the Indonesian state ideology and the shared basis of citizenship has been superseded by group-based moral values, which tend to shift in emphasis from ethnicity to religion (Putra, 2011:275). Recent developments in the Indonesian politics, as reflected by mass mobilizations during the local election period of 2016–2017, show that religion- and ethnicity-based contentious sentiments remain latent and prone to be misused by any party for segmented agendas. In this paper I indicate that the challenges to the USRI format(-ion) that are looming today are by no means characteristic of the post-New Order era. Often seen as cultural blessings by Indonesian nationalist ideologues and foreign Indonesianists alike, the diverse ethnicities and religions in the Archipelago have been the sources of disintegrating sentiments, most remarkably since the idea of unity was raised and Indonesia became independent (Gayatri, 2010:189). Learning the lessons from the period of *mengisi kemerdekaan* in the 1950s, today's project to revive Pancasila and to strengthen a shared sense of citizenship should mean a re-definition and re-invention of the strategies of dissemination. As it was in the early process of the Indonesian state formation of the 1950s, a contractual concept of citizenship should now be promoted ("Citizenship", 2011). The rights and responsibilities of every individual in all aspects of the society should be equally recognized and guaranteed.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the government policy on 'mass education' in the Indonesian state formation of the 1950s. 'Mass education' (*pendidikan masyarakat*) was an official term the government used in many of its policy documents. 'Mass education'

referred to 'education of multitudes of various stages of individual knowledge and development in heterogeneous social surroundings and circumstances' (Department of Information [DI] 1950:41). In the context of the 1950s, "mass education" was complement to the "compulsory education". The latter dealt with formal instructions provided for school-age children by an institutional school system. My prime question in this paper is: How was the 'mass education' programme worked out in order to develop an engagement for the making of the sense of being Indonesian among the people and the elite leaders?

Now and then, the efforts towards achieving the imagined Indonesian state have been a taxing challenge even though the direction in which independent Indonesia is headed in its quest for development has been relatively comprehensible in the Pancasila and in the 1945 Constitution. One of the most critical issues of those efforts in the context of the 1950s dealt with the uncompromised discrepancy between the formation of the ideal State and its implication for the creation of the expected 'exemplary citizen' on the one hand, and the social realities affecting the competence, wellbeing and ideological consciousness of the Nation or people on the other hand. The educational policy in the years following the transfer of sovereignty in 1949 was aimed at bridging the chasm between the elite's imagination of an independent State and the people's consciousness of citizenship.

The mass education and the compulsory education programmes in the 1950s were launched by the government as a medium for the creation of public intellectuality. Public intellectuality was a process of engagement between the elite and the mass, or the leaders and the people, in which the mass or the people would be stimulated by the educated elite to be knowledgeable about their rights as individual citizens. The aim was for the people to be self-driven in contributing to the communal life. However, in this paper I also recognize that the Indonesian state

formation of the 1950s was not entirely an inclusive process. The notion of citizenship had to be (re-)negotiated by the state elites and by the populous masses in terms of meaning, degree and the way of acquisition.

#### **STATE OF THE ART OF THE ISSUE**

A number of recent studies have meticulously attempted to explain the crisis of Indonesian citizenship following the fall of Soeharto's New Order in 1998 by taking a comparative perspective to the situation of the 1950s. While offering buttressed understanding of the past and contemporary factors which have led to the crisis, these studies touch in passing the strategies which culture-breeding institutions such as school can develop to strengthen the collective capacity of the people so as to confront with the crisis. Nordholt (2008:2) argued that *1998 Reformasi* has cost 'a shared sense of Indonesian citizenship'. Although the *Reformasi* has promoted democratization, he said, it accelerates 'a wave of religious, ethnic and regional identity politics'. Enhanced by a freedom of speech, any group of people may now go to the street to voice out their aspirations without a fear of being intimidated by state apparatus like it was under Soeharto's regime. However, also for the same rationale can the social issues which were formerly suppressed and deemed as political taboos easily explode in the form of open conflicts. These includes but is not limited to the issues of identity politics. Conventional issues of land ownership and of local contestation for powers remain potential sources of open conflicts. They are identifiable, for example, in West Sumatra (Zubir and Efendi 2011), in Jambi (Lindayanti and Zubir 2015) and in Bali (Agung 2011). The changing politics in post-Soeharto Indonesia has thus paved a hope for democracy but has also raised a concern about the future and the nature of citizenship in the frame of the USRI. As Irine Hiraswari Gayatri (2010:191) puts it, 'democratization in Indonesia has a paradox at its heart'.

