

MUHAMMAD ASAD SHAHAB AND THE ROLE OF
THE PRESS DURING INDONESIAN NATIONAL
REVOLUTION, 1945-1949

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to explain the role of the press during Indonesian national revolution 1945-1949. This study also analyzes Muhammad Asad Shahab's historical background, his formative years and his contribution in defending Indonesia's independence which declared on August 17, 1945. In order to explain and analyze these aims, the researcher used the historical and analytical approach. The study finds the importance of journalism in supporting Indonesian struggle against the return of Dutch colonialism. The news of Indonesian independence needed to be widely disseminated to the Indonesian society and abroad. Accordingly, the study suggests that the presence of the press in order to form opinion, spirit and optimism at the time of revolution was very important for these needs. In addition to the fighting spirit and optimism of the local society, the presence of colonial threat and Indonesian struggle to defend its independence needed to be disseminated to other countries so that it could be known, acknowledged and gained supports. Also, based on the traces of the press in Jakarta, the study finds that *Arabian Press Board (APB)*, which was founded by M. Asad Shahab and his colleagues, is the only press that specifically spread the news both nationally and internationally. Moreover, as shown by our research, APB's news about Indonesian struggles that spread abroad, especially to the Middle East, as well as its reports sent to the Arab League secretary-general, had a strong relationship with Egypt's de facto recognition of Indonesia's independence in 1947, followed by some other countries. The study comes to the conclusion that through the press, M. Asad Shahab had contributed to safeguard Indonesian independence.

خلاصة البحث

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى شرح دور الصحافة خلال الثورة الوطنية الإندونيسية 1945-1949. تحلل هذه الدراسة أيضًا الخلفية التاريخية لمحمد أسد شهاب، والفكر الذي أثر عليه ومساهمته في الدفاع عن استقلال إندونيسيا الذي أعلن في 17 أغسطس 1945. ولأجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف وتحليلها استخدم الباحث المنهج التاريخي والتحليلي. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن الاستعمار الثاني الذي قام به الهولنديون كان علامة على أن الاستقلال الذي أعلنته إندونيسيا لم يتم الاعتراف به ولم يكن معروفًا على نطاق واسع. لذلك، يجب نشر خبر الاستقلال على نطاق واسع؛ للمجتمع الإندونيسي والخارج. وعليه، ترى هذه الدراسة أن وجود الصحافة من أجل تكوين الرأي والروح والتفاؤل وقت الثورة كان مهمًا جدًا لهذه الحاجات. ترى الدراسة أيضًا أن جانب روح النضال والتفاؤل لدى المجتمع المحلي، يجب نشر أخبار استقلال إندونيسيا ونضالها في مناطق خارج إندونيسيا حتى يمكن التعرف عليها والاعتراف بها وتلقي التعاطف مع ما يحدث في إندونيسيا. أيضًا، استنادًا إلى آثار الصحافة في جاكرتا، وجدت الدراسة أن Arabian Press Board (APB)، التي أسسها محمد أسد شهاب وأصدقائه، هي الصحافة الوحيدة التي يمكنها تنفيذ الوظائف المذكورة أعلاه حينئذ. علاوة على ذلك، تعرض الدراسة إلى أن أخبار APB حول النضالات الإندونيسية خارج البلاد، وخاصة في الشرق الأوسط، وكذلك التقارير التي يرسله APB بشكل روتيني إلى الأمين العام لجامعة الدول العربية وفقًا لطلبه، لها علاقة قوية مع اعتراف مصر الفعلي عام 1947 باستقلال إندونيسيا اتباعًا باعتراف الدولة الأخرى. وعليه، توصلت الدراسة إلى أن من خلال الصحافة التي أسسها محمد أسد شهاب، ساهم في الحفاظ على الاستقلال. وقام بربط الأخبار الإندونيسية والبلدان الأجنبية في آن واحد، حتى نال التعاطف والدعم والاعتراف. وهكذا، تم ممارسة ضغط دولي على هولندا ثم أدى إلى نقل السيادة الكاملة إلى إندونيسيا في عام 1949.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (History and Civilization)

