

for Indonesian well-to-do.

Paguyuban Pasundan organization founded as a social and cultural organization for Sundanese in western Java.

May 9 Sneevliet founds Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging, would become PKI (Indonesian Communist Party).

War in Europe: Dutch government considers local militia for Indonesia.

Great Colonial Exhibition in Semarang, attended by Pakubuwono X of Surakarta and entourage.

Netherlands Indies government founds a flight test facility at Surabaya to study the performance of aircraft in tropical conditions.

KNIL organizes an airborne auxiliary.

Nias comes under complete Dutch control.

KNIL occupation forces on Bali are withdrawn and replaced by regular police units.

Insulinde is founded, supporters include Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo, returned from exile.

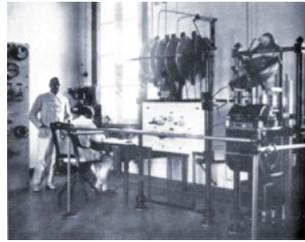
1915

Haji Agus Salim joins Sarekat Islam, promotes Islamic modernism.

Tri Koro Dharma is founded as a youth organization of Budi Utomo. (Name is changed to Jong Java in 1918.)

Soedirman born.

British and Dutch sign treaty fixing the boundary between North Borneo (Sabah) and the Netherlands Indies.



Radio transmitting station in Koepang, Timor, about 1915.



Street scene in Surabaya, 1915.

1916

Delegation with members from Budi Utomo, Sarekat Islam, and other organizations tours the Netherlands.

Netherlands Indies government organizes "Politiek Inlichtingen Dienst", a special police force for investigating political crimes (later renamed to "Algemene Recherche").

J.P. Count van Limburg Stirum is Governor-General until 1921.

Young Sukarno attends school in Surabaya, lives with Tjokroaminoto.

June Sarekat Islam holds convention in Bandung; some members and traditional Javanese are unhappy with modernism.

Mangkunegara VII takes rule of his house in Surakarta.

December States-General in the Netherlands passes bill to create a Koloniale Raad (later Volksraad) for the Netherlands Indies.



For more background on Sarekat Islam, the Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama, see the [Notes on Islam in modern Indonesia](#).

1917

Sarekat Islam begins to take a more anti-government position.

Leftists from Semarang gather in Sarekat Islam under Semaun; Tjokroaminoto does not oppose

The Netherlands, and the Netherlands Indies, were neutral during World War I, but they still maintained military preparedness. The war disrupted trade between the Indies and Europe, but business with the United States and Japan increased. Labor shortages during wartime led to strikes and higher wages.

them.

Netherlands considers conscripting Indonesians for military service; leftists in Sarekat Islam oppose this.

Aisyiyah, women's auxiliary to Muhammadiyah, is founded.

Modern port facilities are constructed at Surabaya.

Ki Hajar Dewantoro returns from exile.



Haji Agus Salim was an early figure in Sarekat Islam; he later served in the early governments of the Republic of Indonesia in the 1940s.

1918

May 18 Volksraad meets for the first time. 39% of its members are Indonesian. Members are elected by local councils from kabupaten. Most members are government officials or bupati. It consists of one house, and serves in an advisory capacity only.

Gov.-Gen. van Limburg Stirum appoints Tjokroaminoto to Volksraad. Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo is also seated.

ISDV starts to organize soviets in Surabaya.

"Sarekat Islam B", secret revolutionary branch, starts organizing. It includes Musso (and possibly Tjokroaminoto).

Sarekat Sumatra founded.

Smallpox epidemic hits Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan.

Jong Minahasa organization founded.

Nederlands-Indië government starts to suppress ISDV soviets, drives Dutch members from communist movement.

The "November Promise": Dutch government says that Indonesia will have self-government in the undetermined future.

November 14 Indonesian members of the Volksraad condemn the Netherlands Indies government for favoring European interests.

Nederlands-Indië government exiles Sneevliet.

Douwes Dekker returns from exile.



