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

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In this chapter, we follow the trail of Mononutu on his journey to Paris. In accordance with the new international orientation of the PI, Mononutu tried to establish contacts and forge networks with anticolonial activists in the capital of “men without a country”. Although the Indonesian students referred to their Parisian contacts as brethren, fighting for the same anticolonial cause, many diverging opinions and political traditions can be distinguished behind this banner of unity. Therefore, the Indonesian activities in Paris should be understood as performative actions, rather than actual collaborative efforts.

In the summer of 1925 Arnold Wilson Mononutu, 26 years old and since January that year vice-chairman of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia, left his home town The Hague on a special mission for the Indonesian Association. The young Mononutu was not a leader nor an agitator, and sometimes even left an impression of insignificance on others. He can be typified as a silent observer and organiser behind the scenes, who was attracted to artistic, intellectual and political circles, and had a special taste for high society. The rare pictures that survive of this period show a young man of normal stature, in European dress with bowler hat and stick. Although Mononutu’s authorised biographer Nalenan mentions several intimate relationships with women, a Dutch special councillor keeping an eye on the Indonesian students in the Netherlands, the ‘Raadsman voor Studeerenden’ J.C. Westenenk, suggested “homosexual leanings”. A qualification that perhaps reveals more of Westenenk’s own orientalist mentality than of Mononutu’s love life itself.

Mononutu’s rise to prominence within the Perhimpoenan Indonesia had been a recent development, and was certainly not the result of years of political work. Arnold Isaac Zacharias Wilson Mononutu was born on 4 December 1898 in the town of Manado, a larger regional and administrative centre in the same Minahasan region as where Ratu Langie was born eight years before. Arnold Mononutu was Christian as well, although he seemed to be

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241 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350.
242 ANRI, Daftar Arsip Foto Personal, inv. nr. p04/056, p05/517, foto Mononutu; Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 124.
243 Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 16-17, 31, 62; NL-HaNA, Commissariaat Indische Zaken, 2.10.49, inv. nr. 2692, report 1927, appendix A, 75, p. 218.
part of an “unchurched intellectual upper layer” in Minahasan society that had enjoyed secular education.244

The Mononutu family was one of the leading families in the Minahasa region, but not so much through indigenous aristocratic titles. Similarly to Ratu Langie’s family, the wealth and status of the Mononutu family was derived from the European power structure. Arnold’s grandfather, who shared the same name with his grandson, was the first Minahasan to receive a grade as Dokter Djawa in 1870, a Dutch colonial education for indigenous doctors. The title of Dokter Djawa lend Arnold Senior high prestige in the Minahasan society, and social promotion to the Eurasian circles of society. His son – the father of Arnold Junior – with the Dutch name of Karel Charles, married a Eurasian woman by the name of Agustina van der Slot, and became a government official for the colonial administration of Northern Celebes. Eventually, Karel would climb up to the rank of Algemeen Ontvanger (‘General Receiver’) of the Manado district. Most likely, he belonged to the growing group of ‘Natives’ who filed a request to be ‘equated’ to the ‘European’ legal status on the basis of his language skills, occupation and religion.245 To emphasise his European orientation, Arnolds father even began to carry the name of Wilson, which he borrowed from his mother’s family.246

The évolué social status determined the career opportunities of the young Arnold. Like many elite Indonesians, Arnold was raised in the Dutch language, and at the age of four he enrolled in the European primary school that was for Dutch, Eurasian and ‘Europeanised’ children only. By the age of 15 he moved to relatives in Batavia to go to one of the three HBS

244 Van Klinken, Minorities, Modernity and the Emerging Nation, 87-88.
245 About this remarkable possibility to cross the colonial colour line: Luttikhuis, Negotiating Modernity, 85-90.
246 Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 9-10.
schools in the Dutch Indies, the prestigious Koning Willem III School. Together with future fellow students Achmad Soebardjo, Alex Maramis and Nazir Pamontjak, Arnold Mononutu was, as is mentioned in his 1981 biography, the only ‘Native’ in a school population of 500 European, Eurasian and Chinese children. They lived the life of the European colonial elite. As Mononutu stated himself, he was invested with a “colonial mentality” in which European lifestyles, values and ideas were prevalent. This would change significantly over the next years. Like many of the pupils in the HBS, Mononutu wanted to continue his school career in the Netherlands, as he had the ambition to become a journalist. As soon as the First World War had ended, and the naval routes were cleared, Mononutu embarked on a ship to Europe. He arrived in Amsterdam at the beginning of 1920.

Mononutu in The Hague
Mononutu settled in The Hague, and was initially absorbed by Dutch student life. He socialised with Dutch friends from the HBS in Batavia and enrolled in a private school in Leiden, which would grant him the requirements needed for prospective journalists. After two years, however, he began to draw closer to the Indonesian students that resided in the university town of Leiden, among whom were his former classmates Achmad Soebardjo and Alex Maramis, who had arrived a few months earlier. It was on Maramis’ initiative that Mononutu first attended a meeting of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia in 1923 – three years after his arrival – when this association was still called Indonesische Vereeniging and was under leadership of Iwa Koesoema Soemantri.

Mononutu entered an association that was in the course of the political transformation between 1922 and 1925. By the time Iwa Koesoema Soemantri was chairman, the association had already been endowed with a more overtly political ethos with the change of name from Indische Vereeniging to Indonesische Vereeniging, and the initiation of new national symbols such as the Benteng head and a new Red-and-White flag. It is unclear why Mononutu, who was by his upbringing closely associated to Dutch colonial life, and invested with a “colonial mentality,” felt attracted to the increasingly uncompromising attitude of students of the

248 The self-identification of Mononutu as ‘bumiputera’ (lit. ‘son of the land’, ‘native Indonesian’) in the authorised biography of Nalenan of 1981 is problematic, and can be read as a retrospective identification in a postcolonial context. It is not known how Mononutu, who was Christian and of European ancestry as well, referred to himself as a school boy.
249 Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 14-17.
250 Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 26-27.
251 Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 34-35.
252 Subardjo, Kesadaran nasional, 117-118.
Indonesische Vereeniging. He had never been politically active before and nothing in his personal life or in the political developments at the time suggests an ideological watershed. Probably, Mononutu, whose studies did not progress as they should, felt attracted to the new vitality of the Indonesische Vereeniging, which had just broken away from restraining collaboration with Dutch student organisations in the Indonesisch Verbond van Studeerenden. The association had reinvented itself and energetically advocated a new Indonesian identity vis-à-vis Dutchmen and fellow Indonesian students. Anyway, Mononutu was inspired by the new political atmosphere, and symbolically refused to carry his European name Wilson any longer, which his father had adopted to acquire a higher colonial status.

Rise to prominence
Within little more than a year after his first involvement in the association, Arnold Mononutu would become one of its most prominent members. Two episodes in particular mark the evolution of Mononutu towards prominence. Firstly, Arnold Mononutu represented the radical faction in a clash with one of the founding fathers of the Indonesische Vereeniging. As mentioned before, in 1924 the senior member Noto Soeroto wrote a favourable article in his own journal, Oedaya, in honour of the military officer and former Governor General J.B. van Heutsz. As a military commander in the Sumatran region of Aceh, he had played a notorious role in quelling a prolonged revolt in that region around the turn of the century. Through scorched earth tactics and mass executions of civilians, leaving thousands of Acehnese dead, he managed to ‘pacify’ the region after years of struggle with Acehnese fighters.253

In the eyes of Indonesian nationalists in the IV, this ‘butcher of Aceh’ was a cruel tyrant. But Noto Soeroto, who belonged to the aristocratic Javanese house of Paku Alam and who had become a well-known poet, publicist and society figure in the Netherlands, expressed his “personal admiration for this Dutchman, who had an eye to the interests of the natives”. Politically, Noto Soeroto believed in the promises of the ethical policy and was in favour of association with Dutch rule. He had expressed serious doubts about the nationalist shift of ‘his’ association, but his status as a founding member prevented the issue coming to a head. The article in Oedaya was, however, an outright provocation of the “super-nationalists” who did not want to recognise “the merits of this conqueror, with iron fists but with a great

It was Arnold Mononutu who took up the challenge to call this senior member to account by convening a special meeting in December 1924. Weren’t the “iron fists” of Van Heutsz castigating the backs of his brothers and sisters of Indonesia? As an Indonesian nobleman, it was counted against Noto Soeroto that he lowered himself to attempts to “get into the good books of the ruling powers”. The association – Noto Soeroto included – was surprised by the eloquence of Mononutu, and with 45 against 5 votes the former icon was expelled from the association.

Another defining moment – one that proved that Mononutu had definitively rejected his ‘colonial mentality’ – occurred when he was asked by Achmad Soebardjo and Mohammad Hatta to join a six week summer course in international law in July and August 1925, at the recently established Académie du Droit International of the Peace Palace in The Hague. During these weeks, students from around the world were educated in the principles and philosophies of international law by prominent scholars, judges and diplomats. The texts and topics discussed, of Erasmus, Grotius, Renan and others, provided the Indonesian students with valuable theoretical ammunition for their national claims. But more important for Mononutu and his fellow Indonesian participants Soebardjo and Darmawan Mangoenkoesoemo was that they succeeded in stating their nationality as ‘Indes Orientales’ instead of the ‘the Netherlands’ or ‘Dutch East Indies’. The issue lead to vehement protests from the side of the Dutch students and heated debates in the forum, with the English, French and Japanese students supporting the Dutch group and the Indian, Egyptian, Iranian and Hungarian groups supporting Mononutu’s claim. The Indonesians won the dispute. For them it had been the first clash for national independence on the international stage of the Peace Palace in The Hague. For Mononutu, it had been a second moment of prominence.

