



# The debate between Mochtar Lutfi and Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa regarding a ministry of religion within Negara Indonesia Timur (The State of East Indonesia), 1946–1950

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## Abstract

This article discusses the debate that took place in Negara Indonesia Timur (The State of East Indonesia) regarding a proposal to form a ministry of religion. This article specifically analyzes the reasoning of those promoting and opposing its formation. The main sources of this article are the SEI archives stored in the South Sulawesi Provincial Archives, magazines and newspapers obtained from the Southeast Asia Collection at Leiden University. The debate occurred between Mochtar Lutfi and his colleagues on one hand and Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa on the other. According to Mochtar Lutfi, the existence of a ministry of religion is a proof of the state's partiality to people who adhere to certain religions, especially Islam. As for Malewa, the ministry of religion reflects the decline of a nation. After going through various pressures, the SEI government finally established a Minister of State to deal with Islamic matters during the Second Cabinet of Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa. However, it only lasted for four months and dissolved following the end of the Malewa Cabinet. Subsequent cabinets never set up any ministries again dealing with religious matters up to the breakup of the State of East Indonesia.

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## Introduction

The formation of the Ministry of Religion within the State of East Indonesia (SEI, 1946–1950) was one of the important topics discussed and debated during the state parliamentary sessions. In contrast to the first cabinet of

the United States of Indonesia, which was formed after the proclamation of August 17th 1945, namely, the Presidential Cabinet that included a ministry dealing with religious matters led by State Minister Wahid Hasjim, from the beginning up to the end of its administration, SEI established a state ministry in charge of Islam only once, during the Second Cabinet of Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa (June 2nd 1947–October 11th 1947). Its formation became the subject of a prolonged debate between several factions led by Mochtar Lutfi and his colleagues on the one hand and Nadjamuddin Daeng Malewa on the other. The debate reflected the polarization of thoughts and

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political views of parliamentarians in the state, whose formation had been initiated by Acting Governor-General Hubertus van Mook. The polarization occurred due to the diversity of regional origins and the political thoughts of the members of the parliament.

Studies on the SEI have thus far not received serious attention. There are very few significant studies on this state, including one written by Ida Anak Agung Gde Agung and another by J. R. Chaniago. Gde Agung's study records well the journey of SEI from its inception in the Malino Conference to the ups and downs of its cabinets (Agung, 1996). Unfortunately, this book does not record the various debates and intrigues that characterize the journey of this state. One cannot also find those debates in Chaniago's writings. Chaniago only highlighted the role of local leaders in the dynamics of the two regions, namely, South Sulawesi and East Sumatra (Chaniago, 2002).

Meanwhile, in other studies such as those of George Kahin and Nugroho Notosusanto, the existence of SEI has not received much attention. In a range of short articles, states including SEI have always been regarded as mere puppet states of the Netherlands, and there has been no analysis showing the active involvement of the Indonesian elites in the process of the state's formation (Abdullah & Lapian, 2012; Hatley, 2012; Kahin, 1952; Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1984). Such a tendency is closely related to the failure to give attention to the debate about the importance of forming or not forming a ministry of religion in SEI.

This study aims to complement existing studies with an emphasis on the debate regarding the need to form a ministry of religion within the SEI. In contrast to several other states in Indonesia, such as the State of Pasundan, the State of East Java, or the State of Madura, which has a homogeneous political orientation, the SEI was a large and very diverse state with a complex political orientation of its state apparatus. This article considers a number of reasons given both by those who promoted the ministry of religion and those who opposed it. This paper is based on the argument that groups promoting and opposing the formation of the ministry of religion in SEI were a reflection of the diversity of vested interests existing in the state.

## Methodology

This study uses various documents stored in the South Sulawesi Provincial Archives, the Jakarta National Archives, and National Archives in Den Haag (The Netherlands). The archives used are mainly those produced by the State of East Indonesia, a state founded in 1946. In addition, a significant amount of data contained in various

newspapers such as *Soeloeh Ambon*, *Pelita Rakjat*, *Pandji Negara*, and others have also been very useful for building arguments in this article. However, before using all these sources, evaluation of the reliability was conducted, both external and internal. External evaluation aimed to determine the authenticity of sources (authentic and genuine), that is, we attempted to determine whether the sources were genuine or fake. At the same time, this external criticism also helped to address the question of relevance to this study. Internal evaluation and criticism mainly focuses on trying to prove that the testimony contained in a source can indeed be trusted—at least for the intended use in our research. The main question posed in internal criticism is “what value of evidence is there in a source?” The materials examined and the conclusions reached were then used in analysis based on our research objectives (Pradadimara et al., 2022).