Generally speaking, scholars point

to the post-1998 decentralization policy (Acts No. 22/1999 and No. 32/2004) as a prime cause to the crisis of the shared sense of citizenship. According to Booth (2010:43–6, 50), decentralization policy was made in response to the blossoming secessionist movements outside Java. By splitting provincial and district administrative territories, the central government devolves control over economic resources to local authorities. This strategy, Booth said, has been successful in easing the tensed relationship between the centre and the regions. However, it has also raised social jealousy among peoples of different administrative territories because of the increasing economic discrepancy between naturally-rich and -poor regions. While decentralization has been motivated by 'the disproportionate ethnic representation in the central government' during Soeharto's administration which had caused economic disadvantage to a number of particular groups of people (Gayatri 2010:189-91), it has also created a socio-economic gap. As McBeth (2002:17) says, decentralization was the most controversial issue law makers had to deal with in the early 2000s.

Like Gayatri's, Booth's analysis suggested that economic consideration was a strong pushing factor for decentralization. However, Booth realized that the decentralization policy, which was initially made as a response to economy-motivated secessionist movements, produces another source of discontent, which potentially weakens the feeling of 'being Indonesian' among the disadvantaged in terms of natural resources. Decentralization has diminished the function of the central government as a balancing element in the economic and political dynamics of the provincial regions and districts. In this case, decentralization has put the shared sense of citizenship at risk. Meanwhile, the anthropologist Heddy Shri Ahimsa Putra (2011:274–5) argued that the crisis of citizenship has to do with the incoherence between political and social transformation. Partly for a low education level of the people, the political changes in Indo-

nesia have not transformed public consciousness of Indonesia as a plural society to that as a multicultural one. As a result, there is recognition of cultural differences but there is hardly shared moral obligation for mutual respects among culturally different groups. In Putra's view, the crisis of citizenship is not so much ideological as cultural.

Post-New Order Indonesia loses legitimacy to effect a shared basis of citizenship. Resistance against Pancasila developed because of the coercive method, which the New Order regime had carried out to impose it to the people. While this holds true, recent manifestations of identity politics are not necessarily an antithesis to the New Order repression as such. What has motivated a series of suicide bombings in the past ten years indicate a direct challenge to the core idea of Pancasila-based Indonesia as a unitary, non-religion state. The Indonesian government has been quite successful in tackling down these ideologically-motivated manifestations of identity politics. However, the Indonesia has not been able to re-gain full legitimacy to persuade all citizens to share Pancasila as the basis of citizenship. The most suitable formula to the present socio-political context has still to be found to re-instate the birth ideology of the state.

At this point, people turn to (school) education as an effective medium for the promotion of Pancasila-based citizenship (*Daily Kompas* May 27, 2011: 1, 19, 37–40). In the post-New Order era, according to Mary Fearnley-Sander dan Ella Yulaelawati (2008:112-3), 'civic agency has been fore-grounded in the citizenship curriculum'. However, "civic identity is no longer seen as the integration of citizens' wills in a supreme, personified state". Many see the Pancasila education course introduced by the New Order no more than a deliberate and systematic exploitation of the state ideology for the sake of political legitimacy of the regime. The New Order's style of Pancasila education cannot possibly be a suitable benchmark of the way Pancasila should be revitalized today (*Daily Kompas*, May 27, 2011: 1,

19). Indonesia's experience of the 1950s in depleting the sources of identity politics and in forwarding Pancasila to the foreground of state- and nation-building may be a source of reflections and inspirations for policy makers in order to deal with the contemporary crisis of citizenship. The nature of the citizenship crisis of the 1950s shared a similarity to today's case.