New international orientation

A month after Mononutu’s clash with Noto Soeroto, he was asked in January 1925 to become vice-chairman in the board of the Indonesische Vereeniging under leadership of the Javanese medical student Soekiman Wirjosandjojo, and with the guidance of Mohammad Hatta and Achmad Soebardjo behind the scenes. This board reinforced the transformation process of the three preceding boards, with a second name change of the association from Indonesische Vereeniging.
Vereeniging to its literal Indonesian translation Perhimpoenan Indonesia. It was this board that issued the programme of activities, in which the PI announced that it wanted “to evoke the interest of the members in international issues”, and “to bring the Indonesian question to international attention”.258

In particular, the organisation aimed to continue the Pan-Asian work of Ratu Langie. In the memorial volume which was published at the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the association, Alex Maramis remarked:

Important are the recent attempts by Indonesians in the Netherlands to get an international, or better, an intra-Asian orientation [...] Already nine years ago, dr. Ratulangi established the ‘Société Asiatique des Étudiants’, which due to a lack of personal commitment did not live up to all the expectations. May the many recent encounters [with foreign students] lay a firm foundation for a new Union of Asian Students.259

Because of his experiences in the Académie du Droit International, his command of the French language and his remarkable intervention against Noto Soeroto, the eyes of the PI board had fallen on Mononutu. He was not as tied to his studies as the other students in the PI, because he neglected his training at the school for journalism. His experiences at the Peace Palace summer school gave him more satisfaction and after he became involved in the

258 Petrus Blumberger, De nationalistische beweging, 189; “Bestuurswisseling,” Indonesia Merdeka 3.1 (February 1925): 3; Subardjo, Kesadaran nasional, 125-126; Hatta, Memoir, 158-159.
259 Alex Maramis, “Terugblik,” in Gedenkboek Indonessche Vereeniging, 18; my translation, original in the appendix. Actually, the SDEA was established five years before, in 1918.
PI, he decided to devote his time to serious politics. Paris provided an interesting opportunity to explore this alternative career path.260

Paris
In the summer of 1925 Mononutu arrived in Paris. For the first nights he arranged to stay in a hotel at 47 Boulevard Saint-Michel in the Quartier Latin neighbourhood, just opposite the prestigious Lycée Saint-Louis.261 After the first weeks, he moved to a cheaper hotel a number of blocks away, Hôtel du Progrès at 50 Rue Gay-Lussac, where he would stay until September 1927.262

Paris was not an unknown city to the Indonesians in the Netherlands. Many students arrived from the colony in Genoa or Marseille by boat, and from there took a shortcut over land by train to Holland. A stop-over in Paris was usual; a stay that, in the case of Ali Sastroamidjojo and his wife, lasted up to two months.263 Moreover, the French capital was a popular destination during holidays and reading weeks, for tourist purposes, but also for language classes, for meetings with friends and activists or just to escape from distraction and obligations in the Netherlands in the period of exams.264 Furthermore, around the same time that Mononutu arrived, the students Mohamad Nazif and Soediono followed courses at the Faculté de Droit (‘Law Faculty’) of the Université de Paris.265 Arnold Mononutu was, then, far from exceptional as an Indonesian studying in Paris.

Paris at that time was truly a global city; a “capital of men without a country” as the American writer and civil rights activist Roger Baldwin aptly described it.266 During the 1920s it was one of the few cities in Europe where political refugees and exiles could easily find a place and a living, unlike for instance England with its restrictive migration laws. According to a census in 1931, Paris harboured 148,000 Italians, 83,000 Poles, 52,000 Belgians, 42,000 Russians and 150,000 other residents from Western countries, in a total

260 Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, Interview of Mattulata with Arnold Mononutu (18 April 1974): 0:42:50.
261 NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Ch.
262 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350.
263 Sastroamijojo, Milestones on my Journey, 20.
264 Hatta, Memoir, 153, 162; Subardjo, Kesadaran nasional, 149.
265 “Een belangwekkend proefschrift van een Minangkabauer,” Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant, January 18, 1929, 1; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 280, 2 July 1926 S10; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Bii; NL-HaNA, Commissariaat Indische Zaken, 2.10.49, inv. nr. 2692, jaarverslag 1926, p. 13; inv. nr. 2693, jaarverslag 1933, Bijlage B Geheim, p. 55
number of 6.7 million inhabitants.\textsuperscript{267} Also from non-Western lands, refugees, students, soldiers and workers found a new or temporary home in the Metropole. Although official figures were not always accurate, around 96,000 North Africans, 49,000 Indochinese, 10,000 Antilleans and 2000 Sub-Saharan Africans called Paris their home by the mid-1920s.\textsuperscript{268} Together, all these foreigners comprised 9.2\% of the total population of the city. Although, many of them came to France to serve in the French army or to work in the industrial zones around the City of Paris, many refugees had left their homelands for political reasons. This brought an explosive mix of views and convictions to Paris, with large groups of antifascist Italians, Czarist Russians, American anarchists and Catholic Poles, who could live in Paris undisturbed, as long as they kept a low profile.\textsuperscript{269}

A special group, and a particularly interesting one for the Indonesians, were anticolonial activists, who, according to Roger Baldwin, numbered only a few hundred, but who were very active in organising meetings and establishing newspapers and political offices. Some of the organisations enjoyed considerable support from the French Communist Party, and from leftist intellectuals such as Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse, and organisations such as the Ligue des Droits de l’Homme.

Hôtels and Cafès

It is almost impossible to reconstruct ‘the average day’ of these students with most of the sources only covering highlights and special events. Nonetheless, some particularities can be pointed out.

First of all, it should be mentioned that the social and political life of the Indonesians almost entirely took place in the university area of the Quartier Latin. Two hotels in particular were the hubs of their social environment. The Indonesians consistently chose to stay in the aforementioned Hôtel du Progrès at 50 Rue Gay-Lussac, or the Hôtel Soufflot at 9 Rue Toullier, just around the block from the Jardin du Luxembourg. Mononutu was not the first to take up residence in the Hôtel du Progrès, as the law student Sastromoeljono stayed there already in 1923. During the period under investigation, Mohamad Nazif, Mohammad Hatta and Nazir Pamontjak stayed for longer or shorter periods in this same hotel as well, sometimes in a private room, sometimes sharing a room with one of their fellow compatriots. The same applied for the Hôtel Soufflot, where, among others, Achmad Soebardjo, Soepomo

and Gatot Taroenomihardjo took residence. According to reports of the French intelligence service Sûreté Générale, these hotels were more than just places to sleep. Often correspondence was sent to and from these addresses suggesting that they functioned as political bureaus. Moreover, the owner of the Hôtel Soufflot complained that often youngsters gathered in the Indonesian rooms, who, as he concluded from “their conversations and life style”, could only be communists.270

Another important place that was a natural cross-over between the social and the political life of the Indonesians in Paris, was the Taverne Pascal. It was one of the favourite hang-outs of the Indonesian students in Paris.271 This bar, located at 2 Rue École-de-Medecine, was a small, two-storey place, without a terrace. It had long been a typical French ‘vieux café’ before a new owner turned it into a Chinese restaurant at the beginning of the 1920s, called Wan Houa Wsieou Leou. Many of the debates in which Mononutu and the Indonesians got involved took place here, and sometimes presale tickets for concerts and conferences were sold behind the bar. Moreover, a 1914 study on prostitution and ‘sexual ethics’ by the German sociologist Robert Michels suggests that there was more for sale in Taverne Pascal than just beer and tickets.272 After the Taverne had turned into a Chinese restaurant, many non-Western students began to frequent the place; mostly Asians, as can be discerned from the following disturbing report of a French secret agent:

I’ve been dining in a Chinese restaurant [at] Rue du Sommerard with comrade Vo Van Toan; this restaurant is becoming a negro restaurant, since the Annamites and the Chinese don’t go there anymore. The blacks are too numerous and the Annamite students have started a campaign to discourage their comrades to go there, for the reason that the Annamites are not among themselves anymore. All moved […] to Pascal, at Rue des Ecole [=Rue École-de-Medecine].273

Just after the First World War, the Quartier Latin was a rough university district, with lots of students, artists and migrants. Street name searches in newspaper databases reveal a bustling area, with many cheap lodgings, small restaurants, with bars and with bar fights. The following fragment in a Parisian newspaper in December 1927 gives an impression of the kind of area the Indonesians inhabited:

270 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350, copy of a report of the Sureté Générale de Paris, 2 July 1927; Sastroamijoyo, Milestones on my Journey, 21.
271 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350, copy of a report of the Sureté Générale de Paris, 2 July 1927.
273 Marilyn Levine and Chen San-ching, The Guomindang in Europe: A Sourcebook of Documents (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), 156; my translation, original in the appendix.
Two Annamite students attack a bell-boy
Two Cochin-Chinese students Tran-Than Phung, 18 years old, and Tran-Than Thien, 20 years old, who arrived two months ago in Paris to finish their secondary education, left the hotel at 19 Rue Cujas where they stayed, and moved to 9 Rue Toullier [which was Hôtel Soufflot where Soebardjo lived around the same period]. They had forgotten two gramophone records in the first hotel. Tran-Than Thien went to get them back and the daughter of the hotel owner asked him to wait a minute. But the Annamite did not want to wait and started to insult the young girl, which made the bell-boy, Alphonse Weigel, to intervene and throw him out. [...] A fight broke out. While Weigel had Thien in a hold, his comrade Phung, who carried a revolver, shot three times and hit both the bell-boy and Thien.274

Although, Mononutu and the Indonesians succeeded in establishing contacts with the high echelons of Parisian society, they usually moved in the milieux of Parisian student life in the Quartier Latin.

