

State Building and Repression in Authoritarian Onset

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Abstract

The paper seeks to explain three episodes of political violence in post-war Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines. It argues that in the tense and pointed post-war competition between state actors and social challengers, a strategic calculus governed relationships among different political authorities, and between different authorities and social forces. The state and its challengers examine the particular currency of power and advance to assess who poses threats, and in what ways, to their various plans for political advance. To validate this argument, the paper examines the social foundations of colonial rule and nationalism, the different modes of transition to independence, and the various engines of upward political mobility after independence.

Three of the more durable postcolonial dictatorships in Southeast Asia share one significant trait: they were led, not by the social or political coalition that achieved independence, but by forces that had been secondary players in that struggle. Suharto, Ne Win, and Ferdinand Marcos all stood at some remove from those who initially held stewardship of independent Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines. Nor were any of these men merely young versions of those in power—in each case, they differed from independence-era presidents both sociologically and in their institutional connections. Suharto and Ne Win were each, at some point, postal clerks, while Marcos was either the legitimate son of a marginal man, or the illegitimate son of shadowy smuggler: inauspicious beginnings, all around. At the same time, at least Suharto and Ne Win in their person (and even Marcos in his social type) had played a role in the independence coalition—and so their political rises came at the expense of some reversals *within that coalition*, fueled by creeping social mobility or institutional growth. Even in the largely socially *immobile* Philippine independence transition—and more so in socially-volatile Burma and Indonesia—these men represent rising political forces that emerged after independence, and pushed aside earlier helmsmen. These new authoritarian regimes, that is, arose in consequence both of power relationships inscribed by colonialism and the transitions to independence, and of later processes of political change and social mobility.

Joel Migdal has written extensively about one dynamic suggested by these observations: that in the particular politics of post-colonial state building, some of the greatest

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dangers to state leaders come from insufficiently subordinate members of the ruling coalition, and a regime that survives devotes significant energy to thwarting the ambitions of nominal allies, and fails of that mission at its own peril [Migdal 1988]. Across Southeast Asia, some of the most prominent anti-state insurgents were originally allied with state leaders against outsiders (one thinks of Communist parties in all three cases) but could not be contained by those alliances. In the heady days of mobilized transformation to independence, boundaries between states and societies may only be clear in retrospect—for sitting around any planning table, the founding fathers of Burma or Indonesia might all have looked, in equal measure, puny and grand: ordinary students and inexperienced soldiers, treading toward power alongside companions who would soon fade back into society, and those who would rise against the state.

In the particularly fluid and precarious period of post-colonial state building, the weakly institutionalized boundaries between state and social forces meant that state leaders, and those that aspired to replace them, operated according to a dual calculus. On the one hand, each must, with strategic clarity, attempt to evaluate their own power relative to that of adversaries and challengers. While in subsequent stages of state construction or consolidation, raw power calculations may give way to stronger legal or civic norms, or to broader, flexible and socially-embedded coalition politics [Stanley 1996], in the early days of wide open rivalry and free-wheeling politics, a more pared down and realist political logic held sway. In the open moments that immediately followed independence, anyone could potentially rule, and one achieved or held state power by thinking in focused, strategic terms about power. Second, where no actor had clearly consolidated national power, these calculations likely existed in motion: adversaries were threatening both in terms of the power they controlled, and in the roles they might play in any of *several* state-building scenarios. It was probably impossible to think about Burma, Indonesia, or the Philippines as anything except works in progress. Within the existing scaffolding of state power, aspiring national leaders, cognizant of their individual strengths and weaknesses, would develop their own plans about how to finish constructing the state, and who threatened that endeavor.

In this paper, I attempt to explain three episodes of political violence in post-war Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines. In each, rising dictators, en route to consolidating power, attacked social challengers. The interpretation I offer assumes that particularly in tense and pointed post-war competition between state actors and social challengers, relationships among different political authorities, and between authorities and social forces, demonstrate strategic calculi. Sociologists and political scientists have often approached the question of state repression and social challenge in purely quantitative terms, arguing either that levels of social resistance influence degrees of repression [O'Donnell 1989; White 1989] or the reverse: that a state's repressive propensities determined levels of social mobilization and unrest [Tilly 1978; Marks 1989; Tarrow 1997]. Others have introduced strategic dimensions into this analysis, arguing that particular forms of protest

elicit special levels of state repression [Davenport 1995]. In what follows, I extend this strategic interpretation by arguing that modes of resistance are not inherently threatening or benign, but are so in relation to the particular character of authorities' power. Actual or aspiring state authorities interpret social threats to specific plans for political control. These strategic interpretations are partly path dependent—because patterns of colonial dominion and nationalist struggle influence power balances and actors' interpretations of one another as formidable or weak. But they are also prospective in a more realist sense: authorities and challengers take stock of their own capacities and those of challengers, to assess who most threatens their political advance, and how.¹⁾ For each case, I examine three factors that influence these calculi: the social foundations of colonial rule and nationalism, transitions to independence, and the various engines of upward political mobility after independence. Together, these considerations help explain the rising dictators' particular lines of attack. Let us begin by reviewing three episodes of state violence.

Three State Attacks

Just over three months after seizing power in March 1962, members of the Burmese military, or *tatmadaw*, arrived at the University of Rangoon's campus, where student protesters gathered to denounce military rule and protest Ne Win's coup. Several uncertain minutes after the soldiers surrounded the building, students shook off their initial apprehension, and some even hurled insults at the soldiers. The troops opened fire. Many students were wounded, killed, or arrested, while others hid within the student union. Hours later, soldiers locked the building, with students still inside, and blew it up. The body count, while never clearly established, likely ran into the hundreds. But it was the destruction of the student union itself that seems most to have shocked Burmese society. Burmese nationalists had erected that student union, under British auspices, after pitched struggle. It figured centrally in the independence struggle, had been a nationalist shrine for over 30 years [Silverstein and Wohl 1964; Lintner 1994].

