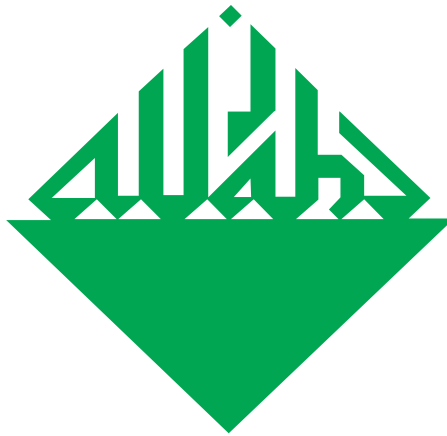


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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INDONESIA'S MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS AND THE OVERTHROW OF SUKARNO

Steven Drakeley

AN ARABIC MANUSCRIPT ON THE HISTORY OF *IṢLĀḤ* AND *IRSHĀD* 'REVOLUTION' IN INDONESIA

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Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk

An Arabic Manuscript on the History of Iṣlāḥ and Irshād ‘Revolution’ in Indonesia

Abstract: *This article deals with an Arabic manuscript written in 1960s by a Ḥaḍramī migrant settled in Indonesia and kept in circulation up to the present time. The purpose of this article is to give a textual analysis of the manuscript and assess its contribution to the history of the Ḥaḍramī migration to the Netherlands East Indies and the Ḥaḍramī awakening that took its shape in the first half of the twentieth century. The manuscript’s contents are systemically assessed and placed in their historical context while being compared with the available primary sources in the field. This content analysis approach enables the author to examine the reliability, objectivity and comprehensiveness of the manuscript in terms of its input to the modern history of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Iṣlāḥ and Irshād organization, Islamic modernism, Dutch colonialism, the Irshādīs, the ‘Alawī Sayyids, Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī, ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī, Indonesia, Singapore, the Ḥijāz.*

Abstrak: *Artikel ini membahas naskah Arab yang ditulis pada 1960-an oleh seorang pendatang Hadrami yang tinggal di Indonesia yang terus beredar hingga sekarang. Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah memberikan analisis teks naskah dan menilai sumbangsuhnya bagi sejarah migrasi orang-orang Hadrami di Hindia-Belanda dan kebangkitan mereka yang terjadi pada paruh pertama abad ke-20. Isi naskah secara sistematis akan dinilai dan ditempatkan dalam konteks sejarahnya dan membandingkannya dengan sumber-sumber utama yang ada di dalam bidang ini. Pendekatan analisis isi memungkinkan penulis untuk menguji kebersinambungan, keandalan, dan keutuhan naskah, yaitu mengenai sumbangsuh naskah tersebut dalam sejarah modern diaspora Hadrami di Indonesia.*

Kata kunci: *Lembaga Iṣlāḥ dan Irshād, Modernisme Islam, Penjajahan Belanda, Irshādī, Sayyid-ʿAlawī, Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī, ʿUmar Sulaymān Nājī, Indonesia, Singapura, Hijāz.*

الخلاصة: يتناول هذا المقال مخطوطاً عربياً، كتبه مهاجر الحضرمي، مقيم في إندونيسيا في ستينيات القرن العشرين، ولا يزال المخطوط متداولاً في الوقت الحاضر. والغرض من هذا المقال هو تحليل نصوص المخطوط، وتقييم إسهامها المعرفي بالنسبة لتاريخ الهجرة الحضرمية إلى جزر الهند الشرقية (إندونيسيا)، وكذلك تاريخ الصحوة الإسلامية-الحضرمية التي أخذت شكلها المؤسس في النصف الأول من القرن العشرين. ويتم تقييم محتويات المخطوط من خلال ووضعها في سياقها التاريخي ومقارنتها بالمصادر الأولية المتاحة في هذا المجال. واستناداً إلى منهج تحليل المحتوى، استطاع المؤلف أن يفحص موثوقية المخطوط، وموضوعيته، وشموليته من حيث الإسهام في كتابة التاريخ الحديث للمهاجرين الحضرمية في إندونيسيا.

الكلمات الاسترشادية: *جمعية الإصلاح والإرشاد، الحداثة الإسلامية، الاستعمار الهولندي، الإرشاديون، السادة العلويون، أحمد السوركتي، عمر سليمان ناجي، إندونيسيا، سنغافورة، الحجاز.*

Scholarship on the Ḥaḍramī migration from the South of the Arabian Peninsula to regions adjacent to the Indian Ocean, extending from the Red Sea to Southeast Asia, witnessed remarkable development in 1990s, inspired by the publication of the monumental work edited by Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith, *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*. During the last fifteen years, a series of scholarly publications was circulated in the Ḥaḍramī diaspora in the India Ocean littoral.¹ In these publications special attention has been paid to the socio-political and religious conflict, and intellectual discourse that emerged between the *ʿAlawī Sayyids*² and the *Irshādīs*³ in colonial and post-colonial Indonesia. A number of books, newspaper articles and pamphlets were circulated in Indonesia and Ḥaḍramawt, addressing the *ʿAlawī-Irshādī* discord from two different perspectives. The *ʿAlawīs* accuse the leader of the *Irshādīs*, al-Surkittī, of dividing the Ḥaḍramī in the diaspora into two conflicting parties, while their *Irshādī* opponents attribute the source of the conflict to the practices of the *ʿAlawī* elite that are not in harmony with the fundamentals of Islam.

The present 134 page-Arabic manuscript was written by ʿUmar Sulaymān Nājī, a prominent figure of the *Irshād* movement in the first half of the 20th century, labelling it “A History of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* Revolution in Indonesia.” In the subsequent sections, a short biography is written on the author (Nājī), his objectives of producing the manuscript and its description and contents. The manuscript is a primary source for scholars and students who are interested in studying the history of the *Irshād* Organization and the causes of the conflict that emerged between the *ʿAlawīs* and *Irshādīs* and its repercussion on the Ḥaḍramī Diaspora in Indonesia. But this does not mean that its narration on the conflict issue is neutral but one argues that it represents the *Irshādīs*’ view which is in contrast with that of their *ʿAlawī* opponents.

Who is ʿUmar Sulaymān Nājī?

