



**ABDULLAH BIN NUH'S CRITIQUE OF MODERN
IDEOLOGIES**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This present research is an attempt to explicate Abdullah bin Nuh's critique on development of modern ideologies particularly in Indonesia after its independence. The development of modern ideologies particularly materialism, Marxism, and communism have become a matter of alarming since the early 20th century in Muslim world through colonization and imperialism. Indonesia as the one of the world's largest Muslim population in the world did not miss on globalization of modern ideologies. Basically, Indonesia based on the Eastern and Islamic values, but after Western colonization, colonizers began to apply their ideologies in Indonesia through imperialism. As the result, clash has occurred between local ideologies and western ideologies through high tension in the forming of basic principle of state and governance system. Abdullah bin Nuh was one of the Indonesian scholars who are concerned with the affairs of Muslim in general and Indonesian Muslim in particular his responds and critiques to modern ideologies. This study attempts at examining Abdullah bin Nuh's views in materialism, Marxism, and communism and his critiques of those modern ideologies. The approach of this study is based on textual analysis, using descriptive and analytical methods from various works of the subject under study. It seeks to discover several aspects of Abdullah bin Nuh's thought of modern ideologies as well as Islamic thought such as the in coherent relationship of materialism and Marxism, Marxism and communism, with Islamic worldview and perspective. This study concludes that Abdullah bin Nuh devoted his live to counter modern ideologies which were developed in Indonesia with presenting the understanding of those ideologies and its detrimental to social live in Indonesia. He also asserted Marxism and communism are misled ideology based on materialism which have difference culture and values with Eastern Muslim countries particularly Indonesia. His noble struggle was successful for he end up with the foundation of Islamic Research Institute as the centre of Occidentalism studies.

خلاصة البحث

هذا البحث محاولة لبيان نقد عبد الله بن نوح عن تطوير الأيديولوجية الحديثة في إندونيسيا بعد استقلالها. منذ أوائل القرن العشرين حينما تطورت الأيديولوجية الحديثة خاصة فكرة المادية، والماركسية، والشيوعية وأصبحت مثيرة للقلق في العالم الإسلامي من خلال الاستعمار. إندونيسيا بوصفها واحدة بها أكبر عدد من المسلمين في العالم لا تخرج عن عوملة الأيديولوجية الحديثة. أساساً، إندونيسيا بنيت على أساس القيم الشرقية والحضارة أو الثقافة الإسلامية، ولكن من خلال الاستعمار، بدأ بتطبيق أيديولوجيتهم في إندونيسيا. نتيجة لهذا، حدث اشتباك بين الأيديولوجية الحديثة أو الغربية من خلال التوتر الشديد في تشكيل المبدأ الأساسي لنظام الدولة والحكم في إندونيسيا. وكان عبد الله بن نوح واحداً من العلماء الإندونيسيين الذين انتقدوا الأيديولوجيات الحديثة. تحاول هذه الدراسة دراسة وجهات نظر عبد الله بن نوح في المادية، والماركسية، والشيوعية ومنتقديه من تلك الأيديولوجيات الحديثة. أما منهج هذه الدراسة فيقوم على تحليل النصوص باستخدام المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي لموضوع الدراسة، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى اكتشاف الجوانب العديدة من أفكار عبد الله بن نوح في الأيديولوجيات الحديثة، فضلاً عن الفكر الإسلامي كعلاقة المادية والماركسية، وكذلك الماركسية والشيوعية، مع وجهة النظر الإسلامية. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن عبد الله بن نوح كرس حياته لمواجهة الأيديولوجيات الحديثة التي تمّ تطويرها في إندونيسيا مع تقديم فهم لتلك الأيديولوجيات الحديثة وأنها تضر بالحياة الاجتماعية في إندونيسيا. وأكد أيضاً، أن الماركسية والشيوعية تضليل للأيديولوجية حيث تقوم على المادية، وأنها تختلف مع ثقافة وقيم دول المسلمة في الشرق خاصة إندونيسيا. وقد نجح عبد الله بن نوح في مجابهة هذا مع تأسيس معهد البحوث الإسلامية كمركز لدراسات الاستغراب.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage (Uşûl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion).

