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The Transmission of *al-Manar*'s Reformism to the Malay-Indonesian World: The Cases of *al-Imam* and *al-Munir*

Abstraksi: Gerakan pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia, dan di Asia Tenggara pada umumnya, tidak bisa dipahami terlepas dari pengaruh gerakan serupa di Timur Tengah. Sejumlah kajian para sarjana membuktikan bahwa gerakan-gerakan pembaharuan Islam di dunia Melayu-Nusantara dipengaruhi pemikiran para pembaharu Islam di Timur Tengah, khususnya Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad 'Abduh dan Rashid Rida. Pemikiran ketiga tokoh tersebut jelas-jelas menjadi sumber rujukan para pelopor gerakan pembaharuan Islam di Melayu-Nusantara. Namun demikian, bagaimana proses jalannya pengaruh tersebut berlangsung tampaknya kurang memperoleh perhatian memadai.

Artikel ini berusaha mengisi kekosongan tentang satu bidang kajian yang selama ini kurang tersentuh. Fokus utama pembahasan artikel ini adalah proses transmisi gagasan pembaharuan Islam dalam *al-Manar*, jurnal pembaharuan Islam di Timur Tengah, ke dalam gerakan pembaharuan pemikiran Islam di Melayu-Nusantara. Dalam konteks ini, pembahasan selanjutnya diarahkan pada wacana yang berkembang dalam dua jurnal utama yang menjadi corong pembaharuan Islam di Melayu-Nusantara, yakni *al-Imam*, terbit di Singapura pada 1906, dan *al-Munir* di Padang, Sumatra Barat, pada 1911. Dua jurnal ini, lebih khususnya *al-Imam*, diakui berbagai kalangan sarjana telah mengikuti hampir secara keseluruhan model jurnal *al-Manar*, yang langsung berada di bawah asuhan Rashid Rida.

Berkaitan dengan *al-Imam*, pengaruh *al-Manar* pada jurnal ini setidaknya bisa dilihat pada dua hal berikut. Pertama adalah anggota redaksi jurnal. Tercatat bahwa yang termasuk dalam susunan redaksi *al-Imam* umumnya mereka yang pernah belajar di Timur Tengah, baik di Mekkah dan Madinah maupun di Kairo, Mesir. Salah seorang yang penting dicatat di sini adalah

Syekh Tahir bin Jalaluddin al-Minangkabawi al-Azhari, editor pertama al-Imam. Lahir di Bukittinggi pada 1869, Syakh Tahir belajar Islam di Mekkah selama sekitar empat belas tahun, sebelum kemudian, pada 1893, ia pergi ke Kairo untuk mempelajari ilmu falaq. Di Kairo inilah dia berkenalan dengan pemikiran Muhammad 'Abdub, dan selanjutnya memiliki hubungan persahabatan yang erat dengan Rashid Rida. Bahkan, saat tokoh pembaharu terakhir ini menerbitkan al-Manar, Syekh Tahir mengirim artikel untuk dimuat. Jadi, dari kasus Syekh Tahir, jelas bahwa anggota redaksi al-Imam memang memiliki akses dan selanjutnya menerima pengaruh yang berarti dari jurnal al-Manar.

Kedua, pengaruh al-Manar ini selanjutnya tampak pada wacana pemikiran Islam yang dikemukakan al-Imam. Seperti halnya al-Manar, al-Imam banyak memuat artikel-artikel atau tulisan-tulisan yang berisi seruan "kembali kepada al-Quran dan Sunnah", yang menjadi salah satu agenda utama gerakan pembaharuan Islam. Sejalan dengan itu, al-Imam memberi perhatian sangat besar pada upaya pembaharuan pendidikan, baik aspek kurikulum maupun kelembagaan madrasah. Beberapa tulisan dalam al-Imam menekankan perlunya memasukkan mata pelajaran umum ke dalam kurikulum, selain mata pelajaran agama Islam. Bagi al-Imam, pembaharuan sistem pendidikan ini merupakan kunci bagi kemajuan suatu bangsa, tepatnya Muslim Melayu-Nusantara.

Pengaruh al-Manar di Melayu-Nusantrara ini selanjutnya bisa pula dilihat pada jurnal al-Munir, jurnal kedua yang dibahas artikel ini. Al-Munir terbit menyusul terhentinya penerbitan al-Imam. Penerbitan al-Munir diprakarsai beberapa tokoh kaum muda Minangkabau yang memang sudah akrab dengan gagasan-gagasan pembaharuan Islam yang disuarakan al-Imam, bahkan al-Manar. Oleh karena itu, mereka kerap dikenal sebagai "kaum al-Manar". Maka ketika penerbitan al-Imam berhenti, mereka segera memprakarsai penerbitan jurnal baru guna meneruskan penyebaran gagasan pembaharuan Islam oleh al-Imam. Salah seorang tokoh yang terlibat dalam penerbitan al-Munir adalah Haji Abdullah Ahmad. Lahir di Padangpanjang pada 1878, dia dikenal sebagai pembaharu Islam terkemuka di Minangkabau.

Seperti hanya al-Manar dan al-Imam, salah satu misi utama al-Munir adalah memajukan umat Islam Melayu-Nusantara yang telah lama berada di bawah tekanan kolonialisme. Al-Munir memuat sejumlah artikel yang menolak taklid buta, dan menekankan perlunya membuka kembali pintu ijtihad. Sejalan dengan itu, al-Munir juga menekankan pentingnya mendirikan organisasi modern sebagai upaya perjuangan umat Islam, termasuk di dalamnya penyebaran gagasan-gagasan pembaharuan bagi kemajuan umat.

The Transmission of *al-Manar*'s Reformism to the Malay-Indonesian World: The Cases of *al-Imam* and *al-Munir*

خلاصة: إنه ليس في وسعنا فهم الحركات الإسلامية التجديدية في إندونيسيا وفي جنوب شرقي آسيا منفصلة عن تأثير الحركات المماثلة في الشرق الأوسط، وهناك عدد من الدراسات تحاول أن تثبت أن الحركات الإسلامية التجديدية في عالم الملايو-الأرخبيل متأثرة بالمجديدين في الشرق الأوسط وأفكارهم، ويخص بالذكر منهم جمال الدين الأفغاني ومحمد عبده ورشيد رضا. ومن الواضح أن أفكار هؤلاء الشخصيات الثلاث كانت مصدرا يرجع إليه رواد الحركات الإسلامية التجديدية في الملايو-الأرخبيل.

وموضوع هذا البحث يتركز على عملية انتقال الأفكار التجديدية الإسلامية من خلال حولية التجديد الإسلامي في الشرق الأوسط وهي المنار، إلى الحركات التجديدية الإسلامية في ملايو-الأرخبيل. وفي هذا الإطار يأتي ما يليه من البحث على الأفكار التي روجت لها الحوليتان الرئيسيتان اللتان صارتا منبرا لنشر تجديد الإسلام في ملايو-الأرخبيل وهما الإمام في سينغافوره سنة ١٩٠٦م والمنير في فادانج سومطره الغربية سنة ١٩١١م، وهما، وبالأخص الإمام، حوليتان تقومان - كما يرى بعض الأوساط العلمية - بمتابعة كل شئ في المنار عندما كانت تحت رئاسة تحرير رشيد رضا.