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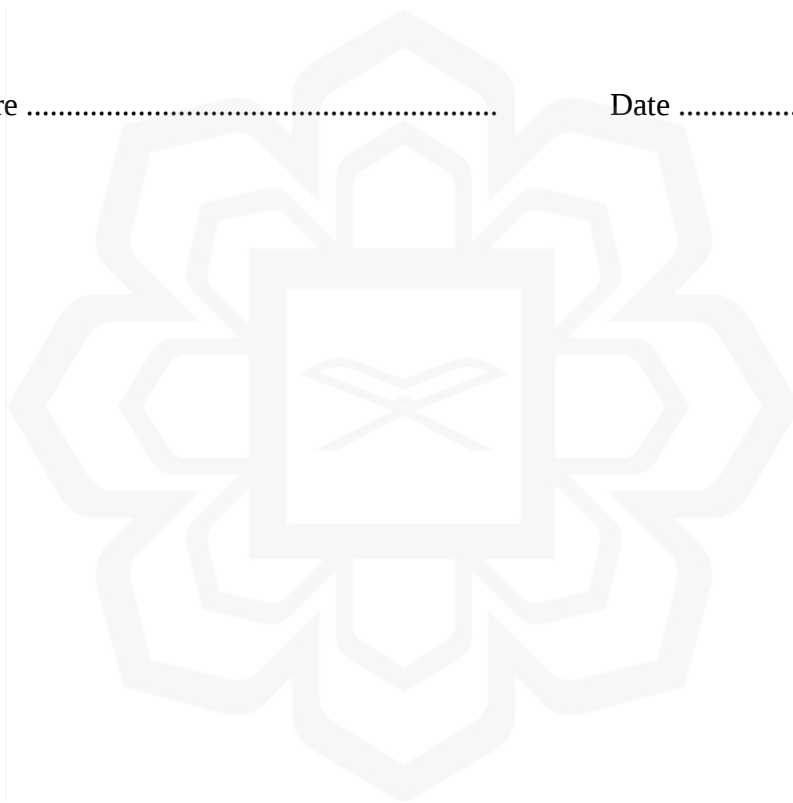
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Firstly, it is my utmost pleasure to dedicate this work to my single parent, beloved mom, Misbaha Matsani, my wife Rosyida Kumala Sari, my family and my friends who granted me the gift of their unwavering belief in my ability to accomplish this goal: thank you for your support and patience.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

On August 10, 1945, Japan was rumoured to capitulate to the allies.¹ The news was secretly and limitedly received in Indonesia. However, after a long process and negotiation between Soekarno (1901-1970)², Mohammad Hatta (1902-1980)³ and the Indonesian youth, the Indonesian independence was declared on 17th of August 1945.

During 1945-1949, Indonesia survived a harsh period (known as Indonesian national revolution period), especially in defending its independence. The Dutch colonized Indonesia in order to weaken it. Thus, they brought a proposal to create a federal government.⁴ During this period, there were three agreements⁵ between the Dutch and Indonesia, two of which were violated by the Dutch through military aggressions, which then led to the third agreement accepted by both sides through the mediation of the United Nation. Before the third agreement, Indonesia's condition was at its lowest point. This was marked by the fall of Jogjakarta as the capital city of Indonesia in 1948 and the establishment of the emergency government called PDRI (Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia) at West of Sumatra at the same year.⁶

¹ George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (New York: Cornell University press, 1952), 101.

² Indonesia's first president.

³ Indonesia's first vice president.

⁴ Audrey R. Kahin, ed, *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: unity from diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 8.

⁵ Linggadjati agreement (1946), Renville agreement (1948), Roem-Royen agreement (1949).

⁶ Muḥammad Asad Shahāb, *Ṣafaḥāt min Tārīkh Indūnīsiyā al-Mu'āṣirah*, 2nd edn (Beirut: Dār Lubnan li al-Nashr wa al-Tibā'ah, 1971), 304.