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Fatimah Abdullah
Supervisor

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Dean, Kulliyah of Islamic
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGOUND OF THE STUDY

Before 1945, some parts of Indonesia had been ruled by the colonialists and imperialists for 300 years, others for less or more.¹ During this time, Indonesians were living under pressure due to the pressure of capitalism and imperialism exerted by colonialists in particular the Dutch.² Approximately 90% of Indonesians are Muslims. As a religion, Islam was viewed primarily as the greatest danger to the European colonizers. The encounter between Dutch Christians and Indonesian Muslims has gone through several stages based on the spirit of nationalism. Then the Dutch established various patterns of colonial rule in order to patronize the Indonesian Muslims' activities starting from restricting Muslims; participation in trade to secularization and missionary, particularly through the education system to spread Western ideology.³

In the education sphere, the Dutch began to consider themselves teachers or even guardians of the still uneducated people. This was manifested in two ways; secular ideas of development, centered mainly on education, and Christian missions. Many missionary activities were conducted by way of that system of education.⁴ The Dutch had several schools for Dutch and Indonesians, somehow, the secular schools, which had been established by the Dutch administration, were organized and

¹ Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9; R. E. Elson, *The Idea of Indonesia A History*, (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

² George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, (USA: Cornell University Press, 2003), 11; Jeanne S. Mintz, *Muhammad, Marx, Marhaen: Akar Sosialisme Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), 22.

³ Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam; Contact and Conflict 1596-1950*, translated from Dutch by Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen, (Amsterdam: Atlanta, 1993), 23-24.

⁴ Ibid, 24.

controlled directly by the Dutch, particularly with regard to their curriculum, teachers, and supervisors.⁵ As a result, the Dutch secular schools had a negative impact on the Indonesian nation; specifically, they were hampering efforts to shake Indonesia free of its colonial status.

Furthermore, there were young Indonesians⁶ who were sent by the Dutch to study in the Netherlands. They returned home with their heads full of Western ideas about freedom, liberalism, socialism, and Marxism.⁷ Even though these served to hasten independence from the Dutch with new movements of anti-imperialism, they became the basic principles of Western ideologies in Indonesia and contributed in forming the basic ideology of Indonesia in the future such as communism.

Sukarno,⁸ as the leader of the Indonesian independence movement, attempted to adopt all of the ideologies in Indonesia in order to achieve national unity in the country. According to him in his book *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi*, there were three ideologies in Indonesia: Nationalism, Marxism, and Islam which unfortunately clashed with each other. Sukarno's syncretic solution to the problem of nationalism,

⁵ Erni Haryanti Kahfi, *Islam & Nationalism: Agus Salim and Nationalist Movement in Indonesia During the Early Twentieth Century*, (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001), 19.

⁶ Among others; Tan Malaka, born 1894 at West Sumatra, he was an Indonesian Communist leader who competed with Sukarno for control of the Indonesian nationalist movement. When he returned in 1919 from Europe, where he was educated, he began to espouse communist doctrine. He argued that communism and Islam were compatible, and that, in Indonesian, revolution should be built upon both; Mohammad Hatta, born August 12, 1902 at Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, a leader of the Indonesian independent movement who was prime ministry (1948-1950) and vice president (1950-1956) of Indonesia. While he studied in the Netherland from 1922 to 1932, he was president of the Indonesian Union and nationalist political group founded by overseas Indonesian student; Amir Sjarifuddin, born April 27, 1907, at North Sumatra, he studied Eastern and Western Philosophy at Haarlem and Leiden University. He was a socialist politician, the figure in the Indonesian National Liberation and Communist movement. Sutan Sjahrir, born March 5, 1909, Padangpandjang, West Sumatra, influential Indonesian nationalist and prime minister who favoured the adoption of western constitutional democracy for Indonesia. He Studied in the Law Faculty at the University of Leiden. In the Neterland, he was a member of a socialist student group and the secretary of Indonesian Union.

⁷ Donald Wilhelm, *Emerging Indonesia*, (London: Cassell LTD, 1980), 14; George MrTurnan Kahin, *Nasionalisme dan Revolusi di Indonesia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Kum Sdn.Bhd., 1980), 64.

