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الأيام أو أتوريزا يقني

An Arabic Manuscript on the History of
Ikhla and Jihad Revolution in Indonesia

VARATIONS ON AN EXEGETICAL THEME:

TASR FOUNDATIONS IN THE MALAY WORLD

Indonesia's Muslim Organisations

and the Overture of Sjarwo

Steven Drakeley

Peter C. Reddick

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

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

Keywords: Iṣlāḥ and Irshād organization, Islamic modernism, Dutch colonialism, the Irshādis, the ‘Alawi Sayyids, Aḥmad al-Sūrkītī, ʿUmar Sulaymān Nājī, Indonesia, Singapore, the Ḥijāz.

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

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

Who is ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī?

‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī was a prominent student of al-Shayh Aḥmad al-Sūrkittī. He received his education at the Irshād School in Jakarta and after his graduation, he was appointed as the founding headmaster of al-Irshād school in Pekalongan in central Java in 1919. He was...
active in politics and much involved in politics of his country of origin (Southern Yemen). Therefore, he was elected as chair of the Liberation Committee of Southern Yemen. He contributed abundantly to the Irshād daily and weekly newspapers, and in 1921 chaired the editorial board of al-Shifā’ monthly magazine (1921-1923). In 1926, Nājī was selected as chair of the Irshād delegation that attended the first Islamic conference organized by Abdul Aziz al-Saud (d. 1953) in Mecca. His journalist background seems to have qualified him to draft the manuscript under review in 1960s, praising the achievements of his Irshādī fellows and their “Iṣlāḥ and Irshād Revolution” in Indonesia (al-Zayn: 2003; al-Hijī: 1993; Nājī: n.d.).

The Idea of Nājī’s Manuscript

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

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

During the visit of the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar, Maḥmūd Shaltūt, to certain cities in Indonesia, he was received by the teacher Abd al-Qadir al-Jafri in Solo, where the Grand Shaykh asked him about the status of Muslims in Indonesia in general and their religious and social affairs in particular. He then entrusted him to write a comprehensive study that would explain their providence in education, understanding of the message of Islam, and the resources that they need to achieve their objectives in terms of Islamic jurisprudence, acquaintance of knowledge and their struggle in life. Al-Jafri drafted the study and sent it off to the department of culture at al-Azhar Mosque, where the department published it in [al-Azhar] Magazine, depending on the wide knowledge of the author, his good intention and noble objective. Two parts of his long study were published in two consecutive issues. After the readers in Indonesia advised the Magazine that the author was influenced by his Alawi affiliation rather than his Indonesian-ness, the Magazine stopped the publication of the remaining parts of al-Jafri’s study (Nāji: n.d., 6–8).
This passage reflects the features of the socio-political atmosphere in which 'Umar Sulaymān Nājī produced his manuscript on the history of “Iṣlāḥ and Irshād Revolution in Indonesia,” dividing it into three Parts. Part I covers the period from 1914 to 1930, addressing the formation of the Iṣlāḥ and Irshād organization and its development; Part II covers the period from 1930 to 1950; and Part III focuses on the period from 1950 up to the present (1960s) (Ibid.). There is no evidence that Nājī has produced parts II and III of his proposed study. The only available part is Part I which deals with the origins and development of the Iṣlāḥ and Irshād movement in Indonesia. The present article provides a descriptive analysis of the contents of the first part of Nājī’s manuscript, placing it in its historical context and wider framework of the primary sources that highlight the history of the Irshād movement and its relationship with the ‘Alawī organizations.

