

TRADITIONALIST MUSLIMS AND MODERNIST MUSLIMS IN INDONESIA : PAST AND PRESENT

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Introduction

Indonesia in the early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of an Islamic reform movement, particularly in Java and West Sumatra. Historically, this Islamic reform movement led to the division of Indonesian Muslims into two groups, namely Modernist Muslims and Traditionalist Muslims in the country. As a consequence, since this time, Islamic modernism and traditionalism appeared on the stage of Indonesian history and these terms have been used by sociologists, historians, religious scholars, both in Indonesia and abroad.

Before continuing to discuss Islamic modernism and Islamic traditionalism, the first thing to know is that both Modernist and Traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia are Sunni Muslims or *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*, i.e. followers of the *sunna* (prophetic tradition) and constitute the majority of the Muslims community (*jamā'a*).¹ In Indonesia, both Modernist and Traditionalist Muslims believe in six pillars of the Islamic faith, i.e. belief in one God, in His angels, in His books, in His messengers, in the Last Day, and in His predestination. Both groups also observe the five pillars of Islamic practices : *shahada* (the profession of faith, i.e. there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God); prayer (five times perday); *zakāt* (almsgiving); fasting during the month of Ramadan; and the *hajj* or pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca for those who are physically and financially able to perform it.

From the brief illustration mentioned above, we come to know that in terms of fundamental faith and practices, there is no difference

¹ Muslim are divided into two groups, Sunnis and Shi'is. Shi'i Muslims form the majority in Iran and a significant minority in Lebanon, Iraq and other places. Sunni Muslims are much more numerous than the Shi'is and are also called the *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*. The Sunnis are found in almost all parts of the Muslim world, including Indonesia.

between Traditionalist Muslims and Modernist Muslim in Indonesia. In fact, the differences between the two groups deal mainly with the questions of *furū'* (details) and not of *uṣūl* (roots, principles).

This paper will trace the factors that contributed to the emergence of the Modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia, its beliefs, its aspirations and its means in achieving its goals on one hand, and the response and reaction of Traditionalist Muslims to it on the other. As we will see later, the attacks of the Modernists against the Traditionalists and the reaction of the Traditionalists against the Modernists created tensions and conflicts between the two groups. However, the present period has witnessed a good relationship between the Modernists and the Traditionalists, something that had never happened in the past. In the last part of this paper, the writer will discuss this tendency by putting forward some important events which have marked a new development and a good relationship between the Modernists and the Traditionalists.

Factors Gave Impetus to the Birth of the Modernist Muslim Movement

"Go back to the Qur'ān and hadīth!" This was an important slogan voiced by the Modernist Muslims in Indonesia, especially in Java and West Sumatra, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their appeal to go back to the Qur'ān and hadīth, i.e. to return to Islamic purity, was welcomed enthusiastically by their supporters. Along with voicing that slogan, they attacked and condemned certain religious practices of Traditionalist Muslims, such as *qunūt*,² *tawāṣul*,³ and *tarekat (tarīqa)* as *bid'a*⁴ which had to be abandoned.

In contrast, the Traditionalist Muslims argued that those religious practices that they performed were not *bid'a* and not contrary to Islam. Consequently, religious disputes occurred between the two groups which consumed a great deal of energy and time in arguing with each other. The religious disputes between the Traditionalists and the Modernists usually dealt with the questions of *furū'* (details) and not of *uṣūl* (principles). However, as Clifford Geertz observes, the conflict between

² *Qunūt* is a special reading recited by Traditionalist Muslims at the second part (*rak'a*) of the morning prayer.

³ *Tawāṣul* is a practice in which the members of the *tarekat* recall their teachers before they begin their *dhikr* (remembering God).

⁴ *Bid'a* ("innovation") is a practice or a belief which was not present in Islam as it was revealed in the Qur'ān, and established by the Sunna on the basis of the Prophetic traditions; hence something probably contrary to Islam. See Cyril Glasse, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1991), 73.

the two groups "was indeed a sharp and bitter one."⁵ As a result, this conflict led to an unharmonious relationship, characterized by tension and disunity between the two groups.