Gov-Gen J.P. Count van Limburg Stirum Van Limburg Stirum in 1918 made statements that the Volksraad should prepare to take a greater role in government. However, he was not motivated by independence or nationalism—he was worried by rumors of a Socialist takeover in the Netherlands and was ready for the Indies to go its own way if that happened. Nevertheless, he was criticized in the Indies and in the Netherlands for being soft on Indonesian nationalists, and he was soon replaced.

1919

May-June Shooting in Garut; assassination of a Dutch official at Tolitoli, Sulawesi. Dutch use shootings as an excuse to suppress Sarekat Islam Section B.

Indo-Europees Verbond founded to promote the cause of "Eurasians", while also supporting the Dutch.

Haji Misbach preaches "Islamic Communism" in Surakarta

December Sarekat Islam claims 2 million members; holds congress in Yogya.

KLM opens long-distance air service from Amsterdam to Batavia.

There was some confusion in Indonesia as to what "communism" really meant, which led to such unusual concepts as "Islamic Communism". Many common people joined such movements in the 1920s. They used the mass organizations that grew around Communist slogans to express their dissatisfaction with colonialism and the conditions of life. Some Islamic leaders were happy to see the Communists leave (or be thrown out) of organizations like Sarekat Islam. Other leaders, such as Sukarno, said that all organizations should cooperate in the struggle for independence; that Islam, Communism, and nationalism could work together as long as none of them upset the overall harmony of the movement.

1920

May 27 ISDV changes name to Perserikatan Komunis di Hindia (later PKI).

PKH publishes works by Lenin.

Technische Hoogeschool founded at Bandung (today's ITB: Institut Teknologi Bandung).

Sarekat Ambon founded.

Conflict between the Communists and Sarekat Islam grows.

December 25 PKH joins the Communist International.

1921

June Jong Java congress in Bandung; Sukarno addresses the congress to advocate language reform.

Fock is Gov.-Gen. of Nederlands-Indië until 1926.

Timorsch Verbond founded.

August Tjokroaminoto is arrested.

October Sixth national congress of Sarekat Islam forbids SI members to belong to other parties, including PKI.

Many Sarekat Islam branches split into "Red" (SI-Merah) factions after Semaun and "White" (SI-Putih) factions after Tjokroaminoto.

Semaun leaves for Soviet Union.

Tan Malaka tries to heal the split in Sarekat Islam.

PKI denounces Tjokroaminoto.

Young Sukarno begins studies at Technische Hoogeschool in Bandung.

Soeharto born.

Hamengkubuwono VIII becomes Sultan of Yogya.

December Tan Malaka becomes chairman of the PKI.



Street scene in Batavia (Jakarta), 1920s.

1922

Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia or Indonesian Students Association is founded in the Netherlands. Its membership would include Mohammed Hatta, Sutan Sjahrir, Sutomo, Ali Sastroamidjojo, and many others who would be prominent in the independence struggle (and in the government of the Republic of Indonesia in the 1950s).

March Tan Malaka is exiled from the Netherlands Indies.

April Tjokroaminoto is released from custody pending appeal.

Ki Hadjar Dewantoro founds Taman Siswa in Yogya, independent school with no gov support to promote Javanese arts as well as modern education (anti-modernist); invents term "guided democracy".

Indische Vereeniging in the Netherlands changes name to Perhimpunan Indonesia. Mohammed Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir are members, Tan Malaka and Semaun speak to meetings.

Semaun returns from the Netherlands.

Marah Roesli publishes "Sitti Noerbaja", first Indonesian novel.

Strikes continue.

Al-Islam congress is held at Cirebon; heated debates break out between holders of "modernist" and "traditionalist" views on Islam.

Pelgrimsordonnantie is passed, beginning government control of the haji.

Modern port facilities open at Belawan to serve northern Sumatra.

1923

February Partai Katolik is founded.

Successful Communist led railroad strike; many unions become Communist dominated.

