

1 Islam in Indonesia before the Revolution

Indonesia today is the world's fourth most populous country and the country with more Muslims than any other. As of the 2010 census, Muslims made up roughly 87 percent of Indonesia's population,¹ and national leaders estimated a similar percentage of Muslims around the time of independence.² Muslims have been present in the archipelago for centuries, and Islamic sultanates were established on Sumatra as early as the thirteenth century of the common era,³ but the early twentieth century was a time of particularly important and particularly rapid change for the Muslim community. In part, this was because they were all under the colonialism of the Netherlands and then (briefly) Japan, tying together thousands of islands in a way they had not been politically united before. In other ways, the religious changes in Indonesia in the decades before the Indonesian revolution were the result of transnational forces within Islam, leading to theological reform and modernization, new ways of organizing the Muslim community, and new ideas about the future of that community.

This chapter introduces Islam in Indonesia and the upheaval of the early twentieth century to readers who do not have a solid grounding in the transformations that were taking place. This provides context against which to recognize some continuities and major changes that took place during the revolution. The basis for the changes of the early twentieth century were the long-standing institutions of Islamic life in the archipelago: scholars and schools. Change came first in the different approaches

¹ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Penduduk Menurut Wilayah dan Agama yang Dianut," <http://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=0> (accessed July 21, 2017). Yearly surveys in between decennial censuses in Indonesia do not provide detailed statistics on religion.

² Abu Hanifah, *Soal Agama dalam Negara Modern*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1950), 21–22.

³ Alexander David Robert Wain, "Chinese Muslims and the Conversion of the Nusantara to Islam," DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2015, chapter 3, "Samudera-Pasai"; cf. Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), chapter 1.

to religion that divided the Muslim community. Three subsequent trends brought more lasting impact: the birth of modern organizations, the rise of a new orthodoxy, and the participation of the Muslim community in politics. In the early 1940s, life in the archipelago was sharply disrupted by the Japanese occupation during World War II, but this occupation also set up the position of the Muslim community in the revolution.

Islam in Indonesia at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Although the Dutch were active traders in the Indies from the late sixteenth century and engaging in explicit territorial colonialism from the early nineteenth century, it was only just after the turn of the twentieth century that they solidified their claims to all the territory of the Netherlands East Indies, which would later become independent Indonesia.⁴ For Muslim communities, the political changes were important, but the key institutions of Islamic life showed broad continuity from the nineteenth century into the early twentieth. These institutions were Islamic leaders and Islamic educational institutions.

Islamic leaders were a staple of village life in every Muslim village in the Indonesian archipelago. The terms for local Islamic leaders varied with the various ethnic groups across the archipelago: *teungku* in Aceh, *syekh* in West Sumatra, *kyai* on Java, *tuan guru* on Lombok, *anrong guru* in South Sulawesi, and many others.⁵

Religious leaders served multiple purposes in an East Indies village. They provided education for the community by teaching basic literacy and thus serving as the first step for young men who might study later in an Islamic school. They led Muslims in rituals, such as prayers and communal activities. In many cases they performed divination and mystical healing, or released individuals from spells.⁶ Often Islamic leaders also led the community more generally.⁷

⁴ M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

⁵ James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Lynn L. Thomas and Franz von Benda-Beckmann, eds., *Change and Continuity in Minangkabau: Local, Regional, and Historical Perspectives on West Sumatra* (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1985); Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976 [1960]); Fahrurrozi, "Tuan Guru and Social Change in Lombok, Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, 135 (2018): 117–134; Mustari Bosra, *Tuang Guru, Anrong Guru dan Daeng Guru: Gerakan Islam di Sulawesi Selatan 1914–1942* (Makassar: La Galigo Press, 2008).

⁶ Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, 2 (1960): 238.

⁷ Cf. the comparisons of village Islamic life in Muhamad Radjab, *Semasa Kecil di Kampung, 1913–1928: Autobiografi Seorang Anak Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1974);

On a supra-village, or even archipelago-wide level, sometimes Muslims collaborated with the colonial powers,⁸ but more often they spearheaded resistance against the Dutch. Muslims of the archipelago were in direct conflict with the Dutch from as early as 1596, and changes in governance in the early nineteenth century moved the initiative for anticolonial resistance into the hands of Islamic revivalists.⁹ As Antony Reid observed, “Every time of upheaval in Indonesia demonstrated again [Islamic teachers’] ability to inspire peasant resistance and heroism.”¹⁰ More prominent religious leaders were those who had traveled – especially those who had completed the pilgrimage to Mecca – and received an advanced Islamic education.¹¹

Islamic leaders were often based in Islamic educational institutions. These Islamic schools were “geared to learning Arabic and memorization of texts dealing with the various Islamic sciences, especially canonical law, theology, and behavior.”¹² Like the terms for Islamic scholars, the names of these schools varied across the archipelago, including *surau* in West Sumatra and *meunasah* in Aceh; the word *madrasah* for Islamic schools became more common only in the twentieth century and usually described Islamic schools organized in a modern style with grades and preset courses. The normative model of an Islamic school in Indonesia, however, is that of a Javanese *pesantren*.¹³ Young men could spend years studying at a *pesantren*, or cycling between several *pesantren*, gathering different aspects of Islamic knowledge so as to become qualified to open their own school. Alternatively, they could stay at a *pesantren* only for a short time and then return to their home community. Regardless, time at

oral history with Mohamad Roem, interviewed by A. Rahman Zainuddin, ANRI SL1 1981 #6, tape 1; oral history with Idham Chalid, ANRI SL1 1985 #9, tape 1.

⁸ For the foremost example of this, see Nico J. G. Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherlands East Indies: A Biography of Sayyid Uthman (1822–1914)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁹ Gerrit Knaap, “Islamic Resistance in the Dutch Colonial Empire,” in David Motadel, ed., *Islam and the European Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 217, 221.

¹⁰ Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution*, 4.

¹¹ For more on the rising number of pilgrims and their influence on nineteenth-century religious life on Java, see Sartono Kartodirjdo, *The Peasants’ Revolt of Banten in 1888: Its Conditions, Course, and Sequel* Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, no. 50 (‘S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), especially chapter 5.

¹² Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 23.

¹³ This is normative not only in Indonesian scholarship, where studies sponsored by the Ministry of Religion tend to focus on *pesantren*, but also in Western scholarship, which is often Java based (see, e.g., Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Moderen* [Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986] and Florian Pohl, *Islamic Education and the Public Sphere: Today’s Pesantren in Indonesia* [Munster: Waxmann, 2009]).

a *pesantren* served as a rite of passage for most Muslim young men on Java. On Sumatra, there existed a similar tradition of young men taking up residence in a religious school as a bridge between childhood and adulthood.¹⁴ On Kalimantan, in the same way, Islamic educational institutions served as a key socializing experience for young men.¹⁵ Across the archipelago, these institutions were not necessarily long-standing traditions, having been shaped in the nineteenth century, but they were an established form of education by the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁶ In all cases, traditional Islamic schools were cultural centers grounding the community of pious Muslims in a given region.