#### **THE MASS AND THE INTELLECTUAL ELITE ENGAGEMENT**

Both in the 1950s and in the post-New Order periods, Indonesia was and is in the process of re-institutionalizing after being liberated from hegemonic regimes. In the two periods, secessionist movements loom (ed) due to such basic factors as unequal distributions of economic sources and power shares. The two periods are also particularly characterized by the growing desire and enthusiasm of the people to participate in the public policy making. On the other hand, identity politics signifies the two periods, too. Segmented social and political groups of people did and do run rivalries to (re-)define what the Indonesian state and society should be and how it should be governed and based on. In short, while showing people's enthusiasm for participation in the public affairs, both periods witness(ed) the multi-aspect problems of the nation- and state-integration. One of these problems in particular was and is the threat to the shared sense of citizenship. In short, there were similar characteristics between the 1950s and the post-New Order periods.

However, the two periods were also different from each other substantially. One of the factors that differentiates the citizenship crisis of today and of the 1950s is the role of the intellectual elite. Like in the 1950s, the Indonesian people in the post-New Order era enjoyed a widening space for the freedom of speech. Unlike in the 1950s, however, the more recent development in the freedom of speech has not seemed to lead to the emergence of public intellectuals, namely the educated elite who got engaged closely with the people in the efforts to solve the citizen-

ship crisis. In particular, the role of university academics has been in the spotlight of today's context. Many, if not too many, Indonesian academics are now working on or getting involved directly in power politics by serving in the administration and joining political parties. As historian Benedict R.O.G. Anderson identified, many other academics are "taking the advantage of various kinds of mass media opportunities such as becoming columnists in newspapers and TV personalities." "Under such circumstances," Anderson said, "many academics pragmatically align themselves with the political elites" (Anderson 2012:47). By doing so, these academics have left the campuses "euphemistically empty" so that it is pretty hard today to find scholars with reputable research and international publications in Indonesian universities (Suwignyo 2013:6). What we can easily find are those people with academic titles and university institutional affiliation, who speak over government policies while proposing pragmatic solutions. The voices of these academics in the public space have not aimed to reflect genuine aspirations about social problems that are based on scholarly inquiry. Rather, they are the yell of political party agents intending for gaining individual position in the power circle of the state administration. So, in the post-New Order Indonesia the growing freedom of speech has not so much stimulated the emergence of public intellectuals in the sense of the words.

Anderson argued that professionalization and state co-optation of universities have caused the absence of the educated people who recognize the socio-political problems of their society and who try "to speak to the whole public" (Anderson 2012:53). During the heyday of the New Order regime in Indonesia (c. the 1980s and early 1990s), debates and concerns were already spread among the Indonesian academics on the role of intellectuals in the public affairs. There emerged two differentiating labels inspired by the Gramscian school: "activist intellectual" and "organic intellectual". The former

were the academics and university professors who shared the people's feeling about political and military repressions and unjust policy practices. They made themselves engaged in the resistant activities against the regime that risked their career and life. This category of intellectual consisted of a small number of people only.

The majority of the Indonesian academics fell into the second category, the organic intellectual. This type of intellectual kept themselves focused on their teaching job and made a clear separation and distance from the socio-political dynamics of the country. This somehow reflected Soeharto's view on the position and role of school and university education in general. In his keynote address to the eleventh congress of the Indonesian Teachers' Association (Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia, PGRI) held in Bandung from 15 to 20 March, 1967, Soeharto required the teachers to get stucked solely to their pedagogical roles in the education and the character-building of children. "Schools and universities should not become an arena of political power contestation," Soeharto said. "So as to guard the Pancasila, education and culture should be made an offensive as well as defensive fortress of the New Order" (Djendral Soeharto 1967: 108—11).

The decline of the role of the Indonesian public intellectuals was hence emanating from the regime-dominated education which last for decades. It was a result of the institutional policy that had set aside the academics and teachers alike from the otherwise *sine-qua-non* core value of their existential being: the freedom of speech. According to social scientist Daniel Dakidhae, the relationship between intellectuals and power politics in Indonesia was a long history of regime's hegemony over the academic freedom of speech. There were different motives, patterns, institutional agencies and events involved in the process of intellectuals cooptation. For the intellectuals of the organic type, their relationship with power politics gradually became mutual in nature. Both the regime and the intellectuals benefitted

from each other. However, the intellectuals of the organic type continued to quest for the freedom of speech. Consequently, those who had moved to or become part of a political power circle consciously missed it (Dakhidae 2003:11–12). As Dawam Rahardjo (1996) puts it, the essence of being an intellectual is whether the ideas s/he produces are a result of a free thinking process, and whether there is a freedom for speaking them out to the public. None of these conditions were met during the New Order.

