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**Haji Agus Salim: His Role in Nationalist Movements in
Indonesia during the Early Twentieth Century**

by

Erni Haryanti Kahfi

**A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

**Institute of Islamic Studies
McGill University
Montreal**

March, 1996

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ABSTRACT

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Title : Haji Agus Salim: His Role In The Nationalist Movements
In Indonesia During The Early Twentieth Century
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Degree : Master of Arts

Haji Agus Salim (1884-1954) was an Indonesian Muslim political figure of the Nationalist Era (1908-1945). He was influential in two important associations; Sarekat Islam (SI-Islamic Union) and the Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB-Young Muslim Union). Salim was born into religious family and had a Western education. In 1915 when he joined the Sarekat Islam it was at the height of its popularity. Salim became so engrossed with its goals, that he devoted most of his life to it. As such, he was soon able to obtain a high-ranking position in it, and to help formulate the movement's strategies. This thesis presents a number of Salim's positions on politics which show his disagreement and criticism of the Dutch Colonial policy and its effects, as well as his advocacy of an Islamic approach to politics rather than "socialism" as advocated by communist members of the SI. These views aimed at the paramount goal of freeing Indonesia from the Dutch colonialism. His views on "Nationalism" can be gleaned from his exchange of polemics with Sukarno, later president of Indonesia. These polemics portrayed Salim as a nationalist who would not depart from a religious viewpoint. Finally, his involvement with JIB was a continuation of his desire to implement and promote Islamic values among Young Indonesian Muslims of Western education, whom he regarded as the future leaders of the country.

RESUME

AUTEUR : Erni Haryanti kahfi
TITRE : Haji Agus Salim: Son rôle au sein des mouvements nationalistes
en Indonésie au début du XXeme siècle
DEPARTEMENT : Institut des Etudes Islamiques, Université McGill
DIPLOME : Maîtrise és Arts

Haji Agus Salim (1884-1954) fut une personnalité politique Indonésienne de l'époque nationaliste (1908-1945). Il fut influent au sein de deux importantes associations: le Sarekat Islam (SI- Association Islamique) ainsi que le Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB- Association des Jeunes Musulmans). Salim naquit au sein d'une famille religieuse et reçut une éducation occidentale. En 1915, il joignit le Sarekat Islam. Alors au summum de sa popularité, Salim devint tellement épris des objectifs du Sarekat Islam qu'il y consacra la majeure partie de sa vie. Ainsi, il réussit à obtenir une position élevée à l'intérieur de l'organisation et collabora à formuler les stratégies du mouvement. Ce mémoire présente un certain nombre de positions politiques montrant le désaccord de Salim ainsi que ses critiques des politiques coloniales Néerlandaises et ses effets de même que le plaidoyer de Salim pour une approche Islamique de la politique plutôt que l'approche socialiste telle que défendue par les membres communistes du SI. L'objectif ultime de ces points de vue était la libération de l'Indonésie du colonialisme Néerlandais. Les opinions de l'auteur concernant le nationalisme peuvent être recueillies des échanges polémiques avec Sukarno qui deviendra plus tard le Président de l'Indonésie. Ces polémiques montrent Salim comme étant un nationaliste éfuant de se dissocier d'une position religieuse. En conclusion, son implication avec le JIB était le prolongement de son désir d'implanter et de promouvoir les valeurs Islamiques parmi les jeunes Indonésiens Musulmans de culture occidentale, qu'il considérait comme étant les futurs dirigeants du pays.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my academic Advisor and Supervisor, Prof. A. Uner Turgay, Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, for his advice in determining the scope and the final direction of this thesis, as well as his continuing and valuable support without which my academic duties would not have been completed. I must also recognize the help, inspiration and guidance, Prof. Howard M. Federspiel, the present Director of the McGill Indonesia IAIN Development Project, has shown me, as well as his readiness and patience to read and advise in elaborating every part of this thesis until its completion.

My due regards and appreciation go to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for granting a valuable scholarship towards my study at McGill. I am also very grateful to the former and present staffs of the McGill Indonesia IAIN Development Project both in Jakarta and in Montreal for all the help extended to me during my entire study at McGill.

Thanks are also due to the staff of the Islamic Study Library of McGill University who assisted me in finding materials. Special thanks go to Miss Salwa Ferahan and others for facilitating my research through interlibrary loans. I am also thankful to Miss Jasmine Badr, Steve Millier, and Collin Mitchell for their patience in editing this work.

I must also mention my indebtedness to Dr. Tarmizi Taher, Ministers of Religious Affairs, who gave me the opportunity to study at the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University; and to the Rector of IAIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung who granted permission to study at McGill and gave necessary assistance. I am also grateful to those

people whose names could not be mentioned here for their assistance and collaboration until my studies could be finished.

Last but not least, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my mother for her readiness and endless patience to accompany me in the last stages of this work; my father for his permission to let my mother travel with me as well as his consistent support; my sisters and brothers for their encouragement; my husband and my first cute son, Erry Setia and Tarmidzi Tibyan Purnama, for their continuous patience and love and for accompanying me during the whole period of my study; as well as my second cute son, Al Farruqi Purnama whom I often left while finishing my work.

Montreal, March, 1996.

EHK

SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

In general, the Indonesian names and terms written in this work are based on the new Indonesian spelling used since 1972. However, certain names and terms are written in the old spelling, especially those which may cause confusion, such as the names of persons. The main differences between the old and the new spelling are: ch, dj, j, tj and oe which became kh, y, sy, c and u. Furthermore, the transliteration from Arabic to English and Indonesian follows the new Indonesian spelling. The main differences of transliteration from Arabic are: *

Arabic	English	Indonesian	Arabic	English	Indonesian
خ	kh	kh	ع	'	'
ض	ḍ	dh	ى	i	ii
ط	ṭ	th	و	ū	u
ص	ṣ	sh	أ	ā	aa
ظ	ẓ	zh	إ	'	/
غ	gh	gh			
ذ	dh	dz			
ش	sh	sy			
ث	th	ts			
ز	z	z			
ق	q	q			
هـ	h	h			
ح	ḥ	h			

*Transliteration scheme from Arabic to English and Indonesian are adopted from Howard M. Federspiel, A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995) pp. xvii-xviii

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INTRODUCTION

After the proclamation of Independence of 1945, the political situation in Indonesia lacked resolution because Indonesians, inspired by the Declaration, demanded independence while Dutch authorities were not yet ready to recognize that freedom. Dutch and Indonesian military services often clashed frequently. This was the situation until 4 November 1946 when the Government of Netherlands officially recognized the birth of the Indonesian Republic with Sukarno and Hatta at its head. At this point the Dutch and Indonesians representatives met and began to negotiate the future of the country. The negotiations conducted by the Dutch Commissioner-General and Prime Minister Syahrir not only reached and signed a full agreement between the two countries, but also published the text known as the Linggadjati Agreement on 18 November 1946.¹ This Agreement was then ratified by the KNIP (Central Indonesian National Council) on 5 March 1947, after having been bitterly debated by the Indonesian political parties during the plenary session held from 25 February to 5 March 1947. Then, after having received the final permission from Sukarno and Hatta, Sutan Syahrir signed the Linggadjati Agreement on 25 March 1947.²

In accordance with the Linggadjati Agreement the Netherlands granted a de facto recognition for the Republic of Indonesia, which was to consist of the islands of Java, Madura and Sumatra. This agreement also called for the creation of a United States of Indonesia comprising the whole of the Netherlands Indies, as well as the establishment of

¹John Coast. Recruit to Revolution. Adventure and Politics in Indonesia (London: Christophers, 1952). pp. 31-32.

²Rudolf Mrázek. Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994). p. 332

a Netherlands Union consisting of the Netherlands, the Dutch West Indies, and the United States of Indonesia. This agreement also called for the reduction of armed forces of both sides.³ However, from the Indonesian view, the signing of the Linggadjati agreement not only proved futile, but aggravated the situation since the Dutch tried to use the terms of the agreement to undermine or even destroy the nascent Republic. They kept creating a number of puppet states that were supposed to become constituent states in the United States of Indonesia alongside the Republic. This situation led the Indonesian government to strengthen the Republic's position on the international level by obtaining de jure and de facto recognition of its status by as many countries as possible.⁴

Hence, after attending the Inter-Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947, Haji Agus Salim, as adviser to the Indonesian delegation, did not return to Indonesia, but flew to a number of countries in the Middle East. On these visits, he chaired the Indonesian delegation, since he was Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Sjahrir cabinet.⁵ His command of many languages, including Arabic, undoubtedly facilitated his negotiations with these Muslim-states. During this official journey, the Indonesia delegation was warmly welcomed and sympathetically heard by the Arab states.⁶ As a result, Salim's tour was hailed an international success, as he was able to obtain a de jure recognition of the Republic of Indonesia from the Arab world. This triumph brought him fame among the Indonesian politicians, and he was hailed as an excellent diplomat.⁷

³C.L.M. Penders, ed., Milestones on My Journey. The Memoirs of Ali Sastroamijoyo, Indonesian Patriot and Political Leader (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1979). p. 213

⁴Coast, Recruit to Revolution, p. 34. Penders, Milestones on My Journey, p. 157.

⁵Mrázek, Sjahrir, pp. 334-5.

⁶Coast, Recruit to Revolution, p. 35

⁷Penders, Milestones on My Journey, p. 218.

The first Arab country Salim visited was Egypt where he not only negotiated a treaty of friendship but also signed a commercial treaty between Egypt and Indonesia on 10 June 1947. Salim also signed a friendship treaty with Syria on 2 July 1947, and obtained a de jure recognition from Iran in July 1947.⁸ Thus, the first recognitions of the Republic on the international level came from these Arab and Muslim countries. The next recognitions were granted by Lebanon and Saudi Arabia on 24 November 1947. Yemen was the sixth Muslim country to recognize the Republic followed by Afghanistan which granted such a recognition around December 1949. As a whole, Salim's mission was able to win seven diplomatic recognitions from its Muslim brethren in the Arab and Muslim countries; a feat rarely matched in people's contributions to their countries.⁹ These early recognitions created an international climate where Indonesia was no longer isolated or without status, but now had friends to bring pressure against the Dutch.

After the triumph of Salim's mission to the Middle East, the Republic continued its arduous defence of the Indonesian independence. Hence, when the Dutch launched their first police action in 1947, the Republic tried to counterbalance this situation by defending its existence and asking the world to settle this bitter dispute between the Netherlands and itself at a session of the Security Council held in August 1947 at Lake Success, New York. Salim was one of the members of the Indonesian delegation sent there, which was headed by Prime Minister Syahrir. Furthermore, the Indonesian struggle for independence did not abate until the Dutch finally ended their occupation of Indonesia and acknowledged the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. All this, however, does not undermine Salim's achievement in the Arab and Muslim states. Whereas the Netherlands, England, and the United States of America granted a de facto recognition of

⁸Mrázek. Sjahrir, pp. 335-6, 358. Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim. Karya dan Pengabdianya (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1985). pp. 70-1.

⁹Coast. Recruit to Revolution, pp. 35-6, 90, 151. Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, pp. 70-1.

the Republic, on the basis of Linggadjati Agreement, Salim's mission was able to gain a de jure recognition, i.e., a full acknowledgment of the independence of Indonesia, from the Arab and Muslim countries. Not surprisingly, this recognition had great impact on the following political endeavours of the Republic on international level. That is also why Mohammad Hatta maintained that the de jure recognition from the Middle East countries was the greatest contribution Salim had even given to his motherland.¹⁰

Salim was an outstanding man who had actively participated in the nationalist movement before and after the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic. As such, he became known as the 'Grand Old Man of the Indonesian Independence movement and veteran leader of Indonesian Islam.'¹¹ This epithet, Hatta maintained, was well deserved and signified the proper respect due to such a distinguished figure.¹² This opinion was also shared by Sukarno who called the latter an ulama intelek, a leader who combined Islamic sciences and Western knowledge to produce a new synthesis of practical Islam on the Indonesian scene.¹³ Appreciation for Salim stemmed from his early involvement in Indonesian political affairs, and his struggle in the nationalist movements during the Dutch colonial period. And, although Salim's activities in the early nationalist movements was marked by several disputes with his fellow nationalists, they, however, did not diminish appreciation for his contributions. Rather, their attitude proved that even though

¹⁰Mohammad Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan Kepada Hadji Agus Salim," in Hadji Agus Salim Pahlawan Nasional, Solichin Salam (Djakarta: Djajamurni, 1965). p. 57

¹¹Harry J. Benda, The Crescent and The Rising Sun. Indonesian Islam Under The Japanese occupation 1942-1945. (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd, 1958). p. xi

¹²Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 59

¹³Solichin Salam, Hadji Agus Salim Pahlawan Nasional (Djakarta: Djajamurni, 1965). p. 5. Alfian, Muhammadiyah The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization Under Dutch Colonialism (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989). p. 125.

he quarreled with most people and staunchly defended his political convictions, Salim had no real enemies as a human being.¹⁴

Thirty years earlier in the early days of the nationalist movement, Salim joined Sarekat Islam which had by then achieved tremendous success under the leadership of HOS. Tjokroaminoto. He was so devoted to the movement in general that he soon occupied the second position of power in that organization, second only its leader HOS Tjokroaminoto. Together, they struggled to promote all aspects of Indonesian life, whether in the economic, social, political or religious fields. Not surprisingly, they became known as the dwi tunggal (duumvirate) or the "solid team" due to their close cooperation. It could also be said that they inspired the later duumvirate of the Javanese Sukarno and the Minangkabau Hatta,¹⁵ when they headed the early Indonesian Republic from 1945 to 1950.

This thesis will study the role of Haji Agus Salim in the nationalist movements with special reference to his participation in Sarekat Islam (S.I). His role in this organization was not only limited to a special area but involved planning strategics and tactics of the movement as well as solving its problems. Moreover, because of his popular influence in the movement, Salim became the major motivator and adviser to the Muslim youth movement; JIB (Young Muslim Union). Such an involvement brought him into close contact with the young and demonstrated his great foresight with regards to the role of young Muslim Indonesians. Not surprisingly, he is now regarded as one of the precursors in the area of educating the youth and providing them with a solid grounding in religion. His aim was to create a generation of educated people who were equally

¹⁴As John Coast mentions that even though Salim quarreled with most people, he had no real enemies (Coast, Recruit to Revolution, p. 98).

¹⁵Mavis Rose, Indonesia Free. A Political Biography of Mohammad Hatta (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1987). p. 110.

versed in religion and the secular subjects. Thus, he is the initiator of what people define as an ulama intelektual,¹⁶ which is the ideal figure aspired to by numerous Indonesian Muslim intellectuals nowadays.

Furthermore, Salim's involvement in Sarekat Islam defined his relationship with the other Indonesian Muslim associations, particularly those inclined towards Islamic modernism. This relationship also strengthened him as a Muslim modernist. As he himself admitted in one of his lectures at Cornell University during the Spring of 1953, he had joined Sarekat Islam as an expert on Islamic teachings. As such, he became a contact man for the Sarekat Islam (a Muslim political association) with the Muhammadiyah (a Muslim educational and social welfare association) and with the Al-Irsyad (an Arab community association). These two organizations favoured the establishment of modernized Islamic schools which were different from the earlier orthodox Muslim schools. Salim also became advisor to these two associations, with the result of further deepening his perspective on Islam.¹⁷

In discussing Salim's involvement in the nationalist movements in the early decades of this century, this thesis will comprise three chapters. The first chapter will include Salim's early life and career, his formal educational background at the Dutch schools, as well as the informal education he pursued, especially during his stay in Jeddah. His early career is also included in this chapter. It involved working from the Dutch Administration to his entry into the Sarekat Islam .

The second chapter will illustrate the Dutch Colonial Policy, particularly with regards to its educational sphere, which had led to the emergence of a number of Western graduate Indonesian intellectuals. These intellectuals later opposed the Colonial Policy

¹⁶Alfian, Muhammadiyah, p. 125.

¹⁷Salam, Hadji Agus Salim, pp. 93-4.

and regarded it as the cause of deterioration of their country. Haji Agus Salim was one of these Indonesian intellectuals who scrutinized, evaluated, and even criticized Dutch Policy and its effects. He expressed his views in a number of articles published in the Neratja (the Scale) newspaper, originally funded by the Dutch Administration, where he became editor-in-chief from 1916-1920. Moreover, this chapter will elucidate Salim's conception of nationalism which distinguished him as a nationalist who would not depart from religious ideals. The major thrust of Salim's nationalism can be detected from his exchange of polemics with Sukarno, who later became president of Indonesia.

The last chapter will explore Salim's leading activities in Sarekat Islam, through which he attempted to sow the seeds of Islamic Modernism in Indonesian Islam in general, as well as in Muslim political, educational and social organizations in particular. Such actions culminated in his successful removal of messianic expectations from Sarekat Islam, the banishment of the communists whose existence had been previously tolerated in the movement, the withdrawal of the organization's membership from the Federation Body of Indonesian Political Parties, as well as the creation of Muslim unity among various Islamic schools. His great interest in promoting Islamic modernism, which had in fact, influenced the course of his career, can also be detected from his involvement in the Muslim Youth movement (JIB). As a result, his involvement in these two Muslim movements, not only made Salim a forerunner of Muslim nationalism and Islamic modernism, but also the champion of Western-educated Indonesians who are well versed in Islamic thought.

CHAPTER I

HAJI AGUS SALIM'S EARLY LIFE AND CAREER

A. Educational Background

Haji Agus Salim, whose name at birth was Masyudul Haq, was born on 8 October 1884 in the village of Kota Gadang in the Agam area around Bukittinggi, West Sumatra.¹⁸ Traditionally, the citizens of Kota Gadang used to leave their home area to make a living as gold craftsmen or civil servants in larger urban centres. In Salim's time, parents often sent their children to study at Dutch schools, which gave them the opportunity to become physicians, or technicians or to pursue other occupations sought after by the middle and upper classes. The children of Kota Gadang went to school in Bukittinggi; and to do so they had to leave their homes early in the morning and to cross a deep gorge and a wide river by foot. Kota Gadang, in the early twentieth century, was overseen by a leader who accomplished much in leading his village towards progress. He established, for instance, the "Studiefonds Kota Gadang" with the aims of providing scholarships to the children of Kota Gadang who wanted to continue their studies at a

¹⁸The name Masyudul Haq was used by Agus during the time he was looked after by a maid from Java. In Javanese custom, maids usually used the term "den bagus" or in short "Agus" or "gus" to refer to the infant in their care; a term which indicated the love and respect of the maid towards the sons of her employer. Therefore in time, the name Agus became used by his family, school friends and Dutch teachers. Moreover, because of the Dutch tongue, the name Agus was pronounced "August" by his teachers who bestowed on him an additional name: Salim. This was the name of Masyudul Haq's father. As a result, August Salim was registered as a student at the Dutch school. When he became an adult, he still used this name with Indonesian spelling rather than the Dutch one: Agus Salim. The decision to use the name Agus Salim for his name indicated that he was close to his maid; and that he opposed the Minangkabau tradition which acknowledged regulations based on the matrilineal rather than patrilineal line. Kustiniyati Mochtar, "Agus Salim Manusia Bebas," in *Seratus Tahun Haji Agus*, Hazel Tanzil, et al. (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984). p. 136. Mukayat, *Haji Agus Salim*, pp. 2-3.

higher level in Java or, if necessary, in Europe. These scholarship could be repaid gradually by the students after finding employment.¹⁹ Therefore, although Kota Gadang was a small village, it produced a number of dedicated intellectuals. Some of them, such as Haji Agus Salim, went on to become national leaders.

Haji Agus Salim was born into a religious as well as a noble family, whose members were part of the upper class of Minangkabau, West Sumatra. Both his mother Siti Zaenab, and his father, Sutan Muhammad Salim, were from respectable families. And, despite being an Indonesian, Sutan Muhammad Salim was employed in Riau as a hoofd djaksa (chief public prosecutor), one of several high positions in the Dutch government. He was also considered an excellent employee and once received the highest civilian medal from Queen Wilhelmina due to his loyalty and devotion to the Dutch government. This distinguished status of his father allowed Agus Salim to be admitted as a student in the Europeesche Lagere School (ELS-the European Primary School) where he attained as edifying an education as other students of European descent.²⁰

At the age of seven years, Agus Salim began to study at the ELS in Bukittinggi. Seven years later he graduated from this school first in his class. Furthermore, throughout the period of his studies at the ELS, Agus Salim was also sent for Islamic religious instruction in the afternoons. In Kota Gadang, Muslim families of various ranks often sent their children to religious schools. In both schools, Salim was recognized as being intelligent, and was known to like reading and to be fond of debating and critical thinking. So much so that one of his Dutch teachers, Jans Brouwer, became interested in Agus Salim and asked Sutan Muhammad Salim to allow Agus to stay with him. The former wanted to educate and guide this intelligent child personally. Realizing the

¹⁹Mohammad Hatta, Memoir (Jakarta: Tintamas Indonesia, 1982). pp. 24-5.

²⁰Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak H. Agus Salim Dalam Tiga Zaman (Jakarta: Rosda Java Putra, 1987). pp. 1-2.

potential of this opportunity, Muhammad Salim agreed to this request; however he only allowed Agus Salim to stay at Brouwer's house after school hours and until dinner time because Muhammad Salim still wanted to supervise his child's upbringing. Hence, thanks to the disciplined guidance of Brouwer, Agus Salim was able to graduate first in his class. Not surprisingly, Salim, encouraged by his success, wished to continue his studies; and was supported in this by both his father and Brouwer.²¹

To continue his study at the secondary level, Agus Salim had to go to Batavia (Jakarta) where the Hogere Burgerscholen (HBS), a general five-year secondary school, was located. Therefore, at the age of thirteen, Agus Salim left his birthplace. In Batavia, once again, he lived with a Dutchman, namely Professor T.H. Koks, who was appointed by Muhammad Salim as Agus Salim's guardian until his son graduated from that school. During his study at HBS, Agus Salim and the other students from influential families were educated and trained in a disciplined fashion. During these years, Agus Salim studied very hard. His fondness for wide and diverse reading contributed to his successful graduation in 1903. In fact, he was not only the best in his class, but ranked high in the list of examination results among the HBS' students in the three main cities of Java: Surabaya, Semarang and Jakarta.²²

Thanks to this success, Salim hoped to pursue an advanced education in medicine in the Netherlands. However, his father could no longer afford to pay his tuition fees, even though he was a trusted employee of the Dutch colonial administration. Thus, his Dutch teachers at HBS, who appreciated the talent of Agus Salim, encouraged him to submit an application for a Dutch government scholarship. However, the efforts of the Dutch teachers were unsuccessful. Then, one year later his father proposed that an equal

²¹Mochtar, "Agus Salim," pp. 36-39. Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, p. 3.

²²Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak, p. 3. Bernard Dahm, History of Indonesian in the Twentieth Century, P.S. Falla, tr. (London: Praeger Publishers, 1971). pp. 18-9.

status (geliigesteld) be granted to his son; this idea was inspired by the secretary of the General-Governor who advised him that this equal status could make Agus eligible for such a scholarship.²³

During the Dutch colonial period the inhabitants of the Dutch East Indies were differentiated in accordance with how they were to be treated by the government. The Europeans, as the ruling class, occupied the highest rank in society, and the government provided numerous facilities for them. The non-Indonesian group, which consisted of Chinese and Arabs residing in the country, occupied the middle class. These people made their livelihood like the Europeans; however, the government did not provide as many facilities for them as it did for the Europeans. The lowest rank was assigned to the Indonesians, the ruled people. Indonesians were further classified into common people, i.e. agrarian workers, villagers and townsmen, who formed the majority, and the elite, who stood above the common people. The latter were for the most part able to obtain a better education and occupations, so that to some extent, they had a measure of influence and played a leadership role in Indonesian society.²⁴ People in this latter category as in case of Agus Salim's father could apply for geliigesteld, or "equal status" which theoretically meant that a person became eligible for better educational and occupational activities, in many cases similar to those enjoyed by his European counterparts in the Indies. However, despite receiving geliigesteld in 1905, Agus Salim was still unable to obtain a scholarship.

While he was waiting for his scholarship proposal to be decided upon, his Dutch teachers suggested that Salim apply to study in Indonesia if the Dutch government refused his request to study in the Netherlands. They wished the government to substitute

²³Mochtar, "Agus Salim," p. 41.

²⁴Robert van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian Elite (The Hague: W. van Hoeve Publishers Ltd., 1970). pp. 14-6.

the scholarship in the Netherlands with a scholarship to attend STOVIA (Stichting tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen- a medical collage for Indonesians) in Batavia. Thus, Agus Salim attended courses at that collage. However, his attendance was only in a brief period, since in the end, this request too was refused.²⁵

At the same time, there was a young Javanese woman, the daughter of the regent of Djepara, who had received an offer of funding from the Dutch government to study in the Netherlands. Her name was Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904).²⁶ However, in accordance with the Javanese custom concerning young women of high rank and pure blood, Kartini was expected to stay at home while waiting for a suitable candidate to be found for her hand.²⁷ She was aware of Agus Salim's status and his strong ambition to continue studying. Thus, she requested that her government scholarship be transferred to Agus Salim and, to supplement this request, she wrote a letter to Mrs. Rosa Abendanon-Mandri, whom she regarded as a surrogate mother, and asked her to pass this request on to her husband, J.H. Abendanon, the contemporary director of the Department of Education. In her letter, Kartini explained how Salim's father was unable to finance Salim's education abroad and listed Salim's advantages, notably his intelligence and eloquence. Furthermore, Kartini discussed his attachment to Indonesia and how if he attained a degree in medicine, he would render valuable services to his countrymen.

²⁵Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak, p. 3., and Joost Cote, tr. Letters from Kartini an Indonesian Feminist, 1900-1904 (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1992). p. 439.

²⁶She was one of the more notable Javanese women who were able to attend Dutch education at ELS. As an educated woman, Kartini held progressive ideas concerning freedom, independence and the status of women. Her progressive ideas about women caused her to be known as a pioneer of Indonesian feminism. She demanded equal rights for women, particularly regarding education. Her ideas portrayed in letters which she had sent to her Dutch acquaintances and friends in Holland. These letters attracted J.H. Abendanon, the director of the Department of Education in the Dutch government from 1900 to 1905, who compiled them into a book known as Door Duisternis tot Licht (Through Darkness to Light). Anton Timur Djailani, "The Background of Indonesian Nationalism," Mizan 4, vol.1, (1984), p. 23.

