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Voices of Islamic Reform: A Study on Islamic Press in Indonesia, 1900-1942

ABSTRACT: Since the end of the 19th century, indigenous-run press had developed rapidly in various regions of the East Indies (Indonesia now), especially in Java and Sumatra. In the beginning of the 20th century, the development of indigenous-run press developed more rapidly than before, in consequence of the fact that the press became the means of struggle used by numerous social, political, and religious organizations. The development of religious organizations, especially in Java and Sumatra, were influential as the press was used as a means for preaching on religious matters and was further expanded on social, economic, and political matters. It was stated that Islamic press played a significant role in the lives of the people. This development can be observed by the emergence of Islamic magazines pioneered by "Al-Moenir" (Enlightenment), in 1911-1916, which was circulated in West Sumatra. This magazine was influenced by the publication of "Al-Imam" (Leader), in 1906-1909, which was circulated in Singapore. While in Java, Islamic organizations such as SI (Sarekat Islam or Islamic League), Muhammadiyah (Followers of Prophet Muhammad), and PO (Persjarikatan Oelama or Islamic Scholars League) also actively made use of newspapers and magazines as their means of struggle. Through news and views, Islamic press called upon people to keep up with progress. Through Islamic press, people also were called upon to learn science, religion, and were given the awareness of nationalism.

KEY WORDS: Islamic society, indigenous Islamic press, colonial Islamic politics, Islamic progress, and Netherlands Indies government.

INTRODUCTION

During the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the Dutch colonial government carried out exploitations in their colonized territories, especially Java and Sumatra. These activities, then, caused fundamental changes in the social order of the Indonesian people. The changes encompassed all aspects of life, such as economy, social, and culture. The exploitations by the Dutch colonial government brought about the

decline of societal life, causing the elites in Europe to demand the Dutch government to carry out debt of honor politics. One of the policies, which turned up due to the demand, was the Ethical Politics, the establishment of colonial education system. This was the policy which gave rise to more intellectual circles in the native society as a result of the opening of various kinds and levels of schools, as a formulation of ethical policy (Ricklefs, 1991).

Some social and economic changes, which

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occurred in the end of the 19th century in Java, was the result of the opening of the railway which at first was built by private plantation entrepreneurs, namely *Nederlandsch Indisch Spoor Maatschappij*, which was then built by the Netherlands Indies government or *Staats Spoor*. The example is the opening of railways, which connected Yogyakarta and Surakarta toward Semarang harbor in the 1870s (Ricklefs, 1991; and Sumardjan, 1993).

The emergence of the railway had a significant impact not only to the mobilization of people, but also of goods from the hinterlands towards the coastal harbor cities, especially when the railway was extended to almost encompassing all areas of the Java island in the 1890s (Kartodirdjo, 1990:363-367). Besides growing into centers of bureaucracies, the cities in Java also became trade offices, offices, or import export agents. Thus, changes in the society occurred where the dynamics of the cities replaced the historical dynamics, which in the past was centered in the villages (Kuntowijoyo, 1991a and 1999).

Another impact, which resulted from economic growth in the 19th century, was the emergence of newspapers which were published by private Dutch entrepreneurs. The newspapers were established as a means of advertisement for products (*advertentie*). Thus, it is not surprising that private owned newspapers started to thrive since the mid 19th century. One of the examples of Netherlands Indies government owned press which has *advertentie* form was the *Het Bataviasch Advertentie Blad* in 1851 and *Java Bode* in 1852, both of which were established by W. Bruining and was published in Batavia or Jakarta now (Surjomihardjo *et al.*, 2002).

Whereas, the natives at that time until the beginning of the 20th century were lagging behind from industrialized countries, especially in terms of science and technology. Although railways, motor powered vehicles, telegraph, and steam boat had existed in Java, in terms of science, it was still behind other countries. To the society having a majority of Muslims, religion in the society was often became the spotlight in responding to the activities in life. This was due to the fact that Islam is

more than just a theological system. Islam is a complete civilization, encompassing all the life order of life of man (Noer, 1991:1).

Because Indonesians not only mastered *fikh* (Islamic law) but also *tasawuf* (Islamic mysticism), *kyais* or religious teachers in Java, for instance, were highly respected just as teachers in the Hindu and Budha era were. Sometimes, they show their abilities in healing, aiding one's wish to be fulfilled through their prayers to the Almighty, or their abilities in fighting supernatural powers. These practices also existed before the coming of Islam. There were even still many offering rituals that were lead by religious teachers or *kyais* at that time. These phenomena that were found in nearly all parts of the country, made it difficult to distinguish a religious teacher to a traditional healer, the great respect for religious teachers made the colonial government believed that Islam was an indicator of national loyalty and a base of unity which was a threat to their position (*cf* al-Atas, 1990; Dhofier, 1990; and Noer, 1991:21).

To Muslim communities, especially in Indonesia, the opening of the Suez canal in Egypt and the advancement of science, such as the steam-engine boat in the 1860s, brought about a more intense relations between Indonesia, West Asia, and Europe. The opening of the Suez canal eased the journey of Indonesian Muslims to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca (Noer, 1991:30). This resulted in a stronger bond among Muslims around the world.

The coming of the Hadramaut people to Indonesia and the return of the pilgrims caused a rise in religion spirit of the Muslims. This in turn brought about a reform in Islam that is by propagating the return to the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad), leaving behind any behaviors that are considered to be *khurafat* (superstition), mystical, and *bid'ah* (heresy); and introduce that there was no contradiction between science and Islam.

In fact, Islam would be a force for the Muslims not only in advancing technology but also in facing colonialism at that time. With such developments, Muslims in Indonesia is called on: *first*, to cleanse all aspects of their life from mystical and *bid'ah*, which

strongly influenced the life of Muslims at that time. *Second* is to defend Indonesians from Netherlands Indies colonial pressures (Niel, 1984:38).

