

## Ideology and Political Orientation of Intellectuals from Koto Gadang 1930-1950: A Prosopography

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### Abstract

Koto Gadang is a traditional village in Minangkabau, which has produced many Indonesian political figures in the period before and during the early days of Indonesian independence. Koto Gadang scholar is an intellectual figure in Indonesian politics in various schools of thought. This study analyses the thoughts of the intellectuals from Koto Gadang; Yahya Datuk Kayo, Agus Salim, Rohana Kudus, Chalid Salim, and Sutan Syahrir; in Indonesian politics 1930-1950. The study shows that the variety of researchers' viewpoints is impacted by family, social, and instructive natural elements, inside and outside Koto Gadang. Yahya Datuk Kayo in the Koto Gadang environment built his region from various aspects, one of which was marked by the construction of *Studiefonds* [intellectualship foundations]. Rohana Kudus advances the ladies of Koto Gadang through the woman' abilities school, called *Keradjinan Amai Setia*. Agus Salim's considerations on Islam and his patriotism about the goals of an autonomous Indonesia. Chalid Salim's writings criticizing the colonial government led to him being arrested and imprisoned, in his actions to defend the workers. Sutan Syahrir grew up outside Koto Gadang, his nationalism was under the influence of socialism through the popular revolution he carried out.

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### Introduction

Nagari Koto Gadang was home to people who were open to European and Western education systems. During 19th century, the people of Koto Gadang worked together to send their children to secular schools, and to attend schools in Batavia and the Netherlands (Singgalang, 2014). Many prominent Minangkabau intellectuals came from Nagari Koto Gadang, including Sutan Syahrir and Agus Salim (Graves, 2007, p. 253). Nagari Koto Gadang is a small village in Minangkabau (present-day West Sumatra), home to intellectual figures who contributed to the foundation of the nation and dominated the Indonesian intellectual class before independence. The Koto Gadang people were intelligent and trustworthy in utilizing unity and consensus to gain knowledge, namely by stimulating and increasing the interest of village children through education (Fitri 2016). Poverty in Koto Gadang, where most people worked

as farmers and craftsmen, gave rise to dissatisfaction and prompted its residents to seek a better life elsewhere so that they could support the education of their children outside the village, even as far as the Netherlands. Migrating is no longer for the purpose of making a living but also for studying.

The Minangkabau nature provides life lessons for the people, including life on the seashore. Minangkabau people not only leave their hometowns and return, but also encourage people to open their minds to the outside world (Nasir, 2007, p. 160). The dynamism of the society has been supported by the Minangkabau social structure. The people live by the adages "where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld", "accept the good, leave the bad". This has contributed to Minangkabau society's openness to change and acceptance of modern Western educational models. The migration tradition of the Minangkabau people has also contributed to their their dynamic outlook (Nasir, 2007, p. 168). In foreign lands, they were introduced to other cultures and saw how people who were free from colonialism lived. This makes them more critical and sensitive in overcoming life's problems, especially colonialism. After returning from overseas studies, Koto Gadang intellectuals laid the foundation for reform in Minangkabau and also in a wider scope, Indonesia in the early 20th century. It was these Minangkabau intellectuals who emerged as figures of the national movement (Zubir 2011). Who were the Minangkabau figures from Nagari Koto Gadang who played an important role in Indonesian politics in the early 20th century?

Mochtar Naim once revealed that the ancestors of the Koto Gadang people were sharp-minded and far-sighted. The Koto Gadang people were good at taking advantage of unity and consensus to gain knowledge by encouraging village children through education (Etek, et al, 2007, p. 165). This article discusses the thoughts of Minangkabau figures who were involved in politics in Indonesia with various schools of thought. One of the areas in Minangkabau that from where figures with different ideologies emerged is Nagari Koto Gadang. Even after Indonesia became independent, Koto Gadang intellectuals still actively engaged in the political field. Who were the Minangkabau figures from Nagari Koto Gadang who played an important role in Indonesian politics in the early 20th century? Prominent names include Yahya Datuk Kayo, Agus Salim, Chalid Salim, and Sutan Syahrir. These figures represent different ideologies with their pioneering work and popularity despite their common origin: Koto Gadang. What thoughts and ideologies did they embrace and develop? Those are a series of questions that underlie the research in this article.

A number of works related to this research include a journal written by Zusneli Zubir titled "Merantau: Embryos of Nationalism in Minangkabau" (Zubir 2011). *Merantau* has had a major impact, as can be seen from the intellectuals who studied and gave birth to renewal of the notions acquired while traveling, which later became the forerunner to the birth of Indonesian nationalism in the 20th century.

