Political Islam in changing times
Sarekat Islam and Masyumi under the Dutch and Japanese occupations (1930-1945)

_Djadi, berdiri di luar, bukan berdiam diri!!_ (So, we stand outside, we are not staying silent!!)\(^1\)

The same forces that had ensured economic growth and prosperity in the 1920s were, a decade later, pulling the Indies down the road towards stagnation. The Great Depression that hit the West inevitably reached the colonies, stalling exports of manufactured goods and crop production. Schools were producing thousands of unemployable graduates, and trained clerks were forced to take up menial jobs, while older employees were fired to make room for younger (cheaper) workers. Nonetheless, in urban Java real wages increased, socio-economic conditions were no worse than usual and the general economic distress did not stir political discontent, much to the surprise of colonial authorities and nationalist leaders alike.\(^2\)

The 1930s were characterized by the further fragmentation of the nationalist movement, which experienced external pressure from the heavy-handed colonial authorities, as well as internal pressure from the movement’s own inability to find solid common ground for a unified front. For Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, this decade marked its isolation from mainstream politics, as the party pulled out of PPPKI’s ‘brown front’,\(^3\) rejected any form of cooperation with the Dutch and, under Kartosuwiryo’s guidance, became increasingly concerned with Islamic politics.

Sarekat Islam’s commitment to non-cooperation is often considered an earthquake second in damage only to the split

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1 Kartosuwiryo, _Sikap hidjrah PSII_, 1936.
3 Soekarno had begun to refer to a ‘brown front’ in late 1927, in opposition to Dutch talks of establishing a _blank front_ (white front) under the leadership of the hardliner H.C. Zentgraaf; see Hering, _Soekarno: Founding father_, pp. 134-4.
between the ‘red’ and ‘white’ wings that occurred in 1923, as membership dropped, leaders were expelled and splinter parties mushroomed.

Yet, as anticipated by the changes in the party statutes in December 1929, the 1930s should also be seen as a time when the religious soul of the party gained prominence, ‘freed’ as it was both from the controlling hand of Tjokroaminoto, who died in 1934, and from diplomatic efforts to establish a common strategy with the secularists. Even as Japan took over Java and Sumatra in 1942, effectuating major changes in the independence movement, the two groups were to remain separated, each with its own ideological and strategic concerns.

KARTOSUWIRYO: A RISING STAR?

In January 1930 the Dutch authorities welcomed Kartosuwiryo’s disappearance from the pages of Fadjar Asia, praising the editorial board for ‘coming to its senses’ and realizing the threat presented by his ‘fanatical’ and ‘intense’ articles. The Overzicht also voiced its disapproval of the party’s choice to keep Kartosuwiryo within the leadership cadres. Kartosuwiryo had only been appointed in mid November 1929, as Agoes Salim had embarked for Geneva to attend the International Labour Conference meeting in December, but the brevity of his appointment was not tied to his ideas, as the Dutch had instead assumed.

Kartosuwiryo continued to hold tight his position in the party; if anything, the immediate future saw his influence on shaping PSII policies increase. This holds true for the period between the 1930 Yogyakarta Congress, when the non-cooperation hijrah policy became central to the party, and 1936, when the party’s sturdy commitment to this approach led to the deterioration of relations between Kartosuwiryo and Agoes Salim, a rift that ultimately resulted in the fragmentation of the leadership.

It is likely that Kartosuwiryo’s withdrawal from the editorial board was related to Salim’s return to Batavia and to his own bad health, rather than to changing winds in the party. Fadjar Asia advertised Kartosuwiryo’s presence at a PSII-Jakarta meeting on 5-6 January 1930, mentioning that he had participated ‘although he has now [9 January] retreated to the mountains near Malan-

4 Algemeen overzicht, January 1930.
5 Hadji A. Salim, ‘Ma’loemat’, Fadjar Asia, 14 November 1929.
gbong due to health problems’. These health concerns faded by mid 1930 and did not prevent Kartosuwiryo from retaining his rank in the party. This early January meeting, as well as the subsequent party congress in Yogyakarta at the end of the month, were pivotal in shaping Sarekat Islam’s future strategies, especially in relation to the secular nationalist movement represented by Soekarno, his PNI and the PPPKI federation. The initial attempt to set aside differences over the role of religion and the level of cooperation with the colonial authorities was doomed to fail, thus pulling PSII out of the ‘brown front’ and radicalizing the Islamic and non-cooperative attitudes of its members.

While in Malangbong, in April 1930 Kartosuwiryo started once again to write for Fadjar Asia. The following year, further affirming his stronghold in the Priangan, he was nominated Garut editor of a new Sundanese newspaper, Sora Ra’jat Merdika, whilst Tjokroaminoto was its editor in Bogor. Kartosuwiryo began travelling across the region on propaganda tours in May. He headed a PSII-Garut branch meeting to organize political action against the ‘wicked and evil’ requirement of corvee. Along with Moestafa Kamil, Joe-soef Taeoeziri and other local leaders, Kartosuwiryo chaired an open meeting of the Garut MOI to expound his political views, and his choice of topics ranged from the impact of the plague epidemic that had affected the region since February, to the duty to follow Islamic law. This meeting was attended by some 3,500 people, and Kartosuwiryo delivered his speech directly in Sundanese, an indication that he had already spent some time in West Java. It should be remembered that Kartosuwiryo had already been married to Siti Kalsum since August 1929, at least. On 10 June 1930, he addressed the party constituency in Cilame on the right to assembly for Friday prayers, and on 14 June he was in Leles at the local MOI meeting.

Under Tjokroaminoto’s protection, Kartosuwiryo was reaching the highest echelons of the party, as evidenced by his recurrent invitations to lead propaganda campaigns and to chair party conferences outside of Java.

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6 Fadjar Asia, 9 January 1930; Pinardi also mentions health problems for Kartosuwiryo around 1929. Pinardi, Sekarmadji Maridjan, p. 23.

7 Fadjar Asia, 7 May 1930.

8 Fadjar Asia, 4 June 1930. At a previous propaganda meeting in October 1929, a local representative of PSI-Gicalengka acted as translator; see Fadjar Asia, 8 October 1929.

9 Fadjar Asia, 10 June 1930 and 14 June 1930. On Sora Ra’jat Merdika, see Algemeen overzicht, July and August 1931, p. 14.

10 Overzicht, 18 June 1932, 10 September 1932 and 26 October 1935 report his many trips across West Java.

11 Overzicht, 22 December 1934 and 11 May 1935.
Islam and the making of the nation

REDEFINING PARTAI SAREKAT ISLAM INDONESIA’S PRIORITIES

Pan-Islamism and non-cooperation

The 1930 party congress in Yogyakarta held in late January marked the height of the friction between PSII and the PPPKI federation. Despite Tjokroaminoto’s conciliatory tone and his efforts to revoke past criticisms, Kartosuwiryo’s position was gaining stronger support, as his new role as commissar for West Java and member of the executive committee gave him increased space to influence the membership. What was at stake in these debates was Sarekat Islam’s integrity as an Islamic party, as the condition for affiliation with PPPKI was that members must be ‘Indonesian’ and thus affirm the group’s identity as an ‘Indonesian’ party, while PSII (despite having recently added the second ‘I’ to its name) was open to Muslims from all over the world.12

This conflict was more than a mere matter of principle or theology; it sheds light on the implications of being an Islamic party that could not limit itself to a geographically defined area. This position would be formalized on 28 December 1930 with Sangadji’s statement that PSII, as an Islamic party, could no longer be part of the Indonesian federation PPPKI, nor could it cooperate with a despotic foreign ruler. A few months later, at the party congress, Soekiman, who had initially co-founded the PPPKI with Soekarno, concluded that ‘without any doubts, the PPPKI is imperialistic!’,13 a claim that marked the final rupture.