The shift of the society from *jahiliah* (ignorance of religion's teachings) society to *syariah* (Islamic law) society, according to Quraish Shihab (2006), was due to the understanding and instilment towards the *Al-Qur'an* and due to the use of and adjustment of historical laws, which are explicitly explained in the *Al-Qur'an*. Furthermore, he stated that since its revelation, the *Al-Qur'an* functions to bring about positive changes (Shihab, 2006:245).

This is in line with the opinion of Karel A. Steenbrink (1991), who mentioned that there were four factors that were the aim of reform in Indonesia. *First*, due to the emergence of individuals or groups in the society, who wanted to return to the *Al-Qur'an* and *Hadith*. *Second*, due to the desire to carry out reform on education. *Third*, to strengthen the economic and social condition of the people for the sake of the people in general. *Fourth*, due to the insurgence factor against the Netherlands Indies ruler (Steenbrink, 1991).

The influence of the pilgrims returning from the pilgrimage and the Hadramaut people brought about changes in the Indonesian society through the presence of religious reform groups. The movements were pioneered by the *ulemas* (Islamic scholars), who were characterized by the desire to look for rational Islamic values and honor science highly. The spread of Islamic teachings and knowledge was carried out orally, through propagation and recitation of the holy book of *Al-Qur'an* or through writings, such as mass-media owned by Islamic organizations at the time.

At that time, the "awakening of Islam" started to influence the history of Indonesia. Human rights were honored so that the people can be released from Dutch colonization. This movement was pioneered by Sumatra *Thawalib* (Students) organization in West Sumatra; *Al-Irsyad* (Guideline) organization in Sumatra and Java; PUI (*Persatuan Umat Islam* or Association of Islamic Society) in West Java; SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League); PU (*Persyarikatan Ulama* or Islamic Scholars

League); and *Muhammadiyah* (followers of Prophet Muhammad) organization in all over Indonesia (cf Stoddard, 1966:295-300; and Noer, 1991).

Muslims at that time, then, tried to understand how to achieve a modern way of life without violating religious rules. This method was, then, campaigned in newspapers and magazines of respective Islamic organizations at the time, such as *Al-Munir* (Enlightenment), 1911-1916, in Padang, West Sumatera, inspired by *Al-Imam* (Leader) magazine; *Soewara Muhammadiyah* (Voice of Prophet Muhammad's Followers) since 1912 and *Adil* (Just) since 1930s, owned by *Muhammadiyah* organization; *Fadjar Asia* (Asian Dawn), 1920-1930, a newspaper owned by SI (*Sarekat Islam*) organization; *Soeara Persjarikatan Oelama* (Voice of Islamic Scholars League) in West Java in 1929; and, last but not least, *Soeara Moeslimin* (Voice of Moslems) in 1932, a monthly magazine issued in Batusangkar, Minangkabau, West Sumatera, in which this magazine discussed about religion, social, and politics (Noer, 1991).

Those magazines and newspapers, which were owned by Islamic organizations, changed the mindset of the people to be more open and rational. The development of newspapers, then, spread and became one of the means of dissemination of information, though at first it was limited to cover news on economy and government, then, developed into media of information in science, social, culture, and religion. These facts showed how effective media press is in mass oriented dissemination of information. The new developments in Islamic organizations were able to voice the importance for Muslims to be intelligent, respectful, and use their mind to reach a better life on earth and in the hereafter.

The analysis of the articles, which were published in newspapers and magazines between 1900s to 1930s, aims to answer the problems "how Islamic press in Indonesia voiced the reforms of Islam in the early 20th century?". Similar studies on the history on press can be found in a number of books, which were written by those interested in the study, among others were Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro & Nugroho Notosusanto eds.

(1984); Adurrachman Surjomihardjo (1991); and Mirjan Maters (2003).

In this part, we can gain information on the first development of regional press and Malay press, also the role of the press as a voice of political organization, studied by Ahmat Adam (2003). Other book on government policies or press in Indonesia was written by Edward C. Smith (1986). Deliar Noer (1991), in his dissertation on Islamic modern movement in Indonesia, also introduced the study of utilizes Islamic press sources in the beginning of the 20th century. This book became the guidance for the writer to carry out further studies.

Another book is the work of Burhanuddin Daya (1990) related to reform movement of Islamic thinking. A.P.E. Korver (1985)'s study on SI (*Sarekat Islam*) also explained the sources of press, which were published by SI in the beginning of its development. Meanwhile, Takashi Shiraishi (1997) also discussed the development of Islamic press in Java.

In this case, the acquired resources are, then, analyzed using discourse analysis, especially for the category of article or opinions in the newspapers, which was related to history. In this case, the writer used Erianto (2003) and Suf Kasman (2010)'s books to see and break down the practice of ideology in media from the groups or organizations which are using it. According to Erianto (2003), media functions not merely to present political reality, but also to present social-politics and can even be used as means of struggle (Erianto, 2003).

Discourse analysis can help us in "reading" the ideology behind the article or news of mass media; on the writer of the article; his or her educational background; the writer's political affiliate and religion; the cultural world of the writer's place; the people who read the article; and also the soul of the era when the article was written (Erianto, 2003; and Kasman, 2010). Thus, discourse analysis prioritized how the message is in the article of newspapers or magazines, and can see more the hidden meaning of a text of the article which is related to the historical approach and method in revealing events in the past (*cf* Kartodirdjo, 1982; Flournoy ed., 1989; and Suwirta, 2000).

