Ummah Yet Proletariat:

Islam and Marxism in the Netherlands East Indies and Indonesia, 1915 – 1959

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the relationship between Islam and Marxism in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and Indonesia from the publication of the first vernacular communist periodical in 1915 to the end of parliamentary democracy in 1959. It explores various permutations of how Muslim identity and Marxist analytical frameworks coexisted in the minds of Indonesian nationalists, as well as how individuals' Islamic faith and ethics shaped their willingness to employ Marxist ideas. Such confluences have long been obscured by state-driven narratives which demonize Marxism and posit the mutual exclusivity of Islam and Marxism. By examining Indonesian-language print culture, including newspapers, books, pamphlets, memoirs, novels, plays, and poetry, this dissertation shows how deeply embedded confluences of Islam and Marxism were in the Indonesian nationalist project, even at its highest levels. Ultimately, this dissertation argues these confluences were the product of Indonesian participation in broader networks of intellectual exchange across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, and that such confluences were the result of Indonesians "translating" the world to Indonesia, a project of creative adaptation ambitious in both its scope and depth.

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Introduction

This dissertation will examine the confluence of Islam and Marxism in the Indonesia from 1915–1959 by studying the ways in which Islam and Marxism coexisted, from quotidian entwinement to explicit theorizations of compatibility. Put another way, it traces a genealogy of Sukarno's NASAKOM (a portmanteau of nationalism, religion, and communism) ideology, investigating its conditions of possibility – the socio-historical conditions that made its promulgation plausible in the late 1950s. As will become apparent, there is a long and rich history of conciliation between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia which has not received sufficient scholarly attention. This dissertation takes 1915 as its starting point because that year marked the emergence of the first unambiguously Marxist newspaper in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), Het Vrije Woord (The Free Word), the newspaper of the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV, the Indies Social-Democratic Association). While this was a Dutch-language newspaper, it went on to spawn a vernacular counterpart, Soeara Ra'jat (Voice of the People), in the emergent nationalist language of Bahasa Indonesia. Many others followed, taking Marxist discourse in new directions. Among those that followed in the path broken by Het Vrije Woord were strains of Marxist print culture that engaged with Islam in various ways. This dissertation takes 1959 as its end point, the year when Soekarno's imposition of "Guided Democracy" ossified the hitherto dynamic confluences of Islam and Marxism in the form of a state-centric ideology, NASAKOM.

At its argumentative core, this dissertation identifies two processes or impulses at work in Indonesian politics over several decades in the twentieth century, and arguably still operative today. The first was the project of adapting or translating the world to Indonesia, in ways that would be relevant and beneficial to Indonesia, while retaining a specifically and authentically Indonesian cast. This is a process which Partha Chatterjee eloquently described in The Nation and Its Fragments, and which Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H.T. Liem (as well as their many collaborators) ably illustrated through studying Indonesian popular media in Heirs to World Culture.[1]

[1] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993); Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H.T. Liem, eds., *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-65*, Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Institut Voor Taal, Land- En Vokenkunde 274 (Leiden: KITLV, 2012).

This project of adaptation and translation looked to three main sources of inspiration: the West, particularly the USA and Europe; the Islamic world of the ummah, the global community of Muslims, particularly in India, Turkey and Egypt; and the world of anticolonial solidarity, in colonized and semi-colonized societies like the Philippines and China. Indonesian activists and later republican leaders sought to adapt and translate the most dynamic and compelling ideas from these societies into an Indonesian context, while keeping them relevant to Indonesians. This included engagement with Marxist critiques of capitalism and Imperialism, which were digested in different ways by a variety of political demographics.

The second process at play was the attempt by Indonesian Muslims to translate Islam into a political idiom, using Islamic sources to construct an intellectual scaffolding for viable political alternatives to European empires, capitalist "democracies," or purported socialist utopias. This was part of a broader wave of modernist Islamic revivalism that had begun in the nineteenth century, sinking deep roots in Egypt and South Asia, which sought to make Islam politically and socially relevant beyond being a set of ritual prescriptions and traditions. For Indonesian Muslims, the project of reformulating Islam was intimately connected to a sense of the fundamental rationality and justice of Islam, which James Siegel describes as the akal/nafsu dichotomy in The Rope of God.[2] An Islamic society is one in which akal, the God-given rational faculties of humanity, prevail, in accordance with Islamic teachings. A society in which nafsu, the base desires of humanity, rules is one which is disordered, exploitative, and unjust. Precisely because they believed Islam to be a rational religion, a source of moral guidance which was compassionate, fair, and all-encompassing, they sought and often found resonances between Islam and the intellectual products of the non-Islamic world, such as socialism. Their preconceptions of what Islam had been, or could be again, i.e. that Islam was rational and just, colored their attempts to formulate or situate Islam politically. Unsurprisingly, their formulations of Islam often emphasized social justice and respect for women, or the accommodation of non-Muslims and economic redistribution, rather than the sanctity of property rights or the inviolability of individual freedoms. This was rarely done in the language

[2] James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God*, Ann Arbor Paperbacks (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000).

of, or with the tools of, formal Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), although most drew heavily on Islamic sources of authority like the Qur'an and hadith to justify their arguments. This process was partially the result of contact with the prevailing political winds in an era of decolonization and the Cold War, but the deeper impulse was their desire to formulate Islam in ways that lived up to its claims to justice.

This dissertation will examine these varied strands of pergerakan (lit. movement) print culture in Bahasa Indonesia, as expressed in newspapers, journals, books, reprinted speeches, memoirs, novels, the scripts of plays, and poetry collections.[3] I define print culture in the broadest possible sense, encompassing the various vehicles of artistic and political knowledge transmission that collectively serve as an index of the ideas circulating in NEI/Indonesian society. Even plays were scripts at one point, before being transformed into polished performances. The phenomenon that this dissertation explores and explains is the confluence of Islam and Marxism. The questions it poses, and hopefully answers, follow: 1) why were Islam and Marxism perceived as compatible, or why did they tend to converge? 2) what conditions made possible, or even facilitated, conciliations of Islam and Marxism? 3) how were such conciliations configured or articulated? None of the answers to these questions are universal or monolithic. Instead, the answers reflect a wide spectrum of responses, as Indonesians found various ways to reconcile their Islamicate civilization with the intellectual exports of Europe or the Islamic world, or the historical experiences of other Asian societies.

The first chapter, from the beginning of Marxist print culture in 1915 to the suppression of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Communist Party of Indonesia) in 1927, focuses on a phenomenon that can justifiably be called Islamic communism. Besides exploring the nature of Islamic communism and its conditions of possibility, it also explores competing alternatives to Islamic communism and considers the social context in which conciliations of Islam and Marxism were formulated through an examination of contemporaneous pergerakan novels. The second chapter, from the implementation of strict censorial measures against the pergerakan in

[3] The *pergerakan* constituted a wide range of political actors of diverse ideological backgrounds, whose political activism ranged from agitating for independence to fostering the 'national awakening' of an Indonesian nation. What united them was their conviction of both the possibility and necessity of shaping a distinctly Indonesian future.

1927 to the occupation of the NEI by the Imperial Japanese Army in 1942, focuses on pergerkan activities during a repressive era, in which their opportunities for activism were circumscribed. It explores the publications of Sutan Sjahrir and Mohammad Hatta's organization, the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Education, henceforth the Pendidikan), the writings of pergerakan activists affiliated with the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah Islamic schools in West Sumatra, as well as those of Muslim pergerakan organizations like the PSII (Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia) and Permi (Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia). It pays special attention to the pedagogical and discursive contributions of female activists like Rasimah Ismail, Ratna Sari, Rasuna Said, S. Yati, Maria Ulfah Santoso and Soewarsih Djojopoespito. The third chapter covers the Indonesian Revolution of 1945–1949, picking up the narrative after the Japanese Occupation, a period characterized by tightly-enforced press censorship and resulting in a dearth of independent print culture. Chapter three focuses on the re-emergent PKI's relationship with Islam, and ostensibly Islamic Republican leaders' engagement with Marxist ideas. It also highlights the emergence of new Marxist republican movements like the obscurely local PKI Lokal Islamy and the nationally-prominent Persatuan Perjuangan, which openly proclaimed the compatibility of Islam and communism in the interest of preserving the broadest possible revolutionary base. The fourth chapter revolves around the Parliamentary Democracy period of Indonesian politics, which lasted from 1950–1959. It examines the engagement with Marxist ideas on the part of Muslim republicans who have been identified as "religious socialists," such as Mohammed Hatta, Mohammed Natsir, and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara. It also explores how communists theorized Islam as compatible with Marxism in the new republic, and how many Muslims politicians across the political spectrum felt unable to ignore the validity of Marxist critiques of capital. To illustrate the conditions of possibility that made these conciliations of Islam and Marxism possible, this chapter dwells on a number of plays and poems to illustrate the social and intellectual milieu which made such creative political thinking possible.

I argue that these sources collectively represent how pervasive, and perhaps even paradigmatic, both Islam and Marxism were in Indonesian politics from 1915–1959. Although the phenomenon of explicit Islamic communism was obvious only in the 1920s, its significance and lasting appeal reverberated for decades after,

taking on different permutations. In analyzing vernacular print culture, this analysis deliberately privileges the discursive over the organizational. Rather than focus on the existence of organizational links between Muslim pergerakan activists and PKI cadres in the NEI, Comintern instructions to the PKI, or intra-party alliances in the Indonesian republic, this dissertation is concerned instead with the highly original and progressive arguments made by prominent activists of surprisingly varied backgrounds. These activists felt compelled to engage with the Islamic milieu in which they operated, as well as Marxist ideas that had taken root in the NEI and Indonesia. Their writings show that they emphasized the importance of social justice in Islam, and interpreted Marxism as an effective vehicle for the achievement of Islamic goals within the framework of anti-colonial resistance. After independence, they found both Islam and Marxist concepts relevant to their political aspirations for the new Indonesian republic.

I argue that many pergerakan activists perceived Islam as an equitable and just system for organizing social life, as expressed in the obligation to give alms (zakat) and the prohibition of usury (rib'a).[4] Communism made similar claims to being an equitable system for organizing human relations, and many pergerakan activists sought to build on that perceived concordance of goals. For example, Participants in the 1926–27 uprisings articulated their antipathy toward the colonial state in both Islamic and communist terms, because they remained immersed in an Islamic milieu which constituted the ineluctable basis for understanding, interpreting and adapting Marxist ideas and modes of organization. Rather than the PKI cynically courting Muslim support by disingenuously claiming communism served Islamic ends, I argue that diverse pergerakan elements theorized conciliation in a variety of ways, conciliations which evolved over time. After the Japanese surrender, the vast majority of the pergerakan activists examined here went on to play significant roles in republican politics, especially during the Indonesian revolution. From that point on, I cease to refer to them as pergerakan activists, and call them republicans instead. However, they were still very much the same people, and the legacy

[4] Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 134; Soekarno, *Marhaen and Proletarian*, trans. Claire Holt, Translation Series, Modern Indonesia Project (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1960), 50., *Fadjar Asia*, December 28, 1928.

of the pre-Independence discursive milieu stayed with them even as their political visions evolved. Explicit Islamic communism became increasingly untenable, but they continued to seek to reconcile Islamic identity and Marxist ideas in a variety of ways.

Literature Review

The scholarly literature on Indonesian Marxism tends to focus on the PKI at the expense of the many other Indonesian Marxist movements. This institutional-centric perspective dominated earlier scholarship on Indonesian communism and continues to be influential today, informing recent studies like Julia Lowell's Maoism: A Global History.[5] The work of Justus van der Kroef, Ruth McVey, Donald Hindley, and Rex Mortimer are generally concerned with the PKI and its formal organs, its affiliate organizations, and its political maneuvering in and outside parliament.[6] This approach has many merits, and McVey's The Rise of Indonesian Communism is so rigorous that it serves as a reference text even today, more than five decades after it was first published. However, this approach also obscures the sheer intellectual diversity of Indonesian Marxism: it allows the PKI to overshadow the plurality of Marxist discourses which pervaded pre-1965 Indonesian politics, discourses which were embedded in organizations like minor Marxist parties, labor unions, and women's rights organizations.

The scholarship which does look beyond the PKI has been focused on the organizational and diplomatic links between communist parties, and between Indonesia and communist states. In relation to the USSR, Ruth McVey and Larissa Efimova's work has been the most prominent, drawing on a rare combination of fluency in

[5] Julia Lovell, *Maoism: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019).
[6] Justus van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its History, Program, and Tactics* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Publications Centre, 1965); Justus van der Kroef, *Communism in South-East Asia* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980); Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965); Ruth T. McVey, "Teaching Modernity: The PKI as an Educational Institution," *Indonesia* 50 (1990): 5–27; Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: 1951-1963* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1964); Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno; Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974).

both Indonesian and Russian as well as making use of the fleeting accessibility of archives after the fall of the USSR.[7] In relation to the PRC, Liu Hong and Zhou Taomo have both published detailed and carefully crafted monographs; this is especially true of Zhou's book, which draws on hitherto unexplored PRC archival sources.[8] Hara Fujio and Ramon Guillermo have also explored the relationship between the PKI and regional communist movements in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysian communists in both Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo, as well as in the Philippines.[9] All of these studies evinced a strong tendency to take the PKI, its activities, members, and literature as their primary subject. As valuable as studying party-on-party interactions or state-on-state diplomacy is, this frame of analysis embraces organizational and political maneuvers at the expense of the discursive. To get a sense of the intellectual milieu of not just the PKI leadership but of Indonesian Marxists in general, or the actual ideas circulating amongst those influenced by Marxism, it is necessary to focus on the material – mostly in print, but also taking the form of speeches, plays, poems, and novels – that Indonesian Marxists consumed. That is one way in which this dissertation builds on existing scholarship but sheds new light on the ideas animating Indonesian Marxism.

The partial exception to this tendency to focus on the PKI is the rigorous research on Tan Malaka, once a PKI leader himself, undertaken by scholars such as Harry Poeze and Helen Jarvis. Poeze has published a veritable mountain of work in English, Dutch and Indonesian on Tan Malaka in an attempt to do Tan Malaka's complex intellectual legacy justice.[10] This includes his multi-volume study of Tan Malaka's activities during the revolution, detailing how this anti-PKI, anti-Stalinist communist leader re-emerged as a potent political force

[7] Larisa M. Efimova, "Stalin and the Revival of the Communist Party of Indonesia," *Cold War History* 5, no. 1 (2005): 107–20; Larisa M. Efimova and Ruth T. McVey, "Stalin and the New Program for the Communist Party of Indonesia," *Indonesia* 91 (2011): 131–63.
[8] Taomo Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution: China, Indonesia, and the Cold War* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2019); Zhou, Taomo, "Ambivalent Alliance: Chinese Policy towards Indonesia, 1960–1965," *The China Quarterly* 221 (2015): 208–28; Hong Liu, *China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965*, Kyoto CSEAS Series on Asian Studies 4 (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, in association with Kyoto University Press, 2011).
[9] Ramon Guillermo, "Blood-Brothers: The Communist Party of the Philippines and the Partai Komunis Indonesia," *Southeast Asian Studies* 7 (2018): 13–38; Hara Fujio, "The Malayan Communist Party and the Indonesian Communist Party: Features of Co-Operation," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 6 (2010): 216–49.
[10] Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Stirjder Voor Indonesie's Vrijheid: Levensloop van 1897 Tot 1945* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinius Nijhoff, 1976); Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Pergulatan Menuju Republik*, trans. Alfian (Jakarta: Grafitipers, 1988); Harry A. Poeze, "The Cold War in Indonesia, 1948," *The Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2009): 497–517.

during the Indonesian revolution even after two decades in exile.[11] Helen Jarvis has translated Tan Malaka's surprisingly lengthy and rich autobiography, considering that it was written in a jail cell amidst general wartime scarcity, while also providing important analysis of Tan Malaka's unusual role in Indonesian politics.[12] Their in-depth research on one very complex and intellectually versatile Indonesian Marxist has exposed modalities of being Indonesian, being Muslim, and being communist that forces readers to reexamine the presumed antipathy between Islam and Marxism. It has also inspired a new generation of scholars like Oliver Crawford to study the "translation" of Marxism to the Indies by tracing the etymologies and ideological genealogies of the terms Tan Malaka employed.[13] In a similar vein, this dissertation builds on Poeze and Jarvis's work, going beyond the thorough examination of one (admittedly prominent) man's political philosophy and situating it within a broader discursive context that was remarkably friendly to confluences of Islam and Marxism.

In biographies of prominent Indonesian politicians, traces of confluences between Islam and Marxism sometimes emerge. Notable examples include Rudolf Mrázek's biography of Sutan Sjahrir, James Rush and Khairudin Aljunied's biographies of Hamka, Mavis Rose and Deliar Noer's biographies of Hatta, and J.D. Legge and Bob Hering's biographies of Soekarno.[14] Admitted into the national pantheon of anticolonial dissidents and revolutionary heroes, these individuals were able to attract scholarly attention but the political constituencies they represented or were incubated in have not been carefully examined. For example, Sjahrir's Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI) has never been the subject of a scholarly monograph, nor has Hatta and Sjahrir's deeply Marxist anticolonial organization, the Pendidikan. Moreover, the breadth and nuance of their

[11] Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka, Gerakan Kiri, Dan Revolusi Indonesia*, 4 vols. (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2009).
[12] Helen Jarvis, "Tan Malaka: Revolutionary or Renegade?," *Critical Asian Studies* 19 (1987): 41–55; Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, 3 vols., Ohio University Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series 83 (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1991).
[13] Oliver Crawford, "The Political Thought of Tan Malaka" (PhD Diss., University of Cambridge, 2018).
[14] Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia*, Studies on Southeast Asia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994); Deliar Noer, *Mohammad Hatta: Conscience of a Nation, 1902-1980* (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan Perwakilan KITLV, 2002); Mavis Rose, *Indonesia Free: A Political Biography of Mohammad Hatta* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1987); J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London: Penguin, 1973); B. B. Hering, *Soekarno: Founding Father of Indonesia, 1901-1945* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002); James R. Rush, *Hamka's Great Story: A Master Writer's Vision for Modern Indonesia* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016); Khairudin Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University Press, 2018).

political visions were sometimes attenuated to avoid incriminating associations with Marxism, which became deeply transgressive in Indonesia after 1965. Nevertheless, such biographies, by virtue of their depth, hint at the ways in which Islamic identity and Marxist frames of reference could comfortably coexist in the worldviews of Indonesian intellectuals. By examining these biographies, this dissertation recovers glimpses of their complex political philosophies, often originally published in long-ignored newspapers, pamphlets, and reprinted speeches. These glimpses suggest that even at the highest levels of pergerakan and republican leadership Islamic and Marxist perspectives were deeply entwined.

Indonesian writers, both academics and former Marxists, have only recently begun to explore Indonesia's historical relationship with Marxism in general, and the relationship between Indonesian Islam and Marxism in particular. This is largely because Marxism is still a deeply sensitive topic, linked as it is to the PKI and G30S, an idea seared into citizens' consciousness by the recurring annual broadcast each September 30 of Arifin C. Noer's film, The Treachery of G30S/PKI. Despite the fall of Suharto's censorial dictatorship in 1998, Indonesian scholars working on Marxism have had to be very careful in their portrayal of Islam, since the insinuation that it might be "tainted" by Marxism can raise hackles in both military and conservative Muslim circles. Hilmar Farid and Razif have published important work which explores the importance of unregulated, clandestine print culture in building Indies – and specifically communist – political consciousness.[15] Hersri Setiawan, a former political prisoner accused of being a PKI sympathizer, has published a study of the Madiun affair which challenges the widely-accepted narrative of Madiun as an example of the PKI's repeated attempts to subvert the Indonesian republic.[16] Syamsul Bakri's study of Haji Misbach's explicitly Islamic communist movement in Surakarta during the 1920s is one of the very few monographs by an Indonesian academic that actively addresses the relationship between Islam and communism, although the phenomenon is hardly unfamiliar to Indonesian scholars.[17] In their work, it is clear that many communists saw themselves as Muslims,

[15] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 277–92.
[16] Hersri Setiawan, *Negara Madiun? Kesaksian Soemarsono Pelaku Perjuangan* (Jakarta: Forum Studi Perubahan dan Peradaban, 2002).
[17] Syamsul Bakri, *Gerakan Komunisme Islam Surakarta 1914-1942* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Askara, 2015).

although with the exception of Bakri no sustained effort is made to explain that confluence. Taking advantage of the fact that it is often easier for a non-Muslim, non-Indonesian to write about such a fraught topic, this dissertation attempts to follow up on the hints of confluence dropped in Indonesian scholarship, and incorporate them into a thorough analysis of how Islam and Marxism have coexisted, and even co-evolved, over several decades.

Somewhat surprisingly, it has been research on less explicitly political subjects that has uncovered significant glimpses of the relationship between Islam and Marxism in Indonesian political life. This is true of Michael Bodden's essay on leftist theater during the Cold War, as well as the many essays contributed by various scholars to Jennifer Lindsay and Maya Liem's anthology of essays on the pre-1965 attempts to "translate" the world to Indonesia.[18] More specifically, scholars such as Keith Foulcher and William Bradley Horton have focused on novels as historical sources, examining them for valuable insights into the zeitgeist of various periods in Indonesian history.[19] In doing so, they have built on the work of earlier scholars like Claire Holt, whose seminal monographs Culture and Politics in Indonesia (1972) and Art in Indonesia: Continuity and Change (1967) first took Indonesian artistic production as their subject of interest.[20] These scholars' works reveal surprising shades of cooperation and compromise between Muslims and Marxists, of leftist art accommodating Islam or Muslim artists engaging with Marxist ideas in their pursuit of articulating an authentically Indonesian artistic voice. Perhaps what politicians found difficult to utter, or express delicately, was sometimes easier for artists to voice.

Geographically focused studies of Indonesia have also been relatively successful at highlighting the – often regionally-specific – dynamics underpinning various conciliations of Islam and Marxism. Examples include

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[18] Michael Bodden, "Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism in North Sumatra: The Forgotten Theater of Indonesia's LEKRA, 1955–65," in *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia*, ed. Tony Day and Maya H.T. Liem (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 2010), 45–80; Lindsay and Liem, *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-65*.

[19] Keith Foulcher, "Moving Pictures: Western Marxism and Vernacular Literature in Colonial Indonesia," in *Chewing over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009); William Bradley Horton, "History Unhinged: World War II and the Reshaping of Indonesian History" (PhD Diss., Waseda University, 2016).

[20] Claire Holt, *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972); Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967).

Audrey Kahin's and Jeffrey Hadler's monographs on West Sumatra, which uncover many connections between individual Muslims and Marxists by examining a particular area in detail, over the course of decades.[21] Takashi Shiraishi's study of Haji Misbach's Islamic communist movement in and around Surakarta is also wonderfully detailed because it situates its object of study within a specifically central Javanese context, from the courtly culture of the kraton to the lived realities of wage laborers on sugarcane plantations.[22] Another realm of study which has produced important insights into how Marxism was incubated in the amniotic fluid of Islam has been the study of the Indonesian labor movement. The work of John Ingleson, Jafar Suryomenggolo and Ben White has shown how union activism in the pursuit of concrete gains could bring Muslims and Marxists together, or how labor activists prioritized respecting the identities and beliefs of the people they sought to organize, not least in Ingleson's exploration of the relationship between the PKI and Sarekat Islam during the early twentieth century.[23]

Unlike Indonesian Marxism, which remains a transgressive and esoteric subject for most, there has been no shortage of excellent scholarship on Indonesian Islam. Nearly all of it, however, tends to mention Islam's relationship with Marxism only in passing, perhaps because highlighting it generates a number of difficult questions which demand in-depth answers. For example, Khairudin Aljunied's study of Hamka's life and work almost entirely avoids Hamka's engagement with Marxist ideas.[24] Monographs on the various aspects of Indonesian Islam are simply too numerous to name here. Some of the most prominent, which occasionally touch on Marxism, include: Harry J. Benda's study of Masjumi during the Japanese occupation; Kees van Dijk and Chiara Formichi's studies of the Darul Islam rebellion; Greg Fealy and Greg Barton's anthology on Nahdlatul

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[21] Audrey R. Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).
[22] Takashi Shiraishi, "Islam and Communism: An Illumination of the People's Movement in Java, 1912-1926" (PhD Diss., Cornell University, 1986).
[23] John Ingleson, *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1927-1934*, ASAA Southeast Asia Publications Series 1 (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1979); John Ingleson, *Workers, Unions and Politics : Indonesia in the 1920s and 1930s*, (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Jafar Suryomenggolo, *Organising Under the Revolution: Unions and the State in Java, 1945-48*, Kyoto CSEAS Series on Asian Studies 9 (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, in association with Kyoto University Press, 2013); Ben White, "Remembering the Indonesian Peasant's Front and Plantation Worker's Union (1945-1966)," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43, no. 1 (2016): 1–16.
[24] Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam*.

Ulama's navigation of both "tradition" and "modernity;" Howard Federspiel's study of the conservative Islamic organization Persis; Karel Steenbrink's exploration of colonialism's impact on Indonesian Islam; Susan Blackburn's study of Indonesian women's participation in political articulations of Islam; and Luthfi Assyaukanie's analysis of the historical relationship between Indonesian Islam and the state.[25] Partial exceptions to this tendency to efface Marxism are Rémy Madinier and Kevin Fogg's studies of Masjumi, which never obscure the ways in which Masjumi politicians were influenced by socialist ideas, though neither study takes up Masjumi's relationship with Marxism as one of its core themes.[26]

Unlike Indonesian Islam, scholarship on Indonesian print culture, especially when it is treated as a specific conceptual category, has remained relatively limited. Ahmat Adam's study of the impact of an Indonesian vernacular press on the national political consciousness, and Benedict Anderson's studies of print capitalism in Indonesia are invaluable for anyone who wishes to understand the impact of print culture not only in Indonesia, but across most colonized societies.[27] James Siegel's Fetish, Recognition, Revolution adds layers of insight to Adam and Anderson's arguments its own unique way, analyzing the subtle impact and revelations of sentiments articulated in Indonesian print culture.[28] Other scholars like J.D. Legge, Hilmar Farid, and Razif, chose to dig deep, analyzing specific newspapers for what they reveal about the discursive tenor of a particular period or

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[25] Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958); Cornelis van Dijk, *Rebellion Under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); Chiara Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in 20th Century Indonesia*, Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Institut Voor Taal, Land- En Vokenkunde 282 (Leiden: KITLV, 2012); Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, eds., *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1996); Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reformism in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970); Karel A. Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts, 1596–1950*, trans. Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006); Susan Blackburn, "Indonesian Women and Political Islam," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39 (February 2008): 83–105; Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State*, ISEAS Series on Islam (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

[26] Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masjumi Party between Democracy and Integralism*, trans. Jeremy Desmond (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015); Kevin Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[27] Adam Ahmat, *The Vernacular Press and the Emergence of Modern Indonesian Consciousness (1855-1913)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1995); Benedict R.O.G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991); Benedict R.O.G. Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, The Wilder House Series in Politics, History and Culture (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990); Benedict R.O.G. Anderson, "Language, Fantasy, Revolution: Java 1900-1950," in *Making Indonesia*, ed. Daniel S. Lev and Ruth T. McVey, Studies on Southeast Asia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1996).

[28] James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997).

organization.[29] More recently, their work has been supplemented by ambitious and comprehensive studies of Indonesian newspapers, serialized novels, and pulp fiction undertaken by Yamamoto Nobuto, Sudarmoko, Oshikawa Noriaki, William Bradley Horton, and Rianne Subijanto.[30] This dissertation hopes to build on this wave of scholarship by showing how a rigorous analysis of Indonesian print culture can provide insights on phenomena which are hard to discern in archival sources. In that sense, it mirrors the efforts made by Herbert Feith and Lance Castles to highlight Indonesian political discourse, allowing Indonesian intellectuals to speak for themselves in their own words, speech which often evinced a mix of Islamic and Marxist motivations.[31]

Scholarship on the relationship between Islam and Marxism outside of Indonesia exists, but has tended to take a state-centric, instrumentalist approach, focusing on how a ruling party or state sought to co-opt or subdue Islamic identities, institutions, and organizations. One exception was Maxime Rodinson's collection of essays on Marxism in the Muslim world, an early attempt to explain the Muslim attraction to Marxist ideas in the decolonizing world, albeit from within a distinctly European Marxist framework.[32] More typical examples include Eren Tasar's study of how communist regimes in Central Asia tamed Islam, and Fowkes and Gökay's anthology on Islam and communism in contexts as disparate as Britain and Albania.[33] In the Chinese context, Jonathan Lipman and Roberta Tontini have authored sensitive studies of how Muslims under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party developed various ways of negotiating their new political realities, if not necessarily

[29] J. D. Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," *Indonesia* 32 (1981): 151–68; Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode."
[30] Nobuto Yamamoto, "The Dynamics of Contentious Politics in the Indies: Inlandsche Journalisten Bond and Persatoean Djoernalis Indonesia," *Keio Communication Review* 36 (2014); Nobuto Yamamoto, "Print Power and Censorship in Colonial Indonesia, 1914-1942" (PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2011); Sudarmoko, "Revisiting a Private Publishing House in the Indonesian Colonial Period: Penjiaran Ilmoe," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 38 (2010): 181–216; Noriaki Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka: A Popular Novel and a Revolutionary Legend," in *Reading Southeast Asia*, ed. Audrey R. Kahin, Roberta Ludgate, and Dolina Millar (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1990), 9–39; Rianne Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 1357–77; Rianne Subijanto, "Media of Resistance: A Communication History of the Communist Movement in the Dutch East Indies, 1920-1926" (PhD Dissertation, University of Colorado, 2016).
[31] Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, trans., *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970).
[32] Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Zed Books, 1979).
[33] Eren Tasar, *Soviet and Muslim: The Institutionalization of Islam in Central Asia, 1943-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Bülent Gökay and Ben Fowkes, eds., *Muslims and Communists in Post-Transition States* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

reconciling their Islamic identities with Marxism.[34] In the Middle East, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman's study of how the Egyptian working class made sense of the new allegiances that the Egyptian nation and communist ideology imposed upon them, as well as how they negotiated those demands in relation to their Islamic identities, has deeply informed my own research.[35] While all of these studies have been important in framing the questions posed by this dissertation, a conscious decision was made to focus on how individual Muslims synthesized Marxist ideas (as exemplified by Rodinson, Tontini, Beinin and Lockman), or how Marxists made sense of their own Islamic identities, rather than to see through the lenses of state policy and organizational links.

This dissertation makes its most direct contribution to the existing literature on this period by straddling the histories of Indonesian Marxist movements and Indonesian Islam, re-examining well-trodden Indonesian historical sources with a fresh perspective. Through a careful re-reading of the published work of well-known pergerakan leaders such as Tan Malaka, Tjokroaminoto, Mohammad Hatta and Soekarno, as well as an analysis of hitherto understudied activists' writings, the confluence of Islam and Marxism becomes evident. This phenomenon is hardly unknown, but it is rarely pursued as the primary object of scholarly analysis. Many prominent scholars have referenced it in passing, as if it were merely a charming oddity. Examples include Taufik Abdullah's Schools and Politics, Anthony Reid's The Blood of the People, Jefferey Hadler's Muslims and Matriarchs, and Ruth McVey's The Rise of Indonesian Communism.[36] This dissertation avoids approaching the confluence of Islam and Marxism as an isolated formulation by a few heterodox thinkers, or as the "false consciousness" of peasants and religious leaders who gravitated to the PKI without understanding its message. Rather, I argue that conciliatory discourses involving Islam and Marxism were surprisingly common, and were

[34] Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997); Roberta Tontini, *Muslim Sanzijing: Shifts and Continuities in the Definition of Islam in China* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016).
[35] Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).
[36] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971); Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979); Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*; McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*.

promulgated even at the highest levels of pergerakan leadership. The histories of Indonesian Islam and Indonesian Marxism have been treated as conceptually distinct subjects by most scholars of Indonesia for far too long; I show how they were intertwined from even the early days of the pergerakan, an entwinement that continued to influence the articulation of Indonesian political visions long past independence.

To the best of my knowledge, only three authors have tackled the confluence of Islam and Marxism head-on: Michael C. Williams, Takashi Shiraishi, and Syamsul Bakri.[37] Williams's study is rooted specifically in Banten during the 1926-27 uprisings and relies on ethnographic fieldwork rather than print sources, while Shiraishi and Bakri's studies are geographically limited to Surakarta. Bakri's book focuses specifically on Haji Misbach, and none of the three venture beyond the 1940s. Early attempts were made by Jeanne Mintz and Kees van Dijk to explore the confluence of Islam and communism in Indonesia at a conceptual level. However, Mintz's book was focused on the 1950s and seriously hobbled by lack of access to primary sources other than state and party documents, while van Dijk's analysis was limited to a cursory chapter exploring the relationship between Sarekat Islam and the PKI during the 1920s.[38] This dissertation fills many conceptual and chronological gaps, and ties preceding scholarship on two hitherto conceptually distinct topics together by taking the confluence of Islam and Marxism across several decades as its primary subject.

This dissertation also makes a meaningful contribution to the extant literature on both Indonesian Marxism and Indonesian Islam in at least one other way: it pays particular attention to the discursive contributions of women. Excellent scholarship on the history of politically active Indonesian women has been published by Jean Taylor, Susan Blackburn, Helen Ting, Elizabeth Martyn, Mary Margaret Steedly and Saskia Wieringa, among others.[39]

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[37] Michael C. Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series 86 (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1990); Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*; Bakri, *Gerakan Komunisme Islam Surakarta 1914-1942*.

[38] Jeanne S. Mintz, *Mohammed, Marx, and Marhaen: The Roots of Indonesian Socialism* (New York: Praeger, 1965); van Dijk, Cornelis, "'Communist Muslims' in the Dutch East Indies," in *State and Islam*, ed. Cornelis van Dijk and A.H. de Groot (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1995), 77–95.

[39] Jean Gelman Taylor, ed., *Women Creating Indonesia: The First Fifty Years* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1997); Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-Colonial Indonesia: Gender and Nation in a New Democracy* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); Mary Margaret Steedly, *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence*, Philip E. Lilienthal (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2013); Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan and the Institute of Social Studies, 2002).

However, these studies seem to exist outside of the "mainstream" scholarship on the Indonesian anticolonial movement, the revolution, or republican politics. Effectively, women's voices and women's contributions have been sequestered into a separate realm of "women's history," since most of the scholarship on Indonesian history makes only cursory attempts to incorporate women's experiences (if at all). Moreover, the historiography of Indonesian Marxism and Indonesian Islam both strongly emphasize the contributions of men, rarely including women's voices, especially women's intellectual contributions. This is even more true of Indonesian nationalist historiography; women make up only 13 out of the 173 national heroes canonized by the state, and most scholarship on Indonesia that does not deal explicitly with gender issues greatly under-represents the roles played by women in the struggle for independence.

This is partially a simple reflection of the fact that despite the great changes afoot during the twentieth century, NEI/Indonesian society remained deeply unequal and there were limited opportunities for women to express themselves politically. The limited opportunities for women to receive an education – in a largely illiterate society with a chronic under-supply of educational opportunities for all natives – further exacerbated this.[40] I contend, however, that there exists a sufficiently large corpus of intellectual output by female pergerakan activists (and later, republican politicians) that make writing women's voices into mainstream Indonesian intellectual history a tenable proposition. In this regard, I have made a conscious decision to incorporate women's voices in the flow of the narrative, treating them as co-equal producers of Indonesian political discourse instead of sequestering them into a separate chapter. Women's voices were under-represented in relation to men both in reality and in Indonesian historiography, but those privileged few who had the means to speak often found discursive platforms like newspapers and novels to do so. Even these privileged few have

[40] At the high water mark of the Dutch Imperial project in 1930 (after thirty years of "Ethical Policy" investments in native education), census takers estimated that only about 7.4% of the native population (3,746,225 people) could be considered literate in any language, while only 0.30% (187,708 people) were considered literate in Dutch. See *Volkstelling 1930*, vols. VI-VIII (Batavia: Department van Ekonomische Zaken, 1933-1936). In 1954, on the cusp of Indonesia's first general election, Rémy Madinier estimated that the entire reading public stood at no more than 3% of the entire population (1,500,000 people) based on newspaper subscription figures. That said, he also recognized that print culture had many afterlives, and the information it contained often continued to circulate in various ways that did not involve individual reading. See Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masyumi Party Between Democracy and Integralism*, trans. Jeremy Desmond (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015), 127.

been under-studied, though not completely ignored. Unsurprisingly, a number of them evinced the same tendency as their male counterparts to engage with both Islam and Marxism in their work.

Vernacular Print Culture

In Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson argues that print capitalism was a key factor in stimulating the consciousness of "nation-ness", an imagined political community.[41] The threads of pergerakan print culture which connected Islam and Marxism were very much part of the phenomenon Anderson named print capitalism, and exercised the same integrative function. However, they did so not independently of, or in opposition to, existing identities. These threads of pergerakan literature overlaid and drew strength from an already extant sense of "nation-ness." This was the sense being brothers and sisters in the global community of Muslims, the ummah, and all the values associated with that identity. Within this dual framework of shared "nation-ness," some Indies Muslims invoked both the ummah as well as the identity and values associated with the international communist movement. Tan Malaka's writings, for example, clearly imagine Indies Muslims as part of much broader worlds, whether that meant the world of Dar al-Islam or the communist oikouménē once called the Second World.[42] For them, this field of connectedness created by print capitalism dovetailed with an existing field of connectedness: a sense of membership in the ummah, sustained by the circulation of texts, pilgrims, traders, and scholars, as Ronit Ricci eloquently shows in Islam Translated.[43] Each drew strength from the other in knitting Indies Muslims into a cohesive imagined community, a community that nursed within itself the imagined potential to repeal the eclectic, hybridized and (ultimately) ephemeral national identity fostered by

[41] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 37–47.
[42] Dar al-Islam is literally translated as "the abode of Islam," but it perhaps best understood in terms of Marshall Hodgson's "Islamdom," the ecumenical cognate of "Christendom."
[43] Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

the Dutch colonial state. In its place, they imagined a community of Muslims that was simultaneously part of the ummah as well as the nation-transcending world of proletarian solidarity.[44]

I consciously choose to prioritize vernacular print culture, particularly in Bahasa Indonesia, in my analysis of the confluence of Islam and Marxism. By drawing on books, pamphlets, manifestos, newspapers, journals, memoirs, novels, plays, and poetry, I am able to provide glimpses of discourses that have long been marginalized by political developments in Indonesia, and effectively excised from its popular historical imagination. This analysis privileges the perspectives of pergerakan activists (and later, republican politicians), though they might not always be fully honest or rigorous about their stated positions. By eschewing reliance on colonial archives as my primary point of entry into the past, I avoid inhabiting the assumptions and predispositions of the Dutch colonial government, which was strongly predisposed to perceive Bolshevik conspiracies and imminent revolution around every corner. Its post-independence counterpart, the Indonesian republic, was less hysterical about Marxism but was so rarely able to articulate a coherent ideology that non-archival sources paint a broader and more accurate picture of the dynamism of Indonesian political thinking than archival sources do. Moreover, the continuous efflorescence of pergerakan print culture from the early twentieth century onward makes it abundantly clear that an enormous amount vernacular print culture remains unexplored, and deserves closer analysis. One 1971 index of Indonesian newspapers lists over 1,000 newspapers published across 55 cities throughout the archipelago, the majority of which began publication during the colonial period.[45] Indeed, to the best of my knowledge, several of the newspapers that I examine in the first chapter have never before been analyzed in English-language scholarship.

[44] Some of these visions could be glib about the religious and ethnic minorities of the NEI/Indonesia, conveniently ignoring the very real prospect of tensions engendered by mapping a vision of Islamic society onto a reality of religious plurality. That said, many of the activists influenced by both Islam and Marxism were steadfast in their insistence on tolerance and inclusion towards all religions, including the top republican leaders who promulgated the national principles of Pancasila, as well as virtually all of the PKI's top leadership throughout this period.

[45] G. Raymond Nunn, *Indonesian Newspapers: An International Union List*, Occasional Series 14 (Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center Inc., 1971).

The expression of pergerakan and republican political visions in Bahasa Indonesia merits special attention. In Language and Power, Anderson argued that the pergerakan commitment to Bahasa Indonesia should be understood as an "enterprise for the mastery of a gigantic cultural crisis, and a partly subconscious project for the assumption of modernity within the modalities of an autonomous and autochthonous social-political tradition."[46] This attempt by the pergerakan to construct a linguistic medium for the conveyance of new, radical discourses was driven by the adaptation of global discourses for an Indonesian context, for Indonesian consumption. This was a task that hierarchical Javanese was ill-suited for, while Dutch-medium education was reserved for native elites, relegating Dutch to a position of marginal relevance in the project of translation. As James Siegel put it, "the lingua franca [of Malay, transmuted by the pergerakan into Bahasa Indonesia] brought not only messages from groups present in the Indies; it brought stories from most of the globe as well. This moment has been seen to be the beginning of Indonesian nationalism. It is important to see that this nationalism began not in the nation and not with the colonial forces but with the reception of messages from Europe and Asia."[47]

In the NEI, the reception of messages like Democratic Socialism from the Netherlands, or revolutionary Marxism from the USSR, necessarily required said messages to engage at least partially with Islam, given Islam's sheer number of adherents. It was also necessary because of Islam's enduring political salience: many Muslims questioned how their faith ought to be manifest in politics. Just as the adoption of Bahasa Indonesia as a discursive medium was essential to the maturation of the pergerakan, the attempts by Muslims to grapple with powerful new ideologies like communism were an integral part of pergerakan political activity. Indeed, the adoption/codification of a lingua franca and the adaptation of new ideas went hand in hand. With that in mind, it is not surprising that conciliatory discourses positing the compatibility of Islam and communism were

[46] Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*, 124. Bahasa Indonesia is based on Malay, the mercantile *lingua franca* of the linguistically-diverse Malay Archipelago, which was adopted in a simplified form by the Dutch colonial state as a language of colonial administration. The Dutch also sought to "develop" Malay as part of their "civilizing mission," and sponsored publication of non-threatening Malay literature through the *Balai Pustaka* (Bureau of Literature).
[47] Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 6.

formulated by prominent pergerakan activists, and are clearly discernable in pergerakan print culture of the period.

It is important to note that while the pergerakan activsits' writings examined here often used the term "modern" (moderen in Indonesian) to describe themselves, their aims, and their intellectual reference points, this was ultimately an aspirational rather than objective term. I do not assume the existence or validity of an objective condition known as "modernity," and when it is used here, it is used in reference to specific phenomena like the Islamic modernism of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. I use the terms "modern" and "modernity" insofar as pergerakan activists themselves used these words to signify to a desirable state of being, or an anticipated social condition. When their ideas are presented or analyzed, the words "modern" or "modernity" are presented in quotation marks.

Vernacular print culture was manifested in political pamphlets, books, and newspapers, which constitute the bulk of the sources used here, but it was also expressed in works of fiction like novels and plays. In Situated Testimonies (2013), Laurie Sears provides a compelling reason for paying attention to fictional narratives as historical sources. Sears points out that the publication of literature in the pergerakan lingua franca of Bahasa Indonesia was an inherently political act: it was effectively the construction of a "minor canon" of literature in direct opposition to the publications of the state-sponsored publishing house, the Balai Pustaka (i.e. the "major canon").[48] The Balai Pustaka had been set up by the colonial government in 1917 to encourage the development of native Indies literature as part of the Dutch civilizing mission, but naturally its sensibilities were parochial and only politically correct submissions were accepted for publication. Pergerakan works of fiction like Xarim M.S.'s Haji Dadjal or Semaun's Hikayat Kadirun were manifestations of what Hilmar Farid and Razif called bacaan liar (wild literature), not only because their contents were perceived as subversive but also because they

[48] Laurie J. Sears, *Situated Testimonies: Dread and Enchantment in an Indonesian Literary Archive* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), 56.

were written in Bahasa Indonesia, the deterritorialized and inclusive nationalist language of collectivity.[49] This was inherently political, as Sears argues:

> "… these writers took the language of the Chinese Indies readers [the commercial lingua franca of Malay, as opposed to dienst Malay, the language of command used by overseers and bureaucrats, or highbrow Riau Malay, promoted by the Balai Pustaka] and made the language one of the languages of colonial modernity and the major language of the popular Malay press in the Indies. To return to Deleuze and Guattari's identification of the process through which a 'minor literature' is created alongside a major language… [Tirto and his colleagues] deterritorialized lingua franca Malay as the market language of the archipelago and reterritorialized it as the major language of the growing nationalist movement of the Dutch Indies, displacing both Dutch and Javanese… For these writers, the act of writing and publishing in 'low' Malay, a language frowned upon by patriarchal Dutch colonial scholars, was political in itself, whether what they wrote was seen to be political or not."[50]

Accordingly, this dissertation examines several novels in Bahasa Indonesia because their very existence was an expression of the desire to shape an imagined community distinct from that imagined by the colonial state or implied by the NEI. In both their content and the language employed, pergerakan novels alluded to alternative visions for the Indies, visions of a free Indonesia invested with their hopes for an equitable and prosperous society. Analyzing such novels allows us to glimpse pergerakan activists' motivations and desires, what Hayden White calls "a range of feelings induced by the experience of an extraordinary historical condition."[51] Through novels, then, we can understand the social, emotive, and imaginary landscapes which fostered conciliations of Islam and Marxism in minds of some pergerakan activists.

At the most fundamental level, I am interested in vernacular print culture as a historical source not because it reflected historical reality – although it sometimes did – but because it was aspirational. It was in print that pergerakan activists were free to imagine the future contours of an Indonesian polity; it was their aspirations, at times blending Marxism and Islam in accord with the positivist, optimistic zeitgeist of the age, that I find intriguing and deeply moving. Their progressive visions for a prosperous and equitable Indonesia did not perceive ideology, ethics, and religion as inimical; rather, they sought to carve an authentically Indonesian path

[49] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode"; Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 56.
[50] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 70.
[51] Hayden White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History* 9 (2005): 149.

towards the future, even if this entailed selectively reinterpreting the past and ignoring inconvenient facts about the present. This dissertation may be reasonably described as an intellectual history of Indonesian pergerakan activists, and later the leadership of the Indonesian republic, but it is also a history of aspirations and dreams. This corpus of aspirations, which simultaneously invoked Islam and Marxism in varying ways, matter because they exerted a kind of gravitational pull on political rhetoric and policymaking long after independence. Dreams may seem ephemeral, but these dreams were an integral component of the self-conception of the Indonesian nation-state.

State archives and intelligence dossiers may indeed offer a more objective view of the pergerakan as they were, warts and all, but it is what they hoped to be, the possibilities that they explored, which grips the imagination. These visions of an Indonesian future are no less worthy of our attention than complex historical realities. Visions of a future Indonesia colored by both Islam and Marxism were articulated by a wide range of pergerakan activists, and constituted a model of progressive Islamic discourse, and its discursive descendants can be found in the work of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals like Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid, along with their many disciples and admirers. This serves as a counterpoint to the pervasive and unsubtle insinuations that Islamic cultures are fundamentally retrograde, a discourse that continues to dominate popular perceptions of Islam.

Definitions: Marxism

Marxism, when referred to here, should not be assumed to mean the ideology of the Leninist-Stalinist vanguard party which embraces a purported dictatorship of the proletariat as its inevitable goal. Indeed, even the PKI's post-independence track record strongly suggests that it actively pivoted away from such an understanding of Marxism. Marxism in both theory and practice is as diverse as Islam, and it should be axiomatic that there are a multitude of interpretations of Marx's ideas, including within Indonesia itself. Where I use the term communist or communism, it is because the source in question does, or an individual or organization specifically identifies

as such. The same goes for socialism. Occasionally, even key PKI leaders like Darsono would use the terms communist and socialist interchangeably in describing themselves.[52] In the absence of explicit identification, I use the more general terms Marxism and Marxist to describe the political leanings of the individuals and organizations studied here, because the sources canvassed here show a strong acquaintance with Marx's work, and cite him often.

This is true even of politicians to whom the label communist or socialist is rarely, if ever, applied, such as Mohammed Hatta and Haji Omar Said Tjokroaminoto. Their writings incontrovertibly show that they engaged deeply with Marx's ideas, and as such I describe them as Marxist, or influenced by Marx. I make no clear conceptual distinction between socialism, communism and Marxism for the pre-1945 period, precisely because of the fluidity of what these labels denote in an Indonesian context. What each term signifies does not map neatly onto how socialism or communism developed in Europe; the PKI (or various other communist factions) did not necessarily work towards overthrowing the government through a revolutionary seizure of power, nor did the socialists necessarily pursue parliamentary participation as the main thrust of their political activity, as social democratic or labor parties have in Europe. Especially in the context of anti-colonial resistance, there were a multitude of ways in which the colonial state could be resisted, accommodated, or harnessed, and the political positions of these Marx-influenced pergerakan activists studied were often so similar as to make a meaningful distinction between "socialist" and "communist" impossible.

Alain Brossart and Sylvie Klingberg's characterization of Jewish Marxists in Eastern Europe is instructive in this regard:

> "We sought, accordingly, to give voice in an equitable manner to representatives of the three major currents of red Yiddishland: the communists, the Bund, and Poale Zion. Reading their stories certainly makes it easy to measure the complex reality that these three labels cover: communist may mean Stalinist, but also Trotskyist or Bandlerite. In the period between the world wars, the Bund swung between communism and social democracy, while the trajectories of Poale Zion allegiance were also multiple, from Moscow to Tel Aviv."[53]

[52] Darsono, "Kommunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 15, 1921.
[53] Alain Brossat and Sylvie Klingberg, *Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism*, trans. David Fernbach (London and New York: Verso, 2016), 6.

In a similar vein, it is much more useful to think about NEI/Indonesian Marxism as a discursive spectrum, rather than a matter of party allegiance or organizational affiliation with the second or third International. Marxism in the NEI/Indonesia was a shifting and contested discursive field, and it is unsurprising that a significant part of that field found a variety of ways to engage with Islam.

The relation between signifier and signified, does, of course, shift over time. By the Indonesian Revolution (1945–49), labels like socialist and communist could connote different policy approaches but functioned primarily as icons of party allegiance. The communist factions strongly associated with Musso and Tan Malaka, for example, favored heavily conditional negotiations with the Dutch, and insisted on full independence no matter the cost in blood and treasure. They also openly embraced nationalization of key industries like shipping and commodity agriculture, and even began implementing land redistribution to some smallholders during the revolution. The socialist factions led by Sjahrir and Amir Sjarifruddin, however, were more hesitant towards land redistribution and nationalization (though not necessarily opposed to it). They favored unity in the face of intense Dutch military and economic pressure by avoiding polarizing policies that might undermine the already shaky finances of the nascent republic.

Nevertheless, the labels socialist and communist remained fluid. Amir Sjarifruddin famously declared that his wing of socialist party, and even his pre-war GERINDO party, had been crypto-communist all along, when the veteran PKI leader Musso's return to Indonesia threatened to undercut his authority. Similarly, Tan Malaka was able to unite a diverse range of parties and militias behind his policy platform, under the umbrella organization Persatuan Perjuangan (Struggle Union) and in the parliamentary bloc Sayap Kiri (Left Wing), many of whom did not identify as communist. Understanding themselves to be working in the same field of political activity, and pursuing similar goals, it was not implausible for politicians to slip between the labels socialist and communist as political expedience required.

After independence, the policy platforms which these labels denoted began to crystallize into something clearer. Throughout the Parliamentary Democracy period (1950–59), the PKI increasingly became the dominant leftist

force in national politics, completely eclipsing other Marx-influenced movements like the Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party) and the Partai Murba in the 1955 elections. At that point, it becomes meaningful to speak of a distinction between communism and other movements influenced by Marx's ideas, since to be a communist meant formal affiliation with the PKI. From that period onward, I rely consistently on the terms "communist" and "communism" when describing the PKI and its affiliates, "socialist" and "socialism" when describing the PSI, and so on. That said, there were plenty of Marx-influenced politicians throughout the political spectrum, from Masjumi parliamentarians to members of Soekarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, Inodnesian National Party) and representatives of minor Marxist parties like Acoma. From at least 1915–1949, which constitutes the bulk of the period studied here, it is simply not productive to think in terms of clear distinctions between various movements inspired by Marx's ideas.

Definitions: Islam

The intuitive irreconcilability of Islam and Marxism is deeply ingrained in both popular and academic discourse. Perhaps it is the ontological legacy of the cold war which has preserved strong associations between communism and words like "Godless" or "atheistic." Similarly, the seemingly paradigmatic "problematization" of Islam ever since September 11, 2001, has crystallized subtle but strong associations between Islam and adjectives like "intolerant" or "retrograde." These assumptions and discourses inflect the work of scholars like Ben Fowkes and Bülent Gökay, whose otherwise helpful anthology on the relationship between Islam and communism in the former USSR is permeated by references to "unholy alliance" and "uneasy alliance."[54] I would argue that this assumption of incompatibility needs to be carefully examined, for the mass of historical evidence gathered here suggests a range of responses to the coexistence of Islam and Marxism in the NEI/Indonesia. These ranged from clear-cut attempts to theorize compatibility, to the eliding of contradictions –

[54] Ben Fowkes and Bulent Gokay, *Muslims and Communists in Post-Transition States* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012). See also Ben Fowkes and Bulent Gokay, "Unholy Alliance: Muslims and Communists – An Introduction," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 25:1 (2009): 1–31.

that is, participants in the anti-colonial struggle who did not see the need to explicitly reconcile Islam and Marxism – that were social realities of the NEI/Indonesia, allowing both to shape their worldviews.

Marshall Hodgson's concept of Islamicate civilization is essential in framing this phenomenon. Broadly speaking, Islamicate civilization refers to the "social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims."[55] Both non-Muslims and Muslims influenced Islamicate civilization, and elements of Islamicate civilization can be found even in societies without Muslim-majority populations. It is not helpful, therefore, to view the political, cultural, or artistic products of Islamicate civilizations as intrinsically Islamic or un-Islamic. For example, despite the unambiguous Islamic theological prohibition on depicting the human form, figural art, as seen in the immaculate miniature paintings produced by the royal ateliers of Muslim ruling dynasties like the Ottomans or the Mughals, is neither Islamic or un-Islamic. Rather, such figural art is the product of Islamicate civilizations, which drew on both Islamic and non-Islamic influences, in the context of religiously and ethnically plural societies in constant dialogue with external cultural trends. Ethnic or religious minorities, along with a broad spectrum of cultural influences, all contributed to the cultural output of Islamicate civilizations. In a similar vein, confluences of Islam and Marxism in NEI/Indonesia were the products of a plural society, and not some kind of deviation from an established Islamic norm. The varied political influences on Indies society, ranging from Dutch conceptions of social democracy, to Javanese messianic folk beliefs, to modernist salafi notions of reconstituting Islam as a viable political ideology, all helped shape the political visions of pergerakan activists. This process of admixture is and was integral to Islamicate civilizations, so it should not be entirely surprising that multiple Islamicate civilizations, including Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia, produced attempts to put Islam and Marxism in productive dialogue during the twentieth century. With that in mind, Saheb Ahmed's scholarship provides a particularly important conceptual lens with which to study such counterintuitive phenomena.

[55] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 59.

Shahab Ahmed's What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic rigorously and unflinching interrogates the seeming contradictions inherent in Islam as a socio-historical phenomenon. Stepping outside of theology and dogma to consider Islam in its historical entirety, Ahmed questions how we can reconcile the legalist Islam of the madhahib (schools of jurisprudence) with the gnostic mysticism of Sufism and its associated philosophical tradition (what he calls the Sufi-philosophical amalgam), which ultimately made claims to a higher reality/truth (haqiqat) outside of the shari'a.[56] While influential sixteenth century Sufi reformers like Ahmad Sirhindi were able to reconcile the two by promoting Sufism as complementary to shari'a, and obedience to shari'a as prerequisite for efficacious Sufi praxis, the fact remains that for much of its history the Sufi-philosophical amalgam clearly claimed to transcend shari'a. While complex and stratified around spiritual lineages, many of its precepts were also widely accepted by the masses.[57] Given how closely identified Islam is with shari'a, can we say that Sufism, so prevalent and so influential across the Muslim world for so long, is Islamic?

In a similar vein, Ahmed questions how we can square legalist Islam with the enduring influence of the teacher, scholar, and poet, Hafiz of Shiraz, whose Divan (Complete Poems) is and was a thoroughly essential component of Islamicate Persianate civilizations from the Balkans to South Asia.[58] Hafiz's Divan is diegetically structured around the pleasures of drinking wine in the context of the social gathering known as the majlis, while reciting a form of love poetry known as the ghazal, with the strong insinuation that love is utterly central to Islam, trumping even justice, faith, and asceticism.[59] This "Hafizian discourse," as Ahmed describes it, is inextricably intertwined with Islamicate civilization, and engages directly with both fiqh (jurisprudence) and tasawwuf (Sufi mysticism). At the same time, its narrative and structure openly defies the prohibition on drinking, and even questions the primacy of the shari'a as the Islamic norm sans pareil. As Ahmed points out, children in Persiantate cultures learn Hafiz's poetry alongside the Qur'an, and examples of Hafizian discourse (from Hafiz's poetry to various commentaries) were the most widely-consumed texts in both manuscript and

[56] Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 25.
[57] Ahmed, 31.
[58] Ahmed, 44.
[59] Ahmed, 36–39.

print form from the Balkans to Bengal.[60] How, he asks, can a book which has helped shape "the mode and mechanisms of self-expression in the largest part of the Islamic world," yet which also "takes as its definitive themes the ambiguous exploration of wine-drinking and (often homo-)erotic love as well as a disparaging attitude to observant ritual piety," be considered Islamic?

Ahmed points out that the legalist faith in the primacy of the shari'a and the Sufi claims of access to a higher haqiqat are not mutually exclusive in practice; not all tensions have to be resolved, or all contradictions smoothened out for "Islamic" to exist as a meaningful category of analysis. Moreover, the deviations from legalist Islam were not marginal; they were "at the very social and political and intellectual center of Muslims' discourses about Islam – and that, as such, they cannot be accounted for by the reflexive insistence that some of these discursive claims (such as law) somehow possess an inherently greater agency of normativity in constituting Islam than do others."[61] The same goes for the tension between Hafizian discourse (part of a broader discursive strain he glosses as madhhab al-ishq, or the path/way of love) and legalist discourse which prioritizes the shari'a. Neither phenomenon is more Islamic than the other, and each has shaped the development of the other in fundamental ways. Ahmed's arguments about Islamic ontology are much more detailed, nuanced, and subtle than can be summarized here, but his observation that fiqh and shari'a are no more or less definitively "Islamic" than Sufi mysticism, art, or architecture is an important one.

Without doing Ahmed's excellent book justice, it is enough for my present purposes to point out that Islam, as a socio-historical phenomenon, has historically contained many seeming contradictions without fracturing or diluting a sense of Islamic identity amongst its adherents. As Ahmed eloquently puts it,

> "These ideas and behaviors [the Sufi-philosophical amalgam] constitute a commonplace and standard part of the ways in which the cultivated and thoughtful Muslims who engaged in them thought and lived as Muslims. These societies of persons thought and lived these things without regarding themselves as transgressing thereby what it meant to be a Muslim – indeed, these ideas and behaviors were construed, as paradoxical as it might seem, to be not only in harmony with, but actually as somehow articulating the meaning and truth of Islam."[62]

[60] Ahmed, 44.
[61] Ahmed, 73.
[62] Ahmed, 81. The emphasis is Ahmed's.

I argue that the case of Islam and Marxism in the NEI/Indonesia was an extension of the phenomenon Ahmed describes; what seemed contradictory both then and now did not necessarily mean that it was a political marriage of convenience or a cynical attempt to win Muslims over to Marxism through clever propaganda. Rather, Islam was and is broad enough to encompass a plurality of competing interpretations and applications, even within one nation. To some, Marxism even expressed and potentially fulfilled certain aspects of Islam. To paraphrase Ahmed, many of the sources examined here express "the assumed and operational norms" of pergerakan activists; Islamic identity was a lived reality for most, and the Marxist critique of capitalism and imperialism was essential to understanding the why and how of resisting colonialism.[63] Islam and Marxist ideas were both operative norms that pergerakan activists could not afford to ignore if they wanted to succeed, and they themselves were shaped by both Islam and Marxism to varying degrees. Given the centrality of Islam to the NEI/Indonesia, and the dynamism of communist ideas in an era of colonial occupation, it is not surprising that there were people who freely drew on both without scrupling to theorize compatibility, while others explicitly sought to reconcile Islam and Marxism.

Ultimately, the phenomena studied here, from explicit Islamic communism to various confluences of Islam and socialism, are significant because they represent (severely understudied instances of) progressive interpretations of Islam. Attempts to interpret Islam progressively and dynamically, or in Carool Kersten's formulation "… a Muslim discourse which seeks to navigate between outright secularism, bland traditionalism, and uncompromisingly literalist interpretations of the Islamic teachings," have occurred throughout the twentieth century.[64] From the state-driven Pan-Arabist socialism of Egypt, Syria, and Yemen, to the grassroots socialist movements led by Maulana Bahshani in East Pakistan, interpretations of Islam which emphasize socio-

[63] Ahmed, 55. Speaking of the foreword to an album of figural art (which was quite clearly prohibited in canonical *hadtih*) owned by the Ottoman Sultan Ahmed I (1603-17), Shahab Ahmed has this to say "… one sees arrayed here the epistemological structures of philosophical religion – and not in a manner or in a discursive register that is seeking to *argue for* a philosophical or Sufi position, or to *argue against* a juridical one, but rather in a manner and register that forthrightly expresses the *assumed and operational norms* of the educated and self-consciously Muslim elite of the Balkans to Bengal complex." Emphasis Ahmed's.

[64] Carool Kersten, "Islam, Cultural Hybridity and Cosmopolitanism: New Muslim Intellectuals on Globalization," *Journal of International and Global Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): 89–113.

economic justice and equity have surfaced far too often for scholars to ignore it as a cohesive phenomenon.[65] As with Liberation Theology in Latin America, leftist interpretations of Islam deserve sustained scholarly attention, whether they manifest in Iran or Egypt, Pakistan or Indonesia. The strong tendency to dismiss Islam's conciliation with Marxist ideas as syncretic, eccentric, or cynically instrumentalist is perhaps driven by the analysis of Muslim-majority regions of the former USSR, a field of study that is particularly distorted by the ideological lenses of the Cold War.

Leftist interpretations of Islam in the rest of the Muslim world, however, cannot be conveniently dismissed as aberrations concocted for the convenience of ruling communist regimes. As with the explosion of Muslim feminist scholarship since the 1990s, the historical phenomena that we might call Muslim leftism clearly shows that Islamicate societies carry within themselves the seeds of progressivism, seeds that a brave few on the margins have worked hard and sacrificed much to cultivate. While the anti-communist massacres of 1965–66 in Indonesia definitively shut the door on overt political conciliation between Islam and Marxism, Muslim progressives who directly engage with Marx's ideas (for example, via Hassan Hanafi's work), or who stress the importance of socio-economic equity in Islam, remain a visible presence in Indonesian intellectual life today.[66] The living, breathing legacy of this phenomenon necessitates a clear understanding of its distinctly local historical roots, which have been insufficiently studied.

[65] Layli Uddin, "In the Land of Eternal Eid: Maulana Bhashani and the Political Mobilisation of Peasants and Lower-Class Urban Workers in East Pakistan, c. 1930-1971" (PhD Dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2016).
[66] Kersten, 95, 101. In the Indonesian context, see Eko Prasetyo, *Islam Kiri: Melawan Kapitalisme Modal Dari Wacan Menunju Gerakan* (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002), and *Islam Bergerak*, https://islambergerak.com/

Chapter 1: Incubating Communism in the Netherlands East Indies

> *"When I stand before God, then I am a Muslim, but when I stand before men, then I am no Muslim, for God has said that there are many Satans among men."*
>
> Tan Malaka

The 1926-7 PKI Uprisings

The confluence of Islam and Marxism was perhaps most evident during the 1926–27 uprisings which flared in various parts of Java and Sumatra. By way of introduction, I will begin by exploring how both Islam and communism motivated ordinary participants in the uprisings. Subsequently, I work backwards to explore the ideas underpinning the uprisings, by examining a range of sources that explicitly theorized compatibility between Islam and communism. These include the writings of the PKI leader Tan Malaka, newspaper articles published by the fervent Muslim labor organizer Haji Misbach (who earned the moniker "Red Haji"), and a wide range of *pergerakan* newspapers that can justifiably be described as Islamic communist. I then focus on two such newspapers, *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*, to showcase the complexity and sophistication of Islamic communist discourse. I follow this up with an examination of how the PKI itself engaged with Islam, paying special attention to the discursive contributions of women. I then discuss Soekarno and Tjokoraminoto's competing alternatives to Islamic communism, which invoked Islamic identity and Marxist ideas simultaneously. I end with an examination of the broader context in which these discourses germinated by analyzing three *pergerakan* novels of varying political leanings.

This opening section on the uprisings draws on government-commissioned reports explaining participants' motivations in West Sumatra, and ethnographic data collected by Michael C. Williams on the uprisings' participants in Banten, Java. Ultimately, the motivations of the uprisings' participants force us to question how Islam and Marxism interacted discursively in the Indies, such that people could be instigated to risk their lives in open rebellion against the colonial security apparatus. This they did, knowing full well the military might of the colonial state, recently exercised in the protracted but ultimately successful Aceh War (1873–1904). These motivations, as this chapter will show, did not spontaneously appear and suddenly gain traction; there existed a

long and rich seam of *pergerakan* print culture drawing on both Islam and Marxism, which preceded the uprisings by years.

The 1926–27 uprisings were planned during the PKI's conference in Prambanan, Java, in December 1924. No specific date was set for the uprising, but regional branches were supposed to be ready by mid-1926.[67] It was supposed to begin with labor union strikes in Surabaya and Padang, which would presumably evolve into a general strike and trigger revolution. It was opposed from its inception by senior PKI leaders like Tan Malaka and Darsono, though many were already in exile and unable to effectively influence such plans from afar. PKI leaders were reacting partially to pressures from the ground: rank and file members had their expectations aroused after years of mass rallies and strikes, and the brief window of opportunity presented by the weakness of the Dutch government – and its consequent willingness to offer concessions – at the end of the Great War, when a social democratic coalition nearly took power in the Netherlands, had also raised hopes. Their optimism was at odds with the efficacy of the colonial security apparatus, which was able to nip the uprising in the bud in early 1926 by arresting many of the key leaders. As a result, limited uprisings did break out in Batavia, Padang, Banten and Surabaya in November 1926, but without coordinated leadership these were quickly suppressed by force. Over 13,000 were arrested, 4,500 interned, and over 800 were eventually exiled to the penal colony of Boven Digoel in Western New Guinea.[68]

During the uprisings, Islam constituted the medium through which anti-colonial resistance was rationalized and justified, and the PKI served as the most effective vehicle for mobilizing resistance to the colonial state. This confluence made sense in the context of economic precarity: the expansion of plantation monoculture, as well as the increased burden of taxation and labor obligations, combined to incite passionate opposition to colonial economic and political structures. The colonial government requisitioned up to 10% of the annual rice harvest in Banten in the late 1910s, fueling peasant discontent.[69] Similarly, in West Sumatra in the 1920s, a tax on

[67] Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), 311.
[68] *Ibid*., 353.
[69] Michael C. Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series 86 (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1990), 128.

family homes was introduced, alongside a delimitation of the use of woodlands and the projected introduction of a new land tax.[70] In the context of severe hardship with few avenues for redress, the PKI increasingly seemed like the most effective vehicle for mounting resistance. As early as 1919, the PKI leader Semaun spoke against the rice requisitioning at a public rally in Banten attended by 3,000 people, but the central PKI leadership was wrong-footed by the upsurge in popular discontent, and unable to fully control its affiliates in the epicenters of the uprising.[71] In order for the PKI and its ideology to be rendered meaningful to participants, Communist ideas were adapted to fit within an Islamic worldview. Participants drew on the organization and mystique of the PKI to gather support for the dangerous enterprise of revolt, while retaining distinctly Islamic rhetoric to justify their actions throughout.

During the mid-1910s, North Banten had been a stronghold of Sarekat Islam. The loci of authority there had remained distinctly traditional, with the leadership of Sarekat Islam branches usually dominated by local *ulama*, traders and minor nobility.[72] These same leaders came to dominate local PKI leadership. They maintained their status and derived their legitimacy from their identity as *kyai*, *ulama* or nobles while becoming local PKI leaders. As the uprisings gained momentum, they invoked their traditional authority alongside the PKI's anti-colonial message to mobilize resistance.[73] Unsurprisingly, part of the rationalization for anti-colonial resistance provided by these leaders was that working for the colonial state as *penghulu*, or within the *pangreh praja*, was *haram* (not permitted) because it constituted aiding the infidel enemy of Islam.[74]

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[70] B.J.O. Schrieke, "The Course of the Communist Movement on the West Coast of Sumatra, Part I (Political Section), Report of the Investigative Committee Appointed under the Governmental Decree of February 13, 1927, No. 1a," in *The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents*, ed. Harry J. Benda and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1960), 99.

[71] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 4.

[72] Williams, 118–23.

[73] E. Gobee and Ranneft Sumitro, "The Report of the Commission Installed by Government Decision No. X of January 26, 1927, to Investigate the Disturbances Which Took Place in Various Parts of the Residency of Bantam in November, 1926," in *The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents*, ed. Benda, Harry J. and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1960), 40.

[74] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 122. *Penghulu* refers to a traditional community leader who had been recognized and salaried by the colonial state, who often performed limited religious functions such as presiding over marriages. The *pangreh praja* refers to the native civil service, also known as the *binnenlands bestuur*, which employed both natives and Europeans, although with a clear glass ceiling between the two.

This distinctly Islamic idiom of opposition to infidel occupation was a recurring theme, and dominated how Bantense resistance to the Dutch was articulated. This echoed the Bantanese *ulama*'s continued support for PKI leaders Alimin and Musso when the PKI formally split from Sarekat Islam in 1923. Rather than close ranks with their co-religionists, the Bantanese *ulama* who dominated the upper echelons of the local Sarekat Islam leadership castigated Tjokroaminoto and the Sarekat Islam for being too passive and cooperative. Instead, they demanded that Alimin and Musso replace Tjokroaminoto as the leaders of Sarekat Islam instead of being expelled.[75] In the words of a participant interviewed by Williams in Banten, "The PKI was the only organization willing to fight for independence. This we respected."[76]

The Governor General's Report of 1927, an analysis of the uprisings submitted to the Ministry of Colonies, also highlighted the role of Islam in the uprisings in other parts of Java. Chapter seven of the report, titled "The Mohammedan Religion in the Service of Communist Propaganda," cited a PKI pamphlet authored by Tan Malaka in 1926 entitled *Semangat Moeda* (The Spirit of Youth): "... recommended in this pamphlet is the making of propaganda by means of religion in Surakarta, Djogjakarta, Achin and Bandjermasin, among other regions."[77] The report went on to claim that (unnamed) PKI leaders had "taken this advice to heart," and recognized that "... Although as a Communist one is inwardly not religious… it is nevertheless of importance, and even vital for the expansion of Communism, that one should pretend to believe in the purity and sublimity of religion."[78]

The Dutch security apparatus interpreted this phenomenon cynically, reading it as evidence of Communist manipulation of credulous, quiescent rural Muslims, but *Semangat Moeda* is thematically consistent with the rest of Tan Malaka's writings. Tan Malaka recognized that revolution was only possible through broad-based

[75] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 303.
[76] Williams, *Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten*, 182.
[77] "The Governor General's Report of January, 1927 (Political Note Concerning the Indonesian Communist Party: Report wherein is summed up information which has come to light concerning the action of the Netherlands Indies Communist Party, a section of the Third International, from July, 1925 up to and including December 1926)," in *The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents*, ed. Harry J. Benda and Ruth T. McVey (Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1960), 17. Hereafter, "The Governor General's Report."
[78] "The Governor General's Report," 17.

unity, thus Communism would have to reconcile itself to different religions and communities. *Semangat Moeda* explicitly stated that Sarekat Rakyat (a grassroots organization directly linked to the PKI) members could be from any caste, any profession, and any religion, whether Islam, Christianity or Confucianism, as long as they hated Imperialist oppression and opposed the Dutch.[79] *Semangat Moeda* also clearly showed Tan Malaka's acceptance of the paradigmatic status of Islamic identity, and the importance of invoking that identity to mobilize anti-colonial resistance. In it, he argued that the sheer diversity of the NEI allowed the Dutch to divide and conquer, pitting Java against Sumatra against Manado against Ambon, even though all were part of the same Muslim community (*sama rakyat Islam*).[80]

The PKI was also able to enlist the support of pious Muslims in West Sumatra. The base of PKI power in Padang Panjang lay in the modernist religious schools, with many younger teachers and students comfortable in their commitment to Islam and simultaneous support for the PKI.[81] This was particularly true of pupils enrolled in a local network of modernist *madrassahs*, the Sumatra Tawalib schools. They played a significant role in the uprisings, even after their main leaders were detained by colonial authorities in 1925.[82] Similarly, the PKI leadership in Silungkang, another West Sumatran city, was comprised primarily of local religious leaders and the merchant class, who agitated against the paramountcy of the collaborationist local nobility, and adopted the PKI slogan of *sama rasa sama rata* (same level, same feeling) with gusto.[83] Like Tan Malaka, PKI members in West Sumatra tended to articulate its conciliation with Islam in terms of a lack of conflict between religion and ideology, arguing that one's religious and political affiliations were separate issues. This was also the case in Banten: in his sociological "autopsy" of the uprisings submitted to the colonial government in 1929, Dutch Sociologist B. Schrieke stated that "It was explained [by participants Schrieke interviewed] that Communism

[79] Tan Malaka, *Semangat Muda* (Bandung: Sega Arsy, 2015), 72. The Sarekat Rakyat (People's Associations) were affiliated with the PKI, and had grown out of the 'red' Sarekat Islam branches that were more amenable to the leadership of PKI members such as Semaun, rather than the more quietist Central Sarekat Islam headed by Tjokroaminoto.
[80] *Ibid*, 85.
[81] Audrey R. Kahin, "The 1927 Communist Uprising in Sumatra: A Reappraisal," *Indonesia* 62 (1996): 22.
[82] Schrieke, "Political Section of the West Coast of Sumatra Report," 100. *Madrassahs* were Islamic schools often associated with the Modernist Islamic movement of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida that emanated from Cairo from the late nineteenth century onward. Unlike traditional Javanese *pesantren*, which emphasized discipleship and memorization, *madrassahs* were not necessarily boarding schools, and often embraced European innovations like standardized grades, classrooms, and curricula.
[83] *Ibid.*

had nothing to do with nationality or religion, but that it rather was a science like medicine, the technical sciences etc."[84] Similarly, a PKI leaflet printed in West Sumatra and distributed in the Minangkabau interior in 1926 cast resistance to the colonial state in an overwhelmingly Islamic idiom, and stressed the relevance of Communism to Islam, using a hodgepodge of Communist and Islamic imagery: "The Communists really do desire what is right, namely, that religion, *adat*, and prosperity should all be improved… Has not Allah said, 'Do not obey the commands of the *kafir* [infidels]?'… Our *adat*, which used to govern us… have been ruined by the government and the capitalists".[85]

As early as 1923, West Sumatran newspapers such as *Pemandangan Islam*, edited by the Sumatra Tawalib graduate and PKI leader Haji Datuk Batuah, argued for a reconciliation of the "science of the regulation of the community [Communism] for the benefit of the masses living in misery and poverty," which would serve the "intentions and the requirements of the true Islamic faith!"[86] Admittedly, this was not a seamless narrative of compatibility: both *Pemandangan Islam* and the PKI organ *Het Vrije Woord* carried articles condemning nationalism and the Pan-Islamic movement as indulging ethnic chauvinism. However, these same publications also printed articles on the desirability of cooperation between PKI and Sarekat Islam. *Het Vrije Woord* went so far as to identify Sarekat Islam as the only organization the PKI would cooperate with, and argued that Communist political ideology was in full agreement with the postulates of Islam in the twentieth century; Capitalism was castigated for pursuing "unclean aims at odds with the teachings of Islam," and Muslims were "enjoined to fight for freedom in accordance with the prescriptions of the Qur'an.[87] Interestingly, Schrieke also noted that the word for Capitalism was translated by PKI publications into Minangkabau as *kapisetali*; *kapi* being the Minangkabau equivalent of *kafir* (unbeliever), while *setali* referred to the Dutch 25-cent piece. This portmanteau embodied "feelings against the unbelievers, the *kapi*, and the feelings against… the tax-demanding

[84] *Ibid.*, 102–103.
[85] B.J.O. Schrieke, "The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra," ed. B.J.O. Schrieke (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1955), 155.
[86] *Ibid.*, 103.
[87] *Ibid.*, 103.

government."[88] This theorized etymology is hard to verify, but it is plausible when read in the broader context of conciliatory discourses circulating in West Sumatra. This begs the question of why these discourses of compatibility emerged. Moreover, why were they so compelling? By way of an answer, this chapter examines the hefty but understudied corpus of pre-1926 *pergerakan* print culture that engaged with both Islam and Marxism. The ideas encapsulated in these sources were part of an Indies-wide discourse, and likely colored the motivations of the uprising's participants.

Early Confluences: PKI and Sarekat Islam

The genesis of the Communist movement in the NEI lies in the formation of the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (ISDV, the Indies Social-Democratic Association) in Surabaya in 1914. Despite many of its (majority Dutch) constituent members' links to the Netherlands's Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij (SDAP, Social Democratic Workers' Party), which advocated 'Ethical Gradualism' in the colonies, the ISDV embraced perceptibly radical solutions to the systematic exploitation and transparent suffering of the natives.[89] While initially lacking native members and hobbled by its miniscule membership, the ISDV laid the foundation for the development of Communism in the NEI with the establishment of two periodicals: the Dutch-language *Het Vrije Woord* (The Free Word) in 1915 and the Indonesian-language *Soeara Ra'jat* (The People's Voice) in 1918. Under the stewardship of Dutch Communists Adolf Baars and Henk Sneevliet, the ISDV increasingly developed a working relationship with Sarekat Islam from 1916 onwards. Although the highly popular but decentralized Sarekat Islam was more reformist than revolutionary, it was also the largest *pergerakan* organization of the 1910s, claiming a total membership of 2.5 million members by 1919, and it served as an effective incubator of Communist ideas and methods of organization. This incubation was

[88] *Ibid.*, 156–157.
[89] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 14–15. Ethical gradualism was effectively incremental reform framed within a parochial, colonial frame of reference, with no tangible plan for political devolution or systemic changes to the structure of Indies society.

facilitated by its sheer size as well as its lack of effective central leadership, which allowed regional branches to pursue their own agendas in response to local dynamics.

As early as the 1916 Sarekat Islam congress, the issue of "amalgamating Islamic and Socialist principles" was debated, and attracted support from both the urban *santri* merchant class, as well as younger radicals who came of age in labor unions.[90] The speech given by Hasan Ali Suriati, a wealthy backer of Sarekat Islam from Surabaya, provides a taste of the distinct flavor of that congress: "The righteous teacher, our Lord the Prophet Muhammad, was the man who removed all inequality between the sexes, did away with the difference between ruler and subject, between rank and class. And all these changes where brought about by the Socialist par excellence, by our Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet carried out the Socialist idea of equality in all branches of government affairs; economic and religious policy and administration were ruled by this idea."[91] Such speeches were more aspirational than intellectually rigorous, but they expressed a tangible attraction to Marxist ideas that was remarkably common for Muslim *pergerakan* activists in the pre-1926 period.

Precisely because neither the ISDV nor Sarekat Islam was initially a political party, this working relationship developed into something resembling the united front strategy of the Comintern: concurrent membership in both organizations was permitted, which had the effect of bringing radical Sarekat Islam members into the ISDV and introducing them to Communist ideas, even as they retained their Islamic worldviews, which continued to inform their articulation of opposition to the colonial state.[92] This eventually led to a popular distinction between "red" and "white" Sarekat Islam branches (regional branches often maintained a high degree of autonomy in relation to Central Sarekat Islam). Red branches were influenced by Communist ideas and practices, demonstrating greater willingness to confront the colonial state, while white branches (referencing the symbolic color of Islamic piety) indicated the pietist Islamic worldviews of their constituent members. The PKI

[90] *Ibid.*, 20.
[91] *Ibid.*, 363–364.
[92] *Ibid.*, 68. The Comintern officially adopted a united front strategy (of which the PKI was an adherent) advocating cooperation with other anti-colonial forces, from 1920-1927.

developed through the incubation of Sarekat Islam members within the ISDV, though it did not fully sever its umbilical cord linking it to Sarekat Islam until 1923.[93]

The entwinement of key Sarekat Islam and PKI leaders exemplified the relationship between Islam and Communism in the 1920s. In 1921, the future PKI leader Tan Malaka was introduced to Haji Omar Said Tjokroaminoto, the foremost leader of Sarekat Islam, in Yogyakarta. By this point, tensions between the pro-PKI faction within Sarekat Islam and other, more politically quiescent, members were already palpable. Tan Malaka, a committed Communist who was only just beginning his political career at the time, cooperated closely with Sarekat Islam in the field of education, setting up numerous Sekolah Rakyat (People's Schools) and was warmly welcomed by Sarekat Islam leaders.[94] In his biography, Tan Malaka spoke glowingly of Tjokroaminoto as well: "Tjokroaminoto also treated me like an old friend," and "… Tjokroaminoto left me saying, 'The doors of Sarekat Islam are open to you.'"[95] The affable, even warm, personal relationships between key Islamic and Communist leaders was indicative of an undercurrent of cooperation and conciliation between Muslims and Communists that would continue to influence *pergerakan* discourse in years to come, even as the relationship between Sarekat Islam and the PKI soured as the 1920s wore on.

Tan Malaka received a similarly warm reception when he spoke at a 1921 Sarekat Islam meeting in Surabaya about "... The alliance between Turkey and the Soviet Union against imperialism… [and] the importance in Indonesia of unity between Islam and Communism against our common enemy," resulting in several unspecified "Islamic leaders" agreeing to attend the upcoming PKI congress of December 1921.[96] Tan Malaka used this congress as a platform to broadcast his message that Dutch Imperialism remained hegemonic through

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[93] *Ibid.*, 21–23. The ISDV would eventually be reorganized as The League of Communists in the Indies (*Perserikatan Komunis di Hindia*, PKH) in May 1920, the first Asian member of the Second International, and subsequently change its name to the Communist Party of Indonesia (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) in 1924.

[94] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol. 1, Ohio University Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series 83 (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1991), 63.

[95] *Ibid.*, 63.

[96] *Ibid*, 67–68. The Indonesian attraction to Turkey was a longstanding one: Bermawy Latief reports that many housholds in West Sumatra kept portraits of the last effective Ottoman Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, in their homes during the early twentieth century. See Bermawy Latief, "Putri Islam Bangun dan Bangkit," *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 222. For the *longue durée*, see A.C.S. Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop (eds.), *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

the exercise of a policy of "divide and rule" between Muslims and Communists, arguing that "... If we deepened and accentuated the divisions between Islam and Communism, we would only give our ever-watchful enemies the opportunity to exploit our internal hostilities and weaken the Indonesian nationalist movement."[97] Evidently, Tan Malaka espoused a narrative of cooperation between the PKI and Sarekat Islam, partly because he recognized their improved capacity for resisting colonial authority, and partly because they perceived the revolutionary potential of Sarekat Islam members.[98] Latent tensions were not easily resolved, but even so prominent religious figures such as *Kyai* Hadikusomo stepped forward to argue in favor of unity at the PKI congress on December 1921.[99]

This is not to suggest that there were no inherent tensions between Islam and Communism. Both Tjokroaminoto and his deputy, Haji Agus Salim, became members of the Volksraad, a partially-elected advisory council to the Dutch Governor-General established in 1918, functioning as a kind of "loyalist opposition."[100] Sarekat Islam, partially as a result of its involvement in parliamentary-style politics in the Volksraad, came under increasing governmental pressure to rein in its "red" (PKI-dominated) branches. This culminated in the 1923 decision to enforce party discipline and expel all PKI members from the ranks of Sarekat Islam unless they forsook their PKI membership.[101] Parts of the modernist Islamic movement, though tightly linked to the PKI in West Sumatra, and to a lesser degree, in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, eventually turned against the Communists. Muhammadiyah, the modernist Islamic mass organization founded in 1912, declared that Islam and Communism were incompatible in 1924.[102] Even Tan Malaka acknowledged these tensions as early as 1921, the year of his meeting with Tjokroaminoto, yet conciliatory discourses concerning Islam and Communism still circulated and retained a powerful appeal beyond 1923. For example, the Mu'alimin movement, a *tabligh*

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[97] *Ibid*., 68.
[98] Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Pergulatan Menuju Republik*, trans. Alfian (Jakarta: Grafitipers, 1988), 302.
[99] Poeze, 69; McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 181. The epithet *Kyai* refers to an Islamic religious teacher in Java, usually a member of a scholarly lineage and the head instructor of a *pesantren*, a traditional Islamic boarding school.
[100] Only half of the Volksraad's 60 members were elected, and elected by a very limited franchise of elite native males. The other 30 delegates were appointed by the Governor-General, and were (at least legally) European. The Governor-General was expected to consult the Volkraad on major legislative decisions, but was at liberty to disregard their suggestions.
[101] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 181.
[102] *Ibid*., 171.

movement whose foundation predated the establishment of PKI and Sarekat Rakyat branches in Surakarta, expanded through the 1920s and claimed several thousand members around Yogyakarta and Surakarta in 1926.[103] Adherents held private exegetical sessions where the Qur'an was interpreted through a Communist framework with little government interference.[104]

Tan Malaka's Integration of Islam and Communism

An examination of Tan Malaka's writings from the 1920s provides a sense of why Communism remained attractive to many Muslims even after the split with Sarekat Islam in 1923, and showcases the ways in which some Muslims were able to effect a conciliation of their faith with communist ideas. Tan Malaka was a complex figure, as the translator and editor of his autobiography, Helen Jarvis, notes: "[Tan Malaka] has been described variously as a communist, nationalist, nationalist communist, Trotskyist, Japanese agent, idealist, Muslim leader..."[105] As one of the key Indonesian Communist leaders of the from the 1920s until his death in 1949, Tan Malaka exerted considerable, protracted influence on the ideology and policies of the PKI.[106] As early as 1926, his books *Naar de Republiek Indonesia* (1925) and *Semangat Moeda* (1926) were in circulation in West Sumatra, one of the hotbeds of the 1926-1927 uprisings.[107] Tan Malaka's integration of Islam and Communism was perceptible in both his political philosophy and policy recommendations, but any analysis of his work should first take into account his general frame of reference, in which religion was imbricated in his essentially Marxist conception of history.

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[103] *Tabligh* refers to Islamic gatherings with the aim of spreading the message of Islam and promoting piety through scripture reading, discussion, *dhikr*, and other practices. See "*Tabligh*," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2295 (accessed 13-Dec-2019).

[104] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 171; Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 321.

[105] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol. 1, lxvi.

[106] Tan Malaka effectively ceased to be a PKI leader after the 1926–27 uprisings, having earned the ire of the party's leadership for opposing the uprisings on the grounds that they were ill-timed. Along with his chief lieutenants Subakat and Djamaluddin Tamin, he founded his own clandestine party in Bangkok in 1927, the Partai Republik Indonesia (PARI), which was no less Communist than the PKI. During the revolution, Tan Malaka would re-emerge as a powerful Communist leader, and many republicans flocked to join his Gerakan Revolusi Rakyat (GRR, People's Revolutionary Movement) colation, which was later reconstituted as the Partai Murba (Murba Party).

[107] Schrieke, "Political Section of the West Coast of Sumatra Report."

In the third volume of his autobiography, Tan Malaka elaborated his self-proclaimed *weltanschauung* (comprehensive worldview). It was presented in the form of a sequential short history of the world, a generally chronological account that hopped from one handpicked event, character or historical development to the next.[108] Tellingly, Tan Malaka's short history of the world included three sequential sections on "The Prophet Moses," "The Prophet Jesus," and "The Prophet Muhammad."[109] His specific choice of these historical characters, particularly the attachment of the appellation "Prophet" to Jesus, reveals his retention of a fundamentally Islamic worldview, which places special emphasis on all three. This resonates with his praise for Islamic civilization earlier in his memoirs: "All the world, friend or foe, acknowledged the glory of the Islamic empire in Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."[110] Evidently, Tan Malaka was aware of the cultural sensitivities of his readers, and these elements of his autobiography can be read as an expression of the subtle ways in which Islam and Communist worldviews were intertwined in the minds of Communist sympathizers and party cadres that Tan Malaka was writing for. Hilmar Farid and Razif make a crucial observation about the (re)writing of history as a *pergerakan* enterprise, which helps contextualize Tan Malaka's worldview:

> *"Critiques of colonialism did not stop at matters directly experienced by the colonized. Activists realized that education was crucial for progress and for the advancement of the anti-colonial movement. Education was needed to undo the education promoted by the colonial state. Constructing a new history of the Indies society thus became an important aim."*[111]

It was precisely this kind of counter-education that Tan Malaka was practicing in his articulation of an Islamic history, asserting the independence of Indies Muslims from the colonial logic of dependency, tutelage and (eventual) progress, while asserting their historical place in a broader Muslim world with its own rich traditions. This was by no means peculiar to Tan Malaka; the leftist journalist Mas Marco Kartodikromo had undertaken a similar exercise in his rewriting of the *Babad Tanah Jawa*, delinking it from Orientalist Dutch scholarship.[112]

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[108] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol. 1, 13–44.
[109] *Ibid.*, 19–24.
[110] *Ibid.*, 39–40.
[111] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 285.
[112] *Ibid.* Mas Marco Kartodikromo was a pioneering Indonesian journalist and founding president of the *Inlandsche Journalisten Bond* (IJB, League of Native Journalists), who later became a prominent PKI organizer in Surakarta during the mid-1920s. In 1917, it was he who coined the slogan "sama rata sama rasa" (same level, same feeling) that would come to be the distinctive slogan of the PKI. See Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 88.

Tan Malaka's political philosophy was also flexible enough to accommodate religion. *Naar de Republiek Indonesia* laid out his proposed PKI minimum program, which explicitly called for the separation of church and state and the recognition of freedom of religion.[113] He described the proper conduct of the Communist revolutionary in the following terms:

> *"... a revolutionary must first gather together facts relating to all the social forces that are to be examined for their character and direction and to be coordinated and mobilized… while relying on one's instinct in understanding the psychology of the masses in motion… conclusions reached by Indonesian or Indian revolutionaries will certainly differ from those reached by Russian ones."*[114]

Similarly, Tan Malaka argued that Communists had to recognize central features of national identity:

> *"We must not forget the weakness of the science of revolution, a weakness shared by all the social sciences. They also have to take account of the uncertain factor, the 'x' factor: human behavior… revolutionaries must associate themselves with the masses, or at least be able to understand the psychology of the masses in action."*[115]

While he did not explicitly mention religion here, Tan Malaka was clearly aware of the need for Communist theory to accommodate the religious sentiments of the masses it sought to mobilize. This was further reinforced by Tan Malaka's deployment of the term *murba* instead of the more doctrinally orthodox *proletar* (proletariat) to describe the dispossessed masses of the Indies, which he perceived to be fundamentally different from the urban working class whom Marx prioritized.[116] Tan Malaka included what Marx would have called the *lumpenproletariat* as well as agrarian smallholders within the *murba* category, to which he ascribed political agency. Tan Malaka was not theoretically doctrinaire, and keenly appreciated the need to adapt Communist ideas into terms comprehensible and meaningful to the masses. In the case of putative Indonesia, these terms would necessarily include Islam.

Tan Malaka made similar points in *Aksi Massa* (1926), an analysis of the political situation in the NEI during 1920s and a statement of his revolutionary program. In the section entitled "Parties and their characteristics,"

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[113] Tan Malaka, *Naar de Republiek Indonesia* (Bandung: Sega Arsy, 1996), 27.
[114] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol 1., 89.
[115] *Ibid.*
[116] *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

Tan Malaka argued that a party could not possess revolutionary strength unless it was able to commandeer the wholehearted support of its members.[117] Read in the broader context of his concerted attempts to reconcile Sarekat Islam with its Communist members, this underscored his awareness of the need to reach out to the masses on their terms, of which Islam was necessarily a part. In the same way, Tan Malaka argued that despite its charismatic leaders, Sarekat Islam was unable to reformulate Islam as a viable popular political ideology precisely because it faced competition from the politically quietist Muhammadiyah.[118] This was effectively an implicit recognition of the power of religious convictions to either bolster or undermine political ideology, and the implications for the PKI were clear to Tan Malaka.

Tan Malaka in Exile

Tan Malaka's insistence on the compatibility of Islam and communism was evident outside of his published work, and was expressed publicly on the international stage as well. Tan Malaka had risen swiftly through the ranks of the PKI, and had been elected its leader at the PKI congress of December 1921.[119] His prominence soon attracted the attention of the colonial authorities, who exiled him shortly after his election. He travelled to Russia via the Netherlands, and continued to support unity between Muslims and Communists from afar: at the Fourth Comintern Congress of 1922, he gave a speech on how Communism should relate to the Indian Swadeshi movement instigated by Gandhi, as well as whether Communists should in general support such movements.[120] He went on to relate (in German) an incident in which pious Sarekat Islam members asked him whether the Communists in their midst believed in God. His reply was striking: "When I stand before God, then

[117] Tan Malaka, *Aksi Massa* (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2008), 105.
[118] *Ibid*, 121–122.
[119] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol. 1, lxxxiv.
[120] Poeze, *Tan Malaka: Pergulatan Menuju Republik*, 312. Pan-Islamism here refers to the early twentieth century *Khilafat* movement, which aimed to mobilise Muslim support for the Ottoman Empire as the heir to the classical Islamic Caliphate. It resonated particularly with Muslim Indians and attracted the attention of Islamic communities in South Africa and the NEI as well. For more information on the relevance of the movement to the East Indies, see Chiara Formichi, "Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwirjo and Negara Islam Indonesia," in *Indonesia* 90 (2010), 125-146.

I am a Muslim, but when I stand before men, then I am no Muslim, for God has said that there are many Satans among men."[121]

Here, Tan Malaka was likely referring to the Qur'anic surah al-'An'am, 112: "And so we have appointed for every Prophet enemies – devils among mankind and *jinn*, inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion (or by way of deception) …" Firstly, Tan Malaka seemed to be making a case for a division between the private spirituality and public political allegiance. One could be both a committed Communist ideologically, as well as a pious Muslim in one's private life. Secondly, Tan Malaka seemed to cast himself in the role of an Islamic prophet, one who – in fine prophetic tradition – anticipated being attacked by various detractors ("devils") who deliberately misconstrued his message. Here, he suggested that his faith was secure in his own mind, and he felt no need for him to justify himself to human detractors. His prophetic message of social justice remained relevant whether they believed him to be a Muslim or not.

This was by no means an unusual position. At the 1923 joint PKI and Sarekat Islam congress, participants such as Haji Misbach and Sugono had openly advocated the PKI's support for Islam while stressing that religion and politics were distinct.[122] Tan Malaka ultimately concluded that Pan-Islamism was fundamentally the union of Muslims against Imperialism, and should thus be supported by the international Communist movement.[123] To situate this in a broader Indies context, this was not an unorthodox position for PKI cadres. At the June 1924 party congress in Batavia, Aliarcham's speech ended with the pronouncement that the models the PKI aspired to were Soviet Russia and Turkey, a sentiment that was met with cheering.[124]

As Tan Malaka's long exile went on, he continued to voice his ideas about the expediency of cooperation between Muslims and Communists as well as their legitimate grounds for conciliation. His 1924 pamphlet, *These Bagi Keada'an Sosial dan Ekonomi serta Tjara Bagi Mengadakan Organisatie dan Taktiek di Indonesia*

[121] John Riddell, ed., *Toward the United Front: Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922.*, trans. John Riddell (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 263.
[122] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 155–56.
[123] Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol. 1, 92.
[124] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 195.

(Theses on the social and economic situation and the means of organization and tactics in Indonesia), was read to the PKI congress of 1924 in his absence, and stressed the need for the PKI to organize "non-proletarian progressive elements into allied organizations such as the Sarekat Rakyat."[125] This was clearly an attempt to prolong a policy that the ISDV/PKI had been committed to for several years already. As late as 1945, Tan Malaka would still be lamenting the persistence of conflict between Communist and Islamic partisans in Pekalongan and Priangan, and he would found an umbrella political coalition, the *Persatuan Perjuangan* (Struggle Union), for the express purpose of sublimating such divisions.[126]

The Red Haji – Interpreting Communism within an Islamic Framework

The rapprochement between Marxism and Islam was facilitated by the advent of Islamic modernism, which sought to "update" Islam to ensure its continuing relevance in all facets of social life. Modernist or Reformist Muslims have had a substantial presence in the Netherlands East Indies since the nineteenth century, and can be understood as the latest in a series of Islamic renewal movements across the Islamicate world advocating and/or imposing orthodopraxy on society.[127] Taking their cue from the progressive Egyptian scholars Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, these Islamic reformers often branded themselves *kaum muda* (the young generation), in contrast to the *kaum tua* (the old generation) whom they perceived to be inflexible and dogmatic. These Islamic reformers were, like many of their counterparts in various "self-strengthening" movements throughout Asia, not uncritical of Western imports, whether technological or ideological. The conciliatory discourses that some Indies Islamic modernists produced can be understood as attempts to make sense of, and potentially appropriate, new ideologies including Marxists critiques of empire and capital. This was not gratuitous posturing; components of these ideologies were perceived to resonate with core tenets of Islam, such as the promotion of social justice via *zakat* (mandatory alms) and the prohibition of *rib'a* (usury). Marxism was

[125] *Ibid.*, 434–435; Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, trans. Helen Jarvis, vol. 1, lxxxv.
[126] Harry A. Poeze, "The Cold War in Indonesia, 1948," *The Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40 (2009): 162.
[127] Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

approached as one amongst many potential ideologies that might yield a fruitful concordance with their modernist articulation of Islam. While many *ulama* did not necessarily identify as modernists, such as Hamka's illustrious father, the Minangkabau scholar Haji Rasul, they were nevertheless influenced by the intellectual climate of Islamic modernism in a rapidly changing world. It was such an intellectual climate which made conciliations of Islam and Marxism plausible in the first place.

The loudest, and perhaps the most heartfelt, voice explicitly proclaiming the compatibility of Islam and Communism was that of Haji Misbach. Misbach was educated in a *pesantren*, and became a key part of Muhammadiyah's *tabligh* efforts in Surakarta from the mid-1910s onwards. He joined Sarekat Islam in 1912, and though not particularly active, he also joined the League of Native Journalists (IJB) in 1914, demonstrating his willingness to engage with new forms of media and new forms of political activity while remaining rooted in a firmly Islamic worldview. Misbach was particularly close to Ahmad Dahlan (the founder of Muhammadiyah and erstwhile consultant to Sarekat Islam) but joined the Insulinde in 1918 as a propagandist.[128] In 1919, he achieved notoriety by being accused of instigating a wave of peasant strikes across the Surakarta region.[129]

Misbach published his own monthly newspapers, *Medan Moeslimin* (founded 1915) and *Islam Bergerak* (founded 1917), drawing on his experiences with the IJB and its primary organ, *Doenia Bergerak.* The *pergerakan* print culture of the 1910s and 1920s was particularly fertile, and can be understood as *bacaan liar* (wild literature), in the sense that the newspapers and periodicals published by Misbach and his contemporaries were vehicles for discourses that lay clearly outside of the canon of Malay-language literature produced or approved by the colonial state's *Balai Pustaka*, or Bureau of Literature.[130] Misbach himself founded a publishing house called *Insulinde* in the early 1910s in Solo, which specialized in producing such literature.[131]

[128] The Insulinde was the successor to the Eurasian-dominated radical nationalist party, the *Indische Partiij*, and agitated for an independent Indonesia led by Eurasian elites.
[129] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 128.
[130] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," 281.
[131] *Ibid*., 280.

Such newspapers had circulation in the low thousands, but had greater relevance than the numbers might suggest. They were often communally read, with the literate reading them aloud to the illiterate, with individuals pooling their financial resources to afford a joint subscription.[132] This was an important vector for the transmission of information, because only 7.4% of the native population was counted as literate during the 1930 census.[133] Newspapers such as *Medan Moeslimin* and *Islam Bergerak* were representatives of a discourse that was not dogmatically class-based in a theoretical Marxist sense, but which articulated a shared sense of grievance on the part of Indies Muslims.

Misbach's activities attracted the attention of the colonial government, and he was arrested and imprisoned from 1919 to 1922. Upon his release and return to Surakarta in 1922, Misbach's commitment to both Islam and Communism became increasingly explicit, leading ultimately to his split from Muhammadiyah and his joining the PKI. In a series of articles published in early 1922, Misbach's cohorts at *Islam Bergerak* and *Sinar Hindia* criticized Muhammadiyah in the name of "true Islam," on the grounds that Muhammadiyah's political quietism was motivated by fear of the temporal authority of the Dutch resident, which amounted to the blasphemy of fearing the Dutch resident more than they feared God.[134] Misbach himself made his split with Muhammadiyah public in his first published article since his return from prison, arguing in the October 15, 1922 issue of *Medan Moeslimin* that "... those who call themselves *mukmin* [the faithful]... must willingly put truth and courage into practice. This stance I strongly affirm, because I observe it deriving from the Qur'an."[135] He went on to force the resignation of the Muhammadiyah members active in *Medan Moeslimin* and *Islam Bergerak* in mid-October 1922, and joined the PKI as a propagandist at the March 1923 PKI congress in Bandung and Sukabumi. Misbach's arguments anticipated developments beyond his immediate locus of influence: from 1925 to 1926, Communist labor unions spread rapidly in Aceh before they were suppressed, while in Palembang, the PKI

[132] *Ibid*., 284.
[133] Volkstelling 1930, vols. VI-VIII (Batavia: Department van Economische Zaken, 1933–1936).
[134] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 254–55.
[135] Haji Misbach, Untitled, *Medan Moeslimin*, October 15, 1922.

gained considerable popularity by preaching self-government under a Muslim ruler. In Muslim Batak areas such as Mandailing, the PKI even openly called for the establishment of an Islamic state.[136]

However, Misbach continued to attend and speak at Sarekat Islam rallies from November 1921 – January 1923, "urging the maintenance of the unity [of Sarekat Islam and the PKI] … and arguing that Communism was in the principle of Islam."[137] Misbach worked hard to keep Sarekat Islam in alliance with the PKI precisely because he perceived Communist and Islamic goals as compatible, and the PKI as the only party willing to openly confront the colonial state. Misbach's associates also argued for unity and posited compatibility. In the March 20, 1923 issue of *Islam Bergerak*, one Soekirno argued that the charge of insulting religion being levelled at the PKI was simplistic. He also made a distinction between Communism as an ideology and Communists as disciplined party cadres; he asserted the right of individual Communists to choose whichever religion they wanted to adhere to.[138] Well after his split with Muhammadiyah, Misbach continued to frame his critique of the colonial state in terms of the oppressed *ummah* and the corruption of Islam. In the November 20, 1922 issue of *Islam Bergerak*, he argued that "Destruction of the people's freedom also means destruction of Faith in Allah… Here I only take up the main points of the greed of Capitalism and Imperialism… our freedom is still shackled within the grip of capital."[139]

Misbach established the PKI Surakarta branch in June 1923, drawing on the support of many former VSTP members who had been dismissed after the failure of the May 1923 VSTP strike in the Javanese cities of Semarang, Madiun and Yogyakarta.[140] Misbach's hybrid discourse of Islam and Communism proved popular in the context of recent labor unrest and its suppression. Misbach had become the undisputed leader of the PKI in the areas surrounding Yogyakarta and Surakarta by the end of 1923, having built his support base largely

[136] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 302.
[137] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 261.
[138] Soekirno, "Menghina Agama? Comunist dan Communisme," *Islam Bergerak*, March 20, 1923.
[139] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 258.
[140] The *Vereniging van Spoor-en Tramwegpersoneel* (VSTP, Federation of Rail and Tramway Personnel) was a union founded in Semarang in 1908, which had strong links to the ISDV/PKI from its inception. Key PKI leaders like Semaun began their careers as unionists in the VSTP.

independent of the PKI leadership.[141] He was sufficiently popular that key PKI leaders – such as Darsono, who disapproved of Misbach's invocation of *perang sabil* (holy war) – could not control him and were instead forced to incorporate the Surakarta branch of the PKI while allowing Misbach to remain its autonomous leader.[142] From his final arrest and exile in July 1924, until his death in exile in Manokwari in 1926, Misbach continued to send letters to *Medan Moeslimin*. Moreover, many *pergerakan* newspapers, from *Doenia Achirat* of Fort de Kock (now Bukittinggi, West Sumatra) *to Sinar Hindia* of Semarang, continued to provide updates on his predicament after his arrest, which offers us a sense of how influential his ideas continued to be.[143]

Medan Moeslimin and *Islam Bergerak*

A closer study of Misbach's newspapers, *Medan Moeslimin* (f. 1915) and *Islam Bergerak* (f. 1917), provides invaluable insights into how Islamic ethics and Communist ideas were combined during this period. The articles in these newspapers did not differentiate between Islam and communism's respective routes to the establishment of a just society, and they championed the protection of Indies Muslims' economic interests as coeval with the promotion of their spiritual interests. Established in 1915, *Medan Moeslimin* was a bi-weekly paper printed in Medan, North Sumatra, and consisted of a short Javanese section alongside a lengthier Indonesian one in each issue. It also printed letters from readers, and can reasonably be characterized as a forum for the discussion of *pergerakan* concerns. *Medan Moeslimin* was deeply immersed in an Islamic milieu, both reflecting and informing the concerns of Indies Muslims. Recurrent topics were Islam's position in relation to Christianity, debates over Islamic praxis, polygamy, anxiety about Christian proselytization, the progressive capacity of Islam (or lack thereof), and accusations of intellectual closed-mindedness and rigidity (*berfikir tetap*) on the part of Indies Muslims. *Medan Moeslimin* even attracted the input of Muslim *pergerakan* activists who were not necessarily in agreement with Misbach. In 1925, the founder of Muhammadiyah and erstwhile

[141] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 271, 274.
[142] *Ibid*., 274.
[143] Anonymous, "Pelemparan Bom," *Doenia Achirat*, October 27, 1923; Anonymous, "Saudara Misbach," *Sinar Hindia*, July 11, 1924.

advisor to Sarekat Islam, Ahmad Dahlan, contributed an article that explained and challenged the tenets of Wahhabism, despite his organization's antipathy toward Misbach's Marxist influences.[144] This corroborates Farid and Razif's characterization of *pergerakan* print culture as hybrid, eclectic, and resisting easy categorization.[145]

Of particular interest is a column on *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) that featured in a 1921 issue of *Medan Moeslimin*, authored by Moedhiroel-chak. It quotes the Qur'anic surah al-Bakarah, and attempts to explain the meaning of "*menoesia itoe oemat jang satoe*" (humanity as a unified community), a phrase derived from the Qur'anic verse. The author explains its meaning in a distinctly exhortative fashion, emphasizing the centrality of community and mutual aid, which chimes comfortably with Islamic precepts. He explained that it meant living as if all men were parts of the same body (*hidoep sebadan*), and always thinking about the lives of their fellows.[146] He concluded that it was impossible to obtain perfection or eternal life without following the path of mutual assistance (*djalan tolong-menolong*).[147] Intriguingly, "*djalan tolong-menolong*" appears with "*collectivisme*" in parentheses next to it. The use of a term with strong Marxist overtones, transliterated from Dutch rather than translated into a colloquial equivalent for mutual assistance and cooperation (such as *gotong royong*), suggests that the author deliberately linked Qur'anic understandings of social justice with Marxist ideas. Collectivism was presented as the fulfilment of Qur'anic instructions to live in harmony and mutual support, subtly connecting Communist ideas to Islam by embedding them in distinctly religious vocabulary. The author went on to condemn endemic strife between Muslim leaders, and called for unity and cooperation in clearly religious terms.[148]

For all its Marxist influence, the fundamentally Islamic identity embraced by the editors and contributors of *Medan Moeslimin* was discernable in its stylized Arabic calligraphic imprimatur on the front page of every

[144] Ahmad Dahlan, "Wahhabisme," *Medan Moeslimin*, January 15, 1925.
[145] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," 282.
[146] Moedhiroel-chak, "Kolom Tafsir," *Medan Moeslimin*, exact date unknown, 1921.
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] *Ibid.*

issue. The text was arranged in two concentric circles, and the inner circle of text was a stylized Arabic rendition of *surah al-Fatihah*, the opening line of the Qur'an, which prefaces each of the five daily prayers: "In the name of God the most gracious, the most merciful." The outer layer of text was from *surah as-Saff*, 13, which reads "And also (He will give you) another (blessing) which you love – help from God (against your enemies) and a near victory. And give glad tidings (O Muhammad) to the believers." This Qur'anic verse is strongly associated with the martial and triumphant theme of Muhammad's return to Mecca from Medina, a victory over his unbelieving enemies, and the foundation of a community of Muslims in Mecca.[149] The fact that the editors of *Medan Moeslimin* chose to preface each issue with this calligraphic imprimatur was an affirmation of their Islamic identity, and their commitment to exploring issues of concern to Muslim readers. Moreover, the inclusion of *surah as-Saff* invoked the militant tone of Muhammad's triumph over his enemies, and signaled the newspaper's expectation of the eventual victory of Islam against the forces arraigned against it, a theme that was consistently evident in articles penned by Haji Misbach.

Islam Bergerak, founded in 1917, was cut from the same cloth. It became the official organ of the Surakarta PKI branch in 1923, when Misbach resigned his editorship to focus on propaganda work for the PKI and Sarekat Rakyat. This provides a sense of how strong its communist sympathies were, despite not originally being founded as PKI newspaper.[150] The close links with the PKI deepened over time: *Islam Bergerak* merged with the Yogyakarta PKI organ *Doenia Baroe* in September 1923 to become *Ra'jat Bergerak*.[151] Articles published in *Islam Bergerak* readily drew on Islamic and Communist ideas in the same breath. For example, "Peredaran Zaman" (the turning of the age), published while Misbach was still editor, identified colonial Capitalism as the prime cause of the people's suffering. Its author, M. Siraj, used the term *orang ra'ijat* (*rakyat*, lit. people) liberally, a term often employed by Communists such as Tan Malaka to denote "the masses" rather than the more doctrinally orthodox *proletar* (proletariat). He did so while couching his analysis in terms of the

[149] Translation and interpretation courtesy of Professor Hamza Zafer, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Washington.
[150] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 269.
[151] *Ibid.*, 271.

coming of a new age (*peredaran zaman*) – a concept that would have resonated with Islamic eschatology in the canonical *hadith* collections.[152] The suggestive metaphor of an eschatological "turning of an age," one explicitly linked to capitalist exploitation, was encapsulated in the following excerpt: "The livelihood of these same people begins to change, then the times change [as well]. Wherefore then does the life of the people suddenly become difficult and murky? The revolution of the Capitalists."[153] M. Siraj went on to castigate Capitalists for buying up fertile fields to build factories, trade offices and infrastructure such as railways, trams, telegram and telephone lines on the lands which provided the most income.[154] This perspective cast what colonial bureaucrats would have labelled "infrastructural development" and the "facilitation of commerce" as the facilitation of exploitation instead. Siraj specifically inveighed against *pembawaan barang-barang dagangan*, the transport of trade goods, a key aspect of the extractive colonial economy. Siraj's critique was reactionary, one that evoked familiar eschatological and bucolic themes for Indies Muslims, but it was also a perspective that was expressed through the modern medium of the newspaper.

Another *Islam Bergerak* article, "*Verslag Pendek dari Openbare Openlucht Vergadering S. I. Pekalongan*," literally "Short report from the public meeting of Sarekat Islam in Pekalongan" provided a sense of the how Islamic communism was understood by its adherents.[155] It described a Sarekat Islam meeting on 23–24 December 1922, on the eve of its expulsion of PKI members. S. Hardjowijoto, a representative of Sarekat Islam's Semarang branch and known to be closely aligned with the PKI, was reported as having publicly clarified why he considered himself both a Muslim and a Communist (*seorang koeminist yang beragama Islam*).[156] He explained that Communism was a form of progressive, dynamic knowledge (*ilmoe bergerak*) that could oppose capitalistic power, and that capitalist regulations had caused multiple kinds of hardship for

[152] Siraj, M. "Perederan Zaman," *Islam Bergerak,* January 1, 1923. Of the canonical *hadith* collections, both Sahih Abu Muslim and Sahih al-Bukhari identify minor signs of the impending judgement that are reminiscent of the effects of Capitalism. For example, such minor signs include the spread of the practice of *rib'a* (usury) and the earning of money through *haram* (forbidden) means.
[153] *Ibid*.
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] Anonymous, "Verslag Pendek dari Openbare Openlucht Vergadering S. I. Pekalongan." *Islam Bergerak,* January 1, 1923.
[156] *Ibid*.

humanity.[157] Tellingly, he used the word *ilmu* to characterize Communism, since *ilmu* was an Arabic loan word that is strongly associated with various forms of Islamic knowledge. Hardjowijoto went on to argue that the final goal of Communism was the elimination of poverty, which was also a key goal of religious people, especially given the squalor afflicting the masses in the Indies; he described those who said that Communism clashed with religion as making a big mistake.[158] As with many of his contemporaries, Hardjowijoto's speech evinced a theatic focus on the importance of solidarity. He highlighted Islam's emphasis on social justice as grounds for the the importance for unity between Muslims and Communists, saying: "…let our movement become one, and no longer have disputes moving forward!"[159]

Misbach in Exile: "*Islamisme dan Kommunisme*"

Misbach's own candid conciliation of Islam and communism emerged in a series of articles entitled "*Islamisme dan Kommunisme*," published in instalments during the first three months of 1925, which he wrote from exile in Manokwari.[160] The opening instalment was published in the January 1, 1925 issue of *Medan Moeslimin,* which prominently displayed the Communist visual tropes: a stylized portrait of Misbach in his trademark white collared shirt and turban was flanked by a hammer and a sickle, taking pride of place on the cover page. Misbach's portrait was located under the stylized Jawi (Malay written in Arabic script) logo of *Medan Moeslimin,* an apt visual metaphor for the confluence of Islam and Communism.[161]

In the first article of this series, Misbach openly criticized Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam, singling out the Sarekat Islam leader Tjokroaminoto, for what he perceived to be selective implementation of only those Islamic precepts that suited their agendas. He called this being Muslim from "above the lip only" (*di atas bibir sadja*) –

[157] *Ibid.*
[158] *Ibid.* While Hardjowijoto generally uses the term "*agama*" (religion) in this article, he ends off his speech by saying "Although I am a Communist, I also will fulfil the requirements of our religion, Islam." Ultimately, he leaves no doubt as to which religion he is referring to throughout his speech.
[159] *Ibid.*
[160] Haji Misbach, "Islamisme dan Komunisme." *Medan Moeslimin*, January 1, 1925.
[161] *Ibid.*

accusing them of merely mouthing piety, but avoiding pious actions.[162] In stronger language yet, he went on to associate coming under the influence of Capitalism with loving the will of Satan, and declared that those who thought Islam and Communism incompatible either were not true Muslims, or had not yet understood the true position of Islam.[163]

In later articles of the series, Misbach summarized his take on the causes of disorder in the world. He argued that global poverty was caused by capitalism, because it was a form of knowledge that searched for profit in conjunction with obtaining the rights of ownership for a limited few only. He ended this section with the clarion call *koeboerlah kapitalisme!* (bury capitalism!).[164] Misbach claimed that the age of capitalism had corrupted people's morality and humanity even as it had allowed them to attain elevated knowledge.[165] Moreover, Misbach's arguments mixed an economic critique of capitalism with a keen awareness of its morally deleterious effects – his critique was both materialist and spiritual. He argued that capitalists tended to produce surplus goods, more than the population actually needed, ultimately resulting in unemployment for hundreds of workers. This, according to Misbach, had the consequent effects of worsening the corruption of humanity and encouraging people to violate religious prohibitions (presumably out of poverty).[166] He accused capitalists of preventing their employees, like the 60,000 or so railway and tram workers of Java, from properly observing the tenets of Islam (such as the five daily prayers and fasting). This was something workers could not militate against without risking starvation, since they had to "chase sustenance and fill their bellies."[167]

More perceptively, Misbach highlighted the relationship between Capitalism and colonization, and identified the destructive effects of an extractive colonial economy that sold processed goods to a captive market: he pointed out that the factory-made products of industrial Capitalism were seemingly "refined in shape and cheap

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[162] *Ibid.*
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] Haji Misbach, "Islamisme dan Kommunisme," *Medan Moesliemin*, March 20, 1925.
[165] *Ibid.* Interestingly, Misbach categorized Capitalism as a kind of *ilmu* (knowledge, an Arabic loan-word), a term which has strong associations with both the formalized and mystical forms of Islamic learning. This suggests that these early articulations of Communist discourse were still unfamiliar to most readers, and had to be couched in an Islamic or vernacular idiom in order to be comprehensible.
[166] *Ibid.*
[167] *Ibid.*

in price," but they ultimately killed local businesses and deepened squalor in a colonized country over time.[168] His language was as militant as the iconic calligraphy of the newspaper's front page; he spoke of Capitalist "market colonialism" being prone to causing "murder" and "war" between the Capitalists and the oppressed, and in this war it was not the Capitalists who would be the "cannon fodder" and "bombs," but the destitute populace who would be victims.[169]

Despite drawing heavily on (his interpretations of) Marx in "*Islamisme dan Kommunisme*", Misbach's criticism was not rooted in materialism alone, but in a spiritual idiom familiar to Muslim readers. He argued that the wickedness of Capitalism lay in its tendency to make men hate each other and make war upon each other.[170] Here Misbach invoked the specter of *fitnah*, strife or tribulation within the *ummah*, which is often abjured in the Qur'an and *hadith*. He also inveighed against the dehumanizing effects of Capitalism in spiritual terms: Capitalism made money the principal goal of humanity, and it blinded men to their humanity to the extent that their humanity, bodies and souls were submitted to the pursuit of money.[171] More directly, Capitalism was castigated for twisting each religion to its own devices (*memoetar masing-masing agama mendjadi perkakasnja*). Contrary to Marx's characterization of religion as the opiate of the masses, Misbach perceived the true danger of Capitalism to be its corruption of Islamic praxis.[172]

Misbach was also particularly concerned with global Muslim solidarity against capitalism. In his account of his travels to Medinah, Misbach recounted his own experience of having his belongings stolen while he slept at night. Characteristically, he didn't miss the opportunity to identify Capitalism as the root cause of this unpleasant experience: in an italicized editorial insert, he explained that Capitalism, whose "poisonous fruits" have afflicted many places, had "attacked" thousands of Muslims in the *hejaz*, and had "flooded" them with squalor, causing them to lose heart and become thieves, highwaymen, robbers, and charlatans.[173] He again

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[168] *Ibid.*
[169] *Ibid.*
[170] Haji Misbach, "Islamisme dan Kommunisme," *Medan Moeslimin*, exact date unknown, 1925.
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] Haji Misbach, "Perdjalanan ke Makah-Madinah," *Medan Moeslimin*, January 1, 1925.

concluded that Muslims must "bury Capitalism."[174] While emphasizing Muslims' solidarity with the other victims of Capitalism throughout the world, Misbach was especially outraged at how Capitalism had corrupted the heartland of Islam, the *hejaz*; his identification with the *ummah* was evident in the way he took particular umbrage at Capitalism's purported penetration of the most sacred of Islamic experiences.

