Behind the Banner of Unity: Nationalism and anticolonialism among Indonesian students in Europe, 1917-1931

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Chapter 1
From ‘Indische Vereeniging’ to ‘Perhimpoenan Indonesia’
Sociability and mobilisation

This introductory chapter gives an overview of existing scholarship concerning the Indonesian (student) population in the Netherlands between 1900 and 1925. The changing political profile of the main association of the students – the Indische Vereeniging, later Perhimpoenan Indonesia – will be examined, with a special interest in the circumstances that led to their politicisation. The chapter is predominantly based on secondary literature and prosopographical information.

Before we proceed in the following chapters with a systematic examination of political engagements and activities of Indonesian nationalists on the international stage, it is worthwhile to devote attention to the organisational and social context in which Mohammad Hatta and his fellow students were active. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that the Indonesian students were certainly not the only Dutch colonial migrants in the Netherlands before the Second World War. It is impossible to give an accurate estimation of the total number of Indonesians in the Netherlands, because many newly arrived migrants and temporary travellers did not register in the central municipal administration system.67 In the period between 1900 to 1940, the total number of Indonesians in the Netherlands, excluding ‘creole migration’ of legally classified ‘Europeans’, grew from some dozens of people around the turn of the century to a permanent but fluctuating base of 600 to 1000 servants, sailors, and students in the 1920s and 1930s.68 The Indonesian community in the Netherlands before the war can be subdivided into four groups.

The largest group that started to arrive from 1900 onwards were Indonesian domestic workers – baboes or djongossen, mostly women – that travelled along with their Dutch employers on furlough.69 Together with more permanent residents such as Indonesian shopkeepers, restaurant owners and their personnel, they formed a tightly knit community of

67 Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:151.
several hundred people. Most of these workers lived in The Hague, which also attracted most Dutch colonial families on furlough. As one commentator wrote: “There are corners in The Hague where people are so familiar with the passing by of baboes, with or without children, that they would be missed if they would suddenly disappear.”

The Indonesian domestic workers and retailers in The Hague were from a less wealthy background than the students residing in Leiden, Delft and elsewhere. This class of people has generally received less attention from scholars, probably because they left fewer written sources than their student compatriots, and also because their political behaviour was less outspoken. Nevertheless, in the 1930s they began to establish social structures and organisations for social and religious purposes, and to address common problems like unemployment, bureaucracy and poverty. The most prominent of these organisations was the semi-religious association Perkoempoelan Islam (‘Islamic Association’), established in 1932 by the Dutch convert Mohammed Ali van Beetem. This organisation lobbied for the establishment of an Islamic cemetery and mosque, and during the Great Depression tried to exert political pressure on the municipal and national administration to alleviate the economic and social problems of its members. Although the Perkoempoelan Islam remained predominantly focused on the immediate interests of workers in The Hague, it also attempted to establish contacts with Islamic communities elsewhere in Europe. However, these efforts were incidental and mainly on the private initiative of its most visible member, Mohammed Ali van Beetem.

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A second considerable group of Indonesians in the Netherlands consisted of dockers, sailors and stewards on cargo and passenger ships, who commuted to and from the colony.\textsuperscript{72} Of this group little is known. Most of them were in the Netherlands only temporarily, and while on shore leave, they usually stayed on their ships or in hangars and boarding houses in the harbour districts of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. The number of sailors on shore corresponded with the expansions and contractions of the international maritime labour market. Matthias van Rossum has calculated the total number of colonial sailors under Dutch flag as up to 2000 workers towards the end of the 1930s.\textsuperscript{73}

Between these workers and other Indonesians in the Netherlands there was a lively black market of colonial and European wares. The Dutch Communist Party attempted to organise the transient sailors in an attempt to establish reliable contacts with the communist movement in the Dutch Indies. Communist Indonesian students sometimes assisted in organising the sailors, also because they could profit from the clandestine smuggling networks as well.\textsuperscript{74} The political consciousness of these sailors was not confined to the boards of their ships. History shows not only examples of targeted labour actions of Indonesian sailors in the Netherlands, but also that some of them were indeed part of a global network of politicised dockers, sailors, gangs, and unions.\textsuperscript{75} The autobiography of the famous Indonesian communist Tan Malaka recounts the sense of amazement he felt when it became clear to him that Dutch, Indonesian and Chinese sailors watched over him, while he was on board of a ship being deported to the Netherlands in 1922.\textsuperscript{76} Indonesian sailors were also instrumental in smuggling messages and clandestine literature between the Netherlands and the Dutch Indies, thus establishing an important link between activists in both countries.\textsuperscript{77}


\textsuperscript{73} Matthias van Rossum, “Kleurrijke zeelieden: Groepsvorming, klasse en interculturele verhoudingen op een mondiale arbeidsmarkt (1890-1945),” \textit{Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis} 29 (2010): 71.

\textsuperscript{74} The most successful and long lived example of an organisation in which both students and sailors were involved was the union Sarekat Pegawai Laot Indonesia (“Union of Indonesian Sea Workers”; 1924-1925), with Semaoen as most prominent organiser and the student Iwa Koesoema Soemantri as one of the board members; see McVey, \textit{The Rise of Indonesian Communism}, 215-216, 240-241.

\textsuperscript{75} Poeze, \textit{In het land van de overheerser}, 1:287-288; See also Linebaugh and Rediker, \textit{The Many-Headed Hydra}; Featherstone, \textit{Solidarity}, 69-98.

\textsuperscript{76} Tan Malaka, \textit{From Jail to Jail}, vol. 1, ed. Helen Jarvis (Athens: Ohio Center for International Studies, 1991), 85-86.

\textsuperscript{77} NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 248, 24 December 1923 C17; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 310, 16 February 1928 A3; Ingleson, \textit{Road to Exile}, 14.
A third group that needs mention were Chinese Indonesian *peranakan* students from the Dutch Indies. In the segregated colonial society of the Dutch Indies, they were classified separately as ‘Foreign Orientals’: a class between the ‘European’ population and the ‘Native’ Indonesian masses. However, ethnically Chinese communities had existed in the Indonesian archipelago well before the first Dutch ships arrived. In the twentieth century, a majority of them had lived in the region for generations, had exchanged Chinese languages and customs for local ones, and were to a large extent ‘Indonesianised’. Nevertheless, culturally, socially and organisationally these *peranakan* remained distinguishable as a group. After being banned from international trade by the Dutch authorities in the nineteenth century, they functioned as middlemen between the colonial administration and local communities. As small traders, pawn shop owners and tax collectors, the *peranakan* were the first to collect money from the indigenous population, and consequently they were the main target of popular anger in times of economic hardship. In an often hostile Indonesian society, *peranakan* parents were intent on giving their children economic independence. For the richest among them, higher education in the Netherlands provided a solution because it guaranteed their children an independent career as a doctor, lawyer or businessman.

