

Chapter 6

Pribumi-Arab Relations in the Indies Al-Islam Congresses: Division and Integration in the Indonesian Islamic Movement

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Introduction

The early twentieth century saw the formation of nationhood in Indonesia (until 1942, called the Dutch East Indies). At that period, Indonesian Muslims, while forming various new organizations and groups, attempted to unify Islamic movements within the nascent nation-state. The Indies Al-Islam Congresses (Congres Al-Islam Hindia), which were held continuously from 1923 to 1932, were the first attempts to close the ranks of the Indonesian Islamic groups. This article examines the changing relationship between the indigenous people, so-called *pribumis*, and Arab inhabitants in a series of those congresses.¹

The Arabs have been present in maritime Southeast Asian port cities even before the Islamization of the region occurred (Tibbetts 1957). In the Islamized kingdoms, Arabs were primarily active in the religious field as *'ulamā'* (religious scholars) and *ṣūfīs* (mystics) (Reid 1993, 66–67, 92–93, 116, 144). Some Arabs, through marital relationships with the local royal houses, could even become rulers (Kathirithamby-Wells 2009). Nevertheless, just like others with foreign origins, such as the Chinese, their Arab-ness was not maintained for long, and they were naturally assimilated in local society within several generations.² In the modern era, however, as notions like race and nation were increasingly prominent, the integration of such non-native people was made a crucial issue.

During the Dutch colonial period, Arabs occupied a unique place in society. They shared a religion with the majority of pribumis and frequently intermarried with local women so that they deeply mingled with the indigenous population. Conversely, the Dutch colonial government categorized the Arabs into “Foreign Orientals” (*Vreemde*

¹ Pribumi means “indigenous people” in present-day Indonesia. In the early twentieth century, the word *boemipoetra* was used more frequently with the same meaning.

² For example, in Banten, West Java, even the Chinese, when they accepted Islam and local customs, could become “Javanese” (Reid 1993, 122).

Oosterlingen) along with the Chinese and other Asian minorities. Different laws and systems governed pribumis compared to Arabs. According to J. S. Furnivall's concept of the "plural society," each population group shared no common will, apart from the most exceptional circumstances (Furnivall 1967, chapter 13). Indonesian nationhood, which was established in the independence movement by the late 1920s, was based on the pribumi-consciousness (Anderson 2006, chapter 7).

Furthermore, previous studies argued that the Arabs were not only excluded from secular nationalist movements but also from Indonesian Islamic movements by the late 1920s. Within the Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union, SI), the first mass political movement in Indonesia formed at the end of 1911 (or the beginning of 1912), the Arabs had a significant presence at the early stage. The SI, however, turned into an exclusive pribumi organization, forcing Arabs to withdraw from it by the end of the 1910s (Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 41–48). Moreover, the third Indies Al-Islam Congress, which was held in 1924, decided not to include Arabs in the Indonesian delegation to the Caliphate Congress to be held in Cairo.³ Arguably, this incident implied that the Arabs were regarded as being separate from the Indonesian Muslim community (Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 139).

On the other hand, as for the process of the integration of Arabs into the host society, much attention has been paid to an organization called the Persatoean [Partai] Arab Indonesia (Indonesian Arab Union [Party], PAI), which was formed in 1934 in Semarang, Central Java (Haikal 1986, chapter 5; Mobini-Kesheh 1999, chapter 7; Jonge 2004, 2009). Mainly consisting of *peranakan* (locally born) Arabs, the members of the PAI advocated that Indonesia be their fatherland (*tanah air*), and supported and attempted to join the Indonesian nationalist movement. This organization proliferated in the late 1930s, which led to serious conflict over the sense of belongingness within the Arab community.

Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that the Arabs, whether members of the PAI or not, were generally accepted in the Indonesian Islamic movement in the late 1930s. Arab organizations became involved in the Madjlis Islam A'laa Indonesia (Supreme Islamic Council of Indonesia, MIAI), a new federation of Islamic groups in Indonesia, which was formed in September 1937, from its early stages. More importantly, some Arabs assumed key posts in the MIAI and none of them were members of the PAI. They did not explicitly pledge their support for Indonesian nationalism.⁴

Thus, questions could be raised whether the Indonesian Islamic movement had excluded Arabs by the 1920s. Few studies have examined the Islamic movement after the SI fell into decline in the early 1920s. Likewise, scholars of Arabs in Indonesia have paid

³ The official name of the congress is al-Mu'tamar al-Islāmī al-'Āmm li-l-Khilāfa (General Islamic Congress for the Caliphate). In this paper we call it as the Caliphate Congress.

⁴ We will discuss the involvement of the Arab organizations in the MIAI later. The PAI also participated in the MIAI lately.

little attention to the position of the Arabs in the Indonesian Islamic movement except for the early two decades of the twentieth century. Yamaguchi (2016) has elsewhere studied al-Irshād (spelled Al-Irsyad today), one of the major Arab organizations, and discovered it had chosen to integrate into the host society using the Islamic bond with pribumis by the end of the Dutch colonial period. Nevertheless, because this study focuses on the activities of the Arabs, it leaves unanswered the question of how pribumis' perception and attitude toward Arabs changed.

This paper investigates the changing relationship between pribumis and Arabs in a series of the Indies Al-Islam Congresses, elucidating the role of the shared religion as a social bond between the two groups.⁵ In so doing, this paper will demonstrate how the Indonesian Islamic movement was integrated differently from the Indonesian secular nationalist movement. Primary sources for this paper are periodicals published by both Arabs and pribumis, and reports on the Indies Al-Islam Congresses by colonial government officials.

1. The Changing Position of the Arabs

Let us start by analyzing how the position of Arabs in Indonesian society changed during the early twentieth century. We will first offer a brief overview of the Arab community, and then explain the process in which they retreated from the SI by the end of the 1910s.

1.1. The Arab Community in the Dutch Colonial Period

Although the Arabs living in Indonesia were very few, their number increased rapidly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were roughly 9,000 at 1860, and the number tripled to 27,000 at the turn of the twentieth century. During the early twentieth century, the Arab community experienced much stronger growth; their number increased to 45,000 by 1920, and more than 70,000 by 1930. Most of the population was concentrated in major cities; in Java and Madura their largest centers were Batavia (present

⁵ The Indies Al-Islam Congresses were held eleven times. The dates and the places are as follows: (1) From October to November 1922 at Cirebon; (2) May 1924 at Garut; (3) December 1924 at Surabaya; (4) August 1925 at Yogyakarta; (5) February 1926 at Bandung; (6) September 1926 at Surabaya; (7) December 1926 at Buitenzorg (present Bogor); (8) January 1927 at Pekalongan; (9) January 1928 at Yogyakarta; (10) June 1931 at Surabaya; and (11) April 1932 at Malang. Some studies have examined these congresses. While Noer (1973) and Akhmad (1989) generally discussed a series of the congresses, Bruinessen (1995) investigated arguments over the caliphate question in the congresses.

Jakarta), Surabaya, Pekalongan, Cirebon, and Sumenep; and, in the outer islands, Aceh (except for Koeta Radja—present Banda Aceh), Palembang, and Pontianak (*Volkstelling 1930* 1935, 48, 307–310). The vast majority of the Arabs in Southeast Asia were composed of *Ḥaḍramīs*, that is to say, immigrants from Ḥaḍramawt (a region of South Arabia) and their descendants.

The Dutch colonial government distinguished between pribumis and Foreign Orientals in some respects. For example, while Foreign Orientals were subjected to the civil and commercial law for Europeans, the criminal law and court system for pribumis were applied to them (Willmott 2009, 17). The colonial government attempted to control and limit the movement and residence of the Foreign Orientals through the quarter system (*wijkenstelsel*) and the pass system (*passenstelsel*). These systems required them to live in specific settlements allotted to each of the communities in the cities, and if they wanted to leave the settlements, they had to apply for passports.⁶ Moreover, in the Western-style elementary education system, which was developed by the colonial government in the early twentieth century, the Chinese and the Arabs were supposed to enroll in specific “ethnic” schools different to pribumis and Europeans (Mobini-Kesheh 1999, chapter 4).