The new party statute, as published in Fadjar Asia in mid January 1930, shows a change in priorities and a complete shift from being

12 PPO, January 1930, pp. 291, 293. The PSII Congress was held in Yogyakarta from 24 to 27 January 1930; ‘Verslag van het 16de congres der PSII, gehouden op Jogjakarta op den 24sten tot den 27sten Januari 1930’ [1930], AMK GMr, no. 230x, NA, suggests that Kartosuwiryo was the executive committee’s member for agriculture. The party board was represented by Tjokroaminoto, Salim, Soerjoprano, K.H. Anwaroein, Wondosoedirdjo, Pardikin and Kadar; whilst the other members of the executive committee were Soekiman and Kiyai Taofiqoerachman, commissars for finance and for sharia and ‘ibada respectively; Kiyai Taofiqoerachman later, in 1945, signed Masyumi’s call for jihad against the Dutch. Major points of discussion at this congress were hereditary property, the poenale sanctie and guru ordonantie, as well as opium consumption, prostitution and gambling; these issues were specifically mentioned in an action programme released on this occasion and named programma van actie (jihad). The 1945 call for jihad is further investigated in Chapter 3.
13 ‘Verslag van de op 28 December 1930 te Batavia delegde [sic.] vergadering der PSII’ [1931], AMK GMr, no. 327x, NA; ‘Verslag van het 17de Congres der Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia’ [1931], AMK: Kabinet Verbaal Geheim [hereafter KVG] no. 5, NA. The congress was held between 16 and 22 March 1931.
an Islamo-socialist organization to becoming an Islamic party committed to pan-Islamism. The PSII executive committee now added a new first article titled ‘unity in the Islamic community’ (persatoean dalam oemmat Islam), which stated that the unity of Indonesian Muslims was ‘a step towards the unity of the Islamic community across the world’. This goal was more important – at least as a matter of principle – than ‘national freedom’, which became the second article of the party’s ‘foundation statement’ (keterangan asas). This concept, that Indonesian Muslims’ unity was a stage in the development of a worldwide unity of the ummah, was then repeated in the first and second articles of the constitution, titled persatoean pergerakan dan organisatie (‘unity of the movement and organization’) and toedjoean (‘aims’), respectively.14 In harmony with such a redefinition of aims and strategies, in March 1931 Tjokroaminoto opened the party’s 17th congress with a quote from the leading member of the British Indies’ Khilafat movement, Maulana Muhammad Ali: ‘It is a wrong conception of religion that you have, if you exclude politics from it; it is not [just] dogma, it is not [just] ritual.’ While this congress was strongly oriented towards the state of Muslims abroad, particularly the Berbers of Morocco and the Palestinians, it also sought and received affirmation of the Indies’ position on the global map of Islam, as Tjokroaminoto received a telegram from the Mufti of Jerusalem, Sayed Amin al-Husayni, that discussed the situation in Palestine and, more significantly, condemned Soekarno’s PNI for its secularism.15 A couple of months later, Tjokroaminoto began to promote the creation of a permanent al-Islam Committee, to be based in Surabaya under the leadership of Wondoamisen. The committee’s broader aim was to advocate and promote pan-Islamism via local publications, like the new magazine al-Djihad, and building an Islamic Union (Islam-bond) together with foreign organizations, such as the British-Indian Muslim Association. This committee was also charged with tackling the anti-Islamic feelings that had surfaced in secular circles.16

14 ‘Persatoean oemmat Islam se-doenia’, Fadjar Asia, 21 January 1930. The statute was edited between October 1929 and January 1930.
15 ‘Verslag van het 17de Congres der Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia’ [1931], AMK: KVG no. 5, NA.
16 Soetomo’s Persatoean Bangsa Indonesia (Association of the Indonesian Nation) had been generic in its anti-Islamic propaganda, but the Surabaya Studieclub, for example, had attacked the pilgrimage to Mecca (belittled vis-à-vis banishment to the Dutch penal colony in Boven Digul, Papua), and nationalist women groups condemned polygamy. ‘Oprichting “Centraal Comite al-Islam”’ [1931], AMK GMr, no. 716x, NA.
The first al-Islam meeting gathered in Batavia in October 1931, and the second in Malang in April 1932. Neither of these meetings made any progress in connecting Muslims in the Indies with the rest of the ummah. However, the committee succeeded in pulling together political and non-political Islamic groups under the banner of the Pergerakan al-Islam Indonesia (Indonesian al-Islam Movement), which reached a total membership of around 4,000 individuals in 1931-32. 17

First established in the 1920s in the aftermath of Mustafa Kemal’s abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, the al-Islam committees were tasked with suggesting ways to bring about a new worldwide Islamic order. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to see the significance of these committees in the 1930s in this same light. Attempts to recreate a global caliphate had long since been abandoned, and even in the British Indies, where the Khilafat movement was more persistent and dedicated, the focus and priorities of the movement had shifted away from the caliphate and towards nationalism. The caliphate as the basis of a political platform reappears only in more recent times, with Kartosuwiryo’s call for a federation of Muslim nation-states in 1950, and later with Jemaah Islamiyah’s propaganda for a transnational Islamic state in the 2000s. 18

The 1930 Yogyakarta congress and the discomfort that emerged from participation in the PPPKI are representative of the issues at the core of the party and, more generally, of the debates dominating this decade. On the one hand, there was opposition to secular nationalism and commitment to religiously informed politics; on the other hand, there was the issue of (non-)cooperation. Both had been central concerns for Kartosuwiryo since his early days as a journalist, and his growing influence on the executive committee resulted in Partai Sarekat Islam’s policies being increasingly determined by his views. Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia had thus begun shaping itself along these two projects of Islamic politics and non-cooperation. However, as political winds in the Indies changed, this redefinition had to be halted.

17 ‘Vergadering van het al-Islam-comite te Batavia op den 11den October 1931’ [1931], AMK GMr, no. 939x, NA; and ‘Verslag van het 2e al-Islam congres in de maand April 1931 te Kalang gehouden’ [1932], AMK GMr, no. 472x, NA. The latter congress was held between 16 and 18 April 1932.
Within two years of his appointment as Governor General in 1931, the conservative Bonifacius Cornelis de Jonge had dramatically reduced the political space in the Indies, and by 1933 only openly cooperative organizations and parties were allowed to operate freely in the political sphere. Sarekat Islam’s 18th congress, held in Bandung at the end of 1931, was mostly concerned with local economic and social issues. Salim focused on new press limitations, Soekiman invoked social legislation, Sangadji complained about agrarian reforms, and Tjokroaminoto attacked the *cultuurstelsel* as a manifestation of ‘capitalism’s baneful influence’.

This ‘cultivation system’ had been in place for a century, with the Dutch government determining what crops Javanese peasants had to produce in order to ensure the steady supply of tropical products in which the trading company was interested.

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**The Islamic movement and secular nationalism**

It is often mentioned that in the 1930s the Islamic movement was deeply fragmented, having neither a strong leadership nor a clear strategy, and that these two factors together were crucial to the decline of PSII’s influence at the national level. The same holds true also for the secularists.

Following Soekarno’s arrest in December 1929, Sartono – who had taken up the leadership of the movement – dissolved the PNI to establish, in 1930, the more accommodating Partindo (Partai Indonesia, Indonesian Party). This new party did not satisfy all of the old PNI membership, so in late 1931 the Study Clubs merged into a ‘new’ PNI, the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (PNI Baru, Indonesian National Education). When Soekarno was released from prison in December 1931, Soetan Sjahrir and Mohammad Hatta had already returned from the Netherlands, and Sartono was holding tight his leadership of Partindo. Their contrasting approaches resulted in a splintered movement, and the shattering of Soekarno’s achievements in unifying the movement in the previous decade.

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19 ‘Verslag van het 18de PSII congres te Bandoeng gehouden sinds December 1931’ [1932] AMK GMfr, no. 518x, NA. The congress was held between 25 and 27 December 1931.
20 For more on the *cultuurstelsel*, see Cornelis Fasseur, *The politics of colonial exploitation: Java, the Dutch, and the cultivation system* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1992).
The fragmentation of the nationalist front was not simply a matter of leadership and power, but, rather more significantly, a matter of strategy about how to strengthen the movement and how to relate to the colonial authorities. On the first count, Hatta, Sjafrir and the new PNI believed in forming highly educated and intellectualized cadres, whilst Partindo and Soekarno focused on stirring mass agitation. On the second count, Hatta and Soekarno differed on the issue of cooperation: in 1929 Hatta announced that ‘non-cooperation is the only correct weapon’ in the current colonial relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands, and in 1931 he criticized Soekarno for using non-cooperation only to provoke the masses, but not to educate them about the ongoing political battle. But by 1932-33 the tables had turned, with Hatta’s acceptance of the candidacy for the Dutch parliament as a member of the Onafhankelijke Socialistische Partij (Independent Socialist Party). Soekarno declared that ‘non-cooperation is not only struggle, it is also a principle of that struggle’, thus accusing Hatta of betrayal for participating in the Dutch parliament. Yet, when he was arrested again in November 1933, Soekarno abandoned Partindo and non-cooperation, an act that Hatta described as the ‘Soekarnoist tragedy’: ‘it was not yet ten months since Soekarno had beaten his breast and cried out that non-cooperation excluded cooperation with the masters in every field, and had called for unremitting struggle’ when he decided instead to accept the Dutch hand.