*Peranakan* students began to arrive in the Netherlands from around 1900 onwards, concurrently with the arrival of other students from the Dutch Indies. In the first years of the twentieth century just over 50 *peranakan* students studied in the Netherlands, but after the First World War their numbers grew to approximately 150 persons per year. Many of them enrolled in the law faculty of Leiden University, but later medical studies in Amsterdam, technical studies in Delft and economics in Rotterdam gained in popularity. In 1911, *peranakan* students established the Chung Hwa Hui (‘Chinese Association’, CHH). This

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78 The term *peranakan* or ‘descendants’ was used in the Indonesian context to differentiate between ‘totok Chinese’, who were born in China and migrated to Indonesia in the course of their lives, and ‘peranakan Chinese’, who were born in the Dutch Indies. The latter usually spoke Dutch or a Malay language and had a cultural orientation on the colonial society. In the Dutch context, however, the term *peranakan* referred to all the ethnically Chinese persons from the Dutch Indies residing in the Netherlands. In the remainder of the article I will use the term *peranakan* instead of ‘Indo-Chinese’, to avoid confusion with migrants in France coming from France ‘Indochine’, present-day Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. On *peranakan* in the Netherlands: Stutje, “The Complex World of the Chung Hwa Hui”; Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java 1917-1942* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976), 85-105; Kees van Galen, “Geschiedenis van de Chung Hwa Hui (1911-1962): Indo-Chinese studenten en Peranakan politiek in Nederland” (MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1989), 28-29; Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke. “Chinese in the Netherlands.” Leeds East Asia Papers 27 (University of Leeds, 1995), 38; Li Minghuan, ‘We Need Two Worlds’, *Chinese Immigrant Associations in a Western Society* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 57-66.


80 Kahin, *Nationalism and revolution*, 41.


82 Li, ‘We need two worlds’, 29; Van Galen, “Geschiedenis van de Chung Hwa Hui,” 28-29; International Institute for Social History Amsterdam (IISH), Archief Chung Hwa Hui, inv. nr. 97, ledenlijsten CHH.
organisation was designed to bring peranakan students in the Netherlands closer together, and to facilitate them socially, intellectually, and financially. In each of the major university cities a local branch was established, and several committees organised the social life of the association.

Each of the above-mentioned groups tried to improve its social, cultural and political position in the Netherlands in its own way. Sometimes the Indonesian communities worked in harmony, but more often they carefully protected their own interests. Crucially, given the particular focus of this thesis on international political networks, each of these groups operated beyond the Dutch and imperial borders and added an international dimension to their political activity. The domestic workers in the Perkoempoelan Islam tried to connect to other Islamic networks in Europe, and were, for example, present at the European Muslim Congress in Geneva in 1935.83 The CHH developed its own network as well, focussing on the various Chinese communities in Europe. At various stages the CHH was in contact with the European branch of the nationalist Chinese Guomindang Party, and they engaged in protests around the Paris peace negotiations in 1919 and in political campaigns against unequal treaties between China and European powers in 1926.84 Although this dissertation intends to explore Indonesian nationalist networks, the CHH and the peranakan students will frequently reappear, sometimes as friends, allies and compatriots, and sometimes with a separate political agenda.

Indonesian students in the Netherlands

Indonesian students, finally, started to arrive from the last decades of the nineteenth century onwards, and in greater numbers after the First World War. In rough estimates, the number of students increased from a dozen individuals in the first decade of the twentieth century, to approximately 50 in the years before the First World War, 130 in 1924, and 175 in 1931. During the years of the Great Depression their numbers dwindled again to 100 in 1936, but in 1940 more than 140 students resided in the Netherlands.85 Harry Poeze has calculated that between 1900 and 1940 278 Indonesian students graduated from the University of Leiden.

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83 Stutje, “Indonesian Islam in Interwar Europe,” 138-139.
84 Stutje, “The Complex World of the Chung Hwa Hui”.
85 All numbers are derived from Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:223, 278. Although this group left more archival sources than the other groups, their exact numbers are equally difficult to obtain. Comprehensive quantitative sources are lacking and we have to rely on aggregated university statistics. A further problem is the fact that students typically only stayed for the duration of their studies. Therefore, the cumulative number of Indonesians who studied in the Netherlands in the first half of the twentieth century is far higher than the number of students on any given moment in time.
alone, which gives an indication of the overall size of the student population if we add the students from – admittedly less popular – universities in Amsterdam, Delft, Rotterdam, Wageningen, Utrecht and elsewhere.  

These students came to the Netherlands to get the education they could not find in the colony. Throughout the colonial period, the school system in the Dutch Indies was not designed to facilitate largescale education of the Indonesian population. Until 1920, there were no tertiary education facilities. Higher educated personnel was usually recruited from Europe directly, or from the European population that had gone to the Netherlands to study. At the secondary education level there was a highly complex system of various school systems, with differentiation not only according to intellectual capacities, but more importantly to class and race. Moreover, as Bart Luttikhuis has argued, the schools in the Dutch Indies were differentiated into ‘Western’ and ‘Native/Oriental’ curriculums. In 1925, only five Hoogere Burger Scholen (‘Higher Commoner’s School’, HBS) and two Algemeene Middelbare Scholen (‘General High Schools’, AMS) provided education that qualified for Dutch universities. The HBS schools were originally intended for the children of ‘Europeans’ and ‘Foreign Orientals’, though with limited access for ‘Europeanised Natives’. For ‘Natives’, there were AMS-schools, and vocational training schools for economic sectors in which the

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86 Poeze, “Indonesians at Leiden University,” 276.
88 Luttikhuis, Negotiating Modernity, 106-139.
need for skilled personnel was most urgent, such as a school for doctors, for civil servants, for legal experts, for agriculture and for veterinary medicine.  

In the nineteenth century, European import of highly qualified officials seemed to suffice, but as the colonial economy expanded and administration professionalised, calls for a mature education system in and for the Dutch Indies gained strength. After the turn of the century, a new liberal policy aimed at the gradual modernisation and constitutional reformation of the colony, resulted in a partial opening of HBS schools for Indonesian and peranakan children. Admission was reserved for those who mastered the Dutch language, had received a European upbringing, and whose parents had acquired a prominent position that had alienated them from the traditional ‘Native’ society. In 1910, 50 ‘Native’ children and 60 ‘Foreign Oriental’ children, mostly ethnic Chinese, attended a HBS or AMS in the Dutch Indies, out of a total of 929 students. In 1930, these numbers had risen to 820 ‘Native’ children and 423 ‘Foreign Oriental’ children out of a total of 3794 students. This might seem a spectacular expansion, but compared to 106,400 pupils in secondary training in the Netherlands in 1930-1931, or 60 million inhabitants in the Dutch Indies that same year, this number was still very low. Nevertheless, an important implication of these reforms was that more and more Indonesian and Chinese pupils became qualified to enrol in Dutch universities.