⁸ Sukarno or pronounced as Soekarno, born June 6, 1901 at Surabaya East Java. He was a leader of the Indonesian independence movement and Indonesia's first president (1949-1966). He was a leader of the radical nationalist movement founded in 1927. He attempted to balance the communist against the army leaders.

Marxism, and Islam foreshadowed his later doctrine of *Nasionalisme, Agama, dan Komunisme* (NASAKOM).⁹ This is Sukarno's first original contribution to Indonesian political thought. Sukarno argued that these three forces in the Indonesian society were basically striving for the same goals.¹⁰

However, Sukarno's political statement benefited the communists because it became their political manifesto. For that reason, some Indonesian intellectuals criticized it; one of them being Abdullah bin Nuh (1905-1987).

According to Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara, Abdullah bin Nuh was an Indonesian Muslim intellectual, an actor in Indonesian history, a theologian, a Sufi, a historian, a lecturer, an Arabic poet, a nationalist, and a patriot. He was a religious nationalist and reformist in his era like Hamka, Muhammad Nastir, M. Rasjidi and Mohammad Hatta. He was a leader of the Defenders of the Fatherland (PETA) during 1943-1945, and People's Security Agency (BKR) during 1945-1946.

Abdullah bin Nuh was a great scholar, he translated many of al-Ghazālī's works and he wrote numerous articles and books. Part of his articles were published in several magazines¹¹ and the rest were unpublished or still in the form of manuscripts. According to him in one of his manuscripts, he clarified the issues of materialism in the community. He argued that capitalism, socialism and communism were controlling Indonesia indigenous mindset during the colonial times. Communism was

⁹ C.L.M. Penders, *The Life and Times of Sukarno*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 34.

¹⁰ He said; "Thus all three want freedom and socialism. Thus all three contain progressiveness. For that reason NASAKOM is a progressive necessity of the Indonesian revolution. Whoever is opposed to NASAKOM is not progressive! Whoever is against NASAKOM in reality cripples the revolution, misbalances the revolution. Whoever is anti-NASAKOM is not fully revolutionary, nay, is historically even contra-revolutionary". See; Weatherby Donald E., *Ideology in Indonesia: Sukarno's Indonesian Revolution*, (Yale: Yale University, 1966), 41.

¹¹ He became the expert team in the Indonesia ministry of religious affairs magazine "Mimbar Agama". In 1961, Abdullah bin Nuh pioneered the weekly magazine "Pembina" which focused on nationalism, religion, and knowledge. He was also the founder of the Islamic Research Institute at Jakarta in the field of scientific investigation in search of truth in order to find the meaning of Islam. Through this institutions, Abdullah bin Nuh investigated modern ideologies in Indonesia, made scientific investigation and criticized it based in Sunni theologies.

the new ideology at that time, it was the impact or response for the capitalist movement during colonial times. Socialism was a new form of Marxism and it's the embryo of the communist ideology. Indonesia's socialists had prepared social movement to embrace communism. Therefore, even communism was not recognized in Indonesia, but as the ideology indeed still survived as a social movement.¹²

Furthermore, Abdullah bin Nuh criticized Sukarno's thoughts on nationalism, Islam, and Marxism. He argued that NASAKOM was Sukarno's failed political move:

.. Sukarno is not a real Indonesian Muslim patriot. It is great sin for the Muslim had leader based on Marxism. He was not an Islamist patriot, but a Marxist patriot.¹³

Based on this brief introduction, this study attempts to seek the critique of Abdullah bin Nuh on modern ideologies, its importance in the framework of Islam and his discourse on materialism.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Colonialism and imperialism are closely linked to orientalism, missionaries, secularism and liberalism.¹⁴ There is no unanimity amongst scholars regarding the impact of Western colonialism and imperialism. Some scholars hold that they greatly contribute to civilization of the backward or indigenous people and contribute to the improvement of their living standards with the set-up of schools and colleges, constructed roads and railway, improved sanitation and health, etc.

However, Western colonialism and imperialism were responsible for the introduction of Western ideas like liberalism, secularism, socialism, materialism,

¹² Abdullah bin Nuh, "Materialisme: Apa Yang Dimaksud Orang Dengan Perkataan Itu", N.P., manuscript.