فأما حولية الإمام فقد كان تأثير المنار عليها واضحا في أمرين: أولهما عضوية مجلس التحرير التي يضم معظمها رجالا كانوا يدرسون في الشرق الأوسط. ومن أهم ما تجدر الإشارة إليهم هنا هو الشيخ طاهر جلال الدين المينانجكابوي الأزهري، المحرر الأول للحولية؛ ولد ببوكيت تنجي سنة ١٨٦٩م وكان يدرس في مكة المكرمة لمدة أربعة عشر عاما قبل رحلته إلى القاهرة لدراسة علم الفلك، وفي القاهرة بالذات تمكن من التعرف على أفكار الشيخ محمد عبده، وكون صداقة حميمة مع رشيد رضا، بل عندما رام الأخير إصدار المنار بعث الشيخ طاهر جلال الدين بمقالة لنشرها في الحولية. ويظهر هذا التأثير على الأفكار الإسلامية التي كان موضع عناية الإمام لنشرها، فكما كان عليه حال المنار كانت الإمام تنشر مقالات من شأنها الدعوة إلى الرجوع إلى الكتاب والسنة، وهي دعوة تمثل إحدى المحاور الرئيسية للحركات الإسلامية التجديدية. وعلى نفس المنوال تولي الإمام اهتمامها على محاولة تجديد التعليم سواء في المناهج الدراسية أم في الوضع التأسيسي للمدارس، ويركز بعض المقالات في هذا الصدد على الدعوة إلى ضرورة إدخال العلوم العامة في المناهج الدراسية بجانب العلوم الدينية، وكانت الإمام ترى أن تجديد نظام التعليم يمثل مفتاحا لتقدم الشعوب وبالتحديد تقدم المسلمين في ملايو-الأرخبيل.

ويمكن ملاحظة تأثير المنار أيضا في حولية المنير وهي الحولية الثانية التي تناولها البحث بالعرض، وقد صدرت عقب توقف الإمام عن الصدور، وكان بعض الرجال من جماعة الشبان في مينانجكابوا، هم الذين بادروا بإنشاء المنير، وقد كانوا يعرفون الاتجاهات الإسلامية التجديدية من خلال المنار ويروجون لها، ولهذا كثيرا ما يلاحظون على أنهم من جماعة المنار. ومن هنا فلم يلبث أن توقفت الإمام عن الصدور حتى بادروا بإنشاء حولية جديدة من أجل الاستمرار في ترويج الأفكار التجديدية الإسلامية التي بدأها الإمام. وكان من أهم الرسائل التي تحملها المنير هو بذل الجهود في سبيل تقدم المسلمين في ملايو-الأرخبيل الذين طالت معاناتهم بالرزوح تحت الاستعمار، وكانت تنشر عددا من المقالات التي ترفض التقليد الأعمى، وتشيد بضرورة فتح باب الاجتهاد وبأهمية إنشاء منظمة أو جمعية على الطريقة الحديثة.

The spread and influence of modern Islamic reformism to the Malay-Indonesian world from the early twentieth century has been recognized by many scholars of Malay-Indonesian Islam. In a general way, scholars have identified the influence of such reformist scholars or activists as Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghâni, Muhammad 'Abduh, Rashîd Ridâ, and others in reformist or modernist organizations like the Sarekat Islam, Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, or Jong Islamieten Bond. Little attention, however, has been paid to the channels of the transmission of modernist or reformist ideas from the Middle East, especially Cairo and Mecca, to the Malay-Indonesian world.

There is no doubt that printed media was instrumental means in the transmission of modernist or reformist ideas in the Malay-Indonesian world (Azra, 1995). Within this context, we can appropriately place the reformist journal *al-Manar* which significantly influenced the course of Islamic reformism in the region. This journal not only directly influenced the spread of Islamic reformism through its own articles, but most importantly also stimulated the publication of similar journals printed in the Malay-Indonesian world. This paper is an early attempt to delineate and discuss in a comprehensive manner the transmission of Islamic reformism to the Malay-Indonesian world by means of journals: primarily *al-Imam* in Singapore and *al-Munir* in Padang, West Sumatra, and other journals that were published in the area.

As for journal *al-Manar* itself, brief notes should be made. It has been wellknown that the backbone of *al-Manar* was the reformist scholar, Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ. Deeply influenced by al-Afghâni and 'Abduh, his main mentor, who jointly published the celebrated journal *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*, Ridâ published his own magazine, *al-Manar* ("lighthouse"), which first appeared in 1898 in Cairo as a weekly and, subsequently, as a monthly until his death in 1935. The objectives of *al-Manar* were to articulate and disseminate the ideas of reform and preserve the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. It was Rida himself who edited most of the articles that appeared in *al-Manar*. Therefore, one can rightly argue that *al-Manar* was a personal work of Rida (Shahin, 1995: 412; Jomier, 1991: 360-1).

Al-Manar and the Malay-Indonesian World

Abaza in her fascinating study of Indonesian students in Cairo, has rightly argued that during colonial times Cairo played an important role as the center for publication and circulation of journals and magazines. There was a number of magazines and journals published in Cairo which were circulated in the Malay-Indonesian world. In addition to the jour-

nal *al-Imam* under discussion here, it is also known that the journal *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*, the predecessor of *al-Imam* was also in circulation in the Malay-Indonesian world.

It is important, however, to point out that Cairo also received a number of magazines and journals published in the Malay-Indonesian world. Abaza reports that it is still possible to find in the collection of the Cairo National Library, Dar al-Kutub, Malay-Indonesian magazines and journals such as *al-Iqbal* (Java), *al-Huda* (Singapore), *al-Mir'ah al-Muhammad-iyah* (Yogyakarta), *al-Takhira al-Islamiyyah*, *al-Irshad* (Pekalongan). Considering this, Cairo indeed played a crucial role in the mutual transmission of ideas from one area to another. In fact, Cairo was not only the center for the publication of Arabic literature, but also those of the Malay community.¹

The influence of *al-Manar* in the Malay-Indonesian world can hardly be overestimated. Despite the Dutch efforts to ban it from entering the Archipelago in particular, it was regularly read in various parts of the region. In fact, it has been suggested that *al-Manar* had been reasonably well circulated in the Malay-Indonesian world through a number of means.

The first means was smuggling. It appears that it was very likely that *al-Manar* was mostly smuggled into Indonesia through certain ports where Dutch supervision was lax. Mukti Ali points out that this journal was smuggled into Indonesia, or perhaps more precisely into Java, for instance, via the port of Tuban, East Java, where there was no customs supervision. According to Bluhm-Warn, G.F. Pijper, the adviser of the Dutch Government for Native and Arab affairs, who was also responsible for supervising the spread of Islamic literature in Indonesia, imposed no censorship on the shipment of *al-Manar* to Ahmad Surkati, founder of the *Irshad* movement in Indonesia (cf. Bluhm-Warn, 1997: 296-7).

The second means was by way of certain *hajis* who returned to Indonesia after their pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina where the journal was in wide circulation. It is well-known that from the early history of Islam in the archipelago, especially from the sixteenth century onwards, *haj* pilgrimage had been an effective means of the transmission of not only Islamic ideas from the Middle East, but also of Arabic literature, to the region. Therefore, it is not hard to understand why Snouck Hurgronje, the leading adviser of Dutch colonial government of Islamic affairs, suggested that the Dutch should pay a special supervisory attention to the returning *hajis* (Azra, 1992).