The arrest of Soekarno was followed by those of Hatta and Sjafrir in February 1934. Soekarno – probably in exchange for softening his political rhetoric – was sent to Flores, but the more radical Hatta and Sjafrir were exiled to Digul until the Japanese invasion of Java and Sumatra in 1942. The colonial government’s treatment of Soekarno, Hatta and Sjafrir proved to most nationalists that non-cooperation was no longer politically viable, and thus that they needed to change strategy.

After Partindo abandoned non-cooperation in December 1934, nationalist groups tended to be generally ‘cooperationist’, in the sense that they agreed to participate in the Volksraad to advance their demands for increased autonomy, as Susan Abeyasekere...
points out. This ‘People’s Council’ had been established in 1917 as an elected proto-parliament, where Europeans, ‘Foreign Orientals’ and ‘Indigenous’ members could voice ‘independent opinions’. Because of the electoral policies implemented, however, the council was not representative of the indigenous population, nor did it have any decision-making powers. In 1925 the council was transformed into a semi-legislative body, and in 1929 for the first time European members were the minority.

One example of the nationalists’ cooperationist tendencies is Soetomo’s decision to merge his Persatoean Bangsa Indonesia (Union of the Indonesian People) with Boedi Oetomo to form a new organization, Partai Indonesia Raja (Parindra, Great Indonesia Party). Protected by their immunity, several of the Volksraad members – especially those belonging to Mohammad Hoesni Thamrin’s political wing in Parindra – made radical statements, as they appeared to be coming to terms with their participation in the councils only so far as doing so was an avenue to independence. Yet, their grudging support for the councils did not translate into their support for gradual reforms. The Soetardjo petition of 1936 requested a conference to discuss the possibility of autonomy from the Netherlands. However, not only did the petition fail to gather the votes of the nationalist movement (as this proposal had emerged from a moderate and assorted group), but it was also rejected by the Dutch government in November 1938.23

In December 1936 Partindo dissolved, leaving Parindra as ‘the chief political organization’ until Amir Sjarifuddin’s founding of Gerakan Rakjat Indonesia (Gerindo, Indonesian People’s Movement) in 1937. Though it represented the left wing of the nationalist movement and was ‘inherently militant’, Gerindo took an overall cooperationist attitude,24 thus making Sarekat Islam the only remaining party practising non-cooperation, a commitment that came with a high price.

23 Susan Abeyasekere, ‘The Soetardjo petition’, Indonesia 15 (April 1973): pp. 80-108; the petition was signed by Soetardjo Kartohadikoesoemo (a patih), Ratu Langie (a Christian representative of the Minahasa Union), Kasimo (the Javanese president of the Political Association of Indonesian Catholics), Datok Toemenggoeng (a Minangkabau aristocrat) and two representatives of ethnic minorities, a Chinese and an Arab. Susan Abeyasekere, ‘Partai Indonesia Raja, 1936-42: A study in cooperative nationalism’, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 3, 2 (September, 1972): pp. 262-76. Since 1931 the composition of the Volksraad had been half Dutch and half Indonesian, with one third of its members nominated, and the rest elected from amongst the civil servants.
Maintaining its commitment to non-cooperation was no easy task. For one, it resulted in radical changes in the PSII party leadership. The first purge occurred in March 1933, when Soekiman – at that point vice-president of the executive committee – and Surjopranoto – leading member of the dewan partij – were expelled.25 The official reason for their expulsion was related to mismanagement of funds, yet it is not far-fetched to suggest that it was also connected to the anti-cooperation contingent’s gaining strength. After their forced exit from PSII, Soekiman and other former party members formed a new cooperationist party, the Partij Politiek Islam Indonesia (Partii, Indonesian Islamic Political Party), which in 1938 added several Muhammadiyah members and re-organized as Partai Islam Indonesia (PII, Islamic Party of Indonesia).26

In the meantime, PSII continued its double-track policy of promoting non-cooperation and upholding Islamic politics. Under the guidance of Agoes Salim, for example, it established a commission to solve the conflict between traditional adat and Islamic law. The commission suggested the replacement of adat with sharia, with particular attention to the realm of family law, a motion strongly backed by Tjokroaminoto at the 1934 congress, just a few months before his passing.27

Tjokroaminoto’s death left the leadership vacant, and the whole party in shock. Kartosuwiryo, Salim and Abikoesno now led the directorate and took charge of the transition.28 Without Tjokroaminoto, the fragile balance within the leadership could not hold, and by January 1939 Dutch authorities reported that if PSII members had lost interest in their party, it was mostly because of a loss of authority at the leadership level.29

At the Malang congress of July-August 1935, Salim took Tjokroaminoto’s place as president of the dewan partij, while Sangadji sat as chairman of the executive committee. Abikoesno took Soekiman’s place as president of the executive committee, and Kartosuwiryo maintained his position as secretary. The party’s branches had withered from 140 in 1934 to 90 at the time of the congress,
even as they still counted a total membership of around 45,000. The youth, divided between Pemoeda Moeslimin Indonesia and SIAP, had an overall membership of 5,000, and the women’s section had 6,000 members scattered across 34 branches.30

Throughout the year, the latent disagreement between Salim and Kartosuwiryo on the hijrah policy grew into an open conflict. Salim asked the executive committee to revise the policy, concerned that the government would further limit the party’s activities if it did not assume a more moderate attitude. Salim also asked permission to re-join the Volksraad, where he had been a member from 1921 to 1924. Nevertheless, the 1936 congress shows that Kartosuwiryo’s position, which was seconded by Abikoesno, was not even questioned by the remainder of the leadership and was instead actually reinforced as the party’s official policy. The politics of PSII were rooted in Islam, and non-cooperation was ‘the best way’ to further the interests of the Islamic community.

Salim was ousted, and by the time the party convened for the Jakarta congress, the leadership had already been changed. The dewan partij was presided over by Wondoamiseno and Kartosuwiryo, who had brought along several members from the West Java branch to fill positions in the executive committee. Amongst its members were Latief, Moestafa Kamil, Toha, Kamran, and Joesoef Taoeziri; Abikoesno was nominated as president and Kartawinata as secretary.31

These changes meant that PSII was not to pursue independence by cooperating with the colonial government, as Salim had recommended, but that it would instead fight for it. In propagandist terms, this reorientation was articulated in the drafting, by the central party leadership, of a Broscoer sikap hidjrah PSII (‘Pamphlet on PSII’s non-cooperation policy’, discussed below). At the end of the congress, the task of articulating the party’s goal in this way was handed over to Kartosuwiryo, who had the assignment of ‘clarifying, explaining and giving his opinion’ on the origins of the party’s non-cooperation policy. In the words of Pandji Islam, which reviewed the booklet in mid-September, ‘For the Islamic struggle of Indonesia, there should be more books on political Islam, like this one, published and distributed among the people of our nation’.32

To Kartosuwiryo this pamphlet represented the political platform

30 ‘Congres van de Partij Sjarikat Islam Indonesia te Malang van 31 Juli tot 4 Augustus 1935’ [1935], AMK GMr, no. 963x, NA.
31 Overzicht, 18 July 1936; Swara PSII, 25 April 1937. The congress was held in Jakarta between 8 and 12 July 1936.
32 ‘Pertimbangan Boekoe’, Pandji Islam no. 36-37, 15 September 1936, p. 9391.
for a new era of the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, but for Salim this marked the end of his career in the party.

Agoes Salim responded to Kartosuwiryo’s brochure with a series of articles published in the periodical *Pergerakan*, which in August of the same year became a pamphlet in its own right. In his *Pedoman politiek* (‘Political directive’), Salim stated that he was no longer prepared to work within a party that continued to seek conflict with the colonial government. Salim still desired to return to the Volksraad. After his request to do so had been rejected by both Kartosuwiryo and the executive committee’s chairman, Sabirin, he felt increasingly marginalized in his cooperative efforts, and eventually left the party in 1937. Salim was followed by Sangadji, Mohammed Roem and Wibisono, amongst others. On 17 February, they held the first meeting of the Komite Penjadar PSII (PSII Awareness Committee), which was attended by some 500 people, including several members of Muhammadiyah, Persis and PMI.