Misbach was by no means the only pious Muslim who supported the PKI. If anything, he was representative of a pre-1926 vintage of Islamic communists. In the Javanese districts of Tegal and Ponorogo, Islamic Communist groups with tenuous connections to the PKI leadership existed under the leadership of Haji Adnan, and drew support from the *pesantren* students clustered in Ponogoro.[175] Haji Datuk Batuah, an Islamic modernist reformist from West Sumatra, also joined the PKI and was primarily responsible for the spread Communism in West Sumatra; the celebrated poet Hamka wrote that Batuah had once told him that "his commitment to Communism was because of his responsibility as a Muslim."[176] Batuah commanded particular influence because he was high-born, a *haji* and a *penghulu adat*, in addition to being a PKI leader.[177] Along with Railway and Tram Workers Union (VSTP) activist Nathar Zainuddin and Sumatra Thawalib teacher Djamaluddin Tamin, Batuah set up two Islamic Communist journals, *Djago! Djago!* (The Champion) and *Pemandangan Islam* (Islamic Outlook), as well as an "International Debating Club" and a "Marxist Social Study Group."[178] Even after Batuah's arrest in 1923, the PKI's development in Sumatra retained a strongly religious character closely aligned with the spread of Islamic modernism, free of the antagonism between the PKI and Muhammadiyah that persistently dogged their relations in Java.[179]

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[174] *Ibid.*
[175] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 174.
[176] Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State*, ISEAS Series on Islam (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 42.
[177] *Penghulu adat* refers to a community leader with authority to interpret and enforce customary laws.
[178] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 175. The Sumatra Tawalib network of modernist madrassahs was founded in 1919 in West Sumatra, and will be dealt with in detail in chapter two. Educational institutions like Sumatra Thawalib were an integral part of the modernist Islamic revival in the NEI, of which the best-known example is Muhammadiyah's *madrassah* network. For more on the Sumatra Tawalib schools, see Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 34-40.
[179] *Ibid.*, 174-176

What follows is a brief overview of a range of newspapers, spread across the archipelago, which propounded similar discourses engaging both Islam and Marxism. Since there are too many newspapers of this stripe to cover all of them in detail, this overview will be followed by an in-depth examination of two selected newspapers, *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*, to break down the component parts of discourse we can justifiably label "Islamic communism."

Islamic communist newspapers throughout the Indies

Islam and communism were also theorized as compatible outside of Misbach's strongholds in the *voorstenlanden* (the areas surrounding the princely states of Surakarta and Yogyakarta) or the urban cities of Java. Misbach was merely the best-known example of a much larger field of activists who accepted similar postulates. In Purwokerto (Central Java), Langsa (Aceh), Sibolga (North Sumatra), Pontianak (Kalimantan) and Padang Panjang (West Sumatra) there existed significant strains of Islamic communist discourses during the first half of the 1920s. There were even reports of a *Perserikatan Komunis Islam* (Islamic Communist Association) led by one Paiso in Makassar, Sulawesi.[180] Misbach's letters from exile suggest that his version of Islamic communism was popular even in far-flung parts of the archipelago: one such letter mentioned his observations of sixteen ports his ship docked at *en route* to Manokwari. Misbach was welcomed in four ports by local Communists, and observed the presence of local Communists in three others.[181] Interestingly, the four ports where Misbach was warmly welcomed were the Eastern Islands of Ambon, Makassar, Ternate, and Sanomo, all outside of the traditional strongholds of the PKI in Java and Sumatra.

The producers and interlocuters of these discourses tended to influential regionally rather than nationally (as Tan Malaka was), but their regional popularity and standing lasted well into the Indonesian Revolution despite long years of detention and exile to Boven Digul. Newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* (Padang Panjang), published

[180] Kankan Xie, "The Netherlands East Indies 1926 Communist Revolt Revisited: New Discoveries from Singapore's Digital Newspaper Archives," in *Chapters on Asia* (Singapore: National Library Board, 2014), 279.
[181] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 284.

by Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin, *Hindia Sepakat* (Sibolga), published by Xarim M.S. (aka Abdoe'l Xarim or Abdul Karim bin Moehamad Soetan), and *Oetoesan Ra'jat* (Langsa), published also by Xarim M.S., were linked to each other through the personal histories of their editorial staff, who were participants in the networks of unionists, teachers and Islamic scholars that spanned the length of Sumatra. [182] Not all of the newspapers examined here were connected so intimately, but there existed a clearly discernable sense of solidarity and recognition that they operated in the same field of activity.

The sense of solidarity across the archipelago was evident in the Purwokerto (Central Java) newspaper *Doenia Merdeka*, published by the local Sarekat Rakyat, a former Sarekat Islam branch which sided with the PKI after the split. This was an explicitly communist and openly didactic newspaper, with little space for advertisements, and aimed directly at the sugar plantation laborers of Purwokerto and Klaten. An advertisement from the January 15, 1924 issue called on readers to specifically support the following newspapers: *Sinar Hindia* (Semarang), *Soeara Ra'jat* (Semarang), *Panggoegah* (Yogyakarta), *Pamor* (Yogyakarta), *Medan-Moeslimin* (Solo), *Matahari* (Bandung), *Soeropati* (Sukabumi), *Sendjata Ra'jat* (Pekalongan), *Halelintar* (Pontianak), *Doenia Achirat* (Bukittinggi/Fort De Kock), *Terpedo* (Padang), *Djago! Djago!* (Padang Panjang), and *Pemandangan Islam* (Padang Panjang).[183] While these newspapers had various formal political allegiances and differing organizational structures, they shared a distinct openness to the conciliation of Islam and communism. They were evidently participants and producers in the same discursive field, and saw each other as collaborators in a shared enterprise, or perhaps interlocuters in an ongoing discussion. Given the geographic spread of these newspapers, it would be fair to infer that theirs was a discourse which had significant resonance throughout the

[182] Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), 70–71. Xarim M.S. was born in 1900 or 1901, and began his career as a draftsman for the public works department (Burgerlijke Openbare Werken, BOW) in 1914. He went on to become the Lhoksomawae, Aceh branch chairman of the department's union (Vereeniging Inlandse Personeel B.O.W., VIPBOW), and a branch chairman for the pro-independence Naational Indische Partij (NIP). After the NIP was dissolved in May 1923, he joined the PKI and in 1924 rose to become the chairman of the PKI's Langsa branch and the PKI commissioner for Sumatra. See Horton, *History Unhinged*, 13. Nathar Zainuddin was Xarim M.S.'s brother-in-law, a railway conductor from Aceh who was active in the VSTP. Expelled from Aceh in May 1923 after a VSTP strike, he became close to Haji Datuk Batuah and taught at the Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang until arrested in November 1923.

[183] Advertisement, *Doenia Merdeka*, January 15, 1924. *Doenia Merdeka* was the press organ of the Sarekat Rakyat (SR) in Puwokerto and Klaten, a PKI-affiliated organization that actively competed with the less-politically radical Sarekat Islam branches after the PKI-Sarekat Islam split in 1923.

Indies. This was especially true at a time when the boundaries between different strands of the *pergerakan* had not crystallized to the point of animosity, a time when the fluid field of nationalist politics could contain many contesting visions of what the Indies should be without fracturing. Their writings were not representative of the bulk of *pergerakan* discourse, but these Islamic communists were comfortably within the field of *pergerakan* activism, and constituted a significant segment of it.

This solidarity was again evident when *Doenia Merdeka* openly proclaimed its alignment with Budi Utomo, Sarekat Islam, the Nationaal Indische Partij, and the PKI on the subject of democratizing education for the Indies masses, and explicitly identified these diverse political movements as working in solidarity to expand educational opportunities.[184] This was despite the formal split between Sarekat Islam and the PKI in 1923; evidently there were many who sympathized with both, and did not see their activities as mutually exclusive. Other articles railed against capitalism, repeatedly stressing that "the outrages [perpetuated by capitalism] bring together various races and religions [in opposition]."[185] Its contributors articulated their opposition to capitalism in distinctly Islamic terms: references to "*nafsu Kapitalisme*" repeatedly cropped up in different issues.[186] This constituted a deployment of specifically Islamic concepts like *hawa nafsu*, signifying carnal or base desires. This was widely understood to be the opposite of *akal*, signifying rationality, which with strongly associated with Islamic praxis. Other articles bemoaned the suffering and penury of the Indies proletariat [*kaoem proletar Hindia*], laying responsibility their suffering squarely at the foot of capitalists, who are identified in distinctly Islamic terms: "Who has caused this suffering? None other than the aforementioned capitalists [*kaoem modal*], whom we can call visible devils, destroyers of the world… their origin is the Devil [*Sjaitan*] of capitalism, who satisfies his *hawa nafsu*."[187] The same article is also rich in distinctive terms which characterize Islamic discourse, with "*Masa'Allah*" (as God wills) and "*Insja Allah*" (God willing) scattered throughout the text.[188]

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[184] S.A. (pseudonym), "Sampai Djemoe… Temtoe!", *Doenia Merdeka*, January 15, 1924.
[185] Anonymous, "Kemana Djalan Kita?", *Doenia Merdeka*, February 1, 1924.
[186] *Ibid.*; K.W. Soediono, "Doenia kapital," *Doenia Merdeka*, March 15, 1924.
[187] Soed (pseudonym), "Kjai Goenoeng Slamet keloehnja jang tiada dipoetoesan," *Doenia Merdeka*, February 15, 1924.
[188] *Ibid.*

In a similar vein, other articles offered critiques of capitalism articulated within an Islamic worldview. "Si Pembunuh" (the murderer) was a sophisticated article revolving around an extended conceit, in which murder was a metaphor for the effects of capitalism. "Nafsu" was personified as a murderer (perhaps equivalent to the English term "Mammon") who "happily murders our brethren, merely for the sake of glorifying himself."[189] Moreover,

> *"Nafsu's servants, the Devil and his demons, continuously tempt the people of God, true humanity [oemat Toehan, manoesia sedjati]. This wily Nafsu is not brave enough to murder in broad daylight, and instead murders subtly, such that the murdered do not even feel they have been killed… Nafsu's realm is expansive, and even the mightiest kings of the world are under his flag. Who is Nafsu? Verily, the kings of finance, the aforementioned capitalists."*[190]

This evocative, and even poetic, characterization of capitalism and its workings might not be worthy of Foucault, but it did evince an analytical subtlety which suggested the author was well-acquainted with Marx's critique of capital as well as Islamic philosophy. Even in critiquing capitalism/Nafsu, the author articulated his opposition in an Islamic idiom: "A Prophet said something in his book, which approximately means this: 'Not only people who separate the souls from the bodies of others are called murderers; but also people who eliminate the livelihoods of other people, who abolish their livelihoods, they should also be called murderers.'"[191] In keeping with the conceit of the murderer, the author eloquently expressed the subtle yet nefarious effects of colonial capitalism.

The most explicit theorization of compatibility between Islam and communism in *Doenia Merdeka* came from the memorably titled "Stupid Sri Jayabaya Prattles like a Madman." This was written in response to another article published in a Sarekat Islam newspaper (the author of said article had taken the alias Sri Jayabaya, a 12th century Javanese king), which accused communism of undermining Islam. *Doenia Merdeka* had this to say about Sri Jayabaya's arguments: "He claims that that the PKI poisons the Islamic people's movement. Your [Sri

[189] Mendoa, "Si Pemboenoeh," *Doenia Merdeka*, March 15, 1924.
[190] *Ibid.*
[191] *Ibid.*

Jayabaya] thinking is stupid, do you understand!"[192] The article also evinced the trans-local perspective of a global Muslim *ummah*, locating the Indies within a broader world of Muslim communists:

> *"In Constantinople, what religion do people profess there? Unlike you, they profess an Islam that is revolutionary! In Egypt, communists who profess Islam are aplenty. In Bukhara, which is now governed by soviets, there exists popular communist government, do you see? And what is their religion [in Bukhara]…? In Persia, which already has populist government, what is their religion?"*[193]

The author was clearly flexible with facts, or perhaps they simply lacked the information to accurately characterize these far-flung societies. However, Islamic communists in the NEI undeniably saw themselves as part of a broader, global movement. This imagined vista of a world in flux, in which Islam could accommodate communist ideology, did have corporeal manifestations in Iran, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, and India, among other Islamicate societies. However, the article's significance lies in *Doenia Merdeka*'s simultaneous affective identification with the broader worlds of both Muslim and communist solidarity. At this historical moment, it was truly possible to imagine oneself as both Muslim and communist, as many others did throughout the Muslim world.

A monthly journal staffed by women and targeted at women, *Perempoean Bergerak*, provides another example of how Islam and Marxism were imbricated in the *pergerakan* discourse of this era. Under the editorship of Boetet Satidjah, and the supervisory editorship of Parada Harahap, an experienced publisher who had established multiple Bahasa Indonesia newspapers throughout Java, *Perempoean Bergerak* began publication in Medan in 1919, and remained in print until at least 1921. Its general sympathies were relatively clear from the fact that it ran advertisements promoting newspapers like *Benih Mardeka*, an identifiably Islamic communist newspaper from Medan to which Tan Malaka sometimes contributed articles.[194] This was done despite the fact that as a monthly journal, *Perempoean Bergerak* relief primarily on subscriptions and ran very few advertisements at all. It was not an explicitly political or didactic newspaper, and its primary goal seemed to be

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[192] Djoewardi, "Si Goblog Sri Djajabaja mengoetjeh seperti orang gila?", *Doenia Merdeka*, April 1, 1924.
[193] *Ibid.* The Persian example is likely in reference to Mizra Kuchak Khan's Jangal Movement in Persia's Gilan province, which proclaimed and fought an an insurgency to realize a Persian Soviet Socialist Republic from 1914–21. See Cosroe Chaqueri, *The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920-21* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1994).
[194] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 69–70. Parada Harahap also served as editor of *Benih Mardeka* for a time.

to stimulate and serve a growing female reading public, while also providing opportunities for women to work in journalism. Correspondingly, many of its articles dealt with issues like women's education and the norms of marriage. It did, however, embody a clear Islamic ethos: it held up the Prophet Muhammad (using the Islamic formulation," *Nabi Kita Mohomad S.A.W."*) and his daughter Fatima as worthy of emulation by female *pergerakan* activists.[195] Intriguingly, the same article went on to extol the bravery of Russian women, exhorting female *pergerakan* activists to support the *pergerakan* the way the Russian women supported the 1917 revolution.[196] The coexistence of Islamic identity and expressions of solidarity with the USSR were, in a sense, unremarkable for a newspaper of this era. Even for one that was not directly linked to a political party, it was not particularly contentious for such sentiments to cohabit the same page.

Perempoean Bergerak proclaimed its commitment to both feminism and Islam in no uncertain terms. In its first issue, it explicitly claimed that one of its aims was to advance native feminism [*feminism Inlander*], but was careful to also state that "our feminism aims to follow the path of the beautiful and the clean, such that our *pergerakan* will not be hampered; we do not intend to transgress our beautiful customs and religion."[197] Another article entitled "Ajam Beranak Itik" (Chickens with Ducks for children) carried the subtitle "Perempoean Hindia Djadi Njai," literally "the women of the Indies are becoming concubines." The subtitle is another good example of the anxiety over a crisis of female sexual morality in capitalist societies that inflected the writings of many communists in this period, hinting at the Islamic moral framework they embraced. At the same time, this article was unsurprisingly clear about its Islamic identity: "Allah" is referenced multiple times, and God's sovereignty over nature is extolled in verse.[198] Other articles, however, openly expressed solidarity with the communist Sumatra Thawalib teacher (and later editor of *Djago! Djago!*) Haji Datuk Batuah.[199] Some articles even openly engaged with *Sinar Hindia*, condemning "sinful capital" (*kapitaal berdosa*) for "destroying the

[195] Tk. A. S., "Pergerakan Kita," *Perempoean Bergerak*, May 15, 1920.
[196] *Ibid.*
[197] Boetet Satidjah, "Salam jang pertama," *Perempoean Bergerak*, May 15, 1919.
[198] Sitti Roekiah, "Ajam Beranak Itik," *Perempoean Bergerak*, May 15, 1919.
[199] Anonymous, "Bertanding," *Perempoean Bergerak*, June 16, 1919.

peace and ruining our freedom."[200] In a time when the desirability of women's education was still being widely debated across the vernacular press, the very existence of *Perempoean Bergerak* and its female staff writers was already a powerful statement, one that could be read as transgressive and un-Islamic. Even so, Islamic identity remained central to these journalists and influenced how they articulated their feminism, as well as their critiques of capitalism. For many women as well as men, Marxist ideas, feminist advocacy, and Islamic identity were inextricably bound together in their political activism.

This mixing of Islamic identity and Marxist affiliation was also evident in regional newspapers, like *Hindia Sepakat*. A bi-weekly newspaper published in Sibolga (North Sumatra), it was edited first by the Sarekat Islam activist Abdoelmanap, and then later by the Acehnese unionist and PKI member Xarim M.S.[201] *Hindia Sepakat* ran articles which indignantly condemned the arrest of the exiled PKI activist Darsono in Holland, after attending a PKI conference held in Groeningen.[202] It also provided updates on both Sarekat Islam and PKI activists, like M. Samin and Alimin respectively, announcing their "leave of absence from the *pergerakan*" in early 1922.[203] Simultaneously, it evinced a discernably Islamic ethos. An editorial marking the occasion of the new year (1922) readily admitted the paramountcy of Islam in the author's worldview: "… all existence is descended from God [*Toehan Allah*]; perhaps the cause of God's wrath is the behavior of humanity, which increasingly engenders tyranny."[204] Similarly, "… in the interest of a harmonious and worshipful world, it would not be wrong to say that almost throughout this world of ours, people are insufficiently heedful of and obedient to God."[205] Moreover, *Hindia Sepakat* celebrated the launching of other regional newspapers like *Soematra-Bergerak*, a weekly newspaper published in Padang from 1922–23, which Jeffrey Hadler classifies as Islamic communist.[206]

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[200] Mariam, "Kawin Dengan Lain Bangsa," *Perempoean Bergerak*, December 16, 1919.
[201] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 19, 70-71.
[202] Anonymous, "Tentang Darsono," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 3, 1922.
[203] H.S.S. Parpatieh, "Soematra… moelai melangkah menoedjoe apa jang dimaksoednja," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 5, 1922
[204] Anonymous, "Perasaan, Pemandangan, Pertimbangan, dan Pengharapan 1921-1922," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 10, 1922.
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] Anonymous, "Soematra Bergerak," *Hindia Sepakat*, January 17, 1922; Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 181.

Oetoesan Ra'jat, edited by Xarim M.S., began publication in Langsa (Aceh) in January 1923. Its subtitle was "*choeth'bah merdeka,*" the "sermon of independence." *Choeth'bah* (*khutbah*) refers to the sermon traditionally preached at the communal Friday prayers, a partially political event because the sermon was regularly accompanied by prayers acknowledging the authority of the sovereign (in this context, Queen Wilhelmina). *Oetoesan Ra'jat*'s sermon was clearly not one of obedience to the colonial government. The editorial board proudly advertised their class status in its first issue: "this group of ours is poor and destitute, and far from the appellation 'moneyed' [*beroeang*]."[207] It actively promoted VSTP political rallies, and provided extensive coverage of ongoing strikes.[208] Other articles didactically explained Marx's ideas, while Xarim M.S. himself occasionally published editorials critiquing capitalism.[209] For example, one of his front-page editorials argued that "… the education common in Indonesia is based on capitalist characteristics that have penetrated out society over the last 300 years, and has engendered a pedagogical language that is unproductive… [an appropriate] education should aspire to the following results: understanding one's people, loving one's homeland, and loving one's fellows, who are all God's creations [*sesama makloek Toehan Allah*]."[210] Similarly, *Oetoesan Ra'jat* began many of its articles with the formulaic Islamic greeting: "Assalamoealeikoem" (peace be upon you).[211] Consistently expressing itself in an Islamic idiom, *Oetoesan Ra'jat* combined Muslim identity with a Marxist critique of capitalism.

Other issues of *Oetoesan Ra'jat* explicitly glorified class struggle across the world, celebrating the successes of Kemalist Turkey, the Bolsheviks, and the Weimar Republic, yet articles also ended on the following note: "… this world is truly convoluted, in accordance with God's judgement; those who were mighty may suddenly become lowly, those who were strong may become weak… God's judgement is more just than worldly judgement, and whoever sins cannot escape from judgement."[212] Islamic communists perceived a world

[207] M.S. Familie, "Pendahoeloean," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 2, 1923.
[208] Anonymous, "Propaganda V.S.T.P," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 2, 1923; Anonmyous, "Openbare Vergadering V.S.T.P," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 26, 1923.
[209] Aboelhajat, "Kemerdekaan!", *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, April 30, 1923; Anonymous, "Boenga Rampai," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, April 30, 1923.
[210] Abdoe'lxarim M.S., "Matahari Terbit," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 15, 1923.
[211] M.S. Familie, "Pendahoeloean," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 2, 1923.
[212] Joenoes, "Keadaan Doenia," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, January 26, 1923.

pregnant with the possibility of radical change; they identified not just with their fellow Marxists or Muslims, but also with an imagined global progressive movement overthrowing autocracy and exploitation. Islamic communists in the Indies understood themselves as part of this global movement, with cooperation possible between the various articulations of that movement, including between Muslims and communists. This was not to last, but newspapers such as *Oetoesan Ra'jat* provide telling examples of the *pergerakan*'s sense of an open-ended era on the precipice of change, where many things seemed possible. This *zeitgeist* was what Takashi Shiraishi rightly identified as *zaman bergerak*, the sense of an "age in motion."[213] Closer to home, *Oetoesan Ra'jat* provided frequent updates on, and expressed sympathy for, Nathar Zainuddin, a VSTP unionist in Aceh who later became editor of *Pemandangan Islam* and *Djago! Djago!* (and who happened to be Xarim M.S.'s brother-in-law).[214] It also carried advertisements for *Doenia Achirat* (Bukittinggi, West Sumatra), all of which signals its belonging within a broader discursive field populated by various Islamic communist newspapers.[215]

Finally, a brief glance at the Pontianak (Kalimantan) weekly newspaper *Halilintar* is sufficient to reveal its simultaneous engagement with both Islam and communism. West Kalimantan, where Pontianak is located, is and was ethnically and linguistically diverse, even by Indonesian standards. Roughly split equally between Dayaks, Malays and Chinese, it was perhaps unsurprising that hybrid discourses like Islamic communism found niches in which to flourish. *Halilintar* began publication in 1922, under the auspices of the Pontianak's Sarekat Rakyat branch. Edited by one Djaja Pranata, its title meant "lightning" in Malay, while its subtitle was printed in English: "our aim is equality of ownership of land," which it attributed to Sun Yat-sen.[216] The demographics of West Kalimantan may have partially accounted for the increased prominence of Sun, whose republican project was a cardinal reference point for the *pergerakan* in general. Nevertheless, it is revealing that the aspect of Sun's political thought *Halilintar* chose to highlight was land redistribution, a key component of communist

[213] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 8.
[214] Anonmyous, "V.S.T.P. Atjeh," *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, June 15, 1923.
[215] Advertisement, *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, May 31, 1923.
[216] *Halilintar* was titled *Halilintar-Hindia* in some issues. See *Halilintar*, December 17, 1924.

policy. Its simultaneously communist affiliation and Islamic identity was evident in an article which openly refuted Muslim critics of communism:

> *"Are there PSI [Partai Sarekat Islam] leaders who truly understand communism's true goals? Why are they brave enough to blindly berate the communist path? Is communism incompatible with Islam? Does communism teach bestiality? Communism is the path of sama rasa sama rata* [same feelings, same level]*... Does communism weaken the unity of Sarekat Islam? Is communism a product of Moscow? Because of this, communism has no place in the Indies?... This slander heaped on communists serves only to throw dust in eyes of misguided people… have these reactionaries ever provided proof that communism is against Islam? Have the communists reviled Islam? Critiqued Islam? … No, communism in both theory and practice seeks to create a humane world."*[217]

Like its Javanese counterpart *Doenia Merdeka*, *Halilintar* was light on advertisements, explicitly communist, and openly didactic. A 1924 article cited the trials and tribulations faced by the Prophet Muhammad – to whom, oddly, it applied the Javanese aristocratic honorific *kandjeng* – and his supporters in Mecca, forcing them to embark on the *hijra*. It held up the Prophet's unfailing faith in the face of said trials as an example for the *pergerakan* to follow, reminding readers that their "tribulations would be forgotten when they tasted the fruits of their labor."[218] The very same issue, however, also included a poem titled "The Fate of the Proletariat [*Nasib Kaoem Proletar*]." Tellingly, it opened with the following stanza:

> *O Proletariat,*
> *Do not tremble in combating capitalism,*
> *Together we will hurl ourselves,*
> *Please subscribe to the newspaper Halilintar.*[219]

This hybrid discourse yoking Islam and communism to each other could be found even in a far-flung corner of the NEI in which Islam was by no means dominant. Moreover, this was a hybrid discourse that was possible at all only because its proponents understood themselves to be part of something much broader and fundamentally adaptive: a global progressive people's movement that was open to embracing a range of novel ideas, as long as these ideas would undermine Imperial rule and promote socio-economic equality. They may have been naïve

[217] A.C.S., "Politiek Kaoem Kita," *Halilintar*, November 26, 1924.
[218] Tjakram, "Ketetapan Hati," *Halilintar*, December 17, 1924.
[219] Karpoes Merah (pseudonym), "Nasib Kaoem Proletar," *Halilintar*, December 17, 1924.

with regards to the tensions that this hybridity would generate, but it is only with this mentality that Sun Yat-sen, the Prophet Muhammad, and proletarian poetry could discursively coexist.

Islamic communism under a microscope: *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*

Of all the newspapers that can be characterized as Islamic communist, *Djago! Djago!* exerted perhaps the most influence, since it had a ready audience at hand. *Djago! Djago!* was based in Padang Panjang, the town which hosted the main Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah Islamic schools.[220] It was directly linked to the local Sarekat Rakyat branch, and widely read in both the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools there.[221] The Sumatra Thawalib of Padang Panjang was the oldest and largest of several schools within the Sumatra Thawalib network (spread out throughout West Sumatra and with a presence in North Sumatra), having originally evolved from the *Surau Djembetan Besi* in Padang Panjang. Audrey Kahin characterizes the Sumatra Thawalib schools as the most important West Sumatran educational institutions of the 1920s, with a total of 39 schools and 17,000 students in 1928.[222] The Diniyyah schools were a related network of schools, also spread across West Sumatra, which specifically provided access to education for girls (both co-educational and otherwise). Both embraced a strong Islamic ethos, in the vein of the reformist, revivalist *kaum muda* strain of Islamic modernism. Both sought to provide a simultaneously Islamic and "secular" (i.e. European) education to a broader section of society than the exclusive government-funded schools would allow, an education which was not tainted by the ontological assumptions and contortions of Dutch-medium education in the Indies. The publishers of *Djago!*

[220] Reid translates *Djago! Djago!* as "Champion," though other translations are certainly possible. "Djago" is literally translated as "cock," in the sense of the fighting bird. It is a word long associated with the *preman* element in society, which Anderson, Cribb and Williams have described in detail. Standing at the intersection of mystical/religious knowledge, martial arts like *silat*, and the role of local gangster/bandit, Djago cut picaresque figures. They were by turns respected, feared, and sneered at; the impetuous *pemuda* of the Indonesian Revolution would be pejoratively described by Republican statesmen like Sjahrir as Djago on more than one occasion.
[221] Leon Salim, "Gerakan Pemuda/Kepanduan Sekitar Diniyah School," in *Peringatan 55 tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 233.
[222] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971), 61; Audrey Kahin, "Translator's Preface," in Leon Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane*, trans. Audrey R. Kahin (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2010), 17.

Djago! and *Pemandangan Islam* were Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah. They were both PKI members, and both worked as teachers at the Sumatra Thawalib schools during the early 1920s.

Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin were part of a broader social milieu which saw no contradiction between Islamic identity and Marxist critiques of colonialism. Other pious Minangkabau Muslims like Haji Bahauddin, husband to one of the founders of the Diniyyah schools, were reported to have made contact with the PKI in Semarang in 1921, though Haji Bahauddin did not formally join the PKI as Haji Datuk Batuah had.[223] Instead, Haji Bahauddin remained a passive supporter of the PKI and a pious Muslim supporting modernist Islamic education, which suggests that the conciliation of Islam and Marxism in this period was not necessarily a matter of firm conviction and creative synergy; the two could simply coexist comfortably within the pre-1926 climate. Bermawy Latief, an alumnus of the Diniyyah school at Padang Panjang, would later write that "the reality was that nearly all the alumni of the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools entered the PKI and actively spread communist ideology (which actually was revolutionary Islam in cloaked in communism) [*sebernarnya asalah Islamisme revolusioner yang bermantel komunis*] relentlessly."[224]

While Marxist ideas were attractive to many staff and students in these schools, not all were comfortable with them. Some, like the prominent Islamic scholar Djalaludin Thaib, chose to leave their teaching positions at both the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools because of their discomfort with Communist ideology, while others, like al-Azhar-educated Muchtar Luthfi, chose to continue teaching at despite their opposition to Communism.[225] It was this social milieu of Islamic piety and progressive activism that *Djago! Djago!* was associated with, which shaped the views both students and teachers at these institutions. Some of the most radical students and teachers organized an "International Debating Club" (IDC), which was directly responsible for the publication of *Djago! Djago!*, enabling it to reach a large audience of students directly.

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[223] Bermawy Latief, "Putri Islam Bangun dan Bangkit," *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 224.
[224] *Ibid*.
[225] Audrey R. Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 54–55. Muchtar Luthfi would later become a founder of Permi (Persatuan Muslim Indonesia, a socialist Muslim organization.

The fundamentally Islamic tenor of *Djago! Djago!*'s content was evident from a recurring news summary it published weekly, entitled "The Whip of Fire." This was very much part of the "wild literature" described by Farid and Razif: "The communist movement has obtained the sympathy of the people of West Sumatra, and those who oppose have to be content with their barking. These people, who have lost their reason [*kehilangan akal*] now want to form a local chapter of the PEB [Politiek Economische Bond], which stands for *Pendjilat Ekor Babi* [the lickers of pigs]! Here, they will mask their efforts in religion and custom. Beware!"[226] The same article also celebrated a suggestion mooted by the Department of Religious Affairs of West Sumatra that a tax be levied to support pilgrims making the *haj*.[227] Even the insults deployed here have a distinctly Islamic flavor: anti-communists were described as barking like dogs and the lickers of pigs because both animals were believed to be ritually impure by Indies Muslims. The support for a *haj* tax, however, is particularly revealing in relation to the priorities embraced by these self-declared communists. It also suggests that for any political movement to gain traction in West Sumatra, it would have to engage with Islam, and the communists had no compunctions about doing so. It was their opponents, apparently, who had forsaken the God-given reason [*akal*] that was necessary for the orderly constitution of human society. They claimed for themselves the mantle of the true interpreters of Islam, even as their conservative opponents sought to do the same.

Djago! Djago! was steeped in the rhetoric of Islamic piety. The opening lines of the October 8, 1923 issue were "Give thanks to the mercy of God, cries all of nature." The same issue also defiantly proclaimed the poverty of the editorial staff, which is unsurprising given the newspaper's subtitle: "Newspaper of the Impoverished Masses" (*Soerat Kabar Kaoem Melarat*).[228] This was a newspaper whose affective attachments were clearly communist: it bemoaned the imprisonment of "our leaders," such as "Semaun, [Henk] Sneevliet, [Tan] Malaka, Sneevliet's wife, [W.A. van] Koordennoordt, Brandsteder, [Adolf] Baars, and [Harry] Dekker," all of whom

[226] Anonymous, "Tjemeti Api," *Djago! Djago!* April 15, 1924. The PEB was a deeply conservative association founded by prominent European and Peranakan Chinese bustiness owners in 1919 to represent their interests in the Volksraad.
[227] *Ibid.*
[228] Familie I.D.C. (pseudonym), "Pendahoeloean," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.

were known communists.[229] The cardinal reference points for a future Indonesia, the dream of "our beloved people's movement" (*pergerakan rajat jang soetji*), are particularly revealing: they were to attain the same "level" as the peoples of Japan, Russia and Turkey.[230] Referencing the resurgent Kemalist Turkey that had replaced the Pan-Islamic dream of a revived Caliphate (i.e. the Khilafat movement of the 1910s) alongside the newly-secure Bolshevik Russia, the authors threw in the Taisho-era Japan with its ostensibly westernizing, democratic direction, conveniently ignoring its suppression of leftists, for good measure.

This combination of reference points is suggestive and lends itself to several interpretations. One potential reading is that the authors were disinterested in the *ethici* promise of productive association and parochial tutelage; instead of looking to the labour and socialist movements in the Netherlands – in the form of the SDAP and its Indies-based affiliate – they envisioned a future Indonesia which forcibly asserted itself against Imperial predations as Japan and Turkey had done. At the same time, this vision of Indonesia was also one that took inspiration from the brave new socialist world that the Bolsheviks were beginning to create, with its egalitarian rhetoric and promise of shared prosperity. That internationalist bent, an imagined place within the world of proletarian solidarity, was evident in statements such as this one: "Not only us, but thousands of others, have suffered, becoming victims, cannon fodder, for the war of 1914–18. The people's brethren (*saoedara-saoedara ra'jat*) in Germany, France, Belgium, Austria… left behind thousands of widows and orphans thanks to a few nobles and capitalists."[231]

At the same time, this was also a vision of Indonesia as one of many resurgent Muslim societies within a global *ummah*, shedding the legacy of colonial domination as Kemalist Turkey had done. These points of reference seem appropriate for an organization that called itself the International Debating Club. It was international not because its constituent members hailed from diverse countries, but because it sought to understand, situate, and

[229] Anonymous, "Tjermin Perbandingan," *Djago! Djago!* October 30, 1923. See also Ruth McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism,* 204. The (mostly Dutch) communist leaders named here were imprisoned or expelled in 1923.
[230] Anonymous, "Tjermin Perbandingan," *Djago! Djago!* October 30, 1923. This article also presents Turkey and Russia as countries worthy of emulation.
[231] Kwaw (pseudonym), "Kesoesahan Hidoep," *Djago! Djago!* November 30, 1923.

process the rest of the world through its debates. This same article ended with a formulaic invocation that mirrored its opening lines: "Thanks be to the grace of God, cries all of nature; and blessings from God's Prophet."[232] In the same vein, other articles in the same issue began with Islamic invocations like "**ASSALAMOE 'ALAIKOEM**" (peace be upon you), printed in bold in capital letters; Nathar Zainuddin also signed off with the same phrase.[233] The Islamic identity ascribed to putative Indonesia by the authors was obvious, though unremarkable for a newspaper of its time and place. What made *Djago! Djago!* intriguing was how this Islamic identity coexisted alongside its proclamations of solidarity with communist activists and nations.

Djago! Djago! was a newspaper with no qualms about its Marxist sympathies. It both advertised and provided reportage of political rallies, particularly those with a leftist bent, thus serving as a platform for mobilizing popular support as well as the dissemination of ideas. For example, the unambiguously titled frontpage article "Red Objectives" attempted to explain why various *pergerakan* mass rallies in Padang Panjang had so far failed to produce concrete results. Citing a recent rally chaired by Abdoel Moeis in which various people's associations and "red parties" (*partij partij merah*) were denied the right to speak, the author complained that "our communist brothers" (*Saudara Communisten*) had been deliberately insulted and slandered by Abdoel Moeis. However, "our communist brothers remained patient in their belief that while communism could be insulted, its truth could not be hindered, and its inexorable progress would continue with giant strides."[234] The author concluded that Abdoel Moeis, who was seeking election to the *Volksraad* at the time, had been parroting the same hollow arguments about the lowliness and weaknesses of the people for fifteen years but could not actually rebut the communists' arguments against cooperation with the colonial state.[235] As a result, the disgruntled crowd left the rally, and gathered at the IDC offices instead to discuss the value of non-cooperation. The author, whose pseudonym Paloearit is a portmanteau of "hammer" and "sickle," reported that those who

[232] *Ibid.*
[233] Pengurus (administrator), "Pengharapan Pengurus," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923; N. Zainuddin, "Pertemoean," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.
[234] Paloearit (pseudonym; lit. hammer and sickle), "Sasaran Merah," *Djago! Djago!* November 10, 1923.
[235] *Ibid.*

gathered at the IDC had their picture taken, with "the red flag aflutter between them, decorated with the hammer and sickle, the flag of unity between farmers and workers."[236]

This sympathy for communism was echoed in *Djago! Djago!*'s coverage of a Sarekat Rakyat rally held in Padang Panjang on March 2, 1924, at which the "Red partisans unfurled their flag, puffed up their chests, and searched for the salvation of the people."[237] Hyperbole aside, this dialectical "search" for a way forward for the putative Indonesia encapsulates the *pergerakan* experience. In coming together both physically, at public rallies, and remotely, in the debates playing out across newspapers, putative Indonesians were groping their way towards an articulation of what an Indonesian future might look like, and what had to be done to facilitate the fulfilment of these visions. At this stage, these included visions of an Indonesia which was both Muslim and communist. Tellingly, *Djago! Djago!* and similar newspapers loudly disavowed violence ("… does the PKI agree with the [anarchist] throwing of bombs? No! A thousand times no!"), though they eulogized Lenin when he died in 1924.[238] This conciliatory discourse linking Islam and communism was a discourse which abetted self-discovery, of identification with a global movement, which in turn allowed *pergerakan* activists to sketch the contours of Indonesian-ness. It was not a discourse which facilitated disciplined obedience to Moscow's directives, or imposed ideological purity in accordance with Comintern dogma.

An article entitled "Who Oppresses Us? Who Wrings Us? Who Destroys Our Religion?" from the final page of the October 8, 1923 issue evinced Marxist analytical frameworks deployed alongside the image of Islam under siege. The article opened with a rhetorical flourish that would not have been out of place in *The Communist Manifesto*: "This I know; Capitalism destroys everything."[239] It went on to explain that Capitalism was the "way" (*tjara*) of the present world, which sought to amass all the contents of the world and to eventually govern throughout the world.[240] Seemingly explaining an unfamiliar concept, the article defined Capitalists as those

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[236] *Ibid.*
[237] Verslaggever, "Openbare Protest Vergadering Sjarikat Ra'jat Padang Pandjang," *Djago! Djago!* March 13, 1924.
[238] Indonesia (pseudonym), "Ahli Communisme – Atau Penghianatkah Ia?" *Djago! Djago!* April 15, 1924.
[239] Z. (pseudonym), "Siapakah jang menindas kita? Siapakah jang memaras kita? Siapakah jang meroesakan agama kita?" *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.
[240] *Ibid.*

who "use the knowledge of Capitalism" (*memakai ilmoe kapitalisme*). The world *ilmoe* (or *ilmu* in modern orthography) is an Arabic loan-word (*'ilm,* علم) which was and remains inextricably linked to both the classical Islamic sciences as well as esoteric Islamic knowledge. Even in translating the complicated phenomenon of capitalism for an Indies audience, the author chose to (or perhaps, had to) rely on an Islamic idiom to make it comprehensible to his audience. Bearing in mind that the newspaper's core audience was Sumatra Thawalib students, the portrayal of capitalism as a kind of *ilmoe* would have been both resonant and appropriate, according capitalism the same complexity that the Islamic sciences and esoterica were acknowledged to possess.

The author went on to explain that capitalism was the unceasing search for profit, until all the wealth of the world had been exhausted, when said wealth would be accumulated (*bertoempoek-toempoek*, lit. piled up) in the hands of a few who would never be satisfied.[241] There was an appreciation for abstractions and systems in this article, but it also possessed a clearly moral dimension: the author argued that this covetousness would ultimately "destroy the righteousness of humanity" (*membinasakan kebenaran manoesia*). Moreover, "the effects of capitalism… are purely destructive to our belief in the one true path, and contradict the tenets of Islam."[242] This was the Marxist critique of the pernicious effects of capital, but it was simultaneously a familiar religious precept on the corruptive effects of obsessing over material goods. Capitalism was presented as deleterious precisely because it legitimized the pursuit of material profit to the exclusion of all else; it was thus immoral, and inimical to Islam. In fact, the author claimed, it was inimical to all religions, and it was the responsibility of the oppressed and poor – regardless of race and religion – to unite in seizing their rights in this world (not the next), because this world belonged not to the few but to all.[243]

This attentiveness both to the material world of the present as well as the spiritual hereafter was repeated in a later issue of *Djago! Djago!*, in which an upcoming meeting of the IDC was advertised. This meeting, it

[241] *Ibid.*
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] *Ibid.*

claimed, was for anyone wanted to deepen their understanding of "Worldly Knowledge, and Knowledge of the Hereafter" (*Ilmoe Doenia, dan Ilmoe Achirat*).[244] This was a discourse that was tethered to religion, but firmly grounded in the present reality of this world, not contingent upon rewards in the next. It is also a discourse with a distinctly international outlook, one which saw the people of the Indies (*Ra'jat Hindia*) as co-participants in the broader, global struggle. It ended with an almost axiomatically Marxist invocation, much as other articles ended with Islamic invocations: "Arise you who are destitute! Destroy the capitalist scoundrels! Who else will?"[245]

The Marxist inspirations of *Djago! Djago!* were not limited to fiery rhetoric alone. *Djago! Djago!* was capable of deploying sophisticated analytical frameworks to explain the impact of capitalism in the Indies, remarkably well-calibrated so as to be comprehensible to a wide audience. "Capitalists and the Proletariat" began with the usual fiery rhetoric: capitalists were people who sought profit even unto the exclusion of their own best interests; they were high-handed exploiters of the blood of the working class.[246] However, the analysis that followed was by no means shallow. The author argued that the working class of the Indies lived in constant threat of retrenchment and with chronic depression of wages because of the colonial capitalist tactic of suppressing the purchasing price of Indies exports while maximizing the profits made by importers of European, American and Japanese goods.[247] Presumably, this referred to the fixed buying prices for commodity crops imposed by the colonial government, the near-complete domination of Indies exports facilitated by the shipping monopoly of the Koninklijke Paketvaart-Maatschappij (KPM, Royal Packet Navigation Company) and the predominance of European businesses in the import/export sector.

Moreover, the author argued that the "obscene war of 1914–1918" which had obliterated twenty million souls had been caused by the greed and wrath of the capitalists, because successful capitalists who had extracted what they could from captive markets now needed new markets. They were therefore forced to seize new markets,

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[244] Anonymous, "Tambah Madjoenja," *Djago! Djago!* November 10, 1923.
[245] *Ibid.*
[246] Baharuddin Saleh, "Kapitalisten dan Kaoem Proletaar," *Djago! Djago!* November 10, 1923.
[247] *Ibid.*

bringing European capital into conflict with American and Japanese capital.[248] He went on to give specific figures for foreign capital "running amok" (*bersimaharajalelah*) in the Indies: f2.65 billion, spread across ten countries, dominated by the Netherlands (f1.9 billion), China (f250 million) and Britain (f300 million).[249] This "envious and treacherous" foreign capital, the author claimed, "undermined the prosperity of the Indies" through its domination of extractive industries like oil, silver, gold, coke and sugar.[250] The formulation was simple, but its underlying logic was sound enough. Rather than a narrative of jingoistic conflict between nation-states, it identified the effects of capital when entwined with Imperialism, facilitating and perpetuating colonial economic relationships, and locking countries into a pattern of competition which ultimately dragged the European powers into the conflagration of near-global war. This analysis was reminiscent of the arguments deployed by Lenin in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) or Bukharin and Preobrazhensky's *ABC of Communism* (1919), especially in relation to how monopolistic domination of captive colonial markets facilitated the outbreak of war between empires. It was particularly similar to Bukharin and Preobrazhensky's critique of the convergence of capital in monolithic monopolies/oligopolies:

> *"The fight between state capitalist trusts [monopolistic syndicates] expresses itself during 'peace' time in the rivalry of armaments. Ultimately, it leads to devastating war. Thus, whereas financial capital puts an end to competition within individual countries, in due course it gives rise to a fierce and embittered competition between various states… the dominion of syndicates is inevitably associated with wars of conquest. Every robber capitalist state endeavors to extend its frontiers; the extension is demanded by the interests of the trust magnates, by the interests of financial capital."*[251]

It is not clear whether Islamic communists in the Indies had direct access to translations of Bukharin and Preobrazhensky's work at this early stage, but it would be fair to assume that many of the ideas that were being debated in the communist world percolated to the Indies, and were internalized insofar as they were relevant to the Indies.

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[248] *Ibid.*
[249] *Ibid.* The author does not cite his sources.
[250] *Ibid.*
[251] N. Bukharin and E. Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (London: The Communist Party of Great Britain, 1922), 102–5.

Contributors to Djago! Djago! often went beyond simply condemning exploitative capitalists, and identified an overarching system (the superstructure, in Gramscian terms) in which even ordinary folk were made complicit in and acquiescent to capital. "Why do we continue to work for the capitalists?... In this age of capital, we the people have already been educated in the precepts of capitalism [*dididik secara kemodalan*], which is to say we have been educated to become tools of capital, like living machines… the schools of the present produce mechanics, clerks and drivers, who are only tools. Now even the intelligent among us are conditioned to be tools, pursuing whatever will maximize their profit."[252] Evidently, the critiques of capital presented by *Djago! Djago!* were not simplistic (or that common euphemism, "messianic"), and resonated with arguments being deployed by Marxists in different parts of the world. These critiques, however, were often presented within an implicitly religious framework as well: "the never-ending exhaustion of the working class is met with the wage reductions by the ungodly [*doerhaka*] and unfeeling capitalists," and these same "ungodly capitalists are both greedy and wrathful."[253] Moreover, the solution to the problems posed by capitalism was "… for the workers to unite, even those who were not in want, to marginalize capitalism by following the path of humanism: Islamism".[254]

Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* were generally well-informed and plugged into contemporary debates surrounding colonial policy, rather than merely aflame with rhetoric. Instructive in this regard was "Workers of the world, unite your hearts!" (*Kaoem kerdja didoenia bersatoelah hati*!), from the October 20, 1923 issue of *Djago! Djago!*. The article was an exposition on the nature and purposes of colonial taxation. It explained at length the suffering of all natives (*boemipoetera*, lit. sons of the earth), from merchants to the very poorest, who struggled with their ever-increasing tax obligations. While accepting in principle the necessity of taxes, the author argued that taxes were ultimately meant to "regulate the welfare of the country," as opposed to burdening it with the long list of taxes – from the routine "corporate tax" and "land tax" to the vaguely ludicrous

[252] H. K. I., "Taktiknja si Kapitalisten," *Djago! Djago!* November 30, 1923.
[253] Baharuddin Saleh, "Kapitalisten dan Kaoem Proletaar," *Djago! Djago!* November 10, 1923.
[254] H. K. I., "Taktiknja si Kapitalisten," *Djago! Djago!* November 30, 1923.

"hondenbelasting" (dog tax) or "Meubels belasting" (furniture tax) – imposed by the colonial state.[255] Moreover, the author pointed out that stamp duty cost between f1.5 to f3, while monthly wages were only between f2 to f5 for the common folk in normal professions.[256] With perceptible indignation, he exclaimed: "Is there more? Yes, there is! If one applies to hold a public rally, one has to pay stamp duty for the permit. If the application is denied, the money is lost!"[257]

That indignant rhetorical opening "Ada lagi??? Ja!" ("Is there more? Yes there is!") was repeated throughout the article, with the author citing everything from stamp duty levied on the students of government schools in return for receiving their graduation certificates, to the proposal put before the Dutch House of Representatives (the *Tweede Kamer*) to raise f300 million in taxes, partially from the Indies, to pay for an expansion of the Dutch navy. In doing so, the author illustrated the extant of colonial taxation to his readers in terms of both everyday costs as well as the larger picture of colonial taxation policy. These taxes were being levied, the author claimed, despite the "*doenia bezuiniging*" (the world of austerity) in which the people of the Indies lived, even as public expenditure on pressing needs like healthcare and education was shrinking.[258] The article even cited a purportedly confidential telegram dated September 17, 1923, in which Queen Wilhemina instructed the Ministry of Finance to slash the wages of public servants and common workers by 20% for two years in order to save the exchequer f140 million.[259] Similarly, the April 15, 1924 issue of *Djago! Djago!* published a long list of salaries paid to civil servants of various ranks as of June 1923, totaling millions of guilders.[260] Presumably, this was an attempt to incite public outrage at the hefty wages paid to colonial administrators, funded by taxes on natives. The rage and indignation were palpable, but these articles also provided clear indications of the sophistication of the contributors and editors of *Djago! Djago!*; their writings could not be dismissed as the syncretistic ramblings of an oddball branch of Islam.

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[255] Sadaroeddin, "Kaoem kerdja didoenia bersatoelah hati," *Djago! Djago!* October 20, 1923.
[256] *Ibid.*
[257] *Ibid.*
[258] *Ibid.*
[259] *Ibid.*
[260] Anonymous, "Ra'at Sepadoe," *Djago! Djago!* April 15, 1924.

Significantly, articles in *Djago! Djago!* also showed how *pergerakan* newspapers that favored conciliation between Islam and communism were connected across the Indies. *Djago! Djago!* attracted donations from local towns in West Sumatra like Payakumbuh and Solok, but also from further afield, such as the city of Pontianak in Kalimantan.[261] "Workers of the world, unite your hearts!" specifically cited previous articles on taxation published by *Sinar Hindia* and *Medan Moeslimin*.[262] *Sinar Hindia* was published in the VSTP stronghold of Semarang, and was closely associated with the PKI. Both Marco's *A Student Named Hijo* and Semaun's *The Story of Kadirun* had originally been serialized in it. *Medan Moeslimin* was published in Solo, in the Javanese interior saturated with sugar cane plantations, and was the flagship newspaper of the overtly Islamic communist labor organizer Haji Misbach. Despite the geographical separation as well as divergent demographics (unlike the urban port city of Semarang, Padang Panjang was a relatively small inland town known primarily for Islamic educational institutions), Pandang Panjang-based newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* were very much in dialogue with their contemporaries throughout the Indies. Other articles expressed solidarity with VSTP strikers in Aceh, while staff writers proudly proclaimed themselves to be readers of Semarang's *Sinar Hindia*.[263]

In fact, the editors of these newspapers were in direct contact with one another, and self-consciously proclaimed their solidarity. H.S.S. Parpatieh, who took over as editor of *Djago! Djago!* after Nathar Zainuddin was arrested in late 1923, contributed articles for *Doenia Achirat* of Bukittinggi (Fort de Kock).[264] The November 20, 1923 issue of *Djago! Djago!* even ran an article about a letter sent by Haji Misbach to the staff of *Djago! Djago!*, detailing the Assistant Resident's search of *Medan Moeslimin*'s offices in Solo with forty five policemen in tow.[265] "Waaah! After reading the letter, we were very shocked. Was there a need for the government to deploy 45 policemen? Did the government think it was crushing a nest of bandits? … We freely admit that our office is

[261] Anonymous, "Terima Kasih," *Djago! Djago!* April 4, 1924.
[262] Sadaroeddin, "Kaoem kerdja didoenia bersatoelah hati," *Djago! Djago!* October 20, 1923.
[263] Anonymous, "Bendera Merah," *Djago! Djago!* March 13, 1924.
[264] Anonymous, "Bendera Merah," *Djago! Djago!* April 4, 1924.
[265] Arid Fadhilah, "Zooooo! Terlaloe!!!???" *Djago! Djago!*, November 20, 1923.

in the same boat as *Medan Moeslimin*, because our brothers at *Medan Moeslimin* are in the same pile [*beronggok-onggok*] as us."[266]

Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* were even able to offer sophisticated critiques of the intangible and subtle effects of capitalism, perceived and expressed within an Islamic worldview. An article entitled "The capitalist system [*stelsel kemodalan*] dissolves the *kebatinan* of the people" was a good example of how new knowledges like Marxist critiques of capitalism were mediated and translated through the medium of local cultures, cultures in which Islam was a core component.[267] *Kebatinan* is notoriously difficult to translate: it loosely means the interior core, essential self, or the source of spiritual strength of a person. It had deep resonance in pre-Islamic Hindic culture, but also in Islamic Sufi spirituality, even at a popular level. The article condemned new additions to the penal code like article "161 *bis*," which it claimed would attack and muzzle people who dared to speak and write critically of the government.[268] It argued that not only was free speech under attack, but "schools which opened the minds of the people" were also being shut down by the government, rendering the people both "chaotic and ignorant," pitting themselves against each other in the labor marketplace.[269] These schools, it argued, included religious schools which empowered students to "progress and mature", and were essential for the creation of Indonesia [*jang paling perloe boeat Indonesia*].[270]

This was an objection to capitalism not merely in economic terms, although the article did wax lyrical about the suffering of smallholder farmers and merchants. Its objection was founded on the degenerative or stagnating impact of a colonial extractive economy which had no incentive to educate its workforce, miring them in ignorance and preventing their self-actualization. In Islamic terms, this was the triumph of *nafsu* (base desires) over *akal* (rationality).[271] Indeed, other articles published in *Djago! Djago!* described capitalism's drive to

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[266] *Ibid.*
[267] Soeradi E.S., "Stelsel Kemodalan Memboebarkan Kebatinan Ra'jat," *Djago! Djago!* March 21, 1924.
[268] *Ibid.* Article 161 *bis*, introduced on May 10, 1923, made punishable the sheltering of strikers' families. Article 161 *bis* was deliberately broad in its phrasing, and allowed for a fine of up to f10,000 or imprisonment of up to five years for facilitating strikes in any way. See Ruth McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 151.
[269] *Ibid.*
[270] *Ibid.*
[271] James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God*, Ann Arbor Paperbacks (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 115–22. Siegel argues that prayer is the exercise of *akal* (reason) over *nafsu* (desire), and that the whole concept of *akal* is integral to the

acquire new markets as the root of "*nafsu Imperialistisch*" and exhorted readers to crush "*nafsu kapitalisme*."[272] The opponents of communism were described as "lacking reason [*kehabisan akal*] and with no shame, like people who have become animals."[273]

This critique of capitalism based on the spiritual damage it inflected on a person's inner self resonates with Partha Chatterjee's observations on the deep-seated need felt by Indian nationalists to defend the sanctity of "national culture" from colonial epistemological predation, to position it as exceptional and ineffable even as colonial subjects mastered the knowledges and technologies of their oppressors.[274] This article from *Djago! Djago!* echoed that impulse, through writ small and personal. The interior selves of the Indonesian people, their *kebatinan*, had to be nourished and defended too, not just their livelihoods. This was an example of what Dipesh Chakrabarty would have called "History 2:" the interior, spiritual, and supernatural *umwelt* of Indonesians was an important part of their lived realities, and thus a motive force in history just as much as capital was.[275] This was not a rhetorical attempt to invoke a sacralized and idealized past, but rather an acknowledgement that Muslim societies were constantly in motion. They had to make provisions for progress and growth, both intellectual and spiritual, something which colonial capitalism certainly did not prioritize.

Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* tended to revolve around certain themes. The trope of salvation was often entwined with the condemnation of capitalism. This was evident in an article entitled "The Word of Our Adored Prophet Moehamad [Peace Be Upon Him]." Opening with a *hadith* (a saying ascribed to the Prophet) phonetically transliterated from Arabic into Bahasa Indonesia, the article went on to explain the verse in simple terms, framing its contents much as a *tabligh* session would frame its exegesis of the Qur'an. According to the author, "Our Prophet said: no good will befall he who leaves the world for the sake of the hereafter, and the

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Acehnese understanding of fulfilling Islamic obligations (*ibadah*). *Akal* is necessary for people to constitute orderly social relations, and is therefore the correlate of matters such as industrialization, trade, and economic advancement.

[272] Bsa (pseudonym), "Koeboerlah Kapitalisme! Hidoeplah Communisme!" *Djago! Djago!* April 4, 1924.

[273] Petir (pseudonym), "Pantjang barisan kita, tambah loeas tambah siap," *Djago! Djago!* April 15, 1924.

[274] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 74.

[275] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 66–71.

hereafter for the world, until he achieves both, for the world is the pathway to the hereafter."[276] The article then laid the blame for this fallen world squarely at the door of capitalism: "We lie in a world that is far from good… in this world of ours, the indubitable loss of our salvation will not benefit you gentlemen, you readers! Who is it that corrupts this world and ravages it? Of course, it is none other than the capitalists. If the capitalists continue to exist in this world, truly the world will be forever troubled."[277] Consonant with the purported *hadith*'s emphasis on the importance of improving this world instead of just awaiting the next, the author issued a striking call to action: "Now we must be ready, with no more interruptions, to overthrow these hellish folk [capitalists] so that we may obtain worldly merit, and so that we may attain the comfort of the hereafter in the future."[278] Invoking the potential loss of one's salvation through participation or complicity in "the way of this world," the article invoked a familiar religious discourse of the importance of obeying God's precepts even at high personal cost. However, this was not a discourse of renunciation, of retreat from the material world to achieve gnosis with the Almighty. By equating condemnation of capitalism with the instructions of the Prophet, it constituted a call to action, a firm statement that God's plan and one's personal standing with God required one to participate in eliminating injustice from human society.

The trope of an eschatological turning of an age which would topple capitalism, framed within an Islamic moral universe, also pervaded many articles. For example:

> *"This present age (zaman) is utterly wrong… [This age of capital] is an age which exclusively privileges the needs of the few, and we must believe that out of the dissolution of capitalism there will arise a prosperous age of communism. That is to say, an age of brotherhood, and age in which one does not only look out for his own needs, an age which does not distinguish on the basis of skin color or race, unlike the present, in which we hear of difficulties left and right, and inconceivable wickedness committed by the people day and night, when we are bound by the exclusive system of capitalism."*[279]

Contributors to *Djago! Djago!* seemed to process their understanding of the failings of capitalism within an Islamic moral universe, in which capitalism was bad because of the way it twisted ordinary people, compelling

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[276] Anonymous, "Sabda Djoendjoengan Kita Nabi Moehamad S.A.W.," *Djago! Djago!*, October 20, 1923. No source is provided for the *hadith*.
[277] *Ibid.*
[278] *Ibid.*
[279] Kwaw (pseudonym), "Kesoesahan Hidoep," *Djago! Djago!*, November 20, 1923.

them to aberrant behavior. The author also utilized a notion of sequential epochs that would be familiar to most Muslims; the advent of Islam, the age of submission to God, had been preceded by the *jahiliyyah*, the age of ignorance. Squaring this with Marx's stagist conception of history was not hard, though the subtleties of dialectical materialism were probably deliberately omitted. The author clearly invoked the notion of "an age in motion" (in Shiraishi's memorable formulation), raising hope for a better age in the near future, which undoubtedly resonated with both Islamic eschatology and millenarian folk beliefs.[280] Resonant though all this was with the "traditional," this was yet a discourse with significant analytical depth. The promised prosperous communist future was not portrayed as a utopia to be achieved simply through expulsion of the Dutch. It would be human effort exercised in solidarity, against racism and against individualistic self-aggrandizement, that would make this communist future real – once the people were free from a capitalist system which shaped their behavior.

That is not to suggest that the conciliation between Islam and communism went unchallenged, or that it was uncontentious to most. A sense of the opposition mounted by other *pergerakan* factions can be gleaned from the distinctly defensive tenor of some articles. An article published in the April 4, 1924 issue of *Djago! Djago!* freely admitted that while communism was superficially espoused by many leaders of the *pergerakan*, most of them were uninterested in applying communist principles; specifically, it accused them of failing to educate the people to secure their political and economic rights.[281] It noted that an article from the November 20, 1920 issue of *Het Vrije Woord*, the Dutch-language PKI newspaper, had been commonly cited as evidence that communism undermined Islam.[282] *Djago! Djago!* rejected this thesis, arguing that "communism has not even once undermined Islam; not only would this undermine the cause of independence embraced by Islamic groups, it was also prohibited by the tenets of communism, because it would not count towards relieving the people of their suffering."[283] This was an original and inventive argument, though one that might not have sat well with

[280] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*.
[281] M. R. Kasim, "Ra'jat Dibela Kedalam Kesesatan," *Djago! Djago!* April 4, 1924.
[282] *Ibid.*
[283] *Ibid.*

contemporary European Marxism. It illustrated, however, the fundamentally adaptive character of communism in the Indies, mediated as it was through local cultures and languages, formulating its own precepts in the process. Marxist ideas had broad currency across the *pergerakan* and may even have constituted a core element of *pergerakan* discourse, if only for a time. This would eventually be contested from various angles, but the defenders of compatibility between Islam and communism were numerous in the 1920s, and their synthesis would directly and indirectly to influence future iterations of the *pergerakan*.

The institution of the IDC itself, responsible for the publication of *Djago! Djago!*, merits some examination. Articles published in *Djago! Djago!* stated that the aim of the IDC was to "improve the fate of the youth of Padang Panjang… and the oppressed and impoverished masses, who did not yet understand the state of affairs of the present era," presumably through its pedagogical interventions.[284] The IDC was led by chairman Nathar Zainuddin, who had been a tram conductor and VSTP unionist in Aceh until May 1923, when he was expelled after a strike, subsequently returning to his native West Sumatra to teach at the Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang.[285] His close associate Haji Datuk Batuah served as the IDC's Secretary.[286] Batuah was a longstanding teacher at the Sumatra Thawalib of Padang Panjang, having originally taught there under the supervision of his teacher Haji Rasul (a famous Minangkabau Islamic scholar and father of Hamka) since 1915. Batuah himself was an Islamic scholar of serious standing, widely acknowledged as Haji Rasul's most able pupil, and had the benefit of both a Dutch elementary education as well as six years of education in Mecca.[287] His embrace of communist ideas stemmed from the influence of Haji Misbach, whom Batuah had met in 1923 while on a tour of Java and Sumatra (the same tour on which he met Nathar Zainuddin).[288]

The IDC treasurer was Djamaluddin Tamin, another of Haji Rasul's students, who eventually joined the PKI in 1922.[289] Tamin would go on to become one of Tan Malaka's most loyal lieutenants, following him into exile,

[284] Soeka Madjoe (pseudonym), "Padang Pandjang ada club baroe," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.
[285] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 70–71.
[286] Soeka Madjoe (pseudonym), "Padang Pandjang ada club baroe," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.
[287] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 39.
[288] *Ibid.*
[289] Soeka Madjoe (pseudonym), "Padang Pandjang ada club baroe," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.

and would continue to espouse a version of communism friendly to Islam. Batuah and Tamin collaborated not just in the IDC but also in publishing another Padang Panjang newspaper with strong communist leanings, *Pemandangan Islam*. These three individuals who ran the IDC were the nexus of Islamic communist discourse in West Sumatra. Through their teaching and publishing activities, they sought to mobilize *pergerakan* activists and promulgate a vision of Islam that was deeply invested in social justice. However, the IDC also provided a forum for dialectical discussion of complex issues (what Islamic obligations might be under colonial rule, for example), as well as an organizational platform for the convocation of mass rallies, the definitive instrument of *pergerakan* activism during the 1920s. An announcement exhorting readers of *Djago! Djago!* to join the IDC bears quoting at length: "When there are public meetings [*vergadering*] then even those who like to stay at home should consider attending, so that we may march in unison against the enemy. If all IDC members faithfully attend public meetings, it is certain that they will swiftly understand the torrent of unjust events which the destitute have been subject to. Take heed! Walk with the IDC."[290] The IDC was but one of many forms of association and mobilization that *pergerakan* activists used in their struggle against what they saw as the entwined evils of capitalism and colonialism.

The IDC and its discursive impact were not limited only to Padang Panjang or the Minangkabau heartlands of West Sumatra. Articles in *Djago! Djago!* self-consciously proclaimed the IDC's solidarity with "brothers in Padang, Medan, Semarang and Aceh, who already understand Nathar Zainuddin's devotion to the destitute among them."[291] This supra-local identification with other areas in the archipelago was telling; this was an organization that saw itself as firmly embedded in a broader, Indies-wide movement. Padang, Medan and Semarang were all urban areas with a significant degree of trade unionization, but Aceh was a larger, more diverse region. Aceh, Medan and Padang were in Sumatra, but Semarang was a major port in Java, and a stronghold of both Sarekat Islam and communist unions. The affective identification of the IDC with these areas was revealing, because Medan, Semarang and (to a lesser extent) Aceh were centers of union agitation,

[290] Pengoeroes (administrator), "Seroean!" *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.
[291] A. Fadlilah Hr, "Sepatah Kata," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923.

particularly the PKI-linked VSTP, but both Aceh and Padang were strongly associated with Islamic education and piety. The Acehnese were well known for the protracted *perang sabil* (holy war) they waged against the Dutch (1873–1904), while Padang was home to important Islamic educational institutions such as the Abadiyah school (founded 1909), whose headmaster from 1933 onwards, Abdullah, was a clandestine but active follower of Tan Malaka's.[292]

The IDC's links to these regions were mirrored by personal connections between activists: Xarim M.S., also known as Abdul Karim bin Moehamad Soetan, had been a childhood friend of Zainuddin's in Idi, eastern Aceh, and was Zainuddin's brother-in-law. Active in the VIPBOW union of the Public Works Department of Lhokseumawe (Aceh), he transferred to Padang in 1920 and joined the PKI in Langsa (Aceh) in 1924. In the early 1920s, he published *Hindia Sepakat* in Sibolga (North Sumatra) and *Oetoesan Rajat* in Langsa (Aceh), both of which had discernably strong Islamic and Marxist influences.[293] Xarim M.S. would go on to become the chairman of the revived Sumatran PKI during the Indonesian Revolution, wielding significant influence (alongside Nathar Zainuddin) over the irregular *pemuda* militia units, especially the socialist militia Pesindo.[294] Examined alongside the activities and publications of Java-based activists like Semaun, Haji Misbach, and Tan Malaka, it is difficult to dismiss the IDC and its affiliate publications as an anomalous or localized oddity.

It would also be reductive to situate the IDC as a subsidiary organization of the PKI. Tan Malaka had contributed frequently to the *pergerakan* newspapers of Medan since the late 1910s, but did not commit to joining either Sarekat Islam or the PKI before leaving East Sumatra for Java in June 1921.[295] His pre-1921 presence and post-1921 influence in West Sumatra is not sufficient to suggest that the PKI was directing IDC efforts from afar. Djamaluddin Tamin himself did not join the PKI until 1922, and had already been teaching at the Padang Panjang Sumatra Thawalib for years at that point.[296] If the IDC and its affiliated publications were

[292] Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane*, 19.
[293] Reid, *The Blood of the People*, 70–71.
[294] Reid, 176, 185, 187. Pesindo stands for Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia, Indonesian Socialist Youth.
[295] Reid, 70.
[296] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 39.

simply parroting PKI propaganda, one would expect that there to be a more tangible connection between PKI headquarters in Java and activists either recruited in or sent to Sumatra; Islamic scholars teaching at modernist schools (like Tamin and Batuah, who found their own paths to communism) were not particularly plausible as implanted PKI agents. Tan Malaka was the foremost leader of the PKI until his exile in 1925, a figure of significant stature even on the national stage, but it was not solely through him that discourses of compatibility between Islam and communism developed in Sumatra. If anything, the social milieu in which Tan Malaka moved prior to his meteoric rise in the PKI may have been a formative experience. As early as 1920, Tan Malaka's lieutenant Djamaluddin Tamin (then still a teacher at the Padang Panjang Sumatra Thawalib) reported discussion amongst Thawalib students of Marxist ideas, and the proposed creation of a *Sarekat Merah* (red league), months before the formal establishment of the PKI in Semarang in May 1920.[297]

While Nathar Zainuddin, Haji Datuk Batuah, and Djamaluddin Tamin had PKI connections and eventually became PKI members, they were by no means the primary vectors of transmission of Marxist ideas to religious schools. The pace and content of discourses of compatibility were not dictated by the PKI, as if they were a cynical recruiting tactic dreamt up in Semarang or Batavia and imposed throughout the Indies. Rather, Marx's ideas were already being earnestly debated by students and teachers like Zainuddin Labai, a pupil of Haji Rasul's as well as a founding teacher of the Sumatra Thawalib, who never openly opposed communist discourses circulating among his students even though he was not himself a communist.[298]

Djago! Djago! was not the only newspaper in Padang Panjang that mixed Islamic identity and Marxist ideology. In the same week that *Djago! Djago!* began publication, *Pemandangan Islam*'s first issue was printed in Padang Panjang. An advertisement in *Djago! Djago!* promoting *Pemandangan Islam* trumpeted that it was published by "THE ADVOCATE OF ISLAM in Padang Panjang," to "clarify and discuss the principles and viewpoints of TRUE ISLAM [*Islam sedjati*] in the GLOBAL PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT [*golongan pergerakan*

[297] Djamaluddin Tamin, *Sedjarah PKI, Djilid 1* (typescript, n.d.), 65-6. Quoted in Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.
[298] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.

doenia], which will achieve salvation in the afterlife [*keselamatan akhirat*].[299] Similar to articles published in *Djago! Djago!*, this revealed a distinctly international outlook, one in which Islam had a distcintly anti-Imperial character. At the same time, the eternal reward of salvation was invoked, perhaps because the prospect of judgement of one's actions in this world loomed large in the consciousness of Muslims. That this anti-Imperial articulation of Islam had a communist aspect was also clear: another advertisement from *Djago! Djago!*'s November 10, 1923 edition: *Pemandangan Islam* was advertised as the "voice of true, humane Islam," and as a "newspaper following a **Red** course, based on the principles of Islamism" (*soerat kabar haloean **Merah** memakai azas Islamisme*).[300]

The orientation of *Pemandangan Islam* towards the next world in addition to the present one is too easily interpreted as evidence of "messianism," and the historiography of Sarekat Islam in particular is rich with characterizations of it as a predominantly "messianic" movement whose popularity was driven by the practices of secret fraternities, loyalty rites, and magical talismans (*jimat*) at the expense of "genuine" political organization.[301] Reading *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*, however, one begins to question whether messianic or eschatological beliefs and political mobilization were mutually exclusive. It seems too convenient to dismiss *Pemandangan Islam*'s attempt to conciliate Islam and communism with the pejorative adjective "messianic." If anything, it brings to mind E. P. Thompson's characterization of how the theological arguments of dissenting protestant denominations provided a core around which farmers' and laborers' opposition to capitalist exploitation could crystalize in eighteenth century England.[302] In a similar vein, Chakrabarty's observations about the undervaluation of "History 2" compel us to consider how such movements might be framed as hybrid or creative, rather than pigeonholed as manifestations of a transitionary stage in the development of "real" political movements.[303]

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[299] M Rasjid M.S., "Pemandangan Islam dan Djago! Djago!," *Djago! Djago!* October 8, 1923. Capitalization and emphasis M. Rasjid's.
[300] M. Rasjid M.S., "Advertentie: Batjalah Teroes," *Djago! Djago!* November 10, 1923. Emphasis by M. Rasjid.
[301] For example, see Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta: Oxford University Press, 1973), 17.
[302] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 26–36.
[303] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 66.

The language, referents, and arguments deployed by the contributors to these newspapers were often nuanced, and it is important to keep in mind that the contributors were often well-educated men (Haji Datuk Batuah, for example, had six years of formal Islamic education in Mecca) writing primarily for an educated audience of both male and female students enrolled in the modernist Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools. These were schools that had, in rejecting government funding and modifying Dutch syllabi, already committed themselves in principle to forging a new pedagogical path. This path did not automatically take the European Enlightenment, or traditional rote-learning and hierarchical discipleship, as its default starting point; it was fundamentally creative. The attempts of *Pemandangan Islam*'s contributors to put Islam and communism in dialogue with one another were indeed novel, but these efforts deserve to be examined as a form of genuine and creative political expression, no less legitimate a form of political activity than trade unionism or the pan-Islamic Khilafat movement.

Pemandangan Islam articulated a remarkably clear concept of human rights (*hak kita manoesia*) within an Islamic framework, which it argued were being trampled by capitalism. Djamaluddin Tamin argued that all humans, regardless of profession or social status, were fundamentally equal: "From the perspective of Islam, Allah has envisaged all of us as equally noble, and is blind to race. In the words of Allah: certainly we have honored the Children of Adam, us and all humanity [surah al-Isra', 70]."[304] Capitalism was contemptible because it "deifies base desires [*bertoehan kepada hawa nafsu*], and armed with wealth and power, freely uses an iron hand against the poor and the working class, with no regard for the humanity of anyone besides the capitalists themselves."[305] As with *Djago! Djago!*, this critique of capitalism was built on its violation of Islamic precepts. These Islamic precepts, however, were not articulated in terms of formal jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Instead, Tamin and others like him sought to interpret Islam in an independent and progressive manner, emphasizing

[304] Djamaloedin Tamim, "Poetoes Esa," *Pemandangan Islam*, November 5, 1923. The verse reads: "Certainly We have honoured the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and given them an advantage over many of those We have created with a complete preference."
[305] *Ibid.*

Islam's acknowledgement of the common humanity of all people, in opposition to colonial and capitalist discourses which legitimized and entrenched inequality on the basis of race and class.

Tamin was effectively exercising his own intellect, what in formal jurisprudence would be known as *ijtihad*, to align Islam with contemporary discourses of social justice emanating from Europe, like the concept of human rights. This closely mirrored what Subijanto has characterized as the gravitation towards European Enlightenment values by the *pergerakan*, which had been gathering pace since the early twentieth century: "The image of the new was a preoccupation of the movement [the *pergerakan*] writ large."[306] All of this took place within a distinctly Islamic framework, deploying specifically Islamic concepts like *hawa nafsu* (carnal or base desires; the opposite of *akal*, rationality) and referencing the Qur'an, because Islam was integral to the worldviews of Tamin's readers. Tamin's "translation" or transposition of human rights discourses into an Islamic frame of reference was thus part of a larger, ongoing effort across the *pergerakan* to combine both what Europe and the Indies had to offer. In this case, that meant thinking about where Islam's priorities lay, and whether those could be reconciled to Marxist critiques of the profit motive and discourses of universal human rights originating in 18th century Europe.

The PKI and Islam: *Sinar Hindia*/*Api*

The PKI itself was not averse to engaging with Islam, as an examination of its main organ, *Sinar Hindia* (rebranded as *Api* after August 1, 1924) readily shows. The influential PKI leader Tan Malaka authored several books and pamphlets that dealt directly with Islam or were framed in Islamic terms.[307] Many of the newspapers examined above were affiliated with the PKI, particularly those published by Sarekat Rakyat branches, but control over these far-flung branches was decentralized at the best of times and downright weak at the worst.

[306] Rianne Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 1358.

[307] We may consider Tan Malaka extraneous to the central leadership of the PKI after his exile in early 1922, and particularly after his split with the central leadership over the wisdom of launching an uprising in 1926. He remained deeply influential even in exile, and was able to reinsert himself almost immediately into Republican politics after Japan's surrender.

For example, the central PKI leadership sought to rein Haji Misbach in on more than one occasion, but they were ultimately forced to acknowledge his *de facto* autonomy because of his popularity. The central PKI leadership was based in Java, particularly in the port city of Semarang, where *Sinar Hindia*/*Api* was published. Its proximity to the central PKI leadership made it a more accurate barometer of the central PKI leadership's ideas than the other newspapers examined above. Even so, productive engagement with Islam was apparent in the articles it published.

By 1924, *Sinar Hindia* had been in publication for 25 years, given its earlier incarnations as *Sinar Djawa* and *Bintang Semarang*.[308] It was edited by the key PKI activists Mas Marco Kartodikromo, Semaun and Darsono; Soebakat took over after the original editors were imprisoned and exiled. The range and number of advertisements suggests that *Sinar Hindia* was a commercially viable local newspaper with a wide readership (its longevity was also unusual). It was less obviously didactic than many of the other newspapers examined in this chapter, and seemed to cater to the local community needs in Semarang, although it was no less political for it. It also had a broad circulation in various contexts, as Rianne Subijanto shows:

> *"Although Sinar Hindia was initiated by an educated segment of both priyayi and kromo classes, it was by no means only distributed among the educated Indonesians. Given that by 1920 only between 4% and 12% of indigenous men and between 0.1% and 1.8% of indigenous women in Java could read and write, how did Sinar Hindia/Api manage to play an important role in a popular movement? The key was in the practices of public reading. Sinar Hindia/Api was not primarily consumed in private, but rather in public events such as openbare vergaderingen (public meetings). Public reading, however, was not the invention of the early communist movement, but rather a common practice at the time."*[309]

Even though the split with Sarekat Islam had become definitive in 1923, *Sinar Hindia* remained openly supportive of Sarekat Islam, as well as of Islamic communist newspapers. The January 2, 1924 issue of *Sinar Hindia* carried an article promoting *Doenia Merdeka* alongside several advertisements; these advertisements included one for a PKI pamphlet titled *Padoman* (lit. Compass), another advertising Sarekat Islam schools in Semarang, and a yet another (recurring) advertisement for a variety of Islamic communist newspapers

[308] The Semarang Sarekat Islam branch bought over *Sinar Djawa* in 1918, and changed its name to *Sinar Hindia*. See Rangsang, "Samboetan Pada Perobahan Nama Orgaan Kita," *Api*, August 1, 1924.
[309] Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," 1370.

throughout the NEI, including *Oetoesan Hindia*, *Halilintar*, *Djago! Djago!*, and *Pemandangan Islam*.[310] The existence of these advertisements, even after the acrimonious split with Sarekat Islam, suggests that the PKI still saw itself as working towards the same goals as Sarekat Islam, and in solidarity with Islamic communists. Recent disputes might have meant that direct cooperation was no longer possible, but the PKI clearly remained sympathetic and friendly to their stated aims.

Long before that, however, *Sinar Hindia* was already explicitly friendly to Islam. In 1921, it republished articles from Haji Misbach's *Islam Bergerak*, including a rebuttal of the Muhammadiyah activist Haji Fachrodin's claim that communism undermined Islam. This article was explicit in its refutation of Fachrodin's claim that communism promoted ethnic chauvinism, undermined Islam, and sowed hatred between Muslims: "This *dakwah* [evangelistic propagandizing] against communist groups is a clear mistake; Fachrodin, if you will recall, was once himself a member of the communist ISDV, but he now attacks communism… where is the sin? Communists do not mean to obstruct Sarekat Islam, nor do they seek to overthrow the religion of Islam."[311] As mentioned earlier, the conciliation of Islam and communism had always been controversial and contested. This article made clear that conciliation did not lack defenders, even within the PKI itself. In a similar vein, articles like "Keterangan" clarified the PKI's support for the *Khilafat* movement's pan-Islamism (as expressed by Tan Malaka at the fourth Comintern congress of 1922), while a series of front-page articles entitled "Komunisma dan Islamisma" by Darsono, published from 14–17 February 1921, explicitly trumpeted the compatibility of Islam and communism.[312]

The first installment of "Komunisma dan Islamisma" chided Fachrodin for his arrogance in presuming to understand communism, and acting as if he were a qualified interpreter of it, when he only understood the basics.[313] Darsono pointed out that Fachrodin was not literate in Dutch, and no communist source texts were available in Malay yet, so how then could Fachrodin possibly be qualified to opine on whether communism was

[310] Anonymous, "Doenia Merdeka," *Sinar Hindia*, January 2, 1924.
[311] Arjo Troenodjoj, "Samboetan kepada s. Fachrodin," *Sinar Hindia*, February 3, 1921.
[312] Perserekatan Kommunist India, "Keterangan," *Sinar Hindia*, February 12, 1921.
[313] Darsono, "Komunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 14, 1921.

compatible with Islam?[314] Darsono went on to highlight arguments that had already been made in the Netherlands concerning the compatibility of communism and Christianity, and referred Fachrodin to Enka's *Kan een rechzinning christen socialist zijn* (Can an orthodox Christian be a socialist?); he also pointed out that were many devout Muslims amongst his comrades in the PKI.[315] Rebutting Fachrodin's criticism that communism would result in the loss of the right to own property, Darsono expressed compatibility in the following terms: "The Qur'an mentions multiple times that it is only God [*Toehan Allah*] who owns all creation, but humanity may eke a living out of God's possessions, and the way in which humanity does so is not based on notions of 'yours' or 'mine.'"[316] That is to say, individual property rights were not paramount, because everything belonged to God anyway within an Islamic worldview. Evidently, unlike the ideas of the avowed Islamic communists, or Tjokroaminoto's conception of Islam embodying socialism, Darsono's understanding of Islam's relationship with communism centered on the absence of conflict. Rather than Islam containing within itself the principles or goals of communism, Darsono seems to have been focused on notion that communism meant religion in general no harm, and that it might incidentally promote goals that religious people would find amenable. This was a theorization of compatibility, or perhaps a lack of incompatibility, but it was discernably different from the arguments deployed by *Djago! Djago!* or *Pemandangan Islam.*

Even after the definitive split in 1923, *Sinar Hindia* continued to express its solidarity with Islam in general, and Sarekat Islam in particular. Instead of condemning them as reactionaries, *Sinar Hindia* chided them for disregarding Islamic precepts. Like many of the openly Islamic communist newspapers, *Sinar Hindia* continued to articulate key concepts in Islamic terms, such as by characterizing capitalism as a manifestation of *hawa nafsu*.[317] Additionally, it provided consistent reportage on Sarekat Islam congresses, both at a branch and national level, even publishing detailed conference schedules in advance.[318] It ran recurring advertisements for

[314] *Ibid.*
[315] *Ibid*. Enka was the alias of A. van der Vlies, whose book was originally published by Baarn Hollandia Drukkerij in 1907.
[316] *Ibid.*
[317] Alhambra, "Kaoem Boeroeh dalam Doenia Kemodalan," *Sinar Hindia,* January 8, 1924.
[318] Anonmyous, "Al-Islam Congres dan Congres C.S.I.", *Sinar Hindia*, January 8, 1924; Anonmyous, "Kongres Central 'Serikat Islam' Djawa Barat," *Api,* January 5, 1926.

companies providing transportation for the *haj* pilgrimage to Mecca, and even provided consistent coverage of Haji Misbach's situation in exile: an article from the July 11, 1924 issue reported Misbach's request to be allowed to go into exile in Egypt.[319] This reportage appears to have exceeded expressions of solidarity or sympathy; the PKI central leadership, especially Darsono, did not get along particularly well with Misbach. The consistent coverage of Misbach suggested that Misbach's brand of Islamic communism had significant traction even among *Sinar Hindia*'s readership. Indeed, as early 1921, Darsono had responded to criticism by the Sarekat Islam leader Haji Agus Salim by pointing out that many communists were Muslims too: "… many of our brothers in Sarekat Islam circles possess deep faith; because of Salim's accusations, they have discarded their own reliable weapons, the religious communists."[320]

It was not only male members of the PKI like Darsono whose writings mixed Islamic identity and commununist ideas. Women were often important contributors to this skein of *pergerakan* discourse, as they were to many others. Unfortunately, the role of women in the articulation and dissemination of *pergerakan* discourse has been marginalized both in nationalist historiography and the popular imagaination. Scholars who have addressed the role of women as producers of *pergerakan* ideas, and interlocutors in *pergerakan* debates, have done so firmly within the boundaries of studying women's rights activism, a realm of activity which has been conceptually demarcated as distinct from "mainstream" *pergerakan* history. As journalists, teachers, and organizers, women were important contributors to *pergerakan* discourses of all kinds, including those which drew on both Islam and communism. The historiography of the *pergerakan* is rife with references to the proto-feminist Javanese aristocrat R.A. Kartini, but is otherwise largely blind to the important intellectual contributions made by women. Unlike most of their male counterparts, women were often simultaneously sensitive to issues of both class and gender, speaking loudly in favour of women's rights, education for women, and women's participation in the *pergerakan*, even as they advocated social justice and called on their coreligionists to live up to Islamic ideals.

[319] "Pemberian Taoe Dari Kapal Islam," *Sinar Hindia*, March 7, 1924.
[320] Darsono, "Komunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 17, 1921.

For example, the female communist Rangsang was a regular contributor to *Sinar Hindia*/*Api*, penning articles not just on women's rights but also on *pergerakan* politics. A frontpage article from August 1, 1924 saw Rangsang explain *Sinar Hindia*'s rebranding as *Api* in the following terms: "Now that Sarekat Islam has changed its name to Sarekat Ra'jat, our newspaper also needs a new name. in accordance with the direction of our movement, we have changed our name to Api [fire]. Truly, this name is short but sweet, and is colored Red."[321] Rangsang went on to make this "red" orientation clear later in the same article:

> *"People with shallow opinions think that this change of name to Api indicates that we mean to attack the world blindly, without distinguishing between good and evil… Fire is an object that only obeys the person who utilizes it. For example: to cook, or to destroy the garbage that litters the world; if one does not use fire, then the cleansing will not be complete. Why is fire needed? To cook; to attack the dark places; to destroy the filth and disease which assail humanity. That is the purpose of our change in name; that is, to destroy capitalism and to bring about communism."*[322]

This was a female journalist contributing an evocative and eloquent piece to a communist newspaper which regularly engaged with Islam. Rangsang had penned a front-page article celebrating a milestone in the newspaper's history, which suggests that women were not necessarily shunted into being "women's affairs" correspondents. Unfortunately, histories of the PKI are almost entirely dominated by the intellectual contributions and leadership of male activists. They did indeed outnumber women, especially amongst the PKI leadership, but much of the party's rank and file cadres as well as sympathizers would have been women; their voices deserve to be heard wherever possible.

Djoeinah, head of Sarekat Rakyat's Salatiga branch, was another important female contributor to *Sinar Hindia* and eventually became its first female editor.[323] She wrote regularly for the newspaper in the 1920s, and her articles often featured on the front page. Her articles contained unambiguous critiques of capitalism, arguing that capitalism exhorted humanity to leave behind its freedoms and pleasures in order to seek a profitable livelihood, ultimately causing many to fall into poverty and thereafter remain bound by capital (*terikat oleh*

[321] Ransang, "Samboetan Pada Perobahan Nama Orgaan Kita," *Api*, August 1, 1924.
[322] *Ibid.*
[323] Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," 1365.

kemodalan).[324] Capitalism, she argued, planted the seeds of selfishness, wrath, and greed in the minds of humanity, ushering in an age of individualism (*zaman individualisme*).[325] This somewhat romantic invocation of an idyllic and content pre-capitalist peasantry was reminiscent of the utopian socialism of Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint-Simon, but Djoeinah's critiques also evinced sensitivity to how capital operated. Djoeinah recognized that capital had already straddled the world for centuries, gathering strength all the while; she also argued that capital could only be resisted by prioritizing unity between workers and farmers, including both men and women.[326] She contended that the opponents of capitalism had to be willing to work with their erstwhile enemies, in the spirit of the common good.[327] While drawing on bucolic themes of a pristine, pre-capitalist age, Djoeinah's critique of capitalism was also measured and sober, acknowledging the difficulty of confronting capitalism as a system (as opposed to a cabal of exploitative capitalists, a much simpler conceptual target), hence her call for sustained solidarity across class and gender boundaries.

In other articles, a perceptible focus on women's issues was intertwined with Djoeinah's critique of capitalism – evidence of her sensitivity to how gender and class could intersect. She castigated capitalism for commodifying the bodies of working class women, who were most at risk of being forced to become prostitutes just to survive.[328] She also criticized the working conditions in factories and plantations which facilitated turning female employees into part-time prostitutes.[329] She called on educated women to go beyond contributing newspaper articles, exhorting them to organize and speak at political rallies.[330] Arguing that the people of the Indies were squeezed by capital [*tertjepit kemodalan*], yet had no weapons with which to fight it except their principles [*roekoen*] and inner strength [*tenaga*], Djoeinah called on educated women to add their abundant principles and inner strength to the struggle, or risk eventual dispossession of their land and bodies.[331] She

[324] Djoeinah, "Zaman Ini," *Sinar Hindia*, December 7, 1920.
[325] *Ibid.*
[326] *Ibid.*
[327] *Ibid.*
[328] Djoeinah, "Belajar ta'mengasingkan diri!", *Sinar Hindia*, February 7, 1921.
[329] *Ibid.*
[330] Djoeinah, "Terhadap Kaoem Poetri Terpeladjar," *Sinar Hindia*, February 16, 1921.
[331] *Ibid.*

invoked the example Korean nationalist women, who were willing to risk their lives in support of their male counterparts in demanding independence from Japan; this was an expression of international solidarity against Imperialism entirely consistent with *Sinar Hindia*'s celebration of Kemalist Turkey and the USSR.[332]

Djoeinah's activism, however, was also couched within an Islamic worldview. In some articles, she explicitly expressed solidarity with Sarekat Islam.[333] In others, she made a point of beginning by giving thanks to God, then went on to identify herself and her readers as proletarians [*kaoem proletar*].[334] She even argued that capitalism was undesirable specifically because it worked only to maximize profit, ignoring all cultural and religious values, making it the natural enemy of many. Therefore, she argued, the *pergerakan* had to open its doors to all potential allies, in order to "turn this age of suffering into an age of communism."[335] Islamicate values also inflected her worldview in more subtle ways. Speaking of the importance of women's education, she called education the "most important and noblest weapon of this age," which helped women get jobs, and prevented them from being "easily led astray."[336] This last phrase was a euphemism tinged with anxieties about female sexual morality, a reading supported by her condemnation of abortion in the same article. While strongly advocating the creation of more schools for women in Semarang, she also accepted "women's obligations, predetermined by God, to become mothers."[337] Moreover, Djoeniah proposed that women's education was necessary to improve household management and sanitation, as well as for the cultivation of children's "exterior well-being" and "interior well-being" (*kesehatan lahir* and *kesehatan batin*). She defined exterior well-being as children with "sound and healthy bodies, free of disease", and interior well-being as children with "intelligence and of sane mind."[338]

These were ultimately conservative attitudes that resonate with Partha Chatterjee's characterization of the Indian nationalist project's gendered dimensions, and the redefinition of motherhood in early twentieth century

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[332] *Ibid.*
[333] Djoeinah, "Rintangan," *Sinar Hindia,* July 4, 1921.
[334] Djoeinah, "Bergeraklah!", *Sinar Hindia,* March 22, 1921.
[335] *Ibid.*
[336] Djoeinah, "Geraknja S.I. Perempoean Semarang," *Sinar Hindia,* December 20, 1920.
[337] *Ibid.*
[338] *Ibid.*

Iran as described by Afsaneh Najmabadi.[339] Mothers were meant to be educators of the next generation, and therefore needed to be educated themselves. As pure receptacles of the national essence, they had to transfer that unadulterated essence to their children, an essence embodied in notions of physical and mental completeness – hence the emphasis on *kesehatan* and not being "led astray." Djoeinah's acceptance of these gender roles did not in any way dilute the validity of her activism. Rather, it expressed how her advocacy of women's rights was (unsurprisingly) refracted through the social world she inhabited, a world which embraced particular gender roles for women. Operating in an Islamicate society in which women had clearly-defined roles as nurturing mothers, Djoeinah redefined the direction of motherhood to suit her nationalist purposes but was not able to jettison her *habitus* and its assumptions. The point of all this is an avowed communist and staunch women's rights activist such as Djoeinah, like virtually all of the *pergerakan* activists examined in this chapter, operated in a particular social context in which Islam was indispensable. Whether critiquing capitalism or championing women's education, activists like Djoeinah conceptualized their activism within a worldview strongly influenced by Islam.

Just as men were not the only participants in *pergerakan* discussions, not only women were advocates of women's rights. Some PKI activists combined a concern for women's rights with class consciousness, embedding their arguments within an Islamic moral framework. PKI newspapers like *Api* regularly published *feuilleton* (seriazlied stories) on the exploitation of native women, such as Solikson's "The Story of Surya, A Man of Intellect," which explored oppressive gender roles burdening elite women.[340] Simlarly, Djola-Djoli's "Siti Maryam," which ran from March 20 to May 12, 1925, explored the links between sexual exploitation, racism, and poverty for subaltern women.[341] Darsono himself, the PKI leader and *Sinar Hindia/Api* editor who authored the "Komunisma dan Islamisma" series of articles in 1921, was a consistent proponent of women's

[339] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 126–27; Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 91–125.
[340] Keith Foulcher, "Moving Pictures: Western Marxism and Vernacular Literature in Colonial Indonesia," in *Chewing over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings*, ed. Doris Jedamski (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), 51–60. This particular feuilleton began publication on October 8, 1924.
[341] *Ibid*., 61–63.

rights. He authored a series of three articles in January 1921 entitled "Kaoem Perempuan" (lit. women), in which he discussed the particular impact that capitalism had on women.[342] Darsono even embedded his advocacy for women's rights within his discussion of whether Islam and communism were compatible. In one of the "Kommunisma dan Islamisma" articles, Darsono reacted to Haji Fachrodin's criticism that communism would undermine the (presumably conjugal) rights of husbands over wives by refusing to delimit sexual relations. Darsono pointed out that if Fachrodin was so concerned about sexual mores, he ought to be concerned with the fact that unequal pay for women prompted destitute women to turn to prostitution.[343] This, according to Darsono, was because capitalism treated both women's labor and their sexuality as commodities (*barang dagangan*), analogous to coolie labor.[344] Underpaying women for the same occupations performed by men was a well-attested practice of colonial plantation capitalism, as Ann Laura Stoler detailed in her excellent book on the Sumatran plantation belt.[345] Darsono followed this up with a bitterly scathing accusation:

> *"Brother Fachrodin has certainly been to these hotels [where prostitution occurs] and knows very well what happens there. Are the women in these hotels not part of our society? Are they not the mothers of the people of the Indies? However, these women are said to have become bitches [djalang], and are no longer the honor of the Indies; they are instead called destroyers of the Indies. They have sold their bodies to men out of poverty, which could only have happened in this capitalist world. Who tells Brother Fachrodin that men no longer have power over women?"*[346]

This rebuttal was revealing in a variety of ways. It showed how Darsono's critique of capitalism was tied up with an awareness of the need to advance women's rights alongside class struggle. Simultaneously, it showed how Darsono operated within the prescribed gender roles of the nationalist project that Chatterjee describes; women were ideally avatars of national purity that should not be defiled. They were to be lionized as "mothers" (*ibu*) and pedestalized as the "honor" of the nation. While Darsono did not accept relegating women to the domestic sphere, as the prominence of female contributors to *Sinar Hindia*/*Api* attests, he did share certain assumptions with Haji Fachrodin. Capitalism was bad precisely because it facilitated immoral sexual behavior,

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[342] Darsono, "Kaoem Perempuan," *Sinar Hindia*, January 12, 17 and 31, 1921.
[343] Darsono, "Kommunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 15, 1921.
[344] *Ibid.*
[345] Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 120, 215.
[346] Darsono, "Kommunisma dan Islamisma," *Sinar Hindia*, February 15, 1921.

something both he and Fachrodin could agree on. Communism, by creating a more just and equal society, would eliminate the poverty that compelled women to become prostitutes, and thus represented an improvement over the capitalist status quo by safeguarding women's sexual morality. To Darsono, the commodification of women's bodies was not a female moral failing but the consequence of a socio-economic conditions, for which women should not be castigated. For both Fachrodin and Darsono, however, the maintenance of female sexual propriety was considered paramount, consistent with traditional sexual mores. That said, Darsono did obviously evince sympathy for the plight of destitute women ("are the women in these hotels not part of our society?") and a sensitivity towards how issues of class and gender were intertwined, which was a rather more nuanced position than Fachrodin's anxieties over female sexual behavior.

This sensitivity to how class and gender intersected was also evident in Darsono's explicit support for gender equality: "Our aim is to equalize the rights of men and women… We who seek freedom for all humanity are obliged to respect freedom for women, the mothers of the world."[347] He also called out double standards in gender roles, pointing out that Indies society found It acceptable for a sixty year old man to marry a seventeen year old woman, but not the other way around; Indies society also accepted a man's prerogative to break off romantic relationships at his pleasure, but not a woman's to do the same.[348] This, Darsono opined, was the consequence of a society in which women were economically dependent on men.

The rest of the article showed how Darsono's discussion of issues of class and gender took place within a broader framework in which Islam was essential. While agreeing with Fachrodin regarding God's sovereignty over all creation, he violently objected to the following postulate by Fachrodin: "Humanity is permitted to take anything in this world, on a first come, first served basis [*dengan djalan siapa tjepat dapat*]."[349] This postulate, Darsono argued, privileged the already wealthy and entrenched strife between mankind. The consequence of this postulate would be to make apostates out of the rich, which proved that Islam did not approve of *djalan*

[347] *Ibid.*
[348] *Ibid.*
[349] *Ibid.*

siapa tjepat dapat.[350] Darsono argued that if Fachrodin truly understood communism, he would know that communism, like Islam, was opposed to *djalan siapa tjepat dapat*. Instead, communism "secures the fate of humanity in this material world, because it is only with their welfare secured that humanity can truly focus their actions and faith on God."[351] Evidently, Darsono's unflinching discussion of women's rights was enmeshed within a broader critique of capitalism, a critique which also accepted the relevance of Islam. It was in Islamic terms that communism was justified; communism was preferable to the status quo both because it would improve the living conditions of women and facilitate Islamic praxis.

In general, PKI activists seem to have construed communism as broadly ethical, and thus compatible with not just Islam but all religions, perhaps under the influence of theosophical ideas then in vogue.[352] However, they also seemed to accept the intrinsic validity of religious beliefs, and occasionally spoke from a position of personal faith: "God brought communism into this world, because *nafsu kapitalisme* was rampaging through this world. Communism has no direct connection with any religion, but its direction is consonant with all religions."[353] In the same vein, it argued that the unity of proletariat was paramount, and thus no one religion could be prioritized over others:

> *"O reader, do not mistakenly suppose that communists do not care about religion! No! In our struggle against the capitalists, we cannot afford to dwell on religion, which is to say we cannot side with any one religion. Communists may be a Christian or a Muslim in their personal capacity; indeed, at present many Christians and Muslims have become communists."*[354]

There were probably a number of factors at which shaped this position. Especially at this early stage, key PKI activists still maintained close ties to Dutch ISDV activists who had mentored them, notably Henk Sneevliet and Adolf Baars. They also imagined themselves within a broader world of anti-Imperial solidarity which transcended religion, as evinced by the frequent references to Kemalist Turkey, the Indian nationalist movement, and the Soviet Union in *pergerakan* newspapers, including *Sinar Hindia*. Their attitude towards

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[350] *Ibid.*
[351] *Ibid.*
[352] Foulcher, "Moving Pictures," 39.
[353] Semaoen, "Komunisme dan Igama: Noot Redactie," *Sinar Hindia,* March 5, 1921.
[354] Sp. Hard. (pseudonym), "Kommunisma dan Igama," *Sinar Hindia, March 5, 1921*.

religion therefore prioritized the principle of inclusion: in the spirit of international solidarity, it would not do to alienate old allies and potential recruits by insisting on the primacy of Islam. The NEI was undeniably multicultural, with significant plurality in religious praxis even amongst Muslims themselves, so the PKI would best serve its own interests best by championing inclusivity. Indeed, the tenor of the article seemed to have been determined partly by a perceived need to show firstly that communism was not entwined or "contaminated" by Christianity, and secondly that Islam had no exclusive relationship with communism. The repeated notion that communists could not side with "any one religion" hints at the temptation to proclaim Islam's particular compatibility with communism.

Evidently, the PKI took a particular approach to Islam, broadly consonant with Tan Malaka's insistence on the distinction between public political allegiance and personal faith. At the same time, PKI activists (like Tan Malaka) frequently let slip formulations which accepted the primacy of religion even in realm of politics ("God brought communism into this world"). These slips hint at the fundamental pull of Islam in an Indies context. For any political movement to operate productively in the NEI, especially one with the universal ambitions of the PKI, it would have to engage with Islam. The PKI activists who contributed to *Sinar Hindia*/*Api* would already have squared their religious faith with their political activities, and the vast majority of them identified as Muslim. Even if they did not share Haji Misbach's convictions about communism midwifing a truly Islamic society, their writings suggested that they had to find some way of conciliating Islam and communism for their readers, much as they had in private. PKI activists like Semaun and Darsono articulated that conciliation in terms of a lack of conflict between political ideology and religious faith, rather than in terms of communism being instrumental to Islam. This marked the PKI's relationship with Islam – overlapping partially with Tan Malaka's – as distinct from the positions taken by explicitly Islamic communist newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*.

Proposed alternatives: Soekarno and Tjokroaminoto

Naturally, Haji Misbach, Tan Malaka, and the central PKI leadership were not the only *pergerakan* activists who felt the simultaneous pull of the poles of Islam and Communism. Soekarno and Tjokroaminoto were reacting to, or had no choice but to operate in, a political field whose parameters had been partially established by Islamic communists. To begin with, at a practical level, the popularity of communism and the ubiquity of Islam was such that they had to deal with both or risk irrelevance. On top of that, explicit theorizations of Islam's compatibility with communism were gaining significant traction throughout the Indies, as shown above. This presented an opportunity as much as a challenge for synthesizers like Soekarno and Tjokroaminoto: to maintain and enlarge their political followings, they would have to be able to offer a political vision that was at least competitive with that offered by the Islamic communists, especially in terms of socio-economic equity. At the same time, they would have to carve out a political platform which would distinguish themselves from the various communist factions in some way, keeping their organizational distance from the PKI, because of all the surveillance and suppression that the label communist would entail.

Tjokroaminoto ended up articulating his own version of Islamic socialism, one which was substantially similar to that of the Islamic communists, but which actively disassociated itself from the Comintern and violent revolution. After his death, this brand of Islamic socialism would continue to inform the agenda of the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII, successor to Sarekat Islam founded in 1929), helmed by his sons well into the 1930s. Soekarno chose instead to embrace, or perhaps transcend, what the Islamic communists and PKI could offer; he proposed conciliation between the various *pergerakan* factions, including communism-averse Muslim activists and communists of various stripes, arguing that their aims were sufficiently compatible for them to cooperate within a broad national front. This was effectively what the authors of *Djago! Djago!*, *Pemandangan Islam*, and similar newspapers had been advocating since the early 1920s, although they had been more hopeful of convincing Muslims to become communists in a way that Soekarno was not.

Tjokroaminoto was the foremost *pergerakan* leader and head of Sarekat Islam until the 1926–27 uprisings, as well as member of the "loyalist opposition" within the Volksraad from 1918 onward. His personal prestige was high, though his ability to control the far-flung and independent-minded branches of Sarekat Islam was limited.

He served as mentor to some of the most prominent *pergerakan* activists, including Soekarno, the pious Muslim nationalist Kartosuwiryo, and the PKI leaders Alimin and Musso.[355] Incidentally, this provides a sense of the personal relationships and networks that bound *pergerakan* activists together, and justifies considering their ideas within a unified discursive spectrum. Under Tjokroaminoto's tutelage, these individuals all engaged with Islam and Communism in some way, though they eventually came to disparate conclusions. Soekarno in particular seems to have learned much from Tjokroaminoto's synthesizing tendencies, incorporating both Islam and and Marxism as components within his broad national vision for a free Indonesia.[356] Tjokoroaminoto's synthesizing tendencies were evident in *Islam dan Sosialisme* itself, the book for which he is best known: Kevin Fogg has uncovered convincing evidence which suggests that Tjokroaminoto lifted large segments of his book from a similarly-titled English-language book by the itinerant South Asian Islamic scholar Mushir Hosein Kidwai, via Ahmadiyyah intermediaries.[357] Considerations of plaigiarism aside, this was clearly one instance of a broader *pergerakan* effort to "translate" the world to the Indies; both Asia and Europe provided valuable knowledge which the *pergerakan* sought to synthesize and apply meaningfully.

Significantly, Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (Islam and Socialism) was published in 1924, after the split between the PKI and the Sarekat Islam had been made explicit. Tjokroaminoto's book showed the continuing relevance of Socialist ideas and goals in an organization whose core identity was Islamic. Following the split, Sarekat Islam needed to reassert its legitimacy and mass appeal vis-à-vis the more politically active PKI, which maintained close connections with labor unions and helped facilitate strikes, or at least lent the unions the backing of the party. Thus, *Islam dan Sosialisme* was probably also an attempt to compete for the loyalties of PKI party cadres who had until recently been simultaneous members of Sarekat Islam, and to consolidate the support of remaining Sarekat Islam members by reassuring them of Sarekat Islam's continued relevance in serving their interests. This was best done by demonstrating the progressiveness of Tjokroadminoto's political positions. Chiara Formichi suggests that unlike Soekarno, Tjokroaminoto tended to

[355] B. B. Hering, *Soekarno: Founding Father of Indonesia, 1901-1945* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), 24.
[356] Kevin Fogg, "Indonesian Islamic Socialism and Its South Asian Roots," *Modern Asian Studies* 53 (November 2019): 11.
[357] *Ibid*., 4. The book is question is S. M. H. Kidwai, *Islam and Socialism* (London: Luzac & co., 1912).

identify with Socialism as a powerful international movement with potential source of support for upholding Indonesian Muslims interests.[358] Nevertheless, *Islam dan Sosialisme* amounted to an implicit admission of the continuing appeal of Marxist ideas, and the recognition that Socialism, when invoked within an Islamic framework, was a powerful political force.

This slim volume was published some years after the establishment of the Third International in 1919, by which time Socialism and Communism had begun to differentiate themselves more clearly, and the Third International had begun openly advocating a Bolshevik-style seizure of power via a revolutionary vanguard instead of incremental change. By avoiding the word "Communism," Tjokroaminoto was asserting the viability of Islam as a modern political ideology which shared many of the same goals as the Communists, but without the implication of revolutionary violence that would surely have invited suppression by the colonial authorities – a position very much in keeping with his projected image as leader of the loyal opposition.[359] Given that Tjokroaminoto had a seat on the Volksraad and had previously been detained for 9 months in 1919 on the suspicion of inciting revolt (the Afdeeling B affair), this seems a plausible interpretation of *Islam dan Sosialisme*.[360]

Tjokroaminoto made a concerted attempt to reconcile Islam and Socialism, starting from an essentially Islamic position; the thrust of his book was that Islam embodied the principles of Socialism, and therefore a good Muslim could also be a good Socialist.[361] In that sense, *Islam dan Sosialisme* was in the vein of modernist Islamic modernist discourse, and sought to justify adapting powerful new ideologies from Europe for an Indonesian context. After opening with a brief introduction to the core ideas of Socialism ("*Apakah Sosialisme Itu?"*) chapters were entitled "Sosialisme dalam Islam" (Socialism in Islam, rather than Socialism and Islam), "Sosialisme Nabi Muhammad" (the Socialism of the Prophet Muhammad), "Sahabat-sahabat Nabi Muhammad

[358] Chiara Formichi, "Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwirjo and Negara Islam Indonesia," *Indonesia*, no. 90 (2010): 128.
[359] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 85.
[360] McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 382.
[361] H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, *Islam & Sosialisme* (Jakarta: Tride, 2003), 3.

yang bersifat Sosialis" (The companions of the Prophet Muhammad who exhibited Socialist qualities), "Contoh-contoh Sosialisme berdasar Islam" (examples of Socialism based on Islam), and "Agama dan Sosialisme" (Religion and Socialism).

Tjokroaminoto argued that a variety of interpretations of Socialism existed, and that the Socialism he supported was one founded on the principles of pure Islam (*[Sosialisme] yang berdasar kepada azas-azas Islam belaka*).[362] He even went so far as to argue that the Islamic *ummah* had the responsibility of implementing this version of Socialism. Evidently, Tjokroaminoto was attempting to formulate Socialism within an Islamic intellectual framework and through an Islamic idiom, in order to showcase the continuing relevance of Islam as a holistic way of life in a rapidly changing colonial society molded by Capital. He even argued that the aims of Socialism had been evident in Islam for the past thirteen centuries, so Socialism could not be said to have arisen entirely from European influence.[363] However, Tjokroaminoto also made a point of introducing the ideas of key thinkers within the Marxist canon, from Feuerbach and Hegel to Marx and Engels, liberally sprinkling the text with Dutch phrases to explain important but still-unfamiliar concepts to his intended audience.[364] Tjokroaminoto might even have deliberately juxtaposed his piety alongside his lucid exposition of Marxist ideas in order to showcase his capacity for philosophy and theory, using this to further legitimize his vision of modernist Islam. This was encapsulated in his argument that being a Muslim was better, nobler and more beautiful than adhering to any ideology, except for a Socialism based on Islam.[365]

Tjokroaminoto was explicit about the similarities between Islam and Socialism, particularly in relation to Capitalism. For example, he specifically condemned usury, identified interest with Capitalism, and went so far as to say that "Islam prevents Capitalist practices [like usury], combats Capitalism at its source, and destroys its roots."[366] To show the historical concordance of Socialist principles and Islam, Tjokroaminoto jumped between

[362] *Ibid.*, 5.
[363] *Ibid.*, 8.
[364] *Ibid.*, 19–21.
[365] *Ibid.*, 23.
[366] *Ibid.*, 63.

temporally and geographically disparate times and places to find relevant examples. In a section entitled "Democratic feeling in Muslim Autocracy", he praised the reign of the autocratic Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II for his industrialization of the Ottoman economy and the provision of jobs to orphans and the poor.[367] Eclectically characterizing Abdul Hamid's government as an Islamic Socialist-Autocracy, Tjokroaminoto likened him to the renowned eighth century Islamic military leader and Companion of the Prophet, Khalid ibn al-Walid, to whom he attributed the saying "… I am only discharging my obligation to God… other than that I have no authority or power over [my soldiers]!"[368]

The implication was that temporal authority, such as the purportedly Socialist government of Abdul Hamid II, was intimately linked to spiritual authority, and such authority could only be derived from Islam. This selective retelling of history was precisely the same exercise that Tan Malaka was engaged in, part of process of counter-education that Farid and Razif describe.[369] Tjokroaminoto drew deeply on the shared cultural memory of an Islamic past familiar to his readers, as well as contemporary models of modernity. In doing so, he fused them into a cocktail that invoked the imagined community of the *ummah* past and the modernist present simultaneously, in order to enhance the appeal of his political message.

Tjkroaminoto's Islamic socialism was not a position of convenience, a platform adopted by Sarekat Islam only for the purpose of competing with the PKI. The available evidence strongly suggests that this was a sincerely held and carefully articulated political vision. *Islam dan Socialisme* was published in 1924, but in 1928, after the failure of the 1926–27 uprisings and the effective suppression of the PKI, the Sarekat Islam press organ, *Fadjar Asia*, was still insisting on the compatibility of Islam and socialism. *Fadjar Asia* began publication in 1923 in Batavia under the direct editorship of Tjokroaminoto and Haji Agus Salim, the undisputed leaders of Sarekat Islam. An umambiguous article titled "The true religion of Allah must desire Socialism" opened by reporting on a dispute between the SDAP and various Christian politicians in the *Tweede Kamer*, the lower

[367] *Ibid*., 79.
[368] *Ibid*.
[369] Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," 285.

house of the Dutch parliament, over whether Christianity was compatible with socialism or capitalism.[370] Unlike Christianity, the author argued, Islam was unequivocal in its position on socialism: "… when it comes to *riba* [interest-bearing loans, or usury], the seed from which capitalism flowers, there is no dispute in Islam, such that the world of Islam considers capitalism to deviate from Islamic teachings."[371] Moreover, "… when it comes to *zakat* [redistributive alms], which is a pillar of socialism, there is no conflict with Islamic obligations and commandments, such that every Muslim man and woman feels obligated to join in establishing a socialist world!"[372]

By explicitly invoking *riba* and *zakat*, the author evinced his fundamentally Islamic worldview, but also the seriousness and sincerity of this conciliation between Islam and Marxism. The prohibition on *riba* and the obligation of *zakat* are fundamentally instruments for promoting socio-economic equity; one by dampening speculative finance and the other by redistributing wealth. *Zakat* in particular is considered one of the five pillars of Islam, and equating it with socialism's proposed redistribution of wealth through progressive taxation or nationalization of key industries constituted an honest attempt to interpret Islam in a progressive manner. The author ended on this evocative note: "These [*riba* and *zakat*] are not merely Islamic principles, but can be proven by historical evidence: Islam embodied charity and true democratic socialism. If the SDAP were to embrace similar principles, then each of their steps would confess the truth of Islam."[373] This was an Islam defined by deeds and principles, not faith and identity alone.