In this sort of context, the educated elite from the periods of the 1950s and the post-New Order enjoy(ed) the freedom of speech as to voice out their thinking about the problems. Many intellectual figures of the 1950s like Muhammad Yamin, Sutan Sjahrir, and Muhammad Hatta, who had received Western education during the Dutch colonial era, created the various government programmes as to promote to the general masses the elite's concept of being Indonesian. These figures can be categorized as public intellectuals of the time. In the post-1998 period, many academics, who had stood up against Soeharto during the *Reformasi* Movement in the 1990s, also turned to become public figures, mostly in politics. However, the mushrooming space for the educated elite to participate in policy making processes over the past fifteen years have not stimulated the emergence of public intellectuals who played an overarching social role.

What is missing today when compared to the 1950s is an institutional set-up that stimulates a collective engagement of the intellectual elite and the people. In the 1950s, this institutional set-up was not necessarily state-centred, but it included a fundamental structure that was effective enough for “mobilizing” the people to find solutions to the society problems of the time. The institutional set-up served as a collective engagement aiming to promote the elite's role in facilitating and stimulating the people's participation in the dynamics of the society. This particular model of collective engagement was a process that I call “the making of public intel-

lectuality”. It was a collective process of dialogue to transform the public way of thinking upon particular social issues. Today, such an institutional set-up does hardly exist. People of different educational levels do enjoy the freedom of speech, but such a freedom of speech is entitled to them merely on an individual basis. While the individual-based freedom of speech does reflect a democratic value, the voices of unorganized individuals over contemporary problems often fail to engage with the public. “Public intellectuality” of the 1950s hence meant a collective movement; it was a rational way of thinking of the people, which somehow shared contemporary reflection of the educated elite's.

#### **THE ELITE'S PERSPECTIVE OF PEOPLE'S CITIZENSHIP**

The creation of the “mass education” programme in the 1950s stemmed out from the state and nation building project. The project emerged as a direct consequence of the international recognition of the Indonesian independence in December 1949. By the formulation of the state ideology “Pancasila” and the State Constitution in August 1945, the Indonesian leaders and educated elite achieved consensus about what an independent Indonesia should be based on. However, in the early 1950s when the time came to work out on the independence at a practical level, the same elite leaders were concerned about whether the Indonesian people overall would share the same idea about the meaning of being an Indonesian. In other words, while political leaders and educated elite had developed a concept of an independent State (in the Constitution and the State ideology, Pancasila), these elite groups also raised doubts about the people's readiness to achieve the goals of a nation-state. These elite leaders believed that the people were facing a problem of citizenship, the matter of transforming the people's status from a client to a citizen. Their education is used as a strategic way out to the problem. The exploration in this section might sound positivistic in capturing the elite's

idea on what the people should do in the early independent years. However, my intention in this section is to situate the elite's transformative thinking of the 1950s in the context, tone and perspective of the period when they were spread out to the people. This way, the atmosphere of how these intellectuals exploited their rational thinking in order to involve and to get engaged with the public could be reproduced.

Generally speaking, the preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the USRI clearly states that Indonesia was to be developed on the ideological basis of the *Pancasila*, the Five Principles of Statesmanship. As a sovereign state, Indonesia would consist of citizens who shared an individual platform of moral values and living balanced by tight social cohesion. As written in a publication of the Department of Mass Education in 1953, "every Indonesian citizen, as a member of the Nation, should have the balance of inner and outer feelings. Inner feelings include religious life and humanity; outer feelings cover nationality, sovereignty and social prosperity. Indonesian citizens as a whole should live in co-operative collectivism so that they would become a strong Nation" (Department of Mass Education [DME] 1953:4). With citizens embodying these ideal characteristics, Indonesia would enter the international community—"the family of Nations"—in the position of an independent and sovereign member, equal to other fellow members (Department of Information [DI] 1950:6-7).

