

The Policy of the Dutch Government Towards Islam in Indonesia

Ismail Hakkı Göksoy

Abstract

This paper aims to examine the policy of the Dutch colonial government towards Islam in Indonesia, especially during the period of 1945-49 in which the Indonesians struggled for their independence from the Dutch. However, the attitudes of the Dutch East Indian Company towards the Indonesian Muslims in the 17th and 18th centuries and that of the Dutch colonial government in later periods were also included in order to indicate the changes in policy.

The government's policy towards Islam during the independence period was determined largely by its immediate aim to gain the support of the Muslim people for the reestablishment of the Dutch rule in Indonesia after the war. Therefore, the Dutch authorities in Jakarta tried to show a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim leaders, especially the ulama who had great influence upon the people, and they were inclined to give them more help in religious, social and educational fields, but without endangering the principle of the separation of religion and politics. In this respect, the attempts to establish close contact with the Muslim leaders and their organizations as well as the stimulation of ulama conferences and establishment of regional Islamic councils were discussed in detail. Based largely on the archival materials, the paper concludes that the Dutch needed to pursue a liberal policy after 1945 in contrast to a neutral one in previous times.

Introduction: The Colonial Legacy

Today's Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, remained under Dutch influence for many centuries. In the beginning, relations between the Dutch and the Indonesians were established through the Dutch East Indian Company, hereinafter referred to as the "Company," which was set up by the Dutch government in the Hague in 1602 to organize the Asian trade between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Its attitude towards Islam was not sympathetic, because the Company officials saw in Islam a possible menace to their position in the Indonesian Archipelago and considered the Indonesian Muslims as a "potential political danger" for their commercial interests in the region. On the other hand, the coming of the Dutch was viewed by the Indonesian Muslims to be an attack on Islam. Islam constituted a problem for the Dutch in spite of the fact that they had been concerned mostly with trade since the beginning of their expansion into Southeast Asia, as compared with the Spanish and the Portuguese who came to this part of the world *inter alia* to combat Islam and to replace it with Christianity.¹

Although the Company did not make serious attempts to convert the native people to Christianity, as the Portuguese and the Spanish had done before, it, nevertheless, provided some kind of help for those people who lived in its direct control. In fact, in the statutes of the Company dated 1602, it was stated, among other things, that one of the main responsibilities of the Company was to help the spread of Christianity and its growth in the Indies.² In 1616, the Governor General Jan Pieterszon Coen supported the giving of half a kilo of rice per day to every Indonesian who wished to attend the Christian schools in Batavia (Jakarta). But this measure soon gave the impression that those who converted to Christianity did so because of their selfish interests. Later they came to be called "rice Christians" among the natives.³

Moreover, the Muslims in Batavia were not given permission to perform their congregational religious duties freely. On December 7, 1643, the Batavia Church Council issued a declaration stating that the performance of the Muslim circumcision should be forbidden, and that Muslim schools were to be closed down. A few years later (1651) the congregational meetings of the Muslims and of the Chinese, whether open or closed, were prohibited. Upon the pressure of Muslims, these measures were softened later in 1674, when a new regulation was issued stating that freedom of meeting and congregational prayers would be allowed on the condition that they did not disturb the feeling of the adherents of other religions.⁴

Another area where Christianization was encouraged was Ambon and its neighboring islands in eastern Indonesia. In particular, those people who had not entered any religion were the main target for Christianization. In his letter to the Governor of Ambon in 1622, Coen stated that he should make some attempts to convert the native people, especially the farmers from Ceram, and that he combat the Muslim traditions practiced among the people. A report prepared in those days shows that the Governor of Ambon took strong measures to prevent the activities of Muslim preachers who were involved in missionary work in the region, and that he used force to Christianize the native people by destroying their villages.⁵

In other places, the Company could not intervene directly in the religious life of the Muslim people, as the Dutch authority in those places was not firmly established. But the main problem between the Company and the Indonesian Muslims was that of the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Makkah, because the Dutch had always felt that the pilgrims, when they returned home, became the main instigators of the revolts directed against the Dutch. Therefore, they put some of the returning pilgrims from Makkah under surveillance. In 1716, the Governor General C. van Swoll even forbade the Dutch ships to carry pilgrims from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia.⁶

From the beginning of the 19th century, when the freedom movements emerged in Europe as a result of the French Revolution, the Dutch began to pay attention to the principle of the freedom of religion and conscience in Indonesia as well. In 1803, a directive issued by the Dutch Government in the Hague to the Governor-General stated that the government would allow all religious groups to practice the requirements of their religions freely, except under the circumstances of possible riots.⁷ Although this principle was maintained in all legal documents, it did not make its effects felt in practice. For instance, in 1810, the Hajjis were obliged to possess a passport for travel from one place to another in Java. This measure was also followed during the English rule (1811-16) in Java.⁸

A regulation adopted in 1825 tried to limit the numbers going on the Hajj as much as possible instead of forbidding the pilgrimage completely. According to this regulation, the government imposed on every pilgrim a sum of 110 Florin to get a pilgrimage passport. In 1831, this sum was doubled (220), and those who went to Makkah for pilgrimage purposes through illegal ways were to be given a sentence of 1000 Florin. In another regulation dated 1859, every aspiring pilgrim was obliged to take an official letter from his local native administrator, showing that he had sufficient means for himself and for his family who would stay behind. In addition to that,

every pilgrim was obliged to pass a pilgrimage exam when he returned home. If he succeeded in it, then he could use the title Hajji and wear the white dress commonly used by the Indonesian pilgrims to signify their Hajji status in society.⁹

The Dutch anxiety about the Hajj continued until the end of the 19th century, when such limitations on it were lifted at the recommendations of C. Snouck Hurgronje, a famous Dutch Islamologist who served the government as an Adviser for Native and Arabic Affairs from 1898 to 1906. The Islamic policy adopted by him aimed to separate politics and religion from each other and to maintain the principle of religious freedom in the state administration. According to him, the government should give the Muslims complete freedom in religious matters like prayer, fasting, pilgrimage etc., but their demands and activities concerning political matters were to be suppressed severely.

