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Leiden  
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**Lijpbart malgré: the Politics of Accomodation in the Indonesian Question**  
Bank, J.

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**Lijphart *malgré lui*;**

The politics of accommodation in the 'Indonesian Question'\*

J. Bank

On the 17th of August 1945 – just two days after the Japanese capitulation in the Pacific and some weeks before the arrival of the allied forces on Java – two well-known Indonesian nationalists, Soekarno and Hatta, proclaimed in Djakarta the independence of the 'Republik Indonesia'. This message proved an unwelcome surprise for The Netherlands, the colonial power in the area. The Dutch political elite had in fact prepared itself during the German occupation of Holland (1940-1945) for a new relationship with the Netherlands-Indies in the form of a Commonwealth but had not anticipated Indonesian independence. Indeed, it was some four years before the Dutch finally reconciled themselves to Indonesian nationalism. Four times between 1945 and 1949 – at the 'Hoge Veluwe', in Linggadjadi, on the American troop-ship 'Renville', and in Batavia (the colonial name of Djakarta) and Djokjakarta – negotiations were conducted while Dutch armed forces also undertook two military campaigns against the Republic. Then, on the 27th December 1949, the sovereignty of the 'Republik Indonesia Serikat', the United States of Indonesia, was finally recognized.

In the present Republic of Indonesia the birth of the state is commemorated annually in terms of a national revolution. In Dutch historiography, however, the struggle for Indonesian independence is generally known as the 'Indonesian Question'. The reason to concentrate on that subject in this special issue and, in particular, on Lijphart's theory of 'consociationalism' can be related to its importance in the search for the *Politics of Accommodation* in Dutch modern history. Historical experience in the processes of decolonization actually shows us that the struggle for independence can provoke severe repercussions such as the collapse of the regime at the heart of colonialism. For instance, a direct connection can be discovered between

\* This paper forms part of the author's dissertation on *Katholieken en de Indonesische Revolutie* ('Catholics and the Indonesian Revolution' which contains a brief summary in English) (Baarn 1983). For an extensive survey of archives and relevant literature the reader is referred to that publication.

the Algerian war and the downfall of the Fourth Republic in France as well as between the exhausting guerilla warfare of the liberation-movements in the Portuguese colonies in Africa and the flower-revolution of certain officers and conscripts in Portugal in 1974. The Indonesian national revolution in 1945 appeared to generate political conflicts in The Netherlands of a range not too far removed from the limits of civil war.

If the argument of stability in the consociationalist democracy of The Netherlands between 1917 and 1967 is to be put to the test, then the decolonization of Indonesia should be able to produce evidence of its validity, because it was one of the most dramatic 'questions' in Dutch history. In other words: in an empirical study on consociationalism the phenomenon of the Dutch reaction to the Indonesian revolution can not possibly be neglected. The political scientist Lijphart, originator of the theory (and coiner of the term), has notably put aside the Dutch-Indonesian conflict as an argument in favour of his thesis. In the second revised edition of his book on *The Politics of Accommodation* indeed he pointed out, that all major political problems facing the Dutch during the past century have been resolved peacefully and constitutionally. But he did add to that conclusion the restriction that 'the only big blot on their record' proved to be the failure to withdraw from the colonial empire without bloodshed and severe damage to their national interest; 'It also produced serious strains in Dutch domestic politics similar in nature but to an even greater extent than the political tensions in the United States over the Vietnam issue. The advantage which a small democracy may derive from its relative noninvolvement in international questions should not be underestimated, therefore'.<sup>1</sup>

Lijphart excludes in an implicit manner these political tensions from his argumentation on political stability in a socially and ideologically fragmented society such as The Netherlands. But in doing so he is missing out on an important piece of historical evidence. For the Dutch experience in the process of decolonization should be subjected to a thorough investigation precisely because of the serious strains it produced in domestic politics. Lijphart was really not at liberty to neglect the case, nor did he have good reason to do so. Closer research could have served to reinforce his argument.

