

## **Madjlis Ahli Soennah Garoet: Local Islamic Puritanism Movement and Its Roles in West Java during the Colonialism Era of 1926 – 1942**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses the local Islamic puritanism movement in Tatar Sunda (West Java), namely Madjlis Ahli Soennah (MAS) Garoet. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union or PERSIS) largely focused on organization with A. Hassan Bandung as its central figure and neglected local organizations. However, local organizations, such as MAS Garoet, similarly have significant roles in spreading the puritanism ideas in West Java. This study employed a combination of library research and in-depth interviews with social-scientific history to describe the MAS Garoet organization and its efforts to spread the puritanism ideas in West Java. This study aims to reveal the relationship between MAS Garoet and PERSIS because both had a similar ideology. It shows that MAS Garoet more effectively spread the Islamic puritanism ideas because most of its leading figures were native Sundanese who spoke Sundanese language fluently. PERSIS showed the opposite condition because the majority were non-Sundanese. Therefore, MAS Garoet served as an extension of PERSIS whose ideas were translated and spread to all areas of West Java.

**Keywords:** Madjlis Ahli Soennah (MAS) Garoet, Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), Puritanism Movement, West Java

### **Introduction**

The study on Islamic puritanism in Indonesia has been extensively conducted by Islamic scholars and Indonesianists.<sup>1</sup> On the topic of the Islamic puritanism movement in West Java, Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), an organization established in Bandung on September 12, 1923, is the most cited.<sup>2</sup> From the Dutch colonization era to the arrival of the Japanese in 1942, PERSIS was yet a large organization. It became popular due to the reformism views of its figures, not due to its organization.<sup>3</sup> Its leading figures were Ahmad Hassan (1887-1958), Mohammad Natsir (1908-1993), and M. Isa Anshary (1916-1969) whose thoughts and ideas were disseminated on books, newspapers, and magazines.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to PERSIS, there were some local Islamic organizations in West Java with similar ideas to those of PERSIS: puritan and radical ideas. One of the local organizations was Madjlis Ahli Soennah Garoet. This organization, as its name suggested, was established in Garut regency at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The literature written in 1930s stated that this organization was often referred to as MAS Garoet or MAS.<sup>5</sup> While PERSIS was nurtured by the majority of Sumatran people who resided in Bandung, MAS Garoet was established by native Sundanese or Sunda *pituin*, the leading figures of Islamic schools in Garut Regency.<sup>6</sup> Different backgrounds between these two organizations had further consequences on their characteristics. They had different organizational characteristics and movements. Their founding fathers and leading figures were also different. MAS figures were mostly *ajengan* (*kiai*

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<sup>1</sup> The most classical study on this topic is written by Deliar Noer (1972), *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. For more contemporary study see Howard M Federspiel (2002), "Modernist Islam in Southeast Asia: A New Examination," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 92, No. 3-4, pp. 371-86. See also Hyung-Jun Kim (2007), *Reformist Muslims in a Yogyakarta Village: The Islamic Transformation of Contemporary Socio-Religious Life*, Canberra: The Australian National University Press.

<sup>2</sup> M Isa Anshary (1956), *Manifest Perjuangan Persatoean Islam*, Bandung: PP Persatoean Islam, p. 7; PP Persatuan Islam (1968), *Qanun Asasi dan Qanun Dakhili Persatuan Islam*, Bandung: Sekretariat PP PERSIS, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Howard M Federspiel (2001), *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (Persis) 1923 to 1957*, Leiden-Boston-Koln: Brill, p. ix.

<sup>4</sup> The PERSIS figures' thoughts were not monolithic, see Pepen Irpan Fauzan dan Ahmad Khoirul Fata (2019), "Portraying Political Polarization In Persatuan Islam in The Case of Mohamad Natsir Vs Isa Anshari," *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 205-32.

<sup>5</sup> See *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 02, Agustus 1930, p. 1; See also *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No. 24, March 1932, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> See *Al-Hidajatoel Islamijah* magazine, No 1, 20 March 1931, pp. 4-5.

or traditional Islamic scholars),<sup>7</sup> while PERSIS figures were merchants and *ulama* (Islamic theologians) from the middle-class of urban people.<sup>8</sup>

*Ajengan* in Sundanese is derived from the word *ajeng*, which means honored. Thus, *ajengan* means an honored or referred person. This title is reserved for elite religious scholars in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and shows Sunda-Priangan people's deep respect for those who establish Pesantren in their regions.<sup>9</sup> This honorary title is also bestowed on the descendants of *Ajengan*. The son of *Ajengan* is called *Aceng* or *Ceng*, and his daughter is called "Nyimas". Iskandar explains that the title of *ajengan* in Priangan (West Java) implies deeper respect than the title of *kiai*.<sup>10</sup>

Within this framework, the significance of the research on the local Islamic reformation movement in Garut was carried out. To date, no research has specifically discussed MAS Garoet. Available literature only discusses MAS Garoet debating traditional scholars in West Java during the Dutch Colonization era. Kunto Sofianto studied the History of Garut City from the Dutch colonization era to the Early Independence Days (1935-1965) and did not even mention this organization.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Hiroko Horikoshi investigated the role of *kiai* in social transformation processes in Garut and briefly described several *Ajengan* people in Garut.<sup>12</sup>

A crucial study by Mohammad Iskandar discussed MAS Garut in large proportion. His book refers MAS as Majelis Ahli Sunnah Cilame (MASC). However, its main topic was related to the thoughts of the Ulama in West Java during the Dutch oppression time. Thus, this book did not comprehensively discuss the characteristics of MASC.<sup>13</sup> Miftahul Falah also followed Iskandar by referring to this reformists' movement in Garut as MASC. He described the existence of MASC debating KH. Ahmad Sanusi. He largely discusses the biography of KH. Ahmad Sanusi.<sup>14</sup> The debate between reformists Ulama versus traditionalists Ulama during the Dutch oppression time was examined by Agung Purnama<sup>15</sup> and, more contemporarily, Jajang A. Rohmana.<sup>16</sup> MASC was also briefly discussed but only in the debate context.

To date, there has been insufficient investigation on this reformist organization, founded by *Sundanese Ajengan* and concentrating in Cilame, Wanaraja, Garut. Therefore, an in-depth and comprehensive investigation of this Sundanese puritanism organization is critical. Moreover, it is important to note that Sundanese reformists had different characteristics from other more renowned reformist organizations in the community. Hence, this investigation becomes more critical.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ajengan* is the religious title within the Sundanese community and is similar to *kiai* within the Javanese community. This special title reflects the distinguished position of that religious figure, compared to the title of *ulama* or *ustadz*, among the communities in Java. See Zamakhsyari Dhofier (1980), "The Pesantren Tradition: A Study of the Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of the Traditional Ideology of Islam in Java," PhD Thesis, Australian National University, pp. 67–68. Specifically in West Java, see Chaider S. Bamualim (2015), "Negotiating Islamisation and Resistance: A Study of Religions, Politics and Social Change In West Java From the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present", Leiden University, pp. 18–19.