He tried to relieve the anxiety of the Dutch authorities about the menace of Islam, maintaining that the majority of the Indonesian Muslims, especially the ulama, were not the enemies of the colonial regime, and that the *penghulus*, who were responsible for the administration of religious affairs in Java, were under the supervision of the local administrators who usually tended to be pro-Dutch. He argued that the independent ulama were not always behind the continuous conspiracies against the colonial regime. On the contrary, they tended to follow a strict religious life, paying attention only to religious matters. He considered pan-Islamism to be an obscure doctrine, not a political reality identified with the Ottoman sultan and caliph.

He did not believe that every pilgrim, when he returned home, had become a fanatic. Nor did he have hopes of converting Indonesians to Christianity in the long run. He maintained that the great majority of Indonesian Muslims would remain Muslims. According to him, the main enemy for the colonial regime was not Islam as a religion, but its transformation into a political doctrine and ideology. Therefore, any movements related to the jihad, pan-Islamism and caliphate questions were to be followed closely and suppressed immediately before threatening the colonial rule. Thus, he divided Islam into two parts: the one being political Islam, which should be put under strict surveillance, the other being religious Islam, which should be encouraged as much as possible.¹⁰ This policy he formulated was officially named a neutral religious policy, and it was followed by his successors until 1942, when the Dutch colonial regime ended as a result of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia.

The Second World War Period (1942-1945)

During the Second World War, Indonesian affairs were entrusted to a Dutch commission in Melbourne, Australia, where the headquarters of Allied forces were situated. This commission was initially headed by J. E. van Hoogstraten, but in December 1942, he was succeeded by Ch. O. van der Plas, an important Dutch figure who had great responsibility for the Dutch administration until the establishment of a Netherlands Indies government-in-exile in Australia under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor General H. J. van Mook in early 1945. Van der Plas was also the first Dutch official who advocated the necessity of cooperation with the Muslim leaders to win the hearts of the Indonesian Muslims for the reconquest of Indonesia from the Japanese. The Dutch concern with Islam and the Indonesian Muslims during this period included basically the recruitment of some Indonesian Muslims into the Dutch civil and secret services in Australia and the Islamic propaganda campaign directed against the Japanese.

During the war, several missions were sent to Saudi Arabia to recruit Indonesians for the recovery of Indonesia from the Japanese, as there remained several thousand Indonesian Muslims in Makkah, who had gone there for pilgrimage and study purposes before the war. In the first recruitment mission undertaken by the Dutch and British intelligence officers in October 1942, some 51 persons were assembled, while in the second mission in 1943, only 21 persons were collected, because most of the Indonesians in Makkah gave the impression that "it is not our struggle."¹¹ Some of the recruits were sent to Ceylon, while others were shipped to Australia for training in special operations.¹²

According to the original plan adopted by the Dutch and English authorities in Australia, these Indonesians would be sent to Java as merchants, but the real intention was to collect intelligence and information on the Japanese measures in Indonesia. However, none of them were used as secret agents.¹³ Most of them were employed in other services, such as information and subversive propaganda activities against Japan, because Van der Plas maintained that they could be used conveniently for the execution of these activities, but not for the special operations in Indonesia.¹⁴ In the end, only two volunteers were sent to Java by a submarine, but they did not return to Australia.¹⁵ In 1953, B. A. van Deinse, a Dutch intelligence officer, told the Inquiry Commission that "the whole group which came from Makkah was a great disappointment and we were finally glad to get rid of them."¹⁶

The plan to employ Indonesian Muslims living in Makkah in the secret services achieved almost nothing. Some of them worked for the Dutch information service, making propaganda activities against Japan, while others became housewarders in *Rumah Indonesia* in Brisbane, which was established in 1943 at the initiative of Van der Plas for the Indonesians who spent the war in Australia.

A different source of contact with the Indonesian Muslims was from the Boven Digul prison in West Irian (formerly New Guinea). After the recapture of this island by the Allied forces in early 1943, several hundred Indonesian prisoners in Boven Digul, who had been jailed by the Dutch before the war, were transported to Australia where the majority of them were released by the Dutch a few months later. Most of them were anti-Japanese Muslim and communist leaders who had been still kept in prison by the Japanese.¹⁷ Among these Islamic leaders were H. Djalaluddin Thaib and H. Muchtar Luthfi, who had been imprisoned by the government in 1933 because of their nationalist activities based on Islam. Both of them came originally from the West Coast of Sumatra and were leaders of a political Islamic organization called Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Union or PERMI).¹⁸

In Australia, Van der Plas established a close contact with these Muslim leaders, who believed that the Dutch would introduce radical changes in Indonesia after the war. They were employed in the Dutch information service, which administered propaganda campaigns through the radio programs to Indonesia.¹⁹ Their propaganda campaign was directed mainly against certain Japanese measures in Indonesia such as bowing towards the Japanese Emperor in Tokyo and other polytheistic practices which were fundamentally against Islam. According to Van der Plas, Islamic propaganda should be made "very carefully and insidiously by or in the name of Muslims, preferably, if available, of well-known Muslims."²⁰ Apart from these leaders, in May 1943, an Indo-Arab in Makkah named Sayyid Abdurrahman al-Massawa, who had been a leader of the Arab Islamic and Economic Society in Palembang (Sumatra) before the war, was also sent to Australia to make Islamic propaganda through radio broadcasts from Melbourne.²¹

As far as the content of these Dutch Islamic propaganda broadcasts was concerned, we know only what we can learn from the letters and memoranda of Van der Plas to senior civil and military authorities. All the texts of the broadcasts which took place under the guidance of the Dutch information service from Australia to Indonesia were lost during and after the War.²² According to Van der Plas, the prudent sermons, based on Qur'anic

texts, were regularly broadcast from Melbourne to Indonesia. Priority in the broadcasts was given to the incompatibility of Islam with Shintoism, and to Japanese interference with Islam.²³

In Search of a Liberal Islamic Policy

At the end of the Japanese occupation, the situation in Indonesia developed quite differently. The nationalist leaders Sukarno and Muhammad Hatta declared Indonesia's independence on August 15, 1945; in the months following the independence declaration and the establishment of the Republic, Islam provided an extra stimulus for the people to resist the return of the Dutch to Indonesia. On the other hand, in trying to reestablish their authority after the war, the Dutch needed to consider their policy towards Islam and its leaders in Indonesia.