**Description and Content of the Manuscript**

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

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

The preface of the manuscript is extracted from an article written by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Rushayid, editor-in-chief of al-Kuwaitī-al-Iraqī Magazine, published in the issue no. 8 of the Magazine in 1350/1931. This preface is described as “a word of a neutral Arab on the pioneer
of the *Irshād* awakening and founder of its schools in Indonesia, the teacher and Shaykh Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkittī al-Anṣārī l-Sudānī.” The original is in Arabic translated into English by the author. A photo of al-Shaykh al-Sūrkittī was inserted between the title of the preface and the text. The structure of the manuscript is based on sub-titles that deal with various issues, including the coming of Islam to the Netherland East Indies, the emergence of Islamic awakening (*nahda*), the Arab society in Indonesia, the migration of the Ḥaḍramīs to Indonesia, the arrival of Shaykh al-Sūrkittī in Jakarta and his struggle for the establishment of an Islamic reformist movement, the causes and repercussions of the conflict that emerged between the ‘Alawī Sayyids and *Irshādīs*, the proposals of the Arab unity and reconciliation and causes of their failure, and the branches of the *Irshād* organization and alumni of its schools.

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

**The *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* Movement in History**

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

**Conceptual Remarks**

The title of ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī’s manuscript, as mentioned earlier, is *Tārīkh Thawrat al-Iṣlāḥ wa-al-Irshād bi-Indūnīsiyā*, emphasising that the *Iṣlāḥ* and *Irshād* movement had succeeded in overthrowing the old socio-political and religious system of the Ḥaḍramī society in Indonesia in favour of a new one that established its strength on the values and fundamentals of Islam. He argues that his memoirs is about “a sudden development of a nation which was drowned in illiteracy, ignorance, myths, tribal fanaticism and false inherited habits (...). It is about bitter and longstanding struggle against corrupt beliefs, and exploitation of religious and racial privilege.”(Nājī: n.d., 4). Thus, he describes the
Iṣlāḥ and Irshād movement as a reformist one that rose against religious and racial practices that contrasted with the principles of Islam. This Nājī’s statement should not be taken at its face value since the Irshādī rivals had totally rejected the message of the movement and stood firmly against its reformist project. The Irshād movement did not enjoy the full support of the Ḥaḍramī community in Indonesia, but rather succeeded in creating awareness among the non-Sayyid Ḥaḍramīs who began to criticize some socio-religious practices of the Alawī Sayyids such as kissing hands for blessing or visiting holymen’s graves for mediation and intercession. It seems that this partial support of the Irshād movement has urged Natalie Mobini-Kesheh not to use the term ‘revolution’ in her book, when dealing with the Irshād organization. She prefers to use the phrase ‘the Ḥaḍramī awakening’, describing that awakening (or nahḍa) as “the adaption of modern, western-style methods of organization and education which aimed, above all, at the attainment of a loosely “progress” (Mobini-Kesheh: 1999, 7). In this respect, one may argue that the term ‘revolution’ used by ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī does not suit the nature of the Iṣlāḥ and Irshād movement because the movement did not totally overthrow the old socio-religious system of the Ḥaḍramī community and created a new system that drew its strength from the Irshādī reformist vision. In the case of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora in Indonesia, the old Alawī regime maintained its internal strength, while losing a large number of non-Sayyid clients who supported the reformist message of al-Irshād. This move absolutely challenged the socio-political and religious status quo of the Ḥaḍramī society in Indonesia and paved the way for the establishment of a new low profile order that served the Irshādīs’ interest.

The Advent of Islam in Indonesia

The advent and spread of Islam in the Malay-Archipelago at large is a very debatable issue because there are several hypotheses that address the issue of Islam in the region from different perspectives and time frameworks. Each of them has its own justifications and arguments that support its claim regarding this major event. Our concern here is not to give a detailed story about the spread of Islam in Indonesia, but rather to investigate how ‘Umar Sulaymān Nājī tackled this complicated issue and what kind of historical sources he consulted to deliver his own narration. His approach seems to have been unsophisticated because...
he depended on a limited number of secondary sources which were not systematically presented nor thoroughly documented. It is obvious that he did not meticulously consult the two fine articles written separately by Shukayb Arslān and Sayyid Ismā’īl bin ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAttās on the advent of Islam in the Malay world. He just cited several different dates for the advent and spread of Islam in Indonesia and then concluded that the ʿAlawī Sayyids (or Al BāʿAlawī) had arrived in Indonesia in the 17th century, two centuries after the spread of Islam in the region (Nājī: n.d.). This abridged approach undermines the reliability of the manuscript and its comprehensiveness in terms of the spread of Islam in Indonesia.