A different sort of murder began in late October 1965 in Indonesia. There, ABRI (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia) set out to consolidate power after outmaneuvering an attempted coup, most likely planned by junior officers from Central Java. Seven senior ABRI officers died that day, and only General Suharto, then commanding KOSTRAD (Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan

1) In this connection, realism refers to one of the dominant schools of thought in the international relations literature, in which political competition between states is determined by strategic interactions governed by some conception of power balances between states. The classic contemporary formulation of this position is Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations* [1985]. Revised versions of Morgenthau's classic realism include the more structural model that Kenneth Waltz builds in *Theory of International Politics* [1979].

Darat, or Army Strategic Reserve Command) seemed able to turn back the challenge. In this moment, Suharto glimpsed an opportunity to eliminate ABRI's arch-rival, the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia). By the end of October, soldiers led a campaign to murder and arrest Indonesian communists, in which they found willing allies in the rural Islamic *Santri* populations enmeshed in their own animosities with PKI chapters and their supporters [Anderson and McVey 1965; Crouch 1978; Nordholt 1987]. Six months later, between 300,000 and 1,000,000 people were dead, mainly on Java, Bali and Sumatra [Cribb 1990; Fein 1993; Robinson 1995].

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, elected once by popular vote and once by massive fraud, decided in mid-1972 that he was through with constitutional restraints on his power, and declared martial law. Under martial restrictions, Marcos suspended representative institutions that could check that power, and then ruled via unilateral presidential decree. In martial law's early days, he imprisoned his parliamentary rivals and a broad range of activists from campuses, labor unions and the recently organized Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Four months later, according to an Amnesty International report, some 30,000 people had been detained [Amnesty International 1977]. For a time, under state pressure, the urban sites of protest—the Plaza Miranda, Mendiola Bridge, and the Liwasang Bonifacio—were becalmed. In the countryside, invigorated military pursuit dealt heavy setbacks to the armed CPP/NPA (New People's Army) insurgency. However, Marcos was more dependent on US support than either Ne Win or Suharto, and he needed to move carefully against his legal opposition, lest he lose US support. A year after martial law began, many politicians arrested in the initial sweep had been released—although they were steadily replaced by activists picked up as part of a dirty war that would expand over the next 15 years.²⁾

To situate these three attacks in the broader field of state politics, I ask how and where authorities struck, and according to what logic—an exercise that requires us to step away from the details of each case, and discern what (generally) the attacks accomplished. Here are short, preliminary answers to that question: The Burmese military killed students engaged in urban protest, and then devoted its greatest attention to eliminating any visible sign of protest or dissent from their society—while BCP (Burma Communist Party) sympathizers suffered most in 1962, repression eventually eliminated *politics itself*—the possibility of public dissent or pressure [Steinberg 1981]. In Indonesia, the anti-communist pogrom both eliminated the communist organization, and paved the way for broader prescriptions against the *organization* of dissent. The slaughter reached its greatest heights in rural areas where the PKI had strong support—which raises an important strategic

2) David Wurfel [1988: 114–153] demonstrates that from 1972 to 1974, martial law struck most decisively at their power base by closing elite institutions like the press and congress. On this point, see also Thompson's *The Anti-Marcos Struggle* [1995: 57–63], and the Staff Report Prepared for the use of U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations entitled *Korea and the Philippines, November 1972* [1973: 1–4].

issue: why would a powerfully central institution like ABRI focus on provincial struggles rather than initially concentrating on the cities (as the *tatmadaw* did in Burma)? Indeed, in the midst of his struggle with an increasingly weakened Sukarno, Suharto took an instructive gamble: he allowed and encouraged Indonesian students to protest against the president, an inherently risky genie to let out of the bottle in a strategic urban area [Aspinall 1993; Hariyadhie 1997]. Eventually, moreover, the New Order demonstrated itself to be far more tolerant of limited and unorganized protests than one might expect, given its inaugural violence. Marcos's martial law struck at both opposition organizations and protest, but with considerably less vigor or focus than in either Burma or Indonesia. While he often attacked demonstrations, they were never as systematically proscribed as in Burma; while he stepped up counterinsurgency against the communists, those efforts never achieved the energy or ruthlessness that Suharto mustered against the PKI. Marcos, in fact, devoted his greatest early attention to neither urban legal nor rural underground opponents, but to revising the state's legal and institutional structures to legitimate centralization (Suharto, in contrast, waited until the communists were dead to build the New Order's institutional apparatus, and Ne Win only established his socialist constitution in the early 1970s).