February Tjokroaminoto reorganizes Sarekat Islam as the new Partai Sarekat Islam. Communist supporters leave the organization, taking a significant number of the rank-and-file with them; "Red" SI branches become Sarekat Rakyat.

Semaun exiled.

Tan Malaka is appointed as the Comintern agent for southeast Asia, working out of Canton in China.

September 12 Persatuan Islam (or Persis), a hardline modernist group, is founded in Bandung. The young Mohammed Natsir is an early member.

Pasteur Institute moves from Batavia to Bandung.

Military service is made mandatory for Dutch citizens in the Indies.

1924

Perserikatan Komunis di Hindia changes to Partai Komunis Indonesia, decides to turn to revolt. Musso joins PKI.

"Sarekat Hijau" organized by Dutch, members are pro-Dutch local officials, criminals, police, etc.

Dr. Sutomo founds Indonesian Study Club.

First airmail service from Batavia to Amsterdam. The flight takes almost two months.

Central Malaria Bureau is founded to coordinate eradication programs.

1925

New constitution: Council of the Indies becomes advisory, Volksraad gets limited legislative powers, Governor-General and bureaucracy are unaffected. Chinese are officially defined under "vreemde oosterlingen".

Membership in the Volksraad is set at 60: 30 Dutch, 25 Indonesians, and 5 members of either Arab or Chinese descent.

PKI-led strikes fail, Tan Malaka is in Singapore.

Sukarno founds pro-independence General Studies Club in Bandung, advocates unity.

September 23 Jong Islamieten Bond is founded in Jakarta; members include Haji Agus Salim and Mohammed Natsir.

Film censorship is instituted.

First commercial radio station in Batavia.

December PKI leaders meet at Prambanan to plan open rebellion.

1926

Dutch arrest more PKI members; Musso goes to Singapore. PKI receives instructions from Moscow to start a revolt, then cancels the instructions. Musso keeps the second instructions (the instructions not to revolt) secret.

January 31 Committee of Islamic

Prominent Communists in this period included:

Sneevliet, a Dutchman, who originally introduced Communism to Indonesia.

Tan Malaka who was not an unquestioning supporter of Moscow and Stalin, but was later executed by ABRl in 1949. He was exiled from Indonesia from 1924 to 1944.

Musso led the PKI during the 1920s, and again during the 1940s independence struggle. He was a strong supporter of Stalin and the Communist International in Moscow, and spent the years 1936-1948 in the Soviet Union. He was executed by the Republic of Indonesia army in the wake of the Madiun incident of 1948.

Semaun who had been an early figure in Sarekat Islam.

Darsono who later renounced Communism.

In 1924, the Islamic caliphate ended, an event which caused much debate and concern in Islamic communities.

Also around this time, the economy in Europe was very poor.



The Governor's Palace at Buitenzorg (now Bogor), flying a Dutch flag. This was used by the Netherlands Indies government from 1870 until 1942. (Years later, Sukarno used it as a Presidential retreat.)



Officials of the PKI in Batavia, 1925.

The 1926 unrest was the first of three ill-advised, unsuccessful revolts by the PKI. The second was in 1948 at Madiun, the third was in 1965.

After these revolts, Communist activity lessened greatly or went underground. Many leftist leaders, including Tan Malaka and Musso, spent years overseas. Within a few years, the mass movements were gone, and instead the Communist presence consisted of a few cadre who were mostly loyal to orthodox Marxism and Stalin's Soviet Union.

scholars meets in Surabaya to send a delegation to Saudi Arabia to protest conditions for Indonesian pilgrims on the hajj. (This committee would later form the nucleus of Nahdlatul Ulama.)

November 12 PKI revolts in Banten, Batavia, Bandung, Padang. PKI declares a republic. Revolt is crushed by the Dutch, who make over 13,000 arrests. Tan Malaka opposes revolt.

Sukarno gets engineering degree in Bandung.

Sukarno publishes series of articles "Nationalism, Islam and Marxism", calling for cooperation between the three movements.