In subsequent paragraphs I shall discuss the second of Lijphart's 'neglects': namely the historical experience as a piece of evidence in favour of the defender. I shall direct the attention of the reader to the Dutch side of the process of decolonization. The history of the Indonesian revolution, which should and could be written in terms of an autonomous development, is to be left out of consideration. It should be added that my

argument is confined to the period between 1945 and 1949; which were the years of the struggle for Indonesian independence. Lijphart himself has analysed 'one case of moribund colonialism' in his study on *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea*, which dealt with the dispute about the sovereignty of West New Guinea, the most eastern island of the Indonesian Archipel, that lasted until 1962. From the sub-title one can deduce that this conflict was a consequence of the earlier decolonization of Indonesia, which had had such a traumatic impact on Dutch consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

### Consensus interrupted

The proclamation of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, had been formulated under patronage of the Japanese occupying forces. As the process of decolonization in Southeast-Asia had been accelerated under the impact of the Second World War, so had the war fundamentally affected the attitude of the Dutch towards Indonesia. Under the German occupation, the Netherlands were completely isolated from developments in Asia. That applied equally to the Dutch government in its London exile which could only watch at a distance when the Netherlands-Indies were lost in 1942. When it became clear that a liberation of the Asian colony could only be realised through an alliance dominated by the United States, the Dutch government commenced to take full account of the anticolonialist traditions in the New World. On December 6, 1942, Queen Wilhelmina outlined a tentative sketch of the new relationship with Indonesia in a radio-broadcast, which was not only transmitted to Dutch listeners in the occupied territories but which was also intended to be heard by political audiences in Washington and New York.

On the one hand, the Queen declared herself convinced that, as soon as the war was over, it would be possible to reconstruct the Kingdom 'on the solid foundation of complete partnership, which will mean the consummation of all that has been developed in the past'. On the other hand she emphasized 'that no political unity nor national cohesion can continue to exist which is not supported by the voluntary acceptance and the faith of the great majority of the citizenry'.<sup>3</sup> Those words contained the implicit recognition of an Indonesian right to secession. The ambiguity of the royal discourse had been adopted by the leadership of the Resistance movement. There it became the subject of discussions in its Indonesian committee; the compromise formula bore the signatures of its Communist, Socialist and Christian-conservative members as well as the Indonesian observer Se-

tiadjit. It resembles an agreement born out of summit diplomacy and secrecy (which are rules number three and six of Lijphart's 'Rules of the Game' in the 'Politics of Accommodation'), except that the conditions of a courageous and persecuted Resistance do not really permit such a comparison.<sup>4</sup>

This statement, formulated in the winter of 1944-'45 with the intention of motivating volunteers for an expeditionary force to liberate the Indies, can be regarded as firm evidence of consensus in the country on the subject of a new relationship with the Overseas Territories. That proved to be no bone of contention at all during the formation of the first post-war government which in June 1945 received a mandate for reconstruction and renovation from the hands of the Queen.

This consensus was rudely interrupted when word reached The Netherlands that Indonesian nationalists had proclaimed their independence. Because they had been almost entirely ignorant of the growing momentum of the nationalist movement in Japanese occupied Indonesia, people reacted at first with disbelief to the announcement of a new state and subsequently this was followed by a severe shock in Holland. When it became evident that the young Republic – proclaimed under Japanese patronage but recognized de facto by the British ally – could make it mandatory for Indonesian people to express their loyalty then the challenge facing the Dutch provoked even more disagreement and conflict. Especially the lack of willingness on the part of the British to cooperate with the Dutch in the early phase of the Indonesian crisis was deeply resented in The Netherlands.

The serious strains in Dutch domestic politics can be dated back to the winter of 1945-1946. They came to a dramatic culmination following the failure of the first Dutch-Indonesian round of talks, which had been brought about through the intermediary of British diplomacy and which took the form of a conference inside the hunting-lodge at the 'Hoge Veluwe' in April 1946. A compromise proposal had been placed on the table which was formulated during talks in Batavia between representatives of the Republican government and the Netherlands-Indies administration. It bore some resemblance to the French state-reforms proposed for Indochina. The Dutch government appeared powerless to grant serious concessions primarily because of factors related to domestic politics: for example there was fierce opposition both from inside and outside Parliament (the so-called 'Week of Shame') and also there was the perspective of the first post-war elections for Parliament looming within one month of the negotiations. This impotence was the expression of an awareness that the Dutch delegation did not conform to the norm of proportional repre-

sentation which normally could be entrusted to handle decisions as onerous as the constitution of the Kingdom. Indeed, nearly all the members on the frontbench of the delegation belonged to the Dutch Labour Party.<sup>5</sup>

### Segmentation confirmed

The parliamentary elections of May 1946 have been interpreted generally as a confirmation of the existence of religious and ideological cleavages and as a failure of attempts to move fixed positions on the prewar electoral chess board. The Labour Party sought to break through the barriers separating the secular bloc from the Catholic and Calvinist blocs but it failed to make significant inroads into traditional religious voting strength. One should however be aware of the fact that the Communist Party had 'committed' the greatest break through with a score of ten percent of the votes. In effect, those elections registered the constancy of segmentation in Dutch society. With reference to our investigation they can be considered as a starting point in the resuscitation of traditional decision-making or, to put it another way, of the politics of accommodation in the 'Indonesian Question'.