SOCIAL CHANGES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDONESIAN PRESS

Since the presence of the Dutch in Indonesia, they had made various policies which regulate the relations with the native people. A number of political supervisions were also conducted to realize their goal. The forced planting (*cultuur stelsel*), which was had been conducted previously, was reenacted in the last period of the 19th century in order to collect natural resources which was gained through the service of the native people. The Netherlands Indies government also allowed private companies to enter Indonesia, especially to Java (Faseur, 1992; and Niel, 2003).

As a result, the wealth of the people declined because they experienced a number of humanity pressures for the sake of the economical advantage. Europeans, who entered subsequently around the 1900s, felt the concerns towards the declining wealth of the natives. They formed new solidarities which, then, triggered many ideas concerning the policy of the Netherlands Indies government towards the natives (Niel, 1984:20). The concern and dissatisfaction at that time, then, prompted what was called "Ethical Politics" (*Politik Etis*), or repayment policy, in 1901.

This idea was to improve the wealth and welfare of the people, besides to show to the world how the Netherlands government felt innocent to the fate of the people. This idea was, then, published in newspapers and magazines at that time, such as in weekly *Bintang Hindia* (Hindia Star), the first European magazine in Malay in 1907 (cited in Niel, 1984:74). The reports on Ethical Politics (*Politik Etis*) gave rise to the development of the level of modern education to Indonesian people, urbanization, and the rise of scholars, who in the end, further, helped the way of modern thinking to the people. This process, then, spurred the development of press in Indonesia (Niel, 1984).

Press, then, became the representation of the voice of the people regarding the attitude, view, and relations among the natives and foreigners; and became more developed, especially in the 1910s and 1930s, since the appearance of community organizations both with social and religious

backgrounds, such as SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League), *Muhammadiyah* (Followers of Prophet Muhammad) organization, and IP (*Indische Partij* or Indonesian Party) until to the organizations which have the political orientation, such as PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* or Indonesian Communist Party), PNI (*Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* or Indonesia Nationalist Party), PARINDRA (*Partai Indonesia Raya* or Great Indonesian Party), and so on (Niel, 1984; and Noer, 1991).

The establishment of medical school for the indigenous people, namely STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen*), which was built in 1902, followed by establishing the Farming School in 1903, Teaching School in 1906, Veterinarian School in 1907, and Law school in 1908 gave rise to the emergence of political elites who took European education system (Niel, 1984). One of them was the member of the royal family of *Keraton* (palace) of Paku Alam in Central Java, namely Notosoeroto who studied in the Netherlands from 1901-1904; and the *pamong* (civil service) of *Keraton* Paku Alam, namely Prince Notodirdjo who studied from 1901-1907, who then became the initiator for the reform to the Indonesian people (Adam, 2003:178).

Up to 1908, more and more Indonesian students studied in the Netherlands. They even established Indonesian student union, namely *Indische Vereniging* or *Perhimpunan Hindia*, a union to unite and spread ideas to young people of Indonesia in the Netherlands. While in Indonesia at that time, a youth organization with the name of BU (*Budi Utomo* or Eminent Character), which was pioneered by Dr. Soetomo, a STOVIA graduate expressed the advancement of a nation which is free and aware of unity (Niel, 1984:76-102).

The ideas of Ethical Politics (*Politik Etis*) were already widely reported by various print media which had developed, such as in the newspaper of *Pewarta Prijangan* (Priyangan News), which was published in Bandung, West Java, on July 1st 1988, in Malay language. In an article written by Pieter Brooshooft and van Deventer, which then influenced the emergence of the policy of Ethical Politics (*Politik Etis*) from the Netherlands. Following is the excerpt:

[...] memadjoekan dan menoeloeng segala anak negeri pendoeboek tanah Hindia ini soepaja merika itoe semakin lama semakin madjoe di dalam segala kepandaijan dan bertambah keoentoengan serta kesaoentasaannja, lagi soepaja merika itoe terlepas dari pada kesoesahan dan kesengsaraan penipoean dan penganiajaan dari kebanjakan roepa-roepa bangsa dan kepala anak negeri njang lalim (cited in Adam, 2003:156).

Translation:

[...] promote and help to all son of country, the native population in the country of Indonesia, that they were becoming more and more advanced with all intelligences, and also increased profits and welfare, and also that they were in spite of hardship and misery caused by fraud and abuse of power by various nations and leaders of the country's own impious.

Thus, the voice of change towards progress for the indigenous people had been published in print media, both magazines and newspapers since the end of the 19th century. This voice of change was manifested, especially in articles on education, health, farming, and the development of the indigenous people in general, although Indonesian people were still under the control of Netherlands Indies government.

Under the pressure of the ruling government, although with the excuse of change and improvement, many of the villagers kept a distance with the rulers or government officials. They, then, tried to find tranquility and formed new strength in their religion, i.e. Islam (Noer, 1991). This is what then made new changes to the Indonesian people.

The growing understanding of Islam on the people became a threat to the ruling government. Islam, which is not only a religion but also a guidance in life, became the main factor to change of the Indonesian people in realizing their self awareness and awareness in nationhood. This change occurred at the time, when the ruling government tried to carry out Christian activities in the region. This Christian mission, then, stimulated Muslims to look deeper into their self awareness in Islam and nationhood (Shihab, 1998).

Muhamadiyah (Followers of Prophet Muhammad), for example, as an Islamic reform organization (1912) got the influence

of reform from the Middle East; and the phenomenon of Christianization was made as the main reason of its establishment (Noer, 1991; Shihab, 1998; and Hill, 2011:81-86). *Muhammadiyah*, which took the way of Islamic propagation on social matters, was then also involved in press in the first decade of its inception around 1920s. Likewise, SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League), which was formally established in 1912, initially established as a response towards Christianization campaigns by the ruling government. SI, then, much motivated the people in improving their life conditions. This became the fear of the colonial government towards the development of SI and *Muhammadiyah* organization (Noer, 1991; Shihab, 1998; and Darban, 2000).