Generally speaking, the Arabs in Indonesia in the Dutch colonial period were characterized by the following points. First, they were economically stronger than pribumis, though not to the same extent as the Chinese. Most of the Arabs conducted commerce in various forms and handled mainly fabrics, such as *batik* (a painted and patterned cloth) and *sarong* (a garment wrapped around the waist). They also engaged in the manufacture of batik and *kretek* (a cigarette containing cloves), shipping, real estate businesses, and publication printing. Additionally, many practiced usury in their businesses, although it was against the teachings of Islam (Berg 1886, 134–158; Ingrams 1936, 166; Mandal 2002, 172–176).

Second, the Arabs could exercise significant religious influence in society. They were credited with saints in the early nineteenth century Java and, even in the late nineteenth century, pribumis considered all Arabs as noblemen, regardless of their actual origins (Raffles 1817, 3; Berg 1886, 206–230). Moreover, their close relationship with the Arab regions enabled them to transmit new trends and thoughts of the Islamic movement to the Indonesian archipelago (Bluhm-Warn 1997). In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Islamic reform movements, which intended to purify Islamic faith and reconcile it with modernity, were launched in various regions. The Arabs played a pioneering role in the Islamic reform movement in Indonesia (Noer 1973, 56–59; Steenbrink 1986, 58, 62).

For example, the Jam‘iyat Khayr (Benevolent Society) established by Arab

⁶ For more information on the quarter and pass systems and the attitude of the Dutch colonial government toward the Arab community, see Jonge (1997).

merchants in Batavia around 1901 is considered to be the oldest modern-style Islamic organization in Indonesia. This organization was mainly engaged in the field of education, and it opened modern-style Islamic schools, called *madrasa*, in Batavia and Buitenzorg (present Bogor).⁷ Although the majority of its members were Arabs, some leading pribumis, such as Ahmad Dachlan, the founder of the largest Islamic reformist organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah, and Hasan Djajadiningrat, the leader of the Banten branch of the SI, also joined (Nājī n.d., 32; Saqqāf 1953, 2; Atje 1970, 103).

The Jam‘īyat Khayr was followed by many educational organizations and madrasas established by the Arabs one after another in the early twentieth century. Al-Irshād was the most prominent organization among these, which expanded its activities across the country, becoming one of the major Islamic organizations in Indonesia. While the Jam‘īyat Khayr took a traditionalist position regarding religious issues, al-Irshād advocated more clearly Islamic reformism.

Behind the establishment of al-Irshād lay internal conflict within the Arab community. In Ḥaḍramawt, where most of the Arabs in Indonesia originated, there had been a social stratification based on lineage. A clan of the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad, named ‘Alawīs (or Bā ‘Alawīs), had occupied the highest stratum due to their noble origins. They sought to maintain religious and social authorities in Southeast Asian and took a leading role in forming the Jam‘īyat Khayr. However, influenced by Islamic reformism in the Middle East, some Arabs in Southeast Asia began to contest the authority of the ‘Alawīs, advocating the equality of all Muslims regardless of lineage. In 1914 they formed al-Irshād in Batavia and a Sudanese ‘ulamā’, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Sūrkaṭī, who was a former teacher of the Jam‘īyat Khayr’s school, became their leader.⁸ A great debate between the ‘Alawīs and the Irshādīs (members or supporters of al-Irshād), which divided the Arab community, continued into the 1930s.⁹

Aside from the social stratification of Ḥaḍramawt, the Arab community had another dividing line, that is to say, differences in birthplaces. Arab immigrants were almost exclusively male, so in many cases, they married local women. While those born in Arab lands were called *totok*, those born in Indonesia were called *peranakan*.¹⁰ Totok Arabs

⁷ In Arabic the word *madrasa* originally meant a school and an educational institution in general. In the Indonesian context, however, it stands for an Islamic school with a modern structure and curriculum that includes non-religious subjects.

⁸ The initial official name was Jam‘īyat al-Iṣlāḥ wa-Irshād al-‘Arabīya (Arab Association for Reform and Guidance).

⁹ For al-Irshād and its leader Aḥmad Sūrkaṭī, see Yamaguchi (2016), while Yamaguchi (2012) discussed the dispute between the ‘Alawīs and Irshādīs.

¹⁰ In Indonesia, those born in Arab lands were also called *aqḥāḥ* (plural form of *quḥḥ*) or *wulāyatī* in Arabic, while those born in Indonesia were called *muwallad* in Arabic and *Indo-Arab* in Dutch and Indonesian.

often considered *peranakan* inferior to them, lacking the good quality of their ancestors.¹¹ By the end of the nineteenth century, *peranakans* constituted most of the Arab community. Since the main factor in the increasing population was not an influx of immigrants but a rising birth rate, the proportion of *peranakans* continued to increase.

From the late 1920s, the Arab community was polarized according to their sense of belonging. While some expressed stronger concern for Ḥaḍramawt as their homeland than ever before, others, especially *peranakan*, attached more importance to Indonesia, where they were born and raised. The latter group founded the PAI and gradually extended power in the Arab community. In the late 1930s, conflict over the sense of belongingness replaced the ‘Alawī-Irshādī dispute, which had subsided in the middle of the decade (Yamaguchi 2012).

Although the PAI was the most successful *peranakan* Arab organization, we must acknowledge that several *peranakan* organizations existed before it. Among them, the al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya (Educational Association), which was established in 1924 in Surabaya, played a prominent role in the Indies Al-Islam Congresses as described below. The young people from both the ‘Alawīs and the Irshādīs participated in this organization, but the al-Irshād influenced it more because it supported egalitarianism (Haikal 1986, 426–427).

1. 2. Arabs and the SI in Its Early Period

We now turn to Arab involvement in the SI in its early years. Boedi Oetomo (Prime Wisdom), which was formed in 1908, is generally regarded as the first nationalist organization in Indonesia, but its leadership was soon taken over by Javanese *priyayis* (aristocrats) and it did not mature to be a national movement. Conversely, the SI successfully acquired support from larger segments of society including the middle class and laborers in urban areas. The establishment of the SI was triggered by a sense of crisis shared by *pribumis* and Arabs when Chinese merchants advanced into trade in batik and kretek in which they had been engaged. Many Chinese had been commissioned to do various kinds of tax collection. Nevertheless, because most tax collection was abolished in the late nineteenth century, they began to find new lines of business (Niel 1960, 88–89; Mandal 1994, 132; Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 42–44).

In March 1909, Tirtoadhisoerjo, a Javanese journalist from Blora, Central Java, set up the Sarekat Dagang Islamiah (Islamic Commercial Union, SDI), the predecessor of the

¹¹ Berg (1886, chapter 8) and Ho (1997) discussed the general characteristics of the *peranakan* Arabs.