The other viable alternative to Islamic communism was proposed by Soekarno. As the first president of independent Indonesia, Soekarno requires little introduction. In the 1920s, however, he was a promising *pergerakan* activist closely associated with Tjokroaminoto, and yet the achieve the paramountcy among the *pergerakan* he would later attain through non-cooperation in the 1930s. Soekarno's *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* was published in 1926, a few years after the final disintegration of Sarekat Islam. It was therefore

[370] Socialist Moeslim Indonesia, "Igama Allah jang Sedjati mesti menghendaki Sosialisme!", *Fadjar Asia,* December 28, 1928.
[371] *Ibid.*
[372] *Ibid.*
[373] *Ibid.*

aimed at consensus-building, an attempt to bridge the gulf between different *pergerakan* factions which Soekarno felt had crystallized into three major *aliran* (lit. streams): Islamic, Communist and Nationalist. It was published in the Jakarta *pergerakan* magazine *Suluh Indonesia Muda* in the hope that *pergerakan* factions could be persuaded to cooperate.[374]

This impulse towards unity was typical of Soekarno, who in the 1930s would plough his efforts into forging a broad-based (but short-lived) *pergerakan* coalition, the Association of Political Organizations of the Indonesian People (PPPKI). Soekarno's article was an attempt to portray Islam and Communism as equally essential components within a broader nationalist framework. While Soekarno's essay can be reasonably read as a pragmatic attempt to exert moral authority over his rivals, it can also be understood as the idealistic expression of the young Soekarno's hope that Islam and Communism could work together to achieve what he saw as their similar goals. This idealism was hinted at in the hyperbole deployed by Soekarno: "… [The parties] each have their own spirit of Nationalism, Islam or Marxism. Can these spirits work together in a colonial system to form one Great Spirit, the Spirit of Unity?"[375]

Soekarno flaunted his familiarity with Marxist theory, stressing in particular the "unity of historical experience" shared by all factions "for hundreds of years", and therefore their indissoluble identity as a *bangsa* (people), which presumably overrode considerations of ideology or religion.[376] To support his argument for unity, Soekarno invoked positive examples of cooperation such as Gandhi's support for the Pan-Islamic *Khilafat* movement, and the united front formed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang, alongside negative examples where the lack of cooperation between factions had undermined nationalist objectives, as in the case of the Hindu nationalist organization Arya Samaj alienating Indian Muslims.[377] Knowing full well that that Islamic political movements like Sarekat Islam were intimately related to Islamic modernism, Soekarno

[374] Soekarno, *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism,* ed. Ruth T. McVey, trans. Karel H. Warouw and Peter D. Weldon, Translation Series, Modern Indonesia Project (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1970), 17.
[375] *Ibid*., 38.
[376] *Ibid*., 40.
[377] *Ibid.*, 40, 42.

also appealed to their pillars of legitimacy, quoting liberally from famous Muslim reformers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Mohammad Abduh, as well as various Ottoman and Egyptian Islamic reformers and nationalists.[378] Citing the experiences of both Communist and religious movements as learning opportunities for the *pergerakan*, Soekarno demonstrated the cosmopolitan outlook of a *pergerakan* that paid close attention to developments in India and China. In discussing these movements in relation to one another, Soekarno also suggested his belief in their basic ontological similarity: in the context of anti-colonial resistance, the *Khilafat* movement was no less relevant an analogue to the *pergerakan* than the CCP.

More explicitly, Soekarno stressed the concordance of Islam and Marxism over issues like *zakat* and *riba*, and evinced Tjokroaminoto's influence on him by stating that "Islam is essentially socialistic."[379] Soekarno quoted liberally from the Qur'an, identifying many points of agreement between Islam and Communism. Citing *surah al-Imran*, 130, to support his arguments, Soekarno argued that "… by combating surplus value, Marxists combat the very roots of Capitalism… usury is basically no different from what the Marxists view as surplus value."[380] In the same vein, Soekarno argued that "The 'fanatical' Moslem, who is hostile to the Marxist movement… does not understand that true Islam, like Marxism, forbids the capitalistic hoarding of wealth for selfish ends. He forgets the verse in the Qur'an: 'those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not expand them in the way of God, give them the good tidings of painful chastisement!'"[381]

Soekarno also emphasized that Marxism had made an important intellectual contribution to the critique of colonialism, what he identified as historical rather than philosophical materialism, which had helped Muslims understand the true nature of colonialism.[382] Speaking to his Communist readers, Soekarno rejected doctrinaire Communist atheism: "Does not Marxism itself teach that Socialism can only be fully realized when all the major states have been 'socialized'? Doesn't the present situation differ radically from the pre-conditions

[378] *Ibid*., 44–49.
[379] *Ibid*., 50.
[380] *Ibid*., 51. *Surah al-Imran*, 130 reads "Devour not usury, doubled and redoubled, and fear you God; haply so you will prosper."
[381] *Ibid*., 51.
[382] *Ibid*., 54.

required for the fulfilment of Marxist goals?"[383] Arguing that "contemporary Marxist tactics are different from those of the past," Soekarno proclaimed that he "favored no side," and wanted only "unity and friendship between all our different movements."[384] Finally, stressing the differences between church-state relations in European and Indonesian contexts, Soekarno capped his exhortation to the Communists with "… Therefore, if Marxists will remind themselves of the differences between the churches in Europe and Islam in Indonesia, they will surely stretch out their hands and say: 'Brother, let us be one.'"[385] Soekarno's *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* constituted a rhetorically persuasive and emotionally-charged attempt to unite the *pergerakan*, based on a genuine conviction that Islam and Communism were similar and compatible.

Evidently, even at the highest levels of *pergerakan* leadership, engaging with both Islam and Marxism was indispensable. This was less true after the suppression of the PKI in 1927, but it set the tenor of much *pergerakan* discourse, and left an indelible imprint on *pergerakan* politics well past independence. In the 1960s, Soekarno was promoting NASAKOM (a portmanteau of nationalism, religion, and communism) as a viable political platform, a move which has long been interpreted as a cynical attempt to appease various political factions or to cement his own increasingly contested authority. The sheer amount of evidence presented in this chapter suggests that it was much more genuine, and had much deeper roots: the Islamic communists of the 1920s were sufficiently influential that even the most prominent *pergerakan* activists had to engage with their ideas, and Muslims' engagement with Marxism (and vice versa) maintained a significant presence in *pergerakan* discourse thereafter. Explicit theorizations of Islamic communism would wane as time wore on, but new permutations of Islam's conciliation with Marxism would emerge throughout various points on the *pergerakan* and republican spectrum.

Context through novels

[383] *Ibid.*, 58.
[384] *Ibid.*, 58.
[385] *Ibid.*, 58.

So far, the sources examined have generally been straightforwardly political, in the sense that they deal directly with lived realities and attempt to shift them in accordance with their own political visions. However, a significant corpus of *pergerakan* print culture was fictitious, and political only in indirect ways. In this final section, I examine three novels published by *pergerakan* activists, in order to illuminate the broader social context in which Islam and communism were theorized as compatible. Put another way, this section seeks to explain the conditions of possibility for a phenomenon like Islamic communism to exist in the first place. Institutional histories or biographies require monumental amounts of research but have the virtue of being conceptually clear-cut; they conceive of an identifiable, distinct subject and operate accordingly. To capture a sense of the intellectual ferment, the *zeitgeist* of the NEI in the 1920s, is a much trickier proposition, but novels are particularly useful sources in this regard. Drawing on two novels authored by communists (Semaun and Mas Marco Kartodikromo), and one novel by a Sarekat Islam activist known to be averse to communism (Abdoel Moeis), I attempt to shed light on the *pergerakan* social milieu of the 1920s, an intellectual landscape so fertile, so open to new possibilities, that some among them felt it possible to bring Islam and communism into meaningful dialogue with each other.

Hayden White makes an important point in arguing that fiction can serve as an invaluable historical source, because it can reveal truths which historians struggle to articulate based on the "admissible evidence" available to them. White points out that historians are deeply concerned with both the "true" and the "real," but while the reality of the past is not in any doubt, the truths that can be told about the past by historians are circumscribed by obvious factors. A novel, especially one written by an observer who existed in the same time and space in which the novel is set, provides valuable "fictional truths" even if the novel is not strictly autobiographical.[386] White brings up Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* as an example, arguing that *Mrs. Dalloway* constitutes a kind of "witness literature" or "*testimonio*" that provides important insights on the past reality of 1920s London,

[386] Hayden White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History* 9 (2005): 147–48.

even though it is not "true" by the standards of the historical discipline.[387] Writing of Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, White has this to say:

> *"The significance of Levi's book lies less in any new 'truthful' information he gives about the camps than in the artistry (by which I mean literary, poetic and rhetorical devices) he employs in order to conjure up a compelling image of a cosmos utterly horrifying and at the same time horrifyingly present as a possibility for everyone of our time. Do I mean to imply that Levi's account of his year in Auschwitz is a fiction in the sense of being a pure invention? Of course not. My point is that by using the kinds of literary devices employed by writers of fiction—including topoi, tropes and figures, schemata of thought, characterization, personification, emplotment, and so on—Levi manages to demonstrate to his readers the difference between a merely truthful account of an event, of the kind provided by most survivor-witnesses, and an artistic treatment of a real event in his past which transcends the truth–reality distinction. Primo Levi's book is true in a fictional sense, in the sense that the image of Auschwitz conjured up by Levi's poetic prose is 'faithful' as well as being 'true' to the range of feelings induced by the experience of an extraordinary historical condition of subjection and humiliation."*[388]

Like Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel's accounts of the Holocaust, the novels examined in this section provide a kind of witness testimony, though not in the sense of an interview transcript or a diary entry. Refracted through the lens of artistic artifice, they are more seamless, more compelling, and neater than reality could possibly be. Nevertheless, such works of fiction are able to express many kinds of truths, including the range of emotions felt by participants at a mass rally, or the anguish endured by *pergerakan* activists as they felt torn between duty and conviction both professionally and personally. Such feelings are entirely real, but can only be glimpsed in conventional historical sources. By examining novels, this chapter attempts to highlight particular kinds of truths about the *pergerakan* experience in this period, truths which likely facilitated the confluence of Islam and communism in their political thinking.

Hikayat Kadirun (The Story of Kadirun, 1920) merits particular attention, because it directly conflates Islam and communism in various ways. This is unsurprising, given that we have previously encountered its author, Semaun, in his capacity as an editor of the primary PKI press organ from the late 1910s and early 1920s, *Sinar Hindia*. *The Story of Kadirun* was originally published in serialized form in *Sinar Hindia*, written during a stint in jail for Semaun from March to November 1919. It was later published as a novel in 1920, with an estimated

[387] *Ibid*., 148.
[388] *Ibid*., 149.

circulation of 1,500 copies.[389] As seen above, Semaun's worldview was one that did not perceive Islam and communism as inimical, tending to construct communism as broadly ethical and therefore compatible with all religions, including Islam. As Henk Maier points out in his introduction to the 2014 Lontar edition of the novel, Semaun published an article in *Sinar Hindia* which celebrated his release from prison in a distinctly religious idiom: "Thanks to your prayers, comrades, I rejoice in the gift from God the almighty, namely the gift of being allowed to perform asceticism in prison for a period of time. Verily, prison is a gift, a place where man can make plans for the general well-being of the world."[390] Semaoen clearly embraced an Islamic identity for himself, perceiving no contradictions between that identity and his political convictions or activism.

In the novel, communism is introduced as a kind of *ilmu* (lit. knowledge, but the word has mystical and religious connotations) that allows a suffering peasantry to comprehend the economic and social changes that have engulfed the NEI, making their lives harsher than before.[391] It is through understanding the global economic system of capitalism that they can make sense of their suffering, and then act to alleviate it. The protagonist, Kadirun, learns communist precepts and thus achieves understanding of the world he inhabits through his didactic relationship with his humble mentor and communist activist, Sariman.[392] This pedagogical relationship and its outcomes quite obviously mirrors the relationship between *kyai* and *santri* disciple in the Javano-Islamic institution of the *pesantren*, the pre-eminent pre-colonial institution of both esoteric and scholarly learning. Indeed, Kadirun's conversations with his communist mentor Sariman often invoke God in the context of blessing their endeavors or making sense of their hardships, which reveals their untroubled, unself-conscious Islamic identity.[393] There are other telling cues, as well. The president of the local chapter of the communist party, who chairs a rally which constitutes Kadirun's first contact with communist ideas, is a Haji – a pious Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. However, when read carefully, novels like *The*

[389] HMJ Maier, "Introduction: Written in the Prison's Light," in *The Story of Kadirun*, Modern Library of Indonesia (Jakarta: Lontar, 2014), vii–xxxiii.
[390] Semaoen, "Ketemoe Lagi," *Sinar Hindia*, December 1, 1919.
[391] Semaoen, *The Story of Kadirun*, ed. John H. McGlynn, trans. Ian Campbell et al., Modern Library of Indonesia (Jakarta: Lontar, 2014), 54.
[392] *Ibid.*, 132-158.
[393] *Ibid.*, 115.

Story of Kadirun go beyond evidence of how Islam and communism were imbricated, and provide deeper insight into the *zeitgeist* of the 1920s.

Studen Hijo (A Student Named Hijo, 1919) and *Hikayat Kadirun* (The Story of Kadirun, 1920) might be considered sister novels, in more ways than one.[394] In the latter, the protagonist begins from within the system (the *binnenlandsch bestuur*) as a well-meaning ambtenaar dedicated to the people's welfare but unable to perceive how best to realize it – that is, caught in the *ethici* paradox. In the former, the protagonist begins from without the system – the promising son of a merchant family, with enough noble connections to be respectable but not enough to capitalize on – and represents the quintessential constituent of Sarekat Islam: men who had established themselves and achieved some social standing through a profession not directly linked to the civil service. Despite their disparate starting points on the social spectrum, they are both inexorably drawn to a newly coalescing world of Indies politics, a world in which they find the solidarity, companionship and wisdom necessary for them to transcend the impossible situations in which they find themselves.

For Kadirun, this means identifying a mentor, and gaining the knowledge that allows him to understand the limitations of working within the system, as well as embracing a cause that provides him with inner peace despite his romantic frustrations. For Hijo, this means rejecting Dutch education and all that it entails; the embrace of Dutch manners, social norms, and Dutch romance. While Hijo himself does not attend the Sarekat Islam rally in Solo, this event proves to be pivotal as all the characters closest to him do so, and it is the rally which provides the occasion for them to start unwinding the tangled skeins of their lives, an entanglement which frustrates Hijo's life in Den Haag and prevents him from pursuing either romance or an education. The Sarekat Islam rally and the PKI rally are two sides on the same coin; they constitute pivotal events on which the lives of the protagonists turn. At the PKI rally, Kadirun starts on a path which will eventually cause him to repudiate his career, his wealth, and (partially) his respectability in return for his peace of mind. At the Sarekat

[394] Semaoen, *The Story of Kadirun*; Marco Kartodikromo, *A Student Named Hijo*, trans. Paul Tickell (Jakarta: Lontar, 2015).

Islam rally, the path is smoothed for Hijo's return to the Indies, facilitating a decision that he had already made to resolve his inner turmoil while "on retreat" in Amsterdam.

The PKI rally inaugurates the possibility of a new kind of world, the socialist utopia of Kadirun and his comrades, even as the Sarekat Islam rally marks the withdrawal from, or foreclosure of, the optimistic world of *ethici* "association."[395] Kadirun can no longer serve as an *ambtenaar*, for the structural limitations he labors under are too estranged from his ambitions to improve the lives of his fellow men. He can, however, glimpse a new possibility for movement (*bergerak*), for action. Similarly, Hijo can no longer operate within the confines of the *ethici* dream; he finds himself torn between becoming Dutch and being Javanese, and he comes to feel his situation can only remedied by a firm choice in one direction or the other. He has to choose between full cultural assimilation, or a rejection of the alluring, enticing *ethici* dream of a Dutch education and a lucrative, prestigious career as an engineer, a modern profession for a modern age, an opportunity that would only have been open to the scions of high nobility not long ago. He chooses to return to Java. In both novels, the protagonists come to understand the frustrating impossibility of the positions they inhabit as children of both the Indies and of the Netherlands; straddling two incommensurate worlds, they cannot be at peace with themselves. They have to choose between one world or the other, and both choose to reject the *ethici* fantasy. Kadirun glimpses something else possible beyond it, while Hijo's quitting the Netherlands is sufficient for him to preserve himself. In both novels, it is novel forms of political association, specifically the mass rally, that provide the impetus for their decisive changes.

A Student Named Hijo provides a particularly incisive and concise depiction of the atmosphere and significance of Sarekat Islam, and the most visible locus of its activities, the novel form of political association known as the mass rally. Unlike the *roman à thèse* that is *Hikayat Kadirun*, Marco does not dwell on the Sarekat Islam rally. It is, nevertheless, wonderfully encapsulated in the following sentences: "Aristocrats from the Solo palace, business people, government officials, private citizens were all there, and all showed a special warmth towards

[395] For the flailing hopes of *ethici* association, see Foulcher, "Moving Pictures," 38–41.

each other. Because of Sarekat's Islam influence, there was no distinction between classes. All were brothers, regardless of social rank… it was as if all the people of the Indies had gathered together and were heading towards a point of common humanity."[396] The Sarekat Islam rally constitutes an act of confederation, a moment in which the rigid boundaries of Javanese society (reinforced by colonial race hierarchies and the co-optation of the Javanese nobility within the institutions of the colonial state) come loose, and an alternative (though by no means new) community is envisioned, felt, glimpsed.

United in the awareness of their "other-ness" in the colonial Indies, new life is breathed into the Islamic *ummah*; gathering 30,000 strong in a public space, the shared (though diverse) discontents that have brought them there are a platform on which they can stand together, and in doing so, the *ummah* is made to feel tangible, corporeal. The rigid hierarchies of status and class which govern Javanese society are temporarily dissolved, or even incrementally weakened, through the shared experience of the rally. In describing this rally, Marco focuses on the sentiment of shared humanity, or essential equality and fraternity; the attendees are converging on a "point of common humanity."[397] The suite of feelings that Marco describes offhandedly seems authentic rather than pedantic, with little of the blatant didacticism that Semaun's PKI rally embodies, despite Marco's own affiliation with the PKI.

Without turning the novel into a platform for PKI propaganda, Marco captures, however impressionistically and perhaps even inadvertently, a sense of the allure Sarekat Islam exercised. The unleashing of the sentiments of shared humanity by Sarekat Islam gives us an imperfect taste (refracted through authorial prerogatives) of the flavor of the times, of how attendees might have been moved by their experiences of the rally. That sense of common humanity was perhaps exactly what the PKI sought to mobilize (and capitalize on) in its slogan *sama rata sama rasa*. It also explains, perhaps, why the PKI found its symbiotic relationship with Sarekat Islam so congenial, a fruitful symbiosis that also gave rise to a distinct Islamic-Communist strand of discourse.

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[396] Marco Kartodikromo, *A Student Named Hijo*, 83–84.
[397] *Ibid.*

The temptations of European modernity in *Studen Hijo* and *Salah Asuhan*

An understanding of the social milieu which produced Abdoel Moeis's *Salah Asuhan* (Never the Twain, first published 1928) and Marco's *Studen Hijo* (A Student Named Hijo, first published 1919), a milieu hinted at by the thematic thrust of these novels, helps us understand how the conciliation of Islam and communism was possible in the NEI.[398] *Salah Asuhan* and *Studen Hijo* are both deeply concerned with the fear of losing one's core identity; of Indies Muslims becoming estranged from their culture, their families, their selves. In the case of Hijo, this estrangement is quite literal: it involves his physical transplantation to the Netherlands, in addition to Hijo's relationship – both explicitly sexual and emotional – with a Dutch girl, the daughter of his landlord. In the case of *Salah Asuhan*'s Hanafi, the estrangement is more directly a result of romance and opaque longings: Hanafi is deeply drawn to a Eurasian girl, which pushes him to reject the identity he was born with to make possible a relationship with her. There is a tension inherent in both these novels: a tension between wanting to maintain one's cultural identity, and the desire to master "modernity" as the Dutch have – to be as liberated in both mind and action as the Dutch, but more importantly, to thereby become essentially (though not necessarily legally) equal to them.

This is more nuanced than the struggle between the poles of "tradition" and "modernity." One of the aberrations of colonial society, as Fanon ably points out, is the near-irresistible impulse to recondition oneself, to be more European than the Europeans.[399] At some level, this was genuinely attractive: moving into the social world of the Europeans, a possibility partly open to the high-born and wealthy, opened new possibilities for thought and action, free from the constraints of tradition. The most pointed example of this, in relation to the novels, is the dramatic change in marriage norms: the possibility of love-matches, to the exclusion of arranged marriages. However, it was also attractive in a more gravitational sense; in a rigidly hierarchical colonial society that

[398] Abdoel Moeis, *Never the Twain*, trans. Robin Susanto (Jakarta: Lontar, 2010); Marco Kartodikromo, *A Student Named Hijo*.
[399] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 3–9.

clearly privileged European-ness, "becoming" European (insofar as it was possible) offered prestige, power and wealth. These opportunities for prestige, power and wealth were rarely obtainable without recourse to "becoming" European in manners, language, education, and (hopefully, eventually) legal status.

Without denying their importance as characters in their own right, European/Eurasian women also represent the temptation of "becoming" European in both novels. Betje and Corrie are not caricatures, lewd temptresses who entrap unwary Indies Muslims. Rather, they represent a way a life, or a mode of existence, to which privileged Indies Muslims inexorably gravitate under colonial conditions. Betje's allure, as Hijo realizes during his self-imposed vegetarian retreat in Amsterdam, is but one aspect or symptom of his existence in the Netherlands. Choosing a university education in Delft, he realizes, amounts to a slow erosion of the Hijo raised in the Indies, and his metamorphosis into something else, something which is more thoroughly European. Hanafi, on the other hand, is already well on his way to his rejection of the world of his parents, and his attraction to Corrie is a culmination of his opaque longings for wealth, respectability, and personal liberty that his Dutch education seeded in him.

This inexorable drift into European-ness and its attendant anxieties is a familiar discourse, an evident in amongst other prominent *pergerakan* activists as well. James Siegel brilliantly parses Suwardi Suryaningrat's (later, Ki Hajar Dewantara, founder of the *pergerakan* Taman Siswa school network) essay "If I were a Dutchman," teasing out the underlying anxiety over, or resistance to, the loss of an "authentic" Indies self (however individuals may have chosen to define it) under the impossible weight of a colonial situation which facilitated the conversion of natives (*inlander*) into incomplete Dutchmen in an apartheid world.[400] For Suwardi, this anxiety manifests itself in the attraction of native men to European women, a social taboo in many circles, a phenomenon which Suwardi associates with capitulation of the authentic self.[401] He rejects this attraction, and in doing so hopes to maintain the sanctity of his authentic Javanese self.

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[400] James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 26–37.

[401] This is not the say Suwardi rejected Europe entirely; the Taman Siswa schools were highly popular for providing a "secular" European education alongside an Islamic one, and constituted a prestigious alternative to the highly-restricted Dutch-medium schools whose syllabi embraced a distinctly colonial ethos of Dutch paternalism. Suwardi/Ki Hajar Dewantara was open to learning from

This anxiety that Siegel describes, which he calls fetish, is consonant with Partha Chatterjee's subtle analysis of how deeply gendered anti-colonial, nationalist projects were. Chatterjee observed that women are almost invariably confined to the inner sanctum of the nationalist project, assigned to defend and maintain the core of an often imagined and deliberately homogenized "national culture" built on "traditional values."[402] The role of mastering European modernity was gendered as male, with men taking on the education, speech, dress and manners of their colonial rulers in order to demonstrate their essential equality and capacity for self-rule. This is an apt descriptor for both novels' protagonists, Hijo and Hanafi. By contrast, their assigned spouses, Biroe and Rapiah, are paragons of Javanese/Minangkabau traditional virtues. However, these assigned roles are also deliciously inverted by Hijo and Hanafi's attraction to European women, which places them in danger of losing their essential, native selves. Thomas Hunter Jr. elegantly expresses the paradox and dangers of becoming European:

> *"… Moeis makes use of two distinct traditions when dealing with the subject of emotion or 'feeling.' In the Malay world, including West Sumatra, a sharp contrast is often drawn between 'reason and will' (akal) and 'feeling' (rasa or perasaan) in the sense of 'base desire' (nafsu). While many studies have shown that reason is usually counted as a male characteristic, in Salah Asuhan it is clear that Hanafi is more consistently the victim of desire, while the women in his life – his mother, his Minang wife, and even Corrie – consistently demonstrate more reason."*[403]

"Becoming" European, the *ethici*/nationalist ideal of the cultivated male native, educated to supplant colonial overlordship with a "civilized" native alternative, falls apart in these novels. To borrow Chatterjee's formulation, these novels expose the inherent weaknesses of the deeply gendered nationalist project. Women are indeed cast as repositories of traditional virtues, but the male ability to straddle the disparate worlds of the Indies and the Netherlands, even with a female anchor, is depicted as highly problematic. There are, for Marco Kartodikromo and Abdoel Moeis, tensions that cannot be resolved, and the protagonists eventually retreat into the familiar embrace of the Indies, both geographically and culturally. This retreat, I would argue, is not depicted as a victory, but rather as something necessary for the preservation of self. The underlying message is

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Europe, or appropriating Europe, but only his own terms; the embrace of Europe within the colonial framework of the necessity of (never-ending) tutelage for *inlanders* was unacceptable.

[402] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 117–19.

[403] Thomas J. Hunter Jr., "Introduction," in *Never the Twain*, Abdoel Moeis, trans. Robin Susanto (Jakarta: Lontar, 2010).

not that the Indies contains some inviolate essence that is sullied by association with the impure West; rather, it is a cautionary tale about the near-impossibility of bridging worlds. These novels were expressions of a particular social milieu, betraying the concerns and anxieties of a generation of Indies Muslims who were privileged enough to access Dutch-medium education, but too bright or too resistant to be quietly co-opted by lucrative careers in the *Binnenlandsch Bestuur*. The *ethici* dream of productive association between the colonizer and the colonized was dangled in front of them; it was a condition of possibility for their education to exist at all, but they did not accept its postulates and assumptions.

The publication, and enduring popularity, of novels like *Studen Hijo* and *Salah Asuhan* are revealing. They illustrate a nuanced awareness that a path toward a more just future for the Indies could not be forged simply by learning from Europe; European knowledge came weighted with baggage, and it was up to the people of the Indies to parse that knowledge, to select and adapt it in a way that would be meaningful for their own societies. Only by indigenizing Europe could Europe's intellectual and cultural sophistication be made to work for the Indies. Attempting to bridge Europe and the Indies on European terms, as Hijo and Hanafi did, was an enterprise doomed to failure. These tensions were not limited to literature alone; Mrazek's excellent biography of Sjahrir evokes a clear sense of estrangement from the ebb and flow and Indonesian politics, what Mrazek describes as Sjahrir hovering on the margins, periodically coming forward to work in the center, but often finding himself ill at ease with his role.[404] Sjahrir was one of the rare few who was at least partially successful in bridging the Indies and Europe, but it also paralyzed him as a leader.

Given this context of tension in reconciling the sense of an authentic native self with the possibilities and privileges of European-ness, it is not entirely surprising that attempts to reconcile the distinctly, emblematically native (like Islam) and the cutting-edge of European modernity (like Marxist ideology) were engendered. In a hierarchical colonial world which strictly policed the boundaries between European and native, a distinction buttressed by European racial pseudo-science, late imperial social conventions and even the legal regime,

[404] Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia*, Studies on Southeast Asia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994).

"learning Europe" from the colonial state was a poisoned chalice, an endeavor compromised from the beginning. That Europe had technological, intellectual and cultural developments to be harnessed could hardly be denied; but the process of "learning Europe" would need to be autodidactic, creative, and original.[405] As Foulcher eloquently puts it, "They stand not in opposition to the West but in juxtaposition to it, an assembly of cultural options available for appropriation according to the outlooks and needs of the *pergerakan* world."[406] That, to my mind, is the unstated but poignant revelation implicit in these novels. It was in this context that the confluence between Islam and Marx's ideas could be conceptualized, as Indies identities (including Islamic identities) were put in conversation with the intellectual products of Europe.

Romance, Gender Roles, and *Maju*/*Moderen* Women in *Salah Asuhan*

Finally, Moeis's treatment of women in *Salah Asuhan* (1928) provides glimpses into the deeply-entrenched gender roles being contested in the social milieu of the 1920s NEI, a febrile milieu that also made possible the conciliation of Islam and communism. Moeis's depiction of Hanafi's desire for a woman "with whom he could share his dreams," one who "could equal him in every field of thought, and sometimes even surpass him," represents one important factor/impulse in the psychological make-up of the *pergerakan*.[407] The desire for what might be called modern romance in Moeis's novel is one manifestation of the *pergerakan* fixation with *maju* or *moderen*. The gender roles of the past are inadequate, much as the old methods of colonial administration or the old hierarchies of relations are now inadequate.

Hanafi's desire for the new woman to match his new man (much like Kadirun's mentor and his wife in *Hikayat Kadirun*) opens a space for the existence of new women in putative Indonesian society, new women heralded by Kartini and who found corporeal expression in *pergerakan* activists like Djoeinah, Rasuna Said, Rasimah Ismail, and Ratna Sari, who are covered in chapter two. In reality, the publishing activities and political

[405] Foulcher, "Moving Pictures," 41.
[406] *Ibid*.,47.
[407] Abdoel Moeis, *Never the Twain*, 59.

organization of these women transgressed prevailing gender norms, but they came to be accepted and even celebrated as integral components of the *pergerakan*. These educated and politically active women even became, perhaps, objects of desire or models for emulation in the eyes of male *pergerakan* activists. The trajectories of these women's lives, educations, and careers were intrinsically innovative/transgressive, and it is not entirely surprising that their writings refused to be bound by political positions formulated by men and hallowed by tradition; it is perhaps unsurprising that their writings took on a strong focus on socio-economic equity alongside their strongly Muslim identity. It is the existence of these female *pergerakan* activists that *Salah Asuhan* heralds, expressed in Hanafi's desire for a different kind of love.

In *Salah Asuhan*, Hanafi's willingness to marry Rapiah is dependent upon his mother's prognostication that she will be a compliant and patient wife. Hanafi's thirst for Europe is partially a universal thirst for equality of status (viz. the ability to marry across racial divides as European men can, or more simply the freedom to choose one's partner), but also a thirst for a distinctly un-Minangkabau, non-traditional wife: a wife who can operate intellectually at the same level as her husband. This is something which Corrie can presumably do, and Rapiah cannot. These, at least, are the aspirations Hanafi projects onto European formulations of romance, courtship, and marriage. Ultimately, however, Hanafi's decision to marry the humble but virtuous Rapiah after his failed courtship of the intelligent but mercurial Corrie is indicative of the simultaneous thirst and discomfort that male *pergerakan* activists felt for this new kind of romantic partner. *Salah Asuhan* illustrates particularly well the gendered dimensions of the nationalist project, which Chatterjee explains in *The Nation and Its Fragments*.[408]

Hanafi's mother justifies Rafiah's suitability as a wife (and by extension, the desirability of traditional gender roles) in the following terms: "Think about this: well-educated women are difficult. If both husband and wife are smart, small things can become big things. Tongues have no bones; they lash out too freely and too quickly. If both sides are unrestrained, such a marriage would make for a life in hell."[409] As Hanafi's mother points out,

[408] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 119–21.
[409] Abdoel Moeis, *Never the Twain*, 60.

prevailing patriarchal norms of marriage in Indies society prescribed unequal marriages in which it was preferable for only one partner (invariably the man) to be educated, and for the other (invariably the woman) to serve and support. These norms as described by Moeis closely mirror Chatterjee's observations on the deeply gendered "modernity" embraced by nationalist elites in South Asia: through colonial education, male participants in the nationalist project were encouraged to learn the languages, technologies and skills of their colonial overlords, while female participants were expected to be paragons and repositories of "traditional" virtues, protecting the sphere of domestic, distinct local culture, guarding against full assimilation.

Rapiah is the paragon of traditional Minangkabau virtue, the patient, long-suffering wife who marries out of obligation but from whom devotion and love may be coaxed. She accepts her secondary, supporting role in relation to Hanafi, while Hanafi embraces his prerogative to be *moderen* while denying access to that same modernity to his wife. Rafiah operates within Hanafi's mother's assumptions about marriage; both parties being "unrestrained" will result in "a life in hell." This fits well with Chatterjee's observation that the nationalist elites favored men being "unrestrained," free to steep themselves in the knowledges of their oppressors, while women should be "restrained" to maintain the integrity of the nation's imagined core.[410] This was the exact same issue that the *pergerakan* struggled with. All the egalitarian rhetoric they used had made possible – perhaps even encouraged – female participation in anti-colonial politics, but male *pergerakan* activists were themselves hesitant about the new kinds of romantic partnerships this state of affairs might engender. They were simultaneously drawn to and wary of these new relationships, a sentiment that Moeis captures particularly well.

Salah Asuhan also speaks volumes about the drastic psychological changes that *pergerakan* activists underwent in both their personal and public lives, in that time of ferment. Hanafi comes to terms with marrying Rafiah with the following rumination: "The last thing he wanted was to marry a woman he didn't love yet had a mind of her own! He would divorce such a woman in a day. Isn't it easy, in the East, for a man to treat his wife as he wishes, he thought to himself."[411] The last observation, in particular, seems to be uttered in a kind of sardonic

[410] Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 126.
[411] Abdoel Moeis, *Never the Twain*, 60.

self-loathing. In his heartbroken state, Hanafi allows himself to be persuaded by his mother, but he remains fully conscious that he is entering into a deeply unequal relationship in which he would have much control, while his wife would be expected to exercise much forbearance. This was not originally what he would have wanted for himself, but given his failed attempt at romancing Corrie, he will settle for the unequal power dynamics of a traditional marriage because it will satisfy his mother and cause him minimal angst.

There is, perhaps, even an element of petulance, or a desire to punish women for his thwarted romance; he cannot marry on the supposed European terms of a mutually-supportive partnership, so he will self-consciously content himself with the enormous power over his wife that his traditional marriage will provide him. More succinctly, if Europe will not have him, then he will revel in the perquisites of a tradition which he supposedly abhors. Here Moeis paints an incisive portrait of the colonized subject; even when privileged within the colonial hierarchy, he/she remains a perpetual other who cannot "live out" the education he/she has received. This perpetual tension between fantasy (engendered by colonial education) and reality (engendered by colonial racism) facilitates the gendering of the nationalist project that Chatterjee describes. Denied full assimilation, elite men construct a nationalist project in which someone (conveniently, women) needs to nurture and prune a precolonial or anti-colonial national identity to which the men can moor themselves, even as they sojourn in the colonial world. That, it seems, is the nature of Rapiah and Hanafi's marriage, and as the plot unfolds Rapiah does indeed serve as a pillar of strength for a struggling Hanafi.

Tellingly, Hanafi tells his mother that "… you must know that this woman can't expect *liefde* from me. Love is not a factor here. It is *plicht*, a debt, that makes me accept her."[412] In response, Hanafi's mother is "overcome with joy." "She didn't comprehend the Dutch words her son spoke but she understood that he had accepted Rapiah as his wife. Her wish had been fulfilled."[413] This is not a capitulation in favor of tradition on Hanafi's part; rather, Hanafi retains for himself access to "modernity" while denying it to his future wife. Hanafi's use of Dutch words like *liefde* (love) and *plicht* (duty or obligation) in speaking with his mother is a longstanding

[412] Abdoel Moeis, 61.
[413] *Ibid.*

habit, and it is telling in relation to his self-perception as a *moderen* civil servant. He knows that his mother will not understand these concepts, that they belong to an epistemological world that is alien to her, but he indulges himself and deploys them anyway. Perhaps because he cannot help but do so, being thoroughly ontologically Dutch by virtue of his education and profession (he even occupies a position usually held by a European in the colonial civil service). Even at the moment when he accedes to his mother's requests, when he agrees to respect Minangkabau norms of reciprocity, he continues to signal his attachment to European concepts like *liefde*, *sympatie*, and *opoffering* and thereby his essentially European worldview.[414]

Colonized in mind, taste and language, the portrait of Hanafi painted by Moeis is a revealing one. Through Hanafi, Moeis illustrates the bind in which educated natives find themselves: torn between a local culture their education has predisposed them to reject, and a European colonial world that will not accept them as equals. This was not continuously true of all colonial situations; Jean Taylor's *The Social World of Batavia* illustrates a more nuanced and valent era in which colonial race hierarchies were less impenetrable.[415] By the time the *pergerakan* had begun to articulate itself in the early twentieth century, however, Moeis's portrait is largely accurate, and mirrors the observations of negritude scholars like Frantz Fanon and Aime Cesaire, particularly in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Hanafi, though not himself political, is a reasonable avatar for many *pergerakan* activists, particularly in terms of their social milieu. Often part of the nascent middle class, they were quick to capitalize on the expanding educational and professional opportunities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with their hopes for economic or social advancement closely tied to the civil service rather than commerce or agriculture. Like Hanafi, many *pergerakan* activists began their professional lives in the civil service (Marco, for example) before turning to law or journalism. Their thirst for Europe, their thirst for modernity, which their education had instilled in them, was never to be fully slaked. Instead, they would have to carve their own *maju* or *moderen* paths, paths that necessarily engaged with the European notion of modernity but which could never be carbon copies of it. Romance and gender roles were integral and contested

[414] *Ibid.*, 67.
[415] Jean Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia, Europeans and Eurasians in Colonial Indonesia* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 114–134.

components of this new modernity they sought to define. This contestation was symptomatic of the intellectual ferment of the 1920s, in which *pergerakan* activists were tempted by the siren songs of both continuity and change; little wonder that some sought to amalgamate both, as happened with the Islamic communists examined here.

Chapter Conclusion

The point of this chapter has not merely been to present the accumulated evidence of the existence of a phenomenon called Islamic communism. Rather, it has been to show that there existed a variety of nuanced approaches to conciliating Islam and Marxist ideas. Moreover, it has shown that Islam and Marxism were deeply and perhaps even inextricably imbricated in *pergerakan* thought during the late 1910s and early 1920s. Even at the highest levels of *pergerakan* leadership, the most prominent activists were compelled to engage with both in one way or another. This chapter has shown that the phenomenon of explicit Islamic communism was discursively sophisticated, with significant appeal across a large geographic area. It cannot be conveniently dismissed as a millenarian or messianic aberration. This chapter has also explained how Islam and Marxism interacted in practice, in the context of violent anticolonial uprisings; highlighted the discursive underpinnings of this phenomenon in vernacular print culture; and done a little to remedy the lack of recognition of women's contributions to these discourses. Finally, it has explored the conditions of possibility for the conciliation of Islam and Marxism as expressed through fiction, sketching the *zeitgeist* of an age that made engagement between Muslims and Marxists possible and desirable in the first place.

Some of the activists examined here pragmatically recognized that putting Islam in dialogue with communism was politically fruitful. For others, communism appeared to be the best vehicle for fulfilling their religious obligations to create and maintain an equitable society. For yet others, personal faith and political ideology were perceived as existing in distinct, incommensurate realms, and thus non-contradictory. While counter-vailing forces did exist, Islam and Marxism proved a potent, and perhaps even irresistible, combination when invoked

in opposition to the colonial state during the pre-1926 period. The next chapter will examine how discursive confluences of Islam and Marxism took on new and more subtle forms after the 1926–27 uprisings, after the hopes for decisive success through violent revolution were dashed and colonial repression of the *pergerakan* intensified. Denied the freedom to publish freely and organize openly, the scope of action for various Islamic communists and the plethora of small presses which produced Farid and Razif's *bacaan liar* (wild literature) became seriously circumscribed. In their attempts to keep their visions for a more just society alive, and to work towards the coalescing idea of a free Indonesia, they found other ways of making their voices heard. After 1927, newspapers continued to be an important means of circulating and debating *pergerakan* ideas, but other organizations such as study clubs and women's rights organizations became increasingly prominent where overtly political organizations and labor unions had been stymied. It is to these alternative forms of "movement," and the print culture they produced, that the next chapter turns.

Chapter 2: New Modes of Movement

After the travails and failures of the early nationalist movement spearheaded by Sarekat Islam and the PKI, the new climate of political repression circumscribed the space in which the *pergerakan* could *bergerak* (move) and maneuver. Accordingly, some sought new modes of organization that did not involve unions, strikes, propagandizing, and clandestine organizations, while others took the opportunity (especially those in enforced exile) to reflect and consider how the *pergerakan* might aid the cause of independence under these new constraints. With the exception of J. D. Legge's and Rudolf Mrázek's work, this period has tended to attract less scholarly attention than the radical phase of *pergerakan* activism that preceded it, and the period of harsh Japanese military rule that followed it.[416] This chapter will explore the discursive output of the *pergerakan* during a period in which mass rallies and strikes were no longer possible, and schools were coming under government scrutiny. Unsurprisingly, despite increasingly strict colonial censorship, *pergerakan* activists turned to print to express themselves and generate support for their ideas, which makes print sources particularly valuable for this period.

Their writings evinced a mix of attachment to Islamic identity and openness to "translating" the intellectual innovations of Europe as well as learning from the experiences of other Asian societies, knowledge which often included Marxist ideas. A surprisingly large number of the most prominent *pergerakan* activists who later became the republic's top leaders were interlocuters in these discursive and translative efforts. Their immersion in this milieu was later effaced by nationalist historiography, especially after Suharto's rise to power in the mid-1960s, after which Marxism became taboo. A re-examination of the writings of these familiar figures, however, reveals the imbrication of Islam and Marxism in the political discourse of the 1930s. Outside of the *pergerakan*

[416] J. D. Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," *Indonesia* 32 (1981): 151–68; J. D. Legge, *Intellectuals and Nationalism in Indonesia: A Study of the Following Recruited by Sutan Sjahrir in Occupation Jakarta* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1988); Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia*, Studies on Southeast Asia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994); Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happyland: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).

elite, discursive expressions of translating the world to Indonesia also occurred, particularly amongst the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, including the Minangkabau diaspora spread across the archipelago.

The Minangkabau heartlands of West Sumatra and the Minangkabau diaspora feature prominently in this chapter, because a remarkable confluence of Islam and Marxism was evident in Minangkabau print culture. Taking a detour from the usual Java-centric approach to Indonesian history, this chapter begins from the periphery (West Sumatra, and numerous regional activists) and meanders back to the center (Java, and Soekarno) of *pergerakan* activism. It opens with a brief exploration of the Minangkabau Islamic milieu, and it ends with a consideration of Soekarno's evolving ideas about Islam. By first examining how local dynamics shaped *pergerakan* discourse in one geographic and cultural zone, this chapter attempts to present an in-depth account of how Islam and Marxism could be entwined in the motivations and inspirations of *pergerakan* activists. Taking inspiration from John Smail's study of Bandung from 1945–50, a city "peripheral" to the revolution when compared to Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Surabaya, this chapter's emphasis on West Sumatra and the Minangkabau diaspora illustrates one example of confluence between Islam and Marxism in detail instead of sampling tidbits of evidence from across the archipelago.[417] What happened in West Sumatra certainly had cognates in other parts of the archipelago, but the Minangkabau were remarkably influential in setting the tenor of *pergerakan* discourse between 1927 and 1942, making them the ideal entry point for a study of *pergerakan* ideas during this period. As will become evident, progressive Minangkabau articulations of Islam mirrored, and perhaps influenced, Islamic discourse in Java.

The Minangkabau of West Sumatra played an important role in the struggle for Indonesian independence and were overrepresented at the highest levels of the *pergerakan* leadership.[418] This was especially true from the

[417] John Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945-46* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1964).
[418] Where appropriate, the terms "Indonesia" and "Indonesian" are used from this chapter onward instead of "Indies," since the cultivation of an "Indonesian" identity and the creation of a polity called "Indonesia" (or at least its outlines) had coalesced as primary *pergerakan* goals by 1928. The term "Indonesia" was explicitly used in the Second Youth Congress held in Batavia in October 1928, and included in the famous nationalist pledge, the *sumpah pemdua* (youth pledge), that emerged from that conference. The concept of Indonesia had existed before 1928, but in existed in competition with other imagined communities like the Pan-Islamic polity conceived by the *khilafat* movement. It was during the 1927–1941 period that the *pergerakan* committed to the concept of Indonesia as an imagined successor, and imagined precursor, to the geo-body of the Netherlands East Indies.

1930s onwards, and Minangkabau *pergerekan* activists became particularly important both during the Revolution and in the early republic. One could even characterize the 1930s, the Revolution, and the post-revolutionary Parliamentary Democracy period as a sustained moment of Minangkabau prominence. Such figures of national importance as Mohammed Hatta, Sutan Sjahrir, Mohammed Natsir, Abu Hanifa and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara were all Minangkabau (though Prawiranegara only partially so), and their writings are examined in the next few chapters. The matrilineal organization, democratic traditions (centered around villages and kinship groups known as *nagari*) and culture of peripatetic rites of passage for men (the *rantau*) of the Minangkabau have been ably and eloquently analyzed by Jeffrey Hadler, Taufik Abdullah, and Rudolf Mrázek.[419] For our present purposes, it will suffice to point out that Minangkabau society produced a number of key *pergerakan* leaders and organizations which seemed particularly open to conciliating Islam identity and Marxist ideas, perhaps because both Islamic identity and ideals of social justice possessed particular resonance in Minangkabau society. With that in mind, much of this chapter is devoted to Minangkabau organizations and institutions, as well as the Minangkabau diaspora domiciled in other parts of the archipelago. Developments in Java and other parts of Sumatra are also canvassed here, especially in relation to the discursive contributions of women.

The Islamic intellectual milieu of West Sumatra created particular conditions in which conciliations of Islam and socialism could thrive. The Sarekat Islam in West Sumatra appealed particularly to the *kaum muda*, Islamic reformists who advocated engaging directly with the textual sources of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology to provide era-appropriate interpretations of Islamic orthopraxis, as opposed to reliance on traditional sources of jurisprudential legitimacy in the form of the books of classic *fiqh* written by famous scholars/commentators. These books were commonly studied in the *pondok*, traditional schools which emphasized mastering Arabic, Quranic recital, rote-learning and discipleship within the Shafi'i *madhhab* (loosely translatable as guild or school of thought) of jurisprudence. More often than not, these books were

[419] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*; Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1971); Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

concise compendiums of rulings by famous jurists within a particular *madhhab*, known as *mukhtasar*, which provided a concise collection of legal axioms without necessarily explaining how the jurist had arrived at these judgements. This approach to jurisprudence and exegesis was one pejoratively characterized by the *kaum muda* as *taqlid*, blind obedience to the established legal maxims of past jurists, without concern for whether these maxims were still relevant. These traditionalists were labelled *kaum tua* by the *kaum muda*, and were often castigated as *kolot* (stodgy or archaic). By contrast, the *kaum muda* championed the exercise of *ijtihad* (jurisprudential interpretation) to align Islamic praxis with the changing social, economic and political conditions brought by Dutch Imperialism.

Both *kaum tua* and *kaum muda* were drawn to Sarekat Islam, though the *kaum muda* eventually became most strongly associated with the organization. It is perhaps unsurprising that it was the *kaum muda*, already active in West Sumatra since the 1830s, who felt most drawn to Sarekat Islam's message of Muslim fraternity, economic self-sufficiency, and mutual support in the face of the deleterious conditions engendered by the integration of the NEI's economy with the global market of agricultural commodities. The post-Great War slump and the Great depression of the late 1920s had wreaked havoc on the tin, rubber, and coffee industries, resulting in widespread hardship amongst both smallholders and plantation laborers. These adverse economic conditions made possible public interest in the novel form of political organization that the Sarekat Islam represented, and it was the most dynamic of Muslims, the *kaum muda*, that responded most enthusiastically to Sarekat Islam's claim to embody the political and economic interests of the Muslim majority.

The West Sumatran branch of Sarekat Islam was founded in Padang by a *kaum tua* Islamic scholar, Sjech Chatib Ali, and his fellow scholar-trader Hadji Achmad, but very quickly became dominated by *kaum muda* personages. The tension between the *kaum muda*-dominated board and the *kaum tua* founders eventually resulted in a split in August 1916, into a "white card" *kaum muda* branch (membership overlapped significantly with the *kaum muda* organization *Sarekat Usaha*) and a "red card" *kaum tua* branch. When Abdoel Moeis (author of the aforementioned *Salah Asuhan*), as a representative of Batavia's Central Sarekat Islam (CSI), visited Padang to reconcile the two feuding branches, he was unable to do so and ended up aligning

himself with the *kaum muda* branch. This cemented the ideological character of the West Sumatran Sarekat Islam branch: *kaum muda* approaches to Islam pervaded the first mass political movement in West Sumatra, imbuing future Minangkabau political activity with a perceptibly progressive and combative edge.

Moeis was himself Minangkabau, but like many of his compatriots, had sought his fortune (*merantau*) in *pergerkan* politics in Java, eventually becoming the vice-president of the CSI as well as an elected member of the *volksraad*. He returned to West Sumatra again in 1918, during which he organized rallies and openly critiqued Dutch colonialism. His efforts intensified over the next few years, and he returned permanently to West Sumatra in the early 1923 to rally the *pergerakan* against new land taxes proposed by the colonial government. This culminated in the November 1923 meeting of West Sumatran *pergerakan* organizations opposed to the new taxes in Padang Panjang, which provided the colonial government with sufficient grounds to expel Moeis from West Sumatra. Moeis's expulsion was germane, because it removed Sarekat Islam's most high-profile and charismatic local leader from play, and the vacuum he left behind was filled by the recently-formed and PKI-affiliated Sarekat Rakyat (SR, People's Associations) of West Sumatra.

The PKI had undergone its final, definitive split from Sarekat Islam in 1923, and converted many of the left-leaning elements of the numerous local Sarekat Islam branches into SR branches. It was one such branch in West Sumatra that was able to build strong links with *kaum muda* institutions like the Sumatra Thawalib schools. Although Sarekat Islam had always been strongly flavored by the desire for social and economic justice, it was Moeis's departure that allowed Marxist discourse to gain traction within a social movement that was deeply and self-consciously Islamic in identity. On their part, the *kaum muda* of West Sumatra embraced a worldview which was distinctly creative and progressive, seeking to find answers to new problems in innovative interpretations of Islam; this made them particularly receptive to relatively new ideas like Marxist critiques of the extractive colonial economy.

The five Sumatra Thawalib schools, especially the original one in Padang Panjang, produced many teachers and students with strong communist sympathies. Some, like Haji Datuk Batuah, simultaneously became members of

the PKI without perceiving any contradiction between their religious and political allegiances. Much of the discursive output of the Sumatra Thawalib has been analyzed in chapter one, so in this chapter we turn to the legacy of the Sumatra Thawalib schools, whose alumni filled the ranks of Sutan Sjahrir and Mohammad Hatta's Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Education, henceforth the Pendidikan), the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII, Islamic League Party of Indonesia), and Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (Permi, Union of Indonesian Muslims). Following an examination of these organizations, all of which had significant followings in West Sumatra, this chapter explores the discursive output of Permi activists, many of whom were female, whose writings invoked both Islamic identity and socialist ideas. This chapter goes on to explore how the Dinyyah schools of West Sumatra, heir to the Sumatra Thawalib schools' dynamism, incubated a new generation of *pergerakan* activists who were drawn to the Pendidikan. Many of them eventually became prominent socialist leaders during the Revolution. This is followed by an examination of the coexistence of Islamic identity and Marxist ideas amongst the Dutch-educated Indonesian literati of the 1930s, a milieu which included many prominent female writers. Next, this chapter analyzes two novels to shed light on the social milieu of *pergerakan* schools and the tenor of their discourse in this period: the pioneering Soewarsih Djojopoespito's *Buiten het Gareel* (1940), and the Islamic communist Xarim M.S.'s *Hadji Dadjal* (1941). Finally, it considers Soekarno's relationship with Islam during the 1930s, showing how his creative, synthetic approach to Islam deepened in complexity, laying the ground for his explicit conciliation of Islam and communism in the late 1950s.

1930s *Pergerakan* Print Culture

The suppression of the PKI in 1927 signaled a turn towards stricter press and censorship laws, with freedom of assembly for political purposes severely curtailed. In the discursive realm, this took the form of the *persbreidel* (press-curbing ordinance) of 1931, which empowered the Governor-General to prohibit publication of any periodical for an unspecific period of time, as opposed to charges of *perdelict*, which were "press offences"

under the NEI penal code.[420] These new restrictions did curtail the vitality and capacity of the *pergerakan*, whose members could no longer voice their frustrations in inflammatory words on the printed page, or on the stage at mass public rallies, as they had done in the 1920s. However, as Yamamoto Nobuto argues, the restrictions on political activity resulted in an intensification of effort in vernacular print culture, which flourished during the early 1930s.[421]

Print culture constitutes a particularly rich vein of sources because of the plethora of newspapers being published from the 1910s onward: many had short print runs due to financial troubles and censorship, but they were legion, and the sheer diversity ensures that they remain understudied. One 1971 index of Indonesian newspapers lists over 1,000 newspapers published across 55 cities throughout the archipelago, the majority of which began publication during the colonial period.[422] Moreover, despite limited circulation and low literacy, such newspapers often had a surprisingly wide reach, as literate subscribers would often read aloud to friends and family, before passing on the newspaper to another literate person.[423] This prolonged the afterlives of newspapers, their contents reverberating through communities weeks after the initial publication, and helped circulate *pergerakan* ideas in a largely illiterate agricultural society.

However, *pergerakan* activity did not disappear during the 1930s; rather, the energies of anti-colonial activists were channeled by the repressive political climate into new realms of activity. In the Pendidikan's case, this entailed the cultivation of a national awakening through education. Print culture constitutes a particularly important corpus of sources in this period because it was one of the principal ways in which the *pergerakan* could continue to express itself despite the omnipresent specter of *persbreidel*. Having been denied the platform of broadcasting their ideas at public rallies and propagandizing within labor unions, it was newspapers, educational materials, and novels that became repositories and vehicles of *pergerakan* discourse. This post-

[420] Nobuto Yamamoto, "The Dynamics of Contentious Politics in the Indies: Inlandsche Journalisten Bond and Persatoean Djoernalis Indonesia," *Keio Communication Review* 36 (2014): 5.
[421] Nobuto Yamamoto, "Print Power and Censorship in Colonial Indonesia, 1914-1942" (PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2011).
[422] G. Raymond Nunn, *Indonesian Newspapers: An International Union List*, Occasional Series 14 (Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center Inc., 1971).
[423] Rianne Subijanto, "Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Press in Colonial Indonesia," *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 1370–71.

1927 generation of the *pergerakan*, activists who had newly come of age or barely escaped banishment or imprisonment, was mindful of the costs of premature revolt. Instead, they channeled their efforts into the creation of study circles (the Pendidikan), social clubs (alumni clubs), student organizations (the Diniyyah student union, scouting organizations like *El Hilaal*), "cooperative" political parties that sat in the *Volksraad* (the PSII) and semi-political organizations (Permi) that would serve the pedagogic function of preparing Indonesians for eventual independence. Moreover, because the Dutch *ethici* had not yet fully abandoned the civilizing mission they had embraced earlier in the century, *pergerakan* print culture remained relatively prolific despite censorship. The newspapers most closely associated with PKI bore the brunt of censorship new press laws restricting publications in vernacular languages, but even identifiably socialist Pendidikan newspapers like *Kedaulatan Ra'jat* (The Sovereignty of the People) continued to be published through most of the 1930s; it ran from 1931-1938, though with many gaps between issues.[424]

The strongly pedagogical character of *pergerakan* activism in the 1930s requires some contextualization. In *The Rope of God*, James Siegel argued that an Islamic society was understood by the Acehnese to mean a commonwealth of Muslims in free association with one another, rendering them more than the sum of their cultural attachments and local allegiances.[425] The signifier "Islam" represented the triumph of *akal* (reason) over *nafsu* (desire), and an Islamic society was one capable of competing with the model offered by the Dutch because a society peopled by pious Muslims was a society constituted by rational actors. It was such rational actors – a concept perfectly compatible with being Muslim – that the *pergerakan* of the 1930s sought to cultivate through education. Whether it was urban study clubs which gave rise to the Pendidikan and PNI, or the networks of reformist Islamic schools run by Sumatra Thawalib, Diniyyah, Muhammadiyah, and Taman Siswa, these educational endeavors expressly aimed to develop "Indonesian" subjects. Their purpose was nothing less than the transmutation of colonial subjects with localized political allegiances and affective ties, into Indonesian

[424] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 157. Daulat Ra'jat only ran from 1931–34, ending with the 1934 crackdown in which Sjahrir and Hatta were imprisoned. The Pendidikan, however, was not proscribed, and continued to exist with limited popular influence and intellectual output.
[425] James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God*, Ann Arbor Paperbacks (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 115–27.

subjects who would constitute the atomic units of a putative polity (Indonesia), a replacement for the incumbent colonial polity (the Netherlands East Indies).

This pedagogical endeavor was not about training disciplined revolutionary cadres, or indoctrinating zealots who would erupt into violent *jihad* at the right moment. Rather, it was a new *modus operandi*, one that had learned from the failures of Sarekat Islam and the PKI. This *modus operandi* was predicated on new modes of being (e.g. being a nationalist, or being a modernist Muslim, or being a women's rights activist) and new forms of organization (e.g. political parties, semi-political associations, student unions, alumni clubs, scouting organizations, debating clubs, autodidactic study clubs) that had been made possible through the "translation" of Europe discussed in chapter one. This shaping of Indonesian subjects through education also embodied the tension between staying true to a distinctly Indonesian identity (which the *pergerakan* was still in the process of assembling), while simultaneously "moving" (*bergerak*), or making progress towards a free Indonesia. This was a process of Indonesian subject-formation, and the tension between authenticity and progress was an important source of fuel for it. Despite the differing political and religious affiliations of the many actors engaged in this pedagogical endeavor, they understood their activities to exist in the same field of *pergerakan* activism: generating national consciousness one Indonesian subject at a time.

The Pendidikan in Three Periodicals

One organization whose ideas epitomized the confluence of Islam and socialism was the *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia*. It was also known as the PNI-Baru, or New PNI, a deliberate allusion to Soekarno's nationalist party, the PNI, that had grown out of similar intelligentsia circles in 1927, and which had been proscribed in 1931. This section examines three newspapers published by or closely associated with the Pendidikan: *Daulat Ra'jat* (Hail the People!), *Banteng Ra'jat* (The People's Buffalo), and *Api Ra'jat* (The People's Fire). The Pendidikan was founded by Sutan Sjahrir and Muhammad Hatta, two Dutch university-educated Minangkabau *pergerakan* activists of the post-1926 vintage. They had come of age participating in Soekarno's *Pemuda*

Indonesia (Indonesian Youth) organization in the late 1920s, and had cut their teeth on student politics in Holland as part of the *Perhimpunan Indonesia* (Indonesian Association). The Pendidikan was founded in August 1931, a reorganization of the *golongan merdeka* (free groups), described by the Dutch colonial police in December 1931 as "… less developed radical elements including some old communists… merely individual clusters not tied in any coherent network."[426]

These *golongan merdeka* had roots in the study clubs and student societies of the late 1920s, groups which self-consciously cloaked themselves in the legacy of resistance to the colonial state as enacted by the PKI and Soekarno's *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party). Many *golongan merdeka* in Batavia, Surabaya and Bandung had been formed by disgruntled PNI members as a result of Soekarno's imprisonment and the PNI's dissolution in 1931.[427] At the behest of Hatta and Sjahrir, who were still in Holland at the time, these *golongan merdeka* met in August 1931 to federate as a national movement, the *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia*, deliberately avoiding the status of either "party" or "association" (thereby avoiding the need for registration and approval).[428] Its members remained free to affiliate themselves with other organizations or political parties. The choice of organizational name was no coincidence: the Pendidikan's abbreviation, PNI, was the same as that of Soekarno's recently-suppressed nationalist party. This self-conscious positioning of the movement within a tradition of radical resistance to the colonial state was mirrored in popular discourse: the Indonesian press of the 1930s often referred to the Pendidikan as the "New PNI" to distinguish it from the original PNI of Soekarno. Continuities in both language and arguments – both had a strong socialist flavor – were perceptible between the "old" and the "new" PNI.[429]

Sjahrir and Hatta returned to Indonesia in January 1932, and Sjahrir promptly reorganized the *golongan merdeka* of Batavia to form a Pendidikan branch, installing himself as the chairman of the editorial board of

[426] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 77.
[427] John Ingleson, *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1927-1934*, ASAA Southeast Asia Publications Series 1 (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia), 1979), 145.
[428] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 79.
[429] J. D. Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," *Indonesia* 32 (1981): 161.

Daulat Ra'jat, the organization's theory-centric press organ.[430] By the early 1930s, the Pendidikan was publishing several newspapers in the key cities of Batavia, Bandung, Surakarta, and Yogyakarta.[431] At a public meeting in Batavia in March 1932, Sjahrir told his audience that the Pendidikan "wants to educate, and thus to map the path which leads to freedom," emphasizing that the Pendidikan was not a political party, and that it was the aim of the Pendidikan to "bring clarity," not to "make agitation."[432] This reserved stance reflected the climate of surveillance and censorship that followed the 1926 uprisings and the investment of the hyper-conservative Cornelis de Jonge as Governor-General in 1931. However, it also reflected a reorientation of strategic emphasis in the *pergerakan*: under the charismatic but rather bookish Hatta and Sjahrir, the Pendidikan was to pursue a course of developing the base, the grassroots that would nurture a new *pergerakan* generation, a generation which would find more effective ways of resisting Dutch rule since outright revolt and appeals to Soviet aid had failed.[433] This emphasis on education and cultivation was evident in the newspapers associated with the Pendidikan: their writing was often cerebral or pedagogical, such as expositions on Marx's ideas rendered in plain Bahasa Indonesia.[434] At the same time, Pendidikan newspapers also embraced an identifiably Islamic identity, evident in the rhetoric and the metaphors employed.

The Pendidikan was also deeply conscious of the need to distinguish itself from the other claimant to the mantle of Soekarno's PNI, the cooperationist Partindo. The Pendidikan's other name, PNI-Baru (New PNI), was a direct claim on the legacy of the PNI, and it duly attracted many former PNI members who wanted no part in Partindo's focus on economic matters and *Volksraad* participation.[435] After some prevarication, it was Partindo that Soekarno ultimately joined after his release from prison in December 1931. While celebrating Soekarno's release, Pendidikan publications were conscientious in highlighting Partindo's allegedly *ningrat* (aristocratic)

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[430] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 84.
[431] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 96.
[432] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 84-85.
[433] J. D. Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," *Indonesia* 32 (1981): 159. Legge has an excellent anecdote about Hatta's "school-masterly performance."
[434] Soewardi, "Peladjaran Karl Marx," *Banteng Ra'jat*, April 25, 1932; *Das Kapital* was translated and serialized in *Daulat Ra'jat* from the April 20, 1933 issue onwards.
[435] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 154.

character, arguing that its leaders came from the elite stratum of Javanese society.[436] By contrast, the Pendidikan attracted members whose families had been sufficiently wealthy to enable them to access a degree of education, but who did not have particularly good prospects within the Dutch civil service. Commensurately, the Pendidikan struggled to attract the same level of support that Partindo did under Soekarno's charismatic leadership, especially in Java, the political center of gravity. By August 1933, Partindo could claim some 20,000 registered members in Java, and Permi some 10,000 in Sumatra, while the Pendidikan could claim approximately 1,000 members spread across 12 branches on Java and 250 in West Sumatra.[437] Besides the urban intelligentsia, the Pendidikan also tried to focus their outreach in Java on the agrarian laboring classes. It was most active in Cirebon and Indramayu, areas outside of the Javanese heartland whose economies were dominated by large sugar plantations.[438]

This is particularly interesting because it mirrors the support base that self-declared Islamic communist Haji Misbach had enjoyed amongst sugar plantation laborers in the Surakarta area in the 1920s. The Pendidikan seems to have operated at two levels: it had a limited grassroots activism and propaganda operation amongst the agrarian laboring classes, but some of its publications were targeted at an educated audience: the civil servants, businessmen and professionals educated in both Dutch and vernacular-medium institutions. Evidently, the Pendidikan embraced a strategy of training dedicated and erudite cadres, rather than a mass movement united by a charismatic figure, as Sarekat Islam had done and nwhich Soekarno tended towards, but it also understood the need to establish organic links with the working classes – though it had limited success in this regard.[439]

There are several reasons why I describe the Pendidikan as a socialist rather than a communist organization, although the Dutch security apparatus tended to think of it as the latter.[440] The Pendidikan was not eager to embrace the label communist, presumably because of a prudent wariness of being associated with the recently-

[436] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 91.
[437] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 89; *Kedaulatan Ra'jat*, October 10, 1932; Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 185.
[438] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 88.
[439] J. D. Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," *Indonesia* 32 (1981): 154-155, 164.
[440] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 91.

proscribed PKI. Hatta himself had even described communism as the enemy of the nationalists on at least one occasion, although George Kahin readily recognized Hatta's facility with Marxist theory.[441] However, at almost exactly the same time, Sjahrir published articles in the Amsterdam socialist newspaper *De Nieuwe Weg* advocating the eventual formation of a mass revolutionary party.[442] This might seem counterintuitive, but it is unsurprising once one abandons the assumption that all Marxists had to be beholden to Moscow. The word communism was occasionally used in articles published by Pendidikan newspapers, but only in the context of explaining communism, or gleaning insights from the teachings of Marx. This is evident in articles entitled "Komunistis" (communism) and "Peladjaran Karl Marx" (The Teachings of Karl Marx). These articles provided an explanation of the differences between communism, socialism, Bolshevism, and social democracy.[443] Both articles made clear that Bolshevism was not synonymous with communism, and that it's defining features were the willingness to use violence in seizing power, and the establishment of a party dictatorship – a position that was clearly distinct from the Pendidikan one.[444]

Pendidikan newspapers were careful to avoid identifying the Pendidikan as a communist organization. While Pendidikan members were clearly influenced by Marx's ideas, they seemed truly invested in Sjahrir's vision that the Pendidikan's main function was pedagogical rather than agitative. The ideas that they sought to disseminate were part of the same corpus of scholarship and ideology that animated communists as well; however, they did not see themselves as a branch of a global communist network, did not seek to organize a vanguard of the proletariat as the Bolsheviks had done, or proselytize within the military as the PKI had done before 1926.[445] Influenced by both Marx as well as Austrian socialists such as Otto Bauer and Max Adler, the

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[441] M. Hatta, "Partai Indonesia and I," *Bintang Timoer*, August 3, 1931; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 281. As Ingleson points out, this was likely the result of bitterness engendered by the expulsion of Sjahrir and Hatta from the Perhimpunan Indonesia (then dominated by Rustam Effendi, a crypto-communist) in November 1931, for their willingness to cooperate with non-communist nationalists in defiance of Comintern dogma. Marxism was central to Sjahrir and Hatta's politics, but so was an openness to other beliefs, motivations, and ideologies. This set the stage for productive conciliations with Islam. See Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 148.

[442] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 147.

[443] Soewardi, "Peladjaran Karl Marx," *Banteng Ra'jat*, 25 April 1932; Anonymous, "Kommunistis," *Daulat Ra'jat*, November 10, 1932.

[444] *Ibid.*

[445] Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), 29.

Pendidikan most often described itself as "proletarian" in its newspapers, which suggests that the Pendidikan is best understood as a Marxist, socialist organization.[446]

"Komunistiys," published in the November 10, 1932 issue of *Daulat Ra'jat*, reinforces this point. "Komunistis" showed remarkable sophistication in parsing the differences between the Bolshevik articulation of communism and the social democratic interpretation of communism. It identified "*Kaoem Sosialis Kiri*" (the socialists of the left) as distinct from the "*Kaoem Komoenis Opisieel*" (official communists) on the basis that the latter were committed to violent revolution and taking instructions from Moscow.[447] It managed to strike a relatively impartial tone, explaining the relative positions of these different articulations of communism, and even attempted to explain why the social democrats/socialists and communists would mutually recriminate each other as reactionary. It characterized socialists as advocating the interests of the working class in opposition to their employers, but argued that socialists stopped short of toppling the existing government, although they theoretically agreed with the dictatorship of the proletariat and the use of violence if necessary.[448] Although the article did not explicitly endorse either side, the Pendidikan's organizational structure and activities clearly positioned it within its own definition of socialism.

However, "Komunistis" also argued that there were ultimately few ideological differences between socialists and communists because both ideologies were based on the teachings of Marx; they differed only in the practical application of said ideologies.[449] The fact that *Daulat Ra'jat* saw the need to publish this article suggests that the Pendidikan saw itself as connected to, but still distinct from, communist resistance to the colonial state, a prudent position to take given the climate of surveillance and repression. The article's description of socialism was clearly aligned with the relatively unconfrontational stance adopted by the Pendidikan. That said, it positioned socialism as drawing on the same corpus of ideas (*Das Kapital* was specifically invoked), sharing the same aspirations (an eventual dictatorship of the proletariat), role models

[446] Anonymous, "Kommunistis," *Daulat Ra'jat*, November 10, 1932, Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 93.
[447] Anonymous, "Kommunistis," *Daulat Ra'jat*, November 10, 1932.
[448] *Ibid.*
[449] *Ibid.*

(Soviet Russia), and using the same language (the importance of seizing *alat penghasilan*, the means of production, is mentioned) as the communists did.[450] More succinctly, this was an organization that sought to clarify and disseminate Marxist ideas such as critiques of capitalism and imperialism, without taking instructions from Moscow. That suffices for the label "Marxist", but not communist in the sense of Comintern affiliation. It would be fair to say the Pendidikan sympathized with communism, and never denied their shared lineage with Soviet Bolshevism or indigenous Indonesian articulations of communism, but ultimately represented a different approach to achieving similar goals.

The Pendidikan was visibly as Islamic as it was socialist. Key Pendidikan leaders such as Hatta moved in a distinctly Muslim social milieu, and Mrázek's description of him is revealing: "Hatta clearly moved in the same orbit as the students from Cairo and Mecca, and as the Permi activists. *kuam muda* Hatta himself had made plans to stop by Mecca to perform the *haj* on his way back to Indonesia from Holland upon the completion of his *doctorandus* degree: although this plan did not work out, it was widely publicized in the Indonesian press, and lent his return a 'specifically Islamic accent.'"[451] Moreover, Pendidikan leaders in Sumatra, such as Darwis Thaib, were sometimes drawn from the ranks of Permi itself.[452] Others were students and alumni of modernist Islamic schools, and maintained their membership in Islamic organizations such as the *Persatoean Moerid Diniyah School* (Union of Diniyyah School Students, PMDS) even after they became Pendidikan members, which was perfectly consistent with Pendidikan policy. The degree to which the Pendidikan was beholden to Islam is demonstrated most clearly in the following rhetorical excerpt from *Daulat Ra'jat*: "A member of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia who dies while fighting for national freedom, is he judged by Allah as a *kafir* [infidel]? To be a nationalist such as the Pendidikan wants one to be, does this make a Pendidikan member a *moertad* [apostate] to Islam?"[453]

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[450] *Ibid.*
[451] Mrázek, *Sjahrir,* 97.
[452] Anonymous, "Berita PBPMI," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932. Darwis Thaib was listed as one of the three members of Permi's leadership training committee, headed by the key Permi leader Iljas Jacoub. Darwis Thaib also regularly contributed articles to Permi's newspaper, *Medan Ra'jat*.
[453] Darwis Thaib, "Ke…Persamaan! Socialis, Kommunis, dan Kedaulatan Ra'jat," *Daulat Ra'jat*, January 10, 1933.

This hybrid Islamic and socialist character was supported by Hatta's own memoirs. Hatta described the Pendidikan curriculum as aiming to provide cadres with a robust understanding of "the broad outlines of Indonesian history, the history of the *pergerakan* itself, the distinction between cooperation and non-cooperation, the growth of Imperialism, the creeping reach of Capitalism, colonialism, and the sovereignty of the people."[454] According to Hatta, the core Pendidikan readings for cadres were articles in *Daulat Ra'jat*, Soekarno's *Menggugat Indonesia* (Indonesia Accuses, a collection of speeches Soekarno gave at his trial in 1930), as well as Hatta's own *Indonesia Vrij* (Free Indonesia) and *Tujuan dan Politik Pergerakan Nasional di Indonesia* (Purpose and Pergerakan Politics in Indonesia).[455] The endorsement of Soekarno is important, because although Sjahrir and Hatta often criticized Patindo and resisted merger with it, they had enough in common with Soekarno's synthetic tendencies to justify assigning his work as part of the Pendidikan corpus. Among their commonalities was a deep commitment to critiquing colonial capitalism and an attachment to Islam. Hatta's own commitment to Islam was also evident in his autobiography: he mentioned an invitation from the PSII activist (and later Masjumi chairman) Soekiman to edit a PSII-linked newspaper, *Utusan Indonesia*.[456] Hatta was too busy with *Daulat Ra'jat* to take up the offer, but he was explicit that *Utusan Indonesia* mirrored the positions of the Pendidikan, and that the PSII and Pendidikan had very good relations.[457]

The confluence of Islam and socialism was perceptible in a variety of Pendidikan newspaper articles. *Daulat Ra'jat*, for example, embodied an articulation of socialism influenced by the Dutch Marxist *Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij* (Social Democratic Workers' Party), though Islam was clearly still relevant to its frame of reference. *Daulat Ra'jat* was the theoretical companion publication to the *Pendidikan*'s main newspaper organ, *Kedaulatan Ra'jat* (The Sovereignty of the People), and ran from 1931–34.[458] It was more explicitly pedagogical in the sense that it focused on explaining socialist ideas rather than reporting on contemporary events. Highly didactic in tone, it rarely ran articles on current events, and the promotional

[454] Mohammad Hatta, *Untuk Negeriku*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Kompas, 2011), 30–31.
[455] *Ibid*., 30.
[456] *Ibid*., 31.
[457] *Ibid.*, 31.
[458] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 87.

section was dominated by advertisements for textbooks, evening classes, and correspondence courses.[459] In his study of *Daulat Ra'jat*, J. D. Legge admitted its radical and nationalist aspects, but characterized it is secular.[460] Contrary to Legge's analysis, this chapter will show how Islamic imagery and language were imbricated in *Daulat Ra'jat*'s articles; evidence that the Pendidikan was articulating socialism within an Islamic framework through *Daulat Ra'jat*.

On November 10, 1932, *Daulat Ra'jat*, ran an article simply titled "Kommunistis" (communism).[461] The article was an attempt to clarify and define communism in an Indonesian context. It argued that both the people who the colonial state identified as communists, as well as those who called themselves communists, were really just violent men using violent means to achieve their vision for Indonesia. This vision was *sama rata, sama rasa* (same level, same feeling), a distinctly Indonesian articulation of societal egalitarianism previously evoked by both Soekarno and Tan Malaka.[462] The article went on to argue that such *orang berkerdja* (workingmen) were often willing to work with *reaksioner* (reactionaries), such as religious insurgents waging holy war against the Dutch, as had happened in Banten in 1926, out of sheer necessity.[463] While dismissive of this confluence, the article nevertheless admitted a basis upon which self-declared communists and Muslims had cooperated in the past, within the context of anti-colonial resistance.

Despite the article's dismissive attitude towards the allegedly inchoate communism of the 1920s, it was published alongside a cartoon which drew on both socialist and Islamic imagery. The cartoon depicted a man in a business suit, with a halo labelled "*oeang*" (money) around his head and wings on his back, smilingly smoking a cigar while carrying a book labelled "BIBLE" in both arms. The cartoon was mockingly captioned "The angel of capitalism spreads civility!" While denigrating the communists of the 1926 uprisings, *Daulat Ra'jat* nevertheless invoked religious imagery that drew on a perceived link between Christianity and

[459] *Ibid.*, 85.
[460] Legge, "Daulat Ra'jat and the Ideas of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia," 156.
[461] Anonymous, "Kommunistis," *Daulat Ra'jat*, November 10, 1932.
[462] *Ibid.*
[463] *Ibid.*

exploitative colonialism – depicting the smirking, winged Christian capitalist, presumably soaring above the laboring masses – precisely because such imagery resonated with its readers' cultural frames of reference. In this cartoon, colonial economic exploitation was deliberately conflated with the Christian identity of the expatriate Dutch, conjuring up the image of a capitalist angel inhabiting the lofty realm of the sky, abstracted from the quotidian suffering endured by peasants in a commodity-oriented plantation economy. In this image, the smirking angel blithely preaches the virtues of both capitalism and Christianity while remaining indifferent to suffering that makes possible the lofty status of the *colon*.

The cartoon caricatures and rejects the structure of colonial Indies society: it identifies capitalism and Christianity as the enemies of the Indonesian people, both as unhappy participants in an unequal colonial economic relationship, and as Muslims living under the rule of a Christian polity. One of the central anxieties driving the *kaum muda* through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was discomfort with the success of Christian missions in the outer islands, as well as with the undeniable political dominance of nations associated with "Christendom." For many *kaum muda* organizations, their emphasis on modernist education was aimed specifically at making Islam a competitive alternative to Christianity, reducing the effectiveness of proselytization to NEI Muslims. Anxieties surrounding the capitalist-Christian axis would thus have resonated particularly with native Muslims, who felt Islam to be under siege both at home and abroad. The combination of socialist critiques and Islamic anxieties regarding the Dutch colonial state is evident in this cartoon. It is but one example of an important but understudied strain of *pergerakan* ideas: the articulation of socialist ideas informed by, and articulated within, an Islamic social context. Significant numbers of Indies Muslims, including Pendidikan members, envisioned an egalitarian future Indonesia, and critiqued the colonial state in a hybrid idiom which mixed Islamic and socialist discourses.

In another article entitled "Indonesia Dalam Lingkoengan-Keadaan Doenia," the author mocked the Dutch tendency to blame social unrest in the Indies upon foreign instigation from Moscow.[464] The author sardonically

[464] Anonymous, "Indonesia Dalam Lingkoengan-Keadaaan Doenia," *Daulat Ra'jat,* August 10, 1932.

raised the specter of the "*momok Bolsjewik*" (Bolshevik Devil), and pointed out the longstanding claim of the "*chotbah pemerintah*" (literally, the government sermon) that social unrest in the Indies was due to foreign instigation. The use of "*chotbah*" here is interesting, because the author is drawing on a specifically Islamic lexicon. The *chotbah*, an indigenized transliteration of *khutbah*, refers to the customary sermon preached by the imam of a mosque to his congregation during the communal Friday prayers. The *khutbah* has particular political resonance, because the Imam would customarily invoke a blessing at the end of the sermon for a political leader, and the political leader thus named was implied to be owed the political (or at least symbolic) allegiance of the congregation. Various *imams* leading the Friday prayers had included mentions of the Dutch Queen Wilhemina on various occasions, at the behest of the colonial authorities.

The use of "*chotbah permerintah*" indicated a grudging acknowledgement of the reality of Dutch power even in religious matters, but it also utilized the *khutbah* as a metaphor to critique the Dutch colonial state's carefully-cultivated image of *rust en orde* (tranquility and order). The Dutch colonial state positioned itself as a secular political authority that respected Islam; in using the phrase *chotbah pemerintah*, *Daulat Ra'jat* subverted that formulation by insinuating that the Dutch consolidated political power through manipulating religion. "Propaganda" was certainly a word that existed within the Pendidikan's lexicon, but *khutbah* seems to have been the preferred term for rebutting Dutch claims that communist agitation was driven by Bolshevik agents. The insinuation was this: much like the hollow *khutbah* preached by compliant Imams in the pay of the colonial state, the *chotbah pemerintah* on Bolshevik subversion was an empty claim that was meant to placate and anesthetize natives. This vocabulary might have been adopted simply because it resonated with *Daulat Ra'jat*'s intended audience; that is, readers would have been more familiar with the concept of *khutbah* than the concept of propaganda. Whether or not that was the case, it is undeniable that the term *khutbah* would have had special cultural resonance, evoking a transgressive image of Dutch interference in Islam. It therefore constituted a useful rhetorical strategy to undermine the claims of the Dutch colonial state.

The article went on to quote the famous *ethici* Orientalist and former Dutch Advisor for Native Affairs, C. Snouck Hurgronje. It cited his rebuttal of the idea that social unrest in the Indies was the result of foreign

agitation.[465] Interestingly, Snouck was quoted at length in the original Dutch; an Indonesian translation was subsequently provided. This provides a sense of the mixed audience *Daulat Ra'jat* attracted – a spectrum with Indonesians who had access to Dutch-language education on one end, and those who had access to vernacular education but not to Dutch institutions like ELS and MULO, on the other. The author endorsed Snouck's argument that the pre-1927 *pergerakan* was a mix of aristocrats, Holy warriors (Muslims waging *Jihad*) and proto-communists, which the author collectively labelled *extremisten* (extremists) and *kaum yang terkiri* (the partisans of the left), rather than Soviet puppets.[466] The author also endorsed Snouck's view that these groups were not mutually exclusive, but were motivated by a shared goal: resistance to Dutch colonial authority. The use of Snuock's characterization of the uprising's participants indicated that the Pendidikan embraced the eclectic *pergerakan* lineage that it was descended from, which includq ed confluences of Islam and communism in the context of anti-colonial resistance. The author went on to argue that prevailing social conditions in the 1930s had given rise to *pergerakan* groups that were even more inclusive than those of the previous generation. He argued they possessed an improved level of sophistication and consciousness that made them wary of "*Jihad atau langkah Jayabaya dan Heru Cakra*" (the paths of Holy War chosen by Jayabaya and Heru Cakra, Javanese kings of antiquity).[467] Therefore, the *pergerakan* of the 1930s could be differentiated from the social movements that gave rise to the Cilegon peasants' revolt of 1888, and the PKI uprisings of 1926–27.[468]

Here, the author was suggesting that the Pendidikan, while rejecting the inchoate rebellion of the past, still located itself within the same tradition of resistance to Dutch rule. Moreover, by endorsing Snouck's assessment of the uprising's participants, the author indicated that the Pendidikan was comfortable with a genealogy for itself which included distinctly Islamic roots, while signaling its openness to the intellectual fruits of Europe,

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[465] *Ibid.*
[466] *Ibid.*
[467] *Ibid.* The implication here is that violent Jihad or the recurring pattern of mystically-inspired rebellion were understood by the *pergerakan* to be ineffective means of resisting Dutch colonial authority.
[468] *Ibid.*, For more on the Cilegon peasant rebellion, see Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta: Oxford University Press, 1973).

including Orientalist scholarship. In true socialist spirit, the article went on to proudly state that the *pergerakan kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Indonesian independence movement) was – happily – taking on radical undertones:

> *"… the Indonesian independence movement has evinced signs towards radicalism, such that the Indonesian people easily embrace the radical principles of communism – we remember the extensive influence of the PKI and the Sarekat Rakyat in the past – which lives on in the courageous opposition to the effects of the* colonialism [of the present generation of pergerakan], *and which desires to steer the destiny of the Indonesian people."*[469]

Revolutionary and socialist in political philosophy, *Daulat Ra'jat* also understood itself to be an inheritor of the mantle of anti-colonial resistance, handed down from the "aristocrats, Holy Warriors and proto-communists," an eclectic band glossed as "partisans of the left."[470] Rather than reject preceding attempts to undermine colonial rule as misguided or primitive, *Daulat Ra'jat* embraced the complex pedigree of the *pergerakan*, a pedigree that mixed Islam and communism.

This embrace of the legacy of the pre-1927 *pergerakan* was visible in the Islamic overtones in the arguments and language deployed by other *Daulat Ra'jat* articles. In an article from the January 10, 1933 issue, Darwis Thaib presented a particularly nuanced argument: anyone who died while serving the nationalist cause was a *kafir* (infidel) because he idolized the motherland: however, if a partisan were to die fighting for freedom while keeping himself *bertauchid* (believing in the oneness of God), then he would reach heaven."[471] This perspective embraced both the Islamic language of martyrdom and monotheism (in the sense of avoiding idolatry), which suggesting its appeal to the newspaper's target audience. At the same time, it framed religious martyrdom within a framework of secular goals such as independence for the Indies. This was perfectly in keeping with Sjahrir's insistence that the Pendidikan needed to speak the language of the masses, though not necessarily court mass membership.[472]

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[469] Anonymous, "Indonesia Dalam Lingkoengan-Keadaaan Doenia," *Daulat Ra'jat*, August 10, 1932. The *Sarekat Rakyat*, or People's Associations, were the grassroots appendages of PKI, and were closely affiliated to the *Sekolah Rakyat*, or People's Schools, which aimed to mobilize the population by cultivating nationalist awareness through education. The PKI and SR were both suppressed after the 1926–27 uprisings.
[470] *Ibid.*
[471] Darwis Thaib, "Ke…Persamaan! Socialis, Kommunis, dan Kedaulatan Ra'jat," *Daulat Ra'jat*, January 10, 1933.
[472] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 150.

Reading *Daulat Ra'jat* in conjunction with other Pendidikan newspapers helps corroborate the imbrication of Islam and socialism in the Pendidikan. *Banteng Ra'jat* (The People's Bull) was published in Yogyakarta from 1932 onward, and tended to strike a tone similar to *Daulat Ra'jat* in terms of rhetoric and didacticism. An article entitled "Pergerakan Ra'jat" (The People's Movement) from 25 November 1932 was typical of the writing that appeared in *Banteng Ra'jat*. The article argued that the Indonesian *pergerakan* was part of a broader "people's movement," an oeuvre which included the Dutch Republic's struggle for independence from Spanish rule during the Eighty Years' War, Turkey's resurgence under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Sun Yat Sen's struggle to build a republican China, Egypt's struggles for substantive independence led by *Arabi Pasja* (Ahmad Urabi) and *Zachlul Pasja* (Saad Zaghloul), and the Indian independence movement under Gandhi.[473] Interestingly, Turkey and Egypt were singled out for having effectively resisted foreign imperialism.

These examples are telling, because they position the *pergerakan* within a broader movement of anti-imperialism from the sixteenth century onward. While not quite an evocation of socialist solidarity, this was an attempt to highlight the *pergerakan*'s place in a broader trajectory of historical development – something resonant with Marx's dialectical materialism. The implication was that the *pergerakan* was just like any of these successful nationalist movements, and deserving of the consideration given to such celebrated movements because they were the part of the inexorable march of history, on the cusp of overrunning the last bastions of Empire. It was an attempt to situate the *pergerakan* historically, to show that the *pergerakan* possessed coherence and meaning, and could not be dismissed as inchoate, infantile rage, or a communist conspiracy masterminded from afar, as some segments of the colonial state and virtually the entire expatriate community were wont to claim. Like the Indian movement for *swaraj*, it had yet to achieve success, but success was but an eventuality, a sentiment drawn from a Hegelian and Marxist conception of History. As the article succinctly stated, "In order for us to understand the emergence of the *pergerakan*, we must first look to Asia, to the other

[473] Anonymous, "Pergerakan Ra'jat," *Banteng Ra'jat*, November 25, 1932.

movements of this age; in the grand scheme of things, we are but one [of many] *pergerakan*… the Indonesian *pergerakan* is but one eye [link] in the chain of the *pergerakan* in Asia."[474]

This internationalist outlook coexisted alongside a highly particularistic conception of the *pergerakan*'s genesis, with no apparent contradiction in the eyes of the author. The article posited that the *pergerakan* originated in 1908 with the formation of *Budi Utomo*, a politically quiescent organization for Javanese aristocrats aimed at promoting Javanese culture in the face of perceived encroachment by Dutch-medium education. The article then connected *Budi Utomo* to a long list of much more radical and expansive organizations, such as the Eurasian-dominated *Indische Partij* (Indies Party), which openly agitated for Indonesian independence under elite Eurasian leadership; *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Association); the PKI; and finally the PNI.[475] The article waxed lyrical about the importance of *Sarekat Islam* in particular: "although freedom of association at the time [unspecified, but presumably the 1910s] had been restricted by regulation III R.R., especially the existence of political groups, nevertheless uncountable numbers of Indonesian people, the *Zachtste volk van de aarde* [the gentlest people on the earth], were able to quash the regulation with the accumulated strength of spirit in the *Sarekat Islam* movement, even though it had only arisen in 1912."[476]

The *pergerakan* of the 1930s, including the Pendidikan, was thus positioned as a continuation of the tradition to resistance to the colonial state spearheaded by the overtly religious Sarekat Islam in the 1910s and 1920s. Like other anti-Imperialist movements across the world, the article portrayed the *pergerakan* as arising spontaneously in righteous opposition to Imperial rule. However, rather than dismiss earlier iterations of resistance as primitive, as doctrinaire Marxists tended to do, the article embraced the predecessors of the Pendidikan, choosing instead to celebrate a specifically Islamic antecedent alongside communist and nationalist movements of various political persuasions. This illustrates the world-straddling character of the Pendidikan,

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[474] *Ibid.*
[475] *Ibid.* Sarekat Islam was a movement founded in 1912 to advance the economic interests of Muslim textile traders, which quickly evolved into the first Islamic political party of the Indies, and which attracted (from 1917-1923) many radicals who would go on to become prominent PKI leaders after Sarekat Islam split into non-communist and pro-communist factions in 1923. See McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, 1-47.
[476] *Ibid.*

where the *pergerakan* is portrayed as simultaneously part of the fine tradition of Islamic resistance to infidel rule, as well as part of a wave of anti-Imperialist solidarity sweeping across the globe. These newspapers, which propounded socialist solutions to the injustices of colonial rule, nevertheless articulated their claims within an Islamic idiom, invoking the heritage of Islamic resistance to Imperial encroachment.

The combination of an Islamic worldview with socialist ideas, methods of mobilization, and the language of revolution was also evident in *Api Ra'jat* (The People's Fire), published in Solo (Surakarta) from 1932 to 1933. *Api Ra'jat* was closely associated with the Pendidikan, but in tone and language it differed greatly from the theory-centric *Daulat Ra'jat*, which was edited by Sjahrir himself and published in Jakarta (Batavia).[477] The location of its publication is significant, and goes some way to explaining the differences in tone and language. Solo lay in the *voorstenlanden*, the princely states where two of the four extant Javanese royal courts still held nominal sway (under the oversight of Dutch advisors). Before 1927, the city had also been a known stronghold of Islamic communists such as Haji Misbach. Unlike the Dutch-educated Sjahrir and Hatta, self-declared Islamic communists like Misbach or Haji Datuk Batuah did not come from the upper-middle class background which nurtured so many *pergerakan* leaders. Neither did they come from the proletarian milieu of the trade unions of Batavia, as the prominent PKI leaders Semaun and Darsono had. Instead, they were educated in Islamic institutions, and drew their support from both pious Muslims as well as the laborers who worked the sugar plantations of the Javanese interior.[478] Despite his lack of union connections or personal ties to the PKI leadership, Haji Misbach was effectively an autonomous leader and labor organizer in the Solo region. The PKI could do little but accept his de facto authority as representative of the Solo PKI committee, though it did not always agree with his often abrasive approach to anti-colonial politics.[479]

This milieu of strident Islamic communism enabled repeated and successful mobilizations against perceived injustices on the sugar estates, and gave rise to radical newspapers in Solo which tended to be more fiercely

[477] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 96.
[478] Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 112.
[479] *Ibid.*

critical of the Dutch colonial state than their more cosmopolitan counterparts in Batavia, as well as more self-consciously Islamic in their posture. *Api Ra'jat* was published in low Javanese rather than the unifying/cosmopolitan language of Bahasa Indonesia, which had long since become the favored language of *pergerakan* publications. Moreover, *Api Ra'jat* was possessed of a markedly informal tone, reminiscent of spoken rhetoric, which stood in clear contrast to the formal prose of other Pendidikan publications like *Daulat Ra'jat*. Examples of this include the use of non-standard spelling for dramatic effect: "…federasinya nanti hanya bisa direpotkan perkara kontribusiiiiiii saja!" (the codification of regulations can only be disrupted by [financial] contributions!).[480]

Api Ra'jat was also notable for its lack of advertisements. Even radical *pergerakan* publications from 1920s Solo, such as Haji Misbach's *Medan Moeslimin*, could count on a few regular advertisers such as sympathetic restaurants and hotels in each issue, scant as these were. The *Congres Journalisten Indonesia* (Congress of Indonesian Journalists) had highlighted the importance of advertising for the financial stability of *pergerakan* publications at its August 1931 conference, but *Api Ra'jat* seemed uninterested in, or incapable of, tapping this source of revenue.[481] *Api Ra'jat*'s intended audience likely had very limited disposable income, since it carried no advertisements at all. Its combination of informal language (low Javanese) and lack of advertising suggests that it catered to a mass audience that had received a basic vernacular education, and who underwrote publication costs through subscriptions. This was a recipe for financial precarity, which explains its short print run. This also suggests that *Api Ra'jat*'s intended audience was urban wage laborers, sharecroppers, plantation laborers, agricultural tenants, and even smallholders, collectively a peculiarly Indonesian class formation known as *marhaen*.[482] *Marhaen* as a conceptual category had been popularized by Soekarno, but the term was widely used by a range of Marxist movements, including Tan Malaka's followers and the Pendidikan.[483] The label

[480] Anonymous, "Merobohkan Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Sekolah Buas," *Api Ra'jat*, Oct 1, 1932.
[481] Yamamoto, "The Dynamics of Contentious Politics in the Indies: Inlandsche Journalisten Bond and Persatoean Djoernalis Indonesia," 14.
[482] *Marhaen* also included shopkeepers, petty traders, and cottage industry workers, amongst other professions, incorporating societal elements that Marx and Engels would have classed as the *lumpenproletariat* or *mittelstand*.
[483] Soekarno, *Marhaen and Proletarian*, trans. Claire Holt, Translation Series, Modern Indonesia Project (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1960).

marhaen was regularly used by *Api Ra'jat* itself when addressing its readers, and this underscores my categorization of *Api Ra'jat* as a direct descendent of the *bacaan liar* (wild literature) publications that dominated in the *pergerakan* publishing ecosystem prior to the 1926 uprisings.[484] *Bacaan liar* were similarly subscription-funded and short-lived, and tended to revel in the kind of incendiary and colloquial language that *Api Ra'jat* did.

In an article entitled "Merobohkan Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Sekolah Buas" (Tearing Down the Government Regulations on the Wild Schools), *Api Ra'jat*'s simultaneously Islamic and socialist orientation was clearly discernable. The article was a strident, emotive defense of the *sekolah buas* or *sekolah liar* (wild schools), schools unlicensed and unsupported by the Dutch colonial state, and which the Dutch sought to rein in by imposing regulations on the hiring of teachers and structure of the curriculum.[485] The article lambasted the Dutch government for denigrating these wild schools as *sekolah hutan* (jungle schools), accusing the government of disrespectfully implying that such schools were good only for producing *orang hutan* (jungle folk), like the *orang mirip-mirip* (common parlance for aboriginal Austronesian peoples like Papuans, who were at the bottom of the racialized colonial hierarchy of civilizational status).[486] Instead, it blamed the supposedly inadequate state of these schools on the government's withholding of its support:

Original	**Translation**
Membayar gurunya… tidak!	"[Does the government] pay teachers? No!
Ikut medirikan… tidak!	Does it collaborate in founding schools? No!
Menyewakan rumahnya… tidak!	Does it lease lands for schools? No!
Meminjamkan bukunya… tidak!	Does it loan books to schools? No!

[484] For more on the 'wild literature' of the pre-1927 period, see Hilmar Farid and Razif, "Batjaan Liar in the Dutch East Indies: A Colonial Antipode," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 3 (2008): 277–92.
[485] Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 111-122. This ordinance provoked almost unanimous *pergerakan* resistance throughout 1932 and 1933, spearheaded by Ki Hadjar Dewantara of the Taman Siswa schools, with thousands of anti-ordinance rallies held. Many Sumatran *pergerakan* institutions like the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools were deeply opposed to the ordinance and agitated robustly against it, organizing rallies and publishing numerous critiques.
[486] Anonymous, "Merobohkan Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Sekolah Buas," *Api Ra'jat*, Oct 1, 1932

Tetapi tiba-tiba hendak ikut-ikut keliling dan memeriksa.	But the government suddenly wishes to hover on the margins and check schools [euphemism for surveillance].[487]

This excerpt provides a sense of the exhortative and rebellious tone of *Api Ra'jat*, as well as the centrality of education to its political agenda, just like the Pendidikan. The socialist overtones emerged when the article went on to argue that "the Indonesian people who possessed conviction [of the *pergerakan* cause] would 'storm the gate of freedom,' which was impossible to do merely by opposing regulations on jungle schools".[488] This constituted a call for broader action against the Dutch state, which was followed by a plan for popular mobilization: "the people need to educate themselves by reading the newspapers published by other *pergerakan* organizations such as *Budi Utomo*, *Perserikatan Buruh Indonesia* (PBI, Indonesian Worker's League), the Perikatan *Perkoempoelan Isteri Indonesia* (PPII, League of Indonesian Women), and *the Istri Insaf* (II, Aware Women).[489] Readers were exhorted to form committees to coordinate anti-regulation agitation wherever there are wild schools, calling on these committees to "discipline" school inspectors such that they never come back. Readers were asked to prepare themselves for unemployment, or to become freelancers or contract laborers in service of the wild schools, such that the wild schools might grow from strength to strength and increase in number." Finally, readers were asked to be prepared to go to jail for their actions and convictions.[490]

This socialist-style militant call to organized defiance to the implementation of Dutch state policy was mirrored by the article's positioning of itself within a long tradition of resistance to Dutch rule:

> *"A 100 years ago, the Indonesian people were aggravated, but it was only Diponegoro who suffered the punishment. In the era of the PKI and SR, Indonesia was aggravated again, but it was the PKI and SR that were punished. In the era of the PNI, Indonesia was aggravated yet again, but it was only Soekarno who suffered punishment. On 1 October 1932, the Indonesian people are in upheaval again, but they are spineless. They are in upheaval because they are buffeted by regulations such as those imposed on the jungle schools."*[491]

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[487] *Ibid.*
[488] *Ibid.*
[489] *Ibid.*
[490] *Ibid.*
[491] *Ibid*. Diponegoro was a Javanese prince who led a successful long-running insurgency against the expansion of Dutch rule from 1825-30, known as the Java War.

The article couched its opposition to the wild school ordinance as part of a sustained, century-long effort to resist encroaching Dutch authority. It drew specifically on the heritage of the PKI's resistance to the Dutch colonial state in the same breath as Diponegoro, the Indonesian example *sans pareil* of a Muslim prince waging a righteous but doomed *perang sabil* (holy war) against the *kaffir* (infidel).[492] Immediately after connecting its arguments to a history of oppression and (failed) resistance, including a communist uprising, it went on to lament: "Ya Allah, Allah, kok berkepanjangan ceritanya?" (Oh God O God, why do you draw out this story?) Here, we see the imbrication of socialist methods of mobilization, the identification with a history of communist militancy, and the proclamation of a perceptibly Islamic identity, all reflected in the exhortative rhetoric of this article.

Such critiques of the colonial state did not emerge from strictly doctrinaire positions, such as the Islamic rejection of infidel rule or the socialist condemnation of imperialism. Rather, they were part of a *pergerakan* tradition of resistance to the colonial state which had existed since the 1910s and was both intellectually and spiritually eclectic. In this milieu, room existed for many eclectic combinations, and the confluence between Islamic identity and Marxist ideas was but one of many. Marxism in general and socialism in particular were valued for the analytical tools they provided to critique the colonial state; Islam was valued as an integral part of Indies Muslims' identity. Both were relevant to the *pergerakan*, and could be invoked without recourse to formal Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) or to official Comintern doctrine; the *pergerakan*'s genius lay in its creative, if optimistic, adaptations of foreign ideas to suit conditions in the Indies. As seen in *Api Ra'jat*, this strand of *pergerakan* discourse grounded itself within an Islamic worldview, but drew on then-current socialist ideas to justify its castigation of colonial policy.

Muslim Modernists: *Soeara Islam* and *Soeara PSII*

[492] Diponegoro himself invoked *jihad* against the Dutch, though he also drew on Javanese mystical precepts to support his claim to legitimacy.

Another area in which the confluence of Islamic and socialist ideas was perceptible was in modernist Muslim newspapers, which embraced the legacy of Sarekat Islam just as tightly as the Pendidikan did. Modernist or Reformist Islam was a movement that had sunk deep roots in Sumatra in particular since the nineteenth century, and which agitated for the adoption of orthodox Islamic norms in opposition to the *adat* (custom) based "traditionalist" Islam that had evolved over 400 years in the Indies.[493] This was a vision of a rationalized and codified form of Islam that aimed to bring Indies Muslims' religious praxis in line with a textually-derived vision of "authentic" seventh century Islamic society, as well as with the prevailing interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence in the Middle East, particularly those of the *Shafi'i* school of jurisprudence. The main vectors of transmission for modernist Islamic ideas were pilgrims returning from the *haj* (whose numbers expanded dramatically from the mid-nineteenth century onward), as well as a long tradition of Indies Muslims seeking higher education in Cairo and Mecca; many of these eventually returned to Southeast Asia with significant social prestige, broader perspectives about Islam, and strong convictions about what Islamic authenticity looked like.[494] These modernists saw associations, educational institutions, and publishing as key to disseminating their vision of Islam, and they accordingly invested heavily in these enterprises.

A representative example of modernist Islamic newspapers was *Soeara Islam* (1931–33), a Muhammadiyah-affiliated bimonthly newspaper printed in Bukittinggi, a town in the Minangkabau heartland which both Sjahrir and Hatta had familial ties to.[495] True to modernist form, *Soeara Islam* was deeply concerned with issues of orthodox praxis, devoting most of the January 28, 1933 issue to multiple expositions on the proper praxis in practical matters of alms-giving, prayer, and so on. Of particular interest is the article entitled "*Zakat fithrah*," which refers to the institutionalized form of mandatory charity collected at least once each year around Ramadan. The article exhorted its readers to provide *zakat* either directly to the poor or to an endowment that

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[493] See M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions c. 1830-1930* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2007).
[494] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 5-17.
[495] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 13; Deliar Noer, *Mohammad Hatta: Conscience of a Nation, 1902-1980* (Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan Perwakilan KITLV, 2002), 8. The Muhammadiyah was an ostensibly apolitical education-focused modernist Muslim organization founded by Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta in 1912, which cultivated deep ties to Sarekat Islam during the 1910s.

managed *zakat* (usually a mosque, or run by the *imam* of a mosque) because it was obligatory; it also cautioned that neglecting to do so was a serious sin.[496] The justifications provided for *zakat* were based on textual evidence: the contents (*matn*), though not the chain of transmission (*isnad*), of a *hadith* transmitted by Ibnu Omar were reproduced in their entirety in Arabic, and the article claimed that the *hadith* was accepted as canonical by all four extant Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*madhhab*). This was followed by a translation of the text of the *hadith* into Indonesian, and further, specific instructions on who was eligible for *zakat*, and who was exempt from having to provide it.[497] By itself, this article is unremarkable, in that its emphasis on putting Islamic principles into practice is typical of modernist Muslim discourse. There was nothing particularly socialist about this, except perhaps its insistence on the paramountcy of *zakat*, an instrument for redistributing wealth and reducing inequality.

However, *Soeara Islam* also ran articles of a very different nature. In an article authored by H. Kamaloeddin (the editor of *Soeara Islam*) entitled "Pergerakan kaoem moeslimin dengan kemderdekaan Indonesia" (The Muslim Movement in Relation to Indonesian Independence), the author made a clear connection between the Modernist Muslim movement and the anti-colonial *pergerakan*. Kamaloeddin "testified to the convictions of the Muslims", who were willing to "sacrifice themselves for the honor of their religion and their people."[498] Partly echoing the pedagogical mission of the Pendidikan, Kamaloeddin went on to state:

> *"Indonesian Muslims have a 100% belief in raising the level of their people and homeland [presumably referring to political consciousness and economic development] based on their beloved religion. Truly, the splendor of the Indonesian nation has not yet been realized, because religion has been discarded. The full belief of the Muslims is to erase the attributes of capitalism and imperialism [and replace them] with the rules of Islam."*[499]

This was an articulation of Islam as resistance: a narrative conversant in the socialist critique of capitalism, employing language that had been circulating within *pergerakan* print culture since the late 1910s. The article's message was self-consciously Islamic, but not in a conservative sense; Kamaloeddin did not advocate a return

[496] Anonymous, "*Zakat Fithrah*," *Soeara Islam*, Jan 28, 1933.
[497] *Ibid.*
[498] H. Kamaloeddin, "Pergerakan kaoem moeslimin dengan kemerdekaan Indonesia," *Soeara Islam*, December 1, 1933.
[499] *Ibid.*

to an idealized Islamic past, but rather a reconstruction of Indonesian society based on Islamic principles. He explicitly identified the modernist Muslims with the *pergerakan* cause of Indonesian independence, and articulated an Indonesian future in terms of a God-fearing nation. He rejected the status quo of "colonial greediness" (*loba djadjahan*) as well as the entwined structures of imperialism and capitalism. In Kamloeddin's calculus of progress ("raising the level of their people and homeland"), Islam, independence, and fighting imperialism/capitalism were all inextricably intertwined.

Reading the earlier article on *zakat* in the light of Kamaloeddin's article, the shrill insistence on the mandatory nature of *zakat* takes on deliberately egalitarian overtones. The modernist vision of Islam propounded by *Soeara Islam* was one that took Islam seriously and justified its arguments within a specifically Islamic hermeneutic framework. However, it was also deeply concerned with the egalitarian aspects of Islam and understood Islam to provide a socially just means of organizing societal relations. *Zakat* was important precisely because modernist Muslims like Kamloeddin hoped for a more socially just society, not just because *zakat* was mandated by Islam; in that sense, Islamic principles could and did go hand in hand with critiques of imperialism and capitalism.

The foregrounding of *zakat*, which is a redistributive mechanism that guarantees the bare minimum necessary for survival to all members of society, was not limited to *Soeara Islam*. Another modernist Islamic newspaper (this time in Java) entitled *Soeara PSII* also prominently highlighted the importance of *zakat*. PSII stood for Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic League Party), a later incarnation of the famous Sarekat Islam movement that had harbored many early leftist radicals who went on to become prominent PKI leaders. *Soeara PSII* was a monthly newspaper that served as the PSII's journalistic mouthpiece, and Harsono Tjokroaminoto, son of the influential Sarekat Islam founder Haji Omar Said Tjokroaminoto, was one of *Soeara PSII*'s editors.[500] The PSII itself firmly embraced non-cooperation with the Dutch colonial state, in opposition to Soekarno's capitulation and abandonment of non-cooperation in 1933 after several stints in jail. Written in

[500] The modernist Muslim leader Kartosuwirjo was vice-president of the PSII from 1936 onward and would go on to lead one of two protracted rebellions against the Indonesian republic, the Darul Islam rebellion.

Bahasa Indonesia, *Soeara PSII* was published in Bandung until September 1937. Subsequently published in Jakarta, *Soeara PSII* ran from 1937 to 1941 but was eventually republished (ultimately lasting well into the 1950s) as the party's fortunes improved after independence.[501]

The PSII was the direct heir to the legacy of the Sarekat Islam. It was led by Tjokroaminoto's surviving brother and sons – Abikusono Tjokrosujuso, Harsono Tjokroaminoto, and Anwar Tjokroaminoto – after his death in 1934.[502] It was constituted as the Partai Sarekat Islam in 1923 after the definitive break with the PKI, and later reorganized as the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia in 1929. In contrast to the apolitical Muhammadiyah and the cooperationist Parindra, the PSII never wavered in its policy of non-cooperation with the colonial state.[503] This resulted in the emergence of several splinter factions, notably one led by Tjkroaminoto's right-hand man and virulent anti-communist, Haji Agus Salim. Salim believed a limited degree of meaningful political participation (primarily through the *Volksraad*, which had its legislative functions expanded slightly in 1925) was possible within the parameters laid out by the Dutch.[504] The PSII had significant cachet, thanks to this policy of non-cooperation (*hijra*).

Despite its near complete suppression during the Japanese occupation, the PSII emerged from the occupation with its organizational structure, leadership, and brand recognition intact during the revolution. Both the PSII and its various splinters were able to reactivate their networks of activists in 1945, and all joined Masjumi in the spirit of universal Muslim solidarity. PSII alumni dominated the Masjumi leadership, across both the *Dewan Pimpinan* (Party Leadership Council) and the Madjelis Surjo (Consultative Council).[505] This lasted until 1947, when the temptation of core ministerial posts in Amir Sjarifuddin's cabinet (which Masjumi had declined to support) tempted several of the PSII's top leaders to break away from Masjumi and reconstitute the PSII as a

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[501] Muhamad Hisyam, *Caught Between Three Fires: The Javanese Pangulu Under the Dutch Colonial Administration, 1882-1942* (Jakarta: INIS, 2001), 235.
[502] Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masjumi Party between Democracy and Integralism*, trans. Jeremy Desmond (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015), 45.
[503] *Ibid*., 43–44.
[504] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 43–44; Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942*, East Asian Historical Monographs (Oxford University Press, 1973), 155. These splinter factions included Soekiman's *Partai Islam Indonesia* (PARTII), the Partai Islam Indonesia (PII), and Haji Agus Salim's Barisan Penjedar PSII.
[505] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 45.

separate party.[506] This spoke volumes about the party's lasting appeal: despite the long period of enforced inactivity during the occupation, and the chaos of the revolution, the PSII was sufficiently esteemed and recognized by Indonesians that it constituted a reasonable alternative to Masjumi, which allowed Amir Sjarifuddin to credibly claim that his cabinet had Muslim support and representation. This was a testament to the pre-war influence the PSII wielded. By then, it was a comparatively small, splintered party trying to fill big shoes, but its leaders and newspapers had strong brand recognition, and their words carried weight in *pergerakan* circles.

In a November 1937 article entitled "Party Allah Mesti Menang" (The Party of God Will be Victorious) *Soeara PSII* prefaced the article by quoting verses 55 and 56 of the Qur'an's Surah al-Maidah: "Verily, your *wali* [protector or helper] is none other than Allah, his messenger and the believers – those who pray and who give *zakat*, and they are those who submit themselves in obedience to God in prayer. And whosoever takes God, his messenger and the believers as protectors, then the party of God will be victorious."[507] Apart from supplying the title of the article, this passage highlights the importance of *zakat* by identifying its practice as a condition for being a true believer. The article itself does not address *zakat* directly, focusing instead on rejecting Western influence in Islamic thought, which it saw as a dangerous "humanization" of religion when Islam should properly remain God-centric. However, the article's invocation of *zakat* suggests that despite its contention that Islam should be God-centric rather than humanistic, the human-centered practices like alms-giving remained essential to the faith. Proper praxis, after all, was a central modernist concern, and *zakat* was an essential part of that praxis. For many modernist Muslim organizations like the PSII, compassion and social justice were key components of both piety and politics.

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[506] Kevin Fogg, "The Missing Minister of Religion and the PSII: A Contextual Biography of K.H. Ahmad Azhary," *Studia Islamika* 20 (2013): 40. Fogg points out that the split may not have been motivated solely by *realpolitik*, but also by pressure from regional leaders in Sulawesi and West Sumatra to reconstitute the PSII as an independent entity. This too suggests that the PSII had significant recognition and resonance in different parts of the archipelago.

[507] M. (alias), "Party Allah Mesti Menang," *Soeara PSII*, November 1937; Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali, ed., *The Noble Qur'an*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex, 2012), 152–53.

The article went on to endorse Hatta (at this point in exile in Boven Digoel), calling him a true member of the *pergerakan* who "endeavored to put the laws of God into practice, walking the path of God and following in the example of the prophet."[508] This expression of solidarity suggests that the PSII saw itself as a constituent part of *pergerakan* alongside the Pendidikan; the high esteem in which Hatta was held also indicates that the PSII was comfortable with the socialist tenor of Pendidikan publications. Hatta had published widely in both Pendidikan and *kaum muda* newspapers by this point, so it would be highly improbable that the PSII was unaware of Hatta's socialist sympathies. This sense of belonging to a *pergerakan* which was broad enough to embrace both Islam and socialism is echoed in following passage from the same article:

> *"Our pergerakan has inflicted upon itself various trials and temptations such as the era of Afdeeling B*[509]*: the era of separation from the communists, resulting in the Sarekat Islam splitting into Red and White branches in 1923; the era of conflict at the* [PSII] *Betawi Congress of 1933, and many other horrifying events in the life of the party. But none of that was able to cause our pergerakan to slip from the straight path, the true path, the* [correct] *path according to the divine instructions and the sunnah of the prophet."*[510]

Not only did the author strike a noticeable note of regret when mentioning the split from the communists, and the subsequent division of Sarekat Islam into pro-communist and non-communist factions, he also clearly placed the PSII within a movement ("Our *pergerakan*") which enjoyed divine sanction. This article posited that the PSII was part of a movement ordained by God and therefore stressed the value of unity, even with the communists.

This insistence on unity was more rhetoric than reality, for the disagreements of the 1920s had been intense, but it nevertheless shows how some modernist Muslim organizations accepted rapprochement with the left within the context of the anti-colonial struggle. This notion of the necessity of cooperating with the left is corroborated by the article's characterization of PSII as a progressive Islamic party, one that sought not to reconstruct an idealized past but to forge an unprecedented society built on Islamic principles:

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[508] M. (alias), "Party Allah Mesti Menang," *Soeara PSII*, November 1937.
[509] Afdeeling B stands for Section B, a shorthand reference to a purported communist uprising planned by a branch of Sarekat Islam and foiled by the colonial police in 1919. For more on the Afdeeling B, see William A. Oates, "The Afdeeling B: An Indonesian Case Study," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 9 (1968): 107–16.
[510] M. (alias), "Party Allah Mesti Menang," *Soeara PSII*, November 1937.

> *"But we should not be inclined to blame God and Islam, but instead speak of archaic religion, religion which is inappropriate for the present, and unsuited for the modern age, this modern age, the age of wetenschap and tekniek* [science and technology]*! Not an Islam unsuited for the times, but an Islam unsuited for carnality. It is not Islam that is anti-modern, or that Islam cannot be modernized, but instead that modernists, in this age of modern jahhilliyah* [the pejorative term for pre-Islamic Arabia, the age of ignorance, into which Muhammad brought divine guidance] *do not understand and do not put into practice the religion which God loves!"*[511]

Statements like these positioned PSII as a firmly Islamic party, but one that flaunted its comfort with the intellectual and technological innovations of Europe. It was a party which saw its goal of creating a model Islamic society as perfectly consistent with the rational *weltanschauung* of science.[512] This is perhaps an unsurprising perspective for a society which, as Mrázek memorably put it, existed "…simultaneously at the farthest reaches of modernity and close to its most dynamic center… both at the periphery and next to the center of Empire and the World."[513] This was, after all, the party of Tjkroaminoto, author of *Islam dan Sosialisme*, led still by his brother and two sons, and their leftist sympathies were perfectly consistent with the legacy of Sarekat Islam. As even Subketi's hagiographic account of the party admits, one of the PSII's five founding principles was the recognition that capitalism was the cause of the *rakyat*'s suffering, and that the PSII must combat capitalism at its very roots.[514] From this position, it would have been a short step to reconcile *kaum muda* Islamic modernism to Hatta's socialist convictions with Islamic credentials. Evidently, the PSII was not ashamed of its historical cooperation with communists. This was an interpretation of Islam that stressed its flexibility and commitment to socio-economic justice, which posited the continuing relevance of Islam in a world dominated by Euro-American science and technology. It pushed back against the colonial orientalist assumptions about the civilizational integrity of Muslim societies, proclaiming the relevance of Islam as both an ethical system and a blueprint for societal organization, one supple enough to accommodate European ideologies like socialism.

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[511] *Ibid.*
[512] This was the distinctive flavor it would lend to the modernist Islamic political party Masjumi, whose ranks were full of Permi and PSII alumni for the first few years of its existence.
[513] Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happyland: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), vx-vxi.
[514] Valina Singka Subketi, *Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2010), 34.