<sup>8</sup> The association was founded by several Muslims to enlarge discussions on religious topics that had been undertaken on an informal basis for several months. They came from a merchant class and three family groups who had migrated for the last two—generations for trade, from the Palembang region on Sumatra to the West Java area where they had come to regard themselves as Sundanese, the dominant ethnic group in the West Java region. The two leading figures in these discussions were H. M. Zamzam and H. Muhammad Junus. H. Zamzam had spent three and a half years studying in the Middle East and then had been a teacher at the Darul Muta'allimin religious school in Bandung about 1910. H. Muhammad Junus, a merchant, was interested in religious matters and had collected a small library of works on Islam. See Federspiel (2001), *Islam and Ideology*, pp. 84.

<sup>9</sup> Ading Kusdiana (2014), *Sejarah Pesantren: Jejak, Penyebaran dan Jaringannya di Wilayah Priangan 1800-1945*, Bandung: Humaniora, pp. 114–15. See also Pepen Irpan Fauzan & Ahmad Khoiril Fata (2019), "Jaringan Pesantren di Jawa Barat 1800-1945; Critical Review atas Disertasi Jaringan Pesantren di Priangan 1800-1945 Karya Ading Kusdiana," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 139–68.

<sup>10</sup> In Sukabumi region (West Priangan), for instance, the title *kiai* is often used in negative connotation. As this, *kiai* is considered an acronym for "kulit kia dina kai," or buffalo skin attached to wood or beduk, a drum in masjid to notify the incoming praying time. This means that the *kiai* only talks/makes sound when people urge/beat him." See Mohamad Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah: Pergulatan Pemikiran Ulama di Jawa Barat 1900-1945*, Yogyakarta: Mata Bangsa, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> See Kunto Sofianto (2000), *Garoet Kota Intan*, Jatinangor: Alqaprint.

<sup>12</sup> Hiroko Horikoshi (1987), *Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial*, Jakarta: P3M, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, pp. 170–75.

<sup>14</sup> Miftahul Falah (2009), *Riwayat Perjuangan KH. Ahmad Sanusi*, Bandung: MSI Cabang Jawa Barat, pp. 67–68.

<sup>15</sup> Agung Purnama, Nina H Lubis & Widyonugrahanto (2017), "Pergulatan Pemikiran Kiai Nahdlatul Ulama Dengan Kaum Modernis Islam di Jawa Barat (1930-1937)," *Patanjala*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 309–24.

<sup>16</sup> Jajang A Rohmana (2017), "Polemik Keagamaan Dalam Tafsir Malja' At-Tālibīn Karya K.H. Ahmad Sanusi," *Jurnal Suhuf*, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 33.

## Research Method

This study was a qualitative descriptive study, which combined library research and an in-depth interview with key informants. This study employed historical research procedures with a social-scientific historical approach.<sup>17</sup>

### West Java at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The Sundanese Ulama's Debates between Reformist vis-à-vis Traditionalist

The majority of the population in West Java is Sundanese and behaves like the Sundanese in general.<sup>18</sup> They are dry and wet-field farmers, like most of the Javanese people. They live in harmony with nature. Therefore, it is unsurprising that they practice rituals related to nature.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the culture in West Java is portrayed as a religious Sundanese community. Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Islamic social integration was evidently strong, but syncretism between Islamic teaching and *adat-karuhun* (the ancestral practices of the Sundanese) still existed. This phenomenon was a common religious situation in Sundanese Priangan, even in Nusantara.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, this phenomenon has been practiced for a long time. When Sunan Gunung Djati, the founder of Cirebon Sultanate, and one of the *Wali Songo* started to teach Islam in Tatar Sunda, the task of spreading the Islamic teaching was performed by *kiai* or *ajengan*. They are an Islamic honorary title bestowed to an Islamic scholar and charismatic leader spreading the Islamic teaching as of the legacy of Sunan Gunung Djati.<sup>21</sup> In the past, each *kiai* who taught their students or *santri* had to reside within a *pesantren* institution. *Kiai/Ajengan* and *pesantren* became the center of Islamic tradition within the Tatar Sunda. This tradition brought political, social, cultural, and legal changes. The changes influenced common people and the *menak* (elites) of Sunda. In relation to this, Nina H. Lubis states: "The kaum menak not only adopted Islam as a religion but also implemented Islamic values into their social and political lives. Therefore, it was noted that the kaum menak were closely related to the Islamic traditions based in *pesantren*."<sup>22</sup>

Islamic law made the community practice Islamic law. Thus, the Sundanese culture experienced acculturation of Islamic law and customary law.<sup>23</sup> This change was creativity of the Sundanese community in Tatar Sunda to provide a unique view on Islamic world. The *kiai* or *ajengan*, according to Ekajati, were central figures significantly contributing to harmonizing Islam with Sundanese culture.<sup>24</sup> *Kiai* or *ajengan* were respected figures in West Java. The *santri* or students in *pesantren* community, whose characteristics were strongly influenced by the shari'a practices, were the main references of piety for the Sundanese community in Tatar Sunda.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, their deep knowledge about sharia and high tolerance toward traditions likely influenced the religious syncretism in the Sundanese Muslim community at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bamualim argues, "...that previous non-Islamic practices strongly inspired by custom are essential for Sundanese people's life."<sup>26</sup>

This condition encouraged the Sundanese Ulama to involve in the debate about Islamic teaching purification and its reformation, generally known as *tajdid*, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> The

<sup>17</sup> On social-scientific historical approach see Peter Burke (1993), *History and Social Theory*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

<sup>18</sup> See Ajip Rosidi (2009), *Manusia Sunda*, Bandung: Kiblat.

<sup>19</sup> The Sundanese are closely tied to their environment, where they complement each other. Human need to adapt with their environment (*kudu pindah cai, pindah tampian*) because each environment is different (*ciri sabumi cara sadesa; jawadah tutung biritna; sacarana-sacarana*). Things within the environment must be preserved, but should not be worshiped (*urang kudu mupusti, tapi lain migusti*). The Sundanese proverbs largely contain the local wisdom values. For further reference see the presentation of Wagiaty and Sugeng Riyanto (2015), "Peribahasa Sunda sebagai Sumber Kearifan Lokal," Paperwork, International Conference on Language, Culture, and Society, Jakarta.