The new cabinet which resulted from the elections was a coalition government of Catholics (the largest party in Parliament) and Social-Democrats under the presidency of a Catholic prime minister, Louis Beel. The British, alternately pressurised the Dutch or talked to them like a 'Dutch uncle', managed to persuade them to reenter negotiations with the Indonesian nationalists. A political delegation left The Hague for Batavia with the traditional title of Commission General. The three members represented the Labour Party (Willem Schermerhorn), the Catholic People's Party (Max van Poll) and the Council of Indian Employers (Feike de Boer). That representation proved to be a typical Dutch solution embodying proportionality. The Commission General had been instructed to supervise the autonomously operating colonial administration in Batavia or, in effect, to 'Dutchify' Indian politics.

In practice the reverse occurred. At a considerable distance from The Hague and under the guidance of the Lieutenant Governor General, Huub van Mook, the Commission General reached agreement with representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in the Javanese mountain resort Linggadjati. The Dutch government could not react differently other than to accept this internationally applauded arrangement although it laid down its own interpretation in a carefully Explanation of the Commission General and two Statements of the responsible minister for Overseas Territories.

Moreover, the Cabinet enlarged the Commission General with an economist of liberal convictions and a Calvinist jurist, who both of them raised no doubts upon their opposition to the Linggadjati Agreement. The experiment of proportional representation had failed, and this was largely because of internal dissensions within the Dutch delegation.

The diplomatic agreement between The Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia proved to be short-lived. During the night of the 20th of July, 1947, Dutch forces crossed the lines of demarcation around their Javanese and Sumatran towns and marched into Republican territory in a so-called 'police action'. International indignation compelled them after several weeks (when the military aims of the campaign had been attained) to agree to a truce through the intermediary of the Security Council. The succeeding negotiations on the Dutch side were conducted by a delegation of professional diplomats and functionaries. The Dutch government nevertheless proceeded to assemble the leaders of the domestic majority and opposition parties in a special and secret Committee of Nine Men. Only the leader of the Communist Party was excluded. The members made it their task to watch over the progress of diplomatic negotiations and to approve the instructions to the Dutch delegation. They interfered considerably in matters and members of the Committee even travelled twice to Indonesia to oversee the talks and movements of the responsible Cabinet ministers. The separation between the executive and legislative branches was frequently disregarded. It proved to be a perfect example of the pattern in which the leaders of the religious-ideological blocs have the duty to make political decisions and to work out compromises.

This supervision – according to the constitutional jurist Frans Duynstee it formed a sort of 'parliamentary board of trustees' – set narrow bounds to the room for manoeuvre of the coalition government. The precise regulations of a new Constitution had similar effects. The 'Committee of Nine Men' owed its convocation precisely to the necessity of amending the law on the occasion of a new relationship with Indonesia. A majority of its members exercised the greatest possible care in order to get precise formulae embedded in the Constitution. These unilateral constructions, and descriptions of the principles of the new Commonwealth structure, had indeed to be acceptable in Parliament in The Hague by two-third of its members before they could be carried into law. In this procedure the opposition parties had the opportunity to demand a voice in governmental decision-making. In 1948, when new elections had produced nearly the same political proportions in Parliament, the constitutional majority became the coalition-majority.

It should be regarded as characteristic for the functioning of summit

diplomacy in the politics of accommodation that a committee of top leaders assembled on the base of proportionality should be able to fix the new relationship with Indonesia before they were able to come to terms on that theme with their Republican counterparts. Independence to Indonesia could only be granted within the frame-work of the Dutch constitution. Lijphart himself has pointed out that the Dutch commitment to the rule of law 'has been a stabilizing force in Dutch domestic politics' but that it also rendered the decolonization process more difficult.<sup>6</sup> Legalism may have seriously affected the ability of the government in The Hague to formulate successful policies towards the Indonesian crisis but other factors should not be neglected either. The broad participation of religious and political leaders in the process of decision-making produced a certain political security against the fierce opposition from inside and outside Parliament; an opposition which gained momentum by threatening sometimes even to overthrow the regime itself. The resistance outside the Estates General acquired form and substance in the 'National Committee for the Preservation of the Unity of the Realm'. Its chairman was Pieter Sjoerd Gerbrandy, who had presided over the Cabinet in exile in London and who in 1945 had been given a hero's welcome in newly liberated Holland. Yet only two years later his successors actually prohibited him from addressing the nation in a radio broadcast. He in turn demanded the impeachment of some Cabinet ministers for constitutional treason. The proportionally composed civil government survived his agitation in the same manner as it survived the public opposition of military commanders when it preferred diplomatic talks on the eve of the so called 'police action' and when it tried to stop further military engagements.