The Migration of Ḥaḍramīs to Indonesia

There are numerous accounts of the Ḥaḍramī migration to Indonesia, when it started and what were the reasons that led the Ḥaḍramī migrants to leave their homeland in the South of the Arabian Peninsula and settle in Indonesia. These issues were addressed in Nājī’s manuscript from two perspectives, where the author highlights the causes of the Ḥaḍramī migration to India and Indonesia, and discusses the system of social stratification which was prevalent in Ḥaḍramawt, and investigates how it affected the development of the society at home and hindered the growth of their reformist movements in the diaspora (Ibid.). In this respect, Nājī does not add new information to the available literature, but gives abstracts about the migration of the Ḥaḍramīs to India, where they worked as military soldiers, and their counterparts in Indonesia who established their career as traders (Ibid.). It is evident that Nājī has paid less attention to the periods of the Ḥaḍramī migration to Indonesia, neglecting the fact that their migration had passed through three distinct periods that shaped their residence in the host country; the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. He also overlooked their engagement in trade, shipping, ship-building, scholarship, missionary activities, diplomacy and even local politics. He slightly discusses the push factors that led them to leave their home country and the abundant opportunities that facilitated their settlement in the host land. These opportunities include their missionary activities and the Prophet’s family lineage that gave a large number of them acceptable legitimacy in the eyes of their hosts who accepted them as in-laws and socio-political partners.
Again this gap in Näji’s account suggests that the manuscript is neither comprehensive nor a consistent primary source on the history of the Ḥaḍramī migrants and their settlement in Indonesia.

The Iṣlāḥ and Irshād ‘Revolution’

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

Näji’s manuscript seems to have purposely discounted the contributions of ʿAlawī reformists to the emergence of the Ḥaḍramī awakening in the Netherlands East Indies, because he immediately proceeded to the arrival of al-Sūrkittī in Jakarta in 1911 and his achievements that inspired Islamic modernism in Indonesia (Näji: n.d.). This shift affects the flow of the narrative because there is a general consensus that the first signs of the Ḥaḍramī awakening established its roots in Singapore, where a group of intellectual ʿAlawī Sayyids launched a campaign against their traditionalist peers, who used to proclaim the possession of a special religious and social status due to their blood relation to the Prophet Muhammad. Based on this noble background, the ordinary Muslims should kiss their hands in greeting, make pilgrimage to their ancestors’ graves for blessing (baraka), and
their daughters should not be married off to non-'Alawīs. The pioneers of this reformist group were Ḥasan bin Shihāb (1852-1912), Abū Bakr bin Shihāb (1846-1922) and Muḥammad bin 'Aqīl bin Yahyā (1863-1931), who relatively succeeded in recruiting a large number of supporters among the Ḥaḍramīs in Java as well as in Singapore (Abushouk: 2000). To strengthen their position in Singapore, they instituted contacts with the elite of the Islāh and tajdid movements in the Middle East and Egypt in particular. Muḥammad bin 'Aqīl bin Yahyā, for example, was the correspondent of al-Manār Magazine in Singapore and had frequent communications with its founder and editor-in-chief, Muhammad Rashid Riḍā in Cairo. Therefore, Singapore functioned as an intellectual hub for Islamic reformist in the region, from where the ideas of Islamic reformism were disseminated to other principal cities of the Malay-Indonesian world (Bakar: 1994).