The PSII had an affiliated women's organization named Sjariakt Poetri Islam Indonesia (SPII, League of Indonesian Islamic Women) whose members actively participated in the PSII's deliberations over how Islamic moral values ought to be manifest politically, economically and socially. The SPII claimed a membership of approximately 6,500 in 1939, making it the second-largest religious women's organization of the day, second only to Muhammadiyah's Aisyiyah.[515] Originally an outgrowth of PSII's Garut, West Java branch, it quickly became the official women's wing of PSII, incorporating older PSII affiliates such as Wanodijo Oetomo and Perhimpoenan Siti Patimah.[516] Like the vast majority of *pergerakan* women's organizations, SPII's conception of women's activism fell within the gendered constraints that Chatterjee and Taylor describe. The SPII's five founding principles were "worship of God," devotion to one's husband," educating one's children properly," "administering the household," "giving thanks to one's parents."[517] Evidently, all of these principles stressed the gendered division of labor in nationalist discourse, in which women were relegated to the roles of caregiver, custodian, and educator. Their existence was defined in relation to their husbands, parents, and children, in the roles of daughter, wife, and mother.

However, by 1940, Marxist influence likely emanating from the Pendidikan, Gerindo, and of course the PSII itself had begun to make perceptible inroads in SPII discourse, particularly in relation to methods of mobilization and demographic targets. Hints of this first emerge in a book titled *Boekoe Peringatan Pergerakan Isteri P.S.I.I. 1918-1940,* published by SPII to mark their twenty-second anniversary. One of the articles of the SPII charter stressed the need to "… in accordance with the commands of God and his Prophet, in all matters of life, the pursuit of a livelihood [*reziki*], and harmonious coexistence with one another, improve our fate and level [*deradjat*] in accordance with the times."[518] This seems innocuous enough at first glance, but the mention of *rezeki* for a women's organization is remarkable. *Rezeki* is best translated as livelihood or sustenance, and it has strong connotations of making "an honest living," as opposed to exploiting one's fellow man. In this article,

[515] Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 20.
[516] Sjarikat Poetri Islam Indonesia, *Boekoe Peringatan Pergerakan Isteri P.S.I.I. 1918-1940* (Garoet: Madjelis Department Pergerakan Isteri PSII, 1940), 15.
[517] *Ibid*., 12-13.
[518] *Ibid*., 16.

rezeki was framed not as a matter of Islamic orthopraxy alone, but something that ought to be aligned with the times, for the material and spiritual improvement of humanity. It would not be sufficient, in this formulation, to return to an imagined golden age in the past, or simply stiffen the moral fibre of society. It was forward-looking, connecting a (spiritually) honest living with societal harmony and material improvement. This was particularly interesting, coming from a women's organization whose founding principles had nothing to do with economics, focusing instead on making its members good daughters, mothers, and wives. Despite these founding principles, the SPII's "work program" included the formation of a peasant women's association, a general women's labor union, women's associations or guilds for specific trades, and a body responsible for educating peasant women.[519] It is doubtful that any of these fine ideas were ever translated into reality until the revolution, but it does show how new horizons for women's activism were emerging.

Reading this in conjunction with other essays included in this anniversary book, the SPII's progressive tint in social and economic issues becomes increasingly evident. The head of SPII's governing council, S. Yati, contributed an article titled "Gerak-langkah Pergerakan Isteri PSII," in which she argued that men and women were essentially equal, because men and women had the same rights and mental abilities, though she did recognize biological differences.[520] With that in mind, Yati went on to argue that the positions that women occupied, and their obligations to society, should change. In the realm of marriage, Yati contended that God frowned on marriage as a means to sate carnal desires (a common justification for polygyny), drawing on example of Muhammad's marriage to Siti Aisyah as evidence. She argued that the Prophet married the underage Siti Aisyah not to sate his *hawa nafsu,* but because he perceived the potential capacity for wisdom contained, which would later be evident in her role as a transmitter of hundreds of *hadith*.[521] It is telling that Yati justified this with her interpretation of prophetic sunnah, though this was by no means a formal exercise of *ijtihad* (jurisprudential interpretation). Citing Siti Aisyah's major contributions to Islam, she argued that women's lives should not be centered around marriage, and that they had an obligation to "know their economic

[519] *Ibid*., 27-28.
[520] *Ibid*., 44.
[521] *Ibid*., 45.

rights" as well as "understand national regulations and politics."[522] The SPII by 1940 was an organization headed by women who believed, like many others, that Islam represented the triumph of *akal* over *nafsu*, and were themselves exercising their God-given *akal* to reconceptualize gender norms and the place of women in Indonesian society.

From this progressive position, it becomes less surprising that Yati's other articles evinced a strong focus on issues of class and gender. In "Pergerakan Perempoean dan Indonesia Berparlement," she argued that women must be aware of political and economic issues, and called on Indonesian women to organize and pressure the government to improve the working conditions of Indonesian women, regardless of race.[523] She specifically argued that it was the responsibility of the *ra'jat* (masses) themselves to mobilize to "protect the sick and suffering," including women.[524] Even the use of the term *ra'jat* is telling; this was a critique of the colonial economy grounded in class-consciousness, using the same vocabulary that Indonesian Marxists did, as opposed to Islamic formulations of communal identity like *ummah* or *kaum Muslimin*. Yati went on to point out that working class women were routinely paid half of what their male counterparts earned, a practice endemic to plantation agriculture. She also highlighted the suffering of female peasant sharecroppers, who often did not receive their share of the harvest, and were paid a measly 9 cents a day on average.[525] With perceptible outrage, she wrote that peasant women in Cirebon and Pekalongan were sometimes paid as little as 2 cents a day.[526] She capped this all by arguing that "capitalists specifically exploit the native working class women [*boeroeh rendahan poetri*] by deliberately depressing their wages."[527] This situation, she argued, was a "danger to our souls and spirits, a danger to our material existence as well as our interior spirituality [*lahir-bathin*]."[528] This did not constitute an explicit theorization of compatibility between Islam and socialism as seen in Tjokroaminoto's

[522] *Ibid.*, 47. Yati's position on marriage even attracted support from the PSII leadership itself. Abikoesono Tjokrosoejoso contributed a short article to this book, in which he condemned *adat* (customary law) for endorsing the superiority of husbands over wives in marriage, and stressed that Islamic marriage constituted a contract between two consenting individuals, not their families.
[523] *Ibid.*, 76-84.
[524] *Ibid.*, 84.
[525] *Ibid.*, 79, 81.
[526] *Ibid.*, 81.
[527] *Ibid.*, 82.
[528] *Ibid.*, 82.

Islam dan Sosialisme, but the influence of socialist concerns and critiques on SPII discourse was undeniable. The intersection of gender and labor issues was embedded within an Islamic moral order. Moreover, the SPII was a good example of how Muslim activist women pushed the boundaries circumscribing their activities, engaging with Marxist ideas emanating from other *pergerakan* organizations in the 1930s.

The Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (Permi)

Of all the Muslim modernist movements of the 1930s, none was more open to Marxist ideas than the Persatuan Muslim Indonesia (The Union of Indonesian Muslims, henceforth, Permi). Permi was founded in 1930 by former members of the Sumatra Thawalib schools. They had organized their own union, the Persatuan Sumatera Thawalib, in 1928, after the arrest and flight of both Islamic and Marxist radicals in 1926–27. The Sumatra Thawalib Union reorganized itself as Permi in 1930, during its third annual congress.[529] As a direct descendent of the Sumatra Thawalib, Permi inherited its ideological mantle, including its divergent impulses. As with the Sumatra Thawalib student body, not all members of Permi were sympathetic towards communism, but it would be safe to say that they were drawn towards a vision of Islam that combatively arraigned itself against the impositions of the extractive colonial state, and which aggressively embraced a policy of non-cooperation with a view towards eventual independence. The congruence between the Persatuan Sumatra Thawalib and Permi was evident in the location of Permi's first headquarters: it was founded in Padang Panjang, the home of the original and most radical of the five Sumatra Thawalib schools, which Haji Datuk Batuah had taught at. Moreover, Permi members themselves openly admitted, in speeches like the one given by Hadji Abdoel Madjid at the second Permi conference of September 1932, that Permi was a direct continuation of the Sumatra Thawalib student movement.[530] By 1930, Permi had grown into one of the more prominent *pergerakan* organizations, with branches in Tapanuli, East Sumatra, Aceh in the far Northwest, and Bengkulu in South

[529] Audrey R. Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration: West Sumatra and the Indonesian Polity* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 53.
[530] Hadji Abdoel Madjid, "Ringkasan Pidato Pemboekaan Konperensi PMI Ke 2," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932.

Sumatra. It was prolific in publishing anti-colonial newspapers and pamphlets, running schools, founding scouting organizations, and holding public rallies.[531] At its peak in December 1932, Permi claimed over 7,700 members – 3,000 of whom were women, and they were not organized in a separate wing, as was common at the time. [532] This was an unusually large proportion, and a feature which made Permi one of the most important incubators for female *pergerakan* activists.

Permi was effectively neutered by the colonial security apparatus in December 1932, when Permi executive board member Rasuna Said was arrested, sparking off a series of arrests against core Permi leaders like Rasimah Ismail, Muchtar Lutfi, Iljas Jacub, and Djalaluddin Thaib throughout 1933. Lutfi, Jacub and Thaib were key Sumatra Thawalib figures, having taught at various Sumatra Thawalib schools and published newspapers like *Medan Ra'jat* throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. Incidentally, the fact that they were targeted in the roundup of Permi leaders suggests a high degree of continuity between the Sumatra Thawalib and Permi. After being put on trial, many of them were subjected to house arrest and incarceration, while others were exiled to Boven Digoel, the colonial penal colony which housed numerous PKI members exiled after the 1926–27 uprisings, including many Islamic communists with Sumatra Thawalib connections. While Permi continued to exist until 1937, under the leadership of Muhammad Sjafei, it had ceased to be a meaningful force in *pergerakan* activism by 1934.[533]

At the national level of *pergerakan* party politics, Permi was open to limited cooperation with Soekarno's Partindo. Permi leaders travelled frequently to Java to meet with Soekarno, and even participated in Partindo rallies, ultimately signing a document establishing that each party would refrain from competing with the other in their respective strongholds.[534] This was typical for the 1930s: future Masjumi leader Sukiman's splinter faction of the PSII, the Partai Islam Indonesia (PARII), looked set to cooperate with the Pendidikan in August

[531] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 230.
[532] *Ibid*.
[533] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 49.
[534] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 197.

1933, before the arrest and exile of Sjahrir and Hatta.[535] Sukiman and Hatta were personal friends, both deeply pious and with similar political leanings, and this may well have facilitated the two organizations working together. In both cases, the clearly Marxist inspiration of the Pendidikan and Partindo's *Marhaenisme* did not constitute a serious barrier to potential cooperation, although there were certainly those in both parties who opposed working with nationalists who did not prioritize Islam as the fundamental basis for an independent Indonesia.

The combination of Islamic and socialist discourses circulating in Permi circles was evident in the publications of Permi-linked schools. The Islamic College of Padang was founded by Permi activists in May 1931, and long outlived Permi itself. It offered a four-year modernist Islamic education at the tertiary level, only admitting students that had already undergone a primary education.[536] Many of its teachers were alumni of the Sumatra Thawalib or Diniyyah schools. Many of its graduates, after having undergone training in the affiliated Teachers' Training College in nearby Payakumbuh, went on to teach in the smaller Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools.[537] Its curricula was representative of the modernist Islamic schools of the time: among other subjects, it offered classes in Arabic, Dutch, English, basic German and basic French; the classical Islamic sciences like *tafsir* and *fiqh*; mathematics, geography, history, political science; and even vocational courses in journalism, music, painting, agriculture, and teaching.[538] Just like the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools, the Islamic College rejected colonial government subsidies (unlike Muhammadiyah schools), and its secular curriculum was independent of the state-sponsored one.[539]

From 1933 onwards, Permi's Islamic College published a periodical titled *Madjallah Raya* (lit. the great magazine), which had a broad readership across the Indies. Erman's study of *Madjallah Raya*'s advertisements and subscriber lists suggest that subscribers were to be found in 44 different cities in the Indies, from Aceh in

[535] *Ibid.*
[536] Erman, *Pergerakan Nasional Dalam Teks Media Di Minangkabau 1933–1936* (Padang: Imam Bonjol Press, 2014), 68.
[537] Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 82.
[538] *Ibid.*, 82.
[539] *Ibid.*, 83–84.

the far West to Makassar in the East.[540] A quick glance at the kinds of articles published in *Madjallah Raya* reveals its leftist sympathies: articles like "Partai-Partai Kiri Apa Kabar?" (1935, What news from the parties of the Left?) and "Hatta-Sjahrir" (1936) were commonplace.[541] At the same time, Islamic issues remained central. Articles such as "Reformatie dalam Onderwijs Islam" (1935, reforming Islamic education) and "Organisasi Pergoeroean Islam" (1935, organizing Islamic teaching) were fixtures. As mentioned above, Sjahrir and Hatta's supporters and Pendidikan members in West Sumatra were often drawn from the modernist Islamic schools, and Permi's Islamic College was no exception. Its publishing activities reveal its immersion in the same milieu as the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools, one that was distinctly Islamic but strongly attracted to the socialist ideas of Sjahrir and Hatta.

Permi's main press organ, *Medan Ra'jat*, was more explicit in its critique of capitalism and Imperialism, which clearly drew inspiration from Lenin's *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1919) and Karl Kautsky's *Imperialism and the War* (1914). *Medan Ra'jat* began publication in 1931 under Iljas Jacoub's editorship, and was published thrice each month in Padang. It was a distinctly regional paper, circulating mainly in West Sumatran towns like Payakumbuh, Padang Panjang, Kerinci, Padang, Manindjau, and Bukittingi. It was remarkably strident in its explicit support for independent Indonesia, to such an extent that it is entirely unsurprising that it attracted colonial suppression in late 1932. Tellingly, it often published short articles tracking the movements of Hatta upon his return from Europe, and was clearly comfortable with his Marxist sympathies, which were by then well-publicized in *Kedaulatan Ra'jat* and other Pendidikan periodicals. It also regularly expressed sympathy for and solidarity with openly communist *pergerakan* activists, such as Sardjono, Alimin and Musso of the PKI, as well as Rustam Effendi of the Communist Party of the Netherlands.[542] It did not limit itself only to rhetoric, and took concrete steps like soliciting donations to pay the legal fees for *pergerakan* activists in trouble with the law: the beneficiaries included Soekarno, Abdul Manaf, M. Yamin,

[540] Erman, *Pergerakan Nasional Dalam Teks Media di Minangkabau 1933–1936* (Padang: Imam Bonjol Press, 2014), 69–70.
[541] *Ibid.*, 75.
[542] Anonymous, "Berita Dari Belanda," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932. This particular article made a point of praising Rustam Effendi, a former *pergerakan* playwright and member of the Dutch House of Representatives (*Tweede Kamer*) from 1933-46, for rebutting the Dutch Attorney-General's derogatory comments on the NEI.

Muchtar Luthfi, Iljas Jacoub, Amir Sjarifoeddin, and Ki Sarmidi Mangunsarkoro, several of whom were known for their Marxist sympathies.[543]

For example, one article by Loetan Gani argued that Imperialism was a "hackneyed" (*kolot*) system, while nationalism was "modern" and strongly implied to be more rational.[544] While this was clearly a simplistic and teleological approach to history, the *modern*/*kolot* dichotomy mirrors the bifurcation embraced by the modernist Islam of the *kaum muda*, and also maps directly on to *pergerakan* assumptions about Islam being the restrained and rational (*akal*) alternative to the base rapaciousness (*nafsu*) of imperialism and capitalism. It argued that "*nafsoe Imperialisme*" was driven by a quest for profits. It acknowledged imperialism's dynamism (*kepandaian*) but condemned it as one that was acquisitive and covetous. It accused Imperialism of continually seeking "more territory to conquer, aided by yet more machines and factories, which in turn incentivize the acquisition of more territory and business opportunities."[545] Loetan Gani also argued that imperialism incentivized war, citing the examples of the first world war and recent Japanese invasion of China. Most interestingly of all, the article also embraced the rhetoric of internationalist anti-imperial solidarity; it discussed and praised anti-Imperial movements in Egypt (Zaglal Pasha), Iraq (Pasha el Atrashi), Turkey (Ataturk), Bolivia (San Martin and Simon Bolivar), and the Philippines (Rizal and Quezon) in significant detail.[546] Other articles even praised Turkey's 1932 decision to join the League of Nations while maintaining good diplomatic relations with the USSR by signing a treaty of mutual recognition and friendship, striking a clearly sympathetic tone towards the USSR.[547] Evidently, Permi's points of reference, or interlocutors, were not merely European Marxists but also fellow anticolonial movements in the Islamic world and in Southeast Asia.

Permi critiques of colonialism and capitalism were not only theoretically engaged with Marxism; they also proposed concrete solutions which evinced a strong awareness of socialist praxis in Europe and America. One

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[543] Anonymous, "Indonesia Berdjoang!" *Medan Ra'jat*, November 1, 1932.
[544] Loetan Gani, "Perdjoangan Imperialisme dan Nationalisme," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932
[545] *Ibid.*
[546] *Ibid.*
[547] Anonymous, "Turkie dan Volkenbond [LON]," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 10, 1932. The treaty in question was likely to be the Soviet-Turkish non-aggression pact originally signed on December 17, 1925, and subsequently prolonged twice.

article by M. Dang Jogja argued that because capitalism and imperialism went hand-in-hand, Indonesia had much to learn from Gandhi's *swadeshi* movement. It explained how "*kaoem kapitalisten*" extracted profits from Indonesia not merely by exploiting its "*grondstoffen*" (natural resources) cheaply, but also through creating a captive market in which processed goods could be sold without competition, while simultaneously raising revenue through export duties.[548] Another article in *Medan Ra'jat* cited Surah al-Qasas 76 of the Qur'an to support its argument that God required Muslims to look not only to the afterlife but also to this one, exhorting them to not forget the welfare of one's fellow man in this world. In that vein, it went on to proudly proclaim that Permi had set up a "business council" (*dewan peroeashaan*) to support Indonesian businesses, which it explicitly distinguished from "capitalist businesses" (*peroesahaan kapitalis*), because the Indonesian business it supported operated as cooperatives which profits were distributed among the cooperative's members.[549] Unsurprisingly, capitalist businesses were explicitly associated with "*nafsu Imperialisme*" multiple times.[550] It concluded that "true [*suci*, lit. holy] nationalism" opposed capitalism; Indonesian business endeavors needed to be organized in a "*cooperatief*" way, such that they would not give birth to capitalist enterprises.[551] Such articles evinced a sophisticated awareness that colonial capitalism was not simply a matter of colonial exploitation, but a fundamentally inequitable and paradigmatic economic system that exerted influence throughout the economy.

Similarly, other articles published in *Medan Ra'jat* evinced a discernable willingness to learn from the experience of European and American socialists, as well as propose concrete solutions adapted to the NEI. Aziz Thaib argued for the creation of peasant cooperatives, which would allow farmers to stop relying on flour merchants who "suck the blood of the people and who demand more profit than is appropriate."[552] Drawing on the example of nineteenth century English cooperatives, he claimed that peasant cooperatives could be set up with as little as f325 in communal capital.[553] These cooperatives would purportedly ease the problem of limited

[548] M. Dang Jogja, "Pergerakan Swadeshi," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 20, 1932.
[549] Dt. Penghoeloe (pseudonym), "Sifat Toedjoean dan Asas PMI," *Medan Ra'jat*, September 20, 1932.
[550] *Ibid*.
[551] *Ibid.*
[552] Aziz Thaib, "Menoendjoe Cooperatie Ra'jat Indonesia," *Medan Ra'jat*, November 1, 1932.
[553] *Ibid*.

access to credit, because farmers rarely had the connections or collateral to obtain loans from urban banks, and relied instead on rural moneylenders who charged exorbitant interest rates. Without providing a specific example, Dang Jugja claimed that capitalists in the contemporary USA were grumbling because they had "met their match" in farmers' cooperatives and "could no longer do as they pleased."[554] An editorial note appended to the article even made a point of stating that cooperatives with "capitalist characteristics" were in opposition to "our *pergerakan*," and called on cooperatives to guard against the creeping infiltration of capitalist practices by reminding them of their Islamic moral obligations.[555] A series of articles penned by Dang Jugja in late 1932 wrote glowingly of Marx and his various interpreters, even going so far as to quote Stalin (in English) and translate it into Bahasa Indonesia.[556] Intriguingly, the various strains of Marxism were described as "*tarekat*" (Sufi brotherhoods built around saintly and scholarly lineages), an excellent example of how Marxism was indigenized or made relevant within an Islamic vernacular. Finally, the article also discussed of the USSR and the various German social democratic parties of the interwar period, and exhorted the *pergerakan* to learn from their experiences.[557] These articles in *Medan Ra'jat* were visibly "translating" Marxism to Indonesia - whether literally translating Stalin's words or more indirectly making sense of Marxist movements in other parts of the world – and were doing so in a way that relied on Islamic vocabulary and ethical justifications.

Permi was exceptional in at least one other way: it had an unusual number of prominent female leaders. Jean Gelman Taylor has rightly argued that women's contributions have been largely excised from scholarship on the *pergerakan*. As an example, she raises Shiraishi's otherwise excellent *An Age in Motion*, which makes almost no mention of women, whether as activists or in terms of their imagined place in the *pergerakan*.[558] Taylor argues that this scholarly failing reflects the tenor nationalist discourse of the 1920s and 1930s, which

[554] *Ibid.* It seems likely that the author was referring to the Socialist Party of America (f. 1920) and its predecessors, which had achieved significant local and regional electoral success in the first quarter of the twentieth century, with strong links to trade unions and rural cooperatives, under Eugene V. Debs's leadership.
[555] *Ibid*.
[556] Dang Jugja, "Nasionalisme dan Islamisme," *Medan Ra'jat*, December 1, 1932.
[557] *Ibid*.
[558] Jean Gelman Taylor, "Introduction," in *Women Creating Indonesia*, ed. Jean Gelman Taylor (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1993), xii.

"placed the new Indonesian man at center stage and directed women to subordinate positions."[559] She points out that many women's organizations were defined by a host of gender roles assigned to women: organizations bore names such as "Independent Daughters," "Active Wives," and "Mothers' Group."[560] Even progressive organizations like *Istri Sedar* and *Istri Insaf*, in which anti-polygyny socialists like Soewarni Pringgodigdo were active, conceived of their members as *istri* (wives).

This phenomenon of linguistic relegation or circumscription of women is well-known in other nationalist contexts, as in Iran in the early twentieth century, where women were conceived by male nationalists as both "sister-citizens" and as charges in need of protection. In Iran, even the word "woman" (*zan*) was laden with multiple meanings, reflecting the contradictions of nationalist womanhood that Chatterjee identified.[561] In the Indies, it was not until 1928 was the *Perikatan Perempuan Indonesia* formed, conceiving of its members as *perempuan* (women) rather than mothers or daughters. Nevertheless, women were still strongly defined by gender and less by political orientation. Accordingly, the goals embraced by these organizations were distinctly gendered: access to education for women, equal pay for female laborers, securing women's consent for polygyny, and so on. Remarkably, it was women in Islamic organizations who most often broke this mold, becoming involved in mainstream politics on par with their male counterparts. In several prominent cases, their career trajectories evinced intersections of Marxism, Islamic faith, and women's rights activism.

The first women's congress was held in Yogyakarta 1928, which marked the distinctly pro-*pergerakan* turn in the character of most women's organizations.[562] Women's participation in radical *pergerakan* activism, however, predated the congress by several years. As early as 1922, Tjokroaminoto's wife, Woro Tjokroaminoto, gave speeches at meetings of Sarekat Islam's Garut branch. This was quickly followed by the

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[559] Jean Gelman Taylor, "Equality? The influence of legislation and notions of gender on the position of women wage workers in the economy: Indonesia 1950-58," in *Women Creating Indonesia*, ed. Jean Gelman Taylor (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1993), 95.
[560] *Ibid*.
[561] Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Moustaches, Men Without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005), 207–14; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993).
[562] Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50.

foundation of Sarekat Islam's women's wing in 1923, with an all-women executive board. Later that year, Woro Tjokroaminoto herself founded a women's organization separate from Sarekat Islam, Wanodiyo Utomo, in Surabaya. Some women became regular speakers at the meetings of various Sarekat Islam branches; these included Woro Sostroatmojo in Pare (Kediri regency) and Manusiah in Semarang.[563] The phenomenon of women's overt participation quickly became normalized amongst other *pergerakan* organizations as well. In more explicitly Marxist circles, Woro Kurliah-Jayadireja gave speeches to meetings of the VSTP's Batavia branch on the importance of increasing women's participation in *pergerakan* activism.[564] One Woro Tetes addressed the VSTP's 1922 conference in Semarang.[565] When Sarekat Islam was re-established as the PSII in 1929, Woro Tjokroaminoto headed its women's wing, and ranking members of the women's wing, such as Woro Sumuadinoto and Siti Rukaeni, addressed the inaugural 1929 PSII general congress in Surabaya.

It is telling, of course, that most of the women mentioned above were identified in relation to their husbands during the 1920s. The prefix "Woro" functions much the same way that "Mrs." does, subsuming a woman's identity under that of her husband's first or family name. It is equally telling that women were often organized in a separate wing of *pergerakan* organizations during this period, metaphorically and structurally "quarantined" from the "main" organization. This strongly suggests a conceptual attachment to the idea that female activists were complementary to male activists, but not their legitimate equals. This tendency conforms to Chatterjee's analysis of the Indian nationalist movement, in which female participants were assigned the roles of static repositories of pure, undiluted national culture, while their male counterparts were expected to dynamically learn and appropriate the language, knowledge, and prestige of their colonial overlords. In the Indonesian context, this manifested itself in the tendency for Islamic women's organizations to focus on identifiably "women's issues" such as polygyny, women's education, and the rights of divorce and inheritance.

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[563] Susan Blackburn, "Indonesian Women and Political Islam," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39 (February 2008): 86.
[564] *Ibid.*
[565] *Ibid.*, 87

By the 1930s, however, some women were beginning to break with this model, and claim their rightful place as full-fledged *pergerakan* activists. Critiques of economic exploitation of the Indies in general and women in particular, which were particularly hideous on the tobacco and sugar plantations, began to be articulated by women's organizations in the 1930s.[566] This was especially evident in Islamic *pergerakan* organizations such as Permi, which did not separate its female members into a women's wing, and which was led by several prominent women during the early 1930s. Similar processes occurred in other parts of the Islamic world, such as Iran, with women resisting and redefining their roles as mothers, wives, and charges in need of defense.[567] In the Indonesian case, Chatterjee's arguments about the compartmentalization of women become increasingly less applicable from the 1930s on. This was a slow process to begin with, but it eventually accelerated with the appointment of female cabinet ministers with known socialist sympathies, S.K. Trimurti and Maria Ulfah Santoso, during the revolution.

To understand how Permi became uniquely open to women's participation, one first has to examine how *kaum muda* educational institutions like the Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah schools expanded the possibilities for women's participation in political discourse. The *kaum muda* were open to innovative new approaches to spreading their ideas, the *tabligh* (public religious lecture) being the most effective among them. Their arsenal also included novel pedagogical practices like the division of students into clearly-defined grades (rather than the traditional open-ended apprenticeship to a master), a willingness to use colloquial Malay instead of scholarly Arabic in their sermons, and the use of reformist textbooks imported from Egypt. Given this openness to pedagogical innovation, It is perhaps unsurprising that the Diniyyah school in Padang Panjang, a hotbed of

[566] Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation*, 31–33; Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*, 171-74. Women were regularly paid less than their male counterparts, and often subject to sexual exploitation at the workplace. The release of the second volume of the Batik Report in 1931, produced by the NEI Labor Office, an underfunded and undermanned organ charged with enforcing paltry ILO labor protections that the Netherlands had ratified in 1922, galvanized women to mobilize against egregious exploitation of women in the Batik Industry. The response was limited partially because of repressive policing, but it did lead to the creation of the Komite Pembela Kaum Buruh Perempuan Indonesia (Committee to Defend Indonesian Women Workers) in Yogyakarta in 1932. By 1932, *Istri Sedar* (Aware Women), the women's rights organization led by Suwarni Pringgodigdo and with strong links to both the PNI and the Pendidikan, had also taken up the issue, investigating the horrific working conditions of women factory laborers, petty traders, and domestic servants and resolving to advocate for their labor rights, although these resolutions yielded few concrete results.

[567] Najmabadi, *Women with Moustaches, Men Without Beards*, 222–24.

kaum muda schools, was among the first to begin admitting female students in coeducational classes.[568] This was virtually unheard of outside of the European schools which occasionally educated the daughters of native elites. The Dinyyah school itself had been founded in 1915 by Zainuddin Labai el-Junusiyyah, an alumnus and former teacher of the Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. The Permi leader Rasuna Said attended the Diniyyah school, as did many Pendidikan socialists like Djoeir Mohamamd and Leon Salim.

Zainuddin's sister, Ramah el-Junusiyyah, went on to found the Diniyyah Putri school for girls in 1923, in Padang Panjang. Rasuna Said joined the staff as an assistant teacher in 1923, and except for the two years she spent in Maninjau, taught there until 1931.[569] The Diniyyah schools were emblematic of the willingness of *kaum muda* institutions to educate women rigorously in both religious and secular subjects; this opened the door for Indonesian women in general and Minangkabau women in particular to fully participate in the *pergerakan*. With the education afforded by *kaum muda* educational institutions like the Diniyyah, Sumatra Thawalib, and Muhammadiyah schools, Indonesian Muslim women had the opportunity to exercise their intellects and voices as journalists, activists, and teachers, sometimes in the institutions they graduated from. The concentration of such institutions in West Sumatra meant that Minangkabau women in particular became prominent participants in nationalist politics, at a level unmatched by their counterparts in Java. Some, like the female leaders of Permi, used this capacity to cogently express their Islamic identity alongside their strong commitment to social justice.

By the end of 1932, Permi was formally constituted as a political party with 160 branches spread across Sumatra. It claimed a membership of 7,700, of whom approximately 3,000 were women.[570] Three prominent Minangkabau women, Rasuna Said, Rasimah Ismail, and Ratna Sari, sat on Permi's central board and were among the first to be targeted by the colonial security apparatus when it moved against Permi in December

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[568] Earlier organizations like Poetri Mardika (f. 1912, Batavia) and Keradjinan Amai Setia (f. 1914, Kota Gedung, West Sumatra) had advocated for women's education and established women's schools. The Diniyyah school, however, was significant for being among the first to allow women to enrol in a prestigious coeducational institution that taught both secular and Islamic subjects up to the tertiary level, predating the better-known coeducational Taman Siswa schools (1922, Yogyakarta) by several years. See Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-colonial Indonesia: Gender and Nation in a New Democracy* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 39.

[569] Sally White, "Rasuna Said: Lioness of the Indonesian Independence Movement," in *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, ed. Susan Blackburn and Helen Ting (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 104, 107.

[570] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 230, and Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 55.

1932. After Rasuna Said and Rasimah Ismail's arrest in Dec 1932, and the wave of arrests that followed, Ratna Sari was elected Permi's first female president in late 1933. By this point, Permi was now seriously open to female leadership, a concept virtually unheard of in other *pergerakan* organizations. Rasuna Said and Rasimah Ismail's speeches, both the ones that led to *spreekdelict* charges as well as the ones delivered while they were on trial, were sufficiently inspiring that new ground was broken for the possible modalities of women's activism.[571] Newspapers like *Tjaja Sumatra* covered their arrests and trials intensively, printing their speeches in full; Permi's own *Medan Ra'jat* fiercely expressed support for "*iboe Permi*," and compared Rasuna Said's contribution to those made by the prominent male *pergerakan* activists, such as Hatta, Moechtar Loethfi, and Mohammad Yamin.[572] The position of inspirational *pergerakan* martyr was no longer the exclusive province of men like Soekarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir.

Beyond its top leadership, Permi also included women such as Kanin RAS, Chasjiah AR, and Siti Adam Addarkawi, all of whom were teachers at the Diniyyah school and heavily influenced by Rasuna Said. Their radical nationalist pedagogy was alluded to by the fact that all three became subject to a teaching ban (*onderwijs verbod*) after a PID inspesction of the school in 1933.[573] Chasjiah AR, in particular, was known as a fiery speaker. She took the stage at Permi's second congress in October 1932, and openly criticized male *pergerakan* activists for indulging the assumption that women were weak (*kelemahan*) and deficient (*kekoerangan*) in relation to men.[574] She accepted the reality that women were indeed generally physically weaker than men and less well-educated, but argued that women had just as much ability to influence society as men did, both as activists and as the first teachers of every child. She justified this with an unspecified hadith, claiming that the Prophet once said that "women are a nation's pillar of security. When women are harmed, the whole nation is harmed. Paradise, which you all desire, is to be found under the soles of a woman's feet."[575]

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[571] White, "Rasuna Said," 111.
[572] Permi, "Rasuna Said: Kekoeasan pemerentah Belanda kepada seorang Perempoean," *Medan Ra'jat*, December 20, 1932.
[573] National Archives, The Hague, Ministry of Colonies: Political Reports and Reports from the Extraordinary Regions, number access 2.10.52.01, inventory number 108.
[574] Chasjiah AR, "Kebangkitan Pergerakan Poetri," *Medan Ra'jat*, October 1, 1932.
[575] *Ibid.* Chasjiah AR was likely paraphrasing from Al-Nasa'i's collection of hadith, *Al-Sunan al-Sughra*, one of the six canonical collections of Sunni hadith. See Sunan an-Nasa' 3104 (book 25, hadith 20).

At the same time, she spoke admiringly of European societies that had enfranchised women and equalized their legal rights with those of men. Rhetorically, she asked whether Indonesians were destined by God to suffer oppression and humiliation as slaves, their lands occupied and their economy just another profitable market in the global economy (*pasaran doenia oentoek mentjari koetoengan dan laba*).[576] She argued that the *pergerakan* could either continue to treat women as burdens to be borne in their long fight for independence, or co-opt them as partners, as Japan, China, Turkey, and India had.[577] She concluded by praising the Perserikatan Perhimpunan Istri Indonesia (PPII, The Indonesian Women's Union, founded in 1929) for its economic activism in *batik* factories, organizing protests against systemic exploitation of women dyers; she suggested that Permi emulate the PPII in this regard. Refusing to accept the gendered division of labor in nationalist discourse, Chasjiah AR also articulated her labor and women's rights activism within an Islamic moral framework.

Rasuna Said, Permi's first female leader, provides an equally explicit example of how Muslims female *pergerakan* activists were open to socialist ideas. Very few of her writings from the 1930s have survived, but an examination of her decades-long career trajectory provides many clues about how both Islam and Marxism shaped her worldviews. Her Islamic credentials were strong: she had been a high-performing student of the highly-regarded ulama Haji Rasul and Haji Rachmany during the 1920s.[578] After an earthquake damaged the Diniyyah Puri school she taught at, Rasuna Said returned to her hometown of Manindjau and studied for two more years with Haji Rachmany at the Sumatra Thawalib school there. Already exposed to the leftist tendencies of Sumatra Thawalib circles in Padang Panjang, her acquaintance with Marxist ideas deepened during her time with Haji Rachmany, a *kaum muda* ulama who had been a PKI member until 1925, when he was expelled for questioning the PKI's stance on religion. Nevertheless, Haji Rachmany continued to be active in the Manindjau branch of Sarekat Rakjat, and convinced Rasuna Said to join it in 1926. In early 1929, Rasuna Said returned to

[576] *Ibid.*
[577] *Ibid.*
[578] Haji Rasul was Hamka's father, and the founder of the original Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. His opposition to communism was well-known, and he left the school he founded over it.

teach at the Diniyyah Putri school in Padang Panjang, marrying a radical Sumatra Thawalib teacher, Duski Samad, against the wishes of her family.

After leaving the Diniyyah Putri school in 1931, she relocated to Padang and joined Permi, eventually getting appointed to its central board as a propagandist in 1931. She was nominated by the Permi leader Moechtar Luthfi, a famous *pergerakan* activist who had trained at al-Azhar and ran the Teachers' Training School in Bukittingi where Rasuna Said worked; clearly Rasuna Said had impressed him. It is also worth mentioning that Rasuna Said also became a member of PSII in 1928, joining under the influence of Haji Rachmany, who became the head of the PSII's West Sumatra branch in 1929. Neither Rasuna Said and Haji Rachmany themselves, nor the Islamic organizations they joined, seemed to have any issues with their continuing association with Sarekat Rakjat, or Haji Rachmany's PKI past. This web of connections illustrates the porosity between the Permi and the PSII, a phenomenon that was characteristic of the *pergerakan* in general. However, it was particularly meaningful in the West Sumatran context because of how strongly influenced both organizations were by the Marxist ideas emanating from Sumatra Thawalib and Pendidikan circles. These links were tangible: Rasuna Said began teaching at the Sumatra Thawalib school for girls, Thawalib Putri, upon her relocation to Padang in 1931.[579] These overlapping identities, institutions, and party affiliations genuinely make Islamic identity and Marxist ideas difficult to separate in 1930s West Sumatra.

After her release from prison in 1934, Rasuna Said returned to Padang and enrolled in the Islamic College, a teacher training institute established by Permi in 1931. She studied there for four years, avoiding overt political activity with a few exceptions, and moved to Medan around 1938. There, she established and taught at a school for girls, while also publishing a newspaper for Muslim women, *Menara Putri*.[580] While in Medan, she married Bairun A.S., an editor of the perceptibly Marxist-influenced *Oetesan Sumatra*, which is examined elsewhere in this chapter.[581] Sally White argues that Rasuna Said's early attraction to Marxist radicals in Padang Panjang and

[579] White, "Rasuna Said," 104–107.
[580] *Ibid*., 111–112.
[581] Rasuna Said and her first husband, Duski Samad, divorced amicably sometime in the early 1930s. Duski Samad had been arrested as part of the government crackdown on Permi in 1933, and eventually exiled to Boven Digoel.

Manindjau was not evident during her time in Medan, despite her marriage to Bairun A.S. White speculates that this might have been tactical on Rasuna Said's part, since she had experienced the consequences of *spreekdelict* charges first hand – her infant daughter had accompanied her to prison in 1933. No copies of *Menara Putri* survive, so it is hard to verify this. However, Rasuna's long association with *pergerakan* activists influenced by Marxism, from Haji Rachmany to Bairun A.S., makes it improbable that she simply shed her leftist leanings after imprisonment. That she was a staunch Muslim and continued to advocate for Islamic causes, such as opposition to the Draft Marriage Ordinance of 1937, is beyond doubt.[582]

During the Japanese occupation, Rasuna Said, Ratna Sari, and even the hitherto apolitical Ramah el-Yunusiyyah collaborated with Chatib Suleiman of the Pendidikan to source recruits and support for the *Giyu Gun*, a Japanese-sponsored militia-like organization.[583] Collaboration with Marxists was a remarkably common theme in Rasuna Said's career as an activist and politician: during the revolution, she joined the *Volksfront*, the West Sumatran incarnation of Tan Malaka's *Persatuan Perjuangan*, which had been founded by Bairun A.S. and Chatib Suleiman. The *Volksfront* and the *Persatuan Perjuangan* aimed for "100% Merdeka," which meant the rejection of any negotiated settlement which made territorial or economic concessions to the Dutch. They were intentionally broad umbrella organizations which stressed unity, so the Marxist influence on their policy platform was visible but muted. Nevertheless, the open identification with the most famous communist in Indonesia was no small thing: clearly Rasuna Said and many others like her in West Sumatra perceived no problem with retaining their identity as Islamic activists while supporting Marxist allies.

This was corroborated by Rasuna Said's long tenure as a parliamentarian during and after the revolution. Rasuna Said served first in the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (KNIP, Central Indonesian National

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[582] White, "Rasuna Said," 112. This highly controversial ordnance, which had the support of the colonial government, divided women's rights activists because it would have made polygyny illegal. Muslim female activists tended to oppose it, casting it as an example of European social norms being forced on the Indies population. Ultimately, in the face of widespread opposition, the government withdrew its support for the ordnance, and it did not become law.

[583] The *Giyu Gun* was founded in Oct 1943, for the purposes of creating a local manpower reserve that the Imperial Japanese Army could mobilize in the event of an Allied attack on the former NEI. Naturally, the Japanese were wary of arming and training *Giyu Gun* recruits. On their part, former *pergerakan* activists like Chatib Suleiman (in charge of West Sumatra's *Giyu Gun* branch) actively sought to subvert such organizations, using them to cultivate a corps of nationalists who would hopefully form the nucleus of Indonesia's future armed forces. See Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 101.

Committee), the Republic's revolutionary legislature, and later in the transitional parliament, the Dewan Perwakilan Rakjat (DPR, People's Representative Council), from 1950-57. She had no formal party affiliation, sitting instead as representative of women's groups, but nevertheless played an influential role as a member of the parliamentary finance committee. Tellingly, she refused to join the largest Islamic party, Masjumi, despite repeated invitations, choosing instead to serve as vice-president of the women's rights organization, Perwari, until at least 1954. White even suggests that Rasuna Said's involvement in the international peace and anti-nuclear movement in the 1950s led her to collaborate closely with international communist women's organizations.[584]

Upon Soekarno's dissolution of parliament and the transition to Guided Democracy that began in 1957, Rasuna Said accepted an appointment to the National Council, one of several consultative bodies representing "functional groups" in Indonesian society. She served until her death in 1965. One of her speeches from her time in the National Council is revealing: on March 16, 1958, at the height of the regional PRRI rebellion backed by much of Masjumi's core leadership and which had West Sumatra as its stronghold, Rasuna Said gave a speech supporting Soekarno's Guided Democracy.[585] She condemned the rebellion, arguing (in contrast to the majority of pious Muslim politicians) that Pancasila was perfectly compatible with Islam, and showcased her comfort with using the formulation "Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa" alongside her conspicuously Muslim identity.[586] She invoked God's blessings on the republic multiple times, arguing that the PRRI had befouled the "*djiwa patriotik Rakjat*" (the People's patriotic spirit) by openly opposing the central government, and specifically criticized the willingness of the PRRI to solicit foreign direct investment from Euro-American

[584] White, "Rasuna Said," 114–117.
[585] The Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI, Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) rebellion was proclaimed in Feb 1958, the culmination of various centrifugal tendencies and unsolved problems that had plagued the republic since its inception. See Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, 462-538.
[586] Soekarno and Rasuna Said, *Tidak Ada Kontra Revolusi Bisa Bertahan: Amanat Presiden Soekarno Dan Pidato Rasuna Said Pada Rapat Pantja Sila Di Bandung, Tanggal 16 Maret 1958* (Djakarta: Kementerian Penerangan, 1958), 21–22. "Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa" had long been a sticking point for most Islamic politicians in the republic. In its most extreme form, resistance to this compromise, which was perceived as a denial that Indonesia was an "Islamic state" (an incredibly slippery concept with many interpretations), led to the Darul Islam rebellion. In its more moderate form, opposition to this principle of Pancasila led the conservative wing of Masjumi to condemn the republic's top leaders as deliberately subverting Islam.

sources.[587] Such statements would have fit perfectly with the PKI's political rhetoric. By this point, Soekarno's alignment with the PKI to balance the military, and the PKI's vocal support for Soekarno, was already indisputable. It had been one of the issues which had driven Masjumi into permanent opposition to Soekarno, and fueled support for regional rebellions like the PRRI. Nevertheless, Rasuna Said remained willing to support Soekarno, republican unity, and Guided Democracy even against her fellow Minangkabau and former Permi comrades. She even went so far as to call Sjafruddin Prawiranegara and Ahmad Hussein, the core PRRI leaders, *pengchianat* (traitors).[588] This unusual position marked her as a singular character amongst female Islamic activists and politicians, with a consistent track record of being willing to collaborate with or support the Indonesian left. Instead of demanding that Islam be the state religion of Indonesia, she modelled a modality of Islamic piety that manifested itself in anticolonial agitation, peace activism, women's rights activism, and supporting broad unity at a time when the fabric of the republic was unravelling, even if that meant collaborating with the PKI and Soekarno.

Rasuna Said's career trajectory provides relatively clear indications of how Islamic identity and cooperation with Marxists could be reconciled. Ratna Sari's career, by contrast, did not evince those conciliations, but her writings do shed light on the context in which Permi and Rasuna Said articulated their ideas. Put another way, her understanding of Islam, which was consistent Permi's approach to Islam in *Meda Ra'jat* and *Tabligh Oemoem*, illuminates the conditions which allowed such conciliations to occur. Ratna Sari's *Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Hukum Islam* (1950) was based on the speeches she gave at the second Indonesian women's congress (Kongres Perempoean Indonesia ke-II) in Batavia in 1935.[589] Interestingly, she expressed gratitude to and solidarity with Soewarni Pringgodigdo, the leader of the secular women's rights organization Istri Sedar (Aware Women), in her preface.[590] This was despite the very public and bitter falling out between Ratni Sari and Soewarni during the conference itself, over the issue of polygyny (Ratna Sari was willing to defend polygyny,

[587] *Ibid.*, 25, 27.
[588] *Ibid*., 27.
[589] The first edition of this book was published in 1939 under the title *Hak Perempoean Dalam Hoekoem Islam*.
[590] Ratna Sari, *Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Hukum Islam* (Medan: Islamyah, 1950), 4.

though within limits).[591] Soewarni, like her sister Soewarsih, was close to Sjahrir and clearly sympathetic to socialism.[592] This conciliatory attitude, as we will see, was not entirely surprising given how Ratna Sari conceived of her Islamic faith. While most of the book focused on the usual suite of women's rights issues, Ratna Sari's preface and introduction are particularly revealing in terms of the Islam framework which informed her activism.

Much like Tan Malaka habitually did, Ratna Sari began by laying out her *weltanschauung*. She started with a consideration of how Islam brought *akal* into the prevailing *nafsu* of the *jahiliyyah*, the pre-Islamic "ignorance" in which Arabian society was mired. However, rather than discuss pre-Islamic Arabia in depth, her cosmopolitan worldview and European education was belied by her discussion of Zoroastrian Persia and the Late Roman empire in the 6th century CE. She frequently referenced European scholarship, regularly citing Edward Gibbon and Gustave Le Bon's work to support her arguments, and used Dutch words like "*sfeer*" (sphere) and "*prae-adviezen*" (advice) liberally. She depicted Zoroastrian Sassanid Persia and Christian Rome as degenerate societies, fallen far from the lofty principles of Stoicism and Zoroastrianism, and given over to the pursuit of worldly pleasures, material wealth, and secular power. In this era, women were "truly the playthings of worldly desires" (*tetap dalam derajat permainan nafsu*), and "existed only to please men" (*hanja tersedia buat kesenangan lelaki belaka*).[593] Similarly, Ratna Sari condemned Hinduism's patriarchal notions of women's servitude to men, as well as the caste system in general. She reserved her harshest criticism for pre-Islamic Arabian society, which she says considered women to be "sampah dunia" (trash of the world).[594] For her, *jahiliyya* was not defined only in the standard sense of pre-Islamic Arabia, but instead in terms of patriarchal cultures dominant across the ancient world: she wrote admiringly of the Zoroastrian reformer

[591] Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan and the Institute of Social Studies, 2002), 77–78.
[592] Mrazek, *Sjahrir*, 162-63.
[593] Ratna Sari, *Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Hukum Islam*, 9.
[594] *Ibid.*

Mazdak, whose "proto-socialist" reforms she credits with beginning to heal the spiritual sickness (*penjakit rohani*) of Persia.[595]

According to Ratna Sari, it was Islam that brought an end to this *jahiliyyah* of women's oppression through its introduction of new ethical values, which were themselves symbols of societal progress (*kemadjuan kemanusiaan*). She argued that Islam spread these new ethical values by initiating a struggle (*perdjuangan*), a grand global revolution (*revolutie akbar sedunia*).[596] "Progress" (*kemajuan*) was a recurring concept in this book, and she defined it as both a key purpose and attribute of Islam. She went on to argue that the characteristics of Islam in relation to society were first, to improve society; second, to save society (in the sense of salvation from the darkness of *jahiliyyah*, as expressed in Surah Ibrahim, 1); and third, to "enact progress" (*memadjiukan*) in society. Juxtaposed against this emphasis on progress and revolution was her conceptualization of Islam as a liberating and moral force. Quoting from Surah Hud, 87, and Surah An-Nisa, 113, of the Qur'an, Ratna Sari argued that Islam was fundamentally invested in "improving the fate of humanity" (*memperbaiki nasib manusia*), while also reforming humanity's behavior to incline it toward righteousness.[597]

Ratna Sari even proclaimed that Islam was no enemy to other creeds and religions, because Islam brought freedom, including "freedom of thought" (*kemerdekaan berfikir*).[598] She argued that the only limitation on this freedom of thought was when public peace was threatened, citing Surah al-An'nam, 108, to justify this. This was a conceptualization of Islam as fundamentally rational, progressive, and cosmopolitan: in its applied form, it constituted a means for ordering a compassionate society that was something more than just the rule of the strong over the weak, or the scrabble for material wealth and power. With its emphasis on *akal*, freedom, revolution, and progress, this was a vision of Islam that lent itself well to Marxist ideas just as much as women's rights. Permi was a truly remarkable *pergerakan* organization for incubating such female activists and

[595] *Ibid.*, 10
[596] *Ibid.*, 11.
[597] *Ibid.*, 18.
[598] *Ibid.*, 14.

giving them leadership roles. Its focus on Islam and social justice, as well as decades of modernist Islamic education for West Sumatran women, may well have facilitated its willingness to accept female leadership in a way that no other *pergerakan* organization did.

Permi's relationship with socialism emerged most explicitly in a slim pamphlet titled *Tabligh Oemoem*, which was clearly meant to be circulated amongst members and potential recruits. *Tabligh Oemoem* translates roughly into "the public propagation of faith," and the term *tabligh* has specifically proselytizing connotations, often taking the form of a public or private meeting in which attendees are exhorted to Islamic orthopraxy.[599] Consistent with its title, this pamphlet functioned less as a didactic text than a devotional one; it was presented as if the reader is actually attending a *tabligh* meeting, opening with the full suite of Islamic greetings and the confession of faith, and ending with a recitation of Surah al-Fatihah, the opening Surah of the Qur'an.[600] It reads almost like a Christian order of service, or a Sufi *wird*, as if a social and pedagogical experience had been crystallized in print form, so that one might carry that experience in one's pocket and be edified by it repeatedly. The pamphlet is organized in three parts: the first section is historical, dealing with the basics of the Islamic faith and its early history. The second section is "Islam with Progress" (*Islam dengan Kemadjoean*), dominated by justifications from jurisprudence (fiqh) and Qu'ranic exegesis (tafsir), which explains why Islam was not inimical to progress/change. Much like Ratna Sari's *Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Hukum Islam*, examined later in this chapter, the language of progress (*kemajoean*) saturates this section.[601] The third and final segment, however, is the most telling of all, titled "Socialism in Islam" (*socialisme dalam Islam*).[602]

This segment relates a speech given on the topic, presumably at an actual *tabligh* meeting, by one M. Ali Tholib Siregar. Siregar's argument was straightforward, and closely mirrored Tjokroaminoto's in *Islam and Socialism* (1924). Siregar claimed that Islam was, in fact, socialism. For him, the principles of socialism were inherent in

[599] "Tabligh," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2295 (accessed 13-Dec-2019).
[600] Permi, *Tabligh Oemoem* (Medan: Badan Perwakilan Dewan Penjiaran dan Pertahanan Islam Permi, 1930), 1, 19.
[601] *Ibid*., 13-16.
[602] *Ibid*., 16-18.

Islam, not in the various European formulations of socialism: "true socialism" (*socialisme sedjati*) was "Islamic socialism, not the socialism of the West" (*socialisme tjara Islam, boekan tjara Barat*).[603] Specifically, he identified the principles promoted by socialism as "the unity of mankind" (*perikemanoesiaan adalah menjadi satoe persatoean*), and "the obligation to ensure each other's welfare" (*wajiblah kita mentjapai keselamatan bagi mereka semoeanja*), among others.[604] Siregar argued that these principles were congruent with Islamic goals, such "the establishment of a just government" (*permerintah jang se-adil adilnja*), and "the implementation of Islam necessarily means promoting harmony and peace" (*orang mendjalankan agama Islam haroeslah dengan roekoen dan damai*).[605] A number of hadith and Qur'anic verses were quoted to support these assertions, although specific references were not provided.

This was not merely a knee-jerk reaction against all things Western, by asserting the moral superiority of Muslim societies over European decadence. It was a call to action consistent with the ethos of *tabligh*; Siregar readily admitted that "our social realities have strayed far from what the Qur'an teaches, for both men and women."[606] Permi as an organization, even in its most accessible literature, was openly engaging with socialism. It did so despite the waves of arrests and exile in 1926-27, after which Marxist discourse became increasingly taboo. This was not the explicit Islamic communism of Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah, but it was a one amongst many outgrowths of Sarekat Islam's entanglement with Marxism in the 1920s, and it would continue in various permutations beyond the 1930s. Permi's newspapers and pamphlets expressed solidarity with anti-imperial movements in the Middle East and Asia as well as with a variety of Marxist movements in Europe and America, seeking to learn from their collective experiences. At the same time, a thoroughly Islamic ethical framework pervaded Permi's discourse, and sometimes Marxist ideas were even rendered in an Islamic idiom. It is highly probable that Permi members, much like the Pendidikan, recognized that Marxism was not a new comprehensive faith; rather, it provided valuable insight in terms of understanding the world and its

[603] *Ibid.*, 18.
[604] *Ibid.*, 17.
[605] *Ibid.*, 18-19.
[606] *Ibid.*, 17.

injustices. Rather than being conduits for Moscow, they appreciated the clarity that Marxist analysis afforded them. They incorporated these insights into their own struggle, on their own terms, and this struggle was framed in nationalistic and Islamic terms as much as it was in the terms of class struggle.

The Diniyyah Schools' Alumni

The PSII in Java and Permi in West Sumatra were not the only organizations to embrace a dynamic Islamic modernism which opened new possibilities for the adaptation of political ideas from outside the Indies. Operating outside of explicitly political movements, Islamic schools such as the Diniyyah schools of West Sumatra trained a generation of Muslims in the 1930s who would go on to join Hatta and Sjahrir's Pendidikan, and later Sjahrir's Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI) as well. Like the Sumatra Thawalib schools that preceded them, the Diniyyah schools were remarkably open to Marxist ideas; unlike the 1920s, however, this did not manifest in the form of the explicit Islamic communism preached by Haji Datuk Batuah and Nathar Zainuddin. The Diniyyah schools were founded in 1923 by the siblings Zainuddin Labai al-Junusiyyah and Rahmah el-Junusiyyah. Zainuddin, originally a teacher at the most radical Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang, left in 1915 to found his own modernist Islamic school, the Diniyyah school. Originally a coeducational institution, the Diniyyah school grew in influence, and Zainuddin's sister Rahmah established a women's school, the Diniyyah Putri, in 1923. Zainuddin died in 1924, and the increasing prominence of the Diniyyah Putri school led to the merger of the two schools in 1932.[607] While both schools were ostensibly apolitical in their curriculum, their students were not barred from privately engaging in political activity.[608] They were certainly avid consumers of *pergerakan* discourse: a Diniyyah Putri yearbook celebrating the 15th anniversary of its founding (1938) published advertisements for *Pandji Islam* and *Pedoman Masjarakat*, leading Indies newspapers which regularly published articles by leading *pergerakan* activists-in-exile such as Soekarno, Hatta,

[607] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 81.
[608] Unlike his teacher, Haji Rasul (Hamka's father), and his peers (such as Haji Datuk Batuah and Djamaluddin Tamin), Zainuddin Labai el-Junisiyyah neither overtly rejected nor sanctioned communism. He chose a different path, one that would empower his students to make their own political decisions. See Hamka, *Ajahku*, 132.

and Rasuna Said.[609] Djoeir Moehamamd recalled reading these newspapers with Leon Salim and Chatib Suleiman, and eventually managed to get some of his own writings published in them too.[610] This section examines the students and alumni of the Diniyyah schools, whose writings and activities evince a strong attraction to both Islamic identity and Marxist ideas.

Large numbers of Sumatra Thawalib students took classes at the Diniyah schools as well, usually in the afternoons after their lessons at the Thawalib schools had ended. Among these students was Leon Salim, a key Pendidikan leader of the 1930s and during the Japanese occupation. Much like the aforementioned Darwis Thaib, who was a ranking member of both Permi and the Pendidikan, Leon Salim saw no contradiction in his simultaneous membership in both the Pendidikan and the *Persatoean Moerid Diniyah School* (Union of Diniyyah School Students, PMDS, of which Leon Salim was actually the chairman).[611] Similarly, Djoeir Moehamad, Pendidikan activist and later a member of Sjahrir's *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (Indonesian Socialist Party), was among the Diniyyah schools' many pupils.[612] In the eclectic milieu of the 1930s West Sumatran *pergerakan*, there was no consternation at being devoutly Muslim and embracing Marxist critiques of capitalism at the same time.

A festschrift published in honor of Zainuddin Labai el-Junusiyyah and Rahmah el-Junusiyyah in 1991 reveals the ways in which Marxist ideas and Islamic identity could coexist amongst Diniyyah students. Long after independence, the Diniyyah schools and the education they provided resonated in the memories of their students. Leon Salim and Djoeir Moehamad, who both went on to become avowed socialists in adulthood, each contributed a chapter reminiscing on their time in the Diniyyah schools.[613] Leon Salim began by celebrating the

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[609] *Peringatan 55 Tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 303.
[610] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1997), 55, 58. Chatib Suleiman was one of the three top Pendidikan leaders in West Sumatra, alongside Darwis Thaib and Tamimi Osman. A close associate of Leon Salim, he helped Leon Salim found the Islamic scouting organization el-Hilaal, and went on to teach at various modernist Islamic schools in West Sumatra. He joined the Pendidikan in 1932.
[611] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 99. In 1991, Leon Salim was using the title "Haji" to preface his name in publications, which suggests that his Muslim faith was a consistent one that deepened over time, despite his long association with the Pendidikan and Sjahrir's Indonesian Socialist Party.
[612] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 55.
[613] Leon Salim, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah Satria Wanita RI Alam Minang," and Djoeir Moehammad, "Mengenang Kak Amah dan Diniyyahnya," in *Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy Dan Hajjah Rahmah El Yunusiyyah: Dua Bersaudara Tokoh Pembaru Sistem*

matrilineal structure of Minangkabau society, even as he proclaimed the Minangkabau to be a people especially steeped in Islam.[614] This is interesting, because the matrilineal bent of Minangkabau culture been a matter of some consternation for the *kaum muda*. Minangkabau social norms were often at odds with the norms of patrilineal inheritance espoused by all four schools of jurisprudence, including the Shafi'i *madhhab* dominant in the Indies.[615] Unlike many *kaum muda* scholars, Leon Salim's understanding of Islam was that of a religion which "held women in high honour [*munjunjung tinggi*] and strengthened Minangkabau traditions [*adat*]."[616] He even described the Minangkabau as "fanatics for *adat*" and "diligent in religion" in the same sentence.[617] To Leon Salim, it was within this special society, one capable of sublimating opposing impulses, that a great enabler of the *pergerakan*, Rahmah el-Yunusiyyah, was born.

Leon Salim's chapter was couched in the language of Islamic piety, constantly invoking God's blessing and praising Rahmah el-Junusiyyah for her commitment to educating good Muslims. The chapter even took on an apologetic, abrasive tone at times, as Leon Salim vigorously defended Rahmah el-Junisiyyah from accusations of building a cult of personality. Salim's ardor was remarkable especially since both Rahmah el-Junusiyyah and her brother Zainuddin explicitly maintained an apolitical stance in their curricula and instruction. In particular, Leon Salim remarked that the "anticolonial spirit [*jiwa anti penjajahan*] flowed through her veins," and praised her for refusing to accept colonial funding; he praised her insistence on accepting only teachers and students who were prepared to "tighten their belts for the sake of their principles."[618] Interestingly, this Islamic ethos of self-sacrifice which Rahmah el-Junusiyyah supposedly embodied was positioned by Leon Salim within a hybrid pedagogical lineage which included known Marxists.

Leon Salim explicitly placed the Diniyyah Putri school within a long line of nationalist educational initiatives, namely "Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Taman Siswa), K.H. Ahmad Dahlan (Muhammadiyah), Tan Malaka (Rakyat

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Pendidikan Di Indonesia, Riwayat Hidup, Cita-Cita, Dan Perjuangannya (Jakarta: Pengurus Perguruan Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, 1991), 125–35, 141–44.

[614] Leon Salim, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah Satria Wanita RI Alam Minang," 125.

[615] Hadler, *Muslims and Matriarchs*, 58–61.

[616] Leon Salim, "Rahmah El Yunusiyah Satria Wanita RI Alam Minang," 125.

[617] *Ibid.*, 128.

[618] *Ibid.*, 131.

School), Cokrominoto (Perguruan SI), K.H. Hasym Ashari (Nahdatul Ulama), Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy (Diniyyah school), Dr. H.A. Karim Amrullah (Madrasah Thawalib), and many others in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi…"[619] These schools, he claimed, educated their students with a holy and pure idealism, teaching them to stand on their own feet and believe in their own abilities, while rejecting the individualism and materialism inculcated by colonial education.[620] Strikingly, the Diniyyah schools of the el-Junusiyyah siblings were located in the same lineage as the Marxist *Sekolah Rakyat* (People's schools) supported by the communist Tan Malaka and the Islamic socialist Tjokroaminoto, as highlighted in chapter one. The Sumatra Thawalib schools, which harbored significant numbers of Islamic communist students and teachers, were also included in this category, alongside the many overtly non-political Islamist modernist schools of the Muhammadiyah (which did accept colonial funding and used the Dutch curriculum for non-Islamic subjects). This is not entirely surprising, as students often attended either the Sumatra Thawalib or Sekolah Rakyat in the day, and then one of the Diniyyah schools in the evening.[621] Leon Salim's apparent focus on specifically Islamic and Marxist educational institutions speaks volumes about his own political and spiritual allegiances, as well as of the eclectic milieu of the 1930s. The young Leon Salim inhabited a world which embraced the possibility of finding generative, productive confluences between the old and new. In that milieu, it was possible for *pergerakan* activists to be both Muslim and socialist; the older Leon Salim, writing in the twilight of his life, still found those eclectic combinations inspiring rather than confounding.

Djoeir Moehamad presents an even more interesting example of how Islamic identity and socialist politics might be combined. While not as highly-placed as Leon Salim, he was a trusted member of Sjahrir's PSI in the 1950s: he was delegated by Hatta to negotiate with the PRRI/Permesta movement during the confrontation between the Masjumi-backed PRRI and the central government, which began in 1958.[622] Presumably, Hatta's choice was not a flippant one. Djoeir Moehamad was likely chosen because of he had previously taught at one

[619] *Ibid*., 131.
[620] *Ibid*., 132.
[621] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 40. The *Sekolah Rakyat* in West Sumatra had been set up in 1924 specifically because of the arrest of radical Sumatra Thawalib teachers and students (including Nathar Zainuddin and Haji Datuk Batuah) in the same year.
[622] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 255–61.

of Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's Islamic schools (*Kulliyatul Muallimin/Muallimat*) in Padang Panjang, and his Islamic credentials made him a suitable envoy to the Masjumi leaders of the PRRI.[623] His contribution to the festschrift was also steeped in Islamic piety, much as Leon Salim's was, despite the fact that both were *Pendidikan* alumni and longstanding members of the PSI. Djoeir Moehamad was no less a socialist later in life: in 1997, eight years after he contributed a chapter to this festschrift, he published an autobiography titled *Memoirs of a Socialist*. In the festschrift, he spoke glowingly of the kind of education Rahmah el-Junusiyyah oversaw, claiming that gave her staff the utmost flexibility to teach as they saw fit, with the result that the students received "a pure and complete Islamic education."[624] This was, according to him, a "moderate" education which "departed from conservative, staid education [*keluar dari tabriyah yang kolot*] to raise the caliber of students' understanding, such that they might participate in the development of a progressive society [*masyarakat yang maju*]."[625]

Interestingly, Djoeir Moehamad acknowledged the fact that Rahmah el-Junusiyyah did not play an active political role in the *pergerakan*, but maintained that she emanated the "non-cooperative, anticolonial spirit," just as Leon Salim claimed.[626] Djoeir Moehamad framed Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's disavowal of direct political activism in direct contrast to Rasuna Said and S.K. Trimurti (teacher, journalist, unionist, and later first labor minister of the Indonesian republic), whose ideas are covered in chapter three. For Djoeir Moehamad, the "active" female *pergerakan* activists like Rasuna Said and S.K. Trimurti were models of civic virtue, and worthy of emulation.[627] However, he also took pains to point out that the independent [*mandiri*] pedagogy of Rahmah el-Junsiyyah contributed in its own subtle way to the development and maturity of the *pergerakan*. Even for an avowed socialist like Djoeir Moehamad, Islam could be a source of progressive discourse, and an Islamic education a productive molding of character, in a way that was synchronous with his socialist creed. It

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[623] Djoeir M, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 51.
[624] Djoeir M, "Mengenang Kak Amah dan Diniyyahnya," in *Zainuddin Labay El Yunusy dan Hajjah Rahmah El Yunusiyyah: Dua Bersaudara Tokoh Pembaru Sistem Pendidikan di Indonesia, Riwayat Hidup, Cita-cita, dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Pengurus Perguruan Diniyyah Puteri Padang Panjang, 1991), 141.
[625] *Ibid*.
[626] *Ibid*., 142.
[627] *Ibid*.

is clear from his tone that he did not perceive Islamic education as a mere transitional phase in the maturation of the *pergerakan* or a stepping stone to a more "developed" society; he valued it in its own right, for how it had helped shape his own commitment to socialism. It is worth pointing out that these were more than wistful reminisces, for participation in Islamic education had concrete effects. Djoeir Moehamad wrote that it was during his stint teaching at the *Kulliyatul Mualimin* that he met Leon Salim and Chatib Suleiman of the Pendidikan, which showcases how often socialist and Islamic circles could overlap in West Sumatra.[628]

In line with Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's ostensibly apolitical pedagogy, the Diniyyah schools were even averse to cooperation with Permi. Permi approached Rahmah el-Junusiyyah in 1930 with a plan to make the Diniyyah schools affiliates of Permi, much like the aforementioned Islamic College in Padang. Rahmah el-Junusiyyah rebuffed the plan with the backing of most of her staff, a stark contrast to the position taken by other West Sumatran *pergerakan* activists like the former Thawalib teacher and Permi leader Muchtar Lutfi.[629] Unlike Rahmah el-Junisiyyah, Muchtar Luthfi had been involved in student politics since his time at al-Azhar in Cairo, and had eventually become the director of the Tasnawijah female teachers' training school in Padang while serving as a Permi leader. It was his Tasnawijah school which employed Diniyyah teachers who could not accept Rahmah el-Junusyyah's apolitical policy: the best-known example was Rasuna Said, who left the Diniyyah Putri school in 1932.[630] Nevertheless, the Diniyyah schools played an important role in incubating many *pergerakan* leaders, particularly those who were drawn to both Islam and socialism. The wide-ranging impact of the Diniyyah schools is attested to in a commemorative volume celebrating the 55th anniversary of the Diniyyah Putri school: the volume attracted numerous glowing forewords from personages as august as Hatta, Natsir, and Hamka.[631]

In his contribution this festschrift, Leon Salim recalled that explicitly Islamic communist newspapers like *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam* were widely-read by the students of the Sumatra Thawalib and

[628] *Ibid.*, 142.
[629] *Peringatan 55 tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang*, 47.
[630] Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 174–75.
[631] *Peringatan 55 tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang*, 1–22.

Diniyyah schools during the early 1920s. He even claimed that "nearly all of the *ulama* [religious teachers] became leaders in the Sarekat Rakyat or the PKI."[632] While this was almost certainly an exaggeration, it is clear that the modernist Islamic schools of the 1920s were a receptive environment for many different strains of political thought, making possible the confluence of Islam and Marxism as just one among many frameworks shaping *pergerakan* activism. He even described the 1926–27 uprisings as "revolutionary Islam in the dress of the Sarekat Rakyat (PKI)," implying that the uprisings retained a fundamentally Islamic impetus.[633] Indeed, even after the suppression of the uprisings, Islamic communism was not quite discredited. Leon Salim wrote that the PMDS, the Diniyyah schools' student union, of which he was chairman, continued to stay in touch with former teachers like Djamaluddin Tamin and Djamaluddin Ibrahim. These were both agents of Tan Malaka, who were then living in Singapore to avoid capture by the Dutch.[634] It was from them that Leon Salim obtained organizational manuals for the scouting movements he was involved in, the communist-affiliated IPO and the Islamic El Hilaal.[635] Unsurprisingly, Leon Salim's mentor Djamluddin Tamin evinced the same willingness to put Islamic faith in dialogue with Marxist convictions: he had been known to publish articles in the Islamic modernist newspaper al-Munir, printed in Padang Panjang from 1918–21.[636]

The ubiquity of Islamic identity coexisting alongside Marxist ideas is also attested to in Djoeir Moehamad's memoirs. Born in 1916, Djoeir describes growing up in a typical Minangkabau environment: most boys of his generation received at least a basic traditional Islamic education in a *surau* under a *sheikh*, memorizing the Qur'an and learning Arabic. Many of these same boys that he attended *surau* with, however, were also attracted to leftist activism. His classmates Baizar Ahmad and Bahar went on to become union leaders in Singapore, eventually introducing him to the PKI leader Alimin in 1946.[637] Similarly, Djohan Noer, another classmate from

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[632] Leon Salim, "Gerakan Pemuda/Kepanduan Sekitar Diniyah School," in *Peringatan 55 tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 233.
[633] *Ibid*., 237.
[634] *Ibid.*, 238. Djamaluddin Tamin was also one of the founding editors of *Djago! Djago!* and *Pemandangan Islam*, the explicitly Islamic communist newspapers examined in chapter one.
[635] Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 58.
[636] *Ibid*., 63.
[637] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 17.

his *surau,* became closely associated with Chairul Saleh, one of Tan Malaka's lieutenants and a prominent militia leader during the revolution.[638] At the same time, Djoeir Moehmad's family was very much immersed in the Kampung life of *adat* and Islam (his father was a *silat* master as well as a practitioner of *kebatinan*), and understood themselves to be "existing on the margins" of colonial society.[639] Djoier Moehamad's father saw no need to enroll him in Dutch schools like the MULO or AMS. It was telling that Djoier Moehamad, despite coming from a non-elite, non-urban, and distinctly traditional Islamic background, still ended up as a committed socialist; and he was hardly the only one.

As a young man Djoier Moehamad was enamored of the writings and speeches of Hatta and Sjahrir, reading *Daulat Ra'jat* when he could. He wrote glowingly of his first opportunity to meet Hatta when he was sixteen, in October 1932, upon Hatta's return from Holland.[640] At the same time, however, he was a member of a Muslim scouting movement, the Hizbul Wathan. Much like Leon Salim, he saw no contradiction between the socialist politics he learned from the Pendidikan's press organs and his Islamic identity.[641] He also wrote admiringly of Permi in his memoirs, acknowledging Permi as an example of a "radical Islamic party" (*partai Islam radikal*).[642] In fact, Djoier specifically acknowledged that Padang Panjang was a center of *pergerakan* activity of a more Islamic bent, but simultaneously constituted "the foundation for political cadre formation" (*lembaga pengkaderan politik*).[643] This implies that he understood the socialist Pendidikan and the various Islamic movements to be mutually supportive, or at least compatible. Unsurprisingly, it was during his time teaching at the Kulliyatul Muallimat, Rahmah el-Junusiyyah's Islamic school in Padang Panjang, that he joined the socialist Pendidikan himself.[644]

Djoeir also recalled that the attempts at religious reform and education initiated by the Sumatra Thawalib and the Diniyyah schools had a strong pan-Indies perspective, influenced by other *pergerakan* organizations across

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[638] *Ibid.*
[639] *Ibid.*, 25.
[640] *Ibid.*, 29.
[641] *Ibid.*, 30–31.
[642] *Ibid.*, 51.
[643] *Ibid.*,
[644] *Ibid.*, 55.

the Indies. He specifically mentioned the Pendidikan, the PKI, Permi, Muhammadiyah, and Taman Siswa, among others, as influences on Islamic modernism in West Sumatra.[645] Evidently, Djoier saw the modernist Muslim movement in West Sumatra as operating in the same field as even explicitly Marxist organizations. This included even explicitly apolitical organizations like Muhammadiyah, which he still felt was working towards a common goal as the Pendidikan and PKI; these organizations not *ipso facto* incompatible, though they might ultimately have different goals. More pointedly, Djoier argued that the West Sumatran *pergerakan* was unambiguously influenced by Marxism, in the form of the "radical political nationalist stream" (*aliran politik nasionalisme radikal*) represented by Tan Malaka, but without being beholden to (*lepas dari*) Comintern influence.[646]

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, with Pendidikan newspapers like *Daulat Ra'jat* flailing, Hatta, Sjahrir and Soekarno in exile, and discursive space for leftist politics generally restricted, Djoeir chose to publish his writings in *Pandji Islam* and *Pedoman Masjarakat*. The choice was telling, because these were newspapers under the editorship of Hamka and Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Islamic modernists with strong ties to Permi who would later become prominent Masjumi figures.[647] Both were highly respected Islamic intellectuals: Hamka was the son of Haji Rasul Karim Amrullah, the original founder of the first Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. Hamka was himself a progressive Islamic scholar, journalist and novelist, and went on to become one of the most prominent voices in Indonesian Islam after independence. His own progressive interpretation of Islam was highly sympathetic to issues of social justice, which is perhaps unsurprising given his immersion in this West Sumatran milieu. His *Social Justice in Islam* (1951), a reaction to Sayyid Qutb's book of the same title (1949), is examined in chapter four. Zainal Abidin Ahmad was a Permi activist who would go on to become a key Masjumi leader, numbered among the religious socialists aligned with Natsir.[648] To avoid being charged with press offences (*persdelict*), these articles that Djoeir authored were circumspect about their

[645] *Ibid*., 56.
[646] *Ibid*., 57.
[647] *Ibid*., 50, 58; Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 48–49.
[648] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 48.

socialist orientation, but his decision to publish in these journals speaks volumes about the kind of easy comfort and compatibility that was assumed to exist between the modernist Muslims and socialists. To be clear, Djoeir Moehamad's commitment to socialism had not faltered during this difficult period for the *pergerakan*. He wrote of his close association with Chatib Suleiman during the late 1930s, describing himself as one of several cadres still studying old issues of *Daulat Ra'jat* and Pendidikan brochures (such as *150 Questions and Answers*) under Chatib Suleiman's supervision.[649] He even recalled that Chatib Suleiman, one of the top three West Sumatran Pendidikan leaders in Hatta and Sjahrir's absence, moved easily in various circles in Minangkabau society, including those of the religious scholars (*ulama*), students, and even gangsters (*preman*).[650]

Besides Leon Salim and Djoeir Moehamad, the Diniyyah schools incubated a range of *pergerakan* activists who blended their Islamic faith with leftist politics. One such example was Djamaluddin Tamin, who taught at both the Sumatra Thawalib and the Diniyyah schools in Padang Panjang in the early 1920s.[651] He and Haji Datuk Batuah were two of the most gifted students of Hamka's father, Haji Rasul, whose modernist Islamic school (the *Surau Djembatan Besi*) would become the first Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. Tamin eventually became Tan Malaka's right hand man, following him into exile in the after 1926. He put the publishing skills he had picked up while helping Haji Datuk Batuah edit *Pemandangan Islam* to good use, by publishing the clandestine newspaper *Obor* (lit. torch) from exile during the 1930s.[652] The attraction of Muslim students to leftist politics was typical of the time and place; Tamin's brother and fellow Diniyyah student Jazir became chairman of the Pendidikan's Padang Panjang section in the early 1930s, while Djamluddin Ibrahim (another Tan Malaka lieutenant) was the younger brother of Hatta's close associate, Anwar Sutan Saidi.[653] Audrey Kahin argues that there was no inconsistency in following both Hatta/Sjahrir and Tan Malaka in the

[649] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 59.
[650] *Ibid*.
[651] Bermawy Latief, *Peringatan 55 tahun Diniyah Putri Padang Panjang* (Padang: Ghalia Indonesia, 1978), 225.
[652] Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.
[653] Audrey Kahin (trans.), "Translator's Preface," in Leon Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2010), 21.

1930s, since all were Marxist, anticolonial, emphasized cadre organization, and did not take orders from Moscow.[654]

The Diniyyah teacher Djamaluddin Ibrahim was similarly drawn to Tan Malaka. Djamaluddin Ibrahim and others like him discovered communism via their involvement in the PKI-linked scouting organization Barisan Muda (young cohorts), which was reorganized as the *Internationale Pavinder Organasatie* (IPO, International Scouting Organization) in 1925.[655] Incidentally, Leon Salim of the Pendidikan had been a member of the Barisan Muda/IPO while enrolled at both the Sekolah Rakyat and the Diniyyah schools in Padang Panjang during the early 1920s, and had even organized his own Islamic-oriented scouting movement, El Hilaal (the crescent moon) in 1927.[656] As an adult, he served as the secretary for Diniyyah schools from 1937–42, having previously spent 1930–31 working with Tan Malaka's PARI in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.[657] Djamaluddin Ibrahim was responsible for editing the IPO journal *Signaal*, and he would go on to become one of Tan Malaka's key lieutenants, serving alongside Djamaluddin Tamin in Tan Malaka's communist party-in-exile, Partai Republik Indonesia (PARI). Even in exile, they maintained strong links with Diniyyah students, sending copies of PARI's *Obor* as well as manuals on organization to the leaders of the PMDS.[658]

The intersecting personal relationships, overlapping political allegiances, and the shared commitment to Islam amongst these West Sumatran *pergerakan* activists is illustrative of a social milieu in which it was commonplace, though not always uncontroversial, for Islam and Marxism to coexist.[659] This was true even beyond the Diniyyah schools: Leon Salim wrote that the headmaster of the smaller Abadiah school in Padang Panjang, Bapak Abdullah, was a clandestine supporter of Tan Malaka all his adult life.[660] The Abadiah school was a modernist Islamic institution founded in 1909, but one which was more congenial to the colonial state: it faithfully followed the Dutch *Holland Inlandsh School* (HIS) curriculum, with the addition of Qur'anic studies.

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[654] *Ibid.*
[655] Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 41.
[656] *Ibid*., 41.
[657] Audrey Kahin (trans.), "Translator's Preface," in Leon Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2010), 19.
[658] Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 58.
[659] Haji Rasul quit the school he founded over this very issue. See Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 38.
[660] Leon Salim, *Prisoners at Kota Cane*, trans. Audrey R. Kahin (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2010), 35.

Even in such places Tan Malaka had his allies; Abdullah was close to Anwar Sutan Saidi, a known associate of both Hatta and Tan Malaka.[661] The *pergerakan* activists examined in this section were all connected to the Diniyyah schools, either as teachers or students, yet all became leftist leaders of one stripe or another while remaining committed to Islam throughout their lives. The prominent place that the Diniyyah schools occupy in their reminisces suggests that their modernist Islamic education was a deeply formative experience, which directly and indiretcly shaped their political allegiances.

Kritiek en Opbouw

Outside of the *Volksraad*, or political movements both proscribed and legal, socialist ideas with identifiably Marxist roots also circulated amongst the Indies literati during the 1930s. Mrazek has ably described the Indies equivalent of salon culture, centered around the person of Edgar "Eddy" du Perron (1899–1940).[662] It was in such circles that Marxist ideas were debated, even as many of the participants in these debates held on to their Muslim identities, and sometimes even raised issues of specifically Muslim concern. *Kritiek en Opbouw* (Criticism and Structure) was the Dutch-language journal most closely associated with the socialist *avant-garde* in the Indies. It attracted articles from both native and Dutch contributors, and was particularly notable for the number of articles contributed by erudite native women like Soewarsih Djojopoespito and Maria Ulfah Santoso. In the pages of *Kritiek en Opbouw*, socialist ideas and issues of specifically Muslim concern coexisted alongside feminist arguments for the expansion of women's rights. In translating the intellectual heritage of Europe to Indonesia, as *Kritiek en Opbouw*'s contributors did, strenuous attempts were made to learn selectively from Europe, while retaining – and cultivating – an authentically Indonesian subjectivity. For many contributors, that authentically Indonesian subjectivity included acceptance of Islam and its role in Indonesian society.

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[661] *Ibid*.
[662] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 163–98.

Kritiek en Opbouw's reliance on Marxist critiques of capital was not hard to spot. Articles such as "In de Marge – De koloniale verhouding" (In the Margins – The Colonial Reaction) expressed incredulity that members of the Dutch *Tweede Kamer* (the lower house of parliament) had claimed that a colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia had ceased to exist in 1926. It spelled out the economic dependence of the Indies on the Netherlands within a Marxist framework:

> *"… economically, the Indies is in a coercive relationship* [with the Netherlands]*; it is a debtor country and a financial asset* [debiteurenland, lit. an area of profit] *for foreign, mostly Dutch, capital, to which it owes an annual 'tribute' of hundreds of millions of guilders on average. The situation was correctly characterized by the notary S. Oppenkamp as such: Indies labor does not attract foreign capital to increase its return on investment, but rather it is foreign capital that attracts Indies labor to increase its own return on investment, its share of capital. Indies labor does not benefit from foreign capital, but foreign capital benefits from Indies labor… This inhibits the chances for indigenous society to develop independently. Practically speaking, the population of the Indies today, with all the capital it has been allocated* [by the Dutch state and private investors]*, does not receive more* [capital] *than it can produce with its own hands and primitive tools. Indonesia is a nation of wage laborers, and a wage laborer among the nations. It is this relationship which is characteristic of colonial relations* [between the Netherlands and the Indies]*."*[663]

The articles in *Kritiek en Opbouw* did not limit themselves to theoretical abstractions, but also addressed concrete issues of socialist concern. Such matters included how public sector salaries were assessed, and how government calls for agricultural businesses like plantations to raise post-depression wages for their employees were toothless, which justified organized labor action.[664] The latter article even drew explicitly on Marx's Immiseration Thesis (*verelendungstheorie*) to argue that real wages had not risen in value, although the value created by Indonesian labor had, in the years since the Great Depression.[665] It even provided updates on developments within the Dutch Communist Party – which held four seats in the lower house of parliament, including one held by Rustam Effendi. Unsurprisingly, *Kritiek en Opbouw* was clear-eyed about the subordination of the Comintern to the USSR's prerogatives. It quoted the Soviet historian E.H. Carr's pejorative description of the Comintern under Stalin's thumb: "She is the specter of the world revolution, haunting

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[663] M. Soetardjo, "In de Marge – De Koloniale Verhouding," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, March 16, 1938.
[664] D.M.G. Koch, "Loonbepaling – De Beteekenis van de Georganiseerde Loonactie," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, April 1, 1938.
[665] *Ibid*. For Marx's Immiseration Thesis, see Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, part 2 (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 708–709.

indecisively around the tomb of Lenin on the Red Square."[666] Without aligning itself with Trotsky or Tan Malaka, or engaging in the Marxist polemics which were typical of the era, *Kritiek en Opbouw* expressed the kind of independent-minded socialism that was comfortable drawing on Marx's ideas but remained firmly rooted in the reality of the Indies.

Female *pergerakan* intellectuals such as the ever-eloquent Soewarsih Djojopoespito also contributed articles to *Kritiek en Opbouw*, engaging in debates with other equally literate women like Maria Ulfah Santoso on the issue of women's suffrage. They were both of excellent pedigree: in 1940, Soewarsih would become the first and only Indies woman to publish a Dutch-language novel, *Buiten het Gareel*, while Maria Ulfah Santoso would become the republic's first female cabinet member in 1946, serving as Social Minister under Sjahrir. Soewarsih argued that the *kota* (town) women like herself needed to be conscious of their own privilege, recognizing that they did not represent the voices and interests of *desa* (village) women, nor even share their worldviews. Shackled by childbirth and domestic labor, *desa* women did not yet have political consciousness, while *kota* women were consumed with imitating their European counterparts in manners and style, an unconscious worship of all things European that Soewarsih implied clouded women's political judgement as well. She pointed out that female candidates for the *Volksraad* were bound to be screened, and only the most palatable – the least radical, the most inoffensive – candidates would be shortlisted. An overwhelmingly male-dominated electorate would then elect them. Without the votes of their fellow women, and without being able to represent the masses of village women, Soewarsih asked, how could electing women to the *Volksraad* be considered progress? Instead, she advocated investment in education and the expansion of women's rights activism, reaching into the villages, to "wake up the unconscious mass of *desa* women from her life-dream."[667]

Soewarsih also lamented the deradicalization of women's rights activism. She argued that unspecified "radical political parties" – clearly referring to Sarekat Islam, the PKI, and the PNI – had stirred up women's desire for equality, galvanizing women to campaign against polygyny. According to Soewarsih, "The women *demanded*,

[666] M. Soetardjo, "In de Marge – De Koloniale Verhouding," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, March 16, 1938.
[667] Soewarsih Djojopoespito, "De Indonesische vrouw en het passief kiesrecht," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, April 16, 1938.

and begged no more! They took the suffragettes as an example, the most furious feminists, to act [and not merely speak]!"[668] Sadly, the campaign was "short and flaring," and fizzled out when radical parties were suppressed.[669] Female activists went back to accepting traditional gender roles as mothers, housekeepers, and spouses, feeling good about their vocal activism but having achieved nothing of substance. Soewarsih's esteem for "radical parties" and the suffragette movement, as well as her open commitment to feminism, were openly expressed in a journal with known Marxist inspirations. At the same time, her acceptance of Islam's role in Indonesian society, and her desire to learn from other Islamic societies alongside European ones, were manifest in other articles she penned.

In a 1938 article titled "Our Muslim Sisters In and Outside Indonesia," Soewarsih expressed her deep sympathy and respect for the incipient women's rights movement in the Middle East, which she identified as worthy of emulation precisely because Indonesia was a Muslim society as well.[670] In Soewarsih's words,

> *"Modern global transportation brought close contact between East and West. Ships moved around and left behind materiel and spiritual values. Telephone and telegraph informed Asia about the rapid progress of modern technique and changes in societal circumstances… And the doors of the harems had to collapse in the storm of modern ideas. Muslim girls went to universities. They received responsible positions in offices. Their voices resounded in meeting rooms. Women edited periodicals. Novelists and poets announced the new life of women. Frank and free they enjoyed life and remembered the years long past with horror. High they raised the banner of freedom and pulverized tradition under their hasty steps… Indonesia is a Muslim country as well. And what is the situation of women here? Cloistered in age-old traditions and bewitched by Qur'anic verses of the orthodox, they only utter a trembling whisper."*[671]

However, Soewarsih qualified her enthusiasm by arguing that this emulation had to go beyond the gathering of elite women to demand reforms in personal status law, women's suffrage, educational opportunities for women, and the reduction of prostitution. She provided a searing indictment of the Third Indonesian Women's Congress

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[668] *Ibid*. Emphasis Soewarsih's.
[669] *Ibid*.
[670] One example of Islamic feminist activism from this period was Hoda Shaarawi's Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), founded in 1923. It made international headlines across the Islamic world when its leaders publicly discarded their veils. The EFU's journals, *L'Egyptienne* and *el-Masreyyah*, were notable for their calls to ban polygyny and equalize women's rights to divorce; at the same time, they specifically identified with Islam, positioning their feminism as Islam being practised in its true spirit. See Cathlyn Mariscotti, *Gender and Class in the Egyptian Women's Movement, 1925–1939*: Changing Perspective (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 93–100.
[671] Soewarsih Djojopoespito, "Onze Muslimzusters in en buiten Indonesië," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, November 1, 1938.

in 1938, which she had participated in: "They [participants] addressed the reality around marriages, but did not dare to go beyond a seeking the protection of the government (a government of men!) for better marriage laws and pleading for *ulama* to interpret the Qur'an in a modern way. They recognised that injustice and oppression, prostitution and polygamy are rooted in economic dependence of women, but they didn't dare to fly high. They remained nailed to the ground of reality and did not dare to go beyond the limits of what was possible. They begged for more girl's schools and for firm action of the moral police."[672] Instead, she called on her fellow activists to focus on building support for women's rights among village women, helping to improve their lived realities, arguing that this was the only way to "liquidate 'man-society,' and to give birth to a 'human society,' an objective she called a "holy ideal."[673] This was feminism articulated within a distinctly Islamic worldview, though not an argument for women's rights legitimated by Islamic hermeneutics, as evinced in S. Yati's writings. Islam was part of the picture, for Soewarsih, not the totality of it. Nevertheless, this engagement with Islam was remarkable coming from a feminist who drew on Friedrich Schiller, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in her other articles, and who praised the USSR for its success in improving women's livelihoods and thereby limiting prostitution.[674]

Naturally, not all Indonesian women's activists agreed with Soewarsih. Maria Ulfah Santoso, a trained lawyer (the first Indonesian woman to earn a law degree, she graduated from Leiden University with a *meester in de rechten* in 1933) and women's rights activist who led the 1938 conference, published an acerbic article rebutting Soewarsih's criticism of the elitist outlook of Indonesian feminists. In brief, Maria Ulfah Santoso argued that Soewarsih's characterization of the draft ordinance on marriage reform was unfair, and that genuine problems existed with the draft legislation which made it unpalatable to feminists.[675] She also objected violently to Soewarsih's critique of the elitist concerns of *kota* feminists, defending their focus on winning the right (for some women, at least) to stand as candidates in municipal councils and the *Volksraad*, as well as the right to

[672] *Ibid*.
[673] *Ibid*.
[674] Soewarsih Djojopoespito, "De indonesische Vrouw van morgen," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, June 15, 1938.
[675] Maria Ulfah Santoso, "De Indonesische vrouw en het passief kiesrecht: Naar aanleiding van het stuk van Mevrouw Soerwarsih Djojopoespito," *Kritiek en Opbouw*, June 1, 1938.

vote in the same elections. What was remarkable was the way religious sensibilities seeped into her writing as well: "Enthusiasm and readiness to fight, thank God, we have in abundance."[676] At the same time, Maria Ulfah Santoso was open to redefining Islam, arguing in another article that the Qur'an did not intend to denigrate women, but how Indonesian society had interpreted Qur'anic principles had resulted in unequal rights to divorce for women, making life especially hard for victims of spousal abuse.[677] Santoso also worked as a teacher in a Muhammadiyah teacher-training college in Batavia after returning from Leiden, which provides some sense of her religious leanings. Her attachment to socialism was not in any doubt: besides publishing in *Kritiek en Opbouw*, her second husband Soebadio Sastroasatomo was a leading member of the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI). They married in 1964, and went on the *haj* together in the 1970s.[678] In the lives and writings of Maria Ulfah Santoso, as with Soewarsih Djojopoespito, we catch glimpses of a lived reality, an *umwelt*, in which Islamic identity and socialist politics could mix easily and without the need for explicit justification. This was true of the 1930s, even as the explicit Islamic communism of Haji Misbach or Haji Datuk Batuah became less attractive, and it would be true of the post-revolution era of parliamentary democracy as well.

Susan Blackburn's "Indonesian Women and Political Islam" provides a useful framework for understanding why a considerable number of educated and erudite Indonesian women like Soewarsih and S. Yati were comfortable embracing both their Islamic identities and Marxist critiques of capital. Blackburn astutely argued that "radical Islam" was once a "nationalist phenomenon," allowing and encouraging women to play a role in politics.[679] Blackburn observed that "bright and articulate women were attracted to radical Islam when it was fighting for national independence, but now [after independence was achieved] few share its goals."[680] This attraction to radical politics and the doors it opened was evident in Djoeinah's writings and speeches, analyzed

[676] *Ibid.*
[677] Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi, "Javanese Women and Islam: Identity Formation since the Twentieth Century," *Southeast Asian Studies* 1 (April 2012): 120.
[678] George McTurnan Kahin, "In Memoriam: Maria Ullfah Soebadio, 1911-1988," *Indonesia* 47 (April 1989): 118–20.
[679] Susan Blackburn, "Indonesian Women and Political Islam," 92.
[680] *Ibid.*, 93.

in chapter one. In the colonial context, Islam provided a means (or framework) for mobilizing women in the interest of social justice, often in ways that directly impacted Indonesian women, such as improving women's access to education, ensuring safe working conditions and equal pay for women, or regulating rights of marriage, divorce and inheritance.

Interestingly, Blackburn uses the example of Gerwani to support her argument: she argues that millions of women were attracted to participate in Gerwani activities not because of its communist inspirations, but because it offered practical solutions to their problems. These solutions served the cause of social justice, and included literacy courses, childcare creches, and campaigns against price hikes in staple goods. In a similar vein, women were attracted to Islamic politics (PSII, Permi) or Marxist organizations (PKI, SR, VSTP) in the colonial era because it afforded them a real opportunity and platform to speak against injustice both abstract and personal. They may not have been *ulama* or philosophers with complex theorizations of compatibility, but they participated in Islamic and Marxist organizations, or published in Islamic and Marxist publications, because these were the entities best-placed and most willing to oppose the indignities of colonial extractive capitalism and confront gender roles constraining women. Women's activism in this period thrived in the interstices of feminism, Islam, and Marxism.

That said, it is also important to be clear-eyed about the limitations of the Indies women's rights movement. Lise Vogel's distinction between what she calls the "dual systems" approach and the "social-reproduction" approach within Marxist theory, with which one can understand the causes of women's oppression, is germane here. Both the Islamic and socialist feminists examined in this chapter were very much attuned to the "dual systems" approach that Vogel ascribes to Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), which perceives patriarchal social norms and class structures as two distinct, autonomous sources of women's oppression.[681] Female *pergerakan* activists like the socialist sisters Soewarni and Soewarsih, or Permi's Rasuna Said and Ratna Sari, were invested in making tangible improvements to the daily lives of Indies

[681] Lise Vogel, *Marxism and Oppresion of Women: Towards a Unitary Theory* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 133–34.

women although they disagreed on how this ought to be done. One notable point of departure was the push for the outlawing of polygyny in 1937, which many Islamic women's organizations felt unable to support.

For all their differences, however, they were united by their inability or unwillingness to regard the organization of production and the organization of reproduction as mutually constitutive. As Vogel explains, this is the dialectic between the how production is organized in a capitalist society at any given historical moment, and how it affects the web of norms and conventions governing women's sexuality, the family unit, the raising of children, domestic labor, and women's participation in the workforce.[682] Instead, female *pergerakan* activists tended to view women's oppression and colonial structures of race and class as distinct, if parallel, processes. Some, like Soewarish, were more sensitive to the inequities of class and race, but others, like Ratna Sari, bypassed the colonial economy and appealed to notions of Islamic ethics and orthopraxy to justify a reconsideration of gender roles and exploitative practices. Either way, what they struggled for was the reformation of male behavior, societal expectations, and laws, as well as for more educational and professional opportunities for women. They were not militating specifically against the colonial capitalist modes of production which rendered women especially vulnerable to both sexual and economic exploitation. While influenced by Marxist critiques of capital and happy to use those critiques against the colonial state, they did not connect those ideas to their own women's rights activism; the two activities remained conceptually distinct. They sought the economic independence of women as a means of improving women's lives, but such economic independence was never going to be forthcoming in a society structured around the exploitative economic prerogatives of the colonial state.

1930s Novels: *Buiten het Gareel* and *Hadji Dadjal*

The intensified surveillance faced by the *pergerakan* from the mid-1930s onward saw the arrest and exile of Soekarno, Sjahrir and Hatta, the strangling of the Pendidikan, PSII and Permi to varying degrees, and the

[682] *Ibid*., 135.

effective censorship of radical *pergerakan* journalism through *persdelict* charges and *persbreidel* legislation. In this repressive climate, it was increasingly difficult to publish anything that was openly critical of the colonial state. Therefore, this chapter now pivots to fiction, a relatively unpoliced discursive realm, to explore how Islam and Marxism remained in productive dialogue. This section will examine two novels: Soewarsih Djojopoespito's *Buiten het Gareel* (1940) and Xarim M.S.'s *Hadji Dadjal* (1941). The former, authored by a close Javanese associate of Sjahrir, sheds light on the hybrid discourses circulating within *pergerakan* schools, while the latter, authored by a Minangkabau Islamic communist, champions new forms of Islamic piety which made possible the incorporation of Marxist ideas.

Soewarsih Djojpoespito's *Buiten het Gareel* (1940) was the first Dutch-language novel to be published by a female Indonesian author. Soewarsih and her husband, Soegondo, had been associates of Sjahrir during his time in Bandung in the late 1920s, and later again when he returned from the Netherlands to lead the Pendidikan in 1932.[683] Though not formally members of the Pendidikan, Soewarsih and her husband moved in the similar circles as Sjahrir, and were themselves teachers in *pergerakan* schools during the late 1930s (including the Semarang Taman Siswa school of Ki Hadjar Dewantara) which rejected subsidies from the colonial state. Both were perceived by the colonial state as subversive *pergerakan* activists, and Soegondo was subject to a teaching ban (*onderwijs verbod*) from 1934–35.

Soewarsih's novel, which was explicitly concerned with the difficulties and joys of teaching at one of these *sekolah liar* (wild schools), is a useful source for understanding the intellectual ferment of the 1930s *pergerakan,* and the kinds of ideas that circulated within the schools outside of the colonial state's aegis. *Buiten het Gareel* can be characterized as a depiction of *pergerakan* activism, particularly in *pergerakan* education, in the 1930s.[684] It was a *roman-à-clef,* a novel containing autobiographical elements and descriptions of real people under fictional names.[685] This was a time when Soekarno, Sjahrir and Hatta had only recently been

[683] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 83.
[684] Toeti Heraty, "Kata Pengantar," in *Manusia Bebas* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1975), xvi.
[685] Laurie J. Sears, *Situated Testimonies: Dread and Enchantment in an Indonesian Literary Archive* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), 99.

banished, and the heady days of *pergerakan* ferment which resulted in the formation of dynamic new organizations like the PNI, Pendidikan, and the PPPKI were fresh on everyone's minds. Soewarsih and Soegondo had been close to the center of that swirl of *pergerakan* activity in Bandung during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and *Buiten het Gareel* is an attempt to evoke – through fiction – the atmosphere, excitement, and troubles of those days. Characters such as Marti are clearly refractions of real people (in this case, Soewarsih's sister Soewarni), and while the novel should not be read as a direct reflection of reality, it is obviously meant to ring true, to capture the essence of a particular moment in time and space. On a more gendered note, it was also a story about the hardships and intimacies shared by a young couple in the course of their activism; Soewarsih "investigates the limits of native women's desires and possibilities for emancipation in the intertwined spaces of personal and political life."[686]

To begin with, it is important to point out that Soewarsih and Soegondo were important *pergerakan* activists in their own right – though primarily in the educational and literary spheres – apart from their relationships with key *pergerakan* leaders like Sjahrir. They were familiar with Soekarno, whose firebrand agitation in the late 1920s and early 1930s was centered in Bandung, and Soekarno himself makes an appearance in the novel.[687] We might even reasonably characterize them as practitioners of the *Pendidikan*'s *raison d'etre*, in the sense that they were concerned with the discursive and pedagogical, mentally equipping a generation of Indonesians to shape their postcolonial future rather than directly agitating for independence. By the late 1930s, Soewarsih was part of a circle of young Indonesian intellectuals centered on Eddy du Perron, a writer for the avant-garde, dissident Bandung-based Dutch journal, *Kritiek en Opbouw* (Criticism and Construction).[688] This group also included other prominent *pergerakan* activists, such as Soewarsih's sister Soewarni Pringgodigdo (also close to Sjahrir), who had been the chairperson of *Istri Sedar* (Conscious Women) since 1932. *Istri Sedar* was the women's affiliate of Sjahrir's Bandung-based student organization, *Pemuda Indonesia*.[689] It was under du

[686] *Ibid*., 88–89.
[687] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 88.
[688] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 162. Du Perron was Indies-born and left at 22 to be educated in Europe. He returned to the Indies in 1936 after having been part of the European interwar avant-garde, alongside novelists like André Malraux, to whom he was close.
[689] *Ibid.*, 86.

Perron's encouragement and mentorship within this progressive circle that *Buiten het Gareel* was written and published.

Soewarni described the intellectual climate of du Perron's circle as febrile: she recalled that du Perron had them read and discuss the classics of Asian and European literature, from Shakespeare and Plato to Dostoyevsky and Chekov, but also "politics, Marxism, history and economics… [even] *belle-lettres*. He did not hide how much he disliked it whenever our minds appeared not open enough to our own culture; it was not only world literature we were supposed to read."[690] Sears described this milieu eloquently:

> *"In the colonial context of the Indies, the group of nationalists Soewarsih portrays did realize that both sets of parents* [the European and Indonesian *weltanschauung* respectively] *had something to offer to the nationalist cause, whose horizons had come from Europe but whose future shape in the emerging Indonesian nation would have to draw on local tradition for ideas and nourishment."*

Marxism was certainly on the table, as one among many ideologies, which was not surprising for individuals closely linked to Sjahrir. This was not a casual attachment, for Soewarni and Soegondo remained supporters of Sjahrir's socialist party into the 1950s.[691] In many ways, this was the same vibrancy and creativity apparent in the writings of Soekarno, Tan Malaka or Mas Marco Kartodikromo; Soewarsih, Soewarni, and others in du Perron's circle were encouraged to forge their own intellectual path, drawing on the best of what the Indies and Europe had to offer. Despite moving in these socialist circles, Soewarsih considered herself a faithful Muslim and would go on to publish a biography of the Prophet Muhammad in 1956.[692]

The novel is too rich and complex to be neatly summarized in a paragraph or two, but parts of the plot are particularly germane. The protagonists of the novel, Dar and Lastri, are teachers in Bandung's Taman Siswa school, which is one of the aforementioned *sekolah liar* that does not accept government funding, and which is therefore free to set its own curriculum. Lastri struggles to deal with the recent rejection of her Sundanese-language novel manuscript by the government publishing house, the Balai Poestaka. Dar urges her not to be

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[690] Soewarni Pringgodigdo, "Du Perron dan Pengaruhnja," 32-33. Quoted in Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 162.
[691] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 103.
[692] Soewarsi Djojopoespito, *Riwajat Nabi Muhammad S.A.W.* (Djakarta: Timun Mas, 1956).

upset, because the Dutch-controlled Balai Poestaka has its own agenda, only publishing materials which it believes are politically "safe" for consumption and which will serve a function in its narrowly-defined *mission civilisatrice*. More broadly, both Dar and Lastri are melancholy, because their involvement in *pergerakan* activism during the heady 1920s has resulted in them losing their social respectability and access to lucrative jobs, in a climate of censorial political oppression. Despite their substantial education, they depend on the meager salaries their teaching jobs provide them with, and lament the materialism, herd instincts, and sheepish submissiveness of their fellow Indonesians. Their lives are peripatetic, and they are forced to move from school to school, from job to job, often relying on the goodwill of their families and sometimes having to compromise their ideals to survive. Along the way, their relationship is deeply strained in various ways, and the reader is forced to confront the cost incurred by *pergerakan* activism in a colonial situation.

The novel traces their constant struggles with their schools' ailing finances, which results in several different initiatives, such as Dar's unpopular proposal to pay the staff according to need instead of ability or seniority. Lastri and Dar's egalitarian principles are put to the test, however, when people whom they consciously or subconsciously consider their social inferiors – like the school attendant, Oerip – join the same political party[693] as Dar and decide that they are now Dar and Lastri's equals. Their insouciance and almost childish disrespect for Dar and Lastri is aggravating, but serves an important purpose. Their behavior, and Dar and Lastri's distress, mirrors something that Soewarsih and her associates almost certainly experienced themselves – the gap between fine ideals and the difficulties (as well as unintended consequences) of putting those ideals into practice. There is a similar gap between the egalitarian relationship Dar and Lastri ostensibly have as lovers, co-workers, and comrades, and societally-sanctioned gender roles that still apply to them, whose weight Dar cannot seem to free himself from. Despite embracing the rhetoric of modernity and progress at work and home, he feels emasculated by Lastri's independence and unwillingness to do what he thinks she should.

[693] The People's Party, likely the fictional cognate of the Sarekat Rakyat.

Soewarsih captures, with raw, searing honesty, the tensions inherent in retaining one's identity while advocating positive changes in Indies society, as well as the birthing pains of the new Indonesia that *pergerakan* activists strove to bring into existence. The fine sentiments expressed in *pergerakan* manifestos and memoirs, while moving and often honest, never quite capture this pervasive discomfort. As the beneficiaries of a European education, as well as participants in *pergerakan* discourse (Dar as a teacher, Lastri as both a teacher and author), Dar and Lastri embody the process of "translation" that Siegel describes in *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, discussed in chapter one. They have partaken of the intellectual fruits of Europe and acquired certain convictions as a result. Applying those convictions, however, presents all kinds of problems: it is hard to put aside Lastri's mother tongue, Sundanese, to write her next novel in Bahasa Indonesia; it is hard to accept that their servants and employees now claim the role of comrade; it is hard to swallow the recalibration of gender roles within a marriage along more egalitarian lines. Implicit in their convictions is the superiority of "modernity" over "tradition," and the assumption that *kemajuan* (progress) is inherently desirable. However, the price of *kemajuan* is high, writ both small and large – Dar and Lastri's relationship and domestic life becomes tense even as they struggle to manage their familial, financial, and professional difficulties.[694] Unsurprisingly, suicidal thoughts and the extramarital temptations make appearances in the novel, because of their difficult circumstances. These circumstances, in turn, are ultimately brought on by the inability of Dar and Lastri to reconcile their convictions as activists with the "double patriarchy" of Javanese tradition and Dutch paternalism.[695]

The process of translation is thus fraught with complications, and progress does not unfold in a straight line; instead it creates obstacles that must be negotiated. Further complicating matters is Dar and Lastri's desire to remain authentically Indonesian, an ontological state which requires constant definition and negotiation. Through her novel, which is in some respects a family drama, Soewarsih is able to tease out many of the

[694] Their troubles are manifold. Dar and Lastri's familial troubles stem from their many conflicts with their natal families, and Lastri's relationship with her sister is particularly damaged; their finances are strained because they work in flailing *pergerakan* schools which refuse state subsidies and control, and are thus poorly remunerated; their professional lives are plagued by the rejection of Lastri's Sundanese novel, Dar's temporary subjection to a teaching ban (*onderwijs verbod*), and police raids on the schools they work in.
[695] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 108.

anxieties of and tensions faced by the educated *pergerakan* elite, the milieu which produced leaders like Sjahrir, Hatta and Soekarno. These anxieties and tensions would color their political positions and decisions, shaping their views on how independent Indonesia ought to be constituted. Some, like Hatta, would double down on Indonesian authenticity in the form of Islam, while championing European-style parliamentary democracy, attempting to keep tension in abeyance. Others, like Soekarno, would attempt to sublimate the tensions between maintaining authentic Indonesian-ness and breaking with the colonial past by formulating novel political ideologies like NASAKOM (*Nasionalisme-Agama-Komunisme*, a portmanteau of Nationalism, Religion and Communism), which would supposedly transcend the impasse between being authentically Indonesian and being fearlessly "modern."

Another important theme of the novel is the tension between folk beliefs and rationalism in the *umwelt* of *pergerakan* activists. For example, Dar and Lastri argue with Lastri's family over a range of issues, from whether they should bless the birth of their children by holding a *selametan* (ritual feast), to Lastri's father's polygamy and the validity of his *dukun* (shaman) status. Lastri is particularly sympathetic to tradition, and loath to dismiss her father's powers or the importance of rituals. Dar and Lastri are caught between "tradition" and "modernity," because they are products of European education, with corresponding convictions and ambitions; but they also hope to reconcile those convictions and ambitions with a strong sense of Indies identity. This tension was an expression of the same dynamic at play within the broader *pergerakan*; *Buiten het Gareel*'s characters reflect the spectrum of *pergerakan* positions on the relationship between "tradition" and "modernity." Sjahrir represented the rationalist, "modern" element of the *pergerakan*, which rejected folk beliefs as superstition and a hindrance to progress.[696] Soekarno, ever the charismatic revolutionary, embraced tradition instead, and gloried in the legitimacy that provided by both Islam and syncretistic Javanese folk beliefs, even as he engaged in the same rationalist discourse that Sjahrir did.[697] Hatta, perhaps, lay somewhere

[696] Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 38.
[697] J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London: Penguin, 1973), 20.

between these two poles, neither wholly empiricist nor fully syncretic; rejecting some elements of tradition, he held on firmly instead to an essentialized form of Indonesian-ness, specifically Islamic faith.

This resonates with Chakrabarty's characterization of the tension between the universal and the particularistic in *Provincializing Europe*: the related but divergent visions for Indonesian-ness represented by Sjahrir (universal) and Soekarno (particularistic) mirror Chakrabarty's insights about historical writing.[698] For *pergerakan* leaders like Sjahrir, Hatta, and Soekarno, however, it was not history that concerned them, but the imagined contours of an unborn Indonesia. Whether they liked to admit it or not, they all had to reckon with the tension between a "tradition" (particularistic) that included Islam and a "modernity" (universal) that included Marxism, and different activists found different ways of resolving that tension. Certainly, there was cognitive dissonance, and perhaps also an idealistic, naïve optimism. However, it is undeniable that a broad range of Indonesians came up with creative ways of reconciling their local, regional, religious (and even national) identities with their aspirations for a free and better Indonesia. Sometimes, putting Islam and Marxism in dialogue with one another was part of that effort; these conciliations should not be dismissed as "eccentric" or "utopian" simply because they were unusual, or difficult to operationalize. Rather, these efforts to define a hybrid non-colonial future for Indonesia were symptomatic of the conditions in which *pergerakan* activism was articulated, and *Buiten het Gareel* does an excellent job of capturing those conditions at a particularly febrile moment.

Buiten het Gareel also parallels Chakrabarty's insistence on taking peasant culture at face value, i.e. the world of spirits, ghosts, ancestors, what might be glossed as folk belief and superstition. Allah continues to pervade the concerns of the novel's characters, even though the Islamic orthodoxy of their beliefs are questionable; for example, Lastri's mother fears it will be a sin against Allah not to hold the ritual *slametan* feast for her grandchild.[699] The point, though, is that Islam (however it was understood and interpreted) was integral to the *umwelt* of the *pergerakan*, and could not be neatly excised from their political consciousness. Islam was an

[698] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 64–71.
[699] Sears, *Situated Testimonies*, 103–106.

integral part of how Lastri's parents understood the world, so it was an integral part of Dar and Lastri's lives as well. This is poignantly encapsulated in the following line from Lastri, when arguing with Dar about whether Soekarno's adherence to Javanese traditions is appropriate: "Yes, we are modern, but even we in our hearts reserve a little space to burn some incense in the moments when we lose hope."[700] It was out of this tension inherent in reconciling or universal values and particularistic local beliefs that creative and original attempts to put Islam and Marxism into meaningful dialogue were born – as one among many kinds of confluences in the *pergerakan* project of building an Indonesian identity.

We have already come across Xarim M.S. (aka Abdoe'l Xarim or Abdul Karim bin Moehamad Soetan), the editor and publisher of *Hindia Sepakat* and *Oetoesan Ra'jat*, explicitly Islamic communist newspapers of the 1920s. Identified as a Marxist activist, he spent much of 1925 and 1926 in jail, before being sentenced to exile in Boven Digoel in June 1927. He was a cooperative prisoner while in Digoel, and was allowed to return to Sumatra in 1932, where he settled in the publishing hub of Medan.[701] Despite his compliant behavior in Digoel, Xarim M.S. did not truly renounce his Marxist convictions; when the revolution broke out, he quickly became one of the two most prominent Sumatran PKI leaders (the other being Bachtaruddin) in 1945.[702] Moreover, while ostensibly cooperating with the Japanese authorities, he was involved in the clandestine anti-fascist underground during the Japanese occupation, alongside his brother-in-law and old Islamic communist comrade, Nathar Zainuddin.[703] Apparently, his Marxist credentials were sufficiently convincing that he even managed to cultivate contacts amongst former Indonesian Marxists working for the Japanese secret police, the Kempeitai.[704]

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[700] Suwarsih Djojopuspito, *Manusia Bebas* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1975), 61.
[701] William Bradley Horton, "History Unhinged: World War II and the Reshaping of Indonesian History" (Waseda University, 2016), 13.
[702] Audrey Kahin, *Rebellion to Integration*, 135. Xarim M.S. remained a PKI leader until 1952, when he left the party a disillusioned man, much like Alimin. See Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), 70. Horton points out that Xarim M.S. likely signed an agreement to stay out of politics in return for his early release. This is likely, given that his brother-in-law Nathar Zainuddin joined the non-cooperative Aliarcham faction in Digoel, and was only released in 1937.
[703] Horton, *History Unhinged*, 30–31.
[704] *Ibid.*

Xarim M.S. wore many hats: besides being prewar labor activist, PKI leader and wartime underground organizer, he was also a prolific publisher. The aforementioned *Hindia Sepakat* and *Oetoesan Ra'jat* were his focus in the 1920s, but after his return from exile he founded a small printing press, Aneka, and began publishing a newspaper titled *Penjedar* (lit. the conscious one) in 1938.[705] *Penjedar* became one of the two most widely-read newspapers in Sumatra, the other being *Seruan Kita*. During the revolution, he also published *Pandoe Merah*, the weekly newspaper of the Sumatran PKI, which began publication in December 1945. Despite its enormous weekly print run of 30,000 copies, such was his standing, and the population's appetite for independence, that the first three print runs sold out almost immediately.[706] *Penjedar* lasted until 1941, but during this time Xarim M.S. also published works of fiction, possibly because avoiding overt political activity was one of the conditions for his release from Digoel.[707] It is to one of his novels, *Hadji Dadjal* (1941), that we now turn.

Hadji Dadjal is useful because it reveals the kind of Islam embraced by Islamic communists such as Xarim M.S.; it was this evocation of Islam that made productive confluences between Islam and Marxism possible. Xarim M.S. had some experience writing fiction: Aneka had published two of his novelettes, *Ratna Kasihan Melati Deli: Boekoe tooneel dari toedjoeh bahagian* (1932) and *Pandoe Anak Boeangan* (1933). He followed these with ostensibly apolitical biographies such as *Abdul Aziz Ibnoe Soe'oed, Pahlawan Tanah Arab* (1934, Ibn Saud, Hero of the Arab Lands) and *Teukoe Oemar Djohan Pahlawan, Panglima Perang Besar di Tanah Atjeh* (1938/39, Teuku Umar Johan, Hero of the War in Aceh). Ibn Saud was the founding father of Saudi Arabia, and an object of fascination for many *pergerakan* leaders including Soekarno.[708] Teuku Umar was a widely-acclaimed hero of the Aceh war, who led a punishing guerrilla campaign against the Dutch for years. Xarim M.S.'s attraction to these two identifiably Islamic figures – one seemingly poised to restore Arabian

[705] Xarim M.S. stepped down as editor soon after founding *Penjedar*, and his role was filled by one Mohammad Saidt, a local PSII leader, in November 1938. This suggests that Xarim M.S. was still accepted within Islamic circles despite his undeniable PKI affiliations.
[706] Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), 174.
[707] Horton, *History Unhinged*, 16.
[708] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh,"in *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 321.

Islam to greatness in the context of colonial domination of Muslim societies, the other a heroic executor of *perang sabil* (holy war) against colonial domination – is revealing. Despite being a known communist, one whose convictions were serious enough that he re-emerged as a key Sumatran PKI leader during the revolution, Xarim M.S.'s cultural points of reference were decidedly Islamic. The Islam that he embraced, and the Islamic leaders he deemed worthy of celebration, were figures of Islam resurgent, militant leaders willing to risk death in order to midwife their vision of a better world. Xarim M.S.'s vision for Indonesia was clearly different from that of Ibn Saud or Teuku Umar, but it seems probable that he admired their willingness to act on their Islamic convictions – something which Xarim M.S. himself had done, and paid dearly for.