SI, in Buitenzorg, aimed at the promotion of the commercial activities of Muslims.¹² This organization was supported financially by Arabs in that city, like Aḥmad Bā Junayd and Sa'īd Bā Junayd, both of whom had studied in Istanbul, Beirut, and Damascus.¹³ The Arabs had substantial influence over this organization; out of nine seats in its executive committee, they held five. Aḥmad Bā Junayd became the organization's president (Adam 1995, 116–117).¹⁴

Yet the cooperation of the Arabs with the SDI proved only short-lived. First, the colonial government did not approve a commercial organization which included both pribumis and Arabs because they were subjected to different commercial laws. Moreover, it is said that Tirtoadhisoerjo was in financial trouble with the Bā Junayd brothers. Furthermore, these brothers left for Istanbul in May 1909 after their petition to acquire European legal status was rejected by the colonial government. Tirtoadhisoerjo dissolved the SDI and reorganized it, but renamed it Sarekat Dagang Islam. This time Tirtoadhisoerjo became president, and limited membership to only pribumis (Fukami 1979, 29–31; Schmidt 1992, 100; Adam 1995, 117–118).¹⁵

In 1911, Hadji Samanhoedi, a major batik entrepreneur and the leader of a beneficial organization called Rekso Roemekso in Surakarta (Solo), Central Java, invited Tirtoadhisoerjo. Samanhoedi turned his organization into a local branch of the SDI. Soon, the Surakarta branch dropped the word “Dagang” from its name and transformed into a new organization, the Sarekat Islam.¹⁶ Since the Chinese revolution in 1911 stirred up Chinese ethnic feelings in Indonesia more than before, tension with Muslims increased in the early 1910s. Especially from 1912 to 1913, violent incidents between two parties occurred repeatedly, which caused deaths and injuries (Fukami 1975, 116–117). Under these circumstances, the SI expanded its power, being a joint front of pribumi Muslims and Arabs against the Chinese, and its branches were formed in other areas.

By the end of 1912, Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto of the Surabaya branch seized the leadership of the SI.¹⁷ Born to a priyayi family in Ponorogo, East Java, and graduated from the OSVIA (a training school for native officials), he was endowed with political ability,

¹² For Tirtoadhisoerjo and the formation of the SDI, see Fukami (1979), Shiraishi (1990, 33–35), and Adam (1995, chapter 6).

¹³ The Bā Junayd brothers received scholarships from the Ottoman government to study in Middle Eastern cities (Noer 1973, 34; Schmidt 1992, 93–102).

¹⁴ Tirtoadhisoerjo assumed the offices of the secretary and advisor.

¹⁵ According to Fukami (1979), the Sarekat Dagang Islam, which Tirtoadhisoerjo reorganized, existed in name only.

¹⁶ There is disagreement about the date of establishment of Sarekat Islam. Shiraishi (1990, 40) stated that it was formed in the beginning of 1912, while Fukami (1976, 119–120) asserted that Tirtoadhisoerjo had already used the name SI in November 1911.

¹⁷ For the life and thoughts of Tjokroaminoto, see Amelz (1952) and Melayu (2002).

especially as an organizer and an orator. His charismatic personality—he was even regarded as “*ratu adil*” (just king) prophesized in Javanese messianic traditions—greatly accelerated the growth and popularity of the SI (Niel 1960, 105–106). However, the Dutch colonial government was concerned about the SI’s unruly development. It did not grant legal recognition to the SI as a national organization, but anomalously to each autonomous branch, called local SIs, and to the Central Sarekat Islam (CSI) as a collection of those local SI (Fukami 1976, 128–134).

While the SI developed, including various currents of thought like indigenous mutual aid, Islamic reformism, Western modernism, and communism, it gradually strengthened its character as a pribumi organization excluding Arabs. One of the reasons for this was that, after Arabs and Chinese in Batavia, Buitenzorg, and Surabaya made a move to reconcile in November 1912, the SI lost its significance as a joint front of Muslims against the Chinese (Fukami 1975, 117; id., 1976, 141). Moreover, there was a growing feeling among pribumis against Arabs who often took a patronizing attitude toward them (Laffan 2003, 191–195). The SI congress held in March 1913 in Surakarta passed a resolution, which virtually aimed to limit the membership of Arabs, that no non-pribumi members could become executives except for one in the central executive committee (Fukami 1976, 126–127).

However, the SI still needed the support of Arab members, so it could not push them out immediately. Although this organization expanded exponentially—claiming 300,000 members in 1913—it stalled on financial problems and had to depend heavily on Arabs’ economic power.¹⁸ Furthermore, N. V. Setia Oesaha in Surabaya, which published *Oetoesan Hindia*, the de facto organ of the SI, was managed mainly by Hasan Soerati from British India and Hasan bin Sumayt, an Arab resident of Surabaya, and was sponsored by other Arabs. Bin Sumayt had a particularly strong influence in the SI; he was appointed as a member of its central executive between 1914 and 1919 (Mandal 1994, 175–176; Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 45).

In 1918, Tjokroaminoto established a committee called the Tentara Kandjeng Nabi Mohammad (Army of the Lord Prophet Muhammad, TKNM) in Surabaya to keep Arabs inside the SI and mobilize them. An article published in *Djawi Hiswara*, a Javanese periodical of Surakarta, insulted the Prophet Muhammad and triggered the establishment of the committee. Tjokroaminoto, however, intended to raise funds from pious Muslims, mainly Arabs, by appealing to their religious feelings (Noer 1973, 127–128; Shiraishi

¹⁸ The SI congress held in April 1914 decided to increase seats for non-pribumi (that is to say, Arabs) in the central executive from one to two. This change was related to the SI’s economic dependence on Arab members. The SI was financially weak partly because the CSI could only use a part of the organization’s money due to its decentralized structure (Fukami 1976, 138–139; id. 1977, 152).

1990, 106–107). Initially, he was successful in this attempt—many Arabs participated in the TKNM and offered large sums of money.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the formation of the TKNM, which was dominated by Arabs, created a backlash of pribumis with Javanese ethnic feeling and resulted in deepening the split in the Indonesian Muslim community. After the uproar of *Djawi Hiswara* calmed down, the TKNM ceased its activities after only a few months. Furthermore, the influence of communism in the SI, which was particularly strengthened after the 1917 Russian Revolution, decreased the place of Arabs who were in stronger economic position than pribumis (Bruinessen 1995, 125; Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 46). The presence of Bin Sumayt in the central executive also displeased other members because he was an Arab. In 1919, he finally withdrew from the SI's activities when he was in trouble over the management of funds (Mobini-Kesheh 1999, 47–48).²⁰

Thus, the involvement of the Arabs in the SI in its early years ended by the late 1910s. In Indonesian society before the turn of the century, the Arabs were regarded as Muslims with special qualities, enjoying respect among pribumis due to their foreign origin. Nevertheless, as the early twentieth century witnessed a heightening of the pribumi-consciousness, Arabs became mere “foreigners,” put in a marginal position in Indonesian Muslim society.

2. The Indies Al-Islam Congresses (1): Phase of Exclusion

Could the Arabs, regarded as “foreigners,” no longer assume any significant roles in the Indonesian Islamic movement? We analyze here the process in which the third Indies Al-Islam Congress decided to exclude Arabs from the Indonesian delegation to the Caliphate Congress in Cairo.

2. 1. *Islamic Movements in the Early 1920s*

From the late 1910s, Agoes Salim rose as a leading figure in the SI, propelling the

¹⁹ The initial meeting of the TKNM held in the building of al-Jam'īya al-Khayrīya, an Arab organization of Surabaya, promised to contribute of 3,177 guilders (Mandal 1994, 182–183).

²⁰ One of the other factors that caused the Arab withdrawal from the SI was the so-called Afdeeling B affair in 1919 (Shiraishi 1990, 113–114). In Garut, West Java, the local government discovered a secret “revolutionary” branch of the SI, Afdeeling B (Section B). The colonial government suspected the CSI leaders' involvement in it, and arrested them including Tjokroaminoto. Out of fear of government suppression, many supporters left the SI. For more on the Afdeeling B affair, see Oates (1968).

organization in the direction of Islamic reformism. He was born in Kota Gedang, Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, in 1884, as a son of a government official. He received a high degree of Western-style education and graduated from HBS (*hoogere burgerschool*, higher middle-class school) in Batavia. Nevertheless, when he worked as a dragoman at the Dutch consulate in Jeddah, a turning point in his life came. He woke up to the Muslim consciousness and began to seriously learn Islamic studies from ‘ulamā’ including his relative, Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb, who had held the positions of *imām* (the leader of prayer) and *khaṭīb* (preacher) at al-Masjid al-Harām (the Great Mosque) in Makkah. After his return to Indonesia, Salim joined the SI in 1915, and he became a key ally of Tjokroaminoto.²¹

Even in the late 1910s, when the Arabs were about to lose their place in the SI, Salim generally kept an amicable attitude toward them. In 1918, the colonial government took measures to obstruct the entry of Arabs, especially Ḥaḍramīs, regarding them as being economically harmful for the local population. Salim criticized this measure, stating that Arabs were no more harmful than the Chinese and other foreigners and that the real problem hampering economic growth of pribumis was the colonial government. On the other hand, Salim asked Arabs for cooperation with pribumis, using their economic strength.²² It is apparent that Salim considered the Arabs as collaborators in the Indonesian Islamic movement.