De Graeff is Gov.-Gen. until 1931.

December 31 Kyai Haji Hasjim Asjari founds Nahdlatul Ulama, a Muslim organization dedicated to schools, charity, and economic help.

1927

January PKI revolts in West Sumatra are destroyed.

February Hatta and others attend anti-colonial convention in Brussels along with many nationalists from Asia and Africa.

July 4 Sukarno and Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo found the Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia (PNI).

September Hatta, Ali Sastroamidjojo and others in Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Indonesia are arrested.

Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo is arrested and sent to internal exile on Banda. He remains in exile for 11 years.

Netherlands Indies builds Boven Digul prison camp in West Irian to house political prisoners.

Anti-narcotics campaign: Netherlands Indies bans the cultivation of coca and hemp.

December PPPKI umbrella group of nationalist organizations (Permufakatan Perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia) is organized in Bandung.

1928

PNI changes name to Partai Nasional Indonesia, adopts merah-putih flag, Bahasa Indonesia as national language, "Indonesia Raya" by Supratman as national anthem.

March Hatta and supporters are acquitted; Hatta's speeches are convincingly anti-Dutch.

October 28 Youth Congress in Batavia adopts "sumpah pemuda": one nation, one language.

Muhammad Yamin writes poems "Indonesia tumpah darahku".

KNILM is founded as official airline of the Netherlands Indies.

Perti (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah) is founded at Bukittinggi as an educational organization for traditionalist Minangkabau Muslims.

1929



Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo was an early activist for Indonesian independence and helped found the PNI party with Sukarno.

The Dutch used the communist unrest as an excuse to arrest many Indonesian leaders who were not communists.

Sukarno in these days was a strong nationalist. He said that "neither an airplane from Moscow nor a caliph in Istanbul" could help Indonesia win independence—they had to do it themselves. On the other hand, the PPPKI group that Sukarno championed allowed groups with various regional, religious, or political backgrounds to unite around the single issue of Indonesian independence.



100 Gulden Netherlands Indies banknote, 1927, showing a portrait of Jan Pieterszoon Coen.



Pakubuwono X of Surakarta poses with Gov.-Gen. de Graeff (center) in 1928.

Many people see this time as the real beginning of Indonesian nationalism, the "kebangkitan bangsa" or "national awakening".

August Netherlands Indies government warns PNI members to stop their activities.

Indonesians gain a majority of seats in the Volksraad, still only an advisory body.

Dutch restore former rulers of Bali to local self-rule under Dutch authority, in an elaborate ceremony at Besakih.

December 29 Sukarno and followers are arrested at Yogya. They are held in prison at Bandung.



Supratman wrote "Indonesia Raya", which was adopted by the PNI in 1928 as the national anthem for the future Indonesia, and is still Indonesia's anthem today.

1930

Muhammad H Thamrin sets up nationalist faction in Volksraad; wants autonomy.

Netherlands Indies government begins limited production of light aircraft at Andir airfield in Bandung (model AVRO-AL), using a Canadian design and local wood supplies.

June Pangeran Surjodiningrat founds Pakempalan Kawula Ngayogyakarta as a cultural organization for the people of Yogya, which becomes very popular.

August 18 Trial of Sukarno opens in Bandung. He gives rousing speeches in court.

Japanese found Borneo Oil Company.

Eruption of Gunung Merapi kills 1300.

Jamiyatul Washliyah is founded with strong Karo Batak participation.

22 December Sukarno is sentenced to four years in prison for nationalist activities.

PNI is declared dissolved by the Netherlands Indies government.

Around this time the effects of the worldwide economic depression began to hit. Exports of sugar and other cash crops to industrial nations dropped, and Japanese imports grew. There was some growth of industry in the cities in the 1930s as well, which was supported by the Netherlands Indies government as a counter to Japanese imports.

1931

Perhimpunan Indonesia is taken over by Communists; Sjahrir and Hatta are expelled.