Colonial Rule and the Nationalist Social Base

To begin formulating explanations for these very different modes of state attack, we look first at the colonial foundations of the post-colonial balances of power. Colonial rule seldom is able utterly to dominate local society using its own national forces. Rather, different colonial regimes reshape, divide and recruit local forces to support imperial rule, and these efforts produce important consequences down the road [Young 1994]. British colonial rule interacted with Burmese society to produce an anti-colonial elite based in Central Burma's urban areas and only loosely connected to mass society, particularly outside the cities. Early British moves to abolish the monarchy and remove local notables meant that young, educated graduates of British colonial schools would be virtually alone at the apex of Burmese society [Furnivall 1978 [1941]]. Nationalist movements thus had urban support among the young, but shallow roots outside the cities (at least after the Hsaya San Rebellion of the 1930s) and students and lawyers led the secular surge toward independence [Moscotti 1974]. Dutch rule originally placed aristocratic local intermediaries between the colonial state and mass society—but shifting cultivation and administration patterns at the turn of the twentieth century eroded this local buffer, and helped focus resentment across the vast archipelago on Dutch colonial rule, for every town and village had its share of imperial overseers. At that same time, expanding educational opportunities (as both Dutch and Muslims founded new schools) produced more graduates than the colonial administration could absorb—driving both upwardly mobile students and aristo-

crats into unemployment, against the Dutch, and toward mutual sympathies [Kahin 1952: 41–42; Stoler 1985]. Across the islands, therefore, increased mass resentment of colonialism had newly alienated elite allies (from both aristocratic and non-aristocratic origins) who were increasingly united on the colonial question.

Unlike Burma or Indonesia, the Philippines had no pre-existing aristocratic strata before the American period, and national political elites in fact emerged under American auspices, in a Philippine Assembly with significant eventual power, and as beneficiaries in US-triggered economic expansion [Anderson 1998]. The US also trained many upwardly mobile new administrators, but these remained separated and segregated from the landed political elite, which was eager to police the boundaries of their privilege [Aurora and Tapales 1988]. When, as in Indonesia, the colonial administration was fully staffed and new college graduates had trouble finding work (the early 1920s) their resentment focused less on the Americans, and more on local political leaders who served American interest. It is instructive, moreover, that many of the most prominent labor and populist leaders in the 1920s and early 1930s took up activism and recruited mass support after some falling out with political elites for whom they once worked [Sturtevant 1976]. This division would prove extremely important.

Nationalism in the three colonies emerged in different manners atop these different social foundations. The urban and secular nationalist movement in Burma contained many different organizations, but these drew on essentially the same small circle of students, and activists were relatively well known to one another. Exposed to strong international Marxist currents, and unburdened of any need to accommodate established or propertied local allies, the Burmese movement developed strong leftist currents. At the same time, because no national elite existed in the countryside, and British colonial rule itself concentrated in the cities, the nationalist movement grew strongest in ethnically Burman urban areas [Moscotti 1974]. Britain's reliance on minority levies for the colonial militia, moreover, both inhibited nationalist appeal in minority areas and encouraged explicit ethnic overtones in the nationalist movement [Smith 1997]. In Indonesia, the left also gained a strong hold inside the nationalist movement, but was only one of several forces. Alongside the communists, and the *pemuda* (youth) nationalists who often supported them, more cautious *diplomasi* nationalists argued for painstaking negotiated efforts toward independence, while Muslims (especially after conflict with the communists in the 1920s) constituted an increasingly separate nationalist force. These different currents would work together under the specific conditions of the revolution, but remained distinct [Kahin 1952; Anderson 1972]. In the Philippines, it was not merely the divisions between landed elites and upwardly mobile administrators that limited the scope of the nationalist appeal, but the US's willingness to negotiate a transition to independence (and the decided ambivalence of the elite toward that transition). With the question of whether the Philippines would be independent resolved by the 1930s, only the terms of independence, and its social ramifications, remained in question [Corpuz 1989]. Hence while Indonesian

(and to a lesser extent Burmese) forces strove to broaden their nationalist alliances, political pressures in the Philippines worked to narrow and exclude potential nationalists, especially those outside the landed, political elite.

Transitions to Independence

The Pacific War, not surprisingly, worked entirely different influences over the three nationalist movements—and they took very different paths toward independence. Across Southeast Asia, of course, the global contest provided local forces with potential allies against colonial rule—but changes in the nationalist struggles also reflected the state of the struggle at the war's inception. Where independence still hung in the balance, Japanese imperial power transformed the equation; in the Philippines, where independence was largely worked out, the Japanese period worked a less permanent influence over political or social relations [Ikehata 1999]. In Burma, Japanese assistance dismantled the British colonial regime, and helped the young nationalists to form military and political organizations. When the changing tide of war brought the British back to Burma, the nationalists had themselves risen against Japan, and were able to reposition themselves as British allies (albeit with some difficulty) and negotiate an independent future. When that transition seemed in danger of bogging down, the nationalists kept things moving with a combination of mass demonstrations and strikes. The entire process, that is, occurred without any sustained or coordinated nation wide struggle against imperial forces: where the struggle was sustained, it was largely urban; when it was national, it was more short-lived. Accordingly, urban and insular political organizations, rather than national military forces, dominated Burma's eventual transition to independence—which was concluded by a series of negotiations between Burmese nationalist Aung San and Prime Minister Atlee in 1949. Urban political institutions, especially the coalition AFPFL (Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League) dominated the new government.

Things transpired quite differently in Indonesia. Here, too, the Japanese occupation set colonial forces to flight and empowered nationalists. But it did so in ways that (within the more heterogeneous Indonesian nationalist movement) shifted the balance between older *diplomasi* nationalists and the more radical *pemuda* (youth) who (in cooperation with the Japanese) stimulated the formation of locally-based anti-colonial militia [Anderson 1966]. Such groups were nominally under republican political leadership—but had stronger independent and local foundations, and a powerful autonomous dynamic. Dutch colonial rule, as we saw, was both dispersed and direct enough to provide autonomous local foundations for the struggle. Hence Indonesian nationalism during the Pacific War developed the particular apparatus for its subsequent revolutionary struggle (i.e. a national leadership and nationally-mobilized supporters) that was absent in Burma but necessary for nationalists facing returning colonial belligerents [Kahin 1952].