Journal written by Danil Mahmud Chaniago, et al, with the title "Nationalism; Its Roots and Growth in Minangkabau" (Chaniago, et al, 2020) which discusses the emergence of the roots of nationalism in Minangkabau, especially those that can be seen in real terms since the Paderi War, then shifted in the 19th to 20th centuries where

nationalism became a focus on politics. This is one of the backgrounds for the birth of the Koto Gadang intellectual group and the movements that each character has carried out.

Then the journal written by Ema Pratama Agustiningsih, "Women's Movement in Minangkabau: The Role of Rohana Kudus in Nationalism during 1912-1972" (Agustiningsih 2019) which discusses the beginning of the education movement for women carried out by Rohana Kudus in order to eliminate the stigma that women are only one housewife according to custom. Through his efforts, Rohana Kudus succeeded in establishing the Amai Setia Craft, which became the first pillar of education to break the stigma and customs regarding women.

Finally, the journal written by Jeffrey Hadler, "Uninterrupted Disputes: Matriarchy, Religious Reformism, and Colonization in Minangkabau" (Hadler 2013) discusses the social situation in Minangkabau which highlights the conflict between the customary system or more specifically matriarchy with the introduction of Islam. The conceptualization described by Hadler is from home and family, the influx of ideas of modernity which is not permanent and can shift if new tendencies emerge, such as the Minangkabau itself, from Europe, even from Islam. It began with the Paderi War as the beginning of a response to disputes over indigenous people who tried to change the matriarchy with religious teachings.

## Method

The method adopted in this study is a historical one as it deals with data from the past. More specifically, the historical method is the process of critically examining and analyzing past records and relics (Gottschalk, 2008, p. 39). Four main steps of sequential historical research are heuristics, criticism or verification, interpretation, and historiography (Abdurahman, 2007, p. 54).

The first method is heuristic, by which the author sought and collected data about Koto Gadang intellectuals. Historical sources consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are oral and written sources that are contemporaneous with historical events (Abdurahman, 2007, p. 54), while secondary sources are indirect sources from historical actors (Daliman, 2012, p. 55). The author used written sources as primary sources, including books written by the intellectuals of Koto Gadang, such as *Lima Belas Tahun Digul; Kamp Konsentrasi di Nieuw Guinea* written by I.F.M. Chalid Salim, and Sutan Syahrir's *Perjuangan Kita*.

Second, source criticism involves testing the data found regarding the truth or accuracy (accuracy) of sources. Testing is carried out through external criticism, where testing is carried out for the authenticity of sources or document authenticity, and internal criticism is carried out to test the validity of sources (Sjamsuddin, 2007, p. 104) regarding information from books or journals relating to the Koto Gadang scholar.

Third, data interpretation. Data interpretation involves data that have been obtained from the field through literature studies analyzed based on cause and effect and grouped according to the grouping of sources based on the object studied. Next is synthesis, involving assembling or connecting data from existing information.

Fourth is historiography/historical writing. It concerns data that has gone through the previous 3 stages to be written down by the author and turn into a written work. Writing history will provide a clear picture of the research process from beginning to end (drawing conclusions) (Abdurrahman, 2007, p. 76).

### Nagari Koto Gadang in Social and Educational Environment

Koto Gadang is a nagari located in Agam Regency, West Sumatra. During the Dutch colonial period it was called Sumatra's Westkust resident. Koto Gadang sits at the foot of Mount Singgalang and with terraced rice fields. Geographically, Koto Gadang is located west of Fort de Kock, Bukittinggi (Etek, et al, 2007, p. 3). Details of the Koto Gadang's map can be seen in Figure 1. Meanwhile, the highlands consist of mountains and hills, valleys and canyons, slopes, land and coast. It is home to two mountains - Mount Marapi and Mount Singgalang, and Lake Maninjau, with 3 large rivers called Batang Antokan, Batang Masang, and Batang Agam, as well as the coast. Nagari Koto Gadang is part of the IV Koto sub-district. Koto Gadang has 3 Jorongs, namely Jorong Koto Gadang, Ganting, and Subarang Tigo Jorong. The Dutch government divided the Danau Maninjau district which consisted of 10 nagari into two supra nagari or *keselarasan* (harmony) (Minangkabau traditional government system), ie Keselarasan IV Koto and Keselarasan VI Koto, with Nagari Koto Gadang belonging to Keselarasan IV Koto (Marajo, 2002, p. 41).

