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DEFENDING THE MAJESTY OF ISLAM:
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IN SEARCH OF AN ISLAMIC LEADER:
MALAY PERCEPTIONS OF IBN SA'UD'S TRIUMPH AND
THE DOMINATION OF THE WAḤḤĀBĪS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Zulkifli

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Mohammad Redzuan Othman

In Search of an Islamic Leader:
Malay Perceptions of Ibn Sa‘ūd’s Triumph and
the Domination of the Waḥḥābīs in Saudi Arabia

Abstraksi: Pada awal abad ke-20, hubungan dunia Melayu-Timur Tengah diwarnai dengan satu ciri penting yang sangat menarik untuk dikaji. Hal ini terjadi seiring dengan perubahan politik di Mekkah menyusul kontrol politik Dinasti Saudi atas Hijaz, Mekkah dan Madinah, setelah mengalahkan Syarif Hussain pada 1942. Satu aspek penting yang menjadi sorotan kaum Muslim Melayu adalah ideologi Islam Wahabi dari Dinasti Saudi, yang memang sangat puritan, baik dalam pemikiran maupun praktik ajaran Islam. Dan bagi Muslim Melayu umumnya —yang bermazhab Syafi‘i— paham keagamaan Wahabi bukan hanya tidak dikenal dengan baik, tapi juga dikhawatirkan bisa mengganggu proses pelaksanaan ibadah haji. Sejumlah kalangan bahkan berpendapat, sikap keagamaan Wahabi yang puritan akan mendorong Dinasti Saudi menghapus antara lain praktik ziarah ke makam Nabi Muhammad, yang dianggap memiliki makna keagamaan sangat penting bagi kaum Muslim Melayu.

Artikel ini menghadirkan satu kajian awal tentang respon kaum Muslim Melayu terhadap perkembangan politik dan keagamaan di Hijaz. Fokus pembahasan diarahkan pada sejumlah jurnal dan surat kabar yang terbit pada awal abad ke-20, yang memang memberi perhatian serius terhadap masalah tersebut. Penting dicatat, pada awal abad ke-20, sejalan dengan pertumbuhan media cetak, arus informasi dari dunia Timur Tengah ke Melayu-Nusantara berlangsung sedemikian intensif. Perkembangan politik-keagamaan di pusat Islam segera menjadi isu penting, dan selanjutnya menjadi pengetahuan bersama Muslim di dunia Melayu. Khusus untuk kasus ini, proses tersebut didorong kepulangan sekitar 150 Muslim Melayu dari Mekkah ke Singapura, yang disebabkan perbedaan ideologi dan paham keagamaan. Atas dasar itulah, Muslim Me-

layu —khususnya mereka dari kalangan reformis— menjadikan pergantian rejim di Hijaz sebagai satu isu penting dalam media cetak yang mereka terbitkan.

Idaran Zaman (1925-1930) adalah satu jurnal yang secara intensif memuat berita tentang hal di atas. Hadir sebagai mingguan di Pulau Pinang, di bawah editorial Haji Abdul Aziz, dan dibantu oleh Mohd. Yunos Abdul Hamid dan Othman Kalam, jurnal ini memberi respon positif atas naiknya Dinasti Saudi ke pentas kekuasaan di Hijaz. Jurnal lain yang memiliki haluan serupa adalah Pengasoh (1918-1932) yang terbit di Kota Bharu, Kelantan, oleh Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu. Jurnal berikutnya adalah al-Hedayah (1923-1926), juga di Kota Bharu (Kelantan), di bawah editorial Ahmad bin Ismail. Di samping itu, artikel ini juga mencatat bahwa dukungan terhadap Dinasti Saudi juga disuarakan jurnal Seruan Azhar (1925-1928), yang terbit di Kairo, Mesir, oleh para pelajar Melayu-Nusantara di al-Azhar. Meski dalam nada dan argumen yang berbeda-beda, semua jurnal di atas memperlihatkan dukungan terhadap naiknya Dinasti Saudi ke pentas kekuasaan atas Hijaz. Bagi mereka, Dinasti Saudi telah berjasa membebaskan tanah suci dari rejim kekuasaan yang didukung kekuatan pihak asing, tepatnya dunia Barat.

Oleh karena itu, seraya memuat berita secara rinci tentang perkembangan di Hijaz, semua jurnal di atas juga menyajikan penjelasan memadai tentang pemikiran Wahabi, yang menjadi paham keagamaan resmi Dinasti Saudi. Dalam hal ini, semua jurnal di atas berusaha meyakinkan audiens pembacanya di dunia Melayu, bahwa Wahabi adalah paham keagamaan yang sejalan dengan al-Quran dan Sunnah Nabi, dan karenanya tidak bertentangan dengan mahhab Sunni yang dianut Muslim Melayu. Jurnal Pengasoh bahkan memberikan klarifikasi bahwa berkembangnya pemikiran anti-Wahabi di dunia Melayu lebih merupakan salah paham akibat propaganda anti-Wahabi oleh musuh politik mereka di Timur Tengah.

Di samping itu, semua jurnal di atas—lebih-lebih Idaran Zaman—berpendapat bahwa kemenangan politik Dinasti Saudi atas Sharif Hussain dimaknai dalam terma-terma keagamaan, sebagai kemenangan pihak kebenaran atas kebatilan. Selanjutnya, jurnal tersebut bahkan mengasosiasikan hal tersebut dengan kemenangan Nabi Muhammad atas suku Quraisih Mekkah. Dengan demikian, jurnal ini meyakinkan pembacanya di dunia Melayu bahwa masa depan Mekkah, berikut pelaksanaan ibadah haji, akan terjamin dengan baik di bawah Dinasti Saudi.

Demikianlah, semua jurnal di atas secara perlahan membangun citra positif kekuasaan Dinasti Saudi atas Hijaz, sehingga ia kemudian bisa diterima oleh Muslim dunia Melayu.