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## Results and Discussion

### *The Process of Forming the State of East Indonesia*

The post-proclamation period was a crucial period for the survival of Indonesia as an independent state because of its unstable condition and the efforts of the former colonial government to return to power in Indonesia. Those attempts were carried out either through physical violence or negotiations. However, a number of negotiations conducted by the Dutch official van Mook and Sutan Sjahrir—then Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia—did not show satisfactory results. Therefore, van Mook began to shift his attention to structuring state administration outside the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. One of these efforts was the negotiations on 16–18 of July 1946 between representatives of the Dutch government and representatives from the Eastern Regions of Indonesia. The negotiations have subsequently been known as the Malino Conference and Muktamar Malino (Malino Muktamar), two interchangeable terms (Husain, 2014).

The conference, which was held in Malino—a resort area south of Makassar—was attended by van Mook and his team as well as by 51 participants from various areas or regions such as Bangka/Belitung, West Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, North Maluku, South Maluku, Irian Jaya, Tanimbar, Kei and Aru Islands, Southwest Islands, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores and Timor (Agung, 1985).

The Malino conference, which was also attended by several sultans and kings, was not well received in the

Republic of Indonesia. The mass media of the Republic of Indonesia at that time criticized the Dutch attempt to hold such a conference and considered it an attempt to gain support from regional representatives outside the territory then controlled by the Republic of Indonesia for the Dutch “solution” to the Indonesian problem. The Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia Muhammad Hatta in an interview with Radio Yogyakarta on July 17, 1946 even stated that the Malino Conference was held under duress by the Dutch government and the participants were appointed by van Mook. Muhammad Hatta’s statement offended the conference participants and they sent a motion or protest note signed by Sonda Daeng Mattajang (South Sulawesi), Soekawati (Bali), Sultan Hamid II (West Kalimantan) and Dengah (Minahasa) (Ibid.).

Regardless of various criticisms on the holding of this conference, the speeches delivered by the delegates can be classified based on three points, namely: (1) All delegates cannot accept the return of colonialism in Indonesia; (2) All delegates stated that the relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia must be continued; and (3) All delegates stated that the unity of Indonesia must be maintained as a nation and that the embodiment of that ideal was integration and dealization of a federal system, namely, an Indonesian federation in the form of the United States of Indonesia (Ibid.).

Three months after the Malino Conference, on November 12, 1946, the Linggarjati Negotiations were held, and the decision included the Dutch recognizing Java, Madura and Sumatra as *de facto* parts of the Republic of Indonesia. It also seems that the Linggarjati agreement provided an opportunity for the realization of the State of East Indonesia. On December 18–24, 1946, the Denpasar Conference was held, attended by representatives of the Dutch government and representatives of the people from all regions of the Great East (Eastern Indonesia) aiming to establish a constitutional unit within an independent and sovereign Indonesia in accordance with Article 2 and Article 4 of the Linggarjati agreement. As for the 70 conference participants, 55 were elected by the people of each region and 15 were appointed by the Dutch government. After seven days of negotiations, on December 24 1946 the State of East Indonesia was established with Makassar as its capital (de Waal, n.d.; *Moe'tamar*, 1946; Reid, 2010).

#### *Mochtar Lutfi and Nadjamudin Daeng Malewa: Figures Behind the Debate*

On April 22, 1947, the first session of the State of East Indonesia (SEI) Provisional Representative Body was officially opened by President Tjokorde Gde Soekawati

with a speech. During this session, various issues related to the future of the SEI were discussed as well as issues at hand that had to be resolved on a national level. In addition to economic issues, government employees, education and finance, there were several very sensitive issues. These issues included the state symbol, the national anthem, and the question of whether or not a ministry of religion should be formed in the cabinet. The last issue is interesting to discuss further because the proponents, both those who requested and those who rejected the formation of this ministry, represented different ways of thinking among the members of parliament. In other words, they are not only voicing their personal opinions, but also reflecting the thoughts that had developed in their respective factions within the State of East Indonesia.