¹³ Abdullah bin Nuh, "Umat Islam Indonesia dan Presiden Sukarno", *Pembina*, 8th February 1967.

¹⁴ Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam*, (Ponorogo: Center for Islamic and Occidental Studies, 2009), 44-46.

Marxism, communism, etc. Many imperialist powers tried to implant their ideas and institutions in their colonies and thus, unconsciously, let loose liberal forces.

Further, in the social and cultural spheres the colonial and imperialist rule produced serious consequences. It had negatively affected the religions of the local people because the local people were exposed to the ideologies of Western missionaries or the orientalist. Therefore, in a certain sense some of them accepted or applied them in order to reach modern style of living.

Abdullah bin Nuh as an Indonesian Muslim intellectual, he did not espouse anti-Western thought. He explored Western literatures and investigated it; finally he criticized deeply what it did not suit Islamic worldview and the Indonesian culture so as to protect the local religion and local civilization. This study aims to explore critically his ideas in Western ideologies using Islamic worldview.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research attempts to answer and investigate the following matters:

- 1) What are Abdullah bin Nuh's contributions to the Islamic intellectual heritage and Indonesia's struggle for independence?
- 2) What are the contemporary issues of modern ideologies in Indonesia?
- 3) What are Abdullah bin Nuh's critiques on modern ideologies and its relevance to contemporary issues of modern ideology in Indonesia?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) To analyze and examine Abdullah bin Nuh's contributions to the Islamic intellectual heritage and Indonesia's struggle for independence.

- 2) To analyze the contemporary issues on modern ideologies in Indonesia.
- 3) To analyze and examine Abdullah bin Nuh's responses and critiques of modern ideologies in Indonesia.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant for some reasons:

There are many Indonesian Muslim scholars left unnoticed despite their great contributions to Islamic intellectual heritage. The study attempts to examine one of them in order to identify his works against modern ideologies prior to Indonesia's independence. It aims to illustrate the original stance of Abdullah bin Nuh on the face of the new revolution era. Some people call him a *Şūfī* because of his works based on al-Ghazālī's thought; even if he was a *Şūfī* he also learned about modern thought.

Only a few of Indonesian Muslim scholars were conscious about the impact of Western ideologies which could damage the indigenous cultures, civilizations, and ideologies of the nation. Abdullah bin Nuh was among those who were and encountered the Western ideologies with incisive and brief critiques.

The study will be important in understanding the impact of modern ideologies on young Indonesian movements in the struggle for Indonesian independence. Many types of Western ideologies had been applied during colonial era. Thus, they had great impact in forming the principles of Indonesian ideology such as Islam, nationalism, socialism, and Marxism.

The views of Abdullah bin Nuh on western ideologies and his approach to identify them based on Islamic worldview was chosen to verify his compatible stance as an intellectual Muslim in order to defend the ideology of Indonesia as a majority Sunni society.

Finally, the results of this study will be an impetus for more research on other Muslim scholar's thoughts on modern ideologies so as to appreciate their intellectual contributions towards the upholding of the worldview of Islam; to contextualize the situation in Indonesia today with the development of thoughts based on both Islamic and Western frameworks.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study on Abdullah bin Nuh's critique on modernism will focus on some Western ideologies in particular materialism, Marxism and communism. The discussion will also revolve on the interpretations and critiques of Abdullah bin Nuh of materialism, Marxism and communism.

Hence, the justification of the study will provide grounds to proceed to the subsequent discussion on his stance in arguing and encountering the Western ideologies' influences on Indonesia.

1.7 METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The study will use qualitative content analysis method; it will expound, examine and analyze the views and critiques of Abdullah bin Nuh on modern ideologies. The study will rely extensively on library research. The primary source will be collected from his works such as *Anā muslimūn sunniyyūn shāfi'īyyūn*, *dīwan ibn Nūh*, *Agama dalam pembahasan tentang materialisme*, *Agama dizaman modern* and a few others of his unpublished works including compilation of his writings in *Pembina* magazine on Islam and materialism. Meanwhile, the secondary sources will be collected from books, articles, journals, theses, and dissertations.