There is no doubt that the Modernist Muslims derived their inspiration and influence primarily from Wahhābism and reformist ideas from Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839 - 1897) and Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849 - 1905). As we know, the Wahhābi movement began formally in 1747 after its founder, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1792), having visited many Islamic countries had come to the conclusion that innovation had obtained currency and that superstitious practices had spread and become indistinguishable from idolatry. Upon returning to his homeland in Arabia, he and his followers therefore began a campaign of purification.⁶ Later, the Wahhābi teaching was formally accepted by the Sa'udis. According to Uthman b. Bishr, in their zeal to rid Islam of its cult of saints and other innovations they sacked Karbala in 1801, captured Mecca in 1803 and Medina the following year, destroyed tombs and purged these cities of all semblances of idolatry.⁷ When Karbala was attacked, a considerable Sa'udi force massacred some five thousand Shi'is, demolished the domes of various tombs -- including that of the Prophet's grandson, Husayn -- and plundered the whole city.⁸ Wahhabism continued to flourish when 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Sa'ud came to power in Mecca after his defeat of Sharif Husayn in 1925. Abd al-Wahhāb was regarded as a reformer not in the sense that "he desired a change in the doctrine of Islam or even a new interpretation of its tenets, but in the sense that he felt it his mission to denounce innovations and accretions, and preach a return to Islam's former purity."⁹

According to H. A. R. Gibb, the reformist ideas of 'Abduh can be summarized as a call for : (1) the purification of Islam from corrupting influences and practices; (2) the reformation of Muslim higher education; (3) the re- formulation of Islamic doctrine in the light of modern thought; (4) the defense of Islam against European influences and Christian

⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1976), 130.

⁶ George Antonious, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1969), 22.

⁷ Quoted in Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1980), 740-741.

⁸ See Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 232.

⁹ Antonious, *The Arab Awakening*, 22.

attacks.¹⁰ In spreading his ideas of reform, 'Abduh collaborated with his teacher, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. Afghānī has been regarded as the first to voice the need for Islamic political reform in the Muslim world. His political project focused on pan-Islamism "as the only effective bulwark against foreign encroachment and domination of Muslim lands."¹¹ 'Abduh and Afghānī published a weekly Arabic newspaper called *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqā* (The Indissoluble Link) during their stay in Paris at the beginning of 1884. Through this newspaper, they preached the ideas of reform which had far-reaching effects on the minds of Muslims everywhere. "It imbued them with the desire of freedom, and inspired them with patriotism, reviving their will to fight their oppressors and strengthening the quality of their moral fibre."¹² Philip K. Hitti said that "more than any other modern writers, these two contributed to the breaking of the scholastic shell which encased Islam since medieval Islam."¹³

From the above-mentioned descriptions, we come to know about the historical context of the emergence of Modernist Muslim and Traditionalist Muslim in Indonesia. Traditionalists Muslims were Muslims who were not influenced by puritanical Wahhābism and Islamic modernism preached especially by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muhammad 'Abduh, and still continued to adhere to the thoughts of the '*ulamā*' regarding the concepts of Islamic law, Qur'ānic exegesis, and Islamic theology which had been formulated and developed from the seventh century until the thirteenth century. In contrast, Modernist Muslims were Muslims who were influenced by puritanical Wahhābism and Islamic modernism voiced particularly by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muhammad 'Abduh and, as a consequence, did not subscribe to any certain *madhhab*.

The Modernist Muslim Movement

The two important factors above, puritanical Wahhābism and Islamic reformism, gave impetus to the emergence of the Modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia, particularly in West Sumatra and Java. Around 1800, a number of *hajjis*, including Hajji Miskin, returned from

¹⁰ H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (New York: Octagon Books, 1981), 33.

¹¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1979), 226.

¹² Osman Amin, *Muhammad Abduh*, tr. Charles Wendell (Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1953), 55.

¹³ Hitti, *History*, 754.