Hadji Dadjal was published in the 1941 under the auspices of the *Loekisan Poedjangga* series. Horton estimates a print run of 5,000 copies which reached as far as Kalimantan, though *Hadji Dadjal* would have been primarily available in Sumatra.[709] Its narrative concerned a Singaporean *cendol* seller named Oemar, known to all as "Dadjal" because he never attended prayers at the mosque, visited the sick, called on the recently bereaved, or attended ritual communal feasts (*slametan*). Colloquially, "dadjal" refers to a person who is irreligious and even tempts others away from proper praxis.[710] Oemar had some education in the basic tenets of Islam, and he was supremely unconcerned with tradition, custom, or the rulings of religious scholars; instead, he relied on his own straightforward interpretation of the Qur'an to induce the principles which guided his life. A thrifty man, Oemar eventually saved enough money to go on the *haj*, despite his ostensible impiety. Going against tradition, he only informed his neighbors shortly before departing, refusing to participate in the usual ceremonies that customarily preceded the *haj*. While in Mecca, he continued to make a living selling *cendol*, while studying under a *sheikh* who also emphasized personal interpretation of the primary sources of Islamic knowledge, the Qur'an and *hadith*. Predictably, he was often in conflict with traditional religious authorities, some of whom actively exploited foreign pilgrims.[711] The plot generally concerns the righteousness of Oemar's positions in relation to

[709] Horton, *History Unhinged*, 17.
[710] Horton, *History Unhinged*, 22.
[711] Abdoe'lxarim M.S., *Hadji Dadjal* (Medan: Tjerdas, 1941), 3–40.

the degenerate corruptions of Islamic praxis accepted by many traditional authority figures, like learned *sheikhs* or *sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet).

Even before reading the novel, an Indonesian reader would be struck by Xarim M.S.'s seemingly paradoxical choice of the title, *Hadji Dadjal*. Given the author's background, his choice of title speaks volumes about Xarim M.S.'s understanding of Islam. Like Oemar, Xarim M.S. had a limited Islamic education, having cut his teeth as a labor organizer in a public sector union instead of teaching in a *pesantren* or *pondok*. Nevertheless, he retained a healthy respect for institutionalized forms of Islamic knowledge: the protagonist Oemar enrolled his step-children in Islamic schools in Egypt and set up an Islamic educational foundation upon his return to Singapore. *Hadji Dadjal* even includes a long discussion of the relative benefits of Islamic education in Cairo, undoubtedly a reference to al-Azhar and its modernist curriculum.[712] Broadly speaking, Oemar represents the modernist/reformist strain of Islam that had been steadily gaining traction throughout the Indies throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly among the *kaum muda* of West Sumatra. This was the modernist Islam of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, which emphasized *ijtihad* (albeit in a much more structured way than Oemar) over *taqlid* (blind obedience to rulings by classical jurists). In the context of Xarim M.S.'s native Aceh, these modernist forces were represented by the Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA, the Association of Acehnese Religious Scholars).[713] Similar to the *kaum muda*, Xarim M.S.'s characterization of his protagonist as an oxymoronic "Hadji Dadjal" proclaimed the possibility of new forms of religiosity, superior forms of piety that depended not on obedience to authority or fidelity to tradition, but on the exercise of humanity's rational faculties (*akal*). As Oemar puts it, "…in exchanging questions and answers with you, arguments always occur, because you think with the brain of others, speak with the mouth of others and hear with the ears of others. But I think with my brain, speak with my mouth, and hear with my ears."[714]

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[712] *Ibid.*, 23.
[713] R. Michael Feener, *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 30–32.
[714] Abdoe'lxarim M.S., *Hadji Dadjal*, 8.

The morality tale of Oemar, the oxymoronic "Hadji Dadjal," conveys a simple message: Islam can and should guide one's conscience, but it is ultimately up to each individual to figure out what the moral lessons of Islam are. This was a statement of faith in the power and liberating potential of human rationality (*akal*) rather than the formal exercise of Islamic jurisprudence (*ijtihad*), or worse, blind obedience to classical rulings (*taqlid*). In Xarim M.S.'s conception of Islam, formal training in the Islamic sciences like *tafsir* or *fiqh* was not necessary to be a good Muslim. A good Muslim should not be concerned with disobedience of one's supposed betters or with flouting tradition, as long as he acted in good faith and thought for oneself. Oemar demonstrated this by refusing to make customary payments to *sheikhs* who conduct religious ceremonies, or provide donations to *sayyids*; instead, he was diligent in his disbursal of *zakat* (alms).[715] He also successfully challenged a moneylending sheikh who made sizeable profits from lending money at usurious rates (50% interest for a term of three to four months).[716] The novel's message is straightforward: a good Muslim need not live in fear of breaking with tradition, but should act on his conscience and common sense.

Hadji Dadjal presents a minimalist vision of Islam, with a perceptible dose of Enlightenment philosophy, but it was nevertheless discernibly pious in its attempt to articulate a liberal (or perhaps liberating) approach to Islamic ethics, an approach that revolved around thinking for oneself. Given Xarim M.S.'s background as a PKI leader, it is unsurprising that the social justice aspects of Islam, such as the injunction on *zakat* (alms) and the prohibition on *riba* (usury), make appearances in the novel. That said, Oemar was equally concerned with matters of personal faith: he disapproved of quickly slurred, ritualistic prayers, and insisted on speaking clearly and respectfully when praying.[717] Within Xarim M.S.'s worldview, Islam was not merely a matter of lip service or identity, but also of orthopraxy: it was a firm ethical foundation from which righteous action would spring, whether than action was in the realm of the personal or the social. This was a conception of Islam that, when confronted with the harsh realities of the extractive colonial plantation economy in Sumatra, was open to the

[715] *Ibid*., 35–37.
[716] *Ibid*., 33.
[717] *Ibid.*, 38–39.

critiques and solutions offered by Marxism, because the thinking Muslim would quickly realize that Islam compelled the him/her to fight injustice instead of mouthing prayers.[718]

Soekarno's "Islam Progresif"

Having examined a large number of West Sumatran *pergerakan* activists, it seems appropriate to end the chapter by shifting the focus back to Java to examine the evolution of Soekarno's political thinking. Soekarno was a singular individual in more ways than one, but the evolution of his religious identity and political ideas while in exile during the later 1930s can be used as a rough barometer of how *pergerakan* discourse was evolving after the 1933 crackdown. From exile in Endeh to internment in Boven Digoel, *pergerakan* activists continued to mature politically, and in some cases – such as Soekarno and I.F.M. Salim – even developed newfound attachments to their Islamic identities. Soekarno's rapturous welcome upon his release from two years of imprisonment on 31 Dec 1931, an impassioned event attended by thousands, indicates how powerful a presence he was throughout the 1930s.[719] No examination of the 1930s *pergerakan* would be complete without exploring his evolving ideas, given the efficacy of his fiery rhetoric and the esteem he enjoyed even from his detractors. Analyzing Soekarno's ideas also illustrates the drift, or perhaps growth and expansion, of *pergerakan* political discourse during a period of heavy censorship and repression which made direct political action like strikes and demonstrations ineffectual. Soekarno's writings show that the subtle confluence of Islam and Marxism evident in West Sumatra was not merely a Minangkabau anomaly, but the result of a larger process affecting the evolution of *pergerakan* ideas throughout the Indies. Soekarno's formulations of what Islamic piety meant to him were indicators of how *pergerakan* activists were exploring new modalities of being authentically Indonesian and "modern" at the same time; holding on to their identities as Muslims, they sought

[718] For the abuses and indignities of the Sumatran plantation economy, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1985).
[719] Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 159.

ways to bring the ethical injunctions of their faith into the political realm, toward realizing their dreams of a just a prosperous Indonesia.

As chapter one has explained, Soekarno's Islamic faith evolved within the context of his "synthetic" approach to anticolonial activism, which – perhaps idealistically – preached solidarity between all *pergerakan* factions, even Muslims and communists. Soekarno's attachment to Islam was often denigrated by his political opponents, and other nationalists often called his "Muslim-ness" into question by insinuating that he took a cynical, instrumentalist approach to religion, whether that was Islam or Javanese mysticism.[720] Abu Hanifah of Masjumi, for example, had long been acquainted with Soekarno, and roundly mocked Soekarno's pretensions to Islamic piety in his memoirs.[721] Abu Hanifah certainly had grounds for his criticism; Soekarno's many romantic dalliances were hardly beyond reproach by Islamic standards, and his vanity was obvious for all to see. That said, it would be negligent to discount the important role that Islam played in Soekarno's political philosophy (however diluted and syncretic it might appear in Abu Hanifah's eyes), because he drew on Islamic ideas, rhetoric, and frameworks so often in his writings and speeches. He might not have been a great scholar of Islam, but his attempts to articulate a progressive understanding of Islam which would be open to his Marxist influences are clearly attested to, regardless of his personal failings as a Muslim.

A careful examination of Soekarno's correspondence with Ahmad Hassan, the main spiritual leader of Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, henceforth Persis) during the 1930s reveals Soekarno's deep attachment to Islam, and his genuine attempts to formulate a progressive articulation of Islam that would be relevant to Indonesia's particular circumstances.[722] Islam was not the lodestone of his political thought, as it was for Masjumi leaders like Natsir, but it certainly constituted an integral component of his identity and politics. The

[720] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," October 17, 1936, 326.
[721] Abu Hanifah, *Tales of a Revolution* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1972), 70–71.
[722] Persis was founded in Bandung in 1923 and can be reasonably characterized as a positive reaction to the reformist/modernist ethos of the Sumatran *kaum muda*. This did not mean they were necessarily aligned – especially on matters of theology – with *kaum muda* organizations like Permi, or with *pergerakan* activists influenced by reformist Islam, such as Soekarno. For example, Natsir, a student of Hassan, penned an article criticizing Soekarno's take on nationalism in the Persis journal *Pembela Islam* in 1932. For more on Persis, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reformism in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970).

1930s and early 1940s saw Soekarno develop his conception of Islam in greater detail, perhaps because his enforced exile severely limited his opportunities to organize or agitate directly against the Dutch. For his anticolonial agitation in the early 1930s, Soekarno languished in exile from 1933 to 1942: first in Endeh, Flores (1933–38) and later in Bengkulu (1938–42) after contracting malaria. He remained a palpable presence in *pergerakan* discourse, however: his writings, such as *Mentjapai Indonesia Merdeka* (Towards an Independent Indonesia) circulated in Permi-linked schools during the 1930s, and he continued to correspond with *pergerakan* figures like Hassan.[723]

Soekarno's correspondence with Ahmad Hassan is clearly one of generative dialogue, in which he seeks guidance and instruction from a mentor, but he is simultaneously unafraid to express and debate his opinions. Soekarno's letter to Hassan from December 1, 1934, strikes a familiar tone, requesting that Hassan to send him a number of core Islamic texts. Soekarno's requests include *al-Burhan*, a classic exegesis of the Qur'an penned by the 11th century scholar Abu'l-Fath an-Nasir ad-Dailami.[724] The familiarity with which Soekarno asks that Hassan "make a present" of these classic Islamic exegetical texts to him suggests a sustained interest in steeping himself in Islamic knowledge, which likely constituted the basis of his pedagogical relationship with Hassan.[725] Soekarno's commitment to deepening his understanding of Islam is evident in other letters as well. In his letter to Hassan dated January 25, 1935, Soekarno expressed his perturbance at dubious *hadith* with weak *isnad* (chain of transmission, or provenance), which he argued conditioned Muslims to be quietist and passive in the face of European colonial domination. "How great is the disaster overtaking the community of Islam from, for instance, the Hadits which has it that 'the world' is for Christians, heaven for the Muslims… or the Hadits that those who believe in Allah must be soft and obedient as camels with pierced noses!"[726] He also requested copies of the classic *hadith* collections, central to the Islamic science of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Sahih al-Bukhari* and

[723] Marieke Bloembergen, "The Perfect Policeman: Colonial Policing, Modernity, and Conscience on Sumatra's West Coast in the Early 1930s," *Indonesia* 91 (2011): 182.
[724] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," 309.
[725] *Ibid.*
[726] *Ibid.*, 310.

Sahih Abu Muslim.[727] Perhaps most explicitly of all, Soekarno wrote that "I am very desirous of expanding my knowledge of law; because in daily practice the followers of Islam are completely controlled by law."[728]

Soekarno's egalitarian vision for Islam was also evident in these letters. Soekarno did not hesitate to make clear his abhorrence for how *sayyids* were treated by their fellow Muslims: "… one of the blemishes of Islam today is this well-nigh idolatrous sanctification of human beings… People are in error who think that Islam recognizes an 'aristocracy of Islam.' There is no religion which seeks equality of standing more than Islam does."[729] This was a clear condemnation of the high esteem in which *sayyids* were generally held by virtue of their bloodline, but beyond this specific grouse we glimpse Soekarno own understanding of Islam: an egalitarian religion which recognized the inherent dignity of all humans, because they were equal in the sight of God, even if they were not equal in material wealth or worldly status. This egalitarian ethos that Soekarno perceived in Islam underpinned his belief that communism and Islam could potentially work in tandem to achieve similar goals, a position outlined in his *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1926).

Soekarno's conception of Islam extended beyond the egalitarian, for he also evinced a strong attraction to the modernist ethos championed by Rashid Rida – the same ethos that animated the *kaum muda*. Soekarno understood Islam to be fundamentally rational, and therefore suitable for providing organizational principles for postcolonial Indonesian society. It was the corruption of Islamic praxis by *hadith* of dubious provenance, as well as the wariness of exercising *ijtihad*, that undermined Islamic societies:

> *"I put great stress upon studying the Hadits, because, according to my utmost conviction… The world of Islam came to decline because many people 'practised' weak and false Hadits. It is because of such Hadits that Islam has come to be befogged by conservatism, superstition, hereticism, anti-rationalism etc., whilst there is no religion more rational and simpler than Islam."*[730]

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[727] *Ibid.,* 310. Soekarno requested English translations of the *hadith* collections, since he was not sufficiently fluent in Arabic to read them in their original language. This is consistent with Soekarno's worldview: a product of European education, he was nonetheless serious about Islam in his own way, and was not averse to putting the intellectual fruits of Europe (such as the translations of classic Islamic texts by European Orientalists) to work for his purposes. This was an approach to Islam that emphasized the induction of principles, and of rigorously considered personal interpretation, rather than maximal "authenticity."
[728] *Ibid.,* 310.
[729] *Ibid.,* 309.
[730] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," March 26, 1935, 311. Soekarno goes on to bemoan the "closing of the gate of *ijtihad*" in this letter, a phenomenon generally equated by traditionalist scholars with the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate to the Mongols in 1258

These positions were sufficiently important to Soekarno that he was willing to express them clearly to Hassan, a noted scholar known for his orthodox piety, and who almost certainly had a more nuanced and more conservative understanding of the importance of *hadith*.[731] In later letters, Soekarno bemoaned the suppression of *akal* embodied by the absence of *ijtihad*: "… the genius of the world of Islam has been dead ever since the opinion arose that it is impossible for there to be an independent expert in Muslim law who could surpass the 'Four Imams' [the jurists who founded the four schools of *fiqh*]…"[732] It was within this framework of a rational, dynamic and progressive Islam that Soekarno cultivated his political worldview, and it was this understanding of Islam that drove his optimistic attempts to conciliate Islam with the dominant political ideas of his day, such as democracy, nationalism and Marxism.

Soekarno comes across as honest and earnest in his letters to Hassan. Even when approaching as sacred a topic as the *Mi'raj* (Muhammad's ascension to heaven on a special night in 621 CE, reported in both the *Qur'an* and various *hadith*), Soekarno was willing to express his resistance to interpreting the *Mi'raj* strictly in miraculous terms: "Why must a thing be turned into something 'supernatural' if reason is able to explain it?"[733] This was not exactly an orthodox Muslim opinion, and would probably have struck Hassan as transgressive. Presumably Soekarno was willing to say this to Hassan because he understood Islam to be fundamentally dynamic, and inextricably linked to the exercise of reason; a core component of Islam was for him the triumph of *akal* over *nafsu* discussed in chapter one. In Soekarno's own dramatic words, "… the world of Islam nowadays is half dead, it has no Soul, it has no Spirit, it has no Fire, because the followers of Islam are totally submerged in that 'book of *fiqh*,' they do not fly on high like the *Garuda*[734] in the skies of living Religion."[735] Soekarno's

CE. This was taken to mean that the age of the great jurists had ended, and succeeding scholars could no longer exercise *ijtihad* but merely do their best to follow in the footsteps of their superior predecessors.

[731] Persis, the organization which Hassan helped found, was known for its deeply self-righteous approach to orthodox piety. Natsir, once a student of Hassan's and a member of Persis himself, ridiculed Permi for its alleged heterodoxy, disparaging it as an organization with only a thin gloss of Islam. Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State*, ISEAS Series on Islam (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 46.

[732] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," December 14, 1935, 316.

[733] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," March 26, 1935, 311.

[734] A mythic winged beast of Hindic origin, often portrayed as Vishnu's mount, that plays an important role in Indonesian folklore. The zoomorphic depiction of the *Garuda* remains an important part of the Indonesian Republic's iconography.

[735] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," July 17, 1935, 312.

relationship with Islam was not merely speculative or academic, however. His letters to Hassan often contain touching elements of a personal faith, such as when Soekarno consoled Hassan in the aftermath of the death of Hassan's son, a consolation he articulated in terms of wholeheartedly trusting one's fate to God.[736] Soekarno also wrote of the death of his mother-in-law in Endeh, and the criticism he and his wife received for not holding a traditional religious service and feast (*selamatan tahlil*) at which prayers for the deceased would usually be recited. In a scene reminiscent of Xarim M.S.'s *Hadji Dadjal*, Soekarno brushed off the criticism, writing that it was more important that he and his wife prayed for his mother-in-law during their five daily prayers, even if no one else would ever know.[737]

To Soekarno, an Islamic education was eminently compatible with a secular education in the sciences and humanities. In another of his letters, he congratulated Hassan on the founding of a new *pesantren*, and urged Hassan to incorporate more "Western knowledge" into the curriculum.[738] To Soekarno, an education in the Islamic sciences like *tafsir* (exegesis) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) was incomplete without the broader general knowledge in which these disciplines might be situated: "… how can someone truly understand God's word that everything was made by him in 'couples,' if he does not understand biology, does not know about electrons, does not know about positive and negative, does not understand action and reaction?"[739] Soekarno went on to bemoan common misconceptions about Iskander Zulkarnian (Alexander the Great), blaming them on a woefully inadequate grasp of history and archaeology.[740] Evidently, Soekarno embraced a forward-looking and interpretive Islam, whose precepts could and should be squared with the scientific and humanistic insights incubated in Europe.

Interestingly, Soekarno also singled out the Islamic modernist Natsir for praise: "how good it will be if your *muballigh* are of high quality, like Mr. M. Natsir, for example!"[741] Natsir had benefited from both an Islamic

[736] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," September 15, 1935, 315.
[737] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," December 14, 1935, 317.
[738] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," April 22, 1936, 319.
[739] *Ibid*., 320.
[740] *Ibid*., 320.
[741] *Ibid*, 320.

and Dutch education, and had emerged as a prominent journalist, teacher and Persis activist in the 1930s. It may seem surprising that it was the modernist Natsir, whose piety was as indisputable as his attachment to European ideas like democracy, whom Soekarno singled out for praise; the animosity between the two is well-documented.[742] This was because Natsir embodied the kind of considered faith that Soekarno himself felt to be so important, and which he could respect despite their many disagreements. It would be no exaggeration to say that this modernist ethos of considered faith was pervasive (though by no means hegemonic or uncontested) across the *pergerakan* of the 1930s. This deep attachment to Islam, alongside a palpable willingness to reconsider and redefine Islamic praxis, constituted an ineluctable component of the *pergerakan* milieu. Even a self-consciously pietist organization like Persis was open to having this dialogue with Soekarno, who regularly expressed opinions which traditionalists would find thoroughly unacceptable. It was such an environment that made possible bold attempts to conciliate Islam with Marxist critiques of the capitalist economy, as Soekarno had already done in 1926, or the implicitly socialist policies embraced by Natsir in the 1940s and 1950s.[743] This *zeitgeist* is perhaps most eloquently expressed by Soekarno in a letter to Hassan dated February 22, 1936:

> *"Why are we required to return to the age of 'Islam's greatness' of former times? The laws of Shari'ah? Do we forget that the laws of Shari'ah are not only about what is forbidden… Do we forget that there are still things which we are allowed either to do or not to do (mubah) or which are to be determined by ourselves (djaiz)? ... How good would it be if the Muslim remembered that in the affairs of the world, in matters of statesmanship, he is 'allowed to make comparison' (berqiyas)* [analogical reasoning, a component of formal fiqh], *allowed to make innovations (berbid'ah), allowed to discard former ways, allowed to take new ways…"*[744]

In his own circumlocutory way, perhaps because of the imposed ban on his political activity, Soekarno occasionally signaled his belief Islam could be reconciled with Marxist ideas. In a series of four articles published in *Pandji Islam* in 1940, he argued that the "bubbling stream" of early Islam had been "frozen" by Ash'ari theology, bringing an end to nearly five centuries of Islamic cultural and intellectual dynamism.[745] While this is almost certainly an unfair mischaracterization of Ash'ari theology (the dominant theological

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[742] Audrey R. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy: A Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2012), 112.
[743] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 303. Madinier reproduces the Masjumi handbill for the 1955 elections, which contains policies clearly influenced by socialism, such as the promotion of labor unions collectivization, and nationalization of core industries.
[744] Soekarno, "Letters on Islam from Endeh," February 22, 1936, 318.
[745] Soekarno, "Rejuvenating our Concepts of Islam," *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 378.

position in Sunni Islam), Soekarno's broader point was historical; much like pre-Reformation Roman Catholicism, he argued, Islam had increasingly become indifferent to science and philosophy since the 13th century CE. Providing a broad survey of contemporary Muslim reformism in Turkey, Iran, India, and Arabia, Soekarno concluded that "Today rationalism is demanding its seat on the throne of Islam again."[746]

Soekarno challenged his readers to dispute the reality that the youth of his day were avoiding Islam because of Indonesian Muslims' overreliance on the sacralized, unquestioned authority of the classical jurists and exegetes. Inverting the Dutch maxim "who has the youth, has the future," Soekarno argued that the ability of Islam to retain the allegiance of Indonesian youth must be the barometer of its success.[747] Summoning a plethora of examples, from Socrates and Plato to Muhammad and his early companions, Soekarno argued that the ability to capture the imagination of the young was a strong indicator of any philosophy or religion's relevance. In effect, Soekarno was arguing for a relentless commitment to constantly reinterpreting Islam in accordance with the evolving precepts of secular knowledge. Tantalizingly, he mused: "Is not the socialist movement very much favored by the Youth too?"[748]

Soekarno's understanding of Islam as a progressive and dynamic faith deepened during his long exile. He explicitly proclaimed himself "pro-ijtihad, pro independent interpretation," and "anti-taqlid, opposed to blind obedience."[749] Writing in *Pandji Islam* in 1940, he rebutted the accusations made against him by Islamic *pergerakan* activists that he was too "dynamic," too disruptive on matters of faith.[750] Soekarno doubled down on his position, asserting that he was actually not outspoken enough in condemning the "wickedness of a religion of *fiqh*-and-nothing-more."[751] Invoking Martin Luther, Lenin, Trotsky, Bakunin, Marx, Swami Vivekananda, Mussolini, Hitler, and the Prophet Muhammad in the same breath, he argued that no one of any consequence had achieved anything without being bold enough to speak their mind.[752] Rather, Soekarno implied, it was

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[746] *Ibid.*, 380.
[747] *Ibid.*, 380.
[748] *Ibid*., 380.
[749] *Ibid.*, 354–55.
[750] Soekarno, "I am not Dynamic Enough," *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 429.
[751] *Ibid*.
[752] *Ibid*., 428.

incumbent upon Muslims to bring "their ideas forward in direct and blunt fashion" just as Muhammad had.[753] Putting aside Soekarno's understanding of Islam as a dynamic and perhaps even disruptive faith, his chosen frame of reference is telling. By invoking Indian nationalists alongside Protestant reformers, fascists alongside communists, he signaled his openness to the world beyond Indonesia, proclaiming his willingness and right to pick and choose from the global smorgasbord of ideas.

Soekarno had strong and well-documented anti-fascist views, expressed in his 1940 article in *Pandji Islam*, "Indonesia versus Fascism: An Ideology Opposed to the Indonesian Spirit."[754] Until his slide towards authoritarianism in the late 1950s, he consistently evinced a strong tendency to work towards consensus among disparate factions despite the exigencies of the Revolution (1945–49) and the chronic instability of the parliamentary democracy period (1950–59). This was consistent with his 1927 attempt to create an umbrella *pergerakan* organization, the Pemufakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI, Association of Political Organizations of the Indonesian People), an early example of his strong synthetic tendencies. Nevertheless, he saw fit to mention fascists like Hitler and Mussolini, because he had a deeper point to make about Islam: Islam, unlike fascism, was fundamentally rational, probing, and considered, rather than staid and unquestioning. To be a Muslim, for Soekarno, was to be a seeker of truth, fully engaging one's intellectual faculties. Therefore, the good Muslim was obliged to speak out against injustice, diagnose problems, or provide frank solutions, all without fear of censure; for after all the good Muslim had much better cause to do so than the fascists did. If the fascists demagogues could be so bold as to trumpet their hollow ideology, then how much louder ought the good Muslim to be?

It is also telling that Soekarno was manifestly familiar with Marxist ideologues. Of the eight characters (excluding the Prophet, who clearly occupies a position of honor) he mentioned, half were Marxists. In this article the basis for Soekarno's conciliation of Islam and Marxism appears: his emphasis on *akal* as a definitive

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[753] *Ibid.*
[754] Soekarno, "Indonesia Versus Fascism: An Ideology Opposed to the Indonesian Spirit," *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 437.

feature of Islam drove him to seek to understand the world, and in doing so he acquired the vocabulary and ideas of Marxism, incorporating them into his formidable hybrid toolkit for attacking Imperialism and envisioning an independent Indonesia. This was done not in spite of his Islamic faith, but rather, as a direct expression of it. As Soekarno himself put it, his was an Islam "progressive [*kemadjoean*] in its form, and progressive in its spirit!"[755]

Soekarno would reiterate this point about the inherent progressiveness of Islam in "Camel Society and Aeroplane Society," published in *Pandji Islam* in 1940. Unlike most of the Islamic communists examined in chapter one (with the possible exception of Haji Misbach), Soekarno was especially bold and explicit in articulating how Islam might be applied in the twentieth century. He argued that the *hadith*, though unchanging in form, contained essential and timeless truths; it was therefore inappropriate to insist on obedience to the letter of any *hadith* without consideration for the principle it expressed. Soekarno argued that the Prophet's answers to the various questions asked of him, which were later recorded in *hadith*, were meant to be a "bare minimum" response, because the Prophet knew full well that his answers would become guidance for all future Muslims.[756] Therefore, Soekarno argued, all *hadith* were inherently open to interpretation, so that the Prophet's guidance could be made relevant to all Muslims for all time.

Soekarno justified this by invoking a *hadith* contained in several canonical collections, regarding an incident when the Prophet had given what turned out to be a mistaken opinion on how best to grow date palms.[757] When questioned on his faulty advice, the Prophet replied "you know better in your worldly affairs." This Soekarno took to mean Muslims could and should interpret Islamic principles to suit prevailing circumstances, prioritizing the spirit of the law over the letter of the law.[758] In writing this, Soekarno was making a bold epistemological claim, similar to that made by the modernist Egyptian scholar Muhammad Abduh, about the sources of the Islamic canon: Islamic law (*shari'a*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) were no less relevant to the

[755] Soekarno, "Rejuvenating our Concepts of Islam," *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 385.
[756] Soekarno, "Camel Society and Aeroplane Society," *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 465.
[757] Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, Trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), Hadith 6126 (139-2360).
[758] *Ibid.*

twentieth century than the seventh, because they were sufficiently flexible that they could accommodate novel conditions and circumstances. This constituted an argument for the structural integrity of Islam as a belief system, while also promoting modernist *kaum muda* approaches to *ijtihad*. This position was not entirely novel, for many classical exegetes and jurists were also of this persuasion. However, since the final collapse of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 CE, conservatives had maintained that *ijtihad* was no longer possible, and insisted instead on obeying the rulings of past jurists. Certainly, many of the more conservative *ulama* in the Indies were of this persuasion, preferring to rely on the *mukhtaṣar* (compendiums of classical legal maxims and rulings) of the Shafi'i *madhhab*, but Soekarno was expressing an approach to Islam that had large numbers of (perhaps more cautious) advocates in organizations like Muhammadiyah, Permi, and PSII by the mid-twentieth century. It was within such a framework, embryonic in 1927 but further developed during his long exile, that Soekarno found it possible to reconcile Islam and Marxism.

Soekarno elaborated his disdain for adherence to the letter of the law over the spirit of the law in "Islam Sontoloyo" (Herd-mentality Islam), also published in *Pandji Islam* in 1940. Speaking harshly against recent reports that a heterodox *kyai* (Javanese Islamic teacher) had "married" and "divorced" his underage female students repeatedly so that he might sexually abuse them, Soekarno noted that the legalistic justifications offered by the *kyai* were sound, but nothing more than "an act of sin made lawful by the law of *fiqh*."[759] Similarly, he condemned usurious practices that some Muslim merchants and moneylenders engaged in, selling items on credit in return for a higher return than the original price, a common dodge around accusations of *riba* (usury). Soekarno was clearly livid, characterizing this as "playing hide and seek with God… as if God could be deceived!"[760] He was also clear, however, that *fiqh* was not the root of the problem: "… you may perhaps think that I hate *fiqh*. I do not hate *fiqh*, I even say that *no Islamic society can stand without fiqh laws*."[761] What he rejected was a legalistic society, one which claimed to enshrine Islamic principles in its penal code and civil code, but which did not act in accordance with the spirit of the law. In his words, Islam had become "too tied to

[759] Soekarno, "Islam Sontoloyo," in *Under the Banner of Revolution* (Djakarta: Publication Committee, 1966), 470.
[760] *Ibid*.
[761] *Ibid*., 471. Emphasis Soekarno's.

outward forms alone, without kindling *intrinsic values.*"[762] This was substantially the same approach to Islam advocated by Xarim M.S. in *Hadji Dadjal*. *Fiqh*, Soekarno argued, was only any good when coupled with the "burning ethics of Islam."[763] Oemar would probably have agreed.

In Soekarno's correspondence with Ahmad Hassan and his various articles in *Pandji Islam*, we can perceive the development of a progressive articulation of Islam. It was progressive in the sense that it was committed to human rationality; it was Islamic in that it was committed to not just to the label Muslim, but also to the belief that a good Muslim was one who exercised his/her intellect and made Islam relevant to prevailing circumstances. These approaches to Islam, whether on the part of communists like Xarim M.S., the eclectic Soekarno, or the large numbers of people educated in *kaum muda* institutions, were the basis upon which Islam could conduct dialogue with the intellectual offerings of Europe. Within this framework, it was possible to imagine a productive dialogue with Marxism. Not everyone would find this palatable, but in the context of the extractive colonial economy and the repressive security apparatus, this was a compelling combination for many.

Chapter Conclusion

Sometime between 1965 and 1968, Hatta, having withdrawn from public service after twenty years of service as Vice-President and Prime Minister, gave a speech at a gathering of the surviving members of the Pendidikan. This speech was nostalgic in tone; it retraced the origins and development of the Pendidikan and analyzed the Pendidikan's impact on Indonesian politics. Hatta was at pains to point out that the Pendidikan had been invested not only in achieving Indonesian independence, but also in the creation of a "just and prosperous Indonesia," a "new people's economy… based on the concept of collectivism."[764] Also notable was Hatta's

[762] *Ibid*., 473. Emphasis Soekarno's.
[763] *Ibid*., 474.
[764] Mohammad Hatta, *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia: A Speech Presented to a Reunion of Members of the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia [New PNI]*, trans. Mavis Rose, vol. 35, Monash University Center for Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper 35 (Melbourne: Monash University Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), 14. According to Ingleson, Hatta's conception of collectivism was a related to the Marxist one, but also deeply beholden to indigenous traditions of mutual support, known as *gotong royong*. This was a prime example of "translation," rooting European Marxism in an Indonesian context. See Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 166.

prominently-displayed religiosity: he began his address with "By God's Grace, we did achieve a free Indonesia within our own lifetime…" and ended with "May the peace of God rest upon you!"[765] Hatta's invocation of God alongside of an identifiably socialist vision for Indonesia certainly corresponds with the vision for Indonesia articulated by the Pendidikan and related elements of the *pergerakan* during the 1930s, the period about which he was speaking. Even though Hatta gave this speech sometime during the opening years of Suharto's rule, during which public space was secularized and the economy opened to the (often rapacious) forces of private capital, his brand of socialism informed by Islam was nevertheless still discernible in his speech.

This phenomenon – the articulation of socialist ideas informed by, and shaped within, an Islamic social context, represented a significant strain of *pergerakan* discourse, but one that was excised from the Indonesian historical consciousness under Suharto's rule. Instead of celebrating the diversity of *pergerakan* visions for a distinctly Indonesian future, the Suharto regime obfuscated what it perceived to be the subversive aspects of Pendidikan ideas: socialism tempered with Islam, or *vice versa*, a potentially potent combination in a Muslim-majority society. Instead, Suharto's regime sanitized history by writing Sjahrir, Hatta, and organizations like the Pendidikan, Permi and PSII into a seamless narrative of a united *pergerakan* struggling faithfully against the colonial state, simplifying their political visions and motivations to nothing more than the ejection of the Dutch from Indonesia. Individuals like Hatta and Rasuna Said were canonized as *pahlawan nasional* (national heroes), but their nuanced political ideas were attenuated, leaving them hollow repositories for nationalist passion.

In reality, these individuals and organizations resisted easy categorization. Their hybridity was made possible by a broader *pergerakan* milieu that was open to political diversity, even routine disagreement and internecine bickering; a milieu which embraced "translating" the world to Indonesia, and which insisted on revolutionary change. It was this hybridity and diversity that Soekarno's broadly nationalist umbrella parties, first the PNI and later the PPPKI, sought to harness. Soekarno himself was born of this eclectic *pergerakan* milieu, and it continued to color his political vision. It was this eclecticism that Soekarno, Hatta and other republican leaders

[765] Mohammad Hatta, *Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia*, 30.

sought to encapsulate and simultaneously attenuate in the formulation of national principles like Pancasila (the five founding principles of the Indonesian Republic). The inclusion of the principles of monotheism and social justice alongside each other in Pancasila was not an aberration. Neither was NASAKOM, the seemingly eccentric political philosophy that Soekarno promulgated in the late 1950s.[766] These confluences of religious and Marxist ideas were not just naïve sentiments or a fig leaf to cover Soekarno's autocratic tendencies; they emerged from a longstanding strand of *pergerakan* discourse that Soekarno was immersed in and in which he himself had participated. Existing scholarship does not connect the dots between Islamic communism of the pre-1927 period with Soekarno's NASAKOM or the PKI's conciliatory attitude towards Islam after independence was achieved, and this chapter has sought to bridge that gap.

Outside of organizations like the Pendidikan, PSII and Permi, this period also proved formative for the next generation of Indonesian nationalists. Abu Hanifah, a young *pergerakan* activist of an age with Leon Salim, is a useful case in point. Born and initially educated in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, Abu Hanifah was sufficiently economically privileged and intellectually gifted to gain access to the best colonial education available to natives: the Europeesche Lagere School (ELS) and the School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen (STOVIA, medical school for natives) in Batavia. He would go on to become a republican leader in Sukabumi, Java, during the revolution, and later became part of Masjumi's core leadership. He recalled the eclectic intellectual atmosphere of 1930s Batavia as brimming with unbounded possibilities. He wrote in his memoirs of an autodidactic environment in which the best of both the colonized and colonial worlds attracted young Indonesians:

> *"The men of '28 [those who came of age after the 1926–27 uprisings] had a very busy life. In their club they were reading and debating about events of the world all the time. The past was rediscovered, and the future debated, sometimes heatedly. Famous leaders of other countries were analysed. Their behaviour, their sentiments, their systems, were studied. Debates could be very fierce and lengthy. The American, the French, the Russian revolutionaries; the Boxer Rebellion; the heroic freedom fighters of the Philippines; the movements of Ghandi, Kemal Pasha; the Third International of the communists; all of these were at one time or another debated… We plunged into Das Kapital, and tried to find out if Marxism was good for the world*

[766] Promulgated by Soekarno in 1945, the Pancasila formulation for monotheism is *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa* (the divinity of the one God) and that for social justice is *Keadilan Sosial Bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia* (social justice for all Indonesian people).

> *or us… We interested ourselves in the words and deeds of Gandhi, Azam Pasha, Garibaldi, and we didn't neglect Luther, Calvin, and the Jesuits… we looked up Marx, Engels and Lenin. It was enlightening but didn't impress me much."*[767]

Despite his ambivalence for Marxism when he was writing his memoirs in 1972, he still had no qualms about describing himself and his Masjumi colleagues (specifically, Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Mohammad Roem, Kasman Singodimedjo, and even Masjumi president Soekiman) as "religious socialists," firm in their Islamic faith but also well-disposed towards Europe.[768]

More importantly, Abu Hanifah captured something of the zeitgeist of the era. His generation of the *pergerakan*, barred from open political activity and with its leaders – chiefly Sjahrir, Hatta and Soekarno – in exile, continued to be drawn toward Marxism as one among many ideologies that might yield important lessons for Indonesia. They took what they found useful from Marxism, especially its trenchant critique of capitalism and imperialism. Naturally, not everyone agreed on how Marxism could be applied or synthesized usefully, and there existed a plurality of approaches. Some, like the pious Acehnese Jusuf Muda Dalam, who served in the anti-Nazi underground in the Netherlands before returning to Indonesia to join the PKI during the revolution, grew to accept their Islamic faith alongside their communist convictions. [769] Abu Hanifah and his colleagues in Masjumi did not accept the label Marxist, but like Hatta, they certainly saw at least some of its prescriptions as relevant to and compatible with their Islamic faith. Men like Abu Hanifah would mature politically during the revolution and go on to play important roles in the tumultuous politics of the parliamentary democracy period.

It is to these activists who came of age during the revolution, proudly continuing in the cosmopolitan and creative worldview of the pre-war *pergerakan*, that the next chapter turns. The revolutionary experiences of privation, betrayal and camaraderie, as well as the passions and expectations engendered by participation in the

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[767] Abu Hanifah, *Tales from a Revolution*, 63–64.
[768] *Ibid*., 161.
[769] Soerjono and Benedict R.O.G. Anderson, "On Musso's Return," *Indonesia* 29 (1980): 68. Jusuf Muda Dalam was a member of the PKI from 1947–54, when he left to join the PNI. He was initially attracted to Marxism while studying in the *Ekonomisch Hoge School* in Rotterdam, where he came into contact with the pro-*pergerakan* elements of the Dutch labor movement and Dutch communist party. He never renounced his Islamic faith and was known among his fellow Indonesian students in the Netherlands as unusually pious. During the revolution, he served as a lieutenant-colonel in the Republican army. He eventually served as the Director, then Governor, of the Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI, National Bank of Indonesia) as well as the Minister for Central Bank Affairs under Soekarno's authoritarian Guided Democracy regime. This is fitting, since he was, in a sense, a living embodiment of NASAKOM. He was sentenced to death in September 1966 by the Suharto regime.

revolution, moved a new generation of activists to participate in democratic politics with a level of gusto and idealism that is rarely seen in most societies. Their enthusiasm and creativity would continue well into the parliamentary democracy period, but the contours of their eclectic political visions were heavily shaped by their revolutionary experiences.

Chapter 3: The Revolutionary Consensus

In "The *Revolusi* Represented: Contemporary Indonesian Images of 1945," Hans Antlöv ably showed how the revolution had slipped its moorings and become a vessel into which individual Indonesians, as well as the state, could pour their romanticized ideals. The revolution functioned as a signifier to which they could attach their preferred mythos of Indonesian history.[770] The historical reality of the revolution was often silenced in public discourse and education, especially if narratives emerged which challenged the cherished mythos of one nation united against imperialism. As examples of how historical narratives could be silenced or amplified, Antlöv highlighted two museums founded during Suharto's *orde baru* (New Order, 1965–98) period: one on communism (Museum of the Communist Party's Betrayal, *Museum Pengkhianatan PKI*) and another on Islam (Museum Beware of Authority, *Museum Waspada Purbawisesa*). Both museums functioned as symbolic and practical attempts to consolidate and thus control historical memory on potentially fraught topics in the *orde baru* period, building on the efforts of many existing museums which had been founded to control the revolutionary narrative.[771]

This chapter aims to subvert these attempts to direct historical narratives of Islam, Marxism, and the revolution itself along familiar, comforting channels, which salve the consciences of individuals, or which "nationalize" history in the interests of the state. Instead, it will show how the revolution was a moment of remarkable ideological efflorescence, when unprecedented solidarity between putative citizens allowed eclectic combinations of religious identities and political commitments, just when Indonesians were actively searching for models upon which they could reshape their society.

This chapter uses the terms "Indonesia" and "Indonesians" even though full legal recognition of an independent Indonesian polity did not occur until the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands East Indies to the federal United States of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia Serikat*) on December 27, 1949. This is done not only for the

[770] Hans Antlöv, "The Revolusi Represented: Contemporary Indonesian Images of 1945," *Indonesia Circle* 24, no. 68 (1996): 1–21.
[771] *Ibid*., 6.

sake of clarity, but also because the Indonesian republicans did have a fair claim to the existence of an Indonesian republic that Soekarno proclaimed on August 17, 1945. The republic proclaimed in 1945 was genuinely popular across the archipelago, and most communities except those most closely tied to the colonial state (such as Ambon and Manado, which provided a disproportionately high number of recruits for the colonial army) were strong supporters of it. The republic's control over most of the territory it claimed was very much real, and exercised through many regional *Komite Nasional Inodnesia* (KNI, Indonesian National Committees), though these were later circumscribed by successful British and Dutch military action. For all intents and purposes, Indonesia and Indonesians did exist after August 1945, although this reality was contested both militarily and diplomatically. This chapter therefore refers to "Indonesia" and "Indonesians" freely, especially since attempts were clearly being made to define an "Indonesian" identity and shape "Indonesian" culture in the sources examined here.

The revolution saw a plethora of different approaches to realizing the hitherto aspirational, and now increasingly concrete, vision of an Indonesian nation-state. From the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, new horizons opened for the erstwhile *pergerakan* activists, who now became republican partisans struggling to make their political visions corporeal. For the most part, they were optimistic about the breadth of their visions for Indonesia, perhaps somewhat naively tending to believe that their visions were inclusive enough to accommodate everyone else's interests, preferences, and emphases. This open-minded approach to constituting the Indonesian nation-state, taking inspiration from diverse sources and attempting to include as many people as possible, was encapsulated in a pamphlet authored by R.A.A. Wiranata Koesoema, *Islamietische Democratie in Theory en Praktijk* (1948):

> *"Doesn't the sun shine equally on all? Don't they all breathe His [God's] air equally? Doesn't God's earth give equal means to sustain life for all? Doesn't history show that those who are considered backward people today, once occupied the pinnacle of civilization? Does the world have any one country, one nation, or one race, which can rightly boast to be the only creator of civilization and can proclaim from the rooftops that it owes none of its culture to that of neighboring countries and peoples? Aren't the various civilizations continuations, or, at best, transformations and combinations of various elements of several other cultures? Has any culture*

> *ever existed as a self-contained unit? Doesn't all this prove that humanity forms a single family, which inherits and bequeaths the same inheritance of important goods?"*[772]

Naturally, different groups developed different – though overlapping – visions for what Indonesia ought to be, drawing on sources as diverse as Ataturk's Republic of Turkey to the People's Republic of China. While the Dutch provided a common enemy against which they had to cooperate, genuine and serious differences in republicans' visions were papered over in the name of unity. However, the seriousness of their divergent political hopes could not be sublimated merely with the republican rhetoric of fraternity and unity, no matter how heartfelt and effusive.

Unsurprisingly, various pro-republic political movements and military bodies began to split away from the republic's formal political leadership by 1948, long before the revolution began to wind down in late 1949. Even before this, however, republicans were already divided into a wide range of parties, civil society organizations, unions, and militias, which coalesced into loose but sometimes politically effectual coalitions. This chapter will survey several republican factions, including most of the major ones, which harbored overlapping visions for what the existing and future Indonesian state should look like. There was significant overlap in their aspirations for Indonesia, for both Islam and Marxism had a significant role to play in informing the worldviews of many republicans.

It is important to understand that the republican factions studied in this chapter represented a large chunk of republican political discourse, but they were not necessarily hegemonic, even when one or another of these factions dominated the cabinet. Even though their ideas overlapped significantly, republican political visions of Indonesia were a nebulous and imprecise mass; this fungibility allowed their disparate visions to coexist. At the same time, imprecise labels such as "socialist," "communist," or "nationalist," obscured their genuine

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[772] R.A.A. Wiranata Koesoema, "Islam and Democracy (1948)," in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, trans., *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), 224. Wiranata Koesoema was a highly educated civil servant who rose to become regent of Bandung, eventually serving as a regents' representative on the Volksraad. During the revolution, he served briefly as interior minister under Soekarno's presidential cabinet, and later as president of the Dutch-sponsored state of Pasundan within the federal United States of Indonesia (RIS, Repulik Indonesia Sarekat). A pious Muslim and avowed democrat, his republican sympathies led him to support the voluntary dissolution of Pasundan and its sublimation into a unitary republic.

similarities. As the socialist activist Djoeir Moehamad succinctly put it, "it was difficult to distinguish one leftist group from another."[773] These inchoate visions of how the republic ought to be were often able to accommodate Islam and Marxism simultaneously precisely because they were amorphous. In fact, the main point of contention which distinguished the different factions was not a specific ideological disagreement on what an Indonesian state ought to be like, but rather the desirability of negotiating with the Dutch, with all the concessions such a policy entailed: protecting Dutch property like plantations and shipping facilities, while tightening labor laws to prevent debilitating strikes.

This gaping fault line should not, however, obscure the very tangible capacity for cooperation and unity that the republicans displayed. Robert Cribb rightly pointed out that the revolution may well have strengthened the republic's civilian bureaucracy, with the exigencies of war and the general commitment to saving the republic resulting in the evolution of a capable civil service at both the regional and central levels.[774] My research, drawing on republicans' recollections as well as Dutch intelligence reports, suggests that cooperation between republican administrators and militias of various political persuasions – including specifically Islamic and specifically Marxist ones – was indeed common. Cribb also pointed out that the *de facto* republican parliament, the Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (KNIP, Central Indonesian National Committee), building on the prewar democratic traditions of various *pergerakan* conferences and umbrella organizations, from the Youth Congress of 1928 and Soekarno's PPPKI of 1927 to the Gabungan Politik Indonesia (GAPI) of 1939, constituted a "forum for robust democratic exchange."[775] Cribb characterized the KNIP as prone to stalemate because the balance of power was distributed across various factions, but cooperation between Muslims and Marxists was also common in a situation where no one faction could maintain its dominance.

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[773] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1997), 225.
[774] Robert Cribb, "Legacies of the Revolution," in *Democracy in Indonesia: 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge (Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1994), 76.
[775] *Ibid*. While Cribb focuses on the issue of continuity and discontinuity in this short but thought-provoking piece, he indirectly makes some important observations about the nature of the republican political thinking and praxis during the revolution. These observations are important for contextualizing the revolution, which was a period of such political and social flux that erstwhile antagonists could sometimes find themselves cooperating, and which made novel political configurations possible.

Even at the parliamentary level, republicans who embraced different political visions for Indonesia were able to cooperate frequently: throughout the revolution, both the opposition as well as the incumbent government consisted of coalitions which included both Marxist and Muslim parties. It was the anomalous conditions of revolution which made possible, and perhaps even necessitated, overt cooperation between Islamic and Marxist parties in parliament and government. Moreover, the political visions for independent Indonesia embraced by various parties, movements and militias were sufficiently overlapping and sufficiently amorphous that these actors could and did cooperate on the ground in practice, which in turn legitimized intra-faction parliamentary cooperation at the center.

By February 1949, the initial solidarity and cooperation between republican leaders lay in tatters. Tan Malaka had been summarily executed by a hostile unit of the republican army during the chaos of a Dutch offensive, Amir Sjarifruddin and Musso had been killed during the suppression of the Madiun Affair, and Sjahrir had been politically marginalized for signing the deeply unpopular Linggadjati Agreement and was effectively living in self-imposed exile in London. The hopes for a broad governing coalition including Muslims and Marxists, Soekarno's cherished dream since 1926, were dashed. Nevertheless, conciliatory discourses on Islam and Marxism like those championed by Tan Malaka continued to circulate and influenced republicans across the political spectrum. The impossibility of a unified leadership did not circumscribe the aspirations of many republicans, who still hoped for the achievement of an equitable and prosperous independent Indonesia, one that could accommodate redistributive socialist policies while also respecting Islamic concerns.

Various republican factions blended Islam and Marxism, and several are examined in this chapter. First, belligerent republicans inspired by Tan Malaka, influenced by his political beliefs to varying degrees, and glossed as the *Persatuan Perjuangan*, *Gerakan Revolusi Rakyat* and *Benteng Republik* at different points in time. Second, Muslim republicans with close ties to Masjumi, described by George Kahin as "religious socialists, who wanted Islam to play an important role in the Indonesian state."[776] Third, the socialists and

[776] George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), 309–10.

communists aligned with Amir Sjarifuddin who embraced their roles as members of global revolutionary movement, glossed first as the *Sajap Kiri* and later as the *Front Demokrasi Rakyat*. Fourth, Muslims in the labor movement, including a remarkable number of vocal and eloquent women, whose activism was framed by Islamic, Marxist, and feminist concerns. Finally, regional movements which drew on localized forms of syncretism, blending Islam and communism to justify their activities. Besides these overtly political republican factions, this chapter will also examine how Islamic identity and Marxist ideas were intertwined in popular print culture published during the revolution.

Republican Political Alignments in Brief

Sajap Kiri, Persatuan Perjuangan, and Benteng Republik

For most of the revolution, republican politics were dominated by three parties: Soekarno's former party, the PNI (Partai Nasionalis Indonesia, Indonesian Nationalist Party), the Islamic party Masjumi (Partai Madjelis Surjo Muslimin Indonesia), and Sutan Sjahrir and Amir Sjarifuddin's combined Socialist Party (Partai Sosialis).[777] The PKI was not a significant political player until 1948, with its veteran leaders, such as Sardjono and Alimin, only returning to Indonesia in mid-1946. The PKI itself was fractured into several factions, and most Marxists were distributed across a spectrum of smaller parties and organizations like the socialist party, the PBI (Indonesian Labor Party), Pesindo (Indonesian Socialist Youth), and Akoma (Angkatan Komunis Muda).[778] The main fault line dividing all these parties was not their disparate visions for future Indonesia – these actually overlapped significantly – but whether or not they were prepared to negotiate with the Dutch. Negotiations under Sjahrir's government had resulted in the Linggadjati agreement of November 1946, making significant concessions to the Dutch, but the agreement was effectively voided by Operation Product in July

[777] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 157.
[778] *Ibid*., 158.

1947. Sjahrir's commitment to a diplomatic solution (often glossed as *diplomasi*) had made many concessions and yielded few results; *diplomasi* was now intensely unpopular.

During this period, the main republican factional coalitions were the Sajap Kiri (Left Wing), nominally headed by Amir Sjarifuddin and supportive of the Sjahrir government's policy of *diplomasi*. The main constituent organizations of the Sajap Kiri were the Socialist Party, the PBI, the PKI, and Pesindo.[779] In opposition to Sjahrir's government and the Sajap Kiri was the Persatuan Perjuangan (PP, Struggle Union), nominally led by Tan Malaka. The PP attracted the support of a very broad range of actors, from various Muslim and Marxist organizations to the Commander of the republican army, General Sudirman himself. However, this was a powerful, if rather loose, coalition: many of them were extremely wary of Tan Malaka's maneuvering his way into power and were united only in their opposition to Sjahrir's *diplomasi*.[780] The PP made a bid for power in July 1946, often known as the July 3 Affair, attempting and botching a coup which landed the key PP leaders, including Tan Malaka, in jail until mid-1948.

During the debates over the ratification of the Linggadjati agreement, the former PP reconstituted itself as the Benteng Republik (Republican Fortress), an even broader coalition of parties and organizations which opposed ratification, or indeed continuing negotiations at all. The main Muslim parties, Masjumi and the PSII – as well as their affiliated *laskar* (militias) and *badan perjuangan* (lit. struggle bodies, mass organizations that were only partially armed, if at all) – tended to side with the PP and Benteng Repbulik, opposed as they were to negotiations. The "secular" Sjahrir elicited discomfort for them, in contrast to Tan Malaka's well-known accommodation of Islam within his communist framework.[781] For the purposes of this chapter, PP and Benteng Republik will be treated as coterminous, and the supporters of Tan Malaka's anti-negotiation policy (known as 100% *Merdeka*) will simply be referred to as PP supporters. However, it is important to point out that Tan Malaka's loyalists, in the sense of those looked to him for leadership and eventually confederated in the Murba

[779] *Ibid*., 199.
[780] *Ibid*., 176.
[781] Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masjumi Party between Democracy and Integralism*, trans. Jeremy Desmond (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015), 72.

Party in late 1948, should not be conflated with supporting the PP. Some PP supporters were indeed followers of Tan Malaka, but they were always a minority within the PP.

The Front Demokrasi Rakjat and Gerakan Revolusi Rakjat

The deep unpopularity of the Linggadjati agreement led to Sjahrir's fall from power and his replacement by Amir Sjarifuddin as Prime Minister. Unfortunately, Amir found himself trapped in the same bind that Sjahrir had been; despite Amir's belligerent rhetoric, he eventually negotiated the even more unpopular Renville agreement of January 1948. This was in turn effectively voided by the second Dutch "police action" of December 1948, Operation Kraai. Amir was popularly blamed for negotiating the Renville agreement, and the subsequent withdrawal of PNI and Masjumi support for his cabinet forced him to resign on January 23, 1948. The Sajap Kiri, finding itself in the awkward position of supporting Amir while disagreeing empathically with Renville, underwent a paradoxical transformation: it reconstituted itself as the Front Demokrasi Rakjat (FDR, People's Democratic Front). The FDR opposed Hatta's new cabinet, which had unenviable task of enforcing the unpopular Renville agreement that Amir had negotiated. The FDR's formation also caused the Socialist Party to split into two factions, one under Sjahrir and another under Amir, with only Amir's faction remaining in the FDR.

When the veteran PKI leader and doctrinaire Stalinist Musso returned to Indonesia in August 1948, much of the FDR – the PKI in particular – gravitated towards his leadership. Amir, with his popularity at low ebb and the FDR's military strength sapped by Hatta's policy of military rationalization[782], declared that he had been a crypto-communist all along and proclaimed his support for Musso's policy of amalgamating all Marxist organizations within the PKI. Musso's sudden galvanization of the FDR culminated in the Madiun affair of

[782] Hatta's policy of rationalization entailed the consolidation of the armed forces by discharging unnecessary manpower from both the army and various militias. This was done to reduce military expenditure, reduce graft, and to increase the government's control over military units. This was perfectly sensible given the republic's precarious finances as well as the chronic shortage of functional weapons in nearly all republican divisions, but it had the effect of alienating thousands of *pemuda* whose revolutionary zeal had compelled them to enlist *en masse* in 1945 and 1946.

September 1948. Local clashes between FDR militias and pro-government forces in Solo and Yogyakarta metastasized into power struggle between the Hatta government and FDR. The FDR, fearful of further government repression after its units in Solo were neutralized, consolidated its forces in its last remaining stronghold of Madiun. In the process of doing so, it took over governmental functions in Madiun, which gave the appearance of a rebellion against central republican authority. The Hatta government, wary of a potential PKI uprising and how this would weaken its position vis-à-vis the Dutch, responded swiftly and decisively, declaring the FDR in rebellion against the republic and sending in the army to military crush the FDR in Madiun.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the Renville agreement, the Hatta government enjoyed the support of Tan Malaka's core following: the old PP and Benteng Republik had been reconstituted as the Gerakan Revolusi Rakjat (GRR, People's Revolutionary Movement). Despite embracing a very similar policy platform to Amir's FDR, they lent their support to Hatta's government and its continued pursuit of negotiations with the Dutch.[783] As with the PP, the GRR included a variety of Muslim organizations, including Masjumi, though this did not mean that Masjumi was willing to support a Tan Malaka-led cabinet should the opportunity arise. The main points of concordance among the members of this loose coalition were support for the Hatta government and opposition to the FDR. Days before the republican army moved on the FDR in Madiun, the PP leadership was released from jail, where they had languished since mid-1946. This took the wind out of the FDR's sails, since the PP had a strong claim to being patriotically anti-*diplomasi* as well as distinctly Marxist. The GRR, with its leadership now restored, participated enthusiastically in the suppression of the FDR in Madiun, despite the purported similarities between the policy platforms of both coalitions.[784]

[783] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 266–67.
[784] Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project Monograph Series 69 (Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1989), 113–20; Harry Poeze, *Madiun 1948: PKI Bergerak* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia and KITLV Jakarta, 2011), 131.

The PKI in Transition

The evolution of the PKI during the revolution merits a brief discussion, given its conspicuous lack of prominence in the major republican coalitions, even though virtually every major republican faction was influenced by Marxist ideas. From the beginning of the revolution until September 1948, the PKI evolved in dialogue with the other Marxist organizations in the Sajap Kiri/FDR and the PP/GRR, such as the Indonesian Socialist Party and the PBI. Unsurprisingly, its post-war trajectory was deeply conditioned by its revolutionary experiences of co-evolution and internecine conflict. The revolution was a transitionary phase for the PKI as it sought to re-establish itself after a long period of semi-dormancy; underground communist organizations had developed on independent trajectories in the years since 1927. Inter-organization coordination was limited out of necessity, structured as they were in self-contained cells, which was perfectly sensible in the repressive climate of Dutch and Japanese surveillance. Communist splinter groups included, but were not limited to, the following: Tan Malaka's PARI network, Musso's "illegal PKI" founded in 1935, the anti-Japanese PKI underground that received Amir Sjarifuddin's help, and Muhammad Jusuf's PKI, which had grown out of a Japanese-sponsored organization and was active during the early revolution.[785] The FDR provided a focal point around which the PKI could regroup, thus attracting Musso's attention as the best point of insertion for his influence. However, the FDR's claim to represent Marxism was constantly undermined by the many Marxists grouped within the PP/GRR, who also positioned themselves as heirs to the pre-1926 PKI, but who saw no need to obey directives from Moscow nor negotiate with the Dutch.

Among all the PKI leaders of the revolution, Musso was the only one who favored unambiguous alignment with Moscow. Perhaps the most obvious indication of this was the PKI Central Committee's decision, at the PKI conference of 26–27 August 1948, to sponsor the creation of a mass organization called *Lembaga Persahabatan Indonesia-Soviet Uni* (Foundation for Indonesian-Soviet Friendship).[786] This was undertaken at a time when

[785] Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 158–59.
[786] Polit-Biro Central Comite Partai Komunis Indonesia, *Djalan Baru Untuk Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1953), 14.

Musso's influence over the PKI was at its peak, and reflected Musso's insistence that the USSR was the "the leader and vanguard of all anti-Imperialist struggles across the world."[787] Unlike Musso, the generation of PKI leaders who came to political maturity during the revolution, such as D. N. Aidit, Luqman, Njoto, and Sudisman, were "locally-born" communists. Grounded in the realities of privation during the Japanese occupation and the Indonesian revolution, they had a strong understanding of conditions on the ground but were initially handicapped by their lack of facility with Marxist theory.[788] Sustained exposure to formal Marxist theory only came after ex-Digoel internees returned from Australia, and Indonesian communists returned from Holland after the second world war.[789] In contrast to Alimin, Musso, Semaun and Darsono, these younger leaders had not spent long years in Europe or Moscow and were therefore not beholden to the USSR ideologically, financially, or emotionally. They were less inclined to accept discipline and direction from Moscow, although Moscow remained deeply interested in influencing PKI policy.[790] This set the stage for creative and adaptive approaches to Indonesian communism, even as they identified affectively with global communist movement and deployed the language of proletarian solidarity. This younger generation of leaders observed and participated in the internecine struggles of the revolution, drawing their own conclusions about how the PKI should be organized. These observations and experiences later guided their policy decisions and political rhetoric when they came to power after independence.

Even among the 1926–27 generation of PKI exiles, there were many signs of heterodoxy: Semaun elected to remain in USSR until the late 1950s, while Darsono quickly renounced the post-revolution PKI. Alimin returned to Indonesia in 1946 and sat on the politburo of the central committee for years, but his influence was steadily eroded by Aidit until his failing health allowed Aidit to shunt him into an honorable but ineffectual sinecure in 1959.[791] The PKI of the revolution, then, had as fresh a start as it was possible to have. While many former Digoel internees returned to the party during the revolution – notable examples include Xarim M.S. and

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[787] *Ibid.*, 18.
[788] Soerjono and Benedict R.O.G. Anderson, "On Musso's Return," *Indonesia* 29 (1980): 66–67.
[789] *Ibid.*
[790] Larisa M. Efimova, "Stalin and the Revival of the Communist Party of Indonesia," *Cold War History* 5, no. 1 (2005): 108.
[791] Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: 1951-1963* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1964), 67.

Bachtaruddin in Sumatra – Alimin and Musso were the only substantial link to the top leadership of the pre-1926 generation, and Musso's influence over the PKI was short-lived indeed. Both before and after Musso's brief tenure, the PKI was mostly free to explore new possibilities, and to conceive how it would fit into the broader republican project. While the last remaining pre-1926 veteran, Alimin, did play a role in this process, it was fundamentally driven by a younger generation of leaders such as Tan Ling Djie, Aidit, Sudisman, Lukman, and Njoto. Even Sajuti Melik, a member of the PKI's Marxist competitor, the pro-Tan Malaka Murba Party, described the ideological flexibility of the new generation with grudging respect:

> *"The PKI's situation under Aidit and his friends was different [from the PKI of the 1920s]. The Politburo consisted of Aidit, Nyoto, Sudisman, and Alimin. In their application of Marx's and Lenin's ideology, they were also influenced by the People's Republic of China. They gave greater emphasis to cultural factors, religious conditions, and population demographics in agricultural areas, such that the interests of farmers were prioritized, in accordance with Mao's ideas."*[792]

The internecine struggles of the revolution and sustained competition with other Marxist organizations pushed the PKI to formulate new strategies to achieve and hold political power, including how to reconcile the PKI with Islam after the fratricide at Madiun, a conundrum which Aidit's generation would find their own creative ways to address. With all this bad blood hanging over their heads, it was not surprising that the PKI under Aidit, Njoto and Lukman worked hard to present a conciliatory image towards all religions, framing opposition to Imperialism as both a religious and communist ethical concern.[793] Though the PKI was merely a minor component of the Sajap Kiri and FDR during the revolution, it would go on to become a powerful force in Indonesia politics after independence – and its revolutionary experiences would powerfully influence how it positioned itself.

The deaths of Amir and Musso in September 1948, and the death of Tan Malaka in February 1949, marked an inflection point in the development of Indonesian Marxism. The PKI was now relieved of the influence of iconic leaders who could exercise almost totemic influence over left-leaning supporters of the republic.

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[792] Sayuti Melik and Arief Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik* (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), 113.
[793] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 148.

Simultaneously, the non-dogmatic Marxists that had gathered around Tan Malaka were left bereft of an effective leader on the national stage after his death; they were deprived of his powerful brand recognition, second only to the Soekarno-Hatta duumvirate. The PKI was thus free of the most prominent pre-1926 leaders, as well as free from serious competition from other Marxists. In such conditions, a new generation of PKI leaders would come to the fore, bringing their own creative political visions for Indonesia. Unsurprisingly, given the rhetoric of republican unity that pervaded the revolution, these visions were willing to go to significant lengths to accommodate Islam.

Tan Malaka's Persatuan Perjuangan: *Soeara Merdeka*, Sajuti Melik, and the Murba Party

Tan Malaka's followers were spread across a number of parties and organizations for most of the revolution, until the formation of Partai Murba in late 1948 consolidated some of his most loyal supporters. In the lead up to the Linggadjati agreement of November 1946, his supporters were generally collected in a broad coalition known as the *Volksfront* (People's Front) or Persatuan Perjunagan (PP, Struggle Union) depending on which part of the archipelago they were in. They would later evolve into the Benteng Republik (Fortress Republic), which opposed the ratification of the Linggadjati agreement. Benteng Republik included many prominent Muslim parties and *laskar* like Masjumi and its affiliates, although the PP had no lack of Muslim support either. Tan Malaka himself, and many of his key supporters, were detained on July 3, 1946 as a result of a failed attempt to seize leadership of the republic, widely known as the 3 July affair. This detention was to last until September 1948, shortly before the Madiun affair. However, Tan Malaka remained influential even from prison. While he languished in jail, his supporters continued to act in his name, often with his broad guidance and blessings, provided via smuggled correspondence. In June 1948, Tan Malaka's supporters would reform as the Gerakan Revolusi Rakjat (GRR, People's Revolutionary Movement) which opposed the implementation of the Renville agreement of January 1948. Paradoxically, the GRR also supported the Hatta cabinet's negotiations

with the Dutch.[794] Most the GRR would eventually confederate as the *Partai Murba* (Murba Party) in November 1948, in an attempt to consolidate their influence and more effectively champion their policy of pursuing unconditional independence, popularly known as "100% Merdeka."

Tan Malaka's support base was also firmly rooted in the unions, with the PP enjoying the consistent support of veteran unionists such as Sjamsoe Harja Udaja and Soebroto Danoehoesodo, both of whom were key leaders in the BBI and the Sugar Workers Union (SBG, Sarekat Buruh Gula).[795] Interestingly, some unionists, like the prominent PBI member Daljono, would eventually switch their allegiances from Tan Malaka to Masjumi; Daljono even became a founding member of the Muslim labor union SBII (Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Workers Union) in 1948.[796] The ease with which that shift occurred – factional realignments were characteristic of the revolutionary period – suggests that Tan Malaka's supporters' and Masjumi supporters' views overlapped significantly when it came to labor rights and religion. Tan Malaka's brand of adaptive, Indonesian-specific communism had significant appeal: the SBG alone could muster the support of approximately 34,000 permanent workers and 80,000 seasonal workers by early 1947.[797] Even accounting for the fact that these numbers might be inflated, and that not all SBG members agreed with their leadership's support for the PP, these numbers are too large to dismiss out of hand, especially since sugar was one of the republic's few lucrative commodities. It would be fair to say that this appeal had something to do with the PP's overt detachment from international communism, its accommodation of religion, and its insistence on "100% Merdeka," traits which this section will explore in detail.

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[794] George Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 266–67. This was primarily a case of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," in the sense that the Hatta cabinet was opposed to Amir's FDR even though it had been saddled with implementing Renville. The GRR was therefore supportive of the Hatta cabinet insofar as it opposed the FDR, its main Marxist competitor.
[795] Colin Brown, "The Politics of Trade Union Formation in the Java Sugar Industry, 1945–1949," *Modern Asian Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 1994): 83–88. Sjamsoe was so committed to Tan Malaka that he would leave the BBI over the PBI's support for Amir's policy of negotiating with the Dutch, forming a splinter movement known as the PNI-Merdeka, which would later become one of the constituent elements of the Partai Murba. The SBG would remain pro-PP until April 1948, when Sjamsoe was ejected and the union came under PKI dominance.
[796] *Ibid*., 87.
[797] *Ibid*., 89.

The PP was very diverse, and its supporters had complex motivations. Some were simply outraged by the ineffectual policy of negotiations with the Dutch, which had yielded few benefits but made many territorial and strategic concessions. This outrage was understandable, since the negotiations that led to the Linggadjati and Renville agreements had also resulted in Operation Product and Operation Kraai, which strongly suggested that the Dutch had negotiated in bad faith and were still hoping to crush the republic militarily. Others, however, had more complex motivations, joining PP and its successor coalitions to jockey for political positions, or attempting to bring down Sjahrir or Amir's cabinets in the hope that they might replace them. It is therefore difficult to paint a definitive portrait of PP ideology, since such a portrait would require representation from across the political spectrum. Nevertheless, certain newspapers were known to be highly sympathetic to the PP and can be analyzed for the tenor of PP discourse. At the very least, newspapers such as these serve as a rough barometer of the kind of ideas that were circulating amongst the political opposition for the duration of Sjahrir and Amir's socialist party (PS) governments (November 1945 – January 1948).

Soeara Merdeka (The Voice of Freedom, 1945–47) was very close to the PP, consistently supporting labor unions and endorsing socialism.[798] Some articles, for example, performed the didactic function of explaining Rousseau's social contract in simple terms, focusing on the role that organized labor had to play in the unspoken social contract.[799] It explained the importance of the right to strike, and argued that organized labor would function as a bulwark against the rise to power of dictators like Napoleon or Hitler.[800] Such articles served to legitimize the many debilitating strikes that occurred on government-run plantations and mines during the revolution, which were born of genuine hardship and perfectly legal. Unfortunately, these were often suppressed, given the dire financial straits in which the republic usually found itself. Other articles proclaimed that "democracy and socialism are the foundations of the Indonesian state," and that "the Indonesian working class [*kaoem boeroeh*] condemns capitalism, and calls for the establishment of a government based on socialist

[798] John Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945-46* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1964), 46.
[799] Soemadi, "Menghadapi Kongres Boeroeh," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 2, 1945.
[800] *Ibid*.

values."[801] At the same time, *Soeara Merdeka* also published articles which openly embraced the revolutionary role of Islam, such as one article contributed by the *dakwah* section of Masjumi's Priangan branch. This article was deeply exhortative and rhetorical, framing resistance to the Dutch in specifically Islamic terms.[802] It even called on all republicans to "put your faith in Allah, who will delivery victory unto us."[803] Evidently, Islamic identity and socialist politics could and did coexist on the same page, within the context of revolutionary solidarity.

More explicitly, *Soeara Merdeka* sometimes espoused solidarity with Marxist movements both domestic and foreign, alongside declamations of solidarity with Islamic organizations. It published articles explaining that Australian labor unions supported Indonesian independence, while other articles proclaimed solidarity with striking dockworkers in Singapore.[804] It also republished articles from *Pravda*, the official press organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, including one condemning European attempts to reassert control over their former colonies.[805] Articles like these sat cheek by jowl alongside other articles which celebrated the formation in Garut of an Islamic *laskar*, the Barisan Moedjahidin (Holy Warriors' Front), which *Soeara Merdeka* hailed for "defending religion and strengthening the republic."[806] *Soeara Merdeka* even published contributions from Masjumi's Priangan branch, which called for "solidarity across the international working class," advocating the "establishment of a socialist state."[807] This last article is particularly notable because it also exhorted readers to "trust in Allah to assure victory," providing encouraging quotations from both the Qur'an and selected *hadith*, rendered in Arabic and Indonesian. Evidently, *Soeara Merdeka*'s audience was conceived of as both *ummah* and proletariat, and it drew inspiration from both.

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[801] B.A, "Mendjelaskan Politik," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 2, 1945; Anonymous, "Selagi Tani Djajahan Masih Ada, *Soeara Merdeka*, November 7, 1945.
[802] Masjoemi daerah Priangan bagian da'wah, "Perdjoangan Oemat Islam," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 1, 1945.
[803] *Ibid*.
[804] Anonymous, "Kebentjian Kepada Belanda Meloeas," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945; Anonymous, "Apa Maksoed Kaoem Boeroeh Dok Singapoera?" *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945.
[805] Anonymous, "Soal Koloni-koloni haroes lekas diselesaikan: Anjoeran Pravda," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 6, 1945.
[806] Anonymous, "Barisan Boeroeh Indonesia Garoet," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945; Anonymous, "Barisan Moedjahidin," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 3, 1945.
[807] Masjoemi Daerah Priangan bagian da'wah, "Perdjoangan dan Pengorbanan," *Soeara Merdeka*, November 7, 1945.

In 1947, a flood destroyed the original press and resulted in *Soeara Merdeka* splitting into two newspapers: *Soeara Merdeka* and *Perdjuangan Kita*.[808] After the flood, *Soeara Merdeka* evolved into a daily broadsheet which was more factual and less clearly partisan. It carried reportage from international wire news agencies like the Associated Press, as well as Indonesia's Antara, and provided strong coverage of global events. Recurring topics included developments in USA-USSR relations, anticolonial efforts in India and Burma, as well as the Chinese and Greek civil wars. Even after 1947, however, *Soeara Merdeka* retained a discernible pro-labor orientation while consistently expressing solidarity with Muslim republicans. One article reported glowingly on the formation of Sentral Organisasi Koperasi Ra'jat Indonesia (SOKRI, Indonesian People's Central Cooperatives Organization), explaining that SOKRI would help found more badly-needed peasant cooperatives across Indonesia.[809] Throughout 1947, nearly every issue would include one or two articles on the gains made by labor movements across the world, while coverage of the newly-founded International Labor Organization's early initiatives to codify fair labor practices was also commonplace. At the same time, *Soeara Merdeka* also celebrated the achievements of Islamic organizations, such as Muhammadiyah's Perserikatan Oemat Islam (POI, Ummah Union), which it hailed for founding new Islamic schools (*madrassah*) in the Bandung area.[810] *Soeara Merdeka*'s continued Marxist sympathies were evident in an article titled "Rombongan Penghabisan dari Digoel," which celebrated the return of the last batch of Partindo and PKI ex-internees from Boven Digoel – most of whom spent the second world war in Australia – to republican territory, hailing them for "lending their strength to the republic."[811] *Soeara Merdeka*'s visibly international perspective made clear to its readers that the Indonesian proletariat were not alone; they were conceived of in terms of a broader world of proletarian solidarity, a world which included actors as diverse as the French communist party and former PKI Digoel internees. This world coexisted alongside, and even overlapped with, Indonesian nationhood, an imagined community expansive enough to accommodate Muslim republicans as comrades in the revolutionary struggle.

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[808] Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution*, 142. No issues of Perdjuangan Kita survive; it is not to be confused with Sjahrir's famous tract with the same title.
[809] Anonymous, "Sentral Organisasi Kop. Ra'jat Indonesia," *Soeara Merdeka*, July 14, 1947.
[810] Anonymous, "Pelantikan POI," *Soeara Merdeka*, July 12, 1947.
[811] "Anonmyous, "Rombongan Penghabisan dari Digoel", *Soeara Merdeka*, July 12, 1947.

This implicit imbrication of Islam and socialism was also evident in other PP-sympathetic newspapers, such as *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, published in the republican capital in Yogyakarta from late 1945 onward.[812] Mrázek describes *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* as supportive of Tan Malaka, and it regularly ran advertisements and announcements concerning Tan Malaka's writings, such as his brochure *Politik*, which was published in December 1945.[813] In *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, articles on the benefits of socialism in the USSR were juxtaposed against contributions by Masjumi branches, which called on readers to "pray that Allah will unite us in our resolve [to achieve independence]."[814] *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* conceived of its audience as part of a global proletarian movement: it republished articles from the British communist newspaper *The Daily Worker* which supported striking unions in the UK and lauded the Chinese Communist Party's military successes in China.[815] At the same time, it consistently addressed Muslim readers directly: one article from the October 15, 1945 issue exhorted Muslims to take up arms against the Dutch in explicitly religious terms, while another "prayed to Allah to guarantee the independence of Indonesia."[816] Such articles shared the same space on this daily broadsheet over and over again, with no apparent discomfort or discordance; the revolution provided a discursive space in which Islam and Marxism were not assumed to be at loggerheads, despite the many Muslim critiques of Marxism in the pre-war years. That suspension of animosity was facilitated by the pressing need for republican unity, but it was only possible at all because *pergerakan* activists like Tan Malaka had already been insisting on the possibility of conciliation for decades.

Tan Malaka, the PP's ideological lodestone and revolutionary symbol *sans pareil* to many more people besides, consistently emphasized the necessity of reconciling Islam to communism during the revolution. One of the last books published before his death was *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948), loosely translatable as "Islam as

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[812] This was a daily broadsheet to which S.K. Trimurti often contributed articles, and is not to be confused with the 1930s Pendidikan newspaper of the same name.
[813] Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia*, Studies on Southeast Asia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), 311.
[814] Anonymous, "Sistem sosialisme ternjata baik sekali," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 9, 1945; Masjumi Cabang Djokdjakarta, "Sholat Hadjat," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 9, 1945.
[815] Anonymous, "Lemahnja Kedudukan Belanda," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 10, 1945.
[816] Masjumi Daerah Jogjakarta, "Kaoem Muslimin Indonesia angkat sendjata," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 15, 1945; Anonymous, "Solat Hadjad Menegakkan Agama Allah dan Kemerdekaan Indonesia," *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, October 15, 1945.

critiqued by Dialectical Materialism," *Madilog* being a portmanteau of Materialism, Dialectic, and Logic. In it, Tan Malaka suggested that Islam acclimatized itself to local conditions as it spread outside of Arabia, but remained essentially coherent through the ummah's interaction via the *hajj* pilgrimage.[817] This paralleled his recognition of specific conditions which required the PKI to focus on the *murba* rather than the narrower category of the urban proletariat: he recognized the mutability of both Islam and communism, and the desirability thereof. He also couched his message in a clearly Islamic idiom. As in his autobiography, he began by providing a short history of Islam in terms familiar to any Muslim, a nod to the continuing relevance of Islam. He referenced the four Rashidun Caliphs, the Prophets Ibrahim, Musa and Daud, the four main schools (*mazhab*) of jurisprudence, the Mutazili School of theology (which had prioritized human reason in interpreting Islamic law), as well as such august personages as Imam al-Ghazali.[818] Furthermore, he made a point of adding the suffix "S.A.W." (an acronym for "Peace Be Upon Him" transliterated from Arabic) to Muhammad's name whenever the Prophet was mentioned. By invoking these key markers of Islamic identity, Tan Malaka signaled his consistent immersion in an Islamic milieu, despite his ideological commitment to communism.

The majority of *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* was given over to Tan Malaka's portrayal of the historical development of Islam vis-a-vis other phenomena in world history, and his stance on Islam was visibly orthodox. Much of the book constituted a paean to Islam rather than an actual exposition of *Madilog*, his nuanced reformulation of dialectical materialism. That Islam was a central pillar around which his story revolved was particularly obvious when he evaluated the young prophet Muhammad in relation to Isaac Newton and Thomas Edison; unsurprisingly, Muhammad fared favorably in his comparison.[819] It was only in his final paragraph that Tan Malaka made his message clear: he argued that *Madilog* admitted the existence of God, and recognized God's sovereignty over nature (*Jadi menurut Madilog yang Maha Kuasa itulah bisa lebih kuasa dari undang alam*).[820] If *Aksi Massa* (1925) was an expression of the practical value of accommodating Islam within a

[817] Tan Malaka, *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (Djakarta: Widjaya, 1950), 6.
[818] *Ibid*., 7.
[819] *Ibid*., 9.
[820] *Ibid*., 15.

communist ideological framework, *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* was aimed squarely at Muslims, and openly championed the metaphysical compatibility of Tan Malaka's understanding of communism and Islam itself.

All of this was consistent with Tan Malaka's instructions to his GRR supporters on the ideal characteristics of a "people's party" (*Partai Rakyat*), written on 31 July 1948 in Magelang jail.[821] This was a prototype for what would eventually become the Murba Party. He argued that a people's party should only use "appropriate tools," and not simply follow foreign examples. He wrote approvingly of the independent-minded "perspective" (*sikap*) embraced by Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito, the Swiss Communist Party, and the Southern German communist party, and argued that these examples should guide the Partai Rakjat's relationship with the Cominform. He even referenced a 1947 statement by Stalin as well as Andrei Zhdanov's address to the 9th Cominform congress of 1947, to the effect that communist parties should no longer be controlled from the center, as they were under the third international.[822] While Tan Malaka perceived the Partai Buruh Merdeka (Independent Labor Party) and Akoma (Communist Youth League) as the core of a future people's party, he also emphasized the importance of a "long term policy" that would build a "broader social basis" for said party.[823]

Read in conjunction with Tan Malaka's *Islam dalam Tindjauan Madilog* as well as his earlier writings, it becomes clear that this was a non-dogmatic, flexible, and adaptive approach to communism which Tan Malaka had cultivated over decades. Amidst the tumult of revolution, he was formulating as best as he could a particularistic, specifically Indonesian communism. This was a communism that did profess solidarity with the global communist and socialist movements, but which fiercely asserted its right to determine relevant ideology and policy domestically. The implication was that Indonesians alone knew what was best for Indonesia. These ideas had currency beyond Tan Malaka himself. Muhammad Yamin, who had founded the pre-war leftist party Gerindo with Amir Sjarifuddin and Sanusi Pane, wrote a hagiography of Tan Malaka during the revolution in

821 Tan Malaka, *Pandangan Dan Langkah Partai Rakjat: Surat Kepada Partai Rakjat* (Djakarta: Pustaka Murba, 1948).
822 *Ibid*., 1.
823 *Ibid*., 2.

which he lamented the split between Sarekat Islam and the PKI during the 1920s, warning that Muslim and Marxist republicans should follow the example set by the PP, so as to avoid repeating past mistakes.[824] Yamin had a long history of involvement with Tan Malaka, covertly aiding his PARI (Partai Republik Indonesia, Indonesian Republican Party, an underground organization founded after the suppression of the PKI in 1927) during the 1930s.[825] This was the kind of ideological framework that made possible conciliation with Islam, especially given the exigencies of revolution, although the framework itself had deep roots stretching back to the 1920s.

Tan Malaka's ideas about the necessity of reconciling Islam and Marxism were obliquely reflected in the publications of the Murba Party and its constituents. The Murba Party was founded in the republican capital of Yogyakarta on November 7, 1948, in response to the effective collapse of the FDR in the Madiun Affair of September 1948.[826] The collapse of the FDR created a political vacuum that the GRR sought to exploit, in the hope that confederation into a more disciplined party would increase their leverage over republican policymaking. This was not an inconsequential move, for the Murba Party's founding members included twelve members of the KNIP, the *de facto* republican parliament, two of whom were members of the KNIP's working committee.[827] The foundational documents of the Murba Party, published in 1950 but originally written in 1948, provide a sense of their non-dogmatic Marxism. The foundational principles (*anggaran dasar*) of the party repeatedly spelled out its commitment to some tenets of Marxism, but conspicuously neglected to mention historical materialism or scientific socialism. In its foundational principles, the Murba Party stated that it was "a party based on anti-fascism, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism," which worked "towards a just and prosperous society… that is, a socialist society."[828] This was immediately followed by a promise to the uphold the 1945 constitution (*undang-undang dasar 45*), specifically committing itself to upholding the principle of the

[824] Muhammad Yamin, *Tan Malaka Bapak Republic Indonesia* (Djawa Timoer: Moerba Berdjoang, 1946), 13.
[825] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interview by Audrey Kahin, June 8, 1985, 2.
[826] Notably, November 7 was the anniversary of the Russian Revolution of 1917, an indicator of the global proletarian solidarity that was fundamental to the Murba Party's worldview despite its rejection of subservience to the USSR.
[827] Partai Murba, *Istilah Murba, Anggaran Dasar, Anggaran Rumah Tangga, Dan Rentjana Konstitusi Partai Murba* (Djakarta: Sekretariat Dewan Partai "Partai Murba," 1950).
[828] *Ibid*., 3.

belief in one God (*Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa*), without any mention of Pancasila.[829] This was remarkable, since *Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa* was not merely invoked as part of the Pancasila formula; the Murba Party was explicitly comfortable with accommodating monotheistic religions in its vision of a socialist society. This was not entirely surprising, since one of the Murba Party's most prominent founding members, Sajuti Melik, was simultaneously a devout Muslim, a Soekarno loyalist (having served as Soekarno's private secretary, he drafted the proclamation of independence in that capacity), and a former Digoel internee with impeccable nationalist credentials.

Sajuti Melik had as fine a *pergerakan* pedigree as it was possible to have. As a young man in Surakarta (Solo) and Yogyakarta in the 1920s, he had studied under Ki Hadjar Dewantara of Taman Siswa fame, as well as his close associate and *pergerakan* sympathizer, the Dutch teacher H.A. Zurink.[830] These sympathies were known to the authorities, and Zurink was eventually deported in 1924 while many of his former students – including Sajuti Melik – were detained and interrogated by the Politieke Inlichtingen Diesnt (PID). More important, however, was Melik's connection to the Islamic communist Haji Misbach, whose publications have been analyzed in chapter one. Late in life, Melik would reminisce that he had two teachers in the realm of politics: Zurink was the first, and Misbach the second.[831] Zurink had gotten Melik interested in politics, which led him to read Misbach's *Islam Bergerak* and *Medan Moeslimin*, which in turn prompted him to seek out Misbach and become his student.[832] He recalled with amusement that it was Misbach who first introduced him to historical materialism, telling Melik that he should study Marx's historical materialism because it was very similar to Islamic teachings.[833] Shuttling between Surakarta and Yogyakarta, Melik also studied Marxism with Darsono, Subakat, and Aliarcham, some of the most prominent PKI leaders of the pre-1926 period; at the same time, he joined Muhammadiyah to deepen his knowledge of Islam.[834] There was something poetic about Melik's

[829] *Ibid*., 3.
[830] Sayuti Melik and Arief Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik* (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), 8.
[831] *Ibid*., 9.
[832] *Ibid*., 9.
[833] *Ibid*., 10.
[834] *Ibid*., 10.

pergerakan "apprenticeship" with Zurink and Misbach; he learned his anticolonial resistance from both Europe and the Indies, neatly symbolizing the two lineages, or two souls, of the *pergerakan* as a whole. This was even mirrored by his family background: Melik's father was a minor civil servant of the *inlands bestuur* (native service), but his family was devoutly Muslim, with several uncles trained as *ulama*.[835] More than anyone else, it was Sajuti Melik who embodied the continuity of the eclectic pre-1926 *pergerakan* intellectual tradition, carrying it into the revolutionary period.

It was unsurprising that a student of Misbach's would end up as a supporter of Tan Malaka and Soekarno, both of whom had broad, synthesizing national visions which accommodated Islam and Marxism. Melik's first contact with Tan Malaka's ideas came in 1926, when he read a clandestine copy of *Naar de Republiek Indonesia*.[836] Given his close association with so many noted communists, Melik was arrested and exiled to Digoel in 1927, where he would languish until 1933, when he was released at the ripe old age of 25. He would continue to be involved with anticolonial activism throughout the 1930s, joining the leftist party Gerindo's underground organization, which got him arrested in 1936 and detained by the British Special Branch in Singapore for a year.[837] After his release, he married the labor activist S.K. Trimurti, who also made no secret of her Muslim faith in her writing; both of them contributed articles to *pergerakan* newspapers like *Sinar Selatan* (light of the south). Unsurprisingly, the stridently anticolonial character of their writings led to them being periodically charged with *persdelict*, and both of them were incarcerated a number of times during the last years of Dutch rule.

By the time the revolution began, Melik was already a hardened *pergerakan* journalist: no stranger to suffering for his beliefs, he had long been exposed to Marxist ideas and was possessed of a supportive family as well as strong personal connections to the top tier of republican leadership. Choosing to support Tan Malaka and his rejection of *diplomasi*, Melik joined the GRR and later became a founding member of the Murba Party. He

[835] *Ibid*., 9.
[836] *Ibid*., 13.
[837] *Ibid*., 20.

spoke of his revolutionary experiences in a stoically religious vein: he pointed out that the revolution's success was by no means assured, so each person had to choose the path which they thought would best facilitate independence, "for only God can engender what happens or does not happen, in accordance with his divine power."[838] He also explained that he did not join the PKI during the revolution because he thought the PKI did not truly embrace Pancasila, but only saw it as a tool for unifying Indonesians: "the PKI's embrace of Pancasila was tactical rather than heartfelt."[839] The implication, of course, was that for a Marxist like Melik, a cursory accommodation of Islam would not suffice – his faith was part and parcel of his politics, and no doubt some similarly-minded people were drawn to Murba Party.

In the mid-1980s, towards the end of his life, Melik would consent to be interviewed by the journalist Arief Priyadi, and the transcript was later edited and published as a book. Although the book jacket and the introduction repeatedly stated that Melik was a practicing Muslim, an entire chapter was dedicated to Melik's understanding of Marxism.[840] This provides a glimpse, refracted through decades of reminiscence and accumulated wisdom, of the nuanced nature of Marxist discourse in PP, GRR and Murba circles. All such recollections must necessarily be read with care, subject as they are to nostalgia, effacement, and obfuscation for both personal and political reasons. There are good reasons, however, to use this source. First, Marxism was effectively a taboo topic during Suharto's New Order regime, and Melik's willingness to go on the record about his Marxist political convictions – which he never renounced – suggests that he was unwilling to censor or attenuate his views for political expedience. Second, Melik's early years in Solo and Yogyakarta, moving in both Islamic and communist circles, are easily verified. That background suggests that his approach to Marxism had been a heterodox and eclectic one since the beginning; the adaptive Marxism he showcased in the interview with Arief Priyadi was very much consistent with the ideas he had held since he was a young man.

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[838] *Ibid*., 52.
[839] *Ibid*., 52–53.
[840] Sajuti Melik was even photographed for the book jacket wearing a *peci*, that quintessential sartorial symbol of Islamic identity in Indonesia.

He began by explaining the etymological roots of key Marxist terms like "proletariat" and "commune," but focused particularly on explaining the importance of Hegelian dialectical materialism and Marx's adaptation of that concept as historical materialism. He demonstrated clear facility with Marxist theory, explaining with impressive clarity and succinctness how historical materialism illustrated the relationship between technological, structural and economic developments, and epistemological changes in human societies from age to age, rather than presenting it as a schematic or teleological unfolding of history.[841] Melik fundamentally approached Marxism as an analytical tool, one that he clearly valued even when it was dangerous to do so, and described it as a form of *ilmu pengetahuan* rather than a comprehensive dogma.[842] He did not approve of the USSR and the PRC's authoritarian political structures, and attributed their economic troubles to an "excessive reliance on the 'laws' of dialectical materialism, paying insufficient attention to other factors, including [the complexity of] human motivations."[843] On a similar note, he questioned the inevitability of the proletariat's violent revolt against capitalism, arguing that the common understanding of revolution as a violent upheaval was simplistic and fixated on "quantitative" instead of "qualitative" (i.e. structural) changes. He did accept that a socialist society would eventually prevail over capitalism, but not necessarily through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.[844] The following quip by Melik encapsulates his ideological flexibility: "If a callow youth is not attracted to Marxism after being exposed to it, his brains are frozen [*otaknya beku*]… if an educated and experienced adult thinks Marxism is the best philosophy of all, this signifies that his brains are frozen."[845] It was such a fiercely non-conformist approach to Marxism that was supple enough to accommodate Melik's Islamic faith. Knowing that many of Tan Malaka's core supporters, like Muhammad Yamin and Iwa

[841] Sayuti Melik and Arief Priyadi, *Wawancara Dengan Sayuti Melik* (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), 96–97.
[842] *Ibid*., 117. *Ilmu*, as explained in chapter one, is a loan word from Arabic ('*ilm*, علم) which signifies knowledge, but it is a term with strong connotations of the formal Islamic sciences, as well as associations with mystical knowledge both Islamic and non-Islamic. *Pengetahuan* can signify understanding, but also science. Taken together, they signify something like an analytical framework.
[843] *Ibid*., 100.
[844] *Ibid*., 101.
[845] *Ibid*., 112.

Koesoema Soemantri[846] were also self-conscious Muslims, we can reasonably assume that Sajuti Melik's views on Islam and Marxism were broadly representative of the Murba milieu. When Melik's ideas are examined in conjunction with the pro-PP newspapers like *Soeara Merdeka*, it becomes clear that a significant segment of Indonesian society saw no problem reconciling their Islamic faith and their Marxist political inspirations.

Muslims in the labor movement

Tan Malaka's supporters were not the only Marxists who eschewed the PKI and its identification with an international communist movement. There were many Muslims active in the labor movement who readily drew on Marxist critiques of capital, adapting these analytical frameworks to the dynamic political realities of a rapidly decolonizing Southeast Asia. Remarkably, many of the most vocal Marxists in the labor movement were women. While the Indonesian labor movement has been the subject of rigorous studies by Ben White and Jafar Suryomenggolo, women's roles in the labor movement have received scant attention. More broadly, Women have too often been excluded from patriotic narratives of the revolution, which have a strong tendency to confine their participation to supporting roles like manning the *dapur umum* (communal kitchens) which were absolutely indispensable to the war effort.[847] Not only are the political *dramatis personae* of the revolution overwhelmingly male, even the academic study of revolutionary cultural production, such as the publications of Angkatan 45 (generation of 1945) writers, rarely include women. Many women could and did participate as combatants in the revolution – including the PSII activist S. Yati, who founded and led the *Laskar Wanita Indonesia* (LASWI, Indonesian Women's Militia) during the revolution.[848] Besides being combatants, however, they were also active participants in the production of republican political discourse. Through their newspaper articles and pamphlets, they sought to shape collective visions of a post-war Indonesia, as well as to direct the

[846] Iwa Koesoema Soemantri was another anomalous Marxist who was considered sufficiently important to the PP that he was detained alongside Tan Malaka, Muhammad Yamin, Abdul Manaf (aka Achmad Soebardjo) during the 3 July Affair of 1946. His ideas will be examined in detail in chapter five.
[847] Mary Margaret Steedly, *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence*, Philip E. Lilienthal (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2013), 54–55.
[848] *Ibid*.

course of the republic's policies in the present. This segment will examine the writings of various female labor activists, primarily those affiliated with the Barisan Boeroeh Indonesia (BBI, Indonesian Labor Front), whose Islamic faith did not prevent them from invoking Marxist ideas when vigorously debating the desired shape of the republic.

Sajuti Melik's wife, S. K. Trimurti, was a key leader of the BBI during the revolution. This was one of many *badan perjuangan* (struggle bodies) formed during the revolution, but her career as a *pergerakan* activist had began as a journalist in the 1930s, when she often covered labor issues relating to women and was incarcerated for *persdelict* at least once. She would also become a prominent leader of the Partai Boeroeh Indonesia (PBI, Indonesian Labor Party), the party affiliate of the BBI, in 1946.[849] The BBI was consistently aligned with Sjahrir and Amir's Socialist Party, and as such had been prominent in both the Sajap Kiri and the FDR coalitions. During her time as the Minister of Labor in Amir's short-lived second cabinet, she was responsible for passing the republic's first labor law, which would eventually be extended to all of Indonesia in 1951. Despite several loopholes, not to mention problems of implementation, this law constituted the first comprehensive Indonesian law to protect workers' rights in general and the rights of women workers in particular.[850] Trimurti was, like her husband, an independently-minded Marxist: when Musso pushed for the amalgamation of FDR organizations into the PKI, she had publicly resisted incorporation of the BBI and PBI, earning a public rebuke from Musso for her efforts.[851] She was also a woman of conspicuous faith. In September 1939, just before she began serving a jail sentence for *persdelict*, she published an article in *Pesat* in which she wrote movingly about her faith in the face of impending incarceration:

> *"Our religion teaches that all which God requires of us is for the good. What is now clear about this disaster is that the inner connection between my husband and I is based solely on holiness, and that foundation strengthens our prayers for our children…"*[852]

[849] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 63.
[850] Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 177.
[851] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 82. Musso called her a Trotskyist in response to her question on why the PBI should merge with the PKI, given its lackluster performance during the revolution.
[852] S.K. Trimurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti: Pejuang Indonesia*, ed. B.E. Henky and Teguh Mangil (Jakarta: Yayasan Bung Karno, 2007), 32.

This religiosity is rarely, if ever, captured by academic studies of Trimurti, which tend to focus on her labor activism and journalistic activities. It was also consistent: in May 1974, she wrote a short autobiographical piece for *Indonesia Raya*, titled "Wartawan Wanita Berkisah" (a female journalist shares her stories). In it, she spoke not only of establishing newspapers like *Marhaeni* – the first Indonesian newspaper explicitly targeting female laborers – but also thanked God repeatedly for preserving her through her difficult activist years, repeatedly using "*Alhamdulilah*" (praise be to God) to signify her gratitude.[853]

This religiosity sat comfortably alongside a deep commitment to socialism, not just at an abstracted, national level, but with a consistent focus on workers' immediate welfare. In an article published on August 17, 1946 in *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, Trimurti presciently pointed out that the military ejection of the Japanese or the Dutch would not be sufficient for independence. The "opportunistic" revolution would have to be systematized to guarantee social welfare, which could in turn only be achieved through the expulsion of foreign capitalists and the nationalization of lucrative businesses like commodity plantations.[854] Even in the chaos of revolution, Trimurti presciently spotted some of the structural problems in the Indonesian economy which would continue to plague successive governments throughout the liberal democracy period. In another article published by *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* on October 21, 1946, she condemned the excessive reliance on Dutch firms as sources of taxable revenue, arguing that the prominence of the *orang particulier* (white collar employees of Dutch firms) had to be limited, or the republic's economy would increasingly be drawn into a capitalist mold. Instead, she advocated the "socialization of society as soon as possible."[855] She saw the revolution is as a global struggle against the creeping hegemony of capitalism, rather than a simply nationalistic, anti-Dutch phenomenon. In an article published sometime in 1947 in *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, Trimurti celebrated SOBSI (Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization) joining the World Federation of Trade Unions, writing that it was a step forward towards the destruction of capitalism.[856]

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[853] *Ibid*., 2–31.
[854] *Ibid*., 45–48.
[855] *Ibid*., 171–73.
[856] *Ibid*., 126–30.

This focus on the immediate needs and suffering of the average laborer was consistent in her writing. Trimurti penned a four-part serial article on the effects of plantation capitalism, based on her travels in the region, that was published in *Pesat* on September 6, 1951. In it, she argued that commodity plantations (primarily tobacco) in Deli, South Sumatra still evinced much continuity with the exploitative labor practices practiced by Dutch plantation enterprises, which had been revived by the Negara Sumatera Timur during the revolution.[857] She argued that the land rights of small cultivators – who had occupied land informally during the Japanese occupation and the revolution – were not being respected, while the minimum wage for plantation employees was unacceptably low, determined as it was by the *Algemeene Vereeniging Rubber Onderneming* (Avros, The General Association of Rubber Companies).[858] She also excoriated the continuing sexual exploitation of female plantation laborers, who were sometimes forced into becoming informal prostitutes or concubines, a practice which had deep roots in the Dutch plantation capitalism.[859]

Tellingly, she wrote acidly of the specific exploitation of Muslim laborers on Deli plantations by the plantations' *modin* (a village religious elder) during Lebaran (Eid al-Fitr), which marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan.[860] She angrily condemned the perversion of *zakat fitrah*, a collection of alms for the poor during Lebaran: instead of distributing alms to the poor, *zakat fitrah* was collected from the poor plantation laborers, who were led by the *modin* to believe that they would not be accepted into paradise if they did not contribute. The result was that Trimurti witnessed many of the poorest laborers pawning their meagre possessions in order to hand a paltry sum of *zakat fitrah* over to their *modin*.[861] These specifically Muslim

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[857] *Ibid*., 217–221. The Negara Sumatera Timur (NST, East Sumatran Nation) had been a constituent part of the Republik Indonesia Serikat, RIS (federal republic of Indonesia, aka the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, RUSI), the entity which the Dutch had negotiated to replace the former NEI. It lasted from December 27, 1949 until August 17, 1950, when it was replaced by the unitary Republic of Indonesia.
[858] *Ibid*., 222.
[859] *Ibid*., 223. For more on plantation concubinage and prostitution, see Laura Ann Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 31–33, 188–89.
[860] In the Indonesian context, the *Modin* is a local religious leader who leads or organizes most Islamic rituals at the village level, from the elaborate rites of circumcision and sacrifice to mundane duties like sounding the call to prayer. See Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," *American Anthropologist* 59 (1957): 40; Achmad Zainal Arifin, "Defending Traditions, Countering Intolerant Ideologies: Re-Energizing the Role of Modin in Modern Java," *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55 (2017): 268–69.
[861] *Ibid*., 226.

sensibilities were, for Trimurti, imbricated in wider issues of class and gender, none of which could be understood without the critique of plantation capitalism offered by a Marxist analytical lens.

Trimurti sometimes called explicitly for cooperation between Muslims and leftists, especially in the context of protecting labor rights, which she understood as a fundamental concern in Islam. In "Kembali Kepada Rakjat" (returning to the people), published in *Kedaoelatan Rakjat* on June 7, 1947, she hailed the Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI, Indonesian Farmers Front), which had strong links to the PKI, as the foremost advocate of land rights for smallholders.[862] While celebrating the efforts and achievements of the BTI, she also argued that the BTI's work was largely compatible with that of its rival, the Masjumi-sponsored Sarikat Tani Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Farmers League) and urged them to continue to struggle together towards their common goals, even suggesting that the two organizations consider merging.[863] Trimurti's belief in the possibility of confluence between Islam and Marxism was heartfelt, and extended beyond the practical to the philosophical as well. Later in her life, she contributed an article to the November 1977 issue of the Angkatan 45 journal, *Gema Angkatan 45*. Trimurti still maintained the importance of unions and direct action, but she also argued that the desire for of social justice was intimately linked to humanity's conscience, which was in turn "inextricably tied up with moral, ethical, spiritual, and religious values."[864] She even argued that labor rights had to be respected precisely because "as creations of God, all humanity is unified, and tied to each other with the bonds of universality," and therefore, "all men are brothers."[865]

Trimurti's religiosity, Marxist fames of reference, and keen attention to the intersections of gender and class were eloquently displayed in her address to the Kongres Barisan Buruh Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Labor Front Congress), held in Kediri on January 25 and 26, 1946. The beginning of her speech showcased a straightforwardly Marxist understanding of capitalism: she affirmed that "the working class has existed ever

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[862] While strongly influenced by the PKI, the BTI was by no means a subservient organization. See George Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 284.
[863] S.K. Trumurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti*, 174–79.
[864] *Ibid*., 204.
[865] *Ibid*., 205.

since the emergence of capitalism," and that "[workers] are forced to accept the wages set at their employers' leisure because they did not have any ownership of the means of production [*productiemiddelen*] or the surplus value of their labor [*hasil perkerjaannya*]."[866] Incidentally, her copious use of Dutch terms mixed with Indonesian words, such as *productiemiddelen*, *perjuangan principeel* (principled struggle), *perjuangan incidenteel* (incidental struggle), and *hak verlof* (right to vacation), is revealing.[867] The linguistically hybrid Marxist lexicon used during the revolution was emblematic of the process of translating Europe to Indonesia, which involved Dutch-educated individuals like Trimurti articulating European concepts like Marxism within an Indonesian idiom. However, translated ideas sometimes lacked an obvious vernacular cognate, resulting in her linguistic eclecticism. This was exactly the same process that had produced Tan Malaka's *murba* and Soekarno's *marhaen*, but they had chosen to formulate their own indigenous categories rather than rely on heteroglossia as Trimurti did here. She even illustrated the relationship between a workers' party (*partai buruh*) and its supporting unions with the Javanese term "*loro-loroning atunggal*," two paths to achieving the same purpose.[868] This heteroglossia, a by-product of translation, also illustrates the degree to which Indonesian Marxism was a partial descendent of Dutch Marxism. This line of descent was embodied not just in the person of activists like Rustam Effendi, who straddled Tan Malaka's PP and the Communist Party of the Netherlands, but also in the influence of Dutch Marxists like Henriette Roland Horst, whose surprising popularity in Indonesia will be examined in chapter four.[869]

Trimurti's understanding of Marxism was deeply enmeshed with the specific needs and rights of female workers. She argued for the establishment of a women's labor front on two grounds. First, she recognized that it would help mobilize hitherto untapped support for the labor movement by bringing more women into the workforce, simultaneously freeing women from traditional gender roles while amplifying the voice of the labor

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[866] *Ibid*., 118.
[867] *Ibid*., 118–19. By principled struggle, Trimurti meant the attempt to change the structural features of capitalism. This stood in contrast to incidental struggle, which she saw as the ultimately ephemeral attempts to meet the immediate needs of laborers, such as striking for improved pay or the right to vacation.
[868] *Ibid*., 120.
[869] Anderson and Soerjono, "On Musso's Return," 70.

movement. Second, she recognized that only such an organization would possess the necessary familiarity with the specific problems faced by female workers to advocate effectively on their behalf. Trimurti gave the examples of insufficient protections for pregnant workers and new mothers, such as the absence of guaranteed maternity leave, the unacceptable lack of respect for women in the workplace, and the dearth of childcare facilities or creches for working mothers.[870] At the same time, she openly championed the unity of purpose between the labor movement and Islamic labor organizations, praising the establishment of the Serikat Buruh Islam Indonesia (SBII Indonesian Islamic Workers League) by Masjumi's Mohammed Daljono in November 1948. Instead of questioning their commitment to workers' rights as the PKI did, she lauded the SBII for "building a labor organization based on Islamic principles, which would fight for the material rights of Indonesian laborers… such that the will of God, who is sovereign over humanity, can direct humanity in the direction he pleases."[871] She saw this as a great improvement over the Sarekat Islam of the 1920s, praising Muslims for their newfound "awareness" (*kesadaran*) of the importance of labor issues.[872] For Trimurti, being a good Muslim necessarily involved struggling to guarantee the rights and improve the lives of ordinary workers.

It was this sort of unitarian discourse of solidarity which laid the foundation for broad-based women's organizations like Gerwis (Gerakan Indonesia Wanita Sedar, Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women), which attracted both Muslim and communist feminists. Gerwis was founded 1950, and later became the PKI-influenced Gerwani in 1954; chapter four will analyze both organizations in further detail. A significant portion of Gerwis's rank and file membership had attended courses on women's rights activism taught by Trimurti herself during the revolution, courses that were organized by the Barisan Buruh Wanita (BBW, Women Laborers Front), a subsidiary of the BBI.[873] Despite her clearly Marxist orientation, Trimurti was considered unacceptable to the PKI, which blocked her chairpersonship of Gerwis during its first conference in 1951. With Suwarti as chair and Trimurti and Umi Sarjono as vice-chairs, all of Gerwani's top leaders had close links to the

[870] S.K. Trumurti, *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti*, 120.
[871] *Ibid*., 153.
[872] *Ibid*., 153.
[873] Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 146.

BBI and BBW, and their independent-minded Marxism was reflected in Gerwis's composition.[874] With its sensitivity to how issues of class and gender intersected, and without being subservient to the PKI, Gerwis had significant appeal to female Muslim activists. S. Yati, the PSII women's wing leader whose writings were examined in chapter two, remained a staunch supporter of Gerwis and Gerwani until 1965; other prominent Muslim women who supported Gerwis in the 1950s included Nyai Utami Suryadharma, Nyai H. Subandrio, and Nyai Aminah Hidayat, the last of whom actually joined Gerwani as a member.[875] In a similar vein, Saskia Wieringa interviewed a former Gerwis member, Sukoni, in 1998. Sukoni and this to say about how her revolutionary experiences allowed her to reconcile religion and politics:

> *"I joined Gerwis because I was asked to join and because I liked to help people… [also] because my husband was a member of SOBSI, and second because I really wanted to help poor women. My first husband had joined a communist guerrilla group. But I never understood what he was doing during his long absences. I had already been married five years when I found out. I was very sad, for my grandfather had always taught me that communists didn't have a God. My husband taught me what a communist member was and what the struggle meant: that communists believe in God and always had to behave in a simple, modest way, and that they had to help other people. Then he died in an accident. When I was a widow, I joined Gerwis."*[876]

The ability of Gerwis members and supporters to reconcile Islam and Marxism, as Trimurti herself had, owed much to the revolutionary environment, as Sukoni's story poignantly illustrates. In an environment with a plurality of movements animated by Marxist ideas, each with their own interpretation of how Marx's ideas ought to be applied to Indonesia, it was possible for Indonesian women to participate in the creative, adaptive political discourse of the revolution; they found their own ways to reconcile their women's rights activism with their religious identities and class consciousness in organizations like Gerwis.

Trimurti's commitment to labor rights, women's rights and her own Islamic faith were articulated within the broader context of labor discourse during the revolution. Newspapers that were closely connected to the labor movement, such as the BBI's *Soeara Boeroeh* (jointly published by BBI and SOBSI from 1947 onward) and the PBI's *Boeroeh* provide a sense of the discursive milieu which shaped and enabled Trimurti's activism. *Boeroeh*

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[874] *Ibid*., 147.
[875] *Ibid*., 251.
[876] Saskia Wieringa, "Interview, Sukoni, 23 December 1998," in Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan and the Institute of Social Studies, 2002), 145.

serves as an effective symbol of how Indonesian identity was necessarily plural, and thus able to accommodate both Islam and Marxism, among other things. Beginning publication in late 1945 in the republican capital of Yogyakarta, *Boeroeh* had been closely linked to the BBI and Trimurti herself right from the beginning of the revolution.[877] What made *Boeroeh* interesting was its clearly Marxist inspiration, juxtaposed against identifiably Islamic and Javanese sensibilities. The front pages brandished headlines like "Workers of the World, Unite!" while articles titled "The International Labor Movement" (*Gerakan Boeroeh International*) invoked working class solidarity in both capitalist and communist societies, describing Marx as "the father of the worker's movement."[878] At the same time, each issue of *Boeroeh* possessed a cover page which displayed the date in the Gregorian, Javanese, and Islamic calendars. For example: the September 30, 1946 issue provided the date as 1365H (*hijri*), while also mentioning that it was *kliwon*, the fifth day of the 5-day Javanese calendrical week.[879] The point here is not that *Boeroeh* was definitively Islamic in character, but rather that a plurality of identities and allegiances could comfortably coexist within the revolutionary framework; it was possible for labor activists in the BBI and PBI to be simultaneously Javanese, Muslim, and Marxist without seeing the need to explicitly defend that hybridity.

This easy comingling of identities and ideas could also be seen in the main BBI organ, *Soeara Boeroeh*. First published as a monthly magazine in Jakarta in 1946, it was deeply sympathetic to communism, though the PKI had no formal influence over it. It was deeply didactic in character and devoted much of its content to explaining how Marxist ideas and policies could be made relevant to Indonesia. It rarely invoked religion explicitly, but much of its language hinted at its contributors' Islamic frames of reference. The BBI was straightforwardly Marxist in its ideological identification, advertising Indonesian translations of the Communist Manifesto as well as running articles explaining the relationship between labor and capital.[880] At the same time,

[877] Officially, *Boeroeh* became the official newspaper of the PBI when it was founded on September 15, 1945, as the formal political arm of the BBI.
[878] Habromarkoto, "Gerakan Boeroeh International," *Boeroeh*, September 30, 1946.
[879] *Ibid*.
[880] B.A., "Modal dan Boeroeh," *Soeara Boeroeh*, February 1947 (Year 2, no. 18); Advertisement, page 3, March 1947 (Year 2, no. 19).

it trumpeted a distinctly inclusive vision for Indonesian labor; multiple articles argued that women's participation was integral to the success of the struggle for labor rights, calling women "co-equal partners in the communist struggle."[881] Moreover, many contributors, such as Sri Juliani and Marhaeni (pseudonym), were women, which was entirely consistent with Trimurti's prominent role in the BBI. This inclusiveness extended to how *Soeara Boeroeh* dealt with religion as well. In the December 1946 issue, *Soeara Boereoh* published the SOBSI manifesto in full, appending its commentary to the manifesto. In the commentary, the editors proclaimed that "SOBSI is constituted with no favor to any particular race, religion, or gender."[882] Other articles used religious analogies to make Marxism more easily comprehensible to their readers. In the February 1947 issue, Sri Juliani explained that Marxism was adaptive and flexible rather than dogmatic, that it was open to interpretation based on the needs of the moment. By way of analogy, she urged readers to consider how religions had evolved and been articulated differently in different times and places, arguing that Marxism was much the same.[883]

This approach was consistent with the PBI's public position. In 1948, Trimurti authored a pamphlet titled *A.B.C. Perdjuangan Buruh* which evinced a deeply Marxist didacticism, while seeking to assuage religious concerns. Without ever mentioning the PKI or the USSR, this pamphlet provided a concise explanation of Marx's ideas about the recurrent crises of capitalism and argued that imperialism was an outgrowth of capitalism.[884] These explanations were followed by short quizzes which readers could complete to test their familiarity with the ideas presented. It also refuted the assumption made by "narrow-minded religious people" that a socialist society was atheistic and therefore undesirable.[885] Trimurti argued that "every religion, every holy book, including the Gospels and the Qur'an, teaches humanity not to oppress one another, but instead to love one another… However, look at how social relations [*pergaulan hidup manusia*] are organized under

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[881] Anonymous, "Wanita Dalam Sosialisme," *Soeara Boeroeh*, November 1946 (Year 1 no. 14); Anonymous, "Boeroeh Wanita dalam Perdjoangan Boeroeh," *Soeara Boeroeh*, October 1946 (Year 1, no. 11); Anonymous, "Pedjoang Wanita Kedepan," *Soeara Boeroeh*, July 1946 (Year 1 No. 1).
[882] SOBSI, "Keterangan Azas dan Pendirian Oemoem SOBSI," *Soeara Boeroeh*, December 1946 (Year 1 no. 15).
[883] Sri Juliani, "Marxisme Indonesia?" *Soeara Boeroeh*, February 1947 (Year 2, no. 18).
[884] S.K. Trimurti, *A.B.C. Perdjuangan Buruh* (Jogjakarta: Pusat Pimpinan Partai Buruh Indonesia, 1948), 15.
[885] *Ibid*., 14.

capitalism? Oppression and exploitation are everywhere, and everything is objectified and reduced to its monetary value."[886] In contrast, Trimurti claimed that "every religion, at its core, harbors the essence [*sari-sari*] of socialism," and since socialism regulated secular or material matters while guaranteeing the freedom of religion, religious citizens had nothing to fear from a socialist society.[887] This was a significant departure from the state-sponsored official atheism of the USSR, and more explicit than merely guaranteeing freedom of religion as the PKI did. In making such arguments, Trimurti was drawing directly on Tjokroaminoto's interpretation of socialism, framing religious concerns as inextricably linked to the concerns of social justice.

A clearer indicator of the way in which Islamic frames of reference suffused labor discourse was the repeated use of the term *nafsu* in *Soeara Boeroeh*.[888] An open letter from the editorial board, published in the October 1946 issue, repeatedly used the terms "*Insja'Allah*" (God willing) and "*nafsu*," with the former functioning as a shibboleth for inclusion in the *ummah*. *Nafsu* is not necessarily an Islamic term, although its etymological roots are certainly Islamic, and it is almost always associated with religion-derived moral and ethical norms. However, its sheer number of permutations in this article was highly suggestive of the way in which Islam permeated the lived reality of labor activists: the editors wrote of "*nafsu kebendaan*" (the lust for material wealth), "*nafsu milik*" (the lust of ownership or possession), and "*nafsu perseorangan*" (individual or human-directed lust), to name just a few.[889] Other articles spoke of the "capitalist *nafsu* of constantly searching for profit" or the "*nafsu* of Imperialism," satirizing Churchill and Wall Street bankers as enslaved to these forms of *nafsu* and labelling them *djago* (cocks).[890] The term *djago* is particularly interesting, because its use in this context suggests that Churchill and Wall Street bankers were not only preening and puissant wielders of power, but also that they lay outside of the ordered realm of rational (*akal*) society; they were potent but potentially

[886] *Ibid*., 23.
[887] *Ibid*., 23–24.
[888] See chapter one for a sustained discussion of the *nafsu*/*akal* dichotomy.
[889] Redaksi, "Manoesia dan Masjarakat," *Soeara Boeroeh*, October 1946 (Year 1, no. 13).
[890] Anonymous, "Abad Rakjat Djelata," *Soeara Boeroeh*, September 1946 (Year 1, No. 10); Anonymous, "Boeroeh Wanita dalam Perdjoangan Boeroeh," *Soeara Boeroeh*, October 1946 (Year 1, no. 11).

threatening within an Islamic and Javanese framework, as well as in a Marxist framework.[891] It was through such terms, with strong religious associations, that labor activists made sense of the revolutionary situation for themselves, and mediated Marxism for their readers.