Besides dealing with social and economic matters, SI and *Muhammadiyah* organizations also dealt with religious matters. In this aspect, both organizations opposed any deviation in understanding of the teaching of Islam (Geertz, 1983). The awakening of Islam, which was initiated by these two organizations, gave a meaningful impact to the Indonesian people, besides due to the policy influence of Ethics Politics and also due to the influence of Islamic reforms which was growing in the Middle East through the writings of Islamic reform spirit. As an impact to this change, press became one of the media, besides to introduce trade products and industry, until then as a media to report the activities of the foundation or institution, and also to spread the aspirations of the people through the organizations.

Since the mid of the 19th century, newspapers or magazines in Malay and Javanese languages had been published, although they were published by European and Dutch entrepreneurs. Some of the newspapers and magazines were the weekly newspaper of *Bromartani* (Skilled Farmer) on 29 March 1855 in Surakarta, Central Java; *Djawi Kanda* (Javanese Story) in 1891; *Djawi Hisworo* (Javanese Clear), which was published interchangeably in Surakarta, Central Java, in 1892; *Retnodhumilah* (Pearl Ray) in 17 Mei 1895; and *Slomporet Melajoe* (Malay Bugle) in 1860 (cf Shiraishi, 1997; Surjomihardjo *et al.*, 2002:80; Adam, 2003:27; and Pradjoko, 2010:41).

Then, in 1907, E.F.E Douwes Dekker, who was the editor of the newspaper of *Bataviasch Nieuws Blad*, owned by the Dutch in Batavia in Malay language, then, became a politician and joined the national reform movement and native cultural social organization by establishing IP (*Indische Partij* or Indonesian Party) in Bandung, West Java, in 1912. The party formulated the cooperation program of natives and other groups to building *Bangsa Hindia* or Indonesia Nation (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto eds., 1984).

While from those of Chinese descendants, there were Chinese-Malay press, which were published in Malay-Chinese language and could be read by internal circles, for native origin, and all groups. Chinese-Malay press was motivated to publish the press, which are useful to the society numerous fields not only in knowledge and information but also in business (Surjomihardjo *et al.*, 2002:42-43). Some examples of Chinese-Malay newspapers were *Pemberita Betawi* (Jakarta News) in 1884-1916; *Bintang Betawi* (Jakarta Star) in 1893-1906; *Bintang Soerabaja* (Surabaya Star) in 1887-1924; *Li Po* (Chinese Newspaper) in 1901; *Pewarta Soerabaja* (Surabaya News) in 1902; *Kabar Perniagaan* (News of Commerce) in 1902; *Warna Warta* (Colour News) in 1903; and others (Surjomihardjo *et al.*, 2002:51-52).

Whereas Malay press, which was published for the first time by the native people, was *Medan Prijaji* (Noblemen Field), in 1907-1912, by R.M. Tirta Adisoerjo, a son of the Regent of Bojonegoro, who was a Muslim trader who also established SDI (*Sarekat Dagang Islam* or Islamic Trade League) in 1911 with H. Samanhoedi. At first, R.M. Tirta Adisoerjo established *Sarekat Prijaji* (Noblemen League), which was aimed to advance and give welfare the indigenous people by giving scholarship to the needy. To socialize his purpose, R.M. Tirta Adisoerjo published a newspaper called *Medan Prijaji* in 1905 (Toer, 1985). The newspaper had a motto as follows:

The voice of the kings, noblemen and the thoughts of and native traders and officers also other traders who have the same rights with the natives throughout Duth Indies (cited in Shiraishi, 1997:44).

Other newspapers published by R.M. Tirtho Adisoerjo were *Soeloeh Keadilan* (Justice Light) in 1907, which had almost the same content as *Medan Prijaji* and magazine of *Poetri Hindia* (Indonesia Women) in 1908. With the circulation of the women's magazine, R.M. Tirtho Adisoerjo believed that progress was not only for men, but also for women in Indonesia. In 1909, R.M. Tirtho Adisoerjo became the editor on the magazine of *Milatih Djawa* (Javanese Military) in Yogyakarta, which was owned by SMB (*Sarekat Militair Boemipoetra* or Native Military League) from Bogor in West Java. R.M. Tirtho Adisoerjo also became editor of other native owned newspapers and magazine, such as *Sri Pasundan* (Sundanese Mother), which was the first Sundanese newspaper circulated on May 1909 (cited in Adam, 2003:188-210).

BU (*Budi Utomo* or Eminent Character) organization also had a newspaper in Malay and Javanese languages, which the organization acquired from the previous owner who was a Chinese. The name of the newspaper was *Darmokondo* (Obligation Story) in 1910 and was bought by BU Surakarta Branch in Central Java, with the price of f. 50,000 or fifty thousand Dutch Gulden (Nagazumi, 1989). While, SI published a newspaper named *Sarotomo* (Eminent Guidance) in Javanese language in Yogyakarta, but it didn't last long and was halted in 1914, due to the lack of fund in publishing it. Besides that, newspapers such as *Oetoesan Hindia* (Indonesian Representatives) in Surabaya, East Java; *Sinar Djawa* (Java Ray) in Semarang, Central Java; *Kaoem Moeda* (Young Generation) in Bandung, West Java; and *Pantjaran Warta* (News Spreading) in Batavia, Jakarta now, were then owned by SI (Shiraishi, 1997:63-66 and 109).