Divisions within the Muslim Community

Over the first half of the twentieth century, the normative idea of what was “Islamic” in Indonesia narrowed, but it still contained a wide variety of beliefs and orientations – and significant contestation between the holders of different positions. Understanding the dividing lines between Muslims at the time is important for understanding the different positions toward the prospect of an Islamic Indonesia.

Pious versus Nominal Muslims

In the 1950s the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz documented religious life in the East Javanese town of Pare.¹⁷ The work he produced from that time, *The Religion of Java*, became foundational for the discussion of Islam in Indonesia. Geertz categorized the residents of his town into three subvariants. These three religious communities were not distinct in language or location; rather, they lived cheek-by-jowl across Java in neighboring villages and sometimes mixed together in the same

¹⁴ On the West Sumatran *surau*, see Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Ciputat: Logos, 2003). On the tradition of *meunasah* in Aceh, see Siegel, *The Rope of God*, particularly chapter 7.

¹⁵ SURIANSYAH IDEHAM ET AL., *Sejarah Banjar* (Banjarmasin: Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Daerah, Propinsi Kalimantan Selatan, 2003), chapter 4.

¹⁶ RICKLEFS, *Islamisation and Its Opponents*, 14; Kevin W. Fogg, “State and Islamic Education Growing into Each Other in Indonesia,” in Pia Jolliffe and Thomas Bruce, eds., *Southeast Asian Schools in Modern History: Education, Manipulation, and Contest* (London: Routledge, 2019), 188–203.

¹⁷ Geertz and others on the project used the pseudonym “Modjokuto” for this town in their works.

village, mingling in social contexts and competing in the lowest level of government.¹⁸

Geertz used the Javanese social category of *santri* for pious Muslims who practice a stricter form of Islam. “The *santri* religious tradition, consisting not only of a careful and regular execution of the basic rituals of Islam – the prayers, the Fast, the Pilgrimage – but also of a whole complex of social, charitable, and political Islamic organizations,” stands in contrast to that of *abangan* in Geertz’s typology.¹⁹ *Abangan* were nominal Muslims who identified with Islam but did not practice the normative obligations. Instead, they were deeply entrenched in rituals drawn not from the orthodox Islamic corpus, but rather from traditional beliefs about spirits and their impact on human affairs.²⁰ The third category, *priyayi*, or aristocratic individuals with beliefs inspired by Hinduism, has fallen out of use in discussions of religion; it has been identified as a social class instead of a religious orientation.²¹

Scholars since Geertz have been split in their evaluation of the major categories of *santri* and *abangan* for pious and nonpious Muslims. Certainly, Indonesian Muslims have come to use the term *santri* outside of Java; *santri* has now become a national term for the kind of pious Muslims Geertz described. However, Indonesians are generally less familiar with *abangan* as a religious descriptor, especially outside of academic circles.²² All the same, most scholarship on Indonesia has

¹⁸ Robert R. Jay, *Religion and Politics in Rural Central Java* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1963), another anthropologist in Geertz’s group in Pare provides an excellent example of *santri* and *abangan* villages living in close quarters and in conflict.

¹⁹ Geertz, *Religion of Java*, 6. ²⁰ Geertz, *Religion of Java*, 11.

²¹ See Donald K. Emmerson, *Indonesia’s Elite: Political Culture and Cultural Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 103–104.

²² The continuing relevance of the term *santri* is evidenced by the large number of Indonesian books that deploy the term *santri* in their titles, such as Asrori S. Karni, *Etos Studi Kaum Santri: Wajah Baru Pendidikan Islam* (Bandung: Mizan 2009); Syafiq Hasyim, ed., *Pluralisme, Sekularisme, dan Liberalisme di Indonesia: Persepsi Kaum Santri di Jawa Barat* (Jakarta: ICIP, 2007), and Promono U. Thanthowi, *Kebangkitan Politik Kaum Santri: Islam dan Demokratisasi di Indonesia, 1990–2000* (Jakarta: PSAP, 2005). *Abangan*, even when it appears in Indonesian scholarship, is usually paired with *santri* and evaluated for its efficacy as a cultural category, as in Yanuar Pribadi, “An *Abangan*-Like Group in a *Santri* Island: The Religious Identity of the *Blater*,” in Bernhard Platzdasch and Johan Saravanamuttu, eds., *Religious Diversity in Muslim-Majority States in Southeast Asia: Areas of Toleration and Conflict* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2014), 214–233. M. C. Ricklefs notes the recent provenance of the word *abangan*, as opposed to the very old term *santri*, in his “The Birth of the *Abangan*,” *Bijdragen van de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 162, 1 (2006): 36. Mohamad Roem also attests to the prevalence of *santri* as a common identity, but he expresses his personal ambivalence toward the terms (especially *abangan* and *priyayi*), in oral history with Mohamad Roem, interviewed by A. Rahman Zainuddin, ANRI SL1 1981 #6, tape 1.

accepted the observation that a readily identified sector of society practiced Islam in a more devout and conscientious way.²³ Even if not recognizing distinct sectors of society, Timothy Daniels helpfully suggests that these are recognized modes of religious practice, in which individuals participate across a spectrum ranging from highly animist to strictly orthodox.²⁴

A few have rejected Geertz's categories. Azyumardi Azra has criticized Geertz for making it appear as though *abangan* and *priyayi* were not Muslims and thus undermining the position of Islam in Indonesian society.²⁵ Mark Woodward has asserted the Islamic roots of *abangan* and *priyayi* practices, calling them *Islam Jawa* (Javanese Islam, as opposed to some internationally recognizable Islam), and rejecting the idea that these practices are sharply limited to strict sociological categories.²⁶

Historians are now converging around the idea that the sharp divide between pious and nonpious Muslims was characteristic of the specific moment of Geertz's fieldwork. Ricklefs noted that the ideas of a division along the lines of *santri* and *abangan* were fairly new in the twentieth century,²⁷ and reached their peak in the 1950s.²⁸ In the 1990s, many Indonesian authors conceded that the divisions may once have applied, but argued that "the *santri-abangan* dichotomic approach [was] no longer relevant to an understanding of the religious life of Javanese Muslims."²⁹

This book accepts the existence of a sector in Indonesian society that is oriented to Islam as the source of inspiration for its worldview and lifestyle. More simply, there was indeed a difference between pious Muslims and nominal Muslims in Indonesia in the 1940s, and pious

²³ See, e.g., R. William Liddle, *Ethnicity, Party, and National Integration: An Indonesian Case Study* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970); Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2007 [1962]); Saiful Muzani, "The Devaluation of Aliran Politics: Views from the Third Congress of the PPP," *Studia Islamika* 1, 3 (1994): 177–221.

²⁴ Timothy Daniels, *Islamic Spectrum in Java* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), especially chapter 2.

²⁵ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation* (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 3.

²⁶ Woodward, *Islam in Java*. Woodward also asserts that the nonorthodox practices of *abangans* are still drawn from the practices of Sufism, thus giving them Islamic roots; see Mark R. Woodward, "The Slametan: Textual Knowledge and Ritual Performance in Central Javanese Islam," *History of Religions* 28, 1 (1988): 54–89. Some of his arguments go rather beyond the consensus of the field.

²⁷ Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*, 86.

²⁸ Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents*, chapter 4.