![Map of Paris](image)

Figure 3.3: Map of Paris,
In blue: addresses of Indonesian students between 1922 and 1928.
In green: social spaces, such as Taverne Pascal and Les Deux Magots.
In red: political spaces, such as the location of the fête orientale artistique, and headquarters of the AECO.
Source: GoogleMaps ©2015 Google

The Quartier Latin attracted the Indonesians not only because it was near the university and provided cheap housing, but also because it was the epicentre of anticolonial and nationalist politics. Within 300 meters from Taverne Pascal and Hôtel Soufflot were located the Association des Étudiants Hindous de France, Association Mutuelle des Indochinois, the

274 “Deux étudiants annamites attaquent un garçon d’hôtel,” Les Annales Coloniales, December 5, 1927, 2; my translation, original in the appendix.
Khana Ratsadon/Thai People’s Party, the Association des Étudiants Chinois and the leftist faction of the Chinese Guomindang nationalists. Some of these addresses were no more than post box offices or operated under the guise of a Chinese restaurant, but sometimes they functioned as the official Parisian seat of an organisation of millions. Often, these office buildings sheltered several organisations at the same time, providing ample opportunity for cooperation and cross-fertilisation between the different nationalities and political groups.

Where to find a network
This was the environment in which Mononutu arrived. Upon departure, Mononutu had notified his parents and the administrative supervisors that he wanted to study at the prestigious Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris, but in reality he never enrolled. Instead, he began to approach prominent periodicals and political societies. Initially, Mononutu was not too particular in the political environments he explored. According to a Sûreté report he even frequented meetings of the fascist organisation Faisceau and the ultra-right royalist Action Française. One should bear in mind that the political right in this period was just as active in the universities and on the streets as the organisations on the left, and often dominated the headlines. Student brawls and street fights between the rightist Camelots du Roi and republican student organisations were frequent.

Nevertheless, in general Mononutu was most interested in anticolonial forces. In a letter to his friend and fellow student in the Netherlands, Abdulmadjid Djojoadiningrat, he wrote that in the first months of his stay he had arranged meetings with several activists and academics. One of them, for example, was an Indian nationalist from the Portuguese enclave of Goa, who had lived in Paris for 10 years: the aforementioned Tristão de Bragança Cunha. This 35-year old man studied electrical engineering at the Sorbonne University, but gained prominence as a correspondent for various Indian journals and writer of a biography of Gandhi. In the French press he campaigned for the Indian independence movement in general, and the liberation of the Portuguese enclave in particular. He published in various

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275 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350.
276 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350.
277 Arch. de la Préfecture de Police de Paris (APPP), Sous-série BA, BA 2134, Étudiants, Manifestations, partis, ligues, unions, groups etc. 1926-1943.
278 NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Cb.
280 In 1928, Cunha would establish the first secessionist party of Goa, the Goa National Congress, which received recognition and representation in the All-India Congress Committee. “Le rôle des étudiants dans les
journals such as the leftist antimilitarist *Le Clarté* founded by Henri Barbusse, and the liberal journal *L’Europe Nouvelle* of Louise Weiss, which was dedicated to the advancement of peaceful international diplomatic relations in Europe and the League of Nations.  

On invitation of Mononutu, Cunha wrote an article for *Indonesie Merdeka* on the role of students in the struggle for national independence. According to Cunha, young intellectuals such as Mononutu had to take the lead in educating, organising and radicalising the most exploited colonised classes towards “the ultimate battle ahead”. Because these intellectuals were raised in the ideology and convictions of the oppressors, they knew exactly how to counter their arguments and tactics. Cunha sharply attacked “this colonial” Noto Soeroto, who had agitated in a Parisian journal against the inclination of nationalists to frame the colonial question in a racial binary. In a Fanonian manner, Cunha lamented: “It seems that [the writer] forgot that this conflict already manifests itself in the form of misery, caused by famine, massacres, and the worst cruelties and humiliations, inflicted upon the indigenous colonised populations by the ones to whom [Noto Soeroto] addresses this mellifluous sermon.”

**Communist attraction**

In the same letter to Abdulmadjid Djojoadhiningrat, Mononutu wrote that he also sought contact with communist circles, especially with anticolonial activists around the propagandistic journal *Le Paria, Tribune des Populations des Colonies*, and with editors of the large communist daily *L’Humanité*. In the first half of the 1920s, the communists exerted great attraction on colonial activists in the metropole. In line with directives issued by the Second World Congress of the Comintern of August 1920, the newly established Parti Communiste Française (‘French Communist Party’, PCF) initiated the formation of a number of organisations and structures for anticolonial propaganda in France. In 1921 a special research and training institute was established, the Comité d’Études Coloniales, that was

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284 NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Cb.
285 The Comintern directives were based on the adoption of Lenin’s ‘21 principles’, in which the forging of a united front between revolutionaries and nationalists in the colonies was proclaimed, especially in article 8. For the PCF: Philippe Dewitte, *Les mouvements nègres en France 1919-1939* (Paris: Harmattan, 1985), 96.
designed to bring communists from the metropole and the colonies together to reflect on the colonial question and to coordinate anticolonial activities. Another organisation, the Union Intercoloniale, served as a mass organisation that campaigned for complete and immediate independence for the colonies, and had to demonstrate that the PCF was the only political party that consistently chose the side of the oppressed colonies.286

And they succeeded in doing this. Although the direct outreach of the Union Intercoloniale and *Le Paria* was limited in terms of membership and print numbers, these structures provided an important platform for anticolonial activists from different parts of the empire to make common cause against French imperialism.287 Already during its existence, the group attained prominence as it brought together a wide range of young activists from several colonies, such as the Guadeloupean lawyer Max Clainville Bloncourt, the war veterans Abdelkader Hadj Ali from Algeria, Lamine Senghor from French West Africa and the young Vietnamese organiser Nguyen Ai Quoc, who would become better known as Ho Chi Minh. The latter was also one of the founding members and driving forces of *Le Paria*.288

In his letters home Mononutu does mention “a revolutionary nationalist Annamite” within the editing board of *Le Paria* with whom he was in contact, but he did not meet Ho Chi Minh in this period. The latter had left Paris at the end of 1923, two years before the arrival of Mononutu. Most likely, Mononutu was referring to the Vietnamese communist Nguyen The Truyen, from the Northern area of Tonkin, who had come to Paris in the early 1920s and soon became editor of *Le Paria*.289

Figures such as Ho Chi Minh and Lamine Senghor would acquire prominence later, as worldwide protagonists of the struggle against colonialism and imperialism. However, this group was already the intellectual point of gravity of a wider circle of better and less known activists, writers and intellectuals in colonial Paris; communists as well as non-communists.290 *Le Paria* and the PCF were on the forefront of agitation against French

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287 Dewitte, *Les mouvements nègres en France*, 98-101; Derrick, *Africa’s ‘Agitators’*, 130. The Union Intercoloniale started with 200 members, and *Le Paria* distributed 3000 copies in France and the colonies; only a fraction of the more than 200,000 copies of *l’Humanité*.
colonial actions, such as the military intervention in 1924 in the Rif War between Spain and Moroccan Berbers, and the Great Syrian Revolt of 1925. Both insurrections had also attracted attention in *Indonesia Merdeka*, and the Indonesian journal had even published an open letter of the Riffian military leader and “Provisional Regent of the Rif-Republic” Abd el-Krim.\(^{291}\) It is not surprising that Mononutu expected an interested and militant audience for the Indonesian cause in the Parisian communist sphere.

Nonetheless, Mononutu’s attempts to get the PI manifesto published in *Le Paria* and *l’Humanité* were unsuccessful. In fact, Mononutu’s arrival in Paris at the end of 1925 was too late to profit from the upsurge in colonial work within *Le Paria* and the Union Intercoloniale. Actually, both structures were about to fall apart. Although the anticolonial efforts of the PCF around the Rif War and the Great Syrian Revolt seemed to be resolute and self-confident, there were internal debates within the ranks of anticolonial activists over the precise tasks and priorities of the PCF and its satellites regarding the colonies. While anticolonial campaigns were in full swing, disappointment grew among prominent figures such as Ho Chi Minh and Lamine Senghor over persistent prejudices in both the rank and file and the leadership of the PCF regarding the capability of ‘indigènes’ to conduct serious anticapitalist politics.\(^{292}\) Many leading communists were of the conviction that revolution would start in the industrialised West, and that anticolonial politics had to support the European parties by weakening Western capitalism overseas. As the Guadeloupean Max Clainville Bloncourt put it:

> Brothers of the colonies, it is indispensable that you take account of the fact that it there is no other solution than the conquest of political power in Europe by the labouring masses.\(^{293}\)

This prioritisation of Western anticapitalism over national independence in the colonies put a different complexion to the support for the Rif Republic and anticolonial politics in general. The massive support of the PCF for the “feudal and religious adventurer” Abd el-Krim in fact served the interest of campaigning in France against the more moderate socialists in the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (‘French Section of the Workers’

\(^{291}\) Abdul Karim, “Een boodschap aan Latijnsch Amerika,” *Indonesia Merdeka* 3.6-7 (Augustus-September 1925): 82-84; “Ginds…,” *Indonesia Merdeka* 3.6-7 (Augustus-September 1925): 85-89.