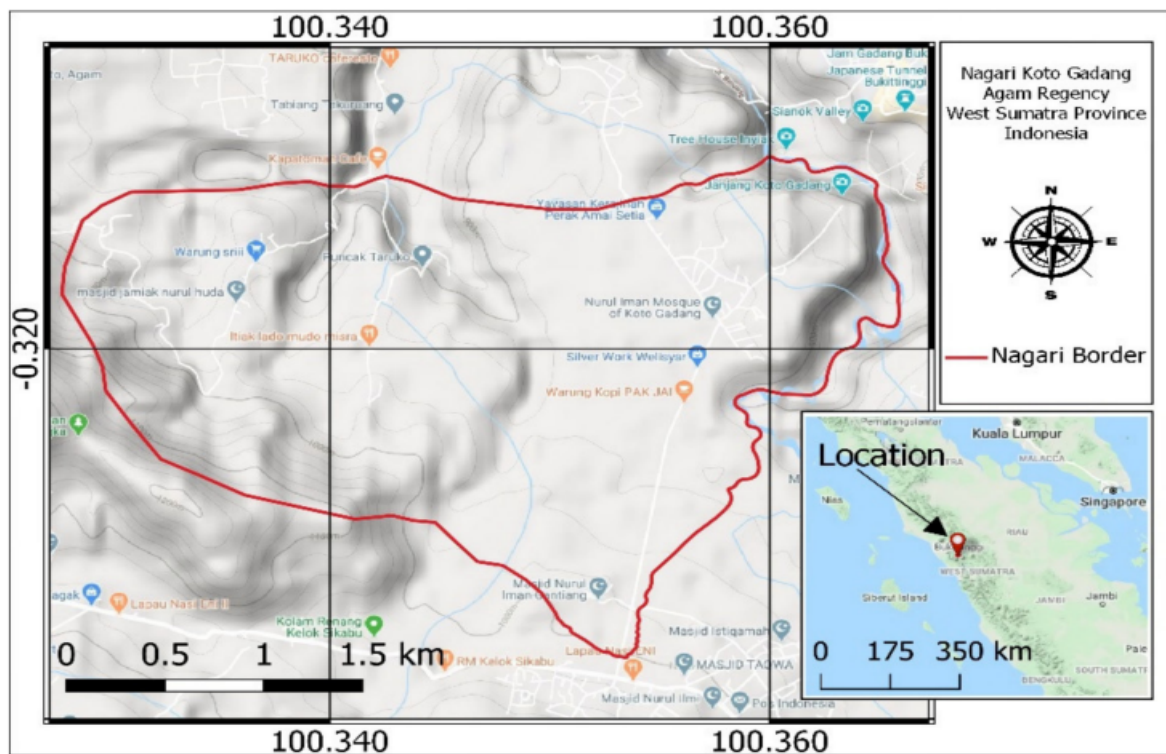


Figure 1. Map of Nagari Koto Gadang  
Source: Afrianus, et al, 2020, p. 4.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Koto Gadang has been a small village, with no more than a thousand inhabitants, occupying a narrow area of land. Koto Gadang is located at an altitude of 700-800 meters above sea level with temperatures around 21°C and 27°C during the day. The total area is about 1000 hectares which covers 75% of the highlands, and the rest is lowland. In terms of livelihood groups, some residents of Koto Gadang work as farmers, traders and craftsmen. Not many people chose the farming profession because of limited land that is not suitable for agriculture. Because of this, some residents chose to leave Koto Gadang, or work as craftsmen and carpenters (Naldi 2006).

Since the 19th century, the people of Koto Gadang have openly accepted the ideas of progress brought by Europeans or the Dutch who came to Indonesia (Suryadi 2013). According to the *Soeara Kemadjuan Kota Gedang* newspaper, which was published in 1916 in Koto Gadang as the first newspaper there, a village school had already been established in Koto Gadang. In 1856, 28 village schools were established in various nagari in Minangkabau, including Nagari Koto Gadang. According to Steinmetz's report, the most rapid progress in education was seen in Agam's children, especially from the Nagari Koto Gadang, whose children were considered diligent and intelligent (Chaniago, 2000). This is proof that the Minangkabau people, especially Koto Gadang, were open to change, including accepting modern Western educational models. The dynamic attitude of society was supported by the Minangkabau social structure (Nasir, 2007, p. 168).