The third means was returning students either from Cairo or Mecca

and Medina. As Roff (1970) shows, the number of Malay-Indonesian students grew significantly in the early 1920's. This increase allowed them to establish organization and publish their own journals, the most prominent of which was the *Seruan Azhar* (Cf. Othman, 1994-95). The *Seruan Azhar* itself, as we will see below, played an important role in the continued Islamic intellectual discourse in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago.

The fourth means is through certain "appointed" agents. This is clear in the case of Sayyid Muhammad ibn Aqil ibn Yahya, one of *al-Imam's* leading associates in Singapore. Rashîd Ridâ mentioned in an obituary of the Sayyid that he took trouble to circulate *al-Manar* in Singapore, Java and all of the Indonesian archipelago [Bluhm-Warn, 1997: 297].

The spread of *al-Manar* was not confined to the Dutch East Indies and the Straits. *Al-Manar* and *al-Imam* also circulated in the Kota Bharu area of Kelantan, Malaysia. As Nik Hassan makes it clear, together with other reformist journals such as *Pengasuh* (firstly issued in 1918 in Kota Bharu), *al-Ikhwân* (firstly issued in 1926 in Pulau Pinang), and *Saudara* (firstly issued in 1928 in Pulau Pinang), it played a crucial role in the spread of Kaum Muda ideas in the Kelantan region. All these journals were among the most important sources of reformist ideas among such 'ulamâ' as Haji Muhammad Yusof bin Muhammad, popularly known as Tok Kenali (1868-1933), Haji Wan Musa bin Haji Abdul Samad (1874-1939), and Haji Ahmad Manam (1834-1938) (Nik Hassan, 1983: 16-7, 27).

It is clear that the influence of *al-Manar* went beyond journals and magazines and reformist organizations. *Al-Manar* even inspired certain writers to write novels containing reformist ideas inspired by the journal. Shaykh al-Hadi, mentioned earlier, for instance, wrote a novel entitled *Farida Hanum* that is set in Cairo in the late 1894. Despite that fact that the novel is fully a fiction, he wished to give some sense of realism and credibility through references to "real people, places, and events. Thus, for instance he mentioned the names of Cairo streets; he also described the Egyptian ruler, Muhammad 'Abduh, the journal *al-Manar*, and even several Egyptian feminists. As Hooker points out, the specific reference to Muhammad 'Abduh and the reformist journal *al-Manar* in the closing pages of the novel, locate the narrative firmly in the context of reformist Islam. (Hooker, 1994: 96-7; cf Roff, 1967: 82-3).

Another novel is the *Hikayat Percintaan Kasih Kemudaan* which was written by Ahmad Kotot (born 1894), an indigenous Malay. This novel has also included the theme of Islamic reformism preached by *al-Manar*. Although the novel was written in a Malay setting, it is distinguished by its reformist Islam underpinning.

Al-Imam: Mouthpiece of Reform (1906-1908)

It is beyond doubt that the Malay publication, *al-Imam* (the leader), was one of the most important channels in the transmission of Islamic reform ideas of *al-Manar* to the Malay-Indonesian world. Roff in his classic study concludes that *al-Imam* in the first place was a radical departure in the field of Malay publications, distinguished from its predecessors both in intellectual stature and intensity of purpose and in its attempt to formulate a coherent philosophy of action for a society faced with the need for rapid social and economic change. He further argues that the range and catholicity of *al-Imam*'s ideas and interests represented incipient movement and growth within almost every facet of Malay life (Roff, 1967: 59, 65).

The fact that *al-Imam* was inspired by and modelled after *al-Manar* has been agreed by many scholars. Roff, for instance, writes that *al-Imam* was a parallel to *al-Manar*; in fact *al-Imam* in many ways closely resembled *al-Manar*. It was from the Egyptian reformist movement that the writers and sponsors of *al-Imam* derived, almost in totality, their reformist ideas. Therefore, like the *al-Imam*, people in the Minangkabau area, as it will be discussed below, the reformist group in Malaya that was responsible for the publication of *al-Imam*, was also known as "*kaum al-Manar*", *al-Manar* faction. An examination of the contents of *al-Manar*, as detailed by Adams (1933), makes clear the extent to which *al-Imam* was modeled on it; and the Malay journal contains abundant references to and excerpts from *al-Manar* (Roff, 1967: 59).

Thus, it is clear that *al-Imam* was one of the most important intellectual vehicles of the reformist Muslims in the Malay-Indonesian world. In addition to being known as "*kaum al-Manar*", this reformist group was also popularly known as "*kaum muda*", the young reformist group, as opposed to "*kaum tua*", the old traditionalist group. The "*kaum muda*", as one might expect, was inspired and influenced by such reformist figures in the Middle East as al-Afghâni, 'Abduh, Rida and the like, and proposed the reform of Islam, while the "*kaum tua*" was the proponent of the established and traditional Islam. The reformist tendencies that were represented by *al-Imam* group can be seen in the brief biographical notes of its editors and publishers below. They were Shaykh Muhammad Tahir bin Jalaluddin al-Minangkabawi al-Azhari, the first editor; Sayyid Shaykh bin Ahmad al-Hadi, a Melaka-born Malay-Arab who was a frequent and pungent contributor; Haji Abbas bin Muhammad Thaha, a Singapore-born Minangkabau, the second editor; and Shaykh Muhammad Salim al-Kalali, an Acehese merchant who was director of

al-Imam during its first two years.²

The most notable, not only among editors of *al-Imam*, but also among the “*kaum muda*” was Shaykh Muhammad Tahir bin Jalaluddin al-Minangkabawi al-Azhari who was born in Kototuo, Bukittinggi, West Sumatra in 1869. His father, Syaikh Muhammad, also called Shaykh Tahir, was a well-known ‘*ulamâ*’ in his area whose father was Shaykh Ahmad Jalaluddin or Tuanku Sami, a judge of the “Paderi” in the Padri Movement in Central Sumatra in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.³ His father died when he was two years old, followed by his mother when he was eight years of age. When he was twelve years old (c. 1881), he was sent to Mecca, where he stayed with his well-known cousin, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi. Ahmad Khatib was known not only as a teacher of many Jawi students in the Holy City, but more importantly as the grand *imam* of the Shafi’i *madhhab* in the Haram Mosque (Roff, 1967: 60-3; Hamzah, 1981: 124-132).

After studying in Mecca for about fourteen years, then early in 1893 he went to Cairo to study *ilmu falaq* (astronomy) at the Azhar School (otherwise known as the University of al-Azhar). It was during his four-year sojourn in Cairo that he was introduced to the teaching of the celebrated reformist Muhammad ‘Abduh. It is also reported that he formed a close relationship with the most brilliant of ‘Abduh’s students, Muhammad Rashîd Ridâ. It is said that, in 1898, when Rida founded *al-Manar*, Muhammad Tahir contributed articles to its columns. If this is true, then he sent his writings to *al-Manar* from Mecca, where he lived and taught from 1887 to 1889. Whatever the case, it is clear that he was profoundly influenced by the reformist ideas current in the “*al-Manar* circle”.