Mecca 'under the influence of Wahhābīte fundamentalism, and called for a return to Islamic purity.'¹⁴ Their movement, known as the *Padri* movement, grew steadily in the first two decades of the nineteenth century and stimulated a reaction from the established leaders of Minangkabau, the *adat* chiefs. In order to put their ideas into practice, the *Padris* used violent means, expelling or killing *adat* chiefs and others who opposed them.¹⁵ The conflict between the *Padris* and the *adat* chiefs resulted in the outbreak of the *Padri* War (1821 - 1837). The Dutch intervened in this conflict, taking the side of the *adat* chiefs with the ultimate aim of establishing their power in that area. According to Taufik Abdullah, the *Padri* War was actually a war between the followers of Wahhābism, on one hand, and their brothers in Islam on the other, whose advocacy of *adat* (local tradition) was considered contrary to the true Islamic doctrine. Some others called it the war between the *Kaum Muda* (Young Group) and the *Kaum Tua* (Old Group).¹⁶

It was Tahir Jalaluddin who also advocated Islamic reform in West Sumatra. Jalaluddin's movement was continued by his disciples, such as Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Abdullah Ahmad, and Abdul Karim Amrullah. With a strong sense of purpose, they introduced the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Muhammad 'Abduh and Jamāl al-Dīn al-afghānī. In spreading their ideas of reform, they established, in early 1911, a journal called *al-Munir* (The Illuminative) which had farreaching influences not only in Sumatra but in Java as well.¹⁷ These Reformists condemned a variety of religious practices which they regarded as innovations, and their condemnation stimulated a reaction from the *Kaum Tua* Muslims, such as Sayyid Zaini Dahlan and Syaikh Nabhani. Debates and disputes between the two groups concerning some controversial religious practices, such as *tawasul* and its like, occurred and this led them to denounce each other.¹⁸

¹⁴ David Joel Steinberg, ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 144.

¹⁵ William R. Roff, "Southeast Asian Islam in the Nineteenth Century", in P. M. Holt et al, eds. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol 2 A (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 166.

¹⁶ Taufik Abdullah, *Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1974), 61.

¹⁷ Harry J. Benda, "Southeast Asian Islam in the Twentieth Century", in P. M. Holt et al, eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam* vol. 2 A (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 189.

¹⁸ Hamka, *Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Tintamas, 1961), 16-17.

In Java, Islamic reform was pioneered by K. H. Ahmad Dahlan (1868 - 1923), a Muslim leader who lived in Yogyakarta, central Java. He studied Islam in Mecca for some years and became familiar with the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb, al-Afghānī, Muhammad 'Abduh and others.¹⁹ He began to introduce his ideas of reform in 1905, and he eventually founded a modern Islamic organization called the *Muhammadiyah* on November 18, 1912. The basic objective of the *Muhammadiyah* can be summarized under four headings: (1) the purification of Indonesian Islam from corrupting influence and practices, (2) the reformulation of Islamic doctrine in the light of modern thought, (3) the reformation of Muslim education, and (4) the defense of Islam against external influences and attacks.²⁰

To achieve its objective, the *Muhammadiyah* carried on much of its work through auxiliary organizations such as youth and women's associations, clinics, orphanages, and above all, a large school system which presented academic subjects and taught Islam not merely by recital and exegesis but also as a basic system of religious, ethical, and social belief.²¹

The other organizations established by the Modernist Muslims were the *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Union), *al-Irsyad* (Guidance), and the *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic Association). The *Sarekat Islam* was a transformation of the *Sarekat Dagang Islam* (Union of Islamic Commerce), founded by H. Samanhudi on November 11, 1905. The outstanding figures of the *Sarekat Islam* were H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto (1883 - 1934) and H. Agus Salim (1884 - 1954), both of whom received Dutch education. Since the *Sarekat Islam* was much influenced by Afghānī's political ideas, it was therefore concerned with political affairs and tried to remain distant from religious controversies. As for *al-Irsyad*, it was an Arab organization established by Ahmad Soorkati in 1913. The *Persatuan Islam* (*Persis*) was founded by a group of Muslims in 1923 in Bandung. One of the leading figures of the *Persatuan Islam* was Ahmad Hassan. He was born in Singapura in 1887. His father was Ahmad and his mother was Muznah. At the age of seven, he began to study Islam and within two years of study he could finish reading the *Qur'ān*.²² In

¹⁹ Yunus Salam, *Riwayat Hidup K.H.A. Dahlan: Amal dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Depot Pengajaran Muhammadiyah, 1968), 8.

²⁰ Abdul Mu'ti 'Ali, *"The Muhammadiyah Movement: A Bibliographical Introduction"*, unpublished M.A. thesis (Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1957), 56.