ʿUmar Sulaymān Nājī was a prominent student of al-Shayh Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī. He received his education at the *Irshād* School in Jakarta and after his graduation, he was appointed as the founding headmaster of *al-Irshād* school in Pekalongan in central Java in 1919. He was

active in politics and much involved in politics of his country of origin (Southern Yemen). Therefore, he was elected as chair of the Liberation Committee of Southern Yemen. He contributed abundantly to the *Irshād* daily and weekly newspapers, and in 1921 chaired the editorial board of *al-Shifā'* monthly magazine (1921-1923). In 1926, Nājī was selected as chair of the *Irshād* delegation that attended the first Islamic conference organized by Abdul Aziz al-Saud (d. 1953) in Mecca. His journalist background seems to have qualified him to draft the manuscript under review in 1960s, praising the achievements of his *Irshādī* fellows and their “*Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* Revolution” in Indonesia (al-Zayn: 2003; al-Hijī: 1993; Nājī: n.d.).

The Idea of Nājī's Manuscript

Nājī states the objective of his manuscript as to document the history of the *Irshād* “revolution” in a “proper and authentic way” that makes it accessible to young *Irshādīs* before being distorted by adverse publications of their *Alawī* opponents. This objective leads us to ask a question: why did ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī write his manuscript in the 1960s in particular, two decades after the death of his teacher Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī whom the *Alawī* rivals consider as the primary source of the division of the Ḥaḍramī community in Indonesia? In the preface of his manuscript (or memoirs), Nājī answers this question, saying that in 1961 Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt,⁴ the Grand Imām of al-Azhar (1958-1963) visited Solo in Indonesia and met ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jafri⁵ and his fellows who showed interest in producing a comprehensive study on the Muslims and Islam in Indonesia. Nājī claims that the Imām commended their proposal and suggested to them to write on the social status of the Arab migrants in Indonesia and the challenges that face them in “performing the message of Islam and its teachings.” (Nājī, n.d.: 6) As Nājī argues, al-Jafri did not take the Imām's suggestion seriously but produced an elaborate study on the history of the Arab community in Indonesia, highlighting the *Alawī Sayyids'* contributions to the spread of Islam in the Malay world and the causes that led to the division of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora into two disputing blocs: the *Alawīs* and *Irshādīs*. The study was published in two articles in *al-Azhar Magazine* which was widely circulated in the Muslim world. The two articles dealt with various topics, including the history of Islam in the Far East, Muslim preachers and spread of Islam in Java, migration of

the *'Alawī Sayyids* to Java, Dutch colonialism and its impact on the Muslim society, spread of modern Islamic education, and causes of the *'Alawī-Irshādī* conflict and socio-political and religious consequences (al-Jafri, 1961).

It appears that the two articles published in *al-Azhar Magazine* were praised by the *'Alawī Sayyids* while criticised by their *Irshādī* opponents who challenged their objectivity in terms of their discussion of the spread of Islam in Indonesia, and the causes and development of the *'Alawī-Irshādī* dispute. In this context, an Indonesian scholar, known as Shawkat al-Baḥrī, of Jokro Amantu University, refuted al-Jafri's claim that Islam was spread in Indonesia by the *'Alawī Sayyids*, giving the credit to the Muslims who came from Gujarat in North-West India. He also accused the *'Alawī Sayyids* of disseminating mythical beliefs and polytheist traditions that diverted ordinary Indonesians from the right path of Islam (al-Baḥrī: 1961). 'Umar Sulaymān Nājī also accused al-Jafri of misusing the Imām of al-Azhar's message to highlight the contributions of his *'Alawī* fellows towards the development of Muslim institutions and Islamic cause in Indonesia while ignoring the contributions of other Muslims (Nājī: 1961). These critiques conveyed a negative message to the editorial board of *al-Azhar Magazine*, emphasizing that al-Jafri's study did not serve the message of the Grand Imām of al-Azhar Mosque, but rather widened the rift between the two disputing forces (*'Alawīs* and *Irshādīs*) of the Ḥaḍramī community in Indonesia. As a consequence, *al-Azhar Magazine* wrote the following remarks:

During the visit of the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar, Maḥmūd Shaltūt, to certain cities in Indonesia, he was received by the teacher Abd al-Qadir al-Jafri in Solo, where the Grand Shaykh asked him about the status of Muslims in Indonesia in general and their religious and social affairs in particular. He then entrusted him to write a comprehensive study that would explain their providence in education, understanding of the message of Islam, and the resources that they need to achieve their objectives in terms of Islamic jurisprudence, acquaintance of knowledge and their struggle in life. Al-Jafri drafted the study and sent it off to the department of culture at al-Azhar Mosque, where the department published it in [*al-Azhar*] *Magazine*, depending on the wide knowledge of the author, his good intention and noble objective. Two parts of his long study were published in two consecutive issues. After the readers in Indonesia advised the *Magazine* that the author was influenced by his *'Alawī* affiliation rather than his Indonesian-ness, the *Magazine* stopped the publication of the remaining parts of al-Jafri's study (Nājī: n.d., 6-8).⁶

This passage reflects the features of the socio-political atmosphere in which ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī produced his manuscript on the history of “*Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* Revolution in Indonesia,” dividing it into three Parts. Part I covers the period from 1914 to 1930, addressing the formation of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* organization and its development; Part II covers the period from 1930 to 1950; and Part III focuses on the period from 1950 up to the present (1960s) (Ibid.). There is no evidence that Nājī has produced parts II and III of his proposed study. The only available part is Part I which deals with the origins and development of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* movement in Indonesia. The present article provides a descriptive analysis of the contents of the first part of Nājī’s manuscript, placing it in its historical context and wider framework of the primary sources that highlight the history of the *Irshād* movement and its relationship with the *‘Alawī* organizations.

Description and Content of the Manuscript

Nājī’s manuscript is written in very clear Arabic-script. The autograph of the writer appears on page 134 but it is not easy to discern the full name of the writer. The approximate size of the writing area of the Xerox copy is 12.5 x 17.5 cm. The manuscript seems to have been completed after 1967 because there is a footnote at page 9, documenting the emergence of the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen on 30 November 1967.