<sup>20</sup> G. F. Pijper (1987), *Fragmenta Islamica: Beberapa Studi Mengenai Sejarah Islam Di Indonesia Awal Abad XX*, Jakarta: UI Press, pp. 1–51 & 129–50.

<sup>21</sup> Nina H Lubis (2011), *Sejarah Perkembangan Islam di Jawa Barat*, Bandung: Yayasan Masyarakat Sejarawan Indonesia Cabang Jawa Barat, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Nina H Lubis (2003), "Religious Thoughts and Practices of the Kaum Menak: Strengthening Traditional Power," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> See Hasan Mustapa (1991), *Adat-Istiadat Sunda*, Bandung: Alumi.

<sup>24</sup> Edi S. Ekajati (1984), *Kebudayaan Sunda: Suatu Pendekatan Sejarah*, Jilid I, Jakarta: Girimukti Pustaka, p. 142. Compare with Clifford Geertz who wrote that *kiai* is cultural bridge between *pesantren* and the "outside world". He serves as a cultural broker that filters the stream of outside culture into the lives of the local Muslim community. See Clifford Geertz (1960), "The Javanese Kijaji: the Changing Roles of a Cultural Broker," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 2, pp. 220–49.

<sup>25</sup> Horikoshi (1987), *Kyai dan Perubahan*, pp. 114–47.

<sup>26</sup> Bamualim (2015), "Negotiating Islamisation and Resistance..." p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> See *Bendera Islam* magazine, 6 April 1926.

roots of the religious reform movement in Indonesia and also in West Java can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as a result of the intellectual relations of the archipelago's students with the Middle Eastern Ulamas.<sup>28</sup> Believers' attitudes toward Islam received new impetus in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and shortly thereafter when pilgrims and students returned from the Middle East. They initiated a fresh wave of enthusiasm. Howard M. Federspiel said that one of those returning with new enthusiasm was a sizeable group impressed with the teachings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, who advocated Pan-Islamism and Islamic Modernism.<sup>29</sup> Federspiel explains:

...the modernists attacked mysticism aspects and regarded them as excessive and non-Islamic aspects. They believed that certain practices in ritual worship were accretions to orthodox practices, and the schools of jurisprudence were the final authority to Muslim behavior (taqlid). However, traditional religious scholars vehemently opposed this modernist activity. Many of them had studied in Makkah, did not accept the advocated reformist notions, and regarded the modernists as emasculating Islamic teachings by de-emphasizing the interpretations of classical and medieval theologians and jurists. The traditionalists responded that the subserviently political and social positions of Muslims in the world were caused by their failure to follow the prescriptions of Islam as laid down by four schools of jurisprudence.<sup>30</sup>

The dispute between the modernists and traditionalists had no early resolution; as modernists' ideas gradually spread throughout Indonesia during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the struggle between the two groups continued in every region.<sup>31</sup> Iskandar argues that the modernist organization Syarekat Islam (SI) was officially established in several areas of West Java in 1913. Many Sundanese traditional *kiai* and ulama initially supported SI because they regarded that SI's fight was compatible with their expectation. In the beginning, the main orientation of the SI movement was more on political dimensions than religious thought and worship practices; therefore, there was no conflict between modernist ulamas and traditionalist ulamas in local SI in West Java.<sup>32</sup> However, the situation became different when SI suffered a setback in West Java due to the farmer radicalization in Garut, East Priangan in 1919; the incident was known as SI Afdeeling B rebellion.<sup>33</sup>

Iskandar described that this incident was the beginning of a confrontation between Sundanese traditional *kiai* and ulama on one hand and reformist ulama on the other.<sup>34</sup> The confrontation was initiated by the Cimareme-Garut incident and was frequently used by Sundanese reformist groups to show the mistakes of traditional *kiai* and ulama to develop Islamic communities in West Java.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes, reformist groups referred to traditional Sundanese *kiai* and ulama as religious sellers, prayer brokers, and amulet sellers for their benefits. As a result, there was mutual ridicule between supporters of reformists and traditionalists.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See Azyumardi Azra (2004), *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, p. 146-47.

<sup>29</sup> The thinking of these two reformers maintained that "return to the teachings of Qur'an and Hadith" would revitalize Islam and that Muslims from all nations should unite in a single religiopolitical community. This set of teachings came to be known as Islamic modernism and was spread to nearly every corner of the Muslim world over twenty-five years through periodicals and returning pilgrims. See Federspiel (2001), *Islam, and Ideology*, pp. 26.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27.

<sup>31</sup> On Islamic reformation movement in Indonesia in the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Rifki Abror Ananda and Ahmad Khoiril Fata (2018), "Sejarah Pembaruan Islam di Indonesia," *Jawi*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 19–40.

<sup>32</sup> Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, p. 135-37.

<sup>33</sup> For the study of the "SI Afdeling B" incident in Cimareme, Garut Regency, see Sartono Kartodirdjo (1984), *Ratu Adil*, Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, pp. 77–78.

<sup>34</sup> Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, p. 152.

<sup>35</sup> See *Kaoem Moeda* no. 42, 18 Februari 1924.

<sup>36</sup> In Bandung, for example, a *kiai*, who was exposed to such innuendo as "Ajengan Penjual Agama" (ulama who sells religion for his benefits), brought his intruder to court in December 1925 because his reputation was defamed. See *Kaoem Moeda* no. 274, 2 Desember 1925.

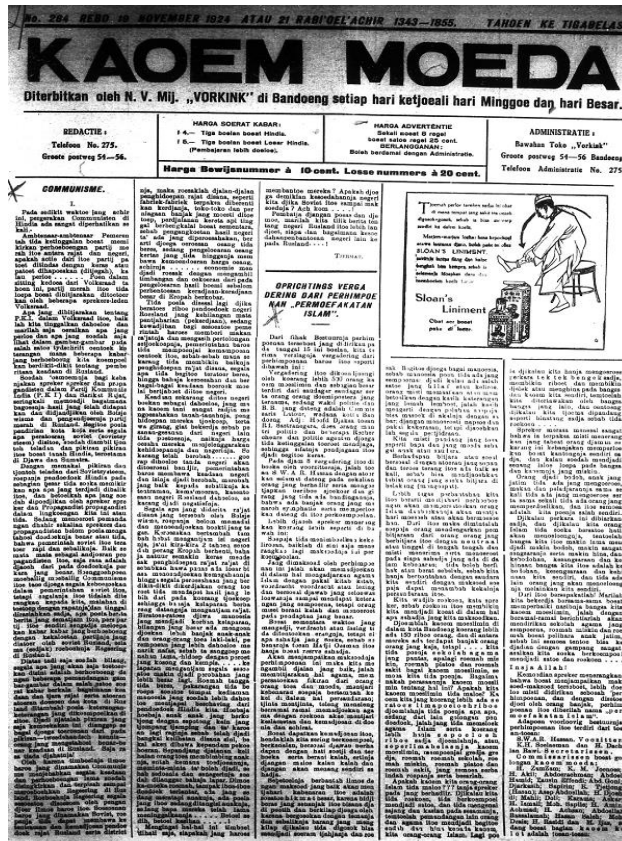


Figure 1: News on the polarization between traditionalists and reformists of Islamic groups in Bandung in which the Permufakatan Islam Organization strived for unity in November 1924  
Source: The *Kaoem Moeda* newspaper, 19 November 1924, p. 1.

