

## The Gait of Islamic Unions in the Political Stage of the National Movement

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to describe the political activities of an Islamic organization, namely Sarekat Islam in 1916-1921. The Union of Islamic Organizations (SI) started from the Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI) which was transformed into the Sarekat Islam with the aim of expanding its reach which was not only limited to traders. SI turned into an association that encouraged the socio-political struggle of the people at the beginning of the twentieth century. The method used in this study is the Historical Method, namely heuristic steps, source criticism, data interpretation and historiography. The results of the study are the political progress of the Islamic organization, namely Sarekat Islam in 1916-1921 through national congresses in several regions by bringing up socio-political problems, which culminated in 1921 with the split of Sarekat Islam itself with two streams, namely Sarekat Islam Merah with socialist principles communists led by Semaun and Sarekat Islam Putih based on nationality and religion led by Tjokroaminoto.

**Abstrak:** Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan kiprah politik organisasi Islam yakni Sarekat Islam Pada Tahun 1916-1921. Organisasi Serekat Islam (SI) berawal dari Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI) yang bertransformasi menjadi Sarekat Islam dengan tujuan untuk memperluas jangkauan yang tidak hanya terbatas pada pedagang saja. SI berubah menjadi perkumpulan yang mendorong perjuangan sosial politik masyarakat pada awal abad XX tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Metode Historis yakni dengan langkah-langkah heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi data dan historiografi. Hasil penelitian adalah kiprah politik organisasi Islam yakni Sarekat Islam Pada Tahun 1916-1921 melalui kongres nasional di beberapa daerah dnegan mengusung permasalahan-permasalahan sosial politik, yang mana berujung pada Tahun 1921 dengan perpecahan Sarekat Islam sendiri dengan dua aliran yaitu Sarekat Islam Merah dengan berasaskan sosialis-komunis yang dipimpin oleh Semaun dan Sarekat Islam Putih dengan berasaskan kebangsaan dan keagamaan yang dipimpin oleh Tjokroaminoto.

### INTRODUCTION

The Dutch colonial government gave rules to its colonies to curb the movement and launch the process of exploitation of its colonies. This strategy encourages the adjustment of regional development examples, which is illustrated by the emergence of various development organizations that have goals and steps that are more organized and coordinated and turn into other development models that significantly affect the historical background of Indonesian public development today, one of which is the Islamic community, especially Sarekat Islam (Ahmad, 2014).



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Sarekat Islam itself is one of the Islamic associations in Indonesia which was founded at the end of 1911 by Haji Samanhudi, a batik entrepreneur in Kampung Laweyan, Solo. Sarekat Islam itself originated from the relationship of Muslims or followers of Islam who incidentally were batik traders. Sarekat Islam itself was formed indirectly called Sarekat Islam, but this organization was originally called Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI). However, when Haji Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto entered the design of this association's authority, he changed the name from Sarekat Dagang Islam to Sarekat Islam with broader points (Korver, 1985).

Over time the Sarekat Islam also had the same political view of the Dutch colonials. The period of the national movement itself was a period where various political organizations flourished in the Dutch East Indies. The Union of Struggle for the Sarekat Islam (SI) fought for an independent Indonesia by making religion the basis of their struggle (Ma'arif, 1985). Under the initiative of HOS Tjokroaminoto with Surabaya as the center of its development, the Sarekat Islam soon showed progress, gaining many members from several regions in Java. Several attempts have been made to make Sarekat Islam a public association. Tjokroaminoto also began to change the way the Sarekat Islam developed from monetary to political (Shiraishi, 2005). Tjokroaminoto's efforts began to bear fruit when the Sarekat Islam found a way to hold a general congress in Bandung in 1916, which was attended by many people who came from various cities in the Dutch East Indies. In 1919 the enthusiasm of the people to join the Sarekat Islam achieved extraordinary developments and showed rapid progress.

Unity of Islam as expressed in the resolution was a propaganda tool offered by Sarekat Islam in politics at that time. After all, the resolution itself is embodied in the battle for true freedom in political circles (Yasmis, 2009). The resolution offered by the Sarekat Islam was not without impact, as evidenced by Het Vaderland's writings on October 1, 1919, explaining as follows:

*"De Sarekat Islam te Soerabaja en andere afdeelingen van den Sarekat Islam beleggen protestvergaderingen tegen de arrestatie van Sosrokadono, die geboeid naar Tasikmalaja werd*

*getransporteerd, terwijl volgens het plaatselijk bestuur van Tasikmalaja nog geen rechtsingang was verleend. In Sarekat Islam-kringen acht men de arrestatie voorbarig. In het Kopningansche zijn twintig leden van de Sarekat Islam gearresteerd in verband met de afdeeling B"* (Roodhuuzen, 1919)