²⁷Hildred Geertz, ed., Letters of A Javanese Princess Raden Adjeng Kartini, Agnes Louise Symmers, tr. (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1964). p. 11

Kartini also asked Mrs. Abendanon-Mandri whether a private letter to the Queen about this situation would help.²⁸

Kartini's attention and efforts to attain a scholarship for Salim did not succeed. However, some reports suggest that Kartini's request to transfer the scholarship was accepted, and that Salim, himself, did not accept it. The reason offered is that the scholarship was really Kartini's and that it was not genuinely offered by the Dutch government to him. However, this theory is inaccurate since Salim did not know of Kartini's letter; this fact was clearly stated in the letter itself. This fallacy was further exposed by Salim himself several decades later. In 1953, he remarked that he did not continue his studies in medicine because Prof. Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje suggested that being a physician was not a good life and discouraged him going to the Netherlands, although, according to Salim, a physician's salary, which might have been regarded as low by Dutchmen, would have been a high one for Indonesians. Hurgronje then advised Salim to choose a career in the Dutch East Indies government.²⁹

Although Agus Salim did not succeed in continuing his studies in medicine, he was still one of the more successful Indonesians to graduate from HBS. This secondary school was mostly attended by European students, who were able to enter any of the higher ranks of the colonial administration after graduating. Posts such as controller, assistant resident, resident and governor were open to them. Moreover, the majority of students graduating from HBS did not continue their studies at the university level since there was no university in the Dutch East Indies until the 1920's.³⁰

²⁸Cote, Letters from Kartini, pp. 438-40.

²⁹Mochtar, "Agus Salim," p. 42.

³⁰Dahm, History of Indonesia, pp. 18-9.

After having spent five years studying at HBS, Agus Salim had come to master various European languages such as Dutch, French, English, and German. Hence, his HBS certificate and ability in languages bestowed on him the opportunity to work in the Dutch Administration, although as an Indonesian, Salim would not find the same opportunities as European fellows.³¹ The Dutch provided chances for Indonesians to study at European schools in the hope of producing people who could be recruited to work in the Dutch Administration. This policy, known as the 'Association', was one of the many reformed Dutch governmental policies introduced and administered by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje.

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje was a prominent civil servant who held the position of Adviseur voor Inlansche Zaken (Advisor for Native Affairs) to the Dutch colonial government from 1889 to 1906. His activities and writings reflect the changing policy of the Dutch government towards Islam in Indonesia. He also advocated a separation between politics and religion. However, towards those Indonesians who wanted to achieve independence, he advocated total opposition and ruthless suppression; as evident in the destruction of the regions of Aceh and Jambi. On the other hand, thanks to his efforts the Dutch Administration modified its policy towards religion, which had been developed and implemented by the Office for Native Affairs (the predecessor of the current Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs).³² The consolidation of Dutch authority and expansion during the nineteenth century had in fact resulted in numerous confrontations with local elements, most of which were inspired by Islamic principles. These conflicts included the Paderi War (1821-1837), the Dipenogoro War (1825-1830) and the long Aceh War (1872-1912). Because of these rebellions, the Dutch

³¹Ibid, p. 18

³²Karel Steenbrink, Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam Contacts Conflicts 1596-1950 (Amsterdam: Atlanta, GA, 1993). p. 77, and pp. 87-91.

Administration invited Hurgronje, who was familiar with Islam, to find solutions for the problems facing the Dutch East Indies. And, on the basis of his advice, the Dutch implemented a reformed policy which was twofold: ruthless in terms of politics, but tolerant and conciliatory in terms of religious affairs.³³

To create the impression of being neutral towards religion, the Dutch permitted Muslims to practice their rituals as well as to maintain Muslim religious courts. A number of religious schools were also subsidized, the pilgrimage (hajj) was assisted by the opening of a Dutch consulate in Jeddah, and an office for Islamic and native affairs in Batavia. These two offices, however, were soon to be regarded as the monitors and controllers of the activities of Muslims both at home and in the Holy City.³⁴ Hurgronje, who is best known as the initiator of the idea of 'Association,' is thus recognized as having been the force behind the reform of Dutch policies towards Indonesian Islam. Particularly, his advice on Islamic matters found immediate acceptance. That is why he was the unchallenged expert of the Ethical Policy Period.³⁵

From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, Indonesians needed more and more schools and, in response, the Dutch subsidized their construction. Moreover, following the inauguration of the Ethical Policy in 1901, the Dutch Administration also supported the propagation of Christianity in the Indies. Assistance was given to Christian missionaries who gradually penetrated Muslim areas. Furthermore, Christian organizations and schools were allocated much more in subsidies than the Muslim religious schools. In fact, the Dutch Administration's subsidy for Muslim schools was rather insignificant when compared to the needs of Indonesian Islam. In this case, the

³³ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, Studi tentang Percaturan dalam Konstituante Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985). pp. 52, 55.

³⁴ Deliar Noer, "Islam as a Political Force in Indonesia," Mizan 4, vol. 1, (1984), pp. 33-4.

³⁵ Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, p. 29

Dutch only supervised and controlled rather than developing them. On the other hand, in response to Hurgronje's idea of emancipating the Indonesians from Islam; the Dutch Administration established several secular schools. These Dutch secular schools produced Western-educated Indonesians who regarded religion as a personal matter pertaining to the spiritual aspect of one's life. Consequently, the idea of separating religion from politics was agreeable to those Indonesians who have graduated from these Western schools.³⁶ The idea of Association, as formulated by Hurgronje, originated from his belief that the rigidity of the Islamic system was no longer capable of adapting to the modern era. Hence, the large-scale organization of education on the basis of universalism and religious neutrality was the only medium by which the Dutch Administration could liberate Muslims from their religious convictions and shackles, he rendered.³⁷

Not surprisingly, the secular educational system set up by the colonial government was considered by Muslims to hamper the development of Islam. The Muslim leaders who realized this danger, tried to overcome it by combatting the secularization process of the Dutch educational system in two ways. Firstly, the Muslim leaders demanded religious lessons to be introduced at these schools. This demand was finally granted towards the end of the 1930's. In the meantime, religious lessons were given once a week after school hours by instructors who usually belonged to the modernist faction of Indonesian Islam. Secondly, Muslim leaders set up new schools with a system that incorporated both religious subjects and secular ones. One of the modernist Muslim teachers active in this reform was Haji Agus Salim.³⁸

³⁶Deliar Noer, Administration of Islam in Indonesian (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1978). p. 26

³⁷Steenbrink, Dutch Colonialism, p. 88-9.

³⁸ Noer, Administration of Islam, p. 26

Haji Agus Salim was not blind to the colonial agenda that these schools fulfilled. Salim argued that the secular schools, which had been established by the Dutch Administration, were organized and controlled directly by the Dutch, particularly with regards to their curriculum, teachers and supervisors.³⁹ As a result, the Dutch secular schools were having a negative impact on the Indonesian nation; specifically, they were hampering the efforts to shake Indonesia free of colonialism. Moreover, the Dutch schools were designed to produce Indonesians who would contribute to a colonized society. The Dutch needed native employees from the lowest to the highest ranks, including, especially technicians. Thus, the native workers were trained for certain types of work and were indoctrinated with the aims of Dutch colonialism.⁴⁰ That is why Salim never sent his eight children to Dutch schools, but educated them at home. Only his last child was sent to a formal school, and this happened when Indonesia gained its independence.

According to Salim, Dutch education aimed to fulfill two purposes: firstly, to recruit members of the Indonesian upper classes in order to assimilate them into the Dutch culture so that they would cooperate with the Dutch government; and secondly, to alienate young Muslims from their own religion. This opinion of Salim's was actually based on his own experience. When he began to study at ELS, the population of Kota Gadang expected and supposed that he had converted to another religion. Moreover, at the secondary school, i.e. HBS, the school succeeded in separating him from his belief. After five years of studying at HBS, Salim graduated feeling that he could not seriously believe in any religion.⁴¹ Salim's experiences were proof enough by the following

³⁹Mohammad Roem, Diplomasi: Ujung Tanduk Perjuangan RI (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1989). p. 119.

⁴⁰Mohammad Roem, "Memimpin adalah Menderita: Kesaksian Haji Agus Salim," Mizan: LP3ES 8, (August, 1977), p. 51.

⁴¹Mochtar, "Agus Salim," p. 40

official statement which should leave no one in doubt: "all educated orientals must steep themselves in Western culture, even adopt the Christian religion as a preliminary to fulfilling their task of leadership."⁴²

Salim, however could never deny the extent to which Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje influenced him. It is due to Hurgronje's advice that the Dutch Administration had recruited Indonesians, like Salim, to study at Dutch schools, thus enabling them to master many European languages as well as other sciences. Furthermore, Salim was able to work at the Dutch consulate in Jeddah where he had the opportunity to study and deepen his religious conviction; an act which eventually proved to be very valuable for his life as well as for Indonesian Islam.⁴³

B. Early Career

After graduating, Salim decided to work. However, he did not want to work for the Dutch colonial government in his own country. Thus, thanks to his linguistic ability, he worked as a translator in Batavia. He translated foreign language texts into the Malay language; the term used for Bahasa Indonesia during the colonial period. However this work was not satisfying for Salim, so in 1904, he moved to Riau where his father worked. In Riau, he obtained a job as assistant to a public notary. However, this work did not satisfy him either. Shortly afterwards, he was transferred to Indragiri where he was employed by a coal-mining company as a translator and clerk until 1906. Salim, who had obtained the best examination result of all candidates from the three HBS in 1903, was discovering that the opportunities open to his European fellow students were not open to

⁴²A.D.A. De Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy, vol. I (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931). p. 379

⁴³Mochtar, "Agus Salim," pp. 41-3.

him. Indeed, he was only being offered jobs which had no relation to his abilities as a graduate of HBS.⁴⁴

Moreover, his parents began to be worried over his inability to stay in one place or in one job. His father wanted him to follow in his footsteps and work for the Dutch government, but Salim's disinterest in government service began to irritate his father and to heighten tensions between them. He was then offered employment at the Dutch consulate in Jeddah, an offer he refused. At the time, Salim's family was a religious one and his mother, noticing her son's less than devout religious penchant, had hoped that he would accept this position in Jeddah. In Saudi Arabia, the family had a relative who had become a religious teacher and Salim's parents had hoped that this relative would bring a positive Islamic influence to bear upon their son. However, Salim still rejected this argument and disappointed his mother deeply. Unfortunately, the latter died soon afterwards and out of respect for his mother's last wish, Salim accepted the position at the Dutch Consulate where he was made responsible for translation and for managing the pilgrimage of Indonesians to Mecca.⁴⁵

The departure of Agus Salim to Jeddah was described by al-Imam magazine, which was published in Singapore from 1906 to 1909. In the August 1906 issue of al-Imam, there was an article containing an interview with Agus Salim. During the interview, Salim had described how he hoped to facilitate the pilgrimage for the many Muslims in Singapore. In another article, the editorial staff of al-Imam also declared Agus Salim to be their representative in Jeddah.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Dahm, History of Indonesian, p. 19. Sutrisno Kutojo and Mardanas Safwan, Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan Haji Agus Salim (Bandung: Angkasa, n.d.) pp. 16-7.

⁴⁵Kutojo and Safwan, Riwayat Hidup, pp. 17-8. Mochtar, "Agus Salim," pp. 42-3.

⁴⁶Hamka, "Haji Agus Salim sebagai Sastrawan dan Ulama," Panji Masyarakat 284 (December, 1979), p. 39.

Thus, in 1906 at the age of twenty two, Agus Salim went to Jeddah full of confidence and promise thanks to the encouragement of his family, his relatives and his Muslim brothers in his own country and abroad. During his stay in Jeddah, he was given the opportunity to go to Mecca. This chance was given to him because the non-Muslim Dutch consulate staff were not allowed to enter the city. Hence, he met his cousin, Syaikh Ahmad Khatib.⁴⁷ By that time, Syaikh Ahmad Khatib had become a prayer leader (imaam), a preacher and also a lecturer at the Masjid al-Haraam in Mecca. Hence, during his stay of five years in Jeddah (1906-1911), Salim regularly met his cousin and enlisted the latter's help in the study of Islam, an important requirement when managing the accommodation of Indonesian pilgrims.⁴⁸

In the context of Indonesian Islamic reform, Syaikh Ahmad Khatib is acknowledged as a forerunner of the reformists in Minangkabau. While in Mecca, and during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, Syaikh Ahmad Khatib had further expanded and propagated his ideas concerning reform. He had also, as we saw above, attained the prestigious positions of leader and preacher at the Masjid al-Haraam. However, because he had never returned to Indonesia, he maintained communications with his homeland through Indonesian pilgrims, students and written publications. He often wrote on controversial matters, including the debate surrounding the Thariqat Naqsyabandiyah which was much followed at that time, and the

⁴⁷The blood relation between Salim and Khatib in several sources is mentioned as Khatib being an uncle of Salim. Mochtar, "Agus Salim," p. 44. Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, p. 9. Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak, p. 7

However according to other writers such as Hamka they were cousins who were descended from Abdurrahman by the title Datuk Rangkayo Besar. Abdurrahman had two sons, the first one was Sutan Muhammad Salim, the father of Agus Salim. The second one was Abdullatif known by the title Khatib Nagari, who was the father of Ahmad Khatib. Hamka, "Haji Agus Salim," p. 40. Kutojo and Safwan, Riwayat Hidup, p. 19.

⁴⁸Kutojo and Safwan, Riwayat Hidup, p. 19

debate on the inheritance regulations in the Minangkabau tradition.⁴⁹ Although Ahmad Khatib was an Imaam of the Shaafi'ii school, he did not prohibit his students from reading the texts of various reformists and modernists, such as the writings of Muhammad 'Abduh published in the periodical al-Urwat al-Wuthqa (The Indissoluble Bond) and the latter's exegesis of the Qur'aan.⁵⁰ For Salim, Ahmad Khatib was the primary source of religious instruction; however, Khatib tutored Salim differently from the other students, most of whom were undergoing training to become Islamic scholars. These students included Syaikh Jamil Jambek, Syaikh Abdulkarim Amrullah from Sumatera and K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the Muhammadiyah movement in Java. When Salim was introduced to the various subjects, he would often react in a critical and comparative manner. Therefore, the lectures given by Khatib tended to focus on discussions and the exchange of ideas, rather than simple instruction.⁵¹ Khatib, who had also once studied at an HBS, understood Salim's educational background and how the Dutch educational system emphasized the importance of reason over faith. That is why,

⁴⁹Thariqat Naqsyandiyyah is an orthodox sufi order which spread from Central Asia into Turkey and Eastern Muslim lands such as India, China, Malaysia and Indonesia. The Naqsyabandiyyah was founded in the 8th/14th century by Bahâ al-Dîn (d. 791/1389). The so-called Naqshband of its founder is clarified by his tying of spiritual paintings on the hearts of his students who practice dhikr by speechless words in order to purify the heart. In practicing dhikr, the students were taught to think of God by keeping their teacher in their mind. In this case, the teacher became a kind of medium. This practice was and is considerably contradictory to Islamic teachings. In Islam, the relation between man and God should be direct. But the teachers or Syaikh occupied a very important place in this community and were able to gain material benefits from the selling of azimat and penangkal (charms, amulets) to avoid evil spirits and for other purposes. They also sometimes behaved as dukun (healer). It was because of these practices, which were basically against Tawhiid, the unity (of God), Ahmad Khatib attacked the Thariqat. Fazlur Rahman, Islam (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979). p. 164. Deliar Noer, The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973). pp. 11, 99.

In the Minangkabau tradition there were two regulations of inheritance which emphasized the individual and suku (clan) properties. The former maintained that the property of a person who died should be inherited by a kemenakan (sister's child) rather than by children of the deceased. While the latter preserved that suku (clan) properties called harato pusaka could be enjoyed by a suku member as a trustee. Ahmad Khatib did not distinguish the two kinds of properties. For him, these two properties should be subject to faraidh (the Islamic law of inheritance). Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 217-8.

⁵⁰Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 31-3.

⁵¹Hamka, "Haji Agus Salim," p. 40.

Khatib provided his cousin with careful answers and plenty of explanations. Khatib hoped that his answers would slowly create in Salim an appreciation of Islam. Fortunately, Salim eventually solidified his religious convictions and in fact, performed hajj five times. He once commented on his religious experiences in an interview with the newspaper, Bendera Islam (Islamic Flag). He acknowledged that, at first, his belief was only a natural reflection of his Indonesian nationality and that it was not a belief based solely on faith. However, after five years in Saudi Arabia, a number of pilgrimages and the expansion of his awareness of Islam, his belief developed from distrust to doubt, and from doubt to confidence. He thus came to believe wholly in the existence of God and God's revelations.⁵²

The close relation between Agus Salim and Khatib had also inspired Salim to study the works of other modern Muslim thinkers more seriously. He eagerly studied the teachings of Jamaal al-Diin al-Afghaani (1839-1897) who had developed the idea of Pan-Islamism, and became familiar with Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) who was renowned as a committed reformist and modernist in the Muslim world. 'Abduh had attempted to free Islam from the rigidity of orthodoxy and, to this purpose, introduced Islamic reforms which were adapted to the demands of a modern society.⁵³ 'Abduh greatly influenced Salim's perception of Islamic education in Indonesia. Salim, for instance, began to see his country's approach to religious education as stagnant and old fashioned, archaic and needing reform. Furthermore, he perceived the root of the problem to be the Dutch colonial government and its educational system. As such, Salim decided to involve himself in Islamic religious propagation in the hope of reforming Islamic pedagogy once

⁵²Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 110. Mochtar, "Agus Salim," p. 45.

⁵³Charles C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt (New York: Russel & Russel, n.d.). p. 1.

he returned to his country. He hoped one day to be able to harmonize and synthetize Islam and modernity for his fellow Indonesians.⁵⁴

Linguistically, Salim prospered as a result of his stay in Saudi Arabia. After five years, he could speak and comprehend both Arabic and Turkish fluently. This is not surprising since Mecca, at that time, was administered by the Ottomans. Moreover, since the consulate was also responsible for mercantile affairs, Agus Salim likewise learned about business administration and commerce. In addition, he became familiar with diplomatic etiquette, a useful skill in his later career after the independence of Indonesian.⁵⁵

However, during his work in Jeddah he came under other influences and was, in fact, a living example of the results of Snouck Hurgronje's educational policy to assimilate educated native people into the Dutch government service. Hurgronje had chosen Salim to work in the Dutch consulate because he acknowledged the latter to be a talented bureaucrat. Similarly, Agus Salim, now working as a gelijkgesteld, thought that he would be given the same status as his Dutch co-workers. Therefore, upon arriving at the Dutch consulate, he requested a desk for his personal use, an act which reflected his position in the office. He also tended to side with the Indonesian pilgrims whenever there was a problem. Not surprisingly, these attitudes evoked negative sentiment among his Dutch seniors, who, later on, always tried to suppress his views. As for the Dutch employees, they considered Salim to be an undisciplined and conceited co-worker. And, even though Hurgronje supported Salim, the clash between Salim and his seniors reached a boiling point. In fact, Salim would come to suffer from the physical effects of this nervous tension. He also realized that his relationship with the Dutch, be it attending

⁵⁴Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, p. 10.

⁵⁵Ibid.

school at HBS or working in the consulate at Jeddah, was based on segregation and discrimination.⁵⁶

In 1911 Agus Salim returned to the Dutch East Indies. Since he had just returned from Saudi Arabia and had performed pilgrimage, his friends and colleagues gave him the title of Haji. Back home, he stayed in Batavia, where he worked at Department Onderwijs en Feredienst (Department of Education and Culture) for a while before transferring to Burgelijke openbare Werken (Department of Public Works) where he worked from 1911 to 1912.⁵⁷

Agus Salim liked reading very much and was specifically impressed by accounts of the numerous Indonesian resistance movements, such as those of Teuku Umar, Dipenogoro, and Hasanuddin. Although all these groups were defeated, their will to free the country from Dutch colonialism had found a place in his heart. Furthermore, the failure of these movements inspired Salim to analyze their argument in the hope of raising a new spirit, a spirit which would compel other national leaders to work towards independence. Agus Salim was not satisfied with the country's condition or the backwardness of his people. Moreover, his knowledge and maturity inspired him to develop a new mentality in Indonesia. He thought that the underlying cause for the previous defeats of the Indonesian struggles was not their individual weakness, but their lack of educated supporters. In his opinion, uneducated people would always be defeated by the educated. At that time, Indonesians were educationally inferior to the Dutch. If lack of education explained why the Dutch had been so successful in subjugating the Indonesians, it stood to reason that the only way to achieve independence was to promote

⁵⁶Mochtar, "Agus Salim," 43-4. Taufik Abdullah, "Haji Agus Salim dan Pembentukan Tradisi Kecendikiaan Islam di Indonesia," in Seratus Tahun Haji Agus Salim, Hazil Tanzil, et al.(Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984). p. 207.

⁵⁷Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, p. 11.

education for backward Indonesians, he thought. To achieve this objective, educated Indonesians should contribute to the advancement of their own people through education. Thus, leaving his post at the Department of Public Works, he went back to his village, Kota Gadang, in 1912 and built and managed an elementary school, namely, the Hollands Inlandse School (HIS).⁵⁸

The children of Kota Gadang could now study in their village, without having to go to Bukittinggi. Moreover, this school had special characteristics: advanced students who could not afford to pay tuition were given scholarships; most of the teachers worked voluntarily; and the subject of nationalism was promoted among the students in order to raise their sense of Indonesian identity. In the Dutch schools, on the other hand, nationalism was never mentioned and the Dutch teachers emphasized that the indigenous Indonesians were a submissive people who had no work skills or culture. This approach made Indonesians feel inferior to others, especially to the Dutch. Therefore, the national educational program propagated by Salim was well suited to the growing needs of contemporary nationalism. The seeds of nationalism needed to be planted in the minds of young students together with other subjects. Salim hoped that the students who had been educated at HIS could be groomed as the next generation of leaders. He knew that the intelligentsia, the forerunners of the national struggle, were well educated, and include such figures as those of the Budi Utomo (Noble Endeavor) and Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union).⁵⁹

⁵⁸Hamka, "Haji Agus Salim," p. 40.

⁵⁹Budi Utomo is a cultural organization of the Javanese elite; civil servants and nobility, as well as Western educated intellectuals. This party was formed on 20 May 1908 which was then recognized as the start of the Indonesian national awakening. Sarekat Islam was developed in 1911 by a middle class society in Central Java. At the beginning, this party was a muslim trading association which was intended to protect Muslim merchants from the encroachments of non Indonesian economic monopoly and capitalization. Soon, this party was followed by the aristocracy and the masses from almost the whole archipelago so that it acquired millions of members very rapidly. Timur Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam Movement: Its Contribution to Indonesian Nationalism," (MA. thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, 1959). p.2, and pp. 149-50. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 102.

The HIS managed by Salim ran smoothly. He taught classes and administered the school at the same time. However, after having taught for two years, he realized that he needed a hulpacte, a formal certificate in order to teach at the HIS. To obtain this certificate, he had to pass the hulpacte examination in Jakarta. He thus prepared for all the subjects for the upcoming examination, including pedagogy, psychology and the Dutch language. He easily passed all the subjects except Dutch. Since Salim had studied with Dutch teachers at the ELS for seven years and at the HBS for five years, he was surprised and disappointed at this failure and suspected that discrimination was at play.⁶⁰

After having managed the HIS for three years and being credited for laying solid foundations for the dissemination of national dignity, Agus Salim and his family decided to seek a new life outside Kota Gadang in 1915. They left their village to go to Java. And, once in Batavia he obtained a position at the government's translation office, Translator Indonesische Drukkerij. After obtaining experience in this office, Salim moved to the Commissie Voor de Volkslectuur, which was then known as Balai Pustaka and was responsible for the publication of various books for Indonesian readers. There, he worked as a translator of European languages into Malay (Indonesian) and vice versa. In addition to these activities, he was appointed as the assistant editor of the Neratja newspaper, under the editor-in-chief, Abdul Muis.⁶¹

Initially, Neratja was subsidized by the Dutch Administration in response to demands by advocates of the Ethical Policy for higher levels of literacy among Indonesians. To avoid any possibility of this newspaper being infiltrated by anti-Dutch propagandists, the management of the newspaper was given to a person who could be trusted for his loyalty to the Dutch. The Dutch had therefore appointed Lanjumin Datuk

⁶⁰Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, pp. 12-3. Untung, Mengikuti Jejak, pp. 7-8.

⁶¹Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, pp. 22-3.

Tumenggung in this capacity. Tumenggung at that time held an important advisory position (patih) to the office of Inlandsche Zaken. Tumenggung, in turn, selected for the post of chief editor his uncle, Abdul Muis, who already held a position as vice president of Sarekat Islam. Tumenggung hoped that Muis would reduce his political activities, and help decrease the tension between the Dutch Administration and Sarekat Islam. This tension was caused by the Party's demand that the colonial government establish a people's representative council.⁶²

Sarekat Islam was an Islamic political association, which had quickly gained popularity among Indonesians and eventually became a mass movement. Under the leadership of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, it had attempted to eliminate the social and economic ills afflicting Indonesians. Needless to say, this mass popularity made the Dutch uneasy, and they confronted the SI and its leaders with challenges and slanders. In retaliation, Tjokroaminoto reminded the government of its responsibilities by quoting Article 55 of the Regeeringsreglement (the Government Regulation). Specifically, he cited how that article guaranteed that Indonesians would be protected from governmental arbitrariness. He also dispelled the myth that the SI was a violent revolutionary political party. This assertion was, to some extent, in response to the accusation that he had engaged in secret negotiations with the Germans in order to procure arms to support a full-scale revolt against the Dutch Administration.⁶³ To substantiate this accusation, the Dutch Administration, however, needed a qualified native to investigate the matter. Tumenggung, an advisor on native affairs and the manager of Neratja, nominated Agus Salim to be this investigator. He told Salim that the police had acquired reports that a revolt was about to break in Java. At the time, the German ships were all over the world, and it was reported that one such German ship was carrying 40,000 rifles to Java, and that

⁶²Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 21, and Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, pp. 22-3.

⁶³Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," pp. 49-50.