In Search of an Islamic Leader: Malay Perceptions of Ibn Sa'ūd's Triumph and the Domination of the Waḥḥābīs in Saudi Arabia

خلاصة: كانت العلاقة بين عالم الملايو والشرق الأوسط في أوائل القرن العشرين الميلادي تتسم بخاصة هامة أثارت اهتمام الباحثين لدراستها، وذلك تمشيا مع التطور السياسي في مكة المكرمة عقب تمكن آل سعود من بسط سيطرتهم السياسية على الحجاز ومكة المكرمة والمدينة المنورة بعد الانتصار الذي حققوه على الشريف حسين عام ١٩٤٢م؛ وكان من أهم الجوانب التي تتركز عليها أنظار المسلمين في عالم الملايو — نتيجة هذا التطور — هو المذهب الوهابي ذو الطابع المتشدد الذي يعتنقه الأسرة المالكة سواء في التفكير أم ممارسة التعاليم الإسلامية؛ وكان المسلمون في عالم الملايو ومعظمهم على مذهب الشافعية يرون أن المذهب الوهابي بالإضافة إلى أنه غير معروف لديهم كذلك يثير مخاوفهم من أنه سيكون مصدر إزعاج لهم في أداء مناسك الحج، بل كان البعض منهم يرون أن المذهب الوهابي المتشدد قد يدفع الحكومة السعودية إلى إبطال بعض المناسك مثل القيام بزيارة الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم التي كان لها وقعها في قلوب المسلمين بالملايو.

تعرض هذه المقالة لدراسة أولية حول موقف المسلمين في عالم الملايو من التطور السياسي والديني في الحجاز، وموضوعه ينصب على عدد من الدوريات أو المجلات العلمية والصحف اليومية الناشئة في أوائل القرن العشرين الميلادي والتي كانت تركز اهتمامها على القضايا المشار إليها؛ وجددير بالملاحظة هنا أنه في أوائل القرن العشرين الميلادي وتمشيا مع نشوء الوسائل المطبوعة شهد عالم الملايو تدفقا من المعلومات الواردة من الشرق الأوسط، وما لبث أن صارت التطورات السياسية في قلب العالم الإسلامي قضية هامة فيه وبالتالي كانت تمثل القدر المشترك في اهتمامات المسلمين بالملايو، وهذه القضية بالذات كان من دوافعها رجوع حوالي مائة وخمسين مسلما من مكة المكرمة إلى سينغافورة (Singapore) نتيجة اختلاف المذهب الديني؛ وبناء على ذلك يقوم المسلمون بالملايو — خصوصا أولئك الذين ينتمون إلى الحركة الإصلاحية — بتناولها كقضية هامة أثاروها في الوسائل المطبوعة التي أصدروها.

وكانت مجلة *إيداران زمان* (Idaran Zaman) (١٩٢٥ - ١٩٣٠) من الدوريات العلمية التي تنقل الأخبار حول القضية بشكل مكثف، وكان صدورها أسبوعياً في بولاو بينانج (Pulau Pinang) تحت إدارة الحاج عبد العزيز وبمساعديه محمد يونس عبد الحميد وعثمان كلام يعبر عن موقف إيجابي من تربع آل سعود على عرش المملكة بالحجاز؛ ومن الدوريات العلمية التي كانت تسيّر على نفس المنوال بينجاسوه (Pengasoh) (١٩١٨ - ١٩٣٢) التي أنشأها مجلس الإسلام والعرف الماليزي في كوتا بارو (Kota Bharu) كلانتان (Kelantan) (ماليزيا)؛ ومنها الهداية *al-Hedayah* (١٩٢٣ - ١٩٢٦) التي أنشئت في كوتا بارو أيضاً بإدارة أحمد بن اسماعيل؛ وتلاحظ هذه المقالة بالإضافة إلى ما سبق أن التأييد لآل سعود كانت تروجه مجلة *سروان أزهر* (Seruan Azhar) (١٩٢٥ - ١٩٢٨) التي أصدرها في القاهرة طلبة الملايو والأرخبيل الدارسون في الأزهر الشريف؛ وعلى الرغم من اختلاف الأساليب والحجج التي كانت تقدمها هذه الدوريات فإنها جميعاً تعبر عن تأييدها لآل سعود تربعها على عرش المملكة في الحجاز، وعن تقديرها كذلك لفضل هذه الأسرة في قيامهم بتحرير الأراضي المقدسة من نظام الحكم الذي تؤيده القوى الأجنبية أي العالم الغربي بعبارة أدق.

ولذلك فإنها في الوقت الذي تنقل فيه الأخبار مفصلاً عن التطورات في الحجاز تقوم هذه المجلات بعرض البيانات الشافية عن الفكر الوهابي الذي أصبح المذهب الرسمي لآل سعود، وفي هذا الصدد تحاول جميعاً أن تؤكد لقرائها في عالم الملايو أن المذهب الوهابي يسير على مقتضى القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية وبالتالي فلا يتعارض مع أهل السنة الذي يعتنقه المسلمون بالملايو، بل أن مجلة بينجاسوه لتؤكد على أن انتشار المواقف ضد الوهابي في عالم الملايو كان مجرد سوء فهم للمذهب نتيجة الدعاية التي يقوم بها أعداء الوهابي في الشرق الأوسط، وبجانب ذلك كانت تلك المجلات جميعاً - وبالأخص مجلة *إيداران زمان* - تروج أفكاراً مفادها أن انتصار آل سعود على الشريف حسين كان رمزا لانتصار الحق على الباطل، بل تذهب إلى أبعد من ذلك إذ تشبه هذا الانتصار بانتصار النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم على قريش مكة، وهكذا ما فتئت تلك المجلات تؤكد لقرائها في عالم الملايو أن مستقبل مكة المكرمة في أيدي آل سعود وأن سهولة أداء مناسك الحج سيكون متوفراً تحت حكومتهم.