At this period, the confrontation between the CSI and its leftist group led by the Semarang branch over labor union activities intensified. The Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging (Indies’ Social-Democratic Association, ISDV) and its successor, the Perserikatan Kommunist di Hindia (Communist Association in the Indies), which later became the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party, PKI) increased its influence within the SI by sending its member to the SI. In the early 1920s, the internal conflict ended in a victory for the CSI, which advocated pan-Islamism under the influence of Salim and other leaders. The communists were expelled, due to the regulation that made it impossible for SI members to belong to another party (Noer 1973,

²¹ The life and thought of Agoes Salim was discussed in Salam (1963), Kahfi (1997, 6–20), and Laffan (2003, 181–189). Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb was considered a pioneer of Islamic reformism in Indonesia. Many leading figures of the Indonesian Islamic movement in the early twentieth century studied under him at Makkah. For Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb and his Indonesian disciples, see Noer (1973, 31–33) and Laffan (2003, 106–113).

²² “Pergerakan Arab,” *Neraja* 3/22 (February 1, 1919): 1; id., 3/23 (February 3, 1919): 1; id., 3/24 (February 4, 1919): 1. The rigid control for the admittance of Ḥaḍramīs was introduced from 1912, and further tightened in 1918. This measure was based on the opinions of Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch Orientalist who was very influential in colonial policies regarding Islam and Arabs. He saw that Ḥaḍramīs had threatened the condition of the pribumis, economically, religiously, and politically. This measure, however, was criticized within the government circle, and was mitigated in the middle of 1919 (Jonge 1997, 106–110).

112–129).²³

Accordingly, however, the SI lost many supporters and declined in strength, while the PKI took the lead in the mass political movement. The SI had to depend on its cooperation with Muhammadiyah, which was extending its power through social activities, mainly establishing madrasas (Shiraishi 1990, 243–244).²⁴ Nevertheless, the SI was practically the sole nation-wide political Islamic organization in Indonesia at that time, so it could still take a leading role in the Islamic movement. Its most prominent activity in the 1920s was organizing a series of the Indies Al-Islam Congresses.

The first Indies Al-Islam Congress was held from October 31 to November 2, 1922, in Cirebon, West Java. The main issue at the congress was differences in religious understandings between the traditionalists and the reformists, regardless of whether they were pribumis or Arabs.²⁵ Two famous *kyais* (traditional Islamic teachers), Abdul Wahab Chasbullah of Surabaya and Asnawi of Kudus of Central Java, denounced the reformist organizations Muhammadiyah and al-Irshād for arbitrarily interpreting the Qurʾān and *Sunna* (the practice of the Prophet Muḥammad), and neglecting the writings of previous ‘ulamā’.²⁶ Countering such statements, Salim and Muḥammad al-Hāshimī, an Arab from Tunisia, defended the reformist position, stating that the denouncement of Chasbullah and Asnawi was based on a mere misunderstanding.²⁷ Sūrkatī, the leader of al-Irshād, and Fachrodin of Muhammadiyah also argued that their organizations never deviated from Sunni orthodoxy.²⁸

It is also important that, at this congress, not only pribumis but also Arabs were appointed to important offices. In that period, the *raad agama*, the religious court established by the colonial government, came under fire, and Islamic organizations demanded to establish *raad oelama*, which would supervise *raad agama*. The first Indies

²³ After the expulsion of the communists, the SI was transformed into one single party named Partai Sarekat Islam (PSI) in 1923 (Noer 1973, 130–131). PSI became the Partai Sarekat Islam Hindia Timoer in 1927, and Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII) in 1930 (Amelz 1952, vol. 2, 15). In this paper, we use the term Sarekat Islam, or SI, to avoid any confusion.

²⁴ Muhammadiyah was formed by Ahmad Dachlan in Yogyakarta in 1912. Its growth in the 1920s is discussed in Alfian (1989, chapter 5).

²⁵ “Verslag van het Eerste Al Islam-Congres Gehouden te Cheribon van 31 October–2 November 1922,” Collectie R. A. Kern, H797, no. 290, KITLV.

²⁶ At that time, Chasbullah belonged to a Muslim discussion group called Taswiroel Afkar (Constellation of Thoughts), which he established in 1918. For Chasbullah and Asnawi, see Fealy (1996) and Abdul Ghoni (2014, xxvii–xxxv), respectively.

²⁷ Muḥammad al-Hāshimī came to Indonesia in 1910 as a teacher of a Jamʿiyat Khayr school. But he soon moved to the Alatas School of Batavia to become its headmaster (Mandal 2009, 167). At the time of the first Al-Islam Congress, he was introduced as belonging to al-Hilāl al-Aḥmar (Red Crescent) (Mandal 1994, 198; id. 2009, 167).

²⁸ For Fachrodin, see Salam (1965, 139–140) and Alfian (1989, 200–204).

Al-Islam Congress decided to establish *raad oelama*, by the name of Majlis al-Islam Hindia (the Indies Islamic Council). Its seven-member establishing committee included two Arabs, that is to say, Sūrkaṭī and ‘Alawī bin ‘Alī al-‘Aydārūs.²⁹

2. 2. Response to the Caliphate Congress in Cairo

Nevertheless, differences between pribumis and Arabs gradually surfaced in the Indies Al-Islam Congresses. When the Caliphate was abolished in Turkey in March 1924, Sharīf Ḥusayn of Makkah declared himself Caliph. Meanwhile, ‘ulamā’ of Azhar in Cairo indicated their intention to convene an international congress in the following March to discuss the future of the Caliphate. They called for Muslims internationally to send their representatives.³⁰ To coordinate the response to the Caliphate Congress, Indonesian Muslims held a meeting in Surabaya in October 1924, which resulted in the formation of the Caliphate Committee (Comite Chilaafat).³¹ In December of the same year, this committee hosted the third Indies Al-Islam Congress, where a resolution was made to exclude any Arabs from the Indonesian delegation to the Caliphate Congress.

Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that the Arabs made a substantial contribution regarding the response to the Caliphate Congress in Cairo. First, among Indonesian Muslims, the announcement of the Cairo congress was mainly sent to Arab individuals and organizations. Second, the October meeting in Surabaya, which decided to establish the Caliphate Committee, was held because members of al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya, the above-mentioned peranakan Arab organization, and other Arabs in Surabaya urged the SI. Third, the plan of forming the Caliphate Committee was based on the proposal of the executive committee of the Caliphate Congress in Cairo, and al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya received the proposal.³² It is evident that the Arabs played significant roles as mediators between the Caliphate Congress of Cairo and the Indonesian Muslim community, using

²⁹ “Verslag van het Eerste Al Islam-Congres Gehouden te Cheribon van 31 October–2 November 1922”; “Hasil Congres Al Islam,” *Doenia Islam* 1/4: (January 26, 1923): 12; id., 1/5 (February 2, 1923), 8. For *raad agama and raad oelama*, see Hisyam (2001, 155–160, 173–175). ‘Alawī bin ‘Alī al-‘Aydārūs is mentioned as a teacher of an Arab school in Ceribon, though the details are uncertain.