Tjokroaminoto would start a revolt once he received those arms. Agus Salim was instructed to become acquainted with Tjokroaminoto. He had already met the Dutch police commissioner in Batavia, and gone to the Centraal Sarekat Islam (CSI) as an investigator.⁶⁴ He accepted this position, even though he thought that the rumors were unfounded, and that if a revolt were to take place, it would result in disaster since, at that time, the Indonesians had not taken up arms for more than a century. Thus, Salim believed that there was no basis for such accusations and that the SI was operating independently.⁶⁵

Agus Salim, who was introduced by Tumenggung to Tjokroaminoto, was warmly welcomed at the CSI. He believed that Tjokroaminoto knew from the beginning that Salim had already been in contact with the Dutch police commissioner in Batavia. However, Tjokroaminoto pretended otherwise and asked Salim to attend the SI congress in Surabaya in 1915. After the congress, Salim was invited to several local meetings of the SI in East Java. There, Salim saw evidence of a mass popular support; in fact, around 50,000 people attended these meetings, and reacted enthusiastically to the speeches. When Tjokro walked by them, the people squatted on the ground and kissed his feet, all the while uttering words of adoration. In Javanese belief, there was a prediction that a "just king" (Prabu Heru Tjokro) would rise, who would save them from their suffering. Thus, Tjokroaminoto was welcomed as the incarnation of Prabu Heru Tjokro. Later on, when the meeting ended, Tjokroaminoto asked Salim for his opinion on the SI, and Salim replied positively. However, he also noted that such adoration was dangerous because few people experienced such exaggerated adoration without losing their perspective. Tjokroaminoto agreed and afterwards they made their first agreement; they promised to

⁶⁴Mochtar, Agus Salim, pp. 57-9. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 110-1. Salam, Haji Agus Salim, p. 85.

⁶⁵Salam, Haji Agus Salim, p. 85.

help one another, and never to undertake any decision for the party without their mutual agreement. Thus, when Salim came to Surabaya he decided to become a party member and to send a wire to the chief police commissioner in Batavia which stated that he ended his relation with the Dutch police. At that moment, he began to study this movement which not only had a promising potential but was also based on Islam.⁶⁶

Likewise, Tjokroaminoto was happy to have Salim in his party. He realized that he had one of the best educated and most intellectually gifted Indonesians for an ally; he also knew that Salim held progressive views on social and economic matters combined with steady Islamic principles. Moreover, Salim was a realist who considered the future aims and potential of the Indonesians.⁶⁷ Haji Agus Salim and H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto became a solid team and together they led the party into its most effective and influential period. Their leadership was known as the Duumvirate Tjokroaminoto-Salim. They managed to maintain their cooperation and always to help each other until Tjokroaminoto died in 1934.

⁶⁶Ibid, p. 87.

⁶⁷Van Niel, The Emergence of The Modern Indonesian, p. 119

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF HAJI AGUS SALIM

A. DUTCH COLONIAL POLICY

Dutch rule over Indonesia was established after a series of bloody wars, known as the Pacification Movement, which were fought in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries against local indigenous leaders, small kingdoms and sultanates. The Dutch campaigns against Prince Dipenogoro (1825-1830), the Padris in West Sumatra (1831-1839) and the Acehnese (1874-1904) are illustrative of these struggles. Moreover, once these efforts at pacification had achieved the desired end of establishing Dutch sovereignty, colonial control was then extended to the remotest parts of Indonesia, bringing security and peace to the whole region.⁶⁸

The security and prosperity established in the regions outside of Java supported the flow of Western and foreign investments which then resulted in millions of guilders in profits being sent to the Netherlands. As an example, during the years 1831-1877, Netherlands gained 823 million guilders from the colonial policy of cultuurstelsel (compulsary labor) in the Indies. These Indonesian contributions to the Dutch treasury were on the increase from the beginning of the twentieth century until the period of World War I, as a result of rapid economic, social and political developments taking

⁶⁸Sartono Kartodirdjo, Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru: Sejarah Pergerakan Nasional dari Kolonialisme Sampai Nasionalisme, Jilid 2 (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1990), pp. 28, 37. J.M. van der Kroef, Indonesia in The Modern World, Part 1 (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1954), pp. 6-7. Yusmar Basri, ed., "Jaman Kebangkitan Nasional dan Masa Akhir Hindia Belanda" in Sejarah Nasional Indonesia, Jilid V, Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notokusanto, ed. (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1990), pp. 14, 30-2.

place in the Indonesian archipelago.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, these developments created new problems for the Dutch government, chief among which was the diminishing welfare of Indonesians. This diminishing welfare was a direct result of the growth in the number of Western-owned estates and mining enterprises. Indeed, their growth was so rapid that it disrupted the Indonesian economy and created an economic division between the Indonesians and the Westerners. Moreover, the favourable peace conditions and the pervasiveness of law and order were conducive to the rapid growth of the Indonesian population which multiplied faster than the growth in food and cattle.⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, the diminishing welfare became a concern for the Dutch government and eventually resulted in the formation of a new colonial policy.⁷¹

At the turn of the twentieth century in the Dutch East Indies, there was a change of political orientation launched by the Netherlands. It came in the wake of the elections of 1901 which brought a coalition of rightist and religious groups to powers.⁷² The "Christian" outlook of the new government can be seen in the annual message of Queen Wilhelmina delivered in September 1901 which stated that

As a Christian nation the Netherlands have a duty to improve the condition of native Christians in the Indian archipelago, to give Christian missionary activity more aid and to inform the entire administration that the Netherlands have a moral obligation to fulfill as regards the population of those regions.⁷³

⁶⁹Basri, "Jaman Kebangkitan," pp. 38, 57. Bernhard H. M. Vlekke, Nusantara A History of Indonesia (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1959). p. 291.

⁷⁰Basri, "Jaman Kebangkitan," pp. 36, 59. van der Kroef, Indonesia, pp. 7-8.

⁷¹van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 32.

⁷²Ibid, p. 31.

⁷³Justus Maria van der Kroef, "Dutch Colonial Policy in Indonesia 1900-1941," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1953), p. 53.

The queen also asked that a commission be formed to investigate the causes for the diminishing welfare of Indonesians, an act which marks the official beginning of what the Dutch called the Ethical Policy.⁷⁴

According to the English scholar of economics, Furnivall, the Ethical Policy had a twofold impacts, one economic and the other social. On the economic side, the government promoted Western enterprise while at the same time demanding that companies located in the Indies provide funds for the promotion of Indonesian welfare. As for the social aspect of this policy, it sought to promote social welfare through village institutions and local self-government. Moreover, in larger rural centres the colonial government established councils and a Volksraad (People's Council) for urban areas and the whole Indonesian territory. Along with the extension of representative bodies, there was recruitment of personnel into the colonial administration to promote education, agriculture, medical care and other services which were equally important for Indonesian social welfare.⁷⁵

With the appointment of Governor General A.W.F. Idenburg as the Colonial Minister in 1902, the Ethical Policy began to be implemented. In 1905 the first direct contribution, amounting to 40 million guilders, was made by the Netherlands to the East Indies for the improvement of economic conditions in Java and Madura. This payment was seen by the Dutch as a payment of "a debt of honor" for past exploitation; an idea inspired by Mr. Conrad T. van Deventer, one of the most prominent supporters of the

⁷⁴J.S. Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India (New York: New York University Press, 1956), p. 227, and van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 30.

⁷⁵Furnivall, Colonial Policy, pp. 227-9.

Ethical Policy.⁷⁶ Earlier, in August 1899, in an article entitled "Een Ereschuld" (Debt of Honor) in De Gids, van Deventer called for the restitution of some of the millions of guilders earned by the Netherlands in Indonesia. The sum, which he estimated to be around 187 million guilders, would improve the school system and many other facets of public welfare. Fortunately, this plea gained wide acceptance among the Dutch people and gave impetus to the implementation of the aforementioned policy by the Dutch government. Furthermore, Professor Snouck Hurgronje was also an outspoken supporter of the Ethical Policy. He emphasized that by sponsoring education, the policy was addressing a hope stated by many Indonesian leaders and writers, about the value of education to the progress of Indonesian society. Hurgronje believed that by granting the wish of Indonesians to receive schooling, the Dutch would secure their loyalty for unlimited time.⁷⁷ Thus in 1905 education for Indonesians began to gain momentum.⁷⁸

In practice, however, this Dutch colonial policy laid more emphasis on improving the material situation of Indonesians, while education, an essential feature of the Ethical Policy, and political reforms continued to be given much less attention.⁷⁹ The efforts at improving social welfare at the village level, by expanding democratic self-government, in accordance with decentralization regulations of 1903 was only minimally realized. Regional councils did not represent the indigenous people because nearly all their members came from functionaries chosen by the Dutch East Indies government, and Europeans. Since representation did not exist, the real aims of the decentralization policy

⁷⁶Basri, Jaman Kebangkitan, p. 35. van der Kroef, "Dutch Colonial Policy," pp. 20-2. van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 32. Amry Vandenbosch, The Dutch East Indies Its Government, Problems, and Politics (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1944). p. 64

⁷⁷Vlekke, Nusantara, pp. 330, 331. Dorothy Woodman, The Republic of Indonesia (London: The Cresset Press, 1955), p. 149.

⁷⁸Van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 34.

⁷⁹Vlekke, Nusantara, pp. 332-3.

or autonomy was not attained. Moreover, the freedom to express one's political opinions was not granted to all Indonesian political organizations, whose meetings could be stopped whenever they were regarded as dangerous to state authority.⁸⁰

During the period 1900-1914 the Ethical Policy was regarded as an effective and worthwhile policy in Indonesia and the Netherlands. However, after this period it began to attract heavy criticism from all sides, and was even ultimately judged to have been a failure by many observers.⁸¹ One knowledgeable observer, a professor of tropical economy in Leiden, commented on the results of this policy in the following terms. He said that "he really could not assure that Indonesians were better off for the millions which the government had borrowed from the State Banks. Irrigation, emigration, colonization, were catchwords that had lost their luster. Other catchwords such as the promotion of export crops, the improvement of hygiene, the relief of taxation had their ups and downs, as, for example the cry for industrialization rising and falling with the economic conjuncture."⁸²

The promotion of Indonesian welfare was markedly successful in creating a new class of Dutch-educated Indonesians. Prominent in this class were a number of Indonesian intellectuals who were well aware of their own positions within the colonial structure, but who recognized the lack of education among their compatriots. Beginning in 1914 Indonesians writers criticized the Ethical Policy, which they regarded as a failure. This criticism was championed by the educated Indonesians who had joined the nationalist self-identity movement.⁸³ Among these Indonesian intellectuals was Haji

⁸⁰Kroef, Dutch Colonial Policy, pp. 339-41, and Kartodirdjo, Pengantar Sejarah, pp. 41-6

⁸¹Basri, "Jaman Kebangkitan," p. 61. van der Kroef, "Dutch Colonial Policy," pp. 344-5.

⁸²Furnivall, Colonial Policy, p. 229.

⁸³Basri, "Jaman Kebangkitan," p. 61.

Agus Salim. He responded to this policy and its effects in a number of articles published in Neratja, where he occupied the position of chief editor from 1916 to 1920.⁸⁴

B. HAJI AGUS SALIM'S RESPONSE TO COLONIAL POLICY AND ITS EFFECTS

Haji Agus Salim, recognized the Ethical Policy for what it was, an attempt on the part of the Dutch to develop the Indonesian economy and promote the social welfare of the general population. He saw the Dutch Administration wanting to improve economic well-being as a means of persuading Indonesian change and development regarded by the Dutch as "progress". Creating a prosperous economy for village life was seen as making it easier for the government to provide health care and education. An effort, in Salim's opinion, launched and motivated by a desire to generate respect on the part of Indonesians towards the Dutch East Indies government. He warned specifically that if the government did not in fact raise Indonesian living standards or create the other changes, it would be disgraced in the eyes of the world.

Agus Salim expressed some of these opinions in an article entitled "Kemajuan Perkara Harta" (Progress as a Property Case), written for Neratja and published on 11 October 1917. In it he maintained that the Dutch political parties called for promoting Indonesian welfare for two main reasons: First, some Dutch politicians were publicly embarrassed because Indonesians, who had contributed to raising the standard of living in the mother country, were themselves living in poverty. These politicians felt that such inequality was unjust and wanted to compensate the Indonesians to overcome this inequity. Thus, it seemed to Salim that their efforts stemmed, primarily, from the wish to recover the honor of their nation in the face of international criticism. Second, a group of entrepreneurs wanted to promote Indonesian prosperity because they believed that an

⁸⁴Van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 135. Hatta, ""Kenang-Kenangan," pp. 26-7.

economically prosperous people would be a better trading partner. Salim saw the motivation behind both views as effectively the same, i.e. self-interest. And, even though the Dutch public supported this Ethical Policy enthusiastically, he argued, their efforts were not really motivated by unselfish interests.

Salim further stated that just as Sarekat Islam had failed in establishing cooperative companies, the government and foreign companies too had collapsed after spending too much money on capital investment and not enough on Indonesian welfare. The colonialists, however, blamed these failures on the Indonesians who, they insisted had not as yet reached the level of maturity needed to compete in the world's economy. Salim contended that a nation which wanted to contend in the global economic arena had to have both property (infrastructure) and wealth (purchasing). Freedom and independence were of no importance, if the nation did not have these requisites of modern economic life. This attitude on the part of the colonial powers, according to Salim, was typical of the Western understanding, which maintained that the Indonesians had to be rich before having independence or even the right to independence.

Agus Salim maintained that the Dutch insistence on Indonesian progress as a condition to independence, ignored the lessons of world history. To illustrate this point, he cited examples from earlier centuries when slaves and oppressed peoples obtained their freedom while still living in the midst of humiliation and poverty. Then, not long afterwards, these poor people became wealthy, with many of them achieving high social positions. Salim also affirmed that during the late 18th and the middle 19th centuries many revolutions took place in Europe that championed by a fourth class of people (de vierde stand). These people represented the lower classes who wanted to free themselves from the oppression of "King, Church and Aristocrats." These people, he said, were only able to gain material and social wealth after achieving their freedom. Similar phenomena also took place during the Greek and Roman empires. Not surprisingly, Salim believed

that every effort carried out by the colonial government or other groups to raise the economic status of Indonesians was doomed to failure so long as the right to freedom was denied them. Indonesians would get nowhere if they were treated equally in the fields of law, education, technical training, trade and government affairs. He concluded that it was impossible to gain economic advancement unless independence and political rights were granted.

In the same article of 11 October 1917 Salim wrote that Dutch ideas promoting Indonesian welfare were only catchwords, based on Dutch concepts and policies, and their attainment depended on Dutch action. The Dutch were of the opinion that progress should be a matter which concerned Indonesians only, but paradoxically could not really be handled by them. Thus when Indonesians demanded the introduction of progressive ideas and techniques, they waited in vain, wondering if their demands would be granted or not. Likewise, when Indonesians requested improvements in their education, they had to wait for a decision made by people on the other side of the world, and received one which was unsatisfactory when it finally came.

In another article entitled "Mana Yang Harus Didahulukan" (That Which Should be Given Priority), written for Nerajia on 24 January 1918, Agus Salim drew a metaphor to illustrate this situation, by comparing the Dutch Colonial Policy to a nurse taking care of a child. There are two purposes behind the nurse's function, he elucidated: the first is to care for someone not yet mature enough to care of him or her self; the second is the wish to lengthen the work of being a nurse. Salim then went on to say that a nurse would forbid the child to do anything which she regarded as dangerous for him, such as forbidding the child to swim out of fear that he might drown, or forcing the child to eat very soft foods which cannot strengthen the child's body, instead of rice, porridge or bananas. The nurse is thus overprotective of the child because the longer the child needs help, the longer the nurse keeps her position. Similarly, the Dutch who knew how to

develop in Indonesians the capacity to look after themselves, decided not to do so, because they deemed the latter as incapable of achieving any progress. Fortunately, however, just as there are parents who are not afraid to expose their children to some danger, while guiding and helping them to become self-reliant, there were also a number of Dutch administrators who wanted to help Indonesians become more independent. This group, according to Agus Salim, was truly progressive. Unfortunately there were many more Dutch people who believed in treating the Indonesians like a nurse treats a child, he lamented, because they considered rapid progress to be dangerous for Indonesians whom they regarded as not "mature" enough. These and several others also assumed that they would lose their authority over the Indies if they allowed progress to accelerate. Salim referred to these people as conservative and reactionary, and contended that they advocated the suppression of new ideas by maintaining tight control over the Indonesians. Consequently, reflecting his optimism in the ability of the Indonesians to overcome obstacles before them, he declared that if the Indonesians were decisive and united themselves in pursuit of a common goal, then applied themselves peacefully and patiently to it, victory could be gained. He concluded that the best way for Indonesians to achieve this goal is through education.

In the same article, however, Salim reminded his readers that under Dutch colonialism, Indonesian education was organized and controlled by Dutch regulations, and that it had taken decades for the Dutch Administration to acknowledge that these regulations had not been applied fairly. Moreover, Dutch educational regulations presented more disadvantages than advantages to Indonesians, since the government did not know which structure was suitable for Indonesians or what branches of knowledge were important to them. The reason the Dutch Administration applied its regulations in this way, Salim affirmed, was due to its belief that Indonesians were not "mature" enough. Indeed, it is to be regretted, he went on to say, that the Dutch educational system,

which was managed by "mature" people, was unable to produce equally "mature" people in turn.

Salim believed that the progress and independence of a nation was achievable not only through the advancement of science, but also through sheer force, as had been the case with Japan, an Asian country which had defeated a stronger country (i.e. Russia) in battles on both sea and land. Since that time Japan had been acknowledged as independent and its dignity had risen in the eyes of the world. In reflecting on Japan's success Agus Salim wondered: How could a backward country such as Indonesia force others to recognize its dignity and obtain equal rights ? and, Was education the key for Indonesians to achieve progress and to compete with other nations?

In answer to the first question, Salim affirmed that there was no reason for Indonesians to take up arms in order to gain independence and progress. Moreover, even though Indonesia had been ruled by foreign powers for centuries, this did not hamper the progress of the Indonesian people. Indeed, progress was attained in spite of the fact that the country was under foreign domination, and often because of it as well. Moreover, if Indonesians opposed the colonial government by force it would be an offense towards God as well as the world, and would ultimately result in disaster, given the superiority of the Dutch in arms and security forces. Besides, rebelling against a government which claimed to be working for the progress of its indigenous people would only invite the hatred of other nations, and cause friction among Indonesians themselves.

The best way to achieve progress, Salim continued, would be through peaceful means. Indonesians have to unify themselves in pursuit of the same goals and to ask and demand the equality of dignity, of rights, of laws for all people in the Indies, and the right to become involved and to speak in political meetings in order to express their views on how the country should be run.

In answer to the second question, Salim stated that Indonesians had been left far behind other nations, and that education was therefore a prerequisite for progress. Moreover, education, in a number of European countries was often the result of progress. A case in point is the Netherlands; whose golden age was the seventeenth century in which the Dutch liberated themselves from Spanish tutelage. During this century there were developments in almost every science and the Netherlands became renowned for its scientific progress and wealth. It was in fact at that time that the Dutch occupied the Indies, which in turn became a source of Dutch prosperity and glory. All this progress was the direct result of what they had done to heighten their dignity, and to escape from Spanish imperialism, Salim affirmed.

Thus, according to Salim, because Indonesians had been left behind, it would be impossible for them to compete with European countries, particularly if they are uneducated. Therefore education was of paramount importance to Indonesians, but not just any education. What was needed was an educational system extending from the lowest to the highest levels. Agus Salim argued that whereas an architect could build a beautiful building with the help of dozens of people, thousands of people who only graduated from elementary school would not be able to construct such a building. Every single person who attained an advanced level of education was more valuable for the dignity and progress of his or her country, than the thousands of people who acquired only a basic education. Consequently, Indonesians needed more academic institutions, universities, and colleges, rather than the hundreds of elementary schools provided by the colonial government. With higher levels of schooling available to them, Indonesians would become teachers, leaders, and pioneers, who would in turn educate the new generations, thus putting an end to dependence on foreign teachers.

At the end of his article of 24 January 1918, Salim called upon the people to unite and to be more "mature", so that the right to organize their own national affairs would be

granted to them. Moreover, a "mature" people would be able to gain independence gradually, Salim believed, regardless of the Dutch reluctance to grant such freedom.

Salim's comments should be seen in context at the turn of the century, the Netherlands was still far behind in providing adequate education to the Indies population, compared with other countries such as Great Britain which had started providing education half a century earlier in India.⁸⁵ At the time, Indonesians could study at European schools. However, these demanded high school fees and offered instruction in Dutch, which limited the number of Indonesian who could study at these institutions. Fortunately, the Dutch East Indies government soon discovered the need for extending popular education, but was faced with the very difficult problem of costs. An answer was finally found by Governor General van Heutsz in 1907. Van Heutsz introduced a low-cost school system whose management was left to the desas (villages). Secondary schools, however, remained scarce, and universities non-existent. The first university in fact opened in 1924.⁸⁶ Because of these conditions Indonesians, according to Agus Salim, had to demand better education, and its continuation to higher levels, which would be most useful for Indonesian society in the long run.

In an article entitled "Lahirnya Tipis, Isinya Dalam" (Thin on the Outside but Deep on the Inside), written in Neratja of 4 October 1917, Agus Salim again criticized the Dutch educational system offered to Indonesians. He took as his example the careers of several nationalist activists, most of whom had graduated from Dutch schools, whom he saw as poor products of education because of their insensitivity toward their fellow Indonesians and Indonesian values.

⁸⁵A.D.A. de Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy, Vol. II (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931). p. 195

⁸⁶Woodman, The Republic of Indonesia, pp. 141-2. Vandenbosch, The Dutch East Indies, pp. 200-1.

According to Salim, the fault lay in the fact that young Indonesians were taught in a European manner, and not along the lines of Indonesian tradition. Coming from an Eastern background, they acquired a superficial knowledge of subjects which were alien to their spiritual development. The Dutch were not sensitive to this dichotomy, and continued to encourage materialism through their educational system without reinforcing it with any spiritual values. The resulting confusion in the minds of these young Indonesians led them to apply the knowledge they had gained in the Dutch school system to ends which were not in keeping with the Eastern ideals they had left behind.

Still Salim recognized that the situation was not without hope. He recognized that some Dutch reformers were aware of the need for providing Eastern educational methods, more suitable to the Indonesian milieu, and tried to give priority to the demand for Eastern subjects. Agus Salim exhorted Indonesians to support these efforts seriously. He asked them to work with the Dutch in this matter, because the Westerners alone would not be able to achieve this synthesis and would need guidance.

Regardless of whether they could provide practical support or not, Indonesians were encouraged by Salim to support any Dutch effort to realize these aims. One such effort was known as the Labberton movement, led by L.J. Polderman who tried to introduce educational reform to Indonesia. The theory behind this movement was the Western saying: 'kennis is macht' (knowledge is power). This movement believed that an educated person should be a leader of his society, and Salim hoped that young, educated Indonesians partaking of this system would be inspired by its ideals and would behave with dignity and respect, in the best Eastern tradition. Moreover, a person of good character would be a leader of his nation.

The Labberton movement worked actively to inform Indonesian youth of their responsibilities and opportunities and directed its efforts towards teaching subjects not formerly given in Dutch schools. Once, Polderman delivered a speech on the importance

of the sense of responsibility, beginning with responsibility towards oneself, one's family and relatives, all the people in the village, and one's fatherland. The last responsibility often demanded personal sacrifice, a concept that was foreign to most Indonesian youth of his day. Polderman also asked his audience of what value was personal happiness and dignity if humiliation still adhered to every Indonesian's forehead. Although an Indonesian might achieve personal distinction, he still lived as a part of his nation, and humiliation was still part of his lot. Agus Salim seemed to agree with this evaluation, and believed that if Indonesians were to listen carefully to the advice of Polderman, they would be able to achieve some progress for their nation. A stance which seems to indicate that he demanded of young educated Indonesians to love their nation, and to put its welfare ahead of personal dignity, social status or salary.

A further weakness of the colonial school system was that only 15 percent of its enrollment space was allotted for girls at central continuation schools. This reflected widespread belief in Dutch and Indonesian society that women did not need much education in the first place. This attitude led to a reaction which led to creation of a number of groups advocating special attention to women's progress.⁸⁷ Among this group was J.H. Abendanon, a leading proponent of the Ethical Policy. In his capacity as director of the Department of (Indonesian) Education, Religion and Industry, he pursued his interest in the education of women. Abendanon knew about Raden Adjeng Kartini, later famous for her letters calling for Dutch and Indonesian efforts to raise educational standards for Indonesians, who had met with him in 1900, and was able to give her much more support than her earlier Dutch contacts had been able to do. He expanded her network of intellectual Dutch and Indonesian friends to whom she wrote letters in the following years. Then, at Abendanon's suggestion, Kartini was finally able in 1903 to open a school for Indonesian girls. The publication of her book entitled Door Duisternis

⁸⁷Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy, Vol. II, p. 225.

tot Licht (Through Darkness into Light) in 1911, a collection of Kartini's letters, attracted popular sympathy to Abendanon's Kartini Foundation, a private organization for women's schools, which was mainly supported by voluntary Dutch contributions. In 1916, this foundation had opened the first Kartini Schools, which played an important role in overcoming the traditional opposition to the education of girls.⁸⁸

The colonial administrator and political observer Kat Angelino concluded that there were at least four prominent names among the advocates of Indonesian women's progress: Raden Ajeng Kartini and Abendanon, who were mentioned earlier, van Deventer (who was also linked to the establishment of various education programs in Indonesian women's schools) and lastly Mrs. van Deventer, who continued her husband's work in this direction. He maintained that their efforts, particularly those of Kartini, aimed at raising the position of Indonesian women, thus enabling the latter to establish better marriages, and to become educated mothers, who, in turn, would insist on proper education for their children. In short, family life would be strengthened through the improvement of the status of women. This was seen as one of the primary conditions necessary for creating a stable society, which would in turn provide a solid foundation for a secure country.⁸⁹

Although Agus Salim was not one of the leading advocates of Indonesian girls' schools, he nevertheless supported efforts at improving the quality of life for Indonesian girls. Thus, he was in keeping with the interests of leading figures in the fight for Indonesian women's progress. In an article entitled "Kemajuan Perempuan Bumiputera" (The Progress of Indonesian Women), written in Neratja on 4 September 1917, Salim argued for the advancement of Indonesian women and posed three questions to support

⁸⁸Geertz, Letters of a Javanese Princess, p. 15, and pp. 22-3. Coté, Letters From Kartini, p. xxiii.

⁸⁹Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy, Vol. II, p. 226.

his argument: he asked, firstly, What was more important for the nation's progress, women teachers, or smart and educated women ? secondly, What is the best way to produce educated women teachers ? and lastly, Was it necessary to provide schools for Indonesian women at the time ?