More than half of the Indonesian students in the Netherlands enrolled in the Law Faculty in Leiden and the Medical Faculty in Amsterdam. These people had often received a preliminary training in one of the aforementioned ‘Native’ doctor or law schools and came to the Netherlands for a prolongation of their studies, as soon as Dutch universities began to modify discriminatory admission requirements. From the 1910s onwards, these students were joined by new graduates from HBS schools in the Dutch Indies that accepted ‘Native’ pupils. This latter group began to choose other study programmes, such as commercial economy in Rotterdam, mathematics in Amsterdam, and Indology or oriental languages in Leiden. An additional category of pupils consisted of military cadets and religious students, attending the military academy in Breda and theological institutes in various places.

89 Poeze, Politiek-Politionele Overzichten, 1:xix, xxv; For an elaborate discussion of these problematic concepts of ‘European’, ‘Western’ and ‘Europeanised’, see Luttikhuis, Negotiating Modernity.


91 Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:145-147; Poeze, “Indonesians at Leiden University”; Bachtiar, “The Development”.
The social background of the students

Under the influence of changing educational regulations in the colony, the social profile of the Indonesian student group changed as well. The cohorts of students before the First World War were almost exclusively of high aristocratic descent; either from one of the two extremely wealthy Central Javanese courts that had retained some of their autonomy, or from old aristocratic families in other parts of the archipelago that had been made tributary to the Dutch colonial administration for their wealth and social position.\textsuperscript{92} Unable to maintain the traditional way of life, many of these latter aristocratic families chose to adapt to the new power system and sent their sons to Europe for some years of higher education.

Consequently, many students were sons of regents in Java or high officials in the Eastern areas of the Moluccas and Minahasa. In the years before the First World War, students from Java comprised between 50 and 60 percent of the total student population in the Netherlands, and judging from the Javanese honorary titles of \textit{Raden} and \textit{Raden Mas}, they were almost exclusively of aristocratic descent.\textsuperscript{93}

After the First World War had ended, lower aristocratic and higher middle class families started to send their children to the Netherlands as well. With new cohorts of students from the HBS and native schools, Javanese princes were no longer dominating the Indonesian student community. Children from religious families (Mohammad Hatta, for instance), wealthy merchants (Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, and again Hatta), lower bureaucratic officials (Ali Sastroamidjojo, Achmad Soebardjo, Soetan Sjahrit), headmasters (Darmawan Mangoenkoesoemo) and doctors (Arnold Mononutu) joined their ranks. Although the proportion of students from Java remained roughly the same, the absolute number of Minahasan, Amboinese, Minangkabau, and other non-Javanese students started to grow as well.\textsuperscript{94}

In terms of gender, the Indonesian student population was overwhelmingly male. In the famous letters of the Javanese noblewoman Kartini, that read as an early indictment against partriarchy and underdevelopment of women in colonial society, she and her sisters expressed the desire to study in Europe as well.\textsuperscript{95} However, expensive education in the Netherlands for daughters was of low priority for Indonesian families. Not only did it contravene the rules of tradition but we also have to take into account that students were

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\textsuperscript{92} Bachtiar, “The Development,” 38-39.
\textsuperscript{93} Poeze, \textit{In het land van de overheerser}, 1:163; Bachtiar, “The Development,” 33-34. In Java, \textit{Raden} and \textit{Raden Mas} are general titles of nobility for descendents of one of the Javanese royal courts.
\textsuperscript{94} Van Niel, \textit{The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite}, 223; Poeze, \textit{In het land van de overheerser}, 1:157.
\textsuperscript{95} Kartini, \textit{Door duisternis tot licht: Gedachten over en voor het Javaansche volk} (’s-Gravenhage: Luctor et Emergo, 1912), 40-41.
\end{flushleft}
typically predestined to a career in the Dutch colonial government, which as a rule dismissed female employees upon marriage. University education for women was therefore regarded as a fruitless investment. Consequently, the boards of the Indische Vereeniging/Perhimpoenan Indonesia were exclusively male, and women did not seem to have taken active part in the political life of the association. Only in 1934 was there a short-lived antiwar committee of Indonesian female students, and Artinah Samsoedin and Siti Soendari participated in a communist women’s congress in Paris. Given the state of the organisation in the 1930s, this committee was most likely on the initiative and under strong political guidance of male PI members Roesbandi and Setiadjit Soegondo.  

Nevertheless, as the antiwar committee indicates, there were examples of female students in the Netherlands before the Second World War. They often came to study art, nursing, or teaching, but there were also a few female law students, such as Siti Soendari. Women were part of the student life of the PI in other ways as well. Some Indonesians had brought their wives to the Netherlands, such as Soetartinah who travelled with Suwardi Suryaningrat, and Titi Roelia who came over with Ali Sastroamidjojo. Indonesian ibu (‘mother’ or ‘madam’), often domestic workers and nannies in Dutch families, catered young students and had an important communal function preparing ceremonial and religious slametan meals. There are many records of amorous relationships between Indonesian boys and Dutch girls, sometimes even leading to permanent partnerships. And finally, as will be demonstrated in the coming chapters, female activists would often play a catalysing role in introducing the Indonesians into larger political networks in Europe.

The social make-up of this community is important, because it is in the context of a social and regional diversification of the student population between 1910 and 1925 that the Indische Vereeniging – the most important student organisation of Indonesians in the Netherlands – evolved from a general forum for sociability and accommodation, to an explicitly nationalist organisation under the name of Perhimpoenan Indonesia.

96 See epilogue. Also Poeze, Politiek-Politioneele Overzichten, 3:388-389. I have the impression that the peranakan Chinese organisation CHH had more female members, probably because of cultural reasons or different career perspectives. Moreover, the higher proportion of peranakan women that studied in the Netherlands reflected the higher number of Indonesian Chinese women in Western education institutions in the Dutch Indies itself. For a unique account of a female student in the Netherlands, see Leonard Blussé, Retour Amoy: Anny Tan, Een Vrouwenleven in Indonesië, Nederland en China (Amsterdam: Balans, 2000).
97 Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:111, 166, 222, 258.
98 Sastroamijoyo, Milestones on my Journey, 20.
100 For examples of love relations: Mrázek, Sjahrir, 81; Gerry van Klinken, Minorities, Modernity and the Emerging Nation: Christians in Indonesia, a Biographical Approach (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2003), 93.
101 See Germaine Merlange in chapter three, and Gabrielle Duchêne and Henriette Roland Holst in chapter four.
Early Indonesian organisations in the Netherlands: ‘ethical’ and loyal

The Indische Vereeniging (‘Indies Association’, IV) was established in Leiden in October 1908 at the instigation of the Batak teacher Casajangan Soripada, the Javanese nobleman Soemitro and the retired Dutch colonial official and public intellectual Jacques Henrij Abendanon. Its establishment was inspired by the foundation five months earlier of the first Javanese culturalist political party Boedi Oetomo, but it rejected the narrow Javanese focus of the latter. Instead, 20 students from across the archipelago subscribed. The association aimed to “promote the interests of the Indiërs in the Netherlands, and to stay connected to the Dutch Indies”. To this end, they tried to unite all colonial students in the Netherlands, and provide information and accommodation to new arrivals. The word ‘Indiërs’ denoted all students from the Dutch Indies, whom the colonial authorities referred to as ‘inlanders’, or ‘Natives’. Although the organisation did not yet use the term ‘Indonesisch’, it already struggled with finding a proper and honourable name for the indigenous population of the Archipelago.