In 1899 Muhammad Tahir returned from Mecca to his homeland in West Sumatra. However, he chose Malaya, instead of Sumatra, to be his domicile, and subsequently, on 28 September of that year, he settled in Kuala Kangsar in the State of Perak where he married a Malay girl. A year later, he was appointed by the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Idris Murshidil Mu’azzam Shah as religious officer, and in August 1904 he was commissioned as a member of the council of the chiefs and religious elders of the state of Perak. Although he chose to settle in Perak, Muhammad Tahir frequently travelled in Riau-Lingga and Sumatra.

In 1903 he was engaged together with his close friend, Sayyid Shaykh bin Ahmad al-Hadi, to accompany a “mission” to Mecca and Cairo, comprising the sons of the Sultan and Raja Muda of Riau. Two years later, 1905, he went to Singapore, where he initially joined his friends to

help organize the pilgrim brokerage in the island, a business he had tried since his latest sojourn in Mecca. It was during his stay in Singapore that he met a number of 'ulamâ' and wealthy people and famous personalities who were knowledgeable, able and willing to work collectively to publish a journal to be known as *al-Imam*, beginning in July 1906 (Hamzah, 1981: 124-7; Roff, 1981:60-1).

It is important to point out that while serving as the editor-in-chief of *al-Imam*, Muhammad Tahir was involved in various other activities. Before and after the First World War, he taught in various institutions, the most important of which was Madrasah al-Mansur in Penang which was established by his friend Sayyid Shaykh bin Ahmad al-Hadi. In 1928 he visited his homeland in Sumatra and was immediately arrested by the Dutch authority for six months on suspicion of being a leftist with communist learnings in his religious teaching.⁴ After a thorough investigation, the Dutch found no evidence supporting their suspicion against him and subsequently he was freed. He then returned to Malaysia and settled in Johor until his death in 1957. Muhammad Tahir wrote several books in both Arabic and Malay dealing with religious matters in general and astronomy in particular.

As Roff argues, Muhammad Tahir seems to have combined both the reformist spirit evident among a section of the Jawi community in Mecca in the 1880s and 1890s and something of the more sophisticated modernism of contemporary religious thought in Cairo. It is also clear that he was profoundly influenced by the Pan-Islamism of al-Afghâni and the reformist ideas of 'Abduh, the ideas that were current in the *al-Manar* circle. Therefore, it is not surprising that he and his friends fashioned *al-Imam* to the image of *al-Manar* (Roff, 1967: 61; Hamzah, 1981: 127).

The second intellectual figure that was closely connected with *al-Imam* was Haji Abbas b. Mohammad Taha, who succeeded Muhammad Tahir as editor when *al-Imam* was reorganized in March 1908. Though he was born in Tanjung Pagar, Singapore (1885), his parents were from the Minangkabau area in West Sumatra. When he was a small boy, he was sent by his parents to Mecca, studying religious knowledge. On returning to Singapore in 1905 he worked mainly as a teacher. In 1906 he published a book on education and its philosophy entitled *Kitab Kesempurnaan Pelajaran* (the Book of Perfection in Education). When *al-Imam* ceased its publication in December 1908, he was appointed as *qadi* for the Tanjung Pagar district, and remained active in the reformist cause. In 1911 he founded and edited a weekly newspaper *Neracha* (the scales), followed in 1913 by a companion monthly journal *Tunas Melayu* (the

Malay seeds). As Roff points out, these two publications were dedicated to the goals elaborated by *al-Imam* in 1906. Concerned with the religious conflict erupted between “*Kaum Muda*” and “*Kaum Tua*”, Haji Abbas urged the formation of a special association for the religious leaders. For that purpose, in 1936 he appealed for the formation of the Persekutuan Ulama Kaum Semenanjung (the pan-Malayan Association of Ulama). In the same year he was appointed as chief *qadi* of Singapore. He was also in close association with Burhanuddin al-Helmi, a politically orientated young reformist activist, who was also of Minangkabau origin. Together they were involved in the debate against “*Kaum Tua*”, from which he was inspired to write a booklet entitled “*Risalah Penting pada Masalah Jilatan Anjing di atas Empat Mazhab*” (An Important Booklet on the Case of being Licked by a Dog according to the Four *Madhhab* of the Sunni) (Roff, 1967: 63-4; Hamzah, 1981: 132-7).

The next pillar of *al-Imam* was Sayyid bin Ahmad al-Hadi (1862-1934). Born in Malacca, his father, Ahmad al-Hadi was of Hadhrami descent, and his mother was a Malay. As a boy he attended for some years a well-known *madrasah* in Kuala Trengganu. When he was fourteen years old, he was taken by his father to Pulau Penyengat, Riau, where his father had connections with the royal house. There he was adopted by Raja Ali Kelana bin Raja Ahmad, half brother of the Sultan and also Raja Muda (heir apparent), and brought up with the royal children.⁵

As a young man, Sayyid Shaykh was put in charge of the *rumah wakaf*, the hostel in which travelers were accommodated while visiting the court. Here he had the opportunity to meet in terms of familiarity, with many noted *alim* (the learned) and to further his own religious knowledge and interests through discussion and debates. In the early 1890s he assisted the formation of the Persekutuan Rushdiyyah, a study club similar to those set up in Singapore at about the same time, and took an active interest in its activities (Roff, 1967: 63-4; Hamzah, 1981: 137-42).⁶

His close association with the court circle can be seen from the fact that on more than one occasion he accompanied the sons of the Sultan and Raja Muda on the pilgrimage to Mecca, Egypt and Levant, travelled in 1903 with Muhammad Tahir with whom he had already forged a close friendship. Perhaps because of these visits, he was reported to have studied in Mecca. But, as Roff points out, it is unlikely that Sayyid Shaykh received much formal religious education during these visits. There is no doubt, however, that he became familiar, probably through the influence of Muhammad Tahir, with the ideas current in the metropolitan centers of Islam during this time in the Middle East.

During this period Sayyid Shaykh had already been living in Singapore; that was precisely in the beginning of 1901, when he was appointed by his adoptive father, Raja Ali Kelana, initially as agent and then as manager of his brickworks company. In 1906, he took a leading role in the establishment of *al-Imam*, and gradually became a prominent figure in the Malay-Muslim community. And in 1909 he moved to Johor Baru. Even though he was not an '*ulamâ*' of the calibre of Muhammad Tahir, he was a very able mind eminently suited the polemicist and propagandist role in which he casted himself. In the course of his long and varied career he was known as *shâri'ah* lawyer, educator, merchant, and publisher; however, he is best remembered today in journalism and literature, as indicated earlier.

It is important to note in passing that Sayyid Shaykh's connection with the Riau court and intellectual circles had contributed to *al-Imam*'s special importance in the Riau region as is also argued by Andaya (1977: 139-40). According to Andaya, the fidelity with which *al-Imam* relayed Arabic opinion on a variety of issues assured it a high standing in the Riau court, where it was read by the Sultan himself. The interest of the *Penyengat* princes in *al-Imam* was also stimulated by the fact that some of those princes, notably Raja Hitam and Raja Ali, became active contributors of the journal, besides they were personally acquainted to the editors. In addition to Sayyid Shaykh's special position above, Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin travelled many times to the area giving advice and religious instruction. Thus, Andaya concludes, the relationship between the founders of *al-Imam* and the Riau court meant that, as Snouck Hurgonje remarked, the journal was a "suitable place for [Raja Ali and his advisers] to publish their desires and grievances". And *al-Imam*, subscribing to pan-Islamism, responded accordingly to their grievances, as will be discussed below.