### Foreign contribution

The picture of the proceedings of Dutch politicians should not be drawn too favorably. Their armed forces were involved in a bloodstained guerilla-war against Indonesian nationalists which they had little or no chance of winning, since their government yielded to persuasion and pressure on the part of the Security Council and, especially, of the United States. An American arms-embargo and a threat to suspend the Marshall Plan aid were necessary to wrest from the Dutch the admission that the Republic of Indonesia was the legitimate expression of the internationally recognized right to selfdetermination in the eyes of the world and, especially in Washington, also a reliable counter-force against the emerging communism in Asia. The Dutch felt not only that their motives were misunder-

stood by the world but also that the facts of the Indonesian crisis were completely misinterpreted. American pressure, however, was strong enough to make the Dutch government bend; yet it was not quite strong enough to break its position. The State Department attached great importance to the stability of the Dutch political system in the light of the Cold War; dependable West-European allies were much sought after.<sup>7</sup>

That concern can be seen as a foreign contribution to Lijphart's thesis. It became reality in American support for the Dutch claim to exclude West New Guinea from the recognition of Indonesian independence in 1949. This – temporary – exclusion was an important strategic weapon in the efforts of the coalition government to obtain the constitutionally required two-thirds majorities in both Chambers of the Estates General.

### Arguments pro Lijphart

What lessons can be learnt from the confrontation of the historical experience in the 'Indonesian Question' with Lijphart's thesis? First of all the significance of Dutch nationalism must be emphasized as the most important factor of consensus among the diverse and mutually isolated blocs. Lijphart correctly stated that the strength of this nationalism must not be exaggerated but its function should be extended, in my opinion, in a normative sense.

In the historical aftermath of war and liberation the Social Democrats and the Catholics took the lead in a coalition-program for societal renewal the blueprints of which had been thought out and discussed during the Thirties and also during the German occupation. Facing the Calvinist blocs they represented the mood of change away from the social and economic policy of the pre-war society although the Catholic party had taken part in the governments of the Thirties. For them, who as relatively 'new minorities' in Dutch history had reached their highest level of power and influence just after the Second World War, the Indonesian struggle for independence represented a colonial heritage which they could afford to discard without difficulty. Both had played no part in the expansion overseas during the 'Golden Age' of the Dutch Republic. In that respect the Catholic and Social-Democratic parties were confronting the Liberal and Calvinist counterparts, who had been the dominant forces in prewar democracy and were the heirs to the 17th century Republic.

The burden of the past proved to be heavier for the 'newcomers' than could be expected. The Dutch Social Democrats and Catholics behaved themselves, each in his own way, as nationalist but in a new sense. Their

concepts of a new unity of the Realm, of enduring bonds with Indonesia, were marked by the consciousness of a new mandate for The Netherlands. In their view the Realm would exchange its domination for cooperation in principle and guidance based on expertise. It sounded almost like a neo-ethical policy or a modern transformation of the 'White Man's Burden'.

With reference to the Catholic People's Party the view can be stated that it did not want to be outdone in patriotism. Its leaders tried to pursue a middle course by screening themselves in two directions. In 1946 the party made the choice for a coalition with Labour and for a programme of change (party after the example of the British Labour Party). In that choice was included a 'liquidation of colonial relations', at the risk of secession of members from the party's right wing. On the other hand this coalition could not take the liberty, in the eyes of the party leadership, of frittering away the Indonesian heritage. Therefore the Catholics were particularly resolute in favour of a new mandate for The Netherlands in relation to an autonomous Indonesia.

A similar conclusion can be drawn with regard to the Social Democrats who exerted themselves in the aftermath of the Second World War to eliminate the memories of the revolution they tried to provoke at the end of the First World War, in November 1918. When the exiled government in London deliberated on the concept of the Queen's discourse on Indonesia in 1942, the two Socialist ministers rejected the possibility of implementing the Indonesian right to self-determination, arguing that the colony continued to depend on Dutch guidance.<sup>8</sup> When the war was over, Willem Drees, the most powerful leader of the Labour Party, stated that his country had to carry out an administrative mission in Indonesia in order to attain a reasonable state of affairs and a better protection of the Indonesian and European population but also to negotiate with the Indonesian elite for a new relationship.<sup>9</sup> He, a reformist and also a leading member of the Resistance movement, abhorred the revolution of the Indonesian 'pemudas' (the 'new generation') and the initiative of Soekarno who had collaborated with the Japanese occupying forces. The view of Willem Drees was soon to be the dominant conception in the Labour Party; the more so as in 1948 as prime minister he could count on the loyalty of the party establishment.