The cover page of the manuscript carries its title, *Tārīkh Thawrat al-Iṣlāḥ wa-al-Irshād bi-Indūnisiyā*, followed by *al-marḥala al-ūlā* [the first phase], and author’s name. There is no evidence that this manuscript was produced in a lithographic form or was widely circulated in Indonesia or Yemen. However, it was accessible to some researchers such as Bisri Affendi who classified it in his bibliography as a “handwritten” (Affendi: 1976, 176) and Natalie Mobini-Kesheh who listed it as a manuscript (MS) (Mobini-Kesheh: 1999, 256). The author of this article is indebted to ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Tamīmī of Surabaya who furnished him with a Xerox copy of Nājī’s manuscript in 1998, when he was editing the text of *Tārīkh al-Irshād*.⁷

The preface of the manuscript is extracted from an article written by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Rushayid, editor-in-chief of *al-Kuwaitī-al-Iraqī Magazine*, published in the issue no. 8 of the Magazine in 1350/1931. This preface is described as “a word of a neutral Arab on the pioneer

of the *Irshād* awakening and founder of its schools in Indonesia, the teacher and Shaykh Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkitī al-Anṣārī l-Sudānī.” The original is in Arabic translated into English by the author. A photo of al-Shaykh al-Sūrkitī was inserted between the title of the preface and the text. The structure of the manuscript is based on sub-titles that deal with various issues, including the coming of Islam to the Netherland East Indies, the emergence of Islamic awakening (*nahda*), the Arab society in Indonesia, the migration of the Ḥaḍramīs to Indonesia, the arrival of Shaykh al-Sūrkitī in Jakarta and his struggle for the establishment of an Islamic reformist movement, the causes and repercussions of the conflict that emerged between the *ʿAlawī Sayyids* and *Irshādīs*, the proposals of the Arab unity and reconciliation and causes of their failure, and the branches of the *Irshād* organization and alumni of its schools.

In the subsequent sections, I shall present these issues from Nāḥī’s perspective and try to compare them with other primary sources written by the *Irshādīs* themselves. This approach leads us to assess the historical reliability of the manuscript and its contribution to the documentation of the *Irshād* history in Indonesia.

The *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* Movement in History

Nāḥī’s manuscript focuses especially on the history of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* movement, highlighting its major achievements in Indonesia. It is different from *Tārīkh al-Irshād* which pays special attention to the life and career of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī and his conflict with the *ʿAlawī Sayyids*.

Conceptual Remarks

The title of ‘Umar Sulaymān Nāḥī’s manuscript, as mentioned earlier, is *Tārīkh Thawrat al-Iṣlāḥ wa-al-Irshād bi-Indūnisiyā*, emphasising that the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* movement had succeeded in overthrowing the old socio-political and religious system of the Ḥaḍramī society in Indonesia in favour of a new one that established its strength on the values and fundamentals of Islam. He argues that his memoirs is about “a sudden development of a nation which was drowned in illiteracy, ignorance, myths, tribal fanaticism and false inherited habits (...). It is about bitter and longstanding struggle against corrupt beliefs, and exploitation of religious and racial privilege.” (Nāḥī: n.d., 4). Thus, he describes the

Iṣlāḥ and *Irshād* movement as a reformist one that rose against religious and racial practices that contrasted with the principles of Islam. This Nājī's statement should not be taken at its face value since the *Irshādī* rivals had totally rejected the message of the movement and stood firmly against its reformist project. The *Irshād* movement did not enjoy the full support of the Ḥaḍramī community in Indonesia, but rather succeeded in creating awareness among the non-*Sayyid* Ḥaḍramīs who began to criticize some socio-religious practices of the *ʿAlawī Sayyids* such as kissing hands for blessing or visiting holymen's graves for mediation and intercession. It seems that this partial support of the *Irshād* movement has urged Natalie Mobini-Kesheh not to use the term 'revolution' in her book, when dealing with the *Irshād* organization. She prefers to use the phrase 'the Ḥaḍramī awakening', describing that awakening (or *nahḍa*) as "the adaption of modern, western-style methods of organization and education which aimed, above all, at the attainment of a loosely "progress"(Mobini-Kesheh: 1999, 7). In this respect, one may argue that the term 'revolution' used by 'Umar Sulaymān Nājī does not suit the nature of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* movement because the movement did not totally overthrow the old socio-religious system of the Ḥaḍramī community and created a new system that drew its strength from the *Irshādī* reformist vision. In the case of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora in Indonesia, the old *ʿAlawī* regime maintained its internal strength, while losing a large number of non-*Sayyid* clients who supported the reformist message of *al-Irshād*. This move absolutely challenged the socio-political and religious status quo of the Ḥaḍramī society in Indonesia and paved the way for the establishment of a new low profile order that served the *Irshādīs'* interest.

The Advent of Islam in Indonesia

The advent and spread of Islam in the Malay-Archipelago at large is a very debatable issue because there are several hypotheses that address the issue of Islam in the region from different perspectives and time frameworks. Each of them has its own justifications and arguments that support its claim regarding this major event. Our concern here is not to give a detailed story about the spread of Islam in Indonesia, but rather to investigate how 'Umar Sulaymān Nājī tackled this complicated issue and what kind of historical sources he consulted to deliver his own narration. His approach seems to have been unsophisticated because

he depended on a limited number of secondary sources which were not systematically presented nor thoroughly documented. It is obvious that he did not meticulously consult the two fine articles written separately by Shukayb Arslān and *Sayyid* Ismā'īl bin 'Abd Allāh al-'Attās on the advent of Islam in the Malay world. He just cited several different dates for the advent and spread of Islam in Indonesia and then concluded that the *'Alawī Sayyids* (or Al Bā 'Alawī) had arrived in Indonesia in the 17th century, two centuries after the spread of Islam in the region (Nāji: n.d.). This abridged approach undermines the reliability of the manuscript and its comprehensiveness in terms of the spread of Islam in Indonesia.

The Migration of Ḥaḍramīs to Indonesia

There are numerous accounts of the Ḥaḍramī migration to Indonesia, when it started and what were the reasons that led the Ḥaḍramī migrants to leave their homeland in the South of the Arabian Peninsula and settle in Indonesia. These issues were addressed in Nāji's manuscript from two perspectives, where the author highlights the causes of the Ḥaḍramī migration to India and Indonesia, and discusses the system of social stratification which was prevalent in Ḥaḍramawt, and investigates how it affected the development of the society at home and hindered the growth of their reformist movements in the diaspora (Ibid.). In this respect, Nāji does not add new information to the available literature, but gives abstracts about the migration of the Ḥaḍramīs to India, where they worked as military soldiers, and their counterparts in Indonesia who established their career as traders (Ibid.). It is evident that Nāji has paid less attention to the periods of the Ḥaḍramī migration to Indonesia, neglecting the fact that their migration had passed through three distinct periods that shaped their residence in the host country; the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. He also overlooked their engagement in trade, shipping, ship-building, scholarship, missionary activities, diplomacy and even local politics. He slightly discusses the push factors that led them to leave their home country and the abundant opportunities that facilitated their settlement in the host land. These opportunities include their missionary activities and the Prophet's family lineage that gave a large number of them acceptable legitimacy in the eyes of their hosts who accepted them as in-laws and socio-political partners.