Protracted and bloody fighting between the Dutch and Indonesian forces commenced soon after the war. In that struggle, the Indonesians enjoyed the important advantage of its militias' potential for struggle independent of central directives or support. In fact, because conservative and negotiation-minded politicians filled out the various Republican governments that rose and fell during the revolution, the struggle made its most radical advances when the Dutch captured that leadership, and the national army was on its own. Decentralized, mass-mobilizing warfare hence dominated the revolution's conclusive stages, rather than more exclusive negotiations between nationalist elites and colonial counterparts. Still, and despite the number of militia created during the revolution and the political leadership's weak governing apparatus, Sukarno controlled the political imagery and idioms of the revolution despite the emerging military's superior institutional power [McVey 1971; 1972; Crouch 1978].

Philippine elites divided between pro and anti-Japanese forces during the war, with leftists taking the Comintern's Anti-Fascist line. Early on, pro-American forces fled the archipelago or went into hiding, while others, soon dubbed collaborators, took office in a pro-Japan wartime regime. Like other Communist Parties in similar circumstances, the Philippine Communist Party (PKP) established anti-Japanese guerillas, and in this effort struck up an uneasy collaboration with the Americans and some sections of the elite. This alliance, however, did not survive World War II, for elite interests that divided on the Japan question were united against class threats to their property—and given existing plans for a negotiated independence, elites never required much mass support for nationalist causes. The negotiated transition to independence thus preserved elite prerogatives and excluded mass forces like those in the PKP [Kerkvliet 1986; Constantino and Constantino 1978]. The Party's wartime exploits produced little post-war prestige and the left soon returned to defending small farmers against an expanding capitalist order. Established coalitions among political and economic elites persisted into independence, and landed powers who formed the political class continued to hold rather exclusive power [Anderson 1998]. The upwardly mobile administrative class, more shut out of political office in the Philippines than in either Indonesia or Burma, lived in some tension with landed elites, but remained subordinate in a system in which power was based upon provincial fiefdoms.

Upward Mobility after Independence

By now, we have a pretty good fix on how first generation political leaders in Burma, Indonesia, and the Philippines came to hold power, as well as on the particular sorts of threats that their administrations would face. Aung San in Burma was the most skilled and credible of the young student nationalists. More than any other political force, his AFPFL negotiated independence with the British and would dominate the parliamentary

period. Still, an organizationally and ideologically diverse (but sociologically similar) group of activists led the nationalist movement, and the AFPFL was more a coalition than a consolidated party. Moreover, the movement concentrated in ethnically Burman areas, and wartime inter-ethnic bloodshed made nationalities questions particularly serious almost from the outset. The weakly organized, urban-based regime, faced fractional pressures from the start, but disintegrative pressures began especially to mount after assassins killed Aung San in 1947. The BCP walked out of the AFPFL four months later, and triggered crippling military defections when it launched an anti-state insurgency in 1948 [Lintner 1990]. Karen unit defections in 1948 signaled the start of ethnic insurgencies that continue today [Smith 1997]. Outside the major cities, autonomous organizations, pocket armies and warlords resisted integration into national political parties, and needed to be courted, conquered or mollified, often by side deals with national politicians. Under these conditions, parochial urban elites quite naturally dominated politics, and the military specialized in, and developed skills and capacities suited to counter-insurgency in far-flung regions [Callahan 1996].

Parochial competition between Burmese electoral parties left many pressing concerns unattended, including persistent insurgencies and economic crisis. Prime Minister U Nu even turned power over to a military caretaker government from 1958–60, hoping that the *tatmadaw's* more disciplined work style would ease the national crisis—as indeed it did [Dupuy 1961]. At the end of that period, however, the same established politicians defeated military-backed candidates, and then slid back into self-serving and parochial patterns of rule. U Nu's Union Party (a faction of the fast disintegrating AFPFL) faced all but insurmountable problems. Squabbling broke out between three of its internal groups—nationalist movement veterans, parliamentary politicians and former military personnel. Students and other popular organizations denounced socialists' failings, and strengthened alliances with BCP activists against the government's civil war in the countryside. Mass organizations, even those that had supported the AFPFL, grew impatient, and anti-regime demonstrations escalated during 1961. Rumors also circulated that Shan leaders would exercise their constitutional right to demand independence. By the end of 1961, the “Shan Principles Paper” was making the rounds—reputed to confirm this intent, but more likely representing a minority position. Other rumors (likely started by military men seeking to touch off a new crisis) speculated that an independent Shan state would serve as an imperialist outpost and join SEATO. By early 1962, several things would have been evident to frustrated soldiers. First, civilian rule had neither the capacity nor the will for efficient, non-sectarian national policy making. Second, as long as brokerage and patronage were central to electoral competition, elections would not favor military interests. Finally, the *tatmadaw's* growing institutional capacity surpassed anything that civilian forces could muster.

In a March 2nd coup, soldiers arrested 52 participants a “nationalities conference,” including the president, Premier U Nu, his cabinet, 11 members of parliament, and many

Shan leaders (*sawbaws*). The military did encounter early protest, but responded with relative leniency, and also recruited popular support by promising more directly socialist policies. Many student activists, taken by the military's socialist rhetoric, pledged to support the new Revolutionary Council.³⁾ This support established ties between the military and some urban activists, and left BCP members and sympathizers (along with a few more conservatives regime opponents) alone in the opposition. When campuses reopened under new curfews and dormitory regulations, BCP supporters held more organized demonstrations. In Rangoon, these centered on the Student Union building; in Mandalay activists drifted toward Buddhist monasteries, where monks also mistrusted military rule. In both cities, the BCP's base had so narrowed that the *tatmadaw* could directly move against BCP protesters. The June explosion sent shock waves across the country, drove students and other dissidents into hiding, and irredeemably changed politics [Silverstein and Wohl 1964].