In the first years of its existence, the IV was indeed primarily a social organisation. Until the early 1920s, the association organised almost all Indonesian students in the Netherlands. The IV organised informative lectures on culture, science and industrial development, excursions to tourist attractions and industrial areas, and musical gamelan performances for a broader public. In practical terms, the members of the IV also assisted one another by sharing food, in finding accommodation, and in providing a social environment. There were branches in several university cities of Holland, and from 1916 onwards, the IV had its own journal Hindia Poetra, ‘sons of the Indies’.

Externally, the IV had good social relations with Dutch student organisations, with the CHH and with the Dutch academic elite. Many of the students were members of Dutch student fraternities; the so-called corpora. Javanese aristocrats such as Soeriosoeparto and Noto Soeroto, were often seen as guests at festivities and receptions, where they were regarded as highly esteemed invitees who brought prestige to the host. The Indische Vereeniging itself enjoyed financial support of some 32 Dutch sponsors in 1911, among

104 Gedenkboek Indonesische Vereeniging 1908-1923 (‘s-Gravenhage: Indonesische Vereeniging, 1923), 10-11; Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:64.
whom were retired military officials, academics in Leiden and Amsterdam and political figures in The Hague.\textsuperscript{105}

Politics in the Indonesian student community
Considering this embedding in the Dutch establishment, it is not surprising that the Indische Vereeniging officially claimed to take a neutral political position with regard to colonial politics. Although potentially complicated political issues were discussed in public lectures – examples include the education system in the colony, the debate on democratisation of and participation in the colonial administration, and the formation of a native colonial militia – it was repeatedly emphasised that the Indische Vereeniging and Hindia Poetra fulfilled a social and informative function. They did not want to provoke agitation and protest, but instead tried to facilitate the exchange of views, and a rapprochement of ‘the East’ and ‘the West’.

The opening statement of Hindia Poetra in March 1916 reads, for instance:

\begin{quote}
It needs to be clear that Hindia Poetra will not be a combative platform. […] Our journal wishes to have a general Indies character, which means that we are open to discuss various topics of use for the Indies and the Indies people, such as contributions on education, arts and sciences, agriculture […], trade and politics etc., in short, everything that can enhance the development of the Indies population.\textsuperscript{106}
\end{quote}

This neutral position was understandable from the context of Dutch student life. However, in an Indonesian landscape of multiple political movements and parties with a highly oppositional attitude, this positivist stance of the IV must be interpreted politically. While the Hindia Poetra refrained from political comments, the modernist Islamist – and anti-Chinese – Sarekat Islam (‘Islamic Association’, SI) united almost 360,000 members in 1916 behind a programme calling for greater autonomy and economic emancipation for the Indonesian population. By 1919 its membership had already reached 2.5 million people, mostly Javanese peasants, small merchants and religious leaders. On a non-religious and multi-ethnic basis the Indische Partij was established in 1911, arguing for ultimate independence, while the socialist Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging (‘Indies Social Democratic Association’, ISDV) tried to win Indonesian support for revolutionary Marxism from 1914 onwards. In other

\textsuperscript{105} Poeze, \textit{In het land van de overheerser}, 1:75.
words, the Indonesian political landscape was boisterous and alive, and loyalty towards the Dutch colonial authorities was no longer self-evident. Therefore, the moderate attitude of Hindia Poetra and the Indische Vereeniging vis-à-vis the colonial authorities must be understood as an active political expression in the liberal ethical tradition.

This intellectual tradition, which gave birth to the official ‘ethical policy’ from 1901 onwards, referred to a set of reformist social liberal ideas on colonial development, that was current in the first decades of the twentieth century among colonial ideologues and politicians in the Netherlands. The term was coined by the journalist Pieter Brooshooft in 1901, who argued that the Netherlands had an ethical obligation as a colonising power to modernise the colonial economy and to democratise the administration. In this Dutch variant of the classical ‘mission civilisatrice’, a heavy emphasis was put on improvements in the educational, agricultural and economic sphere, and on the emancipation of the ‘Native’ population in relation to ‘Foreign Orientals’ and foreign capital. In the long run, the policy indeed intended to make the colony independent, either as a fully autonomous country or under the Dutch Crown, but in the short term this was unthinkable as long as Indonesian society was considered underdeveloped. Instead of a gradual retreat of the colonial order, ethical thinkers argued for a drastic expansion of the colonial responsibilities and an active intervention in society. In their analysis, close cooperation between the indigenous elite and European reformists was of utmost importance.

By discussing political issues not as controversies but as general topics of research, Hindia Poetra implicitly expressed confidence that the Dutch and Indonesian elites could solve problems harmoniously. Instead of critically encountering the colonial government, as one Dutch commentator suggested, the 1916 IV chair Loekman Djajadiningrat argued that the members of IV did not go into opposition, “because we do not have nor want enemies. Call us weak, indolent, cowardly, everything; but to keep harping [frappez, frappez toujours], would soon exhaust our energies that we need so badly for our studies.” Another student added that the members of the IV were assertive enough, “but in a way that is less noisy, and [as part of] a struggle that is not being waged in periodicals and journals, but in laboratories and study rooms”. This was an understandable position for the students, who benefited greatly from the opportunities that were offered to them by the colonial authorities, and who

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107 Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia, 65-71.
108 Pieter Brooshooft, De ethische koers in de koloniale politiek (Amsterdam: De Bussy, 1901).
were confident of a good career in the colonial administrative system. But as time passed by and more students arrived with different political experiences and less bright career prospects, this benevolence towards the Dutch colonial authorities became increasingly untenable within the Indische Vereeniging.\textsuperscript{112} It is against this backdrop that Indonesian political nationalism in the Netherlands started to evolve.