Even though the idea of Indonesia was crystal clear in the elite's imagination, the Indonesian mass had remained ideologically illiterate, according to Minister of Education and Culture, Muhammad Yamin. In 1953, a government education official stated that most Indonesians knew little about what it should mean to be one Nation and to be citizens of an independent modern State, all because they had lived as different peoples in the Archipelago for centuries (Arsip Muhammad Yamin [AMY] No. 247:1; Ministry of Education, Instruction and Culture (MEIC)

1951:6). Government documents also present reviews of the mental beings of the people in connection to their recent-past collective experience (DI 1950:5-6, 17-24; MEIC 1951:3-6). They point out that the political consciousness of the people had grown by unprecedented leaps and bounds in the first half of the twentieth century (DI 1950:46-7). Ever-growing numbers of Indonesians had begun to realize their inferior position in the colonial society. The Japanese occupation and the war against the Dutch crystallized their desire for freedom from any oppressive ruler. Finally, after a long political journey, Indonesians found they had undergone a transformation "from an oppressed and subjugated people [to] a nation thoroughly conscious of its own power" (MEIC 1951:5-6).

These historical stages had raised and strengthened the people's political consciousness but not their ideological one, as government documents said. Indonesians in general were not fully aware of what they were going to do with the independence for which they had successfully fought (MEIC 1951:6-9). Casting a long shadow was a psychological barrier. Most people relied on belief in fate to explain their living conditions. This fatalistic attitude does perhaps show a degree of religious submission. Nevertheless, for one reason or another most people did not measure up to the imagined figure of the State citizens, who, to be able to compete on an equal footing with other nations, were supposed to be self-reliant, self-motivated and bursting with enthusiasm and energy for progress and achievement. A government document strongly suggests that "both the method and the process of thinking of the masses, a tradition of the colonial days, have to be altered and changed in harmony with the achieved freedom." (DME 1953:11).

When thinking about the most effective way to change the mental being of the people, officials of the Education Departments understood that "all matters that are merely imposed upon [the people], whether it is by the Government or by any

organization, cannot bear fruit unless such things are primarily desired by the people concerned” had been well learned (MEIC 1951:8). The State (namely the government elites’) conception of independence should stimulate the Nation (the masses’) consciousness of their “new” status as State citizens. Transcending the moral values of the State ideology, the people are expected to develop their qualities as individual beings. These would provide the self-motivation and the capacity to improve their lives in co-operation with each other’s. Consequently, the people had the inner motivation to develop themselves in the sense of belonging to the society and the State.

*Unity* and *auto-activity* were crucial characteristics that the elite leaders had imagined of the figure of citizens in the 1950s. “Unity is the guiding spirit in uniting the individual with his community, in harmonizing physical and psychological abilities, in unifying the mind, the feeling and the willpower in performing things,” a government document reads. Auto-activity was self-reliance, “cognizance of own duties”, and self-motivated actions to achieve progress in life effectively and efficiently (DME 1953:7, 11-2). By promoting public intellectuality, the State elites were encouraging the masses to understand the meaning of independence from their (the elites’) point of view. Certainly, independence meant freedom from oppression and from poverty and backwardness, but it also demanded social obligations to create a just, egalitarian and wealthy society on the basis of the collective identity, the *Pancasila*. Through the instrument of *unity* and *auto-activity*, the political literacy—a self-consciousness as people who were oppressed and subjugated by colonial and feudalistic rulers—which the masses had increasingly attained since the 1930s was to be transformed into an ideological literacy—a consciousness as citizens of a sovereign state that shared equal rights and obligations.