Sukarno's regime in Indonesia also had a weak administrative apparatus, but drew on a society profoundly mobilized by revolutionary struggle. Unlike in Burma, where regional dissatisfactions soon found expression as successionist pressures, regional groups in Indonesia struggled to influence the character of a national revolution they acknowledged with enthusiasm, and so a president who exercised command over an inclusive, revolutionary idiom held substantial power. From early on, however, the military would attempt to assert itself as the revolution's genuine heir, and indeed it possessed the most powerful institution to come out of the fighting. During the 1950s, Sukarno retained power by drawing on popular support for the revolution, and manipulating differences within the military to thwart either Java-base coups (1954) or those from the outer islands (1956) [McVey 1971; 1972]. Still, civilian authorities lacked the strong apparatus that seemed increasingly necessary to govern Indonesia, and by the late 1950s, Sukarno had begun to construct a centralized corporatist regime—Guided Democracy. Of necessity, the military was dangerously empowered in the new structure, and to balance it off, Sukarno also drew in the only other political force with some claim to a national political apparatus: the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) [Lev 1966]. Bitter animosities existed between the PKI and the military—but these assured the organizationally weak president that neither force could over-run the regime.

The communists at first engaged the rivalry with caution, for party leaders were caught between an impoverished, restive constituency and a precarious national environment—but by the early 1960s, after years of measured parliamentary politics, the party had virtually exhausted its ability to mobilize its mass base without challenging elites [McVey 1990]. The PKI's campaign in 1963 to unilaterally implement agrarian reform

3) Interview B-5, conducted in Burma in 1998. For my informants' security, I do identify sources more precisely than by interview tape. I will, of course, entertain requests for access to interview transcripts.

laws through mass land occupations signaled a leftward shift in the Sukarno-PKI alliance and antagonized conservative Muslims landowners who themselves had histories of conflict with both the communists and Sukarno. Land reform also antagonized military leaders with lands acquired under their expanded political role (*dwifungsi*). Still, Sukarno's plan to authorize PKI militias in 1963 may have roused the most ABRI anxiety. This "fifth force" would give the PKI the single capacity that had been ABRI's alone [McVey 1996]. From that announcement until 30 September 1965, relations between ABRI and the PKI deteriorated still further. The communists stepped up protests, and more aggressively challenged property rights and elite privilege. Both communist and military coups were rumored to be imminent, and junior officers that did move on 30 September seemed mainly interested in blocking a conservative power-grab.

In an important sense, Guided Democracy contributed to the bloodshed in 1965. It virtually institutionalized the rivalry between ABRI and the PKI. Moreover, Sukarno dependence on revolutionary idioms and charges that Indonesians defend the revolution against *internal* enemies legitimized witch hunts, and sanctioned the idea of popular, patriotic mass risings. Yet the unanimity with which Indonesians affirmed the revolution meant that its particular stewardship—and hence the definition of its enemies and heroes—was open to contest. Both the September coup attempt and Suharto's reaction could therefore present themselves as preserving the revolution.

The main question, however, is not why either the PKI or the military would move against one another in 1965, but why Suharto's counter-coup degenerated into genocidal slaughter. The brief answer suggested by this chronology is that as political power increasingly rested on a tense rivalry between the only two Indonesian forces with significant organizational capacities, the principle of organization itself—both in ABRI's competition with the PKI, and in its corporatist vision of the future—became the favored vehicle to state power. Political forces with weak organizational resources posed no immediate threat, and did not call forth great or energetic violence. Hence, the military could mobilize local Muslim groups for the slaughter and at first ignore electoral parties, because neither possessed strong organizational resources [Cribb 1990]. The PKI's reputation for organization—far more than its politics—threatened ABRI dominance, and when Suharto thwarted the 30 September coup attempt, he went directly on to eliminate the PKI.

In some ways, both the Indonesian and Burmese militaries faced common dilemmas. Each was their country's most powerful national institutions, at a time when weaker political forces seemed unable to resolve some deep national crises. Both, moreover, had been somehow restrained from a fully political role. In Burma, open electoral politics, and the comparative strengths that Rangoon-based politicians had in that arena, kept the military at bay. While soldiers had skills essential in combating insurgency (and which also proved useful in the 1958 caretaker period) they could not defeat corrupt politicians at the polls. In Indonesia, the President, not the military, had clearest claim to the revolutionary legacy, and roused mass support more than once to thwart a planned military coup. More

important, if organizational capacity seemed, in the mid-1960s, necessary to resolve the national crisis, the Indonesian military could not claim to have cornered the market on organizational skills. Before replacing civilian rule, the Indonesian military would have to undermine the PKI—for the communists could also claim to have organizational competence, and a stronger mass following. Despite these differences, in both Indonesia and Burma, the divide between old and rising political forces fell along institutional divisions, for such institutions were important legacies left by the nationalist struggle: factors governing the rise or fall of one or another institution would be important both in setting up the dictatorship, and in maintaining it against future challenge.