The disunity between the reformists and traditionalists became clearer after the Al-Islam Congress in Cirebon in 1922. Shortly thereafter, in September 1923, a radical reformist organization, namely Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), was established in Bandung. Although its chairman was H. M. Zamzam (1894-1952), the PERSIS's reputation was mainly due to its three main figures: H. M. Munawar Khalil (1908-1981), H. Mahmud Aziz, and A. Hassan (1887-1958). The Sundanese figures of PERSIS were KH E. Abdurrahman (1912-1983) and KH E. Abdullah (1918-1994) who were students of A. Hassan. They most frequently gave religious fatwas, especially in monthly magazines, such as *Pembela Islam* (1929-1935), *Al-Fatwa* (1931-1933), and *Al-Lisan* (1935-1942). These magazines disseminated religious-reform ideas of the PERSIS, as Akh. Minhaji deploys, “*PERSIS aimed to provoke war against taqlid (imitation), bid’ah (innovation), and khurâfat (superstition) and, at the same time, promote the importance of ijihad and the policy of returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah.*”<sup>37</sup>

Hassan’s fatwas on Islamic law issues cover almost all aspects of problems encountered by Muslims in daily life, such as the ritual, political, social, and economic spheres.<sup>38</sup> One of the worship issues criticized by Hassan was *talaffuz bi al-niyah* problem. This concept referred to a practice in which people pronounced their *niyyah* (intention) verbally at the beginning of certain *ibâdât* (worship) practices, such as *shalâh* (prayer), *sawm* (fasting), *zakâh* (alms-tax), etc. This paper refers especially to the *niyyah* (intention) stated before prayer because it is the most common issue debated by Indonesians, including the Sundanese ulamas in West Java.<sup>39</sup> *Niyyah* is recited before the *takbîrat al-ihrâm* at the beginning of the prayer. In Priangan, this practice is popularly known as reciting the phrase *usalli*, which means I intentionally pray. Sundanese Muslims had performed this practice since the coming of Islam in Tatar Sunda. Therefore, this practice was recommended to practice. Minhaji asserts: “...however, reformers regarded the practice of reciting the phrase *usalli* as an unforgivable *bid’ah* (innovation).

<sup>37</sup> Akh Minhaji (2000), “Islamic Reform in Contest: Ahmad Hassan and His Traditionalist Opponents,” *Studia Islamika: Indonesia Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 95.  
<sup>38</sup> See A. Hassan (1968), *Sual-Jawab Tentang Berbagai Masalah Agama*, Bandung: Diponegoro.  
<sup>39</sup> Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, p. 207-212.

Consequently, Muslims were thrown into confusion. Among those condemned by the traditionalists was Hassan. They labeled him as anti-usalli and accused him of propagating a strange fatwa.<sup>40</sup>

Certainly, the traditionalists made every effort to counter this challenge from the reformists. Nonetheless, most, if not all of them, failed to present a single Quranic or Sunnah text in supporting the practice of *usalli*. In general, the traditionalists based their ideas on earlier jurists' writings, particularly those belonging to the *Shafi'i* school. The four jurisprudence schools had also become the main subject of debates between these two groups. For reformers, following the four Imams (schools of jurisprudence) was similar to *taqlid*, and it was forbidden in Islam.<sup>41</sup>

*Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) branches in West Java fought against the reformists. They debated the issue of *talqîn*, *tahlîl*, and *sidkah* for people who had died, and this debate took place in Cirebon in June 1932. The next debate took place in Tasikmalaya, East Priangan, in March 1935 and questioned the necessity of *ijtihâd* and the prohibition of *taqlîd* to the four jurisprudence schools. The NU branch with PERSIS in Bandung in November 1935 debated *ijtihâd* and *taqlîd*.<sup>42</sup>

One of the prominent Sundanese Ulamas who became a formidable debate opponent of the reformists was KH Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950) from Sukabumi.<sup>43</sup> He was a founder of *Al-Ittihadijatoel Islamijjah* (AII), which was later changed to the Persatuan Umat Islam (PUI).<sup>44</sup> Sanusi wrote a lot of work on *fiqh*, *tafsîr*, Sufism, theology, and others using Sundanese Pegon script. His work was motivated by the need for developing the scientific tradition of *pesantren* and a response to the socio-religious situation in the 1930s, which was dominated by the demand for reformists to face resistance from traditionalist ulama and the *ménak kaum*.<sup>45</sup>

Sanusi's firmness in maintaining local Islamic traditions was reflected in his efforts to face changing demands of times. Meanwhile, the reformers tended to easily accept changes of the times without reservation even though they often contradicted general opinions of the traditionalists. This suggested a number of consequences for both views when dealing with tradition and change. Traditionalist Muslims were very open in accepting traditions and wary of change. On the other hand, reformists bravely criticized tradition and were open to historical change.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Founding of Madjlis Ahli Soennah (MAS) Garoet**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, another reformist organization besides PERSIS was established in West Java. This Sundanese organization had a similar ideology to that of PERSIS and was not less radical than PERSIS. This organization was called Madjlis Ahli Sunnah Garoet and was often referred to MAS Garoet.<sup>47</sup>

MAS Garoet was established in Garut, West Priangan, in 1926. This organization was established based on a unique background. Meanwhile, the PERSIS organization existed in Bandung and actively criticized the Islamic practices at that time. Several SI figures in Garut felt offended and intended to visit the PERSIS leaders to challenge them in a debate in 1925-1926. However, this debate never happened. Before the *Ajengan* departed to Bandung to debate PERSIS leaders, they had read the articles about the thoughts and ideas of A. Hassan written by the PERSIS leaders. The more they read the articles, the more they understood. The *Ajengan* then turned out to support the reformation movement of PERSIS. The support was unusual because they did not support the PERSIS movement by establishing the PERSIS branch in Garut. However, in 1926 they established a new organization in Garut with a similar ideology to that of PERSIS.