The study will use three kinds of methods: (i) the descriptive method using interviews to identify the life and scholarly background of Abdullah bin Nuh and his contributions to the science of Sufism and Theology; (ii) the analytical method to analyze Abdullah bin Nuh's views and critiques on modern ideologies and the corresponding Islamic worldview; and (iii) by comparing and contrasting several Muslim scholars with Abdullah bin Nuh's stance and to draw conclusions for this research.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will comprise works on Abdullah bin Nuh and his modern thought. Comprehensive studies on Abdullah bin Nuh's life, scholarly background and other influential factors that contribute to his thoughts can be found in some books, theses, and dissertations.

The work of Khoirul Sholeh in Arabic entitled '*Abdullāh ibn Nūḥ; Shā'ir al-ʿArabiyyah bi Indūnīsiyā*' analyses the value of the poetry (*shi'r*) of Abdullah bin Nuh. He examines *shi'r* Abdullah bin Nuh from the purpose and the artistic side as well as its meaning side. According to Khoirul Sholeh, Abdullah bin Nuh in his *shi'r* have many aspect of honors, praises, lamentation and apologies with the high of trope in his *shi'r*. Therefore, in his conclusion he says that Abdullah bin Nuh is the greatest of the Indonesian Arabic poets.¹⁵

The work of K.H. Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, one of Abdullah bin Nuh's students provides the basic bibliography sketch of Abdullah bin Nuh. He writes about the highest spirit in the deep desire of Abdullah bin Nuh in order to apply his Islamic knowledge for all people, Abdullah bin Nuh also is the great figure in the application

¹⁵ Khoirul Sholeh, "*Abdullāh ibn Nūḥ; Sya'ir al-ʿArabiyyah bi Indūnīsiyā*", Unpublished Degree Thesis, (UIN Jakarta, 1986).

of his knowledge and his behavior. Abdullah bin Nuh is the Islamic scholar (*‘ulamā*) and the great scientist whose work was based on the Islamic framework.¹⁶

The work of E. Hidayat entitled *K.H.R. Abdullah bin Nuh Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangannya* focuses on the struggle of Abdullah bin Nuh in the political, social, *da‘wah*, and Islamic education fields. As a Muslim scholar, Abdullah bin Nuh contributed to the struggle of Indonesia against the colonial powers.¹⁷

The work of Ahmad Wahid Mubarak in *K.H.R. Abdullah bin Nuh Biografi dan Pemikirannya* provides the number of work by Abdullah bin Nuh and several aspects of his thought on *Taşawwuf*, law, and Arabic literature. As a *Şūfī*, his thought was based on *Şūfī*’s light, and he highly regarded the Islamic brotherhood among Muslims free from any violence and differences between Islamic school of thoughts.¹⁸

Dede Mediana wrote his thesis *Kegiatan Dakwah Islamiyah K.H. Abdullah bin Nuh*, the struggle of Abdullah bin Nuh in doing *da‘wah* and in the education field. He describes the struggle of Abdullah bin Nuh and his devotion throughout his life on development of Islamic *da‘wah* through Islamic education, public discourses, and academic writing periodically. In this thesis also mentions that Abdullah bin Nuh devoted throughout his life to propagate his concept of *al-ukhuwwah al-Islamiyyah* among Muslims through avoiding the hard discussion on *furu‘iyyah* of Islamic teaching, doctrines, and theologies.¹⁹

Ridho Masduki researched his PhD thesis under the title *Pemikiran Kalam Abdullah bin Nuh*. This thesis focuses on the analyzing of the school of thought who

¹⁶ Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, “Riwayat Hidup Singkat K.H.R. Abdullah bin Nuh”, Unpublished, (Bogor, 1987), manuscript.

¹⁷ E. Hidayat, “K.H.R. Abdullah bin Nuh: Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangannya”, Unpublished Degree Thesis, (IAIN Jakarta, 1989).

¹⁸ Ahmad Wahid Mubarak, “K.H.R. Abdullah bin Nuh Biografi dan Pemikirannya”, Unpublished Degree Thesis, (UIN Yogyakarta, 1990).