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Given this goal, Persatuan Islam thought of fighting for equality and concealment of abuse by the Dutch East Indies government. The struggle driven by SI is not only carried out through the struggle for the development of work and ideological groups but also through public alliances and global organizations that fully want to strengthen the sense of solidarity and solidarity of social events against border governments (Mulawarman, 2015). Sarekat Islam itself had a strong connection with public or national development at that time, taking advantage of the reason for the expansion of political impact to channel its goals. However, along with the establishment of the Sarekat Islam association, this organization also began to experience a period of decline caused by clashes between individuals or leaders from the same organization, especially between the Tjokroaminoto, Abdul Muis, and Agus Salim associations with the Sarekat Islam group in Semarang, which it turned out to be heavily

influenced by socialist reasoning driven by Semaun, Darsono, Alimin, and others. Thus, in 1921, the Sarekat Islam split into two parts, namely the Sarekat Islam Merah and the Sarekat Islam Putih, in which the figures of the Sarekat Islam red became the motor in the rise of the development of communist ideology in the Dutch East Indies during the national movement.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Approaches and Types of Research**

This research uses historical or historical research methods. The historical method itself is to analyze sources, as well as information or data, both primary and secondary that existed at that time or in the same era as the event was running and carried out systematically and chronologically. The historical method itself has systematic steps or stages, namely Heuristics, Criticism, Interpretation, and Historiography (Gottschalk, 2008).

The first stage in historical research is Heuristics. The heuristic stage itself is the stage where researchers collect sources that support research data. In this stage, it is a skill in finding, handling, and detailing bibliographies or classifying and maintaining records made by researchers (Abdurrahman, Metode Penelitian Sejarah, 1999). At this heuristic stage, the researcher collects data and related sources from books, journals, archives, documents, newspapers, digital collections. UniversiteitLeiden.nl, and others related to or about Islamic unions during the national movement.

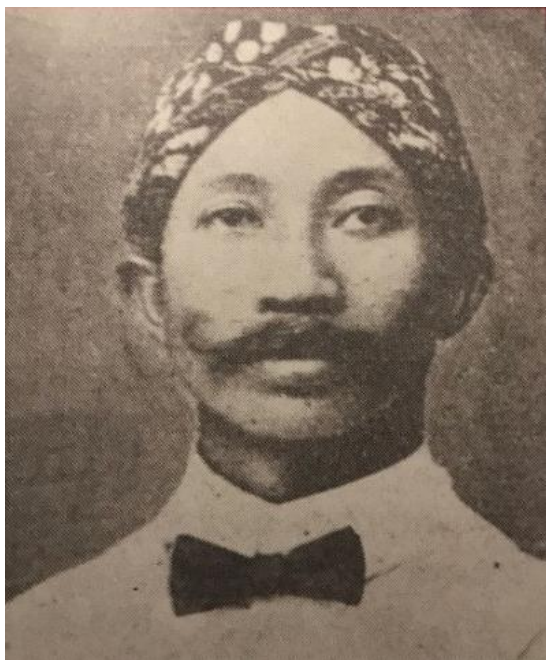
The second stage is source criticism. Source criticism is the process of testing sources both in terms of authenticity or not, and whether or not the data can be accounted for. There are two kinds of source criticism, namely external criticism which means determining the level of authenticity in answering 5W + 1H questions. Meanwhile, internal criticism is the determination of whether or not the information or data in the document can be used as historical facts used in research data (Yass, 2004). It is at this stage that the researcher examines existing or collected sources through the stages of external and internal criticism.

The third stage is Data Interpretation. In this Interpretation stage, the researcher analyzes and interprets the existing data and provides an overview of what is in the data. The interpretation consisting of these facts must be objective. Reconstruction of historical events must produce a true history or close to the truth (Kuntowijoyo, 1994). The last stage in historical research is the Historiography stage. This stage is the stage where the researcher does the writing and explains the data in the historical research that has been done. In this historiography stage, the researcher aims to rewrite it objectively to provide a clear picture of the Gait of the Islamic Union in the Political Stage of the National Movement Period.

## **RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION**

### **Sarekat Islam: From Economic Organization to Social Politics**

The Sarekat Islam was originally a group of struggles which was originally called the Sarekat Dagang Islam. This association is an association of batik traders that was founded at the end of 1911 by Haji Samanhudi, a batik entrepreneur or trader in Laweyan, Solo. The establishment of the Sarekat Dagang Islam was caused by several factors, including at that time trade was monopolized by Chinese traders, the discriminatory behavior of the Dutch government, until the Christianization by Zending (Setiawati & Samsudin, 2020). The Islamic Union in the Islamic Trade Union itself lies in the strength of Haji Samanhudi, this association can be said at the beginning of its struggle that there were no major events or could be considered ordinary, until the joining of Haji Oemar Said (HOS) Tjokroaminoto to the Islamic Trade Union, and had the option to obtain the change of hierarchical design in a superior direction and develop again. Haji Samanhudi himself handed over the Sarekat Dagang Islam to HOS Tjokroaminoto in the hope that the Sarekat Dagang Islam Organization could develop even more and progress (Seran, 2007).