Agus Salim approached the first question by referring to both the conservative opinion which says that a woman is only a "house or kitchen guardian", as well as the (incorrect) assumption that Islam is an obstacle in women's education. In answer to these questions, Agus Salim lamented that women received less attention than men in education, even though people, at the time, had begun to understand the importance of education for women. This situation was aggravated by the fact that the Dutch educational system also gave priority to men over women.

According to Salim, the Dutch educational system produced young, educated Indonesian men who underestimated their female counterparts, and as a result, preferred non-Indonesian women to be their wives rather than Indonesian ones. Many of these educated Indonesian men did not even respect Indonesian women, and did not hesitate to leave one wife for another without notice. Salim regarded all of these factors as obstructing national progress, to say nothing of social morality. This unfavorable situation had to be addressed, Salim contended, by providing more advanced education for Indonesian women. In Salim's opinion the late Raden Ajeng Kartini had provided a noteworthy example in this regard, by rendering a great service to women's education.

Another result of the schools not providing sufficient space for Indonesian women, was that many wealthy Indonesian parents sent their daughters to Dutch schools. This had the affect that, aside from its impracticality and expensiveness, also promoted an attitude of superiority in these girls. These girls did not want to marry Indonesian men, since they too underestimated those who did not have the same advantages. For this reason, Salim regarded it necessary to build a new educational system for Indonesian

women. He supported van Deventer's reforms, the intention of which was to build schools for Indonesian women. He disagreed, however, with the plans to build a school designed to produce Indonesian female teachers. Agus Salim wanted well-educated Indonesian women (with a broad role of service in Indonesian life) and not just narrow careers in education.

In Salim's opinion, there were at the time many teacher training schools which also accepted Indonesian women into their programs. If put to good use, these schools would undoubtedly be able to produce an appropriate number of qualified Indonesian women teachers. However, they were not able to do so because many Indonesian parents could not meet the expenses of accommodating, supervising, feeding and clothing their daughters during the school year. Moreover, because teacher training schools were mostly run by the colonial government, very little attention was given to the care and supervision of girls outside of school hours. Salim felt that since the authorities did not care for the personal and moral development of girls, these schools were not suitable institutions for Indonesian women. He concluded that the best way to produce educated female teachers was for them to have their own teacher training schools, without any government contribution. One initiative in this direction was the establishment of the Gunung Sari school in Batavia. Salim requested Indonesians to assist this school financially, by providing accommodation for the girls and protecting them during their period of study at the school. Turning to the third question, Salim stated that in the majority of Dutch and Indonesian schools boys and girls studied together; and, even though there was a number of single-gender schools, these were not the norm. Moreover, in both Dutch and Indonesian, the number of boy students usually exceeded that of the girls, and had done so for decades without provoking any disagreements or encountering any obstacles. As such, Salim concluded that gender separation was not a necessity in Indonesian schooling.

Also in connection with this, Salim pointed out that in both Indonesian and Dutch schools, students studied topics in broad subject areas such as physical education, which is designed to foster good health; "inner sight" education, intended to establish a better character and personality; and intelligence improvement education, which enhances one's knowledge and abilities. These three components are taught to both boys and girls, without distinction, because both have to be clever and intelligent enough to fulfill their duties as human beings and members of society, although people generally believed that females should stay at home after marriage. Moreover, Salim stated that after marriage a male should work to maintain his family, while a female should manage the home budget, direct the family affairs and educate the children. This family "job description" was necessary because the husband had no time to do additional housework. However if the wife had been educated, she should have developed the character and personality necessary to manage the housework and family, which are the chief benefit of women's education, Salim believed.

In Salim's opinion, the family is the basic social unit. In it, both husband and wife should care for their children in a harmonious environment, because only a harmonious family can create perfection, peace and security in the world. To establish this harmonious ambiance, married couples should adapt to one another, especially in understanding, thought and desire, and should do their utmost to bring up a family properly. Agus Salim ended his article of 4 September 1917 by stating that living in a harmonious family can only be achieved if both members of a couple have an equal degree of education. And, since men and women are equals, there should be no priority for one over the other. At the end, Salim called for the couple to have mutual respect for each other.

Since the introduction of the Ethical Policy, the idea of eliminating all social distinctions in the Dutch East Indies was gaining ground. Such concepts as "assimilation"

and "association" were integral parts of this policy which did not acknowledge race differences; all the people of the Indies, Indonesians and non-Indonesians were to be acknowledged as having equal positions, functions and values in society, and equal rights were to be granted to all.⁹⁰ However there were certain people, Indonesians and Dutch, who disagreed with this doctrine, and who even opposed the Ethical Policy in general. The criterion for anti- Ethical Policy sentiments was not easy to determine, although the very sincere supporters of this policy seemed to find opponents of what they did in changing village life, among other things. The non-supporters of the policy regarded any attempt at improving social welfare at the village level as radical and dangerous to the integrity of Indonesian lifestyle. In general, however, the strongest opposition came from 'the insecure and small European lower middle class, from the Indonesian-born Europeans (the sinjo) and certain sectors of the Indo-European community (Eurasians) group.' These people were still convinced of their racial superiority and refused to consider the application of equality.⁹¹

The European population of the Dutch East Indies consisted of the Europeans and the Eurasians, who were generally called Indo-Europeans, or in short , Indos. The number of these Indos made up around eighty percent of the whole European population.⁹² The full blooded Europeans who were born in Europe but settled in the Indies were, for the most part, businessmen, entrepreneurs, representatives of financial interests and civil administrators. The Eurasians, on the other hand, were economically far behind their European counterparts by the year 1900. Besides, they were mostly neglected by their European fathers, with the result of not being at home in either culture. The colonial

⁹⁰Basri, "Jaman Kebangkitan," p. 64. van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 36-7. Kartodirdjo, Pengantar Sejarah, pp. 50-1.

⁹¹van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 38.

⁹²Vandenbosch, The Dutch East Indies, pp. 7, 9.

government too did not treat them as Europeans. However, after the year 1900, European humanitarians began to pay more attention to the poorer Eurasians and training was offered them in certain skills. As such, the situation of the Eurasians improved during the twentieth century.⁹³

Nevertheless, the growing social, economic, and political situation in the Indies had attracted more European immigration to the Archipelago. These new European immigrants competed with the older ones especially in the areas of government administration and private enterprise. As such, the Europeans grew more European and were less inclined to regard the Indos as part of their society. At the same time the Indos holding official positions of a lower grade began to feel pressure from educated Indonesians, who began to take over positions previously reserved for the Indos by the colonial government. Even the middle class Europeans found themselves in competition with Indonesian intellectuals, a threat which led some of them to abandon the Ethical Policy and the ideas of unification which had up till then influenced their attitude towards the Indonesian population.⁹⁴ Thus, certain Europeans declared their public opposition to the Ethical Policy, which they saw as a threat to their privileged status. Some people also saw no reason to try to improve the economic and social position of Indonesians, and regarded the existence of Indonesian political movements as a danger to Dutch authority in the region.

Nevertheless, General Idenburg, who occupied the post of Minister of the Colonies from 1902 to 1905, and again from 1908 to 1910, was one of the strongest advocates of the Ethical Policy. He also served as Governor General from 1909 until 1916. During his tenure, he showed himself to be very sympathetic to Indonesian

⁹³van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 13.

⁹⁴van der Kroef, Indonesia, p. 283. Kartodirdjo, Pengantar Sejarah, p. 52.

aspirations. Moreover, under the leadership of Mr. Graaf van Limburg Stirum, his successor, Indonesians were able to have a say in political issues through the creation of the Volksraad (People's Council). This council, which people saw as the first step towards self-government, attracted criticism from many quarters in the European sector, especially for allowing participation by Indonesians in political affairs which was regarded as too advanced and too rapid.⁹⁵

The growth of opposition towards and criticism of the Ethical Policy had its effect on the activities of those Indonesians who advocated continuation of the policy to assist Indonesian development. Agus Salim, one of these advocates, was motivated to address the general issue of opposition and to offer suggestions on how to counterbalance that attitude. In an article titled "Kemajuan Diperoleh Dengan Usaha" (Progress is Gained by Hard Work) published in Neratja of 15 September 1917, Agus Salim mentioned that the progress of Indonesians towards establishing their own nation was clear to all who followed the activities of the Indonesian political movement. He asserted that the facts showed that the growth of the Indonesian movement could not be halted.

In addressing the criticisms of those who opposed the Ethical Policy, Agus Salim proposed four questions: 1) Did they (the Netherland Indies elite) really believe that Dutch position among nations would be enhanced if Indonesians remained forever backward and inferior ? 2) Did they really believe that the progress of the Indonesian people could be hindered and demands for their progress ignored, if the government did not answer their demands ? 3) Did they really believe that the power of the Dutch people in the Indies would not be strengthened by associating with the Indonesian people ? 4) Did they really believe that the power of the Dutch forces was sufficient to protect them from the Indonesian people, if the latter could not be trusted ?

⁹⁵Vandenbosch, The Dutch East Indies, p. 68.

According to Salim, the Asmodeé⁹⁶ never seemed to have thought of these questions. This was because they only taught their followers that if the Indonesian people achieved intellectual progress, the Indos would then lose their privileged positions and the high-salary jobs which were provided by the Dutch Administration.

The Asmodeé asserted that if the Indonesians were given arms, this would pose a threat to Dutch authority, as the Dutch would be driven out immediately. However, according to Agus Salim, Asmodeé writers did not tell their readers that if Indonesians were not allowed to advance, the Indies would lag behind other countries. This was so because the Netherlands, with only thousands of inhabitants, would not be able to keep up with the advancements of other countries. Salim also insisted that the Asmodeé should tell their readers that the Dutch would not suffer when Indonesians realized greater progress, since Indonesia was a very large and rich country, with resources and room for all.

Agus Salim remarked that the Asmodeé's negative attitudes convinced many Dutch readers and bred hatred and disaffection among them. The fruits of these seeds were to be seen in many incidents, which Agus Salim cited as proof of the harm the Asmodeé were wreaking. He cited a case involving the Zusters Ursulinen (Ursuline Sisters), a religious order operating a system of Dutch private schools in Batavia. These schools were targeted by the Asmodeé who demanded that they no longer accept Indonesian students. Shortly afterwards, the order, whose several schools had previously offered high quality education to both European and Indonesian students, sent a letter to every Indonesian student asking him or her to leave the school and to find another institution of learning. Fortunately, however, the Dutch Administration still provided

⁹⁶Asmodeé is a terminology used by Salim for the ruling European group. In this sense he used it to refer to the intellectual writers of the class, primarily in newspaper editorials.

sufficient schools so that these students were able to continue their studies in a similar educational system.

There were still many other instances of how the Asmodeé were inciting its readers against Dutch efforts to further Indonesian progress through education. As such, Salim called for Indonesians to support every single Dutch Administration program promoting Indonesian welfare, which was being hampered by the Asmodeé. All the same, he reminded the people that if they wished to achieve independence, or wanted to become self-reliant, they should not always depend on the Dutch government for everything they needed. They should instead raise themselves up by their own hands, and try their best to fulfill those desires. Until Indonesians proved their ability, through struggle and effort, to attain the goals that they set for themselves, they did not deserve to have independence, or to have the authority to manage their own nation, he declared. Therefore, if a Dutch company, for example, did not want to have Indonesians partners, why should Indonesians not support the founding of their own companies ? And if schools belonging to the Dutch did not want to accept Indonesian students, why did the latter not want to establish their own schools ?, he asked.

In his article entitled "Benih Pertjederan" (The Seed of the Split), published in Neratja on 7 January 1919, Agus Salim as chief editor of Neratja and an advocate of the Indonesian advancement movement, openly opposed accusations that his ideas were directed against the Dutch. He believed that this accusation had been hurled at him and his association (the SI) because of the distinction he drew between the Dutch and their supporters, on the one hand, whom, he referred to as kaum sana (over-there people) and the Indonesians, whom he called kaum sini (over-here people), on the other hand. For Salim, these terms referred to the priorities which each group set for itself. The "over-there" people for instance were chiefly interested in the good of the Dutch homeland, whereas the "over-here" people advocated policies that favoured Indonesia, Indonesian

progress and political rights for their own kind. It was understandable that such positions would clash from time to time. The other reason for the accusation was because Salim often reminded Indonesians not to imitate Dutch manners. Apparently, he did not make this point because he disliked the Dutch people; indeed Salim believed that they were capable of much good, rather, he argued that what was best was that which could help Indonesians achieve progress, and that this progress itself should agree with the nation's traditions. This was the true path of success since it agreed with the Indonesian character, which is typically Eastern in that it does not emphasize the material (materie) over the spiritual (gevoel). Therefore in Salim's opinion, the conflict between Dutch and Indonesian values was one of difference, and contradictory understandings. This difference in understanding was not derived from a sense of antipathy towards the Dutch, but was the natural evolution of thought, as expressed by an increasing number of Indonesian intellectuals.

The Indonesian people believed that the autocratic government of the Dutch should not hang on to power much longer, and that giving priority to Europeans over Indonesians had to be stopped. As such, Salim told Indonesians that it was time to demand justice, and to ask for equality. Not surprisingly, this demand for rights led many Europeans to oppose all Indonesian political movements. A case in point is the Dutch writer who wrote an article in the daily Suara Indische Bond (The Voice of Indies Unity), in which he called upon all people of Dutch blood (on the father's side) to unite to prevent the realization of equality for the Indonesian population. In his argument, the writer said that all efforts to help Indonesians achieve progress should be terminated before they destroyed all those of European descent. It was clear enough, according to Salim, that this attitude derived from a sense of hatred towards Indonesians and that these statements were "nonsensical".

Salim nevertheless felt obliged to respond to these accusations, by stating that the Indonesians would not treat the Europeans like the Europeans had treated them for centuries, because rule of law would prevail in the new state. Moreover, Indonesians demanded progress, justice and independence based on religious principles. And, in a state governed by justice, people would not be treated differently because of their descent or ancestry, but rather all would find their places in society solely on the basis of ability and intelligence.

Another example given by Salim was that of an association established by Captain W.V. Rhemrev in Malang, Java, which went by the name Oranjebond van Orde (Orange Association, a defender of orderly security). This association aimed at supporting Dutch authority and took every step within the law to further this goal. One of its leading members started his speech, which he dedicated to the King of the Netherlands, by saying, "Today all the many people under Malang leadership are celebrating Oranje day happily, and all of them express their love, sincerity and loyalty towards His Majesty and the the Dutch in the Indies of government administration." The speech also called on the Dutch and their supporters to unite in support of the colonial government.

Salim for his part said that it was the right time for Indonesians to demand that Dutch authority be replaced. However, he asked that this be carried out peacefully. Furthermore, He thought that, while the Oranje Association expressed neither hatred nor love towards the Indonesian political movement, it was nevertheless careless in underestimating it or feel mere contempt for it, because it had called for Indonesians to unite in opposition to the demand for independence, thus helping to undermine Indonesian unity.

The last example offered by Salim was that of an association called the Nederlandsch Indische Economische Bond (Dutch Indies Economic Association). The

political program of NIEB was a "grass roots" organization by establishing village autonomy and meetings at the the level of regency institutions. With the Dutch settlers clearly in control, the establishment of NIEB was intended to counteract the efforts of Indonesians who wanted to advocate their own ideas concerning the direction of political process. Clearly, the NIEB programs were launched to support Dutch progress and welfare in all areas. In political matters NIEB supported zelfbestuur (self-government) for the Indies, but insisted that unity with the mother country be maintained forever. Within this permanent union Indonesians would slowly mature in their approach to economy and politics, they held.

In commenting on this, Agus Salim pointed out that village autonomy was still only granted on Dutch authority. He reminded his readers that all the miseries and misfortunes affecting Indonesians were caused by the Dutch East Indies government regulations, which prevailed at every level of society. Autonomy for the lowest-level of political institutions would be useless as long as all matters affecting the whole Dutch East Indies were decided from another country, that is, decided by non-Indonesians. Thus, Salim likened the NIEB, which wished to bring about progress for Indonesians, as a tree which had been invaded by caterpillars. Instead, Salim wished to plant another tree, a sturdy tree, one of independence for the whole Indies.

Salim continued his argument in this same article of 7 January 1919 by attacking the NIEB program which aimed at ensuring the security and tranquillity of the country. According to Salim the factors which posed a danger to the country's security were three in number. In the first place, there were the criminals who existed in every country, and whose opponents were the police. Secondly, there was poverty and hunger, which could be solved by government action to end poverty and produce more food. Thirdly, there was intimidation practiced by aristocratic and wealthy people which could be prevented by instituting a system of social justice. Finally, Salim emphasized that rebellions against

the political system would not occur if the colonial administrators themselves obeyed their own law, a situation that frequently did not occur when the colonial administration dealt with the Indonesian nationalist movement. It was not Indonesian political movements that were seeking confrontation, but when their legitimate activities were hampered by hard-line administrators in violation of existing law, open resistance by Indonesians could not be avoided.

In actuality, at the earliest stages of their development, Indonesian political movements were unable to operate in the open. Article 111 of the Constitutional Ordinance of 1854 stated that all political associations were forbidden, a situation that still prevailed in the early twentieth century. For example, the Indische Partij, founded on 6 September 1912, sought government recognition, but it was denied on the assumption it had a revolutionary character. In the following year, the three leading figures of the party, Douwes Dekker, Tjipto Mangunkusumo and Suwardi Suryaningrat, were banished from the Indies altogether, by applying Article 48 of the Constitutional Ordinance of 1854 which stated that the courts could independently judge "to expel persons considered dangerous to the maintenance of law and order."⁹⁷

To avoid such action by Dutch colonial authorities, the Sarekat Islam in 1913 at the first congress declared that it was not a political party. Its leader H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto stated that the SI would maintain its loyalty to the Dutch government, and announced specific programs considered legal and claimed no hidden political agenda. This was considered necessary in order to avoid the application of article 111 of the Constitutional Ordinance of 1854 which "absolutely forbade organizations and meetings of a political character."⁹⁸ This approach was ultimately successful for the colonial

⁹⁷Dahm, History of Indonesia, pp. 34-7.

⁹⁸George McTurnan Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1952). p. 68.

government finally granted legal status to the party in 1916. With that legal recognition, the SI's status rose among Indonesians who apparently preferred legality, even to colonial laws, than to open defiance of the established political order. Thereafter there was greater ease in holding public meetings, especially national congresses, and membership increased in all its branches.⁹⁹

As a result of the increasing influence of the Indonesian political movement and the Ethical Movement, the Dutch East Indies government revoked the Constitutional Ordinance of 1854, especially article 111. In response to this recognition, Agus Salim published his views on how this right should be used properly, in a book, entitled Hak Berserikat dan Berkumpulan (The Right to Associate and to Meet) written in 1919.¹⁰⁰ In it he rejects the contention that the Dutch government or, in fact, any government, has the authority to prevent "the people" from conducting normal political activity. In this he is clearly reflecting views common in European political thought that justified the rise of democracies and republics on that continent.

According to Agus Salim the civil rights of Indonesians would not be handed over by the government voluntarily; rather, every single right given to the people would have to be gained by the efforts of the people themselves. Every government would change its direction in accordance with the people's progress and demands. Once Indonesians finally realized that the government could not survive without popular involvement, it would make that government aware of their power and would claim their rights. At this point, the government would make two options: 1) it could acquiesce to the demands of the people, and thereby assure better relations between government and people; 2) it could

⁹⁹van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesia, pp. 117-8.

¹⁰⁰Agus Salim, "Hak Berserikat dan Berkumpulan", in Djediak Langkah Hadji A. Salim Pilihan Karangan Utjapan dan Pendapat Beliau dari Dulu sampai Sekarang, Panitia Peringatan (Djakarta : Tintamas, 1954). pp. 104-22.

continue to resist, thereby leaving the people no other choice but to resort to force. Force would only be a temporary measure because it would only be necessary while the government stood still; for every government has its enemies waiting to step in when it is weakened, and a popular uprising would give them an excellent opportunity to do so. But according to Salim, the government could only be toppled if the people agreed to let those enemies do that, and only if the original government did not concede to their demands for full civil rights.¹⁰¹

According to Salim the Dutch nation was not very large; the population of the Netherlands itself was only six million. By comparison, Indonesia was very large with a population of almost fifty million. With such disparity Salim believed that the Dutch were not ultimately powerful enough to maintain such a vast empire and profit from it as they had in the past. To him the signs were already apparent. The Dutch government understood that employing non-Dutch or non-Indonesians to administer its possessions would make it difficult for the Dutch to retain their hold. To prevent such a development, the mother country had in fact chosen to provide training in various skills to certain Indonesians, whom it would then employ in different tasks throughout the country. Because of the increasing number of educated Indonesians graduating from the Dutch educational system, there had to be concessions in rights generally granted to people in other countries in the world.¹⁰²

Here and elsewhere in his writings Salim put forward his arguments about what rights should be enjoyed by an independent people and how these rights should be applied. Salim divided the rights of the independent peoples of Europe into four categories: rights which are performed, such as the right to make requests of government

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 104-5.

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 105-6.

officers, the right to associate, and the right to choose representatives to legal or advisory councils; rights which are received, such as the right to occupy a position in civil administration; rights of protection, such as of person and property, of family, of privacy, and those rights pertaining to the law and fair trials; and lastly rights of freedom, which include religious and press freedom, meaning the freedom to express thoughts, opinions, and criticism in the media. Salim insisted that these four categories of civil rights rights were principal, fundamental rights that should be granted to the people of a country which respected justice. He concluded that if the government did not regard these principles as sacred, it would mean that the country was based on authoritarian rule, and that there was a basic conflict between the welfare of two opposing interests: the rulers and the ruled. Salim implied that this situation existed in colonial Indonesia and was perpetuated to prevent the Indonesians from achieving independence. Consequently it had to be recognized that the government would always consider its policy carefully, and whenever it gave a right to the Indonesians, it would apply it gradually rather than directly, because such rights were only ever given after due consideration of its own needs as a colonial power.

Agus Salim went on to argue that people in the Indies had their rights embodied in the Regeeringsreglement, or government regulation, which had existed since 1854. The rights granted them in this document could not compare with the rights granted to the people of the Netherlands. For example, article 4 of the Grondwet, or the foundation law of the Dutch kingdom, mentions that everyone who lives in the Dutch kingdom receives the same right of protection of both person and of property. These rights were granted to a free people, as a result of democratic reforms in the Netherlands and throughout Europe at that time. There was, however no comparable movement in Indonesia, although Multatuli (E. Douwes Dekker), who lived and worked in the Dutch East Indies during the period 1840-1857, called for greater democratization in the Indies, but without any real success. Salim maintained that there were no such rights because Indonesians themselves

had not insisted on them. He stated that it was the right time for Indonesians to raise the question of democratic rights in order that the colonial government pay more attention to the democratization process of Indonesia. He recognized that in a country which was subjugated by another sovereign government, it was authority and power that forced people to obey that government; these people were naturally not permitted to become involved in their own country's affairs. Looking forward to the institution of an independent Indonesia, he projected that in an independent state the government's actions would reflect the will of the majority of the people. In a such a nation, the people would be free to associate, to meet and to discuss governmental affairs.

Returning to conditions in colonial Indonesia, Salim noted that article 111 of the Regeeringsreglement stated that it was forbidden for people to associate or to meet to discuss affairs of state. In 1915, a regulation was issued on 8 May (Staatsblaad no. 542) which revised article 111 of this Government Regulation, and which was itself adopted from article 9 of the Grondwet. It stated that the government recognized the right of people to associate and to meet. Still this was short of ideal as this right was regulated and limited by the ordinance (algemeene verordening) used for the maintenance of public order. Since still Indonesians were guaranteed freedom of political action, and they had to be aware of how to take advantage of this opportunity. Salim reminded his readers that in order to use these new laws properly, people had to know all the requirements and prohibitions.¹⁰³

Agus Salim analyzed the requirements and prohibitions affecting the rights that had been granted. He stated that every right gained by the people was accompanied by an obligation; therefore if a right was not accompanied by an obligation, this right would be useless or might even invite disaster. For example, the right of association and of holding

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 111-2.

political meetings were balanced by the obligation to maintain public order. Furthermore, Salim asserted that the rights of the people and what they were granted or prohibited had no value unless accompanied by sanctions which command attention to these laws. Such concern for the maintenance of order in society was a key consideration of Salim.¹⁰⁴

Looking at the practical side of things, Salim proposed a single gathering place which could be used by a number of political associations. This idea was intended to unify the political associations both physically and ideologically. Because of its central location, such a building could be used for political training and for teaching political leaders how to provide leadership. An educated leadership would be able to persuade other educated people to join the associations and to discuss their use and purpose, thereby giving direction to the national political movements. These educated leaders would also approach popular associations and share their knowledge with the public. If the right of association and meeting was used properly, Salim stated, these groups would be more mature and meaningful, especially when the public at large was aware of the issues being debated.¹⁰⁵

C. The idea of Nationalism

From his early career on, Haji Agus Salim saw young Indonesians as constituting the country's future leaders and undertook a personal mission of helping those with leadership abilities to develop such potential. For instance, before joining the nationalist movement, he had established an elementary school (HIS) for Indonesians in 1903, with the purpose of creating educated Indonesians who were aware of their position in the colonial regime and who had a deep sense of love for their fatherland. Moreover, such attitude was often displayed in his speeches and writings. A case in point is the article

¹⁰⁴Ibid, pp. 112, 115.

¹⁰⁵Ibid, pp. 121-2.

entitled "Lahirnya Tipis, Isinya Dalam", which had been alluded to earlier. At the conclusion of this article, Salim issued clear summons to the young Indonesian graduates of Western schools to love their nation and to put its welfare ahead of personal dignity, social status or salary. Therefore, as a prominent leader of Sarekat Islam, Salim welcomed a group of young Indonesians in the nationalist movement, and always gave liberally of his time, advice and attention.

In an article entitled "Indonesia Merdeka" (Indonesia Free), published in the daily Hindia Baroe of 14 May 1925, Agus Salim warmly greeted the foundation of the Indonesische Vereniging, (Indonesian Association) or Perhimpunan Indonesia (PI), an association intended to organize young Indonesians studying and working in the Netherlands. This association used Indonesian as its language of communication with the intention of establishing relations with the nationalist movement and its leaders in the Dutch East Indies. According to Salim, this was an admirable goal, particularly, since the PI had attracted much attention among the Dutch people at the time. The members of the PI had in fact declared that they would not seek high-salaried positions with the colonial government once they had finished their studies, but would instead devote their efforts to assisting popular movements.

According to Agus Salim these young educated men showed a true sense of love of country and fatherland. Chauvinistic nationalism was transformed into love of the nation, namely love of the people, and a desire to improve their countrymen's lot. This was in line with his view that whenever patriotism existed as blind nationalism, it did not help the people achieve progress in any aspect of their lives.