Again this gap in Nājī's account suggests that the manuscript is neither comprehensive nor a consistent primary source on the history of the Ḥaḍramī migrants and their settlement in Indonesia.

The Iṣlāḥ and Irshād 'Revolution'

As is the case with other available sources, Nājī's manuscript attributes the emergence of the "progressive awakenings" in twentieth-century Indonesia to the commercial competition that emerged between Chinese and Indonesian-Malay traders, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of *Sarekat Islam* by senior Indonesian-Malay traders who attracted a great number of clients to their organization (Ibid.). Without explaining and analysing how the establishment of *Sarekat Islam* had inspired the Ḥaḍramī awakening, Nājī shifted to the core subject of his manuscript, the arrival of al-Sūrkitī to Indonesia in 1911 and the beginning of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* 'revolution' in the Netherlands East Indies. He thus gave a brief biography of his teacher, Shaykh Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkitī, who was born on Arqu Island in Northern Sudan in 1292/1875-6 from a religious family that traced its descent back to Jābir bin 'Abd Allāh al-Ansārī of al-Khazrajī. As Nājī wrote, al-Sūrkitī received his elementary education in the Sudan, and in 1314/1897 he left his home country to the Ḥijāz, furthering his Islamic education in al-Madina for five and Mecca for ten years. In the Ḥijāz, he received his education at the hands of very eminent scholars such as 'Umar bin Ḥamdān al-Maghribī, Muḥammad al-Khiyārī, Shu'ayb bin Mūsā and Aḥmad Barazinjī (Abushouk: 2002; Jone and Keptein: 2001).

Nājī's manuscript seems to have purposely discounted the contributions of *'Alawī* reformists to the emergence of the Ḥaḍramī awakening in the Netherlands East Indies, because he immediately proceeded to the arrival of al-Sūrkitī in Jakarta in 1911 and his achievements that inspired Islamic modernism in Indonesia (Nājī: n.d.). This shift affects the flow of the narrative because there is a general consensus that the first signs of the Ḥaḍramī awakening established its roots in Singapore, where a group of intellectual *'Alawī Sayyids* launched a campaign against their traditionalist peers, who used to proclaim the possession of a special religious and social status due to their blood relation to the Prophet Muḥammad. Based on this noble background, the ordinary Muslims should kiss their hands in greeting, make pilgrimage to their ancestors' graves for blessing (*baraka*), and

their daughters should not be married off to non-*'Alawīs*. The pioneers of this reformist group were Ḥasan bin Shihāb (1852-1912), Abū Bakr bin Shihāb (1846-1922) and Muḥammad bin 'Aqīl bin Yaḥyā (1863-1931), who relatively succeeded in recruiting a large number of supporters among the Ḥaḍramīs in Java as well as in Singapore (Abushouk: 2000). To strengthen their position in Singapore, they instituted contacts with the elite of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *tajdīd* movements in the Middle East and Egypt in particular. Muḥammad bin 'Aqīl bin Yaḥyā, for example, was the correspondent of *al-Manār Magazine* in Singapore and had frequent communications with its founder and editor-in-chief, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in Cairo. Therefore, Singapore functioned as an intellectual hub for Islamic reformist in the region, from where the ideas of Islamic reformism were disseminated to other principal cities of the Malay-Indonesian world (Bakar: 1994).

The first response to this reformist awakening came from Java, where 'Abd Allāh bin Abī Bakr al-Ḥibshī, Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Shihāb and Aḥmad bin 'Abd Allāh al-Saqqāf promoted the idea of *Iṣlāḥ* and *tajdīd*, calling Muslims to refer to the principles of the Qur'ān and Sunna, and the fundamental ethics of Islam. To translate this idea into practice, they founded in 1901 a charitable organization named *Khayr* in Batavia (later Jakarta) with objectives to support the poor and provide a modern system of schooling for the Arab children in Java (al-Hibshī: 1983; Bakrī: 1956). Four years later, the organization was recognized by the Dutch colonial regime, approving its constitution, executive committee, and registered members. The first elected executive committee of the *Khayr* was chaired by Muḥammad bin 'Alī bin Shihāb who was entrusted to set up the first modern-style elementary school of the *Khayr* organization in Pekojan in Batavia, and to make the education of youth as his target towards the reformation of the Ḥaḍramī community in the diaspora (Bakrī: 1956).

In 1911 the *Khayr* administration sent one of its members, 'Abd Allāh bin 'Abd al-Ma'būd, to the Ḥijāz to recruit qualified teachers for the *Khayr* elementary schools in the Netherlands East Indies. Based on the recommendation of the two Meccan scholars, Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Khayāṭ and Ḥasan bin Muḥammad al-Ḥibshī, 'Abd Allāh bin 'Abd al-Ma'būd contracted with Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkitī, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥamīd of the Sudan and Muḥammad al-Ṭayyīb of Morocco as competent teachers for the *Khayr* schools (Nājī: n.d.).

This background assists us to comprehend the causes that led to the arrival of al-Sūrkitī and his colleagues in Batavia in 1911. In his manuscript, Nājī seems to have marginalized the role of the *ʿAlawī Sayyids* who promoted to the emergence of the Ḥaḍramī awakening in the Netherlands East Indies, giving full credit to al-Sūrkitī and his *Irshādī* students, whom he classified as the pioneers of the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* ‘revolution’ in Indonesia.

As Nājī wrote, al-Sūrkitī was given the headmaster-ship of the old school of the *Khayr* in Pekojan, and his two colleagues, Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, were respectively appointed as teachers at the *Khayr* schools in Krukut and Bogor in central Java (Nājī : n.d.). Based on his evident success, al-Sūrkitī was authorized by the *Khayr* Organization in 1913 to recruit new teachers for the schools. The list of the appointees included (a) Aḥmad al-ʿAqīb; (b) Muḥammad Nūr bin Muḥammad Khayr al-Ansārī (or Abū al-Anwār); (c) Sāttī Muḥammad Sūrkitī (or Abū al-Faḍl; al-Sūrkitī’s brother); and (d) Ḥasan Ḥāmid al-Ansārī (Ibid.). Deliar Noer maintains that all of them were well acquainted with the works of Muḥammad ʿAbdūh (d. 1905) and regarded themselves as his devout followers (Noer: 1973). The first two of them received their preliminary education in the Sudan and completed their study at al-Azhar University in Cairo (Ibid.; Basharī: 1991). Sāttī graduated at the school of religious teachers in Ḥalfā (Sudan) and started his career as a professional tutor (Abushouk: 2000). As for Ḥasan Ḥāmid, we know little about his early career in the Sudan, but in Jakarta he was appointed in a teaching post.