Prior to the establishment of secular schools by the Dutch colonial government, the traditional education known in Minangkabau was surau [small mosque] education. In its development, the surau became the initial bridge for the emergence of religious education or Islamic education in Minangkabau. This institution later became the glue that binds the emergence of modern schools with an Islamic perspective (Zubir, 2011, p. 17). In short, the emergence of intellectuals in Minangkabau was inseparable from the existence of the surau. The surau served to socialize Islamic religious values to children in Minangkabau, including in Koto Gadang (Undri 2010, p. 107). After the arrival of the Dutch, there was a change originating from the interests of the Netherlands for the structure of the government bureaucracy. This resulted in the emergence of new jobs, including civil servants in Dutch government offices. This change was related to the tradition of the Koto Gadang people for travelling throughout the region and provided positive benefits for the Dutch colonial government which was in need of people to work in the government bureaucracy outside the area, especially in newly conquered areas such as Aceh, Riau or Kalimantan (Graves, 2008, p. 254).

In this new field of work, the people of Koto Gadang had an interest in working as employees of the Dutch colonial government compared to other villages. The impact of working in the government sector could be seen in the changing mindset of the Koto Gadang people who tended to prioritize education as a measure of one's level of success. Furthermore, the people of Koto Gadang were generally more proficient in

Dutch, and they also attended schools in Western educational institutions established by the government (Naldi, 2006).

### **Influences of Various Ideologies/ from Western Educational Systems**

*Merantau* conducted in Koto Gadang because there was not enough rice fields, and the residents left the *nagari* to trade. Migrating is one way to get influence from outside both in education and ideology. Basically, young people would leave their hometowns when they were in their teens, either to go to school (in the 19th and 20th centuries) and to become craftsmen or traders. *Merantau* is also seen as the right path to maturity and success, as well as a marker of entering adult life (Etek, et al, 2008, p. 40).

In general, Koto Gadang intellectuals started their education at secular schools established by the Dutch colonial government under a Western education system. The small number of Indonesian students who managed to study in the Netherlands were deeply influenced by the conditions and political ideas they discovered there. This impressed them. Sutan Syahrir, one of those who fell for socialism that motivated him to study outside the campus while studying in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He held discussions and gatherings with fellow socialists to talk about the ideals of human independence (Kahin, 2013, p. 68). This was in contrast to Agus Salim, where he acquired his faith in Islam while working at the Dutch consulate to Saudi Arabia in 1906. His ideas about national independence or nationalism were adapted to the teachings of Islam (Committee, 1984, p. 20). Chalid Salim was a leftist who did not believe in the existence of God, thanks to the influence of secular Western education. He saw firsthand the fate of the workers on the Sumber Mujur plantation, Lumajang, East Java (Salim, 1977, p. 40) .

The colonials only thought about the benefits they could get from having workers from indigenous groups (who had the opportunity to attend secular schools) because the colonial government was experiencing a shortage of manpower. However, the Dutch also did not think about other impacts that could arise from the provision of education in the Dutch East Indies, namely the educated group or group of modern intellectuals who surrendered themselves completely to the struggle of their own nation from colonialism by foreign nations, which was channeled into overflowing political activities. This group of intellectuals—including Yahya Datuk Kayo, Agus Salim, Chalid Salim, and Sutan Syahrir in their own way—fought for Indonesian independence not under a shared vision. They had different ideas, making the goals they formulated more complex, but shared one common goal: unity of an independent nation (Mahasin, 1984, p. 3).

### **Koto Gadang Intellectuals and Their Political Thoughts and Practices in Indonesia 1930-1950**

#### ***Yahya Datuk Kayo***

Yahya was born on August 1, 1874, in Koto Gadang. Since childhood, he had moved from one place to another with his mother. Initially, he moved to Suliki in 1882 and attended school there for one year. In 1883, he transferred schools to Pasar Gadang

Padang, then from 1885 to 1887 at a private school in Bukittinggi. At that time, his mother, Landjadin Khatib Besar, whose title was Datuk Kayo, was the head of the coffee warehouse in Baso, where Yahya helped her. In 1888, Yahya began studying as an intern at the Padang Darat Resident's office to become more intimately acquainted with the bureaucracy of the Dutch colonial government. Then from 1892 to 1895, Yahya worked as an apprentice clerk (*Leerlingschrijver*) in the Agam Tua Controller's office. When Yahya was 20 years and 9 months old, he had the title "Datoek Kajo" and was appointed as Tuanku Laras IV Koto. It was a prestigious government position, especially for a native son like Yahya (Etek, et al, 2008, p. 3). Not long after, the position of Head of Laras IV Koto opened up, and Yahya easily entered as a candidate for Tuanku Laras.

Since childhood, Yahya had been taught to love his own village, Koto Gadang, and pay attention to everything related to it. Being taken away by his mother from Koto Gadang proved to have a positive impact on the village in the future. His mother, Landjadin Khatib Besar, wanted him to become a leader in Koto Gadang (Etek, et al, 2007, p. 188).

