



## The Policy of Japanese Fascist Military Authority on *Pesantren* Education

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### Abstrak

Kajian ini mencoba mendeskripsikan kebijakan yang diambil oleh penguasa fasis Jepang terhadap pendidikan pesantren selama masa pendudukannya di Indonesia. Adapun rumusan permasalahannya ialah bagaimana kebijakan yang diambil oleh penguasa fasis Jepang terhadap pendidikan pesantren selama masa pendudukannya di Indonesia sebelum kemerdekaan bangsa Indonesia. Sumber data primer dalam penelitian ini meliputi karya-karya yang mengkaji kebijakan penguasa fasis Jepang terhadap pendidikan pesantren. Berbagai karya tulis ilmiah tentang kolonialisasi Jepang di Indonesia dipakai sebagai sumber data sekunder. Untuk mendukung kedua sumber data tersebut dipakai kepustakaan tentang pendidikan pesantren secara umum. Jenis kajian ini termasuk kajian kepustakaan dengan fokusnya pada kebijakan penguasa fasis Jepang terhadap pendidikan pesantren. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan sejarah, sedangkan analisisnya memakai analisis isi. Kajian ini menemukan bahwa pemerintah pendudukan Jepang memberi ruang gerak pendidikan pesantren lebih “bebas” dibandingkan kolonial Belanda. Kebijakan ini bukan kebebasan dalam pengertian bebas mengembangkan potensi dasar lembaga itu. Akan tetapi, kebebasan dalam pengertian “membiarkan” lembaga pendidikan pesantren untuk berkembang sendiri tanpa adanya “keberpihakan” dari pemerintah pendudukan Jepang. Faktanya, ketika pesantren hendak mengembangkan potensinya sebagai lembaga pendidikan yang mengajarkan sikap antipenjajahan, Jepang segera “bertindak” represif. Pada masa pendudukan Jepang, pesantren-pesantren dan para kiai “diawasi” dan “dikebiri” kemandiriannya.

**Kata Kunci:** Kebijakan, Fasis Jepang, Pendidikan Pesantren

### Abstract

*This study tries to describe the policy implemented by the Japanese fascist military authority toward pesantren education during their occupation in Indonesia. The research problem is how the policies used by the Japanese fascist military authority towards pesantren during their occupation in Indonesia before the independence of Indonesia. Primary data sources of this study include some works examining the*

*policies of the Japanese fascist military authority towards pesantren education. Various scientific papers on Japanese colonization in Indonesia are used as secondary data sources of this study. This study uses historical approach and library research method focusing on the policies of the Japanese fascist military authority towards pesantren education. The collected data then were analyzed by using content analysis. This study exposes that the Japanese government provide more freedom for pesantren education than the Dutch colonial to develop themselves without any affection from the Japanese government. It could be seen from a fact that when pesantren were about to develop their basic potential as an educational institution teaching anti-colonial attitudes, Japanese government immediately acted repressively. They always monitored the kiai as well as all pesantren's activities.*

**Keywords:** *Policy, Japanese Fascist, Pesantren Education*

## INTRODUCTION

Japan is one of the nations in the world that has colonized the Indonesian people and the nation. Although both Japan and Indonesia are countries in Asia, the political policies of the two nations during World War II were different (Huff & Majima, 2011: 856). The political system of the Indonesian people was to create a world order based on independence, eternal peace, and social justice. Meanwhile, Japan's political system was more or less to control other nations so that they were seen as the most powerful nation in the world (Ramli, 2010: 67). Therefore, Japan conquered other nations in the world through the war during World War II. The fires of war that were fomented by Japan reached the Southeast Asia region, including Indonesia. Various policies were taken by the Japanese colonial government to win the war. One of them is the fascist government of Japan's policy towards *pesantren* (Abbas, 2018: 64-65).

The Japanese *occupation* policy towards the people of Indonesia basically had two priorities: removing Western influences among them and mobilizing them for the sake of Japan's victory (Ricklefs, 2008: 426). Similar to the Netherlands, Japan intends to take control of Indonesia for their own interests. They face many of the same problems that the Dutch face and use many of the same solutions. However, in the midst of a major war requiring maximum utilization of the power resources, the Japanese decided to rule through mobilization (especially in Java and Sumatra) rather than by imposing tranquility.