²⁹ Bambang Pranowo, "Islam and Party Politics in Rural Jawa," *Studia Islamika* 1, 2 (1994): 18. This sentiment was common among articles in the journal *Studia Islamika* at the time.

Muslims drew different conclusions about events because of their orientation toward normative Islam. All the same, the definition of pious Muslims used here for the mid-twentieth century differs slightly from the usage of *santri* today. In this book, pious Muslims are those who believed that their actions were inspired by Islam, rather than simply those who strictly avoided traditional or pre-Islamic rituals. Thus, an Indonesian man who participated in mystical activities and believed in amulets would be no less a pious Muslim than an Indonesian woman who staunchly avoided any practice (like mysticism or amulets) not explicitly found in the Qur'an, so long as they both believed their practices to be Islamic. Borrowing Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif's definition, pious Muslims are "those who take Islam as *the way of life*," whether or not their knowledge of Islam follows prevailing ideas of orthodoxy.³⁰

Estimating a precise number or percentage of pious Muslims within the general population is difficult. Ricklefs has used figures on almsgiving to estimate that between 10 and 40 percent of the people in the provinces of Central and East Java were pious in the 1950s.³¹ Those numbers should be seen as low when extrapolated to a nationwide estimate; Central and East Java were far from the most pious provinces. Another rough indication can be found in the results of the 1955 elections, when approximately 44 percent of the Indonesian populace voted for an Islamic party, signaling their acceptance of the principle that Islam should govern the life of the state.³² Whether the figure is closer to one quarter or one half of the Indonesian population, the bloc of pious Muslims was a significant sector of the country during the revolution.

Traditionalist versus Reformist Muslims

In addition to the split between pious and nominal Muslims, there is another major cleavage in the Muslim community of Indonesia: the theological division between traditionalist and reformist Muslims.

This split focuses on how Muslims approach texts and authority in their religion. In Indonesia, the majority of Muslims followed the Shafi'i

³⁰ Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, "Islam as the Basis of State: A Study of the Islamic Political Ideals as Reflected in the Constituent Assembly Debates in Indonesia," PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1983, 5. Emphasis in the original. For a more wholistic discussion, see Ahmed.

³¹ Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents*, 84. Although they were very populous, Central and East Java cannot be taken as representative of all of Indonesia; certainly election returns for Islamic parties were higher outside of these provinces.

³² Using figures from Alfian, *Hasil Pemilihan Umum 1955 untuk Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (Jakarta: Leknas, 1971), 9.

school of jurisprudence, one of the four Sunni approaches to theology and Islamic law dating back to the early centuries of Islam.³³ While founded ultimately on scripture (the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet), a significant canon of texts had grown over the centuries to settle issues of ritual, theology, and Islamic law. In Indonesia, Muslims who adhere to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence (or to any single school of jurisprudence) are called "traditionalist Muslims."³⁴ They are, in many ways, the local heirs to a huge and long-standing network of scholars across the Islamic world and across time, with implications for how traditionalists in the early twentieth century saw their position between local community and scholars around the globe.³⁵

A new theological trend emerged within Islam around the turn of the twentieth century, as a generation of Islamic scholars in the Middle East came to grips with the impotence of Islamic countries facing European imperialism.³⁶ A new brand of theology called for a revival of Islamic societies based on a return directly to the Islamic scriptures, deriving fresh interpretations directly from the scripture without regard to the intervening precedents set by the schools of jurisprudence. This Islamic reformism came into sharp conflict with traditionalist Muslims for rejecting the authority of Shafi'i jurisprudence and calling for cultural changes among Indonesian Muslims. Followers of this theological line are called "reformist Muslims."³⁷

Reformist Islam in Indonesia received its greatest boost with the founding of an organizational body, Muhammadiyah. The founder of Muhammadiyah adopted certain Western practices in addition to his theological innovations, such as adding secular subjects, grade levels, and desks to the traditional offerings of a *pesantren*.³⁸ As the organization

³³ For more on the Shafi'i *madhhab*, see E. Chaumont, "al-Shāfi'iyya," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

³⁴ This term has become ubiquitous in scholarship on Indonesia in both English and Indonesian (where it is rendered *tradisionalis*, a direct transliteration). Alternatively, when the group first became identified in Indonesia through conflict with reformists, they were called *kaum tua*, or the "old group."

³⁵ R. Michael Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), chapter 2.

³⁶ Muhamad Ali, *Islam and Colonialism: Becoming Modern in Indonesia and Malaysia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

³⁷ In scholarship on Indonesia, both the terms "modernist" and "reformist" have been used with regards to this group, with modernist being more common in Indonesia (as *modernis*, although *kaum muda* or "young group" was the original moniker when they emerged as a force in the 1910s). The term "reformists" is used here because it does not suggest that this group was somehow more modernized, but rather that they were reforming theology.

³⁸ Howard M. Federspiel, "The Muhammadiyah: The Study of an Orthodox Islamic Movement in Indonesia," *Indonesia* 10 (1970): 57.

expanded, it built a large network of social services, including not only schools but also hospitals, libraries, women's circles, and youth scouting groups.³⁹

In response to Muhammadiyah's spread and the concomitant spread of Islamic reformism, a group of traditionalist scholars in East Java came together in 1926 to defend and uphold the Shafi'i school in theology. They formed an organization called Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), or "Revival of the Religious Scholars," which spread mostly on Java.⁴⁰ Over the following two decades, NU became the largest Islamic organization in the archipelago, and was also seen to speak for all traditionalist Muslims on the national stage, even though other traditionalist groups emerged in several regions.

Although other theological questions have risen in the century since Muhammadiyah's founding (such as the relative role of reason),⁴¹ the basic division among pious Muslims in Indonesia remains a traditionalist-reformist divide. Over the years, the difference became as much social and cultural as theological, with each group defending certain modes of practice and networks of scholars. The two sides have clashed at times, most notably in the 1920s (leading to the creation of traditionalist organizations) and in the 1950s, but they agree on the importance of Islam more than they disagree on the minutiae of ritual, and together they constitute a solid religious bloc of Indonesian society, even when they are in political or theological competition.

Trends in the Early Twentieth Century

Three major trends in the first half of the twentieth century set up the struggle of pious Muslims in independent Indonesia. These trends were (1) toward organizations; (2) toward new conceptions of orthodoxy; and (3) toward politics.

Toward Organizations

Islamic organizations in Indonesia were not limited to the two largest groups, Muhammadiyah and NU, mentioned previously, but these two groups exemplify the trend. In most cases, a particularly charismatic

³⁹ Ali, *Islam and Colonialism*, chapter 1.

⁴⁰ Menchik, *Islam and Democracy*, 48–51; Faisal Ismail, *Islamic Traditionalism in Indonesia: A Study of the Nahdlatul Ulama's Early History and Religious Ideology* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama, Proyek Peningkatan Pengkajian Kerukunan Hidup Umat Beragama, 2003), 32.