Mochtar Lutfi and Nadjamudin Daeng Malewa are two important figures who engaged in this debate. Mochtar Lutfi represented the Progressive Faction, while Nadjamudin Daeng Malewa represented the Development Faction. Rosihan Anwar—a journalist who attended the Malino Conference—noted that in the 1930s, Mochtar Lutfi had been the leader of the Indonesian Muslim Unity Party (Permi) in West Sumatra (Salim, 2013). Lutfi was a good friend of Ch. O. van der Plas and D. van der Meulen, both of whom were prominent administrative experts on Islam. Van der Meulen, who had been the Consul in Jeddah, conversed with Lutfi in Arabic. When the political situation in West Sumatra heated up after the outbreak of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) rebellion in Silungkang in 1927, Permi activities developed led by Mochtar Lutfi—dubbed by the Dutch as the Minangkabau lion. Lutfi was then captured by the Dutch and exiled to Boven Digul (Anwar, 2004). The Dutch colonial government ultimately sent Lutfi to Makassar with the intention of “subduing” the Muslim community in this region.

On December 24, 1945 along with other Muslim leaders, Lutfi founded an organization called “Madjelis Islam” or Islamic Assembly. As a scholar, Lutfi never stopped spreading Islamic teachings, either through direct public delivery or writing in newspapers published at that time. In *Soeloeh Ambon*, for instance, Lutfi reminded readers about the significance of independence. He also criticized the increasingly close relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia (Notulen, n.d.; Reserse, n.d.; Soeloeh Ambon, 1946). Mochtar Lutfi not only showed his adamancy when he was in West Sumatra, but also when he was in Makassar. The political report of Staats Recherche Zuid Celebes in May 1949, for example, stated that Lutfi led 11,000 Muslims to protest against a radio in Jakarta, on May 17, 1949, broadcasting a story about the life of the Prophet Muhammad (Negara Indonesia Timur, 1949).

On the other hand, Nadjamoedin Daeng Malewa was a community leader and a political figure from South Sulawesi. He was born on January 12, 1907 in Makassar and completed his primary education at the first Europeesche Lagere School (ELS) and continued his study at the Meer Uitgebred Lager Onderwijs (MULO) school in Bandung. He represented the nationalist group in South Sulawesi, who wanted to cooperate with the Dutch government with the aim of defending the interests of the people of South Sulawesi. He was a member of the Parindra party and played an active role in economy and trade, especially in advancing indigenous shipping as the Chairman of the Ship Owners Association in South Sulawesi. Daeng Malewa also led the reviving of an old organization, the People's Power Party (Politiek, n.d.). In May 1945, he was appointed as the Mayor of Makassar (Agung, 1996; Ilham, 2019; Pedoman, 1954; Pelita Rakjat 1947). For republicans (pro-republicans), Daeng Malewa and his group were puppets of the Dutch, trying re-establish their power in Indonesia, especially in South Sulawesi and other areas of the Great East (Tumbalaka, 1947).

The two figures above, Mochtar Lutfi and Daeng Malewa, sometimes walked side by side with the same understandings, but at other times they would choose completely different paths. On September 15, 1946, for example, the two of them founded a political organization called the Indonesian United States Party (PARNESI). Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa was the chairman, while Mochtar Luthfi was a commissioner (Politiek, n.d.).