This philosophical reasoning undeniably pointed out the critical contribution, which education should make to the

average Indonesian’s awareness of political independence. M. Sadarjoen Siswomartojo, an educational official who chaired the Commission for Investigation on the Society Education and the State in 1953, said that the problem of independence lay first and foremost in education (AMY 247:1)—an education which should be understood in its broadest sense, including both schooling and non-schooling practices (DI 1950:3). Alphabet illiteracy, which the Dutch government had long fought against for the people, was obviously only one of the so many challenges the independent Indonesian government had to face in its mission to spread public intellectuality. In its broadest sense, the aim of education was to promote ‘the literacy in mind’, in the words of Lloyd Wesley Mauldin (1961:271). Siswomartojo claimed that school and non-school education were both equally important. They should be the foundation of the new social structure of Indonesia. ‘New educational foundations and systems are needed to guide people towards the new values and qualities which were in step with the ideal of independence,’ Siswomartojo wrote (AMY 247:1–4). Paring the situation down to the bare essentials, the government ended up with two main strategic policies: mass education and compulsory education.

### **THE MASS EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

Mass education was non-formal in nature and non-schooling in kind. It was designed for all Indonesian men and women, young adults and elderly people alike, in towns and villages, businessmen, peasants, fishermen or other tradesmen. In short, mass education was meant for all Indonesian citizens who, because of age or other reasons, could not follow and had not followed any formal education (Mauldin 1961:270). As the government put it, “the care of the education of adults [is] beyond that provided by the schools” (MEIC 1951:11).

“Mass education” was initially a programme to combat alphabet illiteracy.

In 1946 the Ministry of Education of the Indonesian Republic set up a section exclusively responsible for working on illiteracy issues. In 1947, various committees were established in the residencies. A year later, the government carried out a large-scale literacy programme campaign and also set up General Knowledge Courses. The harvest of these efforts was meagre, partly because of the military mobilization and partly because the government had not involved the people in the initiation of the program. In 1950, when Indonesia achieved political unification, the government began to re-address the programme. It was re-launched with a broader purpose called 'mass education'. This time, the government learned from its mistake and involved the people right from the beginning (MEIC 1951:10). Three ministries—the Ministries of Information, of Religion, and of Education, Instruction and Culture—were responsible for the programme (DI 1950:30). The joint department formed from the three ministries and the budget spent show how seriously the government took the project. It was reported that, in 1950, the budget for the mass education programme reached 50 million Rupiahs; in 1951 Rp 130 million, and in 1952 Rp 160 million (MEIC 1951:47). In comparison, the total income of the Ministry of Education, Instruction and Culture was Rp 58.3 million in 1952 and Rp 53.5 million in 1953 (Arsip Sekretaris Kabinet-Undang-Undang [ASK-U] No. 143). Some of the money for the mass education programme came from the three ministries and some from the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (MEIC 1951:47).

The government established mass education committees in the provinces and the regencies as well as in sub-districts and villages (DI 1950:31). The task of the committees was "to concentrate community leadership in aid of mass education, in accordance with national ideals and with the possibility found in the community itself". In 1953, there were 2,400 committees in sub-districts all over Indonesia (DME 1953:14,127). The central Mass

Education Department in Jakarta consisted of eleven sections, each responsible for different duties. They were the sections of the anti-illiteracy campaign, the courses on general knowledge, public libraries, manuscripts and periodicals, scouting movements, youth organizations, physical culture, women's affairs, teachers' instruction courses for mass educational purposes, general affairs, and publications (MEIC 1951:11).

Mass education was a five-year programme and was projected to last for ten years. Although activities had commenced in many places as early as 1950, the programme was only officially raised to the national level in January 1951. Technical reasons had been the stumbling block. The government target was that by 1961 illiteracy would have been conquered and all Indonesians would be able to read and write. In all sub-districts, there would be at least one public library and most villages would have public reading centres (*Taman Pustaka Rakyat*). It was also expected that active, lively youth organizations, scouting movements, women organizations and physical culture associations would be in place down to the village level. People would practise their new knowledge in co-operative societies (DME 1953:12-3). The 1953 Annual Report of the Mass Education Department shows that, at the end of 1953, there were 71,260 anti-illiteracy courses all over Indonesia with a total of 2,440,343 participants/students and 67,563 instructors/teachers. In 1951 when the programme began, there had been 21,853 courses with a total of 899,963 participants/students and 19,983 instructors/teachers (MEIC 1954: appendix).