وهكذا يتمثل إسهام هذه المجلات العلمية في إعطاء صورة إيجابية لآل سعود وحكومتهم على الحجاز حتى يكون مقبولاً لدى المسلمين بالملايو.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Muslim World witnessed the emergence of several intellectual and religious movements, which emanated from several Islamic territories. These movements originated from a number of social, political and religious backgrounds in the Muslim World. The decline of the Ottoman Empire and the diminishing authority of the Caliph, the growing political and cultural influence of the West throughout the Muslim World and moral laxity among the Muslims gave rise to awareness about the need for Muslims to reform, spearheaded by the modernist and the puritanist movements, particularly in the Middle East. The Wahhābī is considered the most important of these movements since it has had a long-lasting influence compared to other puritanical movements. One of the reasons for this is the success of the Wahhābīs in dominating the politics of modern Saudi Arabia. Holding the seats of two holy cities in Ḥijāz, Makkah and Medinah, the domination of the Wahhābīs in the country has a significance political and religious impact on Muslims, including the Malays.

Since becoming Muslim, the Malays have highly revered Ḥijāz and its *'ulamā'*, and have seen them as a source of religious and political authority when the need for an authoritative decision arises.¹ Even though historically Ḥijāz was exceptionally meaningful to the Malays, even for elucidating political questions, in Malaya there was no indication that the people were concerned with doctrinal or political developments with regard to the rise of Ibn Sa'ūd's family and the early domination of the Wahhābīs in the region, until the outbreak of the rivalry between Sharīf Ḥusayn and 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibn Sa'ūd after World War I. Concern towards the political struggle increased following the success of the latter and his Wahhābī warriors in capturing Makkah and Medinah in 1924.²

The reason for the Malay interest in political developments stemmed from their anxiety about the nature of the Wahhābī creed which would have some bearing on the future conduct of the *Ḥajj*.³ Since the Wahhābī doctrines were relatively unknown in Malaya, curiosity over its practices attracted tremendous Malay interest, and it was reported that there was hardly a village where Malays did not argue and discuss with one another the merits and faults of its teachings. These arguments and discussions were sometimes rather heated and people even called each other *kāfir* or infidels.⁴

Early in the conflict there was a clear indication of widespread Malay scepticism about the direction of the Wahhābī hegemony in Ḥijāz, despite ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Sa‘ūd’s assurances about the freedom of religious practice. Malays who were in Makkah at the height of the conflict were alarmed by the uncertainty and fled to Jeddah in the hope of returning home. Some Arabs also fled, and in December 1924 it was reported that about 150 of them arrived in Singapore from Jeddah.⁵ The return of many Malays from Jeddah intensified the interest in the political turmoil and led to an influx of news and stories about what was going on there. Since the political and doctrinal confusion in Ḥijāz coincided with the rapid progress of Malay journalism, the issue was enthusiastically pursued by a number of newspapers and journals, particularly those with reformist tendencies, which reflected the Malay public’s interest in the controversial developments.

II

News, analysis and correspondence about the developments in Ḥijāz were most extensively covered by the reformist newspaper *Idaran Zaman* and the reformist-inclined journal, *Pengasoh*.⁶ Apart from these two publications, which showed a distinct inclination towards supporting the cause of Ibn Sa‘ūd, another journal with similar tendencies was *al-Hedayah*.⁷ The cause of Ibn Sa‘ūd and the Wahhābīs was also supported by *Seruan Azhar*, a journal published by Malay students in Cairo, even though at first it objected to Ibn Sa‘ūd when he declared himself the new ruler of Ḥijāz.⁸ The support provided by these publications, however, was not based on prior relations with Ibn Sa‘ūd or any direct appeal to back his struggle. Instead, it was based on the belief that Ibn Sa‘ūd was genuinely trying to free Ḥijāz from Sharīf Ḥusayn, who was backed by foreign powers, and that the doctrine of the Wahhābīs had been unjustly accused of being contradictory to the beliefs of Sunnī Islam.

The monthly journal *Pengasoh*, however, was the earliest journal to provide extensive coverage on the developments in Ḥijāz, which sometimes took up almost half of its twelve-page issue. The journal stated that the coverage was carried out in this manner as it intended to inform its readers about these developments and please those who supported the cause of Ibn Sa‘ūd. With such objectives it was not surprising that in all its reporting on political events in Ḥijāz the journal clearly showed its support for his cause. In its first report

following the triumph of Ibn Sa'ūd, *Pengasoh* elaborated on the objectives of his campaign, mainly to free the Arab lands from foreign influence. To impress its readers, the journal reported that Ibn Sa'ūd's campaign was widely supported by Muslims elsewhere, including Shaukat Ali of the Caliphate Committee in India, who was even willing to lend his assistance in the war against Sharīf Husayn.⁹

One of the most pressing issues which caused Malay doubt over Ibn Sa'ūd's campaign was his association with the Wahhābīs. *Pengasoh* believed that many Malays doubted the nature of their practices, and that among other things, they feared that the Wahhābīs would obstruct Muslims from visiting the grave of the Prophet. In order to allay doctrinal misgivings, the journal published a four-page article on the beliefs of the Wahhābīs which was intended to give its readers a clear picture and to explain that their doctrines were not contradictory to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.¹⁰ To further convince its readers that Wahhābīsm was also part of the four Sunnī *Madhhabs* (schools of thought) and that what was being said about them was incorrect, a detailed explanation of the Wahhābī beliefs in relation to the Ḥanbalī *Madhhab* was also provided by the journal. Since Malays looked upon the views of al-Azhar with high regard, *Pengasoh* also published the opinions of its 'ulamā', which concluded that the Wahhābīs were part of the Sunnī Muslims.¹¹ The journal believed that the confusion that lingered among Malays over Wahhābī beliefs was the result of the anti-Wahhābī campaign waged by the Turks.¹²