⁴¹ See, e.g., Kersten, *Islam in Indonesia*, chapter 3.

religious leader would gather several like-minded colleagues together to found an organization, often based at a particular school or set of schools, to protect and promote their theological vision. This also took place amid a swell of voluntary associations of various kinds in Indonesian society, such as labor unions and student organizations alongside new religious groups.⁴²

Traditionalist organizations appeared in several provinces to safeguard their beliefs against increasing reformist encroachment. These organizations included Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti), founded in West Sumatra in 1928 in response to sharp conflict with Muhammadiyah followers over orthodoxy⁴³; Jamiyatul Washliyah, which grew out of a debating club in an Islamic school in Medan in 1930⁴⁴; al-Ittihadiyah, a group that emerged in Medan among the ethnically Malay population in 1935⁴⁵; Rabithatul Ulama, a scholars' union in South Sulawesi founded in 1938⁴⁶; Musjawarattuthalibin, a traditionalist union in South Kalimantan in the 1930s⁴⁷; and Perikatan Umat Islam, a group based in Sukabumi, West Java that included many large Sundanese *pesantren*.⁴⁸

On the other side of the divide, reformist-minded organizations whose alumni greatly impacted the revolution included Persatuan Islam (Persis), founded in Bandung in 1923 by the Indonesian theologian of Indian heritage, A. Hassan⁴⁹; Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB), a group that grew out of associations among high school students in the Dutch educational system in 1925⁵⁰; and a new organization called Studenten Islam Studieclub (SIS) that emerged from JIB in 1934, targeting university students.⁵¹

One hallmark of the new wave of organizations was their increased accessibility to all members of society. This was not only because they

⁴² The classic account of the rise of new forms of associationalism and new thinking is Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁴³ Alaidin Koto, *Pemikiran Politik PERTI, Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (1945–1970)* (Jakarta: Nimas Multima, 1997); Za'im Rais, "The Minangkabau Traditionalists' Response to the Modernist Movement," Master's thesis, McGill University, 1994.

⁴⁴ Al Rasyidin, "Islamic Organizations in North Sumatra: The Politics of Initial Establishment and Later Development," *Al-Jami'ah Journal of Indonesian Islam* 10, 1 (June 2016): 71–74.

⁴⁵ Rasyidin, "Islamic Organizations in North Sumatra," 74–75.

⁴⁶ Bosra, *Tuang Guru, Anrong Guru dan Daeng Guru*, 164–165.

⁴⁷ M. Nur Maksum et al., *Musyawarattuthalibin: Historis, Perjuangan dan Pergulatan Pemikiran* (Banjarmasin: Antasari Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah*, 75–76. ⁴⁹ Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology*.

⁵⁰ Robert E. Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard: The Political Failure of Islamism in Late Colonial Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 16, 1 (2009): 15–16.

⁵¹ Yudi Latif, *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), 207.

were open to members from various walks of life and were fundamentally voluntary, with individuals electing to join. It also stemmed from their creation of targeted auxiliary groups for Muslim women, youth, children, and special interest groups. This was true of many other types of organizations emerging at the same time in Indonesian society, such as societies to preserve *adat* (local customs), but Islamic organizations' auxiliaries had great staying power as groups for self-identification.⁵²

Islamic organizations changed the face of Islam in the archipelago in two ways. First, they connected Muslims to co-religionists beyond their village in a concrete way. Muslims previously had an idea that there were millions of others like them in the *ummat*, the Islamic community, and if they had traveled to study at an Islamic school outside of their village they would have encountered a tiny cross-section of their co-religionists. But the new Islamic organizations socialized Muslim villagers to the idea of a truly global community by sending them newsletters with news from Muslim communities around the world; by announcing to them how their membership connected them to a community of hundreds of thousands, and even by holding mass rallies to advocate on issues well beyond the scope of any one village.⁵³ Second, Islamic organizations, through their debates on theology and promotion of particular practices, changed the normative practice of Islam in the archipelago and pulled Muslims closer to modern Middle Eastern constructions of orthodoxy.

Toward New Conceptions of Orthodoxy

The second major trend in Islam in the Dutch East Indies during the first half of the twentieth century was toward new conceptions of orthodoxy. As debates emerged in the Middle East and Southeast Asia about the role of Islam in society and the decline of Muslims compared to the West, Islamic leaders became more concerned with properly practicing their religion so as (in their view) to achieve prosperity and freedom once again.⁵⁴

⁵² Cf. Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, chapter 6, on the appeal and lasting power of Masjumi's auxiliaries.

⁵³ Laffan, *Islam Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, 234–235 and passim. The trend of greater Muslim awareness of the global Islamic community was a worldwide phenomenon in the early twentieth century; see Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), chapters 4 and 5.

⁵⁴ For an excellent examination of the foreign influences (Western and Arab) on cultural traditions and Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia during this period, see Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia through Jihad and Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

One important impetus in inspiring new forms of piety among Muslims in the Indies was the *hajj*, which had greatly increased in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ This trend continued in the early decades of the twentieth century; while from 1905 to 1914, an average of 347 people per million inhabitants of Indonesia went to Mecca on *hajj* each year, this number increased markedly to 565 per million in 1920–29.⁵⁶ Participating in the *hajj* exposed more and more Southeast Asian Muslims to new standards of Islamic piety, which they then brought back and practiced in their home communities, where they were more likely to imitate forms of Islam they saw or learned in Arabia. Many young Indonesian men stayed in Mecca longer than just the *hajj*, pursuing studies there to master the Islamic sciences and becoming committed to Arab ideas of orthopraxy that differed from their homelands. One example was Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, who studied in Mecca starting in 1923; upon his return to his home island of Lombok, he founded schools that taught in the Arabic language and preached strict adherence to five prayers each day and congregational prayers each Friday, at odds with local practices among many Sasak Muslims. The new understanding of Islam spread by Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, based on his experiences in Arabia, fundamentally changed religious practice on the island.⁵⁷ Lombok was just one example of a changing local community, and Mecca was not the only source of this kind of religious change. After the turn of the twentieth century, a substantial contingent of Southeast Asian Muslims studying in Cairo also spread these ideas upon their return to various parts of the East Indies.⁵⁸

Many of the founders of Islamic organizations were indeed leaders who had returned from the Middle East. These men used their newly founded organizations to proselytize and promote strict Islamic practice. Among other methods, changes to Islamic education during this period facilitated increased knowledge of Islamic texts and thus stricter practice. A practice adopted almost simultaneously on Java and Sumatra was to

⁵⁵ Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 181; Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten*, 141; Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, 39.

⁵⁶ Henri Chambert-Loir, ed., *Naiik Haji di Masa Silam: Kisah-Kisah Orang Indonesia Naiik Haji 1482–1964*, vol. 3, 1954–1964 (Jakarta: KPG, 2013), 1228.

⁵⁷ Abdul Hayyi Nu'man, *Maulanasysyaikh TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid: Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangannya* (Pancor, Lombok: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Wathan, 1419 H/1999 M); Sven Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah: A Sasak Community on Lombok* (Goteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1981), chapter 4.