According to Nājī’s account, during the *Khayr* schools vacation in 1914, al-Sūrkitī paid a visit to Solo in Central Java, where he was hosted by Shaykh ʿAwaḍ bin Sunkar, *Kaptein* of the Arabs (Nājī: n.d.). At Bin Sunkar’s house, he was asked about the legality of a marriage of a *Sharīfa* (a daughter of an *ʿAlawī Sayyid*) and a non-*Sayyid* Muslim. He acknowledged the legality of the marriage concerned, basing his argument on Qur’ānic verses and Prophetic traditions (Abushouk: 2000). However, his *fatwā* was rejected outright by the *ʿAlawī Sayyids*, who gave strong support to the counter *fatwā* of ʿUmar Sālim al-ʿAttās (*al-Manār*: 1905), which nullified any form of marriage that would take place between a *Sayyid’s* daughter and a non-*Sayyid* husband. In this sense al-ʿAttās acknowledged the superiority of the *Sayyids* over the rest of the Muslims who do not share with them the same noble blood.

As a result, the *'Alawī Sayyids* stood firmly against al-Sūrkitī's *fatwā* and his reformist message to the extent that they manipulated him to resign from his teaching post at the *Khayr* School on 6 September 1914 (Abushouk: 2000).

The *Irshādī* account of al-Sūrkitī's resignation from the *Khayr* organization is not in harmony with the counter accounts that appear in the *'Alawī-s'* publications. For instance, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jafri traced the cause root of al-Sūrkitī's resignation and his conflict with the administration of the *Khayr* school to the conspiracy of the Dutch colonial administration which favoured the enhancement of Islamic reformism in Indonesia (Jafri: 1961). He claims that al-Sūrkitī was influenced by a Dutch Orientalist known as Singarik⁸ and 'Umar bin Yūsuf Manqūsh⁹ who were interested, as the *'Alawī Sayyids* claim, in creating a politico-religious entity in the Ḥaḍramī community that would serve their political and personal ambitions. The *'Alawī* publications proclaimed that al-Sūrkitī was advised several times to disassociate himself from Dr. Rinkes and Manqūsh, but gave a cold-shoulder to their advices. In response, an educational inspector was appointed to supervise him and report on his performance. Feeling himself in such an awkward situation, al-Sūrkitī decided to resign from the administration of the *Khayr* schools on 6 September 1914.

A week after the acceptance of al-Sūrkitī's resignation, a meeting was held at the house of 'Umar Manqūsh, where al-Sūrkitī's supporters drafted the constitution of the *Jama'iyat al-Isḫāh wa-al-Irshād al-Arabiyya* (Arab Association for Reform and Guidance). The Dutch colonial regime immediately recognized the establishment of the association as a social and educational body, and hosted it in a government house to pursue its activities (Mobini-Kesheh, 1999). These developments, from an *'Alawī'* perspective, emphasizes that the establishment of the *Isḫāh* and *Irshād* Organization was a Dutch conspiracy against the *'Alawī Sayyids* in Indonesia. This allegation seems to have provoked 'Umar Sulaymān Nājī and led him to draft his manuscript sometime in the 1960s, contesting the *'Alawīs'* allegation and revealing the causes that led to the emergence of the *Isḫāh* and *Irshād* revolution from the *Irshādīs'* perspective.

Nājī maintains that the mission of the *Isḫāh* and *Irshād* Organization is "to change the social situation and corrupt beliefs, spread knowledge, fight literacy, free thinking from the shackles of blind imitation, and

destroy the racial privileges based myths and disbeliefs.” Its objective is to “form an Islamic-socialist-cooperative society governed by justice, love and tranquillity.” He highlights that:

“This coup was championed by an Arab-Sudanese scholar who came as a teacher on the request of the educated *‘Alawīs* (...) who diverted with their leadership when they noticed the signs of brotherhood and equality in Islam propagated by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī. When these signs alarmed them they decided to retreat from what they had established. They antagonized the teachers whom they invited from abroad. At this juncture the awakening transcended them and became a growing revolution in the hands of other people.” (Nāji: n.d.).

Nāji’s manuscript illustrates that the founding members of the *Islāh* and *Irshād* ‘revolution’ in the Netherlands East Indies were ‘Umar Yūsuf Manqūsh, Ṣāliḥ ‘Ubayd ‘Abdāt and Sa‘īd Sālim Mush‘abī who financially and morally supported al-Sūrkitī and his reformist mission which was based on the following fundamentals and objectives:

1. The genuine belief in the unity of Allāh without being associated with polytheist beliefs but with the sincerity in worship and the support of Allāh in all matters.
2. The achievement of freedom and equality among Muslims, and the settlement of differences according to the Qur‘ān, the Sunna, the opinions of the renowned Imāms and the *sira* of good forefathers.
3. The fighting of the blind imitation which is not based on reasoning or revealed text.
4. The spread of Islamic and Arabic culture, and sound ethics.
5. The struggle for the unity of Muslims and Arabs in accordance with what Allāh likes (Nāji: n.d.).

Inspired by these principles and objectives, the *Irshād* Organization gradually extended its branches and schools from Jakarta to other principal towns in Java such as Tegal, Pekalogan, Surabaya, and Cirebon. The administration of the *Irshād* Schools was placed in the hands of al-Sūrkitī, his Sudanese collaborators and some of his brilliant students who graduated at the *Khayr* Schools. The organization’s branches were authorized to conduct their activities with little interference from the headquarters in Jakarta which was mainly in charge of the overall management of the organization and its activities and development (Nāji: n.d.). The manuscript also addresses the resignation of al-Sūrkitī from the *Irshād* Organization in 1921, when realizing that the *Irshād*

new administration was not supporting his new reformist project. Other issued that attracted the attention of Nājī were the achievements of the *Irshād* Organization, the contributions of selected graduates of *Irshād* schools to the development of the Indonesia society, and their participation in international events, concerning the Muslim *umma*'s affairs (Nājī: n.d.).