In addition to providing an explanation of the Wahhābī creed, *Pengasoh* also advised its readers who wanted additional information on their beliefs to read further, and listed a number of books on the subject, distributed by Maktabah Haji Abdullah of Singapore and al-Maktabah al-Zainiah, Penang. The emerging Malay sympathy toward the cause of Ibn Sa'ūd, however, was dented when Malays fleeing from Hijāz reached Singapore and reported on the murder of 'Abd Allāh al-Zawawī, the *Muftī* of Makkah, who was highly respected by the Malay people. Realising the murder would be an explosive issue and would greatly undermine its drive to garner support for the cause of Ibn Sa'ūd, *Pengasoh* took the initiative of detailing the events which led to his murder. From the way it was reported by the journal, the Wahhābīs should not solely to be blamed, since the murder had not been deliberately committed and nor was it premeditated, but was instead due to confusion.¹³

Despite *Pengasoh*'s relentless efforts to explain the beliefs of the Wahhābīs in its pages, some of its readers were still confused and far from convinced, particularly when the over-zealous conduct of some of the Wahhābī followers began to emerge. One of the journal's correspondents, who also referred to an edition of the newspaper *al-Ahram* which had been referred to by *Pengasoh*, cast doubt on the belief of the Wahhābīs. He also expressed his confusion over a number of their actions, such as the demolition of the mausolea of the wives and companions of the Prophet, which he alleged the Wahhābīs believed to be sanctioned by the religion of Islam.¹⁴ *Seruan Azhar* also made an effort to explain the nature of the Wahhābī doctrine. The journal even made space in its pages for a question and answer section about the doctrine and made a point of explaining that there was no difference between the Wahhābī creed and other Sunnī *Madhhabs*.¹⁵ The controversy that had arisen, it believed, was the result of Ibn Sa'ūd waging an unpopular crusade against the practice of *bid'ah* (innovation) and enforcing the practice of Islam according to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, which offended the interests of certain quarters.¹⁶

In early 1925, Malay coverage of the political developments in Hijāz received a tremendous boost when a weekly newspaper, *Idaran Zaman*, was published in Penang from the middle of January under the editorship of Mohd. Yunus Abdul Hamid, a staunch reformist. The newspaper's reporting on developments in Hijāz was also assisted by the presence of a well-known journalist, Abdul Rahim Kajai, who was its correspondent for three years from 1924.¹⁷ Apart from being a reporter for the newspaper in Makkah, Abdul Rahim also contributed articles to the journal *Malaya* and was its distributing agent in Makkah.¹⁸

Right from the first issue *Idaran Zaman* made its stand clear; it supported the cause of Ibn Sa'ūd and in doing so elaborated upon his successive triumphs. Ibn Sa'ūd's conquest of Hijāz was claimed not to have been driven by his wish to expand the domination of Nejd, but instead in order to fulfil his obligation to God, and his success was reported to have been enthusiastically welcomed by the inhabitants of Makkah, including its prominent 'ulama.¹⁹ *Idaran Zaman* was also over-zealous in its support of Ibn Sa'ūd's cause. When Sayyid Taha bin Umar al-Sagoff criticised the Malays for arguing over who was right in the conflict between Ibn Sa'ūd and Sharif Ḥusayn, when he believed the right thing for them to do was to call for reconciliation, since both were Muslims, *Idaran Zaman* was quick to repudiate this suggestion. To *Idaran Zaman*, the conflict was a matter of principle, it was a struggle between

truth and falsehood, and it was a responsibility of every Muslim to support the cause of Ibn Sa‘ūd, who was on the high moral and religious ground.²⁰ The victory of Ibn Sa‘ūd over Sharīf Ḥusayn was hailed as a victory of the faithful, and with his victory *Idaran Zaman* expressed its hope that the disturbances there would be brief and the Ḥajj season would continue uninterrupted.²¹

III

The publication of the newspaper was timely since the Malays were very eager to know the latest developments taking place in Ḥijāz.²² Apart from publishing reports supplied by its correspondent, *Idaran Zaman* also depended heavily on information obtained from *Umm al-Qura*, a Saudi propaganda organ in Makkah. Since it based its reporting on this source it was not surprising that its coverage was pro-Sa‘ūd and leaned towards legitimising his new government, along with defending the Wahnābī doctrine.²³ In doing so, it justified Ibn Sa‘ūd’s takeover of Ḥijāz, even though his predecessor, Sharīf Ḥusayn, was a more legitimate ruler since he was a descendant of the Prophet. In its justification of this political process *Idaran Zaman* argued that Sharīf Ḥusayn was unacceptable since he was supported by non-Muslim powers.²⁴ *Idaran Zaman* expressed its relief when it appeared that these foreign powers had abandoned Ḥusayn’s cause and expressed their clear intention of non-interference in the political affairs of Ḥijāz. In order to share its feelings with its readers, the newspaper published a telegram expressing this intention which it claimed was signed by the Consuls of Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Persia.²⁵

Despite the continuing efforts to inform the Malay public about Ibn Sa‘ūd’s cause, *Idaran Zaman* was aware of persisting scepticism towards his political aims and the Wahnābī doctrine. As part of its effort to relieve the Malays of their doubts, the newspaper published a report from the Conference of Makkan ‘*Ulamā*’ which discussed Wahnābī beliefs. The conference was said to have had come to the conclusion that the Wahnābī doctrine was based on a genuine Islamic teaching as outlined by the Qur’ān and Hadith.²⁶ Persistent Malay reservations about the Wahnābī were undoubtedly the result of rumours that they had indiscriminately desecrated tombs that the Malays revered in the Holy Land. These rumours were discounted by *Idaran Zaman* and it published an assurance given by Ibn Sa‘ūd that his followers would highly respect the Prophet, his family and

the companions, and he himself was even reported to have had directed that all mausolea be protected.²⁷ *Idaran Zaman* also constantly denied rumours that were widespread among the Malay public, including the violation of holy places and wrongdoings by Ibn Sa'ūd's forces. *Idaran Zaman* branded those who spread these rumours as intending to create arguments among Muslims. The Malays were advised not to listen to these rumours and the newspaper reported that a fact-finding mission from Egypt had been sent to Hijāz, led by the *Shaykh al-Azhar*, Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, to assess the current situation there.²⁸