**Figure 1.** Haji Saman Hudi  
(Source: National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia)

When the Sarekat Dagang Islam Organization under the leadership of HOS Tjokroaminoto grew rapidly, he turned the Sarekat Dagang Islam into a large and growing association or organization. Tjokroaminoto also changed the name of the Sarekat Dagang Islam to Sarekat Islam, which legally changed the name not only to members of traders but in general the wider community could join the Sarekat Islam, which was formally recognized by the Dutch colonial government in 1912. The recognition by the Dutch colonial government and the change of name to Sarekat Islam, indirectly also helped change the direction of the association, which was initially engaged in the economy, but slowly turned to social politics.

### **The Gait of the Islamic Union on the Political Stage**

Sarekat Islam (SI) was founded on November 11, 1912 in Solo. SI was born from the ancestral association of the Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI). There are two reasons why this association (SDI) was founded. First, the widespread competition in batik exchange, especially with the Chinese, and second, the expansion of the Chinese over the Indonesians (Stibbe & Stroomberg, 1932). In 1914, the registration of the Sarekat Islam had spread

throughout Java, and spread outside Java, so it can be said that this association was sending a positive message to several regions at that time. It is emphasized by Stibbe and Stroomberg (1932) that the leading Sarekat Islam previously established a branch in the capital city of Palembang in November 1913 and by the end of 1914 had 10,000 people in the region. It can be concluded that this association has a fairly large majority of members. The development of the Sarekat Islam in South Sumatra led to the estrangement of other associations, more specifically the Sarekat Abang, Pagueuban Merah, which flared up in Sumatra at the end of 1914 and spread like Jambi, where defiance occurred in August-October 1916 (Stibbe & Stroomberg, 1932).

The increasing advancement of SI also criticized the position of the colonial government. Nonetheless, the pioneers of the Indonesian government argued that direct efforts to address SI could trigger a risky response for the Indonesian population at the time. Bung Hatta wrote in 1930 that SI resembles a public inn where various individuals can gather to express their complaints and express their hearts, this strengthens SI's position as a socio-political organization that gathers complaints from members or communities in the Dutch East Indies at that time (Hatta, 1972). Alexander Willem Frederik Idenburg as Governor General of the Dutch East Indies who ruled from 1909 - 1916, knew about SI's message to colonial rule, he only considered the different parts of SI, but not SI as a hierarchical unit. This activity is expected to be able to break up SI into small associations, each of which stands independently and has nothing to do with the other (Hatta, 1972).

To defeat the aforementioned regulations approved by the public authorities, Cokroaminoto and his relatives from the leadership of the fundamental Sarekat Islam founded the Sarekat Islam Pusat (CSI) in Yogyakarta in 1915. The pioneer was H.O.S. Cokroaminoto, Samanhudi were given special administrator chairs, while Raden Goenawan and Abdul Moeis were directors (Stibbe & Stroomberg, 1932). Meanwhile, SI continues to grow in various regions.



**Figure 2.** Meeting of the Establishment of the Sarekat Islam Branch in Blitar  
(Source: digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl)

### **Realization of Sarekat Islam Politics in 1916-1921**

The political development of the Sarekat Islam had a fairly stable hierarchical construction during the years 1916-1921. This can be seen from the several congresses held that were public and national, several national congresses held by the Sarekat Islam in this period were as follows:

#### **Bandung National Congress**

One of the forms of political development carried out by Sarekat Islam was the holding of the National Congress in Bandung. The movement lasted from 17 to 24 June 1916 and was attended by about 800,000 SI people. The use of the "public" in this congress was an attempt to develop the Sarekat Islam to form self-government, or perhaps give the indigenous population the option to exercise their voice on various policy-centered issues. This was revealed by Tjokroaminoto himself, the General Manager of the Sarekat Islam Association, when delivering his discourse at the National Congress in Bandung on June 17, 1916 (Penders, 1977).

#### **Batavia National Congress**

The Batavia National Congress (Jakarta) was held on 20-27 October 1917. Some of the issues discussed were sugarcane plantations,

secret lands (*particuliere landerijen*), the fate of the workers, and the issue of the Volksraad (People's Council during the Dutch East Indies Government) (Muryanti, 2006). However, there were many advantages and disadvantages during this communication, especially between Abdul Muis and Semaun. For example, the creation of the Volksraad was authorized by Abdul Muis. This is because individual privileges can be safeguarded through parliamentary measures. Meanwhile, Semaun stated that he did not agree with the Sarekat Islam Central sending agent who might be for the Volksraad because Semaun respects the Volksraad. CSI's choice, however, is to continue to take part in the Volksraad arrangement and send its competitors as agents (Locomotief, 1917).