The 'Alawī-Irshādī Discord

Nājī's manuscript attributes the *'Alawī-Irshādī* discord to three primary reasons. The social reason was associated with the issue of equality among Muslims and Muslim brotherhood which were both rejected by the *'Alawī Sayyids* who advocated to the superiority of their social status based on their blood ties with the Prophet Muḥammad. The religious reason was connected with the issue of *Tawḥīd* (belief in the oneness of God) and the fundamentals of faith. The *Irshādīs*, as Nājī argues, rejected all sufi-practices that might water down the concept of *Tawḥīd*, such as the visitation of saints' graves for mediation or interception. The political reason was associated with the passive response of the *'Alawī Sayyids* towards political challenges that faced the Muslim *umma* and the threat of European colonialism in the Muslim world (Nājī: n.d.). From Nājī's perspective, these differences between the two parties manifested themselves in certain issues such as the issue of *kafā'a* in marriage which had great respect in the minds and hearts of the *'Alawī Sayyids*. In October 1915 the question of *kafā'a* was raised by the editor of the Malaya newspaper *Soeloeh Hindia* who asked al-Sūrkitī to justify his *fatwá* on marriage eligibility. In response, al-Sūrkitī issued a long *fatwá* founded on the Qur'an and Sunna, given the name of *Ṣūrat al-Jawāb* (the Form of the Answer), advocating the equality of Muslims regardless of their descent, race, and language, and denouncing the foundation of marriage eligibility on an ideology of descent. He argued that the equality of Muslims and eligibility in marriage should be understood in the spirit of the following Qur'ānic verses:

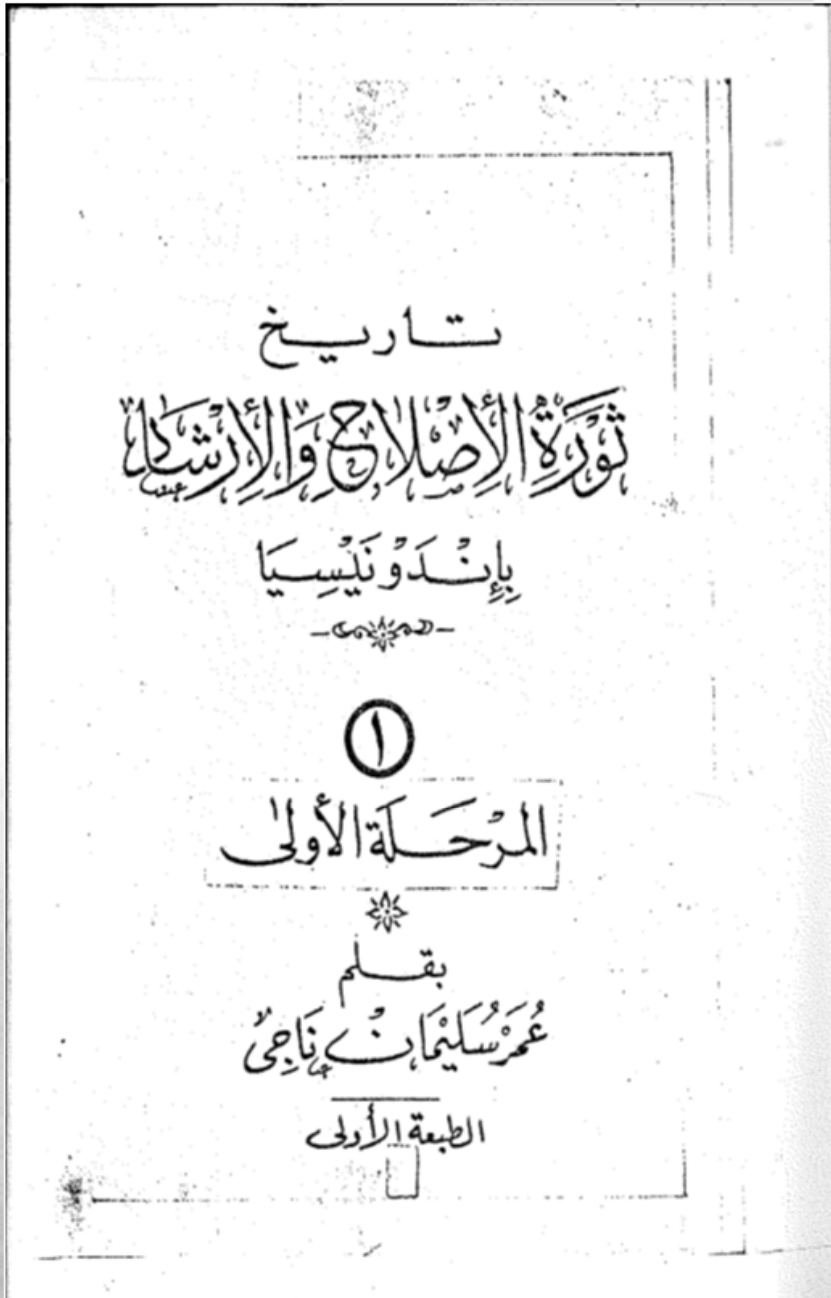
O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (QS. 49: 13)¹⁰

As Nājī wrote, this *fatwā* had widened the rift between the *‘Alawīs* and *Irshādīs* and drove them towards an open confrontation. The *‘Alawī Sayyids* approached the Dutch colonial regime to ban the circulation of al-Sūrkitī’s *fatwā* on the grounds that it was in contrast with the teachings of the Shāfi’ī School of law, and at the same time they entered into a public debate with their *Irshādī* rivals. A series of counter *fatwās* was circulated, advocating the noble descent of the Sayyids and denouncing the validity of “the Sudanese intruder’s” *fatwā*. The cases listed in “*Tārīkh Thawrat al-Islāh wa-al-Irshād*” show how the conflict was bitter and full of intrigues to the extent that it undermined the reputations of the parties and provoked few outsiders to mediate or to call for mutual settlement. Nājī cited a number of reconciliation initiatives proposed by mediators from inside and outside Indonesia and showed how these initiatives had ended in complete failure due to the adamant attitude of the *‘Alawī Sayyids*. Thus Nājī’s account was in contrast with that of al-Jafri who accused the *Irshādīs* of spoiling all settlement initiatives and held them responsible for the division of the Ḥaḍramī community in the diaspora.