Different from the neutral politics developed by the Dutch colonialists against Islam, the Japanese invaders have tried to persuade Muslim leaders to cooperate with them (Maarif, 1985: 97). Japan called itself the "Old Brother" of the Indonesian people.

In fact, according to Zuhri (2007: 272) as one of the executant of history during the Japanese colonialism, the name of *Jepang* or *Japan* is not allowed anymore, and it changed to Dai Nippon, meaning Great Japan. Such politics are primarily aimed at mobilizing the whole people in order to support their immediate and urgent war objectives.

Japan has tried to deceive the people of Indonesia by saying “Old Brother”, so that the people of Indonesia should deceive Japan. The “trickery” strategy can be done by the people is by utilizing organizations made by Japan for the struggle of the Indonesian people, such as Central Office of Religious Affairs (Shumubu), PETA, PUTERA, Hizbullah, Heiho, and others (Hefner, 2013: 19). During the struggle against the Japanese *occupation*, everyone especially the leaders of the movement, is required to shrewdly “deceive” the opponent. Related to that, KH. A. Wahid Hasyim once explained to Zuhri (2007: 273) as follows.

“I tell you, this nation calls itself Nippon. Among the *santri*, the Japanese Nippon should be pronounced nippong, it means “nipu wong” (deceiving people). They say they will free us from the Dutch colonialism, it is true that we are liberated, no longer colonized by the Dutch, but they did not tell us whether we have our independent or colonized by them. This is the form of deception. Couldn’t we reply to deceive them?”

To confront Muslims, Japan actually has a political policy different from the Netherlands. Only at the beginning of his approach, Japan showed a friendly attitude (Suryanegara, 1996: 254). More Japanese likes to deal directly with *kiai* rather than with political party leaders. Japan did not want relate to Islamic political party. Therefore, Japan issued a declaration of political party dissolution. This Japanese action clearly shows his fear of Islam as a political force.

This research used documents as its data sources. Primary data sources in this research included works that examine the Japanese fascist authority’s policies towards education in Islamic boarding school. Secondary data sources were obtained from various scientific papers on Japanese colonization in Indonesia. To support these two data sources, the literature on Japanese colonialism and *pesantren*, in general, is used. This type of study included a literature review with a focus on the policies of the Japanese fascist military authority towards education in Islamic boarding school.

Grounded in a qualitative study relating to written documents concerning the Japanese fascist military authority’ policies towards *pesantren*, this study employed a

historical approach, while the analysis used content analysis (Dawson, 2010: 145). The data collection used the documentation method. The data analysis method used in this study was descriptive-analytic. To obtain conclusions, inductive methods are used (Moleong, 2009: 298).

### ***KIAI, PESANTREN, AND MUSLIMS DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION***

In the early days of Japan's rule in Indonesia, Japan saw the importance of religion, especially Islam, in people's lives. They saw the fact that two Islamic organizations have a strong base in the community, NU and Muhammadiyah. NU has a base in the countryside, while Muhammadiyah has an urban base. They need to respect the religion and religious leaders, and then give priority by applying special wisdom to Muslims (Ambar, 2001: 302).

In early 1943, the Japanese began to mobilize their efforts on mobilization. In August 1942, training schools for the officials and teachers were established in Jakarta and Singapore. The Military Corps (*Seinendan* between the ages 14-25) established in April 1943. For young people between the ages of 25-35 years, the Vigilance Corps (*Keibodan*) as an auxiliary organization of police, fires, and airstrikes was formed. In mid-1943, Heiho (Assistance Force) as part of the Japanese army and navy was formed as well (Ricklefs, 2008: 432; Rohman, 2018: 17-18).

The position of the *kiai* during the Japanese colonialism could be said to be "dianakemaskan", not "dianaktirikan" as in the Dutch colonial period. The Japanese fascist's attitude of accepting this *kiai* must be understood in the context of defusing and conquering them so that the people under the influence of the *kiai* participate in becoming benign and subdued as well. However, on the other hand, the *kiai* also become the torture of Japan's plan to disrupt the people. Therefore, among the Dutch tactics in the early of the Japanese *occupation* in Indonesia to incite hatred of the people to the Japanese occupation government was done by hitting and terrorizing the *kiai*, and if necessary by arresting them (Hasyim 1985: 118; Hasnida, 2017: 253-254).