²¹ Steinberg, ed., *Southeast Asia*, 290.

²² Tamar Djaya, *Riwayat Hidup A. Hassan* (Jakarta: Mutiara, 1980), 16 - 17.

1921, Hassan, together with his parents, moved and settled in Surabaya. When he moved to Bandung in 1923, he joined the *Persatuan Islam* and became involved heavily in its activities. Since that time he appeared as an outstanding and respected leader of the organization. In 1928 he produced a *tafsīr* book entitled *Al-Furqān*.²³ Under the leadership of Ahmad Hassan, the *Persatuan Islam* made much progress and became one of the most vigorous defenders of Islamic reform movement.

As mentioned above, the Modernist Muslim attacks against certain religious practices of the Traditionalists were sharp and bitter. The *Muhammadiyah*, for example, rejected the *tarekat* or Sufi practice of *dhikr* (remembering God by reciting His names repeatedly). For the *Muhammadiyah*, Sufims means

to clean the heart and spirit of mankind from all uncleannesses, meannesses and faults brought into being by lust of the lower nature, by Satan. It should not be an other-worldly experience achieved by magical practices but a practical and measurable influence for the good in human relations. It should assist Muslims to live more intelligent, refined and useful religious lives. On the other hand, for mysticism of a kind which rejects all worldly things, leads to mere asceticism, and gives itself up to repetition of the *dhikr*, there is no room in the *Muhammadiyah*.²⁴

In addition to *tarekat*, *talqin* which was practised by the *Kaum Tua* was also condemned by the Modernist Muslims. Regarding this subject, Ahmad Hassan of the *Persatuan Islam* puts forward his opinions as follows:

- 1) The Qur'ān clarifies that people who are dead cannot be taught anything.
- 2) The *imāms* of the *ahl al-hadīth* state there is no a single firm narrative of the Prophet confirming *talqin*.
- 3) Imām Ahmad (Ibn Hanbal) said that he did not ever see a person perform *talqin*, except the people of Syria (*ahl al Sham*) when Abdūl Mughīrah died, and that at that time a person came and performed *talqin*.
- 4) There is no *hadīth* that indicate that the Prophet ever performed *talqin*, or that his Companions, or that the *mujtahidīn imāms* did.
- 5) Teaching the dead is not only refuted in Religion, but according to reason it can be seen to be the act of a mad man.
- 6) It is according to the Qur'ān that when a person is close to death is repentance is not accepted. If this is true,

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Raymond Le Roy Archer, quoted in Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900 - 1942* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973), 100.

then how can the teachings of the living to the dead already in the grave have validity?²⁵

The *Persatuan Islam's* attack was even more hostile when it accused the Traditionalist Muslim of committing a sin because they followed books written by the *ulamā'*. Referring to the Qur'ānic verse (3 : 103) which runs, "and hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate," the *Persatuan Islam* vowed that it would "not rely on books written by man."²⁶ Moreover, the *Persatuan Islam* continued, "Those who rely on the books of the *ulamā'* have in fact left God aside. Those who violate the regulations of God, commit a sin. Therefore, those who blindly follow (*taqlīd*) the *ulamā'*, commit a sin."²⁷

Then the *Persatuan Islam* stressed repeatedly,

Those who rely on the books of '*ulamā'* differ from each other. Those who have differed from each other committed something which God has prohibited. Those who neglect God's prohibitions commit a sin. Therefore, those who merely follow the opinion of other (*taqlīd*), commit a sin.²⁸

Traditionalism Versus Modernism

To narrow the gulf between the Reformists and the Traditionalists, the *Sarekat Islam* took the initiative of holding the Islamic Congress. The Congress was the natural outgrowth of the ideas of the *Sarekat Islam*, which from the beginning had been concerned with political affairs and Muslim unity, and had set religious disputes aside. The aims of the Islamic Congress stated by Amelz were as follows: (1) to minimize the danger of divergences of opinion among the Muslims regarding details or branches of Islamic jurisprudence, and regarding disputed religious matters, and (2) to strive for achievement of unity and co-operation among the Muslims as regards religious matters.²⁹

²⁵ Ahmad Hassan, "Mengajar Orang Mati", Sual-Djawab No. 2, 14. Quoted in Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1970), 61.