Conclusion

The *‘Alawī-Irshādī* dispute should be examined in a context of struggle for power and social prestige since the *Irshādīs* had tried to undermine the system of social stratification which provided the *‘Alawī Sayyids* with socio-political and religious power that they had enjoyed at home and in the diaspora (Mobini-Kesheh: 1999). The crux of this conflict was also associated with the emancipation of the non-*Sayyid* Ḥaḍramīs from the hegemony of the *‘Alawī Sayyids* in the Netherlands East Indies. The conflict should arguably not be viewed as a pure confrontation between the traditionalist *‘Alawī Sayyids* and the non-*Sayyid* reformers, because neither were all of the *Sayyids* traditionalists, nor were their opponents purely reformists. As mentioned earlier, some *Sayyids* were among the pioneers of the reformist movement in the Malay-Indonesian world, remained loyal to their mission, and contributed to the spread of its values at home and in the diaspora (Arai: 2004). This does not negate that the *‘Alawī-Irshādī* dispute had forced some of them to withdraw their support for al-Sūrkitī, giving priority to their ideology of descent, and joining the platform of their traditionalist *‘Alawī Sayyids* so as to preserve the unity of their *‘Alawī* ethnic group in the face of the growing threat of the *Irshādīs* (Abushouk: 2001).

The situation as far whole does not refute the fact that the *‘Alawī-Irshādī* discord had positive signs that enhanced competition in the Ḥaḍramī community and contributed to the promotion of reformist ideas in the Netherlands East Indies and Ḥaḍramawt via voluntary organizations, educational institutions and publications. The intellectual and political debate that focused on the kissing of *Sayyids’* hands, eligibility in marriage, and the use of the title Sayyid contributed to the establishment of more than fifty newspapers and magazines in Arabic language in Indonesia between the two wars (Mobin-Kesheh: 1996), and enhanced the production of a number of publications and manuscripts dealing with the *‘Alawī-Irshādī* dispute from two different perspectives. The manuscript under review, *Tārikh thawrat al-Islāh wa-al-Irshād bi-Indūnīsiyā* is one of the *Irshādī* intellectual products that documents that the history of the *Irshād* organization and the causes of its conflict with the *‘Alawī Sayyids*. The manuscript is an important primary source on the history of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora in Indonesia. It is a complementary work to the manuscript which I edited and published in 2000: *Tārikh ḥarakat al-Irshād wa-shaykh al-Irshādiyyīn Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkitī fī Indūnīsiyā* (Abushouk: 2000). However, the latter is more comprehensive than the former because it deals with the history of the *Irshādīs* from different perspectives, and gives a thorough account of the life and career of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī (1876-1943) in his homeland (Sudan), the Ḥijāz and Indonesia. Nājī’s manuscript is very rich in terms of documenting the *Irshād* experience but it is not well thematically and chronologically presented. To get a balanced account on the history of the *Irshādīs* and their conflict with the *‘Alawī Sayyids*, we need to consult the publications and manuscripts of the two parties, and discuss them in their historical context. Nājī was not a professional historian, but an *Irshādī* activist who documented the history of his role model teacher, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī, the achievements of the *Irshād* organization, the causes of the *‘Alawī-Irshādī* conflict and its repercussions from his own perspective. Therefore, his account should not be taken at face value, but needs further investigation and meticulous consultation with other available primary sources in the field. This does not deny that the manuscript deserves to be edited and published so as to preserve its academic value and accessibility to all researchers in the field.



Manuscript's cover page

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تمهيد :-

الحمد لله القائل : « فاقصص القصص لعلمهم يتفكرون » والقائل :
 لقد كان في قصصهم عبرة لأولي الألباب . والصلاة والسلام على
 المبعوث بالآيات والحكم لهداية الأمم ، وعلى آله وصحبه معادن الفضل والكرم .

أما بعد . فهذه مذكرات عن تطور فجائي لأمة كانت غارقة في الأمية
 والجهل والخرافات والعصبية القبلية والتعصب للعادات الباطلة الموروثة ،
 مذكرات تاريخية فيها من العبر ما فيه مندرج ، مذكرات عن كفاح طويل مرير
 ضد العقائد الفاسدة والاستغلال الديني والامتياز العنصري ، مذكرات
 تقص الحق وتتحرى الصدق مجردة من العواطف الثورية ، ولعل تأخر
 بروز هذه الحقائق من ظلمة العدم إلى نور الوجود انتظارا للبواعث
 والأسباب المتحمة وفي أولها ما كتبتة مجلة الأزهر عدد جمادى
 الأولى ١٣٨١ هـ .

إننا مسئولون عن أداء هذه الأمانة إلى الأجيال المقبلة في صورتها
 الصحيحة ، هذه الحقائق غمرتها شدة الخصومة حتى حجب بدخانها الكثيف
 منظرها البهيم ، وفي آخر لحظة من حياة الجيل الماضي الذي عامر الأحداث

— ٥ —

وعاركها والذي لازال أفراد منه في قيد الحياة يحتفظون في مملقاتهم وثائق
ومحفوظات ويختزنون ذكريات في أذهانهم عن ثورة الإرشاد مما يسهل
على المؤلف مهمته .

ان الفضل الاول في بروز هذا التاريخ يرجع الى عصبية من خيار
الإرشاديين الذين اختارهم الله ليكونوا حماة تراث النضال العربي الاسلامي
بإندونيسيا . فإلى هؤلاء الكرام اقدم تشكراي وتقديري الفائق لما قاموا
به من تشجيع وقدموه من خدمات في نجاح هذا العمل والنجازه . وقد قسمناه
الى ثلاثة مراحل: مرحلة الكفاح المرير الشاق ، ثم مرحلة الاستقرار والبناء
ثم مرحلة العمل الموحد مع الشعب الاندوني بعد الاستقلال .
تبتدئ المرحلة الأولى من نشأة الحركة عام ١٩١٤م - والمرحلة
الثانية تبتدئ من عام ١٩٣٠م الى بداية الحرب العالمية الثانية ، اي
الى بعد احتلال اليابان عام ١٩٤٢م . والمرحلة الثالثة من عام ١٩٥٠م
بعد نيل اندونيسيا السيادة الى اليوم .