### *The Debate in the Parliament Session*

The issue of whether or not a ministry of religion should be formed within the government of the State of East Indonesia became an important issue and subject of debate in the parliamentary session. As a cleric and preacher, who became a representative of South Sulawesi in the Denpasar Conference and was Advisor for Greater East Religious Affairs and who later became a member of the State of East Indonesia Progressive Faction, Mochtar Lutfi emphasized the need to form a ministry of religion (Agung, 1985). Curiously, Lutfi did not promote a state based on Islam, but a state based on democracy (Pelita Rakjat, 1946, December 24). This attitude was different, for example, from that of Sekarmadji Maridjan Kartosoewirjo's—an Islamic figure who led the Darul Islam rebellion against the Indonesian government (1949–1962) or Kahar Muzakkar, the leader of former guerrillas of South and Southeast Sulawesi and founder of the Indonesian Islamic Army (TII), that later merged with Darul Islam (DI)—who openly promoted the ideals of establishing an Islamic state based on sharia law.

Mochtar Lutfi's unwillingness to establish a state based on Islam, but rather on the basis of democracy, might have been influenced by his cosmopolitanism. Before joining NIT, he had "traveled" to various regions and states even though as an exile. In addition, his association with Dutch government officials such as Ch. O. van der Plas and D. van der Meulen had made him more susceptible to western ideas like democracy. This non-radical attitude was shown by Lutfi when he was in Cairo, Egypt, when he showed no interest in the pan-Islamic ideology promoted by Jamal-al-Din Afghani that later developed into a movement to unite Muslims in one country, commonly referred to as the caliphate. On the contrary, in 1922, Mochtar Lutfi and other students from Indonesia founded the Al-Jamiah al-Khairiyah al-Jawah organization. This organization aimed to equate students' vision of the reality in the Malay archipelago. In 1926, along with Ilyas Ya'kub, Mochtar Lutfi founded the Association of Guardians. They also published *Al-Azhar Appeal* and *Eastern Choice* magazines, both of which were politically oriented (Latif, 2005).

Although Lutfi did not promote a state based on Islam, but rather on democracy (Pelita Rakjat, 1946, December 24), he still considered it important to form a ministry dealing specifically with religious matters. Mochtar Lutfi was not alone in promoting this idea. He was supported by other members of parliament such as Mr. Akib and Bachmid. According to Akib, the religious atmosphere in India—as exemplified by Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa—was different from the State of East Indonesia that still necessitated formation of a ministry of religion (Soeloeh Ambon, 1947 April 8). Mr. Akib or Mohammad Akib was chairman of Muhammadiyah Makassar, a branch of the national Islamic organization founded in 1921 and was also the chairman of the "Islamic Association" (Politiek, n.d.).

The Prime Minister of the State of East Indonesia, Nadajamuddin Daeng Malewa, in his speech to the first session of the parliament responded to the proposal of Mochtar Lutfi and Akib by saying:

*"The next issue is religious matters. The principles of religious freedom have been sufficiently explained in the Denpasar Regulations and have been supported in the Conference; Likewise, the principles of the ministry of small groups essentially also includes religious groups with small memberships.*

*The government has been considering carefully whether to accommodate hopes that are also heard here and there regarding the desire to establish a Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, please take into account the magnitude of the difficulties to determine with such clarity the duties and leadership of such a ministry in a country with so many religious sects"* (Nadjamoeddin, 1947a).

As far as Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa was concerned—as he further elaborated in his speech—the formation of a ministry of religion would be a setback and a hindrance to progress. “The formation of a ministry of religion will eventually mean that we are taking a step back during a progressive journey,” said Malewa. According to him, the principle of forming a modern state means a separation between religion and the state and this principle, he said, is very suitable to the condition of the State of East Indonesia with so many religious sects (Ibid.).

Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa’s rejection of the formation of a ministry of religion contained two important points, namely: (1) the regulations set out in the Denpasar Conference had guaranteed the freedom of religion; and (2) the fact that there were so many religious sects in the State of East Indonesia would result in very complicated tasks for the leadership of the ministry of religion.

Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa’s speech on the issue of the formation of the Ministry of Religion did not satisfy certain groups, especially the Progressive Faction (and especially Mochtar Lutfi). Therefore, Malewa needed to reiterate his views in the government’s response speech to the general views of the members of the parliament. In his response speech he said:

“The East Indonesia Government agrees with Mr. Luthfi that a religion is an inseparable part of the whole community’s life. The government is also absolutely sure that within a state that consists of many different religious sects, such as in East Indonesia, the ultimate development of living within a religion is only allowed by maintaining and guaranteeing religious freedom in the broadest sense and with full acknowledgment of equality from the state. Therefore... it is practically impossible to form a Ministry of Religious Affairs or a High Court of religious affairs, equipped with a regulatory power, as desired by Mr. Luthfi, as long as there is yet no perfect agreement between all groups of respective religions” (Ibid.).