More explicitly, *Soeara Boeroeh* also published poems with a distinctly Islamic flavor. One such poem, published in the September 1946 issue, began with "Divine inspiration from God had already revealed/ that all of God's creations possess the right to freedom" (*Ilham soetji Illahi telah tiba/ Segenap makluk berhak merdeka*).[892] The term *Ilahi* refers to God – it is generally translated as "O Almighty God" – and was commonly used by Muslim politicians in Indonesia. Natsir himself was fond of using the formulation *Ilahi jang Maha Esa* as an alternative to the Pancsila's monotheistic creed, *Tuhan jang Maha Esa*, precisely because the former signaled a specifically Islamic conception of God.[893] For a publication so openly supportive of communism to be comfortable invoking Islam repeatedly, without ever seeing the need to explicitly address the compatibility of Islam and communism (or lack thereof), strongly suggests that many revolutionaries saw no need to square the circle. Presumably, the labor activists who moved in BBI and PBI circles saw no need to explain how exactly their Islamic identities could fit with their Marxist political inspirations, as was the case with Trimurti herself. To be a good Muslim did not necessarily mean translating Islam into a system of a governance. One could be a good Muslim while remaining open to ideas, of disparate origins, on how best to organize a just and compassionate society.

Ultimately, all of this was only possible within a Marxist framework that was explicitly open to accommodating all religions, and not merely Islam, although key BBI leaders such as Trimuri were undeniably Muslim. The labor activist I.N. Suprapti, who was first a PBI member but would later switch her allegiance to the Murba

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[891] The *djago* is a complicated trope in Indonesian society, and can also be translated as "champion." Specific to this period, Robert Cribb and Benedict Anderson's explanations of the role of the *djago* provide the most comprehensive explanation of its meaning. See Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 19–20, and Benedict R.O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 9–11.

[892] Marheini (pseudonym), "Marhaen Pertjaya," *Soeara Boeroeh*, September 1946 (Year 1, no. 10).

[893] Mohammad Natsir, "Salah paham dan ragu-ragu tentang pembetukan Prop. Sumatera Utara tidak ada lagi," *Suara Penerangan*, January 30, 1951.

party – eventually becoming an editor of the party's press organ, *Murba* – published a short BBI pamphlet titled *Perubahan Kebudajaan Dipandang Dari Sudut Histories-Materialisme* (Cultural Change from the Historical Materialist Viewpoint) in 1949. This pamphlet was particularly interesting because it was structured as a Socratic dialogue, employing the conceit of a dialogue between body and mind. The Socratic protagonist was Pak Budi (mind), and his interlocuters were Tegap (sturdy) and Tergas (firm). Reminiscent of a Greek *symposium*, the three of them discussed Indonesian history and its future over the course of a meal. Most of the pamphlet was structured around Pak Budi's explanation of how human societies evolved, according to Marxist historical materialism. It was highly didactic, and the ideas presented were deliberately simple, presumably to keep it as accessible as possible. Pak Budi had this to say about the importance of religion in a socialist society: "Regarding religion, the people [*rakjat*] are absolutely free. One may choose to embrace any religion, or none at all. This is a personal right that should not be infringed upon by society, as happened in the era of ignorance [*zaman kuno*], when one religion was imposed on all."[894] Tegas went on to ask whether honesty and holiness would still be important values for a future Indonesia. To that, Pak Budi replied:

> *"Of course, they are important to humanity, but it cannot be denied that living conditions are important. This is not advice or propaganda enjoining you to abandon honesty and holiness* [kesucian]. *No matter how good the advice is, it will not necessarily enter the heart, or thicken one's resolve. Moreover, remember that the clever capitalists also talk about politeness, humanity, morality, and holiness. Truly, it is only to mask their greed. Therefore, while advising politeness, humanity, morality, and holiness is good, you should know that it does not constitute a system for changing humanity's fate."*[895]

This was not an Islamic frame of reference so much as it was the recognition that interior morality, whether religion-derived or not, was necessarily connected to exterior living conditions. Socialism provided a system conducive to supporting humanity's ethical behavior in a way that capitalism did not. Suprapti accepted that religion did (and indeed, should) play a role in the lives of individual Indonesians, but also in the realm of politics and society. The labor movement embraced the accommodation of religion as an integral component of its platform, and as chapters four and five will show, this was often true for other Marxist movements and

[894] I.N. Suprapti, *Perubahan Kebudajaan Dipandang Dari Sudut Histories-Materialisme* (Djokdjakarta: Sinar Asia, 1949), 27.
[895] *Ibid*., 36.

parties as well. Fundamentally, Suprapti was arguing was that a socialist society could and should facilitate the admirable and ethical goals of religion. This was symptomatic of a revolutionary environment which encouraged Indonesians to be open to both religious and Marxist inspirations. Such an environment, in which many Indonesian citizens first became politically aware and participative, would in later years make plausible the arguments raised the by defenders of Soekarno's NASAKOM, most prominently Sajuti Melik and Ruslan Abdulgani, who maintained that Islam and Marxism were indeed compatible.

Amir Sjarifuddin and the Front Demokrasi Rakjat

Arrayed against Tan Malaka's supporters in the PP and the labor unions was Amir Sjarifuddin's Front Demokrasi Rakjat (FDR, People's Democratic Front), which the still-tiny PKI was a part of. The foundation of the FDR in February 1948 marked an inflection point for the Marxists of various stripes gathered under its banner. The FDR had evolved from the Sajap Kiri (Left Wing) that preceded it, a coalition of Marxist parties and organizations that were generally supportive of the Partai Sosialis governments led by Sjahrir and Amir, which led the republic from early 1946 until late 1948. The main point of contention between the FDR and PP was whether to pursue negotiations with the Dutch, and whether to honor the two agreements (Linggadjati in November 1946 and Renville in January 1948) signed with the Dutch. Negotiations were deeply unpopular, since the Dutch "police actions" in 1947 and 1948–49 had clearly illustrated their preference for a military rather than a negotiated solution. The PP's call for unconditional and full independence (100% *Merdeka*) was therefore able to attract broad support, including support from many Muslim parties and militias. The FDR, however, also courted Muslim support for its approach to securing independence, something which was evident in the rhetoric employed by Amir.

In January 1948, Amir resigned as Prime Minister due to the unpopularity of the Renville agreement he had negotiated, and Hatta formed a new government without Sajap Kiri support. Upon its foundation in February 1948, the FDR was still able to muster the support of a broad range of Marxists, although many were deeply

skeptical of Renville. The formation of the FDR gave a greater voice to non-Socialist Party members in decision-making and policy formulation, whereas Sajap Kiri had tended to be dominated by the Socialist Party's party council.[896] It also marked the beginning of a policy transformation: the avowedly Marxist FDR coalition began to question the wisdom of continuing negotiations with the Dutch, a policy which the Sajap Kiri had tolerated and which Amir had pursued with scant results.[897]

The organizations represented on its secretariat were Amir's Partai Sosialis (PS, Socialist Party[898]), the Partai Buruh Indonesia (PBI Indonesian Labor Party), the "legal" PKI (also known as the PKI Bintaran, so named for the location of its offices, and directly linked to the "illegal" or underground PKI), Pesindo (Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia, Socialist Youth of Indonesia), SOBSI (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia, Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization), and Laskar Rakjat (People's Militia).[899] These were some of the most important republican organizations, representing a broad spectrum of Indonesian society. Notable among the FDR's members were a number of devout Muslims who embraced Marxist politics, such as the BBI's S.K. Trimurti, the Socialist Party's Jusuf Muda Dalam, and the PKI's Natar Zainuddin, the old Islamic communist who published *Pemandangan Islam* and *Djago! Djago!* in the 1920s.[900] One of the staff members of the FDR secretariat was Hasan Raid, an overt Muslim communist, whose autobiography will be examined in chapter 5.[901] Even so, lacking the mass support of Muslim organizations limited the FDR's capacity to oppose government policy or convincingly argue for the adoption of its own.

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[896] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 62.
[897] *Ibid*., 65. This and other disagreements eventually led the FDR's policy positions drifting into something strongly resembling the PP's; galvanized by Musso's return to Indonesia in 1948, components of the FDR, disappointed with Hatta's continued pursuit of negotiations, joined Musso's PKI in attempting to supplant Hatta's government in the Madiun affair.
[898] This was distinct from Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Indonesian Socialist Party), which did support Hatta's government. Sjahrir and Amir's combined socialist party had split in February 1948 upon the formation of the FDR.
[899] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 64. Laskar Rakjat was part of the FDR with the exception of its West Java branch, which was led by the Chaerul Saleh, a Tan Malaka loyalist.
[900] *Ibid*., 63, 68, 70. Jusuf Muda Dalam would eventually become a PKI member, but would leave the party for the PNI in 1954. For more on the Acehnese Islamic communist Jusuf Muda Dalam, see chapter 2; for more on the Islamic communist Natar Zainuddin, see Chapter 1.
[901] *Ibid*., 71.

We get a sense of the FDR's approach to Islam in Amir Sjarifuddin's *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep*, first published in 1947. The analysis of this text is undertaken with the caveat that the FDR was a very diverse coalition which harbored many internal contradictions.[902] Nevertheless, it would be fair to assume that *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep* represented or shaped the views of a significant proportion of FDR supporters, especially given Amir's consistently high prestige until January 1948.[903] *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep* was a pamphlet meant for mass consumption, and probably circulated among the relatively well-educated civil service and officer corps as well as the more cerebral *pemuda*. It struck an identifiably sociological note, defining "*ilmoe pergaoelan hidoep*" as the study of the individual's relationship with society. It was clearly not meant to be rousing rhetoric or propaganda, but rather a kind of Weberian exploration of the new *gemeinschaft* that the Indonesian republic should create. This was Amir's vision for Indonesia in its social rather than political aspect, articulated concisely in social scientific terms. It was revealing of the inclusive tenor of the revolution: even non-Muslim socialists like Amir sought to articulate a social vision which could embrace Indonesia's heterogeneity and complex heritage (including Islam) in its entirety, alongside socialism.

Amir's accommodation of Islam in particular and religion in general was hinted at throughout the book. At the end of the foreword, he signed off with the Islam-derived "wasalam" (a contraction of As-salāmu ʿalaykum, lit. "peace be upon you") rather than the more typical "Merdeka!" that dominated revolutionary literature.[904] Moreover, he explicitly recognized the important role religion played in all societies. He posited that "there are two kinds of submission: submission to principles and rules, as is the case in religion, and submission to coercive force."[905] According to Amir, submission to force could be manifest in four ways: first, a person could submit in the sense of forsaking their humanity; second, a mass of people could be submissive; third, material objects could be "submitted" from one party to another; and fourth, submission could take the form of abandoning principles.[906] Unsurprisingly, the only submission he wanted for Indonesia was the submission to

[902] *Ibid*., 89.
[903] *Ibid*., 74.
[904] Amir had converted to Christianity in 1931, which makes the use of "wasalam" even more surprising.
[905] Amir Sjarifoeddin, *Ilmoe Pergaoelan Hidoep* (Yogyakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan Staf Pendidikan Politik Tentara, 1947), 12.
[906] *Ibid*., 13.

principles and rules, which he recognized as being shaped by religious norms, among others. This all built up to his Weberian formulation that Indonesia was a hybrid society with many cultural influences, all of which the republic ought to embrace, instead of the fascistic glorification of a past golden age, transmuted into a contemporary idiom.[907] Amir argued for the embrace of Indonesia's Hindic past, its courtly Muslim cultures and quotidian Islamic piety, and even its experience of Dutch and Japanese domination.[908] He rejected the notion that "East is East and West is West," and explicitly exhorted readers to participate in the formation of a new Indonesian subjectivity, by which he meant (re)defining the relationships between individuals and society in a way that Indonesians would find ethical and meaningful.[909] Amir made it clear that the relationship between individuals and societies that he supported was "*sosialistisch*," or of a socialist nature.[910] According to him, Indonesian socialism would not be "enforced socialism, as has happened on the European continent, but rather a socialism that is truly compatible (*memang tjotjok*) with the traditions (*adat istiadat*) of Indonesia, which are still in evidence in different areas of the country, such as *gotong rojong*."[911] First, this was an obvious rejection of the USSR's forcible imposition of communist governments across Eastern Europe, which speaks volumes about Amir's independent-minded approach to formulating Indonesian socialism. Second, Amir recognized the enduring importance of organic Indonesian culture, which necessarily included Islam, while remaining committed to socialism – critiques of capitalism and its effects pepper the text. This was a call for a creative, relevant, and non-dogmatic application of Marx's ideas in an Indonesian context. In that spirit, Amir was close to Tan Malaka and Hatta, even though they disagreed fiercely on policy during the revolution.

This frame of mind was entirely consistent with Amir's pre-war activities. Along with Mohammed Yamin and Sanusi Pane, Amir had been a founding member of Gerindo in 1937, the non-cooperative *pergerakan* party

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907 *Ibid.*, 36.
908 *Ibid*., 32.
909 *Ibid*., 33. This is a reference to Ruyard Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West*, whose most famous lines ("Oh, East is East and West is West, and never shall the twain meet") have often been somewhat unfairly read out of context to imply a straightforward justification of colonial racism. In this context, Amir was responding to a long-established strain of *pergerakan* discourse (itself influenced by colonial scholarship) which posited the essential difference or uniqueness of "Eastern" civilizations such as that of the Indonesian archipelago.
910 *Ibid*., 36.
911 *Ibid*., 36.

which stood in opposition to the cooperative Parindra. Gerindo's newspaper, *Kebangoenan* (1936–41), clearly blended Islamic and Marxist concerns, reflecting the hybrid worldview of its editors as well as the interests of its readers. All three regularly contributed articles to the newspaper, with Amir and Pane serving as editors. *Kebangoenan* regularly reported on events in the Islamic world, such as a running column titled "Doenia Islam" (the world of Islam), as well as on Islamic events in Indonesia, such as the foundation of the Pemuda Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Youth).[912] *Kebangoenan* even published an open letter from the editors in four instalments, on questions of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), calling on readers to reconsider how they approached *fiqh*.[913] At the same time, this was a newspaper that advocated land rights for sharecroppers, published hagiographic biographies of French socialist leaders like Leon Blum, and condemned Stalin's purges of Lenin's closest associates, celebrating them instead as heroes of the revolution and civil war.[914] One memorable article by Sanusi Pane criticized the economic policies of the Indies government, concluding that " it doesn't matter whether you call an economic policy liberal or communist as long as it promotes prosperity (*kemakmuran*)."[915] The Gerindo milieu was evidently one of non-dogmatic Marxists, who were comfortable engaging with Islam, or reflecting the Islamic concerns of their constituents.

This worldview, or frame of reference, was very much in evidence in the writings of other FDR members as well. Abdulmadjid was a core Socialist Party leader who had represented his party first on the Sajap Kiri council (the *madjelis lengkap*) and later in the FDR as well.[916] He was a former member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands and the anti-Nazi underground, having joined during his time as a student in the late 1930s, and eventually sat on the Politburo of the "illegal" PKI during the revolution.[917] In conjunction with Maisir Thaib, Abdulmadjid published a slim book titled *Mentjapai Masjarakat Sosialis* (Reaching a Socialist Society)

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[912] Anonymous, "Doenia Islam," *Kebangoenan*, June 5, 1936; Anonymous, "Pemoeda Islam Indonesia," *Kebangoenan,* May 11, 1937.
[913] Hassanbisri, "Soerat Terboeka III: Oesoel Fikih," *Kebangoenan,* May 4, 1937.
[914] M. Yamin, "Hak Tanah Indonesia, Sekarang dan Nanti," *Kebangoenan,* June 6, 1936; R.D., "Seni dan Pengetahoean," *Kebangoenan*, June 6, 1936; Persindo, "Dimana teman-temannja Lenin?" *Kebangoenan*, May 7, 1937.
[915] Sanusi Pane, "Garis Haloean Ekonomi," *Kebangoenan,* May 12, 1937.
[916] Soerjono and Anderson, "On Musso's Return," 63.
[917] *Ibid*., 64.

in 1946.[918] This was a straightforward political manifesto for the Socialist Party, drawing heavily from the writings of Lenin, Mao and Stalin. Nevertheless, the manifesto repeated over and over again that the Socialist Party would "respect the national culture as well each and every religion," even including it in its rendition of the party's principles.[919]

Evidently, Amir was no Muslim socialist in the Sarekat Islam or Permi sense (indeed, he was not a Muslim at all), but he was the chief leader of a republican coalition which included many Muslims who embraced Marxist ideas. His pamphlet is important insofar as it reveals a worldview that was common, perhaps even dominant, during the revolution: it represented a creative, adaptive approach to Marxism, accommodating it within Indonesia's existing social structures and projected needs. These structures and needs necessarily included Islam, since many of Amir's supporters were themselves devout Muslims. Such frames of reference allowed Islam and Marxism to be conciliated, though not necessarily in the form of the explicit Islamic communism practiced by Haji Misbach. Amir's was a broad and inclusive vision for Indonesian nationhood, much like the vision Soekarno had optimistically articulated in *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1926). This vision was self-confident enough to selectively incorporate Marxism, Islam, the European enlightenment, Hinduism, Christianity, indigenous cultures, and any number of other influences. Given this political climate, it was hardly surprising that so many leftists across the political spectrum, from Sajuti Melik (GRR) and S.K. Trimurti (FDR) to Hatta and Soekarno (not officially aligned, but sympathetic to Sjahrir and the Sajap Kiri), saw no contradiction between their Islamic faith and Marxist inspirations; it was so normalized and uncontentious that they often saw no need to address it at all. The need to reconcile the two only came later, after decades of

[918] Maisir Thaib, who also went by the pseudonym Martha, was something of a dilletante in both Islam and Marxism. He was educated in the Sumatra Thawalib school in Parabek and later at the PGAI normaal school in Padang. He went on to run a modernist Islamic school himself while working as an author and journalist, contributing articles to the Muslim communist Xarim M.S.'s newspaper, *Penjedar*. After a stint in jail in Bandung in 1941 at age 22, he became affiliated with the Sumatran Pendidikan. For more on Maisir Thaib, see William Bradley Horton, "History Unhinged: World War II and the Reshaping of Indonesian History," (PhD diss., Waseda University, 2016), 68-70.

[919] Abdulmadjid and Maisir Thaib, *Mentjapai Masjarakat Sosialistis* (Boekittinggi: Dewan Daerah Partai Sosialis Soematera Barat, 1946), 19, 21.

demonizing Marxism under Suharto's New Order, which apologetic memoirs authored by proud Muslim communists like Hasan Raid and Achmadi Moestahal sought to reverse.

The "Religious Socialists:" Revolutionary Muslims on Marxism

In the 1950s, George Kahin identified a number of Masjumi politicians as sufficiently influenced by socialism to be described as "religious socialists," particularly Mohammed Natsir and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara.[920] More recent scholars of Masjumi such as Remy Madinier and Kevin Fogg have generally concurred. Madinier's in-depth study of Masjumi identified an even broader group of progressive politicians in Masjumi whose political views were articulated in dialogue with Marxist ideas, notably Jusuf Wibisono and Kasman Singodimedjo.[921] These Masjumi politicians' political views will be examined in depth in chapter four. In this section, I will refer to "religious socialists" not as a clearly-defined political faction but rather as a broader discursive field which contained many interlocuters. While Masjumi politicians were certainly well-represented, there were many others from diverse backgrounds who also put their Islamic identity and Marxist ideas into productive dialogue. As a complement to the better-known Masjumi politicians, this section analyzes revolutionary literature that has received little, if any, scholarly attention. These include one hitherto unexamined pamphlet by Abdul Manaf (aka Achmad Soebardjo), the republic's first foreign minister; a memoir by Achmadi Moestahal, then a young republican partisan during the revolution; a pamphlet by the Masjumi politician Sjafruddin Prawiranegara; and one of Hamka's lesser-known works, *Revolusi Agama* (1946).

Abdul Manaf, better known as Achmad Soebardjo, served as the republic's first foreign minister (September 1945 – November 1945) in Soekarno's presidential cabinet. Abdul Manaf had trained as a lawyer at Leiden University, graduating with a *meester in de rechten* degree in 1933, and was a member of the Perhimpunan Indonesia (Indonesian Association) during his time in the Netherlands. This was the same organization that had

[920] George Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 157.
[921] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 31–32.

been led by Hatta and Sjahrir until their return to the Indies in 1932, and whose leadership was subsequently increasingly influenced by communism.[922] Abdul Manaf was from Aceh, and known to be a staunch Muslim; he represented the Egyptian branch of the Perhimpunan Indonesia at the meeting of the League Against Imperialism in February 1927, alongside Hatta (representing Perhimpunan Indonesia in the Netherlands) and Semaun (representing Sarekat Rakyat).[923]

Evidently, he was a longstanding *pergerakan* activist with an Islamic bent, but with a track record of being willing to cooperate with Marxists. During the Japanese occupation, he had even been the one to convince Sjahrir to lecture at the Japanese-sponsored Asrama Indonesia Merdeka by telling that him that Indonesian youth were eager to understand socialism.[924] In 1946, Abdul Manaf published a short pamphlet titled *Faham Islamisme dan Komoenisme*, which explicitly aimed to "correct a misunderstanding common on the part of the masses [*rakjat djelata*], especially among those who have a little knowledge of religion… that communism is a specter or ghost to be feared."[925] Abdu'laziz As., who contributed the introduction, argued that this ghost (*hantoe*) did not exist, but like all ghosts, was feared by people who had never seen one; they feared a specter conjured through sheer imagination (*chajal belaka*).[926] Tellingly, this introduction was titled "*moeqaddimah*" instead of the more prosaic "*kata pengantar*," a direct reference to Ibn Khaldun's famous *Muqaddimah* of 1377, a classic of the Islamic canon and a shibboleth which signaled both Abdu'laziz and Abdul Manaf's identification with Islam.[927]

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922 Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 92.
923 Mohammad Hatta, *Mohammad Hatta, Indonesian Patriot: Memoirs*, ed. C.L.M. Penders (Singapore: Gunung Agung, 1981), 112. This is an abridged edition of Hatta's memoirs, which were originally published in Indonesian.
924 Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, 249.
925 Abdul Manaf, *Faham Islamisme Dan Komoenisme* (Koetaradja: Partai Komoenis, 1946), 1.
926 *Ibid*. Abdu'laziz (also rendered Abdul Aziz) was a PKI member whose loyalties lay with Musso; he had been a member of the "illegal PKI" clandestinely set up by Musso in 1935. He died sometime during the revolution, sometime between 1946 and 1948. See Polit-Biro Central Comite Partai Komunis Indonesia, *Djalan Baru untuk Republik Indonesia* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruhan, 1953), 12.
927 Ibn Khaldun's *Muqqadimah* was his lengthy prologue to a longer work titled *The Book of Lessons, Record of Beginnings and Events in the history of the Arabs and Foreigners and Berbers and their Powerful Contemporaries* (*Kitābu l-ʿibari wa Dīwāni l-Mubtada' wal-Ḥabar fī ayāmi l-ʿarab wal-ʿajam wal-barbar, waman ʿĀsarahum min Dhawī sh-Shalṭāni l-Akbār*), therefore coming to signify "prologue" or "introduction" in the Arabic cosmopolis of which Indonesia was a part.

Abdu'laziz argued that communism had been deeply attractive to the *pergerakan* before the war, such that "communism was constantly prodded and peeked at," prompting the Dutch colonial government to pass numerous laws suppressing it.[928] Despite the colonial state's best efforts, Abdu'laziz claimed that the "seeds of communism flourished in the hearts of the *ra'jat*," which "simulated the people's interest in the *pergerakan* more generally."[929] What is particularly interesting here is that Abdu'laziz is not describing the spread of communist propaganda, in the sense of individuals joining the underground PKI or becoming self-avowed communists. Rather, he describes an autodidactic process of self-realization, in which communism was one of many sources of inspiration for putative Indonesians to articulate their opposition to colonialism. He pointed out that Dutch repression after the 1926–27 uprisings made communism taboo, such that the people could only "speak of it in whispers;" yet what they feared was not communism itself, but the specter of exile to Boven Digoel.[930] He argued that this association between communism and Digoel had falsely tainted communism in the eyes of many, making communism seem transgressive and taboo, when the real source of their fear was exile to Digoel. Yet others, having imbibed the Dutch assumption that communism was subversive and dangerous, had intuited that communism was against religion. By contrast, Abdu'laziz argued that communism existed on a plane separate from religion; religion and communism did not occupy commensurate categories. According to him, it was a form of knowledge (he used both *pengetahuan*, knowledge/science and *faham*, concept) containing many ideas that were in accordance with (*bersesoeai dengan*) Islamic teachings.[931]

Abdu'laziz went on to explain the points of concordance between Islam and communism. Immediately after claiming that communism was often in accordance with Islamic teachings, he stressed his commitment to Islam, writing that "we, as the Islamic *ummah*, acknowledge the holiness of Islam," and argued that "just as Islam desires world peace, so does communism desire the unity of all people such that peace may be achieved."[932] Second, he argued that both Islam and communism were fundamentally opposed to capitalism and imperialism,

[928] Abdul Manaf, *Faham Islamisme dan Komoenisme* (Koetaradja: Partai Komoenis, 1946), 1.
[929] *Ibid*., 2.
[930] *Ibid*., 2.
[931] *Ibid*., 3.
[932] *Ibid*, 3.

neither of which were interested in peace, instead "provoking chaos and sowing the seeds of war."[933] Third, Islam was an "international religion" and communism an "international concept [*faham*]:" both were "blind to race" and united in opposition to the "greed [*loba*] and self-centeredness [*angkara*] of capitalism."[934] This was one of the most explicit statements of compatibility between Islam and communism to emerge during the revolution, but it was not entirely surprising given Abdu'laziz's pro-Tan Malaka position throughout the revolution.[935] After all, Tan Malaka had been proclaiming the compatibility of Islam and communism, without necessarily subordinating Indonesian communism to the Comintern, since the early 1920s.

Much like Abdu'laziz, Abdul Manaf argued that capitalism and imperialism were intertwined; that capitalism sought only to ingest the wealth of the world, which imperialism had had made available through subjugating colonies and extracting both labor and material cheaply from them.[936] Slipping frequently into an Islamic idiom while demonstrating some genuine facility with Marxist insights, Abdul Manaf maintained that capitalism transcended races and nations, with the clear implication that it was not a matter of the Dutch being particularly cruel colonizers in comparison to other Europeans or the Japanese. Rather, capitalism incited the "*hawa nafsoe*" of self-interest (*angkara)*, with no regard for whether the exploited were of the same race as the beneficiaries, or of a different race altogether.[937] Capitalism, according to Abdul Manaf, had the defining characteristic of being willing to "suck anyone's blood."[938] At the same time, he adapted Marxist terminology like "proletariat," which he translated as "*rakyat djelata*" (the common people), a transposition that was much broader than the orthodox Marxist sense of proletariat as the urban working class.

Abdul Manaf signaled his deep commitment to Islam by quoting from Qur'an 16:128: "God is with those who fear him and those who do good; refrain from helping those who do evil and cause enmity."[939] Capitalism was thus un-Islamic, because it was driven by "*hawa nafsoe jang tidak terbatas*," carnal desires which know no

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933 *Ibid*., 3.
934 *Ibid*., 3.
935 Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru* (Yogyakarta: Syarikat, 2002), 72.
936 Abdul Manaf, *Faham Islamisme dan Komoenisme* (Koetaradja: Partai Komoenis, 1946), 5.
937 *Ibid.*, 5.
938 *Ibid.*, 5.
939 *Ibid.*, 8.

limits.[940] He rhetorically asked: "What causes man, who is God's viceregent [*chalifah*] on earth, to become a destroyer of the world, much like an animal with no *akal* (rationality)?"[941] Unsurprisingly, his answer was the *nafsu* of the capitalists and imperialists, "who trampled over the rights of people in search of profit for themselves."[942] As in many of the texts examined in chapters one and two, we see here the *nafsu/akal* dichotomy, so central to Islam, that informed Indonesians' critique of capitalism and sat comfortably enough with Marxist ideas. Abdul Manaf did not only dwell on broad Marxist critiques of impersonal economic forces, but also on the quotidian effects of capitalism on individuals. Consistent with his emphasis on the *akal*/*nafsu* dichotomy, he argued that capitalism caused "prices of necessities to continually soar, and people faced increasing hardship. Because the people are struggling even to feed themselves [*terpaksa membela peroetnja*], they learn to be dishonest in all matters relating to their livelihoods – much theft and violence comes from this. There are many men who have sold their good names to feed themselves, and many women who have lost their dignity to fill their stomachs."[943] This critique is notable for its attention to the prosaic effects of capitalism, recasting what was usually formulated in moral terms even by Islamic modernists – women losing their dignity is, of course, a reference to prostitution – by linking it to impersonal economic forces. In Abdul Manaf's view, people lost their *akal*, and were overtaken by *nafsu* or made accessories to others' *nafsu*, because a basic level of prosperity and stability could not be guaranteed under the colonial capitalist economy, whether Japanese or Dutch.[944] Precarity and poverty, keeping labor as poorly paid and as disposable as possible, were built into the structures of capitalism; they were "the fruits of *hawa nafsu*, of selfishness, of the avarice of colonizers and capitalists who longed to swallow the entire world."[945] This, Abdul Manaf contended, was not conducive for the existence of an Islamic society built on equity and fraternity; according to him, it was "reprehensible, and forbidden by Islam."[946]

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[940] *Ibid*., 9.
[941] *Ibid*., 10.
[942] *Ibid*., 11.
[943] *Ibid*., 13.
[944] *Ibid*., 13.
[945] *Ibid*., 14.
[946] *Ibid*., 14.

In the final pages of his pamphlet, Abdul Manaf was more explicit about Islam's relationship with communism. "Islam and communism have similar understandings of imperialism and capitalism. Even so, there are still those who consider Islam to be antithetical to communism. These people need to consider; if communism is opposed to the features of capitalism and imperialism, how can Islam possibly be against communism?"[947] He also made clear the importance of human agency in making the world a better place, even as he acknowledged the importance of Muslim piety. "In the capitalist and imperialist world, justice is not for the weak, but is monopolized by the strong…. The oppressed should not ask for justice; not before you have a weapon in your hand, to seize justice for yourself! Justice can be seen in the first rays of sunlight, in the dawn of socialism's victory throughout the world. Does not the Qur'an tell us that Allah does not change a man's situation, if he does not want to change it himself?"[948] Communism was valued, then, not as a modern incarnation of Islam, but simply because it was a system for organizing social relations that prioritized social justice. An equitable society was one that facilitated the harmonious social relations and moral order that Islam promoted. This concordance of values made it easy, especially during the era of decolonization, for Indonesian republicans to see communism as a benign ally, even if they were pious Muslims.

This concordance was also evident in revolutionary pamphlets authored by Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, a Masjumi member who served as finance minister from 1946–47, and later as head of the *Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia* (PDRI, emergency government of the Republic of Indonesia) after most of the Republican leadership was captured by the Dutch in December 1948. Prawiranegara would go on to hold multiple cabinet positions during the liberal democracy period, only falling from favor after his participation in the ill-fated PRRI rebellion in 1958. His *Politik dan Revolusi Kita* (Our Politics and Revolution) was published for the second time in 1950, but it was based on a speech he had given just before the foundation of Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Socialist Party of Indonesia) in February 1948.[949] In it, Prawiranegara bemoaned the

[947] *Ibid*., 15.
[948] *Ibid*., 16.
[949] No exact dates are provided for the speech itself, or the publication of the book. The combined Partai Sosialis (PS, Socialist Party) had been jointly led by Sutan Sjahrir and Amir Sjafruddin, but effectively split in June 1947 when Amir forcefully ousted Sjahrir and formed the Front Demokrasi Rakjat (People's Democratic Front), a coalition of leftist parties which was much more sympathetic to

fact that most foreigners often misunderstood the political inclinations of the Indonesian republicans, suspecting Indonesian republicans of being pro-Moscow communists.[950] He strenuously rejected this as a misapprehension generated by Dutch propaganda, maintaining that the socialism of Indonesia was not the same as the socialism and communism of Marx.[951] What he meant by this was that most Indonesian republicans who called themselves "socialists" and "communists" were not truly socialists and communists, because Marxist historical materialism was not philosophically compatible with a belief in God.[952] He did, however, acknowledge that the many of the socialists and communists he knew were devout Christians or Muslims, "many of whom are more pious than even myself."[953] Much this pamphlet was devoted to proclaiming the incompatibility of historical materialism and theism, in order to refute the "often-heard claim that communism or socialism a la Marx does not contradict Islam or Christianity!"[954] Regardless of whether Prawiranegara was right in his ideological taxonomy of Indonesian socialism, his pamphlet clearly indicated that very many socialist and communist republicans saw no contradiction between their Marxist political ideas and Islamic faith.

Despite his professed disdain for Marx, Prawiranegara himself was engaged in an attempt to square socialism and its many Marx-derived insights with religion. He went on to posit that many of the Indonesians who called themselves socialists and communists "could actually be considered religious socialists, socialists who based their ideas [*faham*] on religion rather than historical materialism."[955] He acknowledged that "socialism can contain many meanings," and cited Dan Griffith's 1924 work, *What is Socialism?,* which listed over 260 definitions of the term in its overview of social scientific literature.[956] Somewhat condescendingly, he argued that most Indonesian socialists did not fully understand "what their socialism was based on," and strongly suggested that they ought to make common cause with the religious parties like Masjumi instead of aligning

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communism and Moscow-aligned communists like Musso. Sjahrir subsequently set up his own, much-diminished, Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI, Socialist Party of Indonesia) in February 1948.

950 Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Politik Dan Revolusi Kita* (Medan: Andalas, 1950), 4.

951 *Ibid*., 5.

952 *Ibid*., 10–12.

953 *Ibid*., 11.

954 *Ibid*., 13.

955 *Ibid*., 13.

956 *Ibid*., 13. Griffith was a schoolteacher in Llanelli, Wales, and a British Labour Party activist. See Dan Griffith, *What is Socialism? A Symposium* (London: G. Richards ltd, 1924).

themselves with the "Marxist-Socialists."[957] This was obviously a self-interested argument for a Masjumi politician, but one which is revealing of the efforts many Muslims made to find an ideological space in which their socialist-inspired political ideas could coexist with their Islamic identity. Prawiranegara even grudgingly admitted that "no thinker since the Prophet Muhammad had shaken humanity's thinking [*menggontjangkan pikiran manusia*] as Marx had," and that "However great the merits [*djasa-djasa*] of Marxism, it cannot be denied that there are fundamental differences between Marxism and religious ideology."[958]

One of Prawiranegara's sticking points, interestingly, was that Islam and Christianity were both built on compassion for all of humanity, and forbade the hatred even of one's enemies. Socialism as practiced by Lenin and Stalin, however, was "without humanity or mercy [*perikemanusiaan*] to both friends and enemies who obstructed the revolution."[959] In Prawiranegara's estimation, the republic's constitution did enshrine socialism, but not a socialism based on historical materialism, because the constitution also recognized the existence of God (*Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*).[960] To him, socialism could and should be delinked from its application in the USSR or elsewhere, and adapted to suit Indonesia's circumstances. If that meant reconciling socialism with monotheism, Prawiranegara was comfortable with that. Prawiranegara was effectively delineating his own approach to socialism, one that was open to Muslims like himself, within a broad church of "socialisms" that could draw from Eduard Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg or Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint-Simon as much as it did from Marx and Engels. He was opposed to dogmatic Marxists who saw in Marx's writings (and their soviet interpreters) a complete guide to human history. Recognizing the important intellectual contributions that Marx had made in critiquing capitalism, Prawiranegara was not opposed to productively using the insights that Marx and others brought to the table. Like so many other republicans examined here, he was a "translator" of what the world had to offer Indonesia.

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[957] *Ibid*., 14.
[958] *Ibid*., 20.
[959] *Ibid*., 21.
[960] *Ibid*., 37.

In the electrifying atmosphere of revolution, novel and eclectic combinations of ideas and identities were made possible. Just as the supporters of Sarekat Islam had imagined themselves as part of a global *ummah* from the 1910s onward, especially during the height of the *khalifa* movement, Indonesian republicans could now imagine themselves as part of a great, global anti-colonial wave that was only just cresting, and which would sweep away the detritus of colonial empires. For Indonesian Muslims, their membership in the *ummah* and their participation in this anti-colonial, pro-democratic, wave sweeping the world was not mutually exclusive. The egalitarian expectations unleashed by revolution, fueled as they were by decades of racial discrimination and years of wartime privation, opened the door for Indonesian Muslims to reimagine the contours of their putative nationhood in exciting new ways. Would Indonesia be an overt extension of the *ummah*, embracing Islam as its state religion and legislating under the inspiration of *shari'a*? Would it find some other way of containing and nurturing its Islamicity? Would it, like the other decolonizing states, structurally reform its society and economy to facilitate more equitable and dignified lives for its citizens? If so, how? Muslim republicans posed all these questions and arrived at a plethora of different answers. In this excitement and ferment, even Muslims with well-documented antipathies to communism, like Hamka, sometimes found themselves exploring brave new possibilities amidst the excitement of revolution and all the intense desires (for equity, for relief, for dignity) that the revolution seemed to embody.

Hamka's *Revolusi Agama* was originally published in 1946, and a second edition was printed in 1949, during the final negotiations with the Dutch. It struck an unmistakably patriotic, triumphal and optimistic tone: the second edition was dedicated to the many heroes of the revolution, both famous and unknown. This ostensible revolutionary fervor may also have conveniently obscured some of Hamka's less salutary political choices; he had collaborated relatively closely with the Japanese military government during the occupation.[961] The core of Hamka's argument was that social revolution and religious revolution should go hand in hand, because religion and society were inextricably linked. To him, the forces unleashed by the Indonesian revolution could only be

[961] James R. Rush, *Hamka's Great Story: A Master Writer's Vision for Modern Indonesia* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016), 80–82.

consolidated and harnessed by proper religious praxis, shaping the new institutions, cultures, and principles that would replace the old colonial norms. Equally, he recognized that religious praxis was often a reflection of the social conditions in which adherents existed. Hamka acknowledged how common it was for the rich to oppress the poor, or a powerful country to oppress a weaker one, while using religion and tradition to justify their actions.[962] He pointed out that those who sought to change the status quo or to reinterpret religion were often condemned as provocateurs with no respect for tradition: not only by the beneficiaries of the status quo, but also by those who suffered under it, because all had been socialized to accept its normality and sacrality. This was a distinctly open-minded line of argument, which had much more to do with Émile Durkheim and Max Weber than the classical Islamic discipline of exegesis (*tafsir*) in which Hamka had been trained. It was even reminiscent of Antonio Gramsci, reflecting his ideas about base and superstructure, which gives us some indication of the eclectic sources of Hamka's political inspiration. Hamka's premise for *Revolusi Agama* was simply that there existed a fundamental link between religion and society; that one could not be corrected or improved without corresponding changes in the other. The Indonesian revolution, for him, was a good example of how political changes had to be accompanied by religious ones for the full promise of the revolution to be realized.

Within that framework, Hamka embraced some remarkable positions that would exist in tension with his later emphasis on combating secularism and nihilism during the 1950s.[963] Again, the revolution opened certain novel possibilities, not merely because of the republicans' overweening optimism, but because there was a genuine ideological ferment as they sought to define the shape of their beloved republic. In *Revolusi Agama*, Hamka argued that social revolution had to accompany national revolution, conceptualizing social revolution as the struggle for a more just and equitable society.[964] Writing glowingly of Ataturk, Hamka argued that the Turkish national revolution had been cemented by repelling the Greek invasion of Ionia and secured by the treaty of Lausanne. This political revolution was accompanied by the social revolution of "eradicating obsolete thinking"

[962] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama* (Djakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1946), 5–6.
[963] Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 122.
[964] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama*, 6.

(*menghapuskan paham kolot*), such as the abolition of the Caliphate, adopting the Latin script to increase literacy, circumscribing the formal influence of *ulama* over politics, and freeing women from having the wear the veil.[965] These were all remarkably progressive positions that were enormously controversial across the *ummah*, and it was surprising that Hamka endorsed them so unreservedly.

Even more surprising was Hamka's direct engagement with Marx's ideas in *Revolusi Agama*. Hamka's original foreword to the 1946 edition quoted Marx, not to condemn him but to approbate Marx's belief that "the guarantee of a people's freedom is the spirit of freedom."[966] Hamka was perfectly willing to draw on Marx's insights amidst the effusive feeling of republican unity and dynamism during the revolution. This willingness was also a reflection of the coexistence of Islamic identity and Marxist analytical insights that had been so evident in the 1930s, an extension of the process of "translating" Europe highlighted in chapter one. This was particularly perceptible among well-educated Indonesians like Sjahrir, Hatta, Iwa Koesoema Soemantri, Leon Salim, Djoeir Moehamad, many of whom leaned, like Hamka, towards modernist Islam. Hamka even went on to admit that many nations had historically used religion as a tool of oppression, drawing on the example of pre-Reformation Europe, seventeenth century France, and twentieth century Russia, portraying Luther, Voltaire, Rousseau and Marx as liberating heroes in those contexts.[967] Hamka bemoaned the fact that "Allah's name" had been similarly abused to justify tyranny (*kezaliman*), and called for religious revolutions across the Islamic world to match the political revolutions unleashed by the second world war.[968]

Hamka went on to incorporate Marxism, as well as the full spectrum of enlightenment philosophy, into his Islamic frame of reference. He argued that all atheistic or non-Muslim philosophers and intellectuals who came after Muhammad, "from Luther and Erasmus, Spinoza and Schopenhauer, Voltaire and Rousseau, Tolstoy and Gandhi, even Hegel and Marx, were sent to perfect the interpretation of the great teachings of the Qur'an

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[965] *Ibid*., 6.
[966] *Ibid*., 7. It is not clear which text Hamka was quoting from, and he did not provide a reference. It is possible that he was paraphrasing Marx's *Wages of Labour* (1844), in which Marx explicitly recognized the necessity for the individual's development of a spiritual (though not religious) life, which could only happen if material conditions were not precarious.
[967] *Ibid*., 8.
[968] *Ibid*., 8.

[*menjempurnakan tafsir dari pada adjaran besar itu*]."[969] Like many other *pergerakan* activists, Hamka was "translating" Europe to Indonesia, incorporating all the intellectual insights that Europe had to offer into an Islamic intellectual and moral framework. His basic premise was that God works in mysterious ways, allowing even non-believers to contribute toward the betterment of humanity in general, and the *ummah* in particular. The *sunnah* could thus be even better understood in the light of their contributions. Hamka explicitly stated that the work of these intellectuals, their "*ilmu manusia*" (human/secular knowledge, as opposed to divinely-inspired knowledge) contributed to the "overcoming of *hawa nafsu*, such that it no longer afflicted the spirit of humanity."[970] This certainly did not make Hamka an Islamic communist, but this line of thought was indicative of the *weltanschauung* of a large group of Muslims in his generation, especially within Masjumi, which Hamka had strong connections to.[971] They "translated" Europe to fit within their Islamic framework, willingly allowing their secular European education to influence how they translated their Islamic piety into social praxis and government policy. This could involve, as Hamka explicitly stated, productively using the insights of Marx and others to shape policies derived from an Islamic moral calculus.[972]

In the excitement of revolution, Hamka was sometimes overly optimistic about the inclusiveness and unity of the republic, despite the many undeniable signs to the contrary, not least the 3 July Affair of 1946 and the Madiun Affair of 1948. In his foreword to the 1949 edition, published when independence was nearly assured, he waxed lyrical about the "Grace of God" and the "faith of the Indonesian people as well as its leaders."[973] Notably, Hamka wrote very kindly of Soekarno, Hatta, and Sultan Hamengkubowono X of Yogyakarta, clearly eager to highlight their demonstrations of Islamic piety.[974] He also seemed comfortable with the formulation "*Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*"[975] although he clearly saw it as the cardinal value of the Pancasila. He argued that

[969] *Ibid*., 24.
[970] *Ibid*., 24.
[971] Rush, *Hamka's Great Story*, 118.
[972] Hamka, *Revolusi Agama* (Djakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1946), 24.
[973] *Ibid*., 14.
[974] *Ibid*., 14.
[975] "Belief in the One and Only God," the unhappy compromise in Pancasila which had prevented the Jakarta charter from being included in the republic's constitution, which would have made Islam the state religion of Indonesia.

Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa was an inclusive concept, one which "not only pulls at the souls of the ummah, but causes vibrations in the spirits of Christians and Hindus as well."[976] He even ended his foreword to the 1949 edition with a celebration of the life and sacrifice of the Christian *laskar* leader Robert Wolter Monginsidi, convicted and executed by the Dutch for war crimes against civilians in 1949. Hamka described him as "the grandson of Tuanku Imam Bondjol," and placed him in the same pantheon as the Javanese Muslim prince Diponeogoro.[977] This spoke volumes about the inter-religious solidarity that was embedded in his vision of Islam, at least during the revolution. Secondarily, his point seemed to be that *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa* was not a meaningless compromise, but a genuinely important guiding principle which should command the loyalty and respect of Indonesian Muslims. Clearly moved by this revolutionary spirit of inclusion, Hamka was feeling sufficiently gracious in 1949 that he was even willing to explicitly include Marxists in his imagined community that was the putative Indonesian nation-state. This segment from his afterword, acknowledging the influence of Marxism on the revolution, is important enough to reproduce at length:

> *"We too, as Marxists* [Kitapun, sebagai kaum Marxis] *hate capitalism and Imperialism, because we ourselves have suffered for centuries, and because our original religious teachings are anti-capitalism and anti-Imperialism, which are full of malice. However, inasmuch as we hate for capitalism and imperialism, we do not fall into the pit of atheism and modern colonialism* [pendjdjahan modern] *in this world, which flows from the Kremlin. In barely thirty years, the communist movement has been pushed into this direction by Moscow. Countries which adhere to the communist creed are considered enemies by Moscow if they do not implement the instructions of Stalin and his Russia. Communism has lost its spirit of freedom, and is no different from Catholicism; the communist obeys Stalin, while the Catholic obeys the Pope!"*

Clearly, Hamka did not mean to suggest that he was a Marxist in the sense of being part of a global communist movement, although he certainly did sympathize with a global proletarian solidarity and emphasized the common humanity between Muslims and non-Muslims. Instead, he understood Indonesians to be Marxists to the extent that they could and should benefit from Marx's insights into the pernicious effects of capitalism; how it had driven the very imperialism which had caused Indonesians to suffer first as colonial subjects, and later as combatants or civilians during the revolution. This is corroborated throughout *Revolusi Agama*. In explaining

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[976] *Ibid*., 14.
[977] *Ibid*., 15. These were the two best-known leaders of Muslim resistance to nineteenth century Dutch colonial encroachment, and whose struggles had long been celebrated, even ahistorically fetishized, by the *pergerakan* since the early twentieth century.

the development of human societies across the 19th and 20th centuries, Hamka's analysis conformed to the broad outlines of Marxist historical teleology, accepting its explanation of how and why power passes from monarchies and priesthoods to the bourgeois class, subsequently becoming intertwined with modern Imperialism and colonialism, while simultaneously sowing the seeds of its own destruction by creating an environment conducive for socialist and communist movements to establish themselves.[978] Of course, this did not mean that he accepted dialectical materialism, but simply that he sometimes found Marxist analysis useful and even compelling. Rather than Khairudin Aljuneid's portrayal of Hamka as rejecting socialism or striking a balance between capitalism and communism, it would be more accurate to say that Hamka rightly recognized the twisted reality of the USSR, but did not accept that this invalidated Marxism, with all the important insights it had provided to the Indonesian *pergerakan* and republicans.[979] This somewhat nuanced position, while common enough among democratic socialists or social democrats, was soon to become unutterable across the fault lines of the Cold War in the global south, in which Muslims like himself felt compelled to choose sides. The revolution presented a special moment in which these unitarian sentiments and synthetic political visions could be articulated with a degree of honesty, though that moment would not last long.

Perhaps the most revealing of all the "religious socialist" experiences during the revolution was that of Achmadi Moestahal (b. 1928), a self-described *santri* who also believed that Marxist ideas were important for Indonesia's future. In his memoir, *Dari Gontor ke Pulau Buru* (2002), Moestahal described himself as a *santri* who embraced Marxism.[980] In his introduction, he openly wrote that this was the main point of interest for his readers and publishers, but also admitted that he could not possibly satisfy their curiosity on the matter, and could only speak from his own experiences instead of offering a comprehensive analysis of "Islamic socialism." Instead, he hoped his memoir would clarify his own "*aqidah*" (lit. creed, a word which has deep associations with formal Islamic theology) as a Muslim who embraced "scientific socialism" alongside (*berdampingan*) Islamic

[978] *Ibid*., 30.
[979] Khairudin Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University Press, 2018).
[980] Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru* (Yogyakarta: Syarikat, 2002), x.

teachings which were charged with "religious socialism."[981] He accepted Soekarno's use of Marxism as an "effective tool of analysis," arguing that Marx's teachings were not incompatible with Islam, because Islam emphasized "pluralism, equality and justice," (*ajaran pluralisme, musawah (persamaan), dan 'adalah (keadilan)*), always taking the side of the poor and oppressed.[982] This view of Islam, in Moestahal's own words, was "substantive and inclusive" instead of "formal and symbolic," an "attempt to capture the fire of Islam, not its ash and embers."[983]

The memoir's title, "From Gontor to Buru Island," is itself an indicator of how Moestahal understood the unnecessary antipathy between the categories "Muslim" and "Marxist" that dominated the public consciousness. Founded in 1926, Gontor was a truly remarkable *pesantren* that straddled the reformist Muhammdiyah and the traditionalist NU. Gontor combined the study of classical texts with the latest pedagogical innovations in organized grades, curricula, and assessments, and was notable for compelling students to communicate in English or Arabic to improve their mastery of these languages. Martin van Bruinessen points out that while Gontor drew inspiration from famed Islamic reformist institutions like the Egyptian Dar al-'Ulum of Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh as well as the Aligarh Anglo-Muslim College of Syed Ahmad Khan, it also continued to teach from classical *fiqh* texts like Ibn Rushd's *Bidayat al-mujtahid*.[984] This classical *fiqh* treatise was itself remarkable because it comparatively analyzed the rulings of the four major Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*mazhab*), instead of sticking to the Shafi'i *mazhab* that was and is dominant in the Malay Archipelago. Gontor would go on to produce noted progressive Muslim thinkers like Nurcholish Madjid and Yudi Latief during the 1970s and 1980s. Evidently, Gontor was an unusual institution that was at once progressive and traditional, and it is perhaps unsurprising that a Muslim communist like Moestahal emerged from such an intellectually dynamic and undogmatic environment. By juxtaposing a famous

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[981] *Ibid*.
[982] *Ibid.*
[983] *Ibid*., xi.
[984] Martin van Bruinessen, "Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia," in *The Madrasa in Asia: Political Activism and Transnational Linkages*, ISIM Series on Contemporary Muslims Societies (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 223.

pesantren against a penal colony for political prisoners (the mere taint of which could ruin one's career under the New Order) in his memoir's title, Moestahal did not seek to trace his conversion from Muslim to Marxist. Rather, he sought to show how those two categories could coexist; how the distance between them could be traversed, how those two symbols could be linked. Moestahal himself had literally gone from Gontor to Buru and renounced neither. While not everyone might have had the benefit of a conspicuously prestigious Islamic education, there were many others like Moestahal who also managed to traverse that distance between seemingly disparate categories in their own ways.

Moestahal had a pious Islamic upbringing in Madiun during the 1930s, though opportunities to learn about Marxism were not rare. As a Muhammadiyah member, Moestahal's father was tasked with conducting *dakwah* amongst the native Indonesians who had at least a primary school education. Moestahal recalled the enthusiasm many of these people had for rationalized, modernist Islam, which emphasized *ijtihad*, which is entirely unsurprising given the developments analyzed in chapter two.[985] M's education was distinctly Islamic - he attended the Muhammadiyah Hollandsche-Inlandsche School (HIS, a Dutch-medium school for natives) in Madiun in the day, and the *Madarassah ibtidaiyah islamiyah* in the evenings.[986] Despite his family's ties to Muhammadiyah and his own attraction to *ijtihad*, Moestahal was educated in the traditional *pesantren* manner, studying two *kitab kuning* treatises on *fiqh* in depth: they were *Matan Taqrib* and *Nahwu Jurumiyah*. By his fourth year in the Madrassah, Moestahal even began conducting *dakwah* in low Javanese, explaining the meaning of Quranic verses and Hadith to his juniors. At the same time, Moestahal recalled reading "radical-revolutionary" Permi literature (presumably texts like *Tabligh Oemoem*, analyzed in chapter two) at a friend's house, as well as brochures and books by former Digoel detainees.[987] As he read, he began to realize that many of the internees were not PKI members, but often sympathizers with some form of Marxism.[988] Moestahal specifically mentioned Tjokroaminoto's *Islam and Socialism* (1924), noting that it had left a strong impression

[985] Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru* (Yogyakarta: Syarikat, 2002), 13.
[986] *Ibid*., 18.
[987] *Ibid*., 26
[988] *Ibid.*, 27.

on him by helping him to understand that Sarekat Islam was based on "religious nationalism" and "religious socialism," and that it was therefore fundamentally anti-capitalist in character, because it opposed an extractive capitalist economy effectively structured along ethnic lines.[989]

After completing his Dutch-medium education and weathering the Japanese Occupation with his family, Moestahal enrolled as a student in the famous *pesantren* of Gontor in late 1945 (shortly after independence was proclaimed), to study under Ustadz Idham Chalid, formerly of the famous Kulliyatul Mualimin al-Islamiyyah Madrassah.[990] This master-disciple relationship, and the lineage it implied, would later prove to be useful on more than one occasion. Of particular interest is Moestahal's recollection that Sjahrir's classic revolutionary socialist tract *Pergerakan Kita* was influential reading even for students in *pesantren* like Gontor; copies were circulated widely and were well-received by students.[991] Moestahal also recalled learning the basic principles of Marxism from one Muhammad Syarif, formerly a medical orderly in Boven Digoel, who was introduced to the family by KH Abdul Muthi.[992] Moestahal would often visit him after graduating from HIS. Syarif, who spent the 1930s as an active propagandist for Muhammadiyah in Madiun, would go on to join Sjahrir's Partai Sosialis (PS, Socialist Party) during the revolution. Abdul Muthi, who had introduced Syarif to Moestahal, became a staunch supporter of the PP, and was a member of clandestine underground networks run by Sukarni, a Tan Malaka loyalist who served as secretary-general of the PP and later as the head of the Partai Murba.[993] Moestahal, clearly, was not alone in being a pious Muslim attracted to Marxist ideas.

Born in 1928, Moestahal was a young man of 17 when the revolution broke out. As we will see, many of his peers, sometimes called the *Angkatan 45* (generation of 1945), became politically aware at a time when the possibilities for political allegiances were legion, no matter how hybrid or eclectic. Indeed, one of the defining features of the revolution was how easily people segued between political affiliations, moving between different

[989] *Ibid*., 29.
[990] *Ibid*. 47.
[991] *Ibid*., 56.
[992] *Ibid*., 30.
[993] *Ibid*., 73.

political parties, *laskars* and *badan perjuangan*. However, the ability to compound Islamic identity and Marxist ideas was not unique to the revolutionary period; as the preceding chapters have shown, and as Moestahal's own recollection of Muhammad Syarif suggests, there was a decades-long tradition of putting Islam and Marxism in productive dialogue with each other. The *Angkatan 45* were indeed a dynamic and bold generation, producing a flowering of political thought also seen in other rapidly decolonizing societies such as Malaya and Vietnam.[994] Nevertheless, strong continuities between the pre-war and revolutionary periods existed, not least in the form of Islamic socialism and its many permutations.

After leaving Gontor sometime in 1946, Moestahal joined the Masjumi *laskar* Hizbullah in Yogyakarta, primarily because it was commanded by another Gontor alumnus, Muhammad Duchan bin Haji Bilal. However, his expanding political horizons prompted him to leave; he decided that he would prefer not to serve in a religiously exclusive force.[995] He joined the republican army, then known as the Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (TKR, the People's Security Army), and served in the Sukowati battalion. He became close to a fellow soldier, one Touchid of the TKR's Ponogoro battalion, who was slightly older than Moestahal and came from a *santri* background as well. He came from around Sumotro and Bandengan (just west of Ponogoro), areas which had been Sarekat Rakjat strongholds during the 1926–27 uprisings. Their connection was built on shared religiosity: Touchid had previously been a member of the Sarekat Islam Afdeeling Pandu (SIAP), an Islamic scouting organization, much like how Moestahal had been a member of Muhammadiyah's scouting organization, the Hizbul Wathan.[996]

With their common background, Touchid was able to connect with Moestahal, holding an ongoing dialogue with him about the importance of leftist politics. Eventually, Touchid invited him to attend talks held by Marx-influenced political parties, as well as to Sarekat Rakyat events in Badegan and Sumoroto. It was at such events

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[994] T.N. Harper, "The Malayan Spring," in *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Kim Ngoc Bao Ninh, *A World Transformed: The Politics of Culture in Revolutionary Vietnam* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002).
[995] Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 72.
[996] *Ibid.*, 22, 58.

that Moestahal met and learned from the *pergerakan* activists of the 1926-27 generation: in Sumoroto, Moestahal met Mbah Diko, a female Sarekat Rakyat leader who had been imprisoned for the 1926–27 uprisings. Moestahal cited her as an important influence on his political development, crediting her with exposing him to ideas of non-violent civil resistance as practiced by the Saminists in the early twentieth century.[997] In his memoir, Moestahal wrote that he was never really sure why Touchid chose to engage him specifically, but speculated that it might be because of their shared piety. Touchid knew that Moestahal had been a student at Gontor and had observed that Moestahal was rigorous in performing the five daily prayers.[998] It seems likely that it was their shared religiosity which drew them together, and to leftist politics as well.

Throughout his time in the army, Moestahal continued to encounter individuals whose backgrounds mixed Islamic faith and Marxist inspiration. For example, Moestahal had a good relationship with one Colonel Rohim Gondosuwito, an Amir Sjarifuddin loyalist who headed the Biro Perjuangan (Struggle Bureau) in Yogyakarta; Rohim had spent the pre-war years as a PSII activist.[999] When Moestahal was training to become a commissioned officer sometime in late 1948 and early 1949, he attended courses on Marxism at a sugar factory in South Yogykarta, Padokan Madukismo, which the students dubbed "Marx House."[1000] There, several of his course-mates were also of Islamic backgrounds: Anfal Idris and Aslam had both studied in the *persanren* Islam Wal Fajri Kerangkajen in Yogyakarta before coming to Marx House.[1001] Moestahal himself attended Marx House under the sponsorship of the socialist party, and he described the political orientation of his fellow participants as not Marxists *per se*, but rather people interested to learn about and from Marxism. Moestahal described them as "*yang orientasi dan afiliasi politiknya adalah progresif revolusioner*," those whose orientation and political affiliation were progressive and revolutionary.[1002] Moestahal even-handedly admitted

[997] *Ibid*., 59.
[998] *Ibid*., 58.
[999] *Ibid*., 65. The Biro Perjuangan was set up by Amir Sjarifuddin, who served as Defence Minister (November 1945 – January 1948) for the bulk of the revolution, ostensibly to coordinate the various *laskar* (militias) and *badan perjuangan* (struggle bodies), but also to consolidate Amir's socialist party's influence over the various armed bodies outside the army's formal command structure. The Biro Perjuangan would eventually evolve into the command structure of the TNI Masyarakat (People's Army), and brought under firmer control of the army itself.
[1000] *Ibid*., 82-83.
[1001] *Ibid*., 83.
[1002] *Ibid*., 83.

that some Muslim participants eventually chose to leave the pro-Amir Sjarifuddin *Sajap Kiri* after studying at Marx House, because they concluded that historical materialism was necessarily atheistic. Clearly, Moestahal himself, and many others like him, did not come to that conclusion.

The interpolation of Islam and Marxism was also personal for Moestahal. He married his first wife, Siti Fatonah, in November 1949. She was both a devout Muslim and revolutionary, an active member in the *badan perjuangan* Gerkan Pemuda Islam Indonesia (GPII, Indonesian Muslim Youth Movement).[1003] Moestahal and Siti had been schoolmates at the Sekolah Ibti'daiyah in Madiun, where both of them were active in Islamic mass organizations like the Balai Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Association).[1004] Both continued to take their commitments to Islam seriously, despite Siti's family's abhorrence of Moestahal's political commitments; objections were raised by several of Siti's relatives who were serving in Masjumi's Hizbullah *laskar*.[1005] Later in his memoir, Moestahal would write that he was "blessed with his first child by Allah SWT" in July 1951," which signals his continued immersion in an Islamic milieu, despite what his wife's relatives thought of him.[1006] Moestahal's father, meanwhile, remained an active Muhmmadiyah propagandist during the revolution, representing Masjumi in the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD, the provincial legislature) of Pati, Central Java. This despite the fact that Moestahal had enrolled at Marx House, and Moestahal's younger brother possessed strong PKI sympathies, even getting detained by the army after the Madiun Affair of 1948.[1007]

Moestahal also made a point of emphasizing how permeable the divisions between *aliran* (lit. streams) were during the revolution, and explained how many people, including himself, straddled those boundaries. He pointed out that Islamic leaders such as KH Wahid Hasyim, who served as the first Minister of Religious Affairs in late 1945 (and again from 1949–52) and who also happened to be the son of NU founder Hasyim Asy'ari, was a committed supporter of Tan Malaka's PP during the revolution. The fluidity of *aliran* boundaries

[1003] *Ibid*., 66.
[1004] *Ibid*., 98.
[1005] *Ibid*., 98.
[1006] *Ibid.*, 103.
[1007] *Ibid*., 67.

was also illustrated by Moestahal's own developmental trajectory as a republican partisan: from under KH Abdul Mu'thi's mentorship, and despite having had strong associations with Masjumi's Hizbullah, Moestahal was "passed" (*menyerahkan bimbingan*) by Abdul Mu'thi into the guidance of Major General Djokosujono, an Amir Sjarifuddin loyalist in the Ministry of Defense. Djokosujno also happened to be the brother-in-law to the Tan Malaka loyalist Sukarni. Moestahal had many frank conversations with Djokosujono about the necessity of mobilizing Muslim support for Amir Sjarifuddin's Sajap Kiri, recognizing that most Islamic *laskars* and *badan perjuangan* were being drawn overwhelming to Tan Malaka's PP.[1008] Both the socialists in power, and the communists in opposition, were actively seeking Muslim support during the revolution, sometimes becoming actual beneficiaries of it. The result of these conversations was Moestahal being tasked by Djokosujono with acting as a go-between for the Sajap Kiri and various Islamic organizations. Within this capacity, Moestahal even met with the aforementioned KH Wahid Hasyim twice in Ngabean, Yogyakarta, as a personal emissary of Amir Sjarifuddin, to negotiate NU support for Amir's government.[1009] Moestahal also had some success in securing support from Masjumi: he managed to get KH Zainul Arifien, leader of Masjumi's Hizbullah *laskar*, and KH Maskyur, a prominent leader of Masjumi's Sabilillah *laskar*, to join the government-sponsored Dewan Pertahanan Negara (National Defence Council).[1010] Naturally, Moestahal's strong Islamic credentials helped in this endeavor, and he saw no problem leveraging those connections to get Muslims to work with the governing socialists. Evidently, *aliran* distinctions were simply not clear-cut for many – although they clearly mattered more to some than others.

This slippage between *aliran*, and the limitations of convenient classifications such as "nationalists" or "communists," was also evident in Moestahal's success as a negotiator. After the Madiun Affair of 1948, Moestahal was identified as an Amir Syarifuddin sympathizer and interned for some weeks. After being

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[1008] *Ibid*., 76.
[1009] *Ibid.*, 76.
[1010] *Ibid*., 77. Established under State of Emergency regulations on July 6, 1946, the State Defence Council included the Prime Minister, a number of senior cabinet ministers, the army's top leadership, as well as *laskar* commanders. It constituted the highest military decision-making authority in the republic during the revolution and sought to coordinate and control diverse military outfits across all theatres. See Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, eds., *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* (Lanham, MD, and Oxford, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 116.

released, Moestahal negotiated the release of his friend and comrade, Slamet Sabijan (who had actually participated in the fighting at Madiun), from internment by a Hizbullah unit. Moestahal negotiated directly with the unit's commander, Za'ran Hajid, appealing specifically to a sense of Islamic brotherhood by stressing his Islamic credentials as a Gontor graduate, and their mutual friends within Hizbullah. Despite the fact that Moestahal himself had been a political prisoner, and the prevailing paranoia regarding an anti-republic communist insurrection, he successfully negotiated Slamet Sabijan's release.[1011] Evidently, in the eyes of Za'ran Hajid, Moestahal was able to slip between the categories of "Muslim" and "Marxist." Much like Tan Malaka at the Fourth Comintern Congress in 1922, Moestahal's identity was hybrid and dynamic; he could be a Marxist in one context and a staunch Muslim in another. More importantly, in eyes of many, even those overtly opposed to Marxism (as conservative Masjumi supporters often were), it was not impossible to be both a salutary Muslim and a synthesizer of Marxist ideas at the same time; luckily for Moestahal, being a good Muslim trumped all suspicions about Marxism in this context.

It is important to recognize that "Marxism" was decidedly not a party affiliation, but a broader discursive field which was influential in informing the political ideas of revolutionaries within virtually every republican faction during the revolution. It is only by recognizing the mutability of Marxism – that is, different individuals drew on it to various degrees, and in various ways – as well as the deeply autodidactic nature of its circulation that we can understand how many Muslims were able to accommodate Marxist ideas. Writing of his experiences in officer cadet school, then known as the Asrama Republik Indonesia (ASRI), Moestahal recalled that it was common for ASRI trainees to read the Pesindo (*Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia*, Indonesian Socialist Youth) newspaper *Revolusioner* and the PKI newspaper *Bintang Merah*, with the full understanding that these publications were "promoting and explaining socialism and Marxism-Leninism."[1012] Moestahal explicitly stated that readers were not necessarily members of the PKI, but rather sympathizers who respected the PKI as one of the few parties with a long history of brave and overt opposition to the Dutch.[1013] Presumably, they sought to

[1011] Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 98.
[1012] *Ibid*., 81.
[1013] *Ibid*.

learn what ideology gave rise to this bravery, but were by no means passive consumers of propaganda. According to Moestahal, those who "dared not read *Bintang Merah* had internalized colonial propaganda about the dangers of communism as a threat to social order."[1014]

Meanwhile, Tan Malaka's writings circulated freely in ASRI and were read by many students: Moestahal mentions *Pendjara, Madilog, Massa Aksi, Gerpolek, Tesis*, and even Alimin's rebuttal to *Tesis, Analisis*.[1015] In Moestahal's estimation, Tan Malaka and his associates, although small in number, exercised a much greater discursive influence over republican revolutionary thought than Sajap Kiri or the FDR ever did. Moestahal himself "devoured" (*melahap*) all of these texts, analyzing them and adding his own insights to what he learned from "progressive ideologies like scientific socialism and communism."[1016] Despite the circulation of these texts, it would not be fair to assume that ASRI was a center for disseminating communist propaganda, since few officers actually became PKI members. Rather, the circulation of Marxist ideas in ASRI, as attested to by Moestahal, is evidence of how republican autodidacts sought to productively synthesize their Indonesian identities (for many, like Moestahal, their identities included Islam) and what the wider world had to offer. As one of the most virulently anti-colonial ideologies available, Marxism was attractive to republican partisans both because of the PKI's long history of opposition to colonialism, as well as the interest in Marxist precepts that characterized anti-colonial movements across the global south in the post-1945 era.[1017] Marxism as a discursive field functioned as one amongst many theoretical corpora that Indonesian republicans drew from to inform their anti-colonial, nation-building project.

Finally, it seems appropriate to end this analysis of Moestahal's memoir with an anecdote about Soekarno, whose political influence and popular support was at its peak during the revolution. Moestahal wrote about a conversation he witnessed between the former Taman Siswa teacher and noted painter S. Sudjojono, and

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[1014] *Ibid*.
[1015] *Ibid*.
[1016] *Ibid*., 82. In Moestahal's own words, "*Saya mencoba melahap semua bacaan itu, dan dengan sendirinya memberikan tambahan pengetahuan dan wawasan yang membuat saya lebih tertarik terhadap ideologi progresif - revolusioner termasuk ideologi marxisme, socialisme ilmiah, dan kommunisme*."
[1017] Vijay Prasad, *The Darker Nations: A Biography of the Short-Lived Third World* (Delhi: Leftward Books, 2007), 64–65.

President Soekarno, soon after Soekarno's return to republican-controlled Yogyakarta from Dutch-imposed exile in Bangka.[1018] Sudjojono asked: "Brother Karno, are you still a Marxist?" to which Soekarno replied, "Naturally, Djon [Sudjojono's nickname], I am still a Marxist!" Sudjojono's response was cutting: "And why do you remain silent when your friends who were Marxists were shot?" This was a reference to the Madiun Affair, which the supporters of Amir Sjarifuddin and Musso had always insisted was not a rebellion against the republic, but rather than an attempt to steer the republic away from negotiations with the faithless Dutch. Apparently, Sudjojono's accusation hit home, and Soekarno kept silent while weeping for a long while.[1019] While recollections made decades after the fact are always suspect, I would argue that this one is relatively credible for a number of reasons. First, the generally pro-Soekarno Moestahal was not trying to paint Soekarno in a heroic light. Here, Soekarno was portrayed as living with the bitterness and regret resulting from his decision to use force against his erstwhile comrades in the Front Demokrasi Rakyat. After all, it was he who made the radio broadcast on September 19, 1948, declaring Madiun a coup attempt and calling on the people to choose between Soekarno-Hatta and Amir-Musso as their leaders. Second, Moestahal published his memoir in 2002, after decades of New Order anti-communist messaging that Madiun was a communist insurrection, which "proved" the PKI's anti-republican character and justified its bloody suppression in 1965. There was little for Moestahal to gain from painting Soekarno as sympathetic to the deeply-demonized Front Demokrasi Rakyat, or from humanizing the participants of the Madiun affair – the whole incident remained deeply transgressive in the public eye.

While Moestahal never explained the significance of this anecdote in his memoir, I would argue that it revealed his desire to communicate something about the unique atmosphere of the revolution. Through this tale of Soekarno's bitterness and regret, Moestahal conveyed the fundamental desire for cooperation – indeed, the belief in the possibility of fruitful cooperation – between Marxists of various stripes and other supporters of the republic, including Muslims like himself. Soekarno, like many republicans across the political was strongly

[1018] Sudjojono had been influenced by Marxist ideas even before the revolution, and would go on to become a leading figure in the PKI-endorsed artists' association, Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA), which will be explored in further detail in chapter five.
[1019] Achmadi Moestahal, *Dari Gontor Ke Pulau Buru*, 95.

influenced by Marxist ideas but did not see the need for PKI membership. His ostensible regret in the face of Sudjojono's accusation was an expression of the optimistic republican sentiment of unity and fraternity that defined the revolution. To Soekarno, hard choices had to be made to preserve the republic, but he understood that Musso, Sumarsono, Djokusujono, Amir, and all the other Madiun participants were fundamentally his comrades who disagreed with him on policy, not on goals. The point here is that an entire generation of republican leaders that had come of age in the interwar years was deeply influenced by Marxism without being dogmatic communists. They saw each other as comrades, even if they disagreed on important policies such as whether or not to pursue negotiations with the Dutch as the primary strategy for achieving independence. They also embraced the idea that broad cooperation between Marxists and non-Marxists was both possible and desirable. That genuine comradeship and cooperation set the tenor of the revolution: only very few republicans like Musso were principally obedient to the Comintern's united front policy, subordinating local interests to global imperatives emanating from Moscow. It was within such an atmosphere that Islam and Marxism could coexist and cooperate, sometimes even symbiotically, as in Moestahal's case.

Ultimately, in characterizing these "religious socialists," I have found comparative perspectives from other times and places instructive. Saba Mahmood's study of the women's mosque movement, part of a broader phenomenon she called the Islamic revival of the 1970s, articulated an important insight about the relationship between religion and politics: religion and politics do not necessarily exist in separate realms, in line with the private/public dichotomy outlined by Jürgen Habermas.[1020] More recently, a younger generation of scholars such as Nir Shafir have taken those insights and applied them fruitfully in disparate contexts like the early modern Ottoman Empire, re-examining the role of religion in a sometimes irreligious Islamicate polity.[1021] Mahmood argued that Eurocentric notions of secularism willfully excised religion from politics, whereas the

[1020] Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4–5. See also Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991).
[1021] Nir Shafir, "Moral Revolutions: The Politics of Piety in the Ottoman Empire Reimagined," *Comparative Studies in History and Society* 61, no. 3 (2019): 595–623. Shafir's analysis of *nasihat* could well apply to many Masjumi politicians, who were concerned with how to exhort their fellow Muslims to lead moral lives; they understood the intricacies of structuring of this morality socially as constituting the realm of politics.

women she studied often understood their piety as fundamentally political. Piety was not merely a corrective or safety valve for the stifling of overt political expression, and it did not necessarily lead to joining the Muslim Brotherhood or demanding regime change in the streets. Just as Muslim women in the 1970s were able to develop and express new political subjectivities through their cultivation of Islamic piety, many Indonesian Muslims understood their faith as political, but not in terms of "political Islam," a term which assumes the inappropriate intrusion of the "private" into the "public."

The most literal incarnation of "political Islam" during the revolution was Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam movement and his proposed Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of Indonesia), which he proclaimed on August 7, 1949. This was attractive only to a small minority of Indonesian Muslims, however. Most Indonesian Muslims supported republican political parties like Masjumi, the PSII and later Nahdlatul Ulama (which split from Masjumi and organized a political party in 1952) who understood Islamic piety to be absolutely central to their political choices, but whose agenda did not entail the installation of an Islamic state to replace the republic.[1022] For men such as Prawiranegara and Natsir, it was their humane and rational faith which compelled them to adapt the intellectual innovations of the West, including those contributed by Marxists. More explicitly, large numbers of pious Indonesian Muslims – like Achmadi Moestahal and Djoeir Moehamad – also supported political parties strongly influenced by Marxist ideas. The head of state himself was a self-proclaimed Marxist as well as a Muslim, and had been so for decades. For such people, their Islamic piety made possible political subjectivities on the left of the political spectrum, instead of foreclosing possibilities. Piety could and was expressed in a plurality of ways, whether in parliamentary debates, backroom negotiations, public speeches, or in the numerous venues for political activity made possible by the revolution.

Popular Print: Tamar Djaja's *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* (1946)

[1022] All of these parties, however, did consistently argue for Islam to be enshrined as the state religion (albeit with plenty of protections for religious minorities) in the republic's constitution.

Even outside of explicitly political material, it was still possible to glimpse confluences of Islam and Marxism in the popular consciousness during the revolution. Tamar Djaja's *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* was already in its second print run by Feb 1946; it was published both times in Bukittinggi (Fort de Kock), West Sumatra, by Penjiaran Ilmoe (lit. spreading knowledge). It is particularly useful for highlighting the circulation of Marxist ideas outside of Java. *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* is notable because the press that published it (Penjiaran Ilmoe) was also used by Tamar Djaja, its managing editor, to publish many other books on Islam well into the 1970s. These include Djaja's own *Nubuat Nabi Muhammad S.A.W* (1976, The Prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad), as well as Mohammed Natsir's *Islam Sebagai Ideologi* (1950, Islam as an Ideology). *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* was a short biography of three communists that was clearly influenced by *picisan roman* novelettes of the 1930s. In it, the narrative trajectories of Semaun, Alimin, and Tan Malaka reflected the plot devices deployed in *pacar merah* (red pimpernel) popular literature that provided fictionalized accounts of Tan Malaka's adventures in exile.[1023] Short, single-page biographies of Lenin and Stalin were also appended to these sketches of Semaun, Alimin and Tan Malaka, implying a global proletarian solidarity. *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* was not a factual biography, but rather an anthology of exciting stories about Tan Malaka, Semaun and Alimin's adventures abroad, inventing dialogue and even referring to Tan Malaka as *pacar merah* on multiple occasions. This book took liberty with facts, but it did accurately express how widely admired the communist leaders of the pre-1926 generation were during the revolution.

This was published as part of a didactic series on political and civic literacy, which included books like *Pengetahoean Politik II (Tata Negara)*, which claimed to help readers understand the meaning of terms like "republic, dominion status, commonwealth, protectorate, mandate, self-rule, democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy."[1024] The popularity of such books, in a time of public debate over delicate negotiations with the Dutch, was hardly surprising. Other books in this series included biographies of Soekarno, Hatta, Amir, Sjahrir,

[1023] Noriaki Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka: A Popular Novel and a Revolutionary Legend," in *Reading Southeast Asia*, ed. Audrey R. Kahin, Roberta Ludgate, and Dolina Millar (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1990), 9–39.
[1024] Tamar Djaja, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* (Bukittinggi: Penjiaran Ilmoe, 1946), 56.

Muhammad Yamin, and Djamaluddin Tamin, all of whom were influenced by Marxism to varying degrees. Clearly, this was a commercial rather than an ideologically-driven publisher, which sought to cater to the demands of the West Sumatran reading public. Nevertheless, this series clearly shows how Islam and Marxism could coexist comfortably, almost unremarkably, within a publisher's catalogue. The topics which gripped the imagination of the West Sumatran reading public were as varied as Natsir's ideas about Islam's role in guiding the state, and the biographies of known communists and socialists. Even if Penjiaran Ilmoe was selling different books to disparate demographics, the ease with which it toggled between Islam and Marxism, as well as Tamar Djaja's own authorship of books on both Islam and Marxism, suggests a kind of unquestioned comfort in straddling both topics.

That comfort was also evident in the text of *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* itself. The section on Tan Malaka's Partai Republik Indonesia (PARI, the successor to the PKI after its proscription in 1927) named Rahman Djamal as a key PARI activist, who replaced Djamaluddin Tamin as the operative in charge of propaganda sometime during the mid-1930s.[1025] Tamar Djaja took pains to stress that Djamal was a serious Muslim, who planned on studying Islam in India and performing the *hajj*. After being denied an NEI passport, Djamal resolved to join PARI instead. This implied equivalency of activity is suggestive, implying that being a good Muslim could and did involve making the pilgrimage to Mecca, but could also involve joining a clandestine anti-colonial organization, even if it was a communist one. This, of course, was perfectly consonant with Tan Malaka's own approach to Islam, which we have examined earlier in this chapter, as well as in chapter one. It is also interesting that this anecdote about Djamal made it into a biography about three more prominent people, especially given the freewheeling fiction-esque style in which it was written, which tended to cast all three as protagonists. Djamal would not even be included in the *dramatis personae* of the "novelette," if it had one. It seems likely that Tamar Djaja was trying to highlight something by including the anecdote about Djamal. Moreover, *Trio Komoenis Indonesia* also included an excerpt from another book by Muhammad Yamin, who was known to be a great

[1025] *Ibid*., 10–11.

admirer of Tan Malaka. It was titled *Tan Malaka: Bapak Republik Indonesia* (Tan Malaka: Father of the Indonesian Republic). This excerpt portrayed Tan Malaka as a hero of the independence movement, comparable to Manuel Quezon in the Philippines, and pronounced this benediction over him: "Truly, God is great… under the protection of the Republic, the father of the nation, Tan Malaka, defends the workers, *romusha*, and proletariat of Indonesia."[1026]

This eclectic imbrication of Islam and Marxism by Tamra Djaja was perfectly consistent with his pre-revolutionary writings. Before the war, Djaja had published in explicitly Islamic periodicals on issues of Muslim concern. He often published in *Pedoman Masjarakat*, which was an unapologetically Islamic newspaper run by Hamka and Yunan Nasution. Many other prominent *pergerakan* activists with an Islamic bent published in it, including Natsir, Soekarno, and Hatta (the latter two from exile). It was widely considered to be a *kaum muda* publication whose readers and contributors went on to form the core of Masjumi's leadership as well as its support base. Most articles were didactic and Islamic in character: examples include explanations of excerpts from the Qur'an and a series on the history of the classical Islamic empires. Serial articles covered the history of Islam in India and Thailand, while other articles focused on the ideas of the Egyptian modernist scholar Muhammad Abduh. It also had an intolerant side and promoted anti-Ahmadiyyha organizations on the grounds of opposing heresy.

However, some issues began with quotes from prominent European thinkers and writers, such as Tolstoy; other articles drew on the work of Enlightenment philosophes, such as Rosseau's social contract, while yet others expounded on American history. Like many of the publications studied in this chapter, *Pedoman Masjarakat* was an exercise in "translating" the world to Indonesia, reflecting the autodidactic and open worldview of many *pergerakan* activists from that period. To such a periodical, Tamar Djaja contributed articles like "Refuting False Accusations against Islam," which railed against Christian insinuations that the Prophet was a lustful man, apparently because he had multiple wives, or because he married Khadijah for material gain.[1027] Besides

[1026] *Ibid*., 53.
[1027] Tamar Djaja, "Mengoepak toedoehan palsu kepada Islam," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, November 5, 1935.

publishing articles by Soekarno and Hatta, both of whom had undeniably adapted elements of Marxist ideas, *Pedoman Masjarakat* also published articles which – albeit grudgingly – admitted the desirability of socialism for the Indies.[1028] This provides us a sense of the eclectic milieu in which Tamar Djaja had come of age politically, which made possible the unquestioned coexistence of Islamic identity and socialist ideas in his publishing endeavors during the revolution. This lack of perceived friction between faith and political convictions was characteristic of the revolutionary period; this was partially the legacy of the 1930s *pergerakan* milieu, which saw authentic Indonesian identity and an internationalist autodidactic outlook coexist comfortably, without *pergerakan* activists feeling the angst of having to actively reconcile the two.[1029]

Localized Syncretism: "To Mecca via Moscow!"

Shifting the focus away from the centers of power in Jakarta and Yogyakarta on the island of Java, examining localized forms of syncretism provides unusual insight on how Islam and Marxism could be conciliated. It seems appropriate to end this chapter with one particularly remarkable case study of a revolutionary organization that was both Islamic and Marxist. The Minangkabau heartlands of West Sumatra, home to so many prominent republican leaders – including Tan Malaka, Hatta, Sjahrir, Natsir and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara – witnessed an expression of syncretic Islam (or syncretic Marxism) that took the form of the memorably-named PKI Lokal Islamy (Local Islamic Communist Party of Indonesia). The PKI Lokal Islamy was founded in Maninjau in April 1946, 'pledging' their allegiance to Tan Malaka's brand of communism and his refusal to negotiate with the Dutch.[1030] This was likely an affective invocation of the pre-1926 PKI strongly associated

[1028] Damanhoeri Djamil, "Boeat Pedoman Masjarakat," *Pedoman Masjarakat*, May 27, 1936.
[1029] Keith Foulcher, "Literature, Politics and the Indonesian Revolution," in *Text/Politics in Island Southeast Asia: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. D.M. Roskies (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1993), 228–29.
[1030] A.A. Navis, "Alur Kebudayaan Tingkat Laku Gerakan Politik Di Minangkabau," in *Dialektika Minangkabau Kemelut Sosial Politik* (Padang: Genta Singgalang Press, 1983), 88; H. Amura, *Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan Di Minangkabau (1955-1950)* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1979), 62.

with Tan Malaka, since the PKI Lokal Islamy appears to have had virtually no relationship with the Sumatran PKI led by Bachtaruddin during the revolution.

Membership consisted primarily of *muridin* (lit. students, but in the Sufi context, disciples) of the Shattariyah *tarekat* (Sufi order organized around a spiritual lineage), who were apparently convinced to profess communism through the influence of fellow Minangkabau with links to PARI.[1031] This was no doubt partially due to Tan Malaka's near-legendary status as a longstanding activist with links to the Comintern as well as multiple Asian communist movements, a reputation which was amplified by his remarkable ability to evade capture and the *picisan roman* pulp novels which fictionalized his adventures in exile.[1032] Leon Salim, one of the key Sumatran Pendidikan activists with close personal links to PARI himself, was of the opinion that members of the PKI Lokal Islamy pledged themselves to Tan Malaka without really understanding his ideas; for them, Tan Malaka was a symbol of Minangkabau anticolonial resistance and fortitude, in which they could invest their desired meanings.[1033] Apparently, at Shattariyah meetings in West Sumatra, *muridin* would greet each other with a gesture which resembled a military salute: open palms with their fingers closed against each other, but at the level of the nose instead of forehead. They would then turn to the right to salute or hail (*mengucapkan salam*) the Prophet Muhammad, then turn to the left to do the same for Tan Malaka.[1034] Even more pointedly, Hamka recalled that the PKI Lokal Islamy's motto was "to Mecca via Moscow!"[1035]

The PKI Lokal Islamy reportedly had more than the support of Shattariyah *muridin*: the former revolutionary governor of West Sumatra, S. M. Rasjid, claimed that it had its roots in an underground communist organization called PEKOM, which was founded during the Japanese Occupation and led by an influential Islamic teacher named Abdul Gani Syarif.[1036] According to Rasjid, Gani had reformed PEKOM as the PKI Lokal Islamy shortly after the declaration of independence on August 17, 1945, and it was influential enough that it had a strong

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[1031] A.A. Navis, "Alur Kebudayaan Tingkat Laku Gerakan Politik Di Minangkabau," 89.
[1032] Noriaki Oshikawa, "Patjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka: A Popular Novel and a Revolutionary Legend," 10–16.
[1033] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interview by Audrey Kahin, June 8, 1985, 11.
[1034] A.A. Navis, "Alur Kebudayaan Tingkat Laku Gerakan Politik Di Minangkabau," 89.
[1035] Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, vol. 4 (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975), 50.
[1036] S.M. Rasjid et al., *Sejarah Perjuangan Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia Di Minangkabau (1945-1950)* (Jakarta: Badan Pencetakan Sumatra Barat, 1979), 364; Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup*, 49.

presence in Pariaman, Manindjau, and southern Pasaman.[1037] Besides these basic facts, Rasjid's account is not particularly credible; he described members of the PKI Lokal Islamy as fanatics who were "deeply committed to doing whatever their leaders told them to do," and accused them of "refusing to obey the commands of the republican government, even sabotaging its efforts." Rasjid's account of the PKI Lokal Islamy comes from an interview conducted during the height of Suharto's New Order, when the castigation of communism was nigh compulsory, so these descriptions should be taken with a generous pinch of salt.

What is clear is that the PKI Lokal Islamy was sufficiently troublesome that the republican army eventually dispatched troops from Bukittinggi, led by Hasan Bisri, to corral its leaders. Gani himself, and around ten other leaders of the PKI Lokal Islamy including his lieutenant Datuk Kelabu, were captured in Lubukbasung and detained in Bukittinggi.[1038] This was by no means unusual for the time; the Baso branch of the Sumatran PKI, led by former Digoel detainees Tuanku Nan Putih and Tuanku Nan Hitam, had also been targeted by the army for its ill-disciplined reaving across the countryside. Clashes between the army and unruly militias occurred regularly during the first half of the revolution (until the military rationalization undertaken by the Hatta cabinet in February 1948), not just on Sumatra but across the archipelago. However, unlike the suppression of the Baso PKI, the leaders of the PKI Lokal Islamy were judged sufficiently loyal to the republic that they were released after interrogation and "rectification" of their attitudes.[1039] Not much is known about the PKI Lokal Islamy beyond this incident, but its members were most likely absorbed by other pro-republic organizations as the organization's influence gradually crumbled, a common fate for smaller *laskar* and *badan berjuangan*.

However, the broader context which made possible the existence of the PKI Lokal Islamy in the first place is the real object of interest. The primary enabling factor was the spirit of solidarity and cooperation that prevailed between different Minangkabau republican factions. This spirit was significantly more robust in Sumatra than in Java. The armed wings of the PKI in West Sumatra were the Barisan Merah Indonesia (BMI, Red Indonesian

[1037] S.M. Rasjid et al., *Sejarah Perjuangan*, 364.
[1038] *Ibid*., 365.
[1039] *Ibid*., 365.

Front) and Tentara Merah Indonesia (TMI, Red Army of Indonesia). Dutch intelligence suggests that they cooperated consistently with Masjumi militias like the Sabilillah and Hezbollah in local operations.[1040] They even closed ranks with the other republican factions during the Madiun uprising: governor Rasjid recalled that a Madiun-like uprising nearly broke out in West Sumatra, with the two Tentara Merah Indonesia battalions under Bachtaruddin (Rasuna Said's half-brother) and Nip Xarim (son of the Islamic communist Xarim M.S.) making preparations to fight the republican army. Rasjid, apparently, brokered an agreement between Bachtaruddin, Nip Xarim, and the local army commander Ismael Lengah, in which they committed to stand behind the republican government in Yogyakarta, thus avoiding the bloodshed that occurred soon after in Madiun.[1041] Rasjid even claimed that during his tenure as governor, Tan Malaka's supporters (led by Abdullah), PKI forces (led by Bachtaruddin) and Masjumi, which was dominant in the West Sumatran Komite Nasional Indonesia (KNI, effectively the provincial legislature), got along well; "there was mutual respect and willingness to cooperate."[1042] This cooperation and solidarity was the product not just of Minangkabau kinship relations or social norms which prized negotiation and reciprocity. It was at least partially a reflection of the overlap of Muslims and Marxists described in chapter two, in which activists like Leon Salim, Darwis Thaib, Maisir Thaib, and Tamar Djaja all managed to square their Muslim identity with participation in socialist organizations like the Pendidikan. Moreover, many of these *pergerakan* activists like Leon Salim (Pendidikan) and Muhammad Yamin (Gerindo) maintained clandestine links to Tan Malaka's PARI, via the Minangkabau diaspora.[1043] By the revolutionary period, cooperating with communists was simply not unusual because it had many historical precedents, and numerous republican leaders had themselves been participants in these overlapping networks of pre-war *pergerakan* activism.

[1040] "Signalement Toestand Padang Begin Augustus '46," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.
[1041] S.M. Rasjid, "Interview with St. M. Rasjid," interview by Audrey Kahin, May 18, 1976, 23–24.
[1042] *Ibid*., 23.
[1043] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interview by Audrey Kahin, June 8, 1985, 4, 8. Despite being a core Pendidikan activist in West Sumatra, Leon Salim also described himself as a "follower" of Tan Malaka, and recalled reading smuggled copies of *Obor* (PARI's newspaper) as well as other PARI brochures. Muhammad Yamin apparently helped facilitate financing for PARI and Pendidikan activities through his friend, the banker Anwar Sutan Saidi.

Dutch intelligence generally corroborates the situation described by Rasjid and Leon Salim. Dutch intelligence reports should be read carefully, since they were prone to overstating the influence of the PKI and the danger of communist insurrection. After all, forestalling the "radicalization" of the nationalist movement during the incipient Cold War was an important part of the Dutch argument for their continued presence in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the overall picture that emerges from these reports is one of remarkable republican unity. As early as August 1946, Dutch intelligence reported that the PKI's main fighting force in West Sumatra, the TMI, had begun to stockpile war material for Masjumi's militias (known collectively as *Tentara Allah*, God's Army) in the Republican-held countryside, in preparation for the latter's withdrawal from the Padang theater of operations.[1044] Another report from July 1948 pointed out that West Sumatra was unusual because "even the PKI has pledged its full support of the [republican] government until full independence is achieved. It has even promised the government its full support against anti-republican movements." [1045] This promise was made despite the fact that the local republican legislature, the KNI, was dominated by Masjumi, and governor Rasjid himself leaned toward Masjumi. Even speeches given by local republican officials were deeply Islamic in tenor, such as the one delivered by former assistant resident Djamil Djambek on January 6, 1947.[1046]

While there were certainly repeated instances of fighting between the TMI and Masjumi militias like Hezbollah and Sabilillah, the bulk of the internecine conflict in West Sumatra occurred between the official republican army and the Islamic militias.[1047] Dutch intelligence even noted attempts by the well-known Islamic communist and former Sumatra Thawalib teacher, Haji Datuk Batuah, to attract Muslim support for the PKI through "communist propaganda documents invoking Mohammedan religious predecessors" (though the Dutch judged this effort to be largely unsuccessful).[1048] Evidently, the West Sumatran republican factions were unusually

[1044] "Signalement Toestand Padang Begin Augustus '46," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.
[1045] NEFIS, "Anti-Republikeinse activiteit in SWK aanleiding tot openlijke Samenwerking van de Republiek op Sumatra met het communisme," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.
[1046] NEFIS, "Report no. 1050, Berichten Afd. VI, 11 Jan 1947," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.
[1047] "Geheim Mailrapport no. 728/AGSU," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486.
[1048] NEFIS, "Anti-Republikeinse activiteit in SWK aanleiding tot openlijke Samenwerking van de Republiek op Sumatra met het communisme," NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Rapportage Indonesië, 2.10.29, inv.nr. 486. According to this report, the Islamic communist Haji Datuk Batuah, whose newspapers are covered in chapter one, died sometime in August 1948.

cohesive, and tended to cooperate even when they disagreed intensely with one another on whether to obey the orders of the republican government regarding the Linggadjati and Renville agreements, or the status of negotiations with the Dutch. This was the result of decades of conciliation between Islam and Marxism, as shown in chapters one and two. This made for a revolutionary situation in which the PKI could generally cooperate with Masjumi, and also made possible the existence of organizations like the PKI Lokal Islamy.

Secondarily, there was the somewhat superficial, though genuine enough, appeal of communist ideas and slogans in West Sumatra's deeply Muslim society. Leon Salim recalled the Baso Affair, in which the republican army had crushed Tuanku Nan Putih and Tuanku Nan Hitam's branch of the PKI in the remote highlands of Baso, as a justifiable reaction to a radical and simplistic attempt to "apply" communist slogans to village life.[1049] He noted that both leaders were traditional Muslim leaders from the Baso area, and had received neither the modernist Muslim education available in West Sumatran towns like Padang Panjang nor the secular European education afforded by Dutch schools.[1050] Their participation in the 1926–27 uprisings had been premised on Islamic resistance to Dutch rule, for which the PKI was simply the most effective vehicle at the time; he reckoned that they understood almost nothing of communism.[1051] Leon Salim himself, being both a Muslim and receptive to Marxist ideas, did not see anything fundamentally wrong with conciliating Islam and Marxism, but he characterized Tuanku Nan Putih and Tuanku Nan Hitam's followers as "fanatics without limits."[1052] They attempted to literally create a society of "same level, same feeling" (*sama rata, sama rasa*) by robbing and reaving, redistributing property and killing those who opposed them.

Leon Salim explained that the PKI Baso only existed because slogans like *sama rata sama rasa* genuinely had powerful resonance with Minangkabau culture, and he brought up the PKI Lokal Islamy as well as the remarkably strong support for the PKI uprisings of 1926-27 in West Sumatra as further proof of this.[1053] Leon

[1049] Leon Salim, "Interview with Leon Salim," interviewed by Audrey Kahin, October 24, 1976.
[1050] *Ibid*., 63.
[1051] *Ibid*., 65.
[1052] *Ibid*., 64.
[1053] *Ibid*., 64.

Salim argued that the members of PKI Lokal Islamy and the PKI Baso did not understand much beyond the barest basics of communism, but their affective identification with communism could nevertheless happen because the Minangkabau were already a relatively worldly community (thanks to the practice of *perantau*, discussed in chapter two) whose social structures were markedly less hierarchical, more egalitarian, and more consultative than other Indonesian ethnic communities.[1054] These characteristics made communist slogans more appealing and communist affiliation less taboo to the Minangkabau; this was a contradiction which they seemed able to reconcile effortlessly, much as they had reconciled their proudly Islamic identity with the decidedly heterodox (in terms of *fiqh*) matrilineal structure of Minangkabau society.

This is not to suggest that there were no other dynamics at play. Martin van Bruinessen suggested, in his comparative analysis of Sufi militancy in Kurdistan and the Netherlands East Indies, that Sufi militancy was often the result of Sufi *shaykh* becoming politically prominent influence brokers amidst the collapse of traditional sources of political authority.[1055] This process had certainly occurred in both the Ottoman Empire and the NEI during the late nineteenth century, and Sufi *tarekat* – particularly the Qadiriyya-wa-Naqshbandiyya – had indeed played significant roles in both the 1888 rebellion in Banten and the 1916 rebellion in Jambi. Similarly, chapter one has shown how Sufi *tarekat* had a minor role to play in mobilizing support for the 1926–27 PKI uprisings in Banten and West Sumatra.[1056] It would be entirely reasonable to characterize the emergence of the PKI Lokal Islamy as a reaction of a very similar sort, especially given the political vacuum created by the end of the Japanese occupation and the beginning of the revolution. Under such conditions, Sufi leaders like Gani (it is unclear whether he was a Shattariyah *shaykh* or merely a *khalifa*) were able to consolidate their authority, raising armed bands to protect local interests or even reshape society in accordance with their ostensibly pious visions.

[1054] *Ibid*., 64. For more on the egalitarian and non-patriarchal aspects of Minangkabau social structures, see Jeffrey Hadler, *Muslims and Matriachs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia Through Jihad and Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).
[1055] Martin van Bruinessen, "The Naqshbandi Order as a Vehicle of Political Protest among the Kurds (With Some Comparative Notes on Indonesia)" (International Conference on New Approaches in Islamic Studies, Jakarta: Indonesian Institute of Sciences, 1986).
[1056] B.J.O. Schrieke, "The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra," ed. B.J.O. Schrieke (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1955), 83–166.

Without denying the validity of such factors, it is nevertheless important to recognize that the emergence of the PKI Lokal Islamy had been preceded by at least two decades of conciliation between Islam and Marxism in West Sumatra. Since Tan Malaka's rise to prominence in the 1920s, Marxism had entered the Minangkabau consciousness, and it had been appropriated to various degrees by different actors. Some, like Hatta or Leon Salim, were comfortable mixing their cerebral Marxist analytical frameworks with their Islamic faith. Others, like Tan Malaka, were more explicit about the compatibility of Islam and communism. The overlapping circles of Minangkabau *pergerakan* activists, most prominently between the Pendidikan and PARI but also between the Sumatra Thawalib schools and Permi, allowed Marxist ideas and rhetoric to circulate freely, while known communists like Tan Malaka and Digoel internees were elevated to the status of folk heroes. Under such circumstances, it is not entirely surprising that some Muslims would bend communism to suit their preferences, prejudices, and interests under the chaotic conditions of revolution.

Chapter 4: A Critical Ummah, A Conscious Proletariat

The spirit of creative adaptation, of articulating specifically Indonesian political visions, was characteristic of the parliamentary democracy period (1950–59). The period of parliamentary democracy spanned the achievement of formal political independence in January 1950 to the advent of guided democracy. Guided democracy was marked by the return to the 1945 constitution and the dissolution of the Constitutional Assembly (*Konstituante*) July 1959.[1057] During this period, parliament was the dominant conduit of political authority, and political parties jockeyed fiercely for power, both before and after the 1955 general election. Unfortunately, this also resulted in a revolving door of multi-party coalitions and short-lived cabinets. These visions for Indonesia were formulated in direct opposition to the privations of occupation and revolution, as well as the inequalities and indignities of colonial rule. All yearned for the prosperity and stability that independence had promised, but most disagreed on how this could be achieved. The eclectic and open-minded thought process underlying the formulation of such visions was eloquently expressed in the first issue of the cultural journal *Gelanggang*, in an article most likely authored by the filmmaker Asrul Sani[1058] and his associates:

> *"We are the legitimate heirs to the culture of the whole world, a culture which is ours to extend and develop in our own way. We are born of the common people; and for us this term implies the inchoate mass from which new and healthy worlds of thought and expression may be born… We do not wish to limit by a name this Indonesian culture of ours. On the other hand, we do not understand it as the refurbishing of something old to be a source of self-satisfaction; we envisage it as something vigorous and new. For this Indonesian culture will be determined by the manifold responses made on our part to stimuli from every corner of the globe, each one of them true to its own nature. And we will oppose any attempt to restrict or impede a re-examination of our scale of values."*[1059]

[1057] Various dates have been proposed for the beginning of the Guided Democracy period, notably August 17, 1957, when Soekarno laid out his "conception" (*konsepsi*) of Guided Democracy in full during his Independence Day address. This chapter will take the re-adoption of the 1945 constitution, which gave President Soekarno far more *pro forma* executive powers than in the provisional constitution of 1950, as the starting point for Guided Democracy, since this was when parliament's loss of primacy was legally formalized.

[1058] Asrul Sani (1926-2004) was an Indonesian poet and screenwriter strongly associated with the Angkatan 45, intellectuals and artists who had come of age during the revolution. Like many of his generation, he was strongly influenced by Marxist ideas and was generally supportive of Soekarno's guided democracy.

[1059] Gelanggang, "Heirs of Culture of the Whole World," trans. A.H. Johns, in *Indonesian Political Thinking*, 237–238

This chapter is titled "a critical *ummah*, a conscious proletariat" because many Muslims and Marxists were convinced of the importance of building a national community which was politically mature and independent-minded, regardless of whether this imagined community was structured along class or religious lines. They sought the cultivation of an Indonesian citizenry capable of formulating Indonesian solutions to the many socio-economic problems Indonesia faced in the aftermath of the revolution, but without committing ideologically and affectively to Washington, Moscow, or Beijing. Certainly, there were some Masjumi politicians who were particularly well-disposed to the USA's brand of liberal capitalism, and some PKI members who admired the statist authoritarianism of the USSR and PRC. For most republicans, however, these were not attractive models, and they sought an Indonesian approach to socio-economic development which would be equally comfortable drawing on Marxist critiques of capitalism as well as Islamic moral values. This Indonesian path forward could manifest itself in the desire for an Indonesian *ummah* that was, in the Masjumi politician Isa Anshary's words, "critical:"

> *"The struggle will not achieve its goal if we are satisfied with an audience which is great in number, but which is composed of corpses who obey orders without question; who are devoted but lacking in conviction. This is the 'discipline of corpses' seen in fascist and communist countries… Blessed is the* ummah *which has* ulama *capable of carrying out* ijtihad*, the basis of any* jihad*. Blessed is the Islamic struggle which possesses an ummah endowed with critical faculties."*[1060]

Alternatively, this aspiration could also manifest itself within a socialist framework, in the form of the PSI's desire for a citizenry composed of thinking individuals, regardless of whether they were blue collar or white collar, *rakyat* or *orang particulier*.[1061] As Sjahrir put it, a socialist society consisted of "conscious" citizens:

> *"We want a society consisting of people and of individuals who are conscious of themselves and their rights, composed of fully developed and emancipated individuals who are also conscious of their responsibilities toward society, able and willing to work within its framework for the sake of the common good. We are convinced that such a socialist society can only be achieved by people who have developed to full consciousness and maturity… we will not be able to come closer to the achievement of socialism through compulsion, or by deceiving the people, or by abusing their ignorance, as is often being done by movements which also call themselves socialist."*[1062]

[1060] Isa Anshary, "Ruh Intikad dan Idjtihad," in *Revolusi Islam* (Surabaya: Hasan Aidid, 1953), 31–34.
[1061] *Orang particulier* refers to white collar employees of Dutch or other foreign firms.
[1062] Sutan Sjahrir, *Indonesian Socialism* (Rangoon: Asian Socialist Publishing House, 1956), 21–22.

In the case of the PSI, there was a distinct continuity with the Pendidikan's pedagogical focus on educating cadres, on the triumph of *akal*, instead of rallying the masses through impassioned rhetoric.[1063] It certainly saw itself as a Marxist party and employed Marxist rhetoric, though it was so independent-minded and heterodox that several scholars have cast doubt on its Marxist credentials.[1064] What was indisputable, however, was the PSI's reliance on Marxist critiques of capitalism and its implacable opposition to the neo-Imperialist capitalism on offer during the cold war. The larger point is that both Marxists and Muslims, whether in the PSI, Masjumi, or other organizations, were deeply invested in the idea of cultivating an Indonesian national community that would organically develop its own way forward in an uncertain post-war world. Their desires for a "critical" *ummah*" or a "conscious" proletariat were expressions of the same impulse which militated against blindly accepting whatever the local Imam said in the mosque on Friday, or uncritically believing whatever *Pravda* printed. Instead, the discursive climate of parliamentary democracy was one which encouraged intellectual independence and inquiry, allowing Muslims to explore and selectively incorporate Marxist ideas, while also allowing Marxists to formulate distinctly Indonesian approaches to socialism.

The international context was conducive to this sampling and adaptation. Su-Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte rightly point out that scholarly analyses of the Bandung conference, with a few notable exceptions, have tended to focus on diplomatic initiatives while overlooking the Indonesian context for the conference.[1065] Not only did the Bandung conference emerge out of a specifically Indonesian political context – the politically chaotic, intellectually freewheeling, and emotionally positivist era of parliamentary democracy, it also grew out of a nascent Afro-Asian anti-Imperial solidarity that was clearly visible by at least 1948 in the form of the Southeast Asian Youth Conference held in Calcutta. This incipient solidarity would go on to make possible the Non-Aligned Movement of the Cold War, as well as various "other Bandungs" at the sub-state level, but it also had

[1063] Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia*, Studies on Southeast Asia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), 406.
[1064] Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), 130.
[1065] Su Lin Lewis and Carolien Stolte, "Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War," *Journal of World History* 30, no. 1–2 (June 2019): 3.

domestic reverberations.[1066] The world of anticolonial solidarity, which partially overlapped with a class-conscious proletarian solidarity, came to visit Indonesia in Bandung in 1955. The Bandung conference functioned as a symbol, or perhaps manifestation, of the intellectual openness that Indonesians embraced during the revolutionary and the parliamentary democracy periods. It was highly visible proof that Indonesians were indeed, as they claimed, heirs to world culture.

Conference participants were happy to learn selectively from both sides of the Cold War divide, while rejecting allegiance to either. Rejecting continuity with the colonial order, and simultaneously refusing to accept the neo-Imperialist *realpolitik* offered by the USA and the USSR, the nations gathered at Bandung represented a spirit of independent-minded inquiry which reflected Indonesian intellectual dynamism, and in its turn the conference further galvanized Indonesian intellectual life. The Bandung conference was partly an expression of the political tenor of parliamentary democracy, but it also provided the international climate, networks, resources, and state patronage which facilitated the articulation of uniquely Indonesian solutions to the thorny questions of how to build prosperous and egalitarian postcolonial societies.[1067] Put another way, the "other Bandungs" analyzed in Lewis and Stolte's anthology found domestic expression in Indonesia itself.

Lewis and Stolte acknowledge that the atmosphere of the Bandung conference, as well as that of the "other Bandungs," was distinctly left-leaning although not all participants were Marxists.[1068] These conferences and the very real connections they forged between state and non-state actors created conducive environments for the formulation of a multiplicity of Asian socialisms. Each was cognizant of specific cultural conditions prevailing in their societies, but they also valued international solidarity and collaboration. The Burma socialist party and India's Praja Socialist Party were particularly good examples of independent-minded Marxists who felt free to criticize both cold war superpowers, and to formulate distinct national approaches to socialism built on

[1066] *Ibid*., 5.
[1067] *Ibid*., 4–5.
[1068] *Ibid*., 10.

democratic socialism, anti-imperialism, and Afro-Asian solidarity.[1069] This was a conducive regional environment for Indonesian Marxism to further evolve along its own trajectory, primarily in response to domestic rather than Cold War considerations.

The "Third Force" or "Third Camp" that postcolonial and anticolonial leaders sought to midwife in Bandung and other conferences encouraged creative and diverse Asian socialisms, which took pride in their indigenous identities without attempting to recapture some ahistorical golden age. For many Indonesians, those indigenous identities included Islam.[1070] As Stolte eloquently puts it, the environment was one of "polyphonic internationalism that enabled the activists in this movement to imagine visions for Afro-Asia and Afro-Asian decolonization."[1071] It was within such an environment that Islam and Marxism could coexist, and not only in Indonesia.[1072] Unlike the heady 1920s, Marxism was not understood as the most effective vehicle for the fulfilment of Islamic goals. Rather, Islamic identity, with its attached norms and values, was accepted as a necessary part of the calculations of any would-be Indonesian Marxist movement, whether political parties like the PKI and the PSI, or civil society organizations like the Barisan Buruh Wanita (BBW, Women Workers Front) and Gerwis (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Sedar, Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women, later to become Gerwani). To be authentically Indonesian, and to formulate Indonesian socialism meaningfully, they would necessarily have to reckon with Indonesian Islam.

International context aside, the still-evolving norms of republican politics and chronic instability of republican coalition governments during parliamentary democracy created an extremely fluid political situation in which all kinds of parliamentary coalitions between Muslims and Marxists were made possible, sometimes even desirable. The dissolution of the federal *Republik Indonesia Sarekat* (RIS, United States of Indonesia), which

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[1069] Su Lin Lewis, "Asian Socialism and the Forgotten Architects of Post-Colonial Freedom, 1952-1956," *Journal of World History* 30, no. 1–2 (June 2019): 63–66, 72.
[1070] *Ibid*., 66. Lewis rightly points out that concepts like the Third Force and Third Camp were formulated by independent-minded Asian socialists such as Ram Manohar Lohia of India and U Kyaw Nyein of Burma, not by Nehru or Soekarno.
[1071] Carolien Stolte, "'The People's Bandung': Local Anti-Imperialists on an Afro-Asian Stage," *Journal of World History* 30, no. 1–2 (June 2019): 130.
[1072] Lewis and Stolte, "Other Bandungs," 10.

the Dutch had brokered at the Round Table Conference of 1949, led to the formation of a unitary Republic of Indonesia in August 1950. This consolidation had the effect of introducing several new factions (the Sarekat Kerakjatan Indonesia and Fraksi Demokrat) into an already incredibly heterogenous parliament. In the absence of proper elections, which the exigencies of revolution had prevented, the Indonesian unicameral legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) of the pre-1955 period had an understandably strong tendency to be as inclusive and representative as possible. For example, its 16 constituent parties included representatives of minor parties such as the Partai Katolik (Catholic Party) and Parkindo (Indonesian Christian Party), which represented a total of four million Christians out of a total Indonesian population of nearly 70 million. Numerous other smaller parties such as the Partai Murba (Murba Party), Partai Buruh (Labor Party) and Partai Rakyat Nasional (National People's Party, PRN), representing regional and class interests, also held parliamentary seats.

Until the 1955 elections, the main parliamentary players were Soekarno's Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) with 41 seats, Sjahrir's Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) with 15 seats, and the modernist Islamic party Masjumi with 50 seats, although the Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) broke away from Masjumi in 1947 and 1952 respectively, taking their parliamentary seats with them. Taken collectively, small parties were so numerous that they effectively denied the major players the parliamentary seats required to form majority governments. Instead, coalition governments were the order of the day. While parliamentary alignments shifted repeatedly, all Muslim parties (particularly the PSII and NU) demonstrated willingness to cooperate with Marxist parties (including the Partai Murba, Partai Buruh, PKI, and PSI) at the parliamentary level on multiple occasions.

The composition of parliament necessitated broad coalitions in the absence of a power-sharing deal between the major parliamentary blocs. Disagreements over the distribution of ministerial positions were endemic, and Masjumi in particular tended to resent the fact that it clearly had a very broad – if loosely organized – electoral

base, yet rarely received a commensurate number of prominent ministerial positions.[1073] This often derailed negotiations with the PNI, pushing formateurs to seek coalitions with the numerous smaller parties, which could easily be enticed to support the government in return for relatively fewer, and less prominent, ministerial positions. Within the many short-lived cabinets, most lasting for less than a year, all kinds of eclectic combinations were possible, and these parliamentary coalitions generated an accompanying rhetoric of cooperation and solidarity. This rhetoric might have been easy to dismiss as a collection of fine but empty sentiments, if not for the long relationship between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia.

For example, Ali Sastroamidjojo's first cabinet, which was convened by the PNI and lasted from August 1953 to July 1955, secured the participation of PSII and NU ministers alongside those of Marxist parties like the PKI-linked Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasants' Front) and the Partai Buruh (Labor Party). Interestingly, two non-party ministers in this cabinet, Iwa Koesoema Soemantri and Muhammad Yamin, both had strong Marxist backgrounds – Yamin in particular was closely connected to Tan Malaka – but were also known to be staunch Muslims. Masjumi, which was unambiguously anti-PKI, was scandalized by NU's participation in a cabinet that the PKI publicly supported, although the PKI had not been granted any ministerial positions.[1074] Such governing coalitions of Muslims and Marxists were made possible by parliament's heterogeneity, and they in turn facilitated discursive conciliation between Islam and Marxism within other sectors of society, as the normalcy of cooperation between Muslims and Marxists established itself within the Indonesian political imagination.

Naturally, Muslim responses to the possibility of cooperation with Marxists were not monolithic. While the top NU leadership, including *Rais Am* (chairman) K.H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah, Vice-President K.H. Dahlan, and president of *Anshor* (NU's youth movement) Imron Rosjadi, had all clearly condemned the PKI, other prominent personages like the leader of NU's parliamentary fraction A.S. Bachmid were perfectly prepared to

[1073] Rémy Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia: The Masjumi Party between Democracy and Integralism*, trans. Jeremy Desmond (Singapore: NUS Press, 2015), 125.
[1074] *Ibid*., 145.

cooperate with the PKI.[1075] In October 1954, Bachmid publicly dismissed concerns that the PKI was on the cusp of power, and baldly stated that the cooperation between NU and PKI was founded on a "common understanding of desired goals," as well as plain "common sense."[1076] In January 1955, the leader of NU's East Java branch, Murtadji Bisri, publicly disagreed with Masjumi's assumption that Islamic law and communism were mutually exclusive; he argued that this was a polarizing discourse which could potentially undermine national unity.[1077] In a similar vein, PSII president Arudji Kartawinata (S. Yati's husband) publicly affirmed that the alliance between nationalists, communists and Muslims in the first Ali cabinet was "based on obvious reasons."[1078] On its part, the PKI made much of its openness to all religions, which was entirely consistent with the friendly approach to Islam that Tan Malaka, Darsono and Semaun had first championed in the 1920s. In March 1954, the PKI's top leader, D.N. Aidit, even publicly argued at a rally in Malang that the PKI and not Masjumi was the true defender of Islamic values: "The Prophet was not a man whose ideas were like Masjumi's, his Islam was better than Masjumi's Islam. To vote for Masjumi is to wish for the world to go to hell. To join Masjumi is *haram* (forbidden), whereas to join the PKI is *halal* (permissible)."[1079]

At a more informal level, cooperation and mutual regard often existed between Muslim and Marxist politicians, both within and without parliament. Madinier argues that Masjumi leaders at both the local and national levels worked to minimize conflict between Masjumi supporters and PKI members, because they "made a clear distinction between an ideological battle and their struggle against communists, and often maintained cordial relations with their counterparts in the PKI."[1080] Umar Suriatmadja, a Masjumi branch leader in Bandung, regularly invited members of the local PKI branch to family and religious events, and was invited to their houses in turn.[1081] Natsir himself, who became the dominant Masjumi leader from 1950 onward, was repeatedly

[1075] *Ibid*., 144.
[1076] "Reparasi Kabinet Minggu Ini," *Abadi*, October 25, 1954.
[1077] "Agama dan Politik," *Abadi*, January 10, 1955. Bisri's article was originally published in *Keng Po*.
[1078] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 145.
[1079] Organisasi Pembela Islam, *Peristiwa rapat P.K.I. di Malang, 28 Maret 1954* (Malang: Organisasi Pembela Islam, 1954).
[1080] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 152.
[1081] *Ibid*., 153.

seen having tea with his PKI counterpart, D.N. Aidit, at the parliamentary cafeteria during the 1950s.[1082] These personal and professional courtesies were reflections of republicans' mutual respect for one another's credentials and goals, even if they disagreed intensely on policy or identity. They would also help lubricate the friction generated by their ideological differences, enabling Marxist parties to regularly cooperate with Muslim ones in parliament and in government. After the 1955 elections, which saw the PSI lose a significant number of parliamentary seats and the PKI rise to electoral prominence, both main parliamentary blocs were composed of Muslim and Marxist parties. On one hand, Masjumi, PSI, Parkindo, and Partai Katolik were generally aligned; on the other, the PNI, PKI, PSII and NU were often in coalition under Soekarno's patronage.