A second argument in support of Lijphart's thesis can be found in his concept of the rules that govern the game of accommodation. These are, in his own words, a mixture of procedural rules and general orientations towards politics which are unwritten, informal and implicit. The pattern of political conduct as described by him has been formulated earlier by the political scientist Hans Daalder in his inaugural lecture at the University of

Leiden in 1964.<sup>10</sup>

The history of the 'Indonesian Question' reveals examples of nearly every rule. I shall single out some of these for discussion without laying claim to completeness. The first example is to be found in the formula on the basis of which the Indonesian conflict could be settled in 1949 (in order to revive subsequently the dispute about the sovereignty of New Guinea) and in the acceptance of the diplomatic agreement by Dutch politicians. The compromise resulted in the proposal that the political independence of Indonesia was recognised in exchange for the preservation of Dutch economic privileges in the new state. The loss of political control [given-up under pressure from the United Nations and the United States] was to be compensated by a maintenance of economic influence. This attitude – to vary Lijphart – was in accordance with Holland's long tradition as a merchant nation and with the crucial political role that the merchant middle-classes have played in Dutch history. Therefore, the government succeeded in binding the members of Parliament, in order to win a two-third majority for approval of the agreement.<sup>11</sup>

A second example can be discovered in expressions of a 'spirit of accommodation'. In the Labour Party as well as in the Catholic People's Party conflicts arose in which the leadership threatened to be defeated by a majority of the voting members of a parliamentary fraction or party-council. In both organisations the position and prestige of the leaders happened to be preserved. On the eve of the first 'police action' the majority in the council of the Labour Party denounced the responsibility of the Social-Democratic ministers for using military violence against the cause of Indonesian nationalism. However, the spokesman of this intra-party-opposition, Jacques de Kadt, abandoned his attempt to press the matter further, because it would have caused the resignation of the ministers and leaders without providing an alternative workable solution. In 1949 the Catholic People's Party suffered a series of defeats in its political retreat from its early intention to eliminate the Republic to its later position of negotiating with and recognizing the Indonesian state.<sup>12</sup>

As a final example the secrecy of decision-making strikes the observer. Especially during the last stages of the Indonesian crisis all important decisions had been taken under the cover of summit diplomacy. As a result the Dutch public was confused to considerable extent.<sup>13</sup> Secrecy culminated in a closed session of Parliament to discuss a vote of censure because of the 'deviationist' policies of the coalition government, which were conducted without providing the information and publicity that one should expect in a democratic system.

To conclude my argument, I wish to state that, by examining the history

of Dutch reactions to the decolonization of Indonesia, we can extract some arguments in favour of Lijphart's thesis. He himself has pointed out that Dutch obstinacy on the question seriously affected their politicians' ability to formulate successful policies towards Indonesian independence. That may well be true. The nature of Dutch stability, however, should not be forgotten. Although the Dutch consociational system was subjected to serious strains, it did not crumble but survived the crisis.

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### The management of subcultural conflict:

#### The issue of education in Belgium (1950-1975)

G. Dierickx

#### Introduction

In the Belgian political arena the issue of education is at times a highly salient one which captures the attention and the emotions of the public at large. At other times it appears as almost dormant from the perspective if not of the political insiders, then at least of the less well informed outsiders.

Between 1879 and 1884 a first, rather violent struggle opposed catholics and anticlericals and resulted in the consolidation of two major school networks. An 'official' network was organized by the state and by the local authorities. The state schools claimed to be philosophically 'neutral', while their critics accused them of varying degrees of anticlericalism. At the other side of the philosophical fence, a network of 'free', private schools was organized, in its overwhelming majority, by catholic dioceses and congregations. At the same occasion both school networks got their own political patrons. The liberal and the socialist parties with their anticlerical traditions advocated the cause of the neutral schools, while the catholic party championed the cause of the 'free' catholic schools.

After the first school-war (1879-1884) the education issue went into relative latency. After the second world war and the liberation of Belgium there was little to suggest the imminence of a second school war. On the contrary, the Christian Democrat party, which had succeeded the prewar catholic party, appeared anxious to 'deconfessionalize' its program and to appeal to an electorate beyond the confinement of the catholic subculture. Instead of its traditional one-sided defence of the catholic schools it proposed to uphold a pluralist equilibrium between the major school systems.

The government would establish new state schools and support local and free schools more or less according to the proportion of parents selecting them for their children. The government would subject itself to the opinion of the parents and so would the new Christian Democrat party. All kinds of penalization for picking one school rather than another would have to disappear.