The next pillar of *al-Imam* was Syaikh Muhammad Salim al-Kalali who was its first managing director. Though only very little information is available regarding Muhammad Salim al-Kalali, it is known that he was an Acehnese of Hadrami descent, and that he was a generous merchant residing in Singapore. Despite his epithet as a "shaykh", Roff assumes that his importance to *al-Imam* was less as a scholar or writer than as a businessman, though several major articles are attributed to him such as "*al-Ummah wa al-Watan*" which was in fact written by certain Muhammad Murtaji (Roff, 1967: 64; Hamzah, 1981: 120-1).

The last figure closely associated to *al-Imam* was Shaykh Sayyid Muhammad b. 'Aqil. When the management of *al-Imam* was commercially reorganized in March 1908, which resulted in the establishment of the

al-Imam Printing Company Ltd., Sayyid Muhammad 'Aqil was chosen and appointed the Company Director (*mudir*). Little is known about him. But he acquired a certain public fame beyond the Malay-Muslim community when he was put on trial with two others in 1908 for the murder of Sayyid 'Abd al-Qadir al-Sagoff, another leading Singaporean Hadrami. Though the trial ended inconclusively, Sayyid Muhammad b. 'Aqil was subsequently cleared of all blame when it was discovered that a principal witness for the prosecution had committed systematic perjury. Later, an important study found that he had a strong tendency of being a Shii'ite (Roff, 1967: 64; Hamzah, 1981: 123-4; Ende, 1973).⁷

What was the content of *al-Imam*? For the purpose of this paper it is worthy to cite Roff (1967: 56-7) who has delineated the concern of *al-Imam*. *Al-Imam*'s first concern was with religion and not directly with social, even less with political, change. At the same time this distinction between religious and social-political aspects would have been in some measure foreign to the editors and writers of the journal, who shared the traditional Islamic concept of the undifferentiated *ummah* (Islamic community) in which spiritual, social, and political well-being and ends are subsumed under the one head—the good and profitable life lived according to Divine Laws.

With this in mind, it is not surprising to find that the attention of the editors and writers was paid in the first place to the state of Malay society. According to Roff, almost all of the thirty-one issues of the journal contain at least one article, and often more, analyzing the ills of the community. In self criticism and condemnation, *al-Imam* reveals the backwardness of the Malays, their domination by alien races, their laziness, their complacency, their bickering among themselves, and their inability to cooperate for the common good.

In *al-Imam*'s analysis, the root cause of the decline of the Muslim peoples from their past glory is that they have ceased, in their ignorance, to follow the commands of God as expressed through the mouth and the life of His Prophet Muhammad. As an instrument for discovering and understanding the Divine Law, man has been gifted with *akal* (reason), an intelligence which is incumbent upon him to use and to develop. Islam is not, writes *al-Imam*, as its detractors allege, hostile to knowledge and progress as exemplified by the West. On the contrary, "a proper understanding of and submission to the law and spirit of Islam is our only means of competing successfully with those who know rule and lead us" (cited in Roff, 1967: 56).

Following its diagnosis, *al-Imam* goes on to exhort certain group of

people to take necessary action. It urges the rulers and traditional leaders to form associations to foster education, economic development, and self awareness. It also urges the 'ulamâ' to cleanse Islam that had been adulterated by impurities of customs and belief derived from *adat* and from other religions. According to the journal, the 'ulamâ' who transmit impure Islam should be brought to a sense of their errors and obligations. For this purpose, *al-Imam* put a strong emphasis on the need, for its readers, to return to the Qur'ân and *hadith*, and to practise *ijtihad* (independent reasoning and judgement) rather than *taklid buta* (blind acceptance of intermediary authority).

Al-Imam pays attention not only to socio-religious matters, but also to political issues. One of the pet issues taken up by *al-Imam* relates to pan-Islamism. This is of course not surprising, since its intellectual genealogy was *al-Manar* and also *al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*, both of which related closely to Jamal al-Din al-Afghâni, one of the most important pioneers of pan-Islamism.

Thus, when the issue of "Caliphate" was brought forward by the Turkish Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid, *al-Imam* also took it up enthusiastically. Right from the very beginning of its existence, *al-Imam* printed news on Turkey in the same breath as news on Japan. Under the heading "Turkey and Japan", *al-Imam* discussed the proposed Congress of Religion to be held in Tokyo. It is reported that Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid had sent telegrams to the Emperor of Japan, and that he had dispatched three special envoys to Japan in order to attend the Congress (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 23 July, 1906; Roff, 1967, repr. 1994: 59-9; Othman, 1996: 101-2).⁸

To further the Caliphate cause, *al-Imam* listed some achievements of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid. According to the journal it is important to inform anxious readers on the latest news on Turkey. *Al-Imam*, thus, described Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid military build up which indicated the power of the Empire. It also gave detailed accounts of the capability of a Turkish warship complete with its tonnage, armour and speed "for those who like to read it" (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 21 August, 1906: 63; Othman, 1996: 102).

Despite this seemingly powerful Turkish army, *al-Imam*, however, reminded the Ottomans to continue their effort to improve their military strength, since this Empire was surrounded by mighty enemies. *Al-Imam* was convinced that only with modernization of its army, the Ottoman would be in par with other European powers. Again, *al-Imam* expected that the readers would be happy with its news and accounts of the Ottoman military development (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 16 January, 1907, 211; Othman, 1996: 102).

Al-Imam's attachment to the Caliphate question appears to have led it to praise Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid lavishly. In its reports, *al-Imam* describes the Sultan as a caring ruler whose main concern was the rebuilding of the Empire's infrastructure by building schools, railways and other means of communication. According to *al-Imam*, the noble efforts of the Sultan were challenged by the formidable West. Facing this challenge, the journal hoped that the Turks would be more resilient and prayed that they would be protected until doomsday (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 9, 16 March, 1907, 281-4; Othman, 1996: 102).

It is strange, perhaps, that the editors of *al-Imam* were not aware that the Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid had been a subject of strong criticism by other political elites both in Turkey and in the Middle East. *Al-Imam* in an innocent way believed that Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid was sincere in his efforts to revitalize the old Ottoman Empire. It asserted that there was no Islamic government that existed other than the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, *al-Imam* deplored unfavorable reports about the Empire exposed by the Western press which, it believed, were part of the conspiracy to undermine her (*al-Imam*, Vol. 2, No. 5, 7 November, 1907: 101-2; Othman, 1996: 102). Based on reports in the Malay journal, *Neracha* (1911-1915), according to Othman, *al-Imam*, however, changed its attitude when Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid was deposed from the throne by the Young Turks in 1908. The journal now shifted its admiration and favorable support to the Young Turks and viewed them as the patron of Islam (Othman, 1996: 103).

As indicated above, in connection with the biography of Sayyid Shaykh, *al-Imam* pays special attention to the destiny of Riau court under the encroachment of the Dutch. First, in an editorial published in September 1906, *al-Imam* pondered the fate of those countries which had lost their independence and of nothing remained except "a collection of texts and stories" (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 19 September 1906: 77; cf. Andaya, 1977: 140). Furthermore, as Andaya argues, a number of *al-Imam's* articles clearly reflected the resentment felt on Riau towards the changes in court protocol introduced by the colonial government, and above all the abolition of the Yamtuan Muda post, Tengku Osman, the Sultan's eldest son and Raja Ali's son-in-law and protege, who had been at school in Cairo during the crisis over the 1905 Treaty, and returned in 1906. In its November issue, *al-Imam* published verbatim a speech he made to the Rushdiyyah Club. "I think, sirs," he said, "You must all be very worried and sad to see what has recently occurred in our beloved homeland" (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 17 November 1906: 77). Not only

that, *al-Imam* also published an article by Sayyid Shaykh which inveighed against the foreigners for placing the Eastern peoples under slavery, for their duplicity and disrespect to Eastern rulers, and for closing the doors to knowledge (*al-Imam*, Vol. 1, No. 6, 18 December 1906: 170-2).