\textbf{Frustrations within the IV and the rise of political nationalism}

Although the ethical tradition within IV remained dominant until 1922, the first signs of a political shift within the Indische Vereeniging were already manifest during the years of the First World War, most notably in the writings of Suwardi Suryaningrat. This young aristocrat with links to one of the royal houses of Yogyakarta was exiled to the Netherlands in 1913, along with Ernest (E.F.E.) Douwes Dekker and Tjipto Mangoenkosomo. The three had been leading the Indische Partij, which carried the slogan ‘The Indies free from Holland’, and Suwardi Suryaningrat was also the author of a scathing article ‘If I were for once a Dutchman’ (‘Als ik eens een Nederlander was’) criticising Dutch behaviour in the colony. This was enough for the colonial authorities to exile the three to the Netherlands, although Douwes Dekker and Tjipto Mangoenkosomo left the Netherlands within months. Suwardi Suryaningrat, however, whose reputation had also reached the Netherlands, took up a prominent position as editor of \textit{Hindia Poetra} and continued his criticisms in various newspapers and journals. In his articles, he made no secret of his socialist sympathies, although he was cautious not to create a split in the Indische Vereeniging. After the First World War, he returned to the Dutch Indies, but his ideas influenced the new generation of Indonesian students that made the voyage to the Netherlands immediately after the war.\textsuperscript{113}

Suwardi Suryaningrat is also a clear example of a politicised IV member whose political awakening began in the Dutch Indies itself. As will be demonstrated in the coming chapters, the Indonesian student association in the Netherlands would provide a unique hothouse in which students and exiles could discuss new ideas and explore new political identities in a relatively safe environment. The location of the Netherlands and Europe at large stimulated interaction with other political movements and networks. However, most of the students that will be discussed in this study already had formative political experience in

\textsuperscript{112} Van Niel, \textit{The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite}, 223.
youth organisations and political parties in the Dutch Indies, and some had even come into confrontation with the colonial authorities. The popular image of the Netherlands as the birthplace of Indonesian nationalism, where Indonesian students were ‘infected’ with subversive theories and anticolonial thought, is highly problematic, because it reiterates the critique of contemporary conservative politicians against the ‘ethical’ Leiden university, where many of the students matriculated. Moreover, it denies the agency of students and exiles to determine their own political beliefs and strategies.\(^{114}\)

That said, in 1922 the Indische Vereeniging was indeed the scene of decisive political changes, and it transformed into an important outpost of Indonesian nationalism in Europe. The reasons behind this change – or rather, levels of influence, because a direct causal relation cannot be demonstrated – cannot easily be distilled to just one or two factors. A combination of factors, some relating to their position in Europe, others stemming from colonial policies in the Dutch Indies or from the colonial condition in general, influenced the political views of Indonesians in the Netherlands.

A common frustration of the students in the Netherlands and activists in the Dutch Indies, was the lack of progress in colonial reforms and modernisation.\(^{115}\) Impatience and discontent among Indonesians grew, as education was still reserved for the high elite, democratic institutions were still governed by Dutch interests, and Indonesian entrepreneurs were still unable to compete with Chinese and European businesses. In 1918, Governor General J.P. van Limburg Stirum made far-reaching promises to the population of the Dutch Indies, in an attempt to appease revolutionary discontent in the colony, in the wake of unrest in the Netherlands. The process towards self-determination would be accelerated, and in the newly established advisory Volksraad a majority of non-Europeans would be appointed. These ‘November Promises’ were not delivered and the proportion of Indonesians in the Volksraad remained less than 39%. Similar disappointments occurred in 1922 and 1925 when announced constitutional reforms failed to bring a radical extension of the Volksraad’s power and influence. Instead, politically active Indonesians were confronted with severe limitations of their democratic rights and repression by the police and intelligence service in the Dutch Indies. Moreover, the career prospects of graduated students proved less bright than expected. An official government survey in 1928 showed that 25% of the Western educated

\(^{114}\) See Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*, 13-14.

Indonesians were unable to find jobs commensurable to their level of education, and this percentage would rise dramatically with the economic turmoil of the 1930s.116

The unresponsive attitude of the colonial government discredited the ethical loyalist position, and strengthened the conviction of some students in the Netherlands that the Dutch authorities were not prepared to transfer power voluntarily. Instead, they were seen as an obstacle to development of the colony rather than a partner. From the 1920s onwards, harmonious words of cooperation and mutual appreciation between the two parts of the empire were increasingly met with suspicion.

The radicalising effect of disappointment among Indonesian students regarding the colonial policy of the Netherlands was similar to the disillusionment among Chinese, Egyptian, Indian and Korean intellectuals in the late 1910s described by Erez Manela in *The Wilsonian Moment*. These students, activists and migrant communities had expressed confidence in the American president Woodrow Wilson and his pleas for national self-determination, but soon found out that this principle was only to be applied in Central and Eastern Europe, and not to colonised peoples. This led to massive protest movements and a radical estrangement of colonised intellectuals from Western liberal thought. Because Indonesia was not directly involved in the First World War, there were no Indonesian attempts to influence the American president during or following the Versailles Peace negotiations. However, Wilson’s broken promise of self-determination was often compared with the failure of the Dutch colonial government to live up to its promises.117 Illustrative is Hatta’s speech in Bierville, with which this study began, in which he said:

Until the end of the World War, the Indonesian people believed in the democratic spirit of the West. [...] The people’s right to self-determination that Mister Wilson announced, raised hope. Likewise, the Indonesian people believed that the promises of November 1918 would be delivered by the Dutch government [...]. Far from having delivered what they had solemnly promised, they have created a new colonial regime of an extremely reactionary type.118

117 For example: J.A. Jonkman, “Iets over Indonésie en de aangekondigden wereldvrede,” *Hindia Poëtra* 1.1 (November 1918): 60-61; Front cover of *Hindia Poëtra* 1.3 (May 1923); Hatta, “Nationale Aanspraken I,” in *Verspreide Geschriften*, ed. Mononutu et al., 355; De Indonesische Vereeniging, “Indië en de Vlootwet. Teekenen des Tijds,” *De Telegraaf*, October 16, 1923, 5. Because of their sympathies for the Chinese nationalist government, the *peranakan* students of the CHH engaged with the Versailles Peace negotiations more directly. Both with a mandate from organisations in the Dutch Indies and stimulated by Chinese students in France and Belgium they sent letters of support to the Chinese delegation at the Versailles Peace Conference and were well aware of the state of affairs in the Chinese province of Shandong and in Japan. See Stutje, “The Complex World of the Chung Hwa Hui,” 525-528.
118 Hatta, “L’Indonésie et la Paix,” in *Verspreide Geschriften*, ed. Mononutu et al., 156; my translation, original in the appendix.
Social promotion and racism

Another politicising factor pertaining to Indonesian students in the Netherlands was the very act of migration to a new social environment. Many scholars have mentioned the fact that the students greatly appreciated arriving in a society that did not differentiate according to race. For the first time, they experienced the absence of official apartheid laws in trains, bars or restaurants, and they were generally approached by Dutchmen as respectable citizens. This is indeed a trope in the autobiographies of the students themselves. As Soebardjo mentioned in his autobiography: “I spoke with [many] citizens of Amsterdam. These people were not prejudiced towards me, and treated me as equal.” Although most of the students were not rich in Dutch society, they enjoyed the privileges typical of higher middle class students, dressing decently, travelling first class in trains, and dining in restaurants. In countries such as Germany and Austria, where inflation was rampant, Indonesian students on holidays could even live the lives of rich men, unrestrained by colour bars and race restrictions.