From late 1945 to April 1946, Islam became a principal political pre-occupation of the Dutch officials in Indonesia, because Muslim leaders, especially the ulama, served as the rallying points of resistance against the Dutch. The role of Islam in the revolution was discussed, while at the same time suggestions were made to stem the influence of Muslim nationalists and to appease the population by using "moderate" Islamic leaders, who in their speeches touched only upon religious matters and kept aloof from politics. After long and careful discussions, the Dutch authorities in Jakarta were able to formulate an Islamic policy which aimed to establish close contact with Muslim leaders and their organizations.

This policy also included meeting some of the wishes of the Muslim community, especially in religious, social and educational matters, but without endangering the secular principles in Indonesia, and without appearing to engage in open use of Islam for propaganda purposes. The implementation of this policy was entrusted to Van der Plas, an expert on Islam who served as an Adviser for Islamic Affairs in the Cabinet of the Lieutenant Governor-General from April 1946 to December 1947.

In official circles, the importance of Islam and its leaders for reestablishing Dutch authority in Java and other places in Indonesia was first expressed by Major R. S. S. Santoso, a Javanese nobleman who served the Dutch as the Head of the "Intelligence and Loyalty Investigation" of the Allied Military Administration Civil Affairs Branch (AMACAB) of West Java. On February 2, 1946, he produced a long report on the Japanese Islamic propaganda in which he argued that the support of the masses could only be gained through the use of religion and its leaders, in particular the

kiais, traditional ulama who had the real authority over the people, especially in the rural areas. He was of the opinion that, through those *kiais* who were reluctant to take part in the revolution, it might be possible to calm the masses and to clear away the anti-Dutch spirit from the minds of the people.²⁴

In a letter to Ch. W. A. Abbenhuis, Commanding Officer, AMACAB of West Java, on March 2, 1946, he insisted that the sphere of “law and order” in Jakarta, in particular, and in the whole of Indonesia, in general, could only be created by Islam and her leaders. He argued that the Japanese and the Republic made use of influential *kiais* for their political purposes; in the same way, but with different methods, the Netherlands Indies government should also make use of *kiais* and should give more priority to Islam to gain the sympathy and cooperation of the people in the reconstruction. He said:

If one wants to restore order again among the population, the support and collaboration of friendly religious leaders could be of very great value. Political pressure and schooling in Japanese style are not necessary to obtain this collaboration, since there are various influential and prominent Islamic leaders who are, in principle and from the very beginning, against the misuse of Islam as a political tool, who have had to suffer very often for this idea and who are inclined to make known their standpoints — when they are tactfully approached and protected against their detention by the Republican forces.²⁵

In another letter to Abbenhuis on March 6, 1946, Santoso said, “As the masses of population have been brought into revolt by Islam, they must be calmed by Islam also.” To achieve this, he proposed setting up an office for Islamic Affairs, which would have immediate access, even in emergencies, to the government departments. Under its guidance, anti-Dutch feelings of the people would be cleared away through the influential *kiais*.²⁶

However, the ideas expressed by Santoso was opposed by Abbenhuis, who doubted the role of Islam and its leaders in the revolution. In his view, the principal cause of the widespread independence uprising was not exclusively or even mainly Islam, but Japanese propaganda, conducted by means of press, radio broadcastings and various meetings. He thought that the *pemudas* (youths) rather than the *kiais* played an important role in the independence movement. He also objected to the use of Muslim leaders for propaganda purposes, stating that, “How far is it advisable to make use of its (Islam’s) spiritual leaders, more or less, for propaganda purposes?”

He continued:

If one were to work primarily along the lines of Islam, then, whatever political status Indonesia would have in the future, the constitutional result could be that Islam, by nature, striving towards establishing power in the state, would be supported in that objective.²⁷

According to Abbenhuis, the nucleus of the Dutch propaganda should not be Islam and its leaders. Propaganda should, firstly, be directed against Japanese propaganda, which consisted of anti-western slogans, then against the idea of '*Kemerdekaan* (Independence),' emphasizing "what it meant: that it was not banditry, terror or murder, but it was, first of all, discipline, order and respect for the opinions of other people." Furthermore, the best propaganda channels for him would be the economic ones such as distributing food to the people, medical care, clothing, giving more opportunity to the people to do their work and the promotion of commercial activities.

His views were not fully shared by Van der Plas, who argued that, in important parts of Java and Madura, the support of the population could only be obtained by means of Islam and native traditions preached under Islamic disguise, especially when it was impossible to provide food, clothing, medical treatment and security. Like Santoso, Van der Plas maintained that contact with the Islamic organizations and their leaders should be made urgently. The involvement of Muslim leaders and their organizations in the reconstruction, particularly in the spiritual enlightenment of the people, should be secured by the government by providing financial support to their charitable and educational works. But, he rejected establishing an office for Islamic Affairs and turning the *kiais* into government officials, as proposed by Major Santoso. He was of the opinion that the leading *kiais* and other prominent Islamic leaders should be given advisory functions in a council in contact with an expert of the government, so that collaboration with the Muslim leaders could be stimulated and coordinated in that way where necessary. In this respect, he proposed the establishment of a High Council for Islamic Affairs to meet the need for a body to act as a go-between, linking the government and the Muslim community.²⁸

Discussions regarding the government's policy towards Islam and its leaders continued until April 1946, when Van Mook as the Lieutenant Governor-General issued a memorandum on April 1, 1946, stating that in general, he agreed with the views expressed by Van der Plas. Thus, the Islamic circles and the people would be given more attention and Van der Plas would be appointed to be adviser for Islamic Affairs to the Cabinet. The body proposed by Van der Plas would be established as quickly as pos-

sible so that contact with the Muslim leaders could be centralized; but, this last one did not materialize.²⁹

Contact with Muslim Leaders in Kalimantan and Sulawesi

After Van der Plas' appointment as the adviser for Islamic Affairs to the Lieutenant Governor-General's Cabinet in April, 1946, he began to pay visits to the major cities of South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi in the Outer Islands where the Dutch authority was established shortly after the Japanese surrender. His first visit was to South Kalimantan, a region where Islam had a strong influence. Specifically, he visited the cities, such as Banjarmasin, Martapura, Kandangan, Amuntai, Barabai, Alabio, Rantau and Kelua.