At the Bandung congress of 1937, Kartosuwiryo and Wondamiseno were still advocating the *hijrah* policy as a political and economic strategy, although throughout the year at least 21 branches had made known their discontentment with this approach, with some even moving their allegiance to Salim’s Komite Penjadar. It was reported that at Bandung, out of a total of 131 PSII branches, only 70 participated, and that of the party’s 40,000 members, at least 200 had moved to the Penjadar faction. Although this was quite a rescaling of PSII’s attendance, comparing these numbers to secular nationalist followers shows that Sarekat Islam still garnered much broader support.

34 ‘De PSII brochures “Hidjrah”’ [1937], AMK GMr, no. 101x, NA.
35 *Overzicht*, 22 August 1936.
36 *Overzicht*, 11 January 1937.
37 ‘Vergadering van het “Comite Penjadar Barisan PSII” te Batavia op Februari 1937’ [1937], AMK GMr, no. 227x, NA.
38 *Overzicht*, 30 January 1937. The 21 branches were: Batavia, Bandung, Kebarongan, Sidareja, Cilacap, Banyuwangi, Serono, Tempeh, Probolinggo, Pasuruan, Malang, Bululawang, Surabaya, Babat, Ngrongggot, Paree, Kota Bumi (Sumatra), Biaro (women’s wing), Bukittinggi, Dangung-Dangung (women’s wing), and Surau Pinang Biaro. In early January the provincial congress of Sulawesi, in Gorontalo, had issued a press release voicing its disappointment over the *hijrah* policy. See also PPO April-October 1937.
39 ‘Congres PSII te Bandoeng Juli 1937’ [1937], AMK GMr, no. 703x, NA. The 23rd congress was held between 19 and 23 July.
40 In mid 1933 Partindo counted around 20,000 members, and at the same time the new PNI barely had 1,000 members. The old PNI, at the height of its popularity, gathered 10,000 supporters. Parindra, instead, jumped from 3,200 in 1936 to 19,500 in 1941.
At Bandung, Kartosuwiryo focused on two of the issues of major concern for the Islamic party: the new limitations imposed on the authority of the religious courts, and the *hijrah* policy. These limitations were seen as yet another means to control the indigenous population and their religious affairs, as they revoked the relative autonomy granted to Islamic courts since 1882 in family- and inheritance-related matters. With the support of Muhammadiyah, Nahdatul Ulama and Persis, PSII passed two motions against the new regulations, recommending the establishment of a temporary *majelis ulama* (assembly of scholars) to settle conflicts arising from inheritance problems and a *majelis syari‘* (sharia assembly) to officiate at weddings. More importantly, the motion prohibited PSII members from making use of the Landraad, the colonial civil courts set up for indigenous Indonesians.

Anticipating the subject of his speech for the 1938 Majelis Islam A’la Indonesia congress, at Bandung Kartosuwiryo questioned the appropriateness of the government’s intervention in religious matters, as he believed religious affairs should be self-regulated by the Muslim population. Kartosuwiryo also blamed the community for referring to the colonial authorities rather than to local leaders when seeking solutions to their daily problems. In this system, inheritance-related matters were reassigned from Islamic courts to the Landraad, and all of the former’s decisions had to be approved by the latter’s president. Kartosuwiryo, voicing his disapproval of this system, returned to these issues at the first MIAI al-Islam congress, held in February 1938. This federation of Islamic organizations, modernist and traditionalist alike, had been established in September 1937 with the aim of forming an Indonesian parliament based on Islamic legislation, possibly as a reaction to the Soetardjo petition of 1936.

Using his vigorous oratorical skills, Kartosuwiryo, representing PSII, tackled the problem of implementing Islamic law from two sides: on the one hand, he blamed the Indonesian *ummat* for not following Qur’anic precepts, and on the other hand, he accused the Dutch of not abiding by their pledge to maintain religious neutrality and to grant freedom of religious expression. This

41 ‘Congres P(artij) S(jarikat) I(slam) I(ndonesia) te Bandoeng, Juli 1937’ [1937], AMK GMr, no. 830x, NA.
was an easy opening for Kartosuwiryo to stress the importance of harmonizing political and judiciary systems. The sole solution to ensure full adherence to Islam, he argued, was a satisfactory implementation of Islamic law, which by itself would only be possible through the combination of religious judges (hakim) and religious authority (such as the wali-al-amr, amir-ul-mu’minin or ulil amri).\(^{43}\)

Once the conflict with Salim had been settled by his withdrawal from the party, the hijrah remained the key point on PSII’s agenda, but also something that Kartosuwiryo felt compelled to clarify and justify at every given occasion. In Bandung he reiterated its ‘multidimensionality’ as a socio-economic as much as a religious and political effort. To further reinforce the membership’s consciousness of its value, the party established an Oesaha hidjrah committee with Kartosuwiryo as chairman, which was tasked with the compilation of the Daftar oesaha hidjrah, a pamphlet that was finally released in 1940,\(^{44}\) even though a first draft had already been approved at the Surabaya congress in 1938.

### THE BROSOER SIKAP HIDJRAH PSII AND DAFTAR OESAHA HIDJRAH

In the Brosoer sikap hidjrah PSII and Daftar oesaha hidjrah pamphlets, Kartosuwiryo focused at length on the origins and aims of the non-cooperation policy. He first identified its roots in Tjokroaminoto’s decision to withdraw from the Volksraad in 1923, and then labelled all subsequent attempts to join any colonial representative body or to cooperate with the Dutch as manifestations of an ‘accommodationist’ approach; he referred explicitly to Salim and Soekarno. Notably there was no reference to the Indian Khilafat’s movement constitution, drafted in 1919.

As a figurative migration from the ‘Indonesian Mecca to the Indonesian Medina’, the hijrah marked the transition from a regime of adat to a religious ideological framework articulated

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\(^{43}\) ‘Preadvies tentang Raad Agama dan Mahkamat Islam Tinggi, berhoeboeng dengan pemindahan hak-waris dari Raad Agama kepada Landraad, dihidangkan pada Al-Islam-Kongres jang ke-10 di Soerabaja, pada tg. 28 Februari menghadap 1 Maart 1938’ [1938], APG no. 1007, NA.

\(^{44}\) Kartosuwiryo, Daftar-oesaha hidjrah PSII bagian muqaddima (Malangbong (SS W/L)) (Java: Poestaka Dar-oel-Islam, March 1940) in Al Chaidar, Pemikiran politik proklamator negara Islam Indonesia S.M. Kartosoewirjo: fakta dan data sejarah Darul Islam (Jakarta: Darul Falah, 1999), pp. 461-76. ‘Pertimbangan Boekeoe’, Pandji Islam no. 36-37, 15 September 1936, p. 9391, indicates Daroel Oeloem as the publisher.
as the *darul Islam*, an ideal Islamic state.\(^{45}\) This transition was a priority in the party’s political platform, and could only be made possible as a result of *jihad*. To realize the pan-Islamic project was as important as the Islamization of Indonesian politics (as opposed to its Westernization), the education of Indonesian Muslims or the establishment of contacts with other Muslim communities outside of the archipelago. Ultimately, Kartosuwiryo declared that PSII was neither communist nor fascist and inspired by neither Arabism nor ‘Indonesianism’, as its foundation was only Islam.\(^{46}\)

The *Sikap hidjrah* pamphlet, arranged in two parts, was published under Kartosuwiryo’s signature in September 1936 following deliberations by the Party’s 22nd Majelis Tahkim. The *Sikap hidjrah* was conceived as a new manual for all members of the party, who had the duty to understand and implement the ‘Supreme Directives’ of the party’s non-cooperation. Abikoesno and Kartawinata admitted that its content might have sounded like ‘new stuff’ to readers, yet they nevertheless were confident that it would rapidly become an exemplary model for Islamic politics. The pamphlet aimed at illustrating the religious foundations of the party’s non-cooperation policy by focusing on the theology and history of the Prophet’s migration as much as on its political implications. However, Dutch officials saw the pamphlet in isolation from its context, claiming it was purely the outcome of Muslims’ unwillingness to cooperate with *kafir* (infidel) rule.\(^{47}\)

The first part of the pamphlet is mostly concerned with laying the historical and theological foundations for the second part. It begins with the events surrounding Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina in 622, before considering the following eight years of his leadership, the structure of the first Islamic institutions in Medina and the political outlook of this first ‘Islamic state’.