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

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

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

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

According to Nājī’s account, during the Khayr schools vacation in 1914, al-Sūrkittī paid a visit to Solo in Central Java, where he was hosted by Shaykh ‘Awaḍ bin Sunkar, Kaptein of the Arabs (Nājī: n.d.). At Bin Sunkar’s house, he was asked about the legality of a marriage of a Sharīfa (a daughter of an ‘Alawī Sayyid) and a non-Sayyid Muslim. He acknowledged the legality of the marriage concerned, basing his argument on Qur’ānic verses and Prophetic traditions (Abushouk: 2000). However, his fatwā was rejected outright by the ‘Alawī Sayyids, who gave strong support to the counter fatwā of ‘Umar Sālim al-’Attās (al-Manār: 1905), which nullified any form of marriage that would take place between a Sayyid’s daughter and a non-Sayyid husband. In this sense al-ʿAttās acknowledged the superiority of the Sayyids over the rest of the Muslims who do not share with them the same noble blood.
As a result, the ‘Alawī Sayyids stood firmly against al-Sūrkitī’s fatwā and his reformist message to the extent that they manipulated him to resign from his teaching post at the Khayr School on 6 September 1914 (Abushouk: 2000).

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

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

Nājī maintains that the mission of the Iṣlāḥ and Irshād Organization is “to change the social situation and corrupt beliefs, spread knowledge, fight literacy, free thinking from the shackles of blind imitation, and
destroy the racial privileges based myths and disbeliefs.” Its objective is to “form an Islamic-socialist-cooperative society governed by justice, love and tranquillity.” He highlights that:

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

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

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

Inspired by these principles and objectives, the Irshād Organization gradually extended its branches and schools from Jakarta to other principal towns in Java such as Tegal, Pekalongan, Surabaya, and Cirebon. The administration of the Irshād Schools was placed in the hands of al-Sūrkittī, his Sudanese collaborators and some of his brilliant students who graduated at the Khayr Schools. The organization’s branches were authorized to conduct their activities with little interference from the headquarters in Jakarta which was mainly in charge of the overall management of the organization and its activities and development (Nājī: n.d.). The manuscript also addresses the resignation of al-Sūrkittī from the Irshād Organization in 1921, when realizing that the Irshād
new administration was not supporting his new reformist project. Other issues that attracted the attention of Nājī were the achievements of the Irshād Organization, the contributions of selected graduates of Irshād schools to the development of the Indonesia society, and their participation in international events, concerning the Muslim umma’s affairs (Nājī: n.d.).