To further convince the Malays, *Idaran Zaman* published a personal message from Ibn Sa'ūd addressed to all Muslims, which made clear his intention to implement *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law), and to bring peace and justice to all Muslims from the oppressive and despotic rule of Sharīf Ḥusayn and his family.²⁹ Such commitments by Ibn Sa'ūd were also elaborated upon by *Pengasoh*, to the effect that with the implementation of *Sharā'ah*, Hijāz would become a free Islamic State devoid of non-Islamic elements. As "a Slave of the Haramain", the journal reiterated that it was the wish of Ibn Sa'ūd to protect Makkah and Medinah from foreign interference and to cleanse it of cruelty, so that justice would prevail. *Pengasoh* warned that the bad image and slander attached to Ibn Sa'ūd's struggle and the Wahhābī creed were intended to rupture Islamic solidarity between Arabs and other Muslims. Undesirable elements were blamed for trying to weaken the strength of Muslims, since Ibn Sa'ūd's struggle was for the Arabs and to raise Muslim dignity.³⁰

The Malay perception of Ibn Sa'ūd in these publications clearly showed that the Malay public was in search of an Islamic leader and he was the man who suited their current criteria. Ibn Sa'ūd was described as a humble leader who waged a war against the enemies of Islam and had a good working relation with Kemal of Turkey, who was also perceived as striving to restore Muslim dignity. Muslims were urged to support his leadership and Malays were expected not to hesitate to do so.³¹ As a saviour of Islam, Ibn Sa'ūd was portrayed as being in the process of proving his credibility by first setting Hijāz on the path of becoming a prosperous region. After his initial triumph, Makkah was reported as being peaceful, food was cheap and the people were able to mingle freely. On the other hand, Sharīf Ḥusayn was regarded as evil and Jeddah, which was still under the rule of his son, Sharīf 'Alī, was reported to be in a state of famine. Its inhabitants were living in destitution with torn clothing and had to

endure high prices for foodstuffs. Sharīf 'Alī was also reported as being very oppressive, imposing high taxes on his people and punishing heavily those who opposed him. He was portrayed as a tool of Western powers and was said to have sold a market place to foreigners to finance his war effort. His forces were purportedly highly demoralised and wished to abandon the struggle.³²

Following the final victory of Ibn Sa'ūd when he captured Jeddah, the journal *Pengasoh* and the newspaper *Idaran Zaman* further demonstrated their anti-Husayn convictions. In announcing the victory as reported by *al-Ahram*, *Pengasoh* reiterated that the news would please its readers who were pro-Sa'ūd.³³ To further humiliate Husayn in the eyes of its readers, the journal also published an article entitled "Hijāz Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" where previous conditions in Hijāz were compared with current ones, and Husayn's personality was compared with Ibn Sa'ūd's.³⁴ The anti-Husayn position was also taken up by *Idaran Zaman*, which reported that twenty beautiful young Javanese girls were found in the palace of his son, Sharīf 'Alī in Jeddah. These girls were used as his concubines and were only released after the Dutch Consul General issued a warning.³⁵

When Ibn Sa'ūd achieved final victory over Sharīf 'Alī, the joy of his success was reported to have been welcomed by Muslims all over the world. Following the victory, *Idaran Zaman*, apart from reporting the news, also published the full text of the congratulatory telegram sent to him by the al-Irshad Society of Surabaya, accompanied by the hope that his success would establish the dignity of Muslims.³⁶ There were also high expectations that his leadership would restore the past glory of Islam.³⁷ Ibn Sa'ūd's endeavours to bring prosperity to his kingdom were also highlighted, such as his efforts to explore the underground water potential as undertaken by a German engineer, for which the cost of drilling would be shared by Muslims all over the world.³⁸

Idaran Zaman also equated the victory of Ibn Sa'ūd with the Prophet's victory against the Quraish, since following his conquest, Ibn Sa'ūd, following the actions of the Prophet, decided to grant pardon to all inhabitants of Hijāz, except for the family of Sharīf Husayn.³⁹ His success was viewed as the victory of good over evil, and *Idaran Zaman* predicted that this victory would bring about a new era for the Islamic World.⁴⁰ To dismiss rumours of Wahhābī intolerance towards other Sunnī *Madhhabs*, *al-Ikhwān* published the new rulings on the conditions for teaching in the Masjid al-Haram, which clearly showed Ibn Sa'ūd's respect for the four major Sunnī

Madhhabs. According to the journal, Ibn Sa'ūd was particularly against the practices of *bid'ah* which were clearly contrary to Islamic teachings, as outlined by the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.⁴¹

The greatest Muslim fear concerning Ibn Sa'ūd's ascendancy was the future of the Ḥajj. Realising its importance, Ibn Sa'ūd was quick to issue a communique which stressed his full commitment to its future conduct. The communique was published in full by *Idaran Zaman*, hoping that it would allay Muslim fears about its future prospects.⁴² Following his capture of Jeddah, Ibn Sa'ūd also made all possible efforts to ensure that the pilgrimage season of 1926 went ahead as usual.⁴³ Ibn Sa'ūd also made a concerted effort to guarantee the safety and lives of the pilgrims, something which had been a long-standing problem under Sharīf Husayn, with pilgrims being subjected to robbery, theft and other forms of intimidation on their journey.