³⁰ The Caliphate Congress of Cairo was discussed in detail in Kramer (1986, chapter 9).

³¹ For the process that led to the establishment of the Caliphate Committee, see “Kalifaatsaktie,” Collectie R. A. Kern, H797, no. 316, KITLV; “Centraal-Comite-Chilaafat-Hindia-Timoer,” *Soeara Perdamaian* 2/8-9 (March 4, 1926): 2. After branches of the committee were formed, the Surabaya committee became the Central Indies Caliphate Committee (Centraal Comite Chilaafat Hindia Timoer).

³² “Kalifaatsaktie.” Moreover, the meeting of October 1924 was held at an Arab-run school, the Tarbiyat al-Aytām (Education for Orphans) in Surabaya.

their close networks with the Arab Middle East.

Furthermore, Arabs had no small presence in the Caliphate Committee itself. The committee, comprised of fifteen and, later, sixteen members included four Arabs; ‘Uthmān Bā ‘Abūd al-‘Amūdī (the treasurer of Surabaya branch of al-Irshād) as the treasurer, ‘Aydarūs al-Mashhūr (the editor of *Ḥaḍramawt*, an ‘Alawī-periodical in Surabaya), Maṣṣūr Yamanī (the president of al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya), and ‘Umar bin Sālim Hubayṣ (a member of Surabaya branch of al-Irshād) respectively as members.³³ A member of al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya was included in the committee, though it was a small Arab association active only in Surabaya. Obviously, this was made for its contribution to the formation of the Caliphate Committee.

Conversely, the process in which the delegation to the Caliphate Congress was elected certainly shows the rising pribumi consciousness. At the meeting in October, the first topic was whether Indonesian Muslims should send their delegates to Cairo despite the enormous cost. Some attendees submitted adverse comments. Hasan Soerati stated that it was a waste of money because the Indonesian delegation would be disdained in Cairo, considered as “flies or mosquitos.” So, in his opinion, it would be enough to send a proposal concerning the caliphate.³⁴ Fachrodin of Muhammadiyah argued against this, calling out “let it be if our people there are considered as mosquitoes. Then, it is good that they just know what these mosquitoes look like. Islam makes no race-based distinction, so we are not inferior to Egyptians.” This statement, which appealed to the self-confidence of pribumis, settled the argument, leading to the decision to send the delegation.³⁵

The next issue discussed was who would attend the Caliphate Congress in Cairo as the representative for Indonesian Muslims. The argument mainly concerned whether the delegation would be composed of only pribumis or include Arabs. Fachrodin maintained that Indonesian Muslims should delegate only pribumis because their countrymen from Arabia would represent Arabs. Conversely, Tjokroaminoto proposed Sūrkaṭī, Salim, and Soemo Widgdo (an Indian doctor of Muhammadiyah), as delegates. During the discussion,

³³ Ibid. In another place of the same report, the name of the committee’s treasurer was mentioned Muḥammad ‘Abūd al-‘Amūdī. ‘Umar Hubayṣ was an influential figure of al-Irshād, who held positions such as the director of the Surabaya school (Mahfudz 1990). The board of the committee at the meeting held in October 1924 was slightly different from that at the third Indies Al-Islam Congress in December. At first, the name of Hubayṣ was not included in the list until later. The primary members of the board remained the same: the president of the committee was Wondosoedirdjo (later changed name to Wondoamiseno) of a local SI, the vice-president was Chasbullah, a traditionalist, the first secretary was A. M. Sangadji of the CSI, and the second secretary was Simoen of the CSI. “Kalifaatsaktie”; “Verslag van het Buitengewoon Al Islam Kongres Gehouden te Soerabaja op 24, 25, 26 December 1924,” Collectie R. A. Kern, H797, no. 337, KITLV.

³⁴ “Kalifaatsaktie.” Although Hasan Soerati was the founder of N. V. Setia Oesaha, he was ousted from his position as director by Tjokroaminoto (Shiraishi 1990, 54).

³⁵ “Kalifaatsaktie.” For Fachrodin’s argument, see also Bruinessen (1995, 129).

some expressed that it was desirable to choose delegates who knew Arabic or English, the languages of communication in the Caliphate Congress. Presumably, Tjokroaminoto made the proposal based on this opinion.³⁶

No agreement had been reached over the delegation in the October meeting, but six candidates were nominated for three seats—Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin Shihāb (a member of the central executive of Jam‘īyat Khayr), Sūrkatī, Salim, Soemo Widgdo, Chasbullah (a traditionalist, and the chairman of Taswiroel Afkar), and Mas Mansoer (chairman of the Surabaya branch of Muhammadiyah).³⁷ It is clear that Tjokroaminoto’s opinion predominated at this point because the list included two Arabs and one Indian.³⁸

At the third Indies Al-Islam Congress, selection of the delegation was discussed again, but opinions were divided even between two leaders of the SI who presided on the congress. Though he explained that he had no intention to drive a wedge between pribumis and Arabs, Salim agreed with Fachrodin’s opinion and proposed that the delegation should be composed only of pribumis. On the other hand Tjokroaminoto maintained again that the delegation should include one Arab. After a lengthy discussion, by a majority vote, the delegates were decided to consist of only pribumis. Those elected were Fachrodin, Soerjopranoto (a leading figure of the SI), and Chasbullah. It must be noted, however, that not a few people cast votes for Tjokroaminoto’s opinion.³⁹

Furthermore, we must state that, as with the SI in its early period, the Indies Al-Islam Congresses were heavily dependent on Arab economic power. Although the problem of the enormous expense of sending the delegation to Cairo was not resolved in the congress, Arabs promised to cover most expenses. The cost for sending three persons to Cairo was estimated at 7,500 guilders. An Arab named Rubay‘a bin Ambārak bin Ṭālib, who was former treasurer of the TKNM, transferred the remaining 3,100 guilders to the Caliphate Committee. Moreover, the Surabaya branch of al-Irshād donated 500 guilders. Conversely, from other attendants, only 444 guilders were collected.⁴⁰

³⁶ “Kalifaatsaktie.” Soemo Widgdo was a doctor in a clinic of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta. There was an opinion endorsing Tjokroaminoto as one of the delegates, but he declined as it was impossible for him to leave Indonesia for a long time.

³⁷ Ibid. Muḥammad bin Shihāb was the first president of al-Rābiṭa al-‘Alawīya (‘Alawī Union), which was established in 1927 in Batavia (Mashhūr 1984, 153–155). He was proposed as a candidate because the ‘Alawīs responded against the Sūrkatī’s nomination of a candidate.

³⁸ After the October meeting, some branches of the Caliphate Committee also proposed candidates for the delegation. These included two Arabs, ‘Alī bin ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥabshī and Muḥammad bin Hāshim. The former was a famous ‘ulamā’ in Batavia and the latter was known as journalist and educator, both of whom were ‘Alawīs (Kāf 2008, chapter 1; Alatas 2011).

³⁹ “Verslag van het Buitengewoon Al Islam Kongres.” Soerjopranoto was from the Pakualam house of Yogyakarta. In the late 1910s, he emerged as a leader in the trade union movement, known as the “strike king” (*radja mogok*) (Shiraishi 1990, 110–112).

⁴⁰ “Kalifaatsaktie”; “Verslag van het Buitengewoon Al Islam Kongres.”

Thus, it is true that Arabs ended up not being included in the Indonesian delegation to be sent to the Caliphate Congress in Cairo due to the rising pribumi consciousness. However, they were not completely excluded from the Indonesian Islamic movement. The Arabs made significant contributions to the Indies Congresses. They served as mediators between the Caliphate Congress in Cairo and Indonesian Muslims, using their networks with the Arab region and their proficiency in Arabic. Moreover, the economic support which they provided was essential for the congress. We should note that there were not a few pribumis who believed that their delegation should add Arabs.