International’, SFIO). Comparably, the candidacy in French municipal elections of people such as Lamine Senghor and Abdelkader Hadj Ali was primarily to provide the PCF with an anticolonial image vis-à-vis the socialist SFIO and other ‘bourgeois’ parties. Both the Rif-campaign and the candidacies of Senghor and Hadj Ali were failures in terms of turnout and votes, but this was less of a problem for the PCF, which had already established its anticolonial image as against the SFIO, than to the anticolonial activists themselves who found themselves in an ineligible position.

Therefore, right around the time that Mononutu tried to arrange a meeting with editors of Le Paria, some prominent anticolonial organisers began to leave the Union Intercoloniale and to build structures along geographical lines. In 1926, Lamine Senghor initiated the foundation of the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre that had a Pan-African outlook, while Messali Hadj and Abdelkader Hadj Ali established the Étoile Nord-Africaine and Nguyen The Truyen started the Parti Annamite de l’Indépendance. The establishment of these organisations was not so much a break with communism or the PCF as such. These organisations, which were explicitly promoted in the last issue of Le Paria, continued to receive money and aid from the PCF. Rather, their foundation was an attempt to prioritise first and foremost anticolonial concerns, to work more independently from the directives of the party, and to attract cooperation with non-communist colonials in France.

An important implication of this regionalisation of the anticolonial struggle was that, although these organisations continued to stress the importance of intercolonial solidarity, for instance in the opposition to the deployment of foreign colonial tirailleurs in other continents, they started to turn their focus to a specific political hinterland. Lamine Senghor and the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre concentrated on uniting all black peoples in Africa and across the Atlantic, while the Étoile Nord-Africaine naturally focussed its attention on the Maghreb and the Islamic world. Students from French Indochina, to conclude with, increasingly placed their work in a Pan-Asian framework, in which events in British India and China took a central position. It seems that Mononutu and the Indonesians were specifically drawn in this Pan-Asian orbit.

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297 Derrick, Africa’s ‘Agitators’, 166; “L’Union Intercoloniale,” Le Paria, April 1926.

Mononutu’s implicit ‘choice’ for the Asian environment was also reinforced by the academic character of his Parisian political journey. Not all anticolonial activists were alike. While the Algerian and African activists were predominantly of a proletarian background and focused on Algerian workers communities in the outskirts of Paris and on African colonial soldiers in the French-occupied Rhineland, the social life of the Vietnamese and Cambodian activists was largely centred around the Quartier Latin and the universities. Among the 55 Algerian nationalist leaders there were only eight intellectuals, while in contrast, the manual worker Ho Chi Minh was an exception to the rule that most of the Indochinese political activists in interwar France were students or academics. Mononutu started seeking for political support among communist proletarian circles, but soon, his journey took on an academic and elitist edge.

**Civilisations Orientales**

An important organisation in which Mononutu got involved, an engagement of which he and his fellow Indonesians were particularly proud, was the Association pour l’Étude des Civilisations Orientales (‘Association for the Study of Oriental Civilisations’, AECO). This association, in which Mononutu took a board position, was established in the spring of 1925, and was a continuation of a previous collaboration of anti-imperialists from different colonial backgrounds. It had as its objective to bring students and intellectuals from various colonies in the ‘Orient’ together, to acquaint them with each other’s cultures, and to introduce this wealth of civilisations to the Western public through history, art and cultural performances.

The initiative seemed to have derived from a visiting professor from the University of Beijing, Tjeng Yin Chang, and a communist Chinese worker-student in Paris, Xia Ting. Hence, the association’s secretariat was located at the office of the Association des Étudiants Chinois and a number of other competing Chinese nationalist student groups. However, the AECO was successful in attracting a wide range of students, academics and activists from a

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302 According to a report of the Sureté Générale ‘Ting-Chao Tsin’ runned the secretariat, which was at 41, Rue des Ecoles, Paris V. I assume that this is the same person as Xia Ting: NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350; Levine and Chen San-ching, *The Guomindang in Europe*, 117, 133-134, 155.
number of countries in Asia; from Syria to Japan, and from Russia to the Dutch Indies. British, French and Dutch secret services were worried that the organisation was being infiltrated by communists and other subversive forces, but this seems to have been overly anxious. Although some of the members of AECO had a clear communist profile, such as Xia Ting who according to Levine belonged to the ‘extremist’ communist faction of the Guomindang in Paris, a closer look at the people involved makes clear that the association comprised a variety of ideologies and world views, and had a rather culturalist and academic character.

The 67-year old Alimardan Bey Topchubachev, for instance, was an Azeri exile living in Paris. He was already politically active in 1905, as one of the leaders of the Ittifagi-Muslimin (‘Union of Muslims’), and was in 1918 one of the founders of the independent Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. He was sent to Paris in December of that same year to lobby for international recognition of his country at the Peace Conference in Versailles. He succeeded in this, but as in the meantime the new Republic was taken over by Bolshevik groups, Topchubachev could not return. As an exile in Paris, he established the Association Émigrante Azerbaïdjanaise and he continued his political struggle for liberation and independence for Azerbaijan. Politically, Topchubachev was far from a Bolshevik, which to him as an Azeri nationalist represented oppression rather than liberation. At a conference in June 1927 with Caucasian migrant groups and many dignitaries from the French governmental, military and business elite, he expressed gratitude to the French people and its state officials, because they had always supported the Caucasian peoples “from the start of the invasion and violent occupation of our countries by the Bolshevik Russian hordes”. He added: “our eyes are fixed on [...] this beautiful France [...] where the entire human race

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303 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350; Apart from the two Chinese members, national representatives included: Georges Margouliès (Russia), Alimardan Bey Topchubachev (Azerbaijan), unknown (Armenia), Nimbousheff Darja (Kalmyks), Hakopian (Persia), Henri Abel Kouchakji (Syria), Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, Mukerjee, Chatterjee (British India), Ting Chao Tsing, Tung Meau (China), Li Tsing Sie (Korea), Narita Shigeo (Japan), Prince Areno Yukanthor (French Indochina), Duong Van Giao (French Indochina), Bui Quang-Chiêu (Cochin China) and Arnold Mononutu (Dutch Indies).

304 Marilyn Levine, The Found Generation: Chinese Communists in Europe during the Twenties (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 195. Other members who were under suspicion were Hakopian and Margouliès, primarily because of their nationality. The former was an Armenian from the Caucasus area, and the other was born in Odessa: APPP, Assoc., inv. nr. 643; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 283, 13 September 1926 H14; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Cb; NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350; NL-HaNA, Commissariaat Indische Zaken, 2.10.49, inv. nr. 2692.

finds the germs of the most noble ideas, which are in line with the dignity of individuals and the sanity of the collective.”

Prabodh Chandra Bagchi was of another political type. This Indian student was at 28 years old around the same age as Mononutu, and according to the British secret service a great friend of his. He was a young academic professional, and had already made significant career steps before he arrived in Paris. He had been a promising student and a lecturer in Indian ancient and cultural history at the University of Calcutta, before he was recommended by the renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore to the French Indologist Sylvain Lévi. With the latter he embarked on a number of orientalist expeditions to Nepal, French Indochina and Japan, in the course of which he learned a handful of modern and ancient Asian languages. In this way he got acquainted with a wider circle of French Indologists and orientalists in Asia, and in 1923 he was offered a French government scholarship to start a doctoral research project at the Université de Paris.

Intelectually, Bagchi was indeed a heir of Tagore and Lévi. A year after the establishment of the AECO, Bagchi published two books – *Le Canon Bouddhique en Chine* and *India and China: a thousand years of cultural relations* – in which he unearthed deep cultural connections between India and China. With Lévi, Bagchi was convinced that ancient Indian history could only be interpreted in a broader Asian frame. Long before Europeans arrived on the subcontinent, there were cultural, religious and economic relations between India and ‘India Magna’: a vast cultural sphere that stretched from Central Asia via South Asia to China and Southeast Asia. This primordial Asian culture formed the substratum under the many temporal rulers and empires of Asia, and could be discerned by comparative research in philology, literature, architecture and cultural artefacts.

In itself, this reinterpretation of the value of Indian and Asian culture was conducted by orientalists within the high walls of the academia, but it also bore implicit political significance. The idea that the Indian subcontinent was in fact the cradle of Asian civilisation – from Central Asia, to China and Southeast Asia, and with Hindu-Buddhist structures such

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306 “Une manifestation Franco-Caucaso-Ukrainienne,” *Prométhée, Organe de Défense Nationale des Peuples du Caucase, de l’Ukraine et du Turkestan* 2 (June-July 1927): 10-14 : ”[N]os regards sont fixés avant tout sur ce magnifique pays, sur cette belle France […] où l’humanité tout entière trouva le germe des indées les plus nobles, les plus conformes à la dignité de l’individu et au salut de la collectivité!”