In his response to the views of members of parliament, Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa further explained that Egypt, which has a 93 percent Muslim population, also does not have a ministry that deals with religious matters. There is, however, a minister who deals with the property of the ummah, namely, the Ministry of Waqf (the Ministry of Treasury) (Ibid.).

Mochtar Lutfi’s proposal to form a ministry of religion in the cabinet, was finally approved by the State of East Indonesia government. This occurred in the Second Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa Cabinet (June 2, 1947 – October 11, 1947), when a state ministry dealing with Islamic matters was formed (Politiek, n.d.; Agung, 1985). However, the one appointed to be the minister was not Mochtar Lutfi—an Islamic cleric and activist who had been fighting for the formation of the ministry. Rather,

Achmad Sjehan Bachmid was appointed. The question is why was Mochtar Lutfi not appointed to be the Minister of State in charge of Islamic issues.

There are several likely reasons why the choice fell on Achmad Sjehan Bachmid. Firstly, he was an Islamic scholar from Halmahera, in the Moluccas (Zn, 2011), whose religious knowledge was comparable to that of Mochtar Lutfi’s. Secondly, he was one of 15 participants appointed or sent directly by the Dutch government to the Denpasar Conference. In other words, the Dutch knew exactly the personality and political orientation of Bahmid, so he might be more easily subdued. Thirdly, Bachmid was never involved in an effort to oppose the policies of the State of East Indonesia government, by submitting, for instance, or supporting a motion as Mochtar Lutfi had. Bachmid did agree with Mochtar Lutfi’s idea regarding religion, but he never urged the government to form a ministry of religion. During the parliament session of the State of East Indonesia on May 3, 1947, Bachmid only said that the cabinet is a *puzzle*, but that a cabinet must create a “wederzijdse begrijpen en vertrouwen” (mutual understanding and trust) (Soeloeh Ambon, 1947 May 8).

Unfortunately, the work programs and activities carried out by Achmad Sjehan Bachmid while serving as the State Minister for Islamic Affairs were very limited. It could be due to the fact that the tenure of the Second Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa Cabinet lasted for only four months, so it was not possible to carry out many programs. One of Bachmid’s activities as a minister was becoming the head of an Honorary Mission (Pilgrimage) Team to Mecca. Based on the Decree of the President of the State of East Indonesia, Bachmid along with six members (Sonda Daeng Mattajang, Baso Daeng Malewa, Hadji Abdoerrahman, Hadji Boestami, Hasan Pontoh, Hadji Zainoeddin) and a secretary (Zakaria Darwis), were appointed to carry out an honorary mission to Mecca (Negara Indonesia Timur, 1947). No information was found on the purpose of this honorary mission, but it could be aimed at neutralizing the development of issues and leaflets in Mecca entitled “Haram Naik Hadji”, made and circulated by the Indonesian Independence Association in Saudi Arabia and distributed to pilgrims from Indonesia, including the pilgrims from Eastern Indonesia (Arsip Propinsi Sulawesi, n.d.).

In the subsequent cabinets, starting from the Warrouw Cabinet, the First Anak Agung Gde Agung Cabinet, the Second Anak Agung Gde Agung Cabinet, as well as the cabinets of J. E. Tatengkeng, D. P. Diapari, and J. Poetoehena, a ministry dealing with religious matters no longer existed. Unfortunately, no information is available on why the ministry of religion was eliminated in the following cabinets until the State of East Indonesia was finally dissolved. However, in a friendly meeting between

the cabinet of the government of the Republic of Indonesia and the delegates of the State of East Indonesia parliament in February 1948 in Yogyakarta, the head of the East Indonesia group, Arnold Monotutu, conveyed a message from the Muslims in Sulawesi to the government of the republic. In the message they asked about the possibility of continuing Islamic religious studies in the republic areas. This message was conveyed because several students from the State of East Indonesia intended to continue their studies in the republic. The Minister of Information of the Republic of Indonesia, Moh. Nazir replied to the message and question by saying that if the desired lessons were not too advanced, then they were welcome to continue studying in the territory of the republic (Nadjamoeddin, 1947b).