<sup>40</sup> See Akh. Minhaji (1997), "Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia (1887-1958)," PhD Dissertation, Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University, Montreal-Canada, pp. 207.

<sup>41</sup> Akh Minhaji (2000), "Islamic Reform in Contest," pp. 108-09.

<sup>42</sup> For reports on the events of these debates, see Agung Purnama, Nina H Lubis & Widyonugrahanto (2017), "Pergulatan Pemikiran Kiai Nahdlatul Ulama," pp. 313-22.

<sup>43</sup> Besides KH Ahmad Sanusi, among traditional Sundanese ulama who oppose the reformists in West Java include: KH Syafei from Pesantren Pangkalan (Cicurug), KH M. Nahrowi from Pesantren Cantayan, KH. M. Basyuni from Pesantren Nyomplong (Sukabumi Regency), and the others. See Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, p. 214.

<sup>44</sup> On AII (and later PUI), see Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, pp. 176-85.

<sup>45</sup> On KH. Ahmad Sanusi's thoughts and biography, see Miftahul Falah (2009), *Riwayat Perjuangan KH. Ahmad Sanusi*, pp. 11-106.

<sup>46</sup> Jajang A. Rohmana (2017), "Religious Polemic in Tafsir Malja' At-Tālibin of Ahmad Sanusi," *Suhuf*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 25-57.

<sup>47</sup> See *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 02, August 1930.

Since the headquarter of PERSIS was in Pesantren Cilame, in the eastern part of Garut city, it was also known as Madjlis Ahli Sunnah Cilame (MASC).<sup>48</sup> The founders of the MAS Garoet organization were KH Muhammad Anwar Sanusi, KH Yusuf Tauziri, KH M. Romli, KH Abdul Qohar, KH. M. Bakri, KH. Fatah, and Raden H. Sukantawijaya.<sup>49</sup> They were quite diverse. The two central figures were KH M. Zakaria (1860-1942) and KH. M. Anwar Sanusi.<sup>50</sup> KH. R. M. Zakaria, sometimes called KH. Muhammad Ba'ali,<sup>51</sup> was the chairman of Pesantren Cilame, a large pesantren at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was the center of reformistic Islamic teaching purely based on the Quran-Sunnah. KH RM. Zakaria was also a member of *Raad Igama* (marriage officiant) of District Garut. Meanwhile, KH. M. Anwar Sanusi, the SI leader and chairman of Pesantren Biru Tarogong, was the chairman of *Hoofd Bestuur* MAS Garoet.<sup>52</sup> Other central figures of MAS Garoet were as follows:

1. KH Yusuf Tauziri, the family of Mama Zakaria, one of the chairmen of Pesantren Cipari, and the founder of Pesantren Darussalam,
2. KH M. Romli an ulama who led Pesantren Haoerkoening, Kadungora, and
3. Raden H. Sukantawijaya, an important figure in SI Garut and member of *Musyawatul Ulama* of Garut District.<sup>53</sup>

In general, MAS Garoet leaders were important and modernist figures of SI/PSI (the Sarekat Islam Party) Garut.

### **The Role of MAS Garoet in Preaching Reformist Ideas in West Java in 1926-1942**

The leaders of MAS Garoet also wrote their views in books and articles in newspapers and magazines that had a reformist view in the Priangan area to preach their religious reformation views. The articles of KH M. Anwar Sanusi, KH M. Romli and H. AR. Sukantawijaya were often published in *Sipatahoenan and Atikan Rakjat*. The articles discussed two topics: *taqlid* and *bid'ah* (heresy) and garnered strong reactions from the traditional ulama in Priangan, especially from *kiai* in *pesantren* in Sukabumi.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, KH. M. Anwar Sanusi wrote a commentary book of the Quran in Sundanese language, entitled *Gajatoel Bajan (Katjida Pertelana) Tafsir Qur'an Basa Soenda*. This commentary book was published by MAS Garoet in 1928 in five volumes. One year later, KH M. Anwar Sanusi translated the *Tafsir Al-Foerqon*, composed by A. Hassan from PERSIS, from Malay language to Sundanese language, entitled *Tafsir Al-Foerqon Basa Sunda*. This translation work was carried out together with Djoeragan Mh. Djoenaedi.<sup>55</sup>

Mama Zakaria Cilame had also written two *fiqh* books in Arabic, entitled *Tasyqîq alAwhâm* and *Tazâhiq al-Bâthil*. These works were phenomenal at that time and caused a stir among the *kiai* and *santri* in Priangan Barat, Bogor, Karawang, and Batavia. Moreover, the publication of these two books by MAS Garoet created a polemic among the ulama of Priangan. One of them was KH Ahmad Sanusi Sukabumi who was exiled to Batavia. E. Gobe, an *Adviseur voor Inlandshe Zaken* officer of the Dutch colonial government, in an official note number 1103 on July 23, 1929, reported intense debates due to the publication of the books.<sup>56</sup> The harshness of this debate made Mama Zakaria from Cilame receive a terrorizing package containing a snake and frog.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Since 1873, Pesantren Cilame has been widely known. It shared a similar family network of Mama Zakaria with Pesantren Cidewa. The figures sponsored both *pesantren* were KH. Abdul Karim, KH. Syamsudin, KH. Abdullah, and KH. Hasan. See Iim Imadudin (2010), "Peranan Kiai Dan Pesantren Cipari Garut Menghadapi DI/TII (1948-1962)," *Patanjala*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 48-65.

<sup>49</sup> See *Bendera Islam* magazine, 13 May 1926; *Al-Hidajatoel Islamijjah* magazine, March 1930; Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, p. 171.

<sup>50</sup> KH. RM. Zakaria had a *Menak* ancestry from his mother, R. Hj. Fatimah, who had ties to the nobility of the Javanese kingdom. See Horikoshi (1987), *Kiai dan Perubahan*, p. 81-82.

<sup>51</sup> See *al-Hidajatoel Islamijjah*, no. 5, July 1931, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> See *Tjahja Islam*, No 2, August 1930, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> The *Musyawatul Ulama* was initially established in Cianjur, then spread to Garut at the end of December 1924. See *Balatentara Islam* magazine, No 5, 27 December 1924.

<sup>54</sup> See *Al-Hidajatoel-Islamijjah* magazine, No 4, June 1931, pp. 48-51; See also *Al-Hidajatoel-Islamijjah* magazine, No 5, July 1931, pp. 69-71.

<sup>55</sup> Jajang A Rohmana (2014), *Sejarah Tafsir al-Qur'an di Tatar Sunda*, Bandung: Diktis Kemenag RI - Mujahid, p. 88.

<sup>56</sup> Iskandar (2000), *Para Pengemban Amanah*, p. 173.