Agus Salim also pointed out that the PI members were most concerned with helping those people who were living in misery and difficulty. For this purpose, they would have to carefully investigate the situation, before embarking on the course of action that would render benefit. Efforts of this kind, while requiring much energy, would

be of the greatest benefit to the underprivileged stratas of society. He warned that the PI had to avoid seeing the situation through Dutch eyes, and to ignore those Dutch voices which maintained that the situation of the poor had improved during the three hundred year Dutch occupation of the Indies. Instead, he urged, the PI to focus its attention on worthy paradigms from the life of the Prophet Mohammad s.a.w., "the prominent model for all human beings, and the shaper (hervormer) of his era."¹⁰⁶ The PI should carefully study how the prophet transformed a coarse and unsophisticated nation into a powerful and eminent one in a short space of time. And, even though the times and the world had changed, Salim added, Mohammad's example was a worthy one and could be applied to the contemporary situation. The spirit and foundation of nationhood as established by Prophet Mohammad should be kept firmly in mind, even though its rhythm, method and realization would certainly differ in accordance with the changes in time and circumstance of each nation. Obviously Salim believed that Islamic ways of running matters was synonymous with general Indonesian values, a point not necessarily accepted by most members of the PI who came from regions and class groups where Islam was not the regulating cultural factor of their lives.

Nationalism and Patriotism (Polemics with Sukarno)

The Sarekat Islam Party (PSI) enjoyed a cordial relationship with one of the "secular" nationalist groups, namely the Bandung Study Club which later became the Partai National Indonesia (PNI-Indonesia Nationalist Party) headed by Sukarno. When Sukarno proposed the amalgamation of the Indonesian political parties into the PSI in October 1927 Sukiman Wirjosanjoyo, a leader of the PSI at the time, enthusiastically welcomed this idea. This idea also found favour with the other parties, and as a result the PNI, PSI and other political parties, such as the Budi Utomo, the Surabaya Study Club,

¹⁰⁶ A person who has great impact on the age in which he lives.

and several leading Christian organizations merged in a federation known as Permufakatan Perhimpunan Partai Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI-Federation Body of Indonesian Political Parties) on 17 December 1927.¹⁰⁷ Adopting the concept of an all embracing Indonesian nationalism, the PPPKI, led by Sukarno and supported by his friends, advocated national unity regardless of all other principles. To arouse the people's patriotic feelings, Sukarno delivered numerous speeches on the greatness of "Mother Indonesia," and her delivery of such heroic figures as Gajah Mada and the other leaders of the Indonesian Hindu period. Sukarno also highlighted the importance of love and devotion to Mother Indonesia.¹⁰⁸

However, this conception of nationalism was not accepted by many Indonesian Muslims, including Salim, who warned his readers against it in an article published in the daily Fadjar Asia on 29 July 1928. In that article Salim discussed the issues of nationalism and patriotism in the context of a speech delivered by Sukarno a few days earlier. That speech had been made before the PNI, and in it Sukarno summoned his listeners to love their fatherland and to serve their Mother Indonesia faithfully, because of her beauty, and her generosity in giving them water to drink and rice to eat, as well as her many other splendours. All that was needed was a little care and time, and the land would give them all they needed, he added. Sukarno also described Mother Indonesia as vigorous and fertile because she had consistently brought forth champions and heroes to face challenges and would in the future continue to bring forth many smart and courageous sons. Sukarno concluded that it is proper that all Indonesians should serve the motherland and become her true and devoted children.

¹⁰⁷ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 250-1. M. C. Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia, c. 1300 to the Present (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981). pp. 174-5.

¹⁰⁸ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 253.

In response Salim admitted that Sukarno's approach would doubtless appeal to the people's sensitivity. Any person will love and honor his or her own mother above all other people's mothers, and no citizens will respect other countries more than they respect their own. He admitted that it would be very difficult to find any other country which matches the wealth, generosity and loving care of Mother Indonesia. Indeed, she had borne sons of great courage, such as Gajah Mada and Kumbakarna, who had dedicated their strength, even their lives, for the honor of Mother Indonesia. Agus Salim cited other heroes such as Hayam Wuruk, Sunan Kalijaga, Maulana Yusuf from Banten and Pangeran Dipenogoro from Mataram. In sum, Sukarno's reasons for praising mother Indonesia, according to Salim, were true and his purpose proper and meritorious.

However, Agus Salim warned that in the name of one's "country", which is frequently synonymous with "deity" or "mother", the French happily paraded behind the tyrant Louis XI, attacking, damaging and destroying other countries and other peoples, who were, after all, their fellow men. In the name of the "fatherland" the Austrians humiliated the Italians and Swiss in the era of their glory. And, also in the name of the "fatherland", the Prussian kingdom destroyed the Austrians. Other examples were also provided by Salim demonstrating how various peoples humiliated others in the name of their country.

Salim asserted that this "religion" (i.e. nationalism) enslaves human beings to the love of the "fatherland"; a love which drives them in pursuit of wealth, glory and greatness, all the while humiliating and destroying other countries and totally disregarding human rights and justice. It is dangerous to be so dedicated and subservient to a fatherland, he observed, because it becomes an end in itself, and because it confers wealth and honor. This quest for worldly riches is of no use to anyone who seeks true perfection, because when life comes to an end, worldly things perish. Every aspect of this mundane world, including love of the fatherland, should be set aside for higher goals

such as righteousness, justice and greatness; qualities and values ascertained by God Almighty and not by fellow human beings. When people want to accomplish any task, it should be for the sake of Allah, Salim declared. This would steer them away from the wrong path, onto which they may be driven by passion and greed. Li/illaahi Ta'aala, "for the sake of Allah," should be the true basis of the love of the fatherland, i.e. Indonesia. In other words, "For the sake of Allah" should be the ultimate condition underlying every noble intention, Salim concluded. As support for his contention he cited Surat Ibrahim of the Holy Qur'aan, verse 37, where it is recorded how Ibrahim prayed to Allah concerning his homeland:

"Our Lord, I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit near Thy Sacred House, that they may keep up prayer; we make the hearts of some people yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits; happily they may be grateful".¹⁰⁹

Salim explained that the land surrounding Allah's Sacred House was not wealthy, nor beautiful. It was a dry desert, an unproductive land devoid of vegetation, ringed by rocky hills, and severed from the outside world. This land offered nothing to its people, except for the opportunity to pray in Allah's Sacred House; the first religious house established by Man. Since that time, however, this land has become the great city of "Makkah Al-Musharafah", to which people come from all over the world. Whatever their race or color of their skin, people visit this country and feel a love for it akin to the love they have for their own fatherlands. People come to this place for no other purpose except to obey Allah's summons. This is true "love of one's country", or love of the fatherland that is solely motivated by the love of Allah, and in obedience to His orders. Therefore, Mother Indonesia would be truly fortunate if her sons take as their example such a love of the fatherland; one that shuns worldly goods and appearances, and is performed for the sake of Allah, Salim wrote.

¹⁰⁹ Agus Salim, "Nationalism and Patriotism," Mizan 4 (1984), p. 51

Sukarno responded to Salim's article on nationalism and patriotism, in an article entitled "Ke Arah Persatuan" (Towards Unity), in Fadjar Asia of 18 August 1928. He stated that the spirit of Indonesian nationalism had penetrated every level of society, according to those active in Indonesia's independence movement. The PNI as one of the organizations working for Indonesian independence was proud to be serving this spirit and working for the country's welfare and unity. In this, the PNI was trying to realize the truth of the proverb, "Unity brings strength"; by motivating Indonesians to join this movement, whether in the ranks of the PNI or any other movement. Hence, a sense of devotion and loyalty to Mother Indonesia was important, in order to strengthen the relations amongst Indonesia's political parties and to transform narrow party interests into the supreme interest; i.e. the interest of unity. Sukarno elucidated that it was his belief that Hadji Agus Salim's article was inspired by the spirit of unity, and that it was not Salim's intention to differentiate between the love of the fatherland and dedication to Mother Indonesia.

Sukarno also reiterated Salim's argument on how nations humiliated other nations in the name of their own country and for the sake of material wealth and prosperity. According to Sukarno, although this argument was not entirely clear to him, he did see that it had much relevance to the Indonesian nationalist movement or to should cause split in the effort toward gaining independence. Similarly, the article written by Sukarno in response to Salim's article was not intended to create a rivalry or to cause divisions between them. Rather, Sukarno stated, he hoped that his comments would reinforce the unity between them, especially since they were not intended to contradict, but to complement Salim's thoughts. Sukarno also stated his firm belief in the old proverb, "United we stand, divided we fall".

According to Sukarno, the nationalist sentiments which burned at the hearts of Indonesian nationalists were not aggressive nationalist sentiments, or a nationalism on the

offensive, or a wish to dominate the world, as exhibited by Western nationalism which is directed outwards, not inwards, and which calls for a worldly nationalism of an antagonistic nature. Rather, it is in the mainstream of Eastern nationalism as inspired by such great figures as Mahatma Gandhi, Mustafa Kamil and Sun Yat Sen, all of whom completely rejected Western nationalism. Indeed, it is this Eastern nationalism that has inspired Indonesian nationalism, Sukarno reminded Salim.

Furthermore, Indonesian nationalism is not based on arrogance, Sukarno stated, but is a broadminded type of nationalism that is complimented by a thorough knowledge of the structure of the world and the course of history; it is not jingoism or chauvinism, or a copy of Western nationalism. Indonesian nationalism has room for love of other nations, and for allowing the existence of all living things, he rendered. Indeed, Indonesian nationalism is no different from the nationalism espoused by the champions of Islam, such as Amanullah Khan, the King of Afghanistan who called himself "the servant of his country" or 'Uraabii Pasha who vowed that he would "go to heaven with Egypt or to hell also with Egypt". Sukarno and the followers of his party were convinced that the nationalism of these champions is essentially similar to Indonesian nationalism, and is a noble nationalism.¹¹⁰

Agus Salim's retort to Sukarno came in the form of an article written for Fadjar Asia on 20 August 1928. In it, Salim mentioned that he had already pointed out the similarities and differences between himself and Sukarno. According to Salim, both men shared the same sentiment of "love of country and nation," had the same purposes and goals of attaining "national dignity and national independence," and shared the same arena, "the arena of the political movement of the oppressed nation which demanded its natural rights, an undivided control over its own territory, an attainment of independence

¹¹⁰Sukarno, Under the Banner of Revolution, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Publication Committee, 1966). pp. 101-6.

from the alien nation from overseas, and freedom from the oppression of other nations." However, their differences lay in the basic principles and intentions that promoted these sentiments.

However, these differences are not insurmountable since both men shared a basic tenet, namely, Islam, and acted for the sake of God, Li/illaahi Ta'aala, Salim added. This meant that they were both willing to die for the sake of fulfilling His commands, would be happy if this were to occur in the process of winning, and would accept His determination without sadness or disappointment in the event of loss; after all, success and loss are both in the hands of the Almighty God. Salim maintained that their similarities should motivate them to cooperate and to strengthen the national unity, but it was their differences with regards to one's spiritual attitude, that had driven him to make the statement which had in turn prompted a reply from Sukarno.

In addition, Salim denied that his argument lacked clarity. Rather, it was meant to clarify what he agreed or disagreed about, without blaming or finding fault with anybody else. Salim also stated the nature and attitude of the PSI in relation to the matter he was discussing. For instance in article 16 of the PSI's principle statement, it was mentioned that with regards to cooperation with any political movement which sought to achieve the common purpose of considering worldly nature alongside Islamic tenets, the PSI would not allow its fate to depend on any international movement, but would affirm its independence and purposes vis-à-vis any other parties contended that his article did not in anyway threaten the national unity which had been agreed upon by PSI and PNI. Rather, it was a clear and factual account of the differences in the convictions and principles of both parties. That is also why the PSI had provided Sukarno with the opportunity to clarify his principles and convictions in the PSI's daily newspaper Fadjar Asia.

Agus Salim stated that he did not comment on the examples cited by Sukarno, because in his view it is most difficult to compare and judge the attitude and behaviour of

another individual. Every human being cannot be separated from his own virtues and weaknesses except when liberated by God from his mistakes and weaknesses. Therefore the example of the Prophet Ibrahim, who loved his country so deeply for the sake of Allah, was a compelling example of love of one's country, Salim affirmed. Ibrahim's love for his country was not engendered by secular controversies nor was it motivated by worldly pleasures, Salim declared.

As for the nationalist heroes and champions Sukarno had cited, Salim simply replied that do not praise them, they might do something wrong or betray their nation before they really passed away. Salim argued that the statement made by 'Uraabii Pasha on "going to heaven with Egypt, and also proceeding to hell with Egypt" referred to an earthly heaven and hell. "Heaven" is akin to independence while "hell" is equivalent to the oppression of the imperialists, he demonstrated. Salim refused to equate the Hereafter with one's fatherland, and rejected the argument that one's belief depended on one's worldly fatherland. Likewise he would not accept such blasphemy whether it was expressed by 'Uraabii Pasha or by a much better man. And, while Amanullah Khan had called himself 'the servant of the country', Khan's statement, in Salim's opinion, may have been inspired by affection for his fatherland, but his devotion was due only to Allah.

The last comment of Sukarno's that Agus Salim commented upon was the phrase, "United we stand, divided we fall", and to which Sukarno referred as two stakes upholding each other. This picture however did not agree with the PSI's convictions because, even though respecting unity is a command of Allah, the party did not need to lean on this unity but on Allah, as all Muslims must lean on Him alone. "For the sake of the Almighty" is the exact requirement for every single righteous intention if Muslims truly wish to pursue righteousness without striving for worldly gains, avoiding loss and evading calamity. "For the sake of Allah" is the basic principle underlying the struggle for independence. Because liberating a country from the tutelage of imperialists was not a

light matter and did not produce immediate advantages, there were many worldly temptations which might provoke the people to stray from the right path. Only the acknowledgment of Allah's restrictions would protect the purity of a true movement, Salim elucidated.

Agus Salim reminded his readers that at the beginning of almost every national movement "love of the nation and country" are just and pure slogans, particularly when these countries are subjugated and oppressed by other nations. However, a precept from the Holy Qur'aan surat Al 'Alaq, verse 6-7: ".....but yet man is rebellious, for he thinks he is sufficient in himself,"¹¹¹ demonstrates that the spirit of defending and struggling for independence is often superseded by the wish to defeat and to subdue other nations, once a nation has succeeded in achieving its own sovereignty.

In conclusion, there are two concepts according to Salim that must be kept in mind from the beginning: 1. Li/illaahi Ta 'aala, "For the sake of God", which is a concept that will eliminate fear and dread of mundane objects. 2. Virtue and righteousness should become the guiding principles for people in any endeavor.

Such polemics as illustrated by the exchange of Sukarno and Salim led to a split among the members of PPPKI, and this showed that the unity erected by the federation was not based on real consensus. The differences of purposes, ideology and personalities among the members were reasons for the cleavage within the federation. There was Sukarno and his fellow secular nationalists on the one hand, who believed that a nationalism irrespective of regional and religious bonds was a potential basis for Indonesian action. They were supported in this by the Indonesian students in the Netherlands who merged in a political group known as Perhimpunan Indonesia (PI-

¹¹¹ Ahmed Ali, Al-Qur'ân a Contemporary Translation (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993). p. 543

Indonesian Association) founded in 1922.¹¹² These students not only hailed the concept of a religiously neutral nationalism, but also regarded Islam as historically incapable of adapting to modernity and being one of the factors which caused a 300 year Dutch colonization of Indonesia. They therefore restricted religion (in this case Islam) to individual belief and worship, and maintained that the secular nationalism of the West was the best vehicle for gaining independence and establishing the Indonesian state. This viewpoint was strengthened by the emergence of a secular nation in the "Islamic region" such as Egypt, Persia and Turkey, which they regarded as dynamic and full of future promise.¹¹³

On the other hand, there was Agus Salim and other urban Islamic leaders who believed that Islam deserved to be recognized as a foundation for nationalism. This viewpoint received strong support from the prominent leaders of Persatuan Islam (Persis-Islamic Union) who roundly denounced nationalist ideals. These Modernist Muslim leaders disagreed with secular nationalism on the basis that it was created by men, caused divisions among Muslims worldwide and brought Western wars and colonialism. Furthermore, Persatuan Islam writers voiced the view that as a revelation from God, there could be no better basis than Islam for unifying the country; after all it was the religion of most Indonesians.¹¹⁴ As A. Hassan of Persis mentioned, the adoption of Islamic principles for the nationalist movement was fair because 90 % of the population was Muslim, while the other 10 % were believers of other religions whose rights would be equally respected by Islam.¹¹⁵ In other articles written in 1931 Mohammad Natsir, a

¹¹²Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia, p. 175.

¹¹³Howard M. Federspiel, Persatuan Islam Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1970), p. 85.

¹¹⁴Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia, p. 179.

¹¹⁵Federspiel, Persatuan Islam, pp. 87-8.

future Prime Minister, stated that "only Islam could be the basis of an Indonesian nationality, but for Muslims independence itself could not be the ultimate goal; rather, they must struggle for a state which would serve Islam and in which Islamic Law and Muslim leaders would be dominant."¹¹⁶

On the other hand, the 'secular' nationalists who began to dominate the Indonesian political arena highlighted the incapability of Sarekat Islam, with its Islamic national character, to mobilize the masses against continued Dutch rule in the fifteen years of existence. This failure had encouraged the new Indonesian leaders to create a new meaning of the concept of Indonesian nationalism. Thus, during the "stagnation period" of the SI (in the late 1920's) these leaders, represented by Sukarno, invented a new national culture devoid of any religious, regional or tribal nuances. Instead, the grandeurs of the past Hindu empires; Srivijaya and Majapahit, which, they asserted had already formed an Indonesian nation, were brought to the fore and exalted as worthy paradigms in the creation of a new Indonesia.¹¹⁷ This idea inspired those active in the political and youth movements to make frequent references to past glory, to Hinduism, Hindu gods, the Bhagawad Gita or other sacred Hindu books. Agus Salim regretted such unIslamic references and added that some people seemed disinterested in Islamic teachings. Indeed, they regarded as taboo any citations quoted either from Al-Qur'aan or from the Traditions of the Prophet Mohammad.¹¹⁸

In response to Sukarno's creation of a new Indonesian nationalism, Mohammad Natsir whose outlook paralleled that of Agus Salim, retaliated by tracing Indonesian nationalism from a historical point of view and stating that the Islamic movement was a

¹¹⁶Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia, p. 179.

¹¹⁷Federspiel, Persatuan Islam, pp. 88-9.

¹¹⁸Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 257.

paramount political action directed towards independence, and that it had already planted the seeds of Indonesian unity, by removing the barriers of isolation between the various islands and provincial regions. Islam was the first to sow the seeds of brotherhood among Muslims worldwide, Natsir added. And, only Islam has the ability to bind hundreds of thousands of members throughout the Indonesian Archipelago. Therefore, "here was no Indonesian nationalism without Islam", he concluded.¹¹⁹

If we refer back to Salim's article "Indonesia Merdeka," published on 14 May 1925 in Hindia Baroe, which was addressed to Indonesian students in the Netherlands, we will see why he suggested that the efforts of the PI (Indonesian association) in improving the fate of Indonesians, should imitate those of the Prophet Mohammad. He asserted that most of these young intellectuals were Muslims, and hence should apply a part of their Islamic heritage to their movement. Furthermore, according to the Neo-modernist Muslim scholar A. Syafii Maarif, the misunderstandings between the Muslims and the nationalists were caused by a limited number of nationalist leaders who knew nothing of Islam. Maarif further stated that Agus Salim's response to Sukarno's advocacy of nationalism was only a reminder that nationalism should not depart from God. Hence, the phrase "for the sake of Allah" was indeed very crucial for Salim. To Salim and others associated with an Islamic identity, such calls to emphasize Islamic illustrations seemed necessary as a part of Muslim faith, but many other Indonesians found such identification as unnecessary or unimportant. Hence Salim can be seen as a "renewer" of religious attitudes as well as a champion against Dutch colonial rule. In addition, Maarif believes that while there is no evidence in Salim's writings suggesting that he regarded nationalism

¹¹⁹ Federspiel, Persatuan Islam, p. 89. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 260.

as wholly incompatible with Islam, it is nevertheless clear that he did not want to see nationalism, in Indonesia, depart from the universalism of Islamic teachings.¹²⁰

Similarly, the highly respected Muslim activist and scholar Deliar Noer also commented upon Sukarno's refusal to accept Salim's understanding of the Prophet Ibrahim's love of his country, and the suggestion that Li'illaahi Ta'aala should serve as the basis of Indonesian nationalism. According to Noer, Salim believed that the concept of nationalism proposed by Sukarno would only result in imperialism and colonialism, which at that time, were being fiercely condemned by Indonesians. It was this difference in approach which impeded both figures from reaching any agreement on this point.¹²¹

In reviewing polemics raging through the Indonesian political scene of the late 1920's when the issue of nationalism was becoming an important motivation for Indonesians, the New Order economist Emil Salim declared that Salim's remarks anticipated and warned against the danger of love of the fatherland without control. According to Emil Salim, the difference between Sukarno and Agus Salim lay on how each would have answered the question, "What is the purpose of loving one's country?"¹²² Emil Salim believes that Sukarno's thinking was oriented towards the secular and the mundane, the here and now, while Agus Salim's starting point was "for the sake of Allah." Indeed, for Salim, love of the nation and love of the country developed because of and for the sake of Allah. Not surprisingly, these two attitudes towards love of the country provided alternate motivations for those committed to liberating Indonesia from Dutch colonialism. Interestingly though, one may note that this

¹²⁰ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, "Islam and Nationalism in Indonesia a Historical Perspective," Mizan 4 (1984), pp. 14-5.

¹²¹ Deliar Noer, "Mengalihkan Perhatian dari Persoalan Pokok," Media Dakwah 241(1994), pp. 50-1.

¹²² Emil Salim, "Li'illaahi Ta'aala," in Seratus Tahun Haji Agus Salim, Hazil Tanzil, et al. (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984).p. 480.

exchange of polemics did not greatly sour the relationship between Sukarno and Salim who subsequently sat on many of the same boards: e.g. the Committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence, the Small Committee (the Committee of 9), the Formulator Committee and others, which eventually resulted in the formulation of the Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945. The viewpoints of both Sukarno and Agus Salim can be seen in the first and third principles of the Pancasila, namely, "Belief in the One, Supreme God" and "The Unity of Indonesia."¹²³

The sessions held by the committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence (BPKI) were conducted during several months before the actual proclamation on 17 August 1945. During these sessions, the basic ideology of the state was discussed and members argued on whether Islam or Pancasila, should form the national foundation. However, there is no evidence that Agus Salim associated the state ideology with religion. Salim was also a member of the Committee of 9 (the Independence Preparatory Committee/PPKI), which made the Preamble of the Constitution of 1945, later known as the Jakarta Charter. When the chief of the Committee, Sukarno, delivered and defended the results of the Committee of 9 to the plenary session, he said, "Please receive this. This is a compromise which was achieved with difficulty between the nationalist group (5 people; Sukarno, Hatta, Moh. Yamin, Maramis and Ahmad Soebarjo) and the Muslims (4 people; Haji Agus Salim, Abikusno Tjokrosuyoso, Wahid Hasyim and Kahar Mudzhakir)". In this case, Salim must have agreed to the compromise, although in the plenary session, Wahid Hasyim still advocated Islam as the national foundation. Salim, however, stated that the members of the

¹²³Ibid, pp. 481-2.

Committee of 9 were tied by the achieved compromise, which resulted in the Jakarta Charter.¹²⁴

With regards to Salim's conception of the relation between the state and religion, Moh. Natsir declared that Salim's position on this matter was similar to Masyumi's (i.e., the leading Muslim political organization of the late 1940's). However, Salim's position was quite different from Kartosuwiryo's notion of an Islamic state (which was based on recognizing Kartosuwiryo as leader (imaam), immediate implementation of Islamic precepts (Syari'ah) and accepting no compromise with non-Islamic movements). Masyumi believed that the nation should be a means to an end. Furthermore, when Masyumi formulated its concept of how the state should be established, Salim asked its members if their position resembled Kartosuwiryo's? To which they replied with a resounding "no". Instead, Masyumi believed that the state should promote the cause of Islam and become the means of the realization of Islamic principles.¹²⁵

In conclusion, Salim's writings demonstrate that he paid attention to the well-being of his fellow countrymen whether economically, socially or politically. He demanded better living standards for Indonesians, called for equal treatment, justice, better education for both men and women and asked for political freedom. He was concerned with attainment of independence for all Indonesian aspects of life. Moreover, in implementing his ideas, Salim had a keen eye for reality. He knew social conditions well enough as to ascribe workable solutions that address real needs. As such, he advocate the highest education, as the ideal for the advancement of science and society. Meanwhile, he refused the use of armed force for the attainment of freedom, since he believed that force and violence would only hamper the movement of Indonesian

¹²⁴Ahmad Syafii Maarif, "Bapak Kaum Intelektual Muslim Indonesia", in Seratus Haji Agus Salim, Hazil Tanzil, et al. (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1984), pp. 243-5.

¹²⁵Ibid.

nationalism. All of these ideas sprang from his sincere devotion to his nation and fatherland. Not surprisingly, he became a well-known personality, as a true nationalist, a realist, and was respected by both Dutch and Indonesian at the same time.¹²⁶

Finally, by referring back to the exchange of polemics between Sukarno and Salim, one has to assert that the ideas of these two leading figures fueled the popular political movements and greatly contributed to the birth of the Republic of Indonesia. Moreover, these two perceptions of nationalism are recognized and regarded as crucial to the study of the early birth of Indonesian nationalism. They are also the reason why Sukarno is appreciated as the father of secular Indonesian nationalism, and Agus Salim as the founder of Indonesian Islamic nationalism.¹²⁷ It is significant that these two protagonists got on well together, that they could argue politely with one another and ultimately cooperate with one another in the final phases of Indonesia's actual birth as an independent nation. It is to Salim's credit that for whatever views Sukarno might espouse, he was ultimately like himself, a Muslim leader.

¹²⁶ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 158.

¹²⁷ Mizan's introduction to Salim's article, "Nationalism and Patriotism," p. 48.