In the Philippines, in contrast, the boundaries between groups that held power and those who did not fell primarily along class lines, and the institutions of rule were essentially shadows cast by the social structure. Landed elites gained power under US colonialism by controlling territory within the electoral system's geographic grid. After the war, however, the Philippines entered an era of reconstruction-driven import substitution. When established elites showed little interest in manufacturing, the initiative passed to new, un-landed entrepreneurs (Chinese traders and money lenders, Filipino management professionals, lawyers and bureaucrats) [Yoshihara 1985]. These developments changed patronage and rent seeking practices, for entrepreneurship required new skills and connections, and access to capital, permits and licenses all fell under government regulation. As licensing became more crucial, political and administrative professionals (as distinct from landed elites) grew powerful [Hawes 1992; Yoshihara 1985; Baldwin 1975]. By the late 1950s, import-substitution entrepreneurs lobbied for policies that openly competed with landed elites [Boyce 1993: 7]. Marcos's main source of power and wealth came not from the economic activity that either policy package would support, but from political skills that allowed him to promise policy coherence in either direction. He was not a member of the landed elites, but rather a professional politician most at home in government offices. His ascent marked a reversal in power relations established under American colonialism, when economic activity required little state support, and bureaucrats were firmly subordinate to politicians. By the early 1960s, national political institution, rather than provincial bases and lands, were becoming primary arenas for amassing power and wealth, and professional politicians were poised to benefit from their control. In Marcos's first term as president (1966–70) he hence began to centralize state power on a scale unseen since Manuel Quezon's Commonwealth presidency (1935–44) [Hawes 1992: 159].

Marcos's main claim to justify Martial Law in 1972 was communist threat, but the allegation was overblown. As we have seen, the mode and timing of Philippine independence meant that the PKP never established itself as an important central political force in the postcolonial arrangement—particularly in comparison to the Indonesian PKI and (early on) the Burmese BCP. By 1968, the Party's old guard was so stagnant that young activists broke away to form the Maoist CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines). The CPP eventually proved far more dynamic than the PKP, but was still small and weak in

1972. Its dramatic expansion occurred *after* Martial Law, and some even suggest that Marcos funded militant demonstrations in 1972 to create the impression of leftist menace. Nevertheless, mass (if not communist) politics had attained new national and urban expressions by then. An expanding student population, many from middle class families started the first protests around 1966, when a crowd denounced a Manila meeting between US President Johnson and Southeast Asian leaders. Other student activity began in established campus organizations, such as University Student Councils and the National Union of Student of the Philippines (NUSP), but youth sections of the new CPP, such as the Kabataan Makabayan (KM or Nationalist Youth) were also exceptionally active. By then, urban laboring communities, tied to the cash economy and deeply affected by currency and commodity price regulations, began to protest as well.

This broader complex of activists was in place for demonstrations in 1971 that began by demanding a fair Constitutional Commission, but soon moved on to more sweeping issues. By February, demonstrations raged on all Manila campuses, especially when six activists were killed outside the Malacañang presidential palace. In March, transportation workers struck, and with students, staged a “People’s March” that ended violently. These groups formed the Philippines’ first *urban* movement to make national and integrated demands. The First Quarter Storm (as the protests were called) radicalized middle and upper class university students [Lacaba 1970], but these new leftists were distinct from others across Southeast Asia. Because the PKP was weak and isolated, students were not recruited into an established party with an insurgent tradition; educated in urban universities and attuned to life in the capital, they sprung from the same modern, centralizing forces that produced Marcos himself. Some came from the new, restless middle class, others from expanding bureaucratic and educational elites. They might never have adopted insurgency had martial law not driving them toward the CPP underground.

Marcos did not declare Martial Law until September 1972, before which, political pressures against his administration continued to mount. The still independent judiciary issued a string of decisions that undercut American standing in the Philippine economy, and weakened Marcos’s position. Three hundred and twenty Constitutional Convention delegates (chosen in a 1970 popular election) clearly favored a parliamentary system in which Marcos and his wife could not hold executive office. The press began printing stories that Marcos bribed or pressured delegates to influence the draft. The Liberal Party defeated Marcos’s Nacionalistas in 1972 elections, making him the first post-war president to lose mid-term elections. Marcos needed to prepare either to leave office, or to circumvent constitutional provisions limiting his rule. The 1971–72 political crisis was hence not a crisis for state institutions, but for their incumbents [Hawes 1992]. By then, however, models of anti-communist authoritarianism were globally prominent, and Marcos learned that he would gain international support by depicting his country as under siege from leftists; he abetted the impression by faking attacks on his officials and on the cities [Staff Report Prepared for the use of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations entitled *Korea*

and the Philippines, November, 1972 Feb. 18, 1973]. An incident for which Marcos seems not to have been responsible, the bombing of the Liberal Party's August 21st, 1971 Meeting de Advance at the Plaza Miranda, reinforced this sense of crisis. Starting in March 1972 small bombs periodically exploded across Manila, and in September, an alleged attempt on Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile's life (in reality a clumsy affair staged by the government) provided the final excuse for Martial Law.

The regime-changing competition that produced the Marcos dictatorship, in contrast with the institutional developments we traced in Burma and Indonesia, involved evolution in the social and economic foundations of power. Marcos did not rise within, or to defend, any single institution, but rather recognized that state institutions could themselves be powerful political resources. Behind this recognition, he stitched together a coalition of entrepreneurs, professional politicians, and technocrats (all with the vision and skills to snatch up investment opportunities and windfall profits) and designed it into a more effective weapon against landed privilege. Marcos, at the van of this social coalition, grew formidable because he accumulated political debts, associations and money useful in transforming any office into a vehicle for this new political style. Once in Malacañang, he centralized and empowered the state, the better to face down an adversarial landed elite, and to attract entrepreneurs and technocrats. Unlike landed families building on their provincial power (for whom virtually any president who favored the right policies was acceptable) Marcos required access to central institutions, and as the first president of this kind, was also the first to refuse to vacate the palace: he declared Martial Law as his second term waned and the constitutional commission seemed ready to bar him from leading the proposed parliament.