Throughout most of the first part, the discussion does not stray from standard theological teachings. However, at the end of each section, Kartosuwiryo skilfully connects these principles to PSII’s politics. In explaining the relations between the Creator and His creatures (*khalik* and *makhluk*), for example, Kartosuwiryo argues that it is because of this strong and enduring relation that Islam

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\(^{45}\) Here, ‘*dar al-Islam*’ and ‘*dar-ul-Islam*’ refer to the principle of ‘house of peace’, or ‘territory of Islam’, its spelling depending on the source; ‘*darul Islam*’ refers to the ideal of an Islamic state in Indonesia. ‘Darul Islam’, in capital letters and set in roman, refers to Kartosuwiryo’s group.

\(^{46}\) ‘PSII congres 1938 te Soerabaja’ [1939], AMK GMr, no. 1170x, NA. The congress was held between 30 July and 7 August 1938.

\(^{47}\) ‘De PSII Brochures ‘Hidjrah”’ [1937] AMK GMr no. 101x, NA.
offers directions in all aspects of life: both in this world and in the afterlife, to individuals as well as communities, one nation and the whole of humanity, for glory in this world and happiness in the next. In short, all the rules needed for internal and external conduct can be found in Islam, from the smallest to the biggest.

In this way, the Qur’an and the Prophet are portrayed as the models of behaviour in social and economic life.

As humans can be divided into three categories depending on their proximity to God, so can the history of PSII be organized in this same way: first, the party had a ‘materialistic’ existence (hidup hissy)\(^48\) from its establishment in 1912 until the Madiun congress of 1923. Then, the expulsion of communist members had ensured a deeper concern for the afterlife (hidup ma’nawy). But it was not until the 1930 congress in Yogyakarta that the PSII shifted its focus from ‘pure action’ to ‘belief’. The party had subsequently promoted the further elevation of the party to a life freed of material concerns and in perfect harmony with Islam (hidup ma’any).

The main engine behind this shift – from focusing on a materialistic existence to rooting itself in pure belief – is identified in members’ adherence to Islamic precepts, fear of God, faith in Allah and His One-ness, and complete surrender (tawakkal Allah). This surrender, however, must not translate into inertia, but rather should result in isti’anah (the act of seeking help) and istiqamah (knowledge that help will come from God), thus instigating istitha’a, or the power and willingness to act. In political terms, this meant that party members would abide by God’s laws, involving themselves in the anti-colonial struggle and believing in the sole efficacy of not cooperating with the Dutch.

As Muhammad and his followers had left Mecca and migrated to ensure the supremacy of justice over evil, and of monotheism over polytheism, so Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia had to seek happiness (falah) and victory (fatah) by pursuing its own hijrah and starting a new era. It is on these reflections that part two of the pamphlet is opened, explaining how in this context Mecca is not a dot on the map of the Middle East, but instead represents the metaphorical situation of oppression and ignorance that can be found in every kampong and country of the world, and thus a situation that needs to be (figuratively) abandoned in favour of Medina-

\(^{48}\) The Islamic term hissy can also be translated as ‘sensationalist’ or ‘sensuous’. However, as here it is opposed to lives inspired by deep concern for the afterlife or lives conducted in full harmony with Islam, I chose to translate the term as ‘materialistic’, suggesting a life grounded in worldly matters and goals.
Indonesia, where the law of God rules and the ummah is happy and victorious.

Where the second part surpasses the first is in its focus on PSII’s strategies and aims. Above all, the hijrah to Medina-Indonesia – and hence to an Islamic state – is marked by three steps: jihad, iman (faith) and tauhid (unity). This path is well trodden, as it places Kartosuwiryo in an intellectual and strategic tradition that connects al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Hasan al-Banna (1906-49), Abu ‘Ala Maududi (1903-79), Sayyed Qutb (1906-66) and contemporary Islamist militants.49 As mentioned in the Preface, I see Kartosuwiryo’s radicalization as a development strictly correlated with domestic political and social dynamics. However, it would be erroneous to consider developments in Indonesia in isolation from events occurring in the Middle East. I will explore this point further in the next section.

Kartosuwiryo dedicates several pages to explaining the meaning of jihad, iman and tauhid, making generous use of Qur’anic quotations and bringing forward their practical implications for the political struggle. Having established that in the Qur’an there is no hijrah without jihad, Kartosuwiryo is careful to explain that the ‘positive’ struggle is the jihad of the tongue and the heart (the jihad al-akbar, led by iman), and not that of the sword – the jihad al-asghar, defined instead as negative and destructive. The Program djihad partij, or ‘programme of action’, issued by the Yogyakarta congress in 1930, should therefore be understood as a ‘programme of the greater jihad’.

Reconnecting with the earlier discussion of the relation between God and His creatures, Kartosuwiryo blames the West for severing the ties linking religious duties to believers’ daily activities, thereby breaking the unity of religion and politics (agama dan kerajaan) and shifting the hijrah unto the realm of ‘ibada (worship). Nevertheless, Kartosuwiryo emphasizes that the jihad ubudiyah, based on faith in unity, has to be complemented by the jihad ijtima‘iyah which embodies the social, economic and political dimensions of hijrah and jihad, and represents the foundation of PSII. Politically it calls for Islamic politics; economically, for cooperatives and self-reliance (for which Kartosuwiryo uses the Indian term swadeshi); and socially, for the benefit of public interest (maslaha).

The last section of the pamphlet is fully dedicated to the party’s agenda, which is summarized as ‘achieving the implementation of the laws of God, on the way of God, because of God’. In essence,
this agenda was the implementation of sharia law and the creation of a society in which it was possible for all Muslims to conduct fully Islamic lives.

What had been generally defined as ‘Islamic politics’ was expounded in three clear points: the propagation of Islamically interpreted knowledge and politics amongst PSII members in particular and amongst Muslims in general; the establishment of relations with Muslims across the world to work towards the realization of pan-Islamism as the unity of the Islamic ummah; and the dissociation of PSII actions from colonial bodies and policies.

The Daftar oesaha hidjrah, printed in 1940, complemented the Sikap hidjrah by illustrating the anticipated Program djihad partij. This short pamphlet laid out the necessary steps for the transformation from ‘Mecca-Indonesia’ to ‘Medina-Indonesia’, a goal that could only be achieved through jihad. Weaving together the threads laid out in the past decade, Kartosuwiryo argued that PSII should direct its efforts towards improving the status of the Indonesian population (meaning the natives) by expanding the reach of the dar-ul-Islam and thus widening the constituency of the Muslim society. Loyal only to God, and thus dedicated to the implementation of sharia on an individual (shakhsiyah) as well as a social (ijtima’iyah) level, the party and the members of this Islamic society were committed to pursuing pan-Islamism – here also referred to as ‘the unity of Islam and oneness of God’ (al-ittihad-oel-Islam dan wah-danijat Allah) beyond the borders of the Indonesian archipelago, implementing sharia law, and reuniting agama dan dunia (religion and government), the link between which had been severed by Western colonial domination.

REFLECTING ON THE ‘MIDDLE EAST’ FACTOR

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that the connections between the Middle East and Southeast Asia were kept alive by the circulation of pilgrims, students and printed material, which stimulated a vibrant exchange of ideas across these regions. I also showed that debates within Sarekat Islam often touched upon issues involving the wider Muslim world. As far as Kartosuwiryo himself is con-
cerned, there is not much evidence of direct contact with Middle Eastern modernists or activists. However, there is enough evidence to suggest a degree of influence that goes beyond ‘parallel development’, as instead argued by Howard Federspiel in the case of Persis leader Ahmad Hassan and Hasan al-Banna, for example.\(^5^2\) In this section, I do not suggest any causality or a direct reproduction of Middle Eastern patterns in Indonesia, but simply wish to highlight instances in which foreign developments were brought to bear upon Kartosuwiryo’s ideas since the late 1920s.