The change of position and role of *kiai* in society during the Japanese colonialism period was also recognized by Shiddiqi (1996: 40). In the Dutch colonial period, it is pillar of power was the elite group (*priyayi*) by ruling *out* the *kiai*, then the Japanese invaders wanted to use the *kiai* to be his hands. The *kiai* were drawn to work in the Japanese army's government offices, especially in Shumubu (Central Religious

Service Office) which established in two weeks after arriving in Java, and Shumuka (the Office of the Religious Affairs Bureau) to the village.

It should be noted, some *kiai* were not willing to cooperate with Japanese fascists. It was because Japan was more violent than the Dutch as it could be seen in the system of *romusha*, seize the people's rice under the reason for the interests of war and the action of *Kem Pe Tei* with the principle of “the hit first, the matter later”, and also it was more worried for the *kiai* that Japan tried to introduce *Shintoism* among Muslims. The command to do *seikeirei*, bowing to the sunrise in honor of Tenno Haika, was an issue they talked then.

Besides inviting *kiai* to work in government offices, so that they gained experience in managing government administration and bureaucratic system, Japanese also tried to form a single non-political organization which embodies all Muslim organizations that have been established during the Dutch colonial period. Japan managed to realize this desire on October 24, 1943 with the formation of Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Masyumi). According to Maarif (1985: 110), Masyumi “made by Japan” was different from the Masyumi formed on 7 November 1945. Masyumi on 7 November 1945 was established by Muslims themselves without outside interference, even though the old name was still used. According to Benda (1985: 185), the establishment of Masyumi “made by Japan” was the substitution of MIAI (Majelis Islam A’la Indonesia). It was no doubt that was a Japanese political victory against Islam.

At the time of its establishment, the membership in Masyumi “made by Japan” was only given to Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Each *kiai* personally might also be a Masyumi member with the approval of Shumubu. In this way, Shumubu could exert full control over the new federation’s membership. The stewardship of Masyumi was from the elements of *ulama* (religious teachers), not from the leadership of the Islamic party. KH. Hasyim Asy’ari, one of the founders of NU and the caretaker of *Pesantren* Tebuireng was chosen as the first Chairman of Masyumi. The strategy of establishing Masyumi as a forum for *ulama* was not unique matter to the area outside Java. With the founding of Masyumi, for the first time, *ulama* especially from *pesantren* were directly involved in national politics (Abdullah & Hisyam, 2003: 202).

A year before Masyumi “made by Japan” was formed, precisely on September 4, 1942 through 3A first deliberation was held at Hotel des Indes. As a result of this deliberation, Muslims revived the Islamic Council of A’la Indonesia (MIAI). Two important groups involved in MIAI are *kiai* and preachers who have *pesantren* or madrasah, and leaders of political parties/Islamic organizations. When MIAI was revived, a PSII figure, W. Wondoamiseno was appointed chairman (Abdullah & Hisyam, 2003: 197). The revival of MIAI means that Muhammadiyah and NU as its sponsor have freedom of movement as well.

Although Japan desperately needs the help of Muslims, feelings of fear for the unity and resurgence of Muslims appeared. It needs to be balanced with the establishment of PUTERA/Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (March 8, 1943). This board was under the control of the Japanese. Four prominent Indonesian leaders were appointed as their chairman: Soekarno, Hatta, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, and KH. Mas Mansur (Ricklefs, 2008: 432). This new organization has little support, partly because Japan was unwilling to give freedom to potential peoples’ powers. For example, Japan did not give any power to any of the youth movements. The purpose of PUTERA was clearly to break the unity.

The policy of Japanese Islamic politics rests on the *kiai*. This means that Japan feels very secure by fostering the cooperation in military relations with scholars (*ulama*) who does not understand about politics. Major General Okazaki emphasized his government’s attention on the *kiai* rather than the MIAI. Dealing with this, *kiai* was commanded by Shumubu as an activator (Suryanegara, 1996: 257). The Japanese realized that the way to mobilize people through Islam could only be provided by Muhammadiyah and NU which had schools, welfare activities, *pesantren*, and informal relationships stretching from urban areas to small towns and villages, and no obvious political demands (Ricklefs, 2008: 431). It implies that mobilizing the people clearly requires a new approach.