²⁶ Quoted in Noer, *Modernist*, 98.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 98 - 99.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Amelz, H. O. S. *Tjokroaminoto: Hidup dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1952), 129.

The first Islamic Congress was held in Cirebon, West Java, from October 3 until November 2, 1922, and was attended by delegates of both the Modernist and Traditionalist Muslims. The traditionalist Muslims were represented by K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah and K. H. Asnawi. The Congress almost failed because the two groups could not avoid discussing their religious disputes. In this Congress, the *Muhammadiyah* denounced those who followed the *madhāhib* (schools of Islamic law) by saying that Muslims ought to close the books written by the 'ulamā' and refer only to the Qur'ān and hadīth. In contrast, K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah argued that the books of 'ulamā' were still relevant to use as tools in understanding Islamic law which had been derived by the 'ulamā' from the primary sources, the Qur'ān and hadīth.³⁰

Dispite their differences, the Modernists and the Traditionalists at the Congress reached an agreement that the basis of all religious teaching is the Qur'ān and hadīth; that the four *imāms*, i.e., founders of the *madhāhib*, had come to their respective judgements after a careful and complete study and investigation of the texts in the Qur'ān and hadīth; that reference to the Qur'ān and hadīth is very important for the explanation of the various disciplines of Islam, and for the study of religious books; and finally, that interpretation of the Qur'ān should not be done arbitrarily, but rather, it requires the necessary tools, i.e., various kinds of knowledge.³¹

The next Islamic Congress was held in Surabaya, East Java, from December 24 - 26, 1924. The main topic discussed in this Congress were, among others, the problem of *ijtihād* (individual interpretation of the Qur'ān and hadīth) and the teaching of the *Muhammadiyah* and *al-Irsyad*. Among the important decisions made in this Congress were that the *Muhammadiyah* and *al-Irsyad* were not synonymous with the Wahhābis; that the two organizations were not considered to deviate from any of the *madhāhib*; and that those who applied *tawasul* were not regarded as kafir (unbelievers).³² After a long and bitter debate in the Congress, the Reformist and the Traditionalist Muslim leaders came to agree that the gate of *ijtihād* was still open and that it could be practised by those who knew Arabic and were knowledgeable about the texts of the Qur'ān and hadīth; the *ijmā'* (consensus) of the 'ulamā'; the hadīth

³⁰ Slamet Effendy Yusuf et al., *Dinamika Kaum Santri: Menelusuri Jejak dan Pergolakan Internal NU* (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1983), 15.

³¹ Quoted in Noer, *Modernist*, 227 - 228, n. 44.

³² Ibid., 227 - 228, n. 47.

narrators and their stories; and the reason for the revelation of Qur'an and the existence of hadith statements.

The following Congress was dominated by the Modernist Muslims. However, the relationship among the Modernists themselves deteriorated because of differences of political views in the face of the leftists within the *Sarekat Islam*.³³ This deterioration reached its climax when the *Sarekat Islam* took action by prohibiting its members from becoming *Muhammadiyah* members; if they chose to join the *Muhammadiyah*, they were required to quit the *Sarekat Islam*.³⁴ Meanwhile, a similar case also occurred between the *Sarekat Islam* and the *Persatuan Islam*. The *Sarekat Islam*, which was concerned with politics and Muslim unity, insisted that religious disputes be stopped in the hope of creating Muslim unity. On the other hand, the *Persatuan Islam* persisted in continuing to discuss religious disputes as part of its reform movement.

In a further development, the Indonesian Muslim leaders succeeded in establishing a committee called the *Komite Khilafat* (Caliphate Committee) in Surabaya on October 4, 1924. The chairman of the *Komite* was Wondoamiseno of the *Sarekat Islam* and its vice-chairman was K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah of the Traditionalists. The *Komite Khilafat* was founded as a response of the Indonesian Muslim leaders to the idea of the Egyptian government that planned to hold a congress on the caliphate in 1924 to establish a new caliphate. The idea of establishing a new caliphate was motivated by the fact that Turkey, under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, had abolished the Sultanate in 1922, and then the Turkish National Assembly abolished the caliphate in 1924, by which Turkey aimed to become a modern secular state.³⁵