⁵⁸ Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, 139; Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 54.

pay increased attention to teaching comprehension of the Arabic language, with the goal that students would understand and begin to interpret what they were reading (whereas previously they had mostly intoned the text and memorized the explanation given by their teacher).⁵⁹

Competition between traditionalists and reformists was also crucial to spreading new conceptions of Islamic orthodoxy. As organizations on each side of the theological divide tried to draw more Muslims to their view, they fought to assert their correctness and uprightness on all issues of praxis and doctrine, such as the way to pray, the rules for inheritance, and the nature of God's divine unity.⁶⁰ As a result, organizations pushed their members to follow Islamic precepts in ways that more closely mimicked Islamic models in the Middle East.⁶¹ Overall, in the early twentieth century promoting certain forms of Islamic piety became just as important for Islamic leaders as proselytizing the religion to non-Muslim communities.⁶² This is evident in the stated goals of the organizations according to their founding documents, as well as in their activities in the first half of the twentieth century.⁶³

Toward Politics

In the nineteenth century, Dutch colonial bureaucrats worked hard to keep religious leaders out of politics. The Dutch had a class of officially recognized Islamic scholars who "lent themselves to the Dutch colonial policy in repressing manifestations of [extremist, anticolonial] activity," but these men could not create their own interpretations of how Islam should engage the state, for fear of losing state patronage.⁶⁴ Thus, political thought or activity was discouraged among scholars, forcing any political activity to position itself in direct opposition to the colonial state. Many religious movements of opposition did arise, but these were quickly suppressed or their leaders exiled by the Dutch. No sustained

⁵⁹ Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah*, 3, 44, 71.

⁶⁰ Hamka has identified these among the many issues addressed among Indonesian Muslims in the early twentieth century; see Kevin W. Fogg, "Hamka's Doctoral Address at Al-Azhar: The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia," *Afkaruna: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 11, 2 (2015): 125–156.

⁶¹ Za'im Rais, *Against Islamic Modernism: The Minangkabau Traditionalists Responses to the Modernist Movement* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001), 94.

⁶² Menchik, *Islam and Indonesian Democracy*; Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology*, vii.

⁶³ See, e.g., *Al Djami'atul Washliyah ¼ Abad* (Medan: Pengurus Besar Al Djami'atul Washliyah, 1955), 342, which states the goal of the organization as "Implement the requirements of the Islamic religion so as to progress toward happiness in the world and the hereafter."

⁶⁴ Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten*, 146. Cf. Kaptein, and Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam*, pt. 3.

movement could emerge that faced political questions from an Islamic stance.

This was in part due to the policy formulated by the foremost Dutch advisor on Islamic issues: Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. Instead of seeing Islam as a single phenomenon that was dangerous for the Dutch colonial project, Snouck Hurgronje saw many different components. One element that became a focus of his work in the East Indies was the influence of Sufism on Islam; he believed that this held the Muslims of the archipelago back from modernity (including being integrated into the Dutch empire), and therefore he fought to combat Sufi strains.⁶⁵ This was also related to Snouck's differentiation between religious Islam and political Islam. In advocating that the Dutch colonial government support the purely religious elements and forbid all political elements, he won the agreement of many Islamic scholars at the turn of the twentieth century.⁶⁶

The other key pillar of Dutch policy was to favor Indonesian customs and customary law, called *adat*, over Islamic practices.⁶⁷ In some regions, the Dutch preference for *adat* over Islam also connected with favoring traditional nobles over Islamic leaders, as in Aceh.⁶⁸ In other regions, the Dutch crafted and cultivated *adat* to align with their colonial aims, such as in West Sumatra.⁶⁹ This contributed to antagonism between Islamic leaders and the Dutch and between Islamic leaders and traditional nobles.

Dutch policy entering the twentieth century called for Islam to be explicitly apolitical, but other circumstances pushed the Muslim population in the opposite direction. In particular, the economic dominance of the local Chinese population on Java grated on indigenous and Arab traders, who began to form organizations and unions to face Chinese economic competition.⁷⁰ After a few false starts in the first decade of the twentieth century, a successful organization was founded in 1912, with explicitly indigenous leadership, called Sarekat Islam (SI). Under the guidance of the Surabaya-based activist H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto, SI grew

⁶⁵ Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam*, chapter 11 and passim.

⁶⁶ Harry J. Benda, "Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia," in *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia: Collected Journal Articles of Harry J. Benda* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph Series No. 18, 1972), 87, 92.

⁶⁷ Henry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 68.

⁶⁸ Siegel, *The Rope of God*, 70; Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 75.

⁶⁹ Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, chapter 2, esp. 57.

⁷⁰ Azyumardi Azra, "The Sarekat Islam and the Indies Chinese: An Account of the Anti-Chinese Riots in Colonial Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 1, 1 (1994): 25–53.

into a much larger body and spread beyond Java. At the same time, its interests broadened from breaking Chinese monopolies to the general promotion of Muslim welfare and the Islamic religion. During its first decade, SI engaged in programs primarily concerned with social welfare, rather than religious practice or overt politics. With this focus, SI membership expanded rapidly on Java and beyond, to reach a peak in 1919 of a reported two million members.⁷¹ Although it had started as fairly neutral in politics (Snouck Hurgronje, writing from the Netherlands in 1916, even welcomed the emergence of SI as a positive development for Indonesian Muslims,⁷² and several of his protégés were close observers of the early period),⁷³ political issues grew markedly in the organization at the end of its first decade. This included the rise of many Communist and left-leaning leaders in local SI branches.

In 1923, in response to these political trends, Tjokroaminoto led the organization as a whole to take two bold steps: first, rejecting the Communist ideology as “godless” and thus inappropriate for them (and thereby ejecting a large bloc of the SI’s left-leaning members), and, second, transforming the organization Sarekat Islam into the political vehicle Partij Sarekat Islam.⁷⁴ Part of the drive to give Sarekat Islam a more political character came from Haji Agus Salim, a Minangkabau former bureaucrat in the Dutch colonial government who had received a Western-style education but also “knew a great deal about Islam from its basic sources.”⁷⁵ The ejection of the Communists in 1923 weakened the Sarekat Islam, and the exit from Sarekat Islam did not destroy Marxism in Indonesia; rather, the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) had a continuous existence from 1920 to 1966.⁷⁶ The change led the Partij Sarekat Islam to focus on promoting more Islamic goals and boycotting the colonial government. Tjokroaminoto went so far in 1926 as to flatly reject an invitation to sit in the colony’s representative council (Volksraad).⁷⁷ Still, the movement was susceptible to society’s trends; in 1929, in response to surging nationalism and the founding of several secular parties, such as Sukarno’s Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), the Partij Sarekat Islam changed its name to Partai

⁷¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 200; Ricklefs doubts that so many people participated in the organization.

⁷² Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 70. ⁷³ Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 194.

⁷⁴ Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 237–238.

⁷⁵ Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), 298.

⁷⁶ On the founding of a Communist party in the Dutch East Indies and its early interaction with Islamic groups, see Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, chapters 6 and 7.

⁷⁷ Elson, “Disunity, Distance, Disregard,” 5; *PSII dari Tahun ke Tahun (with English Translation)* ([Jakarta?]: Departemen Penerangan dan Propaganda PSII, [1952]), 8.

Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII), thus fusing its strong sense of Islamic identity with the new territorial nationalism of the era.⁷⁸

Unlike SI and its successor parties, many of the mass Islamic organizations formed in the first half of the twentieth century were explicitly apolitical. This was certainly true, at least initially, for the two largest groups, Muhammadiyah and NU.⁷⁹ The apolitical stance connected with these organizations' focus on theological and liturgical issues, which were the impetus for their founding. At the same time, given Dutch policy that discouraged and suppressed political Islam while allowing or encouraging a more cultural practice of religion, their apolitical stance safeguarded the continued existence of Islamic organizations. Sometimes it even gave them access to government funds to further their projects, as with many modern-style Islamic schools.⁸⁰

Many Islamic schools, however, were breeding grounds for politics, and particularly politics opposing colonialism. According to one Indonesian observer, the pattern of educational movements evolving into more political forms reflected new trends in Western-style education integrated in Islamic schools, causing new types of self-reflection and competing ideas among the up-and-coming Muslim leaders.⁸¹ The reformist schools of West Sumatra provide perhaps the clearest example of an educational movement turning ever more political. In 1930, what had been an alliance of several dozen reformist schools called Sumatera Thawalib (Sumatran Students) transformed itself into a mass political movement open to the public. The new organization, created by young reformist teachers and heavily influenced by trends in the Middle East and on Java, called itself Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (Union of Indonesian Muslims) or Permi.⁸² Permi fused nationalism and religion at a time when other Islamic organizations were promoting religion only. In this way it provided a sharp critique, first of secular nationalism, which Permi leaders and other pious Muslims found objectionable for isolating Muslims in the East Indies, and second of apolitical religious activism, which Permi leaders thought did not fulfill all the requirements of Islam.⁸³ Although it aspired to spread across the Dutch East Indies, the

⁷⁸ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 8.

⁷⁹ Gregory John Fealy, "Ulama and Politics in Indonesia: A History of Nahdlatul Ulama, 1952–1967," PhD diss., Monash University, 1998, 30.

⁸⁰ A famous example is the Adabiyah School of Abdullah Ahmad in Padang, Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 43.

⁸¹ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah* (Bandung: Mizan, 2009), 89.

⁸² Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927–1933)* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 130–131.

⁸³ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 321.

actual footprint of Permi was limited to West Sumatra. Its ideas on Islamic nationalism, however, had an impact on the direction of politics back on Java.

Even as Permi proposed a new possible direction for nationalism, the most politically prominent strand of Indonesian nationalism was avowedly secular, with Sukarno keeping his Partai Nasional Indonesia “closed to religion,” and Christian newspapers calling for “setting aside all religions” to achieve the goals of nationalism.⁸⁴ Facing this staunch secularism, Islamic activists felt “boycotted, ignored, not accorded their due, their ideas not considered worthy or relevant, not embraced and employed by their fellows.”⁸⁵ At the same time, pious Muslims generally rejected the leadership of secular nationalists. In 1933, in an article in the Islamic journal *Pembela Islam*, a Muslim activist named Sabirin argued that the secular nationalists, who rejected the religious duties to pray five times a day and avoid women who were not their relatives, etc., “were somehow short of the mark and were not good choices as leaders for Muslims who might otherwise be attracted by some of the nationalists’ political statements.”⁸⁶ At the same time, secular nationalists rejected Islamic nationalism as applicable only to a small sector of society, with one secularist writing in 1931 that “a political association with Islam as its basis will bring division and will find adherents only amongst serious Muslims.”⁸⁷

This polarization between secular and Islamic politics grew more and more marked by the final years of Dutch colonialism. The shared anti-colonial history and synergy between communism and Islam were forgotten.⁸⁸ Even between secular nationalists like Sukarno and pious Muslims, like the young student columnist Mohammad Natsir, there was increasing conflict over the role that Islam should have in a future Indonesian state. In a series of contending editorials published in 1940, Sukarno looked to the Turkish model of a fully secular government while Natsir called for total integration of Islam in the state so as to properly serve the Muslim population.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Quoted in Elson, “Disunity, Distance, Disregard,” 6.

⁸⁵ Elson, “Disunity, Distance, Disregard,” 7. Cf. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy*, 14–16.

⁸⁶ Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology*, 35.

⁸⁷ Elson, “Disunity, Distance, Disregard,” 10, quoting *Pertjatoeran*, March 12, 1931. “Serious” here most likely refers to *santri*, pious Muslims.

⁸⁸ Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 342.

⁸⁹ Significant excerpts from these debates have been translated in Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 279–295. Several of Natsir’s essays from this debate are reprinted in the fifth section of M. Natsir, *Capita Selecta* (Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1954).

After 1930, Islamic groups focused increasingly on implementing Islam more perfectly and saw nationalism as merely a means to reach that end. Permi shifted to this position after it was criticized by Muslim leaders both inside and outside West Sumatra.⁹⁰ PSII also turned more exclusively toward Islam around this time,⁹¹ leading to some of the conflicts mentioned previously between PSII leaders (and Muslim leaders in general) and secular nationalists.⁹²

Although they were growing more distant from secular nationalism in the 1930s, pious Muslims were also fighting among themselves more. PSII remained the main vehicle for Muslim politics until the Japanese invasion, but it had several offshoots. In 1933, a medical doctor named Sukiman, who had studied in the Netherlands and been thoroughly integrated in the nationalist movement there, took exception to PSII's refusal to cooperate with the Dutch authorities. When PSII kicked Sukiman out of the party, he led several followers to establish their own party, the Partai Islam Indonesia (PII), with a more collaborative stance.⁹³ Without mass backing, PII fizzled within a year. Sukiman's critique of PSII's noncooperative policy, though, had an impact on other PSII leaders, including Haji Agus Salim, who had been so crucial when Sarekat Islam ejected its Communist-leaning members. With several other regional leaders, Salim founded the Gerakan Penjadar PSII (Front to Awaken the PSII) in 1936.⁹⁴ After several years of struggle within the party over its stance toward the Dutch colonial government, PSII kicked out the Gerakan Penjadar and its sympathizers in 1937. These sympathizers, including not only Salim but several other future leaders such as the law student Mohamad Roem, established the Gerakan Penjadar as an independent political organization, but it, too, failed to win a mass following.⁹⁵ Still, there was room in Indonesian politics for an alternative to PSII in the field of Islamic nationalism, as was proven by the re-emergence of PII in 1938 with support from many Western-educated intellectuals.⁹⁶ The departure of the PII and Gerakan Penjadar left PSII unified against collaboration with the Dutch colonial regime but

⁹⁰ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 14.

⁹¹ Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*, 48.

⁹² Latif, *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power*, 201.

⁹³ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 22. On Sukiman, see Abu Hanifah, *Tales of a Revolution* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972), 189.

⁹⁴ Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*, 57–58; Noer, *Partai Islam*, 18; oral history with Harsono Tjokroaminoto, interviewed by Wardiningsih Surjohardjo, ANRI SL1 1982 #60, tape 11.

⁹⁵ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 24.

⁹⁶ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 25.

hollowed by the loss of several notable leaders and divided about its own political potential.