CHAPTER III

THE INVOLVEMENT OF HAJI AGUS SALIM IN NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

A. The Horizon of Indonesian Nationalism

The word "nation" is derived from the Latin "natio", meaning birth or race, and originally indicated a tribe or social order built on an actual or imaginary community of descent and unity of language. However, since the seventeenth century the term "nation" has come to mean the population of a sovereign political state, regardless of any racial or linguistic unity. However when the word "nation" is transformed into "nationalism", it takes on various other meanings, depending on place and time.¹²⁸ Political, economic, and intellectual forces have made possible a new definition of nationalism, as an idea or movement which factually has its roots in the past.¹²⁹

First of all nationalism implies a process of factual historical events which establish nationalities as political systems, and which transforms tribes and empires into the modern institution of a nation. Within the modern institution of the nation, nationalism can grow and integrate the masses (of people) into a common political unit. Furthermore, in this development process nationalism indicates the theory, principle, or ideal underlying the consciousness of nationality and the political philosophy of the

¹²⁸ Carlton J.H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926). pp. 3-4.

¹²⁹ Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, a Study in Its Origins and Background (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956). p. 3

nation. Nationalism, therefore, exists in the form of a centralized government over a certain territory both factually and theoretically. Furthermore, nationalism is also referred to as a state of mind among members of the same nationality, a group of people speaking the same language and performing the same fashions of a nation; it is a state of mind in which allegiance to the theoretical or factual reality of one's nation is superior to others, in which there is pride in one's nation and belief in its deep-rooted qualities. The most evident consideration of nationalism has emerged in the twentieth century when, besides being seen as an historical process, it is primarily regarded as a state of mind which colours the thought, and conditions the movements in the political, social, and cultural domains of domestic politics and foreign relations. In this case, nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of one group's consciousness which can either concentrate on itself, others, or on different groups.¹³⁰

An example of this definition of nationalism, in the modern understanding, has emerged in twentieth century Indonesia.¹³¹ The consciousness of the masses converged on forming one community, in a national unity. The aspects of culture, religion, language were considered as decisive forces in building this national unity, while racial considerations were generally rejected. However, there was one very important factor in building the new nation; namely the "will" of the people to persist in forming this one nation, and to continue to live in one nation in the future. The "will", as a state of mind, has proven itself, historically, to be more substantial than other components in creating and sustaining the nation. This mental component of nationalism had the most influence on Indonesian leaders, who had studied Ernest Renan's theory of nationalism. Whether they were leaders of religiously neutral parties, such as the Indonesian National Party (PNI), or of the Islamic-oriented Sarekat Islam (SI), all of them emphasized this 'will'.

¹³⁰ Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, pp. 4-6. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, pp. 4, 10-1.

¹³¹ Noer, "Mengalihkan Perhatian," p. 50.

Nevertheless, there was a slight difference in the response of Muslim leaders, who promoted nationalism on the basis of their own convictions. They believed that Islam, which had kept them united for centuries, would continue to do so in the future. They also presumed that in any national state, there would always be a majority and a minority so that non-Muslims could still consolidate themselves as such in establishing the new nation state.¹³²

The birth of Indonesian nationalism was influenced by the prevailing new colonial policy, subsequently known as the Ethical Policy, which was launched by Queen Wilhelmina in January 1901. Theoretically, this Ethical Policy named education as its main priority as a result of the idea that the Netherlands owed a "debt of honour" to the Indonesian people.¹³³ As a result, the new educational policy gradually built more Dutch schools, which were attended by the young Indonesian elite; the children of civil servant families and noble families, thus producing, in small numbers, a great many educated people who later went on to organize various social and economic programs designed to improve the lives of their fellow Indonesians. These educated people later played a leading role in the achievement of Indonesian self-government and independence.¹³⁴ Kat Angelino had earlier anticipated that the creation of an intellectual elite would prove destructive to colonial interests, as it would engender a new consciousness and lead to certain revolutionary feelings.¹³⁵

¹³²Noer, Administration of Islam, p. 5. Ernest Gellner, Nation and Nationalism (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983). p. 53.

¹³³John Ingleson, Road to Exile: the Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927-1934. (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1980). p. 1. Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy, vol. 1, p. 379. Benda, The Crescent and The Rising Sun, p. 34.

¹³⁴Khoo Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism (Kuala Lumpur: Longman, 1977). p. 7.

¹³⁵Kat Angelino, Colonial Policy. Vol. 1, pp. 396, 398.

The atmosphere of change and reform provoked by the Ethical Policy received additional stimulus from developments in other parts of Asia. The "awakening of the East" which was growing in Asia, and was inspired by the victory of Japan over a Western power, namely Russia, in 1905, and the subsequent success of the Japanese in creating a modern Japan, on a par with European states, had a great impact on Indonesians. Similarly the termination of the autocratic government of the Manchus, followed by the declaration of a Chinese Republic in 1911 also roused a new consciousness among the Chinese in Indonesia. Moreover, the end of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines, followed by the Insurrection, and the American occupation at the turn of the century, as well as the triumphs of Kemal Attaturk against Western armed forces completed the awakening of the Indonesian people. Not surprisingly, these external events were watched closely by the advocates of Indonesian political progress, particularly, since they no longer accepted in their inferiority vis-à-vis the Dutch, or their inability to conduct their affairs without Dutch assistance.¹³⁶

In Indonesia, where Muslims were the majority, the Islamic revival in the Middle East had an equally important influence on helping the Islamic faith adapt to the requirements of modern life, particularly since those Muslims who adhered to traditional practices had hindered the making of advancements in science, economics and politics. This new conception of Islam also had an effect on rallying opposition against Christian efforts at proselytization as well as other secular, political and economic influences.¹³⁷

Therefore, in a sense, the emergence of a new intellectual elite can be seen as a product of the Ethical Policy, as well as a movement partly inspired by the "Awakening of the East", as a result of the modernist Islamic revival. These Indonesian Muslims were

¹³⁶ Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, p. 35. Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, pp. 5,7. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution, p. 50

¹³⁷ Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, p. 7

also united in an Islamicly oriented movement; i.e. Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union), which was the first Indonesian mass movement to command "the center of the stage of the Indonesian nationalist movement".¹³⁸

Historically, the Dutch occupation of Indonesia, which continued from the early seventeenth century to 1942 always aroused the patriotic and heroic spirit of the people. Thus, the sense of nationalism in the contemporary history of Indonesia appears as a manifestation of revolutionary patriotism vis-à-vis colonialism and imperialism.¹³⁹ In this matter, Islam tended to be a symbol of local patriotism, aimed at opposing the aggressive colonialism of Western powers. For example, the Dipenogoro War (1825-1830) in Java, the Padri War (1831-1839) in West Sumatra, the Aceh War (1874-1904) and other armed struggles all called for a holy war to be waged against the infidels. Therefore, since the arrival of the Dutch, Islam had come to lead the opposition against this alien authority even though most such actions ended unsuccessfully. However, these revolts were the forerunners of a later and much more critical one, namely Sarekat Islam; an organized, expressive movement and a modern and mature nationalist movement which emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁴⁰

As an intrinsic part of nationalist self-identity (pergerakan) in Indonesia, SI became entrenched in the social, economic, religious and political fields and managed to leave its mark on Indonesian life. For example, in the social sphere SI was able, together with its local branches, to render assistance to the families of dead members. Similarly, the members of the local branches helped the family of the dead member with funeral

¹³⁸ George McTurnan Kahin, "Indonesian Politics and Nationalism," in Asian Nationalism and the West, William L. Holland, ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953). pp. 68-9.

¹³⁹ Maarif, "Islam and Nationalism," p. 10.

¹⁴⁰ J. D. Legge, Indonesia (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965). pp. 52-3, 112. Kahin, "Indonesian Politics," p. 67.

expenses and accompanied them to the cemetery. In the economic sphere SI was even more influential. It succeeded, for example, in establishing various types of cooperatives to maximize the commercial potential of its members and to help them confront the tough competition presented by Chinese and foreign traders. Through the cooperatives, SI also organized toko (small shops), warung (street stalls), trading and transport companies, and other such enterprises. In the religious field, it promoted schools and educational curricula on the basis of Islamic modernism. Moreover, throughout these activities, SI stressed the concept of gotong royong (mutual cooperation),¹⁴¹ a concept of cooperation long in common practice in Indonesian motherland.¹⁴²

As the first mass political movement, SI left a rich legacy on the Indonesian soil. During its peak, it had in fact succeeded in igniting discontent among the masses throughout Indonesia, in capturing their imaginations and making them dream of the day when they would be free of Dutch colonialism. Besides, SI also succeeded in breaking through the ethnic and regional mind-sets of Indonesians, which marked psychological attitudes during the colonial era. Thus, it established the first nation-wide political movement; an important phenomenon in Indonesian history.¹⁴³ Its achievements as the first organization able to voice popular complaints and to awaken the people to the power of unified action, was certainly an important contribution to Indonesian political life. As the American Fred von der Mehden observed, it was this ability to break the icons of the past and to lead Indonesians to the final victory, that was its legacy to Indonesia.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ A.P.E. Korver, "Islamic Movement," in Born in Fire. The Indonesian Struggle for Independence, Colin Wild and Peter Carey, ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988), pp. 17, 19.

¹⁴² John Sullivan, Inventing and Imagining Community: Two Modern Indonesian Ideology. (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University, 1991). pp. 1, 12.

¹⁴³ Korver, "Islamic Movement," p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ Fred R. von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism in Southeast. Burma. Indonesia. the Philippines (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), p. 217.

Another indication of SI's contribution to the creation of a new Indonesian state was the large number of trained political leaders that emerged from it. One of them was Haji Agus Salim, the subject of this thesis. In commenting on SI's greatest achievement, Salim stated: "Hunger makes a child scream, a larger child to question and a great man to seek." This statement means that in the early periods Indonesians cried and questioned, but then the SI made them think and act. Indeed, it is through this process that this Islamic nationalist movement was able to provide the transition from submission to practical opposition to the Dutch.¹⁴⁵

B. Haji Agus Salim and his Involvement with Sarekat Islam

Sarekat is derived from the Arabic word sharika meaning a brotherhood or trade group. However, because of the Javanese pronunciation, it became Sarekat.¹⁴⁶ Sarekat Islam was established in Surakarta on 11 November 1911 under the name Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI- Islamic trading union). Haji Samanhudi founded this organization in response to two things: 1) the increasingly tough competition posed by Chinese traders to the Javanese batik market and the aggressive attitudes shown by the former after the success of the Chinese revolution in 1911; and 2) the oppressiveness of the Solo nobility towards other Indonesians.¹⁴⁷ The SDI soon dropped the word dagang to give less emphasis to its commercial activities. It also changed its name into Sarekat Islam, in order to better reflect its membership, activities and objectives. To run the association, Samanhudi chose H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto who had been trained in administrative sciences in the Western style. He was a civil servant known for his charismatic personality,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ C. C. Berg, "Sarekat Islam," in First Encyclopaedia of Islam 1913- 1936, vol. VII, ed. M. Th. Houtsma et al. (Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill, 1987). p. 163

¹⁴⁷ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 102

courage and eloquence.¹⁴⁸ When Tjokroaminoto assumed the leadership of SI, he helped define its objectives which included the promotion of Indonesian commerce, education, the Islamic way of life, and the removal of false beliefs and wrong practices from Indonesian Islam.¹⁴⁹ The last objective was a goal proposed by those Indonesians belonging to the Modernist faction of Indonesian Islam. From the beginning then SI acknowledged itself to be a Modernist Islamic-oriented group.

At the beginning, SI declared that it was not a political movement and that it would maintain its loyalty to the Dutch Administration entirely. This assertion was intended to bring the SI in line with Government Regulation 111 which noted that political features of organizations and meetings were completely forbidden.¹⁵⁰ Since SI had already attracted a large membership, there was interest in the country's politics among its members. Governor General Idenburg apparently sensing this political proclivity refused the SI headquarter's request for recognition as an organization in 1913, but did grant the SI branches this legal status.¹⁵¹ At the same time the Idenburg government did allow Centraal Sarekat Islam (CSI) to serve as coordinator among all the SI branches in Surabaya in 1915.¹⁵² Later, 1916 full status was given to the CSI.¹⁵³

After the CSI was recognized by the government, the membership of SI rose significantly among Indonesians. It probably reached the peak of its popularity after 1915. With its membership close to half a million people, it had already spread outside of

¹⁴⁸ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 33

¹⁴⁹ Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, p. 47

¹⁵⁰ Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution, p. 68

¹⁵¹ Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak, pp. 32-3.

¹⁵² Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, p. 48.

¹⁵³ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, p. 117.

Java and had a large following in South Sumatra (Lampung), Southeast Kalimantan (Banjarmasin), as well as the Batavia area.¹⁵⁴ Hence, during SI's first national congress of 1916 in Bandung, delegations came from all over Java, Bali, Sumatra and Sulawesi. In fact, the congress itself was attended by approximately 16,000 people of all walks of life.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, within four years of its establishment, its membership numbered 360,000 and by 1919, its membership had attained almost two and a half million. Its program of militant political action, threatening the use of force, seems to have been spur to growth of the organization.¹⁵⁶

The sudden emergence and popularity of SI astonished the colonial regime as well as many Indonesians. This development was explained by its leadership who declared that the SI had already been alive in the hearts of Indonesians long before its arrival. Accordingly, when SI came into being, people joined it with the intention of seeking the justice which had eluded them earlier.¹⁵⁷ SI's success can also be attributed to its ability to attract followers from all classes: the urban and rural populations, Muslim merchants and laborers, Islamic scholars (ulamaa) and Islamic teachers (kiyayi), the noble Javanese (priyayi) and educated young Javanese, and above all the peasants.¹⁵⁸ The historian, Harry J. Benda has described SI as the first and last political mass movement in colonial Indonesia.¹⁵⁹ The sociologist, van Niel, described it as: "the magnet that drew the members was the appeal of Islam, within Islam it seems particularly to have been the

¹⁵⁴ Korver, "Islamic Movement," p.18

¹⁵⁵ Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak, p. 33

¹⁵⁶ Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution, pp. 65-6.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, pp. 68, 69.

¹⁵⁸ Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, pp. 41-2.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 42

hope of closer communal and brotherly ties that exercised the greatest attraction: i.e., factors of life which Ethical-Policy inspired changes had not been able to fill".¹⁶⁰

There was another reason for the popularity of the movement, which related to cultural beliefs and hopes of the general population. Around 1900 the great majority of Indonesians were overwhelmingly Muslim, whose Islam had been influenced by Buddhistic-Hinduistic beliefs which, in turn, inspired spiritual-animistic tenets and fueled mystical concepts. At this time, latent popular beliefs in a messiah rose in force among the general population, an individual who would liberate them from the Dutch tutelage.¹⁶¹ This legend forecast a Javanese revival in which a legendary King of Kediri would emerge as the expected Messiah, end their sufferings, introduce a better life and create a new golden age for Indonesia.¹⁶²

In the early stage of its development, the SI was attached to this mystical-traditional belief in the expected messiah (the saviour), or the Ratu Adil (righteous prince). Moreover, this expectation was seen by some as having been fulfilled in the person of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, the leader of SI.¹⁶³ He was the first figure to be seen as the expected messiah since Prince Dipenogoro who fought in the Java War (1825-1830). As such, he was adored as that ideal figure because of his dramatic and charismatic personality, as well as his name which is similar to that of the Ratu Adil, Prabu (King) Heru Tjokro. It may account for Tjokroaminoto becoming the first modern Indonesian to

¹⁶⁰ van Niel, The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian, p. 114

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁶² C.C. Berg, "Indonesia," in Whither Islam?, H.A.R. Gibb, ed. (London: Victor Gollancz, 1932), p. 276.

¹⁶³ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, pp. 105, 106.

achieve recognition on a national level.¹⁶⁴ This popular belief was prevalent in SI at the time Haji Agus Salim joined the movement.

Haji Agus Salim joined the Centraal Sarekat Islam before it held its congress in Surabaya in 1915. His early devotion to the movement soon made him a member of its administrative committee. SI's congress in Surabaya chose Tjokroaminoto as the top leader followed by Abdul Muis, Sosrokardono, Suryopranoto, Agus Salim, Wondoamiseno, and Alimin Prawirodirjo, who occupied secondary positions.¹⁶⁵

Salim, who had worked in Consulate of the Netherlands in Jeddah for five years (during which time he had studied Islamic religious writings and teachings), felt strongly inclined towards the Modernist Islamic stance, which had become a growing force in the Middle East at the turn of the century.¹⁶⁶ One of modernist Islamic chief principles was to banish beliefs and practices from Muslim society which challenged Islamic teachings. Since his first acquaintance with Tjokroaminoto, he was impressed by him and apparently joined the movement because Tjokroaminoto was its leader. Still Agus Salim did not like the exaggerated respect and reverence shown to Tjokroaminoto by the masses, who regarded him as the realization of the Ratu Adil.¹⁶⁷ He was also surprised that an Modernist Islamicly oriented movement did little to dispel such beliefs by the general membership. As the Indonesian Ethnologist Hasan Djajadiningrat, a Commissioner of the CSI, wrote in Oetoesan Hindia (newspaper of SI), Tjokroaminto himself could not shake this belief from himself except by the will of God.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, pp. 156-7.

¹⁶⁵ Salam, Hadji Agus Salim, p. 78.

¹⁶⁶ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, pp. 117-8.

¹⁶⁷ Abdullah, "Haji Agus Salim," pp. 213-4.

¹⁶⁸ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 157

Salim, a Sumatran, had limited appreciation for Javanese traditions and culture, quite apart from the fact that he wanted to implement the modernist Islamic concepts to which he subscribed. Thus, early in his membership, he talked to Tjokroaminoto about the dangers of the people's adoration and their high expectations; Tjokroaminoto seemed to agree. Furthermore, Salim wanted to disassociate the concept of the Ratu Adil from the movement for practical reasons as well. He had been educated in a Western institution with rationalism as its basis, and believed that the idea of the Ratu Adil was dangerous for the movement, as it necessitated an external force quite beyond the power of SI's leadership. Salim's stance was adopted by the central leadership of the movement and after 1915 the Ratu Adil appeals were very purposefully suppressed. A new base, more in tune with orthodox Islam was adopted.¹⁶⁹

In response to the abolition of this Messianic ideal, many common people became deeply disappointed. Unfortunately, there are no satisfactory data about the extent of the people's disillusionment or the number of people who left the party as a result of it. The German historian Dahm mentions that the growth of the party's membership had peaked at the time, and that 100,000 members left the party because of its failure to declare the expected kingdom of Prabu Heru Tjokro. However, he mentioned that this had happened in 1914, while the messianic expectation had, in fact, been successfully restrained only after 1915. On the other hand, he had also stated that the loss was insignificant because the political function of SI had simultaneously risen, thus promoting new membership. The new membership came from the spread of SI to the outer islands thereby making it "a country-wide movement".¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 157-8.

¹⁷⁰ Dahm, History of Indonesia, p. 45.

However, at this point the mystical and traditional Ratu Adil beliefs were not the only reason people continued or discontinued their adherence to SI. SI had spread to small villages by local religious teachers or religious authorities whose position possessed much religious zeal and influence. Indeed, their position was strong enough that they could often threaten the authority of secular authorities, particularly in the supra-village administration. Dutch colonial policies, especially those which attempted to exploit the villages and transform them into production units, were greatly resented and thereby "created the necessary moods and sentiments which led to the burgeoning membership of the SI".¹⁷¹

Since his first involvement with SI, Agus Salim seems to have exercised a measure of influence on the party. A case in point is the removal of all messianic appeals from SI; an act which was regarded as one of his earliest achievements. However, during that early stage in the SI's development, Salim's influence was not apparent and he certainly was not as popular as Abdul Muis and Suryopranoto, for instance. Later, Agus Salim was able to exercise a critical influence on the policies and tactics of SI and to paint these with the colour of Islam. Still, over time Salim can be said to have played a highly significant role on Indonesian affairs.¹⁷²

Even though SI's leadership was composed of urban-born graduates of Dutch schools, the SI was in no way subject to a Western orientation. These graduates derived their primary inspiration from Islam, although resorting at times to non-religious models. By the time the orthodox Islamic tenets were introduced to the rural people, SI was intrigued by the Marxist social theory which began to make its presence felt among the members of the CSI. Moreover, these ideas gained the support of many intellectuals in

¹⁷¹ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, pp. 20-1, and pp. 114-5.

¹⁷² Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 109-10. van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, pp. 118, 119.

the central leadership of SI. And, although Marxism can, to some extent, live side by side with Islam, the central leadership of SI finally had to make the choice of which master to serve.¹⁷³

Marxism, with its anti-imperialist message, was brought to Indonesia by Westerners at about the same time as SI was beginning to take shape. The founder and first leader of the Indies Social Democratic Organization (ISDV) was H.J.F. Sneevliet, a Dutchman who formed this organization in 1914.¹⁷⁴ Sneevliet's organization was under the influence of communist efforts in Russia, that emphasized unity with like-minded liberal forces. The ISDV wanted to propagate its socialist ideas among the Indonesians. However, since it had only a few members, all of whom were Europeans, who knew little about Indonesian affairs, Sneevliet approached SI, which commanded the greatest popularity in the country, as an obvious choice for transmitting his socialist ideals to the masses.¹⁷⁵ SI was receptive to radicalism at the time.¹⁷⁶

As a result, the ISDV succeeded in infiltrating the Sarekat Islam. This success was partly realized because its program was similar to that of SI, since both organizations were opposed to capitalism. ISDV success can also be attributed to its reliance on Semaun and Darsono, who were native Indonesians, who could infiltrate the SI. These two young men were on the membership board of SI as well as ISDV. Moreover, the success of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 had a great impact on national movements in Indonesia, especially on this Marxist-oriented organization (ISDV). As a result, ISDV quickly rose and identified itself as the left wing of SI, penetrated the

¹⁷³ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, pp. 119-20.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 121, 123.

¹⁷⁵ Ruth McVey, "Early Indonesian Communism," in Born in Fire. The Indonesian Struggle for Independence, Colin Wild and Peter Carey, ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988). p. 22

¹⁷⁶ Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution, pp. 71-2. McVey, "Early Indonesian Communism," p. 22.

leadership ranks and policies of SI and recruited a large number of SI members.¹⁷⁷ The communists then made a considerable number of nationalist appeals to obtain public support.¹⁷⁸

Marxism developed quickly in the districts where SI was strongest. Socialism became the symbol of modernity of opposition to imperialism, and of bringing social justice, prosperity and independence to Indonesia.¹⁷⁹ Then, as these circumstances developed, religion become less and less a cornerstone of SI's ideology and leadership. Marxists began opposing the Islamic leadership and rejected the religious basis as a symbol of nationalism. For these reasons, the Marxists chose a branch of SI in Semarang as the major center for their activities. The revolutionary activities of the Semarang branch provided fertile ground for the socialist ideals and activities. Not surprisingly, by the end of World War I, SI was shaken by an internal conflict between the Marxists and the central leadership.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the growing strength of the leftists endangered the unity of SI. Many people began leaving the movement. Those who remained in the movement became more radical. To counter the growing power of the Semarang group, some prominent SI leaders led by Agus Salim and Abdul Muis founded a right wing in Yogyakarta, a move which the communist wing declared to be a government-sponsored effort.¹⁸¹

The activities of the ISDV, represented by Semaun and his friend, shook SI's leadership. Abdul Muis was the first to anticipate the danger of ISDV's activities and in

¹⁷⁷ Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, pp. 32, 35.

¹⁷⁸ Harry J. Benda and Ruth McVey, The Communist Uprisings of 1926- 1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1960). p. xxv .

¹⁷⁹ McVey, "Early Indonesian Communism," p. 22.

¹⁸⁰ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, pp. 54, 55, 57.

¹⁸¹ Dahm, History of Indonesia, p.52. McVey, "Early Indonesian Communism," p. 25.

Neratja 29 September 1917, he wrote that Sneevliet seemed to have sowed dissension in the body of SI, an act which not only made him dangerous to the movement, but to Indonesian people in general. As such, Muis demanded that the colonial government expel the latter from Indonesia; a sentiment shared by both Agus Salim and Sosrokardono, another prominent leader of SI. Moreover, Salim believed that the leftists wanted to disseminate more of the European divisive ideas to Indonesia.¹⁸²

Abdul Muis, who had been gaining popularity since the early development of the party, had joined the Centraal Sarekat Islam on the request of Tjokroaminoto in 1912. He was a well-educated Indonesian (a graduate of STOVIA, a medical school in Batavia) and had a revolutionary attitude; a characteristic much needed in the Sarekat Islam movement. Muis was born in Bukittinggi (West Sumatra) in 1878 and came from a noble and religious family. His early career was mostly spent as a journalist and writer, especially since he did not like working for Dutch companies.¹⁸³ Similar to Agus Salim, Muis was much inclined to Modernist Islamic stance. He met Salim for the first time when he became the chief editor of Neratja; Salim was his assistant. Both men were Minangkabau (West-Sumatrans) and were involved in the same committees of the SI. Their similar origin, their affinity in particular characteristics and their activities in the movement seemed to create in them a similar attitude towards the party's policies, especially those aimed at counterbalancing leftist activities.

At the second National Congress in 1917, the radical communists began to dominate the party and wanted to take up a fight against capitalism, while Tjokroaminoto and Agus Salim, on the other hand, were inclined to combat "sinful" capitalism only, i.e. Western capitalism which exploited Indonesia to the advantage of foreign countries. As a

¹⁸²Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 122.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

result, the SI restated its opposition to "sinful" capitalism, which was viewed as the primary reason for the economic deterioration of the majority of Indonesian people at that time.¹⁸⁴ At the second congress, SI also deliberated the question of the Volksraad (People's Council), which was to be set up in 1918, and sundry opinions were voiced concerning SI's participation in that body. Abdul Muis affirmed, since the first national congress in 1916, the importance of the party's participation in the Volksraad as a step towards the establishment of a real representative council with policy powers. Semaun, a leftist, had, on the other hand, asserted that the Volksraad was "merely a nonsensical show, a trick of the capitalists to deceive people in order to gain more profits". However, the party's final decision reflected Abdul Muis's view, and it was decided to participate in the Volksraad.¹⁸⁵

The question emerged again when Tjokroaminoto was appointed by the Dutch East Indies Administration to sit in the People's Council on 23 February 1918 with Abdul Muis as representative from Batavia. The local Sarekat Islam branches and the Central SI had also confirmed this appointment. It was who believed that SI's participation in that body would convince the Dutch Administrators of the deteriorating conditions of the Indonesian people. As such, the Volksraad was regarded as a forum for expressing the party's demands. Agus Salim, in this case, held the same views.¹⁸⁶ During the following years, SI decided to cooperate with the Dutch colonial authorities through the Volksraad.