هذا ونسأل الله ان يسد دخطانا ويهدينا الى ما فيه الخير
العام . ر

المؤلف

— ١٣٤ —

سميت بجريدة « السلام » ثم احتجبت بعد صدور أول
عدد منها بخلاف وقع بين مدير المطبعة ورئيس التحرير، ثم
صدرت أخرى تسمى « الإرشاد » تحت إدارة مدير المطبعة
على عدم أهليته وقدرته على التحرير، عاشت الجريدة سنة
ثم احتجبت وبقيت المطبعة تشتغل بطبع الكتب وغيرها
وكانت مطبوعات رابحة، ثم قدم المدير استقالته
فجأة - فلم تقبل منه إدارة الشركة حتى تجد من يقوم مقامه
ولكنه أصر على الوقوف العاجل، فطلبت منه الشركة
إمهالها شهراً حتى تبحث عن غيره، لم تجد أحدًا بعد نهاية المدة
فأقفل المدير المطبعة وذهب مغاضباً للنزهة والاستشفاء شهراً
كاملاً قبل أن يؤدي مراسم القبول والإيجاب مع الشركة.
ولما رأى العملاء والزبائن المطبعة مقفولة الأبواب ذهبوا إلى
مطابع أخرى حتى دخلت المطبعة في خبر كان.

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تمت المرحلة الأولى، -

- ويليه المرحلة الثانية.

خط : جمع.

Endnotes

1. Sumit K. Mandal, 1994. *Finding their Place: A History of Arabs in Java under Dutch Rule, 1800–1924*. PhD. dissertation, Columbia University. Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, 1999. *The Ḥaḍramī Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900–1942*. Ithaca: NY, Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications. Linda Boxberger, 2002. *On the Edge of Empire. Hadramawt, Emigration, and the Indian Ocean, 1880s–1930s*. Albany: State University of New York Press. Anne Kathrine Bang, 2003. *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860–1925*, London, Routledge Curzon. U. Freitag, 2003. *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadbramaut*, Leiden: E.J. Brill. Engseung Ho, 2006. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (eds.), 2009. *The Ḥaḍramī Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?* Leiden: E.J. Brill.
2. The ‘*Alawī Sayyids*’ are the descendants of Aḥmad al-Muhājir who trace their origins back to the Prophet Muḥammad.
3. The *Irshādīs* are the members of the *Islāḥ* and *Irshād* organization founded by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sūrkitī and his supporters in Jakarta in 1914.
4. Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt (1893-1963) is a prominent Egyptian scholar and Islamic theologian, best known for his work in Islamic reform. He was appointed as Grand Imām of al-Azhar Mosque in 1958 and remained at his post until his death in 1963. He visited Southeast Asia with an impressive Egyptian delegation, including Shaykh Muḥammad al-Bahī, an Egyptian scholar and philosopher, in January and February 1961.
5. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jafri is one of the prominent scholars of al-Jafri family which traces its descent back to the Prophet Muḥammad. He lived in Indonesia and played a significant role in the conflict that took place between the ‘*Alawī Sayyids*’ and *Irshādīs*.
6. My own translation. For further details see the remarks of the editor in-chief in “al-Jafri wa-al-‘Arab fi *Indūnisiyā*,” *Majallat al-Azhar*, vol. 33/11 (April, 1961), p. 1407-8.
7. The manuscript of *Tāriḫ al-Irshād* was compiled by Muḥammad Abū al-Anwār in 1943, and kept unpublished until 2000, when it was edited and published by the present writer in a book titled: *Tāriḫ ḥarakat al-Irshād wa-Shaykh al-Irshādiyyin Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkitī fi Indūnisiyā*, Kuala Lumpur: Markaz al-Buḥūth, al-Jami‘a Islāmiyya al-‘Alamiyya bi Malizay (ISBN 983-9470-33-3). The compilation of the manuscript was initiated by al-Sūrkitī’s students who were interested in documenting the history of their movement and the contribution of Shaykh al-Sūrkitī to Islamic reformism in twentieth-century Indonesia.
8. Al-Jafri seems to have meant Dr. A. Rinke, director of the office of native and Arabic Affairs (1914-1916), who had contact with al-Sūrkitī. The office of native and Arabic Affairs was established 1899 with the Legendary Dutch Islamologist Dr. Snouk Hurgronje, as the first advisor (1899-1906), and it was headed subsequently by Dr. G.A. J. Hazeu (1907-1913, 1917-1920), Dr. A. Rinke (1914-1916), E. Gobe (1927-1937), and Dr. G.F. Pijper (1937-1942), all trained in Indology with good command of Arabic and native languages. For further details see, Takashi Shiraishi, “A new regime of order: The Origin of Modern surveillance politics in Indonesia,” in: James T. Siegel. Audrey R. Kahin (eds.), 2003. *Southeast Asian over three generation: Essays presented to Benedict R. O’Gorman Anderson*, Cornell, Southeast Asian Program Publications: 61.
9. ‘Umar bin Yūsuf Manqūsh was born to a non-sayyid family in Ḥaḍramawt and travelled to Java in his youth. In Java he began his career as a small trader and gradually worked his way up to become a wealthy merchant and property-owner by the turn of the 20th

century. In 1902 he was appointed as the *Kapitein* of the Arabs in Jakarta and remained in this position until 1931. In 1921 he was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Orange Nassau. As Natalie Mobini-Kesheh points out, this was a clear of Dutch government favour. Thus through the course of time Manqūsh became “proud of his achievements and famed for his refusal to be looked down upon by anyone, whether sayyid or European.” For further details see Mobini-Kesheh, *The Ḥadramī Awakening*, 28.

10. The Holy Quran, English translation of the Meaning by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

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2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
3. Feener, Michael R., and Mark E. Cammack, eds. 2007. *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions*. Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program.
4. Wahid, Din, 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang, 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

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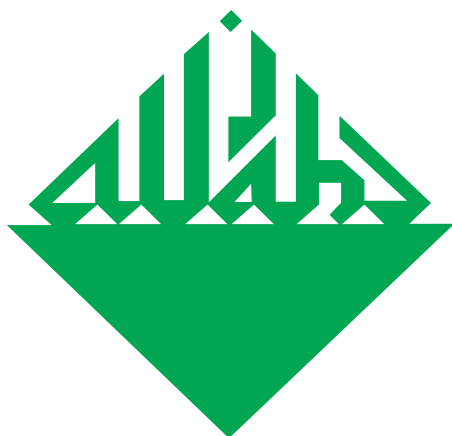
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