In an attempt to unite the archipelago's Muslims, and in a display of strong initiative by the hitherto apolitical mass organizations, Muhammadiyah and NU organized an "All Islam" conference in 1937. This conference resulted in the founding of an umbrella organization for all Islamic groups in Indonesia, the *Madjlisul Islamil A'laa Indonesia* (MAI, or Great Islamic Council of Indonesia).⁹⁷

The MAI brought together the three major trends of Islam under late Dutch colonialism. Organizations, ranging from small groups like SIS to mass movements like NU and Muhammadiyah, were the chief vehicle for Islamic progress and reform, and the MAI was the first example of mass organizations taking the lead on issues of Islam and nation. MAI was also a forum for debates on orthodoxy and proper Islamic practice; it promoted stricter adherence to Islam among Indonesia's Muslims and debated how such adherence could be encouraged or enforced. And, finally, the MAI was a vehicle for political interests, a body that directly interacted with the state and impacted colonial policy. All this opened the way for greater predominance on the part of Islamic theological leaders in the political realm. MAI proved that Snouck Hurgronje's policy of separating Islam from politics was not successfully implemented by the Dutch colonial state.

Around this time, similar unifying organizations emerged in the broader world of Indonesian nationalist agitation. In 1939, most Indonesian political parties and nationalist organizations joined the new *Gabungan Politik Indonesia* (Indonesian Political Federation, GAPI), agitating for an indigenous representative body and increased autonomy for the Dutch East Indies.⁹⁸ These issues appeared particularly pressing for Indonesians because of the war spreading in Europe and East Asia, but the Dutch were unwilling to make concessions. Islamic organizations supported GAPI's demands and made additional stipulations about minimum Muslim representation in any parliament and administrative branches for Islamic affairs, but these demands were swept away by the invasion of the Japanese.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 89–90. Although this organization was founded by leaders from Muhammadiyah, NU and PSII, NU did not become a formal affiliate until 1939; see Jeremy Menchik, "Productive Intolerance: Godly Nationalism in Indonesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, 3 (2014): 604–605.

⁹⁸ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 230. ⁹⁹ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 30.

Japanese Occupation

The Japanese invaded the Dutch East Indies on January 10, 1942 and conquered the whole territory by March 8, 1942, thus smashing the image of impregnability that the Dutch had built up for centuries.¹⁰⁰ This swift victory was perhaps facilitated by Indonesian Muslims' refusal to defend the Dutch East Indies in a vigorous way. NU and Muhammadiyah each ruled that protecting the Dutch colonial state did not count as defending one's homeland for theological purposes, and MIAI prohibited Muslim blood transfusions to wounded soldiers in the Dutch military.¹⁰¹ After capturing the territory with relative ease, the Japanese divided the East Indies into three parts to be occupied and administered by different military units. Sumatra came under the Japanese 25th Army (at first jointly with Malaya, then independently run from Bukittinggi); Java was under the Japanese 16th Army; and East Indonesia (comprising basically all islands outside of Sumatra and Java) was under the Japanese Navy.¹⁰²

The position of Muslim organizations under the Japanese differed markedly from their position under the Dutch, especially on Java. Although at first the Japanese closed down all native organizations, including Islamic organizations, so as to secure their control over the new territories, they then fostered Islamic organizational activity specifically to win allies among Muslims, hoping to cultivate a force that could be mobilized in the war if necessary.¹⁰³ Among their first actions in this regard, in 1942 the Japanese founded an Islamic affairs office, staffed both by local Muslim leaders and by Japanese Muslims, on Jakarta's central square.¹⁰⁴ Then the Japanese rechartered MIAI as a way to channel Muslim support to the occupying regime. All other Indonesian political parties, nationalist and communist, remained banned. In October 1943, the MIAI held its last meeting, and its Japanese creators shut it down as easily as they had reopened it. In its place, the Japanese sponsored a new federation of Islamic mass organizations – initially only NU and Muhammadiyah – to be called Masjoemi.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution*, 10.

¹⁰¹ Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard," 35.

¹⁰² Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 235; Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 95.

¹⁰³ C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, "Japanese Islam Policy in Java, 1942–1945," in *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia: Five Essays* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 134–35; Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 201.

¹⁰⁴ Van Nieuwenhuijze, "Japanese Islam Policy in Java," 117–121.

¹⁰⁵ Van Nieuwenhuijze, "Japanese Islam Policy in Java," 153; Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 151. Masjoemi later incorporated the Persatuan Ummat Islam (PUI) of Sukabumi and Persatuan Ummat Islam Indonesia (PUII) of Majalengka, two smaller mass

The November 1943 creation of the social organization Masjoemi was a turning point for pious Muslims on Java. When the Japanese military government closed down MIAI, it called the group “the shadow of an ‘anti-colonial’ federation.”¹⁰⁶ MIAI’s replacement thus had to have a different character, and this character was defined by working exclusively through mass organizations. In this way, the Japanese were able to change their relationship with Java’s Muslim populace and change their interlocutors. The Japanese empowered the leaders of Islamic mass organizations, primarily theological leaders, over political leaders from PSII and other parties from the late colonial era.¹⁰⁷ This solidified the theological leaders’ dominant position, a position that they had begun to assert after the Al-Islam conference of 1937. The ascendance of more theological leaders was largely a result of Japanese policy (the Japanese handpicked the leaders for both the MIAI and Masjoemi during the occupation), but Japanese policy may have grown out of an astute observation of the strength of mass organizations in Javanese society.¹⁰⁸ By contrast, it may have been an attempt by the Japanese to forestall any potential political opposition.¹⁰⁹

The most important innovation of Masjoemi as an unofficial organ of the Japanese occupation government was the incorporation of *ulama* into positions of governmental authority on Java. On both a local level, through the Islamic Affairs Offices created by the Japanese, and on the island-wide level, government-sponsored *ulama* had an official venue to influence other *ulama* and to engage directly in governance.¹¹⁰ The Japanese chose Muhammadiyah leader Mas Mansur to be among four Japanese leaders (along with secular nationalists Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta and education activist Ki Hadjar Dewantara) at the highest level of political leadership under the occupying forces.¹¹¹ Thus Muslims on Java were gaining power not only in the religious sphere but also in the governmental structure more generally.

On Sumatra, too, the Japanese found ways to integrate Muslims in the administration of the occupied territory, but in a much more limited way.

organizations. Throughout this book, the mass organization will be spelled with “oe” (i.e., Masjoemi), to differentiate it from the later political party, which will be spelled with “u” (i.e., Masjumi).

¹⁰⁶ Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 151.

¹⁰⁷ Latif, *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power*, 214.

¹⁰⁸ Oral history with Mohamad Roem, interviewed by A. Rahman Zainuddin, ANRI SL1 1981 #6, tape 8. Roem reports that both he and Agus Salim were happy not to be chosen for leadership positions by the Japanese, but had absolutely no control over this because appointments were entirely Japanese prerogative.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 108–110.

¹¹⁰ Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 165. ¹¹¹ Noer, *Partai Islam*, 23.