¹⁹ Dede Madiana, “Kegiatan Dakwah Islamiyah K.H. Abdullah bin Nuh”, Unpublished Degree Thesis, (UIN Jakarta, 1993).

was affected most by Abdullah bin Nuh's view on *'ilmu al-kalām* through all of his works specifically in *Dīwān ibn Nuh*, *Anā Muslimun Sunniyyūn Shafi'īyyūn*, *Fī Zilāl al-Ka'bah*, *al-'Ālam al-Islāmī*, and *Lā Ṭāifiyyata Fī al-Islām*. He analyzes Abdullah bin Nuh's consistency on Sunni's thought either Ash'ari or Maturidi thought. However, as a result, there are differences on some issues of *'ilm al-kalām* with Sunni's thought in particular about *uṣul al-Īmān*, *Rūh*, and in argumentation of existence of God.²⁰

Gausulfardi Hakim in his thesis wrote in *K.H.R Abdullah bin Nuh dan Karya-Karyanya*. This study explores Abdullah bin Nuh's role in the civil society, Islamic education, art and literature, and Indonesian government. Moreover, it provides Abdullah bin Nuh's works in the field of philosophy, theology, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic ethics (*akhlāq*), history, and Arabic literature.²¹

The work of Muhammad Syafii Antonio entitled *Al-Ghazali dari Indonesia, K.H. Abdullah bin Nuh; Ulama Sederhana Kelas Dunia* provides information on Abdullah bin Nuh's understanding of *taṣawwuf* based on al-Ghazālī's views. In addition, it compiles all aspects of Abdullah bin Nuh's thought in the spheres of economics, nationality, education, and *'ilm al-kalām*.²²

Many works have also been done on Abdullah bin Nuh on various aspects of his Sūfī thoughts and his contributions to Indonesia. Yet no in-depth research has been conducted on his critique of the modern ideologies specifically on materialism, socialism, Marxism, and communism. This research will attempt to fill that gap by exploring Abdullah bin Nuh thought in other spheres of knowledge.

²⁰ Ridlo Masduki, "Pemikiran Kalam Abdullah bin Nuh", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (UIN Jakarta, 1998).

²¹ Gausulfardi Hakim, "K.H.R. Abdullah bin Nuh dan Karya-Karyanya", Unpublished Degree Thesis, (UIN Jakarta, 2009).

²² Muhammad Syafii Antonio, *al-Ghazali dari Indonesia, K.H. Abdullah bin Nuh; Ulama Sederhana Kelas Dunia*, (Jakarta: Tazkia Publishing, 2015).

1.9 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the contribution of Abdullah bin Nuh on modern ideologies based on the Islamic worldview has not been studied extensively. The available works do not focus on the major purpose of Abdullah bin Nuh's thoughts which demonstrate his contributions to the field of modern ideologies in defending Indonesian Muslims from the globalization of modern ideologies by Dutch colonial power.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES ON MODERN IDEOLOGIES IN INDONESIA

2.1 COLONIZATION AND WESTERNIZATION IN INDONESIA

Modernism is similar in meaning with Westernization. It is an ism or a worldview based on Western civilization and thought. It emerged from Western historical background since the Dark Ages that has characteristic features such as nationalism, capitalism, humanism, liberalism, secularism, democracy, and etc.²³ However, secularism is considered to be the most important among these modern characteristic features.²⁴ Nevertheless, modernization is not entirely a Westernized concept.²⁵

Modern or Western ideologies was introduced to the Indonesian people during the colonialism era. In that era, the colonizer particularly the Dutch indirectly operated the system of colonial government by introducing their ideologies to the indigenous Indonesian people in order to create a modern civilization, such as liberalism, secularism, democracy, socialism, communism, and Marxism. On the contrary, their ideologies were opposite to the local ideologies and culture as Muslim majority. It provoked a contravention of tradition between the local people and their colonizers.

According to Zeenath Kausar, colonialism has a long chain of suffering and its

²³ Maryam Jameelah, *Islam and Modernism*, (Lahore: Muhammad Yusuf Khan, 1975), 15.

²⁴ Secularism has two characteristic features. First, moderate secularism considers that religion is a personal and spiritual affair. Therefore, it should not mix with worldly affairs such as knowledge, politics, economics, technology, etc. Second, extreme secularism considers that religion is a social evil or vice. However, both reject religion fully. See Muhammad al-Bahi, *Penentangan Islam Terhadap Aliran Pemikiran Perosak*, (Kuala Lumpur: Hizbi, 1985), 52.