Yahya Datuk Kayo was "the Master of the Indonesian Language" while working at the Volksraad, as he was the only one who used Indonesian during sessions (Rohmadi, et al, 2017, p. 104). According to him, he could use Malay more freely and be able to express it at the Volksraad sessions, asserting his identity as an *Indonesier* (Indonesian). Nationalism teaches that a person only lives for his nation and for the sake of the nation and Yahya Datuk Kayo stayed true to this adage at the Volksraad. Yahya used Indonesian in the Volksraad from 1927 to 1931. This consistent attitude made him awarded the title "Master of Indonesian" by the *bumiputera* magazine. Yahya's passion for using Indonesian was a demonstration of his pride as an Indonesian (Rohmadi, et al, 2017). In addition, Yahya Datuk Kayo succeeded in establishing the Kota Gedang *Studiefonds* or the Koto Gadang Intellectualship Foundation, in 1909.

This foundation's objective was to advance the education of Koto Gadang children, including sending them to the Netherlands. *Studiefonds'* short-term program was to find teachers, especially those who could teach Dutch. Kahar Masyhur and Rustam, who graduated from the Raja Bukittinggi School, were sent to the Netherlands. The goal was for them to get diplomas in the teaching of Dutch and allow them to teach in Koto Gadang (Etek, et al, 2007, p. 157). In 1912, HIS was founded by *Studiefonds* Koto Gadang. Yahya's efforts to maintain *Studiefonds* were a success as the foundation managed to survive for more than 20 years, and expanded to several cities such as Batavia, Bandung and Medan (Suryadi, 2019).

### ***Rohana Kudus***

Rohana Kudus was born Siti Rohana, the first daughter of Muhammad Rasyad Maharaja Sutan and Kiam, on December 20, 1884 in Koto Gadang, Minangkabau. At childhood, she moved out of Koto Gadang to follow her father, who worked as a prosecutor in Medan, and often moved, both within and outside Minangkabau.

Rohana often spent her childhood outside Koto Gadang. Even so, she grew up following Minangkabau customs and Islamic teachings. Rohana was the half-sister of Sutan Syahrir (Zubir, 2011: 76). Her first education was obtained from his father who taught her reading and writing skills at home. (Agustiningsih, 2019).

Koto Gadang girls were not allowed to attend public schools, but Rasyad introduced Rohana to a collection of books and magazines, allowing her to master the basics of reading skills (Dahlia, 2013, p. 9). When Rohana was 6 years old, she moved to Alahan Panjang to follow his father. There, Rohana met Mrs. Adiesa, the wife of Lebi Rajo Nan Soetan, then a neighbor. As a child, Rohana often played at Adiesa's house, and over time, Rohana also studied with Adiesa. Rohana felt that Adiesa's house was so comfortable, because there were many newspapers, books and magazines like at home. Rohana's interest in books made Adiesa teach her to read and write. Rohana, who previously had basic alphabet recognition taught by her father, quickly learned to read and write with Adiesa. For 2 years, Adiesa and her husband taught Rohana to read and write. At 8, Rohana was already proficient at reading and writing in the Arabic Latin alphabet, Arabic Malay, Malay, and Dutch, and she even taught her playmates (Zubir, 2011).

As a teenager, Rohana chose to return to Koto Gadang to realize her dream of having a school for her female friends. She attracted the attention of the girls there by sitting reading books on the terrace or by the window. Her friends, who at first mocked her, now started to want to know the stories Rohana read to her sister. Moreover, she sent many books from her father in Medan. Her friends' interest in learning increased, so Rohana converted a room in the gadang house into a classroom. Rohana's grandmothers, Tuo Tarimin and Tuo Sini, supported her and believed that she could achieve her dream that women could be as educated and knowledgeable as men (Dahlia, 2013, p. 51).

Society at that time believed women should not go to school and they were destined to be housekeepers. Rohana wanted to change that and believed that women in Koto Gadang should be as educated as the men (Oktarina & Putra 2021). The awakening women in Koto Gadang in education began with the establishment of the Keradjinan Amai Setia school (Inlandsche Meisje School) on February 11, 1911. It was Rohana herself who taught women the ability to read and write, as well as arithmetic. Keradjinan Amai Setia aimed to provide education for Koto Gadang women in the fields of reading, writing, arithmetic, household affairs, craftsmanship, religion, sewing, embroidery, and other skills. Keradjinan Amai Setia in Kota Gadang was the first girls' school in Minangkabau.