In West Sumatra, the seat of occupying 25th Army, the Japanese accommodated Islamic voices by placing key Muslim leaders from Islamic education and mass organizations on the council advising the army leadership.¹¹² Elsewhere on Sumatra, Muslims were more disappointed with their position under the Japanese. For example, in Aceh the Japanese devolved some power to the *ulama*, who expressed their solidarity with the Japanese by revolting against the Dutch immediately before the Japanese invasion and joining Japanese-sponsored councils.¹¹³ Primarily, though, the Japanese ruled Aceh through its traditional nobles (*ulèëbalang*), the rivals of the *ulama*, leading to frustration against the new occupiers.¹¹⁴ In the South Sumatran city of Palembang, too, Muslims were frustrated by a general ban on religious associations and strict limitations on Islamic education.¹¹⁵ On Sumatra, no formal organization brought together all Muslim groups until the very end of the war, when the Japanese inaugurated the Madjelis Islam Tinggi (High Islamic Council, MIT), and then only around the island's capital of Bukittinggi.¹¹⁶ The major inroads that Muslims on Java made into government under the Japanese were not shared on Sumatra.

In East Indonesia under the Japanese Navy, developments were similar to those on Sumatra. In South Sulawesi, the Japanese shut down all Islamic schools and organizations.¹¹⁷ In a concession to the Islamic community, the Japanese created an umbrella organization based in Makassar called Jam'iyatul Islamiyah (Islamic Community) that included several prominent Buginese and Makassarese Islamic leaders, but the organization's head was a Japanese Muslim whose religious belief was highly suspect.¹¹⁸ In South Kalimantan, however, Islamic organizations were shut down but schools were allowed to continue, and the Japanese even founded a new Islamic Middle School in Banjarmasin, albeit with Japanese propaganda heavily integrated into the curriculum.¹¹⁹ The major traditionalist organization of the region, Musjawar-attuthalibin, never recovered from being closed down by the Japanese.¹²⁰

¹¹² Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 99.

¹¹³ R. Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 31–33.

¹¹⁴ Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, 2nd ed. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014), 126–127.

¹¹⁵ Oral history with K. H. M. Zen Syukri, June 7, 2010, Palembang; oral history with M. Thahir Azhari, January 17, 2010, Ciputat.

¹¹⁶ Reid, *Blood of the People*, 176.

¹¹⁷ Bosra, *Tuang Guru, Anrong Guru dan Daeng Guru*, 255.

¹¹⁸ Bosra, *Tuang Guru, Anrong Guru dan Daeng Guru*, 258–259.

¹¹⁹ Suriansyah Ideham et al., *Sejarah Banjar*, Bab VI.

¹²⁰ M. Nur Maksum et al., *Musjawaratuththalibin*, 71.

In Eastern Indonesia, then, one could argue that Islam was neither promoted nor discouraged; it was contained. This was in keeping with Japanese plans to keep Eastern Indonesia in their empire for perpetuity, and thus not to empower any representatives, religious or secular, of the indigenous populations in the eastern archipelago.¹²¹

Across the three occupation zones, there was early opposition to the Japanese occupation, but this never grew into something effective. When the Japanese initially instructed Muslims to bow toward Tokyo rather than Mecca during their prayers, Muslims thoroughly rejected these orders.¹²² As the Japanese learned more about traditional customs and avoided such flagrantly offensive instructions, most resistance faded from the Islamic sector. Instead, opposition to the Japanese on Java at least coalesced around communists and socialists in Jakarta, especially Amir Sjarifuddin and Sutan Sjahrir and their young followers. Amir's circle failed in its attempts to resist; when the activists were arrested in early 1943, the Japanese executed most of Amir's deputies and spared Amir only because of a personal plea from Sukarno.¹²³ Sutan Sjahrir's circle, however, succeeded only by limiting itself to political discussions and nationalist theorizing, what Anderson called "thinking dangerous thoughts."¹²⁴ Both of these resistance groups were left-leaning and did not include any prominent Islamic activists.¹²⁵ Although a circle of Muslim youth formed around the Muslim intellectual Mohammad Natsir, it was significantly smaller, less influential, and not so strongly opposed to the Japanese.¹²⁶ Within the urban Islamic community on Java, the initiative remained with those who collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation, and outright opposition was minimal.

Rather, the Japanese encouraged or imposed cooperation at all levels. They began building up Indonesian strength to help combat any Allied invasion toward the end of the war. This involved the creation of military units and militias. Though the Japanese originally formed these militias with the intention that they could aid the Japanese military, it became clear by 1945 that these military and paramilitary groups would serve as the defenders of impending Indonesian independence. On Java, the

¹²¹ Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution*, 13.

¹²² Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 122–123. Cf. Abu Hanifah, *Tales of a Revolution*, 128.

¹²³ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 38.

¹²⁴ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 49.

¹²⁵ For more on the underground resistance of Amir and Sjahrir, see Anton Lucas, ed., *Local Opposition and Underground Resistance to the Japanese in Java, 1942–1945* (Melbourne: Monash University Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986).

¹²⁶ Latif, *Indonesian Muslim Intelligentsia and Power*, 217.

Japanese first inaugurated an indigenous fighting force in October 1943, a group called Pembela Tanah Air (Fatherland Defenders, known as Peta). This effort involved giving some 40,000 Javanese cadres military training in the Japanese style and providing their soldiers with limited arms.¹²⁷ On Sumatra, a similar effort, known by its Japanese name Giyugun (People's Militias), trained between 7,500 and 9,000.¹²⁸ More than a year later, in December 1944, the Japanese started a similar initiative on Java for specifically Islamic militias. This force, called the Hizbullah (from the Arabic for "Faction of God"), had the stated purpose "to realize the device of the Indonesian Muslim community, viz. to stand together with Japan, in the path of the Lord, in any situation."¹²⁹ Contradictory though their charge was, the training of Muslim military leaders for this auxiliary of Masjoemi proved important for the Muslim community's participation in the later revolution against the Dutch. Although perhaps no more than 500 men graduated from the Hizbullah training program, their effect was greatly multiplied by Muslim men who flocked into Islamic militias, swelling the militia's numbers to 50,000.¹³⁰

On the outer islands, the Japanese did not build up Muslim militias in the same way. No separate Islamic militia group was ever formed on Sumatra by the Japanese, but many of the Japanese-trained military leaders for the Giyugun there were products of the Islamic educational system and active in Islamic organizations.¹³¹ In Eastern Indonesia, Japanese preparations for Indonesian independence only began very briefly before the end of the war, so they sponsored no military groups.¹³² By contrast, some Muslim militias formed independently in mid-1945, and these represented the main preparations of East Indonesian Muslims for independence.¹³³

Between the consolidation of the Dutch territory in Southeast Asia and the collapse of Japanese occupation in the region, there were major shifts in Islamic life in Indonesia. In August 1945, they quickly became compounded with the rapid changes of the revolution. Muslims were primed to engage in a fight, to defend their religion, and to build a more religious future for their country.

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 20–21; Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution*, 14.

¹²⁸ Mestika Zed, "Giyugun – The Indigenous Defense Force in Sumatra," in Peter Post, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 128–132.

¹²⁹ Quoted in van Nieuwenhuijze, "Japanese Islam Policy on Java," 159.

¹³⁰ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 26; Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution*, 17.

¹³¹ Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 102–103.

¹³² Reid, *Indonesian National Revolution*, 13.

¹³³ Bosra, *Tuang Guru, Anrong Guru dan Daeng Guru*, 261–262.