<sup>57</sup> "Interview with KH. Aceng Zakaria" (Bandung, 27 March 2020).



Another Arabic book of Mama Zakaria was *Tasfiyat al-Zunūn ‘alā Man Tamassak bi al-Udhun*. It vigorously campaigned the jargon of *kembali pada Al-Qur’an dan Sunnah* which means returning to the Quran and Sunnah. Moreover, the book encouraged the society to carry out direct *ijtihād* to the two main sources of Islam and advocated to leave *taqlīd* toward the opinion of ulama. Mama Zakaria’s book had a strong response from traditional Sundanese ulama, such as KH. Tubagus Ahmad Bakri (1846-1975) from Pesantren Sempur, Purwakarta. He wrote the manuscript of *Muzīl al-Majnūn fī Radd Tasfiyat al-Zunūn* exemplified traditional ulama’s work that responded and criticized the Moslem puritanism. Generally, Mama Sempur rejected Mama Zakaria’s puritanism because it did not agree with the religious conditions of society that tended to maintain traditional Islamic doctrines.<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, the MAS Garoet organization had published newspaper, namely *Tjahja Islam* since 1930. The identity of this magazine was boldly written as its motto on the front cover “*Soerat Kabar Agama Islam Madzhab Ahli Soennah Waldjama’ah/the Islamic newspaper that follows the teaching of Ahli Sunnah Wal Djama’ah.*” This newspaper, more correctly the magazine, was initially published in 1930, and its official address was at Soekadana No. 133, Garoet. *Hoofd Redactueur* (editor in chief) of *Thahja Islam* magazine was M. Anwar Sanoesi. Meanwhile, the editorial boards were H. M. Djakaria Kiai Tjilame, H. M. Romli Kiai Haerkoening, and Mh. Toechfah *ustadz* Madjalaja.<sup>59</sup>



Figure 2: The front cover of *Thahja Islam* magazine published by MAS Garoet in 1930  
Source: *Tjahja Islam*, No. 2, August 1930, p. 1

*Thahja Islam*’s front cover described that the religious ideology of the MAS Garoet figures was Islamic puritanism, which aimed to purify Islamic teachings to follow the Quran and Sunnah of the prophet from the valid hadiths. The Quran and hadiths were the parameters to judge religious and cultural practices at that time. Thus, these parameters made their views were different from the common views on the reference used to judge religious practices. This reformist view insisted on directly referencing from the *shahih* (strongly valid) hadiths and neglecting the *dhaif* (weak) hadiths for religious issues, including *fadlail ‘amal*.<sup>60</sup> The religious view of the MAS Garoet was strongly anti-*bid’ah* (heresy). Religious rituals considered this view highly dangerous. It is said:

“*anoe matak bid’ah katjida pisan dipisengitna koe K. Nabi Moehamad SAW sabab bid’ah teh katjida berbahajana, matak ngaroeksak kana Agama jeung qaum Islam, matak ngawoel-ngawoel doenja Islam, jeung matak ngaroentagkeun karadjaan Islam.*”

<sup>58</sup> See Nurfika Arofah (2020), “Muzil Al-Majnun Fi Radd Tasfiyat Al-Zunun By Mama Sempur: Moslem Puritanism in Review,” *International Review of Humanities Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 242–53.

<sup>59</sup> See the cover of *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 2, August 1930.

<sup>60</sup> This was similar to the view of A. Hassan, a PERSIS figure who advised that only authentic hadiths could be used as the source of Islamic law. In addition, these hadiths must not oppose the Quran or other authentic hadiths. On the other hand, weaker hadiths should not be used as legal bases, even only for *fadlail ‘amal* (the benefits of doing good deeds) matters. See A. Hassan (1977), *Soal Jawab*, Bandung: Diponegoro, p. 343.



(The Prophet Mohammad PBUH strongly opposed bid'ah because it was so dangerous, destroyed religion and the ummah, and destructed the Islamic world and community).<sup>61</sup>

In relation to this, MAS Garoet criticized the religious practices of the Sundanese community because they considered those practices as an innovation or *bid'ah* in religion. MAS Garoet's view was based on the Quran.<sup>62</sup> Islam is already perfect; thus, it did not need innovation, addition, or revision from human tradition.<sup>63</sup>

The Islamic magazine often published debates between the MAS Garoet figures and the PERSIS Bandung figures, especially Tuan A. Hassan. Besides, the magazine sometimes published debates between MAS Garoet and Christian figures or the traditionalist ulama. For instance, *Tahja Islam* publication No. 2 of 1930 published an article about the debate between M. Anwar Sanusi and a Dutch Priest. This debate was held at the PERSIS Bandung office. It was further mentioned that the debate involved the holy scriptures of three religions: the Quran, the Bible, and the Tourat.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, in its March Edition of 1932, the *Tjahja Islam* magazine issued the debate between MAS Garoet figures and the traditionalist ulama of Tasikmalaya. The debate was written under the heading of: "*Bagian Debat: Kahatoer Pagoejoeban Goeroe Ngadji Tasikmalaja, sareng para Djoeragan Rengrengan Al-Imtisal.*"<sup>65</sup>

Another edition of *Thahja Islam* reported that MAS Garoet and PERSIS Bandung debated the ulama of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Cirebon. The *Tjahja Islam* magazine No. 28 of 1932 wrote an article entitled "*Ver slag Ringkes Openbare Debat Vergadering Kiai Nahdlatoel Oelama Tjirebon Contra Kiai Modern.*" The NU was represented by KH Abdul Khair, one of the leaders of NU branch Cirebon. Whereas, the modern *kiai* was represented by KH Muhammad Anwar Sanusi of MAS Garoet. This open debate was held in HIS PGB Ciledug, Cirebon on June 19, 1932.



Figure 3: The news on the debate between PERSIS and MAS Garoet

Source: *Thahja Islam* magazine, No. 24, March 1932

<sup>61</sup> See *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 2, August 1930, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> See Al-Quran, Al-Maidah [4]: 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 28, June 1932, pp. 9-10.

<sup>64</sup> *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 2, August 1930, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 24, March 1932, pp. 8-9.