April 25 PNI votes to dissolve itself. Partai Indonesia or Partindo is organized as a replacement four days later. Some PNI members, including Hatta, are disappointed.

December Sjahrir founds Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia with Hatta ("PNI-Baru").

Sukarno released by de Graeff.

King of Bone is restored by the Dutch to govern with local self-rule.

De Jonge is Gov.-Gen. until 1936.

Netherlands Indies government tightens press censorship.

Ong Hok Liong founds the Bentoel cigarette company.

December 31 Sukarno gains early release from prison in Bandung.

Some important Dutch figures in Batavia were actually sympathetic to Sukarno during this period, including Van Mook, who wrote an anonymous newspaper article criticizing the treatment of Sukarno by the government. (Van Mook later served as Lieutenant-Governor of the Indies from 1945-48, during the independence struggle.)



"Ladang": land being cleared for slash-and-burn cultivation near Palembang, 1930s.

1932

Sukarno joins Partindo; interest in Partindo rises.

August Hatta returns from the Netherlands.

Mohammed Natsir, age 24, takes charge of new Persatuan Islam schools, writes that Islam must be the basis of the new Indonesia.

Dutch require independent schools to get permission from the

government to operate; factions in the Volksraad unite against the idea.



Nederlands-Indië: Zelfbesturen

Areas under Zelfbesturen in the 1930s are in dark blue
Information is adapted from Cribb, "Historical Dictionary of Indonesia"

Zelfbesturen

"Zelfbesturen" were areas where the Netherlands Indies government allowed local rulers to govern the internal affairs of their lands. Local rulers did not have power beyond their borders, and they generally did not have jurisdiction over Europeans or Chinese living in their territories.

1933

February 5 Mutiny of Dutch and Indonesian sailors on the Dutch naval vessel Zeven Provinciën. The mutiny was due to unhappiness with low wages, but the Netherlands Indies government views it as a political rebellion.

Netherlands Indies suppresses independent schools and political leaders in Minangkabau.

August Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir are arrested. Sukarno is exiled to Ende on Flores without a trial.

Oost-Indische Leger is renamed KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger).

Meetings of the PPPKI umbrella group are banned.

1934

Dutch begin protectionist drive to keep out less expensive Japanese products in favor of more expensive Dutch ones.

Dutch pressure PKN to renounce overt political activity.

February Hatta and Sjahrir are arrested and sent to the Boven Digul concentration camp in West Irian.

Dutch ban congress of Partindo.

Nahdlatul Ulama youth wing, Ansor, is founded.

Tjokroaminoto passes away.

1935

Al-Ittihadiyah (modernist Islamic association) founded at Medan.

Nahdlatul Wathan, an organization for Islamic education, is founded on Lombok.

Nahdlatul Ulama issues a ruling that the Netherlands Indies is a nation where Islam can be practiced, and should be defended against Japan.



Street vendor in Batavia, 1935.

December Budi Utomo and Persatuan Bangsa Indonesia combine to form Partai Indonesia Raya or Parindra. Membership includes Thamrin and Dr. Sutomo; it also includes some pro-Japan members. The new party calls for

independence through cooperation with the Dutch.

1936

Van Starckenborgh is named Governor-General; holds title at least until 1945.

Hatta and Sjahrir are moved to Banda.

July "Sutarjo Petition" is published, calling for independence for Indonesia within ten years.

September 29 Volksraad votes to support petition for autonomy for Indonesia within the constitution of the Netherlands.

First becaks in Batavia.

November Partindo disbands.

Dutch geologists discover evidence of mineral wealth--iron, copper, silver, and gold--in West Irian.



Dutch pilots of KNILM, the colonial airline, in the late 1930s. Indonesians had almost no opportunity to rise to jobs at this level.

In 1937, a group of young Indonesian men in Bandung led by Tossin, and supported by a local businessman, built a homemade airplane called the PK-KKH. In the face of heavy skepticism, the plane safely made a transcontinental flight to the Netherlands, China and back.