In Sumatra, newspapers had started to exist since the 19th century and developed in a number of cities like the West Coast and Aceh, also in the East Coast at the *Karesidenan* (Regencies) of Tapanuli and Palembang. The newspapers were *Selomporet Melajoe* (Malay Bugle); *Pertja Barat* (Rubber of the West), and *Tapian na Oeli* (Beautiful Edge). In the beginning of the 20th century, newspaper of *Wasir Hindia* (Indonesian Leader) in 1903 was

established with Soetan Radja nan Gadang as the editor; and *Bintang Soematra* (Sumatera Star) and *Sinar Soematra* (Sumatera Ray) were also established in 1905. Besides that, there were also *Pewartu Deli* (Deli News) in 1909; *Warta Palembang* (Palembang News) in 1914; and *Salendang Sibolga* (Sibolga Shawl) in 1911 (Adam, 2003:212-217).

Newspapers in Sumatra, which had Islamic learning, like *Alam Minangkabau* (Minangkabau World), on 9 January 1904, was the first Islamic newspaper in Padang, West Sumatera, and used Malay language and literature, and also used *Jawi* letters (Arabic script). The administrator was Haji Mohd Amin and Dja Endar Moeda. This newspaper had the tendency to be oriented to the Middle East and was limited to Muslims in Minangkabau, Mandailing, dan Angkola. Thus, the native owned newspaper was criticized mainly by the Chinese and the traditionalists, because it did not reach the natives in general (Adam, 2003:221).

A year later, the traditionalists published a newspaper of *Sinar Sumatera* (Sumatera Light), on September 1905, in Padang, West Sumatera. This newspaper used Low Malay language which reached a much wider readers, but it showed its pro-Chinese and pro-Dutch stance (*cf* Surjomihardjo *et al.*, 2002; and Adam, 2003). Besides that, *Oetoesan Melajoe* (Malay Delegate) owned by POAM (*Perserikatan Orang Alam Minangkabau* or People League of Minangkabau World) lead by Datoek Soetan Maharadja also emerged. It was aimed at showing the original culture of the Minangkabau through press to advance the natives (Adam, 2003).

Datoek Soetan Maharadja was renowned in the West Coast of Sumatra just like R.M. Tirtho Adhi Soerjo in Java, who through his press media was passionate to preserve the original tradition of the indigenous people. However, they both were modern in their belief that progress can be achieved through education. In the newspaper of *Oetoesan Melajoe* (Malay Delegate), Datoek Soetan Maharadja showed his dislike towards modern religious leaders, who gained their education in Mecca and Cairo. This is in contrast with what R.M. Tirtho Adhi Soerjo believed. He thought that

actually it was Islam that had the potential to unite the natives through organized efforts towards the awakening of the nation. While R.M. Tirto Adhi Soerjo then joined SI, Datoek Soetan Maharadja was always adversative to the *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) of Minang, due to his hatred on the Paderi war (Kuntowijoyo, 1991b; Noer, 1991; and Ricklefs, 1991).

This issue that was always became a polemic between the newspaper owned by these two groups, namely the traditionalists and the religion reformists. The newspaper of *Oetoesan Melajoe* (Malay Delegate) made the journal of *Al-Moenir* (Enlightenment) and newspaper of *Alam Minangkabau* (Minangkabau World), which had Islamic learning as its competitor. *Al-Moenir* and *Alam Minangkabau* always encouraged the reform in Islamic thoughts through rejection of matters which were not in line with the teachings of the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad). The two different features between the traditional leaning and Islamic leaning can be analogized as how the Minangkabau society was grouped, namely "the old and the young generations" (Abdullah, 1976; and Kasman, 2010).

Unlike in Java and Sumatra, the growth of press in Eastern part of Indonesia (Sulawesi and Maluku) and Kalimantan, since the end of the 18th century, went slowly. According to Ahmat Adam (2003), this was due to the high illiteracy rate among the natives and their unfamiliarity with Malay language. In 1904, there was a newspaper named *Pewarto Manado* (Manado News), but it didn't publish much news, so it only lasted for six months. Then, there was the newspaper *Tjahaja Gorontalo* (Gorontalo Light) in 1909; and *Matahari Terbit* (Sun Rise) in 1912, in Manado. In Ambon, Maluku, there was a newspaper named *Penghentar* (Introduce) in 1894, which was managed by a Chinese (Adam, 2003:256-265).

In Makasar, Sulawesi, in 1903, the newspaper of *Pemberita Makassar* (Makassar News) and *Sinar Matahari* (Sun Light) was published. It was in Malay language and was owned by a Dutch nationalist. Besides that, there were also Chinese who owned newspapers in Malay language, such as *Sinar*

Borneo (Borneo Light) and *Pewarto Borneo* (Borneo News), both of which appeared in 1913, and tend to have advertisements. In this Eastern part of Indonesia, there was not even one native owned newspaper. All of the existing media at that time were owned by either Dutch or Chinese nations (Adam, 2003).

About the Policy of the Netherlands Indies' Government towards Indonesian Press. In the beginning, around 1860s, the Netherlands Indies government was reluctant to interfere on matters dealing with Islam. But, since the arrival of C. Snouck Hurgronje, in 1889, who was sent by the Dutch government to be the Advisor on Indigenous and Arabic Affairs in Netherlands Indies, matters pertaining Islam were then regulated by the government. This was based on the fear of the Dutch government towards the Paderi war in West Sumatra (1821-1827), Diponegoro war in Central Java (1825-1830), and Aceh war in North Sumatera (1837-1904), which drained a lot of fund and entailed the implementation of *Inlandsch politiek* or politics of natives' affairs (Suminto, 1996:9-11).