Facing the most chaotic situation during this period, Indonesia did its best to defend its independence from the Dutch. There were two strategies that Indonesia used to defend its independence: military and non-military means.⁷ For the first, Indonesia set up some military groups, including a military group which were formed by ordinary people as a form of defence for the proclaimed independence.⁸ And for the second, Indonesia started to open diplomatic relationship and gained national and international support through the spread of information or news.⁹ In the end, the strained relationship between the Dutch and Indonesia was heading toward the transfer of sovereignty after the Roem-Royen agreement in May 1949.¹⁰

However, between 1945-1947 Indonesia did not have representatives abroad who could afford diplomacy during the revolution. Therefore, it relied on the Indonesian citizens living abroad for studies or other purposes.¹¹ In the case of diplomacy during the revolution, an Indonesian journalist of Arab descent named Muhammad Asad Shahab (1910-2001) played a diplomatic role by spreading the news of Indonesia's struggle through a news agency named *Arabian Press Board* (APB), published in Indonesian, English and Arabic,¹² which he founded in September 1945 in Jakarta. This news agency used many Indonesian students abroad as correspondents of

⁷ Colin Brown, *A Short History of Indonesia: The Unlikely Nation?* (Allen & Unwin, 2003), 157.

⁸ Ibid., 163-164.

⁹ Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 100.

¹⁰ Some of the agreement contents were as follows: the Dutch agreed to withdraw their troops around Yogyakarta, Indonesia agreed to be satisfied with only one-third of the seats in Indonesia's future federal as the representative assembly, fighting on all fronts was to be stopped, Republican leaders were to be released, and the final discussions about the transfer of sovereignty (which set up in the Round Table Conference in the Hague) were to be held. See, R Mrázek, *Sjahir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia*, No. 14 (Cornell University Press, 2018), 395.

¹¹ Ibid., 20

¹² Solichin Salam, *APB, Arabian Press Board: Sejarah Dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: CV. Kuning Mas, 1986), 19.

that agency. These Indonesian citizens who were abroad played an important role in spreading APB's news.

Aside of both methods of struggle in facing the Dutch, the role of news and press cannot be denied in the struggle of the Indonesians. For instance, once the news of proclamation spread in all regions of Indonesia, it was welcomed by the people.¹³ When republican newspaper and journals sprang up in many places, a whole generation of writers came up, men whose creative skills came to fruition in the revolutionary period, such as Chairil Anwar (1922-1949), Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925-2006), Mochtar Lubis (1922-2004), Bahrum Rangkuti (1919-1977),¹⁴ and also M. Asad Shahab. The news and published articles had surely influenced the thinking of Indonesian people. They came to realize that there was a need to defend Indonesia's independence. Moreover, writings of M. Asad Shahab and his press had a wider range of influence in Indonesia and abroad. His writings helped to attract the international attention to the Indonesian issue and become one of the important bridges of diplomacy between Indonesia and the international world, especially the Middle East. Thus, the media and the press had an important role in defending the independence.

M. Asad Shahab was an Indonesian journalist who had important contribution during the Indonesian revolution.¹⁵ He began his career in journalism after studying law at University of Indonesia (colonial *Ganeeskundige Hogeschool*) after previously completing school at the *Madrasat al-Khairiyyah Aliyah*, Surabaya (1932) and at the *Madrasat Shamail Huda*, Pekalongan (1924). He worked for the local journal named

¹³ Vickers, 161.

¹⁴ M.C Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia: c. 1200*, 3th edn (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 264.

¹⁵ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, "Asad Shahab, Bahasa Arab, dan Kebangsaan Indonesia", *Media Indonesia* (1st December 2018). Accessed September 2, 2019, <https://mediaindonesia.com/read/detail/201359>

Mingguan Tidar between 1936 and 1938. Between 1938 and 1942 he became a correspondent for several newspapers abroad.¹⁶ His career in journalism then led him to the establishment of APB.