Rohana's struggle did not stop there. She also wanted to have her own newspaper catering to women. The Soenting Melajoe newspaper was founded on July 10, 1912, a year after the establishment of Keradjinan Amai Setia. The newspaper was managed by Rohana together with Zubaedah Ratna Juwita. The newspaper was published once every eight days, establishing itself to be reformist women publication, to allow Minangkabau female intellectuals to encourage other women to pursue progress and improve their lot (Zubir, 2011). The Soenting Melajoe then became the center of



activities for young and married women, covering politics, the rise of Indonesian women, and prose and poetry, in addition to providing opportunities for women to enter the political arena (Agustiningsih, 2019).

### *Agus Salim*

Agus Salim was born Masyhudul Haq on October 8, 1884, in Koto Gadang, West Sumatra. Agus Salim had 15 siblings (Zulkifli, et al, 2017, p. 136). His father, Sutan Mohammad Salim, was a *hoofdjaksa* or chief prosecutor at Landraad in Riau en Onderhorigheden (high prosecutor at the Riau district court). Agus Salim had moved from one place to another since childhood following his father's work. As a chief prosecutor, Mohammad Salim was respected. Agus Salim was able to enter the ELS school (Europeesche Lagere School), a Dutch elementary school in Bukittinggi in 1891, when he was 7 thanks to his father's position. In 1898, Agus Salim continued his studies at HBS (Hogere Burgelijke School), a high school in Batavia, after graduating from ELS (Fauzi & Hasanah, 2019).

After graduating from HBS in 1903, Agus Salim decided to work. He was accepted as a translator in Batavia. He moved again with his father to Riau and worked as a notary's assistant, then to a company in Indragiri until 1906 (Mukayat, 1958, p. 8). Highly intelligent, he mastered 9 foreign languages, including Dutch, German, English, French, Turkish, Arabic and Japanese. His expertise in foreign languages led him to travel to Saudi Arabia to enrich his thoughts and knowledge, as well as being a translator and the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah in 1906 (Abdi, 2012). There he met his uncle, Ahmad Khatib Al-Minangkabawi. Ahmad Khatib's open mind towards reform influenced Agus Salim, who had never studied Islam more deeply as he he was subjected to Western education. Ahmad Khatib made Agus Salim rediscover his faith and his experience while in Saudi Arabia and studying with his uncle became a turning point in his life about his faith and Islam (Zulkifli, et al, 2017, p. 84).

Agus Salim was an intellectual with nationalist-Islamist thinking. For him, nationalism could not be separated from Islam, because Islam played an important role in Indonesian life. He believed Islam would create a unified group consciousness, a unification of feelings from various ethnic groups, with their respective histories, languages, traditions, and social structures. Through Islam, different groups could unite into a large community (Nasution, 1965). In order to prevent nationalism and independence from going astray, Agus Salim proposed a framework of life "for Allah SWT", so "the state" as a human creation was no separated from religion and more specifically belief in God the Almighty. This means that all of our lives, all of our actions, all of our steps, and all of our deaths are for Allah alone (Sularto, 2004, p. 88). Agus Salim realized nationalism-Islamism in Sarekat Islam. Sarekat Islam was the only organization large enough and widely known by the public that was based on Islam. For Agus Salim, any action should be with the goal of pleasing Allah SWT and this was in line with the SI organization's goal: to promote trade among Muslims (Mukayat, 1958, p. 26).

Apart from being active in political organizations, Agus Salim also expressed his thoughts in written form when he was active in the world of journalism, and his skills in speaking were also clearly visible from Sarekat Islam, and when he became a member of the Volksraad (Yulianti, 2012). Agus Salim's writings opened a window to his thoughts on various aspects of life. Of course, his writings were inseparable from Islamic teachings and colored the national movement at that time. *Oethosan Hindia* was one of SI's media that served as a forum for conveying thoughts and ideas. After *Oethosan Hindia*, Agus Salim moved to *Bendera Islam* and also the *Hindia Baroe*. The press world, for Agus Salim, succeeded in opening the awareness of the Indonesian people at that time that the Dutch East Indies should have self-government (Yulianti, 2012).

### *Chalid Salim*

Chalid Salim, also known as Abdoel Chalid Salim was born on November 24, 1902 in Tanjung Pinang, Bintan Island, Riau Islands. His father, Sutan Mohammad Salim served there as chief prosecutor. His father had been transferred to several areas such as Padang and Medan, even though he was still Minang and came from Koto Gadang (Salim, 1977, p. 38). After Sutan Mohammad Salim retired, he chose to settle in Jakarta. Chalid first entered Kindergarten (Hollandsche Christelijke Frobelschool), then continued to ELS and to MULO for junior secondary education. After that, Chalid moved to Padang and finished MULO. The Salim family received a European education (Salim, 1977, p. 39).