But the Congress on the caliphate scheduled to be held in Cairo was postponed. Consequently, the *Komite Khilafat* turned its attention to another invitation of Ibn Sa'ud of Saudi Arabia who also wanted to hold a congress on the caliphate in Mecca in his effort to establish a new caliphate. Ibn Sa'ud's invitation was discussed by the Indonesian Muslim leaders in the fourth Islamic Congress (held in Yogyakarta from August 21 - 27, 1925) and would be continued to be discussed in the next fifth Islamic Congress scheduled at the beginning of 1926, in Bandung, West Java. Before the Islamic Congress in Bandung was held, however, the

³³ In the 1920s, the *Sarekat Islam* split into two factions, namely the White *Sarekat Islam* and the Red *Sarekat Islam*; the former was an Islamic faction and the latter was a Communist or leftist faction.

³⁴ Quoted in Noer, *Modernist*, 237.

³⁵ See Marjorie Kelly, ed., *Islam: The Religious and Political Life of a World Community* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 199.

Reformist leaders had held a meeting in Cianjur, West Java, from January 8 - 10, 1926, in which they made a decision to send Tjokroaminoto of the *Sarekat Islam* and K. H. Mas Mansur of the *Muhammadiyah* to participate in the Congress on the caliphate which was to be held in Mecca.

Predictably, when the fifth Islamic Congress in Bandung was held, the Congress automatically confirmed the decision which had been made by the Modernist leaders in the Cianjur meeting: Tjokroaminoto of the *Sarekat Islam* and K. H. Mas Mansur of the *Muhammadiyah* were formally assigned to attend the Congress on the caliphate in Mecca. This decision made the Traditionalist leaders, especially K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah, deeply frustrated. Because of this frustration, he then proposed that the Congress request that the Wahhābi ruler of Sa'udi Arabia maintain the teachings and practices of the four *madhāhib* which had been applied there before. The Congress rejected his proposal; consequently, he increasingly felt alienated from the Congress. In the light of this unpleasant fact, Abdul Wahab and his three friends withdrew from the *Komite Khilafat* after being advised by K. H. Hasyim Asy'ari.

Reaction of Traditionalist Leaders

After withdrawing from the *Komite Khilafat*, K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah took the initiative and held meetings with leading *kyais* and Traditionalist 'ulamā' in Surabaya, Pasuruan, Jember, Semarang, Lasem and Pati. In these meetings, they agreed to establish another committee which would send its own delegates to call on King Ibn Sa'ud to discuss directly with him some urgent religious matters. Abdul Wahab felt that this was an alternative means of channelling the 'ulamā's aspirations after his proposals were rejected by the Modernist leaders in the Islamic Congress in Bandung.

To realize his dream, on Januari 31, 1926, K. H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah invited the prominent Traditionalist 'ulamā' to his house in Surabaya to discuss what they had talked about in their meetings in several cities in Java. In addition to Abdul Wahab himself, the leading 'ulamā' who attended the meeting were, among others, K. H. Hasyim Asy'ari of the *pesantren* of Tebuireng (Jombang), K. H. Bisri Syamsuri of the *pesantren* of Tambakberas (Jombang), K. H. Asnawi of Kudus, K. H. Ma'mun of Lasem, K. H. Ridwan of Surabaya, H. Abdullah Ubaid of Surabaya, Alwi Abdul Aziz of Malang, H. Abdul Halim of Lewinmunding (Cirebon), H. Doro Muntaha of Bangkalan (Madura), Dahlan Abdul Qahar of Kertosono, and H. Abdullah Faqih of Gresik.³⁶

³⁶ Aboebakar, *Sejarah Hidup K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim dan Karangan Tersiar* (Jakarta: Panitia Buku Peringatan Almarhum K.H.A. Wahid Hasyim, 1957), 471.