Following his final victory, Ibn Sa'ūd also called for a *Mu'tamar Islami* (Islamic Congress) during the Ḥajj season of 1926 in Makkah to discuss the future governing of the holy places. The convening of the congress was widely reported and welcomed by Malays.⁴⁴ It was also hoped that the *Mu'tamar* would be a forum for the exchange of ideas among Muslims.⁴⁵ *Idaran Zaman* even went a step further by suggesting that the Malays should take the proposal seriously and recommended that educated and well-respected Malays should form a committee which would represent them at the congress.⁴⁶ When the *Mu'tamar* was convened from 7 June to 6 July, *Al-Ikhwān* congratulated Ibn Sa'ūd for his efforts and expressed on behalf of the Malays its willingness to share the burden of the administration of the Holy Cities so as to provide better conditions for the conduct of the Ḥajj.⁴⁷ The full resolution of the *Mu'tamar* was also published by *Al-Ikhwān*, which clearly showed Ibn Sa'ūd's commitment to better conditions and facilities for the Ḥajj in the future.⁴⁸

IV

Apart from the role played by newspapers and journals in pursuing the cause of Ibn Sa'ūd and Wāhhābīsm, the cause was also taken up by a number of individuals, including those with an English education, one of them being Abdul Majid Zainuddin, who was in Ḥijāz as a Malay Pilgrimage Officer during the political turmoil. In his advocacy of the Wāhhābī doctrine he rationalised it as a real Islam which would appeal to Muslims everywhere, even in what

he termed "backward Malaya". Abdul Majid, however, regretted that among Malays, Wahhābism had to suffer from the stigma of being styled by the *Kaum Muda* (modernist movement) and associated with the undesirable Communists, which he argued it should not be, since Islam opposed every aspect of Communism.⁴⁹ Ibn Sa'ūd's cause was also supported by other modernists like Muhammad Yusof Sutan Mahyuddin, who went to the extent of condemning those who belittled Wahhābī doctrines.⁵⁰

Despite the effort and the scale of the journalistic campaign for Ibn Sa'ūd and Wahhābism, in certain quarters it was still received with hostility and regarded as an ultra-reformist movement. This animosity stemmed from the nature of Wahhābī doctrine itself, which was regarded as intolerant towards certain practices of other Muslim *Madhhabs*, including the Shāfi'ī to which the Malays adhered. In Makkah, the new ruling introduced after the establishment of Ibn Sa'ūd's administration, whereby religious teaching was only allowed to be conducted in the mosque by approved teachers, caused much ill-feeling among Malay residents there who feared it was an attempt to convert them to Wahhābism.⁵¹

Even though in Malaya the opposition to Ibn Sa'ūd was not that intense and there were no public meetings to denounce him, as was the case in India and Afghanistan, there were signs of a growing dislike towards the Wahhābīs.⁵² This particularly emerged when there were reports of vandalism blamed on them and as a result of the Malays' exasperation at the prospect of not being able to proceed with the Ḥajj.⁵³ Anti-Sa'ūd feelings, however, were more obvious within the Arab community in Malaya, which was divided into those who supported each side. One Arab, Sayyid Abdullah Dahlan, was strongly anti-Ḥusayn and in his effort to support the cause of Ibn Sa'ūd he published an open request in *Lembaga Melayu* on 30 October 1925, appealing for donations to a Ḥijāz fund which would be used to assist those who suffered hardship as a result of the power struggle. Sayyid Abdullah also issued a second appeal in the form of pamphlets.⁵⁴ On the other hand, there were a number of Arabs who supported the cause of Sharīf Ḥusayn, including Sayyid Omar al-Sagoff, a prominent Muslim leader in Singapore.⁵⁵ As a show of support for his cause, Sayyid Omar, who had a close relationship with Sharīf Ḥusayn, and was decorated with his highest order, sent £2000 to Medinah.⁵⁶

In Penang, Shaykh Abdullah Maghribi, after his resignation as the *mudir* (Headmaster) of Madrasah al-Mashhor, in 1927 formed

an organisation to support the cause of Sharīf Ḥusayn called Jam'iyah al-Khalafah.⁵⁷ Even though the organisation did not last long and had to be closed down in the same year, and other support for Ḥusayn dwindled after his defeat, at least there was evidence of an element of anti-Wahhābī and anti-Sa'ūd thinking in Malaya. Similar sentiment was also demonstrated by certain *ṭarīqah* (ṣūfī order) groups, one of them being the Tariqah Ahmadiyah whose *Khalifah*, Shaykh Muhammad Said bin Jamaluddin al-Linggi, wrote a booklet which criticised the Wahhābīs.⁵⁸ Even though ideologically there were those who were either for or against the Wahhābīs and Ibn Sa'ūd, the equation proved not to be that rigid in practice. Sayyid Ibrahim Omar al-Sagoff, a prominent Muslim leader in Singapore who served in the Legislative Council in Makkah from 1923 to 1926 under Sharīf Ḥusayn and was also decorated with his highest order, then served under Ibn Sa'ūd from 1926-1929 following the latter's success in the political struggle for the Ḥijāz.⁵⁹

By the early 1930s, the Wahhābī controversy had subsided considerably and Ibn Sa'ūd was generally accepted by Malays as the ruler of the Ḥaramain. His acceptance by the Malay public was the result of better security, facilities and living conditions being provided for the pilgrims, compared to what had been the case during the Sharīfian rule.⁶⁰ The Malay press also played a significant role by presenting a noble image of Ibn Sa'ūd, and one paper even portrayed him as the greatest Arab leader after the Prophet.⁶¹ In the 1930s after Ibn Sa'ūd's government was firmly established in Ḥijāz, these newspapers continued to regularly publish his speeches which clearly showed his commitment to the cause of Muslims.⁶² In 1983, as part of his effort to win the hearts and minds of the Malays, the Saudi government published a bilingual journal *Nidā' al-Islām* with the aim of strengthening relations between the Malays and the Arabs.⁶³

Even though the triumph of Ibn Sa'ūd and the Wahhābīs did not disrupt the Malays' quest to perform the fifth pillar of Islam, he did not fulfil their wish that he would emerge as the awaited Muslim leader who would lead them to a superior dignity. After his success in eliminating his rivals, 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibn Sa'ūd main concern was to strengthen his country and the monarchy he had established. Ibn Sa'ūd did make several attempts to unite Muslims under his leadership, after securing recognition as the "Protector of the Holy Cities", but his effort was unsuccessful because of the limitations he encountered, and his leadership was questioned when the regime adopted a western-inclined policy.