During the First World War (1914-1918), communications between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies were interrupted and the Dutch East Indies government made decisions without consultation with the Hague. During this time frame

¹⁸⁴ W.F. Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition A Study of Social Change (The Hague, Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1956). pp. 71, 216. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 113

¹⁸⁵ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 115-6.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 116.

the Indonesian political movement insisted on extending the people's participation in government and expressed dissatisfaction with the establishment of local and regional councils. In response, the Dutch colonial government decided to establish the Central Advisory Council, named the Volksraad, on 18 May 1918.¹⁸⁷ This council was comprised of 39 members; a chairman who was to be appointed by the Crown, and others, half of whom were to be appointed by the Governor General, while the other half were to be elected by indirect choice. The Volksraad had only advisory powers, but it was given the rights of free expression, of petition, and of questioning.¹⁸⁸

From the first Volksraad meeting in 1918, SI's representatives, namely Tjokroaminoto and Muis, constantly attacked the government's social, economic and political programs. The economic improvement of the Indies was condemned by them for being wholly targeted towards the Europeans and their interests, while ignoring the Indonesian population.¹⁸⁹ Tjokroaminoto and Muis also voiced the demand for a full parliament, that would be gradually established. Thus, the growth of revolutionary forces in the Volksraad together with political instability in the Netherlands prompted Governor General Mr. Graaf van Limburg Stirum to promise a wide extension of the Volksraad's authority and zelf bestuur (self government) for Indonesia at a Volksraad meeting on 18 November 1918. This event was named the De November-beloften van 1918 (the November Promise of 1918). Unfortunately, the colonial government stalled on its promise, which was never fully realized.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, p. 35. Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, p. 37.

¹⁸⁸ Vandenbosch, The Dutch East Indies, pp. 111-2.

¹⁸⁹ Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, pp. 18-9.

¹⁹⁰ Salam, Haji Agus Salim, p. 96. Wertheim, Indonesian Society, p. 70. Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," p. 64. Sukarno, Under The Banner of Revolution, p. xii

In a Volksraad meeting on 25 November 1918, SI's representatives made several demands to the colonial government, such as the swift establishment of a parliament elected by the people, the granting of full rights to all the inhabitants of the Indies and the establishment of a government responsible to parliament. This motion was not well received by the government and did not lead to any concrete results. Not surprisingly, the Volksraad was often a disappointment to the Indonesian nationalists, especially since it did not have the power to meet their demands or aspirations, together with the fact that the Dutch Administration seemed intransigent in its opposition to reform. Thus, the question of the movement's participation in the Volksraad was brought up once again. Sosrokardono, the secretary of the Centraal Sarekat Islam requested that Tjokroaminoto and Muis resign from the council, while Agus Salim, insisted on continued participation in the Volksraad, which he believed could function as a training ground for SI's political concerns. He acknowledged, however, that the people's fate did not and could not rely on it. Furthermore, Salim reminded his peers of their party's decision at the second national congress in 1917 on this subject. He also stated that the Party could only withdraw its representatives in the Volksraad, if the latter's activities violated SI's principles.¹⁹¹

As a result of its frustration with the Colonial Administration the SI gradually succumbed to suspicion of colonial government policy and evolved into an opponent of that government. Tjokroaminoto, who did not see much benefit in attending the council withdrew from it, but allowed his position to be filled by Agus Salim in 1921. The latter continued to struggle for the movement and to promote the Indonesian cause by launching a rabid attack on the colonial government.¹⁹² The different attitudes between the "sini" and "sana" people (the people "over-here" and those "over-there"), which

¹⁹¹ Salam, Haji Agus Salim, p. 97. Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, p. 19. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 117.

¹⁹² Salam, Haji Agus Salim, p. 97.

distinguished the brown and the white people, was the main controversy in the Volksraad.¹⁹³ The terms "sini" and "sana" were first coined by Salim who popularized the concepts in the editorials of Neratja, where he became editor-in-chief after Abdul Muis left. He skillfully used Neratja as a forum for discussing and comparing the attitudes of the rulers and the ruled; those editorials solidified the nationalist position on the issue. At the hands of Salim, Neratja not only deliberated political concerns, but also reinforced the nationalist point of view on these matters.¹⁹⁴

However, Salim's struggle for five years (1921-1925) ended without positive result, a fact which made him change his political attitude from cooperation to non-cooperation. At the end, he came to believe that the struggle and aspirations of SI could not be achieved through the Volksraad. A case in point is the withdrawal of the "November Promise of 1918", which was not realized until 1925. Not surprisingly, Salim labeled the Volksraad a komedi omong (a comedy theater).¹⁹⁵ According to him, there was no place in a colonial relationship for sentimental politics or the expectation of sympathy from the colonialists, since all matters were defined by facts and numbers.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, he believed that SI's participation in the Volksraad only strengthened the colonial government and restrained the attempts to achieve independence, even though, individual members of the Volksraad were provided with a better life. Salim decided that "non-cooperation" with the Dutch Administration was the obvious choice for Sarekat Islam.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Berg, "Indonesia," p. 281.

¹⁹⁴ Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 25.

¹⁹⁵ Salam, Haji Agus Salim, p. 97. Sukarno, Under the Banner of Revolution, p. xii. Woodman, The Republic of Indonesia, p. 112. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 117.

¹⁹⁶ Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 39.

¹⁹⁷ Roem, "Memimpin adalah Menderita," p.52.

Salim's convictions were crucial in convincing the SI to withdraw its participation from the Volksraad¹⁹⁸ This 'non-cooperation' attitude was the same as that held by the Indonesian Association (PI) in the Netherlands, as well as the Indonesian National Party (PNI) of Sukarno.¹⁹⁹ At the time, the Volksraad was dominated by a majority of Europeans, who were appointed by the colonial government, and whose function was to give advice to the Governor General. Hence, Indonesian demands received scant attention in this framework.²⁰⁰

It was at the third national congress of 1918, that the SI embraced ideas of a revolutionary nature, accompanied by a certain amount of socialist doctrines. This acceptance was unavoidable since the central leadership considered the increasing number of Marxist-oriented local branches to be a factor in maintaining the unity of SI.²⁰¹ This third congress was also marked by sharp accusations exchanged between the right wing of the organization, headed by Salim and Muis, and the left wing, led by Semaun and Darsono. Tjokroaminoto, reflecting the traditional role of Javanese leadership, attempted to reconcile the two groups. As a result, the left wingers were given seats on the governing body of the party in exchange for a promise to stop their attacks on "the Islamic wing." This cooperative approach by the communists was engineered by their spiritual father, Sneevliet, just prior to his banishment from the Indies in 1918 for rebellion.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 26.

¹⁹⁹Roem, "Memimpin adalah Menderita," p. 52.

²⁰⁰Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, p. 19.

²⁰¹Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," p. 65

²⁰²Dahm, History of Indonesia, p. 53

The central leadership of SI had tried to adapt Socialism, as established by Karl Marx, to Islamic teachings. Salim was the person who made the draft combining the concepts of Marxism-socialism and Islam. However, he himself did not accept this approach. He declared that the Prophet Mohammad, God's messenger, had preceded Marx by 12 centuries; accordingly, socialism was an old concept. The word socialism was coined in the 19th century, he continued, and Marxist socialism was really atheism. On the other hand, the purposes of that ideology, such as the realization of sama rata sama rasa (equality and solidarity) within society and the end to poverty were also aims sought by Islam. Salim also lamented that Islamic scholars in Indonesia had traditionally emphasized religious service and jurisprudence, while neglecting the social aspects of Islam. He stated that these aspects were also part of God's commands and were mentioned in the Qur'aan. Salim recognized that Tjokroaminoto had shown "socialism in Islam" through his promotion of welfare efforts in Indonesian Muslim society; these acts had Salim's support.²⁰³

Following this, Salim became involved in the Persatuan Perserikatan Kaum Buruh (PPKB- the Federation of Labour Unions) which was established on 15 December 1919.²⁰⁴ He and other SI leaders sat on the board of one of the committees of this federation; Semaun served as chairman, Salim was the secretary, and Suryopranoto, an advocate of Islamic socialism, as vice-chairman.²⁰⁵ At the National Congress of the Party in 1919, Suryopronoto was also chosen as vice-president of the Centraal Sarekat Islam (CSI). He wanted to remove the seat of the federation of Labor Unions from Semarang to Yogyakarta, a plan which Semaun denounced as an effort to banish the

²⁰³Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 31

²⁰⁴Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 121.

²⁰⁵The other appointed members to the committee were Bergsma as treasurer, and Alimin and Tejomartoyo as commissioners. (Takashi Shiraishi, An Age in Motion Popular Radicalism in Java 1912-1926 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990). p. 220).

Communist group, for Yogyakarta was the center of Islamic Modernism in Java. As a result, the two wings of the SI launched attacks against each other. When these attacks did not abate, Semaun decided to dissolve the PPKB in June 1921 and to establish a new federation under the name Revolutionaire Vak Centrale (RVC-Revolutionary Federation of Labour Unions). Suryopranoto, on the other hand, declared that the PPKB would continue despite the withdrawal of Semaun and his communist friends from the federation at a meeting held on 3 July 1921. In addition, some of the most important supporters of the PPKB, namely the pawnshop employees' union (PPPB- Persatuan Pegawai Pegadaian Bumiputra), which at the time was under the leadership of Tjokroaminoto, Muis and Salim, determined to end all relations with the Communist group at its congress in July 1921.²⁰⁶

On 23 May 1920, the ISDV was transformed into the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI- Communist Party of Indonesia) which became the principal instrument of the left wing. Semaun acted as the president of the new party while Darsono served as its vice-president. However, the left wing members maintained their membership in the SI, since they had not given up on the hope of converting SI's ideology into a communist one.²⁰⁷ However, these changes led Agus Salim to oppose the continued membership of the left wingers within Sarekat Islam ²⁰⁸

The presence of two opposed factions without an agreed program of cooperation was a source of great disturbance within the party. Strategy of how to deal with the Volksraad and labour units illustrate this lack of cooperation with each other. What is more, Darsono accused Tjokroaminoto of embezzling party funds and otherwise attacked

²⁰⁶Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 121. Ruth T. McVey, The Rise of Indonesian Communism (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968). pp. 91, 101.

²⁰⁷Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," p. 76

²⁰⁸Rose, Indonesia Free, p. 12

his leadership in 1920. And, although Tjokroaminoto was reconciled with Darsono at the National Congress of 2-6 March 1921, Agus Salim, Abdul Muis and possibly Suryopranoto began to re-think the party's principles and to champion the application of party discipline, in which members could belong only to the SI, while those insisting on allegiance to other parties, i.e., the leftists, could be expelled.²⁰⁹ This sentiment later reached a peak at the national congress of October 1921.

The fifth national congress on 2-6 March 1921, was attended by only 50 branches, in contrast to the third congress of 1918 which had been attended by 87 local groups. In fact the increasing power of the leftists had caused many members to leave the party. However, at this congress, Salim presented a new set of principles combining both Marxist-socialist theories and modernist Islamic ideas, which were approved by Tjokroaminoto and the Executive board of the Centraal Sarekat Islam.²¹⁰ This mixed policy statement indicated that the CSI was still determined to maintain the unity of the party.

Alas, the ideological conflict between the Muslims and Communists reached its climax at the sixth National Congress held on 6-10 October 1921; Tjokroaminoto did not attend because of his imprisonment for eight months (1920-1921) for supposed involvement in a clandestine plot, known as the section B Affair.²¹¹ The most controversial topic at the sixth national congress was party discipline. Agus Salim, who acted as spokesman for the rightists, took the offensive and was backed by Abdul Muis. He stated that party discipline must be maintained in order to promote a cordial relationship between the members and to maintain the basis of the movement; i.e. Islam.

²⁰⁹Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 122-3.

²¹⁰Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," pp. 81-3.

²¹¹Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 133. Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," p. 89.

On the other hand the Marxist-Communists, represented by Semaun and backed by Tan Malaka, denounced any attempt to impose party discipline and harshly attacked the Islamic-based faction. They regarded Islam as an unsuitable foundation for a nationalist and socialist organization, and claimed that the founder of SI had been a capitalist, and that the hajis had made Islam into a capitalist ideology. They also denounced the 1917 policy against 'sinful' capitalism as a mistake. However, Salim, who still upheld socialism, attempted to give the left a means of reconciliation by demonstrating the fundamental socialism of the prophet Mohammad and the Qur'aan. Salim also stated that Mohammad had taught Marxism twelve centuries before Marx, and that the application of Marxism could be found in the Qur'aan. On this basis, he reasserted that Islam was the most suitable basis for the movement and it was compatible with socialist doctrine. Finally, he called for party discipline and demanded that SI members sever all other memberships. This response inspired the audience, and when a vote was taken, a large majority of the delegates (23 to 7 votes) supported party discipline. As a result, the PKI was abandoned, together with its Communist-controlled branches at Semarang.²¹² In retaliation to Sarekat Islam the PKI later established Sarekat Rakyat (People's Unions).²¹³ As for SI's activities, they continued to be based in Yogyakarta.

Salim was able to champion the banishment of the Communists from Sarekat Islam, and to have his motion accepted because he was the most important figure in that congress. It is reported that even though the rightists dominated the central leadership of Sarekat Islam, their leadership had not been real from 1919 onward. Abdul Muis prestige's and that of other leaders had been neutralized by the leftists, who wielded the real power in the movement. Consequently, Agus Salim was the only leader of the right

²¹²Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," pp. 89-90. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution, pp. 75-6. Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 124-5.

²¹³Rose, Indonesia Free, p. 23

able to mobilize a large enough following to rival Semaun,²¹⁴ and at the congress he defeated him handily.

Salim's motion to banish the PKI from SI was not intended to undermine or betray Tjokroaminoto who was in prison, and who still wanted to maintain the unity of the movement. Salim demonstrated his loyalty to his imprisoned leader at a Volksraad meeting, where he was still a member, by calling for Tjokroaminoto's reinstatement as a member of the Volksraad. This was done in a Volksraad's speech, given for effect in the Indonesian language, something which had never happened before in the history of that council. He asserted that Tjokroaminoto's re-appointment to the Volksraad was the only way for the government to make amends for arresting him and for clearing his name. He also hinted at the possibility that SI would no longer cooperate with the government if this demand was not met.²¹⁵ Unfortunately, Salim failed to obtain Tjokroaminoto's acquittal through that speech and was unable to convince the Dutch Administration that Tjokroaminoto was not involved in the Section B Affair.²¹⁶

Furthermore, the Dutch East Indies government's attitude towards Sarekat Islam, as demonstrated by Tjokroaminoto's imprisonment, followed by the harassment of SI's members suspected of involvement in the Section B Affair by the Dutch authorities, prompted thousands of members to resign from the party. Not surprisingly, this matter dealt a fatal blow to the party's membership, even though, in fact, the communist threat was regarded as the main reason for the party's decline.²¹⁷ These events, coupled with Salim's failure in clearing Tjokroaminoto's name, led to the party's decision to end

²¹⁴ Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, pp. 114-5.

²¹⁵ Noer, *The Modernist Muslim*, p. 134

²¹⁶ Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," p. 77.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

"cooperation" with the Dutch Administration by adopting of the Hijrah (non-cooperation) policy in 1922.²¹⁸ This policy was symbolically implemented when Agus Salim resigned from the Volksraad in 1925.

The party's disappointment with the Dutch was demonstrated by changes made to the basic principles of the SI. These principles, which were brought before the National Congress of October 1921, reflected a very critical attitude towards the Dutch government, and explained the position of Islam in more detail. Events at that congress again showed the importance of Agus Salim and the influence that he wielded at Party gatherings. The task of drafting the new basic principles was entrusted to Salim and Semaun, since they reflected the controversies within the movement. The final document reflected Salim's ideas much more than those of Semaun. As such, the detailed statement of SI's Islamic position could be regarded as reflecting the views of Agus Salim.²¹⁹

Throughout the period of the 1920's, the split with the Party made the task of the Sarekat Islam leaders difficult in retaining the trust of its general membership. Agus Salim, realized that dangerous inroads that had been made into the party by the Communists and Dutch Administration informants, tried to counter these developments by launching a campaign of unity and peace among Indonesian Muslims in general.²²⁰ Hence, Sarekat Islam began to plan for a series Al-Islam congresses, which can not be seen as transcending the SI and its unity problems. Instead the meetings were portrayed as attempts to overcome differences of belief and practice among Muslims caused by the rise of Modernist Muslim thinking and its different interpretation of Islamic rites, obligations and belief in contradistinction to Muslims clinging to traditional

²¹⁸Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 129.

²¹⁹Ibid, pp. 129-30.

²²⁰Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, p. 38. Untung S., Mengikuti Jejak, p. 34

interpretations of religion and ways of life. Salim's unification efforts were widely endorsed by the Islamic movements on Java and Sumatra. The first Al-Islam congress held on 21 October 1922, which was followed by nine other Al-Islam congresses successively. SI sponsorship demonstrated the national character of these congresses, and the SI strengthened its claim to be an organization for all Muslims.²²¹ This was significant, because, although espousing modernist Islamic principles the SI, under Salim's leadership in this endeavour, showed itself capable of bringing traditionalists and reformists together for the common Muslim good. By the third decade of the twentieth century, the party showed its religious character and evolved into a religio-nationalist movement. It had in fact, more Muslim members than any other Muslim movement in Indonesia.²²²

After the first Al-Islam Congress of 1922 Tjokroaminoto affirmed, at the local SI rallies and meetings, his support of Salim's decision to banish the Communists from the movement. Furthermore, he affirmed that the SI was based on Islam, and that since the Communists did not believe in God and did not profess that religion, their ideology was incompatible with that of the SI. As such, party discipline was rightly adopted at the sixth National Congress of October 1921 and introduced to the various SI branches.²²³ This attitude was further re-affirmed by Tjokroaminoto at the seventh National Congress of February 1923 when he stated, apparently under Salim's influence, that while SI entrusted everything to Allah, the PKI was "neutral" to Him, and that party discipline was indispensable under these circumstances.²²⁴

²²¹ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 135-6.

²²² Ibid, p. 135. von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 33

²²³ Takashi Shiraishi, "Islam and Communism: An Illumination of the People's Movement In Java, 1912-1926," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1986). pp. 457-8.

²²⁴ Shiraishi, An Age in Motion, p. 238.

Events at the sixth National Congress, where a bitter debate between Salim and Semaun occurred and which resulted in the expulsion of the communist group, brought Salim to international attention. Many newspapers published in the Indies and in the Netherlands wrote about him and his ideas on Marxism and socialism in Islam. Salim's influence, especially on the Islamic political front, was seen as important. Moreover, within the Indonesian intelligentsia, it was widely held that Agus Salim was the "thinker" while Tjokroaminoto was the "doer" within the PSI.²²⁵ Thus, while SI was the "brightest star" on the Indonesian political horizon, Agus Salim was a well-known personality, and was also regarded as a respected guide in religious matters. His belief that violence would only hinder the limited Indonesian nationalist movement also gave him credence with the Dutch East Indies government.²²⁶

Agus Salim's role in the Al-Islam congresses showed him to be a champion of Islam in the Indonesian setting. The first Al-Islam Congress took place on 21 October-2 November 1922 in Cirebon and was led by Tjokroaminoto as chairman. This Congress was organized by Salim, Fakhruddin of the Muhammadiyah, and Mohammad Soorkati of Al-Irsyad.²²⁷ Consequently, it was attended by members of SI, Muhammadiyah and Al Irsyad, together with the traditionalists who sent a delegation under the leadership of Kiyayi Haji Abdul Wahab (the head of a local educational institution named Tasywirul Afkar in Surabaya) and Kiyayi Haji Asnawi (a well-known Islamic scholar of Kudus).²²⁸

At the first Al-Islam Congress, Salim spoke to the need for unity among Indonesian Muslims in order to defend themselves from elements that would harm Islam

²²⁵ Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 38.

²²⁶ van Niel, The Emergence of Modern Indonesian, pp. 86, 158.

²²⁷ Shiraishi, An Age in Motion, p. 237.

²²⁸ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 136.

and the Indonesian cause. He also explained his idea of Pan Islamism which he saw as a means of bringing together all the Islamic schools of law, and Muslims of every background from throughout the Islamic world under a common banner. At the second Al-Islam Congress of May 1924 in Garut, Salim elaborated upon the functions of religion and science, and the relationship between Islam and socialism, and went as far as condemning capitalism when its sole aim was the generation of profits. The official purpose of this congress was the promotion of Muslim unity. The congress took up a Pan-Islamic issue, i.e., the question of reestablishing the caliphate, an issue that was of concern to Muslims throughout the world at that time.²²⁹ The congress designated Salim as its representative to the Muslim World Congress held in Mecca at the beginning of 1927.²³⁰ Although this congress was canceled, Salim, who spoke fluent Arabic, succeeded in discussing the concerns of Indonesian Muslims, with King Ibn Sa'ud. This trip opened the way for successive Indonesian Muslim delegations to the Muslim World Congresses and brought Indonesian Muslims formally into contact with Muslims from all over the world.²³¹

The successive Al-Islam congresses which were supported by Sarekat Islam, and inspired by Haji Agus Salim, came to end in 1927. The reasons for their discontinuation were the disenchantment of Indonesian Muslims who were unable to find resolution to their differences. Both traditionalists and reformists felt frustrated. Similarly, the Muslim World Congresses were also discontinued since general Muslim interest in international

²²⁹ Mukayat, Haji Agus Salim, pp. 41-2.

²³⁰ Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," pp. 132-3.

²³¹ The first delegation was headed by Tjokroaminoto and Mansur (from Muhammadiyah) who went to Mecca to attend the Muslim World Congress of June 1926. (Jaylani, "The Sarekat Islam," pp. 132, and pp. 133-4).

cooperation was not seen as very pertinent to the world events of the time. All these adverse developments were grave disappointments for the Sarekat Islam.²³²

Moreover, Salim's advocacy of national Muslim unity together with Pan-Islamism was one of accusations hurled at him by an advocate of the non-religious nationalist movement. The latter declared that these ideas detracted from efforts to preserve national unity. Salim, on the other hand, rejected these accusations together with the notion that he was a Dutch "agent" planted in the midst of the movement to sow seeds of dissension by transforming a popular movement into a clerical organization, which neglected the social, economic interests of the people in favour of religion. These accusations were denied by Salim, who declared that SI was run by a committee not by one person. To clear such allegations, a local Sarekat Islam called meeting, held on 7 May 1927 in Yogyakarta. In it, a team of panelists presided over by Kusumo Utoyo, a former Regent of Jepara and the president of the Budi Utomo, announced that all accusations towards Salim lacked proof. Thus, Salim emerged as the "winner".²³³

The Sarekat Islam had dominated the Indonesian political scene from its creation to 1927.²³⁴ In that year, its domination was challenged by a new independence organization, namely the Perhimpunan Nasional Indonesia (PNI- Indonesian National Party), founded by Sukarno, which reflected new approaches to the issue of nationalism. Significantly in 1927 most Indonesian political movements began to focus their attention on the common goal of opposition to the colonial regime, rather than on issues of national character.²³⁵ As such, SI joined the Permufakatan Perhimpunan-Perhimpunan Politik

²³²Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 136-8.

²³³Noer, The Modernist Muslim, pp. 249-50. Mochtar, "Agus Salim," pp. 64-5. Penders, Milestones On My Journey, p. 60.

²³⁴Federspiel, Persatuan Islam, p. 88.

²³⁵Benda, The Communist Uprisings, p. xxv

Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI- the Union of Political Associations of the Indonesian People) established in the same year. This federation resembled a national coalition, whose every effort was directed towards reaching a compromise between the various nationalist organizations, such as PNI, Budi Utomo, Pasundan, Sumatra Bond and the Surabaya Study Club.²³⁶

Unfortunately, the PPPKI did not last for very long. It broke up as a result of internal dissension following the arrest of its prominent leaders by the colonial government; one of those leaders was Sukarno.²³⁷ However, SI maintained its PPPKI membership until 1930,²³⁸ in spite of several PPKI ordinances asserting that only organizations exclusively comprised of Indonesians could belong to the PPPKI. These dictums caused difficulties for Sarekat Islam which welcomed all Muslims irrespective of their race or nationality. Moreover, the question of the Islamic basis of SI also contributed to the split with the PPPKI, and was in fact the main reason for it. Although Sukarno, a representative of the PNI, often spoke about his commitment to Islamic doctrines, he is usually assessed as having been a nationalist first and a Muslim second, believing that independence could only be obtained through Indonesian nationalism.²³⁹ Agus Salim however, as a representative of SI, believed differently, seeing Islam as having a crucial role in determining the definition and direction of nationalism. Hence, the debates between both of them symbolized the subsequent division within the nationalist movement into an Islamic and a secular faction.

²³⁶ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 76

²³⁷ Kay Hock, The Development of Indonesian Nationalism, pp. 49-50

²³⁸ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 251.

²³⁹ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 76

After 1927, SI's existence seemed to be on its final hour. Its attitude towards the Dutch Administration became even more hostile, the hijrah policy was even more persistently carried out, and SI pursued even more vigorously the call for a parliament. Even though its attention towards religious affairs did not decrease, it no longer represented the majority of Indonesian Muslims.²⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the Dutch Administration considered all nationalist movements which accepted the principle of non-cooperation as disloyal and as liable to persecution. Under the leadership of Governor General B.C. de Jonge (1931-1936), the Dutch Administration reinforced this policy by imposing stricter regulations on groups that chose not to cooperate. Dutch police watched closely every movement of the Indonesian political leaders and imprisoned many nationalist leaders, such as Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Syahrir; their intention was to weaken the nationalist movement by depriving it of its leaders.²⁴¹ Not surprisingly, Indonesian political leaders who were not arrested, such as Agus Salim, Dr. Sutomo, Thamrin, and Ki Hajar Dewantara, felt obliged to give ground and were less vocal in advocating non-cooperative policies openly. Salim, who seemed to have taken that stand only as a tactic, not as a point of ideology, moved within the SI to change positions.