After speaking with some Dutch and Indonesian administrative officials, Van der Plas held several meetings with a number of ulama, religious officials like *kadis* and muftis, and administrative members of the Muhammadiyah Islamic organization in the area. During his visit, Van der Plas aimed to acquire an insight into the political attitudes of the Muslim community towards the Dutch and to assess their views on matters such as the introduction of Islamic religious education to public schools, the establishment of advisory Islamic councils, the appointment of a Head *Kadi* in Banjarmasin. He also wanted to discuss the possibility of making a pilgrimage to Makkah. In addition, he tried to find candidates to become army religious officers and Indonesian personnel for government information services to work, especially, in radio broadcasting, press and translation matters.

The ulama's response to Van der Plas' proposals was only lukewarm. Although Van der Plas said that the meetings had passed in "an atmosphere of confidence and readiness to cooperate with the government," there were also some protests against his proposals. An alternative meeting held by the ulama of Banjarmasin, sympathetic to the Republic, opposed his proposals and declared that "people have no candidates, either for Islamic councils or for army religious officers in the Dutch army."³⁰ According to the Dutch official reports, 95% of the educated and middle-class, including the ulama in South Kalimantan were in favor of Indonesia's independence, but they wanted to achieve this goal "through peaceful means and in cooperation with the Dutch."³¹

During the meetings only some ulama from Kandangan clearly expressed their desire to support some of Van der Plas' proposals, namely

the establishment of an Islamic council. His attempts to find candidates to become Muslim religious officers in the Dutch army resulted in no success. In his meetings with the ulama, Van der Plas also laid stress upon the need for the introduction of non-compulsory Muslim religious education in public schools and prisons for one or two hours a week in order to restore public morals. He considered religious education to be the only possible means to deter many, especially the youth, from their violent activities in support of the independence movement.³² However, because of the refusal of the Department of Education and Public Worship to provide payments for religious lessons, the plan was not put into effect until June 1947. Nor did the plan fully meet the demands of the Muslims, who insisted that lessons in Islam should be given in all public schools and for all classes. They also insisted that the lessons should be made compulsory for all pupils considered to be Muslims.

To secure the cooperation of the ulama with the government, Van der Plas also sought to establish local advisory Islamic bodies in South Kalimantan, but he was able to initiate the setting up of an ulama council only at Kandangan. Established in May 1946 under the leadership of H. Mansur from Pantai Hambawang, it served the assistant-resident as an advisory body in Islamic affairs in the Hulu Sungai region. But its activities had virtually ceased in August 1946 when the assistant-resident prohibited the council from performing any role in society other than to give advice to the authorities and the public concerning Islam, claiming that it was involved in activities which did not originally belong to the religious field. Although it began to function again at the end of February 1947 with H. Abdullah Siddik as its new chairman, it played a limited role in society.³³

With regard to appointing a new Head *Kadi* in Banjarmasin, some ulama considered it necessary while others were reluctant to support such an appointment by the Dutch. Some ulama also demanded the introduction of Islamic law in matters pertaining to inheritance, which meant transferring jurisdiction over inheritance from the purview of the civil judges in the civil courts to that of the religious judges in the *kadi* courts.³⁴ However, no changes occurred in this respect. The colonial ordinance of December 1937 on the organization of religious justice in South and East Kalimantan, which dealt only with personal matters like marriage and divorce, remained in force. A government decree dated June 24, 1946 specified the payments to the *kadi* judges and the superior *kadi* judge at Banjarmasin.³⁵

In May 1946, Van der Plas proceeded to South Sulawesi, another stronghold of Islam in the Outer Islands. As in South Kalimantan, he held

meetings with a number of *kalis* (religious officials in the self-governing areas in South Sulawesi) and leaders of Islamic organizations in Ujung Pandang and Gowa. In South Sulawesi, the contact between the government and the Muslim community was facilitated through the Madjlis Islam which was established at Ujung Pandang in December 1945 on the initiative of H. Muchtar Luthfi, who himself served the resident of Ujung Pandang as an adviser for Islamic Affairs after his return from Australia.

The wishes of the Muslims in that region concerned mainly a subsidy request for the construction of a *Masjid Raya* (Great Mosque) at Ujung Pandang and the establishment of an Islamic Appeal Court which would re-examine the decisions of the religious judges at the self-governing courts of that region. Although Van der Plas promised them some necessary building materials such as cement and steel, because he expected that "it would result in favorable political consequences for the government," no help was given by the government side.³⁶

The idea of establishing an Islamic court in South Sulawesi met with opposition not only from the self-governing rulers in the region but also from the Dutch Department of Justice. The Director of the Department of Justice, A. H. C. Gieben, having discussed the matter with Van der Plas, opposed the making of a new regulation for its establishment. He argued that such a regulation would violate the competence and jurisdiction of native and civil courts over the religious justice in the area. He said that such a court would mean the promotion of Islamic laws and the creation of a legal basis for their existence in the judiciary.³⁷

At the insistence of Van der Plas, a voluntary court of appeal was formed with H. Achmad Bone as its chairman and three *kalis* and three ulama as members, to improve the expertise of judges in Islamic law, but this court did not function at all, because the resident refused to make a regulation for payments to its members.³⁸ Actually, there was no change in the organization of Muslim religious justice in South Sulawesi, which formed part of native justice based on *adat*, the customary law. Although the central government in Jakarta agreed, in principle, to offer its assistance for the training of religious judges to improve their legal expertise, no serious measures were taken by the local authorities in this respect. The former colonial regulations concerning Muslim religious justice remained in force in South Sulawesi as well.