Endnotes

1. In Kedah, following the death of the Regent in 1907, Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah (1861-1943) intended to appoint his son Tunku Ibrahim (generally known as Tunku Sulong) as the new Regent. The post, however, was traditionally reserved for the Ruler's brother, and the State Council voted unanimously for Tunku Mahmud to fill the vacant post. The ensuing struggle for the throne also involved the British, who were in the early stages of administering the state after the transfer of power from Siamese rule. In 1912, Tunku Mahmud asked Arthur Young, who had succeeded John Anderson as Governor of the Straits Settlements, to declare Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah mentally unfit to rule and appoint the Regent in his place. At this juncture, in order to support his case, Tunku Mahmud sent four doctor's certificates on the Sultan's mental health which all confirmed that there was little hope of recovery to Singapore through W.G. Maxwell, the British Adviser. He also enclosed a ruling from Shaykh Muhammad, a *Qadi* from Makkah, which contained an explanation from the point of view of Muslim law that a ruler *ipso facto* falls from power if mentally incapable of ruling. Tunku Mahmud enclosed the ruling to cover any possible objection on religious grounds to the case he tried to bring forward. J. de Vere Allen, "The Elephant and the Mousedeer - A New Version: Anglo-Kedah Relations, 1905-1915", *JMBRAS*, Vol. XL1, Part 1, July 1968, p. 68.
2. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 7, No. 157, 29 October 1924, p. 4.
3. For a brief history of the Wahhābī beliefs and how they differ from other Sunnī doctrines, and also the rise of Ibn Sa'ūd, see Ziyā-ul Hassan Farūqī, "A Note on the Wahhabiyah", *Islam and the Modern Age*, Vol. 4, No. 1, February 1973, pp. 38-50; Phoenix, "A Brief Outline of the Wahhabi Movement", *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XVII, Part IV, 1930, pp. 401-406, W.F. Smalley, "The Wahhabis of Ibn Sa'ud", *The Moslem World*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, 1932, pp. 227-246; Mu'innuddin Ahmad Khan, "A Diplomat's Report on Wahhabism in Arabia", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 7, 1968, pp. 33-46. See also Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, "Wahhabism in Arabia: Past and Present", *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XVI, 1929, pp. 458-467. The article was originally a speech given by Sheikh Hafiz Wahba to a group from the Central Asian Society in London chaired by Lord Allenby and was also translated into Malay by Za'ba. See *Al-Ikhwān*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 16 December 1930, pp. 97-107 & Vol. 5, No. 5, 16 January 1930, pp. 130-138. For early works on the Wahhābīs, see J. O'Kinealy, "Translation of Arabic Pamphlet on the History and Doctrines of the Wahhabism by Abdullah, Grandson of Abdul Wahhab, the Founder of Wahhabism", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XLIII, 1874, pp. 68-82; E Rehatsek, "The History of Wahhabys in Arabia and in India", *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 14, 1880, pp. 274-351.
4. Haji Abdul Majid Zainuddin, *The Malayan Kaleidoscope*, Kuala Lumpur: The Selangor Press, 1935. p. 23. See also *Idaran Zaman*, 21 May 1925.
5. CO 537/927, Laurence Nunns Guillemard (Governor) to Amery, 31 December 1924; enclosure *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, No. 24, December 1924.
6. Most of the coverage published by *Idaran Zaman* and *Pengasoh* was obtained from *al-Ahram* of Egypt and *Umm al-Qura* of Hijāz, and also occasionally from personal accounts given by Malays who fled Hijāz during the turmoil.

7. See for example *Al-Hedayah*, September 1925, pp. 102-104. Other journals which also supported Ibn Sa'ūd's cause were *Al-Ikhwān* and in the early 1930s, *Bahtra* and *Saudara*.
8. *Seruan Azhar*, Vol. 1, No. 7, April 1926, p. 131. The change in opinion that took place among the *Seruan Azhar* circle was brought about by Djanan Taib who visited Cairo in July 1926 and explained the noble cause of Ibn Sa'ūd.
9. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 7, No. 157, 29 October 1924, pp. 1-3.
10. See the column questions and answers in *ibid.*, pp. 4-8.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-8.
12. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 7, No. 159, 27 November 1924, pp. 1-2.
13. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 7, No. 160, 11 December 1924, pp. 5-6.
14. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 7, No. 163, 15 January 1925, pp. 4-5. Despite the doubts, the reader who wrote the comments assumed that this was not carried out by those who adhered to the true principles of the Wahhābī doctrines. To clear these doubts, the writer hoped that religious experts, who could afford to do so, would go to Hijāz themselves in order to investigate what was the actual situation.
15. See *Seruan Azhar*, Vol. 1, No. 10, July 1926, pp. 192-194.
16. *Seruan Azhar*, Vol. 1, No. 11, August 1926, pp. 211-213.
17. Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar, "Abdul Rahim Kajai: Pulau Pinang Sebagai Tempat Menuntut Ilmu Kewartawanan", in Abdul Latif Abu Bakar (ed), *Warisan Sastera Pulau Pinang*, Kuala Lumpur: Biro Penerbitan GAPENA, 1985, p. 4.
18. Saleh Osman, "Majalah *Malaya* (1926 - 1931)" in Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar (ed), *Warisan Sastera Pulau Pinang*, Kuala Lumpur: Biro Penerbitan GAPENA, 1985, p. 23.
19. *Idaran Zaman*, 22 January 1925.
20. *Idaran Zaman*, 21 May 1925.
21. *Idaran Zaman*, 19 February 1925.
22. *Al-Ikhwān*, 19 February 1925.
23. See for example *Idaran Zaman*, 19 March 1925.
24. *Idaran Zaman*, 19 February 1925.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Idaran Zaman*, 2 April 1925.
27. See *Pengasoh*, Vol. 8, No. 177, 20 August 1925, p. 12. (The full text of the telegram from the Ruler of Egypt to Ibn Sa'ūd and his reply).
28. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 8, No. 178, September 1925, pp. 9-10.
29. *Idaran Zaman*, 30 April 1925.
30. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 8, No. 177, 20 August 1925, pp. 11-12.
31. *Seruan Azhar*, Vol. 1, No. 11, August 1926, pp. 211-213.
32. *Pengasoh*, Vol. 8, No. 179/180, 2 October 1925, pp. 9-12. Even though the report was clearly pro-Sa'ūd, ironically the editor of the journal claims to be impartial since pro-Husayn readers might not agree with the report. A similar report was made a few months earlier by *Idaran Zaman*, which it claimed was obtained from returning pilgrims. See *Idaran Zaman*, 4 June 1925.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
34. See "Keadaan di Hijaz Kelmarin, Hari Ini dan Esok", *Pengasoh*, Vol. 8, No. 185/86. 16 & 30 December 1925, pp. 8-13.
35. *Idaran Zaman*, 14 January 1926.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Idaran Zaman*, 23 January 1926.