It is worth noting that C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, in his *Aspects of Islam in post-colonial Indonesia*, mentioned that whilst he was in Egypt at a meeting with Muslim Brotherhood leaders, in 1950 he was questioned on the Darul Islam movement of West Java. Van Nieuwenhuijze defined their enquiries as an interest supported by a good deal of rather detailed information, it seemed. In fact, would it not be surprising if no relations existed between movements, each so well settled – even though not legally – in its own society?\(^5^3\)

In more abstract terms, Boland also suggested possible influences from the Muslim Brotherhood and Abu Ala Mawdudi on the Darul Islam.\(^5^4\)

I could find no indication of Mawdudi’s influence on Kartosuwiryo. However, some evidence of direct contact between Hasan al-Banna’s group and the Indonesian community in Cairo can be found in the existence of the post-independence group named, in Arabic, Lajnatul-Difa’i’an Indonesia (Committee for the Defence of Indonesia, in Indonesian: Panitia Pembela Indonesia). It appears that Hasan al-Banna participated in its establishment, together with other Brotherhood leaders and the Palestinian leader Muhammad Ali Taher in October 1945. Further, when in April 1946 the Indonesian Republic’s delegation visited Cairo, the delegates were received by al-Banna and dozens of Brotherhood members.\(^5^5\)


The military publication *Penumpasan pemberontakan D.I./T.I.I., S.M. Kartosuwiryo di Jawa Barat*, itself a collection of Darul Islam documents’ reproductions, as well as accounts produced after Kartosuwiryo’s capture, report that in the 1950s Kartosuwiryo’s intention was to first consolidate his authority on the archipelago, and then to build relations on the international level with Malaysia, Pakistan and Egypt. Once linked with movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, the Indonesian Islamic state would have been able to establish a pan-Islamic *dewan Khalifatullah fil’ardi* (Council of God’s Caliphate on Earth), which would assume a federal structure with a rotating leadership of two-year terms.56

Finally, I would like to add some reflections on Kartosuwiryo’s use of one specific term, *sji’ar Islam*, between 1929 and the mid 1940s. As explained below, this has a wide range of meanings. Although at first glance ‘Nasib ra’iat Tjitjoeroek’ (published in *Fadjar Asia* on 11 May 1929) might seem no different from other articles in which Kartosuwiryo invoked Islam as the solution to all social problems, it is worth noting that he uses the word *sji’ar*. In traditional *fiqh* (jurisprudence), this term was used to define the mark of sacrificial animals, pilgrimage ‘stations’, and sumptuary laws. Though the use of this word has been increasingly common in Islamist circles since the 1970s, it had not been present in the Indonesian context in the preceding decades, leading scholars to believe that it had been introduced only during the Islamic revival period. I have, however, encountered the term on several occasions, from this 1929 article to the *Sikap hidjrah* pamphlet, and the *Soeara MIAI* magazine during the Japanese occupation. In its contemporary usage and in Kartosuwiryo’s understanding, the term indicates a complete implementation of Islamic precepts, equating the expression *Islam kaffah*. What is most relevant to this study is that it appears that Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood was using this sense of the term *sji’ar Islam* in their early days.57

KARTOSUWIRYO’S WEAKENING SUPPORT AND WITHDRAWAL FROM POLITICS

Between 1937 and 1938, no significant shrinking of the party’s constituency was recorded, and at the Surabaya congress of 1938 Karto-

57 For the above information on *sji’ar Islam* I am indebted to Michael Feener, who is researching this subject.
suwiryo was still vice-president of the board. Yet, just one year later, he would be expelled from the party, mostly as a result of his non-cooperationist approach. Kartosuwiryo’s conflict with other party leaders was aggravated by the clash of his *hidjrah* policy with Abikoesno’s decision, in early 1938, to join Soetomo in forming the Gabengan Politik Indonesia (GAPI, Indonesian Political Federation).  

The GAPI embraced ‘cooperative nationalism’, and set itself the task of creating a united national front. As nationalist leaders’ requests for self-government were becoming entangled with developments in Europe, GAPI agreed to cooperate with the colonial authority on two levels: internationally it would help to fight Fascism, and nationally it would contribute to establishing a democratically elected Indonesian parliament (the movement was commonly referred to as *Indonesia ber-parlemen*). But Germany’s occupation of Holland in August 1940 resulted, insofar as the Indies were concerned, in the Dutch government having a strong reason to stall any structural reform until the end of the war. This uncommitted approach to Indonesia’s independence was further stressed in Queen Wilhelmina’s London speech in May 1941, in which she promised to revisit the relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands after the war, but gave no indication that independence as such would be discussed.

At the same time as relations between Kartosuwiryo and the leaders of other Indonesian parties were worsening on account of their disagreement on the issue of cooperation, the central board of PSII came under the impression that Kartosuwiryo had pursued a wide campaign to propagate mystical teachings. Members of the executive committee argued that Kartosuwiryo’s *Sikap hidjrah* pamphlet contained the building blocks of a Sufi *tarekat*, which they saw in full opposition to the principles of PSII in particular, and of Islam in general. It was suspected that these teachings had spread across the region, and mass expulsions were led in Garut and beyond. The party’s leadership became concerned

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58 The first organizational meeting was held in March 1938 and was led by Abikoesno and Soetomo. However, as Soetomo died in May 1938, the leadership shifted to Thamrin. The first gathering of GAPI was held in May 1939, and it was joined by Parindra, Pasoendan, Gerindo, PSII, PII and several other smaller parties.

59 ‘Actie in Nederlandsch-Indië voor een volwaardig parlement’ [1939], AMK GMr, no. 101x, NA.


61 PPO, January 1939, p. 257. None of the sources explain which elements of the *Sikap hidjrah* pamphlet indicated an alignment with the *tarekat* movement, and I could not detect any such indications from my reading of the text.
that the interests of Sarekat Islam had been compromised, and as Kartosuwiryo refused to stop the re-printing of the brochure, he was eventually expelled too.62 A later issue of the Overzicht suggested that in addition to the conflict over the non-cooperation policy, there was also a theological one on the nature (sifat) of the Qur’an. This statement is, however, left unexplored by the sources.63

Kartosuwiryo was not the only victim of this purge: several other leading figures, together with the entire memberships of the Malangbong and Tejamaya (Tasikmalaya region) branches64 and of eight other branches (including some in Central Java), incurred the same fate.65 In late January 1940 Wondoamiseno declared that the party had ‘long since abandoned the non-cooperation policy’ and had changed its strategy from hijrah to tauhid, joining in the wider cooperative effort to establish an Indonesian parliament.66

Kartosuwiryo’s activities between mid 1939 and early 1940 are unknown, but the suggestion that he had established a new party – a third PSII splinter group – was first aired at the 1939 PSII congress and later publicized by several newspapers between late January and early February.67 A more detailed account appeared later in April in a report by Statius Muller, Adviseur voor Inlandse Zaken, explaining how after a few months of inactivity – or, more likely, of preparation – on 24 March 1940 Kartosuwiryo had formed a new party headquartered in Malangbong.

The Komite Pertahanan Kebenaran-PSII (KPK-PSII, Committee for the Defence of the Truth-PSII) was labelled by the Dutch a sect rather than a party, and was supported by around 1,500 members originating from 21 different PSII branches, including those in Padang Panjang (West Sumatra) and Manado (North Sulawesi).68 The Malangbong branch, at the centre of this new splinter party, held a public meeting to discuss the decision of the Palembang congress to expel Kartosuwiryo in May 1940. They decided, first, that the central board’s expulsion was against the

62 Overzicht, 17 June 1939.
63 Overzicht, 3 February 1940.
64 PPO, January 1939, p. 257.
65 Overzicht, 17 June 1939.
66 Overzicht, 3 February 1940.
67 These were Pewarta Deli (25 January), Sinar Sumatra (26 January), Pertja Selatan (27 January) and Penjebar Semangat (3 February) – all mentioned in Overzicht, 10 February 1940 – and Overzicht, 3 February 1940.
68 ‘Oprichting van een nieuwe politiek-godsdienstige [sic.] partij door het KPK-PSII’ [1940], AMK GMr, no. 529x, NA.
party’s principles, and second, that the KPK-PSII would autonomously continue to work along PSII lines, even keeping the same flag and name. The *Daftar oesaha hidjrah* (discussed above) was printed in March 1940 by Kartosuwiryo in Malangbong, and thus the absence of any comments in the pamphlet on the split could be read as a marker of this desire for continuity or, even, as a manifestation of self-perceived authenticity and commitment to the true PSII aims.