²⁵ In Indonesia, the term “modern” is used in several meanings. There is the religious social movement by Muhamadiyyah which uses term “*al-Tajdīd*”, but sometimes also uses “modernization”. Hamka uses the term “tasawuf modern” in his book as his concept of *tasawwuf*. In the educational sphere, the term “modern” is used for modern Islamic boarding schools in terms of reforming the educational system and syllabus.

implications in the lives of indigenous or colonized people. They are induced into the colonizer's government system through political, economic, social, cultural, and educational spheres. As a result, widespread discrimination between the colonizer and colonized are not restrained.²⁶

In Indonesia, the Dutch politically used the divide and conquer strategy. They allied with some indigenous economists and politicians strata in operating their colonial system enforcing discrimination in all social levels between the colonizer and indigenous people.²⁷ On the other hand, the colonizers also introduced some Western ideologies and culture that is opposite to local culture in order to divide or disunite indigenous unity. As a result, this political strategy caused the local people to become individualistic and some of them began to affiliate with their colonizers.

In the economic sphere, the colonizers applied liberal economy and monopolized policies in trading with the presumption that it would increase indigenous social welfare. They allowed foreign investors to come into Indonesia in order to support liberal and capitalism policy by the Dutch. As a result of this rule, capitalism grew on favour of the colonizers whereas local markets were marginalized. Only foreign capitalists and investors such as the Dutch, Chinese, some Arabs and some local traders profited from this policies.²⁸ However, in rural areas, farmers from indigenous communities suffered from this liberal economy policy and poverty increased steadily.²⁹

²⁶ Zeenath Kausar, *Colonization to Globalization: 'Might is Right' Continues: Earthly City Versus Civilized City, Madinah*, (Malaysia: Thinker's Library Sdn. Bhd., 2007), 18-19.

²⁷ During the Dutch colonial government system in Indonesia, they divided the society into three classes: the first class were Europeans or colonialists such as the Dutch who were the highest caste with several privileges; the second class were the East colonizers such as the Chinese and Japanese; and the third class were the indigenous Indonesian people who were the lowest social caste.

²⁸ Ahmad Suhelmi, *Islam dan Kiri: Respons Elite Politik Islam Terhadap Isu Kebangkitan Komunis Pasca-Soeharto*, (Jakarta: Yayasan SAD Satria Bhakti, 2007), 4-5.

²⁹ There were discrepancies between the local people in Javanese villages. Poverty and starvation increased sharply in their villages. As a consequence, many local people migrated to cities to survive.

Furthermore, in most cases, the colonial education system was limited to primary school only, while the curricula and prescribed books reflected to Western culture and racist attitude.³⁰ Virtually, the Dutch education system aimed to fulfil two purposes: first, to recruit members from the Indonesian upper classes in order to assimilate them into Dutch culture so that they would cooperate with the Dutch government and; second, to alienate Muslims youth from their own religion. A.D.A. De Kat Angelino said in his book:

All educated Orientals must steep themselves in Western culture, even adopt the Christian religion as a preliminary to fulfilling their task of leadership.³¹

Obviously, when Western countries occupied Muslim countries, they brought with them the “Gold, Glory, and Gospel”. Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch orientalist, succeeded in contributing to Dutch colonization in Indonesia with his crucial recommendation to the Dutch government particularly in order to disunite indigenous Indonesian. This was clear evidence that there was a deep relation between orientalism, missionary, and Western colonial movement during the expansion of the colonized state.

In order to propagate Western worldview, concepts, values, cultures, civilization, and system, the Dutch in particular used several methods, including Westernization and globalization as tools in spreading their ideologies. Orientalism was used in studying Islamic thought from Western perspectives or the Westernization of Islamic thought, with the result of getting fallacious meanings of Islamic thought

Finally, social explosions, uprisings and riots occurred. According to Clifford Geertz, these incidences affected the agricultural involution. See Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963).

³⁰ Zeenath, 19.

³¹ A.D.A. De Kat Angelino, *Colonial Policy*, Vol. 1, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931), 379.