Keeping in mind the conducive international situation, the endemic domestic political instability, and the perceptible (if waning) remnants of republican solidarity and mutual respect across the political spectrum, this chapter will examine confluences of Islam and Marxism both in and out of parliament, among the republican elite and the nascent middle class, and in fiction as well as in reality. This chapter uses a range of sources: books published by Masjumi parliamentarians, transcripts of debates held in the Constitutional Assembly, memoirs of pious communists, newspapers affiliated with minor Marxist parties and civil society organizations, Islamic poetry circulating during the 1950s, and plays produced by PKI-affiliated organizations. In doing so, it will show how being "heirs to world culture" involved a process of creative adaptation and dynamic translation, but on Indonesian terms and in response to perceived Indonesian needs.

Muslim parliamentarians and the lure of socialism

Socialism exerted gravitational pull on Indonesian political thinking from at least the 1920s until the 1960s, and its enduring appeal was apparent even in Muslim circles. As explained above, the international and domestic climate of Indonesia during the parliamentary democracy period facilitated Muslim engagement with socialist ideas in new ways, engagements which went beyond the optimistic Islamic communism of Haji Misbach or

[1082] *Ibid*., 153.

Haji Datuk Batuah.[1083] In any case, the *kaum muda* that formed the intellectual backbone of Masjumi were already predisposed by their training in Mohammad Abduh's modernist jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to be open to open to socialist ideas emanating from Europe and other parts of the Muslim world, although they were never uncritical observers.[1084] Within Masjumi, Mohammed Natsir (1908–93) and his associates, primarily Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Abu Hanifah, Kasman Singodimedjo, Jusuf Wibisono, and to a limited extent even the radical Isa Anshary, constituted the backbone of Masjumi's modernist wing, and were described by George Kahin as "religious socialists."[1085] Not without cause did Sjahrir boldly proclaim that "…among the many political parties in present day Indonesia, there is not one party that does not express its sympathies for a socialist and collectivist society, nor is there any party today that advocates unlimited free economic enterprise or free competition. We in Indonesia are all socialists, or at least, socialistically inclined and such is also the spirit of our constitution..."[1086]

From 1950 onward, these modernists became increasingly dominant in Masjumi, successfully competing with the older and more conservative wing of the party led by Soekiman for party leadership and ministerial roles.[1087] Mostly Dutch-educated and fluent in several European languages (usually Dutch, English and German), these Masjumi intellectuals were well-read and familiar with European Marxist ideas. Their writings evince a strong acquaintance with Dutch communist literature rather than Soviet propaganda, though none of them appear to have read Marx or Engels's major works rigorously. Several of them even seemed ignorant of Marx's own bourgeois background and assumptions, aggrandizing him as a working-class champion in ways reminiscent of the panegyrics associated with Sufi saints. As their references will show, their analyses of Marxism's relevance for Indonesia drew primarily on Western European Marxist and Anarchist literature, from Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to Henriette Roland Holst, rather than Comintern publications. Marx's historical materialism was clearly transgressive for them, but they perceived in Marx's critique of capital important lessons for Indonesia,

[1083] Both are examined in chapter one.
[1084] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 20.
[1085] George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), 309–10.
[1086] Sjahrir, *Indonesian Socialism*, 30–31.
[1087] Madinier, *Islam and Politics*, 46.

and resonances with Islamic goals. Accordingly, they sought to synthesize Marxist ideas in a way that would positively shape Indonesia's socio-economic structures, rather than to justify alignment with the USSR or the PRC. This section will explore the discursive output of these Muslim modernists, and demonstrate their receptivity to socialism as well as their adaptations of it within an Islamic framework.

Masjumi marketed itself as an Islamic party, but what that meant is rather more complicated than it might first appear. Madinier has made a crucial observation about the diversity of ideas circulating within Masjumi circles: "The surprising discovery that there could coexist within a single group, and sometimes even within a single leader, two apparently contradictory positions leads one to the conclusion that, as far as Indonesia is concerned at least, the idea of a clear and unambiguous border between secularism and religion needs to be revised."[1088] Madinier characterized Masjumi as a party which had little to no nostalgia for an imagined utopia in seventh century Arabia, twelfth century Baghdad, or even an Indonesian golden age (Islamic or otherwise). The references to Indonesia's past that did exist in Masjumi literature concerned Islam's role in mobilizing resistance to the Dutch, particularly during the Aceh, Java and Padri Wars.[1089] This was Islam not as a set of codified laws with which to govern society, but Islam as activism, Islam as justice, and Islam in service to the nation. Madinier described this as the instilling of a "revolutionary spirit" in every believer: this articulation of Islam, especially in service to the imagined community, made it particularly amenable to conciliation with other creeds which also laid claim to a tradition of activism, justice, and service to the nation, such as the Tan Malaka's brand of communism.[1090] Furthermore, the intellectual references of Masjumi publications, of which fifteen were examined by Madinier, were rooted in the European intellectual tradition rather than Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*) or jurisprudential interpretation (*ijtihad*).[1091] This was an incarnation of Muslim politics that took as its starting point the feasibility of combining Islamic identity and broadly-defined Islamic principles

[1088] *Ibid*., xv.
[1089] *Ibid*., 7.
[1090] *Ibid*., 10.
[1091] *Ibid*., 6.

(instead of formal *fiqh*) with the political traditions of Europe and America. This openness was what made possible for conciliations between Islam and socialist ideas.

One such open-minded writer, whose Islamic faith was informed by or articulated in relation to socialist ideas, was Jusuf Wibisono (b. 1909). He had cut his teeth as a *pergerakan* activist in the Bandung branch of the Jong Islamitien Bond (JIB, Islamic Youth League) during the 1930s, publishing Islam-oriented books such as *Monogamy or Polygamy: A Never-ending Question* (1937).[1092] A close associate of Sukiman – Natsir's rival for the leadership of Masjumi – as well as part of Masjumi's "brains trust" in his own right, he was a prolific writer who also served as finance minister in Sukiman's cabinet (April 1951 – February 1952) and in Ali Sastromidjojo's second cabinet (March 1956 – March 1957).[1093] In Masjumi's internal factional politics, the Sukiman-Wibisono axis was the counterpart to the Natsir-Prawiranegara axis: both Prawiranegara and Wibisono tended to serve in finance-related positions when their respective allies were in power. Trained as a lawyer in the Dutch Rechts Hooge School in Batavia, he was a close associate of both Mohamad Roem and Kasman Singodimedjo and left the JIB in 1934 to found the Studenten Islam Studie-club (Islamic students study club) with Roem in 1934.[1094] During his time at the Islamic students study club, he edited the Dutch-language newspaper *Moslims Reveil* and came into contact with many of Masjumi's future leaders in the 1950s, such as Burhanuddin Harahap and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, although the latter never joined Wibisono's organization.[1095] Madinier pointed out that Wibisono, like Natsir, Roem, Harahap, and Singodimedjo, was part of the Javanese contingent of modernist Muslim intellectuals who would come to political maturity in Masjumi during the parliamentary democracy period. The other component was to be found in Medan, Sumatra, where like-minded modernist Muslims such as Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Yunan Nasution, and Abu Hanifah were coming of age during the 1930s, partially under Hamka's wing.[1096] Unsurprisingly, many of these Sumatran activists

[1092] Karel A. Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam: Contacts and Conflicts, 1596–1950*, trans. Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), 138.
[1093] Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, 152.
[1094] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 47.
[1095] *Ibid*., 48.
[1096] *Ibid*., 48.

had been members of the Islamic socialist organization Permi in the 1930s, and their political ideas in the 1950s bore the mark of these formative experiences.

Jusuf Wibisono's *Islam dan Sosialisme* was published in 1950, at the beginning of the parliamentary democracy period. By Wibisono's own admission, it was a direct descendant of Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924), examined in chapter one.[1097] The political context for its publication was several years of cooperation in the *de facto* republican parliament, the KNIP (*Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat*, Central Indonesian National Committee) between the PSI and Masjumi in forming cabinets during the revolution, which created an environment conducive to putting Islam in dialogue with socialism at an ideological level. Much of Wibisono's book was pedagogical in tone and clarificatory in purpose, attempting to explain Marxism to its readers remarkably rigorously. Instead of deploying rousing rhetoric or concise summaries, it provided substantial amounts of background information to help readers situate Marxism. In that regard, there were even some similarities to Tan Malaka's didactic approach to Marxism, evident in *Islam dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948).

Wibisono's connection to Tjokroaminoto was explicit: he referenced Tjokroaminoto's earlier, and probably eponymous, book in his opening sentence. Wibisono posited that Tjokroaminoto's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924) was deeply necessary at the time because of the charges laid against Sarekat Islam, such as accusations that Islam only looked out for the interests of Muslims without adequately addressing political, social and economic issues in a plural society. Wibisono argued that "socialism is not a political path [*aliran politik*] that can be ignored, especially not by Islamic parties, which have to determine their own attitudes towards socialism, just as Christians have done in the West."[1098] Wibisono also situated the dialogue between Islam and socialism within a longer conversation that had occurred not only in Indonesia, but also in South Asia, as part of an older, broader discourse across the Muslim world. he cited M.H. Kidwai's *Islam and Socialism* (1912), published in English in British India, as a precursor to Tjokroaminoto's book.[1099] He also cited M. Barazi's *Islamisme et Sosialisme*

[1097] Jusuf Wibisono, *Islam Dan Sosialisme*, vol. 1 (Djakarta: Pustaka Islam, 1950), 3.
[1098] *Ibid*., 3.
[1099] *Ibid*., 3.

(1929) as a continuation the dialogue of which Tjokroaminoto's book (and presumably, his own book as well) was a part, although he criticized Barazi for paying insufficient attention to Marxist historical materialism, class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and theories of nation-state formation.[1100]

This emphasis on South Asian connections was likely reflective of the international climate of postcolonial third world solidarity which pervaded the 1950s. Stolte describes the Marxist *ulama* Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (1880–1976) of East Pakistan speaking at the 1955 "People's Bandung" conference in New Delhi, at which Bhashani invoked Allah's blessing on the participants and their efforts to promote global peace and socio-economic justice.[1101] Earlier generations of Indonesian Muslims like Tjokroaminoto would probably have identified with Stolte's characterization of Bhashani: "The activism of people like Maulana Bhashani demonstrates that the question of whether he was a 'Marxist or a Maulana [Islamic scholar]' was not one he would ask of himself… Bahshani showed that both traditions belonged in the soil of Bengal."[1102] Wibisono was the product of that discursive tradition, which unfolded across the Muslim world, though he interrogated Islam's relationship with socialism more attentively than Tjokroaminoto had.

Wibisono's main point, in the opening pages of his book, was to make clear that there existed many interpretations of socialism, and that their intellectual genealogies involved many more contributors than Marx alone.[1103] He explicitly stated that his purpose was to highlight the points of compatibility and incompatibility between Islam and Marx's approach to socialism/communism, as well as Lenin and Stalin's applications of Marx's ideas.[1104] This attempt to conciliate Islam and socialism was one that admitted the desirability of engagement, normalizing it as something that had already occurred in both Indonesia and other parts of the Muslim world. It was also analytically flexible and broad-minded in its approach to Marxism, treating Marx's

[1100] *Ibid*., 5.
[1101] Stolte, "The People's Bandung," 148.
[1102] *Ibid*., 155.
[1103] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 3, 6–22.
[1104] *Ibid.*, 5.

ideas not as comprehensive dogma but one among many contributions to the ideal of building a socialist society.

Erudite and widely read, Wibisono's first two chapters, titled "the origins and meanings of the word 'socialism'" and "various paths to socialism," were effectively exercises in translating Europe to Indonesia. He sketched the intellectual trajectories of socialism, making clear his opinion that socialism was related to but distinct from communism. Drawing on a wide range of European intellectuals, he summarized the ideas of Joseph Proudhon, Wilbur White, Hendrik de Man and Marx, along with those of Robert Owen, Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Mikhail Bakunin.[1105] His list of referents was so long as to be nearly exhaustive, although he was limited to providing glosses of their ideas and how they fit into an evolving tradition of socialist thinking. Unsurprisingly, Wibisono was deeply critical of Lenin and Stalin, arguing that the that the USSR had not lived up to Marx's vision or what Wibisono understood as the principles of socialism; rather, the USSR could only be called socialist to the extent that the CPSU was in a position of total power.[1106] To Wibisono, Marx's socialism, developed in dialogue with many other thinkers and activists, had been inappropriately incarnated as the communism of the USSR. What was now called communism was in reality an amalgam of Marx's theories and the dogmas introduced by Lenin and Stalin.[1107] Wibisono argued that Lenin's dictatorial approach to implementing Marx's ideas was considered by many to be a betrayal of true Marxism, and that this form of communism in Indonesia was represented by the discredited Musso.[1108]

Armed with his appreciation for the multiplicity of socialism's intellectual contributors, as well as his clear distinction between the communism of the contemporary USSR and Marx's ideas, Wibisono went on to explore various formulations of religious socialism in the second volume of *Islam dan Sosialisme*. Drawing on the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), whose early attraction to Marxism had been tempered by Christian existentialism, a dogged emphasis on individual freedoms, and implacable opposition to the

[1105] *Ibid*., 6 - 11.
[1106] *Ibid*., 21–22.
[1107] *Ibid*., 23.
[1108] Jusuf Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, vol. 2 (Djakarta: Pustaka Islam, 1950), 5, 10.

authoritarian state, Wibisono wrote that the Russian Orthodox church was no longer considered an opponent of the state, nor religion considered the opiate of the masses.[1109] However, he agreed with Berdyaev's assertion that this was only for the time being: after all, Christians who preached the compatibility of Christianity and communism, like the Swede Gunnar Hedlund, had been expelled from the Third International.[1110] Wibisono did not believe that soviet communism would ever truly accommodate religion, though it might make tactical concessions to that end. He did, however, explore a range of Christian intellectuals and activists who had theorized the compatibility of Christianity and socialism, including the Anglican clergymen Charles Kingsley and Frederick Dennison Maurice, whose Christian Socialist Movement (1848–54) had proclaimed Christian values as the only solid foundation for socialism, while agreeing with Marx's analysis in *Das Kapital*.[1111] Drawing on the writings of the German Catholic Wilhelm Hohoff and the Dutch Reformed Minister and parliamentarian Aritius Sybrandus Talma, he sketched the outlines of European Christian socialism and labor activism upon which Islamic socialism could be modelled.[1112]

More explicitly, in a section titled "Islam and Marx's socialism," Wibisono argued that Islam was at least partially compatible with Marx's ideas.[1113] Wibisono posited that Marx's concern for humanity, his aims, and his honorable principles (*tjita-tjita mulia*), "displayed the qualities of prophethood."[1114] Marx was described by Wibisono as almost an ascetic, and as being in a state of seclusion (*bertapa*), enduring his own physical suffering as well as that of his family with a "pure heart" (*kesucian hati*) in order to discern the root causes of the laboring classes' suffering.[1115] "He struggled until his last breath to free the proletariat from their suffering," which Wibisono considered a touching (*mengharukan*) life story, embodying the values of "simplicity and

[1109] *Ibid*., 10. Wibisono was drawing from Berdyaev's *Origin of Russian Communism* (1937), which he had read in Dutch translation as N.A. Berdjaev and A. Kosloff, *Beteekenis en Oorsprong van het Russische Communisme*, second ed. (Amsterdam and Antwerp: Kompas, 1948).
[1110] *Ibid*., 10.
[1111] *Ibid*., 17–22.
[1112] *Ibid*., 18–20.
[1113] *Ibid*, 24.
[1114] *Ibid*., 22.
[1115] *Ibid*., 22.

sincerity."[1116] This positioning of Marx within an Islamic, even Sufi, frame of reference is truly remarkable, and serves as an excellent example of how Marxism was necessarily refracted through the identities and cultural lenses of Indonesian Muslims when they came into contact with Marx's ideas.

To support these arguments, Wibisono quoted two Qur'anic verses and one *hadith*; the verses were Surah an-Nisa, 135 and Surah al-Balad, 12–16, although no reference was provided for the *hadith*. The Qur'anic verses exhorted Muslims to avoid injustice, to free bondsmen, to feed the hungry, to care for the orphaned, and to provide for the homeless.[1117] Citing these verses, Wibisono argued that while Muhammad's teachings were not the same as Marx's call to "defend the proletariat against the capitalists," the historical context of Muhammad's era must be taken into account; the conditions of exploitation that Marx was reacting to were simply not present in Muhammad's day.[1118] However, "the intentions behind these Qur'anic commandments were consistent with Marx's plan to build a workers movement that would oppose the injustices of capitalism."[1119] Wibisono even pointedly used Marxist frames of analysis, acknowledging that it was unjust for capitalists to profit from the surplus value of the proletariat's labor.[1120] At the same time, he drew on Qur'anic verses like Surah al-Bara'at, 34 to show that the Qur'an prohibited the unlimited accumulation of capital, as well as unspecified *hadith* to show that monopolistic trade practices were un-Islamic.[1121] Extrapolating directly from the Qur'an to induce the values and goals of Islam, Wibisono perceived a fundamental compatibility between some of Marx's goals and those of Islam.

Wibisono did not arrive at this conclusion via an exercise in formal jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Wibisono was effectively invoking *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*, the goals that *shari'a* law aimed to promote. [1122] This interpretation is

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[1116] *Ibid*., 22.
[1117] *Ibid*., 22.
[1118] *Ibid*., 23.
[1119] *Ibid*., 23.
[1120] *Ibid*., 23.
[1121] *Ibid*., 26.
[1122] *Maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* was first conceptually laid out by the famed classical jurist al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE) and can loosely be defined as the social goals promoted by Shari'a. It is closely related to *maṣlaḥa* (public interest or welfare). Most Sunni jurists agree with al-Ghazali that *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* consists of at least five goals, namely the promotion of religion, life, intellect, offspring, and property. Jurists are deeply divided over how to operationalize this legal principle, however. A minority of progressive jurists, including Rashid Rida, have used it as an independent source of law. See Jonathan A. C. Brown, "Maṣlaḥah," in *The Oxford*

founded upon his telling assertion that Muslims were not obligated to promote "specific material goals or economic arrangements, but rather spiritual goals: after all, the revelation received by Muhammad in Mecca did not concern matters of this world, but matters of the spiritual and divine realm."[1123] The implication was that Muslims were free to formulate the structure of their societies in accordance with Islamic values, to achieve Islamic ends. This was a position also taken by Soekarno in his correspondence with the Persis leader Ahmad Hassan, examined in chapter two. Furthermore, Wibisono pointed out that the Qur'an had not one but five injunctions calling on Muslims to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed.[1124] He also drew an explicit analogy between enslaved persons of the seventh century and the proletariat of the nineteenth century. According to Wibisono, just as the Qur'an instructed Muslims to alleviate the suffering of the enslaved, Muslims were similarly instructed to alleviate the suffering of the proletariat, who were the modern counterparts of seventh century slaves. Wibisono also pointed out that the Marx never claimed that exploitation of the weak only came with the advent of capitalism; the phenomenon already existed in antiquity (*zaman purbakala*).[1125] The current exploitation of the working class by capitalists, which began in the nineteenth century, thus made them the modern equivalent of the enslaved (*budak-belian*) in antiquity, because it was an extension of the same phenomenon.[1126] Here Wibisono was effectively exercising *ijtihad*, perhaps even using the component of *fiqh* known as *qiyas* (analogical reasoning), in an unstructured and informal way that had more to do with the spirit of the *shari'a* than the letter of *shari'a*. As we will see throughout this section, this sort of thinking was characteristic of the progressive wing of Masjumi.

Perhaps the best way to describe Wibisono's understanding of the relationship between Islam and Marx's ideas would be to use the image of "fellow travelers," which is appropriate given the term's specific associations in Marxist circles. In Wibisono's opinion, "... the principles which animated Marx and for which he fought all his

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Encyclopedia of the Islamic World (Oxford University Press, 2009), and Adis Duderija, "Contemporary Muslim Reformist Thought and Maqāṣid cum Maṣlaḥa Approaches to Islamic Law: An Introduction," in *Maqasid al-Shari'a and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought: An Examination*, ed. Adis Duderija (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2014).

[1123] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, Vol. 2, 33.

[1124] *Ibid*., 22.

[1125] *Ibid*., 23.

[1126] *Ibid*., 23.

life were along the same path as outlined by the teachings of Islam" (*menurut pendapat saja, tjita-tjita jang mendorong Marx untuk berdjoang selama hidupnja, adalah sedjalan dengan peladjaran Islam*).[1127] He also characterized Marx's ideas as "intersecting" (*bersimpangan*) with Islam's teachings, though he freely admitted that there were clear differences between Islam and Marxism regarding Marx's fundamental worldview (*dasar pemandangan hidoep*), as well as on the new society that Marxists sought to create.[1128] In delineating the points of convergence and divergence between Islam and Marxism, Wibisono made a clear distinction between Marxist economic theory and historical materialism. While he accepted Marx's economic analysis of recurrent crises and the extraction of surplus value in capitalism as accurate and useful for Muslims, he rejected historical materialism on the basis that socio-economic conditions did not constitute the ultimate determinant of humanity's fate – the exercise of humanity's free will could be decisive as well.[1129] Accepting Marx's analytical concept of surplus value, and the ensuing struggle between capitalists and workers to extract the maximum amount of surplus value (*nilai-lebih*), Wibisono argued that Islam clearly sided with the working class because it opposed exploitation.[1130] He cited Surah al-Baqarah, 275 – a Qur'anic verse which prohibits *riba* (usury) – to support this argument, on the grounds that the profits extracted through colonial capitalism were clearly exploitative in the same way *riba* was.[1131]

This was important for at least two reasons. Firstly, Wibisono was articulating support for some Marxist ideas within an Islamic hermeneutical framework, even though he concluded that Marx's philosophy was, *in toto*, ultimately incompatible with Islam.[1132] Second, he was approaching Marxism not as monolithic political credo

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[1127] *Ibid*., 24.
[1128] *Ibid*., 24.
[1129] *Ibid*., 24.
[1130] *Ibid*., 29.
[1131] *Ibid*., 25. Interestingly, Wibisono drew on Tjokroaminoto's argument in *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1924) that Islam was fiercely opposed to capitalism. However, he also admitted the possibility of an "Islamic capitalism" that was distinct from "Western capitalism," inextricably tied as the latter was to imperial conquest and racialized colonial domination. What Wibisono seemed to mean by "Islamic capitalism" was the permissibility of capital accumulation as long as it was tempered by care for one's fellow men, but it was clear that he remained implacably opposed to interest-bearing loans and the primacy of the profit motive, both central features of capitalism anywhere. "Islamic capitalism" may thus be a misnomer; it would be more accurate to say that Wibisono was articulating his opposition to a planned economy, collectivized agriculture/industry, and the centralization of administrative authority in the state *à la* the USSR or PRC.
[1132] *Ibid*, 27. By Marx's philosophy, Wibisono meant historical materialism and its exclusion of individual human or divine agency. This was in contrast to Marx's economic theories, which Wibisono clearly found compelling.

or dogma, but instead with an appreciation of the usefulness of its analytical frameworks; he did not see any need to accept Marx's historical materialism in order to find its critique of capitalism germane, nor did Marx's atheistic criticisms of religion delegitimize his more useful contributions. This was a form of political Islam which felt free to draw on the lessons the rest of the world had to offer, without needing to defend the "Islamicity" of its adaptations.

This was also an approach to Islam which emphasized its "dynamic" (*dynamische*) and "enterprising" (*giat*) character, explicitly proclaiming Islam's moral duty to support the working class (*kaum buruh*) and calling on the working class to unionize and agitate against employers to defend their rights if necessary.[1133] It did not however, extend to condoning class war or the proletariat's seizure of political power. Wibisono's book was an adaptation of Marx's ideas which drew on Marx wherever it felt appropriate to do so within an Islamic moral framework, without feeling beholden to the whole of Marx's canon.[1134] This worldview was articulated in relation to other conciliations of Islam and Marxism, such as Tan Malaka's *Islam dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948), which Wibisono admitted had received significant praise from Hamka, and which Wibisono himself seemed to accord a measure of respect.[1135] That said, Wibisono did not feel that Tan Malaka had adequately addressed the connection between Madilog and Islam, and emphasized the need for comparative analysis of Marxism and its ideological counterparts from an Islamic standpoint. Both the revolutionary and parliamentary democracy periods possessed an intellectual climate which facilitated Muslim intellectuals' engagement with Marxism. Unlike Tan Malaka's proclamations of compatibility, Muslim politicians like Wibisono, who served as a Masjumi parliamentarian and even twice as finance minister, found ways of engaging in meaningful dialogue with Marxism on their own distinctly Islamic terms. We may critique such attempts for their rigor and consistency, but it is undeniable that Marxism exerted a gravitational pull on Indonesian politics that many Muslim politicians found difficult to ignore.

[1133] *Ibid*., 29.
[1134] *Ibid*., 29.
[1135] *Ibid*., 27.

Sjafruddin Prawiranegara (1911–89) was a prominent half-Minangkabau, half-Bantenese (both cultures being known for their Islamic piety) Masjumi politician, and a core member of the *de facto* revolutionary parliament, the KNIP. Trained as a lawyer in Batavia, he worked as a civil servant in the colonial government's department of finance, while also editing a moderate *pergerakan* newspaper, *Soeara Timoer*, until the Japanese occupation. Unlike many of his future Masjumi colleagues, Prawiranegara did not join either the JIB or the Islamic students study club during his time in Batavia.[1136] Serving as finance minister and agriculture minister at various points during the revolution, he achieved national prominence for leading the republic's emergency government (PDRI, *Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia*) during the darkest days of the revolution, when Yogyakarta fell to the Dutch and Soekarno and Hatta were captured during Operation Kraai in December 1948.[1137] His republican credentials were impeccable by the end of the revolution, and he was tapped to serve as trade minister in Natsir's cabinet (September 1950 – March 1951).[1138] After the dissolution of Natsir's cabinet, Prawiranegara's reputation as a technocrat with a working knowledge of finance won him the position of governor of the Bank of Indonesia, in which capacity he served until 1957. Unfortunately for Prawiranegara, he – like his close friend Natsir – disagreed with Soekarno on both policy and ideology. Soekarno's nationalization of Dutch assets and his revocation of the Provisional Constitution of 1950 in favor of the Constitution of 1945 (which greatly empowered the office of the president, thereby magnifying Soekarno's already-great influence) in 1957 prompted Prawiranegara to support the PRRI rebellion, leading to his fall from political grace.[1139]

Prawiranegara was notable for his steadfast commitment to both Islamic values as well as democratic institutions and norms throughout his life. In May 1980, along with several of his former Masjumi colleagues like Natsir and Kasman Singodimedjo (but also Marxists like S.K. Trimurti), he would sign the *Petisi 50*, a statement of opposition to Suharto's "New Order" government on the grounds that Suharto was abusing

[1136] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 48.
[1137] Mestika Zed, *Somewhere in the Jungle: Pemerintah Darurat Republik Indonesia, Sebuah Mata Rantai Sejarah Yang Terlupakan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1997).
[1138] Audrey R. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy: A Political Biography of Mohammad Natsir* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2012), 59–60.
[1139] *Ibid*., 111.

Pancasila to quash political opposition. This despite the fact that Suharto had deposed Prawiranegara's nemesis, Soekarno. Prawiranegara was clearly a man with moral fiber, whose values and convictions never failed him despite the manifold costs of opposing the autocratic instincts of both Soekarno and Suharto. The PRRI rebellion cost him his political career, and *Petisi 50* cost him his freedom of movement, which he bore despite his failing health. A staunch opponent of the PKI and a critic of both Soviet and Chinese communism, his writings during the parliamentary democracy period nevertheless evinced a significant acquaintance with Marxist ideas, and an undeniable identification with the values and goals of socialism.

In his foreword to *Islam dalam Pergolakan Dunia* (1950), written during the incipient phase of the Cold War, Prawiranegara waxed lyrical about his deep commitment to a progressive, forward-looking application of Islam in the political realm, deliberately attacking various forms of Islamic conservatism.[1140] He stated that the purpose of his book was not to champion the glory of Islam, for that needed no propagandization. Instead, his primary purpose was to force Muslims to confront their narrow-mindedness and their "backwardness," (*kekolotan*) such that the potential of the *ummah* might be fully realized.[1141] By contrast, he uncharitably castigated Buddhism and Hindusim as non-dynamic and ill-equipped to provide a moral framework for political evolution: the former for renouncing worldly matters, and the latter for discriminating on the basis of caste.[1142] Moreover, Prawiranegara identified "Christianism-capitalism" as a specific complex afflicting the world, against which Islam compared favorably because it presented clear moral injunctions which could potentially constrain the impulses of capitalism. He strongly implied that a system of governance built on Islamic principles would be far superior to what the USA and its European allies had to offer.[1143] In that vein, and on a Gandhi-esque note, he also argued that Islam was a form of "spiritual power" (*kekuatan rochani*) that could positively influence humanity, even though Muslim nations were politically or militarily marginal. He even claimed that Islam might be able to alter the course of the looming third world war which he expected to break

[1140] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Islam Dalam Pergolakan Dunia* (Bandung: Al-Ma'arif, 1950), 49–51.
[1141] *Ibid*., 8.
[1142] *Ibid*., 12.
[1143] *Ibid*., 12, 24.

out between capitalist and communist states.[1144] The point he was making was partially the product of the discursive climate of the decolonizing or recently decolonized third world: the superior moral framework that Islam provided could be incarnated as an equitable political, social and economic system, one which would avoid the authoritarian communism of the second world as well as the exploitative capitalism of the first.

Prawiranegara made some telling claims in *Islam dalam Pergolakan Dunia*. He argued that Islam constituted a compromise between capitalism and communism, in the sense that it was as concerned to promote social justice (*keadilan sosial*) as communism was, but possessed none of the disregard for human suffering that capitalism engendered.[1145] According to Prawiranegara, this "humanitarian impulse [*perasaan perikemanusiaan*] was not foreign to Islam at all," because "the social justice which is the objective and principle of Marxist ideology also constitutes the guidelines of Islam."[1146] Moreover, "raising the living standards of the poor and oppressed, who suffer from cruelties inflicted by the capitalists, is also one of the principles of Islam."[1147] With a nod to the Third world internationalism and post-colonial solidarity that pervaded this era, Prawiranegara even argued that it was the duty of every Muslim to support and help the poor and oppressed everywhere.[1148] Islam, like Marxism, admitted the existence of societal classes (unlike capitalism's wistful amelioration of class structures in favor of individual gumption), but differed in that Islam did not condone class war, nor envision the eventual triumph of the proletariat and the creation of a classless utopia.[1149] Instead, Islam represented an important alternative to communism because it promoted a compassionate society built on redistributive economic mechanisms such as *zakat* and *zakat fitrah*.[1150] Nevertheless, he admitted that the resonances were such that Muslims were deeply attracted to Marxism, with many joining communist groups during the revolution.[1151] He recalled that "in our struggle against Dutch imperialism and colonialism, Muslims and communists fought as

[1144] *Ibid*., 10–11.
[1145] *Ibid*., 13.
[1146] *Ibid*., 13. Prawiranegara makes no distinction between Marxism, socialism and communism, using terms like "Marxist socialism" and "Marxist ideology" interchangeably with "communism."
[1147] *Ibid*., 13.
[1148] *Ibid*., 13.
[1149] *Ibid*., 13–14.
[1150] *Ibid*., 14.
[1151] *Ibid*., 13.

comrades, even as a single bloc, without concern for who was a doctrinaire communist, or who was a pious Muslim."[1152]

What emerges clearly from this line of reasoning is that while Prawiranegara was not attempting to reconcile Islam and Marxism, Marxist ideas had percolated through Indonesian political discourse over decades, and deeply informed Indonesian Islam in its social, political, and economic aspects. Prawiranegara strongly emphasized Islam's egalitarian ethos, and understood the pursuit of social justice as essential to Islam. He saw Islam as fundamentally superior to Marxism, delivering better and more realistic results on their shared objectives. One chapter of the book was devoted to critiquing Marxism – its disregard for human individuality [*individualiteit manusia*] in favor of class struggle, its "quixotic" [*donquichotterie*] dream of a classless future, its inculcation of hatred between social groups, historical materialism's excessive reliance on the human pursuit of utilitarian self-interest instead of emphasizing commitment to ethical ideals or legal norms – but also constantly admitted the similarities between Muslim and Marxist goals, followed by asserting the superiority of Islamic solutions.[1153]

Prawiranegara's assertion that Marxism was a reaction to the failure of Euro-American societies to live up to their Christian ideals was particularly revealing. Christianity's incapacity to live up to its stated ideals of compassion and universal brotherhood, and capitalism's inability to deliver social justice [*keadilan sosial*] alongside technological progress, had led to a radical backlash in the form of Marxism.[1154] Marxism was thus an understandable, if misguided, reaction to the failures of capitalism and Christianity; in a similar vein, Islam was a corrective to the injustices normalized in a formerly colonized society. For all of Marxism's many failings in Prawiranegara's eyes, it shared many of Islam's ethical concerns, in a way that capitalism did not. His most scathing criticism was reserved for capitalism, attacking Keynesian economics and what he called the "neo-capitalism" of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and Clement Attlee's post-war labor government.[1155] He

[1152] *Ibid*., 13.
[1153] *Ibid*., 16–18.
[1154] *Ibid*., 27.
[1155] *Ibid*., 28.

argued that social spending was a core component of Marxist ideology as well as Islamic ethics, but was not integral to capitalism at all; investment in education, housing and public amenities were a means to an end, not a constitutive feature of capitalist economies.[1156] Capitalism's regard for the less fortunate, when it existed, was couched in the Catholic logic of "charity" rather than the logic of "human rights," a situation which Prawiranegara found unacceptable.[1157] Moreover, he openly supported the socialists Sjahrir and Hatta, calling accusations that they had "sold Indonesia out to the capitalist-imperialists" as "evil."[1158] Prawiranegara's triumphalist approach to Islam, what we might even characterize as Islamic exceptionalism, was optimistic in the extreme, but it did evince a high degree of clarity in its critique of both communism and capitalism. Nevertheless, his book shows the degree to which Marxist ideas exerted a leftward pull on mainstream Islamic discourse, a drift that was remarkably consistent across the upper echelons of Masjumi leadership during the parliamentary democracy period.

In 1957, near the end of the parliamentary democracy period, Prawiranegara gave a speech at the Catholic Students Association in Jakarta titled "The role of religion and morals in the development of Indonesian society and economy." By 1957, his criticisms of Soekarno had grown increasingly strident, and he was on the verge of being deposed from his position as governor of the Bank of Indonesia. One of those criticisms was the state of the economy and the quality of life for ordinary citizens. Prawiranegara pointed out that seven years after independence, it should be possible to explain to the working poor (*si miskin*), who had borne so much suffering during and after the revolution, what all their sacrifice and endurance had been for.[1159] He quite rightly pointed out that Indonesians were in the habit of blaming all the economic hardships of the colonial era on the Dutch, and prone to assuming that economic prosperity would quickly follow the expulsion of the Dutch, as if their

[1156] *Ibid*., 31–32.
[1157] *Ibid*., 32.
[1158] *Ibid*., 57.
[1159] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Peranan Agama Dan Moral Dalam Pembangunan Masjarakat Dan Ekonomi Indonesia* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1966), 14.

wealth could be simply appropriated and shared. What was the point of a revolution, Prawiranegara asked, if it did not deliver a standard of living and personal dignity higher than that provided by the colonial system?[1160]

His scathing answer was that the economy had been badly mismanaged, especially in terms of letting political passions overrule economic sense. He argued that politicians had played up popular misconceptions for their own political gain, allowing citizens to believe that Dutch assets could be nationalized without consequences. By contrast, Prawiranegara pointed out that while Dutch capitalism had indeed made life intolerable while Indonesia was colonized, ham-fisted actions like the nationalization of Dutch assets – which Soekarno had been threatening throughout the 1950s, in response to the continued Dutch presence in Papua – would wreak economic havoc on Indonesia.[1161] He argued that such populist policies would cut Indonesia off from the global credit market, reducing its access to cheap credit and in turn its ability to pay for badly-needed infrastructure projects. Moreover, such quasi-legal and unilateral moves were ethically dubious deviations from both Pancasila and Islam, and would also result in the flight of foreign expertise.[1162] This would undermine the smooth functioning of Indonesia's key industries, such as oil and gas, which contributed a significant portion of the national budget and were fundamental to bringing in foreign exchange. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Prawiranegara argued that nationalization of Dutch assets would likely result in an economic vacuum that would soon be filled by "sham entrepreneurs" (*schijn-ondernemers*) who would serve as a front for foreign business interests. What was the point, he asked, if "foreign capitalists are simply replaced by Indonesian capitalists, while the industries so important for the working class [*kaum buruh*] are disrupted and likely diminished?"[1163]

[1160] *Ibid*., 14.
[1161] *Ibid*., 17–18. It is important to point out that Soekarno had vacillated on this policy on many occasions; it was most likely political leverage more than it was ideological conviction. During the Soekiman cabinet (April 1951 – February 1952), Soekarno had actually supported the cabinet's policy of encouraging foreign investment and spoke openly against nationalization of foreign assets. Nevertheless, there was no denying that such policies were popular, both among the public and political parties like the PNI and PKI. See Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, 216.
[1162] *Ibid*., 17.
[1163] *Ibid*., 18.

Clearly, Prawiranegara did not agree with Soekarno's populist policy of nationalizing Dutch assets, which did finally occur in 1959. The point, however, is Prawiranegra's independent-minded commitment to doing what he truly believed was best for Indonesia. As seen in his *Islam dalam Pergolakan Dunia*, he was no fan of capitalism, but neither did he hurry to blame the post-revolution stagnation of the Indonesian economy on insidious foreign forces or Dutch neo-Imperialism. Knowing full well the effects of Dutch colonial capitalism as well as the aspirations of the Indonesian laborer, he was keenly aware that foreign investment came with strings attached, and continuing dependence on the Dutch or any other foreign power was not a tenable solution for Indonesia's economic woes. On the other hand, he understood that the economic difficulties the republic faced were structural, and a transition to prosperity would have to be managed carefully. With the interests of the Indonesian working class in mind, the interests of the *si miskin* who had sacrificed so much to midwife the republic, he supported a politically unpopular position on the grounds that it would do little to actually achieve socialist goals such as the equitable distribution of wealth, or raising the living standards of the working class – it might even retard Indonesia's economic recovery just to make a point of national pride.

Prawiranegara's position was representative of not just the "religious socialists" in Masjumi, but also of many Marx-influenced political factions in the republic. From Sjahrir's PSI to the non-conformist Marxists in the Murba Party, many Indonesians accepted the importance of Marxist critiques of capital but remained independent thinkers when it came to assessing Indonesia's best interests. The parliamentary democracy period, for all its flaws, provided a climate congenial to the efflorescence of Indonesian political thinking, allowing politicians with strong convictions – and often good sense – to formulate their own articulations of what Indonesian socialism or Indonesian Islam meant, without being beholden to either Cold War superpower and the ideologies they promoted.

Even late in life, Prawiranegara would remain remarkably consistent in his convictions. In a working paper presented at a symposium held at Universitas Padjadjaran (UNPAD) on May 29, 1971, he openly proclaimed both the importance of Islam in guiding politics as well as his disdain for capitalism, neither of which was politically acceptable under Suharto's USA-aligned New Order regime. In his paper, he made clear his

disapproval of Marxist historical materialism because of its disregard for spiritual matters; he also criticized the USSR and PRC for their excessive investment in military spending. At the same time, Prawiranegara explicitly stated that the virtues of Marxism lay in its hatred of capitalism, and its willingness to work and sacrifice destroy capitalism (*achlak jang baik bagi orang-orang komunis adalah: membentji orang-orang kapitalis dan giat berkerdja dan berkorban untuk menghantjurkan mereka*).[1164] Equating capitalism with "*hawa nafsu*," he argued that Western capitalism was legitimized by parliamentary democracy, but it was ultimately "materialistically hedonistic," vainly "searching for peace through profit and comfort."[1165] He went on to assert the rights of religious minorities in Islam, quoting several Qur'anic verses and hadith to justify cooperation, coexistence, and peace between Muslims and non-Muslims.[1166] The consistency of his arguments, from the dynamic 1950s to the inhospitable 1970s, suggest that Prawiranegara's opinions were not merely an expression of the political climate of the 1950s, when Soekarno, Nasser, and Nehru popularized ideas about a Third Force in world politics. Like the other Masjumi intellectuals examined here, Prawiranegara's Islamic moral convictions manifested themselves in the realm of politics, whether that involved formulating Indonesian economic policy, critiquing international capitalism, or denouncing Soviet and Chinese autocracy. Sometimes, those Islamic moral convictions would manifest themselves in terms that closely resembled socialist goals and rhetoric.

Not all Masjumi parliamentarians were so congenial to socialism, however. If Jusuf Wibisono stood at one end of the Masjumi spectrum, Isa Anshary (b. 1916) stood at the other. Known for his sympathies towards Kartusuwirjo's Darul Islam rebellion (1949–62), which aimed to violently overthrow the republic in favor of an explicitly Islamic state, Isa Anshary was an Islamic triumphalist whose rhetoric often verged on the chauvinistic. A Minangkabau born in Maninjau, West Sumatra, Anshary received a traditional Islamic education in various *pondok* and *surau*. He was an active member of PSII during the early 1930s but moved to Bandung to pursue his Islamic education in 1933. There, he joined Ahmad Hassan's conservative Islamic

[1164] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Agama Dan Ideologi Dalam Pembagunan Ekonomi Dan Bangsa* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1971), 9.
[1165] *Ibid*., 10.
[1166] *Ibid*., 22, 24.

organization, Persis, which Natsir was also a member of, and became a member of its governing board in 1940. He eventually became the leader of the Persis from 1948 to 1960. From 1956 until 1960, he served as a member of the Constitutional Assembly, a body set up after the 1955 elections to formulate a permanent constitution for Indonesia, one which would replace the provisional constitution of 1950. A fervent anti-communist, he was known for penning screeds such as *Revolusi Islam* (1953), which gave voice to Masjumi's more conservative aspects. In it, Anshary argued that Pancasila was un-Islamic, or at least inferior to Islam as a guiding philosophy.[1167] He asserted that Muslims had nothing to learn from Marx, Lenin and Stalin, and even proclaimed that the Indonesian revolution had nothing to do with the Islamic revolution he was proposing.[1168] This text would not be out of place amongst the writings of fundamentalist *salafi* across the Muslim world, saturated as it was with vitriolic proclamations of Islamic superiority, and virtually no policy recommendations.

However, Masjumi held different impulses in tension with one another, and these competing impulses were visible even in Anshary's own writing. As the 1950s wore on, he would author increasingly hysterical anti-communist books, such as *P.K.I. Pembela Negara Asing* (1955, PKI, the Defender of Foreign Interests), *Islam Menentang Komunisme* (1956, Islam Against Communism), and *Bahaya Merah di Indonesia* (1956, The Red Threat in Indonesia). In 1949, however, Anshary had written a very different text, one in which the leftward pull of socialist ideas was evident. In *Falsafah Perdjuangan Islam* (1949, The Philosophy of Islamic Struggle), a younger Anshary engaged directly with Marx's ideas, even juxtaposing the original German against his analysis in Indonesian.[1169] In this text, Anshary was writing in a revolutionary context; with independence within the republicans' reach, Anshary was looking forward to the new society that he hoped the revolution would give birth to.

He argued that the political revolution was only sensible if it could produce a new system which ameliorated the hardships engendered by colonialism.[1170] Drawing on the writings of H. Mohammad Rasjidi (formerly the

[1167] Isa Anshary, *Revolusi Islam* (Surabaya: Hasan Aidid, 1953), 11.
[1168] *Ibid*., 12.
[1169] Isa Anshary, *Falsafah Perdjuangan Islam* (Bandung: Pasifik, 1949), 168.
[1170] *Ibid*., 8.

republican minister for religious affairs) as well as Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Anshary argued that "freedom from want" was a prerequisite for any democratic society to function smoothly. To Anshary, "freedom from want" was a universal value, desirable not only for Indonesians themselves but for all peoples of the world, which Indonesia had a moral duty to support.[1171] Anshary went on the argue that various crises of the present and recent past, the suffering of the masses during the second world war and the Indonesian revolution, had their roots in specifically material, economic phenomenon. "The imbalance in the world economy, the unequal division of income, and the absence of social justice in the way human societies are organized are all direct results of the structures of the liberal-capitalist economy, as well as the expansionist politics of neo-Imperialism."[1172] This recognizably Marx-influenced analytical framework was accompanied by his apparent fondness for the ideas of the Dutch Christian Marxist and Council Communist Henriette Roland Holst (1869–1952). He quoted her writings at length, reproducing them faithfully in Dutch and providing his translation in Indonesian.[1173]

> *"The crisis afflicting the whole capitalist world today is not merely the outcome of an economic phenomenon, but the result of a deadly disease of the socio-cultural organism; it is not only the failure of the system of production, but the dead-end of culture, of a specific life-principle: indeed, of the greed and egoism (whether personal or group egoism) which dominates and directs our lives."*[1174]

Anshary juxtaposed Holst's ideas against Surah an-Nur, 39–40, of the Qur'an, which cautions against taking pride in one's deeds, and the impossibility of escaping God's judgement.[1175] He argued that the predations of capitalism denounced by Holst were an example of the evils the Qur'an warned against, reminding readers that complicity in capitalist exploitation would not go unpunished; complicity was the result of "a lack of moral character" (*ketiadaan asas hidup*).[1176] According to Anshary, "without the guiding hand of Islamic morality,

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[1171] *Ibid*., 8.
[1172] *Ibid*., 17.
[1173] *Ibid*., 18. Holst's Council Communism invested decision-making power in the organic workers' councils which controlled the means of production, rather than Lenin's "democratic centralism" or his theorization of the party's role as the "vanguard of the proletariat." Critical of the autocratic USSR, council communism was strong in Germany and the Netherlands during the 1920s. See Carolien Boon and Ger Harmsen, "Schalk, Henriette Goverdine Anna van der," *Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* 5 (1992): 241–256.
[1174] *Ibid*., 18.
[1175] *Ibid*., 18.
[1176] *Ibid*., 18.

humanity falls into exploitative behavior like capitalism, and constructs systems to legitimize and facilitate such exploitation."[1177] Anshary went on to argue that Islam was deeply grounded in the material realities of this world as much as it was concerned with the spiritual realities of the next, contending that injustices in this world had to be fought by pious Muslims. "Islam does not allow its adherents to acquiesce to or go along with the oppression of others. It does not allow the *ummah* to close its ears to the lament of the weak, of the women and children, who suffer under oppression and injustice."[1178] This was Islam conceived of as a guarantor for social justice, and Anshary even wrote that "the fight against oppression and injustice was one of several possible forms of *jihad*."[1179]

Like many Islamic *pergerakan* activists who had preceded him, Anshary framed his criticism of capitalism, and Islam's relationship with capitalism, within the *akal*/*nafsu* dichotomy. He blamed "egoism, individualism, and ego-centrism" for the oppressive forms that human societies have taken on, characterizing these aberrant forms as the expression of *hawa nafsu* (worldly desires), in contrast to Islam's elevation of *akal* (rationality).

> *"Those whose hearts are already controlled by these isms and nafsu become people whose behavior resembles that of animals; humans who live only to run wild and fulfil their own needs, sacrificing the rest of society and pergaulan bersama* [in this context, meaningful and enriching human relations and the benefits of cooperation]*... We are obliged to fight, to oppose this wolfish nafsu, by means of jihad. This wolfish nafsu is not only lodged in people, but also lodged in communities and nations, constituting capitalism, imperialism, expansionism, colonialism, and fascism. Attacking capitalism, imperialism, expansionism, colonialism and fascism, is, in the eyes of Islam, the greatest struggle of all."*[1180]

Anshary's implicit acceptance of Marxist analytical frameworks for critiquing capitalism is evident, though he places relatively strong emphasis on the spiritual and psychological roots, as well as impact of, capitalism. To Anshary, the inequalities and suffering of the world were not just the result of a moral crisis but were also embedded in structures and institutions.

[1177] *Ibid*., 18.
[1178] *Ibid*., 89.
[1179] *Ibid*., 89.
[1180] *Ibid*., 91.

Moreover, Anshary emphasized the importance of *ijtihad* and described it as the exercise of *akal*. He argued that *jihad* and *ijtihad* were inseparable, and that *jihad* without *ijtihad* would quickly devolve into fundamentalist simplifications.[1181] Arguing that the Islamic revolution constituted the triumph of *akal* over *nafsu* in the governing structures of society, not merely a change in political leadership, he even suggested that the "warriors of God" (he uses both *mujahidin* and *para pejuang*) had to be subordinate to the "thinking heroes" (he uses both *mujtahidin*, the acclaimed scholars of Islam, and *pahlawan dalam berpikir*), who would ensure that *jihad* would always be righteous.[1182] This was a telling formulation, for he rejected the revolutionary romance of the dynamic *pemuda* (youth) which Soekarno had embraced. To Anshary, the doers had to be guided by the thinkers, and the thinkers had to be steeped in Islamic ethics. Regardless of its practicality, or lack thereof, Anshary was expressing an old sentiment in Indonesian Islam discourse: that Islam provided a moral framework for organizing a just society, allowing meaningful and enriching human relations, facilitating cooperation over conflict and exploitation. This was Islam as *akal*, and capitalism as *nafsu*; this was why the revolution could not stop at expelling the Dutch, and why the political dynamism of the Indonesian people had to be harnessed by Islamic ethics.

Falsafah Perdjuangan Islam also contained a section titled "Progressive Views in Islam," in which Anshary elaborated on his conceptual framework for the translation of Islamic values into political, economic, and social structures. Anshary began with praise for Soekarno, expressing sympathy, though not full agreement, with Soekarno's call for a more dynamic Islam.[1183] Anshary did not provide sources for Soekarno's views, but these were likely to be Soekarno's correspondence with Ahmad Hasan of Persis during the 1930s, examined in chapter two; after all, Anshary named Ahmad Hasan as one of Soekarno's interlocutors, and Anshary was the leader of Persis at this point.[1184] Anshary lamented that the "outmoded scholars" (*kaum kuno*) did not have the conceptual tools to engage with Soekarno's well-intentioned statements, and immediately branded him an

[1181] *Ibid*., 92.
[1182] *Ibid*., 92.
[1183] *Ibid*., 67.
[1184] *Ibid*., 68.

infidel. However, the *kaum muda*, whom Anshary identified with, had a more nuanced response: he agreed with the need for Islam to be dynamic, but also contended that Soekarno failed to make an important distinction between *ibadat* (matters of ritual and worship) and *muamalat* (non-*ibadat* matters).[1185] Matters of *ibadat* were sacrosanct, but *mualamat* were not – Soekarno's call for Islamic dynamism could only apply to matters of *muamalat*, a position which Anshary thought Soekarno should have clarified.

Anshary argued that matters not directly addressed by the Qur'an and hadith, such as forms of government and economic organization, were well within the realm of *muamalat* and were thus subject to innovation.[1186] He repeatedly emphasized that this was a matter of exercising one's God-given rational faculties (*menggunakan akal*).[1187] In support of this, he cited a famous *hadith* from Sahih Muslim 2363, in which the Prophet Muhammad deferred to a group of farmers on how to plant their trees, since "you [the farmers] have better knowledge of your worldly affairs than I do" (*kamu lebih tahu kepada soal-soal dunia kamu*).[1188] Anshary used this *hadith* to justify innovations in governance, which would allow Islamic ethics to inform new societal structures, ensuring that they would achieve Islamic goals like justice and prosperity, even if they had no Islamic historical precedents. It was precisely this conceptual framework which made possible Anshary's appropriation of Marxist critiques of capitalism, or which allowed him to quote Holst repeatedly without feeling the need to explain why he was referencing a famous council communist. The secular knowledge of this world was fair game, and Muslims were expected to learn what they could, and use what they could, in the pursuit of Islamic goals.

That said, a significant portion of *Falsafah Perdjuangan Islam* was dedicated to Anshary's refutation of Marxism. Anshary devoted several pages to summarizing Marx's ideas, ultimately arguing that they were incompatible with an Islamic *weltanschauung* founded on the sunnah.[1189] He gave three reasons for this

[1185] *Ibid*., 69.
[1186] *Ibid*., 72.
[1187] *Ibid*., 70.
[1188] *Ibid*., 70. See Sahih Muslim 2363, or Book 43, Hadith 186 (https://sunnah.com/muslim/43/186).
[1189] *Ibid*., 166–170.

incompatibility: first, Marxism's dialectical materialism did not respect individual choices and morality, or the role of spirituality, by focusing only on economic conditions; second, Marxism condemned the state as a tool of oppression wielded by capitalists, and looked forward to a nation-less, state-less global society; and third, Marxism promoted class warfare. By contrast, Anshary argued that the state did not have to be a tool of oppression, but could be one of regulation (*alat pengatur*) as well as a protector of the weak.[1190] Anshary nit-picked repeatedly on the role of the state in Marx's writings, stressing that his proposed Islamic state was a state that promoted social justice (*keadilan sosial*), and therefore Marxism was at odds with Islam because it did not see the state as a force for good.[1191] For all his repeated rejections of Marxism, Anshary's ideas about an Islamic state possessed an unmistakably socialist ring, as one might expect from an admirer of Holst. His arguments bore the marks of engagement with (and selective translation of) the ideas and rhetoric of various Marxists – not least his appropriation of critiques of capitalism, which he drew freely from Lenin and Marx, even situating the birth of Indonesia within a "global movement for change, against the slavery of feudalism and capitalism, that is, the current global struggle against capitalism."[1192]

It would be remiss to exclude Natsir's contributions from any discussion of Masjumi political thinking, so this section will conclude with a brief analysis of a little-known speech given by Natsir on April 21, 1953, subsequently published as *Dapatkah Dipisahkan Politik Dari Agama?* (Can Religion and Politics be Separated?). The speech was given to commemorate the life and works of the South Asian philosopher, poet and politician Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), whose Urdu and Persian writings were widely admired across the Persianate world, and apparently in Southeast Asia as well. It may be telling that Natsir was so attracted to Iqbal's work: despite his inability to read or write either Urdu or Persian, Natsir must surely have perceived in Iqbal a sort of kindred spirit, someone who had also drunk deeply from the cup of Western education, yet who

[1190] *Ibid*, 170.
[1191] *Ibid*., 170.
[1192] *Ibid*., 168–69.

retained his Islamic identity and a conviction that Islam could still be meaningfully manifest in politics, as in all areas of life.

Having read Iqbal's poetry (in Arabic translation) and a collection of Iqbal's speeches published in English as *Reconstruction of Religious Thought* (1934), Natsir argued that Islam could not be excised from politics in a Muslim society.[1193] This was a refutation of the separation of church and state that informed Euro-American political values to varying degrees, as well as of the distinction between the public and private, or material and spiritual: to Natsir, Iqbal's work meant that spiritual insights should constantly inform material matters like governance.[1194] More pointedly, Natsir interpreted Iqbal's writings to mean that Iqbal – like Natsir – championed Islam as a superior alternative to both "Western capitalism" and "Marxist socialism."[1195] Natsir argued that both were deeply materialist and "spiritually hollow," with Marxist socialism based only on the "equality of stomachs" and Western capitalism – which he equated with imperialism, colonialism and racism – little more than a form of "material obesity" (*kegemukan-djasad*).[1196] Drawing on various Qur'anic verses, Natsir went on to proclaim that Islam emphasized the importance of democratic governance, freedom of thought and expression, religious freedom, tolerance, social justice, and even the "humanitarian obligation to help all of humanity achieve prosperity."[1197]

Natsir never explicitly hitched Islam to socialism the way Zainal Abidin Ahmad did, which was not entirely surprising for someone who had spent the 1930s as a Persis member. Ahmad, by contrast, had been a member of Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia (Permi), the Islamic socialist organization examined in chapter two. Nevertheless, both Natsir and Ahmad were prominent Masjumi members, and like the many Masjumi thinkers examined in this section, had been exposed to years of socialist discourse circulating amongst the *pergerakan*. The leftward pull of those ideas was clearly evident in how they chose to interpret Islam: their idea of Islam

[1193] Mohammed Natsir, *Dapatkah Dipisahkan Politik Dari Agama?* (Djakarta, Bukittinggi and Padang: Mutiara, 1953), 17.
[1194] *Ibid*., 18.
[1195] *Ibid*., 19.
[1196] *Ibid*., 19.
[1197] *Ibid*., 22.

incarnate in the political realm did not involve forcing women to don the veil, persecuting minority heterodox communities like the Ahmadiyyah, or banning the consumption of pork and alcohol in Indonesia. Instead, their formulation of Islam's presence in the public sphere was one in which Islamic values like responsible democratic governance, tolerance for racial and religious minorities, and the promotion of social justice informed policymaking. This was a matter of emphasis and priorities, rather than theological rigor: Islam can, and certainly has been, interpreted in deeply intolerant ways that obfuscate social inequality or legitimize autocracy. For the Masjumi thinkers of this generation, however, Islam in politics meant addressing many of the class issues that Marxism had called to their attention. Madinier was entirely right to point out that their political ideas, as elaborated in a 1955 election handbill, constituted "a manifesto which could have been drawn up by a number of non-religious parties including the PSI [Socialist Party of Indonesia]…"[1198]

Masjumi politicians were notable for their diverse and convoluted formulations of Islamic socialism, but there were also other Muslim parliamentarians who spoke clearly in favor of cooperation with the PKI, or various other Marxist parties. The parliamentary democracy period helped facilitate inter-party cooperation: no party had an outright majority and even the two biggest players (PNI and Masjumi) always found themselves relying on parliamentary allies to build coalition governments. This rhetoric of cooperation should thus be taken with a grain of salt, but given the many conciliations of Islam and Marxism in the preceding decades, and even within Masjumi itself, parliamentary cooperation between Islamic and Marxist parties should not be glibly dismissed as a fig leaf for the transactional assignation of ministerial portfolios when building coalition governments. Madinier noted that while many Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) leaders were clearly anti-communist, this was by no means representative of NU as a whole.[1199] At least two NU leaders, A.S. Bachmid and Murtadji Bisri, were clearly open to cooperation with the PKI on the basis of shared goals. Moreover, NU participated in the PKI-backed first Ali Sastromidjojo cabinet (July 1953 – August 1955), despite a torrent of criticism from

[1198] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 302.
[1199] *Ibid*., 145–46.

Masjumi.[1200] The PSII president, Arudji Kartawinata, husband of the PSII activist S. Yati, whose writings were examined in chapter two, publicly supported a parliamentary alliance between the PKI and various Islamic parties, justifying this on the grounds of preserving national unity and similarities in policy goals.[1201] Parliamentary cooperation between Muslims and Marxists was thus contested, but had very real political implications; the defenders of cooperation and solidarity were not merely an isolated and radical fringe.

In the lead up to the 1955 elections, Murtadji Bisri, who was NU's parliamentary representative for East Java, disagreed with Masjumi's assertion that "Islamic law was against communism," or that "communists were infidels [*kufr*]."[1202] This may not have been entirely surprising, since Bisri also served as the chairman of the NU-dominated Sarbumusi (Muslim labor union of Indonesia) in East Java during this period, and was likely sympathetic to organized labor.[1203] His position ran directly counter to the statements issued by NU's overall leader, K.H. Dahlan, who made it clear that "NU has for some time now considered communists as infidels."[1204] Murtadji Bisri, however, justified his position in terms of national solidarity in a plural political landscape, arguing that "interpreting Islamic law as opposed to communism runs the risk of counter-productively undermining our Indonesian unity; this interpretation, whether wittingly or unwittingly, will sow deep discord between Islamic groups and the PKI."[1205] Implicit in this line of reasoning was not only *realpolitik*, but the recognition of legitimate differences: Murtadji Bisri understood that not everyone could accept Islam as the basis of the state, but continued to believe that Muslims and Marxists had enough in common to work together in the collective interest. After all, independence had not been won by the *mujahidin* alone, but by a plurality of groups working in unison.

[1200] *Ibid*., 145. The PKI did not receive any ministerial portfolios in this cabinet, although associated Marxist parties like the Indonesian Peasants Party (BTI, Barisan Tani Indonesia) and the Indonesian Workers Party (PBI, Bartai Buruh Indonesia), did. While technically in opposition, it deemed the cabinet's agenda to be sufficiently progressive that it publicly promised not to obstruct its agenda. This was apparently a step too far for Masjumi, who condemned NU for participating in the cabinet.
[1201] *Ibid*., 146.
[1202] "Tadjuk Rentjana: Agama dan Politik," *Abadi*, January 10, 1955.
[1203] "Murtadji Bisri," Benedict Anderson papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
[1204] *Ibid*.
[1205] *Ibid*.

In a similar vein, A.S. Bachmid argued that "cooperation between NU and the PKI was based on common goals and common sense."[1206] He pointed out that NU had entered into no binding commitments or alliances with the PKI, so if the PKI chose to throw its support behind the first Ali cabinet (in which NU was represented), that was entirely up to the PKI. Moreover, he chastised the hysterics over the PKI's purportedly increasing influence, arguing that there were a plethora of non-Muslim parties represented in the first Ali cabinet, many of which were bound of gain prominence; why was that not similarly worrying?[1207] He also pointed out that the NU and PKI had several common goals on which they could and should cooperate, such as the holding of parliamentary elections as soon as possible, or the "implementation of beneficial policies," although he did not specify what these policies were.[1208] Finally, it is noteworthy that Bachmid justified cooperation with the PKI on the grounds that Islam required its adherents to cooperate with all people wherever possible, the only exception being "*kafir-harbi*."[1209] "*Kafir-harbi*" (حربي "belonging to war") refers to infidels who are not under the protection of Islam and are outside of the *Dar al-Isalm* (the abode of Islam). The undeniable implication was that communists, though infidels, were infidels within a Muslim society, and were therefore "*kafir dhimmi*," infidels who enjoyed protective rights much as Christians and Jews had under Ottoman rule. There was room for them in a Muslim polity, even if they could not be considered Muslims. Bachmid effectively rationalized cooperation with the PKI within a specifically Islamic idiom, finding room within an entirely Islamic framework for the accommodation of political differences with Marxists, and opening doors to cooperation on issues of shared concern.

Another supporter of cooperation between NU and the PKI was K.H. Muslich, the NU parliamentary representative for West Java. Born in 1918 in Kudus, Central Java, Muslich had received a modernist Islamic education in English and Arabic at the Islam school at Tebuireng Djombang, West Java, and later at the Mambaul Ulum Madrassah in Surakarta. In 1938, he joined NU's youth wing, Anshor, and he was a prominent

[1206] "Reparasi Kabinet Minggu Ini," *Abadi*, October 25, 1954.
[1207] *Ibid*.
[1208] *Ibid*.
[1209] *Ibid*.

member of the revolutionary *badan perjuangan* (struggle body) Gerakan Pemuda Islam Indonesia (GPII, Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement) during the revolution. He also served in various other capacities within NU throughout the early 1950s, including as consul to NU's West Borneo branch.[1210] With his strong connections to the often-volatile Muslim youth movement, Muslich was a surprising advocate for cooperation. Nevertheless, in the dying days of the parliamentary democracy period, when Soekarno repeatedly floated the idea of guided democracy in his public speeches, Muslich was one of the earliest and most prominent defenders of guided democracy and its guiding philosophy, NASAKOM (a portmanteau of nationalism, religion, and communism), arguing that Islam was not necessarily opposed to either.[1211]

This was not unprecedented, for Muslich's parliamentary colleagues in NU and PSII had expressed similar sentiments around this time as well. During the 1958 constitutional assembly debates on amendments to the 1945 constitution before it replaced the provisional constitution of 1950, the NU parliamentarian Ahjak Sosrosugondo explicitly argued that Islam was deeply concerned with economic questions, interpreting the Qur'anic Surah al-Qasas, 77, to mean that the "exploitation of labor by capitalists is forbidden in Islam."[1212] Like his Masjumi colleague Zainal Abidin Ahmad, Sosrosugondo specifically raised the possibility of instrumentalizing *zakat* as a mechanism of wealth redistribution in the form of a 2.5% wealth tax.[1213] These ideas clearly envisioned common ground between NU and PKI, though Sosrosugondo did not personally accept NASAKOM; he was a fervent supporter of elevating monotheism (*Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*) to become the foremost of the five principles of Pancasila, arguing that legislation should be based on Islamic values because these would "support an egalitarian society free from exploitation," while also "respecting the rights of non-Muslims."[1214] In a similar vein, his PSII colleague R. Mohammed Sjafii Wirakusuma, argued that Islam ought to

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[1210] "Hadji Muslich," Benedict Anderson papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. 95, 27.
[1211] Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Dan Politik Di Indonesia Pada Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin, 1959–1965* (Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunan KAlijaga Press, 1998), 95; Soekarno, *Like an Angel That Strikes from the Skies: The March of Our Revolution. Address by the President of the Republic of Indonesia on the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic, 17th August 1960* (Djakarta: Departemen Penerangan, 1960), 27.
[1212] "Ahjak Sosrosugondo," *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Dalam Konstitutante*, vol. 1 (Bandung: Kementerian Penerangan, 1958), 26–28.
[1213] *Ibid*., 28.
[1214] *Ibid*., 29.

be enshrined as the state religion so that Islamic ethics would guide policymaking. He justified this partially in terms of socio-economic justice: "according to Islam, the basis of public prosperity is a people's economy," for apparently an Islamic economy would oppose "the evils of capitalism, which has run rampant with all its strength in our homeland for 350 years… pushing us into the abyss of evil, and reducing our people to servitude."[1215] These impassioned critiques of capitalism, common enough amongst Muslim politicians, were one of the factors which made possible Muslich's support for NASAKOM, or Bisri and Bachmid's promotion of cooperation between NU and the PKI. Muslims and Marxists shared an antipathy towards capitalism, an antipathy with deep roots in the colonial period, which allowed them to make common cause; this was especially true under the conditions of revolving coalition governments built on compromise and cooperation.

In his review of John Sidel's *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad* (2006), James Siegel made an important observation about the role of Islam in the Indonesian republic: explaining the mass violence that surrounded and followed the fall of Suharto's *Orde Baru* (new order) regime in 1998 required a firm understanding of how Islam was (and continues to be) perceived by many citizens as having "failed" to achieve political success in Indonesia.[1216] From the revolution onward, the role of Islam in the state was hotly contested, most famously in the August 1945 dispute over whether the Jakarta charter ought to be included in the 1945 constitution. This charter would have legally obliged Muslims to obey *shari'a* law, however it might be codified by the state. The Jakarta charter was ultimately excluded in the interests of building the broadest possible basis for national unity. While initially accepted by Muslim republicans because of the exigencies of revolution, this refusal to implicitly or explicitly accord Islam the status of state religion would be challenged again in 1959, 1968, and 2002.

This is important because the "terms of the marginalization" of Islam were such that even though Muslim politicians did achieve many important political victories, such as multiple Masjumi-led governments during the 1950s, Islam "did not succeed in establishing itself in such a way as to confer a secure sense of identity in its

[1215] "R. Mohammed Sjafii Wirakusuma," *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, vol. 1, 60–61.
[1216] James Siegel, "John T. Sidel. Riots, Pogroms Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia," review of *Riots, Pogroms Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*, by John T. Sidel, *Indonesia* 84 (October 2007): 183–186.

followers."[1217] As Sidel points out in his book, the violence which accompanied Suharto's fall evinced a inchoate but deep desire on the part of many Muslims to secure a specifically Islamic identity for Indonesia, a desire not manifest in terms of personal piety or orthopraxy, but in terms of an imagined community: the Indonesian *ummah*. There was and is a thirst, perhaps even anxiety, for the hegemony of Islamic identity in Indonesia, for the assumption that the Indonesian *rakyat* (masses) is essentially coterminous with *ummat Islam* (Islamic community). This could lead to intercommunal violence when that projected affective identity seemed threatened by the demands of ethnic/religious minorities or discourses about a secular and plural public sphere.[1218] Bahtiar Effendy had another way of describing the same phenomenon: explicitly Islamic parties like Masjumi attempted with some success to "contract" the concept of the *ummah*, monopolizing signifiers like "Muslim" or "Islamic" by yoking them to political identification with specific parties and organizations. In doing so, plenty of perfectly devout Muslims who identified with other parties or organizations came to be denigrated as secular or heterodox.[1219]

This impulse had long existed in Indonesia: during the parliamentary democracy period, the Masjumi parliamentarians examined above were deeply beholden to that desire to secure the "Islamicity" of the republic. International and domestic conditions in the 1950s, however, predisposed them to articulate that desire in ways that were much less violent than the post-1998 convulsions. Instead of whipping up anti-minority sentiments, they sought a way to square Muslim identity with the other paradigm-setting components of Indonesian identity, such as the vision of Indonesia as a socialist society which guaranteed the equitable distribution of economic gains. As part of that effort, they formulated policy in relation to their deeply held Islamic moral values; these policies often came closer to Marxist positions than is readily admitted today, and many bore the mark of Marx's influence on Masjumi thinking.[1220] Effectively, Muslim politicians sought a conflation of *ummat Islam*

[1217] *Ibid*., 183.
[1218] John T. Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 130–31.
[1219] Bahtiar Effendy, "Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia," (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1995), 231.
[1220] Madinier, *Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, 302.

with *kaum buruh* (working class), *kaum proletar* (proletariat), and *rakyat* (the masses, or the People, in the sense of *volk*): by doing so, the primacy of Islam would be secure in the republic's self-image. By engaging with Marxism, Masjumi – or PSII, or NU – could always claim that the issues raised by the PNI, PSI, and PKI were the same ones that concerned Muslims as well, thus laying claim to the affective allegiances of citizens who might identify primarily as "followers of Soekarno" or "followers of Tan Malaka." The "Islamicity" of the imagined community would be secured by the willingness of citizens to profess themselves Muslims first and foremost, as opposed to Masjumi simply winning their votes in elections because of its policy platform. To get citizens do that, Masjumi and other Muslim parties would have to address citizens' concerns on issues like pay, working conditions, taxation, land tenure, and social mobility, issues that were keystones of PNI, PSI and PKI rhetoric, and which structured the class consciousness as well as affective identities of the citizenry. Ultimately, this attempt at conflating *ummat Islam* and *rakyat*, or the "Islamization" of Indonesian identity, was not successful enough to be satisfactory. After Soekarno's forced dissolution of Masjumi and the PSI in late 1960, many Muslims turned to other forms of activism that precluded electoral politics. Nevertheless, the anxiety that Sidel and Siegel identified is instructive in that it helps us frame the motivations of Masjumi politicians, and helps us understand why they engaged with Marxism in the way they did.

Pious communists in the PKI

Although the political possibilities and ideological permutations of explicit Islamic communism had been largely circumscribed since the 1926–27 uprisings, a number of Muslims continued to find an outlet for the expression of their moral convictions in the PKI. None of them achieved the kind of prominence that Haji Misbach had in Surakarta or Kyai Haji Tubagus Ahmad Chatib had in Banten, as regional leaders with disciples and militant followings, or as parliamentarians and ministers in the republic. What they did represent was a significant segment of ordinary PKI supporters who found various ways of reconciling their faith with their political commitments. The two examined here were only tip of the iceberg, for many pious communists did not

leave written records of their political beliefs. Such views were transgressive in the extreme after the 1965 massacres of suspected communists, and it was not until the fall of Suharto's New Order regime that such pious communists' autobiographies began to be published. As Masjumi's Sjafruddin Prawiranegara grudgingly admitted in *Politik dan Revolusi Kita* (1950), he personally knew many devout Christians and Muslims in the PKI.[1221] This section will examine the speeches of Kyai Haji Achmad Dasuki Siradj (b. 1908) and the autobiography of Hasan Raid (b. 1923), both of whom justified their PKI membership in distinctly Islamic terms.

The more prominent of the two was Kyai Haji Achmad Dasuki Siradj (b. 1903), who served a PKI representative to the Constitutional Assembly, the body charged with drafting and debating a new permanent constitution to replace the provisional constitution of 1950. The titles "Kyai" and "Haji" were honorifics granted to Muslims who had completed their Islamic education under a master at a traditional Javanese Islamic school (*pesantren*), and who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. These markers of Islamic piety were retained by Siradj in his official Constitutional Assembly profile, and his speeches in the assembly were inflected with Islamic greetings and benedictions, as well as quotations from the Qur'an in their original Arabic.[1222] Siradj was born in Surakarta in 1903, the city where Haji Misbach's influence was strongest, coming of age amidst the Islamic communist labor agitation and radical publishing that flourished during the early 1920s. Educated in the Sarekat Rakyat-linked Sekolah Rakjat (People's school), Siradj went on to study at the Djamsaron *pesantern*, the Kasingan Rembang *pesantren*, and also at the Mambaul Ulum Madrasah, as did the NASAKOM-supporting NU parliamentarian, K.H. Muslich.[1223] In 1918, he had been one of the founders of a debating club – much like the International Debating Club of the Sumatra Thawalib in Padang Panjang discussed in chapter one – called *Idzharuichaq* (lit. clarifying the truth). He was involved in organizing Muslim youth in a *tabligh* organization

[1221] Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, *Politik Dan Revolusi Kita* (Medan: Andalas, 1950), 11.
[1222] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Dalam Konstitutante,* vol. 2 (Bandung: Kementerian Penerangan, 1958), 326–36.
[1223] "Achmad Dasuki Siradj," Benedict Anderson papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. The Sarekat Rakjat was A subsidiary organization of the PKI; see chapter one for more details.

active in rural areas, known as the Mu'alimin movement.[1224] From 1919 to 1926, he joined the editorial staff of *Mingguan*, a newspaper edited by the famed *pergerakan* leader Dr. Tjipto Mangunkusomo. At the same time, he joined the staff of Haji Misbach's newspapers, *Islam Bergerak* and *Medan Moeslimin*, which chapter one has examined in detail.[1225] The articles Siradj published in *Islam Bergerak* and *Medan Moeslimin* ran afoul of *persdelict*, and he was imprisoned for six months in the early 1920s. Siradj joined the PKI in 1924, teaching at a number of *pesantren* in the Surakarta region, while also employed as a Sarekat Rakyat organizer and a leader in the PKI-sponsored scouting movement, the Internationale Pavinder Organasatie (IPO, International Scouting Organization). Like the *Medan Moeslimin* journalist Haroenrasjid, Siradj was a close associate of Haji Misbach's, and both men were eventually interned for several years on Boven Digoel.[1226]

In a famous incident that made the news as far away as Singapore, Siradj was involved in organizing a demonstration, purportedly 30,000 strong, outside the Great Mosque of Surakarta after Friday prayers on February 19, 1926.[1227] The protest was organized in defiance of the ban on public gatherings imposed by the colonial authorities in anticipation of intensified PKI activity, activity which would eventually lead to the 1926–27 uprisings. Siradj was arrested for his troubles, and eventually exiled to Digoel in 1927, so he did not participate in the uprisings which broke out in late 1926. He spent several years in Digoel associating with other exiled communists and was released relatively early in 1933. This marked him as a "cooperative" prisoner who was willing to work for a small salary, unlike "uncooperatives" such as Hatta and Sjahrir. Apparently, his cooperation and early release did not signify his recantation of communism, for he was active in the underground PKI that Musso organized from 1935–45; he was even detained from two months in 1943 by the

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[1224] *Tabligh* refers to Islamic gatherings with the aim of spreading the message of Islam and promoting piety through scripture reading, discussion, *dhikr*, and other practices. On the Mu'alimin movement, see Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), 171; Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912-1926* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 321.

[1225] "Achmad Dasuki Siradj," Benedict Anderson papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. 26, 73-4

[1226] Takashi Shiraishi, *Hantu Digul* (Jakarta: LKiS, 2001), 26; Djohan Effendi, *Pembaruan Tanpa Membongkar Tradisi* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010), 73–74.

[1227] Kankan Xie, "The Netherlands East Indies 1926 Communist Revolt Revisited: New Discoveries from Singapore's Digital Newspaper Archives," in *Chapters on Asia* (Singapore: National Library Board, 2014), 267–94.

Japanese Kempetai on suspicion of communist activity.[1228] During the revolution, he served as a member of Surakarta's KNI, and he organized guerilla resistance to the Dutch during and after Operation Kraai, as leader of the Gerakan Republik Indonesia militia. Arrested by the Dutch in April 1949, he rejoined the Sarekat Rakyat and the PKI after independence, also becoming a member of the PKI's secretariat in Surakarta before serving in the Constitutional Assembly.[1229] His career trajectory clearly attests to his place within the "lineage" of Haji Misbach's Islamic communism: unlike Misbach's other disciples, such as Sajuti Melik, Siradj never saw the need to abandon communism or the PKI. Instead, he continued to see it as the best means to achieve Islamic goals.

In the heated Constitutional Assembly debates on whether to give Islam a special place in the constitution, Siradj made an impassioned speech justifying his PKI membership, and why he believed Islam ought not to be the official state religion. Siradj's fundamental argument was that while the PKI respected all religions, the adoption of Islam as the state religion was simply impractical; it would cause chaos (*hantjur benrantakan*) because non-Muslims would feel betrayed.[1230] Speaking after Mohammad Natsir, Kasman Singodimedjo and Zainal Abidin Ahmad of Masjumi had accused the PKI of disloyalty to the republic and intolerance towards Islam, Siradj was understandably defensive. He delivered a fierce rebuttal of Natsir's arguments, qualifying Natsir's choice quotes from the Qur'an by providing additional context to the verses Natsir cited.[1231] Siradj contended that Natsir's arguments about Qur'an allowing Muslims to protect themselves against their aggressors (by which Natsir meant the PKI) were taken out of context when directed against the PKI, because it was not the PKI but Kartosuwiryo's Darul Islam rebellion which had burnt mosques and killed Muslim congregants at prayer.[1232]

[1228] "Achmad Dasuki Siradj," Benedict Anderson papers, #14-27-4189. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
[1229] *Ibid*.
[1230] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, vol. 2, 330.
[1231] "*Ibid*., 326–28.
[1232] *Ibid*., 329.

In doing so, he was effectively engaging in an act of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), signaling that a communist like himself was no less steeped in Islamic knowledge than the leaders of Masjumi were. In doing so, he implied that there was more than one way for Islamic piety to be expressed politically. Siradj forcefully rebutted claims that the PKI was "anti-God," or that it sought to "destroy places of worship and limit freedom of religion."[1233] He argued that enshrining Islam as the state religion, as Masjumi wished, would effectively be letting Darul Islam off the hook. Siradj pointed out that Darul Islam – whose primary agenda had been the adoption of Islam as the official state religion, proclaiming an Islamic state (*Negara Islam Indonesia*) in place of the republic when the rebellion began in 1949 – would likely benefit from an amnesty if Masjumi had their way, and would therefore never face justice for the atrocities they had already committed.[1234] He openly challenged Natsir, arguing that if Natsir's interpretation of the Qur'an was correct and the PKI ought to be disbanded, the same applied to Darul Islam and its military wing, the Tentara Islam Indonesia (TII, Islamic Army of Indonesia).[1235]

Siradj also pointed out that the revolution's success had not been due to the efforts of one party alone, but of many: "the communists and the Muslims, the nobility and the illiterate masses" had all contributed toward making independence a reality.[1236] Therefore, the government represented all these diverse groups, and ought not to be perceived as prioritizing the interests of Muslims over others by making Islam the official state religion. Much like the more optimistic and less disillusioned Masjumi intellectuals of the early 1950s, Siradj argued that Pancasila was eminently compatible with Islam: he contended that Pancasila was a good example of an Islamic legislative structure inspired by Islamic values and designed by Muslims, within which genuine differences could be accommodated.[1237] Attacking Natsir's contention that Pancasila was merely a compromise to promote unity in the chaos of revolution, Siradj questioned how the Qur'an, which championed the principle

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[1233] *Ibid*., 329.
[1234] *Ibid*., 330. This was not an unreasonable accusation. As Siradj acidly noted, Masjumi members like Isa Anshary were highly sympathetic to Darul Islam's insurgency, while Natsir himself had made strenuous efforts to reach a negotiated solution to the conflict when he served as Prime Minister from September 1950 to March 1951. See Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy*, 76–77; Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*, 162, 192, 201.
[1235] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, vol. 2, 329.
[1236] *Ibid*., 332.
[1237] *Ibid*., 332, 334.

of *Tauhid*[1238] (unity), could possibly be "*a priori* opposed to the Pancasila principle of *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*?"[1239] *Ketuhanan jang Maha Esa*, after all, was a monotheist confession of faith, acknowledging only one God; it also had the social effect of uniting a heterogenous Indonesia under a religious principle acceptable to most citizens. In that sense, Pancasila was an incarnation of Islamic values in the political realm.

Most explicitly of all, Siradj proudly stated that he had been a PKI member for 33 years, and saw his membership as a matter of "political practicality:" he was a PKI member because PKI policies best advanced Muslims' interests, "in accordance with God's injunctions."[1240]This position evinced a high degree of continuity with Haji Misbach's belief that communism constituted the best vehicle for achieving Islamic goals. Siradj's emphasis on "political practicality" also echoed the position adopted by Tan Malaka: communists were free to choose which religion they embraced, and that Indonesians were free to wear as many hats as they wished. This was a dedication to communism animated by religious convictions was perfectly acceptable to both Tan Malaka and Siradj. Quoting Surah an-Nisa, 75 in both Arabic and Indonesian, Siradj asked his colleagues: "what is the matter with you, that you do not fight for Allah's cause, for the oppressed men, women and children who say 'O Lord, remove us from our place of oppression and appoint for us a protector and helper?'"[1241] This was the thrust of Siradj's argument: if the Qur'an enjoined Muslims to fight injustice, they ought to seek the most effective path to do so. If that path involved joining the PKI, then so be it. In what must have been an infuriating turn of phrase to his Masjumi colleagues, Siradj ended his speech by proclaiming that the PKI "was the only party dedicated to practicing God's laws [*mengamalkan hukum Allah*] in their political form," so if Masjumi would like to "implement God's laws sincerely," they were "invited to join the PKI."[1242]

[1238] *Tauhid* is a loaded concept in Islam, usually referring to the theological concept of God's unity of being in a monotheistic sense. This stood in contrast to Sufi mysticism (some branches of believed God to be manifest in his creation), the Christian triune Godhead or Hindu polytheism. Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Qutb interpreted Tawhid to mean that the principle of unity ought to be manifest in human affairs, "whereby society is to reflect divine unity through unanimous submission to God's revealed will, both privately and publicly." This guiding principle of unity is what Siradj was invoking to defend Pancasila. See "Tawhid," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (Oxford University Press, 2003), 317–18.

[1239] "K.H. Achmad Dasuki Siradj," *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstitutante*, vol. 2, 334.

[1240] *Ibid*., 336.

[1241] *Ibid*., 331.

[1242] *Ibid*., 336.

Outside of the parliament and related institutions such as the Constitutional Assembly, middling members of the PKI also left memoirs which defended their amalgamation of Muslim faith and communist politics. One such memoir was Hasan Raid's *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis* (2001), which presented a moving account of his deep beliefs and unwavering commitments, as well as the costs they incurred. Written sometime in the early to mid-1990s (the memoir ends in 1993, when Raid turned 70), it was not published until 2001 because of how transgressive the concept of Islamic communism was during Suharto's New Order regime. Built on an ideological foundation of anti-communism and wary of Islamic opposition to authoritarianism – as evinced by the aforementioned *Petisi 50* signed by both Prawiranegara and Trimurti– the New Order naturally found the amalgamation of Islam and communism particularly threatening. It was especially inimical to Suharto's attempts to pose as a pious Muslim leader from the late 1980s onward. Born in 1923, Raid was a Minangkabau native of Silungkang, West Sumatra, a PKI stronghold in the 1920s which became one of the flashpoints of the 1926–27 uprisings.[1243] Educated in the Dutch-medium government primary school in Silungkang, Raid also received an Islamic education from a young age – as was typical among the Minangkabau – at the Surau Tanjong Medan under Pokiah Yakub.[1244] During this period, he studied the Qur'an (which he had memorized by the age of ten) and read books of the Western literary canon, such as Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, as well as *pergerakan* literature like Abdoel Moeis's *Salah Asuhan*, examined in chapter two.[1245] As chapter two has argued, this was an environment that was particularly friendly to the simultaneous cultivation of Islamic identity and Marxist ideas in the *pergerakan* consciousness, and Raid's convictions reflect that.

One of the recurring tropes of Raid's memoir was his understanding of the Qur'an's Surah al-An'nam, 145, which contains an injunction against the drinking of flowing blood. The verse, in its totality, forbids the consumption of the flesh or blood of an already-dead animal, of pigs, or an animal slaughtered in dedication to another God, unless absolutely necessary for survival.[1246] Raid, however, recalled that his teacher, Pokiah

[1243] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis: Otobiografi Hasan Raid* (Yogyakarta: LKPSM, 2001), 16.
[1244] *Ibid*., 26.
[1245] *Ibid*., 25. s
[1246] *The Noble Qur'an*, 193–94.

Yacub, interpreted the verse metaphorically. The drinking of flowing blood or the consumption of prohibited animals' flesh was likened by Pokiah to the exploitation by a master of a slave's labor, for that labor was the product of the blood flowing through a body.[1247] Raid subscribed to this metaphor, explaining that the "blood-sucking" (*penghisapan*) of the poor by the rich was the principal cause of poverty, and society had to be structured in such a way as to severely limit such exploitation except when utterly necessary, much as the Qur'anic verse assured Muslims of God's mercy if they consumed the flesh or blood of such animals to survive.[1248] Syllogistically, the "consumption" of labor, or what in Marxist terms would be called the theft of laborers' "surplus value," was something that ought to be structurally limited according to Pokiah and Raid's interpretation of the Qur'an. Raid's commitment to the PKI hinged upon this belief, because he felt the PKI the only party that was serious about structuring society to limit "blood-sucking."

Raid also deployed a particular narrative of his education and his journey toward political awareness, presumably to convince his readers of his logically sound and gradual, even teleological, progress towards the conviction that supporting communism was a corollary of his Islamic faith. Raid wrote of being inspired by PKI and Sarekat Rakyat members who challenged the deeply unequal status quo of Silungkang in 1927, an area in which sharecropping was widespread and informal debt-slavery was an unacknowledged institution. He also wrote of being inspired by the Islamic socialist Permi activists of the 1930s, such as Rasuna Said and Rasimah Ismail, who were imprisoned in 1933 for their fiery speeches.[1249] In 1936, he moved to Surabaya, East Java, to complete his education; there he became an avid reader of the *pergerakan* press, faithfully following the writings of Soekarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir. He recalled reading Soekarno's *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1927) in particular, and though attracted to it, he knew little about what Marxism entailed at the time.[1250] Returning to Silungkang in 1940, he laid low during the Japanese occupation and experienced his first direct contact with PKI literature in November 1945, when he read the very first issue of the post-war PKI journal,

[1247] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 6.
[1248] *Ibid*., 6.
[1249] *Ibid*., 20–23.
[1250] *Ibid*., 68.

Bintang Merah.[1251] However, the pull of his Islamic faith was always clear: Like Moestahal, Raid joined Masjumi's armed wing, Hizbullah, when the revolution first began in August 1945. He even saw action around Semarang during the early clashes with British and Japanese troops.[1252] Raid recalled being electrified by the PKI's program as laid out in *Bintang Merah*, writing that the PKI was committed to "an end to the blood-sucking of people by people [*penghisapan manusia atas manusia*], and the promotion of justice in all aspects of life."[1253] This reminded him of the courage displayed by the participants in the 1926–27 uprisings, as well as the ideals of an equitable and dignified society cherished by Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir; he immediately decided in his heart that he would join the PKI instead of Masjumi.[1254] He joined the PKI in late 1945, and was put to work editing *Bintang Merah* alongside D.N. Aidit and Persis Pardede.

As a condition for becoming a PKI member, Raid was required to undergo several courses, in which he learnt about historical materialism and the nature of state administration, but he perceived no conflict between his Islamic faith and historical materialism.[1255] At one point, he even penned an article in *Bintang Merah* which attacked Tan Malaka for being insufficiently grounded in historical and dialectical materialism.[1256] Moreover, Raid named the PKI veteran Alimin, a fellow Muslim, as his role model because of Alimin's independent thinking, keen grasp of Marxist theory, and his rejection of pomp and ceremony. Raid particularly admired the fact that Alimin chose to live as simple a life as possible, the way a good Muslim would.[1257] Alimin, like the characters of Semaun's *Hikayat Kadirun* examined in chapter one, exemplified a particular articulation of Muslim piety: whether or not the motive force in world history was economic or spiritual was not a sticking point, because it was just action that mattered. What was more important for communists like Raid was that

[1251] *Ibid*., 65–66.
[1252] *Ibid*., 62, 65.
[1253] *Ibid*., 65.
[1254] *Ibid*., 66.
[1255] *Ibid*., 66–69.
[1256] *Ibid*., 73. Specifically, Raid's grouse was with Tan Malaka's argument, elaborated in the PARI Manifesto of 1945, that the coalescence of nations into larger blocs would serve as a deterrent to future conflict. Raid disagreed and felt that this "did not reflect the historical and dialectical materialist way of thinking."
[1257] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 73; C.W. Watson, *Of Self and Injustice* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2006), 43.

Islamic priorities such as the creation of a just society would manifest themselves in political efforts to actually improve society.

In the later stages of the revolution, Raid served as the PKI representative on a government mission to Sumatra headed by Siauw Giok Tjhan, the Minister for Issues of Nationality, to investigate the conditions faced by ethnic minorities in Sumatra. After the revolution, he worked as a full-time union organizer in Sumatra, working first with the Union of Plantation Workers (SIBRI) and later with the PKI-influenced Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization (SOBSI). An incident that occurred during his time as a journalist at *Bintang Merah* illustrates vividly his understanding of Islam's relationship with communism. Raid recalled a long conversation he once had with Haji Datuk Batuah, the Minangkabau Islamic communist and Sumatra Thawalib teacher examined in chapter one, contriving to invent the dialogue of this exchange (although he makes clear that this is not verbatim).[1258] Haji Datuk Batuah had been testing Raid on whether he understood both Islam and communism well enough for him to deliver a radio talk titled "The PKI and Religion." Haji Datuk Batuah explicitly asked Raid how he would defend the PKI's program of liberating humanity from oppression from accusations that it was incompatible with Islam. Returning to his favorite Qur'anic verse, Surah al-An'nam, 145, Raid replied that the Qur'an "forbade the drinking of flowing blood," which symbolized how Muslims ought not to participate in the exploitation of others. Haji Datuk Batuah then asked how Raid would defend himself against accusations of "subjectivity," especially since many Muslims would find his "unwillingness to defend harmony and peace" (i.e. seek a non-confrontational solution to problems) unpalatable. In response, Raid conceded that his defense of communism was indeed subjective, but all political positions were fundamentally subjective. The capitalists who benefited from the status quo were on equally subjective ground: they would naturally claim that their worldview, which normalized exploitation, was realistic, reasonable and objective.[1259]

[1258] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 76–82. This was clearly an episode of some importance to Raid, important enough for him to "recreate" the dialogue to dramatize it.
[1259] *Ibid*., 76–77.

Haji Datuk Batuah responded favorably to this line of argument; he pointed out that it was easy to assume a position of seeming neutrality in the face of an unjust status quo, but maintaining the appearance of being non-partisan was as good as perpetuating injustice.[1260] Raid enthusiastically agreed, quoting Surah al-Qasas, 5–6, which concerns Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. The Israelites are described as the beneficiaries of God's desire to "favor to those who were weak and oppressed in the land, to make them rulers and to make them inheritors."[1261] By the same token, Raid argued, God was on the side of the Indonesian *rakyat*, the long-suffering masses whose labor had been exploited under colonial capitalism, and for whom the revolution had struggled to bring meaningful improvements in quality of life.[1262] Raid also cited Surah ar-Rad, 11, to justify committing oneself to fighting socio-economic injustice: "… Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."[1263] More conservative interpretations of these verses usually take it to mean that the "good condition" of a people will not be altered unless they have sinned.[1264] Raid was applying a generous interpretation of these verses, squaring them with the broad moral injunctions of the Qur'an – which he induced from the importance of *zakat* – to justify upending the status quo to improve the living conditions of the poor and oppressed (*kaum mustakbirin*).[1265] In connection with this, Raid argued that Indonesian society could only be considered just by Islamic standards if Islamic scholars (*ulama*) would encourage the oppressed to organize so as to put an end to their oppression. Indonesian society would only be just when the structures of the state guaranteed a modern equivalent of the *Bayt al-Mal*, a public treasury which would be used to guarantee a minimum standard of living for the poor, beyond what the obligations of *zakat* or the charity of individuals could provide, because good intentions did not resolve the "roots of poverty" (*sumber kemiskinan*).[1266] Haji Datuk Batuah was impressed by Raid's arguments, approvingly stating that the PKI would

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[1260] *Ibid*., 77.
[1261] *The Noble Qur'an*, 517.
[1262] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 78.
[1263] *Ibid*., 78.
[1264] *The Noble Qur'an*, 321.
[1265] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 78.
[1266] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 78. The *Bayt al-Mal* (lit. house of wealth) was the public treasury of the Rashidun caliphs, which was also responsible for the collection of *zakat* and its expenditure. See "Bayt al-Mal," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. Oxford Islamic Studies Online, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e324 (accessed 06-Nov-2019).

"… fly high the banner of freedom of oppression… our PKI will implement the teachings of Islam regarding the liberation of the people [*PKI kita amalkan ajaran Islam tentang pembebasan umat*]."[1267] With that, Haji Datuk Batuah approved Raid's radio talk.

The radio talk itself was relatively straightforward: Raid asserted that the PKI welcomed support from all faith communities, as long as they supported the PKI's program of resistance to oppression, because religion was a private matter outside the ambit of the PKI. The PKI believed that the exploitation of the poor and oppressed in the status quo would continue unless the poor and oppressed actively took matters into their own hands, militating for their own interests. Islam forbade the exploitation of man by his fellow man, as elaborated in Surah al-Baqarah, 188, and Surah al-Humazah, 1–3.[1268] Finally, echoing Siradj's speech in the Constitutional Assembly, Raid argued that the PKI's goal of a socialist society was desirable from a Muslim point of view because it was the first step towards a classless society, which was in turn an expression of the Islamic principle of *Tauhid* (unity).[1269] This classless society or "unified society" [*masyarakat Tauhidi*] was "truly in accordance with Islamic teachings to support truth and justice in all matters, eliminating the exploitation of man by his fellow man."[1270] In fact, that entire section of the memoir, consisting of several chapters, was titled "*Panggildan Hidup untuk Masyarakat Tauhidi*," the call to build an united society. Raid's emphasis on *Tauhid*, which was clearly important to Siradj as well, serves as an indicator for how deeply Islamic faith and Marxist ideas could be imbricated during this intellectually febrile period.

The prominence of Islam in Raid's worldview was consistent throughout the parliamentary democracy period. In the early 1950s, Raid left *Bintang Merah* to work as a full-time organizer for the national-level Indonesian Plantation Workers Union, (SABUPRI, Sarekat Buruh Perkebunan Republik Indonesia), an affiliate of the umbrella labor union controlled by the PKI, the Central All-Indonesian Workers Organization (SOBSI, Sentral

[1267] *Ibid*., 79.
[1268] The verses read as follows: "And eat up not one another's property unjustly, nor give bribery to the rulers that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully;" "Woe to every slanderer and backbiter. Who has gathered wealth and counted it. He thinks that his wealth will make him last forever! Nay! Verily, he will be thrown in the crushing fire." See *The Noble Qur'an*, 39, 853.
[1269] *Ibid*., 82.
[1270] *Ibid*., 82.

Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia). While a full-time unionist, Raid had to contend with controversies over whether Muslims could join SABUPRI, because of its relationship with the PKI-dominated SOBSI, on the presumption that the PKI condemned religion. He recalled a series of articles debating the compatibility of SABUPRI and Islam being published in the main SABUPRI magazine, *Warta Sabupri*. Raid contributed an article rebutting the accusation that the PKI was anti-religion, pointing out that this was terribly convenient for the plantation owners (often Dutch concerns, especially in the Deli tobacco plantation belt in Sumatra) who were always looking for opportunities to undermine the unions. He invoked Surah Ar-Rad, 11, once again, arguing that the Qur'an called on Muslims to work to change their own circumstances, which dovetailed neatly with SABUPRI's *raison d'être*.[1271] This argument must have held some water, since SABUPRI's membership peaked in the early 1950s, reaching approximately 700,000 in 1952, making it the single largest Indonesian labor union of the parliamentary democracy period.[1272]

Raid also had to rebut Masjumi accusations of the PKI's purportedly anti-religious agenda while campaigning for the PKI in the lead up to the 1955 elections. Raid recalled his rhetorical defense, which he often deployed at speeches given in various villages, vividly: "In what way is the PKI anti-religion for wanting to rescue the people [*umat*] from poverty? For opposing the oppression of one's fellow man? For condemning drinking the flowing blood of one's fellow man? Why is the PKI anti-religion for upholding justice in society?[1273]" By contrast, Masjumi was far too cozy with plantation owners and business interests, discreetly acquiescing to the bulldozing of squatter settlements on fertile land, a common occurrence in this period because of the economic disruption of the revolution had forced many to turn to subsistence agriculture on plantation land. Raid pointed out that the occupants of these squatter settlements were the very same orphans and paupers (*anak yatim* and *fakir miskin*, both specific categories in *fiqh*) that the Qur'an compelled Muslims to protect. He went on invoke Surah al-Ma'un, 1–7, which condemns those who pray intensely but ignore the needs of the poor (*fakir miskin*) and the orphans (*anak yatim*). The verse reads: "Have you seen the one who denies recompense? For that is the

[1271] *Ibid*., 125–26.
[1272] Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation*, 115; Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951–63*, xvi.
[1273] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 133.

one who drives away the orphan, and does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray, [but] who are heedless of their prayer, those who make show [of their deeds], and withhold small kindnesses."[1274] Raid also condemned the tendency amongst Masjumi supporters to denounce PKI members as *kafir* (infidels), accusing them of stoking *fitnah* (civil strife), something that the Qur'an explicitly forbade. Quoting Surah al-Hujarat, 1, Raid argued that such declamations constituted an usurpation of God's exclusive right to pass judgement on humans, in direct contradiction of Qur'anic injunction.[1275] By critiquing Masjumi within a specifically Islamic framework, Raid asserted the PKI's status as the true executor of Islamic values in society.

The many flavors of Indonesian Marxism

Not all whose worldviews mixed Islam with Marxism were supporters of the PKI. Marxism found many forms of expression in Indonesian political life, most notably among the PSI, but also in the left wing of the PNI and arguably even Masjumi. Beyond these major players were numerous smaller parties that synthesized Marxist ideas, or operated on explicitly Marxist platforms adapted for the Indonesian stage. Partai Murba (Murba Party), Angkatan Comunis Muda (Acoma, Generation of Communist Youth), and Partai Buruh (Labor Party) were merely three examples, and all held parliamentary seats throughout the parliamentary democracy period.[1276] The influence of Marxist ideas over Indonesian political discourse was undeniable, and as the section on Masjumi intellectuals has shown, Marx's ideas penetrated deep into Islamic parties too, despite Masjumi's unwavering opposition to the PKI in nearly all realms of political activity.

[1274] *The Noble Qur'an*, ed., trans. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Madinah: King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex, 2012), 855.
[1275] Hasan Raid, *Pergulatan Muslim Komunis*, 134.
[1276] The Partai Buruh (Labor Party) was a splinter faction of the Partai Buruh Indonesia (Indonesian Labor Party), which had voluntarily merged with the PKI in December 1949. The dissident Partai Buruh rejected the merger, and obtained seven seats in the provisional parliament which served as the republic's legislature from 1950–55; it only won two parliamentary seats in the 1955 elections. See Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 144.

Beyond the political parties, there were many actors in civil society, including those who chose to forego overt political affiliations, whose writings also evinced an admixture of Islam and Marxism. This section examines a variety of avowedly Marxist Indonesians who did not count themselves as PKI supporters – indeed, many of them were staunch opponents of the PKI – who managed to find their own ways of squaring their Muslim identities with their Marx-inspired politics. Bahtiar Effendy rightly pointed out that plenty of Islamic political discourse was not expressed through political parties.[1277] Outside of parties like Masjumi, NU and PSII, there were many articulations of Islamic political discourse: individuals such as Hatta and Trimurti and organizations like Muhammadiyah and Persis developed their own variants of what Shaheb Ahmed would recognize as Islamic discourse. Islam is polyvocal and can be interpreted in many ways; different actors had different ideas about how Islam ought to be woven into the fabric of the republic. The fact that they were not members of an "Islamic party" did not make their ideas any less Islamic. This section covers the experiences of Muslim women in the Marxist women's organization Gerwani; the writings of heterodox Marxists like S.K. Trimurti and Darsono; the speeches and recollections of Djoeir Moehamad and Soedjatmoko, both members of the PSI's upper echelons; and the transcripts of speeches given by various representatives of minor Marxist parties in the Constitutional Assembly. It will end with a brief consideration of the PKI's public rhetoric on Islam in Aidit's speeches and writings, showing the remarkable degree of consistency across the Indonesian left when it came to engaging Islam.

Outside of the debates in parliament and the Constitutional Assembly, there were Marxists aplenty who were similarly adaptive and perhaps even idiosyncratic in their applications of Marxist ideas. For them, Marxist ideas were tools, albeit important ones, in a larger toolkit. S.K. Trimurti, whose revolutionary writings we have already examined in chapter three, was one such anomalous Marxist. Deeply committed to the labor movement and feminist activism, she was familiar with Marxist theory but never joined any political party and remained a life-long Muslim. In 1957, Trimurti penned a short but robust defense of Tan Malaka and the minor Marxist

[1277] Bahtiar Effendy, "Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia," (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1995), 54, 75.

parties which continued his intellectual legacy, such as Acoma and the Partai Murba. In it, she asserted that Tan Malaka was both an honest intellectual and a visionary, a true communist who valued Indonesia's needs more than ideological purity.[1278] His only failing, Trimurti mused, was that he never addressed women's issues. Trimurti called on labor unions to support Tan Malaka's heirs, much as they had supported the Persatuan Perjuangan (PP) during the revolution.[1279] This was written in 1957, an inopportune time to be a Tan Malaka loyalist: the PKI was at the height of its political influence, having performed well in both the 1955 general elections and the 1957 regional elections. There was no love lost between the PKI and Tan Malaka; the official party line was that Tan Malaka had been misguided at best and a traitor at worst for splitting the PKI's support base. Despite the political inconvenience of doing so, Trimurti was willing to overtly support another anomalous Marxist who had fallen from favor precisely because of his adaptive approach to Marxism.

Trimurti's commitment to labor unionism and her sympathy for Tan Malaka's brand of communism coexisted alongside her strong commitment to Islam; they were even framed within an Islamic worldview. Chapter three has already shown Trimurti's religiosity in the face of impending incarceration for *persdelict*. The importance of her Muslim faith would be evident later in life as well, when she wrote articles for a left-leaning magazine titled *Gema Angkatan 45* (Echo of the 1945 Generation). In it, she argued that humanity's economic activities were an expression of not just humans' physical needs, but also of their spiritual (*roh, spirituil*) needs.[1280] The advancement of economic interests at the expense of mental or spiritual interests was therefore not acceptable to her; economic progress could not be the epitome of human priorities. Instead, she argued that "the feeling of justice" (*rasa keadilan*) was the higher purpose; mankind had a deep desire to live in a just society, "in accordance with their mental, spiritual, religious, moral and ethical values."[1281] She asserted the universality of humanity's dignity, regardless of race, religion and gender, arguing that "God has constituted his creations as a

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[1278] S.K. Trimurti "Tan Malaka Seorang Jujur," in *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti Pejuang Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan Terpilih Karya S.K. Trimurti (1939-1991)*, ed. B. E. Henky and Teguh Mangil (Jakarta: Yayasan Bung Karno, 2007), 108.
[1279] *Ibid*.
[1280] S.K. Trimurti "Pemeratan Pendapatan Arah Yang Kita Tuju," in *95 Tahun S.K. Trimurti Pejuang Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan Terpilih Karya S.K. Trimurti (1939-1991)*, ed. B. E. Henky and Teguh Mangil (Jakarta: Yayasan Bung Karno, 2007), 204.
[1281] *Ibid*., 204.

single unit," so an injury against one was an injury against all.[1282] It was within this distinctly religious framework that she made her argument for broad and expansive labor rights, acknowledging the cost this might impose on economic growth but accepting that cost as the price of respecting human dignity.[1283]

These fine-sounding sentiments were entirely consistent with her pragmatic approach to labor activism. In a 1975 speech given at the Museum of National Awakening in Jakarta, Trimurti provided an overview of the growth and development of the labor movement in Indonesia. She positioned her own labor union, the Barisan Buruh Indonesia (BBI, Indonesian Workers Union), within a lineage of labor unions going back to the PKI-organized *vakcentrale*, the VSTP (Vereniging van Spoor-en Tramwegpersoneel, Association of Rail and Tram Personnel), and the PFB (*Personeel Fabriek Bond*, Union of Textile Workers) of the 1920s, all of which were deeply influenced by Marxist ideas and close to the PKI.[1284] This was not the most politically correct statement to make, since the rabidly anti-communist Suharto regime was then in power. She made no mention, however, of communism or solidarity with the PKI. What concerned her was whether these unions had taken concrete actions to improve the living conditions and labor rights of ordinary Indonesians. In that vein, she had kind words for the Masjumi-supported, self-consciously Muslim labor union, the SBII (Sarekat Buruh Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Workers Union), which had been set up as a direct competitor to Marxist unions like the BBI, SOBSI and SABUPRI. She said that "the SBII was founded by conscious Muslims [*kesadaran gologan Islam*], because they understood that since the formation of Sarekat Islam in the 1910s, Muslims had paid insufficient attention to mass action amongst the working class."[1285] The implication, of course, was that to be a good Muslim meant paying attention to matters of class, and in that regard, she had expressed her piety in a lifetime of labor activism. She did not condemn competitor unions for being subservient or servile to external interests, instead recognizing that progress could and should be fought for on many fronts. For a Marxist like Trimurti, it was ultimately actions, not abstract ideas, that mattered. Her Islamic piety manifested itself in

[1282] *Ibid*., 205.
[1283] *Ibid*., 206.
[1284] Dra. Ek. S.K. Trimurti, *Hubungan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia Dengan Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Nasional* (Jakarta: Yayasa Idahyu, 1975), 8–13.
[1285] *Ibid*., 14.

various kinds of activism, and Marxism informed that activism without necessarily directing it. In a similar way, she saw SBII as through the lens of solidarity instead of competition, because SBII could make concrete progress on labor rights despite its ideological hostility towards Marxism.

Trimurti was not the only female activist driven by both Muslim piety and Marxist ideas. Working in civil society rather than through political parties, such activists, especially female ones, are largely absent from the scholarship on this period, with the exception of monographs that deal explicitly with women's organizations and struggles.[1286] Two such activists were S. Yati, also known as Mrs. Arudji Kratawinata after her marriage of the PSII/Masjumi parliamentarian Arudji Kartawinata, and Chalisah, both of whom were active in the left-leaning feminist organization Gerwani and its predecessor, Gerwis. Gerwis (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Indonesian Women's Movement) was founded in Semarang in 1950, and changed its name to Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Sedar Indonesia, Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women) in 1954 when it moved towards becoming a mass organization. With only 500 members in 1950, it expanded remarkably quickly, claiming up to 1.5 million members in 1963 and 3 million in 1965.[1287] Influenced by Marxist theory since its inception, it became increasingly close to the PKI as the 1950s wore on, inducing founding members like S.K. Trimurti to eventually leave.[1288]

Gerwani's relationship with Islamic organizations had long been strained because of Gerwani's unwillingness to engage with Islam at a hermeneutic level, or to make common cause with Islamic organizations at an institutional level.[1289] This recalcitrance was in large part the result of Gerwani's focus on criticizing "backward" marriage customs and promoting legal reform in personal status law to benefit women. These fraught issues, especially polygyny, had been a source of contention since the 1930s when Soewarni and Ratna Sari clashed over whether Islam played a positive role in promoting women's rights (see chapter two), and they

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[1286] There are a number of excellent monographs on women's movements and struggles during the 1950s, including Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (2002), Elizabeth Martyn, *The Women's Movement in Post-colonial Indonesia: Gender and Nation in a New Democracy* (2005), and Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (2004).
[1287] Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: 1951-1963* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1964), 208; Saskia Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan and the Institute of Social Studies, 2002), 140, 179.
[1288] Susan Blackburn, *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 181.
[1289] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 250.

continued to divide Indonesian feminists. Muslim women's organizations, though progressive in many ways, tended to perceive Gerwani's critiques as an insult to Islam itself, foreclosing the possibility of cooperation. Gerwani, on its part, made no strenuous efforts to bridge that gap between intention and perception.[1290]

However, at the individual level, there were a number of prominent Gerwani supporters who continued to combine their Islamic piety with their women's rights activism. Such individuals may have been influenced to the international context of the 1950s, which provided a discursive climate in which non-aligned, pan-Asian solidarity was deeply popular, as expressed in international women's conferences like the Conference on the Women of Asia in Beijing (1949), the Asian-African Conference of Women in Colombo (1958), and the Afro-Asian Women's Conference (1961).[1291] Despite the participation of many Marxist women's organizations, these conferences were largely independent and multi-denominational; many Indonesian women's organizations were represented at them, and they fostered a spirit of undogmatic women's cooperation and solidarity across national boundaries.[1292] This historical moment of transnational Afro-Asian solidarity may have motivated Indonesian feminists to bridge domestic divides and cooperate where they could despite their differences. S. Yati, whom we have already encountered in chapter two, was an influential member of the PSII's women's wing even before her marriage. Her position within the PSII allowed her lend the PSII's support to Gerwani during the 1950s, so female PSII members were able to join Gerwani activists and female members of SOBSI on several occasions to hold public demonstrations against issues like unequal pay for women and women's rights in the workplace. S. Yati argued for a progressive interpretation of Islam in relation to women's rights, arguing that Islam emphasized the importance of mutual love between man and wife, the desirability of women being economically active, and Islam's opposition to exploitative economic practices like speculation and usury.[1293]

[1290] *Ibid*., 251.
[1291] Elisabeth Armstrong, "Before Bandung: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement in Asia and the Women's International Democratic Federation," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41 (2015): 305–31.
[1292] Carolien Stolte, "The People's Bandung," 142–143.
[1293] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 251.

This solidarity between Islamic and secular women's rights activism was markedly consistent with the sentiments expressed by S.K. Trimurti when she edited Gerwis's magazine, *Wanita Sedar*, in the early 1950s. Trimurti penned editorials advocating reforms to the laws governing marriage, arguing that the conventions of *adat* (localized customs) and Islamic family law regarding divorce and reconciliation did retain some relevance in informing secular laws, but these needed to be structured and qualified by secular regulations because "people simultaneously occupy two roles: firstly as adherents of a faith, and secondly as citizens, both of which are equally important."[1294] She attempted to bridge the gap on the controversial issue of polygyny by arguing that the it ought to be allowed, but tightly regulated: all marriages (including polygynous ones) ought to be registered with the state, and polygynous marriages would have to secure the formal written consent of all wives. Moreover, the state ought to assess the financial ability of the husband to maintain all his wives equally, consistent with established Islamic *fiqh*, failing which the marriage could not proceed.[1295] This did not mean that Trimurti was willing to bow to orthodox *fiqh* on all matters: contradicting the established rulings of the four major *madhhab*, she also argued for men and women to be given equal rights of inheritance.[1296] All of this creative adaptation of Islam and *adat* occurred within a magazine which also described the plight of Indonesian peasant women, praised female American labor organizers as "heroines of the working class," and celebrated international women's rights conferences – such as one held in Berlin on June 9, 1951 – attended by Gerwani as well as by several communist feminist organizations from the PRC, USSR and Vietnam.[1297]

Chalisah was a Gerwani member of Minangkabau origin, and attended a women's Islamic school in Padang Panjang, possibly the Diniyyah school which so many Permi activists attended or taught at. After graduating, she worked as an Islamic teacher at women's schools in various locations. She divorced her first husband when he married a second wife, and her second husband was a communist *haji* who encouraged her to join the PKI. She joined the party and became one of the founding members of Gerwis in 1950, serving as vice-chair of the

[1294] S.K. Trimurti, "Soal-soal Sekitar Perkwainan," *Wanita Sedar*, Year 2, No. 16, Dec 1951.
[1295] *Ibid*.
[1296] *Ibid*.
[1297] S. Ummi, "Wanita Didesa," *Wanita Sedar*, Year 2, No. 16, Dec 1951.

Gerwis branch in Bukittingi, West Sumatra. At the same time, Chalisah joined Muhammadiyah's women's organization, Aisyah, perceiving no contradiction between being a member of the PKI, Gerwis and Aisyah at the same time. When interviewed by Saskia Wieringa, she explained that she perceived no problem with her multiple allegiances because Hatta had publicly said that citizens were free to join whichever organization they liked in a democratic society.[1298] She also specifically explained that she saw no contradiction between being a Muslim and being a Gerwani member, because Islam called on its adherents to honor women, while condemning those who insulted women.[1299] As a Gerwis and Gerwani activist with a formal Islamic education, she specialized in resolving problems that arose in relation to Islam: on one occasion, she was sent to West Java to explain to a hundred female tea pickers who had joined both Gerwis and the plantation workers union SABUPRI that their local Islamic teacher had been wrong in advising them to leave Gerwani – purportedly because Gerwani opposed Islam. She was successful, and the women rejoined both Gerwani and SABUPRI.[1300] For the many Gerwis and Gerwani activists who made unprecedented efforts to address the needs and concerns of rural women, their motivations sometimes mixed both Islamic piety and Marxist critiques of patriarchy. Some Muslim women's rights activists perceived no problem with their support for, or membership in, Marxist organizations like Gerwani or the PKI precisely because they were focused on concrete improvements to women's conditions, which they understood as part of their ethical obligations as good Muslims.

Like these Gerwani supporters, Djoeir Moehamad (b. 1916), whom we have already encountered in chapter two, had little trouble reconciling his identity as a Muslim with his PSI membership. An old associate of Pendidikan leaders in West Sumatra, Djoeir became a full-time PSI activist and organizer after the revolution. He served first as a regional secretary for the greater Sumatra region, and then as the chairperson of PSI's Sumatra secretariat. Eventually, he was appointed a member of the PSI's governing council, responsible for the education, information and propaganda secretariat.[1301] Djoeir recalled that his first serious acquaintance with

[1298] Wieringa, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, 252.
[1299] *Ibid*.
[1300] *Ibid*.
[1301] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1997), 220.