State Repression and the New Authoritarian Architecture

The brief histories sketched above describe both the balance of political forces that passed from the colonial period to independence, and the kinds of political developments working their way to the fore in post-colonial society. Given the competition between social forces struggling to control the state, repression served an important purpose. On the one hand, it was a singular weapon—particularly in the hands of incumbents like Marcos, or military leaders like Suharto and Ne Win—to put challengers in their place and advance rising ambitions. In this light, each state attack was a key move in a power struggle that eventually produced a new dictatorship. But the character of violence also set down rules and lessons that future social challengers would follow, and so laid the foundation for the new political regime. In Burma, for example, the relatively small and isolated demonstration of BCP-supporters could hardly have posed a great threat to the Revolutionary Council. Nor, for all his talk of communist conspiracy and danger, had Marcos much to fear from the CPP in 1972. Their acts of violence and repression against these forces, how-

ever, makes sense as a means to establish new political rules *in the process of* striking down adversaries.

Ne Win and Suharto's dictatorship-initiating attacks on society were utterly different. The Tatmadaw Revolutionary Council (RC) displaced a parliamentary regime that wielded cosmopolitan power, elaborated in terms of mass mobilization, backroom deals, compromise and corruption, that the army could not match. Since the *tatmadaw* seemed unable to convert battlefield or nationalist prestige into parliamentary power, it built a new political system, oriented toward a central mission and a hierarchy modeled on the anti-insurgent apparatus. By March 6, the RC enjoyed support from broad activists fronts like the National United Front (minus the communists) and from many of the Front's mass organizations. By July of its first year, the RC established its Burmese Socialist Program Party, and incorporated mass organizations into its local Security and Administration Committees, led by local military commanders. With social support increasingly behind the state's centralizing political activity, the student union murders served to proscribe open dissent, a mode of politics central to the parliamentary system, but beyond the military's grasp. It helped, of course, that the bombing victims isolated sympathizers of a BCP at war with the army. Yet in retrospect, the bombing did not cut into the BCP's strengths as much as it shut down a political arena that the BCP and other politicians—*but not the army!*—could best use. As the RC constructed its new apparatus, it eliminated avenues for critical participation and dissent, and seemed only comfortable with extremely local associations like farming teams and religious centers. Coordination between associations, when required to meet central directives, occurred under strict military oversight. The RC kept Burmese society atomized and weak, and pushed dissent to society's criminal and insurgent margins. Not coincidentally, of course, the army was particularly equipped to overpower a criminalized opposition with no legal standing. Hence in Ne Win's Burma, dissenters could become either secretive, insurgent or compliant—but *any of these alternatives* troubled the regime far less than legal political opponents might have.

In Indonesia, the transition to Guided Democracy weakened electoral parties like the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) long before 1965, and thereby weakened the Jakarta politicians who most resembled Ne Win's main rivals in Burma. Under Guided Democracy, ABRI's real competitors dwindled to only the PKI—even as the military's own resources and capacities expanded. Unlike the *tatmadaw*, however, ABRI was not primarily an insurgency-fighting army, and did not build the kind of battle hardened and streamlined units that made the *tatmadaw* more coherent, self-contained, and confident against insurgents. Rather, ABRI had diverse economic, social and political interests, and jostled with the PKI for standing in national politics [Crouch 1978; Jenkins 1984]. Under Guided Democracy, the two institutions encroached upon the other's area of specialization: ABRI built mass organizations modeled on PKI groups, and the PKI lobbied for an armed contingent under communist leadership. Hence, while rivalry between the army and the parties sprang from mutually exclusive specializations, tension between them reflected their simi-

lar capacities in a winner take all game for political control. After the October 1965 coup, ABRI maintained Guided Democracy's centralized and corporatist character, for it suited the military [Nordholt 1987]. Given the match between ABRI and PKI capabilities, however, either might prosper under such a regime—and ABRI had watched before as a scattered communist party regrouped after an apparently shattering defeat. The PKI murders did not, therefore, address communist behavior—as student murders in Burma prevented protest; they utterly eliminated the PKI itself.

New Order Indonesia, founded in the midst of those murders, was therefore a different kind of dictatorship than that which rose as Socialist Burma. In contrast to the RC's aloof and insular rule, ABRI established extensive corporatist structures throughout Indonesia, and concentrated on penetrating society and drawing it into these structures: domesticating, rather than eliminating modes of political expression [Suryadinata 1989; Dhakidae 1991]. Moreover, with the PKI destroyed, only the state had the capacity to pull together and direct corporatist associations, and for as long as only official associations could function, ABRI would rest on firm foundations. State security and repressive policy seized upon this monopoly from the first. The committees and working groups of Sukarno's National Committee remained central features of the New Order—but were more consolidated and dependent on ABRI than previously. More important, once the PKI was gone, state policy assiduously blocked the organization of non-state political groups, and brought existing groups into state-led associations. Parties and labor unions soon found themselves jumbled together in large, inefficient and heavily surveiled organizations. Indeed, organizational prohibitions, rather than restrictions on dissent per se, represented the very core of the New Order repression [see Tanter 1991].

