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The Historical Roots of Islamic Education Integration: A Policy Analysis of the Independence Revolution Era and Its Relevance to the Modern National Education System

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the juridical-constitutional position, institutional transformation, and policy dynamics of Islamic Education in Indonesia during the early independence era (1945–1950), as well as to formulate its relevance to the modern National Education System (*Sisdiknas*). Utilizing a qualitative library research method with a historical and policy analysis approach, this study examines the post-colonial structural transition. The results indicate that the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs on January 3, 1946, acted as a bureaucratic catalyst that dismantled the Dutch colonial educational dualism by standardizing curricula and integrating general sciences into madrasahs. Constitutional legitimacy derived from the First Principle of Pancasila and Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution culminated in the enactment of Law No. 4 of 1950, which formally guaranteed the right to religious education in public schools. Amidst the Dutch Military Aggressions I and II, Islamic educational institutions particularly pondok pesantrens demonstrated high social resilience through a dual-function paradigm as centers for religious learning (*tafaqquh fiddin*) and decentralized guerrilla defense bases driven by community self-reliance (*swadaya*). This study concludes that the revolution-era policies laid the foundation for national integration by synthesizing religious and civic values. Its relevance to modern Sisdiknas reinforces that Islamic education is not merely a religious subsystem, but a primary pillar in forging a national character that is both moderate and adaptive to contemporary developments.

Keywords: Islamic Education Policy, Postcolonial Education, Madrasah Integration, Independence Revolution, Social Resilience.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic education encompasses facts related to the growth and development of both formal and non-formal Islamic education. It provides direction for the progress and dynamism it has experienced, ensuring that the construction and development of education remain within a holistic and fundamental framework. In Indonesian history, there is no doubt that the presence of Islam has made a highly significant contribution to the development of Indonesian society. One prominent contribution is that Islam laid a solid foundation for a process of sociocultural communication and interaction among various communities scattered across different

islands. This was because the growth of the Asian trade network connected the peoples of the archipelago to one another not only through the bond of religion but also through business networks and political diplomacy. At this point, Islam emerged as a unifying force that bound together diverse societal groups, transcending differences related to local-primordial identities (Burhanudin, 2017).

The Proclamation of Indonesian Independence on August 17, 1945, was a momentum of decolonization encompassing all aspects of life, including education. During three and a half centuries of Dutch colonization and three and a half years of Japanese occupation, the educational system in Indonesia suffered from segregation and discrimination. Islamic education, represented by *pesantren* (traditional Islamic boarding schools) and madrasahs, was often looked down upon by the colonial government because it was perceived as a center for ideological and political resistance (Daulay & P., 2012).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy of unification and modernization of the madrasah curriculum initiated at the beginning of independence should not be viewed simply as a tactical bureaucratic move. More than that, this policy constituted a massive epistemological decolonization movement. The effort to introduce general subjects into madrasahs aimed to break the hegemony of the dichotomy of knowledge inherited from the Dutch colonial era, which deliberately separated science and religion to marginalize Islamic institutions. This initial transformation ultimately succeeded in transforming the previously local and primordial system into a legal and state-recognized subsystem of national education. At the dawn of independence, the nation's founding figures realized that education was the key to fulfilling sovereignty. A crucial issue that emerged was how to unify the educational dualism inherited from the Dutch, namely the secular public schools and the religious Islamic educational institutions. Islamic education during this period was not only demanded to produce religious experts but also patriotic citizens possessing the general skills needed to build the bureaucracy of the newly born nation (Steenbrink, 1986).

This paper will explore how Islamic education transformed from a traditional-local system into an official part of the Indonesian national education system. The analysis focuses on the period from 1945 to 1950, a time when the legal and institutional foundations of Islamic education were laid amidst the turmoil of the physical revolution against Dutch military aggression. Specifically, this research clarifies its focus on investigating how Islamic education policies during the 1945–1950 period operated not merely as structural administrative measures, but as a complex process of epistemological decolonization and socio-political reconciliation. Structurally, these policies served as an administrative bridge; however, at a deeper level, they dismantled the discriminatory Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies that had historically marginalized indigenous faith-based systems. Furthermore, this policy shift functioned as an instrument of social reconciliation, weaving together fragmented grassroots social agency, diverse Islamic socio-religious factions, and the newly established state apparatus into a cohesive national vision under the theological-constitutional compromise of Pancasila. (Raihani, 2023).