Marxist theory had occurred during his years as a student in Delhi University, where he became friends with a fellow student, Saleh Jakfar, who was a correspondent for Zainal Abidin Ahmad's newspaper, *Pandji Islam*. Through many discussions with Saleh Jakfar and Subhas Chandra Bose, attending university debating club sessions, and his own study of both European and Asian Marxist literature – especially from China – in the Delhi University library, Djoeir "became acquainted with the intellectual fruits of Marx and Engels."[1302] Returning to Indonesia during the second world war, he became close to Pendidikan activists such as Leon Salim and Chatib Suleiman, and deepened his acquaintance with Marxist theory by reading old issues of Sjahrir and Hatta's *Daulat Ra'jat*.[1303] He came to understand that socialism was a viable alternative to Feudalism, Capitalism and Imperialism, and by his own admission became more secular in his thinking. However, he made clear that he "never became a proponent of secularism," instead embracing socialism as a form of *ilmu pengetahuan*; "as a person who received a traditional Minangkabau Islamic education in a *surau*, Marxism could never annihilate [*menghapuskan*] the fundamental Islamic teachings in my soul."[1304]

Djoeir chose to join the PSI because he understood Sjahrir's attempt to build "Indonesian socialism" (a formulation that Soekarno and many PNI politicians would also use) as the creation of the "people's economy" which would benefit "the victims of feudalism, capitalism, imperialism and colonialism."[1305]To that end, the state would necessarily have a hand in controlling the production and distribution of key goods, but without abolishing all rights of private ownership.[1306] Djoeir argued that "there was no need to obscure or fear the fact that socialism's genesis lay in Marx's *Das Kapital*, or that it was colored [*diwarnai*] by Marxism."[1307] To support this line of argument, Djoeir pointed out that Sneevliet's introduction of Marxist ideas to the Indies in the early 1920s had been well-received, with Tjokoraminoto and Haji Agus Salim developing these ideas into what Djoeir called "religious socialism," which eventually became part of Masjumi's legacy. This, Djoeir

[1302] *Ibid*., 221–222.
[1303] *Ibid*., 223.
[1304] *Ibid*., 222.
[1305] *Ibid*., 225.
[1306] *Ibid*., 225.
[1307] *Ibid*., 225–226.

observed, was abundantly clear from Sjafruddin Prawiranegara's *Politik dan Revolusi Kita*, examined above, which outlined Masjumi's support for the 1945 constitution's embrace of socialism.[1308] Interestingly, Djoeir also pointed out that Hamka had written in his memoir of "studying Islam and socialism with Tjokroaminoto, sociology with Soerjopranoto, and the Islamic science of *Tauhid* with Haji Fakhruddin."[1309] Djoeir's invocation of Muslim *pergerakan* luminaries such as Hamka, Tjokroaminoto, and Haji Agus Salim was telling. His purpose was to showcase the deep entwinement of socialism and Islam in Indonesia, writing as he was during Suharto's rabidly anti-communist rule, which aggressively demonized anything connected with Marxism. Djoeir's choice to highlight Hamka's association with Soerjopranoto and Haji Fakhruddin was deliberate: both men had led powerful unions in strikes against Dutch business interests and the colonial state in central Java during the 1910s, modelling a form of Muslim piety that found expression in labor unionism.[1310] The fact that Hamka openly admitted his connection with them, on specifically Islamic terms, was an indicator of the importance of socialist ideas and practices to Muslim intellectual life in Indonesia. Djoeir's point was that socialism's intellectual debt to Marx's critique of capital, and its borrowing of Marxist theory, did not mean that it was a direct reflection of Soviet dogma, such as the communist rejection of religion. Adaptation of Marx's ideas to suit Indonesian needs, including accommodating Islam, could and had taken place. Why else would so many famous Muslim activists have been willing to propound socialism?

Djoeir also took pains to point out the PSI's approach to Marxism was fundamentally adaptive and creative. At the PSI congress in Bandung in 1952, Soebadio, a leading cadre, had moved that any mention of Marxism be removed from the PSI's charter. Djoeir supported Sjahrir's decision to retain it, because he felt that PSI members were not interested in being "doctrinal and orthodox Marxists."[1311] Djoeir recalled Sjahrir arguing that Marxism was not the "basis" (*azas*) of the PSI's socialism, but that it "informed the PSI's orientation." It would therefore be unfair to jettison Marxism and its important contributions, though Djoeir acknowledged that

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[1308] *Ibid*., 227–228.
[1309] *Ibid*., 226. The memoir in question was *Ajahku* (Jakarta: Widjaya, 1950), the first of several memoirs that Hamaka published.
[1310] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, 110–12; Syamsul Bakri, *Gerakan Komunisme Islam Surakarta 1914-1942* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Askara, 2015), 157.
[1311] Djoeir Moehamad, *Memoar Seorang Sosialis*, 228.

"dogmatic applications Marxism give birth to political movements which are erroneous and destructive, whose consequences cannot be blamed on Marx and Engels."[1312] Djoeir argued that unlike the PKI, the PSI prioritized democracy and humanism not merely as ends to be eventually achieved, but integral to means as well. Making the right political decisions was important, but the manner in which those decisions were made was even more important.

The PSI rejected the possibility of seizing of power through a *coup d'état* because a government which came to power without the consent of the *rakyat* would have to quash resistance with force, inviting the *rakyat* to oppose the government. The PSI, therefore, "respected the opinions of others, even if they were critical [of the PSI]," and rejected media censorship.[1313] According to Djoier, Sjahrir and the 1952 PSI congress had made clear that "the works of Marx and Engels were not to be used as doctrine or dogma, but solely as *ilmu pengetahuan*, which was open to critique at all times."[1314] The doctrinal application of Marxist ideas was the main point of distinction between the PSI and the PKI, and Djoeir made clear his opposition to the PKI's communism because of its resultant "authoritarian and totalitarian tendencies."[1315] Only this adaptive approach to Marxism, which valued its insights without elevating it to dogma, could have made possible the conciliation between personal faith and public politics that Djoeir perceived both in himself and his Masjumi colleagues.

Soedjatmoko (b. 1922), a rather more prominent PSI member with the intellectual depth to rival Sjahrir, also evinced a willingness to accommodate Islam within his thoroughly socialist worldview. Soedjatmoko was a longstanding Sjahrir associate, a fellow Minangkabau, and part of the PSI's top leadership. He served as the editor of the main PSI periodicals, *Siasat*, *Pedoman*, and *Konfrontasi*, and was elected as a PSI representative to Constitutional Assembly in 1956. Unlike Sjahrir, he maintained a good working relationship with Soekarno until around 1957, where they fell out over the Soekarno's turn to Guided Democracy.[1316] Unlike Djoeir,

[1312] *Ibid*., 228–229.
[1313] *Ibid*., 230–231.
[1314] *Ibid*., 229.
[1315] *Ibid*., 233.
[1316] George McTurnan Kahin and Milton L. Barnett, "In Memoriam: Soedjatmoko, 1922-1989," *Indonesia* 49 (1990): 133–39.

Soedjatmoko's accommodation of Islam was not a result of profound personal religiosity, but rather a realistic recognition of the degree to which Islam permeated the social fabric of Indonesia. He fully recognized the degree to which Islam was imbricated in world history: if Indonesians were heirs to world culture, Islam was part of that world culture too.

> *"The development of Western European culture was the result of its contact with Islamic civilization during the crusades. The Renaissance emerged from Northern Italy's reacquaintance with the culture of classical Greece. The glory of Islamic civilization was itself the result of a meeting between Hellenistic culture, and after some time, the Turkic and Mongol cultures that had been integrated into Indian culture* [the Timurid and Mongol influence on Persianate cultures of the Islamic world, such as the Mughals and Safavids]. *In Indonesia, the development of Hindic culture and its later meeting with Islamic culture is evidence of the great benefits and progress that accrue from the meeting of one culture with another. The capacity for a culture to digest and adapt* [mencerna dan menyesuaikan] *elements of another culture in accordance with its own needs is evidence of the vitality of a nation's culture."*[1317]

To Soedjatmoko, Islam had shaped the Malay Archipelago's pre-colonial civilizations, both the Netherlands and the Indies, and naturally Indonesia itself. This ongoing process of interaction and adaptation of cultures was not merely desirable; it was a sign of vitality and growth. By the same token, he argued that "socialist culture" had to be adaptive and creative, identifying merit and learning from it wherever it was to be found, instead of merely following the examples of established communist countries.[1318]

This dynamic understanding of Islam was very much evident in his other writings as well. In a speech given at the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo in 1987, on the occasion of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, Soedjatmoko posited that all religions had to reckon with political, social and economic change: "… poverty and injustice cannot be overcome by charity alone. Increased understanding of the nature and origin of poverty and the structures that perpetuate it injustice brings religion face-to-face with the perplexities of power and the complexities of transforming unjust institutions…"[1319] Similarly, In other UNU speeches, Soedjatmoko would argue that Islam was a religion of action, and that social implications necessarily flowed from Islamic

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[1317] Soedjatmoko, *Kebudayaan Sosialis*, ed. Muhidin M. Dahlan (Jakarta: Melibas, 2001), 61–62.
[1318] *Ibid*., 65.
[1319] Soedjatmoko, *Transforming Humanity: The Visionary Writings of Soedjatmoko*, ed., trans. Kathleen Newland and Kamala Chandrakirana Soedjatmoko (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1994), 163.

ethics.[1320] He also called upon Muslims to re-evaluate the practice of *ijtihad* and how it might be harnessed to develop Islamic responses to pressing questions, while exhorting Muslims to find common ground with other religions, belief systems, and modern ideologies.[1321] Soedjatmoko like Sjahrir had the benefit of an excellent Dutch education, and was fluent in Marxist theory. He self-identified as a Marxist and socialist, rejecting dogmatic interpretations of Marxism.[1322] Like Tan Malaka, he was clear about his admiration for Islamic civilization, accepting that it was an integral component of Indonesian culture, without necessarily being its defining aspect. To that extent, it was necessary, indeed beneficial, to synthesize the best that Islamic culture had to offer within the new socialist Indonesian culture that Soedjatmoko sought to midwife.[1323]

Soedjatmoko was an exceptional thinker in many ways, but his comfortable relationship between his Islamic faith and his Marxist inspirations was typical of the political discourse of this period. This comfort was also evident in the speeches given by Constitutional Assembly (*Konstituante*) delegates during the late 1950s. The Constitutional Assembly was elected in 1956 and tasked with formulating a new, permanent constitution to replace the provisional constitution of 1950. It spent much of its existence (1956–59) debating the place of religion in Indonesian society, and how that ought to be reflected in the constitution. Much like Soedjatmoko, there were many delegates from various Marxist parties who saw Islam as fundamental to the republic's identity but did not support its adoption as the official state religion. One such delegate was Rd. Abdulrochman Wangsadikarta, who represented the PKI-sympathetic PTI (Partai Tani Indonesia, Indonesian Farmers Party). He argued that the constitution should continue to embrace Pancasila as a set of guiding principles, including *Ketuhanan Jang Maha Esa*, instead of making Islam the state religion. At the same time, he made clear his sympathies for labor unions, but stressed that the PTI did not want to see Indonesia emulate the USSR in its collectivization of agriculture or its marginalization of religion.[1324] Sahamad Sudjono, who represented the Acoma party in the Constitutional Assembly, was more explicit about his party's willingness to accommodate

[1320] *Ibid*., 173.
[1321] *Ibid*., 174.
[1322] Soedjatmoko, *Kebudayaan Sosialis*, ix.
[1323] *Ibid*., 70.
[1324] "Rd. Abdulrochman Wangsadikarta," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, vol 1., 48.

Islam. Acoma (originally a Tan Malaka-aligned movement called Angkatan Komunis Muda, Generation of Communist Youth, until it was reformed as a political party in 1952) was a Trotskyist party led by Ibnu Parna, one of Tan Malaka's disciples. It won only one parliamentary seat in the 1955 elections, occupied by Ibnu Parna himself. Like the Partai Murba, it represented the continuation of Tan Malaka's intellectual legacy in Indonesian politics. He made clear Acoma's willingness to collaborate with any "revolutionary Islamic group," because "both communists and Muslims are opposed to the exploitation of humanity."[1325]

Baheramsjah Sutan Indra, the representative of the Marxist Partai Buruh (Labor Party, which had split from the PBI over its decision to merge with the PKI in 1949), went even further in signaling his willingness address Muslims' concerns. He admitted that Masjumi's Natsir had a valid point in wanting to make Islam the state religion, because Islamic teachings would not be a bad basis upon which to organize the state.[1326] However, despite Indra's own adherence to Islam, he ultimately disagreed respectfully with Natsir, arguing that the difference in their opinions lay in his belief that there was "a firm line between matters of this world, and matters of the afterlife."[1327] His distinction mirrored the aforementioned distinction between *ibadat* and *muamalat*: questions of "social and economic organization" that did not impinge on rituals of worship (i.e. *muamalat*) were policy matters to be evaluated on the basis of their effects, and such policies ought to be formulated "using both religious and secular sources of inspiration."[1328] Indra argued that "It is our duty to articulate and honestly defend our ideas… [in the expectation that they will] fulfil the goals stipulated by Pancasila," implying that a good Islamic idea is still a good idea, and well-worth incorporating into legislation, all of which was possible without enshrining Islam as a state religion.[1329]

These arguments were common fare in the Constitutional Assembly. Despite the public paroxysms of piety that Masjumi delegates like Kasman Singodimedjo worked themselves into during their speeches, there were several

[1325] "Sahamad Sudjono," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, vol 1., 80.
[1326] Baheramsjah Sutan Indra, in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, vol 1., 321.
[1327] *Ibid*., 322.
[1328] *Ibid*., 322.
[1329] *Ibid*., 322–323.

representatives of explicitly Marxist and Islamic parties who openly stated that they were willing to collaborate with each other. Two examples examined earlier in this chapter were Ahjak Sosrosugondo, representing NU, and R. Moh. Sjafii Wirakusumah, representing PSII. Even the PKI's delegates were at pains to stress their respect for Islam, despite their significant electoral successes in the 1955 and 1957 elections. Sakirman, representating the PKI, argued that the constitution should not reflect the agenda of any one group, neither communist nor Islamic, but be broad enough that the vast majority could accept it in the interests of national unity. He reminded his fellow delegates that the PKI did not campaign on a platform of creating a "proletarian constitution" during the 1955 elections, and had no intention of supporting one now.[1330] He argued that the principles of Pancasila were worth upholding because the spirit of the revolution and was one of unity, a unity expressed in Pancasila, which "respects and values religion and people's beliefs."[1331] Moreover, he recognized that "religious principles" (*cita-cita keagamaan*) were an important motivating factor in the long struggle against the Dutch, and that the constitution's embrace of Pancasila meant that Islam already was an esteemed and integral component of the republic.[1332] Both the PKI and the dissident communist parties were keen to signal their friendliness toward Islam, though this did not mean that they were willing to adopt Islam as the state religion. Tellingly, their opposition to enshrining Islam as a state religion was not based on an ideological aversion to religion, but framed in terms of the need to preserve national unity in a time of extended economic crisis and centrifugal pressures.

Outside of civil society and political parties, there were many anomalous or heterodox Marxists whose writings reveal the various permutations of how Islamic piety and Marxist ideas could coexist. Few, however, possessed Darsono's political pedigree and unique perspective. Darsono (b. 1895), once a rising star of the pre-1926 PKI alongside Semaun, was forced into exile in Europe by the Dutch colonial government in 1925. Like Tan Malaka, he had not been in favor of the uprisings, judging them premature; though aware of the impending uprising, his exile meant that he was powerless to influence events on the ground. He was in Moscow from

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[1330] "Ir. Sakirman," in *Tentang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia dalam Konstituante*, vol 1., 14.
[1331] *Ibid*., 16.
[1332] *Ibid*., 18, 23–24.

1926–29 and became a candidate member of the Comintern's Executive Committee. He looked on in horror as Stalin's purges began in 1930, which eventually prompted him to renounce communism and the PKI.[1333] He was in Berlin from 1930–34, training as an economist, and spent the war as a member of the anti-Nazi underground in the Netherlands. He only returned to Indonesia in 1950 at Hatta's invitation after meeting Hatta at the Round Table Conference. In the 1950s, Darsono worked as an economist and was a keen observer of Indonesian politics; he was a life-long Muslim, and sometimes wrote for Islamic newspapers as well as the PSI newspapers *Siasat* and *Pedoman* after returning to Indonesia.[1334] His education and breadth of experience, as well as his intimate understanding of the PKI, made his perspective as both an insider and an outsider uniquely credible. In 1957, Darsono published a scathing critique of the PKI led by Aidit during the parliamentary democracy period (in English, one of the many languages he was fluent in), a document which yields important insights into the PKI's *modus operandi* during this time. In the aftermath of the 1957 local and regional elections, in which the PKI bettered its already-strong 1955 performance, Darsono had these uncharitable words for the PKI:

> *"Among the top leaders of the PKI there are some intellectuals, but the guidance of the party today is in the hands of semi-intellectuals… judging from their writings it is doubtful whether any of these people have made a profound study of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin; this is all the more true of the important works by Marx. Engels and Lenin have not yet been translated into the Indonesian language. Mastery of foreign languages sufficient for deep study of these works is still to be found only amongst a relatively small proportion of the people. Original publications in the Indonesian language dealing with Marxian theories are likewise very limited. It follows that what knowledge of Marxism there is amongst the membership and supporters of the PKI is rather a simplification than 'Pure Marxism,' and constitutes a mixture of some of Marx's thoughts with petit bourgeois thinking. The top leaders of the PKI are no Marxists in the Western sense, but people whom Lenin once designated as middle-class men 'growing wild.'"*[1335]

This was a highbrow critique of what we might call "low" or "syncretic" Marxism, made by an urbane, worldly founder of the PKI with an excellent education and an aristocratic mien to boot.[1336] Similar critiques were later made by Darsono's old comrade, Alimin, who had rejoined the PKI after the revolution but was sidelined by

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[1333] Frank Palmos, "Indon's Prophet," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 12, 1968, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, ARCH02476, *Raden Darsono Notosudirdjo Papers*, File 5.
[1334] *Ibid*.
[1335] Darsono, "The Indonesian Communist Party," *Informaties uit Indonesia*, December 31, 1957.
[1336] This critique was not entirely fair: Aidit published a reasonably detailed and pragmatic explanation of the PKI's program in 1962, and earlier PKI publications were not exactly simplistic either. See D.N. Aidit, *Indonesian Socialism and the Conditions for its Implementation* (Djakarta: The Aliarcham Academy of Social Sciences, 1962).

Aidit in 1954.[1337] As chapter three notes, it was certainly true that the post-revolution PKI's core leadership, including Aidit, Njoto, and Lukman, had initially been poorly read in Marxist theory. For all his disdain, however, Darsono made an important observation: the PKI of the parliamentary democracy period was especially ideologically untethered to the USSR or even the PRC, having built relationships with these foreign powers only after becoming a political force in Indonesia itself. As such, the PKI was largely able to dictate the pace and nature of its relationship with the USSR and PRC, without the baggage of having previously been in a patron-client relationship.[1338]

An earlier generation of PKI leaders, such as Tan Malaka, Semaun, Musso, Alimin, and Darsono himself, had all spent significant time in Moscow. They – with the possible exception of Tan Malaka – would have found it harder to shed the baggage of old Comintern associations had they been in charge during the 1950s. The younger generation that came to power in the 1950s – which quickly sidelined veterans like Tan Ling Djie and Alimin – was free to develop their own pragmatic adaptations of communism, paying lip service to the divergent ideological orthodoxies of the USSR and PRC. Darsono may not have approved of the PKI's formulations (he was particularly annoyed by what he saw as unrealistic promises made by the PKI and the wild accusations of corruption hurled against the PKI's opponents), but he rightly identified their ideological flexibility and willingness to seek pragmatic paths to power. It was within such a framework that Aidit could and did articulate the need for the PKI to cooperate with Islamic parties and to win the support of Muslim voters.

Aidit clearly articulated the importance of winning Muslim support during speech he gave at the second plenary session of the PKI central committee, held from November 8–10, 1954. He began by reaffirming his support for the first Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet (July 1953 – August 1955), which included no PKI ministers, but did

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[1337] Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, 480; Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951–63* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), 105.

[1338] Zhou Taomo, "Ambivalent Alliance: Chinese Policy towards Indonesia, 1960–65," *The China Quarterly* 221 (March 2015): 208–228; L.M. Efimova, "New Evidence on the Establishment of Soviet-Indonesian Diplomatic Relations (1949–53)," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 29 (2001), 215–233.

include three NU and two PSII ministers.[1339] He argued that not all Islamic and Nationalist parties could be lumped together as "birds of a feather."[1340] Not all such parties were influenced by Western Imperialist propaganda, and therefore "it would be wrong for the communists to generalize them and refuse cooperation with any Muslim or nationalist party and leader. We should incessantly seek close cooperation based on some specific and concrete program… experience has shown that there are plenty among the nationalist and Muslim masses who agree with our party."[1341] Going beyond the usual rhetoric about how the PKI was not anti-Islam, Aidit was expressing the PKI's willingness – or attempting to rally support to that effect – to cooperate with Islamic parties like the NU and PSII at the policymaking and electoral levels, on the basis of a concordance in policy goals. The barbs, of course, were directed at the Masjumi and PSI, who were in opposition at the time.

As has been noted elsewhere, it is revealing that the PKI was voicing support for Muslim parties in government, while the opposition it castigated as "victims of Western Imperialist propaganda" also consisted of a Marxist party (PSI) and an Islamic party (Masjumi). Aidit even went on to argue that cooperation between the PKI, nationalist parties, and Islamic parties ought to extend beyond electoral coordination in the lead up to the 1955 elections: "As far as we are concerned, this cooperation should be continued after the general elections regardless of the elections' results. What we would like to have is something like a diversity in unity."[1342] Ironically, this position bore some similarities to Darsono's, despite his fierce criticism of the PKI. In a 1961 letter to his son and daughter-in-law, Darsono wrote of how silly it was that the USSR insisted on being the gatekeeper of ideological orthodoxy, forbidding the "revision" of Marxist ideas by other communist parties.[1343] Darsono himself continued to find Marx's critique of capitalism useful, and would in his later years rail against

[1339] D.N. Aidit, "Untuk Persatuan Jang Lebih Luas Dalam Semua Kekuatan Nasional di Indonesia," in *D.N. Aidit Pilihan Tulisan I (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1959)*, 231.
[1340] *Ibid*., 237.
[1341] *Ibid*., 237–238.
[1342] *Ibid*., 238.
[1343] Darsono, "Letter to Alam and Pop," January 26, 1961, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, ARCH02476, *Raden Darsono Notosudirdjo Papers*, File 1.

the failures of "state capitalism," but he did not seem to think that the PKI's adaptations of Marxism during the 1950s were appropriate or effective.[1344]

Aidit reinforced these arguments in an article he published on October 10, 1955, in which he provided a preliminary analysis of the recently held general elections.[1345] Conscious that the PKI had done surprisingly well in the 1955 elections, securing approximately 16% of all votes cast and 39 parliamentary seats, Aidit was keen to impress upon his supporters the importance of cooperating with Islamic and nationalist parties, presumably to maximize the PKI's influence on policymaking given the kingmaker position it found itself in.[1346] In a extended defense of NU, Aidit admitted the importance of centuries-old Islamic traditions, but pointed out that tradition alone could not account for the electoral successes of NU: "We often hear people say that NU is 'conservative,' 'undemocratic,' or 'not modern' in problems of religion. These are issues with which the PKI will not meddle. But it is clear that in political problems, especially in the speeches of the NU leaders during the parliamentary elections, NU has indicated a tolerance and readiness to bring democracy into being and to carry out a policy of an anti-colonialist nationalist character… [NU policies during the Ali cabinet] indicated the readiness of the NU to cooperate with the democratic parties, with the PNI and PKI, with the sole qualification that they would do nothing which would be injurious to Islam."[1347] He went on to crow that it was Masjumi's supposed accommodation of capitalism that led to NU's success: "The harmony of Islam with the special character of Indonesia, together with the anti-colonialist policy of the NU are more attractive to the Muslim masses than the modernism of Masjumi in the field of religion and the political agreement of this party with the interests of foreign monopolistic capital."[1348]

[1344] Frank Palmos, "Indon's Prophet," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 12, 1968, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, ARCH02476, *Raden Darsono Notosudirdjo Papers*, File 5.
[1345] D.N. Aidit, "Selamatkan dan Konsolidasi Kemenangan Front Persatuan," *Harian Rakyat*, October 10, 1955.
[1346] The PSI had failed miserably, securing only 2% of the vote and 5 parliamentary seats, while Masjumi's 21% and 57 seats, though impressive, left it far from a majority. By contrast, the PNI's 22% and 57 seats, as well as the NU's 18% and 45 seats, meant that the PKI was the fourth-largest parliamentary bloc and would likely be a key player in any coalition government.
[1347] D.N. Aidit, "Selamatkan dan Konsolidasi Kemenangan Front Persatuan," in *D.N. Aidit Pilihan Tulisan I* (Djakarta: Jajasan Pembaruan, 1959), 321.
[1348] *Ibid*., 321.

What is clear from Aidit's line of argument is that the PKI was not prepared to take a clear stand on religious matters, such as defining what constituted "progressive" Islam. In this regard, Aidit echoed a longstanding tradition within the PKI going back to Tan Malaka's early writings, which sought to articulate a distinction between personal piety and public political commitments. Naturally, this had not been the only impulse animating the PKI. Haji Misbach, Natar Zainuddin, and Haji Datuk Batuah, among others, had openly championed the compatibility of Islam and communism in the 1920s, as chapter one has shown. However, these arguments for overt compatibility no longer carried much weight after the revolution: even Tan Malaka's ideas about communism's relationship with Islam would change, as seen in *Islam Dalam Tindjauan Madilog* (1948).[1349]

Unlike his predecessors, Aidit sought to build bridges with Islamic parties and Muslim voters by arguing that it was a pragmatic concordance on policy goals that could bring communists and Muslims together. In practice, this would have meant agreement on the desirability of nationalizing foreign business interests in lucrative sectors such as plantation agriculture and petroleum extraction, or land reform in which sharecroppers and smallholders would receive economically viable plots of land. In fact, the PKI was so invested in portraying itself as a "moderate, tolerant, and genuinely national party" that it even dropped national-level land redistribution from its campaign promises, emphasizing instead its willingness to participate in a "national coalition government."[1350] Herbert Feith argued that the PKI was successful in doing so, and was not generally perceived as anti-religious.[1351]

Aidit also made it clear that the PKI was perfectly happy with "doing nothing which would be injurious to Islam," signaling to his readers that the PKI was ready to accommodate the sensitivities of its Muslim supporters and partners. Aidit was also asserting that the PKI was not averse to cooperating with any Islamic party, as long as they could work towards shared goals. This was not merely political maneuvering in

[1349] See chapter three.
[1350] Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 358–360.
[1351] *Ibid*., 360.

expectation of future cabinet positions; the PKI had already been supporting the PNI, NU, and PSII dominated government of Ali Sastroamidjojo for the past two years. In what was perhaps a rare moment of magnanimity, Aidit even declared his willingness to cooperate with Masjumi (which he had been vilifying for years) as long as they could agree on policy goals: "The PKI believes that the basic enemy of the Indonesia people at present is the remnants of Dutch colonialism in the fields of economy, politics, education and culture. To liquidate these remnants of Dutch colonialism entirely, all national forces must be unified. The PKI has never rejected cooperation with any party as a means to achieve this goal, and has never rejected cooperation with Masjumi."[1352]

For all their socialist influences, Masjumi parliamentarians never did accept this olive branch. What was abundantly clear, however, was the PKI's seriousness in attempting to garner Muslim support during the parliamentary democracy period. Certainly, part of this was pragmatic coalition building for a party which had chosen the democratic route to power, but it was also a genuine attempt to articulate a relationship between politics and religion, or a relationship between the public and the private spheres, which could accommodate Islam and communism simultaneously. It was this attempt to articulate an Indonesian political consciousness, in which a citizen could be both Muslim and communist, that led Aidit to claim that voting for the PKI was *halal*, while voting for Masjumi was *haram*; his point being that parties ought to be judged by their policy goals and the fruits of their labor, not by the claims they made on communal identities and allegiances.[1353] If the PKI's policies achieved ends that were laudable for Muslims, then it was an acceptable party for Muslims to support. At the bare minimum, Aidit's writings from this period make it hard to give credence to the insistent claim made by Masjumi parliamentarians like Isa Anshary that the PKI was bent on destroying religion. They also make it easy to see why Muslim PKI representatives like Ahmad Dasuki Siradj could conceive of exhorting his fellow Muslims to abandon Masjumi and support the PKI in order to meet their Islamic moral obligations.

[1352] *Ibid*., 324.
[1353] Organisasi Pembela Islam, *Peristiwa Rapat P.K.I. Di Malang, 28 Maret 1954* (Malang: Organisasi Pembela Islam, 1954).

The Soekarnoist Synthesis

As the 1950s wore on and the political deadlock in parliament showed no signs of resolving itself even after two elections, Soekarno grew increasingly frustrated with his relatively ceremonial role as President under the provisional constitution of 1950. In late 1956, Soekarno began to make his play in the court of public opinion, claiming that political and economic stasis would soon lead to generalized crisis, and promising to eventually reveal a "conception" (*konsepsi*) that could forge a new national consensus.[1354] By February 21, 1957, it became clear that his *konsepsi* involved abolishing parliament in favor of a "national council" (*dewan nasional*) which would include not only political parties but also members of "functional groups" such as labor unions , youth, women and peasant organizations. It also involved forming a cabinet which represented all the parties which had won seats in the 1955 elections, including the PKI, in the inclusive spirit of the revolutionary KNIP. Eventually, by August 17, 1957, this *konsepsi* evolved into a political manifesto that Soekarno called Manipol-USDEK, an acronym representing a return to the 1945 constitution (under which the President held much more executive power), socialism *à la* Indonesia, guided democracy, a planned economy, and the promotion of national identity.[1355]

Predictably, this synthesizing political vision, intended to recapture the broad consensus, unity and passion of the revolution, was deeply unacceptable to Masjumi and the PNI, who were particularly wary of giving the PKI ministerial portfolios. Soekarno's evident dismantling of the parliamentary order catalyzed Masjumi support for regional rebellions like the PRRI/Permesta movements, which began in March 1957. This eventually led to the proscription of Masjumi in August 1960, on the grounds that it had been implicated in supporting both the Darul Islam and PRRI/Permesta rebellions. Soekarno's own paranoia about a PSI plot against him resulted in the PSI being dissolved and Sjahrir imprisoned in August 1960 as well. Meanwhile, the Constitutional

[1354] Daniel S. Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics, 1957–1959* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 1966), 29.
[1355] *Ibid*., 30–31.

Assembly was dissolved in July 1959, and the 1945 constitution replaced the 1950 provisional constitution under Soekarno's approving gaze.

Even while the architecture of parliamentary democracy was being dismantled piecemeal and Masjumi progressively alienated, Soekarno continued to speak publicly about his desire for a broad national consensus that was inclusive enough to accommodate both communists and Muslims, a beloved theme of his since *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (1926). He was remarkably consistent about the importance he accorded Islam within Indonesian politics, a perspective that can be traced to his correspondence with Ahmad Hasan of Persis while in exile during the 1930s.[1356] In a speech he delivered at Universitas Indonesia in Jakarta on May 7, 1953, Soekarno argued that "Islamic principles" (*cita-cita Islam*) were integral to the nation.[1357] Soekarno's speech was responding to a letter that a Muslim student had written and delivered to him during the celebration of the *Isra* and *Mi'raj* (the Prophet Muhammad's journey to Jerusalem and his ascent to heaven) at the presidential palace that year. The student had posed three questions: first, whether the nation state was irreconcilable with the Islamic state that many Muslims desired; second, what the relationship between Islam and Pancasila was; and third, whether it was acceptable for the winner of the upcoming general elections (if indeed there was one) to implement policies driven by their ideology even if large segments of society were opposed to said policies.[1358]

Soekarno gently chided the student for his "many misunderstandings of both nationalism and Islam," but thanked him for the opportunity to elaborate on these questions publicly.[1359] He argued that religion in general and Islam in particular could never be shunted into the private sphere and excised from the political realm, for "Islam is a way of life."[1360] Soekarno cited the Prophet Muhammad's experiences leading a mixed community of Muslims and non-Muslims in Medina as evidence that Islam could and did provide guidance in matters of

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[1356] These were later published as "Letters on Islam from Endeh," *Under the Banner of Revolution*, 309–328. See chapter two for analysis of these letters.
[1357] Sukarno, "Negara Nasional Dan Cita-cita Islam: Kuliah umum di Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, 7 Mei 1953," in *Bung Karnno dan Islam: Kumpulan Pidato Tentang Islam*, (Jakarta: CV Haji Masagung, 1990), 1.
[1358] *Ibid*., 3–4.
[1359] *Ibid*., 5.
[1360] *Ibid*., 5–7.

policy and statecraft, although he stopped short of explaining how exactly the Prophet Muhammad's example might be adapted to present-day politics. According to Soekarno, "Islam does provide social principles [*cita-cita kemasyarakatan*], only we interpret them in different ways."[1361] He asserted that the principles of Islam could be induced from the Qur'an and *hadith*: for example, the guarantee that non-Muslims were free to practice their religion as they saw fit.[1362] What was clear was Soekarno's insistence that Islamic principles ought to inform policymaking, with the caveat that non-Muslim concerns were also worthy of consideration, just as the Prophet Muhammad had done in Medina.

Soekarno rejected the separation of church and state as a peculiarly Christian invention, necessitated by the secular power historically wielded by the church. He stressed that politically empowering Muslims would not lead to the establishment of a theocracy because Islam did not possess a church hierarchy the way Catholicism did. While admitting his deficiencies as a layman, Soekarno pointed out that he had never in all his reading come across the issue of nations and national identity (*negara*) in Islam; "nation" was not part of Islam's vocabulary. He argued that Islam did not prescribe any one format for the nation, merely principles of societal organization: concepts like *Dar al-Islam* (lit. the abode of peace) were not coterminous with the nation, and could not be grafted onto the nation as if they were blueprints for political organization valid for all ages.

If anything, Soekarno argued, Islamic principles such as the importance of deliberation and consensus (*musyawarah*) facilitated the establishment of democratic governance, a form of community organization which did not negate the community's position within *Darul Islam*.[1363] By way of example, Soekarno explained his own experience as the President of the original unitary Republic of Indonesia proclaimed in 1945, which subsequently became the federal United States of Indonesia (RIS, Republik Indonesia Sarekat) in 1950, and which became a unitary republic again shortly thereafter. He pointed out that the republic's forms of governance, its "internal structure" (*interne structuur*), had undergone changes (*wisseling*), but it remained the

[1361] *Ibid*., 7.
[1362] Ibid., 8–9.
[1363] *Ibid*., 8–9.

same republic. In a similar way, the structures of governance could change over time, but this did not negate the Islamic principles guiding statecraft, or the fact that the nation was part of *Dar al-Islam*.[1364] Soekarno reminded his audience that the republic was a nation state (*negara nasional*) not an Islamic state (*negara Islam*), but this in no way "negated the rights of Muslims to propagandize what they believe in, nor the rights of communists to do the same."[1365]

Soekarno pointed out that the controversy over nation state or Islamic state had erupted in Indonesian politics a generation ago, during the 1930s, in the form of a dispute between Muslims about whether Islam approved of nationalism. At the time, Soekarno threw his support behind an inclusive nationalism as a means to free Indonesia from Dutch rule, but he acknowledged that many Muslims like Ahmad Hasan of Persis disapproved of nationalism because it recognized humanity as a single unit, on the basis that all were God's creations. Soekarno recalled that the most complete answer that he found to this conundrum was the one put forward by Permi – he respectfully mentioned Permi's main leaders, Muchtar Luthfi, Djalaluddin Thaib, Rasuna Said, and Rasimah Ismail by name – which contended that Islam accepted the validity of nationalism. Permi's position was that Islam disapproved of chauvinistic nationalism (Soekarno uses both *chauvinistis nasionalisme* and *ashabiyah* to denote this) which prized loyalty to one's own community above all things, but it was not opposed to the anticolonial nationalism promoted by Soekarno, which encouraged Indonesian unity.[1366]

It was telling that Soekarno invoked Permi: in doing so, he was aligning himself with an explicitly Islamic socialist organization to justify his own insistence that Islam and Marxism could indeed coexist in an independent Indonesia. Drawing on the precedent of a *pergerakan* organization well-respected for its willingness to confront the colonial state (Muchtar Luthfi and Djalaluddin Thaib had both been exiled to Digoel, while Rasuna Said and Rasimah Ismail had both been incarcerated) Soekarno was invoking Permi's

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[1364] *Ibid*., 9–10.
[1365] *Ibid*., 10.
[1366] *Ibid*., 12. The concept of 'Asabiyyah (عصبيّة) was popularized by Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqqdimah* (1377 CE), and refers to social cohesion based on a shared culture. It has sometimes been translated as "tribalism." See Syed Farid Alatas, "A Khaldunian Exemplar for a Historical Sociology for the South," *Current Sociology* 54 (2006): 397–411.

legacy to justify his support for a nation state in which Islamic principles guided policy, but in which Islam need not be the symbol of collective identity. All these ideas were already firmly embedded in Soekarno's worldview in 1953, long before he first proposed NASAKOM as a political philosophy in 1956.

Another of Soekarno's speeches from the Guided Democracy period, after NASAKOM had been elevated to the level of a national slogan, shows how the sentiments expressed in the 1953 speech developed over the course of the parliamentary democracy period. On March 15, 1960, Soekarno gave a speech at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta to mark the traditional anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's first revelation. In this speech, titled "Islam, Agama Amal" (Islam, the religion of *amal*), Soekarno embraced a vision of a dynamic, active Islam compatible with Indonesian socialism.[1367] *Amal* can be translated as deeds or works, but also as charity in the sense of *caritas*, the love of God manifest in love for one's fellow men.[1368] In calling Islam the religion of *amal* Soekarno was suggesting that Islam was not just a collection of proscriptions and rules, but a religion which prompted men to turn principles into virtuous action; he specifically used the English term "gospel of action" to describe *amal*.[1369] He pointed out that prosperity (*kemakmuran*) and the cultivation of a specifically Indonesian identity (*kepribadian kebudayaan*), which were the aims of his Manipol-USDEK, were laudable goals but did not constitute ends in themselves. Instead, he argued that the practice of Indonesian socialism, guided democracy, and a planned economy had to be a virtuous expression of *amal*, of Islamic values put into practice.[1370] To Soekarno, the means were as important as the ends. As in 1953, Islam provided a moral framework within which he positioned his political activities. Islam shaped his goals, but Soekarno felt free to formulate his own novel ways – as it turns out, a path to perdition – of achieving those goals. For Soekarno, those novel ways necessarily included the PKI, because it had garnered a significant amount of support in the

[1367] Sukarno, "Islam, Agama Amal: Amanat Peringatan Nuzulul Qur'an di Istana Negara, 15 Maret 1960," in *Bung Karnno dan Islam: Kumpulan Pidato Tentang Islam*, (Jakarta: CV Haji Masagung, 1990), 54.
[1368] *Ibid*., 53.
[1369] *Ibid*., 53.
[1370] *Ibid*., 54.

1955 elections. They also included Marxist critiques of capitalism, which he had understood as essential for securing Indonesia's economic future since the 1920s.

Soekarno's synthesis was appealing to many Marx-influenced intellectuals both within and without the PNI, such as Roeslan Abdoelgani, Mangunsarkoro, Iwa Koesoema Soemantri, and Sajuti Melik, none of whom were PKI members. Many of them wrote their own pamphlets and gave speeches in support of Soekarno's eclectic political philosophy, confirming their belief in the viability of mixing Islamic identity and Marxist politics. What is more revealing, however, is that this amalgam was evident even among Soekarno's political opponents. Hatta, Soekarno's longtime Vice President and the other, indispensable half of the revolutionary duumvirate, resigned his post on December 1, 1956. He had become disillusioned with Soekarno's increasingly erratic and self-aggrandizing behavior, including his incipient autocratic tendencies.[1371] After resigning, "Hatta became the symbol not of unity but of dissension."[1372]

Shortly after his resignation, Hatta delivered a speech at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China, in which he made no secret of his own commitment to Islamic socialism. He began by asserting that socialism had many interlocutors, but that "Marx was the first to bring scientific clarity and rigor to socialism, showing how a socialist society would organically evolve as the result of class conflict over time."[1373] Hatta stressed that Marx did not hate capitalism, although many of his present-day followers did; capitalism was merely one stage in a historical process, and was the "mother which would give birth to socialism."[1374] Marx, according to Hatta, "did not express either hate or worship, because his was a critique of consecutive stages of social development, from feudalism to capitalism to socialism. This was a scientific opinion, not a fantasy of paradise on earth."[1375] Hatta went on to castigate the PKI for attempting to find shortcuts in Indonesia's long journey toward socialism, implying that its supporters were ignorant but impassioned radicals who were unrealistic in their

[1371] Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, 25–26.
[1372] *Ibid*., 26.
[1373] Muhammad Hatta, "Sosialisme Di Indonesia (Pidato Di Depan Para Mahasiswa Universitas Sun Yat Sen Di Kanton, Pada Tanggal 11 Oktober 1957)," in *Muhammad Hatta Bicara Marxis Dan Sosialisme Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Melibas, 1975), 55.
[1374] *Ibid*., 56.
[1375] *Ibid*., 56.

expectations.[1376] He deliberately described them as followers of the "Marxist *aliran* [lit. stream]," which he pointed out was not the only socialist movement in Indonesia. The real practitioner of Marx's teachings was the PSI, a "social democratic party both in form and substance."[1377] What is clear from this formulation was that Hatta saw Marx's ideas as an invaluable, even scientific, source of critiques of capitalism and historical analysis, which should naturally inform Indonesian politics. To Hatta, Marxism was not a teleological and irresistible political philosophy which provided a clear blueprint for the future; anyone who took Marx to be an infallible prophet was deeply mistaken.[1378]

Consistent with his broad perspective on Marxism, Hatta argued that Marx's ideas alone had not given birth to socialism in Indonesia; two other "sources" of socialism were Islam and the "collective character" (*corak kolektif*) indigenous to Indonesian culture.[1379] Hatta asserted that "socialism based on Islam" was a powerful political force in Indonesia because "Allah the most loving, generous and just has obliged Muslims to create a society based on love and mercy, on a the mutual recognition of humanity, mutual help, social justice, and peace in men's souls. Because all these things can only be obtained by implementing socialism, where the means of production are owned by the majority and a spirit of cooperation animates society… then Islam fundamentally demands the implementation of socialism."[1380]

Animated by what he understood as his ethical obligations as a good Muslim, Hatta perceived in Marxist theory an invaluable source of analysis pertaining to humanity's historical development, as well as the rough outlines of a society in which class conflict would be eliminated, an outcome cherished by Islam. He leavened this with an awareness that Indonesian society would take a long time and be convulsed by many struggles to reach that

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[1376] *Ibid.*, 60–63.
[1377] *Ibid*., 63.
[1378] Hatta was no dilletante when it came to Marxist theory. Besides the articles he published in Pendidikan newspapers, examined in chapter two, his facility with Marxist theory manifested itself in the public debates he had with the future communist leader Tan Ling Djie. These played out across the pages of *Sin Tit Po* in the 1930s, and evinced a deep engagement with the writings of now just Marx and Engels, but also of Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, particularly Kautsky's *Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm: Eine Antikritik* (1899). See "Ajaran Marx, atau kepintaran sang murid membeo?" in *Muhammad Hatta Bicara Marxis dan Sosialisme di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Melibas, 1975), 1–51.
[1379] Hatta, "Sosialisme di Indonesia," 64.
[1380] *Ibid*., 65.

point, and was therefore open in the interim to taking practical steps to improve Indonesia's socio-economic situation instead of mimicking the ideological orthodoxies of the PRC or USSR. For him, as with many of his predecessors, Marxism was the most effective vehicle – though not, in his case, a political blueprint – for the achievement of Islamic goals.

Finally, a quick glance at the print culture of the 1950s provides a glimpse of a discursive climate receptive to both Soekarno and Hatta's ideas. *Pesat*, a weekly magazine edited by Sajuti Melik, was a relatively popular Marxist magazine without any party affiliation, and which circulated throughout the archipelago: issues were sold in Makassar (Sulawesi), Palembang (South Sumatra), Rangkasbitung and Ciamas (West Java), as well as Jakarta. A 1951 issue carried extensive advertisements for the Islamic publisher Bulan Bintang's catalogue, which included many books by Tjokroaminoto, including *Islam and Socialism* (1924). The same issue also carried advertisements for biographies of Ho Chi Minh.[1381] This particular issue included a panegyric to the Danish system of cooperatives, which were praised for being part of a mixed economy and the beneficiary of both public and private investment; the article noted that cooperatives had been established with good results in both capitalist and communist countries.[1382]

Juxtaposed against this article was another celebrating the actions of the Sunan Kalidjogo company of the revolutionary Diponegoro division, which was identified as both self-consciously Muslim as well as pro-socialist: "… jang berbadju keagamaan maupun jang berbadju kesosialan (sosialisme)," "… clothed in both religion as well as socialism."[1383] Later issues ran advertisements for clearly Islamic newspapers like the daily *Darul Islam*, which began publication in 1954, describing itself as opposed to "ANTI-GOD AND ANTI-ISLAM groups" (*aliran-aliran ANTI-TUHAN DAN ANTI-ISLAM*).[1384] Despite the fact that *Pesat*'s Marxist orientation must have been obvious to all its readers, it clearly had significant Muslim readership. Other articles even rebuked Isa Anshary of Masjumi for claiming that socialism, marhaenism, collectivism and nationalism

[1381] *Pesat*, May 30, 1951
[1382] Anonymous, "Kooperasi di Denmark," *Pesat*, May 30, 1951.
[1383] Anonymous, "Kompi Sunan Kalidjogo," *Pesat*, May 30, 1951.
[1384] *Pesat*, January 9, 1954. Emphasis according to the advertisement.

were all anti-Islam; *Pesat* argued that intellect was God's gift to humanity, and the exercise of human intellect to solve pressing problems was pleasing in God's sight.[1385]

Unlike *Pesat*, *Pikiran Rakjat* was a national daily broadsheet during the 1950s, but it was also sympathetic to Islamic and Marxist concerns, making room for both in its pages. *Pesat* was particularly supportive of unions like SABUPRI, the powerful plantation workers union, explaining the necessity of SABUPRI strikes given post-war inflation and the rising cost of daily necessities.[1386] Other articles even discussed the feasibility of developing a people's economy (*ekonomi rakjat*) which transferred ownership of the means of production into the hands of collectives instead of the state.[1387] PKI leaders like Alimin published in *Pikiran Rakjat*, as did non-conformist Marxists like the Tan Malaka protégé I.N. Suprapti, of the Murba Party.[1388] At the same time, *Pikiran Rakjat* published articles on key matters of Muslim concern, such as the pilgrimage to Mecca (*haj*). In one particularly long article, an embedded journalist followed the first ever batch of 10,000 Hajis performing the *haj* under the auspices of the newly independent Indonesian government, explaining the conditions of the *haj* and the experiences of pilgrims.[1389]

Pikiran Rakjat even made room for extended rebuttals of Alimin's articles, in which a self-evidently Muslim contributor criticized Alimin's analysis of Indonesian political developments, ending his article with a triumphant "BISMILLAHIRRAHMANIRRAHIM!"[1390] Even such rebuttals were respectful, however: the author made a point of referring to Alimin as *saudara* (brother), and offered Alimin his respectful greetings (*salam*) at the end of each article.[1391] This cordiality was not unusual for daily broadsheets during the parliamentary democracy period. *Haluan*, published in Padang, West Sumatra, ran articles celebrating the *Isra*

[1385] Saja (pseudonym), "Menolok Hukum Tuhan?" *Pesat*, January 16, 1954.
[1386] Samrin, "Kemenangan Buruh," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 11, 1950; Anonymous, "SARBUPRI dan SBG Dibantu Penuh Oleh BTI," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 16, 1950. SABUPRI was affiliated with SOBSI, the general union aligned with the PKI.
[1387] Yap, "Ekonomi Rakjat," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 16, 1950.
[1388] Alimin, "Alimin Tentang Revolusi," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 16, 1950; Alimin, "Alimin Tentang Revolusi (part II)," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 17, 1950; I.N. Suprapti, "Partai dan Nagara," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 19, 1950.
[1389] Anonymous, "Naik Hadji Zaman Sekarang," *Pikiran Rakjat*, October 17, 1950.
[1390] H.R. "Pengetahuan Politik: Adakah Gunanja?" *Pikiran Rakjat*, November 25, 1950. Emphasis in the article. The phrase is known as the *basmala* (بسملة) and means "In the name of God the most gracious and most merciful."
[1391] *Ibid*.

and *Mi'raj* and advertisements for Muhammadiyah courses alongside articles contributed by Nusjirwan Adil, secretary-general of the Padang branch of SOBSI, in which he offered Islamic greetings for the festive occasion.[1392] This brief survey is by no means representative of Indonesian print culture as a whole, but it does suggest Islam and Marxism coexisted in mundane ways in the minds of ordinary Indonesians. This coexistence was simply uncontentious, at least in some demographic pockets; this was the social context which made Soekarno's NASAKOM seem plausible in the first place.

Islam and Marxism in cultural production

Cultural production reveals much about the conditions of possibility undergirding Soekarno's NASAKOM or Hatta's "socialism based on Islam." The sentiments expressed in literary circles say more about the nascent intelligentsia of the 1950s than they do about ordinary people, but still provide a glimpse into a broader discursive realm which made conciliations of Islam and Marxism conceivable to politicians and plausible to their audiences. What is evident in the sources examined here is how uncontentious it was to invoke Islam and Marxism in the same breath; many educated people simply did not feel it was transgressive to do so, because they were already engaged in the project of "translating the world to Indonesia," placing their education and broadening intellectual horizons in dialogue with their personal subjectivities as Muslims.[1393] Novels, plays and poems can sometimes speak volumes where conventional historical sources only provide glimpses, and they can even reveal subtleties of feeling and experience that no newspaper or archival document can.[1394] The cultural production of the parliamentary democracy period reveals much about the anguished but open-minded *zeitgeist* of this era. It expresses the manifold hopes and anxieties of many Indonesians as they searched themselves and the world around them for inspirations that would facilitate the fulfillment of their national visions after a decade of war and privation. These desires, so densely encapsulated by works of art, made Soekarno or Hatta's

[1392] Gafar Djambek, "Islam Itu Tinggi tidak ada jang meatasnja, manakala tanggung-tanggung tidak akan mendjumpainja," *Haluan*, March 28, 1955; Nusjirwan Adil, "Sjarief Said Membuka Topengnja Sendiri," *Haluan*, March 29, 1955.
[1393] Lindsay, "Heirs to World Culture: An Introduction," 4–9.
[1394] Hayden White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History* 9 (2005): 147–57.

conciliations of Islam and Marxism plausible, even attractive, to many Indonesians. With that in mind, this section will analyze a poem by the Indian Muslim poet Muhammad Iqbal, translated into Indonesian during the 1950s; a magazine published by the PKI-affiliated artists' association, LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, Institute of People's Culture); and two plays by playwrights affiliated with LEKRA, Utuy Tatang Sontani and Agam Wispi.

The South Asian poet and polymath Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) needs no introduction, claimed as he is by Pakistan as its spiritual father and national poet. Though his influence in South Asia is well-studied, a lesser-known aspect of Iqbal's work is its popularity in Indonesia. The recipient of an excellent classical Islamic education as well as the best that the universities of Cambridge and Munich had to offer, Iqbal was particularly steeped in Urdu and Persian poetry, with their strong Sufi influences. His status as a staunch Muslim able to integrate his Western education with his Islamic faith, becoming highly esteemed in both Europe and South Asia as a poet, philosopher and academic, likely endeared him to Indonesian Muslim intellectuals who were engaged in a similar project of translating the world to Indonesia. Mohammad Natsir and Jusuf Wibisono of Masjumi were particularly enamored with Iqbal, evident in Natsir's *Dapatkah Dipisahkan Politik Dari Agama?* (1953) and Wibisono's *Islam dan Sosialisme* (1950), which lamented that Iqbal's work had not been translated into Indonesian.[1395]

The first of Iqbal's works to be translated into Indonesian was a collection of Persian poetry, his first anthology and upon which his reputation as a poet rested. This was titled *The Secrets of the Self* (اسرار خودی, *Asrar-i Khudi*, 1915), translated as *Rahasia-rahaisa Pribadi* in 1953. Unsurprisingly, Natsir made time to provide a glowing foreword to the translation, despite his busy schedule serving as Masjumi's parliamentary leader. The broader context for the translation of Iqbal's work was the circulation of Islamic texts across the Indian Ocean, linking Egypt and Arabia to South Asia and the Malay Archipelago.[1396] The Ahmadiyyah of South Asia had

[1395] Wibisono, *Islam dan Sosialisme*, 27.
[1396] Terenjit Sevea, "Making Medinas in the East: Islamist Connections and *Progressive Islam*," in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2009), 149–74.

taken energetically to using both print and translation as a means of magnifying their influence, and both Ahmaddiyah tracts as well as rebuttals by scholars like Iqbal regularly found their way to Indonesia.[1397] Intriguingly, the Indonesian editors and translators of *Secrets of the Self*, Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain, made the decision to append a few extra poems from Iqbal's other works. Of these appended poems, one poem in particular stands out: "Lenin before God" (*Lenin di Depan Tuhan*), taken from Iqbal's later anthology of Urdu poetry, *Gabriel's Wing* (بال جبریل, Bal-e-Jibril, 1935).

First of all, it is necessary to point out that *The Secrets of the Self*, *Rahasia-Rahasia Pribadi* in Indonesian, was structured around an underlying conceit which fit well with "Lenin before God." This conceit employed many different dialogues to explain Iqbal's philosophical framework for human growth and fulfilment: this prized individuality, postulating that one drew closer to God the more individual or unique one was. This growth in individuality could only be achieved through the mastery of one's *Khudi* (which Iqbal translates as Ego).[1398] This philosophy was translated into political ideals by Iqbal himself, in his contribution to R.A. Nicholson's introduction: "Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth. Nietzsche had a glimpse of this ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception." [1399] Iqbal's poetry, as Sevea argues, was often a vehicle for his political visions, visions open to the West but never acceding to the transplantation of Western practices and institutions – that is to say, Iqbal's political visions were creative and adaptive as well.[1400] The dialogue between Lenin and God, though from another anthology of poems, was thus a cognate of the many dialogues in *The Secrets of the Self*, which included a dialogue between coal and diamond (XIII), a dialogue between a Sheikh and a Brahmin, and a dialogue between the Ganges and the Himalayas (XIV).[1401] This structural congruence was perhaps one reason why Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain saw fit to include "Lenin

[1397] Iqbal Singh Sevea, "The Ahmadiyya Print Jihad in South and Southeast Asia," in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2009), 134, 145.
[1398] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, ed., trans. R.A. Nicholson (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), 48.
[1399] *Ibid.*, xxvii.
[1400] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 126–129.
[1401] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, 104–115.

Before God" in their translation of the *Secrets of the Self*. However, given this chapter's examination of the intellectual climate of the parliamentary democracy period, it would be reasonable to interpret this deliberate editorial choice as the result of a perceived resonance with, or particular relevance of, "Lenin before God" to an Indonesian audience. The poem is so striking that it merits full reproduction here:

Indonesian	**English**
Sungguh di segala ruang dan roh dunia ini	All space and all that breathes bear witness; truth
WujudMu termaktub dan gitu djuga sifatMu abadi	It is indeed; You are, and do not remain.
Betapa aku akan tahu, kau ada atau pun taka da	How could I know that God was or was not,
Selagi hitungan 'nentiasa berkisar dan berganti?	Where reason's reckonings shifted hour by hour?
Siapakah jang mendengar musik-kejadian segala ini	The peerer at planets, the counter-up of plants,
Penindjau kembang puspita atau penghitung bintang kemintang?	Heard nothing there of Nature's infinite music;
Hari ini kulihat keradjaan dan negara	Today, I witness and acknowledge realms
Jang bagiku hanjalah sunglap kaum geredja	That I once thought the mummery of the Church.
Sedang kami meringkuk, dibelenggu hari dan malam	We, manacled in the chains of day and night!
Kau, pembina dan abadi, perona sang zaman	You, moulder of all time's atoms, builder of aeons!
Tuhan, berikanlah padaku waktu seketika menjawab soalku	God, let me have leave to ask this one question,
selamanja ini tak terdiamkan kaum sardjana	Not answered by the subtleties of the scholars,
Ini Tuhan… selagi aku hidup di bawah atap tenda langit angkasa	It is this, God: that while I lived under the sky-tent's roof
Guntjang dan duri tertudjam dalam hatiku	Like a thorn rankled in my heart
Dan seraja pikiran demi pikiran begitu mengamuk dengan jiwaku	And made such chaos in my soul of all its thoughts
Tiadalah padanja suatu negara apa pun, sedang ditjakapnja	I could not keep my tumbling words in bounds.
Siapakah sebenarnja orang itu jang ber-Tuhan kepadaMu	Oh, of what mortal race art You the God?
Itu machluk, dibentuk oleh abu dibawah langitMu ini:	Those creatures formed of dust beneath these heavens?
Perenggi-putjat dewa sang Timur	Europe's pale cheeks are Asia's pantheon,
Logam kemilau dewa negeri Maghribi	And Europe's pantheon her glittering metals.
Dimana marak menjala tempat landasan dan terang pelita ilmu	A blaze of art and science lights the West

Gelita Tandus oleh sumber kehidupan!	With darkness that no Fountain of Life dispels;
Dalam kesjahduan, pujuk dan foja	In high-reared grace, in glory and in grandeur,
Bank kemilau melampaui RumahMu, Tuhan	The towering Bank surpasses Your house;
Mereka bermain dengan batu-batu dadu	What they call commerce is a game of dice
Laba bagi seorang, adjal jang tiba-tiba ribuan menunggu	For one, profit, for millions swooping death.
Ilmu, falsafah, kuliah dan konstitusi	There science, philosophy, scholarship, government,
mengadjar kesamaan bagi semua, tapi menghisap darah manusia	Preach man's equality and drink men's blood;
berfoja telandjang mabuk pitam, butuh dan mengaggur	Naked debauch, and want, and unemployment
Kemenangan gemilang negeri Maghribi!	Are these mean triumphs of the Frankish arts!
Amboi benua… tak kundjung diberkahi sinar nazari,	Denied celestial grace a nation goes
uap dan listrik mengikat hasil kerdjanja	No further than electricity or steam;
itu alat mendera segala budi dibawah telapak kakinja	Death to the heart, machines stand sovereign,
Mampus sirna sang hati, dan tegak berdaulat itu pesawat	Engines that crush all sense of human kindness.
namun alat di-hitung-hitung disana-sini, bagai tokoh memberat	Yet signs are counted here and there that Fate,
pemain tjatur kehabisan rentjana dan muslihat	The chess-player, has check-mated all their cunning.
Dan djari djemari Si Tua Bangka lemah berkerut antero mangkuk	The Tavern shakes, its warped foundations crack,
wadjah sendjakala Maghribi memerah dengan tjet	The Old Men of Europe sit there numb with fear;
mukdjizat anggur dalam gendi selalu mengimbau	What twilight flush is left those faces now
	Is paint and powder, or lent by flask and cup.
…JANG MAHA KUASA, JANG ADIL, KAU!	Omnipotent, righteous, You
Betapa pahit zaman ini	but bitter the hours,
Pahit tertahan djam dan waktu buruh,	Bitter the labourer's hours
kini terikat dalam duniaMu	Chained in Your world!
Bilakah runtuh dan karam KAPAL KERADJAAN EMAS INI?	When shall this golden galley's dominion flounder?
DUNIAMU, HARI PEMBALASANMU, TUHAN,	Your world Your day of wrath, Lord,
BERDIRI DAN MENUNGGU![1402]	stands and waits![1403]

[1402] Muhammad Iqbal, *Asrar-i Kuhdi: Rahasia-Rahasia Pribadi*, ed., trans. Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain (Djakarta: Pustaka Islam, 1953), 139.

[1403] English translation cross-referenced against the translation from the original Urdu undertaken by Khan and Koshul. See Farzad Rafi Khan and Basit Bilal Koshul, "Lenin in Allah's Court: Iqbal's critique of Western Capitalism and the opening up of the postcolonial imagination in critical management studies," *Organization* 18 (2011): 303–322.

Two things about this poem stand out immediately. First, Iqbal's imaginary meeting of Lenin and God portrays the famous Bolshevik as, if not a Muslim, then inevitably in awe of God's presence. Lenin effervescently sings God's praises, acknowledging his sovereignty over all creation. Perhaps Iqbal felt that Lenin's avowed atheism, like Nietzsche's, was ultimately irrelevant; in death, all humankind would have to acknowledge God. In the poem, Lenin does not go to hell or purgatory as one might expect an atheist to, but instead meets God and pleads with him as the biblical Job might have: after suffering many bereavements, Job berates God for the many injustices that God has allowed in the world, though Job never renounces his faith (Job 7:17 – 24:12). In much the same way, Lenin seems to berate God while acknowledging his omnipotence.

Conceivably, Iqbal may have felt that Lenin, like Nietzsche, had important contributions to make to humanity, and his lack of faith – though regrettable – did not ultimately detract from the fundamental value of his contributions. In this context, Lenin's contribution was to be the voice of righteousness, to rightly identify the suffering of the masses, and to demand redress for them. This framework seems to have been attractive to Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain, who chose to capitalize several lines in which Lenin acknowledges God's omnipotence (the capitalization does not exist in the original Urdu), even selectively adding punctuation like exclamation marks for extra emphasis. They must have felt a certain satisfaction or sense of apotheosis in Lenin's fictional submission to God ("today, I witness and acknowledge realms/ I once thought the mummery of the church"). The point, however, was than Lenin was not anathema to Islam; misguided though he was, Iqbal and his Indonesian translators seem to have been willing to countenance the validity of some of Lenin's ideas.

Second, this poem was a clearly a vehicle for a critique of the many injustices perpetrated by Imperialism and Capitalism, articulated within an Islamic ethical framework. This was not unusual for Iqbal's work: though we ought to be careful not to read such works of art too literally, it is difficult to deny that other poems in *Gabriel's Wing*, such as "God's Command to the Angels," harbor similar sentiments. It includes lines such as these: "Rise, and from their slumber wake the poor ones of My world!/ Shake the walls and windows of the mansions

of the great!/ Kindle with the fire of faith the slow blood of the slaves!"[1404] Appreciative though he was of his European education, Iqbal held some unambiguously critical views of the world European dominion had created. In "Lenin Before God," he wrote of Asians' worship of European society, the widespread belief in the superiority of European ways and perhaps even the internalization of European standards of beauty. He also pointed out how hollow all the fine European sentiments of philosophy and science were, for Europe worshipped nothing more than the wealth of Asia, while European philosophy preached the equality of men but European empires used their mastery of science to exploit colonial subjects instead. The references to machines standing sovereign and the bank towering over the house of God are unmistakable references to capitalism and the industrial revolution, and Iqbal clearly revels in the prospect that fate will one day dislodge Europe from its primacy. It was entirely unsurprising that a poem like this would resonate with audiences in newly independent Indonesia, which won its freedom through blood and the endurance of privation. After all, this poem was translated in 1953, when the exultant memory of the revolution was still fresh.

Much like Hamka's Revolusi Agama (1946), examined earlier in chapter three, "Lenin Before God" was informed by an understanding of Islam which emphasized Islam's role in promoting socio-economic justice. The whole point of ejecting the Dutch or the British was not merely to supplant them with local elites, or to return to a princely past of lavish royal courts. The prize of victory was the opportunity to refashion society in accordance with Islamic values of justice and dignity for all, not to ensconce a theocracy of jurists or cleanse the nation of all non-Muslims. How that refashioning ought to take place was up for debate, and certainly Iqbal's contributions in that regard were more theoretical than practical.[1405]

Nevertheless, Bahrum Rangkuti and Arif Husain must have felt the particular resonance of "Lenin Before God" in an Indonesia which seemed to have emerged triumphant from the quake that ended European Imperialism, so much so that they made a point of including it in their translation of *The Secrets of the Self*. The day of God's

[1404] Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 175–176.
[1405] Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 164–165.

wrath had arrived, and the edifice of empire had fallen. Indonesia now stood satisfyingly on the cusp of a new world, had Indonesians but the clarity of vision and the strength of will to midwife it. To do so, Indonesia would have to learn and adapt discerningly from the best the world had to offer, while remaining true to itself, much as Iqbal had.[1406] Arguably, this was what made a poem like "Lenin Before God" so attractive for Indonesian audiences; it was not impossible, or even difficult, to imagine learning from the Bolshevik revolution, or the American, French or Chinese revolutions, while remaining a true Muslim.

This may well have been the case for many Muslim members of the PKI. The leftist writer Hersri Setiawan, who was not himself a PKI member but who was incarcerated for years alongside other leftists after the 1965 killings, recalled how Islamic piety and identity helping inmates to survive years of privation and beatings. Prisoners would often take turns reciting or reading the Qur'an aloud – it being one of the few books they were allowed – as a form of solace and entertainment.[1407] Hersri himself would quote Iqbal's poetry as a source of comfort in the face of difficult circumstances, musing that Iqbal's celebration of human ingenuity was also evident among prisoners, who manufactured all kinds of tools and necessities from the limited materials at hand.[1408]

Although Iqbal was relatively popular throughout Indonesia, Persian poetry, even in translation, was inevitably the province of the well-educated Muslim intelligentsia. Some organizations deliberately sought to engage in forms of cultural production which would capture the attention of the masses, and the confluence of Islam and Marxism was evident in those productions as well. A prime example of this was LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, Institute of People's Culture), an artists' organization affiliated with the PKI. It perceived the importance of making artistic production in the new republic comprehensible to the masses, acknowledging the need for art to reflect their lived realities and tastes. This did not mean that all LEKRA-sanctioned

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[1406] Rangkuti's intention in this regard was evident from his introduction to the anthology, in which he writes "In truth, [*The Secrets of the Self*] is not only about morality or wisdom, but also about all the permutations of human perspectives on questions of economy, politics, art, and culture" (*Jang benar dan salah itu bukanlah hanja dalam urusan susila atau kebijakan, tetapi dalam seluruh pendjelmaan dan pikiran manusia tentang ekonomi, politik, kesenian dan kebudajaan*). See Bahrum Rangkuti, "Kata Pengantar," in Muhammad Iqbal, *Asrar-i Kuhdi: Rahasia-Rahasia Pribadi,* 42.
[1407] Hersri and Keith Foulcher, "Arts and Entertainment in the New Order's Jails," *Indonesia* 59 (1995): 8.
[1408] *Ibid*., 10.

productions were subject to an artistic orthodoxy like the prevailing socialist realism of the USSR and PRC; there was remarkable diversity of vision within LEKRA itself.[1409]

LEKRA's magazine was titled *Zaman Baru* (New Age) and it began publication in 1956. It made no secret of its ties to the PKI: issues of *Zaman Baru* carried advertisements for the PKI newspaper *Harian Rakjat*. Articles from 1957 onward were notably PKI-sympathetic. It was an elegant monthly magazine with a minimalist aesthetic, but by 1957 it had developed into a newspaper arts supplement published once every ten days. *Zaman Baru* was very much plugged into broader issues of leftist concern across the world, publishing articles on how Sartre's views on communism had evolved, Bertolt Brecht retrospectives, and the arrest of Pablo Neruda.[1410] It was very much an extension of the impulse to makes Indonesians heirs to world culture, regularly republishing strips from the early twentieth century satirical Czechoslovak comic *The Good Soldier Švejk*. It was also sufficiently well-regarded that accomplished writers like Pramoedya Anata Toer, though not formally a LEKRA member for much of the 1950s, chose to publish in it.

For a magazine with such evident connections to domestic and international Marxism, *Zaman Baru* was surprisingly prone to engaging with specifically Islamic issues, as well as publishing artistic works which deployed Islamic frames of reference. An article titled "Gerakan Modernisme di Mesir" (the modernist movement in Egypt) was a straightforward explanation of Muhammad Abduh's (1849–1905) ideas, with the author clearly expressing his approval for what he saw as a rational approach to *fiqh*.[1411] For example, the article explained the logic behind Abduh's rulings (*fatwa*) on polygamy, arguing that Abduh's opposition to – though not disavowal of – polygamy was based on a rigorous reading of the Qur'an and *hadith*.[1412] The very same issue also carried an article celebrating the life and works of the Marxist social realist novelist Maxim Gorky,

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[1409] Lindsay, "Heirs to World Culture: An Introduction," 4; Michael Bodden, "Modern Drama, Politics, and the Postcolonial Aesthetics of Left-Nationalism in North Sumatra: The Forgotten Theater of Indonesia's LEKRA, 1955–65," in *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia*, ed. Tony Day and Maya H.T. Liem (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program Publications, 2010), 45–80.
[1410] Anonymous, "Memudji Komunisme," *Zaman Baru*, August 20, 1957.
[1411] Dr. Osman Amin, "Gerakan Modernisme di Mesir," *Zaman Baru*, July 10, 1957.
[1412] *Ibid*.

explaining his relevance to Indonesia.[1413] *Zaman Baru* did not limit itself merely to the realm of art: it also published articles exhorting Indonesians to identify with global working class solidarity, calling on them to oppose injustice everywhere.[1414] Such articles sat cheek by jowl alongside short stories like "Sorga Dibumi" (paradise on earth) contributed by Sugiarti Siswadi. Siswadi's short story was deeply immersed in an Islamic frame of reference. His pious Muslim characters and even the narrator invoking God's love for man on multiple occasions, with no hint of mockery or caricature.[1415] The paradise on earth his characters looked forward to was clearly some form of proletarian classless society, and Siswadi seemed to have no problem articulating that vision in Islamic terms.[1416]

Even for these Marx-influenced artists and writers, the quest to articulate a genuine, honest Indonesian literary voice necessitated engagement with both the world beyond Indonesia, as well as all things authentically Indonesian. Whether or not they were practicing Muslims, they recognized that Islam was always going to be one of the core components of Indonesian identity and could never be readily dismissed if Indonesian art was to be authentic and resonant. For their art to be honest, none of them could ignore Islam entirely, so it is unsurprising that engagement with Islamic identity and Islamic ideas crop up repeatedly even in leftist literary magazines like *Zaman Baru*. The point is not that LEKRA members were self-conscious Muslim communists (although certainly some were), but rather that magazines like *Zaman Baru* provide a glimpse into the literary climate of the 1950s, in which the coexistence of religion and Marxist cultural polemics was not considered jarring. In the sphere of artistic production, Islam and Marxism could sometimes meet.

Finally, an examination of two plays from this period allows a glimpse into some of the issues which caught the imagination of artists and audiences during this period. Utuy Tatang Sontani's *Awal dan Mira* (1951) is regarded as one of the finest examples of gritty realism in Indonesian theater, and its performance marked the

[1413] Dyanti B. Supeno, "Maxim Gorki di Indonesiakan," *Zaman Baru*, July 10, 1957.
[1414] Anonymous, "Solidariteit Segala," *Zaman Baru*, August 20, 1957; Bakri Siregar, "Bangsa jang Berkemauan Baik," *Zaman Baru*, August 20, 1957.
[1415] Sugiarti Siswadi, "Sorga Dibumi," *Zaman Baru*, June 1956.
[1416] *Ibid*.

high point of realism in independent theater before plays became increasingly commodified as monetizable performances, or subject to the demands of state-sponsored ideology.[1417] The plot revolves around a small coffee stand (*warung*) run by Mira and her elderly mother. Awal is a regular visitor to the *warung*, besotted as he is with Mira; he hopes to convince her to marry him. Mira continually avoids Awal, even pretending that she is not in when he comes calling. Awal eventually sees through the ruse and comes to see Mira, but he is mocked by two of the *warung*'s regular customers, getting beaten up by them in the ensuing brawl. Other customers come and go, interrupting the conversation Awal is attempting to have with Mira, although she is clearly evasive.

One such customer is an elderly Muslim, whose pious certainties are mocked by Awal. The old man is bemused rather than angry, and leaves with his dignity instead of quarrelling with Awal. Another is a journalist who comes seeking Mira's permission to use her photograph on the cover of his magazine. Mira has no patience for him, naming an impossibly high price for her consent, and Awal mocks the journalist for his faux-patriotic attempts to convince Mira to let him use her picture. They quarrel, and the journalist leaves. After Mira's mother retires for the night, Awal and Mira get into a heated conversation in which Mira makes clear her disdain for Awal's intellectual pretensions, and his vaunted clarity of vision, through which he perceives the *warung*'s other patrons as "clowns." She also makes it clear that Awal's romantic desire for her to elope with him is selfish: she has her own duties, responsibilities, and limitations, which she chides Awal for being unable to understand. Awal loses his head and declares that he will leave and never return: he now believes that Mira will never understand him. Mira, faced with his imminent, permanent departure, finally admits that she does love him, but stands firm in her criticism that Awal is fundamentally selfish: he loves himself, or an idea of himself, more than he loves her, so she cannot allow herself to readily reciprocate his feelings although she would like to. It is at this point that Mira reveals that she is a cripple: she has had both feet amputated because of the revolution. The play ends with an anguished Awal screaming, and Mira comforting him.

[1417] John McGlynn and Michael Bodden, "Introduction," in John McGlynn and Michael Bodden, eds., *The Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Drama*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Jakarta: Lontar, 2010), x.

Awal dan Mira expresses the anguish of the revolution and its consequences, both physical and psychological. The old ways and the old hierarchies are gone; freedom, once seen, cannot be unseen, and freedom is troubling. As a result of the revolutionary tumult, Awal is now a new but anguished man, and can no longer accept the social hierarchies inscribed by the colonial order. He is educated, and possibly even noble, but he rejects the standing that he would have had before 1942, and which he could still conceivably still lay claim to. He cannot accept the nihilism of "white shirt" and "blue shirt," the regular customers who beat him up; they have no hope for the future, and they simply seethe with resentment that their military service has not earned them a place in the new Indonesia. Neither can he accept the unifying conformity of nationalist appeals to "working together" (*kerjasama*) and service to the nation, which the journalist uses on Mira.[1418] Awal's anguish is a metaphor for Indonesia's troubled new dawn, encapsulating questions like "wither Indonesia?" or "what does it mean to be authentically Indonesian?" The exchange between Awal and the old pious Muslim, for example, is a commentary on how the old certainties like emulation of the Prophet Muhammad are insufficient for this new world, and new inspirations will have to be added to the old. Similarly, Sontani shows how the journalist who wants to use Mira's photo as a representative of "the struggling masses" on a magazine cover, a magazine which "belongs to the people themselves," is hollow. [1419] The trappings of socialist realism do not constitute an Indonesian soul.

Mira, on the other hand, is much clearer about who she is, but her physical mutilation represents the destruction and loss of the revolution. This physical cost is juxtaposed against the revolution's supposedly glorious outcome (a new community of citizens and patriots) as expressed by the journalist; Mira will have none of it, and refuses to be co-opted as a symbol. Mira reminds the audience of the violence and trauma of the revolution, of the uncounted sacrifices that never received redress, especially on the part of non-combatants.[1420] She too is unreceptive to the nationalist appeals for unity and cooperation, for what need do the broken have for honor or

[1418] Utuy Tatang Sontani, "Awal Dan Mira," in *The Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Drama*, trans. Harry Aveling, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Lontar, 2010), 187, 195.
[1419] *Ibid*. 197.
[1420] Mary Margaret Steedly, *Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence*, Philip E. Lilienthal (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2013), 56–58, 161, 168–169, 193, 313–314.

glamour? Mira is broken in body and Awal is broken in spirit, paralyzed by the difficulties of articulating what the fruits of the revolution are, and how to make all the sacrifices (like Mira's pain) worthwhile. Both Awal and Mira, as well as their interlocuters at the *warung*, implicitly and explicitly pose the questions of how to respect the many sacrifices made by Indonesians for a better future. Awal in particular is disdainful of nearly everything the other patrons say, refusing to engage with them or explain himself because he thinks they would not understand. The problem is what that better future, the new Indonesia as well as the new Indonesian subject, actually means in practice. Although Sontani provides no answer, he makes clear that he believes it is certainly something more meaningful, more examined and reflective, than jingoistic nationalism, ignorant nihilism, or public piety. The fact that artists and audiences found these themes compelling suggests that Indonesian society in the 1950s had a deep yearning for the promises of a better Indonesia, some of which were encapsulated in the Pancasila, to be fulfilled. In this climate of loss, anguish, and the affective need for justification, Soekarno's NASAKOM must have seen like a potentially dynamic path forward, especially when governing cabinets were often ineffectual.

A distinct theme that undergirds all of this is Sontani's implicit critique of post-revolutionary gender roles. The new Indonesia has dawned, but men still cling to their old self-serving expectations and perquisites. Awal bears an unrequited love for Mira, and she is careful not to lead him on. He persists in pressing his suit, inflicting anguish on her to the point where he forces a confrontation and the revelation that she is a cripple. Ultimately, it is Awal's insistence on forcing Mira's hand, making her choose between loving or rejecting him, that undermines all of Awal's fine talk about soulfulness and clarity; his intellectual depth is exposed to be laced with a healthy dose of selfishness. He wants Mira, but he wants her only on his romanticized terms, in which she is put on a pedestal and called the "ultimate woman."[1421] He does not take her needs and ideas into account, so Mira is disinclined to elope with him even though she does love him.

[1421] Utuy Tatang Sontani, "Awal Dan Mira," 197.

Sontani implies that it is insufficient to talk of high ideals like recapturing or forging the Indonesian soul, for ideals are muddied by reality and action. Awal's relationship with Mira is Indonesian society writ small. His clarity of vision is suspiciously absent when dealing with his beloved, so how can he possibly serve as society's eyes and conscience? Awal's acuity is ultimately deflated when he sees Mira's deformity. Instead of apologizing or comforting her, he can only express his own anguish by screaming, which is how the play ends. By juxtaposing Awal's incisive critiques of the other patrons against his obvious failings as a romantic partner, Sontani acknowledges that fine ideals mean nothing unless they can be implemented in practice. Awal the critic falls short of the ideals of the new Indonesian man. *Awal dan Mira* is thus an incisive critique of a post-revolutionary Indonesia that has so far failed to live up to its ideals, but it is also a cautionary tale for those who would dare to criticize. This self-reflexive critical mentality that Sontani evinces was very much a manifestation of the "thinking *ummah*" and "conscious proletariat" that this chapter has sought to highlight. *Awal dan Mira* expresses the critical, dynamic, pathbreaking intellectual spirit that animated Angkatan 45 artists and intellectuals. Sontani's work, like that of his peers, both reflected and influenced Indonesian citizens' concerns to create a just, prosperous, and even moral society that was appreciably better than what the Dutch or Japanese had managed. To do so – as Sontani implies this in his play – they would have to find their own creative ways of shaping Indonesian culture, and of organizing the structures of Indonesian state and society. It was this open-minded and creative intellectual climate that made possible the Soekarnoist synthesis across much of the political spectrum.

Much like *Awal dan Mira*, *Gerbong* (Boxcar) centers on the detritus of revolution. The cast consists of the human detritus: Miah the prostitute, the orphans Ali and Ida (Ali and Ida are the younger siblings of Miah's deceased husband), Kasim the gambler, and One Eye the maimed beggar. The setting is the physical detritus of revolution, a decaying and repurposed boxcar, which they all are living in or around. They remain at the boxcar instead of attending the ritual feast celebrating the end of hostilities, and so they are symbolically outside of the community by refusing to participate in its rituals (and they probably would not be welcome anyway). Their painful lives are haunted by absences of even harsher lives; Ali and Ida's drunkard father Amir abandoned his

children and their mad mother went missing; Ali's friend Jamin was killed by Dutch troops and Miah's husband died in combat; Kasim's brother died working as a Japanese forced laborer, a *romusha*. Their circumstances are straitened, and they lack even food, but Miah, the orphans, Kasim and One Eye are a makeshift family thrown together by the vagaries of fate, tender and gentle with each other in a way that their blood relations are not. Taken together, they represent the trauma, displacement and loss of the revolution, whether physical, social, or psychological. They refocus the revolutionary narrative on non-combatants in contrast to the nationalist glorification of the heroic *pemuda*.

The plot of *Gerbong* revolves around this damaged family attempting to deal with their past trauma and find a way to move forward in newly independent Indonesia. In that regard, they are collectively a metaphor for the deeply damaged Indonesia that emerged from the revolution – desperately poor, mired in mutual recrimination, and clinging desperately to the hope of a better future. The occupants of the boxcar are confronted by local villagers, Miah's customers, who want Miah and the orphans to leave. Miah and Ida scorn them and send them packing, even as one of the customers professes his love for Miah. Ida and Ali's father Amir returns to the boxcar after a long absence, seeking his children's affection but not receiving it. After an extremely tense exchange full of lament and recrimination, it becomes clear that the children's mother is dead, supposedly killed by her husband, Amir. Apparently, Amir was driven to do so by the fact that his wife had an affair with his superior in the mines. Ida's young fiancée Zainal stops by the boxcar and is cruelly mocked by Amir for impregnating Ida; he leaves quickly, but not before expressing his love for Ida and their hope for a better future. Amir leaves shortly after, strongly implying that he is about to kill himself. The villagers then return to chase Miah and company away from the boxcar, blaming her for tearing local families apart, but it becomes clear that the villagers actually want to repossess the boxcar so they can let it to new refugees. Miah refuses to obey.

Kasim and One Eye return with the news that Ida and Ali's mother is alive after all, singing and wailing to herself across a nearby river, and Ida quickly surmises that Amir means to kill his wife as well as himself. They attempt to find Ida and Ali's mother, but are unsuccessful. Fortunately, their mother makes her own way to the boxcar the next morning, raving before falling asleep. The villagers return and this time they successfully

convince Miah and company to leave the boxcar, but their hypocrisy and avarice are laid bare to the audience. A redemptive note is struck when Kasim the gambler expresses his love for Miah, though more seriously this time: he proposes to marry her, to which Miah responds favorably though somewhat ambiguously. The play ends with the return of Amir – who failed to kill even himself – and his wallowing in self-pity, for he cannot see a future for himself in the new Indonesia. His wife awakes and complements his self-loathing with her madness by singing melancholy songs aloud, seemingly oblivious to the events around her, but she reaches out to console her husband while doing so. As this broken family is briefly reunited – for none of their problems have been solved, and none of the forces tearing them apart negated – Zainal reiterates the importance of not losing hope.

The play's themes emerge less from the plot than they do from the often terse and sometimes explosive conversations the characters have with each other. The price of freedom, eight years of occupation and war with only poverty to look forward to, is often discussed. As Zainal says to Ida with bitterness, "You see yourself as too important. A little event has happened. Thousands of people are involved in it. That event is independence. And we think we are more important, more important than independence. So we are not in tune with their suffering. Why should your mother and father be the problem? They are just chips thrown out because independence doesn't distinguish between people."[1422] Agam Wispi's focus is on the many forms of damage that revolution has wrought, and this says as much about the post-revolutionary angst as much as it does about the revolution itself. The audience is even denied the catharsis and triumph of victory, as Miah and company refuse to attend the celebrations marking the end of hostilities. The disappointment and poverty of post-war Indonesia in the 1950s is reflected in Wispi's pessimistic portrayal of the end of hostilities, on the cusp of a new Indonesia. As the drunkard father Amir bitterly puts it, "Yes, these are the spoils of war and you call them freedom – a father losing his rights to his child, a wife discarding her faithfulness, a widow losing her morals?"[1423] At this moment of transition, Wispi reflects bitterly on the hopes it inspired; for many of the

[1422] Agam Wispi, "Gerbong," in *The Lontar Anthology of Indonesian Drama*, trans. Barbara Hatley (Jakarta: Lontar, 2010), 335.
[1423] *Ibid*., 317.

broken, their lived realities are so desperate even hope is scarce commodity. As Kasim the gambler says, "Maybe the bullets have stopped whizzing around, but the wounds of the war will last a long time – maybe until the day you die."[1424]

The characters in *Gerbong* also represent a generation which straddled colonialism and independence. The revolution cost Amir dearly, destroying his family, robbing him of his job, and making a drunkard of him. He cannot partake of the patriotism that drove his son to fight for the republic; instead, he can only curse the republic as his livelihood evaporated and his son went to his death. Amir leaves the boxcar with the intention to kill his wife and himself because he represents that generation which cannot readily adjust to the new world of the republic: "Fifteen years [working in Dutch mines] is not just a moment… but I feel that I've been born, torn apart by the revolution... maybe because my blood has been poisoned by colonialism."[1425] Wispi highlights the reality that many of this generation would struggle to square their pasts with independence, and not all could make that transition smoothly even if they desired to. Ultimately, independence brings pain instead of relief. The already traumatized and marginal Miah and company are forced by the villagers to leave their one refuge, the boxcar, which nearly culminates in a fight. Amir is lynched in a nearby refugee camp for blaming the loss of his job in the Dutch-run mines on the revolution. The revolution doesn't bring peace, but only habituates violence. There is no justice in *Gerbong*; only loss upon loss. Wispi tallies the cost of independence in this play, confronting the audience with their moral duty to do right by those who died and suffered, calling on the survivors to live up to the republic's ideals.

An undercurrent of religion pervades the play. Miah's disgruntled customers complain about the morality of her occupation because of their religious beliefs, while Amir in his despair invokes God both to curse his fate as well as to pronounce a benediction on his daughter, Ida.[1426] Wispi hints that old beliefs are being supplemented by a new form of religion, "democracy," which demands the faith of Zainal and Ida. While Amir mocks

[1424] *Ibid*., 307.
[1425] *Ibid*., 321.
[1426] *Ibid*., 311–313.

democracy as nothing more than a "new religion," Zainal contends that democracy is not a religion but about "collectively having faith in ourselves."[1427] First performed by LEKRA in 1956, this reads as an acknowledgement of the role that religion had to play in Indonesian society, despite the seismic changes it had undergone; religion is not caricatured, but suffuses the lived realities of the play's characters for better or worse. Islam was a part of the lived realities of many Indonesian citizens, and Islam shaped their fears, hopes, and desires. Even Marxist cultural production performed during the PKI's ascendancy was cognizant of and respectful of this fact: *Gerbong* was hardly an attempt to turn Muslims into PKI members, or to criticize Islam.

Gerbong also can be read as a strident reminder to the many unstable and short-lived coalition governments of the parliamentary democracy period that a heavy responsibility lay upon them. Rather than fetishizing or worshipping democracy as an end unto itself, Wispi was calling upon successive cabinets to make good on their promises to live up to the ideals of Pancasila, delivering concrete improvements to the quality of citizens' lives. The cut and thrust of parliamentary politics, with its coalition-building and horse-trading, was clear for all to see as inter and intra-party disputes played out across the pages of a free press for most of the 1950s. *Gerbong* reminded its audience that democracy and freedom were false Gods unless they delivered what they promised, to justify their cost in blood, treasure and trauma. At the same time, a reversion to the old certainties, whether in pietism or nostalgia for the relative stability of the Dutch colonial economy, is shown to be pointless – both Miah's patrons' sudden rediscovery of their sexual scruples and Amir's longing for his old job are clearly hollow.

These two plays demonstrate that Marxist cultural production was not necessarily polemical or propagandistic in 1950s Indonesia. In *Gerbong*, for example, the pious old Muslim is the only customer at the *warung* who isn't caricatured as coarse or pretentious. Wispi implies that the old Muslim is well-intentioned, but good intentions are not enough. The old Muslim's religious ethic needs to balanced against, and perhaps informed by, other considerations. Instead, LEKRA plays like these called upon the republic to live up to its ideals by

[1427] *Ibid*., 340.

reminding it of the cost of freedom. All the suffering endured in the revolution cried out for redress. These plays expressed that insistence upon justice: that promises be kept, and that a radical break be made with the past, paving the way for a more egalitarian society where human dignity would be nurtured.

These plays were at once deeply humanist and Indonesian, and their motivations were shared by not only Indonesian Marxists but also by other parties across the political spectrum. The climate of the 1950s, full of yearning, hope and disappointment, was a febrile one in which traditions (including Islamic traditions) were open to reinterpretation; certainly Jusuf Wibisono and Zainal Abidin Ahmad were doing something to that effect in their books. It was also a climate in which a new, more just and equitable world (such as that imagined by Marxists) was felt by many to be just around the corner, waiting to be forged. There were no hard rules, no clear vision for what that world might look like, and these LEKRA plays afford a glimpse into the atmosphere of yearning for that better world, a desire which drove creative adaptations of both "modernity" and "tradition," making possible the varieties of confluences between Islam and Marxism examined in this chapter.

Sontani's *Awal dan Mira* and Wispi's *Gerbong* are valuable as historical sources because they reflect the frustrations of many Indonesians with the political and economic stasis of the parliamentary democracy period, even as this era of unprecedented freedom and cautious optimism infused the arts with vibrancy, making the production of plays like these possible. LEKRA playwrights like Sontani and Wispi were actively engaged in the process of articulating an Indonesian cultural identity, working with prestigious forms of artistic expression such as European-style theatre while remaining firmly grounded in an Indonesian context. They did not see fit to mimic the socialist realism of the USSR, using theatre as a bland vehicle for the conveyance of simplistic patriotic or moral messages.[1428] Instead, they explored their own subjectivities as Indonesians, claiming their place as heirs to world culture by taking the artistic forms of Europe and infusing them with Indonesian substance.

[1428] Until Stalin's death in 1953, a monochromatic version of socialist realism reigned supreme in Soviet theater, which LEKRA artists must have had at least some familiarity with. See Anatoly Smeliansky, *The Russian Theatre After Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

This project involved the production of authentically Indonesian plays but also critiques of the status quo, for authenticity by itself was insufficient; Indonesian art had to resonate with its consumers as well as serve a social purpose in the nascent republic for it to be meaningful (or simply worth the effort). The frustrations expressed by these two plays were very real, and evident in many of the other sources examined in this chapter. The social function that *Awal dan Mira* and *Gerbong* served was to force the republic's leaders to live up their promises, and to remind them of their obligations to those who did not live to see the republic born. This was Marxism manifested in the cultural realm: honest artistic attempts to create distinctively Indonesian theater, but not merely for art's sake. This art could and did involve religion, insofar as Islam and other religions were part of the collective Indonesian psyche, and no authentically Indonesian art could be produced without reference to it.

Chapter Conclusion

Els Bogaerts provides a tidy summary of the ethos of cultural production during the parliamentary democracy period, one which is relevant to the broader political climate of the period as well. Studying Indonesian print culture of the 1950s, Bogaert posits that the creative attempts to articulate a uniquely Indonesian national culture, which had begun in the 1910s, flowered in the conducive conditions in the 1950s. The work of Indonesian artists like the poet Sitor Situmorang (1923–2014, the quintessential Angkatan 45 poet alongside Chairil Anwar) was representative of a broader societal attempt to synthesize a meaningful "Indonesian-ness." Speaking of Sitor Situmorang and his milieu, Bogaerts argues that

> *"… articles published in Mimbar Indonesia on the question of the continuing Dutch presence show that the Indonesian people were anxious to determine their own destiny and extend their contacts with the world at large. In Sitor Situmorang's words it was 'London, Paris, New Delhi. And maybe Peking. The actual meaning of Western culture, Russian communism and new democracy in China is what matters to us. Between Washington and Moscow, the Netherlands is just too small a factor for us to worry about.'"*[1429]

[1429] Els Bogaerts, "'Whither Indonesian Culture?' Rethinking 'Culture' in Indonesia in a Time of Decolonization," in *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian, 1950-65*, ed. Jennifer Lindsay and Maya H.T. Liem (Leiden: KITLV, 2012), 247. *Mimbar Indonesia* was a weekly magazine published from 1947–66, strongly associated with the urban intelligentsia who had significant access to European education.

Situating themselves as heirs to or translators of world culture, Indonesian artists and intellectuals laid claim to all the benefits and lessons the world had to offer, whether those had germinated in Amsterdam, Moscow, Tokyo, Washington, or someplace else; this applied to political systems, economic policies, and religious beliefs as much as it did to the arts.

This was substantially similar to the sentiments expressed by Asrul Sani about Indonesians being "heirs to world culture" referenced at the beginning of this chapter. These sentiments were shared by others and dominated the consciousness of the intelligentsia during the parliamentary democracy period. In July 1954, Soedjatmoko, the editor of several Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI) newspapers – *Siasat* (tactics), *Pedoman* (guidelines) and *Konfrontasi* (confrontation) – published an editorial titled "The Need for Creative Adaptation." This article appeared in the first ever issue of *Konfrontasi*, which specialized in cultural issues, but which never shied away from politics either. In it, he lamented not only the lack of clear political direction on the part of the republic's leadership, but also the lack of a vibrant culture of public political participation, of discourse and debate over values and principles, that he felt was essential for formulating coherent policy.[1430] He saw this an antithetical to the spirit of the revolution, whose "revolutionary *élan*" was born out of "self-confidence and self-reliance," as well as "total commitment to the struggle [for independence]."[1431] By this, he meant the dynamism which characterized revolutionary discourse, in which Indonesia would find its own way to political independence, social justice, religious freedom, and all the other goals enshrined in Pancasila, free from having to conform to Cold War imperatives from Washington or Moscow, or colonial precedents.

This dynamism had always been more discursive than corporeal, and it harbored more than a tinge of unrealistic optimism. Nevertheless, Soedjatmoko had accurately put his finger on the pulse of the *status quo*. He was largely correct in pointing out that "our national energies are spent in quarrels amongst ourselves," while politicians in Jakarta were alienated from the quotidian concerns of the Indonesian citizenry, especially outside

[1430] Soedjatmoko, "The Need for Creative Adaptation," in *Indonesian Political Thinking,* 239–240.
[1431] *Ibid*., 239.

of Java.[1432] Reading Herbert Feith's classic monograph on the serpentine political developments of the parliamentary democracy period, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (1962), it is hard to disagree with Soedjatmoko. Feith effectively conveys the sense that the parliamentary democracy era was characterized by chronic political jockeying for cabinet positions and constant firefighting, dealing with crises that required the government's immediate attention, instead of coherently planning Indonesia's economic and social development.

Furthermore, Soedjatmoko rightly argued that the republican leadership was possessed of a limited political imagination, unsuited to the drastically different post-1945 world: "The crisis is clearly one of leadership. Its cause is to be found in the inability of our national leaders to adapt themselves to the new situation we have been facing since the achievement of independence. It lies in their incapacity to understand that the world in which we have taken our rightful place is different from the world which we saw from a limited nationalist vantage point in the period of our struggle against the Dutch."[1433] Soedjatmoko's call for creative adaptation was an attempt to recapture the intellectual eclecticism and dynamism of the *pergerakan*, drawing freely from other societies and cultures, but also formulating Indonesian solutions to Indonesian problems. United against the Dutch until 1949, republicans had found it easy to paper over genuine differences in their political visions, which were in any case often inchoate and imprecisely articulated. Faced with independence, they soon began to realize that simply owning the means of production was no guarantee of national prosperity; equitably distributing the dividends of freedom and meeting the multifarious expectations of the war-weary and impoverished citizenry was an incredible challenge requiring much more than just the creation of a sovereign government led by free Indonesians. [1434]

The benefits of independence were slippery, hard to harness and harder still to distribute equitably. Citizens' desires for land, education, housing, and job opportunities, to say nothing of sustainable rates of inflation or the

[1432] *Ibid*., 239.
[1433] *Ibid*., 240.
[1434] They often did not even own the means of production; much of economic infrastructure and lucrative industries remained in the hands of Dutch or Chinese firms well into the 1950s. See Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 551–565.

provision of public amenities like electricity, sanitation, and roads, could not be met simply by legislating the requisite resources into being. Knowing full well the enormity of the task facing free Indonesia, Soedjatmoko called upon his fellow citizens to simultaneously unite around their shared goals, while also opening their minds to debate and discussion over how best to achieve those goals. As this chapter has shown, many Indonesians answered that call: both within and without the halls of power, an efflorescence of Indonesian intellectual life took place, in which Muslim identities and Marxist critiques of capitalism were accepted as legitimate components in the deliberations on how Indonesian society ought to be organized. Drawing inspiration from the Indonesian past, other Muslim societies, Southeast Asian colonies and former colonies, as well as Europe, the USSR and PRC, Indonesians sampled on a global scale to shape their own ideas for Indonesia. It was within such a framework that Islam and Marxism could coexist discursively.

The coexistence of Islam and Marxism during this period was something more than the product of conducive conditions. The climate of Afro-Asian solidarity, feminist solidarity, and Third Force non-alignment internationally, as well as the inability of any one party to dominate parliament domestically, did help facilitate cooperation between Muslims and Marxists. There were other international factors as well: progressive Egyptian jurists like Mahmud Shaltut gained influenced at Cairo's al-Azhar University, the pre-eminent center of Islamic scholarship, throughout the 1950s. This culminated in Shaltut, an ally of Gamal Abdel Nasser's, serving as the Sheikh al-Azhar from 1958–63, and ties between al-Azhar and Indonesia deepened during his tenure.[1435] However, even the progressive leanings of al-Azhar's prestigious jurists and their radical approaches to *fiqh* during this period would not be enough to explain the remarkable confluence of Islam and Marxism in Indonesia. It is imperative to acknowledge that Indonesia possessed a long history of everything from Islamic identity coexisting with Marxist ideas, to outright theorizations of compatibility between Islam and Marxism, going all the way back to the 1920s.

[1435] Mona Abaza, *Three Generations of Azharites in Indonesia*, Occasional Paper 88 (Singapore: ISEAS, 1993), 14.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" may be useful in framing the cumulative impact of this long history. Bourdieu defines habitus as ingrained habits, skills and dispositions which shape how individuals perceive their social world, and also conditions how they react to it.[1436] Effectively, habitus is the reality within which individuals are socialized, including both individual as well as group experiences, and it shapes both the body language and minds of individuals. I would argue that one component of the Indonesian habitus, or the Indies habitus before it, was the uncontentious coexistence of Islam and Marxism. There were so many prominent Marxists – many of whom were not PKI members – in Indonesian political life, and so many of them were avowed Muslims, that Masjumi intellectuals like Sjafruddin Prawiranegara labored to explain to his readers that Islam and Marxism were incompatible. The possibility for coexistence was there for all to see over the course of decades, in the speeches and writings of Soekarno and Hatta, or Semaun and Tan Malaka. Of course, significant numbers of Muslims did not agree, but this did not change the reality of this confluence, which was clearly expressed repeatedly in Indonesian print culture. Because Islam and Marxism were not naturally presumed to be antithetical, discursive space existed for some individuals to bridge Islam and Marxism in the 1950s. As this chapter has shown, many Indonesians did, and found a plethora of ways for doing so.

[1436] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Conclusion

During the time I spent in the Netherlands conducting archival research, I had the opportunity to meet with an old exile, once a journalist for the PKI newspaper *Harian Rakyat*. He had survived the killings of 1965 because he had been out of the country but had lost many members of his family. He never returned to Indonesia, and eventually became a citizen of the Netherlands in his old age. In incredibly generous and humorous man despite his frailty, he welcomed me into his home, and we spent an afternoon together chatting about matters both historical and mundane. Upon hearing about the nature of my research, he promptly described himself as "Islam abangan."[1437] I noticed multiple volumes of Marxist theory in English, Dutch and German, languages he was fluent in, perched on his overflowing bookshelves. On a separate shelf in a different corner of his house, he also owned several copies of the Qur'an, in both Indonesian and Arabic. He was clearly not an Islamic communist in the mold of Hasan Raid or Ahmad Dasuki Siradj, and he did not describe himself as such. His bookshelves and his self-professed identity, however, did illustrate how Muslim identity and political commitment to communism could coexist comfortably. In his case, that confluence or coexistence had not merely been the product of particularly conducive circumstances; it had lasted a lifetime.

The noted novelist and former political prisoner Putu Oka Sukanta wrote movingly of the ways in which political prisoners accused of being communists – of course, some were indeed communists, while others were Marxists of various stripes – framed their identities as Muslims. The following abstract from Sukanta's *Merajut Harkat* (1999) compounds many of these complex feelings as well as their social contexts. In it, the communist political prisoner Risno is speaking to the novel's narrator:

> *"'He* [Risno's brother-in-law] *was the only one in her family who disapproved of our marriage. For political reasons. He used to be a big shot in the Socialist Party, the PSI. My father-in-law belonged to Muhammadiyah, but when it came to his daughter's happiness he was prepared to let go of politics. I haven't forgotten what he said to her: 'You can marry anyone you like, as long as he believes in God. I don't want you marrying an infidel.' My wife, my fiancée at the time, told me what he said and asked me about my beliefs. I convinced her that I did believe in the existence of Almighty God, but I confessed that I rarely performed the ritual prayers. My*

[1437] *Abangan* refers to Indonesian Muslims whose religious traditions actively embrace the local and regional influences on Islamic praxis, such as Hindic influence on Islam in Java. See Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

> *parents were abangan Javanese, nominal Muslims who believed in the world of the spirits. The important thing for them was that we didn't go against God's commandments. My wife was always reminding me about the daily prayers, and it's true, when I was busy I forgot more often than I remembered. But I always fasted the full month of Ramadan. Now I'm not fasting, my feet still hurt and I can't calm my nerves. I'm paying for it now." He fell silent.*
>
> *His story set me thinking about how many of us, myself included, had been unprepared for this separation from our families. We lived peaceful lives, and none of us ever expected to end up in jail like this. A hurricane had come from nowhere and blown our lives to smithereens. I sat and watched Risno cry—a party activist, a communist cadre, awash with tears because he was missing his family. Was this sentimentality, or an expression of his deepest humanity? On the other side I'd seen our interrogators, those apes, with their professed piety and belief in God, engage in sadistic torture and commit rape, justifying whatever means they used to get what they wanted. There was no more law. They didn't fast, and I'd never seen any of them perform the daily prayers. Did people like that still need to ask God's forgiveness? Did they acknowledge the greatness of God? Hadn't they put themselves above God's power? I had heard that in Central and East Java, they'd competed to see how many people they could kill, in the belief that forty beheadings was enough to get someone into heaven. Although they didn't wait for heaven to claim their reward—they looted everything they could find among their victims' possessions."*[1438]

The Muslim faith of many of the communist prisoners was even a source of comfort and solace during the long years of incarceration, as another scene from *Merajut Harkat* shows:

> *"Pak Manto, one of the older men in the group, went off to the toilet. He was followed by one of the young criminal prisoners who was covered in tattoos.*
>
> *'Is that a sarong you've got with you, Pak?'*
>
> *'No.'*
>
> *'Come on now. Tell me the truth. I saw you folding up a sarong just now. Give it here.' The words came out sounding harsh and insistent.*
>
> *'I need it for praying,' Pak Manto said softly.*
>
> *'Praying? Communists don't need to pray. You're going to hell anyway!'*
>
> *Pak Manto, who was a veteran of the revolutionary war in Central Java, couldn't speak. He just stood there looking at the tattooed kid, swearing at him on the inside. 'What do you know about hell and praying? You're not worth a drop of my piss, you punk.'"*[1439]

As I have argued in the introduction, fiction can expose a range of emotions and feelings that conventional historical sources can only glimpse. Through his prose, Sukanta was expressing something very true of the

[1438] Putu Oka Sukanta, *Merajut Harkat* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar bekerjasama dengan Jendela Budaya, 1999), 320–22. Translations courtesy of Keith Foulcher, for a forthcoming English translation of *Merajut Harkat* by Lontar Press in 2020.
[1439] *Ibid*., 450.

social milieu of Marxist Indonesians, although this was not the straightforward recollection of a memoir. Given the many sources examined in the preceding chapters, it should be abundantly clear that for many Indonesian Marxists, their Islamic faith and Marxist political commitments could and did coexist, in contrast to popular assumptions that Islam and Marxism are diametrically opposed. Their intellectual and affective reference points were plural: they saw fit to identify both with the global community of Muslims as well as a global movement of proletarian solidarity. It is the remnants and traces of this confluence that remain visible in the fiction penned by former political prisoners.

John T. Sidel provides a useful frame of reference for this phenomenon in his review of Larisa Efimova's *Stalin and Indonesia: Soviet Policy Towards Indonesia, 1945–1953* (2004). Sidel approves of Efimova's contribution to what he calls a "de-nationalized history of modern Indonesia." Sidel notes that such a denationalized Indonesian history can be told not only through the lens of Indonesia's Islamic connections across the Indian Ocean, as seen in the scholarship of Michael Laffan, Azyumardi Azra, and Ronit Ricci, but also through the prism of Indonesia's participation in trans-regional flows of Marxist dialogue and cooperation. As Sidel puts it, "If, after all, we recall Soekarno's formulation "NASAKOM"—Nasionalisme, Agama, Komunisme (Nationalism, Religion, Communism)—then we may find within our grasp a very different prism through which a properly "de-nationalized" history of modern Indonesia can be illuminated. Such a prism is one in which Moscow, Lenin, and Semaun figure more prominently than Mekkah, Rida, and Salim as points of reference."[1440]

This dissertation has been once such attempt to de-nationalize modern Indonesian history, with an emphasis on the importance of both Moscow and Mecca – among many others – as reference points for Indonesian Muslims. It goes beyond Sidel and Efimova's research (which outline histories of Indonesia in relation to Southeast Asia and the USSR) by highlighting how thoroughly cosmopolitan Indonesian political discourse was for much of the twentieth century, not only in relation to one country or region. A history of Indonesian political thought

[1440] John T. Sidel, "From Russia with Love?," *Indonesia* 84 (2007): 162, 171.

must take into account the intellectual and affective orientation of Indonesians not just to Cairo and Mecca or Moscow and Beijing, but also to Europe, India, Turkey, Vietnam and Japan. Eager to translate the world to Indonesia, Indonesians sampled broadly, and this made for a dynamism in Indonesian political thinking that allowed conciliations of Islam and Marxism to thrive.

This dissertation has also been an attempt to correct the assumed polarities of Indonesian political identities, categories like the communist, nationalist, and Islamic *aliran* (lit. streams), or the *santri*/*abangan* dichotomy, which have dominated both popular and scholarly discourse for decades. Ariel Heryanto eloquently described how Suharto's New Order regime (1966–98) relied on a toxic form of identity politics and stigmatization to justify its very existence, a strategy that has configured the citizen-state relationship in Indonesia in fundamental ways.[1441] The fossilization of political identities under the New Order embedded categories like "nationalist" or "Islamic" as signifiers of communal identity in the popular imagination, although these categories efface much more than they reveal. They remain relevant insofar as people have come to believe them to be relevant, and identify themselves with reference to them. Before 1965, however, political identities were much more nebulous and overlapping: many Muslims saw no need to explain their membership in the PKI or the PSI. The aforementioned memoirs published by Achmadi Moestahal and Hasan Raid after the fall of Suharto are examples of the pressure communists felt, after decades of New Order fossilization of political identities, to explain their Muslim-ness and *vice versa*. Before 1965, they simply were.

Suharto's New Order has ably shown how mass movements, and even entire discursive fields, can disappear – silenced or smothered by the state and its preferred narratives within one generation. In Indonesia, this was achieved through various mechanisms: the dissemination of print culture demonizing communism, television and radio broadcasting that fetishized the violence committed by the would-be coup plotters on September 30, 1965, new curricula and textbooks in schools that glorified Suharto and the military as the saviors of the republic. Collectively, these efforts reshaped the dominant historical narrative in the minds of the young, and

[1441] Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 159–60.

perhaps even the minds of those who had experienced or participated in older discursive fields. These older discourses included intellectual efforts like the humane expression of Islamic ethics in socialist policies, exemplified by the PSI's Soedjatmoko or Masjumi's Jusuf Wibisono, which had once been the dominant political direction of the 1950s. These vibrant and creative discourses were optimistic and aspirational, but they were important because they shaped the possibilities of what Indonesia might yet become. Being both a Muslim and a Marxist is now a deeply transgressive proposition: what was once so obvious as to require no explanation has now become unthinkable. This dissertation has sought to unravel the fabric of the New Order narratives which obscure the past, so that the incomprehensible may be comprehensible again.

After describing the various confluences of Islam and Marxism, and the many permutations of this phenomenon across decades, I feel compelled the answer the following questions: "Why did this discursive formation not remain stable? Why did mixing Islam and Marxism cease to be part of a tenable political platform? How could a discursive field that was so robust for decades crumble so irrevocably after 1965?" These are not the core questions that animate this dissertation, but answering them seems a fitting epilogue to this extended analysis of why and how Islam and Marxism. Obviously, the 1965–66 massacres of communists after the attempted coup of September 30, 1965 demonized all manifestations of Marxism, but this was merely the catalyst for the destruction of a discursive field, not an underlying reason for its demise. In the domestic realm, there were at least two major reasons why communists in general and the PKI in particular became such an effective scapegoat, generating enough ire to fuel the New Order's propaganda for decades.

First, the trope of the enemy within had become well-established in the political imagination of the Indonesian citizenry, a legacy of secessionist attempts like Republic of South Maluku (1950–63), the Darul Islam rebellion (1948–1960), and the PRRI/Permesta attempts to bend the central government to their will (1957–61). The threat of a fifth column waiting to rupture the fragile republic was therefore not implausible, and Cold War propaganda about the nefarious intentions of the PKI fit well into the recent historical experience of the republic. Second, Soekarno increasingly relied on the PKI to balance the military's political influence in the late 1950s, as well as using the PKI as a crutch in his attempt to recapture executive power in the republic. The

PKI's association with Soekarno's increasingly authoritarian ways stained the PKI, undermining its claims to seeking a peaceful, democratic way to power. Moreover, Soekarno's obvious role as the main beneficiary of his new "political concept" (Manipol-USDEK) made the blend of Islam and Marxism that he espoused seem hollow, especially among the educated republican political elite.b

At the international level, the conducive climate generated by the Third Force of Nasser, Nehru and Soekarno, as well as the many Marxist-friendly international conferences held in Rangoon (1953), Bandung (1955), Delhi (1955) and Bombay (1956) built on anti-colonial solidarity, was quickly fading in the 1960s. Asian nationalists had failed to translate their early successes into tangible improvements in prosperity, stability and good governance, as the structural weaknesses of the colonial societies they had inherited and the globalization of the Cold War undermined their best efforts to turn their rhetoric into reality. Later attempts by post-colonial leaders such as Jamaica's Michael Manley to construct an equitable international economic order distinct from the communist world's autarkic tendencies and the USA's conditional aid looked increasingly untenable as the 1970s wore on. These attempts culminated in the Group of 77 initiative, launched at the UN General Assembly in 1974, to create what they called a New International Economic Order (NIEO), the international corollary to domestic socialist projects.[1442] By 1980 these projects had clearly failed, but even in the 1950s and 1960s the cracks were already evident. The inability to quickly achieve prosperity and stability pushed the former colonies back into a subservient relationship with former Imperial economies, in need of their foreign direct investment, foreign exchange, and technical expertise.[1443] This was a handicap that Indonesia constantly struggled with throughout the parliamentary democracy period: the ethos of government was anti-colonial and socialist, but the reality of government, given the scarred and stunted economies they inherited, often involved making compromises with Western business interests in order to keep the economy from stalling. The inability to deliver much-anticipated prosperity through union action, labor protections, nationalization of industries, and limited land redistribution because of macroeconomic structural constraints made Marxism look ineffectual

[1442] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 18.
[1443] Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 20–21.

despite the manifest validity of its critique of capitalism. This prevented Marxist sympathies from growing beyond the peasantry, plantation workers and urban laborers whose immediate needs were served by Marxist movements.

As the post-independence years wore on, the inability of Marxist mobilizations and ineffectual policymaking to deliver prosperity and stability disillusioned the masses who had sacrificed so much for independence. This inhibited the further elaboration of conciliations between Islam and Marxism, since one of the key planks of this conciliation, the promotion of social justice, proved difficult to achieve. It became much more electorally profitable for Indonesian Muslim politicians to double down on the politics of identity and grievance, especially in the face of competition for Muslim loyalties from conservative Islamic movements like Darul Islam, and the Masjumi party's implication in PRRI/Permesta attempts to overthrow the central government. It became far less electorally profitable for Muslim politicians to continue promoting social justice as the centerpiece of their policy platforms. Individual Muslims with Marxist convictions like Ahmad Dasuki Siradj, Achmadi Moestahal and Hasan Raid continued to exist, but the broader political climate had shifted to favor other kinds of Islamic politics.

Where Islamic socialists in the Middle East and South Asia had come into a measure of power, such as Pakistan's Liaquat Ali Khan (1947–51) and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971–77), or the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood led by Mustafa al-Siba'i, they had also failed to deliver tangible results. Liaquat Ali Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto both operated within constraints imposed by the Cold War, and their much-vaunted Islamic socialism never truly found expression in concrete policies, allowing secular communist and socialist factions to challenge their legitimacy just as Islamic parties did. Although initially promising, Islamic socialist movements like al-Siba'i's Syrian Muslim Brotherhood never quite achieved their full potential, as first Nasser and then the Ba'ath party actively suppressed them after 1963. The discursive space in which a distinct ideology of Islamic socialism could be proudly proclaimed and articulated in concrete policies was severely constricted by the Cold War. As in Indonesia, the international climate favored Islamic politicians who could mobilize support through the politics of identity and grievance, not the politics of social justice. Conversely, the failure to actualize

Islamic socialism in other Islamicate societies affected Indonesia as well, making the *sosialisme à la Indonesia* of the already-discredited Soekarno seem hollow; it was US allies like the ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia which seemed to be thriving, not the Islamic socialists.

While it is important to understand the causes leading to a collapse of the discursive field which accepted the possibility of confluence between Islam and Marxism, this does not mean that said discursive field is a closed chapter in Indonesian history. Apart from the importance of developing a more accurate understanding of the (relatively recent) past because of how it shapes the political imagination of the present, conciliations of Islam and Marxism are worthy of our attention today because they are not quite gone. The decades of confluence between Islam and Marxism in Indonesia cast a long shadow, and the legacy of those conciliations is emerging again after years of submersion under New Order hegemony.

The time I spent trawling book markets and libraries in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo and Padang for sources yielded a number of surprising discoveries: a significant number of books have been published in Indonesian by Indonesian authors on the possibilities of confluence between Islam and Marxism. Examples include Eko Prasetyo's *Kiri Islam* (Leftist Islam), Munir Che Adam's *Muhammad SAW & Karl Marx*, and Eko Supriyadi's *Sosialisme Islam* (Islamic socialism), the last of which explicates the ideas of the Shi'a Iranian Islamic communist Ali Shariati. Moreover, English-language scholarship has also been translated – likely illicitly – into Indonesian and republished by Indonesian presses. Translations of older monographs such as Jeanne Mintz's *Mohammad, Marx and Marhaen* can easily be found in Indonesian book markets. Additionally, there has been a resurgence in the popularity of Tan Malaka's writings since the fall of Suharto's New Order regime. Republications of Tan Malaka's works, particularly *Madilog*, are readily available throughout Indonesian bookstores, published by specialist leftist presses such as Sega Arsy and NARASI but also by popular publishers like Tempo. This has been echoed in digital media as well, with websites such as *Islam Bergerak* – explicitly named after Haji Misbach's newspaper from the 1920s – publishing articles which promote the emphasis of social justice in Islam.

The confluence of Islam and Marxism examined in this dissertation found expression in many ways, in many different contexts. The primary goal of this dissertation has been to address the fundamental questions of why this phenomenon existed, the conditions that facilitated it, and the various forms it took in relation to the relevant social, economic and political contexts. I can only hope that I have made a fair attempt to do so, because the humane visions that Indonesian Muslims cherished for a more prosperous, equitable and inclusive future remain compelling today, no matter how optimistic they were. Unafraid to learn from the best that the world had to offer, unafraid to critique injustice when they saw it despite the cost, all the while remaining true to their identities as Muslims and Indonesians, they modeled a modality of Islamic piety that is sorely needed today.

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