In his report, Statius Muller also made a note about an educational institution, the Soeffah. Through the development of intellectual capacities and character building, members of the Soeffah were seen as forming the core of an ‘Islamically perfect’ society. While this was the same aim that Kartosuwiryo had set for the Batavian Taman Marsoedi Kasoeasrastran in 1929, what he intended to do in his enterprise in Malangbong by referring to it as a Soeffah was to reconnect his efforts with Muhammad’s dual role as political leader and teacher. In Medina, the Prophet used to expound Islamic teachings in a sheltered corner of the mosque (in Arabic called *suffah*), which at night also functioned as makeshift home for the newly arrived migrants, the *muhajirin*.

To Kartosuwiryo the prophetic *suffah* represented the place where *syariat Islam* – the way of Islam – was taught in Medina and where the *muballighin* practiced their teaching skills. In the memories of one of his associates, life in this institution was conducted in complete fulfilment of the Qur’an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. According to one of Kartosuwiryo’s grandsons, whose house today still faces the lot where the Soeffah once stood, this was a place where around one hundred religious teachers were trained at any given time in what was still considered Tjokroaminoto’s political strategy for achieving independence: *persiapan, kemerdekaan, Negara Islam* (preparation, independence, Islamic state).

It is difficult to date the end of the KPK-PSII and the Soeffah. According to the *Overzicht*, Kartosuwiryo’s PSII splinter group was still active in mid January 1942 and a Dutch military report from January 1948 mentions that Kartosuwiryo’s Soeffah was active

69 PPO, May-June 1940, p. 341.
70 An alternative explanation could be in reference to the *Ikhwaan as-Saffa*; I am grateful to Michael Laffan for pointing this out to me.
71 Kartosuwiryo, *Sikap hidjrah PSII*, IV/5 and V/3.
72 Interviews conducted by the author in Bandung, 16 January 2008, and in Malangbong, 6 February 2008.
73 *Overzicht*, 17 January 1942.
before the military campaign of July 1947. Oral sources provided inconsistent information, as one stated that the Japanese bombed its mosque, school and houses soon after the invasion, whilst another remembered that the destruction of the Soeffah occurred at the hands of the Dutch in 1947, thus triggering Kartosuwiryo to move to Ciamis.

NEW REGIME, NEW APPROACH: DAI NIPPON AND ISLAMIC POLITICS

The Japanese landing on Sumatra in February 1942 and their invasion of Java the following month occurred at a time when relations between colony and motherland were strained, as exemplified in August 1941 by the Indonesian nationalists’ boycott of the bill on native militias. The Dutch authorities in Java and Sumatra quickly surrendered to the new occupier, which meant that significant changes had to be made to ensure the survival, if not the success, of the nationalists’ aspirations to independence.

Exiled nationalist leaders returned to the centre of the struggle, boundaries between cooperationists and non-cooperationists shifted, and the Japanese-led mobilization of the Indonesian population all had consequences for the nationalist movement. Though at first Japan had promoted the religious wing of the nationalist movement, by the time Japan capitulated, Soekarno and the secularists had gained the upper hand.

As short-lived as it was, the Japanese occupation was a formative experience for the Indonesian political leadership, as it gave a structure to what until then had been just hopes, dreams and visions of an independent state. Even more significantly, in the beginning it strengthened politicized Muslims’ expectations for an Islamic state. Japan sought to gather support for its anti-Western Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere by appealing to the anti-colonial movement and the Islamic nationalists, and it is in this framework that Japan had propagated its support for Islam and its victories against European powers for decades.

74 ‘Overzicht en ontwikkeling van de toestand 1 Jan 1800 uur tot 5 Jan. 1800 uur’, Territorial ts. Troepencommandant West Java [1948], Ministerie van Defensie [hereafter MD]: Archieven Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië [hereafter AS], no. 2224, NA.
75 Interviews conducted by the author in Malangbong, 6 February 2008, and in Jakarta, 7 February 2008.
76 The importance of the Japanese invasion and occupation of Southeast Asia has been explored by Harry Jindrich Benda, ‘The structure of Southeast Asian history: Some preliminary observations’, *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 3 (1962).
Japan also reversed the Dutch attitude of ‘regarding Indonesian politics as a troublesome irritation’, and along with re-organizing the bureaucratic apparatus at the local and national levels, it proceeded to substitute all existing political parties with broader mass organizations. These two trajectories led, first, to the unintentional politicization of the rural population, as traditional structures of power were replaced by new organizations whose leadership was entrusted to physically strong, administratively able and highly cooperative youth. Second, it provided urban Indonesians with ready-made mass organizations, thus facilitating the formation of an Indonesian national identity beyond the regional and ideological lines that had characterized the anti-colonial movement since the 1910s.

The first such organization was the Gerakan Tiga A, which hailed Japan as leader, protector and light of Asia. The group was established within weeks from the Japanese arrival, as early as April 1942. As all pre-invasion organizations and parties had been abolished, the Triple A Movement was to include members of both nationalist parties and government officials without distinction. The first sign that Japan was not going to sideline, but instead would emphasize, the role of the Muslim leadership was the formation of an Islamic sub-division of the Triple A Movement, the Persiapan Persatoean Oemmat Islam (Preparation of the Unification of the Islamic Community), entrusted to Abikoesno in July 1942.

Japan’s arrival in March had been welcomed by all constituencies, and the Islamic leadership was particularly enthusiastic. Their enthusiasm was demonstrated, for example, by Wondoamiseno’s comment in August 1942 that the Japanese arrival was an event to be thankful to God for, as ‘the brave sacrifice of the Dai Nippon’ had freed the Indonesian people of 340 years of Dutch colonization and ‘had lifted it from the mud of subjugation and humiliation’; now there is no more ethnic differentiation, ...
everyone is equal, and this is the blessing of the leadership and protection of our brother Japan’.

Wondoamiseno also suggested to the party’s local leaders in Sulawesi that they follow the Japanese request to dissolve the party, as it was expected that Japan would soon create an Islamic organization independent from the Triple A Movement. There was no reason to upset the new regime, argued Wondoamiseno, as it seemed committed to strengthening the Islamic movement by providing it with a united organization. Until then Sarekat Islam was to focus on education (*tabligh*) and economic initiatives. The following month Japan re-established MIAI, entrusting its leadership to Harsono Tjokroaminoto and Wondoamiseno, who at that point were seen as the most cooperative elements of PSII.

Driven by the idea that Islam could be a viable way to penetrate Indonesians’ souls, and thus help their effort to gain popular support, in 1943 the Japanese begun to co-opt *kiyai* and *ulama* by training them in pan-Asian ideology, hoping that this would be integrated in their pan-Islamic vision.

In March 1943 the Triple A Movement experiment was terminated, and Japan created Putera in its stead (Pusat Tenaga Rakjat, Concentration of the People’s Power). Putera brought together all political and non-political nationalist organizations to work towards establishing a form of self-government. Although in the hands of secular nationalists - its directorate included Soekarno, Hatta, and Ki Hadjar Dewantoro of the Taman Siswa - Putera also gave a leading role to the former chairman of Muhammadiyah K.H. Mas Mansur. In its attempt to seal a partnership with Islam, Japan went as far as calling upon the Indonesian people to fulfil their ‘duty to defend themselves as an Asiatic race, to defend the religion, the sovereignty, and justice as Muslems [*sic*], and to support the realisation of *Hakko Itjoe* [Japanese for ‘the world as

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81 ‘Letter of Ladjnah Tanfidzijah Partij Sjarikat Islam Indonesia Batavia-Centrum 2044’, APG, no. 1007, NA.
82 Soeara MIAI [hereafter SMIAI], 1 January 2603 JIY/1943 CE.
83 The Japanese administration in 1943-44 established obligatory courses for religious teachers. ‘Kiai-Cursus’, Archief van de Algemene Secretarie, 1944-1950 [hereafter AAS], nos. 5236, 5237, includes several exercise notebooks that show the high level of indoctrination on themes such as pan-Asianism and the Co-Prosperity Sphere these teachers were subjected to. *Kiai* were also asked to answer questions such as ‘in which practical ways do you expect to cooperate with the *Dai Nippon*?’. Also very interesting are the archives containing the registration modules of participating *kiyai*. These offer extensive information on their family history and education, and often also on the titles of the texts studied and taught.
one house’] as ordained by Allah’. The honeymoon between the Japanese authority and the Islamic movement would only last until late 1944, when Japan’s favour was transferred to the secular nationalists, a shift that led Soekarno to cry: ‘to live and die with Japan’.