Although classic studies by (Steenbrink, 1986), (Nata & A., 2011), (Daulay & P., 2012), and (Azra, 2012) have laid a strong historical foundation for the dualism of education and modernization of madrasahs in Indonesia, these studies largely view early independence policies as merely bureaucratic-tactical measures. There is an academic

research gap regarding how policy dynamics during the crucial period of 1945–1950 functioned not only as administrative tools, but as a comprehensive epistemological decolonization movement that reconciled grassroots social agency with the theological-constitutional compromise of Pancasila. This article specifically fills this gap by analyzing the synthesis of public and Islamic spaces amidst economic paralysis and physical military aggression.

To systematically analyze this multifaceted transformation, this study establishes a firm theoretical and conceptual framework utilizing a triad of approaches: Decolonization Theory, the Politics of Education, and Social Resilience. Decolonization Theory: This framework is utilized to examine the deconstruction of the colonial *dichotomy of knowledge* (secular vs. religious) and the subsequent reclamation of indigenous intellectual spaces through curriculum integration. The Politics of Education: This lens unpacks the power dynamics, institutional negotiations, and legislative compromises between the state, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in defining the legal-constitutional status of religious schools. Social Resilience: This concept evaluates how grassroots Islamic education networks (*pesantren* and madrasahs) demonstrated operational and cultural endurance, maintaining community cohesion and educational continuity despite severe economic paralysis and physical Dutch military aggression. By synthesizing these conceptual lenses, this article offers a comprehensive reading of the 1945–1950 educational policies as an arena where structural governance met resilient, revolutionary social agency.

This research is designed using a qualitative approach with a primary focus on historical studies and policy analysis. The author attempts to reconstruct the events and the transformation of Islamic education that occurred during the crucial period between 1945 and 1950. Technically, the method applied in this study is library research. The author collects, verifies, and synthesizes various data sourced from authoritative literature, including both legal documents and the scholarly works of educational historians. Approach & Time Limitation: The research uses a qualitative approach of historical study and policy analysis, which is strictly limited to the timeline of 1945 to 1950—an era of post-colonial transition and physical revolution in Indonesia. Source Selection Criteria: Data was collected through library research by screening authoritative literature on educational historians as well as primary legal documents that have direct relevance to the integration of Islamic institutions and the state. Legal Document Specifications: The juridical-constitutional documents consulted include: Original Text of Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution concerning the right to education for citizens. Law Number 4 of 1950 concerning the Basics of Education and Teaching in Schools.(Undang-Undang Nomor 4 Tahun 1950 Tentang Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran Di Sekolah. (1950). Jakarta., n.d.) Joint Decree (SKB) of 1946 between the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Education, Teaching, and Culture (PP&K) concerning religious teaching in public schools.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Constitutional Position of Islamic Education: The Pancasila Compromise

Islamic education holds a foundational and legal-constitutional position within the modern Indonesian national education system, as guaranteed by Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution and Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (*Sisdiknas*). It operates as an integrated subsystem through madrasahs, *pesantrens*, and

religious education in formal public schools, aiming to increase faith, piety, and noble character (Hidayat, 2025).

As noted by Hidayat Nur Wahid (Vice Chairman of the MPR RI), religious instruction possesses both a historical foundation in the anti-colonial struggle and a deliberate constitutional footing negotiated by the nation's founding fathers. During the critical transition to independence, the primary foundations of Islamic education were anchored directly in the 1945 Constitution and the state philosophy of Pancasila. The first principle, *"Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa"* (Belief in the One and Only God), provides deep legitimacy showing that Indonesia is not a secular state that separates religion from public administration and public schooling. The original text of Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution explicitly mandated that every citizen has the right to education and that the government shall institutionalize a unified national education system (Zuhairini., 2008).