309 Bayly, “Imagining ‘Greater India’,” 715-718.
as the Borobudur and Angkor Wat as its most visible landmarks – provided ammunition for Indian nationalists and Pan-Asianists. They found evidence not only that Asia had been civilised before the era of colonial conquests, but also that its culture was still latently alive under the heel of colonisation, and only in need of revitalisation. That Bagchi was not a politically detached scholar but acutely aware of the political implications of his ideas, was illustrated by the fact that he was a prominent member of the Greater India Society and one of the founders of the Association des Étudiants Hindous de France. This latter organisation, with its office in the Quartier Latin, gave shelter to Indian political activists, and according to the British Secret Service was involved in seditious activities.

One of these activists may have been Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, another Indian youngster in the AECO. He had an academic background as well, and after his studies at Oxford University became a lecturer at the Aligarh University as a history professor. Judging from later publications, he shared the views on ‘Greater India’ of Lévi and Bagchi, stressing the spiritual unity of South and Southeast Asia. Apart from academic works, Panikkar also expressed his nationalist ideas as a journalist, writing for numerous journals and newspapers and in 1924 as the first editor of the nationalist journal *Hindustan Times*, a mouthpiece of the Indian National Congress. In 1925 he travelled to Europe for the second time and, in January 1926 he arrived in Paris as a journalist, earning a living by selling articles on Indian culture and politics to French newspapers. From the selected works of the nationalist leader Jawaharlal Nehru it appears that Panikkar was in close contact with the higher circles of the Indian National Congress, and wrote investigative articles on the initiative of the latter.

Two other politically active persons who might give an impression of the variety of people active in the AECO, were the Indochinese Bui Quang Chiêu and Duong Van Giao. They were both active in the Indochinese Parti Constitutioniste, the first as its founder and most important leader, the latter as its main propagandist in Paris. This organisation, established in 1917 as a pseudo-political interest group, drew its members mainly from the privileged indigenous classes, consisting of civil servants, students, merchants and capitalists, and landed elite. Bui Quang Chiêu himself, for example, was a French-educated agricultural engineer and son of Confucian notables in the Mekong Delta. These groups wanted a greater

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310 Fischer-Tiné and Stolte, “Imagining Asia in India,” 82-83.
311 British Library Archive (BLA), India Office Records: Public & Judicial Department (IOR/L/PJ), inv. nr. 219, Police reports on Indians and Afghans in Paris, 4 September 1924; Bayly, “Imagining ‘Greater India’,” 710. The office was at 7, Rue Sommerard.
share in the economic upsurge after the First World War, and campaigned against Chinese and French dominance in the trades. They argued for economic liberalisation and reforms, for better education, and above all for greater political freedom and representation guaranteed in a constitution.  

Politically, the Parti Constitutionaliste was a moderate reformist organisation, steering a middle course between conservative colons on the one hand, and those who rejected French colonial rule all together on the other. Its members were not anti-French or anticolonial per se. In their manifestos, they expressed loyalty to the colonial authorities, and put great trust in subsequent Governor Generals to reform. The implementation of ‘French’ values, such as equality and economic liberty, was even at the basis of their demands. An affiliated journal wrote, for example: “We will […] attempt to promote the diffusion of French ideas among the educated elements of the Annamite population.”

However, despite promises from various new Governors, substantial reforms in the course of the 1920s failed to take place with French conservatives controlling the colonial government. Therefore, when the socialist Governor Alexandre Varenne assumed office in 1925, the Constitutionalists saw the chance to demand reforms and step up their activities. At the end of 1925 Bui Quang Chiêu decided to go to Paris to join forces with Duong Van Giao in an attempt to convince the government in Paris of the desirability of reforms.

Duong Van Giao, who was married to a French woman and was “lean and tall, and with a peaceful personality”, had come to Paris immediately after the First World War, to become a law student. In 1922 he received a doctors degree with distinction at the newly established Institut de Criminologie de Paris, and subsequently, he became an advocate at the Cour d’Appel de Paris, the highest appeal court in France. In the meantime, he was a professor at the École des Langues Orientales and helped to establish various semi-political self-help organisations for Indochinese in Paris, such as the Association Mutuelle des

Indochinois, the Association des Travailleurs Intellectuels d'Indochine, and the Parisian branch of the Parti Constitutionnaliste.320

In 1925 and 1926, Duong Van Giao and Bui Quang Chiêu, sometimes in cooperation with more radical activists such as the aforementioned communist Nguyen The Truyen of the Parti Annamite de l’Indépendance but usually with a moderate and Francophile undertone, urged for a realisation of the promises made.321 In public meetings with up to 800 participants, they called upon the French authorities to give the Indochinese intellectual, political and economic elite a share in the administration of the colony, to expand public education, and to guarantee political liberties in a constitution.322 Ignoring the call of these elites, they warned, would only play into the hands of radicals and revolutionaries.323

Diffuse Asianism, regional nationalism

There were more remarkable figures among the members of the Association pour l’Étude des Civilisations Orientales, such as the Siamese student Prayun Phamonmontri, who was among the founding students of the Khana Ratsadon/Thai People’s Party in Paris in 1927, that would undertake a coup against the absolutist Thai monarchy in 1932; or the Cambodian prince Areno Yukanthor, who had forfeited his rights to become monarch of Cambodia when he expressed critique of the corrupted Francophile elite of Cambodia. These biographies only undergird the impression that the AECO was an organisation of various colonial elites from Asia, with a strong leg in orientalist cultural studies and closely associated with French governmental circles and higher echelons of the French society. Politically, the character of the AECO is less unequivocal, with anti-Bolshevik and Francophile elements existing next to moderate nationalist demands, ‘extremist’ Chinese nationalists, and possibly more radical culturalist Pan-Asian theories. Only a diffuse sense of cultural pride and a general wish for more autonomy for Asian countries bound the members of the AECO together. The purpose of the AECO, therefore, must not be sought in the advancement of a direct and coherent

323 “La colonisation et la paix internationale,” L’Echo Annamite, July 1, 1926, 1; Duiker, The Rise of Nationalism in Vietnam, 147.
political program, but rather as an attempt to make the various Asian voices heard in the French capital.

The day-to-day activities of the AECO were not very clear. Its members often came together in the Chinese students’ secretariat, and met each other at public lectures on Asian and colonial affairs, where they tried to balance what they considered as false propaganda by colonial advocates. According to Panikkar, the most active members, among whom was most certainly Mononutu, gathered every evening in “the Domago coffee house” to exchange ideas and news from the Far East.\(^{324}\) This coffee house was perhaps Café Les Deux Magots, a famous and very popular bar in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés area, that also attracted the literary and Surrealist art scene of the moment in Paris. Another restaurant that repeatedly comes up in the sources was the aforementioned Chinese restaurant Wan Houa Wsieou Leou, better known under its old name Taverne Pascal.

To Mononutu, who became a member of the Executive Committee of the AECO, the political relevance of the organisation for the Indonesian struggle was clear and concrete. First of all, it provided the opportunity for him and the PI to meet anticolonial activists and to establish connections with foreign political movements. Several of the members of AECO were invited by the Perhimpoenan Indonesia and the Chung Hwa Hui, to give lectures in the Netherlands for the Indonesian and peranakan Chinese members. On 6 June 1926, Panikkar lectured at the general meeting of the PI in Leiden about “the necessity of Asiatic unity”. He stayed a month in the house of Hatta to work on a historical publication on the VOC in South Asia.\(^{325}\) Two months later, Duong Van Giao and a certain Tung Meau visited the Netherlands on the invitation of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia to talk about the national movements in their respective countries.\(^{326}\)

Secondly, it provided the Indonesian nationalists with an important platform to present their national claims to an international public. On 12 February 1926, the AECO organised a fête orientale artistique. It was held in one of the largest and most expensive hotels in Paris, the Hôtel Continental along the Tuileries Gardens, the chandeliers and ballrooms of which radiated true Parisian grandeur. The evening was hosted by the French poetess and novelist Madame Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, and there were various Asian dance


\(^{326}\) NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Ca; IISH, Archief Chung Hwa Hui, inv. nr. 12, letter by Tung Meau from Paris to the CHH, 9 August 1926.
performances, a serpent charmer, a tombola and a ball.\textsuperscript{327} Nervously and with high expectations Mononutu sent a letter to the PI board in which he urged coming with an important delegation of students and the best student dancers in the Netherlands, Ngabéhi Poerbotjoroko, Wirjono Prodjidikoro and Soepomo. “In all circles the highest hopes are for the Javanese dance. In the programmes and in the advertisements it is ranked among the artistically most interesting pieces”, he wrote.\textsuperscript{328} To the accompaniment of a violin and a piano, these Indonesian delegation performed a Javanese Wirèng dance. According to \textit{Indonesia Merdeka}, this was a great success. “Up to three times our dancers were asked to come to take a bow. Words as excellent, marvellous, formidable and unforgettable were attributed to them.”\textsuperscript{329}

It is remarkable that the Indonesians, probably for lack of ‘Indonesian’ symbols, used a traditional dance from the Central Javanese courts to support political nationalist claims. They clearly saw the cultural performance as a political event, and they were keen on leaving a good impression. Preceding the festivities, Mononutu wrote to a fellow student: “…much of our prestige, our national art prestige depends on it. It is not only the dance. Most important is the name of Indonesia. […] Don’t you understand the propagandistic value, when Indonesia as a nationality would make a good impression, on a par with the most notable countries of the East?”\textsuperscript{330} After the event of 12 February, the editors of \textit{Indonesia Merdeka} commented:

The favourable impression, that was left behind by our Indonesian art on the Parisian public, will necessarily evoke more interest in our country. Their eyes will open up and see, that somewhere in the Pacific there exists an archipelago, named Indonesia, the population of which fights for freedom from foreign rule. They will come to the conclusion that a people with such a highly developed artistic performance, as the one they had just seen, is not doomed to live under the heel of a foreign oppressor forever, and that such a people will have the power to throw off its foreign yoke.\textsuperscript{331}

By drawing attention to the rich Indonesian culture, the students in the PI hoped that the world opinion would become more favourable and less ignorant towards the Indonesian national claims, and that this would put pressure on the Dutch colonial government. “The so-

\textsuperscript{327} “Informations littéraires,” \textit{L’Europe Nouvelle}, February 20, 1926, 246; NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350, Vreede of the \textit{Centre d’Études Franco-Hollandaises}, 10 April 1927.
\textsuperscript{328} NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Ac.
\textsuperscript{329} “Indonesië op het Fête Orientale,” \textit{Indonesia Merdeka} 4.2 (March 1926): 18.
\textsuperscript{330} NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Ch.
\textsuperscript{331} “Indonesië op het Fête Orientale,” \textit{Indonesia Merdeka} 4.2 (March 1926): 18-19; my translation, original in the appendix.
called civilising project of the Dutch colonisers, of which until now nothing but positive is trumpeted abroad through one-sided and tendentious information, will be revealed in its true character.” 332 As such, the political significance of the AECO for the Indonesians was mainly drawn from the prestigious stage it provided to make a public statement against the Dutch colonial regime.

In April 1926, the cultural performance was repeated on a smaller scale, on special invitation of the exclusive cultural political Société des Amis de l’Orient, the Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet and the Conservatoire de Paris. Again, the oriental performances drew many high ranking officials and prominent personalities.333 This time, the Indonesians managed to arrange a traditional Javanese gamelan set from the conservatory depots by mediation of a certain Germaine Merlange, who organised musical performances for the Guimet Museum. In later interviews and in the authorised biography of Mononutu it is suggested that the two engaged in an amorous relationship. Nalenan even mentions that they got engaged.334 Although it never came to a marriage, this story is not unlikely as love relations often occurred between Asian students and European women.335 Moreover, one of the Indonesian attendants Soepardi wrote to a friend in the Netherlands that Merlange felt attracted to the Indonesian students. She reportedly had said: “Vous Indonésiens, vous devenez dangereux pour les Parisiennes!”336 More importantly, it is likely that Merlange, around 25 years old and educated in Paris and Oxford, played an important role in assisting Mononutu in his political work. Panikkar mentions Merlange in his autobiography as someone with a large network in journalistic, artistic and political circles: “By looks, birth and education Germaine had the entry to any society in Paris”. She provided Panikkar with contacts with French literary figures, prominent journals, and translators, and she saw it as her job “to make things easier for visitors from the Orient”.337

332 “Indonesië op het Fête Orientale,” Indonesia Merdeka 4.2 (March 1926): 19; see also “Indonesia te Parijs,” Indonesia Merdeka 4.3-4 (June-July 1926): 33.
333 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350, Vreede of the Centre d’Études Franco-Hollandaises, 10 April 1927; NL-HaNA, Kolonië / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Ac; Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 61-63.
335 Goebel, Anti-Imperial Metropolis, 97; Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:191, 224.
336 NL-HaNA, Kolonië / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Ac: “You Indonesians, you become dangerous for the Parisiennes!”.
Bierville

At one of the evenings in Café Les Deux Magots, Duong Van Giao announced that friends of his were involved in the organisation of an international pacifist conference in Bierville, a small village 120 kilometres Northwest of Paris. This Congrès Démocratique International pour la Paix – mentioned in the introduction – took place from 14 August until 23 August 1926, and was organised as an annual event by the Ligue de la Jeune-République. This small progressive catholic party under the leadership of Marc Sangnier, was a strong proponent of official diplomatic efforts to advance peace through the League of Nations and the Locarno Treaties of 1925.338 Despite the international pretensions the focus of the conference was on Europe, and in particular the promotion of Franco-German reconciliation. Therefore, Duong Van Giao proposed to the AECO members that they register as a group and raise the question of colonialism and peace outside Europe, in particular in Asia. They agreed and sent an invitation request to Marc Sangnier, which he accepted.339

Mononutu himself was unable to attend, because, just as the year before, he went to the annual summer school at the Peace Palace in The Hague. Instead the Perhimpoenan Indonesia decided to send its chair Mohammad Hatta as a representative of the Indonesian youth. Hatta arrived in Paris at the end of July and was introduced by Mononutu to Topchubachev, Tung Meau, Panikkar and Duong Van Giao. In preparatory meetings they agreed upon forming an ‘Asian bloc’ and writing a joint manifesto, which Panikkar would present on behalf of the others.340

The conference in Bierville was quite successful in attracting foreign delegations. 5000 visitors from 33, mostly European countries were present, among whom were more than 900 German ‘Peace Pilgrims’. Moreover, it enjoyed patronage from high-level French politicians and even from the French foreign minister Aristide Briand.341 For 10 days Bierville, a village of around 100 inhabitants, was inundated with visitors. They were accommodated in three large campsites, one for men, one for women and one for the clerics, in large army tents provided, ironically for a pacifist event, by the French Ministry of War. Also remarkable were the many religious symbols and the jamboree-like atmosphere in which the conference was held, with a large pine wooden crucifix from German Schwarzwald planted in French soil and with Wandervogels and boy scouts as volunteers. Although Hatta in his memoirs complained about the accommodation, sleeping on a stretcher of 75

338 Barry, The Disarmament of Hatred, 125-128.
339 Hatta, Memoir, 200.
340 Hatta, Memoir, 200-201.
341 Barry, The Disarmament of Hatred, 129.
centimetres in width and a meter away from his neighbour, he was delighted with this first experience of an international conference.\textsuperscript{342}

On the seventh day of the ten-day conference, Panikkar gave the speech on behalf of the Asian bloc in which he stressed that the conference until then had been too Eurocentric, and too much focused on the complex balance of powers on the European continent.\textsuperscript{343} Actually, the Asian delegation remarked, the most dangerous tensions were to be expected in the colonised world. Wars and conflicts in the Hejaz and China easily drew European powers into conflict and spurred rivalry among them. Moreover, the apparent peace in overseas areas, such as British India, was deceptive, because it was only enforced by colonial repression, and instilled hatred in the hearts of the colonised peoples. This hatred would sooner or later burst out, with severe consequences for peace and stability in the wider world. As an Indian nationalist, Panikkar emphasised the importance of the future of British India, which would both determine the future of Asia as a whole, and the future of the British empire and imperialism in general. War in India would have major consequences for pacifists in the West. Conversely, peace and freedom for the Indian people would unleash the “Asian spirit of Ahimsa and non-violence” rooted in ancient Buddhist traditions: “The spirit of Asia is essentially pacifist. In India we have rediscovered – after many centuries – the great doctrine of Ahimsa or non-violence of which Mahatma Gandhi is the Apostle.[…] Help to liberate that spirit and you would have achieved your object.”\textsuperscript{344} To conclude, the Asian delegation through Panikkar brought in two resolutions; one underlining the right to self-determination for all nations – also the non-European ones, the other confirming that universal peace was only possible with the liberation of the suppressed peoples of the East. In this resolution the delegations promised to work in the respective countries for the liberation of the latter.\textsuperscript{345} Both resolutions were carried by acclamation.

Hatta’s speech, which he held the next day, on 21 August, was designed along the same lines as the common statement of the Asian bloc, although with some Indonesian accents. He sketched the contours of the Indonesian archipelago island by island, and described the recent political history of the nationalist movement. Just like Panikkar did with regard to the Indian people, Hatta stressed the peaceful character of the Indonesians, but he ended his statement in a more militant tone. He described the process of radicalisation of

\textsuperscript{342} Hatta, \textit{Memoir}, 201.
\textsuperscript{343} Panikkar, \textit{An Autobiography}, 64.
Indonesian youth, that had put great trust in the benevolence of the Dutch rulers, but was heavily disappointed by the undelivered promises of democratisation. Instead, Hatta argued, a new reactionary wind blew through the colony with strict censorship, no freedom of assembly, association or strike, and unfavourable employment laws. As a reaction, parts of the movement for national independence had grown more militant. In a way, Hatta turned the words of Panikkar around and ended with the baleful warning: “où il n’y a pas de justice, il n’y a pas de paix”. Peaceful movements could become violent if the European powers did not abolish colonial rule.346

The other Asian delegates Tung Meau, Topchubachev and Duong Van Giao held speeches as well, the latter repeating the words of Panikkar stating that it was the task of all pacifists to let freedom and justice reign in the whole world, without regard to nations or races. In general, the members of the Asian bloc were greatly satisfied with their appearance at the congress. Looking back on the event in Indonesia Merdeka, Hatta wrote: “For the first time the Western pacifists saw Asia being represented at their congress. And for the first time they heard Asia’s voice, which declared in clear language that no lasting peace is possible as long as the oppressed peoples are not free of the foreign yoke”.347

Different timbres and diverging issues
The fact that the Asian delegations acted as a common front on the international scene was indeed one of the achievements of Bierville, and helped to put their message across. Nevertheless, within this Asian voice different timbres were discernible, that reflected the different political backgrounds of the Asian members. Although there is no evidence suggesting open disagreement, the different accents in the Asian contributions are revealing.