APB was the only Indonesian international newspaper agency during the revolution, established sixteen days after Indonesia's independence was proclaimed. Its office was located at Gang Tengah No. 19, Jakarta,¹⁷ and operated for seventeen years (1945-1962). Besides having many journalists and correspondents spread across various regions of Indonesia and abroad, APB also became a special representative and correspondent for various news agencies abroad.¹⁸ However, in accordance with its principles and vision,¹⁹ APB published many newspapers, bulletins and magazines in Indonesian, Arabic and English to reach more groups of people in Indonesia, including children.²⁰ Thus, APB had been intense in shaping the minds of the people who lived in Indonesia during the revolution about what happened in Indonesia and what they were required to do.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As explained above, the year between 1945-1949 was the period of Indonesian defence for independence. Conflicts that occurred between the Dutch and Indonesia were much tinged with negotiations and military forces. Militarily, the Dutch was certainly far

¹⁶ For details of newspaper agencies name, see Mona Abaza, "M. Asad Shahab: A Portrait of an Indonesian Hadrami Who Bridged the Two World", Eric Tagliacozzo, *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement, and the Longue Durée* (2009): 252.

¹⁷ This office was known as *Rumah Pemuda*. Besides being a news agency, this office was also a headquarters for cooperation with Indonesian youth, see Salam, 10.

¹⁸ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁹ There were two main point of the APB's charter: Indonesian nationalism (based on 17 August's proclamation, *Pancasila*, the defense and development of Indonesia nation) and the objectivity of reports, see *ibid.*, 9.

²⁰ Ibid., 19.

superior to Indonesia. But, using guerrilla war, Indonesia was not easily conquered by the Dutch. In this case, the press played an important role in triggering masses' reaction to unite against the Dutch. Through the press, many Indonesians were kept informed and were enlightened on the importance of struggling to defend Indonesia's independence, and finally knew that what the Dutch did in Indonesia was an act of colonialism and very detrimental to the Indonesians. As what Adrian Vickers says in his book, entitled *A History of Modern Indonesia*, that when a poster or news about the situation of Indonesia in the periods of military aggression with the Dutch spread in the entire regions of Indonesia, the masses' reaction to the struggle of Indonesia in defending independence was unstoppable, the spirit of revolution arose and the struggle of committees and militia were set up on most of the islands, particularly Java and Kalimantan.²¹

Moreover, the influence of news and press did not only cause a reaction in the local community in Indonesia, but also international reactions in several countries. In his book *Nasionalisme dan Revolusi di Indonesia*, which was translated by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia, Kahin mentioned that when dr. Adnan Kapau Ghani (1905-1968)²² sent news to the security council of United Nations that the Dutch violated the order that forbids the Dutch from launching any assault against Indonesia, several countries gave their support for Indonesia and criticized the Dutch's violation of the Linggadjati agreement.²³

²¹ Vickers, 97-98.

²² Indonesia's first vice prime minister.

²³ George McTurnan Kahin, *Nasionalisme dan Revolusi di Indonesia* (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1980), 270-271.

Thus, the role of the press was instrumental in mobilizing the support for Indonesian independence. As such, M. Asad Shahab played a vital role through the press he founded (Arabian Press Board). Nevertheless, although there were few writings that mentioned M. Asad Shahab and APB, not many wrote about his role in defending Indonesia's independence through the press.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Some studies have quoted M. Asad Shahab and his movement without highlighting his role in defending Indonesian independence through the press during the revolution, which will be the main focus on this study.

This research uses primary sources that have not been previously used to the best of the author's knowledge. It provides strong evidence that what had been done by M. Asad Shahab in defending Indonesian independence was for real and that *Arabian Press Board* (APB) was the only Indonesian international press during the Indonesian revolution that was headquartered and operated in the Indonesian territory.

Moreover, it shows the evidence on how M. Asad Shahab contributed in defending Indonesian independence through the press and shows the role of the press which was extremely important in defending Indonesia's independence. In terms of diplomacy abroad, M. Asad Shahab and his APB played a significant role in Indonesia, though indirectly, through reports and writings of Indonesia's struggle during revolution.