According to Kiai Wahid Hasyim (in Zuhri, 2007: 269), Japan (in sarcastic terms “bare demon”) felt that the battle between them and the Allies would take a long time and require an extraordinary warfare. This “bare demon” knew that *kiai-ulama* have an enormous influence among our people. On the contrary, they also knew that the society hate the people who have been the loyal assistants of the Dutch colonialists.

Japan was luring the people. They desperately need the support of the people. In addition to the *kiai-ulama*, Japan also mobilized the youth for their interests. On April 29, 1942 the Youth Force (Seinendan) was established. The youth in Indonesia were mobilized from the district level to the village with the slogan to foster the prosperity of East Asia. On 13 October 1943, the army of *Pembela Tanah Air* (PETA) was formed under the leadership of Dai Nippon (Ambary, 2001: 303). Japan appointed the *kiai* as *Daidanco* (Commander of the Battalion).

As the preparations for the Pacific War were prepared well, Hizbullah was formed on December 15, 1944 to prepare Muslim youth in defending Java for the arriving of the ally armies. Suzuki was in charge of training this new corps, although they only equipped with spikes bamboo and wooden weapons. This corps attracted many youths. In 1945, for example there are 500 young people aged 18-20 years were trained by Japanese soldiers for two months in Bogor. The cost of accommodation of the Masyumi army was subsidized by its own military. The scholars (*ulama*), including Kiai Wahid Hasyim, had a considerable contribution in establishing the branches of this corps (Khuluq, 2001: 107). The establishment of Hizbullah was a spectacular event in the Islamic movement during the first phase of the Japanese occupation.

The balance of power was always guarded by the Japanese occupation government. In addition to restore the participation of secular nationalist leaders, the Japanese occupation government also encouraged Muslim *santri* to participate in politics. On September 10, 1943, they officially recognized Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah after being frozen for some time. The formation of PETA involving these *santri* could also be understood from the perspective of maintaining this power balance. Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari who has been appointed as a PETA warrior adviser set out to prepare for war because of Allah, not treasure and so forth. According to him, the purpose of PETA warriors was to fight for raising the honor of Islam (*i'zāz dīn al-Islām*) and to spread the commandment of God, i.e. "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God", so that the efforts of PETA warriors could be categorized as fighting in the way of Allah (Khuluq, 2001: 100).

Although Japan did not approve the relation with the leaders of Islamic political parties, Japan required the *kiai* to form the new organizational venues in order to "nurture" the *kiai* and Muslims. Therefore, as explained earlier, the Japanese formed

Shumubu headed by Colonel Horie Choso and Shumuka. Japan also formed the Three A Movement (Japan Asian Leader, Japan Patron of Asia, and Japan Light of Asia). According to Abdullah & Hisyam (2003: 196), Japan tried to make this Three A Movement the center of all activities that have the character of propaganda and people mobilization.

The Japanese occupation government retained the 1925 Teacher Ordinance. Indonesian officials exerted it even more forcefully, both in their opposition to the Islamic elite and the fear of the Japanese if they seemed too soft (Ricklefs, 2008: 433). The Japanese military authorities were clearly aware of the importance of Islam as an element of power in the Indonesian villages. Although they were lack on academic expertise and scientific equipment such as their precursors, the Japanese came to Java with a wisdom plan aimed at winning the support of Islam. Part of this wisdom was the obvious reversal of Dutch objectives primarily aimed at the problems of Islam at the grass-roots level (Benda 1985: 139).

On the one hand the Japanese occupation government kept a tight control on Islamic organizations, especially on Islamic education including *pesantren*. On the other hand, the efforts to mobilize the Islamic, Japan military government created a very close relationship between the Islamic elite and his followers in the village. Finally, as written by Benda (1985: 141), Islamic organizations became a political force *par excellence* and became a serious rival to the nonreligious nationalist movement.