This did not imply that racism was absent in the Netherlands. Although students usually trivialised racist harassments as uncivilised behaviour, we can find examples of racism of various kinds in autobiographies. Mohammad Hatta makes mention of provocations and name-calling in the street. So did Soetan Sjahrir, Abdul Rivai and Alam Darsono. Usually, the students chose to evade conflict and to keep a low profile. Poignant were the conclusions of the medical student Sitanala: “What I have learned here in Europe can be summarised with, 1) be silent to all the teasing and provocations of children on the streets; 2) be silent to all the market vendors and land lords etc.; 3) be silent whenever you don’t feel recognised or appreciated.” This was more difficult when the students had to endure demeaning remarks by university professors, who doubted their intellectual capacities. It was an extra motivation to prove the professors wrong.

119 Van Niel, The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite, 50, 223; Ingleson, Perhimpunan Indonesia, 3; Ingleson, Road to Exile, 2; Rose, Indonesia Free, 18; Poeze, “Indonesians at Leiden University,” 263; McVey, The Rise of Indonesian Communism, 118.
120 Subardjo, Kesadaran nasional, 95.
124 Hatta, Memoir, 148; Sastroamijoyo, Milestones on my Journey, 20.
How ever the students experienced this confusing blend of racism and social promotion, the idea that they would once again return to a racially segregated society was unattractive to all of them, and led to frustration about the inequality of the colonial state. These frustrations did not resonate with Dutch students who prepared for a career in the colonies. The ethical ideas of most of the first generation students could not prevent frictions between Dutch and Indonesian students on larger social forums, such as the Indonesisch Verbond van Studeerenden (‘Indonesian League of Students’). This Verbond was established in 1917, as a co-initiative of Indonesian and peranakan students, and Dutchmen preparing for a career in the colonies. 14 student associations, among which the Indische Vereeniging and the Chung Hwa Hui, joined the platform that organised biannual conferences on various colonial themes between 1917 and 1922.

Initially, the Indonesians welcomed the establishment of the Verbond as a possibility to discuss the future of the Dutch Indies on a higher level. Moreover, it provided a practical opportunity for the IV to step up its activities in these difficult years of war. Nonetheless, despite the warm and ethical words of harmony, collaboration and mutual appreciation between Dutch and Indonesians, the student organisations in the Verbond failed to find common ground. While Dutch speakers put an emphasis on the expansion of colonial rule in order to modernise the colonial society, Indonesian students stressed the importance of increasing Indonesian involvement in decision making and a gradual withdrawal of Dutch officials. Similarly, the ethical position regarding education was ambiguous. While Dutch speakers called for the ‘modernisation’ of the indigenous elites through increased access to Dutch schools, Indonesians were in favour of the establishment and expansion of a serious and modern education system for the Indonesian population at large.

Added to these differences of opinion, the Dutch delegations – who were often interested in the Dutch Indies from an academic or professional point of view– felt intimidated by the very articulate and assertive Indonesians of the Indische Vereeniging. The latter spoke from the experience of their background and debated passionately. Often, the atmosphere at the Verbond meetings was tense and even led to a proposal in 1919 to keep politicised and sensitive issues off the conference agenda. This was to no avail, and fundamental differences could not be overcome. In 1923 the Indische Vereeniging left the

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125 Poeze, _Politiek-Politioneele Overzichten_, 1:xlix; Subardjo, _Kesadaran nasional_, 112.
126 Poeze, _In het land van de overheerser_, 1:127-134, 157-163. Remarkable is the fact that the Indonesisch Verbond van Studeerenden was the first organisation to carry the term ‘Indonesisch’ in its name, albeit in a purely geographical, and not political sense: Elson, _The Idea of Indonesia_, 24.
Indonesisch Verbond van Studeerenden, which soon thereafter dissolved. The experiences in the Verbond and other platforms demonstrated that harmonious collaboration was less self-evident than expected, and that the Indonesians as a group had fundamentally different points of view. This discovery was crucial in the process of forging a distinct Indonesian group identification and a sense of self-reliance.

Exile and agitation

Another factor that influenced the students politically, was the fact that the Netherlands unintentionally became a political epicentre of Indonesian activists and politicised students.\textsuperscript{128} To contain undesirable political activities, the Governor General could exercise ‘exorbitant rights’, on the basis of which he could deport activists to or from a designated area. Some Indonesian activists were left the choice to be deported to a remote island or to leave the country until further notice. Such was the case for the three aforementioned leaders of the Indische Partij, and for the communists Semaoen, Tan Malaka, Darsono, Henk Sneevliet and Piet Bergsma, who were also exiled to the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{129} Paradoxically, these activists enjoyed greater political freedom in the Netherlands. Although they were watched closely by the secret service and often suffered from administrative bullying, they were free to speak, assemble and organise. Most exiled communists found shelter in the Dutch Communist Party, but some activists also exercised influence on the slightly younger Indonesian students in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{130}

These students, on the other hand, were more receptive to anticolonial thought than the cohorts before the First World War. As mentioned above, many new arrivals had been active in one of the youth organisations of new political organisations in the Dutch Indies.\textsuperscript{131} Parties such as the Javanese Boedi Oetomo, the Islamist Sarekat Islam, and the communist Partai Komunis Indonesia (a continuation of the old Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging), had established firm ground in the colony and their membership levels were

\textsuperscript{128} Van Niel, \textit{The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite}, 226; Ingleson, \textit{Road to Exile}, 5; Van Miert, \textit{Bevlogenheid en onvermogen}, 97.
\textsuperscript{129} Poeze, \textit{Politiek-Politionele Overzichten}, 1:Lxi.
\textsuperscript{131} Van Niel, \textit{The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite}, 223; Ingleson, \textit{Perhimpunan Indonesia}, 2; Ingleson, \textit{Road to Exile}, 1; Poeze, “Indonesians at Leiden University,” 263; Poeze, \textit{Politiek-Politionele Overzichten}, 1,l; Poeze, \textit{In het land van de overheerser}, 1:157; Elson, \textit{The Idea of Indonesia}, 49.
growing. Moreover, the 1910s also saw the emergence of various regional youth organisations among students and pupils. The Jong Sumatranen Bond (‘Union of Young Sumatrans’) was established in 1917, soon followed by Jong Java, Jong Celebes, Jong Ambon, and many other organisations. Each of the above had regional chapters, sub-committees and editorial boards, and thus provided ample opportunity for youngsters to gain organisational experience. Nazir Pamontjak, who arrived in 1919, and Mohammad Hatta, who arrived in 1921, had both been involved in the Jong Sumatranen Bond, while Soebardjo (arrived in 1919), Iwa Koesoema Soemantri (1921) and Ali Sastroamidjojo (1923) had been members of Jong Java. Maramis (1919) had experience in Jong Minahassa.132 These students were more politicised than previous generations and continued their political work in the Netherlands.

In short, this explosive cocktail of disillusionment with Dutch colonial policy, disagreements with Dutch ethical students, and the influx of politically experienced activists and students from the Dutch Indies, combined with the relatively free environment of the colonial metropole, culminated in the emergence of highly critical and anticolonial ideas among the students in the Netherlands, and as such in the cultivation of a new ideology of unitary nationalism.