This study, however, offers the evidences which affirm M. Asad Shahab as one of the important and significant contributors to Indonesia in defending independence during the Indonesian revolution.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to analyse the contribution of M. Asad Shahab in defending Indonesia's independence 1945-1949, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What were the socio-political situation and the role of the press during Indonesian national revolution, 1945-1949?
- 2- What is the historical background of M. Asad Shahab?
- 3- How did M. Asad Shahab contribute to the defence of Indonesia's independence through the press?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to highlight the role of M. Asad Shahab in defending the independence of Indonesia through the press in the period 1945-1949. The objectivities of this research are as follows:

- 1- To explain the socio-political situation and the role of the press during Indonesian national revolution, 1945-1949.
- 2- To analyse M. Asad Shahab's historical background and the thoughts that influenced him.
- 3- To analyse M. Asad Shahab's contribution in defending Indonesia's independence through the press.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are not many books and articles addressing M. Asad Shahab and usually do not provide primary evidence. The role of M. Asad Shahab and APB during Indonesian national revolution, however, still need to be studied thoroughly. The relevant literature is reviewed below.

Solichin Salim's *APB: Sejarah dan Perjuangan*²⁴ covers the history of APB (*Arabian Press Board*) following the date, month and year of the incident. This is actually the earliest book written on this topic. Unfortunately, the discussion of the history of the APB was brief, the content of the discussion only included APB's cooperation with Indonesian and foreign press offices and schedules for sending news abroad. The rest of the book discussed the founder of APB, namely Muhammad Asad Shahab. The book uses later documents and news of appreciation as the evidences.

A.M Shahab's *Sang Penyebar Berita Proklamasi RI: Perjuangan M. Asad Shahab & Arabian Press Board*²⁵ which was the extended book of Solichin Salim's *APB: Sejarah dan Perjuangan*. It came up with the brief view from the author about the press in Indonesia after the independence and the establishment of *Arabian Press Board* as M. Asad Shahab's initiative, continued with M. Asad Shahab's historical background. However, the book focused more on explaining M. Asad Shahab's historical background and APB's. It also shows some important documents and photos that related to M. Asad Shahab and APB as evidences, such as APB's reporter card that was issued by ministry of information in 1946, a letter from Ministry of Information in 1948 that decided to provide monthly financial assistance in 1948 to APB. Though the book has a lot of information and provides some documents and photos as evidences, the researcher found that this book is not inclusive of APB's writings in the newspapers or magazines as strong evidence that APB really existed and played an important role in the Indonesian revolution.

²⁴ Salam.

²⁵ A.M. Shahab, *Sang Penyebar Berita Proklamasi RI: Perjuangan M. Asad Shahab & Arabian Press Board* (Jakarta Selatan: PT. Zaytuna Ufuk Abadi, 2017).

Mona Abaza's "M. Asad Shahab: A Portrait of an Indonesia Hadrami Who Bridged the Two Worlds"²⁶ examined the biography of M. Asad Shahab and thoughts that greatly influenced him through his writings (a novel and two books) and many of his journeys. Besides, Mona also says that M. Asad Shahab was active in journalism and writings. Besides working at news agency in Indonesia, he also worked as a correspondent in several newspapers abroad, such as *al-Mokattam* and *al-Ikhwan* in Cairo, *al-Amal* in Iraq, *Mimbar al-Shāb* in Morocco, *al-'Irfān* in Lebanon, and *al-saqafa* in Argentina. Mona tracked thirty-two books written by M. Asad Shahab in Arabic and many in Indonesian.²⁷ Mona also referred to three books written by M. Asad Shahab to understand his position. These books were *Ṣafahāt min Tārīkh Indūnīsiyā al-Mu'āṣirah* (Pages from Contemporary Indonesian History), *Jawlatun ilā Rubu'i Juzuri Mūrū* (A Journey to the Interior of the Moro Islands), *Min Shamīmil Wāqi'* (From the Innermost Reality: An Indonesian Novel). Unfortunately, Mona did not examine and discuss the press that M. Asad Shahab founded.