The interference of the Dutch government pertaining Islam, through the Islamic politics of C. Snouck Hurgronje, made the government to be more susceptible to the possibility of the recurrence of resistance such as the Paderi movement. Islam was, then, often considered to instigate threats to the Dutch authority. That was why the Dutch government enforced many regulations which oppressed Muslims in Indonesia, especially if it dealt with *Pan Islamism* (ideology to unite all Muslims) and *tarekat* (Islamic mysticism organization), because the Dutch government considered them as potentially dangerous movement which can shake the authority (cf Noer, 1991; Suminto, 1996; and Suwirta, 2002).

Pan Islamism was initiated by Jamaluddin al-Afghani with Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, who then published the magazine of *Al-'Urwatul Wutsqa* (Sturdy String Knot), with the intention of making Muslims aware to cling on dearly to the teachings of Islam and to unite Muslims in one bond of solidarity; or in other words, to revive the feeling of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Muslims brotherhood) in the Muslim world. This movement deeply

influenced Indonesian people. Islam reform movement in the Middle East made continuous intensive relations with Indonesian Muslims who stayed (*muqim*) in Mecca, either directly with those performing the hajj or through correspondence in giving information related to Islam and the development of Islam people. Thus, the Dutch government also gave tight control to Indonesian Muslims (*muqimin*) residing in Mecca, through its Consulate in Jeddah and also to Arabic people living in Indonesia (Nasution, 1991).

As a reaction to the conditions of Muslims at that time, the Netherlands East Indies government then established *Kantoor voor Inlandsche Zaken* (Office for Indonesian People Affairs), as a realization of the expansion of tasks of an *adviseur* (advisor) whose instructions were officially regulated (Suminto, 1996). This institution was, then, referred to as the Office of Islamic Religion Affairs. In relation to *Pan Islamism*, this institution monitored all the activities of Muslims of Indonesia abroad and also monitored information on the development of Islam in various regions of the world, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, India, and Singapore, especially on the movements of young generation through various media (Suminto, 1996:110-111).

The Netherlands Indies government was very cautious, if not exaggerated, towards the spirit of Muslims. The Cilegon incident in Banten, Western Java, in 1888, was also made as a reason for the various policies of the Netherlands Indies government on Muslims, whether on *Pan Islamism*, Islamic education in *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), and/or on *Penghulu* (Muslim leader). With the occurrence of the incident, the policies on *Pan Islamism* were carried out more seriously, and Islamic education was also monitored (*cf* Kartodirdjo, 1984; Steenbrink, 1991; Suminto, 1996; and Ismail, 1997).

The Netherlands Indies' government monitored the publication of the newspapers of *Bintang Islam* (Islamic Star), *Medan Muslimin* (Muslim Field), dan *Pandji Islam* (Islamic Banner), which often published news on the development of Muslims in Indonesia and abroad (Noer, 1991; and Suminto,

1996). The reaction of the Netherlands Indies' government towards Islam and its developments in this country seemed to be discriminative compared to programs having missionary activities or *zending* (Shihab, 1998). The Netherlands Indies government was very afraid with the power of Muslims, who were in the process of social and religious changes. Actually, the harsh and rigid response of the Netherlands Indies government made the bond of the unity of Muslims to be stronger and, on the contrary, made the government loose the sympathy of the Muslims in Indonesia (Noer, 1991; and Suminto, 1996).

The nationalist movement which was proclaimed by the young generation, whom Taufik Abdullah (2010) referred as "the proclamation of progress", had been voiced vigorously through press, whether it was in Malay or in vernacular languages. With the spirit of advancement, the native young generation formed national awareness, which was in motion with other nations of the world in an era towards modernity, although they don't know each other (*cf* Abdullah, 2010; and Kasman, 2010).

Since 1856, the Netherlands Indies government had actually regulated the publication of press where prior to the publication, all printed works had to be submitted to the local head of government, justice officials, and *Algemene Secretarie* (Secretary of State). The submission had to be done by the printing office or the publisher, and should be signed. If the regulations were not carried out, the printed works were confiscated and the printing office and the place, where the printed works, was kept would be sealed (Smith, 1986).

The regulations, which were tend to be preventive, was then renewed in 1906; and changed to be repressive, meaning that the submission of sample copies of a newspaper, magazine, or periodicals to the government officials, justice officials, or the court and secretary of the government should be done 24 hours after publication or circulation. It was also stipulated that the name, address of the printing office or publisher of the press had to be included (Maters, 2003).

In this case, there was freedom for press

in publishing it, although the administrator feared for any content that would be considered not in line with the expectation of the Netherlands Indies government, which would entail punishment to the administrator of the newspaper. But, this policy was better compared to the policy twenty five years later, in 1931, where the colonial government issued *Persbreidel Ordonantie* (Law of Massmedia Suppression) on 7 September 1931. The local government or the Governor General was given the right by the Netherlands Indies government to ban publication, printing, and distribution of certain printed media, which was considered to “interfere the public order”. Besides that, certain measures can be taken against press based on *Haatzaai Artikelen* or Hate Verses (cf Smith, 1986; and Maters, 2003).

This clauses contained legal consequences to anyone through writing, verbal action, or pictures propagated hostility, hatred or contempt towards the Netherlands Indies government or a number of groups, or population groups living in Netherlands Indies in terms of race, religion, nationality, and descendant. The punishment for the violation of the clauses was a maximum of seven years imprisonment or a maximum fine of f. 300 (three hundred Dutch Gulden). Despite the implementation of numerous policies on press in Indonesia, the number and circulation of Malay or vernacular languages press was rising (Surjomihardjo *et al.*, 2002; Adam, 2003; and Kasman, 2010).