Philippine Martial Law did not establish a new military regime, but consolidated an incumbent, and so its 1972 crackdown required less violence than either the Burmese or Indonesian coups. But the logic of Marcos's repression also differed from that employed in the other two cases, and this really is the key. Marcos controlled newly centralized institutions, and was so empowered relative to political rivals that he needed neither to ban politics nor to eliminate competitors. Rather, he needed broader access to state institutions. Hence, while he used the newly centralized security forces initially to curtail representative democracy with a series of well coordinated raids (logistically impossible under earlier, decentralized military deployment) an embryonic political opposition was in place by the mid-1970s, and real opposition movements and parties had emerged by 1978. Marcos also enjoyed a new kind of US support, keyed to a cold-war allegiance that required him to juxtapose martial law with leftist subversion, but also eventually to somewhat soften authoritarianism. Despite the florid language of communist emergency, periodically sauced with the prospect of rightist conspiracy, the regime initially moved lethargically against its adversaries. Armed with new institutional resources, the president did not need to destroy dissidents, but rather to secure an environment of emergency in which those institutions could operate unfettered. As David Wurfel notes, the crackdown scat-

tered, rather than destroyed, Marcos's enemies [Wurfel 1988]. With no recourse to due process, rivals like the Lopez and Aquino clans had little leverage against the new state. But if they were initially impotent against the New Society, they nonetheless constituted an elite, and fuming, opposition from the dictatorship's inception. As Marcos's constitutional authoritarianism emerged, these opponents would adapt, and eventually prosper [Thompson 1995].

Conclusions

Comparison between the Philippines, Burma and Indonesia suggests that the character of state attacks depended less on leader's capacities or animosities, and more on his vulnerabilities to rivals in the specific context of state-building activity—and especially changes initiated at the authoritarian onset. Ne Win's violence eliminated open protest that underlay the political power of parliamentary factions. Perhaps, like Suharto, he also wished to exterminate the communist party, but needed instead to focus on gaining control over low-land Burma to eliminate the vestiges of parliamentary power in the political center. The 1962 student union murders drove dissent underground and into rural arenas the military could more comfortably engage. In contrast, Suharto's fear of the PKI *organization* lay behind the 1965–66 massacre. ABRI did not need to secure strategic territory, as had Ne Win, and instead hunted down the PKI in its provincial bases. Suharto attempted neither to push back nor reform the PKI, and one cannot imagine him conducting peace talks with communists as did Ne Win in 1964: the PKI's very existence threatened the idea of an ABRI-dominated New Order; Ne Win's socialist regime, in contrast, could accommodate an insurgent BCP far more easily than open protest. Marcos had less to fear from any rival social force than either Ne Win or Suharto. He mainly faced legal obstacles protected by parliamentarians. His moves against both the left and the parliamentary opposition produced space to redraft Philippine law to continue the centralization of personal patrimonial power. Indeed, Marcos probably felt most vulnerable to international critics of his regime, and so concentrated on constructing a political order that he could defend internationally that his opponents were soon able to regroup. The fact that only he had by then mastered the new institutions suddenly so important in Philippine politics probably also led him to under-estimate social threats.

Hence these attacks form a peculiar bridge between an old and an emerging political order. Either by directly striking at its strongest rivals—as ABRI struck at the PKI—or by undermining the base of a rival's power—as the Burmese RC's prohibition of protest undermined party power—state crackdowns allowed new dictators to shake themselves free of the old system. But crackdowns also established rules of engagement for future political dissent, and claim makers in Socialist Burma, New Order Indonesia, or New Society Philippines could look to state crackdowns for learn how the central apparatus

would respond to opposition. From 1962, Burmese protesters more or less understood that demonstrations courted bloodshed that (even) insurgency and underground work could more easily avoid. Open mobilization against Ne Win consequently required an extraordinary impetus that made participants look beyond these expectations—and even during protests, few could expect to encounter a state that was receptive to some negotiated or reforming resolution to the struggle. New Order Indonesia proscribed political organization, but allowed demonstrations and protest. The state's hold on power rested on its organizational monopolies, but *because* these measures defanged the opposition, the New Order could permit peaceful demonstrations that Ne Win would not. In the Philippines, both elite parliamentary opponents and radical organized and underground groups survived into martial law. Marcos's attention to the ruling apparatus gave each the chance to adapt to the new terrain. Marcos certainly assumed that a more centralized state could withstand (and perhaps even win over) the opposition. But these new rules, including the bankrupt constitution, also provided resources for an opposition that proved flexible and resilient—not least because both its parliamentary and underground modes survived 1972.

Finally, the attacks underscore several issues of importance to those more generally concerned about state politics and repression. The postcolonial milieu, we are reminded, represents a particular moment when colonial models of political communities remained strong, even as the European or American resources that supported colonialism vanished. The independent state's political crisis occurred while the ramparts of national leadership remained low and easily breached. Perhaps the most singular feature of postcolonial political authority remains its understated differentiation from social power, and the ability of social groups, or institutions within the state, to pose real, and for incumbents, frightening challenges to state power.

In this context—not so much the absence of democracy but the under-institutionalization of state rule—repression served a strategic purpose. It was a way to set aside social challenges and defeat adversaries, but also to rewrite the rules of political engagement. Especially where political forces wanted fundamentally to revise political arrangements, they resorted to almost unimaginable levels of violence against challengers. Yet as I have tried to stress in this work, it is not the *quantity* of repression that should capture our attention as we review the historical record, but rather its *quality*. Asking, as we have so often asked, about the conditions influencing whether great violence or tolerance will occur misses the strategic lesson that these histories would teach: that violence often sets out to accomplish specific aims, and those who want to understand it should attempt to discern its logic and objectives.

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