George McTurnan Kahin's *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*²⁸ covers Indonesian history from 1945 to 1950. It describes in detail the struggle for independence, and the protest against the return of the colonialists. Moreover, Kahin discussed much on the effort of the Dutch to re-establish its authority and the establishment of the federal states that was proposed by the Dutch to Indonesia to create division and control.²⁹ There are two main focuses of the book: the growth of nationalism and the revolutionary period in Indonesia. Kahin says that during the

²⁶ Abaza.

²⁷ Ibid., 252.

²⁸ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*.

²⁹ Cora Du Bois, "Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia. By George McTurnan Kahin", *The American Historical Review*, Volume 58, Issue 3 (April 1953): 631–633.

revolution, Indonesia used negotiation tactics to defend its independence. As a result, it got United Nation's support and finally gained its right as an officially independent nation.

Besides addressing Indonesian negotiation effort, Kahin also notes that writings during the revolution were used to distribute and transmit the idea and the spirit of struggle to the Indonesian society which influenced a lot of Indonesian's political thinking.³⁰

Audrey R. Kahin's *Regional Dynamics of The Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity*³¹ describes issues of Indonesian revolution 1945-1949 from an Indonesian perspective. Moreover, since scholars began to have access to the military and political records of the Dutch administration for the 1945-1950 period, the writer used these archives to supplement and balance the information.³² It is very useful and reliable source of information because it uses Indonesia's perspective and the archives of the Dutch. However, it does not come down to the issues of the press.

Yong Mun Cheong's *The Indonesian Revolution and the Singapore Connection*³³ provides the additional information about the diplomacy effort that Indonesia did with Singapore. This book focuses on the relationship between Indonesia and Singapore during Indonesian revolution period. The author provides a detailed account of the multi-faceted relationship (diplomatic, commercial and security) between Indonesia and Singapore from 1945 to 1949.³⁴ Thus, Singapore had a secret

³⁰ Ibid., 164.

³¹ Kahin, ed, *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity*.

³² Ibid., x.

³³ Yong Mun Cheong, *The Indonesian Revolution and the Singapore Connection, 1945-1949* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2003).

³⁴ Robin Ramcharan, "The Indonesian Revolution and the Singapore Connection, 1945-1949 by Yong Mun Cheong", *Pacific Affairs*, 79, (2006): 156-157.

operation in Indonesia and was described as an “Indonesia’s front” during that period. Even though the author does not discuss the press during the revolution and only mentions a journalist named Sjahroedin who was chosen to set up the new branch of *Antara* in Singapore,³⁵ the book is relevant to this research as it describes the diplomatic relationship between Indonesia and Singapore during the period.

M. Zein Hassan’s *Diplomasi Revolusi Indonesia di Luar Negeri*³⁶ furnishes information about the diplomacy abroad and how Indonesia conducted international relationship with other countries in the Middle East during the revolution. It also explains the overseas attitude, steps, actions, relationship and struggle that Indonesia did to defend the independence. Thus, this book actually addresses in detail the role of an association called the *Perkumpulan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Indonesian Independence Association), well-known as P.K.I, which was very active in 1945-1946 in the Middle East to gain support for Indonesian independence. Although this book uses a lot of the press as references, it does not mention the *Arabian Press Board*.

Andi Suwirta’s “Pers, Revolusi dan Demokratisasi: Kehidupan dan Pandangan Lima Surat Kabar di Jawa Pada Masa Revolusi Indonesia, 1945-1947”³⁷ gave brief information about the press during Indonesian revolution. This work focuses on five newspapers in Java between 1945 and 1947. It discusses two fundamental things. First, the press as a tool for formulating and articulating a political vision of the country as a manifestation of the values and spirit of independence. Moreover, the article also

³⁵ Cheong, 2.

³⁶ M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi Indonesia di Luar Negeri: Perjuangan Pemuda/Mahasiswa Indonesia di Timur Tengah* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1980).