The political policies of Islam carried out by the Dutch, such as the supervision of the development of *pesantren*, *dai*, and *da'wah* activities with the 1905/1925 Teacher Ordinance and the 1932 Wild School Ordinance were attempted by the Japanese with little revision (Mahdi, 2013: 11-12). World War II demanded that Japan mobilize the Islam on its side. For this purpose, Nippon's Islamic Grass Roots Policy (Japanese Political Policy for the People of the Common Moslem) was mentioned. The targets were *pesantren*, village, and *ulama*. This policy aimed at establishing *ulama* as a leading civil leader participating in creating peace and alertness. Controlling *kiai* means that the Japanese control the *pesantren* and the village. Suryanegara (1996: 259) explains to implement the policy, Japan used educational media as a propaganda tool. The *ulama* need to increase their participation by holding a kind of crash course. On July 1943, as written by Ricklefs (2008: 433), Japanese began to dispatch 60 *kiai* to

Jakarta for attending training courses for approximately one month. Until May 1945, more than 1,000 *kiai* have completed the courses. Indeed, Japan prefers to deal directly with Muslims in the countryside rather than through the MIAI auction, as has been discussed earlier.

On July 1, 1943 was the first day of the Japanese Nippon's Islamic Grass Roots Policy. The Japanese military government on the one hand rejected the existence of Islamic political parties, but on the other hand Japan preferred to politicize scholars (*ulama*). Through this way Japan hopes to distribute the latent potential of *pesantren* to its war interests, while successfully mobilizing *kiai-ulama* and villages people in Indonesia. The change movement undertaken by the Japanese during the occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945) was not at all to improve the fate of people, but for the purposes of their war. Japan remains imperialist. However, for Muslims at that time there was no choice but to show a "friendly" attitude with the Japanese fascists (Suryanegara, 1996: 259). In contrast, Japan was also like the Netherlands trying to destroy Islam. The conditions of war that demanded the help of stability in the colonies forced Japan to approach Muslims. It is used by Muslims, or to borrow the term from *kiai* Wahid Hasyim "riding Japan for the sake of independence". Indeed, he himself was known close to Japan, but he was good at reducing Japanese pressure and leading to the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence (Dewanto, 2011: 83).

The Japanese policy of forming organizations as described above was ultimately intended for the interests of the colonial and the triumph of the Japanese army, not for the welfare of the people. The socio-economic event that befell the Indonesian people, such as the plight because of forced labor (*Romusha*) has sparked renewed passion against the Japanese occupation as demonstrated by the PETA rebellion in Blitar led by Supriyadi on 14 February 1945. The motivation that led to the rebellion as written by Suryanegara (1996: 265) was due to not being able to bear the suffering of the people, could not bear to see Japan's pride and arrogance, and the promise of independence was nonsense, because taking of independence need to use some weapons. West Java also rebelled. The rebellion was launched by a *kiai pesantren* and member of NU, KH. Zainal Mustafa near of Tasikmalaya, Priangan on 18 February 1944 (Wahyudin, 2016: 34). On June 1945, the platoon of the Cilacap and Cimahi Battalions also rebelled.

While on July 1945, the company of Giguyyu (people's army) in Pematang Siantar against the Japanese instructors (Abdullah & Hisyam, 2003: 207).

*Java Hookokai* and Masyumi also took advantage of the opportunity and legality provided by Japan to prepare for the movement towards independence of Indonesia. They also mobilized people's power to cooperate with the nationalist forces in preparing for the independence movement. KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah even utilized the name "Java Hookokai" to arouse the people's passion to survive from the suffering created by Japan. "Let's just say the name given by Japan with *Java Hookokai*, interpreted to the language of the *santri* 'Java Haqqu Kiai' (Java owned by *kiai*). The Meaning: finally Indonesia will belong to our own nation, God willing", said Kiai Wahab Hasbullah in Zuhri (2007: 52).

### ***Pesantren* in the lap of "Old Brother" Japan Fascist**

The policy of the Japanese occupation, and also the Dutch colonialists, has caused the suffering of the inner and outs of the Indonesian people. But there was an expression "the paingiven by Japan for a month is more terrible than the Dutch for ten years" (Zuhri, 2007: 45). This phrase implies that Japan has brought unbearable pain. The pains that Japan spreads include the physical, mental, religious, political, economic, cultural, and mental safety. It could not be imagined how great and terrible the Indonesia's pain under the Japanese occupation. For the *pesantren*, the pain was shown in the drastic reduction of student (*santri*) during the occupation. The following description may indicate the "suffer" of the *pesantren* at that time.