Debates within the BPUPKI demonstrated a strong desire from Islamic figures, such as K.H. Wahid Hasyim and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, to ensure that religious education was not merely left to grow independently as a private matter but was actively supported, financed, and facilitated by the state. This aspiration was subsequently realized through the establishment of state institutions specifically tasked with managing religious affairs and education.

The historical consensus achieved through the removal of the seven words from the Jakarta Charter replaced with the inclusive principle of *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* did not weaken Islamic education. On the contrary, this theological-political compromise gave birth to a specific legal state model (*rechtsstaat*) based on Pancasila law, where the state rejects both extreme secularism and radical theocracy. This institutional compromise provided absolute legitimacy for the enactment of Law No. 4 of 1950, which legally obliged the state to finance, facilitate, and guarantee the right of every citizen to receive religious education in public schools.(Zainuddin, 2022).

Consequently, Islamic education underwent a highly significant shift in status, transforming from a system previously marginalized and discriminated against by colonial policies into an integral part of the national education framework.

The Establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Bureaucratic Revolution

January 3, 1946, marked a historical milestone with the creation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). Far from a minor administrative change, the creation of this ministry fulfilled the state's socio-political promise to the Muslim community and triggered a structural bureaucratic revolution. In the arena of education, the ministry's primary operational focus involved three main pillars: (1) Political Commitment: Fulfilling the structural demands of Indonesian Muslims for equal representation in the newly born Republic (Zuhdi & M., 2021); (2) Institutional Stewardship: Providing financial aid, strict supervision, and systemic standardization for madrasahs and *pondok pesantrens*; and (3) Public Integration: Training and appointing professional religious teachers to be deployed directly into government-run secular schools (Azra, 2012).

Through MoRA, the state began to standardize curricula, distribute material aid and subsidies, and systematically deploy faith-based educators to public schools. This initiative successfully dismantled the educational dualism inherited from the Dutch colonial administration, which had long separated religious sciences from general knowledge.

The Development of Islamic Educational Institutions

1) Pondok Pesantren: The Fortress of Defense and Knowledge

During the 1945–1950 period, *pesantrens* fulfilled a unique dual-function paradigm. In addition to serving as centers for *tafaqquh fiddin* (deepening religious knowledge), they acted as active military bases and command centers. Many *kyais* (religious leaders) led the Hizbullah and Sabilillah militias directly from within the *pesantrens*. Education during this era heavily emphasized the spirit of *jihad* to defend the homeland, which was framed not merely as a political act but as an active form of worship (Yunus & M, 1996).

When analyzed using social capital theory, the resilience of these institutions amidst economic paralysis and military aggression can be attributed to the deep sociological bonds within the boarding school community. When the formal state apparatus was paralyzed by the Dutch occupation, *pesantrens* activated three key elements of their social capital: the community's absolute trust in the *Kyai*, internal norms of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and widespread alumni networks. This pattern of community self-reliance demonstrates that *pesantrens* were not passive consumers of state policy, but rather independent social ecosystems capable of maintaining human sovereignty and educational continuity during national emergencies (Kadir & A, 2021).

2) Madrasah: Modernization of Curriculum

In contrast to *pesantrens*, madrasahs adapted rapidly to the classical classroom system. During this period, madrasahs began structuring their educational levels systematically; for instance, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah was established as a 6-year primary level. The most significant transformation was the integration of general subjects such as National History, Indonesian Language, and Natural Sciences into the madrasah curriculum without reducing the core proportion of religious subjects (Hanafi & Saifi, 2024).

Religious Education in Public Schools

Prior to independence, colonial public schools were strictly prohibited from providing religious lessons. However, beginning in 1946 through a Joint Decree (SKB) between the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Education, Instruction, and Culture (PP&K), religious education began to be integrated into the state public school system.

This policy represented a deliberate effort toward the "Islamization" of values within public spaces while simultaneously "Nationalizing" Islamic educational institutions, ensuring that the two systems would no longer operate dichotomously (Ramayulis., 2011).