In addition to different sentiments towards the Volksraad, at this time the public congress of Abdul Muis and Semaun again clashed over *Indie Weerbaar* (Indies Defense), where Abdul Muis and several people who attended this congress opposed the presence of *Indie Weerbaar*, but on the other hand Semaun failed to refuse the invitation. From these disputes it tends to be suspected that since 1917 the seeds of division within the Sarekat Islam association began to grow. This can be seen from the many conflicts between individuals from the Central Islamic Sarekat, especially the main figures in it, including Abdul Muis and Semaun himself (Gie, 1999).

#### **Surabaya National Congress**

This national congress was held from September 29 to October 6, 1918, and was attended by nearly 87 members of the Sarekat Islam. In the National Deliberation in Surabaya, the issues studied by individuals from Sarekat Islam are still social. There was another clash between Semaun and Abdul Muis, addressing comparisons of perspectives such as religion, patriotism, and more flexible business. Not only chairing the Third National Deliberation, the Sarekat Islam Center in Surabaya, where Tjokroaminoto was appointed in 1918 as the representative of the Sarekat Islam with Decree No. 2 coincided on February 23, 1918. This position was recognized by Tjokroaminoto, but with the inclusion of individuals first. from the nearest Javanese and Madurese Islamic Sarekat are requested by

voting (Muryanti, 2006). It can be concluded that Tjokroaminoto himself considered the principles of democracy at that time.

### **Surabaya IV National Congress**

In 1919 a general congress was held in Surabaya by the Central Islamic Union. This show became the fourth public performance, held from October 26 to November 2, 1919. In that year, the participation of Sarekat Islam reached about 2.5 million people. This fourth public congress focused on the main labor associations, which were to some extent influenced by the Semarang section of the Sarekat Islam, which had its place with the meeting of the Social Revolution. The consequences of the 1919 CSI Congress had to be seen in the development of several associations, including the Sugar Factory Workers' Union, the Pawnshops' Union, and the Railroad Workers' Union.

These three associations are joined in a league called Vakcentrale (union). Then, at that time, this affiliation changed its name to the Union of Workers' Movement (PPKB) which was founded on December 15, 1919. The Sarekat Islam struggle to bring the development of this work to completion was pursued through a mass strike. Strike requests from these experts are aimed at getting a raise and paying double wages, but actually, this strike has great power. This is because the seeds of division found in the Sarekat Islam association have been planted in several previous congresses. Otherwise, two forces emerged for this situation as well, namely the power driven by Surjopranoto located in Yogyakarta and the force driven by Semaun located in Semarang, which was influenced by different communist ideas (Maftuhin & Umamah, 2017).

### **Congress of the Islamic Society of 1921**

This year's congress took place 2 times in the region. The main congress was held in Yogyakarta from March 1 to March 7, 1921. At this fifth congress, Tjokroaminoto, as director of CSI, responded to disputes between Sarekat Islam leaders, including Abdul Muis and Semaun. He said that the focus on solidarity and honesty within Sarekat Islam

was better. After that CSI held a second congress once again, which was held in Surabaya on October 6-10, 1921. This congress was called the Extraordinary Congress of the Sarekat Islam. However, the congress this time was not guided by Tjokroaminoto as the CSI administrator but was guided by Abdul Muis. On August 28, 1921, Tjokroaminoto was arrested by the police in Surabaya. The arrest of Tjokroaminoto was the aftermath of the problem of the Priangan group's defiance of the Dutch colonialists led by the Sarekat Islam. After this congress, the Sarekat Islam organization was split into two sects, namely the Sarekat Islam Merah with a socialist-communist basis led by Semaun and the Sarekat Islam Putih with a national and religious basis led by Tjokroaminoto, both of which underwent a development with new beginnings and structures (Setiawati & Samsudin, 2020).

### **CONCLUSION**

Sarekat Islam is one of the oldest Islamic associations in Indonesia, founded in late 1911 by Haji Samanhudi, a batik entrepreneur in Kampung Lawean, Solo. This association originated from the relationship of working-class Muslim merchants, which was originally called the Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI). The development of SDI under the leadership of HOS Tjokroaminoto has transformed SDI into Sarekat Islam (SI) which can accommodate more members who are not only with merchant backgrounds. As part of the political development or political progress of SI in realizing its goals as a socio-political organization, it can be seen at several national congresses held in several cities, Persatuan Islam assisted through several congresses from 1916 to 1921.

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