3. The Indies Al-Islam Congresses (2): Phase of Integration

In the late 1920s, the Indonesian Islamic movement was seriously split, so that it became impossible to unite for a common purpose. Nevertheless, the split, along with the SI's emphasis on pan-Islamism, brought about a rapprochement between pribumis and Arabs.

3. 1. *The Split of the Indies Al-Islam Congress*

The Caliphate Congress in Cairo was postponed more than one year mainly due to political confrontation within Egypt (Kramer 1986, 86, 90). Indeed, the three mentioned Indonesian delegates were never sent to the congress. Meanwhile, the situation in the Middle East rapidly changed. Ibn Sa'ūd defeated Sharīf Ḥusayn in October 1924, and the kingdom of Hijaz collapsed in the next year. Ibn Sa'ūd had disclosed his intention to hold the Congress of the Islamic World (*Mu'tamar al-'Ālam al-Islāmī*) on the Ḥajj (Great Pilgrimage) in June 1926 to discuss the future form of government in Hijaz.⁴¹ Tjokroaminoto became distrustful of the Caliphate Congress in Cairo because of the rumor that the Egyptian king Fu'ād I would be installed as the new caliph by the British. Thus, the attention of the Indies Al-Islam Congress shifted from Cairo to Hijaz (Bruinessen 1994, 27).⁴²

The rise of Wahhabi Ibn Sa'ūd in the Middle East and the Congress of the Islamic World in Makkah sparked the split of the Indies Al-Islam Congress. First, the smoldering confrontation between the reformists and the traditionalists surfaced. Led by Salim, the reformists expressed support for Ibn Sa'ūd, and they gained control of the congress. At the fourth Indies Al-Islam Congress held in August 1925 in Yogyakarta, the traditionalists

⁴¹ For the Congress of the Islamic World, see Kramer (1986, chapter 10).

⁴² The Caliphate Congress was finally convened in May 1926. Although the above-mentioned three did not participate, two Sumatran Islamic reform movement leaders, Hadji Rasoe and Abdullah Ahmad, attended (Hamka 1982, 151–159).

proposed sending a petition to Ibn Sa‘ūd to respect the traditional religious practices and teaching of the four Sunni Islamic schools of law in his state. Nevertheless, this proposal was rejected by the reformists. Hence, the traditionalists from Central and East Java led by Chasbullah formed the Consultative Committee for the Hijaz Problem (Comite Mereboeg Hidjaz). This committee was reorganized into Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) at a meeting held in Surabaya in January 1926, installing Hasjim Asj’ari, the most respected kyai in Java in its leader (Noer 1973, 223; Bruinessen 1994, 26–29).

The reformists and the traditionalists were divided, so they could no longer coordinate in elections of delegations for Indonesian Muslims. The fifth Indies Al-Islam Congress was held in February 1926 in Bandung, but the NU did not participate in it. The Bandung congress chose Tjokroaminoto, Mansoer, and Moehammad Bakir, an Indonesian resident in Makkah, as the delegates to the Makkah congress.⁴³ Although Arabs were again not included in the delegation, al-Irshād dispatched ‘Umar bin Sulaymān Nājī and Muḥammad bin Ṭālib to Makkah (Nājī n.d., 132–133).⁴⁴ On the other hand, the NU attempted to send its delegation. In the same year, the NU decided to send Asnawi of Kudus and Bisri Sjansoeri of Jombang to Ibn Sa‘ūd, though the dispatch was canceled. Finally, in 1928, Chasbullah and Aḥmad Ghanā’im, an Egyptian teacher in Surabaya, traveled to Makkah. They received Ibn Sa‘ūd’s commitment to respect the traditional religious practices and the teaching of the four Sunni Islamic schools of law (Noer 1973, 224–226; Bruinessen 1994, 26–29).

In addition to the secession of the traditionalists from the Indies Al-Islam Congress, the attendance at the Congress of the Islamic World in Makkah triggered the conflict within the reformist Muslims. Tjokroaminoto, though he was known as an orator within Indonesia, could hardly participate in the discussion at the Makkah congress because he lacked Arabic skill. Moreover, after returning to Indonesia, he was criticized by some Muhammadiyah members for his negligence of *ṣalāt* during his stay in Makkah, and his wife’s improper conduct. It was also rumored that he mismanaged delegation funds. The

⁴³ “Mandaat: Kepoatoesan Persidangan Moella Loear Biasa dari pada Congres Al-Islam Hindia Jang ke V,” *Soeara Perdamaian* 2/8-9 (February 25–March 4, 1926): 1. Even before the Bandung congress, a meeting of the reformist organizations had decided to send Tjokroaminoto and Masoer to the Makkah congress (Noer 1973, 223). Moehammad Bakir was a kyai from Yogyakarta, who had sojourned at Makkah for about twenty-five years (Hamka 1951, 104). He was a supporter of Muhammadiyah. “Inlichtingen over de Actie van den Heer Hadji August Salim te Mekka,” mailrapport 949x/1927 in verbaar September 5, 1927, NA.

⁴⁴ ‘Umar Nājī was one of the leading figures of al-Irshād, active in the fields of education and journalism (Nājī n.d., 120, 126), while details of Muḥammad bin Ṭālib are unknown. Among Indonesian Muslims, Djanan Thaib from West Sumatra, who studied in Cairo at that time, also attended the Makkah congress. For a list of attendees, see “Maḥḍar al-Jalsa al-Ūlā li-l-Mu’tamar al-Islāmī al-‘Āmm,” *Umm al-Qurā* 2/75 (June 11, 1926): 2.

relationship between the SI and Muhammadiyah deteriorated, and this resulted in a rupture between the two groups in the late 1920s (Noer 1973, 235–237; Laffan 2003, 225–227).⁴⁵

Thereafter, the Indies Al-Islam Congress became entirely controlled by the SI, while Muhammadiyah no longer played an active role. After the Makkah congress, the sixth Indies Al-Islam Congress held in September 1926 in Surabaya decided to establish a branch of the Makkah congress named Mu'tamar al-‘Ālam al-Islāmī Far‘ al-Hind al-Sharqīya (East Indies Branch of the Congress of Islamic World, MAIHS). Members of the SI dominated its executive committee, which, from Muhammadiyah, only Mansoer joined as a member.⁴⁶ The ninth Indies Al-Islam Congress in January 1928 held in Yogyakarta was symbolic of Muhammadiyah's remoteness. Although this was its stronghold, according to a Dutch official's report, Muhammadiyah's members were notably absent.⁴⁷

3. 2. *The Rapprochement between the SI and Arabs*

It is interesting to note that, as the relationship with Muhammadiyah deteriorated, the SI reinforced its ties with other Islamic organizations, especially Arab ones. In the executive committee of the MAIHS, ‘Umar Hubays of al-Irshād assumed the role of second secretary, the highest position assigned for non-SI members, while As‘ad al-Kalālī, the president of al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya at that time, was appointed as a member.⁴⁸ The selection of the Indonesian delegation for the second Congress of the Islamic World, which was scheduled to be held in Makkah in 1927, was more important. As the result of the selection of the delegates at the eighth Indies Al-Islam Congress, Sūrkatī of al-Irshād was nominated along with Salim.⁴⁹ In addition to worsening relations between the SI and Muhammadiyah,

⁴⁵ Another factor that worsened the relationship between the SI and Muhammadiyah was the former's partnership with Ahmadiyah, an Islamic movement from India. Many Muhammadiyah members negated it saying that it deviated from Islamic religion (Noer 1973, 150–151).

⁴⁶ “Rinkasnja Kepoatoesan Congres Al-Islam,” *Soeara Perdamaian* 2/35 (September 23, 1926): 1. The executive committee consisted of Tjokroaminoto as president, Wondosoedirdjo as vice-president, and Salim as first secretary.