³⁷ Andi Suwirta, “Pers, Revolusi dan Demokratisasi: Kehidupan dan Pandangan Lima Surat Kabar di Jawa Pada Masa Revolusi Indonesia, 1945-1947”, *HISTORIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah* III, no. 6 (December 2002), <http://sejarah.upi.edu/artikel/dosen/pers-revolusi-dan-demokratisasi-kehidupan-dan-pandangan-lima-surat-kabar-di-jawa-pada-masa-revolusi-indonesia-1945-1947/>

discusses how the press became a medium of transmission between the Indonesian political elites and the people to support the independence. Unfortunately, the discussion stopped just for two years of the revolution period up to 1947, while the revolution period lasted for 4 years (1945-1949). This, of course, makes the series of information about the press during the revolution incomplete. Besides, the *Arabian Press Board (APB)* is not discussed by this article.

Andi Suwirta's "Bertempoer atau Beroending: Tanggapan Pers di Jawa Masa Awal Revolusi Indonesia"³⁸ focuses on three newspapers in Java and has a limited scope of years, between 1945 and 1946. As Andi Suwirta said in his article, the press not only presents news but also provides a view and insight into events during the revolution. Furthermore, the press itself was a manifestation of the surge of government and people after independence was proclaimed. The press was widely established and encouraged as a form of freedom in expressing a position and view during the Indonesia revolution for the benefit of the country in general. Also, various allusions to his opponents (in the form of caricatures), slogans, mottos, or pearls of wisdom were being a medium for the press to arouse enthusiasm and determine the direction of the people's struggle.³⁹ Thus, as discussed in this article, the press played an important role in shaping public opinion during the Indonesian revolution. However, this work does not discuss how the press can support the process of diplomacy with other countries during the revolution period, as the APB did. The discussion of this article was also limited to three newspapers and to the early years of the revolution (1945-1946).

³⁸ Andi Suwirta, "Bertempoer atau Beroending: Tanggapan Pers di Jawa Masa Awal Revolusi Indonesia", *HISTORIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah* V, No. 10 (December 2004): 93-124.

³⁹ Ibid., 94-96.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research Design and Method

This research uses the historical-analytical method. While the historical approach is used to scrutinize the works and the writings of M. Asad Shahab, the analytical approach is used to critically analyse the role of M. Asad Shahab in defending Indonesia's independence during the revolution. An important part of the analytical method is employed to scrutinize many documents and books that deal with the subject.

1.7.2 Data Collection and Analysis

This study depends on an analysis of the academic literature on the primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources entail some of the works written by M. Asad Shahab such as *Ṣafaḥāt min Tārīkh Indūnīsiyā al-Mu'āṣirah*, which is relevant to this research, historical report, newspapers, photos, and official letters of M. Asad Shahab in the National Library of Indonesia and in his family's house. To have more information on the biography of M. Asad Shahab, his activities and travels, also the condition of Indonesia during the revolution, researchers need to extract and analyse it from the secondary sources which can be obtained from books and document.

CHAPTER TWO

INDONESIAN REVOLUTION AND THE ROLE OF THE PRESS 1945-1949

2.1 DUTCH'S AGGRESSION AND INDONESIA'S STRUGGLE IN DEFENDING INDONESIAN INDEPENDENCE

According to Robert Bridson Cribb's Ph.D. dissertation, the root of revolution in Indonesia between the year 1945-1949 was the social injustice caused by a racial distinction in the time of Dutch's occupation before 1942.⁴⁰ Social injustice that Cribb describes as a fact, but not the only thing that drove resistances against the Dutch when they returned to Indonesia in the middle of 1945.

The situation was different when Japan occupied Indonesia between 1942 and 1945, Japan's propaganda known as "Nippon Protector, Leader, and Light of Asia" received an empathy by the Indonesians at the beginning of the occupation. The Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 brought a tremendous change to Indonesia. While preserving the existing administrative structure, the Japanese sought to mobilize Indonesian people to support its interests in the World War II and for that purpose they set up several mass organizations.⁴¹ Moreover, Japan's arrival also ignited the spirit of Indonesians' awakening. Japan increased the pride and hope of Indonesian people as it became an Asian nation that could defeat the Russian empire in sea warfare in Shimonoseki, in 1905 and 1906.⁴² Nevertheless, that does not mean that what Japan had

⁴⁰ Robert Bridson Cribb, "Jakarta in the Time of Revolution 1945-1949" (PhD diss., University of London, 1984), 44-45.