A nationalist turn in the Indische Vereeniging

This political momentum came to a head on a Sunday evening in February 1922, when the general assembly of the Indische Vereeniging elected a new board in a meeting on the second floor of Café Riche in the heart of the governmental district of The Hague.133 At the instigation of the previous chairman Soetomo and the nationalist law student Nazir Pamontjak, Hermen Kartowisastro was appointed as chair of the association, with Soewarno as secretary and Mohammad Hatta as treasurer. At this general assembly the students once again condemned the broken promises of the colonial government of November 1918, and lamented the disappointing collaboration with Dutch students within the Verbond. As an expression of its new convictions, the assembly agreed to change the name of the association from Indische Vereeniging to Indonesische Vereeniging. Furthermore, Mohammad Hatta was given the task of exploring the possibilities for a restoration of *Hindia Poetra*. Between August 1918 and August 1922 the journal had been a joint publication of the Indische

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133 Hatta, *Memoir*, 123.
Vereeniging, Chung Hwa Hui and the Indonesisch Verbond van Studeerenden, but after a year of silence, the Indonesische Vereeniging reissued *Hindia Poetra* on its own authority.

The sudden breach with the internal deadlock within the IV between nationalist and ethical students was in no way incidental. The 1923 board, under chairmanship of Iwa Koesoema Soemantri and with Sastromoeljono, Darmawan Mangoenkoesoemo and Mohammad Hatta as important members, issued new nationalist principles and abandoned the Verbond, while the 1924 board of Nazir Pamontjak sharpened these principles and changed the name *Hindia Poetra* to *Indonesia Merdeka* (‘Indonesia Free’ or ‘Free Indonesia’, IM). In 1925, chairman Soekiman Wirjosandjojo symbolically completed the reorientation of the Indonesian student association in the Netherlands by changing its name once again, to its Malay translation: the Perhimpoenan Indonesia.

Henceforth, the IV/PI was no longer a general social club but a political organisation of around 50 members. With the use of the term ‘Indonesia’, the students rejected the imposed name of ‘the Dutch Indies’ and demeaning terms such as ‘inlander’ and ‘inheems’ (‘native’ or ‘indigenous’). The slogan ‘merdeka’, or ‘freedom’, indicated that the students were no longer hoping for reforms within the colonial system, and only put confidence in complete independence.\(^{134}\) Most clear were the new principles issued in 1925, in which the board emphasised that colonial oppression could only be confronted with conscious and unified mass action. They also proclaimed that all social strata of society needed to participate in the struggle; that the colonial question – despite all veiled words and promises from the Dutch side – was fundamentally a conflict of interests between rulers and ruled; and lastly, that the physical and psychological effects of colonisation needed to be challenged at the root.\(^{135}\) Ethical and loyal ideas on assimilation and modernisation under Western guidance were clearly rejected.

Also the tone of its journal changed fundamentally. While the old *Hindia Poetra* intended to inform its readers of news from the colony, to discuss colonial issues from various sides, and to highlight Indonesian culture and languages, the purpose of articles in *Indonesia Merdeka* was quite different. From January 1924 the magazine endorsed the principles of the PI on independence, self-reliance and the unity of the Indonesian people.\(^{136}\) The journal was turned into a propaganda tool, and only articles that were written in the spirit

\(^{134}\) “Voorwoord,” *Indonesia Merdeka* 2.1 (March 1924): 1. Robert Elson even argues that the Indonesian students in IV/PI were the first to use the term ‘Indonesia’ in a purely political sense, in a speech in 1917: *The Idea of Indonesia*, 23.


of ‘revolutionary nationalism’ were published. This spirit was in no way a static and fixed set of principles and ideas, and developed in the course of years. However, four general concepts can be discerned from the writings of *Indonesia Merdeka*.\(^{137}\) Firstly, the Indonesian students in the Netherlands pursued a clear political goal, which was the independence of a unitary Indonesian state. No longer were Indonesians to be subdivided into regions, religions or languages, but instead a united front had to be forged against the Dutch colonial power. Therefore, secondly, the concept of solidarity was crucial, not only between these particularistic groups, but also across class boundaries and with other colonised peoples. As a third central concept, the PI and its journal advocated a strict policy of non-cooperation.

From the broken promises and vain pleas for democratisation and modernisation, the students learned that the Dutch state would never give up its power voluntarily. They held that no Indonesian should work for any governmental institution, because pseudo-democratic organs such as the Volksraad only masked and prolonged the struggle between colonisers and

\(^{137}\) Petrus Blumberger, *De nationalistische beweging*, 6-7; Van Niel, The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite, 225; Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 5; Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia*, 59-64.
colonised. In connection to this, the Indonesian students continuously argued for the creation of political, social, economic and legal structures of self-help, such as independent schools, cooperative societies and loan banks. Some students even argued for the construction of a state within the colonial state as a tactic to overcome colonial rule.\(^\text{138}\)

The new principles of the PI did not make explicit whether the fundamental conflict of interests between ‘rulers’ and ‘ruled’ was to be understood in racial, cultural, economic or political terms. Did the co-opted Javanese elite belong to the ‘rulers’ or the ‘ruled’? And what about peranakan Chinese, or people of mixed descent? In general, the articles in *Indonesia Merdeka* explained the colonial conflict in economic and political terms. However, when it came to practical politics, for instance on who to accept as a member of the PI and who to include in the united front against colonial oppression, the organisation sometimes resorted to racial criteria. The fact that white people were refused entry at closed PI meetings could be explained as a security measure, but Hatta was more explicit in an intercepted letter to Sudjadi, a clerk in the department of finance in Batavia who functioned as a liaison of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia.\(^\text{139}\)

> [R]egarding Your question who we mean by Indonesians, I can announce that we conceive the word Indonesians in its most pure sense: only the original inhabitants of Indonesia, who are referred to by the oppressor with the term ‘natives’ ['inlanders']. We can impossibly regard the Eurasians [Indo’s] as our race-brethren [rasgenoot]. As such, they cannot enter the Perhimpoenan Indonesia.\(^\text{140}\)

Also with regard to the Indonesian political landscape, Hatta defined friends and foes on a racial basis. This is most evident in a positive commentary on a political coalition of nationalist organisations in the Dutch Indies at the end of 1927, the Permoefakatan Perhimpoenan-Perhimpoenan Politiek Kebangsaän Indonesia (PPPKI). Hatta commented: “In contrast to previous Radical Concentrations, the PPPKI rests on a pure nationalist foundation. Only Indonesian nationalist parties are allowed in this federation, while non-Indonesian elements and mixed corporations are meticulously excluded. We arrived at this decision through experience!” Hatta continued to describe how Dutch parties in the end reverted to chauvinism and paternalism, and could not be considered reliable allies in the anticolonial

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\(^{138}\) Ingleson, *Road to Exile*, 26.  
\(^{139}\) NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 248, 24 December 1923 C17.  
\(^{140}\) NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Bm; my translation, original in the appendix.
struggle.\textsuperscript{141} It is unclear what this racial strategy implied for cooperation with Arab and peranakan Chinese organisations, but the complicated relationship with the CHH in the Netherlands reveals racial tensions between both groups.