38. *Idaran Zaman*, 14 January 1926.
39. *Idaran Zaman*, 23 January 1926 & 28 January 1926.
40. *Idaran Zaman*, 28 January 1926.
41. *Al-Ikhtwan*, 16 December 1926, p. 81.
42. *Idaran Zaman*, 30 April 1925.
43. GA 58/26, National Archive, Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch). P.I.B. 1132, A.W. Hamilton, Acting Director, Political Intelligence Bureau to the Secretary to High Commissioner, 19 January 1926.
44. See *Al-Ikhtwan*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 16 October 1926, pp. 11-12; *Seruan Azhar*, Vol. 1, No. 9, June 1926, pp. 122-126.
45. *Seruan Azhar*, Vol. 1, No. 10, July 1926, p. 183.
46. *Idaran Zaman*, 5 March 1925.
47. *Al-Ikhtwan*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 16 September 1926, pp. 14-15.
48. See *al-Ikhtwan*, 16 October 1926, pp. 11-13.
49. Haji Abdul Majid Zainuddin. *The Malayan Kaleidoscope*, pp. 23-24.
50. Muhammad Yusof Sutan Mahyuddin, *Kejatuhan Kaum-Kaum Islam Dan Pergerakan Baru*, Penang: Jelutong Press, 1931, p. 72.
51. MB 296/28. National Archive, Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch) "Religious Instruction in the Hijaz". F.H.W. Stonehewer Bird, His Majesty's Agent and Consul, Jeddah to General Adviser, Johore, 21 September 1928. The new regulations enforced by the new Ibn Sa'ūd-Wahhābī government were also published by the Malay journals. See *Al-Ikhtwan*, Vol. 2, No. 6, 16 January 1928, pp. 80-81; *Dunia Melayu*, 20 March 1929, pp. 74-75. See also MB 265/29, National Archive Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch), "Establishment of Wahhabi Religious Influence in Mecca", W.L Bond of British Consul, Jeddah to Foreign Office, 20 July 1929.
52. For example, the case of Afghanistan in the nineteenth century when the ruler himself supervised the efforts to refute the Wahhābī doctrine. In 1888 Amīr 'Abd al-Rahmān (reigned 1880-1901) supervised a group of thirteen 'ulamā' who composed a treatise entitled *Takwīm al-Dīn*, the third part of which consisted of a critique of the Wahhābī doctrine concerning intercession, the nature of prophethood and *ijtihād* (individual interpretation). See Christine Noelle, "The Anti-Wahhabi Reaction in the Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan", *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXV, Nos 1-2, January-April, 1995, p. 23.
53. CO 371/11698, Laurence Nunns Guillemard (Governor) to Amery, 28 November 1925; enclosure *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, No. 33, October/November 1925.
54. CO 537/927. Laurence Nunns Guillemard (Governor) to Amery, 31 December 1924; enclosure *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, No. 24, December 1924.
55. See L/PS/10/599 (Oriental and Indian Office Collection). Dudley Ridout, Brigadier-General, Commanding the Troop, Straits Settlements, Singapore to the Secretary, War Office, London, 15 August 1916.
56. CO 371/11698, *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, No. 34, December 1925.
57. Mohd. Sarim Hj. Mustajab, "Syeikh Abdullah Maghribi: Pendidik dan Kaum Muda", *Jebat*, Vol. 5/6, 1975/76 - 1976/77, p. 2.
58. Hamdan Hassan, *Tarekat Ahmadiyah Di Malaysia. Suatu Analisis Fakta Secara Ilmiah*, Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992, p. 63.

59. *Sunday Times*, 9 February 1936, *Genuine Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, February 1936.
60. MB 247/1939, National Archive, Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch), R. Irvine to the General Adviser, Johore, 3 May 1939; enclosure "Annual Report on the Pilgrimage for the Season 1938-1939AD or 1357-1358AH". R. Irvine was the Acting Secretary to the High Commissioner for the Malay States.
61. See *Persahabatan*, Vol. 1, No. 19, 28 December 1936, p. 13.
62. See for example the publication of his speeches, "Ucapan Lelaki Islam. Khutbah al-Malik Ibn Saud Raja Hijaz dan Nejd Di Dalam Perhimpunan Orang-Orang Haji Tahun Ini Di Makkah al-Musyrifah", *Saudara*, Vol. 4, No. 211, 8 June 1932 & Vol. 4, No. 212, 11 June 1932; "Pidato al-Malik Ibn Saud Tatkala Berangkat Ke Taif", *Bahtra*, Vol. 1, No. 51 (9 August), No. 52 (12 August), No. 53 (16 August), No. 54 (23 August) and No. 55 (26 August 1932); "Ucapan Yang Mulia Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud Dalam Kumpulan Orang Ramai dan Orang-Orang Besar Yang Naik Haji Tahun Ini", *Saudara*, Vol. 7, No. 513, 29 May 1935.
63. See *Nidā' al-Islām*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1937, p. 19.

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