⁴⁷ “Islam-Congres van 26 tot 29 Januari 1928 Gehouden to Jogjakarta,” mailrapport 141x/1928, NA.

⁴⁸ “Rinkasnja Kepoatoesan Congres Al-Islam,” 1. A list of the members of the executive committee of al-Jam‘īya al-Tahdhībīya at that time is found in “Vereeniging Attahdhībījah,” *Zaman Baroe* 1/11 (August 20, 1926) section 2: 3.

⁴⁹ “Verslag Ringkas,” *Soeara Perdamaian* 3/2 (January 20, 1927): 1. Actually, it had already been decided to dispatch Salim and Sūrkatī at the SI meeting held in Surabaya in December the previous year. “Ledenvergadering P. S. I. Soerabaja,” *Sawoenggaling* 1/1 (January 5, 1927): 2. At the eighth Indies Al-Islam Congress, Abdul Halim, the leader of Perserikatan Oelama, an Islamic organization based in Majalengka, West Java, was nominated as a spare. For Abdul Halim and his organization,

we can interpret the problem of delegates' language ability which was raised at the Makkah congress in the previous year as a reason for the nomination of an Arab. Not to speak of Sūrkatī, Salim was well known for his good Arabic ability.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Sūrkatī excused himself from the delegation without giving a clear reason.⁵¹ Being a substitute for him, Nājī of al-Irshād, who participated in the first Congress of the Islamic World, accompanied Salim to Makkah. After the first Congress of the Islamic World, a letter was sent from Ibn Sa'ūd that demanded the appointment of Sūrkatī to his "envoy" (*mu'tamad*) in Indonesia, and Nājī aimed at realizing this request.⁵² Although the second Congress of the Islamic World had been canceled before their arrival, Salim and Nājī approached dignitaries from Hijaz including Ibn Sa'ūd and other important Muslim figures from around the world. Salim proposed a plan to establish an international Muslim organization called Jam'īyat Anṣār al-Ḥaramayn (Association of the Helpers for the Two Holy Places), which gained acceptance (Noer 1973, 137; Kramer 1986, 119–122).

Neither the plans to establish Jam'īyat Anṣār al-Ḥaramayn nor the appointment of Sūrkatī as an envoy of Ibn Sa'ūd in Indonesia ever materialized. What is important, however, is that Salim and al-Irshād forged strong cooperative ties based on support for Ibn Sa'ūd. In 1928, Sūrkatī set off on a Ḥajj and a visit on the Arab countries, during which he had an audience with Ibn Sa'ūd.⁵³ Salim attended the celebration gathering for his departure held in Batavia, and in his speech he praised Sūrkatī's achievement on the "Islamic Renaissance" (*al-nahḍa al-Islāmīya*).⁵⁴ Salim also arrived for a meeting of al-Irshād held in Batavia in November 1932 celebrating the foundation of Saudi Arabia.

see Noer (1973, 69–73) and Steenbrink (1986, 72–76). This congress, seemingly giving concession to the traditionalists, decided to ask them to put forward a representative. But no one from the traditionalists was elected.

⁵⁰ Salim's Arabic and other language skills were mentioned in an article which announced the decision of the delegates. "Oetoesan M. A. I. H. S.," *Zaman Baroe* 2/24 (February 15, 1927): 3. Mochammad Bakir, who attended the first Makkah congress as a representative of Indonesian Muslims, also stated his opinion that the delegates should be persons with Arabic language skills. "Ikhwānī fī Jāwā," *Mir'āt Muḥammadīya* 6 (February 13, 1927): 140–142.

⁵¹ "Oetoesan ke Hidjaz," *Zaman Baroe* 2/26–27 (March 5–15, 1927): 3. Sūrkatī said, "I cannot accept this nomination for there are some matters that I cannot explain now." The reason for his declining the offer is not clear. Abdul Halim, the spare candidate, was also not sent to Makkah after all.

⁵² A copy of the letter from Ibn Sa'ūd to Sūrkatī dated July 19, 1926 along with its Indonesian translation is found in *Al-Arkhabil* 5/8 (November 1999): n.pg. According to a report of a Dutch official, Nājī desired himself to be appointed to the "envoy" of Ibn Sa'ūd. "Inlichtingen over de Actie van den Heer Hadji August Salim te Mekka."

⁵³ Sūrkatī left Batavia in April and returned to Indonesia in November. "Ilā Umm al-Qurā Za'im al-Nahḍa al-Islāmīya fī al-Sharq al-Aqṣā," *al-Ma'arif* 29 (April 12, 1928): 1; "'Āda al-Ustādh al-Jalīl," *al-Miṣbāḥ* 1/1 (December 1928): 13–15.

⁵⁴ "Ḥaflat Tawdī'," *al-Ma'arif* 29 (April 12, 1928): 2.

There he again delivered a speech, mentioning Saudi Arabia's foundation as a dawn of the new era for Islam, and appreciating the traits of Arabs such as pride and bravery.⁵⁵

Conversely, among the Arabs, the 'Alawīs, who confronted al-Irshād, generally adopted a critical stance toward Ibn Sa'ūd. They had supported Sharīf Ḥusayn, as they were fellow descendants of the Prophet, during his rivalry with Ibn Sa'ūd over the control of the Hijaz. They viewed Wahhabism as dangerous because it condemned traditional religious practices including veneration for the descendants of the Prophet (Bruinessen 1995, 128; Knysh 1997, 203–205). *Ḥaḍramawt*, an 'Alawī newspaper published in Surabaya, reported that the annual pilgrimage should be abstained from due to worsening security in Hijaz under Ibn Sa'ūd's rule. Salim denounced the report as false and conflicted with the 'Alawīs.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he became involved in the dispute over the status of the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad within the Arab community.

In the early 1930s, one of the main issues of the 'Alawī-Irshādī dispute was the use of *laqab* (title) "*sayyid*," which had been applied only to the 'Alawīs in Ḥaḍramawt (Yamaguchi 2012, 53–56). At the congress held in May 1931, al-Irshād decided that the *laqab* would be used as a common honorific for men, just like "mister" in English, or "toean" in Malay, while the 'Alawīs strongly disapproved of the decision. As for this issue, Salim published a statement which supported al-Irshād's decision.⁵⁷ In his view, the conflict between the 'Alawīs and the Irshādīs could be compared to that between aristocracy (*aristocratie*) and democracy (*democratie*) or, even, between the Dutch and the Indonesians. That is to say, only the 'Alawīs bearing the title of "sayyid" based on their lineage meant the same thing as aristocratic titles such as "raden" in Javanese, or "jonkheer" in Dutch made a difference between people. Furthermore, he continued, Indonesians naturally sympathized with the Irshādī's position because they were only called "native" (*inlander*) or "native woman" (*inlandsche vrouw*) by the Dutch, who were given titles such as "*heer*" or "*dame*."

We should notice from this statement that Salim never recognized giving a special position to the Arabs as the pribumis did before. Around the same period, Salim was interviewed by the editor of *al-Hudā*, an Arab periodical in Singapore. He was asked about the reason for his support of al-Irshād, and Salim answered that this organization upheld the principle of "democracy" (*al-dīmūqrāṭīya*), that is to say, "egalitarianism" (*al-*

⁵⁵ "Vergadering van Arabieren te Batavia," Collectie Emile Gobée, H1085, no. 57, KITLV.

⁵⁶ "Hadramaut Courant Bohong: Communiqué Kantor MAIHS Penolak Kabar Bohong," *Soeara Perdamaian* 3/3-4 (January 27–February 3, 1927): 1; "Hadramaut Courant," *Soeara Perdamaian* 3/8-9 (February 17–24, 1927): 3.