SI which had been stressing the hijrah policy from 1931 onwards extended this policy from the political to the economic field. However, when Tjokroaminoto passed away in 1934, he was succeeded by his brother, Abikusno Tjokrosujoso, who was even more convinced of the effectiveness of the hijrah policy. In 1935, Salim, as chairman of the party council, asked the executive committee, headed by Abikusno Tjokrosuyoso, to re-examine the non-cooperation stance, because he believed it was not effective and it limited party initiatives in political arena. However, his proposal was rejected. As a result, Salim created the Barisan Penyadar PSII (the Front of PSII Self-Realization)

²⁴⁰Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 138

²⁴¹Wertheim, Indonesian Society, pp. 71-2. Vlekke, Nusantara, p. 379.

within the party, in November 1936, in order to propagate his ideas among the members of the movement and to gain strength for his Islamic concepts. This new movement spread to other branches of the SI, a move which was seen as divisive and disruptive by some other party members, who wanted unconditional loyalty to the hijrah policy. In an attempt to preserve the status quo, the party, directed by Abikusno Tjokrosuyoso, decided to banish Salim and his followers in February 1937.²⁴²

After more than 20 years in SI, Salim together with his followers, who numbered only 500 in 1939,²⁴³ continued to pursue their ideal of a popular Islamic movement, which had been their goal earlier in the Sarekat Islam. The move led to further breakup of the SI. Others thought that the hijrah policy was a mistake and in 1938 a group led by Wiwoho Purboadijoyo and Dr. Sukiman left PSII and established their own party called Partai Islam Indonesia (PII).²⁴⁴ Though Salim's organization did not exert much influence on the other Indonesian political movements or on many Indonesian Muslims, it managed to survive until the Japanese invasion of 1942, after which no single political movement was allowed to exist. After World War II Salim did not become involved in any Islamic organization; political, social or otherwise. Rather, the rest of his life was devoted to individual action to promote national independence, until he passed away in 1954.²⁴⁵ Those events, which involved participation in the earliest government of the Revolution (1945-1949), are beyond the time frame of this thesis and constitute another chapter in the importance of this dedicated Muslim leader and striver for Indonesian independence.

C. Haji Agus Salim and the Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB)

²⁴²Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p.145-6. Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, pp. 79, 226. Dahm, The History of Indonesia, pp. 74-5.

²⁴³Dahm, The History of Indonesia, p. 76.

²⁴⁴Ibid, p. 75.

²⁴⁵Roem, Diplomasi, p. 227. Maarif, "Bapak Kaum Intelektual," p. 239.

Haji Agus Salim, who had occupied a distinguished position in the party's leadership during the heyday of Sarekat Islam, also played an important role in Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB- Young Muslim Union). This movement was a Muslim educational organization which was not considered dangerous by the Dutch administration, even though it had a distinctive character as an affiliate to a political party (Sarekat Islam).²⁴⁶ Politically, the JIB was the most important organization to oppose the ideological Westernization of the Indies through Western organization. The JIB was comprised of students of Dutch schools who saw themselves as rising Muslim leaders. They were quite different from the Western-oriented Indonesian intellectuals. In fact, the JIB functioned as a nucleus of latent leaders, who were expected to occupy central positions in the Islamic political parties in later years.²⁴⁷ As the central figure of this organization since its founding, up to at least ten years of its development,²⁴⁸ Agus Salim was called the spiritual founder²⁴⁹ or spiritual father of the JIB.²⁵⁰ Moreover, Salim's influential role as the main advisor of this movement is regarded pivotal even until the present.²⁵¹ Through his involvement with JIB, he was able to identify and guide a number of ulama intelek, leaders who combined Islamic sciences and Western knowledge to produce a new synthesis of practical Islam on the Indonesian scene. As it was stated earlier, he himself is regarded as the first real Indonesian ulama intelek.²⁵²

²⁴⁶ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, pp. 194-5.

²⁴⁷ Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, pp. 49, 56.

²⁴⁸ Syamsuddin Abdullah, et al., Organisasi Kaum Muda Islam di Jawa, pada Masa Akhir Penjajahan Belanda, 1925-1942 (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Research dan Survey IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1986). p. 46

²⁴⁹ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 203.

²⁵⁰ Ridwan Saidi, Pemuda Islam dalam Dinamika Politik Bangsa 1925-1984 (Jakarta: CV. Rajawali, 1984). p. 28.

²⁵¹ Abdullah, "Haji Agus Salim," p. 224.

The JIB originally developed from the first Indonesian youth organization, Tri Koro Dharmo (Three Noble Purposes) established on 7 March 1915, which consisted of students of MULO (Dutch extended primary schools) and AMS (general secondary schools). Then, in 1918, the organization changed its name into Jong Java (Young Java); and not only recruited its members from youth of Javanese origin, but also from Madurese and Sundanese youngsters as well, without any regard to religious affiliation. At about the same time, there also emerged other provincial organizations such as Jong Sumatranen Bond, Jong Celebes, Jong Minahasa, Jong Batak and Sekar Rukun.²⁵³ Communication among the young, educated members of these groups was difficult, due to the lack of a common vernacular, especially since Dutch was still the only language these youth of different ethnic backgrounds shared. What drew these young people into the various provincial organizations was the wish to preserve their own culture, and the desire to eliminate what they regarded as the backwardness and poverty among their people.²⁵⁴

The major difficulty encountered by these youth organizations, especially by the members of Jong Java, was the lack of unity among the organizations themselves. Their members were not only divided on the organizational level but on the regional one as well. These young people were therefore well aware of the need for national unity, and were searching for a cause around which they could rally. Among those involved were Kasman Singodimedjo, Musa Al Makhfuedi and Suhodo, all of whom believed that the

²⁵² Alfian, "Islamic Modernism in Indonesian Politics, The Muhammadiyah Movement during the Dutch Colonial Period 1912-1942," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1969). p. 188

²⁵³ Abdullah, Organisasi Kaum Muda Islam, pp. 36- 40.

²⁵⁴ Ridwan Saidi, Cendekiawan Islam Zaman Belanda Study Pergerakan Intelektual JIB dan SIS (Jakarta: Yayasan Piranti Ilmu, 1990). p. 10

differences separating the educated youth of Indonesia could be removed by adopting Islam as a point of identity, since it was already the religion of the majority.²⁵⁵

Early in its existence, the Muslim members of Jong Java had expressed a desire for courses on Islam for Muslim members.²⁵⁶ This request was raised at the seventh congress of Jong Java held in December 1924 when Syamsurizal, the president of the organization, proposed the idea without excluding religious courses for the adherents of other faiths.²⁵⁷ He justified this segment on the basis that other religions, such as Protestantism and Catholicism, as well as believers in theosophy, already provided sufficiently for their adherents within the Jong Java. However, he was not convincing and with slightly less than half supporting the motion, the proposal was rejected.²⁵⁸

Subsequently, those members of the Jong Java who wanted to provide Islamic courses for the educated Muslim youth of Indonesia, approached several of the leading Muslims of the time, H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan and H. Agus Salim, asking them whether it would be useful or advantageous to establish an organization for young educated Muslims, which would provide Islamic courses for them. These three figures gave these young men their unanimous blessings, and whole-heartedly approved of such a notion.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ Kasman Singodimedjo, Hidup itu Berjuang (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1982). pp. 26-7.

²⁵⁶ Saidi, Pemuda Islam, pp. 10, 27-8.

²⁵⁷ Ridwan Saidi, "The Organizations of Young Moslem Intellectuals Past and Present," Mizan 1 (1985), p. 31.

²⁵⁸ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 248

²⁵⁹ Mohammad Roem, "The Genesis of an Islamic Youth Movement: JIB," Mizan 3 (1986). p. 23

Moreover, the young men were fortunate in meeting and talking to Agus Salim on the way home from the seventh Jong Java congress.²⁶⁰ Salim advised them not to be disheartened by the response of the people in the congress and encouraged them to pursue their goal. Furthermore Salim, who believed that those young men would become the nation's future leaders upon completion of their studies, stated that he agreed with the idea of providing Islamic courses for the educated youth. Therefore at the turn of 1924-1925, Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB- Young Muslim Organization) was born.²⁶¹ The JIB was officially founded by Syamsurizal on 1 January 1925 in Batavia and attracted an unexpected large number of MULO and AMS students and their alumni.²⁶² This new organization not only spread its wings in Java, but also extended to many other islands. In fact, it was the first nation-wide youth organization in Indonesia.²⁶³

During the 1920's Salim criticized the Indonesian educated-youth movements, for the limitation of their work to provincial and regional ideals. According to him, these young men had forgotten their true fatherland; Indonesia. As such, he called upon them to work for the end of Dutch control so that Indonesia would be left to the Indonesians. The new organization corresponded with the view of Salim, often stated in his SI work, that Muslims across Indonesian should be united in common endeavours. In talking with the members of Jong Java he could visualize a youth organization that would involve many young Indonesians of various young regional or provincial organizations, and would

²⁶⁰ Agus Salim did not attend the seventh congress of Jong Java as a participant, but as an invited guest, and a representative of the Muslim scholars, just as there were other Protestant, Catholic and theosophist there as well. (Saidi, Cendekiawan Islam, pp. 14-16. Saidi, Pemuda Islam, pp. 29-31).

²⁶¹ Noer, The Modernist Muslim, p. 248

²⁶² Saidi, Pemuda Islam, p. 32.

²⁶³ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, pp. 203-4.

unite them under the same banner. This desire was finally realized with the establishment of "Jong Islamieten Bond" in 1925.²⁶⁴

At its founding the JIB arranged its aims and principles, set out in Dutch, in the articles of the association. They are as follows:

1. Bestudering van de Islam en bevordering van de naleving van aijn voorschriften. (The study of the Islamic faith and promoting the practice of its prescriptions)
2. Het opwekk en van sympathie voor de Islam en zijn belijders, naast positive verdraagzaamheid jegens anderdenkenden. (Generating sympathy for the Islamic faith and for those professing the faith, and tolerance for those with dissenting ideas).²⁶⁵

In accordance with these aims, Salim began teaching Islamic courses at the JIB. He was fluent in the Dutch and certainly had a wide knowledge of Islam, which helped him clarify important doctrines and issues and give critical comments about the development of Islam during the Dutch colonial period. His lectures at the JIB evolved around the precarious position of Islam, and the image that outsiders have of it. Salim's approach in all such matters was critical in nature rather than merely recitation of orthodox beliefs. This was a popular approach and it was soon imitated by the student-leaders themselves. They denounced tagliid (public acceptance) and encouraged scientific debate. However in presenting religious issues, Agus Salim always attempted to avoid iktilaaf (differences in Muslim society) since he believed that arguments setting one Muslim against another was unwise.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," pp. 36, 38.

²⁶⁵ Roem, "The Genesis of an Islamic Youth," p. 24

²⁶⁶ Saidi, Pemuda Islam, pp. 97-8.

In achieving its aims and principles, the JIB published a monthly magazine Het Licht (Al-Nur/The Light).²⁶⁷ Salim wrote numerous articles in this magazine, which did much to clear up the confusion in the minds of younger Muslims. Often this attitude came from the low opinion of Islam portrayed in the Dutch school system. There Islam was considered an inferior belief system because its adherents were regarded as ignorant by modern Western standards. Consequently, Salim's efforts portrayed Islamic noble history, its stress on learning and other factors helped the JIB members recover their self-esteem, which had been lost in their high school or university classrooms, or from the critical words of non-Muslim educated people, and even of some educated Muslims. As a result, the Islamic courses given by Salim at the JIB and his Het Licht articles, countered the feeling of inferiority on the part of Muslim youth, and helped them to value their religion more highly.²⁶⁸

As a senior expert in the Islamic movement, Salim was a resource person for young Indonesians who wished to discuss the complex problems of Muslim society. Moreover, as a representative of the first generation, he guided the second generation of Muslim leaders such as Wiwoho, Kasman Singodimedjo, Mohammad Roem, Mohammad Natsir, Jusuf Wibisono, and others who were for the most part studying at AMS at that time. He also played an active role as a father figure who helped guide the spirit and mentality of the younger generation. In reality, he guided but did not dictate, provided inspiration in solving problems, as well as motivation, but did not command obedience. Moreover, he helped his younger colleagues in the understanding process; without providing answers to their questions. Rather, he assisted the young Muslims in finding the answers for themselves. Thus, it is to his credit that he widened the horizon of the

²⁶⁷ On the cover of this magazine, JIB's motto was always written. It was a quotation from Surat al-Taubah, verse 32: "Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths: but God only desireth to perfect this light albeit the infidels abhor it." (Roem, "The Genesis of an Islamic Youth," p. 28).

²⁶⁸ Saidi, Pemuda Islam, pp. 100-1. Roem, "The Genesis of an Islamic Youth," p. 28.

younger generation through religious and general knowledge, of which he was a master.²⁶⁹

It was during one of those courses offered at the JIB, that Agus Salim confessed to his own feeling of inferiority as a young man. This feeling, he said, not only affected him but extended to other aspects of Indonesian life, such as culture and traditional customs and practices. Indonesians would feel superior, more advanced and progressive, he elaborated, once they donned western clothes and adopted the customs, styles and manners of the ruling class. However, when the Dutch began praising and admiring the Indonesian culture, and especially traditional costumes, people suddenly went back to wearing their national dress and felt proud of their traditional clothes.²⁷⁰

In political matters, the guidance of JIB's spiritual leader and other Islamic national leaders was more subtle and indirect. Instead of asking the younger generation, for example, to get involved in political activities, they provided them with exemplary actions and careers. Not surprisingly, these youngsters, who were quick to learn, observed how the earlier generation behaved and followed in its footsteps, thus becoming the next generation of leaders.²⁷¹

The influence of Salim at the JIB could be seen from the fact that the topics discussed at SI's congresses. Matters centering on socialism, modernism and nationalism were prominent and Salim himself discussed the interrelationship between Islam and socialism. In addition, the JIB congresses also advocated Salim's modernist ideas and elucidated the relationship between Islam and nationalism, an act which did much to enlighten numerous young Muslims. Salim's Islamic nationalism, which later led to

²⁶⁹ Saidi, *Pemuda Islam*, pp. 97-8.

²⁷⁰ Roem, "Memimpin adalah Menderita," p. 53.

²⁷¹ Roem, "The Genesis of an Islamic Youth," p. 29.

internationalism, greatly contributed to the ideas of nationalism adopted by these Young Muslims, who were destined to dominate the Indonesian political life and thought in succeeding years.²⁷²

Although the JIB often stated a policy of being non-political it actually supported many political views of Agus Salim. Hence, the JIB was seen as a political movement.²⁷³ Sometimes, the JIB was described as SI's "sister organization", and comparisons were drawn between both organization's history and problems.²⁷⁴ Certainly it could not escape the major issue of time, i.e., nationalism, and it was understandable that their views on many issues should reflect those of Salim since he himself was a modern Muslim. That is, after all, what they wanted to be, so it was easy to emulate him and his views.

²⁷² von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, pp. 204-5.

²⁷³ Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun, p. 78.

²⁷⁴ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, pp. 203-4.

CONCLUSION

Haji Agus Salim played a significant role in Sarekat Islam, a nationalist movement which "became an intrinsic part of the contemporary struggle for nationalist self-identity (pergerakan) in Indonesia".²⁷⁵ As the first mass nationalist movement, Sarekat Islam is credited with the great contribution of being the vehicle of awakening Indonesians after centuries of being trapped in colonialism, and leading them through an important era in pursuit of national independence.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, this movement had a distinct character as an influential Islamic reform movement, although it did not show this character explicitly. Behind this movement, there was the significant force of two different backgrounds of Muslim modernists; those who had graduated from religious schools and those who had benefited from the Western educational system. In the latter group, Salim was the most prominent Western-educated Muslim Modernist.²⁷⁷

Prior to the arrival of Islamic modernism, the majority of the Indonesian Muslim population, the Indonesian political scientist in Alfian's opinion, living in a state of "darkness". This "darkness" did not only include the debilitating social and economical results of colonialism, but extended beyond that. It was distinguished by a decline in their concept of belief which was greatly influenced by mysticism and age-old religious traditions, as well as the intellectual backwardness caused by a static educational system. These two factors were interrelated during that time.²⁷⁸ As such, the need to return to the

²⁷⁵ Korver, "The Islamic Movement," p. 17

²⁷⁶ von der Mehden, Religion and Nationalism, p. 217.

²⁷⁷ Alfian, Muhammadiyah, pp. 115-6.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 69-70.

purity of religious concepts was the first concern of the Indonesian Muslim Modernists, who strove for the social and educational improvement of their country. Thus, this belief was also shown by Modernist Islamic movements, which played significant roles in the religious, social and educational fields. Not surprisingly, Salim, who played an active role in the Islamic political movement, also tried his best to promote and actualize the ideas of Islamic Modernism, which believed that Islam is compatible with modernity.

As a Muslim modernist, Salim believed that education was of paramount importance. However, he did not mean just any education, but was the highest kind of education, which necessitated academic institutions, colleges, and universities where Indonesians could become teachers and leaders, and acquire other important abilities useful for (common) people and for building a nation. Education was a prerequisite for progress, moreover in some European countries it was often the result of progress. As such, Salim refused the attainment of progress and independence through taking up arms, since force was not an option for uneducated people who had been left far behind in the race of the world. He believed that education would provide more mature people who would be able to gradually gain independence ²⁷⁹ He believed that it was madness to arm people, who had been disarmed for more than a century, and who had never carried arms especially the modern ones. As such, starting a sudden revolt was suicidal, since it would either bring great disaster for the country as a whole, or for its initiators.²⁸⁰

On the other hand, the Indonesian advocates of the ISDV, whose power was growing stronger within Sarekat Islam, formed a bloc within the movement; an act which created rivalry between them and the rightists of SI. The ISDV Marxists' influence rose rapidly, it hampered and eventually harmed the economic conditions as well as worsening

²⁷⁹ Salim, "Mana Yang Harus Didahulukan" (That Which Should be Given Priority), *Neratia* 24 January 1918.

²⁸⁰ Salam, *Hadji Agus Salim*, p. 85. Noer, *The Modernist Muslim*, p. 110.

the relationship between the colonial regime and the Indonesian nationalist movement. Moreover, this was accompanied by the success of the revolutionary movements in Bolshevik Russia and some European countries, which gave impetus to the idea of revolution in Indonesia. The transformation of ISDV (social-Democratic) to PKI (Communist) was to show the revolutionary spirit which permeated the movement and was getting stronger.²⁸¹ On the other hand, the rapid growth of the red SI or the leftists endangered the position of white SI leaders or the rightists who did not agree with the unconditional revolutionary character of their counterparts. Moreover, the atheistic teaching of Marxism created a sharp schism between the leftist communists and the rightist Islamic advocates. Thus, the importance of religious belief became a major barrier between them.

Regarding the controversy between the communists and the moderate, or Muslim political leaders, the Australian historian Ricklefs maintains that: "The next generation of Indonesian politicians would include some who were more realistic, Islam was undergoing a true reform, and the nature of the enemy had been perceived."²⁸² In portraying the true reform among the Muslim political leaders, Haji Agus Salim looms large. He is a realist who could not only comprehend the character of the colonial regime, but also knew well the nature of the majority of Indonesians; who were common people mostly living in backwardness.

The contention between the Communists and the moderate, or Muslim political leaders, which basically stemmed from their different ideologies, had led some Indonesian political leaders to try and reconcile between these two currents. In this matter, Sukarno is the major proponent. He wrote an article entitled "Nationalism,

²⁸¹ McVey, "Early Indonesian Communism," pp. 23-4.

²⁸² Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia, pp. 170-1.

Islamism and Marxism" in 1926. In it he stated that all extant Indonesian political parties had the "spirit" of Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism combined and that they could be united in one single spirit; the great spirit, the spirit of Indonesian unity bearing the glory of Indonesia, an Indonesia free of the Dutch colonial regime.²⁸³ However, his attempt to reconcile the two different ideologies was useless since the amalgamation of Islam and Marxism was absolutely unattainable; the major barrier being the atheistic aspect of Marxism.²⁸⁴ Until his death in 1970, of course, Sukarno never conceded this point.

The dispute between Sukarno and the Muslim political leaders, represented by Agus Salim, was created by different views on nationalism. However, both views were essentially established on Ernest Renan's theory of nationalism, which states that people who have shared one common history and have the 'will' to live in one nation, can do so in future. Later difference between Sukarno and Salim emerged when Salim and his fellow Muslim political leaders, defended nationalism on the basis of Islam.²⁸⁵ As such, the exchange of polemics between Sukarno and Salim can be said to reflect the opposing beliefs and natures of these two men.²⁸⁶ Fortunately the different understandings between them did not sour their relationship in the following years. They knew how to appreciate different ideals, and to cooperate during their struggle in liberating Indonesia from Dutch colonialism. At the end of Japanese occupation (1942-1945), Salim and Sukarno sat on many of the same boards such as the Committee for the Investigation of Indonesian Independence (BPKI) and the Independence Preparatory Committee (PPKI), in which discussions were held concerning the basis ideology of the state whether Islam or Pancasila. However, Salim did not show his support to the Muslim nationalist

²⁸³ Sukarno, Under The Banner of Revolution, pp. 2-3.

²⁸⁴ Maarif, "Islam and Nationalism in Indonesia," pp. 15-6.

²⁸⁵ Noer, Administration of Islam, p. 5.

²⁸⁶ Taufik Abdullah, "Tanpa Islam, Tidak Ada Indonesia", Media Dakwah 241 (July, 1994). p. 55.

participants, rather he acknowledged Sukarno's statement by saying that the Committee's members should maintain the achieved compromise between the Muslim and Nationalist factions.²⁸⁷ Moreover, after the proclamation of Independence in 1945, Salim continued to work energetically for that independence. His immense success in achieving de jure recognition of Indonesia by Middle Eastern countries had a crucial impact on the fortunes of the Republic on the international level. As such, this immense achievement was regarded by Hatta as the greatest contribution Salim had ever given to his fatherland.²⁸⁸

Salim's struggle in the Indonesian political movements in the early decades of this century reflect his inclination towards Islamic modernism. He had played a significant role in the birth and development of Islamic modernism in Indonesia. And, as a Muslim modernist and graduate of Western education, he was able to maintain a cordial relationship with the Muslim modernists of religious schools, represented by the leaders of Muhammadiyah, and the other Muslim modernist organizations. Furthermore, together with Tjokroaminoto, he attempted to unite the various Muslim organizations through Al-Islam Congresses.²⁸⁹ Salim worked with other Muslim leaders to promote Islamic modernism in the religious, social, educational, economic and political fields. Thus, he was one of the important proponents of Islamic modernism in Indonesia.

Moreover, Salim had a distinct position among the advocates of Islamic modernism. His major contribution was the redefinition of Islam in contemporary Indonesia and giving it a practical application in politics. He was a curious person, and was keenly interested and receptive of new thoughts during his lifetime. First of all he was intrigued by Western progress, which had influenced much of the world during his

²⁸⁷ Emil Salim, "Li'laahi Ta'aala", p. 481. Maarif, Bapak Kaum Intelektual," pp. 243-5.

²⁸⁸ Hatta, "Kenang-Kenangan," p. 57.

²⁸⁹ Alfian, Muhammadiyah, p. 119.

time. And, since he studied and deepened his religion seriously, he attempted to defend himself and his religion by affirming that Islam was compatible with the needs of every era, including the modern one. Therefore, on the basis of his Islamic convictions, Salim refused the convictions of the religiously neutral nationalists and the communists, who accused Islam of being an old-fashioned and out-dated concept for the nationalist movement. In confronting the Communists, Salim stated that the social justice they were in favour of, had been championed by the Prophet centuries ago. Moreover, in challenging the religiously neutral nationalists, Salim reminded them that nationalism could easily lead to imperialism and colonialism, such as demonstrated by Western countries, including Holland which led to the suffering of Indonesians. On the other hand, he did not dispute the love of one's fatherland, as he mentioned, but maintained that this love should be guided by devotion to God Almighty.²⁹⁰

Salim and the Salimists who continued their defence of Indonesia with the secular nationalists have left a rich heritage for later Indonesian life. Their ideological formulations, which resulted in debates and conflicts during the Nationalist Era, left a deep legacy after independence. These ideological conflicts and debates, which were marked by antagonism between Islamism and Communism, and the main polemic between Islamism and secular nationalism happened during the twenties and the thirties in the last decades of Dutch colonialism. As a matter fact, it was these political and philosophical outlooks that led to the emergence of political thought in Indonesia in the first twenty years after independence, as stated by two Australian scholars, Herbeth Feith and Lance Castles, who fully understand the significance of the ideological debates begun in the final decades of the Dutch colonial era.²⁹¹ In this matter, Salim exerted a

²⁹⁰ Deliar Noer, Partai Islam di Pentas Nasional 1945-1965 (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1987). p. 8.

²⁹¹ Alfian, "Indonesian Political Thinking: A Review," Indonesia 11, (April, 1971). p. 193

noticeable influence and is even acknowledged as the most important figure in formulating the political ideology of Indonesian Islam.²⁹²

In addition, Salim is accredited with encouraging Western-educated Indonesians to turn to their religion, as well as deepening their perception of religion both emotionally and cognitively. Through the JIB, an organization of Western-educated Indonesians, Salim emerged as an outstanding Muslim thinker and reformer. Moreover, his involvement in the founding of the JIB and his role as its main advisor, made him revered until the present. Therefore, one can argue that the emergence of Modernist Muslim thinkers and leaders, who had graduated from Western schools, would have been difficult without the historic role of Haji Agus Salim. His influence was always great among the Western-educated young Indonesians, especially after he championed the establishment of the JIB in 1925.²⁹³ After independence, Salim's influence was still maintained among the whole Muslim society although he was not a member of Masyumi.²⁹⁴ Moreover, in the 1950's the political elite in Indonesia could be divided into two groups; the Salimist (Salim's disciples, friends, families and relatives, and others) and the non-Salimist. These two different groups existed in large political factions in Indonesia.²⁹⁵

Salim was a strong enough advocate of Islam, as he himself admitted that he had joined Sarekat Islam as an expert on Islamic teachings. He was a contact man between Sarekat Islam and Muhammadiyah, and between Sarekat Islam and Al-Irsyad.²⁹⁶ Besides, he also championed Muslim unity among various Islamic organizations. In the early

²⁹² Abdullah, "Haji Agus Salim," p. 217

²⁹³ Ibid, pp. 215, 217, 224.

²⁹⁴ Ben Anderson, Revoloesi Pemoeda Pendudukan Jepang dan Perlawanan di Jawa 1944-1946, Jiman Rumbo, tr. (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1988). p. 352.

²⁹⁵ Abdullah, "Haji Agus Salim," p. 227.

²⁹⁶ Salam, Hadji Agus Salim, pp. 93-4.

decades of this century Salim was able to reshape a new understanding of Islam for his era. And, even though during his early life, he lived in dangerous political times, he managed to enthusiastically work for both Indonesia and Islam to bring both to a condition from which they could develop, realize their potential and achieve the right to manage their own country. Furthermore, in the Islamic-oriented nationalist movements, Salim was able to reflect his ability to organize and guide others; which is a distinct contribution to both the Indonesian and Muslim cause. Therefore, Salim bears a special place among Indonesians, and truly of great importance in defining the times he lived in as any other Muslim leader of the twentieth century.

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