How influential was *al-Imam*? To answer this question, in the first place one may look at its circulation. Roff admits that though its subscribers may have been few in number, *al-Imam* also came into the hands of religious teachers, particularly those in the new style *madrrasah* (modern religious schools). For them *al-Imam* was an inalienable source in order to deal with such diverse and controversial questions as the validity of certain *hadith*, payment for burial prayers, certain practices associated with *tarekat* like the Naqshabandiyah, the wearing of European clothing, and interest on savings bank loans. Roff concludes that though there is no clear evidence about the size and nature of its audience, there is little doubt that a majority of its readers came from the intellectually and socially more sophisticated element of the towns and from those religiously educated group who had received some introduction to Muslim polemics in Mecca (Roff, 1967: 66, 64).

It is important to note that *al-Imam* also had representatives (*wakil*) for most parts of the Malay states, and that some of the most cogent contributions came from Malay correspondents in Johor, Perak, and Pahang. Though perhaps the bulk of its readership was within the British Malaya, there is no doubt that *al-Imam* was also in circulation in other parts of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. In fact, a high proportion of its correspondence came from the Netherlands East Indies, particularly Sumatra. It is well-known that Shaykh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, the founder of the journal, sent copies to his friends and pupils in Minangkabau. As a result, as Hamka testifies, *al-Imam* exercised considerable influence on reformist thought and led directly to the establishment in 1911 of a similar journal, *al-Munir* (Roff, 1967: 66-7; cf. Hamka, 1950: 48).

As Daya points out, *al-Imam* for the Minangkabau Muslims was a source of pride; it was established by one of their best-known '*ulamâ*'. Therefore, there was an intense correspondence between certain Minangkabau '*ulamâ*' at home with Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin. Furthermore the travel back and forth of Minangkabau *perantau* (migrants) who brought *al-Imam* with them, Daya argues, practically made *al-Imam* a possession of Minangkabau Malays. There were a good number of agents, subscribers, and correspondents of *al-Imam* in this area; and a number of articles written by Minangkabau '*ulamâ*' were also published in *al-Imam*. All persons related to *al-Imam* in one way or another were collectively called

"kaum *al-Manar*" (the *al-Manar* group): It is not surprising therefore, when *al-Imam* ceased its publication, that its passing was lamented by Minangkabau reformist '*ulamâ*'; and this led to the increasing need for publication of their own journal, *al-Munir* (Daya, 1995: 118-19).

It is clear that the impact of *al-Imam* was not confined to the rise of new similar journals in the Malay-Indonesian world. As Roff points out, it is in fact in the field of the new education that the immediate impact of the reformist group may be most clearly seen, especially in its encouragement of establishing new kind of *madrasahs* (religious schools) which were of a more ambitious and elaborate kind than had hitherto existed. *Al-Imam* had also encouraged the formulation of a system of education which, ideally, would take into account the need not only for a purified Islam but also for modern secular knowledge (Roff, 1967: 66). Thus what *al-Imam* basically proposed was a reformed system of religious education in which, upon a sound basis of doctrinal instruction, Arabic, English and modern educational subjects would be taught.

Al-Imam did pay a lot of attention to matters regarding education. In fact, *al-Imam* seems to have specific educational aims. There are at least five *al-Imam*'s educational aims; first, to convince the Muslim community that knowledge is the first thing enjoined by God in the Holy Qur'ân, and that the Qur'ân contains all knowledge that is necessary for human progress [*al-Imam*, Vol. 2, No. 12, 4 June 1908: 279; Vol. 2, No. 3, 9 September 1907: 84-9; Vol. 1, no. 1, 23 July 1906: 1-6]; second, to introduce a new system of education based on the Qur'ânic doctrine [*al-Imam*, Vol. 2, No. 11, 3 May 1908: 338]; third, to establish educational institutions with a sound curriculum and syllabus [*al-Imam*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 29 August 1908: 104]; fourth, to encourage and assist Muslim youths to advance their studies abroad [*al-Imam*, Vol. 2, No. 10, 3 April 1908: 356]; fifth, to urge the rulers, traditional chieftains, and knowledgeable '*ulamâ*' to give special considerations and to take immediate actions to enhance the system of Islamic education in the country [*al-Imam*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 9 September 1907: 84-9; cf. Hamzah, 1981: 57].

There are also numerous other exhortations on education ranging from the benefit of education, types of education, and danger of ignorance, to suggestion to parents not to allow their children to sleep during the day time. And thus, the concern of *al-Imam* was indeed wide-ranging. Furthermore, *al-Imam* was interested not only in the ideas, but also in the establishment of institutions that would support the spread and maintenance of its ideas. The most important of the institution that *al-Imam* helped to establish was the Madrasah al-Iqbal al-Islamiyyah, founded

in Singapore in 1908. Run by an Egyptian, 'Uthman Effendi Raffat, this *madrasah* borrowed much from modernism in Egypt and the West. Undoubtedly, it was the forerunner of many other *madrasah* organized along similar lines throughout the Malay Peninsula and other parts of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago during the next few years.

Al-Munir (1911-1916): The Kaum Muda Reformism

When *al-Imam* ceased publication, undoubtedly the Kaum Muda, especially in Sumatra, felt that they had lost their important mouthpiece. They sought to publish a new journal that could succeed it. The initiative was finally taken by prominent leaders of Kaum Muda in West Sumatra, by founding the journal *al-Munir* (Illuminative). Taking into account its intellectual genealogy, as Adam (1995: 140) points out, it was only natural that *al-Munir* should take over the role of *al-Imam* in spreading Kaum Muda teachings and countering all enemies of Islam.

According to Yunus, *al-Munir* was the first Islamic journal that began to be published in Padang in 1 Rabi' al-Akhir 1329AH/1 April 1911CE. *Al-Munir*, however, did not last long; it ceased its publication in 1916 because, according to Yunus, its printing press was burned down (Yunus, 1996 [orig. publ. 1957]); 79; Yunus 1971: 48).

The founder of *al-Munir* was Haji Abdullah Ahmad, one of the most important scions of Islamic reformism in the Minangkabau area in the early twentieth century. Before providing his brief biography, it is important to point out that Abdullah Ahmad's idea to publish a journal similar to *al-Imam* came to his mind during his visit to Singapore in 1908. It was in this occasion that he learned about the things related to the journal publication, management and editorship. In addition, he also took opportunity to gain insights from *al-Imam*'s experience to establish the Madrasah Iqbal al-Islamiyyah (Noer, 1973:39). And as soon as he returned, he established his well-known school, "Sekolah Diniyyah al-Islamiyyah" (*al-Munir*, V, 5, 1915:68; cf. Syahrudin, 1986). In the case of *al-Munir*, however, it was only three years later that he established this journal.