In principle, the mass education program was intended to "chang[e] the very mentality of the people," from the disposition of the (colonial) slave to that of self-respecting citizens and moral individuals, who were "aware of their responsibility towards and of their place in the history of the people and the country". The goal was to "broaden and intensify the national consciousness of the State;

Table 1: A five-year Mass Education program, 1950

Year	Program
First year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To plant the meaning and intensify the national consciousness</li><li>• To plant the meaning and intensify consciousness of the State (kesadaran bernegara) based on the Five Principles, the Pancasila</li></ul>
Second year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give instruction in civil rights and duties</li><li>• To give instruction in the Constitution and the principles of democracy and the way to apply these democratic principles</li></ul>
Third year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give guidance to the principles of 'Movements' and 'Party-Politics'</li></ul>
Fourth year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give instruction in the field of economies and to promote the national enterprise in the economic reconstruction</li><li>• To give guidance in the daily life</li></ul>
Fifth year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To give meaning to the connection and relation between the various nations to plant consciousness of the position of Indonesia in the world brotherhood</li><li>• To stimulate progress and fill all the deficiencies in every field</li></ul>

Source: Department of Information, *Rentjana Mass Education*. Jakarta: Department of Information 1950:61-2.

the understanding of the international position of Indonesia; political education for citizens who would cherish democratic principles; and the forces of progress and of the remedying of deficiencies in all fields" (DI 1950:41,44; DME 1953:11). The ideological mission of the mass education programme required an elaborate five-year curriculum (Table 1).

In practice, the programme seemed much less related to theoretical comprehension of the State ideology than to daily issues. Several photographs show mass education activities relating to the daily life of the people; for example, several men, possibly farmers, using mattocks to cultivate a piece of land; a man was lifting a basket out of a fishpond, while some other men looked on during a fishery course; villagers gathered next to a rice-field paying attention to a man, probably an information official; a group of women learning to sew; several other women guiding small children playing an outdoor game; boys in the uniform tidily lining up in rows during a scouting activity programme; some other boys playing ping-pong. There are more pictures showing these non-school activities. The only undertaking which indicated an academic

programme was captured in the photographs of a group of eight adults who were learning to read the alphabet. They were sitting at desks and looked busy writing. In the background, a small blackboard and the Red and White flag (black and white in the photograph) are attached to the wall. Another picture shows several more adults sitting behind their desks. Their attention seems to be focused on someone standing in front of the class: namely the teacher, who is pointing to the characters of the Latin alphabet written on the blackboard. More pictures show women are learning the alphabet (DI 1950:16, 22,26,33; DME 1953:25,76,84,87-9,91-4,182-8).

This photograph-based description of the mass education activities gives an impression that this programme, although ideological in purpose, did not actually amount to indoctrination. It does not seem to be very doctrinal if it is compared with the ways in which Soeharto's New Order elaborated the values of Pancasila and forced them on the people. Only during the first year were the learning materials truly designed to raise awareness of the State ideology. In the other four years, the programmes dealt with the practical issues

of the daily life, such as what democratic principles should mean in everyday social relations, how to improve life skills for economic reconstruction and so on. One important point is that for the five years of the programme, the design of the learning materials involved the direct participation of the 'students' themselves. So the approach was learning by doing. By taking this fact, the mass education programme would have indeed stimulated and encouraged the people's collective spirit to achieve progress. The people were deliberately being encouraged to realize their ideological position. They were not just a mass of people living in a territory, but were citizens of an independent State, a Nation! They came to realize what it meant to be Indonesians and the rights and responsibilities that this entailed.

#### **PEOPLE'S RESPONSE**

Local administrations enthusiastically welcomed the mass education programme, perhaps as the result of the government strategy to involve them from the beginning of the programme. In June 1950, the Association of Teachers for Illiteracy Eradication convened in Malang, East Java. It released a statement asking the government to make education compulsory for all illiterate Indonesians and to make a stint of teaching service compulsory for all educated Indonesians (Arsip Kabinet Perdana Menteri Republik Indonesia Yogya [PMRI-Yogya] No. 40). In August 1953, the Association of Surabaya Muslim Teachers played the same tune when it asked for more government subsidies because their schools, they said, had participated in the anti-illiteracy movement (Arsip Kabinet Presiden [AKP] No. 1126). In exactly the same period, the Inspectorate of Mass Education of Central Sumatra urged the government in Jakarta to draw up a compulsory educational act (AKP 1133). This idea was shared in September 1953 by the Inspectorate of Mass Education of the Regency of Pesisir Selatan and Kerinci in western Sumatra. In its statement, the educational inspectorate of the Pesisir Selatan and Kerinci Regency