Educational Dynamics Amidst the Physical Revolution (1947–1949)

Between 1947 and 1949, the young Republic faced severe existential threats from Dutch Military Aggressions I and II. These conditions heavily disrupted educational stability. Many madrasahs in occupied territories were forced to close or relocate to remote inland areas controlled by republican guerrilla forces. Religious teachers frequently doubled as guerrilla fighters.

However, despite these severe material limitations, the community's enthusiasm for learning intensified. Education was perceived as a vital defense mechanism to protect national identity from the return of colonial cultural influences (Nata & A., 2011).

Education Law No. 4 of 1950

The pinnacle of formal recognition for Islamic education during the early independence era was the passage of Law No. 4 of 1950 concerning the Foundations of Education and Instruction. This law explicitly guaranteed the right of every citizen to receive religious education in public schools. It marked the formal end of an era where religious education was treated merely as a private matter, transitioning it into a clear state responsibility within the national education framework (Fadhli & M., 2023).

Analysis of Challenges and Achievements

The greatest structural challenge of this period was an acute shortage of educators competent in teaching both religious and general subjects. To address this issue, the government established the State Religious Teacher Schools (SGA) and Religious Teacher Education (*Pendidikan Guru Agama* / PGA) across various regions.

Even though the state economy was severely crippled by the war, the spirit of self-reliance (*swadaya*) among the Muslim community in funding and building madrasahs remained high, indicating that Islamic education answered an essential grassroots need.

Critical Analysis and Theoretical Discussion

1. **Epistemological Decolonization: Dismantling the Colonial Knowledge Hierarchy**

   The transformation of Islamic education between 1945 and 1950 offers an empirical critique of conventional post-colonial education literature, which frequently treats early national curriculum reforms as mere administrative updates. Viewed through Decolonization Theory, the structural dualism established by the Dutch East Indies government which intentionally segregated secular-modern public schools (*openbare scholen*) from traditional-religious Islamic education (*pesantren*) was not a neutral administrative design. It was a deliberate epistemic strategy designed to marginalize indigenous institutions by branding them as centers of anti-colonial sentiment (Daulay & P., 2012).

   The establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) on January 3, 1946, acted as the primary bureaucratic instrument for an intellectual revolution. By introducing general subjects (such as Natural Sciences, Indonesian Language, and National History) into the madrasah curriculum, the state did not simply adopt Western models; rather, it dismantled the Eurocentric hierarchy of knowledge that separated science from religion (Azra, 2012).

   This integration is conceptually distinct from simple assimilation. It redefined the curriculum as a decolonized space where general knowledge was re-anchored within an Islamic ethical framework. This analysis expands upon Karel's (1986) framework by demonstrating that this curricular synthesis was an epistemological strategy to transform a marginalized, localized system into a state-recognized, legal subsystem of national education (Hanafi & Saifi, 2024).

2. **The Politics of Education: The Pancasila Compromise and Institutional Synthesis**

   The institutionalization of Islamic education during this period provides a clear case study for the Politics of Education, specifically illustrating how theological friction can be channeled into sustainable constitutional law. The debates within the BPUPKI between Islamic figures (such as K.H. Wahid Hasyim and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo) and nationalist figures highlight the contestation over the state's ideological foundation. The resulting national consensus—the removal of the seven words from the Jakarta

Charter and the affirmation of the First Principle of Pancasila (*Belief in the One and Only God*) did not dilute the Islamic educational agenda (Zuhairini., 2008).

Instead, this political compromise created a unique state model that avoids both extreme secularism and radical theocracy. This compromise provided the legal framework for Law No. 4 of 1950, which legally bound the state to finance and guarantee religious education in public schools (Masykur & A., 2023).

This dual movement suggests a revision to standard theories of educational politics, which often view state recognition as an instrument for central control. In the Indonesian context, state recognition operated as a reciprocal contract. The state incorporated madrasahs and *pesantrens* into its regulatory framework, while the Muslim community accepted national civic standards, effectively resolving the historical friction between religious and national identities (Ramayulis., 2011).