As a result of their meeting, these 'ulamā' made two important decisions which would later color the pages of Indonesian Islamic history. Firstly, they formally established the *Komite Hijaz* whose term would end when its delegates returned from Sa'udi Arabia to Indonesia. Secondly, they established an organization to act as an instrument for the 'ulama' to guide the Indonesian Muslim community in achieving the glory of Islam and of the Muslims.³⁷ This organization, on the suggestion of K.H. Alwi Abdul Aziz, was called the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Renaissance of the 'Ulamā'). The goal of the *Nahdlatul Ulama*, as mentioned in the second article of its Statute, was 'to hold firmly one of the four *madhāhib*: the Hanafī, the Mālikī, the Shāfi'ī and the Hanbalī school, and to carry out its program which benefits Islam."³⁸

As mentioned above, King Ibn Sa'ud had adopted the Wahhābi teaching through which he made radical religious changes in the entire kingdom. Concerned with certain cases, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* on behalf of the Indonesian 'ulamā' sent its representatives, K.H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah and Syeikh Ahmad Ghana'im al-Misri, to call on the new King of Sa'udi Arabia on June 13, 1928. The two delegates, among others, requested that Ibn Sa'ud continue to maintain the teachings and practices of the four *madhāhib* which had been applied before he came to power. The King responded positively to their requests by promising to respect the teachings and practices of the four schools of Islamic law as had been taught by the teachers and 'ulamā' in the *masjid* al-Harām in Mecca, *masjid* al-Nabawī in Medina, and other places throughout the kingdom.³⁹ King Ibn Sa'ud even sent a letter to the *Nahdlatul Ulama* in which he described the results of the discussion between himself and the two delegates of the *Komite Hijaz*, hoping that other 'ulamā' of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* would be aware of his response. In the view of the *Nahdlatul Ulama*, its delegates were successful in carrying out their mission.

Modernists - Traditionalists: A New Tendency

Alongside the historical observations based upon scholarly research, this section centers on personal observations about the relationship between the Modernists and the Traditionalists. Because these are current observations supporting scholarly documentation that is not readily

³⁷ K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri, *K.H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah: Bapak dan Pendiri Nahdlatul Ulama* (Jakarta: Yamunu, 1972), 26.

³⁸ See Solichin Salam, *K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari : Ulama Besar Indonesia* (Jakarta : Jaya Murni, 1963), 67.

³⁹ Mohammad Sufyan Cholil and Masbuchin, *Nahdlatul Ulama di Tengah-Tengah Rakyat dan Bangsa Indonesia* (Kebumen: Daya Bhakti, 1967), 27.

available, the remarks fall generally in line with similar observations made in reading Modernist publications, such as *Panji Masyarakat*.⁴⁰

The present period has witnessed a new dimension to the relationship between Modernist Muslims and Traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia. Unlike the past, when the Modernists and the Traditionalists always bickered with each other concerning the questions of *furū'*, today the relationship between the two groups is much better. It seems that the two groups have learned from the experience of the past and tried to understand each other and then come to realize that each group has its own religious, cultural and socio-historical background. The Modernist Muslims today look to avoid condemning certain religious practices of the Traditionalists which they bitterly denounced in the past. The word "*bid'a*" which was always used by the Modernists to attack certain religious practices performed by the Traditionalists is hardly ever heard today in the Indonesian atmosphere. Taking *tahlil* for example, the Modernists now call it *adat* (custom) instead of *bid'a* (religious innovation). Apparently, there is a new dimension and tendency of relationship between Modernist Muslims and Traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia today.

In the past, it was hard to find inter-marriage between Traditionalist Muslims and Modernist Muslims in Indonesia. But today, inter-marriage between the two groups has become more and more common without regard to his or her spouse's origin and background. This new tendency not only happens at the level of the common people but also in the circle of educated ones. To take an example, it has become more acceptable for male students or teachers of Modernist origin to marry female students or teachers of Traditionalist background. This new dimension, of course, makes a great contribution to the decrease of factional fanaticism, something that had widened and worsened the relationship between the Modernists and the Traditionalists in the past. From a sociological perspective, it is undeniable that this inter-marriage could improve the relationship between the two groups. Meanwhile, a new generation who is no longer involved in religious controversies is born. This new trend will lead to the creation of a novel and fresh atmosphere in Indonesia in which a good relationship between Modernist Muslims and Traditionalist

⁴⁰ *Panji Masyarakat Banner of the Community* is a wellknown Islamic magazine established by Hamka, a Modernist Muslim leader, and published in Jakarta. The magazine has a nationwide circulation in Indonesia and after Hamka's demise in 1981, the magazine has been run by Hamka's son, Rusydi Hamka. Many Modernist writers have contributed their articles to this magazine. However, articles composed by Traditionalist writers have often appeared in this magazine.