Most scholars are in agreement that Abdullah Ahmad was the sole pioneer of *al-Munir*. Yunus suggests that the name of Abdullah was identical with *al-Munir*; so that he was even called H. Abdullah al-Munir (Yunus, 1996: 157). Though their statements were different, Hamka (1958), Alfian (1989: 108), and Djaja (1966: II, 700) agreed that it was Abdullah Ahmad who took the initiative to publish *al-Munir*. Benda, however, asserts that in addition to Abdullah Ahmad, Abdul Karim

Amrullah was also an initiator of *al-Munir* (Benda 1984: 189). But this assertion is not confirmed by any source. In its first issue, Abdul Karim Amrullah was stated as a contributor in Maninjau. Furthermore, there is no single writing of his in this first issue; most of the writings were of Abdullah Ahmad (Ali, 1997: 26). In addition, Hamka, the son of Abdul Karim Amrullah, points out that "his father moved from Maninjau to Padang in early 1912 to help Abdullah Ahmad in his school, since the latter was already very busy with it" (Hamka, 1974: I, 14).

This problem came about because *al-Munir* made no mention of the name of persons who were involved in its management in every issue; their names appeared only in its annual collection. The complete management of *al-Munir* is as the following: Editor, Abdullah Ahmad of Adabiyah School; business manager, H. Marah Muhammad b. Abdul Hamid; publisher, H. Sutan Jamaluddin Abubakar; correspondents (and contributors), H. Abdul Karim Amrullah (Danau Maninjau), Muhammad Dahlan Sutan Lembak Tuah (Padang), H. Muhammad Thaib Umar (Batusangkar), and Sutan Muhammad Sali (Kotogadang). In addition, there were a number of younger '*ulamâ*' who were also involved as regular writers of *al-Munir* such as H. Muhammad Jamil Jambek, H. Ibrahim Musa, H. Abas Abdullah and Zainuddin Labai al-Junusi.⁹

Born in Padang Panjang in 1878, Haji Abdullah Ahmad hailed from an '*ulamâ*' family; his father, Haji Ahmad was an '*ulamâ*' and textile trader. After finishing his elementary education, he travelled to Mecca in 1899 where he studied with Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, a leading Jawi '*ulamâ*' in the Holy City at the time. He returned to Indonesia in 1905 and devoted himself to teaching and *dakwah* (preaching) activities in Padang Panjang. Here he began to establish himself as an ardent reformist by opposing *bid'ah* (unwarranted innovations) and *khurafat* (delusions). About 1906 he moved to Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra, to succeed his uncle as a teacher. Later he established the Jama'ah Adabiyah, the original seed of his school that he subsequently founded. With the financial support of Muslim traders, he founded the Adabiyah Diniyyah School in 1909 (Noer, 1973: 38-9; Latif et. al., 1981: 107-11).

It is clear that Abdullah Ahmad made use of the Adabiyah institution (Jami'ah Adabiyah) as the organization that was responsible for the publication of *al-Munir*. As for the Jami'ah Adabiyah itself, it consisted mostly of traders who were the backbones of the Adabiyah activities, including the publication of *al-Munir* (*al-Munir*, I, 1, 1911:1; Noer, 1973: 38-9). *Al-Munir* was published fortnightly, using Malay language with Arabic characters. Most of the issues consisted of 16 pages. From its very first edi-

tion, *al-Munir* proclaims itself as “the journal of Islamic religion, knowledge, and information” (*Majalah Islam, Pengetahuan dan Perkhabaran*).

What was the mission of *al-Munir*? In the first issue, the editors explained the meaning of *al-Munir* itself. In the first place, “*al-Munir*” meant “candle” or something that illuminated the environment. Within the context of this meaning, in the second place, *al-Munir* wished to be a beacon of the Muslim *ummah* in the Netherlands East Indies who had been suppressed by the Dutch. In a more detailed way, editors of *al-Munir* explicated the goals of the journal. First, to lead and bring the Muslim *ummah* to progress based on Islamic injunctions; second to nurture peace among nations and human beings; and third to illuminate the Muslim *ummah* with knowledge and wisdom (*al-Munir* I, 1, 1911:1).

It is important to note in its explanation of the function of Islamic journal, *al-Munir* pointed out that [the Islamic journal] was like a teacher who gave to its readers guidance in the right path; reminded them of [their “wrongdoings”] in the past; consoles those in grief; helped those suffered from misery; awakened them [to virtues]; and sharpened their reasons. As Ali writes, this explanation is a reminiscence of *al-Imam*’s ideas. And this is an indication that *al-Munir* was eager to continue the mission of *al-Imam* (Ali, 1997: 53).

The publication of *al-Munir* was warmly welcomed by many readers as shown by a number of letters from readers congratulating it. For example a letter from Sayyid Hasyim b. Thahir was sent from Palembang. The letter, in addition to congratulating the editors for their noble efforts, expected them to manage the journal in wise way and continually provided balanced information to all segments of Muslim society (*al-Munir* I, 2: advertisement page). *Al-Munir* got not only favorable response but negative reaction as well. For example, *al-Munir* made a mention of an unidentified “trouble maker” (*tukang kacau*). It is likely that the “trouble maker” was among the Kaum Tua who opposed the Kaum Muda as represented by *al-Munir*. But the reason behind the criticism appeared to be more deeply rooted. Tamar Djaja argues that criticism of *al-Munir* might have existed because the journal itself as media was at the time considered as a *bid’ah* (unwarranted innovation). These critics, evidently believed that preaching through media was a Western innovations; and thus, adopting these Western ways was heretical (Djaja, 1966, II: 701).

Al-Munir’s spirit of reform was clear in its insistence on the importance of organization as a vehicle to further the Muslim *ummah*. Again, “organization” was a new means for Muslims to further their cause; and this concept was adopted from Europe. According to *al-Munir*, organization

or association was an institution for channeling the spirit of reform, encouraging enterprising vigor and enhancing the nobility of knowledge (*kemuliaan ilmu*). It was a place to cultivate [brotherhood] among mankind and nations (*al-Munir*, 2, No. 1, May, 1912).

Like *al-Manar* and *al-Imam*, *al-Munir* was radical in its religious orientation. It published articles on subjects had hitherto been considered taboo by the Kaum Tua on the basis of the traditional *fiqh*. For instance, wearing neckties and hats, and taking photographs, which had been considered *haram* (unlawful, forbidden) by the Kaum Tua, were openly discussed in *al-Munir*; it informed its readers that such things had never been forbidden by the Qur'ân and hadith. *Al-Munir* also taught that the Friday *khutbah* (sermon before prayers) could be delivered in language that the congregation could understand.

Furthermore, according to *al-Munir*, Muslims should not blindly follow (*taqlîd*) certain Islamic legal school. Since, it insisted, that for instance the Shafi'ite school of law, that was (and still is) adhered to by most Indonesian Muslims, was not the only valid interpretation of Islamic legal precepts. Even, the Shâfi'i madhhab might draw upon the three other Sunni legal traditions, the Hanafi, Mâlîki, and Hambalî schools of Islamic legal thought. *Al-Munir*, as one might expect, emphasized that Muslims should develop *ijtihad*, independent legal reasoning by returning directly to the original sources of Islam, that were al-Qur'ân and the Prophetic *hadith*. The journal refused the well known assertion among many Muslims that the "gate of *ijtihad*" had been closed (Ali, 1997: 271-9; Yunus, 1971: 47; Adam, 1995: 140).