also complained about the high price of some sports equipment like rackets for tennis, the nets and the balls for football, volleyball. "Public enthusiasm for sports is widely catching on in Pesisir Selatan and Kerinci. The luxury category of sports equipment makes it hard for us to afford them," the motion reads (AKP 1133). In December 1956, the Transitional Local Parliament of Bandung tabled a motion urging the central government to expand the education in West Java (AKP 1133). In this it was supported by the regency government of Merangin in Central Sumatra. "Education is vital to the welfare of the people, not only in Bandung but also all over Indonesia," the motion sent in January 1957 reads (AKP 1133).

The enthusiasm of local administrations as representative bodies of the people is the most salient indication of the growing self-reliance and of self-motivated actions. Collective spirit and a desire for education worked with a snowball effect. One critical idea in this is that adult people began to realize that illiteracy should be done away with to prepare the way for economic welfare. For adult people themselves, the mass education program also vitally contained what was known as the "after-care unit", which ensured that the people's ability in reading and writing was maintained after they had finished their literacy courses. This effort included the foundation of public libraries in villages, the publication of popular magazines and so on (MEIC 1951:20-1; DME 1953:15). While limited and simple in many ways, the after-care programme was designed to be non-school in kind. The motion cited implicitly identifies the kind of education which the people wanted for their children, certainly not the one that they were receiving. In this step, the emerging public intellectuality began to reveal the greatest impact of all. Not only were the Indonesian masses maturing to be self-reliant, self-confident and collectively engaged, they also wanted their children to be better prepared for their future lives. The masses began to desire an education for their children which, as expressed in the motions

cited, should be enshrined in formal schooling and should be compulsory.

Nevertheless, the mass education programmes had been set in motion. It does not seem wide of the mark to suggest that the atmosphere of learning began to leak a tangible imprint on the daily lives of the people. While adults warmed enthusiastically to non-formal education, children between eight and fourteen years of age—with the full support of their parents—went to school. The aim of the government was to work on the two different sides of education, but to achieve the structural development of the society in the long-term, it could not allow itself to be distracted from improving the quality of schooling education. As Hutasoit put it, “stabilization [of the society] will only be reached when all citizens have been given the opportunity of receiving primary schooling” (Hutasoit 1954:55). The educational expenditure in 1952 and 1953 clearly shows that, along with the compulsory education programme, the training of teachers and the educational facilities and school buildings received a priority in financing.

## **CONCLUSION**

The process of Indonesian state building in the 1950s was stumbled by the social realities of the people. The government elite set up public educational programmes in order to stimulate the awareness of the masses as citizens. Through education, the masses were made to be knowledgeable about the position that they were no longer a crowd of people who lived in scattered islands, they had become citizens. The political unification of Indonesia in 1950 marked the creation of public intellectuality in which education was a core medium for the development of citizenship.

At this point, it is quite right to say that the changing politics of the pre-war and post-war regimes in Indonesia gradually reflected shared aspirations of the people. However, the Indonesian state formation in the 1950s was much a process of transforming the elite’s imagination of

an independent state into the (sub) conscious life of the people. The mass education programme was a strategic instrument by which to “implant” the idea of independent Indonesia into the people’s mental construct as it was imagined by educated elite.

The making of Indonesian citizenship was a prevailing process of power contestation even if the medium for it was naturally cultural (that is, education). Whether or not the citizenship project would work on the corridor of Pancasila as a shared basis depends on the political good-will of policy makers and on the dynamics of power relations at the state levels. Notwithstanding this, Indonesian history of the 1950s shows that such a project of citizenship only saw the light of the day because it involved all components of the society since the very beginning of the project. This suggests that the dissemination of Pancasila as a shared basis of citizenship should be community-based in which a bottom-up approach is applied and the state (apparatus) plays a facilitating rather than a directive role. While the elite leaders of the 1950s posed themselves as public intellectuals, the process of the public intellectuality making was outreaching to the people.

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