3. Social Resilience and the Dual-Function Paradigm of Pesantrens

During the physical revolution of 1947–1949, marked by Dutch Military Aggressions I and II, the survival of Indonesian education relied heavily on the structural adaptability of grassroots networks. When military occupation disrupted the formal state apparatus, *pesantrens* shifted into hybrid institutions: serving simultaneously as centers for religious learning (*tafaqquh fiddin*) and as decentralized guerrilla military bases (Yunus & M, 1996).

This dual-function paradigm illustrates the core mechanics of Social Resilience Theory. The endurance of these boarding schools did not depend on formal state infrastructure, which was largely incapacitated at the time, but on internal social assets. By mobilizing three dimensions of social capital trust in the leadership of the *Kyai*, structural networks of *gotong royong*, and deep relational ties among alumni *pesantrens* maintained educational continuity and community cohesion in occupied territories (Nata & A., 2011). This historical evidence challenges classic resilience frameworks that focus primarily on economic or material resources. In the early Indonesian Republic, psychological commitment driven by the theological concept of *jihad* as both a religious duty and a civic responsibility to defend the homeland substituted for missing material wealth, turning religious identity into a key asset for national survival.

4. Grassroots Agency vs. Economic Scarcity: The Bottom-Up Dynamic

The structural tension between top-down state policy and bottom-up grassroots initiative during this era reveals that educational development was primarily driven from the ground up. While the state attempted to build structural capacity by establishing State Religious Teacher Schools (SGA) and Religious Teacher Education (PGA) to address teacher shortages, war-induced inflation and budget deficits limited the impact of these initiatives (Prasetyo & A, 2023).

The continuity of education during this crisis was sustained through a partnership between state intervention and community self-reliance (*swadaya masyarakat*):

Table 1. Bottom-up Educational Development Model

Dimension of Analysis	State Structural Intervention	Grassroots Social Agency (Swadaya)	Critical Analytical Synergy
Policy & Legality	Passing Law No. 4 of 1950; issuing	Adapting madrasah curricula locally to	State laws provided external legitimacy, but local implementation by

Dimension of Analysis	State Structural Intervention	Grassroots Social Agency (Swadaya)	Critical Analytical Synergy
	joint ministerial decrees.	align with state decrees.	community actors gave those laws practical meaning.
Human Resources	Establishing SGA and PGA to formalize teacher training.	Local scholars (*kyais*) and senior *santris* doubling as instructors and fighters.	State institutional design set the baseline, but grassroots flexibility solved immediate human resource shortages during wartime.
Infrastructure	Allocating limited, inflation-strained material subsidies.	Funding, sheltering, and physically relocating schools to safe zones.	The survival of physical schools was almost entirely dependent on community capital, independent of state treasury support.

This analysis refutes the state-centric narrative often found in early Indonesian historiography, which portrays the post-colonial state as the sole author of modernization. The legal-policy matrix of 1945–1950 was not just an administrative output; it was a formal recognition of an active, self-sustaining social ecosystem already operating at the grassroots level.

Theoretical and Conceptual Contributions

This study contributes to the literature on the history and sociology of education by demonstrating that the integration of Islamic education in early independent Indonesia (1945–1950) serves as a historical precedent for modern educational synthesis (Mujahid, R., & Hairudin, 2021).

Epistemological Decolonization: It offers an empirical model showing how post-colonial societies can reconcile secular and religious knowledge systems without fully marginalizing indigenous traditions. Social Resilience Theory: It expands the framework by highlighting how cultural, relational, and religious capital can substitute for material infrastructure during acute state crises. The Politics of Education: Within this domain, this case demonstrates that incorporating religious institutions into the state apparatus can serve as a mechanism for social reconciliation rather than political polarization.

Contemporary Relevance for National Education

These historical findings have direct implications for contemporary educational policy, particularly regarding current initiatives like *Moderasi Beragama* (Religious Moderation) and the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile) within the modern National Education System (*Sisdiknas*).

The 1945–1950 transition provides empirical evidence that strengthening religious instruction within public schools while aligning madrasahs with national civic standards does not foster radicalization or social division. Instead, this dual policy promotes a balanced approach to education, cultivating citizens who are simultaneously nationalistic, civic-minded, and grounded in their religious traditions. Historically, the synthesis of religious values and national identity served as a foundational pillar of early Indonesian state-building.