*Pesantren* became quiet, as the *santris* returned to their homes. No exception for *pesantren* Kasingan ... Pondok *pesantren* has already quiet left by the *santri*, so that Kasingan had to be dispersed. The *santri* came back to their home. K. Abdullah Zaini himself invited the *santri* to return to their respective homes if they did not firm and strong in facing of the disaster. At that time, there was news that if the war happen and the Japanese land, the train, bus, and other public vehicles would not work. Postal mail and money order would be stop (Huda, 2005: 26).

*Pesantren* in Rembang experienced no different fate from *Pesantren* Kasingan was *Pesantren* Al-Hidayat Lasem Rembang. When the Japanese managed to get into the Rembang area around 1941, this *pesantren* was forced to repatriate the *santri* because of certain risks that might happen. *Pesantren* Al-Hidayat taken care by KH. Ma'shum

Ahmad was one of the Japanese occupation victims. The hundreds of students (*santri*) there became exhausted. This *pesantren* became the main target of the Japanese army because it became the headquarters of Laskar Hizbullah (Thomafi, 2007: 97). The political and military policies of the Japanese occupation government really limited and muzzled the academic life of *pesantren*.

George Kahin was cited by Caldwell & Utrecht (2011: 144) asserting that Japanese power is disruptive, cruel, and with Japanese demands for bitter labor and almost triggered a number of rebellions. In general, the Japanese occupation disrupted the methods of rationing on land and work obeyed, but at the same time strengthening Indonesia's national consciousness (Sabarudin, 2015: 156). The period of Japanese occupation (1942-1945) was a very bitter time for the world of boarding schools. The number of *santri* decreased due to the difficulty of obtaining food and clothing. The Japanese occupation government forbid the transport of rice between regions so that *santri* could not get rice shipments from their parents. The period of this new colonization of corn was very heavy (Yahya, 2006: 17). This description was a portrait of the condition of *pesantren* in West Java, not least Cipasung *Pesantren* led by Ajengan Ruhiat.

The fate of the *pesantren* in south Java during the Japanese occupation was no different from north Java. Zuhri (2007: 307) reports the following.

I arrived at *Pesantren* Wanayasa, Kebumen. It was quiet without any activity of *santri* which there was only one third of the whole students. Many *santri* returned home because their parents could not afford to provide supplies at *pesantren*. While the students who still stayed in the *pesantren* took their time for reciting to patrol the village helping "Keibodan", kept the security of the village in case of the attack from the Allies.

Facing the apprehensive situation of *pesantren*, in Jombang under Hadratussyekh Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari and Kiai Wahab Hasbullah organized *riyāḍah ar-ruḥān* movement among scholars (*ulama*). In addition to improve the spirit of the homeland defense, the scholars also practiced some wirid of *ḥizbu ar-rifā'*, *ḥizbu al-baḥr*, *ḥibubu an-nawāwī*, and other prayers pumped in *riyāḍah* in the form of spiritual practice. Kiai Wahid Hasyim mobilized a campaign aimed at the world of *pesantren* and the *ulama*. The campaign was called *Mabādi Naṣrillah* which consists of three important things. First, *tazāwuru ba'duhum ba'da*, means visiting each other and

strengthening unity. Second, *tawāṣaw bi al-haqqi wa tawāṣaw bi aṣ-ṣabri*, means giving advice each other on truth and struggle for patience. Third, *riyāḍah ar-ruḥāniyyah*, means being closer to God to ask for His help while multiplying *wirid*, *hizib*, and *prayers* (Zuhri, 2007: 320).

In just three and a half years, Japan has “successfully” destroyed its political, economic, social and cultural structures. Japan rob people’s wealth, destroyed the nation’s culture and customs, and spread the fear among the population. The Japanese arrested KH. Hasyim Asy’ari without any obvious reasons. Some scholars (*ulama*) and *santri* asked to be privy with Kiai Hasyim Asy’ari in Japanese prisoners. Afterwards KH. Mahfudz Siddiq, Chairman of Tanfidziyah PBNU arrested by Japan on charges of doing anti Japan movement.

The despotism and inner-born suffering created by the Japanese against the people fosters the spirit of *santri* for independence. The feeling of anti-Japan could not be hidden, hostility and rebellion against Japan flared up. The hatred expression of the *pesantren* towards Japan was realized in many secret codes, for example the “doomsday” code means the end of Japanese rule. If a *santri* meets with his colleagues while asking, “Less how many days does doomsday?”, then it is immediately answered “seven days again” and so on (Zuhri, 2007: 56).