The debate was formally held. The chairman was H. Agus Salim from Sarekat Islam Indonesia Party (PSII), and the note taker was H. Alimoen, the chief of PSII branch Cirebon. Before the debate, the debate chairman asked both parties to appoint a *Commisie Verslag* who would note their argument and basis. NU appointed Mas Sastramihardja, a teacher supervisor in Ciledug and a member of NU Cirebon. Meanwhile, the modern *kiai* was represented by Mr. A. Hassan from PERSIS Bandung, and he was assisted by H. Soekantawidjaya acted as *Commisie Verslag* from MAS Garoet.<sup>66</sup>

### **The Progress of MAS Garoet in 1926-1942**

The reformist movement (*tajdid*) of MAS Garoet and PERSIS Bandung were very similar. These two movements helped each other to spread the Islamic puritanism or reformation idea of returning to the Quran and Sunnah of the prophet. During the debates in the 1930s, ulama of MAS Garoet often appeared together with ulama of PERSIS Bandung. Since most PERSIS Bandung figures were not Sundanese, their preaching and writings used Malay language and were translated by MAS Garoet leaders into Sundanese language.<sup>67</sup> In some aspects, these language barriers made MAS Garoet often more familiar than PERSIS to the Sundanese community in West Java especially from 1926 to the end of the 1930s.

Besides Majalaya and Bandung, MAS Garoet was also spread to *Afdeeling* Sukabumi. In this West Priangan area, MAS Garoet had many followers; thus, they could establish Cipeutir School in Sukabumi.<sup>68</sup> Miftahul Falah studied KH. Ahmad Sanusi in Sukabumi and viewed the spread of MAS Garoet in Sukabumi and Bogor as follows:

...in the end of 1927, a book entitled *Tasqiq al-Awkhaam* was distributed in the *Afdeeling* Sukabumi and Bogor. In the meantime, a *dai* (Islamic preacher) from MAS Cilame came to Sukabumi and criticized religious practices, such as *talafudbinniat*, *qunut*, reciting surah *al-Fatihah* behind the imam, reciting *zikr* at the end of a prayer, *tawassul*, and sending prayers for the dead.<sup>69</sup>

Another example of the MAS Garoet's influence in the remote area of West Java was the early *tajdid* movement in Sumedang. The autobiography of Somawikarta, written in a *wawacan*<sup>70</sup> and manuscript by his son, Ust. Entang Sulaiman, described that the Islamic reformation movement in Sumedang was done individually. In the 1930s, a *menak boswezen* (retired forestry officer), namely Raden Pancakusuma, took Islamic reformation views in Tomo, South Sumedang. He was introduced to this reformist view by a figure of Madjlis Ahli Soennah (MAS) Garoet.

Muhammad Anwar Sanusi preached *tabligh* (Islamic teachings) while selling books and magazines published by MAS Garoet in Sumadang area. He also conducted religious dialogues with Raden Pancakusuma. In the end, he acknowledged and accepted M. Anwar Sanusi's view. Since then, he frequently contacted MAS Garoet to understand more about the view. This was evident from his habit because he then subscribed to magazines published by MAS Garoet. One of them was *Cahaya Islam* magazine. Entang Sulaiman explained as follows:

“Kira-kira tahun 1930 di kampung Bantargitung desa Bugel kacamatan Tomo kabupaten Sumedang, sisi jalan Propinsi...aya Menak Pangsiunan kehutanan Boswezen baheula mah disebutna...selang-selang tina pucal-pacul kurad-kured, Mama pangsiunan teh kasepuhnakeun kasengsrem kana ngulik kaagamaan, Majalah sareng buku-buku ulikanana teh harita mah kaasup keneh kana sora anyar kayaning majalah Cahaya Islam sareng Madhhab Ahli Sunah wedalan Majlis Ahli Sunah ti Garut, nu disesepuhan ku Kiyai Muhammad Anwar Sanusi...”<sup>71</sup>

(In 1930, near the main street... there was a Menak, a pensioner from the forestry office, previously called *Boswezen*, in Bantargitung of Bugel village of Tomo sub-district in

<sup>66</sup> *Tjahja Islam* magazine, No 28, June 1932, p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> See Ajip Rosidi (1989), *Biografi Mohamad Natsir*, Vol. 1, Bandung: Girmukti.

<sup>68</sup> *Al-Hidajatoel Islamijah* magazine, No. 1, 20 March 1931, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Falah (2009), *Riwayat Perjuangan KH. Ahmad*, p. 68.

<sup>70</sup> *Wawacan* is derived from Sundanese language, which means text, a biography written in the form of *dangding* (Sundanese poem) such as, Dandanggula, Sinom, etc.

<sup>71</sup> Entang Sulaiman (n.d), “Catetan Ngawalajar Ajaran Allah jeung Rasulna di Sumedang,” Unpublished, p. 1.

Sumedang regency. When working on his farm, he was attracted to study religion. He studied a new thing from books and magazines and read *Cahaya Islam* and *Mazhab Ahli Sunnah* published by *Majlis Ahli Sunah* from Garut. This publisher was led by Muhammad Anwar Sanusi).

Therefore, the Islamic reformation movement in Sumedang was started individually through the interaction between R. Pancakusumah and Anwar Sanusi from MAS Garoet. This view was then further spread through the interaction between R. Pancakusuma and Somawikarta, a village teacher assigned to Bugel Village of Tomo Sub-District. Initially, Somawikarta, then known as Uu, was not so intense in religion and preferred political movement. However, this did not last long. His interaction with R. Pancakusumah, a distant family of Siti Khadijah, his wife, made him realize that he had neglected religion and started learning a reformation movement from Raden Pancakusumah. In his autobiography, UU wrote as follows:

*“Kitu raden Pacakusumah ngadawuh, waktos dideuheusan, ka bumina teh ku abdi, saparantos sareng abdi sawala. Nyawalakeun agama ti barang wawuh, tapi ceuk emang mah mun dipapay rada tebih, tina tareh para wali-wali sanga. Kitu Raden Pancakusumah pidawuh. “Datangna agama ka urang enggeus teu murni, geus pagalo jeung nu lain. Ayeuna mah heunteu kedah seueur saur”, saurna terasna, “Anggur mah urang salidik, mangandehna ku urang piceunan. Kitu deui sayaktosna ti kapungkur, parantos karasa lemahna dina agami, anu mawi renung meuweuh pergerakan...tapi emang muji sykur ka yang Agung, kasumpingan semah, juragan Anwar Sanusi, urang Garut kadieuna dagang kitab. Lami-lami emang teras jadi wawuh, ku sering-seringna, anjeuna kadieu sumping, sok ngawangkoong tableg ngabahas agama.”<sup>72</sup>*

(When I met Raden Pancakusumah in his house, we talked about religious issues since we knew each other. However, he argues that if we look further from the history of Walisongo or nine prominent ulama spreading Islam in Java, our religion is no longer pure. They mixed Islamic practices with other religions' practices. Then, he invited me to filter those unrelated practices and practice Islam as it is. Now we realize that our religious knowledge is insufficient. Therefore, we learn through movements. Nevertheless, I am grateful to God that I met Anwar Sanusi, a merchant from Garut, who came to sell books here. My uncle has become familiar with him as he often visited and discussed religious matters).