Muslims will continue to exist.

Another tendency that marks the relationship between Traditionalist Muslims and Modernist Muslims in Indonesia is the practice of *ta'ziyya*. This practice is performed by leaders of one group to express their sympathy to other group whose leader is dead. Leaders of the two groups take time to see a leading figure of one of them who is sick. To do this, they sometimes cover a great distance to reach another city to see their sick fellow. It was, of course, difficult to do this in the past when religious disputes between the two groups were sharp, bitter and acrimonious.

A better relationship between the Modernists and the Traditionalists is also characterized by a new approach between the two groups. When the *Nahdlatul Ulama* held its 28th National Congress in Yogyakarta in 1989, the *Muhammadiyah* put up some posters welcoming the Congress. The *Nahdlatul Ulama* did so when the *Muhammadiyah* conducted its 42nd National Congress in the same city in 1990. The *Nahdlatul Ulama* even invited the leading figures of the *Muhammadiyah* to attend the opening ceremony of its national Congress and so did the *Muhammadiyah*.

In the wake of this new development, K.H. Yusuf Hasyim, one of the leading figures of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* proposed a double membership for the members of the two organizations. In other words, a *Nahdlatul Ulama* member can have a membership card of the *Muhammadiyah*. Hasyim further stated that this can also be done by the *Muhammadiyah* members. Hasyim's proposal reflects his sincerity and deep concern about the formation of Muslim brotherhood or Muslim unity among Indonesian Muslims as a whole. However, his proposal is not carried out by the two organizations. It is certain that this new tendency did not occur in the past when religious contraversies between the two groups led them to quarrel with each other.

In addition to the new tendencies mentioned above, there is also another development which characterizes the relationship between Traditionalist Muslims and Modernist Muslims in Indonesia. Today there is a great number of students of *Nahdlatul Ulama* origin and background studying at *Muhammadiyah* universities in many cities in Indonesia. They are not allergic to studying at those universities, even though the universities are run by the *Muhammadiyah*. The same cases have also occurred at junior and senior high schools as well as at kindergarten schools of the *Muhammadiyah*. This new tendency has taken place since about 1960 - 1970, during which time the *Muhammadiyah* made every effort to improve its educational institutions at all levels.

Another thing that should also be mentioned here is the emergence of a cultural transformation which marks the relationship between Traditionalist Muslims and Modernist Muslims in Indonesia. This transformation results in the establishment of a new approach through which the two groups become more open and willing to exchange views and opinions in various scientific forums. Today, it is usual for the Traditionalists and the Modernists to come and participate in various seminars, discussing religious and social matters that arise in the Muslim community in Indonesia. The Modernists often invite Traditionalist intellectuals to attend discussions held by them as do the Traditionalists. Through these cultural and intellectual exchanges and activities, an intellectual gap between the two groups has been narrowed. In other words, a "cultural barrier" between Modernist Muslims and Traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia has been destroyed. Along with this tendency, a mutual understanding between the Traditionalists and the Modernists has begun and this new climate will, we believe, bring the two groups into a new era filled with tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. In this new atmosphere, the two groups are no longer concerned with religious controversies, but have paid much attention to social problems such as implementing the Islamic doctrine in social life, carrying out the Islamic mission in the fight against poverty, and educating and developing the Muslim community as a whole. Both sides in fact have their own significant contribution to the development of the Indonesian Muslim community through their own efforts, endeavours, and work.

Conclusion

Based on the descriptions mentioned above, certain conclusions may be drawn. An intensive implementation of Islamic reform took place in the early twentieth century in Indonesia. Historically, this period marked the rise of Modernist Muslims and Traditionalist Muslims in the country. Espousing different views concerning the questions of *furū'*, the two groups were involved in religious disputes in the past. Unlike the past, however, the relationship between the Traditionalists and the Modernists has demonstrated a new dimension and tendency in the present period. The decrease of factional fanaticism, inter-marriage between the two groups, mutual understanding, and cultural transformation are among the significant factors that have contributed to the establishment of a good relationship between the Modernists and the Traditionalists. This new tendency will, I believe, continue in the future and enable the two groups to concentrate their efforts and energy on tackling and solving social problems arising among the Indonesian Muslims community.

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