One of these diverging issues was the possibility of cooperation with European rule in the colonies and European countries in general. The 1925 board of Perhimpoenan Indonesia, the same board that had sent Mononutu to Paris and of which both Mononutu and Hatta were members, had as one of its principles that the colonial question was essentially an antagonism between the colonisers and the colonised. Injustice and underdevelopment in the Dutch Indies was not just a matter of mismanagement or bad policy by the colonial authorities, but an

346 Hatta, “Manifest of the Asiatic Delegation at the Bierville Congres for Peace,” in Verspreide Geschriften, ed. Mononutu et al., 154-157; “Where there is no justice, there is no peace”; Hatta, Memoir, 201-202; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 310, 16 February 1928 A3, transcription interrogation Mohammad Hatta, 8 November 1927, p. 22.
347 “Onze buitenlandse propaganda,” Indonesia Merdeka 4.5-6 (October-November 1926): 70-71.
intrinsic element of colonialism itself.348 In the view of the activists of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia, self-help and autonomy, independent of Dutch benevolence, was the road to follow. Although the word ‘non-cooperation’ was not yet officially adopted by the Indonesian students in the Netherlands by 1926, they had lost hope in the Dutch authorities, and followed the Indian movement for independence with great interest. Already in 1924 a four-page article appeared in *Indonesia Merdeka*, in which Gandhi’s non-cooperation policy was described as a powerful weapon for Indonesia as well.349

This hostile stance towards naive reliance on colonial powers was not shared by Duong Van Giao. As mentioned before, he was an active member of the Indochinese Parti Constitutionnaliste, which, as its name revealed, aimed at the extension of ‘French’ laws and rights to colonial lands. Duong Van Giao was a Francophile, and repeatedly expressed loyalty to the colonial authorities. In various meetings in Paris preceding the Bierville conference, he called upon the French government to live up to its promises and to include the Annamite elites more actively in the rule of the colony. In October 1925, for instance, the Parti Constitutionnaliste, with Bui Quang Chiêu and Duong Van Giao as its most honoured speakers, adopted a resolution stating:

The Assembly,
Considering that it is in the interest of France to exercise a liberal policy in Indochina to win the sympathy of 20 million natives;
Considering that despite [regrettable misunderstandings between the protectors and the protected], there exists a fraction among the Annamite elite which is sincerely in favour of a French-Annamite rapprochment for the benefit of both peoples;
Considering that the declarations of the new Governor Alexandre Varenne are in accordance with democratic principles;
Declares to have confidence in the Government and awaits its first actions in Indochina.350

This resolution was certainly not in accord with what the Indonesian students of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia propagated in their own situation, and although Duong Van Giao’s speech at the Bierville conference was less clear on the point of cooperation with the colonial government, he reinforced his loyalist stance with a recognition of the merits of the League of Nations and the praiseworthy efforts of the European powers to promote peace.

350 “La France devant le Pacifique,” *Les AnnalesColoniales*, October 23, 1925, 1; my translation, original in the appendix.
Another unresolved issue, closely connected to the former point, was the evaluation of the Locarno Treaties of 1925. Marc Sangnier and the Congrès Démocratique International pour la Paix in general were very positive about the new détente between the great powers on the European continent, especially about the French-German attempts of reconciliation by Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann. The Locarno Treaties were to constitutionalise this rapprochement, and solve some of the problems that had emerged from the peace treaties of 1919. While Duong Van Giao in his speech praised the developments in Locarno, and expressed hope that its conclusions were extended to the wider world, Hatta did not even mention Locarno in his speech, perhaps bearing in mind that Indonesia Merdeka roughly a year before had vehemently attacked the hypocrisy of the Treaties. While all Europe was praising this important step towards balance and reconciliation between the great powers in the name of peace, the French and Spaniards butchered the Moroccans, who were only longing for independence and prosperity, sneered Indonesia Merdeka. Was there one signatory of Locarno that defended the rights and struggle of the Egyptians, Chinese or black South Africans?351

A last difference of opinion worth mentioning, especially because it was the central theme of the Bierville conference, was the issue of peace itself. In Bierville, the question of peace and war was generally discussed as a matter between states and armies. The emphasis was on the importance of international diplomacy, on the proliferation of weapons and on the fraternisation between peoples. Social peace, or ‘internal’ peace between colonised and colonising peoples were not part of the content of the conference. In their contributions, the Asian delegations basically elevated the ‘internal’ struggle for independence within colonies to a matter of international importance between nations. As such, they interpreted the issue of peace in a much more political way than the other delegations. The question remained how peaceful this road towards peace was, when it concerned justice and liberation in the colonies.

With regard to this, it seems that Panikkar and Hatta had moderated their statements somewhat. In Bierville Panikkar, perhaps tempered by Duong Van Giao, stressed the peaceful character of the Asian peoples, influenced as they were by Buddhist culture. Supporting the Asian movements for independence thus implied supporting peace. Nevertheless, if we take into account an article he wrote for Indonesia Merdeka on invitation of the Indonesians, a much more activist approach comes to the fore. In this article on the

national movement in his fatherland, Panikkar refuted moderate and cooperative attitudes towards the English as impotent and naïve. “The guarantee against the repetition of incidents [such as the Massacre of Amritsar in 1919, when English troops opened fire on peaceful protesters] lay[s] not so much in parliamentary acts as in the power of the people to enforce respect. It was with this that the non-cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi was started”. He continued: “While the moderates are constitutionalists believing only in the parliamentary action, the nationalists believe also in direct mass action, either by civil disobedience or by passive resistance as a means of enforcing national demands.”

It is unknown how the constitutionalist Duong Van Giao reacted to such attacks on parliamentary action, but the Indonesians, under the leadership of Hatta in this period, fully agreed with this statement. They added:

> Who has taken the article of K.M. Panikkar to heart, will not discover mere passivity in Mahatma Gandhi’s non-cooperation without violence, but a great revolutionary spirit. [...] Superficial readings of Gandhi have put too much emphasis on passivity, which in essence is only a preliminary action, and they overlook the fact that when Gandhi considers that the time has come he does not reject violence as well.

**Performing Indonesia**

Given these different analyses and the various backgrounds of the Asian students with which Mononutu and Hatta got involved, it seems that the work of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia in the context of the AECO, the Congrès Démocratique International in Bierville, and the political scene of Paris in general was not for the purpose of merging agendas or producing coherent political content with other Asian groups or European pacifists. Although these contacts with Asian activists, with new political views and backed by powerful international movements, most certainly informed and inspired the thinking of Indonesian students in the Netherlands, they chose not to be too rigid and principled in finding allies and friends abroad. Differences of opinion with for example Duong Van Giao – whose views were quite comparable to the ideas of Noto Soeroto at the time he was banned from the Perhimpoenan Indonesia by Mononutu himself – were not stirred up, and although these issues most certainly have caused heated debates in the Parisian cafès, they were not fought out in public.

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353 K.M. Panikkar, “The National Movement in India,” *Indonesia Merdeka* 4.1 (February 1926): 6; See also Mohammad Hatta, “Non-cooperation,” *Indonesia Merdeka* 8.4 (July 1930): 61-64; my translation, original emphasis; original in the appendix.
As such, it seems that in these first years of Indonesian activities abroad the forging of a common Asian front against Western colonialism was more a performative action than an instance of concrete collaboration or alignment on the basis of shared political principles.

Comparably, the presence at the pacifist conference in Bierville should not be interpreted as a demonstration of pacifist ideals. As mentioned in the introduction, Hatta even felt the need to remark that: “we did not take part in the Congrès Démocratique International in Bierville, because we endorse the insufficient methods of the Western democrats to realise universal peace, and discard our revolutionary principle based on [an interpretation of international relations as an] antagonism of powers. No!” Instead, the Indonesians attached a high value to the performative function of being present abroad. In *Indonesia Merdeka* it was acknowledged that the international community only recognised new nations if they publicly demonstrated a serious desire to self-determination. “We have to avoid ignorance about our national claims leading to the impression that Indonesia does not possess the desire to become free. Our people has demonstrated this desire persistently over the last 10 years. It is our task to point out this fact to the international public.” Therefore, when Hatta gave his speech before the international audience in Bierville, he solemnly stated in a manner reverberating the voluntarism of Ernest Renan: “Pour qu’une nation soit libre, il suffit qu’elle le veuille. Cette volonté qu’exprime aujourd’hui le peuple indonésien, est une étape importante pour la paix universelle.” The fact that the name ‘Indonesia’, adopted in 1922 by the activists to describe their joint country of origin, was officially recognised by an international congress was deemed the most important result for the Indonesians on the international stage.