In the political field, the Muslim leaders in the Outer Islands were given freedom as long as they acted within the limits of the law and did not become involved in any political or military activities directed against the

Dutch. However, the Dutch relied primarily on the support of the self-governing rulers, native officials and ethnic headmen, who tended to be pro-Dutch. Most of the enlightened Muslims and secularly oriented nationalist leaders, especially in South Sulawesi and South Kalimantan, opposed the Dutch proposals to form a federal state system there. For instance, on July 20, 1946, the South Sulawesi branch of the Muhammadiyah organization, after hearing the views of its representatives in that area, accepted a motion in response to the results of the Malino Conference, which was organized by the Dutch to discuss the federal state system in Indonesia.³⁹

The demands of the Muslim leaders, especially on the form of the state system, were ignored by the Dutch. For instance, during the Den Pasar Conference of December 1946, which resulted in the establishment of the federal state of East Indonesia, some Muslim leaders like H. Mughtar Luthfi and Muhammad Akib advocated a religious basis for the proposed state, namely the formula "Belief in the All-Just God" inspired from the first principle (Belief in the One God) of *Pancasila* in the Republic, and proposed the establishment of a ministry for religious affairs in East Indonesia.

These proposals were rejected by the Governor-General Van Mook, who said that such a ministry would be unacceptable to a modern (secular) state and who recommended them to proceed with the establishment of a council only. When these Muslim members even put forward a motion in the provisional parliament of East Indonesia on May 6, 1947, for the establishment of a Supreme Religious Council under the presidency of a State Mufti who would be Minister of State at the same time, it was also rejected by the Christian, Hindu and some secularly oriented Muslim members of Parliament, who all opposed the linking of religious affairs with that of the state.⁴⁰ Thus, the East Indonesian local leaders were also very keen on maintaining the principle of separation between political and religious affairs.⁴¹

The Government's Policy Towards Islam in Java and Sumatra

In Java, the Dutch authority was initially limited to the cities, such as Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang and Surabaya. The local Dutch officials in these cities showed a favorable attitude towards the Muslim religious officials, such as the *penghulus* and *naibs*, who were responsible for the administration of religious affairs. They appointed new *penghulus* in places where there were vacancies, and tried to establish new *penghulu* courts to administer Muslim religious justice.

Before the war, religious officials and judges were appointed directly by local Indonesian authorities like regents, princes and chiefs. As there were no Indonesian regents in the areas occupied by the Dutch after the war, Muslim religious officials were, therefore, appointed by the Dutch residents. A provisional ordinance issued by the Dutch on November 8, 1946, tried to regulate the religious justice in Java, but it was put into effect only in Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya where the Dutch authority was firmly established.⁴² The Dutch officials undertook paraffin distribution to the mosques and *langgars* (small prayer houses) as well as cloth distribution to the *gurus*, mosque personnel and needy people in the Dutch controlled areas. Some Dutch officials also made attempts to obtain the cooperation of local ulama in the preservation of "law and order," particularly in Surabaya and Bandung.⁴³

This positive attitude continued after the First Military Action of July 1947 against the Republic, which resulted in the occupation of the five territories, namely West Java, Central Java, East Java and Madura, East Sumatra and South Sumatra; each of them was put under the administration of a *Recomba* (Government Commissioner for Administrative Affairs). However, it paved the way for a discussion on the demands of the Muslims as well. These discussions were based on the proposals put forward by some Muslim leaders from Semarang who organized themselves in an Islamic organization called Badan Penjiaran Islam (Organization for the Spread of Islam or BPI) just before the offensive. The proposals demanded, among other things, the establishment of official positions and powers for Muslims in the government centers.

In June 1947, the BPI leaders expressed their wish to cooperate with the Dutch, if the latter gave Islam a prominent place within the state apparatus and respected it as the religion of about 95% of the Indonesians. They brought forward a number of demands to P. H. Angenent, Dutch resident at Semarang, such as: appointing senior officials to the center of the Netherlands Indies government and to local administration centers, appointing true Muslim representatives to the Ministry of Overseas Territories in the Netherlands, and an official closure of government offices on Fridays from 11 o'clock for the whole afternoon.⁴⁴

Some Dutch officials including Van Mook and Van der Plas initially responded favorably to these proposals; but they changed their stance when Van Nieuwenhuijze and P. J. Idenburg (director-general for general affairs) maintained that such Islamically-oriented officialdom within the state apparatus might become a driving force for the establishment of an Islamic state

in Indonesia. Van Nieuwenhuijze, who was interested in the future form of a modern, secular and constitutional Indonesian state, opposed the appointment of any Muslim officials to the government and the making of intensive contact with the Muslim leaders. He even rejected the appointment of a Muslim adviser for Islamic Affairs in the cabinet, as advocated by Van der Plas and some other Dutch authorities.⁴⁵ Idenburg maintained that direct or apparently direct interference with Islam should be avoided. He also felt that such interference with Islam might result in counter-propaganda by the Republic. He said that "a sympathetic policy towards Islam ... in order to gain the confidence of the great masses of the (Muslim) people," might take on the character of propaganda against the Republic.⁴⁶

The government then decided to encourage the establishment of various local committees of the Muslim community. To sum, up the BPI leaders did not achieve their goals. The formation of the committees for Muslim community, with advisory functions, was finally preferred over the appointment of purely Islamic officials which they had sought.

Another important governmental decision was to provide f25,000 per month for each *Recomba* area in Java and Sumatra to meet the needs of the Muslims in the religious, social and educational fields. The government also agreed to appoint a prominent Muslim leader to perform Van der Plas' previous function as adviser for Islamic Affairs to the cabinet in order to facilitate contact with the Muslim community; but no Muslim leader was found for this post. Finally, two Dutch experts on Islam, namely L. Graf and C. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, were appointed to this office.⁴⁷

To secure the cooperation of the people in the reconstruction of the newly occupied areas and to achieve their immediate objectives, all the *Recombans* in Java and Sumatra generally showed a tolerant attitude towards the Muslim leaders, in particular the ulama, who had great influence upon the people. They organized ulama conferences in their respective regions to discuss issues relating to Islam. They also tried to stimulate the establishment of regional Islamic councils to create some kind of spiritual leadership and to gain political influence with those Muslim groups who were not too well satisfied with the consequences of the Indonesian revolution.