ISLAMIC REFORM MOVEMENT IN THE INDIGENOUS ISLAMIC PRESS

In the beginning of the 20th century, there was a general condition which occurred not only in the Netherlands Indies but also South East Asia. At that time, according to C. Snouck Hurgronje (1995), the mystical world was more appreciated than Islamic laws. This was due to the deeply rooted influence of the remaining teaching of paganism and Hinduism. At that time, the remaining condition of animism era was still visible in the community. The condition of the community, where worshipping rituals still existed, made religion teachers or *kyai* at that time to be motivators of reform. In one side, the negative

matter which occurred besides the wrong understanding of religion that excessive worship towards *kyai* or teachers or *syekh* in any acts in life made the Netherlands Indies government exiled the *syekh* as they were considered to jeopardize the government’s position (Hurgronje, 1995:180-181).

The influence of the *ulamas* (Islamic scholars), which became the fear of the Netherlands Indies government, then, created many changes to the Muslim community of Indonesia. The emergence of religious reforms movements pioneered by the *ulamas* as an influence of reforms in the Middle East was a feature in the search for Islamic values, which were rational and believed in progress and science and the spread of which then was done a lot in writing and verbal acts (Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

Indonesian Muslims realized that in facing the condition of the nation at that time, there was a need for changes in the mindset in understanding the true teachings of Islam and which was in line with the *Al-Qur’an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad). The growth of thoughts in reforms was especially driven by those who had ever studied in Mecca. They were influenced by the Wahabi movements, which appeared in the Arabic peninsula in the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, as a reaction to the decline in Islam.

Wahabi movement was aimed to return to the purity of Islamic teachings, like in the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him). Wahabi movement was aimed to harmonize Islamic laws, which were internalized with the social life of the community. The influence of the Wahabi movement was, then, carried to South East Asia, especially Indonesia, where it started with the reforms in Minangkabau area, West Sumatera, initiated by Syekh Ahmad Khatib (1855-1915), who had ever been the *imam* (Islamic leader) from *madzhab* (school of thought) Syafi’i in Masjidil Haram. Syekh Ahmad Khatib indeed never returned to his place of origin in Minangkabau, but the influence of his thoughts was carried by his students who learned from him. Besides that, his influence can be found through

his writings, which dealt with the growing problem in Minangkabau area, namely his refusal towards the *tarekat* (Islamic mysticism organization) Naqsyabandiyah and towards customary rules on inheritance, which were not in line with the *shariat* (law) of Islam (Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991:39-40).

The reforms carried out by Syeikh Ahmad Khatib started the reforms through writing media. Through the port of Singapore, the books, magazines, and newspapers originated from outside South East Asia, especially from the Middle East, were then spread throughout this area. Besides being a transit point in the journey towards the Haj for Muslims in South East Asia, Singapore was also the first publishing point for printing media in South East Asia (Madjid, 2008).

This can be seen with the publication of the first reform magazine in Singapore, *Al-Imam* (Leader) in 1906, which was in Malay language and which was initiated by Syeikh Thaher Jalaluddin Ampek, whose born in Angkek, Bukittinggi, West Sumatera and then stayed in Singapore (Noer, 1991:40-42). This magazine awaken Muslims, who were in the decline in understanding the teachings of Islam. Magazine of *Al-Imam*, which contained the main changes in religious attitudes, published many articles on popular knowledge, comments on the important events in the Islam world at that time, and religious matters. This magazine also propagandized the need for Muslims to reach progress, so that Muslims would not be left behind in competing with the West (Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

The works of Syeikh Ahmad Khatib, then, spread to Indonesia at the same time with the spread of the magazine. This magazine had similarities with *Al-Manar* (Beacon) and *Al-'Urwat al-Wustqa* (Sturdy String Knot) in Egypt initiated by Rasyid Ridha, which published a lot of the thoughts of Muhammad Abduh on Islamic reforms. This publication was also, then, followed by Haji Abdullah Ahmad, Syeikh Ahmad Khatib's disciple, from Padang Panjang, West Sumatera, by publishing *Al-Moenir* (Enlightenment) magazine with Zainuddin Labai El-Yunusi in 1911-1916 (Daya, 1990:112-115). He then established, lead, and managed community of education,

schools, and *tabligh* (educational propagation) movement to fight against the practice of *tarekat* (Islamic mysticim organization) and traiditons that is not relevance with Islamic teachings (*cf* Daya, 1990; Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

Al-Moenir magazine was the pioneer of Islamic reforms magazines in Indonesia. The aim of *Al-Moenir* magazine, as written in its first publication, was as follows:

[...] memimpin dan memadjoekan anak-anak bangsa kita, Melajoe dan anak-anak Islam di Soematra kita ini, pada beragama jang loeroes dan beri'tikad jang betoel [...] menambah pengetahoean jang bergoena dan mentjari nafkah kesenangan hidoep soepaja sentosa poela mengerdjakan soeroehan agama [...] hikmah jang teroetama sekali daripada beberapa Rasoel dalam agama Islam ini adalah soepaja mentjerdikkan kita, manoesia, daripada bebal dan soepaja menerbitkan damai pada antara manoesia (cited in Daya, 1990:117-118).

Translation:

[...] to lead and develop our nation's children, Malay, and the children of Muslim in Sumatra, towards understanding of Islam that is straight and correct faith [...] to add useful knowledge and earning an income of living for the pleasures of life in order to prosper and be happy anyway in running religious orders [...] the main lessons from some of the Messengers of Allah in Islam is in order to educate our intellectual, as human, out of obtuseness, and to creates a sense of peace among human beings.