Al-Munir's reformism was also clear in its views of theological matters. As pointed out above, *al-Munir* oriented itself towards the purification of Islamic belief from any manifestation that it regarded as having no basis in the Qur'ân and *hadith*. There were some aspects of theological matters that became subjects of *al-Munir's* purification. Firstly, purification of the use of the Qur'ânic verses. *Al-Munir* objected the use of the Qur'ânic verses for magical purposes, for this run contradiction to the real function of the Holy Book (*al-Munir*, II, 3, 1912: 35). Second, purification of Islam from any belief that considered certain thing as having spiritual power (dynamism). *Al-Munir* believed that this kind of belief was some sort of "associationism" (*shirk*) (*al-Munir*, I, 6, 1911: 52-3). Third, purification of Islam from certain aspect of theoretical Sufism such as the concept of "*Nur Muhammad*" (the Light is Muhammad). According to *al-Munir* this concept had nothing to do with the Prophet Muhammad (*al-Munir*, I, 12, 1911: 157). Fourthly, purification of Islam

from eschatological belief such as the belief to the coming of the Mahdi to save Muslims and the world from Dajjal. *Al-Munir* was of the opinion that *hadiths* which were used to be the basis of this belief were *dâ'if* (weak) *hadith* (*al-Munir*, IV, 4, 1914: 58-6; cf. Ali, 1997: 270-1).

Despite its critical attitude in religious and theological matters, *al-Munir's* attitude to political matters, especially concerning the legitimacy of Dutch colonial government, was perhaps quite surprising. Basically, *al-Munir* accepted the government of the unbeliever Dutch. Based on this framework, *al-Munir* tried to develop the politics of cooperation with the colonial government. The reason for the acceptance and cooperation was that the Dutch had done good service for the Muslims, creating not only public order, but also allowing Muslims to carry out their religious duties. For *al-Munir*, politics was not a religious duty (cf. *al-Munir* II, 9: 1912: 131) and, by implication, the journal was in accord with the idea of separation between religion and politics. Whether *al-Munir* realizes that the idea was indeed "secularization" that can lead to secularism, is hard to ascertain. Apart from that, the idea that was subscribed to by *al-Munir* is a controversial issue among Muslims until today; the following idea of *al-Munir* related to politics is even more controversial.

What is clear is that *al-Munir* was criticized by a reader. In a letter that was published in *al-Munir* (II, 16, 1912: 248), the writer critically questioned *al-Munir's* acceptance of the rule of foreign and unbelieving people. While at the same time, Muslims were ordered by God to elect their own leader, and wage wars against the unbelievers. In response to this letter, *al-Munir* explained that God did not care about who ruled the Muslims, regardless their religion and race, as long as they were able to establish a good governance. According to *al-Munir*, since Muslims were not yet able to govern, whereas the Dutch had shown themselves able to govern in a good manner, they could be accepted. *Al-Munir* did not agree either that Muslims should wage the wars against unbelievers. *Al-Munir* confirmed that Muslims were obliged to launch *jihad*, but that was allowed only to hostile unbelievers, not to those who had done a good service to Muslims (*al-Munir* II, 19, 1912: 297).

Considering *al-Munir's* political views above, it is not surprising that when discussing "*al-watan*" (motherland), the journal regarded it as purely religious and social matters. The idea of *al-watan* to *al-Munir* was important to improve unity among Muslims; so that they were not fanatical of their own village or ethnicity (*al-Munir*, I, 15, 16, 17: 1911; cf. Ali 1997: 229-41). To *al-Munir*, "*al-watan*" (or *wataniyyah*) had nothing to do with nationalism that began to gain momentum among Muslims elsewhere.

For the purpose of this paper, it is not necessary to delineate and discuss *al-Munir*'s complete perspectives on various issues. What have been disclosed above is perhaps sufficient to show *al-Munir*'s reformism. As has been mentioned earlier, *al-Munir* ceased its publication in 1916. But *al-Munir*'s influence went beyond its relatively short life. Before long, Zainuddin Labay el-Yunusi published in Padangpanjang *al-Munir al-Manar* the very name of which reflected the continuing reformist spirit of *al-Munir*. In addition, there was a great number of other journals published in various cities in West Sumatra that aimed at spreading the reformism of Kaum Muda.¹⁰ In the final analysis, all of these journals contributed significantly to the rise of West Sumatra as one of the strongest bastions of Islamic reformism in the whole Malay-Indonesian world.

Conclusion

It is hard to ascertain which came earlier reformist magazines and journals or *Salafi*-oriented organizations. It seems that in the case of Indonesia, the appearance of these reformist journals and magazines took place almost at same time with the rise of *Salafi* organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam etc. The publication of magazines and journals had only stimulated further expansion of *Salafi* organizations in Indonesia. As a result, *Salafi* oriented organization had strong ideological support that contributed to their ever increasing influence in Indonesian Muslim society.

In the case of the Malay Peninsula, however, the spread of reformist journals and magazines seems to have limited impact only on the expansion of *Salafi* ideas. Even though the publication of *al-Imam* preceded *al-Munir*, the reformist organizations did not ever implant very deep roots in the Malay society in general. It took a very long time for Islamic reformism to gain momentum in the Malay society, due in part to the domination of states in both Islamic institutions and interpretation of Islam; most Malaysian Muslims still hold fast to what in Indonesia is called "Islamic traditionalism". It is only in the late seventies, that Islamic reformism began to get a stronger hold in Malaysia.

Notes:

1. It seems that initially a certain number of works by early Malay-Indonesian leading scholars such as al-Raniri, al-Sinkili, al-Makassari, Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, al-Palimbani were printed in Istanbul. Subsequently, their works were also printed in Cairo, and in Mecca and Medina.
2. In the case of the Malay Peninsula, Roff has discussed debates and conflicts that took place among the "kaum muda" and "kaum tua", see Roff, 1967: 56-90. As for Indonesia's case, see, for instance, Noer, 1973; Abdullah, 1971; Daya, 1995.
3. For further accounts on the Padri Movement, see, for instance, Christine Dobbin, 1983, *Islamic Revivalism in Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra 1784-1847*, London: Curzon Press.
4. During this time, in West Sumatra Communist unrest did arise. For further account, see, for instance, Abdullah, 1971; Benda & Mcvey, 1960.
5. Pulau Penyengat, which already had a reputation as a center of Malay learning, largely as a result of the literary works of Raja Ali Haji b. Raja Ahmad and other members of his family, was at this time a place of frequent recourse for itinerant religious scholars. Further, see, Roff, 167: 44-6; Winstedt, 1958; Tan, 1961.
6. It is important to note that most of the Bugis princes in the area joined this Rushdiyyah Club and among its prominent leaders was Raja Ali Haji's own son, Raja Khalid Hassan, better known as Raja Hitam who militantly opposed the presence of the Dutch in Riau. Further on this, see, Andaya, 1977.
7. Further account of the case of Sayyid Muhammad b. 'Aqil, see, Roff, 1997.
8. The Caliphate question was of course a big issue in Indonesia. Further on this, see, van Bruinessen, 1995.
9. A brief account of the lives of these 'ulamā', see, Yunus, 1996: 141-68; Latif, et al, 1981; Noer, 1973: 35-42.
10. For a complete list of the names of the journals, see, Daya 1995: 121-2; Adam 1995.

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