In West Java, an Islamic conference was held at Bandung from November 26-29, 1947, and was attended by 45 delegates who came from the 15 regencies of West Java, then under Dutch control. The East Java Islamic Conference was held from December 25-27, 1947, and was attended by 54 ulama, all of whom had been invited by Van der Plas, now the *Recomba* of East Java and Madura. The Central Java Ulama Conference was

organized at Semarang from August 15-20, 1948, and was attended by 85 delegates. All of them had been selected by the ulama, from the Dutch-controlled 10 regencies of Central Java.⁴⁸ Among the three conferences, only the East Java Ulama Conference produced concrete results. With the presence of Van der Plas, who played a large role in guiding the Conference, an Islamic council was established under the leadership of K. Nuryasin, a Muhammadiyah-oriented Muslim leader from East Java.⁴⁹

In fact, the Dutch authorities in Java and Sumatra made great efforts to detach the Muslim leaders, especially the influential ulama, from supporting the Republic, but they achieved only a little success in this respect. In particular, Van der Plas, through the Islamic Council of East Java and Madura, was able to secure the cooperation of some *kiais* in the reconstruction of East Java and Madura. On the other hand, the Dutch did not hesitate to arrest those Muslim leaders who continued to engage actively in the Republican cause.

From the middle of 1948, under pressure from the Christian leaders, the government began to give more emphasis to the maintenance of religious freedom in Indonesia. The discussions on this issue among the government circles was conducted mainly by Van Nieuwenhuijze, who urged the government to establish a permanent body to pursue an active policy of freedom of religion and conscience in Indonesia. He was concerned mainly with the practical realization of these principles in Indonesian political life and advocated a policy of neutrality towards Islam. He considered the existence of a ministry for religious affairs in a modern constitutional state to be "an infringement upon religious freedom." To him, every governmental regulation in the field of religion meant, in practice, the end of religious freedom. He also rejected the idea of a representative college of religions, arguing that the notion of representation belonged only to the sphere of politics.⁵⁰

Actually the principle of religious freedom was adopted in most of the constitutions and statutes of the federal units, including those of East Indonesia and West Kalimantan. Only the provisional constitution of the *Pasundan* state established in West Java after the First Military Action did not contain this principle. The equality of all Indonesian religions was also emphasized in the statutes of federal states and of the proposed federation.

The Government's Policy Towards the Hajj

The great interest the Indonesian Muslims have always paid towards the Hajj obviously inspired the Netherlands Indies government after 1945 to

pursue a liberal Hajj policy, hoping to regain the sympathy of the Muslims. The government made available the necessary foreign currency for people who wished to undertake the Makkah pilgrimage, but only from Dutch-occupied territories. No one was allowed to go to Makkah for the pilgrimage from the Republican-held territories. Because of the shortage of foreign currency after the war, the government introduced a quota system, limiting the number of aspiring pilgrims who could undertake the pilgrimage.

Organizing the pilgrimage to Makkah was in the hands of the Department of Internal Affairs and the so-called *Kongsi-Tiga*, three closely cooperating Dutch shipping companies which handed the transportation of pilgrims from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia. The government announced the quota of pilgrims for 1946 to be 3,000. However, only about 100 people applied for the pilgrimage permits. Apparently the main reason for this was the strong propaganda made by the Republican leaders against the Dutch. For instance, K.H.M. Hasjim Asjari, leader of the conservative Islamic organization Nahdatul Ulama and member of the Maşjumi Islamic party, in a radio speech, announced to the Muslims that the Hajj was not in force when the independence of the country was threatened by the enemy. He viewed the Dutch offer of participation in the Hajj as a means to deter the Muslims from their current duty of defending the sovereignty of the Indonesian state.⁵¹ Therefore, in 1946, only 70 persons actually undertook the pilgrimage, while the number of candidates who applied for Makkah passports in 1947 outnumbered the quota announced by the government. That year 4,000 pilgrims were allowed to go to Makkah for the pilgrimage.

In 1947, the government also sent official Hajj missions from East Indonesia and West Kalimantan to Saudi Arabia, which aimed to consolidate the position of the Dutch-created federal states among the Indonesian *mukims* (residents) in Makkah in particular, and the Muslim Arab countries, in general. The government hoped that the arrival of many pilgrims from Indonesia, especially from the Dutch-controlled territories, would change the pro-Republican attitude of the Indonesian *mukims* in Saudi Arabia.⁵² However, right from the beginning, they took a pro-Republican stance and began to distance themselves gradually from the jurisdiction of the Netherlands Indies government.⁵³ During May 1946, about 70 percent of all Indonesian *mukims* in Saudi Arabia returned their passports to the Dutch legation in Jeddah in a damaged state, in order to express the fact that they no longer considered themselves Dutch subjects.⁵⁴

These missions yielded no success, because they were soon challenged by the Republican representative in Cairo, H.M. Rasjidi, who came to

Makkah on October 13, 1947, to obtain the recognition of the Republic from King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud. While the Indonesian *mukims* branded the missions as Dutch propaganda, Rasjidi was welcomed by the *mukims* with great enthusiasm and demonstrations. In addition to that, most of the Arab countries including Saudi Arabia recognized the Republic as an independent state during the course of 1947.⁵⁵

In 1948, the government allowed about 9,000 people to go to Makkah for the pilgrimage, the great majority were from East Indonesia and Kalimantan. The remainder came from the Dutch-controlled parts of Java and Sumatra, especially from West Java. The quota of pilgrims for 1949 was set at 8,600, a number which was not higher than that of the previous year. That year the Republican government sent its own Hajj mission to the Hejaz to increase the relationship between the Republic and the Arab countries.⁵⁶

In fact, after the Van Roijen-Roem Agreement of May 7, 1949, by which the Dutch agreed to transfer sovereignty to the Indonesians, Islam began to command less attention from the government. For instance, on April 20, 1949, Van der Plas proposed to the central government the organization of a second ulama conference in East Java, with the intention to allow the annexation of the newly occupied areas to the state of East Java as well as to discuss the establishment of a High Islamic Council for the whole of Indonesia; but this proposal was rejected by the government.⁵⁷ The government subsidies to the Muslim community for their social and educational activities also ceased after that agreement. For instance, from August 1949, the subsidies given to the former Republican officials at the Office of Religious Affairs at Pati in Central Java and ten *madrasahs* in that residency were discontinued.⁵⁸ In the subsequent months leading to the transfer of the sovereignty of Indonesia by the Dutch to the United States on December 27, 1949, the Dutch interest in Islam for political expediency was no longer a vital question.