⁵⁷ Salim's articles were originally published in *Mustika*, a periodical he edited. The following discussion is based on the quotation of the articles in Secretariaat Vereeniging Al-Irsjad (1931, 101–102).

musāwāt). Conversely, he bitterly complained about an arrogant attitude seen among Arabs toward pribumis. Some Arabs, he said, led ignorant pribumis to believe that marrying off their daughters to Arabs was a “recommendable act” (*mustahabb*) in Islam, and they disdained their wives and fathers-in-law as masters treated their slaves. Educated pribumis, however, did not want their daughters to marry Arabs any longer because they now realized themselves as equal with all people.⁵⁸

It should be noted that, although Salim antagonized the ‘Alawīs, other SI members generally retained cooperative relations with the ‘Alawīs. In 1931, *Hoa Kiao*, an Indonesian Chinese periodical, carried an article which slandered the Prophet Muḥammad. This incident led the SI to call for the establishment of the Al-Islam Committee (Komite Al-Islam) in Surabaya (Akhmad 1989, 324–340). In the next year, after its branches were opened at various places, the central committee was established to control them and A. M. Sangdji, one of the SI leaders, was appointed as its president. In this central committee, several Arabs, especially the ‘Alawīs, held important positions. For example, Muḥammad al-Kāf assumed vice-president, and ‘Aydarūs al-Mashhūr, the editor of *Ḥadramawt*, joined in its founding committee.⁵⁹

One of the reasons why the SI restored its relations with the Arabs from the late 1920s is the SI’s emphasis on pan-Islamism and denial of the character of a “pribumi organization.” In 1927, a federation to unify Indonesian political forces, named Permoefakatan Perhimpoean-perhimpoean Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (Agreement of Indonesian Political Associations of the Indonesian Nation, PPPKI), was formed under the initiative of Soekarno. Although the SI participated in its formation, conflict with secular nationalist groups gradually intensified mainly due to ideological differences. Eventually, the SI withdrew from the PPPKI in December 1930 (Noer 1973, 250–251). In early 1930, the SI published an “explanation of its principle,” which stated that the union of the whole Islamic community in the world was its primary purpose. It conceived of its activities just as a part of it (Formichi 2012, 50–53).⁶⁰ Most nationalist organizations which were established from the late 1920s to the 1930s, like the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party, PNI), limited its full membership to pribumis (Suryadinata 1978, 18). Nevertheless, the SI, in accordance with the ideal of pan-Islamism, stipulated in its bylaw published in January 1931 that it opened membership to all Muslims and made no distinctions based on nations (*bangsa*) and nationalities (*kebangsaan*).⁶¹ Thereby,

⁵⁸ “Ḥadīth ma‘a al-Za‘īm al-Kabīr al-Ḥājj Aqūs Sālim,” *al-Hudā* 23 (October 26, 1931): 3; id., 24 (November 2, 1931): 3.

⁵⁹ “Central Komite Al Islam,” *Het Licht* 7/4-5 (June–July, 1931): 124.

⁶⁰ The purpose of the activities of the SI was notified in “Rantjangan: Keterangan Asas Partij Sarekat Islam Indonesia,” *Fadjar Asia* 17 (January 21, 1930): 1.

⁶¹ “Statuten Partij Sarekat Islam Indonesia IV,” *Fadjar Asia* 20 (January 24, 1930): 1.

the Arabs were no longer excluded from the SI and treated equally to pribumis at least in principle.

Although the Al-Islam Committee planned to convene the annual congress, the SI, which headed the committee, had already lost its leadership in uniting all Indonesian Islamic groups. The committee ceased operations after presiding over two Al-Islam Congresses in 1931 and 1932. It took five years before Indonesian Islamic groups succeeded in closing ranks again. In September 1937, especially under the initiative of Muhammadiyah and the NU, a new federation for Indonesian Muslims, the MIAI was established in Surabaya. The MIAI sponsored three Al-Islam Congresses until the end of the Dutch colonial rule (Benda 1958, 89–90; Noer 1973, 240–247; Akhmad 1989, chapter 7).

Arab organizations actively participated in the MIAI, while pribumi did not show any intention to remove Arabs from important posts. At the time it was established, only seven organizations were affiliated with the MIAI, and those included two Arab organizations, that is, the Surabaya branch of al-Irshād and al-Jam‘īya al-Khayrīya (Benevolent Society) of Surabaya (Noer 1973, 242). Among them, especially al-Irshād assumed an important role in the MIAI. One of the five representatives of the MIAI sent to Kaikyo Tenrankai (Exhibition of Islam) held in Japan in November 1939 was ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Amūdī (Kobayashi 2011, 188–189).⁶² Furthermore, ‘Umar Hubays of the Surabaya branch became a member of the executive board of the MIAI and even he was appointed as one of the representatives of the MIAI in Madjelis Rakjat Indonesia (Indonesian People’s Council), which was formed in 1941 (Noer 1973, 272; Akhmad 1989, 270).⁶³ The Arabs were now entitled to become representatives of the Indonesian Muslim community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from what has been argued above, the Arabs continued to maintain solidarity with pribumis in the Indonesian Islamic movement during the first half of the twentieth

⁶² MIAI’s representatives other than ‘Amūdī were Abdul Kahar Moezakkir (Partai Islam Indonesia [Indonesian Islamic Party, PII] and Muhammadiyah), Kasmat (PII), Farid Ma’roef (Muhammadiyah), and Machfoedz Siddiq (NU).

⁶³ The Madjelis Rakjat Indonesia was a permanent body which replaced the Kongres Rakjat Indonesia (Indonesian People’s Congress) held in 1939. The Gaboengan Politik Indonesia (Indonesian Political Federation, GAPI), which was formed in 1939, presided over it while the MIAI and Persatoean Vakbonden Pegawai Negeri (League of Civil Servants’ Union, PVPN) joined the Madjelis Rakjat Indonesia (Pluvier 1953, 189–190). Other representatives of the MIAI were Wahid Hasjim (NU), Wondoamiseno (SI), Soekiman (PII), and Mansoer (Muhammadiyah and PII).

century. It is true that rising pribumi-consciousness rendered the Arabs, who had been venerated due to their origin, to be considered as mere “foreigners.” Indeed, they became marginalized even in the Indonesian Islamic movement by the 1920s. Nevertheless, the Arabs had a significant presence in the Indies Al-Islam Congresses through their close networks with the Arab region, Arabic language skills, and economic strength. Pribumis never drove them from the Indies Al-Islam Congresses completely, but not a few of them opined that Arabs should be added to the Indonesian delegate to the Caliphate Congress in Cairo. Furthermore, from the late 1920s, the division within the Indies Al-Islam Congresses and SI’s emphasis on pan-Islamism caused rapprochement between the SI and the Arabs. While the Irshādīs strengthened cooperative relations with Agoes Salim, the ‘Alawīs assumed important positions in the Al-Islam Committee, which was formed under the leadership of the SI.

Thus, the division of the population set by the Dutch colonial government was not absolute in the Indonesian Islamic movement, where the shared religion played a significant role as the principle for integration. We may say that, on this point, the Indonesian Islamic movement was different from the secular Indonesian nationalist movement, which basically excluded non-pribumis. There is one other thing that should be noted. As seen from Salim’s statement, the view that Arabs must be equal with pribumis was promoted in society. This leads us to suppose that the Indonesian Islamic movement resulted in the shaping of a common “Indonesian Muslim” consciousness between pribumis and Arabs, which was more focused on religious fraternity and differed slightly from the Indonesian consciousness in the secular nationalist movements.

We have mainly examined the Indonesian Islamic movement until the early 1930s. At that time, there remained confrontations between the reformists and the traditionalists, and among the reformist groups. The period afterward to the late 1930s, when Indonesian Islamic groups overcame their differences and were reunified under the MIAI, was not discussed in this article. To elucidate the process of the integration in the Indonesian Islamic movement in detail, it is necessary to investigate this period.

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