**Surveillance and repression**

With regard to the activities of Mononutu, Hatta and the others in Paris, there is one aspect that has not yet been addressed. While the Indonesians extended their field of activity to the wider European sphere, the Dutch structures of surveillance and intelligence internationalised as well. Parallel – but with an inevitable delay – to the gradual integration of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia in anticolonial circles in Paris, the Dutch Raadsman voor Studeerenden Westenenk, who was appointed to keep an eye on the Indonesian students in

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356 Hatta, “Onze buitenlandse propaganda,” in *Verspreide Geschriften*, ed. Mononutu et al., 155: “For a nation to be free, desire is enough. This desire, which the Indonesian people expresses here today, is an important step for universal peace.”
the Netherlands, was increasingly concerned over possible seditious activities beyond his control and he tried to extend his influence to Paris and other foreign anticolonial centres. As soon as the Indonesian participants at the second cultural performance in the Guimet Museum in April 1926 returned home, the bursary students among them were summoned to the office of the Raadsman to account for the “anti-Dutch propaganda” they had produced.\footnote{Hatta, “Onze buitenlandse propaganda,” in Verspreide Geschriften, ed. Mononutu et al., 147.}

Not all students were equally accountable to the Raadsman voor Studeerenden. From his point of view, the Indonesian students in the Netherlands fell into three categories. A first group studied with a grant of the colonial government, and fell under direct supervision of the Raadsman. These students, mostly medical students, were invited to a yearly interview in which their study progress and their general behaviour were discussed. A second group received a study grant or loan from a private scholarship fund, such as the Tjandi Stichting or the Nederlands-Indische Onderwijs- en Studiekas. Officially, this group had no relation with the Raadsman, but because the latter was a board member and government representative in the platform uniting all private study funds, the Vereeniging Oost en West, he had access to the files of these students. In this position he could still put pressure on these students or on the funding organisations in case of undesirable behaviour.\footnote{Poeze, In het land van de overheerser, 1:143, 223.} A third and last group came to the Netherlands fully funded by their parents and relatives. In principle, this group was unaccountable to the Raadsman voor Studeerenden or other authorities. But in this case, he could pressurise the fathers of the students, many of whom were employed within the colonial administration. Moreover, to many of the students a career in a colonial state institution was an important prospect. Thus, a good impression on the Raadsman, who was under the direct authority of the Ministry of Colonies, was of great importance.\footnote{NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 291, 8 March 1927 G4; NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 296, 28 June 1927 M10.}

Mononutu belonged to the last category of students, and during his stay in Paris he found out that he was not invulnerable to the Raadsman’s powerful position. In the first months of his stay in Paris, Mononutu lived under the radar of the supervising institutions. He was financially independent, receiving 300 guilders on a monthly basis from his father in Manado. It consumed nearly a third of his father’s salary, but for Mononutu it was enough money to get by in Europe.\footnote{Nalenan, Arnold Mononutu, 31.} Furthermore, to bear part of additional expenses from travelling to Paris he received a modest sum from the ‘National Fund’, which was established.
by the Perhimpoenan Indonesia to finance foreign propaganda.\footnote{Verhoor Hatta cs. p. 90-91: NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Cb.} It also worked to Mononutu’s advantage that the Raadsman voor Studeerenden was extremely busy and repeatedly asked his superiors for assistance. Initially, he did not seem to pay special attention to the small and apparently insignificant group of Indonesians in Paris.\footnote{Verhoor Hatta cs. p. 90-91: NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Cb.}

However, this changed after alarming messages from foreign authorities. The British secret services were already highly suspicious of any activities of Indian militants in continental Europe.\footnote{Pettersson, \textit{We are neither Visionaries, nor Utopian Dreamers}, 181.} They followed with special interest Indian activists in Paris, Switzerland and Berlin. The fact that the British Indian subjects Panikkar and Bagchi were active in a “secret club” of which representatives of various Eastern countries “agreed that the salvation of the East lays in the casting off of the yoke of foreign domination” was reason enough to warn befriended Western secret services about the AECO.\footnote{NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 283, 13 September 1926 H14.} In the spring of 1926, the Indian Political Intelligence Office sent a report about the AECO to the Procureur-Generaal (‘Attorney General’) of the Dutch Indies. In this report, a certain “Mononata of Celebes” was described as “an advocate of revolutionary methods”. The Attorney General redirected this report to his superior, the Governor General of the Dutch Indies, adding that nationalists in the colony had also mentioned the establishment of a new organisation in Paris and the involvement of Mononutu. Via the Minister of Colonies and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in The Hague, the message finally arrived at the desks of the Raadsman voor Studeerenden and the Dutch embassy in Paris. The latter approached the French Sûreté Générale for further intelligence about this Parisian organisation.\footnote{NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 283, 13 September 1926 H14.} On 29 September 1926, the French secret service issued a report in which it was stated that although the AECO members denied being Bolsheviks themselves, the door remained open for Bolshevik intrusion, something of which they suspected the Armenian Hakopian and Russian Margouliès, because of their nationality.\footnote{APP, Assoc., inv. nr. 643; NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350.}

**Clamp-down**

This all was reason enough for the Raadsman voor Studeerenden to conclude that Mononutu, whose studies in the Netherlands had failed anyway, and who had expressed anti-Dutch...
opinions against Noto Soeroto in the past, was an undesirable guest and had to return to the Dutch Indies as soon as possible. To achieve this, he used a tool he employed more often against ‘extremist’ individuals who did not fall under his direct supervision or who fended him off. In December 1926 he sent a letter of complaint to the father of Mononutu, Algemeen Ontvanger of the Manado district, making it explicitly clear that he would lose his position if he did not stop the money transfers to his son. This act of intimidation was effective. Between December 1926 and March 1927, Mononutu received several emotional cables from his parents to his home address in Paris, begging him to come back and calling for understanding of his parents’ decision to obey it the Dutch authorities. On 5 January 1927, his father wrote that: “until now we supported you only out of parental love, and we did not have bad intentions against the government, [but] we have to obey her if I want to receive an honourable discharge.” Mononutu did not answer the cables, probably highly disappointed by the lack of support from his family. This provoked even more emotional appeals, such as: “Oh, if you only knew how sad we are, you would feel sorry that you did not want to listen to us.”

The measures of the Raadsman against the home front of the students turned the political struggle against the Dutch authorities into a generational conflict and a breakdown of authority of the parents back home. In 1926 and 1927 no less than 10 students were subjected to a similar treatment, which led to severe loyalty conflicts. Soediono, whose father was also pressurised, wrote to a friend:

[My father] demands me to apologise to the crazy Dutchmen [Blanda Gila]. If I do not obey, I would have to return to Indonesia, but the worst thing is that he would resign from his position if I don’t listen. Thereby my brothers and sisters will suffer poverty and will be victims of my actions. [My father] is worse than a moderate. What do I have to do!

Even more explicit was Hatta, who pointed out that the colonial system compelled their fathers as civil servants to keep silent and to betray their sons. “To the sons is left the choice either to imitate the fathers in their dull routine, comfortably and willingly and slavishly...

367 NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Bh.  
368 NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nrs. 280 S10; 291 G4; 296 M10; 301 G13; 310 A3. Among the students involved were Mononutu, Soebardjo, Nazif, Gatot Taroenomihardjo, Iwa Koesoema Soemantri, Abdulmadjid Djojoadhingingrat, Soediono, Ali Sastroamidjojo, Darsono and Soekiman Wirjosandjojo.  
369 NL-HaNA, Koloniën / Kabinet-Geheim Archief, 1901-1940, 2.10.36.51, inv. nr. 301, 9 August 1927 G13, Bii; my translation, original in the appendix.
carrying out orders from above, […] or […] to take up the cause of the masses and prepare themselves for the extreme consequence, that of severing family ties.”

The intervention against Mononutu also illustrates the effective way in which financially independent students were brought under control. Despite their seemingly unbound status, their money was in the end still derived from colonial salaries. After Mononutu's father stopped funding, a difficult period started for Mononutu in which he relied on irregular gifts from the National Fund of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia, and on occasional loans from fellow students. However, many of them suffered from restrictive government measures as well, and at some point it became untenable for Mononutu. Reluctantly he returned to his parents and asked for a final gift of 750 guilders to pay his debts and to buy a return ticket to Indonesia. In March 1927 he received a suspicious reply from his father saying that he would only receive the money with special permission from the Dutch authorities, in this case the Dutch consul in Paris.

With no better solution at hand, Mononutu explained his case to the consulate five days later. In what must have been a humiliating meeting, Mononutu confessed that he had around 2000 guilders in debts at the Hôtel du Progrès, and some smaller debts, including 150 guilders to a perfume shop. To prove his trustworthiness to the consul, Mononutu was asked for some names for recommendation. In the course of investigation, the Dutch consul visited the rector of the Institut d’Études Politiques, the Sûreté Générale, and the Managing Director of the Centre d’Études Franco-Hollandaises to investigate Mononutu’s political behaviour. From the testimonials arose an image of an irresponsible, young student, with a fascination for artistic, intellectual and political circles, who was involved in nationalist politics, but who seldom took centre stage. Furthermore, the rector of the Institut d’Études Politiques testified that Mononutu had never enrolled in his institution. Combined with a negative judgment of the Raadsman voor Studeerenden, and with an argument at the consulate in which Mononutu disputed the consul’s right to know how he spent his money, Mononutu was refused the special permission of the consul. With an insufficient advance of 100 guilders, Mononutu took off, likely to find other, more political sources of money instead.

The above story bears witness to the fact that the Dutch authorities were extending their control to other European cities, and that Paris was no longer a safe haven for Indonesian activists abroad. In chapter five, we will further examine the interaction between Indonesian students and Dutch authorities on the European stage, and see that the increasing

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371 NL-HaNA, Ambassade Frankrijk, 2.05.57, inv. nr. 1350.
pressure of the authorities stimulated political radicalisation of the Perhimpoenan Indonesia. The next chapter, however, will take us to Brussels, where in 1927 the Kongress gegen Imperialismus took place.