Conclusion

To sum up, the attitude of the Dutch East Indian Company towards Indonesian Muslims in the 17th and 18th centuries was not sympathetic. During these centuries the Company officials considered the Muslims as a potential danger for their commercial activities, and they encouraged missionary activities among the native people living especially in their direct control. Under the influence of the French Revolution, the Dutch began to provide for the Muslims a limited freedom of religion, but the pilgrimage to

Makkah was still under Dutch surveillance. Therefore, some limitations concerning the Hajj remained in force until the end of the 19th century, when they were lifted at the recommendations of C. S. Hungronje, who advocated a neutral policy towards Islam, which was also followed by his successors until 1942. In the war years, the Dutch made attempts to recruit some Indonesian Muslims into Dutch services to use them for intelligence and war purposes. At the same time they were involved in Islamic propaganda activities against Japan from their bases in Australia.

During the struggle for independence (1945-49), the Dutch tried to pursue a liberal policy towards Islam and its leaders in Indonesia. The government's policy during this period was determined largely by its immediate aim of gaining the support of the Muslim people and their leaders for the re-establishment of Dutch rule in Indonesia after the war. To win the hearts of the Muslim people and to suppress the independence movement, the Dutch were inclined to give Indonesian Muslim leaders more freedom in religious, social and educational fields, and to show a tolerant attitude towards them, but without endangering the principle of the separation of religion and politics. They even organized ulama conferences to discuss issues relating to Islam, and tried to stimulate the establishment of regional Islamic councils to create some kind of spiritual leadership and to build a bridge between the government and the people. However, when the Dutch were forced to transfer the sovereignty to the Indonesians, their liberal policy towards Islam for political expediency began to disappear and the maintenance of the principle of religious freedom became more important than it.

Notes

1. Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Singapore/Kuala Lumpur/London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 21.
2. W. J. A. Kernkamp, "Government and Islam in the Netherlands East Indies," *The Muslim World* 35 (1945): 9.
3. W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study in Social Change* (s'Gravenhage/Bandung: W. Van Hoeve, 1964), 201.
4. C. Van Dijk, ed., *Islam en Politiek in Indonesie* (Muiderberg: Dick Coutinho, 1988), 14.
5. *Ibid.*, 14-15.
6. J. Vredenbergt, "The Haddj: Some of its Features and Functions in Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land en Volkenkunde* 118 (s'Gravenhage: 1962), 94-96. To keep the pilgrims under surveillance was a common measure. For instance, in 1664 three Hajjis returning from Makkah were not given permission to enter

- Indonesia for the reason that their coming would result in serious consequences. They were therefore, sent to Cape Town in South Africa, a place of exile where the Dutch held quite a large number of exiled Indonesians.
7. Van Dijk, *Islam en Politiek*, 19.
 8. Vredenberg, "The Haddj," 97.
 9. *Ibid.*, 98-100.
 10. On C. Snouck Hurgronje and his Islamic policy, see H. J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945* (The Hague/Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 20-31 and his "Christian Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundation of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia," *The Journal of Modern History* 30 (1958), 338-47; Alfian, *Muhammadiyah: The Political Behavior of a Muslim Modernist Organization under Dutch Colonialism* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1989), 17-29.
 11. L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, Deel 11c, Nederlands-Indië III* ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1986), 233.
 12. "Memorandum of the Terms of Employment of ... (Agents)," Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI), Arsip Algemene Secretaria (Arsip AS), no. 754; see also, de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 191-92.
 13. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 233, 234. The recruitment work among the *mukims* in Mecca was organized later in 1944 and 1945 by the Netherlands representatives in Saudi Arabia: in October 1944, 16 and in January 1945, 9 recruits were sent by ship to Australia (*Ibid.*, 234, note 1).
 14. Van der Plas to Van Mook, March 23, 1943, Algemeen Rijksarchief (ARA), Archief van de Algemene Secretaris van Nederlands Indië (Arch. AS) 1:22, 35.
 15. C.G. Roberts to Van der Plas, February 14, 1943, ARA, Arch. AS 1:22, 35.
 16. *Enquête-Commissie Regeringsbeleid, 1940-1945: Militair Beleid 1940-1945. Terugkeer naar Nederlands-Indië*, 8:1081 (Getuige B. A. van Deirse).
 17. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 134.
 18. On the pre-war activities of these leaders and their organization PERMI, see Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 50-51, 154-56.
 19. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 137.
 20. A memorandum of Van der Plas, "Draft for a Tentative Master Plan of Political Warfare directed to the Netherlands Indies," April 15, 1943, ARA, Van Mook Collection, no. 8.
 21. Van Mook to Van der Plas, May 7, 1943 and Van der Plas to Van Mook, May 8, 1943, ARA, Arch. AS 1:22, 35; Van Mook to Van der Plas, August 16, 1943, ARA, Arch. AS 1:22, 35.
 22. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk*, 151.
 23. Van der Plas to Bell, "Islam Propaganda and Observations in New Delhi," March 22, 1944, ARA, Van der Plas Collection, B-5:15.
 24. R. S. Soerio Santoso, "De Japanse Propaganda en de Islam," February 2, 1946, ARA, Arch. AS 1:2, 17. Extracts can be found in *Officiële Bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen, 1945-1950*, ed. S. L.