⁴¹ Ibid., 53.

⁴² Dasman Djamaluddin, *Butir-Butir Padi B.M. Diah; Tokoh Sejarah yang Menghayati Zaman* (Jakarta: Pustaka Merdeka, 1992), 61.

done to Indonesia was right. In fact, as an imperialist nation, Japan also intended to expand its empire in Indonesia, as well as the Dutch.⁴³

When the Dutch came to Indonesia after the proclamation, Indonesian people simultaneously resisted against the Dutch between 1945 and 1949 which is known as the revolution period. This is like what Badruzzaman Busyairi (1952-2017) referred to in his book *R.H.O. Djunaidi Pejuang Pengusaha dan Perintis Pers* as the root of revolution in Indonesia against the Dutch's attempts to regain control over Indonesia.⁴⁴ Therefore, the Dutch's desire to recolonize Indonesia would instead lead to strong resistance by Indonesian people.

After the defeat of Japan at the end of the Second World War and Indonesian proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, the Dutch as a winner of the war wanted to recolonize Indonesia and it was supported by the British in the process. The British as the representative of union states designated as SEAC (South East Asia Command) received a message to go to Indonesia to help the Dutch regain control of Indonesia.⁴⁵ The allies then arrived in Indonesia to reclaim it from the Japanese.⁴⁶ According to Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christison (1893-1993), the British had three objectives in Indonesia: to protect and evacuate the allied prisoners of war and other internees, to disarm and repatriate the Japanese, and to maintain law and order.⁴⁷

⁴³ Djamaluddin, 60-61.

⁴⁴ Badruzzaman Busyairi, *R.H.O. Djoenaidi; Pejuang Pengusaha & Perintis Pers* (Bandung: Yayasan R.H.O. Djoenaidi Manonjaya, 1982), 148-149.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁶ Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, *Java in a time of revolution: occupation and resistance, 1944-1946* (Equinox Publishing, 2006), 130.

⁴⁷ This statement broadcasted over SEAC Radio station in Singapore and being a controversial matter because no official transcript was ever released. Ibid., 135.

In the face of increasingly intense "pressure" from the Dutch, one of Indonesia's strategies was to place Jakarta as a city with an essentially passive role.⁴⁸ This strategy was chosen by the nationalists so the Japanese would feel no obligation to intervene to restore law and order with forceful steps, considering that the Japanese still had to maintain the political status-quo in Indonesia.⁴⁹

The differences in views on what was experienced by Indonesia after the proclamation led to debate and to the formation of API (*Angkatan Pemuda Indonesia*, Youth Generation of Indonesia) on 1st September 1945. Formed to organize and coordinate the many other *pemuda* groups, and to seize arms, and offices. API carried out some activities; called for avoiding from Japanese raid, spearheaded the takeover of the railway, tram systems, the telephone exchange, and a steadily larger number of private and public institutions, raised the republican flags and put a sign of "property of the Indonesian Republic" in many places.

Initially, the activities carried out by the republic were non-violent, until finally, the people in Jakarta felt that the central government issued policies that were deemed incompatible with the spirit of the revolution and nationalists. Moreover, many prisoners of war from among the Dutch, Eurasian, Ambonese roamed the streets vigilantly and disregarded Louis Mountbatten's (1900-1979) orders (as Supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia) to remain in their camp. This situation was getting worse when the Dutch knew that Indonesians had a deep hostility against the return of the Dutch. Consequently, a number of irregular armed groups were formed, to protect

⁴⁸ The city was to be a peaceful reflection of the republic's international goodwill and internal self-control, an arena for diplomacy and, eventually, to prevent the return of colonialism and to preserve the existence of the republic. See Cribb, 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 64.