Kartosuwiryo was just as enthusiastic about the change of regime, and he was ready to fight for the supremacy of Japan along with other Islamic leaders. Returning to journalism, he became a regular contributor to the bi-weekly magazine Soeara MIAI from its inception in March 1943 until it dissolved at the end of the same year. Kartosuwiryo promoted a profoundly cooperative attitude towards the foreign authority, marking a dramatic change from his earlier pieces published in Fadjar Asia.

At a time when Japan had expelled Fir’aun Belanda (the Dutch Pharaoh) and thus had ‘opened the door to, and widened the efforts towards, Islam’, the Indonesian ummah had to take advantage of the changed circumstances and cooperate with Japan in creating a ‘new world’.

84 Helen Hardacre explains the concept of Hakkō Ichiu as ‘eight corners of the world under one roof’. For Hardacre, the term suggests that ‘[t]he Japanese were a superior people with a mission to rule the entire world’. Evidently, Indonesians understood this concept in a different way. Helen Hardacre, Shintō and the state, 1868-1988 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 40.


87 Kartosuwiryo, ‘Bekal bathin dalam perdjoeangan’, SMIAI, 1 March.


The apex of Kartosuwiryo’s positive attitude toward Japanese rule was reached in May 1943, when he wrote: ‘Whether one likes it or not, each individual and group will become a member of the Big Family, the Greater East Asia Family’, and each of its parts ‘has to feel obliged to work, help, and support it with full conviction and consciousness, in the effort to reach common prosperity’. Cooperation with Japan had become wajib (obligatory).90

It is on this basis that Kartosuwiryo advocated the unification of all those who had been contributing to building the Greater East Asia sphere into one front. His understanding of Japan’s dunia baru (‘new world’) as an embryonic Islamic state became explicit: the front was called Benteng Islam (Islamic Front), and the new world represented the bridge to the dar al-akhirat, the afterlife.91 The goal of the Benteng Islam was to implement religious precepts and further Islamize Indonesia under Japanese rule. To ensure the success of such a project, the front had to rely on a combination of the ummah’s genuine belief, the Islamic leaders’ knowledge and the Japanese national government’s authority. Kartosuwiryo appeared very confident that Japan would support this idea: ‘As the Supreme Government in Tokyo and the military authority located here have already granted the Islamic ummah the freedom to follow its religious duties, now all that is left are the lower levels of the National government.’92

Even though at this point Kartosuwiryo still seemed pleased with the Japanese attempts to coordinate the nationalist movement, by 1949 he was to describe their rule as a circus in which the animals (Indonesian nationalist leaders) were only free to act within the limited range of movement allowed and orchestrated by their trainer, Japan.93 Using less picturesque terms, Benda has made a similar point about this tendency of the Japanese regime:

Until almost the end of the occupation […] it was they who held the keys to all power, and it was they who rigorously maintained the limits within which urban elites, especially, were allowed to move. Whether nominally exercising the authority of ‘independent’ governments or whether playing less elevated roles as leaders of yet dependent peoples, the scope of nationalist elites was pitifully restricted, their activities narrowly circumscribed, and their bargaining power vis-à-vis the occupying power virtually non-existent.94

Yet Kartosuwiryo’s support of Japan’s rule had apparently paid off. In May 1943 he was reported to be mayor of Bandung, and by June he succeeded in setting up a treasury for the Islamic community—the *bait al-mal*—under MIAI’s sponsorship. As it was explained in a series of articles published in *Soeara MIAI*, the function of the *bait al-mal* was socio-economic. In this transitional period when the *ummah* was ‘striving for the realization of the Co-Prosperity Sphere’, the *bait al-mal*’s finances were to be used to support the war. During times of peace, this treasury would have also collected wealth from unclaimed inheritance, *dhimmi*’s (tax-paying non-Muslim monotheist) taxes and war spoils, taking up all the functions of a treasury. The *majelis bait al-mal* was operated at a regional level in the Bandung area by Wondoamiseno and Wiranatakoesoema. Kartosuwiryo’s plan to extend it to every province in Java soon encountered Japanese opposition.

As MIAI gained socio-political success, Japanese administrators began to fear that the anti-Dutch sentiments predominant in pre-invasion Islamic circles would be translated into anti-Japanese sentiments. Furthermore, Benda has suggested that it was the creation of the *bait al-mal* as a monetary institution that tipped the balance and brought Japan to the decision to disband MIAI entirely. Within two weeks of the dissolution of MIAI, the Majelis Sjero Muslimin Indonesia (Masjoemi or, in current usage, Masyumi) was established in its place. Masyumi’s leadership was entrusted to Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama, whom the Japanese saw as less politicized, thus leaving PSII and the other former political parties with no role to play.

THE RISE OF SECULAR NATIONALISM

At the end of 1943, Putera was also dissolved, and replaced with the Jawa Hōkōkai, by far the most successful of all the Japanese attempts to mobilize the Javanese population. This group retained...
Soekarno as its leader, and throughout the year it enjoyed increased freedoms and support from the Japanese – including the creation of a military wing, the Barisan Pelopor (Pioneer Corps) – tipping the balance in favour of the secular nationalists. As Japan was the ultimate gate-keeper of the political sphere, the rising prominence of the secular nationalists had wide-ranging effects. By the time the government declared, in early September, that Indonesia would obtain independence ‘in the near future’, the tables had turned and Islamic groups’ dominance was limited to the social sphere.

It was not until late December, when Japan was increasingly losing ground on the international scene, that local authorities once again embraced Islam as a key element of their anti-Western propaganda. In an attempt to identify their defence as a holy war, they added a religious flavour to the Pembela Tanah Air, (Peta, Army for the Defence of the Fatherland) by placing the Muslim crescent on its flag. They also allowed Masyumi to have its own armed wing. Hizboellah was placed under the direction of Wahid Hasyim and was open to Indonesian Muslims between 17 and 25 years of age. Trainees came from all over the archipelago, and in February 1945 the first group of 500 first military and ideological training in Cibarus, West Java, under the leadership of K.H. Zainul Arifin. Among the several ulama providing spiritual training was K.H. Moestafa Kamil from Singaparna, the above-mentioned Sarekat Islam leader.

In April 1945 Kartosuwiryo became a trainer for the Banten branch of the Barisan Pelopor; he was never a member of the Hizboellah. It should not be a surprise that a leader of the Islamic nationalist move-
ment became part of the cadre of the secular Pioneer Corps instead of joining Masyumi’s military wing. As mentioned, former PSII members had been effectively expelled from – or, perhaps more accurately, had never been included in – Masyumi, to the extent that politicized Islamic nationalists had infiltrated the Jawa Hōkōkai, gaining particular influence in Bandung and the Priangan area.103

Despite their mixed constituencies, their joint effort in preparing post-occupation institutions, their common goal of independence and their agreement over the need to protect Japan against the Allies, Masyumi appeared uninterested in Jawa Hōkōkai’s proposal to merge the two organizations. The Muslim party was aware that it would have meant the loss of its autonomy as well as of its leverage in securing a role for Islam in the future state of Indonesia.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Between 1929 and 1936 Kartosuwiryo was propelled towards the leadership of Sarekat Islam, and they coordinated a radicalization of Islamist politics and non-cooperation. In the aftermath of Tjokroaminoto’s death, the hijrah policy became a dominant feature of the party’s policies, especially as secular nationalists retreated towards cooperation with the Dutch to achieve self-governance. As De Jonge’s repressive policies cornered Sarekat Islam and Kartosuwiryo, several long-standing members withdrew their support from the party, eventually leading to Kartosuwiryo’s expulsion.

At the time of the Japanese landing in 1942, Indonesia and the Netherlands had already been rapidly drifting apart. Dai Nippon succeeded in finding its niche in the hearts of most Indonesians, harvesting support in rural and urban areas by co-opting political and administrative agents. The religious movement grew stronger under Japanese rule, as it became more coordinated, created a stronger structure and, most importantly, was provided with an armed wing: in 1948 this would become the core foundation for Kartosuwiryo’s Darul Islam.

While the Allied forces were making progress against the Axis powers, Japan agreed to prepare Indonesia for independence. Japan first supported political Islam as an instrument for deepening its hold on the country’s population, but when the secular nationalist elite was deemed more suitable for the task of laying the foundations of the new state, the Japanese shifted their support accordingly.

103 Benda, The crescent and the rising sun, p. 266.