However, Mochtar Lutfi and his colleagues hoped that matters relating to Muslims would not only be resolved in a friendly meeting with other parties, but felt that they called for a permanent institution that would have the authority to regulate and resolve problems of moslems. Lutfi and Haji Sewang promoted the establishment of a High Court. This institution was deemed necessary for several reasons, including being a mediator between the State of East Indonesia government and the Muslim community, being a supervisory authority for religious courts, caring for widows and orphans, and training religious officials (Assistant Resident Makassar, 1949). So far as Mochtar Lutfi and his friends were concerned, the formation of the High Court was a compromise in view of the absence of a ministry of religion in the State of East Indonesia cabinet. Unfortunately, no sources explaining the proposal for formation of this institution were found during this research.

In relation to the debate and the formation of the ministry of religion within the State of East Indonesia, one point of interest is the issue of the state ideology that has never been questioned, either by members of the government, members of parliament, mass organizations, or by the public in general. Pancasila as the new state ideology was first mentioned towards the end of 1949 and the beginning of 1950. In an organizational meeting of the Bureau of the Followers Fighters of the Republic of Indonesia on February 5, 1950, which discussed the organization's Articles of Association, for example, it was stated that the basis of the organization was Pantjasila and its five precepts: (1) Belief in the one and only God; (2) National Unity; (3) Humanity; (4) Democracy; and (5) Social Justice. Another organization, namely the Labor Union, in its meeting in March 1950 also stated that "a Unitary State must be realized, under the realization of the Unitary State we uphold the Pancasila in which the belief in God takes precedence" (Notulen, n.d.).

### *Building the Grand Mosque, "Taming" Mochtar Lutfi*

When the Dutch government appointed Hadji Moechtar Lutfi and Mohammad Akib as envoys from South Sulawesi to attend the Denpasar Conference, the Dutch government actually chose the wrong people. This was clearly demonstrated later when both repeatedly called for a return to a unitary state as participants in the conference and as members of the state parliament. In several parliamentary sessions, Mochtar Lutfi repeatedly protested against the policies taken by the cabinet. Together with Mohammad Akib, Lutfi fought for the formation of a ministry of religion within the State of East Indonesia.

When he had been a refugee in South Australia following the defeat of the Dutch by Japan, Mochtar Lutfi was recruited by Ch. O. van der Plas, then the head of the Netherlands Indies Commission for Australia and New Zealand. Van der Plas was a key member of NICA, the Dutch colonial government, once based in Makassar. The Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) attempted to use Mochtar Lutfi as a tool to "tame" South Sulawesi. Lutfi was sent to Makassar with a secret task from NICA, namely, to win back the sympathy of the people of South Sulawesi. The strategy was well designed, for example in approaching and embracing Muslim scholars and designing the construction of the largest mosque in Eastern Indonesia. NICA realized that for a long time Muslims in this area had been neglected. Therefore, through Mochtar Lutfi, NICA strove to improve its image in the eyes of the people of South Sulawesi (Sukatanya & Monoharto, 2000). When he arrived in Makassar, Mochtar Lutfi initially did not receive a good reception, he was instead labeled a traitor to the nation. However, in front of his nationalist friends, Lutfi conveyed what was really in his heart by saying: "Outwardly I am now a tool of the Dutch colonialists, but inwardly I am still holding fast to the commands of God Almighty. The struggle of the Indonesian nation and homeland is part of the faith. That's why I really look forward to your help, brother, lest we be preceded by NICA winning the hearts of the people, especially the ulama."

Mochtar Lutfi's confession finally melted hearts and convinced his friends in Makassar. Thus, the construction of the Makassar Grand Mosque finally began and the laying of the first stone took place on May 25, 1949, attended by the President of the State of East Indonesia, representatives of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the King of Bone, the King of Gowa, the Sultan of Sumbawa, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Information, members of parliament and others. This mosque was also to be a symbol of the splendor of Makassar city as the capital of the state (Pandji Negara, No. 4, Juni 1949). Mochtar

Lutfi's efforts to build a grand mosque show that he was not only fighting for the presence of a ministry of religion in the SEI, but also directly demonstrates his commitment to the implementation of Islamic law in the form of providing places of worship for Muslims.