Reactions

Of course, the transformation of the IV into the PI, and the HP into the IM caused consternation among Dutch students and the Dutch press. For the first time Indonesian nationalism had established an organisational foothold in the Netherlands. “Is this, after 15 or 20 years of ethical policy, the result?”\textsuperscript{142} a commentator in the liberal \textit{Algemeen Handelsblad} wondered.\textsuperscript{142} In the conservative journal \textit{Koloniaal Tijdschrift} the shift was regretted as a “sad stupidity”, and the Minister of Colonies was urged to take measures against radical students who had student loans.\textsuperscript{143} Directly affected were the members of the old guard of ethical Indonesians. A response from this side came from Noto Soeroto. Almost simultaneously with the nationalist turn from \textit{Hindia Poetra} to \textit{Indonesia Merdeka}, he broke with the journal which he had helped establish himself, and founded a new magazine: the bilingual \textit{Oedaya} – \textit{Opgang} (‘Rise’).\textsuperscript{144} While the indignation about colonial crimes covered the pages of the IM, \textit{Oedaya} continued to write about art and culture, and the fruitful cooperation between East and West. Noto Soeroto actually returned to the old principles of \textit{Hindia Poetra}. Indonesians and Dutch were to become acquainted with each other through social meetings and excursions. “In this way: to contribute to the promotion of mutual appreciation and mutual understanding between the Netherlands and Indonesia, and between East and West in general, is the pursuit of \textit{Oedaya}”, Noto Soeroto wrote in a permanent statement in the journal.\textsuperscript{145}

It is illustrative of the new atmosphere within the Perhimpoenan Indonesia, and the Indonesian student community in general, that the general assembly of the PI decided to expel Noto Soeroto from its ranks in early 1925.\textsuperscript{146} The immediate cause was a laudatory commemorative text by Noto Soeroto in \textit{Oedaya} on the occasion of the reburial of the retired military officer and former Governor General J.B. van Heutsz. This general was notorious for

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\textsuperscript{141} Hatta, “Van ‘Radicale’ tot een Nationalistische Concentratie,” in \textit{Verspreide Geschriften}, ed. Mononutu et al., 392; original emphasis.

\textsuperscript{142} “Een boze geest,” \textit{Algemeen Handelsblad}, December 28, 1924, 5.

\textsuperscript{143} J.E. Bijlo, \textit{Koloniaal Tijdschrift} 14 (1925), cited in Poeze, \textit{In het land van de overheerser}, 1:179.

\textsuperscript{144} Karels, \textit{Mijn aardse leven vol moeite en strijd}, 92-95.

\textsuperscript{145} “Mededeeling,” \textit{Oedaya} 3 (September 1926): 186.

the role he had played as a military commander in the Sumatran region of Aceh, at the end of
the nineteenth century. After decades of struggle with Acehnese armies, he managed to
‘pacify’ the region with rigorous war methods, leaving thousands of Acehnese dead.\footnote{In total, an estimated number of 37,000 colonial troops and 60 to 70,000 Acehnese lost their lifes in four decades of war in Aceh (1873-1914): Adrian Vickers, \textit{A History of Modern Indonesia} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10-13.} The
broad recognition in mainstream media for his career, and the state funeral that this ‘butcher
of Aceh’ received, was a topic of great controversy between supporters and opponents of
colonial rule. Noto Soeroto’s obituary, which spoke of a “personal admiration for this
However, the problems were more fundamental than just this text. In a testimonial of Noto
Soeroto in \textit{Oedaya}, after being expelled from the Perhimpoenan Indonesia, he wrote, not
without sarcasm:

\begin{quote}
Actually, already for quite a while I could not keep abreast with these noble patriots, but I remained a
member for fifteen years and I paid my dues faithfully, because I have helped to establish the
organisation, was three times its president, and continued to consider it as a \textit{general association} for
Indonesians [...] So, I said goodbye to the ‘Indonesische Vereeniging’ with a ‘bleeding heart’.\footnote{Noto Soeroto, “De hoofdredacteur van ‘Oedaya’ geroyeerd als lid van de Indonesische Vereeniging, wegens anti-Indonesische gezindheid,” \textit{Oedaya} 2 (January 1925): 187; my translation, original emphasis and punctuation, original in the appendix.}
\end{quote}

Other students were expelled from the PI as well, such as the ethical teacher Casajangan
Soripada, who was an honorary member of IV and member from the beginning, Sitanala, a
board member who had defended Noto Soeroto against his opponents, and assistant professor
Prijohoeotomo a year later.\footnote{J.B. Sitanala, “Open brief aan de ‘Indonesische Vereeniging’,” \textit{Algemeen Handelsblad}, January 9, 1925, 8; “Wegens zijn lectorschap aan de Utrechtse Universiteit,” \textit{De Telegraaf}, October 6, 1925, 16.} After 1925, the PI no longer tolerated members whose opinions
conflicted with the nationalist principles of the organisation.

\textbf{Synthesis}

The transformation of the loyalist Indische Vereeniging to the nationalist Perhimpoenan
Indonesia had consequences for the appeal of the organisation to the Indonesian student
group as a whole. While the IV comprised almost all Indonesian students in the Netherlands
between 1908 and 1920, the PI after 1922 represented only a half to a third of the entire
Indonesian student population in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, within the Indonesian
political landscape, the PI reached a much bigger audience than under the ethical direction,
and the choice for ‘Indonesia’ as a political term contributed to its popularisation in the Dutch Indies. Especially in the period between 1922 and 1928, the organisation, although active in a country far away, was regarded as the most prominent advocate for a unified and independent Indonesia.151

Crucial to acknowledge was the intermediate position of the small student community in the Netherlands, both in structural social and political correspondence with developments in the fatherland, and uniquely positioned and somewhat isolated in the imperial centre. This position provided on the one hand the necessary circumstances in which the rank and file of the Indische Vereeniging radicalised, and on the other hand the unique possibility to spread its wings beyond the borders of the Netherlands. The ideology of revolutionary nationalism, was to be tested over the years in foreign environments and in encounters with movements abroad. While the students hardened their convictions in confrontation with Dutch students and authorities, their ideological tenets continued to be refined among allies and friends from other colonised countries. In the next chapter, I will explore the emergence of an internationalist world view within the Indische Vereeniging and later Perhimpoenan Indonesia, in correspondence with changing ideas about ‘the Self’.

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151 Petrus Blumberger, De nationalistische beweging, 187. Only in 1927, PI’s unique position was eclipsed with the establishment of the Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia of Soekarno, and with the Sumpah Pemuda or Youth Pledge of 1928, when a large assembly of regionally affiliated youth organisations in the Dutch Indies pledged allegiance to the unity of the nation, the homeland and the language of Indonesia. Before 1927, nationalist ideals found their outlet in the Sarekat Islam and in the PKI.