- vander Wal, P. J. Drooglever and M. J. B. Schouten 3:509, note 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971) (hereinafter abbreviated as *OBNIB*).
25. *OBNIB* 3:481-83.
 26. *Ibid.*, 508-10.
 27. *Ibid.*, 530-34.
 28. *Ibid.*, 599-604.
 29. *Ibid.*, 604, note 1.
 30. Van der Plas, "Rapport Over Contacten met de Islamietische Gemeente in Bandjermasin, Martapoera en Hoeloe Soengai," April 15, 1946, Banjarmasin, ARA, Arch. AS 1:22, 23.
 31. *Ibid.*, see also *OBNIB* 4:137, 366, note 3.
 32. Van der Plas to P. J. Koets, "Godsdienstonderwijs op Openbare Scholen," April 17, 1946, ARA, Arch. AS 1:22, 23.
 33. Van der Plas, "De Islamietische Maatschappij," February 16, 1947, ARA, Arch. AS 2:22, 25.
 34. Van der Plas, "Rapport Over Contacten."
 35. J. J. Domeir secretary of the Resident) to Van der Plas, "Recht tot declareren op den voet van het Algemeen reisreglement van den Kadi Besar te Bandjermasin," July 13, 1947, ARA, Arch. AS 2:3396.
 36. Van der Plas, "Rapport over Islamietische Aangelegenheden" and "Vervol-rapport," June 11, 1946, Makassar, ARA, Archief Rapportage Indonesie, 1945-1950, no. 575.
 37. Gieben to Van Mook, Van der Plas and Hoven, "Godsdienstge rechtspraak in Zuid-Celebes," August 14, 1946, ARA, Arch. AS 1:1, 33-39.
 38. Van der Plas to T. K. Tjiang, "Hooger beroep inzake vonnissen door den Islamietischen godsdienstigen rechter gewezen," March 15, 1947, ARA, Arch. AS 2:3396.
 39. A. H. Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, 11 vols. (Bandung: Penerbit Angkasa, 1977-79), 3:525.
 40. J. Verkuyl, "Indonesia and Religious Freedom," *International Review of Missions* 38 (1949), 312-23. See especially pp. 320-22.
 41. On the place of Islam in the federal state of East Indonesia, see Ismail Hakk; Göksoy, *Dutch Policy towards Islam in Indonesia, 1945-1949* (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1991), 124-36.
 42. A. A. Schiller, *The Formation of Federal Indonesia, 1945-1949* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1955), 329.
 43. See the reports on Islamic affairs in the Dutch-held cities prepared by the local authorities, R. Rangga Kartaadi Kusuma, "Islamietische Zaken in de ommelanden van Batavia," January 6, 1947, Batavia; J. A. Reus, "Islamietische Zaken in het Regentschap Priangan," November 22, 1946, Bandung; J. O. Ott, "Islamietische Aangelegenheden te Buitenzorg," May 3, 1947, Buitenzorg; C. J. G. Becht, "Islamietische Zaken in het Soerabajagebied," December 19, 1946, Surabaya. ARA, Arch. AS 2:3396.

44. Angenent to Van der Plas, "Desiderata Badan Penjiaran Islam te Semarang," June 12, 1947, ARA, Arch. AS 1:21, 23.
45. Van Nieuwenhuijze, "De beteekenis van de Islam voor de huidige politieke situatie," September 18, 1947; Van Nieuwenhuijze to Koets and Idenburg, October 1, 1947, ARA, Arch. AS, 2:1108/1303.
46. Idenburg to Van Mook and Koets, "Islam," October 23, 1947, ARA, Arch. AS 2:1108/1303.
47. Van Boetzelaeer to all *Recombas* in Java and Sumatra, "Islam-Politiek," 1 December 1947, ARA, Arch. AS 2:1108/1303; see also, *OBNIB*, 11:549, note 2.
48. For a broad discussion and results of these conferences, see Göksoy, *Dutch Policy*, 214-20, 229-34, 243-44.
49. "Notelen Conferentie van Oelamas," Surabaya, December 29, 1947, ARA, Arch. Kol., Z223 (W120-Z120); Van der Plas to Van Mook, "Oelama-conferentie Oost-Djawa," December 31, 1947, Surabaya, ARA, Arch. Kol., Z223 (W120-Z120); see also *OBNIB*, 12:371, 372, note 4.
50. Van Nieuwenhuijze to Koets, "Staat en Godsdienst in het nieuwe Indonesie," February 27 and March 5, 1948, ARA, A.J. Vleer Collection, no. 196; See also his (Van Nieuwenhuijze) book, *Mens en Vrijheid in Indonesie* (The Hague/Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1949), 33-37.
51. See the Republican newspapers, *Al-Djihad*, April 18, 1946; The Voice of Free Indonesia, April 20, 1946.
52. H. H. Dingemans (Dutch representative in Jeddah) to DIRVO (Far East Directorate), September 10, 1947, "Emir al-Hadj uit Oost-Indonesie," ANRI, Arsip AS, no. 755; Dingemans to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Drie Indonesische Missies in het Heilige Land," December 7, 1947, ARA, Arch. Kol., Z 71B.
53. Dingemans to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Reactie Mekka op Gebeurtenissen in Indonesie," December 8, 1945, Jeddah, ANRI, Arsip AS, no. 753; see also A. Hasjmy, *Misi Haji: Menjalankan tugas revolusi di negara-negara Arab* (Bandung: Almaarif, 1984), 99-100.
54. *OBNIB*, Vol. IV, p. 418; Dingemans to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Inlevering Mekkapassen," May 12, 1946, ANRI, Arsip AS, no. 753.
55. Dingemans to DIRVO and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Republikeinse propaganda onder Oost Indonesische pelgrims," April 12, 1948, ANRI, Arsip AS, no. 121.
56. Hasjmy, *Misi Haji*, 26.
57. Van der Plas to the High Representative of the Crown, "Alim-oelama conferentie," Surabaya, April 20, 1949, ANRI, Arsip AS, no. 1254; L. Graf to Koets, May 10 and 16, 1949, ARA, Arch. AS 2:3399.
58. J. P. van Dam to Graf, August 9, 1949; Graf to the *Recomba* of Central Java, November 17, 1949, ARA, Arch. AS 2:3399.