However, the Dutch intention to tame the people of South Sulawesi and Mochtar Lutfi with the construction of this mosque were of no avail. As a result, NICA was furious and tried to hinder the completion of the mosque, but this effort failed because the community, especially the youth, put their bodies together to protect the construction of this magnificent mosque. In July 1949, for example, the religious holiday Eid was held in this mosque and attended by about 26,000 worshipers. Mochtar Lutfi used this opportunity to call for the workers to unite and provide financial support to complete the construction of the Grand Mosque as soon as possible (Negara Indonesia Timur, 1949).

This condition was unacceptable to NICA and they held Major Mochtar Lutfi as responsible and even treasonous. Worried about Mochtar Lutfi's growing influence, NICA secretly devised a plan to assassinate him. One morning in 1950, after dawn prayer, Mochtar, who was standing in front of the window of his house near Losari beach, was hit by bullets. Mochtar Lutfi breathed his last in the arms of his wife and to honor his services and struggles, the people and government of Makassar immortalized the name Muchtar Lutfi on one of the streets around Losari Beach in Makassar City.

## Conclusion

The State of East Indonesia, founded on December 24, 1946, was the most dynamic of the newly created states. In contrast to other states, such as the State of Pasundan or the State of East Java, which were homogeneous and geographically small, the State of East Indonesia consisted of people with many different political thoughts and understandings and covered a very wide area. This diversity then contributed greatly to the debates, disputes, and intrigues in the parliament and the cabinet. Various motions of no confidence were launched, both from the pro-federalist and anti-federalist camps. One of the issues that was fiercely debated in the parliamentary session was whether or not a ministry of religion should be formed within the federalist state. This debate is interesting because it reflects two main groups in parliament, namely the pro-federalist group represented by the Development Faction and the anti-federalist group represented by the Progressive Faction. In addition, the debate showed the various political perspectives of the

time. Mochtar Lutfi, who joined SEI, continued to fight for the interests of Muslims, who are the majority in Eastern Indonesia.

Mochtar Lutfi and Nadjamudin Daeng Malewa were two figures "at odds" about whether or not a ministry of religion should be formed within the State of East Indonesia. According to Lutfi, the very diversity of religions in the community required a ministry that specifically dealt with religious matters. On the other hand, Nadjamudin Daeng Malewa considered the formation of a ministry of religion reflecting a national decline. In Malewa's opinion, the number of regulations and laws of the State of East Indonesia were more than sufficient to show the commitment of this federal state to accommodating the interests of various religious interest groups. Taking Egypt and India as examples of countries without a ministry of religion, Malewa believed that the idea of Mochtar Lutfi and his friends did not need to be taken seriously. Ironically, in the Second Nadjamoeddin Cabinet a state ministry was formed to deal with Islamic matters. However, this ministry only lasted for four months and was dissolved with the dissolution of the Cabinet of Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa. This ministry was never formed again until the disbandment of the State of East Indonesia in 1950.

Mochtar Lutfi—a pro-republican—promoted the idea of forming a ministry of religion, an idea which was subsequently supported by other members of parliament such as Muhammad Akib, was not an ordinary person. The Dutch government was fully aware of this, and they gave Lutfi a "privilege". Lutfi became the envoy appointed by the Dutch government to attend the Denpasar Conference that gave birth to the State of East Indonesia. However, the Dutch intention to "tame" Lutfi was to no avail. During various parliamentary sessions, Lutfi became one of the driving forces calling for the disbandment of the State of East Indonesia and the return to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Supporting the construction of the Makassar Grand Mosque was the last effort by the Dutch to embrace Mochtar Lutfi. However, Lutfi's call for a unitary state and to accommodate the interests of Muslims through the formation of a ministry of religion grew more and more intense. The Dutch chose to "eliminate" Mochtar Lutfi for good—they accused him of committing treason.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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