At the beginning of its occupation, Japan did strict controls on all levels of Islamic education and Islamic propaganda. The Japanese military government continued to reinstate Dutch Teacher Ordinance 1925 which is a tool to control Islamic education including *pesantren* in the village. Nevertheless, religious schools received more material and financial assistance than in the Dutch government. The inevitable consequences of these funds made the Japanese government's intervention stronger. To undertake supervisory duties at this district and sub-district level Japan entrusted to *priyayi* administrators. Thus the tension between religious leaders in the village including the kiai and the indigenous aristocracy that had been inherited since the Dutch era continued to the Japanese occupation (Benda 1985: 161; Syarif, 2019: 111).

The practice of occupation education in Tan Malaka’s view (1894-1949) in Syaifudin (2012: 28) was nothing but a hidden discrimination arena. According to him, the practice of occupation education actually distanced the Indonesian people from their own reality and nationality. Thus, the occupation educational practice produced new

bourgeois groups derived from indigenous peoples. The occupation education policy that was not in accordance with the goals of colonized education can be understood, e.g. from the practice of education organized by the Dutch occupation government in Indonesia which aimed to realize hidden *occupation*. In other words, the policy included politicization in the practice of Dutch colonial education (Abdullah, 2013: 195; Maulida, 2016: 1298).

During the Japanese occupation, the Dutch education policy was replaced. The Japanese occupation government adopted the principle of ethical education practice (the idea of state service) and the cult to the leadership (Emperor of Japan). State education was included in the Indonesian school lessons by instilling a sense of respect to the government and the Emperor of Japan. To help the battle of Greater East Asia Japan, the physical and military education was prioritized rather than cognitive education known as forensic education.

The education policy during the Japanese occupation in general could be understood through the management of schools by holding teachers training in Jakarta. They were assigned as propagandists of Hakko Ichiu ideology, an ideology of “mutual prosperity” in Greater East Asia. Each district was required to send its representatives for being trained by Japanese leaders. The training lasted for three months and aimed to make the teachers being Japanese. After training, they were required to socialize the new ideology (Djumhur & Danasuparta, 1976: 196).

To win the people’s heart, the Japanese occupation government erased the dualism of the educational system imposed by the Dutch colonials, i.e. education for Dutch students and education for *bumiputra*. They argued that education does not recognize the distinction between one group and the other. Though Japan actually has Asian motto for the Asian nation, Japan was obsessed with mastering Indonesia's rich sources of raw materials to support their war interests (Mansur & Junaedi, 2005: 60).

## CONCLUSION

The present qualitative study exposes the education of *pesantren* in particular and general education in Indonesia experienced severe deterioration and setbacks during the Japanese occupation. This can be understood because the policy is too strict in conducting indoctrination and dead discipline in fascism militarism education implemented by the Japanese occupation government. Likewise, the education policy of

the Japanese occupation government can also be seen from the curriculum that they have designed. The basis of the curriculum referred to the usefulness of providing education for the benefit of war. Physical exercises, such as military training, are the main material taught to students. For this program to run smoothly, then in each school a kind of student task force was formed, namely *seinen-tai* (primary school task force) and *gakuto-tai* (senior high school task force).

The Japanese occupation government provided space for Islamic education to be more “free” than during the Dutch colonial era since Japan did not seriously pay attention to religious interests. For those who were important to them was winning the war. Policies in the form of freedom of Islamic education, including Islamic boarding school, were not freedom in the sense of being free to develop the basic potential of the institution, however, freedom in the sense of “allowing” Islamic educational institutions including Islamic boarding school to develop on their own without the “affection” from the Japanese occupation government. In fact, Japan immediately “acted” repressively when Islamic boarding schools were about to develop their basic potential as an educational institution that taught anti-colonial attitudes. During the Japanese occupation, large Islamic boarding schools often received visits and “respect” from Japanese authorities. The visit and “respect” must be seen in the context of the veiled “supervision” of Islamic boarding schools and *kiai* as well as efforts to castrate the independence of *pesantren*. Japan’s “support” of Islamic boarding school was only a ploy in the interests of Japan in dealing with all possibilities during World War II.

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