The ‘Alawī-Irshādī Discord

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

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

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

**Conclusion**

The ‘Alawī-Irshādī dispute should be examined in a context of struggle for power and social prestige since the Irshādīs had tried to undermine the system of social stratification which provided the ‘Alawī Sayyids with socio-political and religious power that they had enjoyed at home and in the diaspora (Mobini-Kesh: 1999). The crux of this conflict was also associated with the emancipation of the non-Sayyid Ḥaḍramīs from the hegemony of the ‘Alawī Sayyids in the Netherlands East Indies. The conflict should arguably not be viewed as a pure confrontation between the traditionalist ‘Alawi Sayyids and the non-Sayyid reformers, because neither were all of the Sayyids traditionalists, nor were their opponents purely reformists. As mentioned earlier, some Sayyids were among the pioneers of the reformist movement in the Malay-Indonesian world, remained loyal to their mission, and contributed to the spread of its values at home and in the diaspora (Arai: 2004). This does not negate that the ‘Alawī-Irshādī dispute had forced some of them to withdraw their support for al-Sūrkittī, giving priority to their ideology of descent, and joining the platform of their traditionalist ‘Alawi Sayyids so as to preserve the unity of their ‘Alawi ethnic group in the face of the growing threat of the Irshādīs (Abushouk: 2001).
The situation as far whole does not refute the fact that the 'Alawī-Irshādī discord had positive signs that enhanced competition in the Ḥaḍramī community and contributed to the promotion of reformist ideas in the Netherlands East Indies and Ḥaḍramawt via voluntary organizations, educational institutions and publications. The intellectual and political debate that focused on the kissing of Sayyids’ hands, eligibility in marriage, and the use of the title Sayyid contributed to the establishment of more than fifty newspapers and magazines in Arabic language in Indonesia between the two wars (Mobin-Kesheh: 1996), and enhanced the production of a number of publications and manuscripts dealing with the 'Alawī-Irshādī dispute from two different perspectives. The manuscript under review, Tārīkh thawrat al-Īṣlāḥ wa-al-Irshād bi-Indūnīsiyā is one of the Irshādī intellectual products that documents that the history of the Irshād organization and the causes of its conflict with the 'Alawī Sayyids. The manuscript is an important primary source on the history of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora in Indonesia. It is a complementary work to the manuscript which I edited and published in 2000: Tārīkh ḫarākat al-Irshād wa-shaykh al-Irshādīyyīn Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkittī fī Indūnīsiyā (Abushouk: 2000). However, the latter is more comprehensive than the former because it deals with the history of the Irshādīs from different perspectives, and gives a thorough account of the life and career of Shaykh Ahmad al-Sūrkitti (1876-1943) in his homeland (Sudan), the Ḥijāz and Indonesia. Nājī’s manuscript is very rich in terms of documenting the Irshād experience but it is not well thematically and chronologically presented. To get a balanced account on the history of the Irshādīs and their conflict with the 'Alawī Sayyids, we need to consult the publications and manuscripts of the two parties, and discuss them in their historical context. Nājī was not a professional historian, but an Irshādī activist who documented the history of his role model teacher, Shaykh Ahmad al-Sūrkitti, the achievements of the Irshād organization, the causes of the 'Alawī-Irshādī conflict and its repercussions from his own perspective. Therefore, his account should not be taken at face value, but needs further investigation and meticulous consultation with other available primary sources in the field. This does not deny that the manuscript deserves to be edited and published so as to preserve its academic value and accessibility to all researchers in the field.
Manuscript's cover page
إنهما مسؤولون عن اداء هذه الأمانة إلى الأجيال المقبلة في سوريا الصيدلة، هذه المتاعب تجرأنا علناً كنوزة الكيف منظرها النبيذ، ولذا أثراعlica من سماة الفيالم أشهر الأحداث

Manuscript page 4
وعاركاً، والذي لا يزال أفادًا من في قلم الحياة، يختبئون في ملائقهم وثائق مخزونات ويخزنون ذكريات في أذهانهم عن ثورة الإرشاد، كما نبأ
على المؤلف مهمته.

فان الفضل الأول في بروز هذا التاريخ يرجع إلى عصبة من خار والإرشاد الذين اختارهم الله كونوا حمامة للهدي التضامن الإسلامي
بندونيسيا. فإلى هؤلاء الكبار قدمنا شكريًا وتقديرنا الطيب، بما قدموه من تفاني وعملهم من خدمات في نجاح هذا العمل والهبة. وقد قدرنا
إلى ثلاثة مرحل: مرحلة الكفاح، مرحلة الاستقرار، مرحلة الاستقلال.
تم مرحلة الاستقلال ونوحدة الشعب الإندونيسي بعد الاستقلال.
تتم مرحلة الأولى من شهأ المعركة عام 1945م، والمرحلة
ثانية تتم من عام 1945م، الأولى الغربية العالمية الثانية، أي
بعد اندونيسيا السعيداً إلى اليوم.

هذا ونسأل الله أن يسدد خطاناً، وشهدنا إلى ما فيه الخير
المأ لم
سميت بمجردة السماح ثم احتسبت بعد مستداول عدد منها خلاف وفتق بمنح مدير المطبعة ورئيس التحرير. ثم صدرت أخرى تسمى الإرشاد تحت إشراف مدير المطبعة على عدم أهليته وقد رده على التحرير. عاشت البراءة سنة ثم احتسبت ببقية المطبعة تشتغل بطبع الكتب وغيرها وسكتت مطبعتها رابحة. ثم قدم لابن لها استقالته.