Stacks of rice ready to be threshed and milled, Lampung, 1930s. In the 1930s, there was increased promotion of agricultural techniques to increase yield and control soil erosion, particularly on Java, where larger populations needed better food supplies.

By this time, half of the agricultural exports of Indonesia came from Indonesian-owned lands, rather than Dutch or other foreign-owned plantations. In 1900, almost none of the agricultural exports came from Indonesian-owned lands.

1937

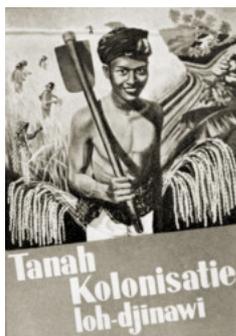
May 24 Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia founded: Gerindo. It includes Yamin and Amir Sjarifuddin. As an organization it supports independence, but tends to cooperate with the Dutch against the Japanese.

September 21 MIAI founded: Majelis Islam A'laa Indonesia, umbrella group for cooperation between Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Persatuan Islam, and other Islamic groups.

December 17 Antara news service founded.



Javanese settlers boarding a bus to a new transmigration colony in Lampung, late 1930s. After about 1936, the Netherlands Indies government increased its sponsorship of transmigration activity dramatically in an attempt to relieve population densities on Java and Madura. Propaganda booklets were published and distributed, free films were shown in villages, and the programs were extended to include Sulawesi and Kalimantan as well as Sumatra. Despite the extra efforts, the number of transmigrants leaving Java in the 1930s equalled less than 10% of the increase in population during the same time.



"Colonization Land is Rich"
A propaganda postcard distributed to transmigrants by the Netherlands Indies government. The settlers were supposed to write messages back to their home villages on Java telling about the "good life" in the new transmigration colonies. By 1940 there were about 200,000 Javanese living in transmigration colonies.

1938

Sukarno, still under Dutch custody, is moved to Bengkulu.

First outsiders reach Baliem Valley on Irian Jaya.

Dutch hold council of Tapanuli to support Batak local rulers.

Netherlands Indies institutes "adat law" in Minangkabau and Banjarmasin.

Moscow tells PKI to stop anti-Dutch activities.

Persatuan Arab Indonesia formed from existing Arab Muslim organizations.

November 16 Netherlands government rejects the 1936 autonomy petition for Indonesia.



Gov.-Gen. A.W.L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh-Stachouwer, the last full Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies. (Van Mook would only be named Lieutenant Governor after the war.) Van Starkenborgh was forced to surrender the Indies to Japanese forces in March 1942, and was sent to Korea as a prisoner of war.

By the late 1930s, the Dutch were building up their defenses at Surabaya, Amboina, Cilacap and other bases, in apprehension of Japanese expansion in the area. Yet, the Dutch resisted arming Indonesians for defense purposes.

1939

Pakubuwono X of Surakarta passes away, Pakubuwono XI is new Susuhunan.

Pakubuwono X was a huge man, very much loved by the people of Surakarta, who predicted that after his rule there would be no more like him.

Japanese occupy Spratly Islands.

May PUSA (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh) is founded by Muhammad Da'ud Beureueh to coordinate anti-Dutch activities in Aceh.



Telegraph office in Batavia, late 1930s.

Gabungan Politik Indonesia or GAPI is formed, an umbrella group of nationalist organizations. Thamrin is a major promoter.

Kartosuwirjo and followers split from Partai Sarekat Islam, taking much of its support in West Java with them.

December GAPI organizes Kongres Rakyat Indonesia, a large representative meeting in Batavia, which presents the demand for full elected parliament for the Indies.

1940

February Dutch again reject autonomy for the Indies.

February 13 Japan repudiates treaty of arbitration with the Netherlands.

March 18 Hamengkubuwono IX becomes Sultan of Yogya.

May Netherlands falls to Germany, Dutch government flees to London.

Sosrodjojo family in Slawi, Central Java, begin selling tea as Teh Wangi Melati. The company would later grow into PT Sinar Sosro.