When Chalid finished school, he went to live with his eldest brother, Agus Salim, in Rangkasbitung, Banten. It was from here that Chalid Salim first became acquainted with politics. Agus Salim at that time was a member of the Volksraad, and also a leader of the Sarekat Islam, which meant that he had enormous influence within the nationalists. After that Chalid moved again and lived with another older brother, a government official in Lumajang, East Java. Thanks to the help of his older brother, he became an employee at the Soember Moedjoer plantation. From here, a sense of serving the nation began to emerge, because Chalid saw from the plantation that the workers who had worked hard there looked very miserable. Their conditions were not commensurate with the huge profits the Dutch government enjoyed from the coffee, quinine and tobacco plantations at that time. Seeing this, there was a feeling of wanting to fight for self-government for the country and also to improve the lot of the workers who had worked hard there. Gradually, Chalid Salim, who started to get to know politics with no leanings, flirted with leftist ideas.

While in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, he became a member of the editorial staff of *Halilantar Hindia*, which followed PKI principles. Together with a PKI member, Koesno Goenoko, Chalid founded the "Sarekat Rakyat" party, which later developed into a covert organization of the communist movement. Since being active in the communist movement, Chalid stood by his own leftist movement until finally he was suspected and exiled to Digul (Salim, 1977, p. 41). Chalid tried to socialize his ideas through the mass media. Chalid joined as a member of the editorial staff of the PKI-

affiliated Halilintar Hindia, then moved to the communist-leaning Proletar magazine, and finally to the editorial office of the *Pewartar Deli* newspaper, which was even more bold in criticizing the *poenale sanctie* policy and the arrest of all post-rebellion movement figures in West Sumatra in 1926. Although Chalid was eventually exiled to Digul, this did not dampen his enthusiasm for building ways towards liberation from colonialism (Salim, 1977, p. 191).

Chalid's desire to fight for Indonesian independence and escape from colonialism can be interpreted as a feeling of nationalism, and his leftist ideology was a way to realize these ideals. Chalid, a son of Indonesia whose heart burned with love for his homeland and his people and bled profusely, was compassionate at seeing the misfortunes of his homeland and the lowliness of his people, even though he had different views Chalid never intended to do any harm, although in the end by fighting for his ideals against the Indonesian nation in his leftist direction, he became one of the hundreds sent to Boven Digul, exiled in Tanah Merah (Panitia, 1984, p. 343).

### *Sutan Syahrir*

Sutan Syahrir was born in Padang Panjang, March 5, 1909. His father, Mohammad Rasad, titled Maharaja Sutan bin Soetan Leman and Soetan Palindih, came from Koto Gadang and an amtenaar with his last position as Hoofd van Landraad or chief prosecutor at the District Court in Medan (Az, 2014, p. 13). Syahrir entered school at the age of 6 at ELS, then he continued his junior high school at MULO in Medan, and AMS in Bandung (Az, 2014, p. 17). In Bandung Syahrir's nationalism grew, after he heard the speech of Dr. Cipto Mangunkusumo, who at that time was known as a leader of the nationalist movement, at the Bandung square.

Since then, he began to be active in national youth associations, even taking part in forming the Jong Indonesie association (1927) and the *Perhimpunan* magazine. As a result, Syahrir, who was still young and studying at AMS, was often spied on by the police. In 1927, Syahrir was one of the ten people who initiated the establishment of a nationalist youth association called "Jong Indonesie", then changed the name "Pemuda Indonesia", and successfully organized the Indonesian Youth Congress, culminating in the 1928 Youth Pledge. In 1929, Syahrir graduated from AMS, and was determined to continue his education in the Netherlands, at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands, majoring in Law (Az, 2014, p. 22).

Syahrir came to the Netherlands, Amsterdam in 1929, to study there, but he spent more time outside his campus. His association outside campus introduced him to people from various nationalities, whom he thought were more interesting than studying and discussing activities in the lecture hall. He rarely attended lectures because his interest and attention was in discussion forums outside campus. There Syahrir became acquainted with the notion of socialism and also deepened his knowledge in the polemics of socialism theory (Az, 2014, p. 27). Still in Amsterdam, Syahrir then joined the PI or Indonesian Association [*Perhimpunan Indonesia*], an association of Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands. When he returned to Indonesia, Syahrir voiced his opposition to the dissolution of the PNI. Syahrir then

founded his own party, the Indonesian National Education or PNI-Baru. It was from here that Syahrir's political career was really within the party and based on the socialism he had studied in the Netherlands. The PNI-Baru adopted a social-revolutionary platform (Az, 2014, p. 31).