فلم تقبل منه إدارة الشركة حتى تجد من يقوم مقامه ولكنه أمر على الوقوف العاجل، فطلبت منه الشركة إعمالها بشهر حتى تُبعده عن غيره لم يجد أحدا بعد نهاية المدة أقفل مدير المطبعة وذهب مغضوبًا للنحاسة والاستئناف. كما لاحظ أن يودى مشاك العابد إلى النبي، وسأى معه الفضائل والزياة المطبعة متناولة الأبواب ذهب إلى مطلوب أخرى حتى احتلت المطبعة ستة خبرين.

تمت الرسالت الأولية...
وتمت الرسالت الثانية...
قد جمعت...
Endnotes


2. The 'Alawī Sayyids are the descendants of Ahmad al-Muhājir who trace their origins back to the Prophet Muhammad.

3. The Irshādīs are the members of the Iṣlāḥ and Irshād organization founded by Shaykh Ahmad al-Sūrkittī and his supporters in Jakarta in 1914.

4. Shaykh Mahmuḍ Shaltūt (1893-1963) is a prominent Egyptian scholar and Islamic theologian, best known for his work in Islamic reform. He was appointed as Grand Imām of al-Azhar Mosque in 1958 and remained at his post until his death in 1963. He visited Southeast Asia with an impressive Egyptian delegation, including Shaykh Muhammad al-Bahi, an Egyptian scholar and philosopher, in January and February 1961.

5. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jafrī is one of the prominent scholars of al-Jafrī family which traces its descent back to the Prophet Muhammad. He lived in Indonesia and played a significant role in the conflict that took place between the 'Alawī Sayyids and Irshādīs.


7. The manuscript of Tārīkh al-Irshād was compiled by Muḥammad Abū al-Anwār in 1943, and kept unpublished until 2000, when it was edited and published by the present writer in a book titled: Tārīkh ḥarakat al-Irshād wa-Shaykh al-Irshādiyyīn Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Sūrkittī fī Indūnīsiyā, Kuala Lumpur: Markaz al-Buḥūth, al-Jami'a Islāmiyya al-'Alamiyya bi Malīzay (ISBN 983-9470-33-3). The compilation of the manuscript was initiated by al-Sūrkittī's students who were interested in documenting the history of their movement and the contribution of Shaykh al-Sūrkittī to Islamic reformism in twentieth-century Indonesia.

8. Al-Jafrī seems to have meant Dr. A. Rinkes, director of the office of native and Arabic Affairs (1914-1916), who had contact with al-Sūrkittī. The office of native and Arabic Affairs was established 1899 with the Legendary Dutch Islamologist Dr. Snouk Hurgronje, as the first advisor (1899-1906), and it was headed subsequently by Dr. G.A. J. Hazeu (1907-1913, 1917-1920), Dr. A. Rinkes (1914-1916), E. Gobee (1927-1937), and Dr. G.F. Pipper (1937-1942), all trained in Indology with good command of Arabic and native languages. For further details see, Takashi Shiraishi, “A new regime of order: The Origin of Modern surveillance politics in Indonesia,” in: James T. Siegel. Audrey R. Kahin (eds.), 2003. Southeast Asian over three generation: Essays presented to Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, Cornell, Southeast Asian Program Publications: 61.

9. 'Umar bin Yusuf Manqūš was born to a non-sayyid family in Ḥaḍramawt and travelled to Java in his youth. In Java he began his career as a small trader and gradually worked his way up to become a wealthy merchant and property-owner by the turn of the 20th
century. In 1902 he was appointed as the Kapitein of the Arabs in Jakarta and remained in this position until 1931. In 1921 he was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Orange Nassau. As Natalie Mobini-Kesheh points out, this was a clear of Dutch government favour. Thus through the course of time Manqūsh became “proud of his achievements and famed for his refusal to be looked down upon by anyone, whether sayyid or European.” For further details see Mobini-Kesheh, The Ḥaḍramī Awakening, 28.


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