CONCLUSION

The period of 1945 to 1950 marks a foundational and transformative era for Islamic education within the framework of the newly independent Republic of Indonesia. The historical and policy trajectory during these five tumultuous years reveals three critical conclusions:

Dismantling Colonial Dualism: The establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs on January 3, 1946, acted as a vital bureaucratic catalyst that successfully dismantled the colonial educational dualism inherited from the Dutch administration. By introducing standardized curricula, material subsidies, and the appointment of religious educators to public schools, Islamic education shifted from a marginalized, localized system into an institutionalized subsystem of national education.

Constitutional Legitimacy: The political compromises reached during the BPUPKI debates—which culminated in the First Principle of Pancasila and Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution—provided an unshakeable legal-constitutional legitimacy for Islamic education. This recognition reached its legislative peak with the enactment of Law No. 4 of 1950, which officially integrated religious instruction into state-run schools (*Sekolah Rakyat*, SMP, and SMA) and created a balanced synthesis between the "Islamization" of public schooling and the "Nationalization" of Islamic institutions.

Organic Social Resilience: Amidst the severe disruptions caused by Dutch Military Aggressions I and II, Islamic educational institutions—particularly *pondok pesantrens*—demonstrated extraordinary resilience. By operating under a dual-function paradigm as both centers of spiritual learning (*tafaqquh fiddin*) and guerrilla defense bases, they fused religious duty with patriotic nationalism. Supported by a robust spirit of community self-reliance (*swadaya masyarakat*) to counter economic scarcity and teacher shortages, Islamic education during the physical revolution proved to be a cornerstone in forging a national character that was simultaneously deeply religious and fiercely nationalist.

Academic Implications

The findings of this study offer a significant conceptual contribution to the fields of educational history and post-colonial sociology. By framing the 1945–1950 educational reforms as an act of *epistemological decolonization*, this research challenges standard state-centric histories that reduce early independence policies to mere administrative adjustments.

It provides an empirical template showing that post-colonial curriculum integration is not just about adopting general sciences, but about re-anchoring those sciences within an indigenous, faith-based ethical framework. Furthermore, it expands *Social Resilience Theory* by showing how non-material capital—such as collective trust in religious leaders and deep community networks—can successfully substitute for missing state infrastructure during national emergencies.

Practical and Policy Implications

For modern educational policy, this historical trajectory offers critical insights for contemporary structural reforms within the National Education System (*Sisdiknas*). First, it provides a precedent showing that strengthening religious education within public schools and standardizing madrasahs does not breed social fragmentation; instead, it serves as a mechanism for civic reconciliation and moderate state-building. Second, it underlines the critical importance of formal, institutional recognition for community-based education. Just as early policymakers realized that the state could not

survive without integrating *pesantrens*, modern educational frameworks must continue to guarantee equal resource allocation, structural support, and operational autonomy for faith-based and community-run networks, validating them as co-architects of national human capital rather than peripheral institutions.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study successfully reconstructs the dynamics of Islamic education policy and resilience during the revolutionary era (1945–1950), its main limitation lies in its heavy reliance on macro-national policy documents and historical archives centered predominantly in Java. This study has not explored in depth how emergency curricula and structural integration policies were implemented across diverse geographical landscapes outside Java, or how isolated communities managed these shifts under direct enemy occupation.

To address these gaps, future research should pursue the following avenues: Regional Comparative Field Studies: Conduct comparative historical and field studies utilizing local archives in regions outside Java (such as Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan) to examine how regional socio-political variations influenced the pace and nature of madrasah integration.

Micro-Historical Analysis of Local Autonomy: Perform micro-historical analyses of specific long-standing *pesantrens* outside the central government zone to evaluate how local religious scholars independently adapted teacher-provision frameworks—such as local branches of the *Sekolah Guru Agama* (SGA) or *Pendidikan Guru Agama* (PGA) amidst economic blockades. Cross-Regional Policy Mapping: Develop a comparative framework contrasting areas under secure Republican control with territories under Dutch puppet state administrations (*deelstaten*) to understand how different political environments affected grassroots educational survival.

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