Thanks to going to school in the Netherlands, Syahrir became acquainted with the notion of socialism. He was one of those affected by the spirit of the *zeitgeist* era after World War I in 1914-1918, namely Marxism which gave rise to the struggle to improve the lot of workers who were oppressed by capitalism. His understanding of socialism from this experience deepened as he became involved in proletarian life. He becomes sensitive to social and political phenomena that occur in his environment, leading him to be more determined to fight for the fate of the oppressed. Syahrir's version of socialism was populist socialism or socialism based on the people, to uphold humanity and recognize the equality of every human being. This means that socialism is the consummation of all popular ideals, namely true freedom and human maturity (Pramasanti, 2013).

In populist socialism, Syahrir's thoughts were centered on humanity. For him, the opposite of colonialism and oppression is not national independence, but rather human revival and the upholding of human dignity. Nationalism that is fought for must be complemented by democracy. Nationalism without democracy would easily be contained and immersed in feudalism, which had become the model of modern fascism and traditional imperialism. The Indonesian nation must be free from all forms of imperialism and live in a democratic nationalism. Democracy must also be built in the spirit of nationalism. Democracy without nationalism would lead to efforts to pursue individual interests, which could weaken the unity and cohesion of life as a nation (Molan, 2014). Therefore, the burning spirit of the Indonesian people was important and the struggle for independence to escape feudalism was carried out with the power of the national revolution, and was viewed from within as a people's revolution (Syahrir, 2018, p. 105).

## Conclusions

Historically, Nagari Koto Gadang has filled national history because it succeeded in giving birth to intellectuals including Yahya Datuk Kayo, Rohana Kudus, Agus Salim, Chalid Salim, and Sutan Syahrir. Each of these figures, although they came from the same nagari, had different views on politics and the pursuit of Indonesian independence. A significant difference from the Koto Gadang intellectuals stemmed from the perspective of growing up and studying education from different places. Yahya Datuk Kayo, who grew up in the family and social environment of Koto Gadang, tried to build Koto Gadang from various aspects of nagari life. His way of thinking directed Koto Gadang to progress, with many children going to school funded by the Koto Gadang *Studiefonds* (Intellectualship Foundation).

Yahya Datuk Kayo's efforts to revive Koto Gadang was similar what Rohana Kudus had done. However, Rohana only focused on the women of Koto Gadang who lagged behind their educated male counterparts. Although Rohana never received

formal education, she received informal education from her father, and at a young age Rohana had mastered several languages. Thanks to her intelligence, Rohana was able to establish the Keradjanan Amai Setia school which heralded the awakening of women in Koto Gadang and provided them with education and skills. Not being complacent there, Rohana also expanded her wings to spread the spirit of women's advancement through the Soenting Melajoe newspaper.

Agus Salim's experience in Jeddah made shaped his thoughts with regard to Islam and also his sense of nationalism. He mixed nationalism and Islam, believing that the achievement of the ideals of an independent Indonesian nation could only happen because of and for Allah SWT alone. Chalid Salim and Sutan Syahrir were figures who were influenced by Marxism. Chalid Salim leaned towards the left because he saw the plight of the workers in the plantations. Meanwhile, he grew up in a social environment that was very close to the Netherlands, but seeing for himself the conditions of the workers made him fight for an independent government, and further away from God. Even so, his efforts to have self-government, to liberate the proletariat and its nationalism, should be appreciated because of his courage to write articles attacking the colonial government until he ended up in Digul exile. Sutan Syahrir, who grew up outside Koto Gadang but was still educated in the Koto Gadang social environment, grew to be an immigrant child and had wide associations. In adulthood, he looked for ways to realize the nationalism that he learned while in the Netherlands. Socialism became the biggest influence in realizing the ideals achieving nationhood for Indonesia separate from the Netherlands with the popular revolution.

These Koto Gadang intellectuals have shown several colors or characteristics such as intellectuals who received education in Minangkabau; Yahya Datuk Kayo whose thinking is an effort to advance Koto Gadang from being left behind. Intellectuals who study outside Minangkabau; Agus Salim, Chalid Salim, and Sutan Syahrir whose direction of thought was shaped by influences that came from outside the Dutch East Indies, namely Islam, the left and socialism. These characteristics were also tied to the family or social environment the intellectuals grew up in; intellectuals who grew up in Koto Gadang, Yahya Datuk Kayo and Agus Salim, as well as those who grew up outside Koto Gadang, Rohana Kudus, Chalid Salim and Sutan Syahrir. These characteristics influence the mindset of the figures and also their political practices after Indonesia's independence.

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