The data shows the spread of the MAS Garoet view to Sumedang. Muhammad Anwar Sanusi, a native Garut, came to Sumedang individually to sell books published by MAS Garoet. In addition, he preached (*tabligh*) religious reformation to his customers who were native Sumedang. One of them was Raden Pancakusumah.<sup>73</sup>

Through this person-to-person *tabligh*, M. Anwar Sanusi could convince Raden Pancakusumah. Pancakusumah stated: *“Tah ieu mah kana hate emang surup, emang sok meseran kitab-kitab anu pararenting, beuki seueur maca kitab beuki sadar,”*<sup>74</sup> (Thus, he could convince me. My uncle loved buying important books. The more I read, the more I aware). Raden Pancakusumah could accept and testify to this view. He later comprehended more this reformation view and said, *“...dinten ieu alo disaur, geus lami teu tepang, mangga urang teras deui, soal jawab tina masalah agama, Nyucruk elmu tina bab agama Rasul, nu dasarna Qur'an, sinareng Hadits nu Shohih, dinteun ieu urang ngadambel ulangan.”*<sup>75</sup> (...Today I called you in because we have not met for a long time. Let's continue to discuss religious matters and learn the religion of the Prophet based on the Quran and the *sahih* (valid) hadiths. Let's make a review. His son, Entang Sulaiman, also affirmed as follows:

<sup>72</sup> Somawikara (n.d.), “Wawancara Uu 60 Tahun NGalaladah Babakan Bagja Ngambah Galuraning Pancaroba Dunya Cihonje 1916-1976,” Unpublished, p. 32.

<sup>73</sup> It is currently unclear whether M. Anwar Sanusi spread the Islamic reformation idea (purification) to others, besides Raden Pancakusumah, in Sumedang and how their reaction was due to the absence of data. It is highly possible that his profession as traders enabled him to interact with others, besides Raden Pancakusumah.

<sup>74</sup> Somawikara (n.d.), “Wawancara Uu 60 Tahun,” p. 32.

<sup>75</sup> Somawikara (n.d.), “Wawancara Uu 60 Tahun,” p. 33.

“Pedoman poko anu jadi cecekelan...saenyana sarua wae jeung karereanana kiyai waktu harita nyaeta: Qur'an Hadits, Ijma jeung Qiyas. Ngan lebah ngagunakeun Hadis, heuteu asal ngagunakeun Hadis wae, Hadis anu kasebut do 'if mah tara dipake hujah poko. Komo anu kasebut Hadis maudlu mah. Nyakitu deui boh Ijma boh Qiyas ari nu bertentangan jeung Hadis mah tara ieuh dikeukeuweuk dipake hujah agama.”<sup>76</sup>

(The main guidelines were similar to that of most *kiai* at that time. They were Quran, the hadiths, *Ijma*, and *Qiyas*. However, *dhoif* (weak) and fake (*maudhu*) hadiths were not used as the main guideline. Similarly, the *Ijma* and *Qiyas* were not be used when they opposed to the Quran and Hadiths).

Raden Pancakusumah and Uu critically reinterpreted common religious practices at that time in Sumedang by spreading MAS Garoet's view. This condition was found in their different views of establishing religious practices of the Sumedang society. Raden Pancakusumah and Uu were aware of this situation and later started reviewing that those established practices were no longer pure Islamic teachings but had been syncretized with other religion's teaching. This syncretism was considered as *bid'ah* (innovation) that must be eradicated. He illustrated as follows:

“Naon-naon nu parantos yakin benerna, ebreh quranna sareng merele Hadis-hadis shohehna, nu dikira geus pikdaguaeun dilakonan mah ku Uu teh dikeureuyeuh diamalkeun Pamusrikan dina kapercayaan mimiti digibrig-gibrigkeun pabid'ahan dina ibadah mimiti dituntut disingkahan papagon Agama nu geus puguh natrat quranna jeung Hadis shohehna dileukeunan diamalkeun.”<sup>77</sup>

(The correct things and facts stated in the Quran and Hadiths could be performed gradually. Polytheism practices must be gradually eradicated. Innovation in worshiping must be abandoned. The religious practices must follow the Quran and *sahih* (valid) hadiths.)

M. Anwar Sanusi who interacted with *Menak Alit* (lower aristocrats) in Sumedang was a sympathizer of PERSIS Bandung. Besides, the AMS Garoet organization that he led, had a similar ideology to that of PERSIS and often applied the Fatwa issued by PERSIS Bandung. Hence, it was unsurprising when M. Anwar Sanusi possessed and distributed the books published by PERSIS Bandung besides books published by MAS Garoet. He sold this book to Sumedang and other areas in West Java.

The Mas Garoet's influence had grown rapidly from 1926 to the 1930s. However, the arrival of the Japanese occupation in Indonesia in 1942 negatively impacted this organization. Like other organizations, the MAS Garoet was dissolved by the Japanese government, which ruled over all the former Dutch colonies. Moreover, the main figures behind MAS Garoet, KH RM. Zakaria, died in 1942, and the Pesantren Cilame had a setback. Therefore, the Mas Garoet never stood up again since the disbandment.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study highlighted several points. First, the role of MAS Garoet was more effective and quickly spread to remote areas in West Java, and even Batavia. The *da'i* (preachers) from MAS Garoet were more interactive with the rural community in West Java because they were fluent in the Sundanese language. Therefore, *tabligh* in Sundanese language enabled West Java community to quickly and easily understand the Islamic purification or reformation view of MAS Garoet, but it also raised pros and cons among the society.

MAS Garoet leaders, such as M. Anwar Sanusi, Sukantawijaya, and M. Romli wrote books in Sundanese language. Meanwhile, Mama Zakaria Cilame gained quicker responses from the traditionalist ulama in West Java after writing a book in Arabic language because *santri* (Islamic students) in West Java during the Dutch colonial era were more familiar with the Arabic alphabets than the Latin alphabets. Therefore, the debate between the MAS Garoet ulama and the traditionalists ulama had happened long before the PERSIS Bandung debated the traditionalists ulama.

<sup>76</sup> Sulaiman (n.d.), “Catetan Ngawalajar Ajaran,” p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Sulaiman (n.d.), “Catetan Ngawalajar Ajaran Allah,” p. 4.

MAS Garoet leaders played an important role in spreading the *tajdid* (reformation) movement in West Java by translating the reformists' articles outside MAS Garoet into Sundanese language. Thus, MAS Garoet enabled the Sundanese Muslims to read various Islamic reformistic work, which was previously written in Malay language. To conclude, the use of local language, in this case, was Sundanese, had an important role in the process of spreading Islamic reform ideas in Indonesia.

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