The reform movement initiated by Haji Abdullah Ahmad, through *Al-Moenir* (Enlightenment) magazine, was clearly meant to improve the conditions of Indonesian Muslims by way of increasing their knowledge and understand the teachings of Islam correctly. While the reform done by HAKA (Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah), or more often known as Haji Rasul, in 1925, was by introducing *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic League) and *Muhammadiyah* (Followers of Prophet Muhammad) in Minangkabau, West Sumatera. He then, in 1929, was able to establish unity of students of Haji Rasul in Padang Panjang under the name of Sumatera *Thawalib* (Students), which at the beginning was named as *Thuwailib* (HAMKA, 1982; Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

This social organization gave birth to PERMI (*Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia* or Unity of Indonesian Muslims), in 1932, which then became an Islamic political party. Then, Sumatera *Thawalib* was more active in education by establishing *Perguruan* (College) Sumatera *Thawalib* aimed at producing Muslims' intellectuals to advance Islam and its followers (Noer, 1991:45-46). *Sekolah* (School) of Sumatera *Thawalib* in Padang panjang, West Sumatera, reflected the growth of Islamic modern movement in the region, which educated a lot of students to be become an independent and *istiqomah* (consistent) Muslim (HAMKA, 1982; Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

The birth of *Sekolah* Sumatera *Thawalib* in Padang Panjang was, then, followed by other schools in other Sumatera regions from Aceh up to Bengkulu. Burhanuddin Daya (1990) stated, by quoting the magazine of *Dewan* (Council), which was issued in Yogyakarta, Central Java, in 1930s, as follows:

Soematara Thawalib itoelah nama satoe perkoempoelan jang boleh dikatakan moela-moela memboeka mata pendoeoek Minangkabaoe, oemoemnya seloeroeh Soematra; dan telah banjak berdjasa pada tanah air dan agama (cited in Daya, 1990:92).

Translation:

Thawalib (students) of Sumatra, that's the name of an organization that can be said first of all to open the eyes of the Minangkabau people in particular, and the population of Sumatra in general; and also this organization has a lot of merit to the motherland and religion.

It means that Sumatera *Thawalib* (Students) is a reform organization like *Muhammadiyah* (Followers of Prophet Muhammad) organization in Yogyakarta, Java. This can be seen by the purpose of Sumatera *Thawalib* itself that was to: (1) Advance science and work that bring goodness and advancement, whether on earth or the hereafter, based on the teachings of Islam; (2) Establish, manage, and give help to schools, which give Islamic teachings and lessons beneficial for life on earth; (3) Published and help the publishing of books beneficial for the lessons in schools; and (4) Develop and spread the teachings of Islam to revive the soul

and spirit of Islam (Daya, 1990:94-95).

The influence of Islamic reform movement which, was reflected in the organization of Sumatera *Thawalib* obviously tried to revive the soul of religion to Muslims and to improve the conditions of the Muslims through science, which was acquired in Islamic schools. Sumatera *Thawalib* expanded its branches by fixing the methods, curriculum, and the quality of its teachers. The influence from *Al-Manar* (Beacon) magazine in Egypt and *Al-Imam* (Leader) in Singapore was clearly seen in this organization (Daya, 1990; and Noer, 1991).

The magazine of *Al-Imam* revived the emergence of magazines on the reform of Islam in Sumatera, such as magazine of *Islamiah dan Diniah* (Islam and Religion) in Batusangkar, West Sumatera, in 1928; and magazine of *Al-Itqan* (Perfectness), both of which besides the subject on Islamic lesson, also dealt a lot with politics, economics, social, education, nationality, and women (Daya, 1990:137). One example of their audacity was when the magazines of *Al-Itqan*, in 1930s, published an article which criticized the function of *Penghulu* (Muslim leader) at that time, who only prioritize worldly matters, as can be seen in this extract:

[...] penghoeloe-penghoeloe itoe sekarang soedah menjalahi foengsi jang ditetapkan adat kepada mereka. Jang diperhatikan dan dipentingkan mereka sekarang hanja apa-apa jang berhoeboengan dengan oeng rodi, oeng padjak, oeng oepahan, menghadiri oendangan nikah kawin, dan lainnja. Semoeanja ini haroes diroebah dan dikembalikan kepada foengsinja semoela, jaitoe mendjadi wakil orang banjak.

Penghoeloe haroes melaksanakan toegas amar ma'roef nahi moengkar. Tetapi kenjataanja, mereka loepa pada dasar ini maka masjarakat poen tidak wadjib lagi ta'at pada mereka. Maka kalaoe masjarakat akan mengangkat penghoeloe, angkatlah mereka jang terpeladjar, djangan diangkat mereka jang bakal djadi boedak pemerintah sadja (cited in Daya, 1990:171-172).

Translation:

[...] the Islamic leaders now have been violated the functions defined by customary to them. Payed and necessitated by them now are only matters relating to "rodi" (corvee) money, tax money, salary money, attending the invitations of marriage and wedding ceremony, and more. Everything had to be modified and returned to its

original function, namely to be the representative for the common people.

Islamic leaders should carry out the task of commanding the good and forbidding the evil. But, in fact, they forgot the duties and obligations, so that community members are not required to submit and obey to them. So, if the people will appoint the Islamic leaders, choose them whose educated figures, do not select those who will only become slaves of the government alone.

The views on reforms as these were often published in some articles in a number of magazines, which were circulated in Sumatra at that time. This was done besides to defend the truth based on the teaching of the Islamic religion in opposing customary in Minangkabau, also to protest the misconduct behavior of the government officials. The Minangkabau community in West Sumatera, at that time, was divided into two groups. The first was trying to hold on the tradition; while the other one opposed fervently towards tradition and they were obedient in performing religious services, which was then named as the *kaum muda* or young group (Abdullah, 1966; and Ricklefs, 1991).

The Paderi war in the 19th century, in West Sumatera, was one form of disharmony among the two groups. The traditional group always glorified the magnificence of the tradition of their forefathers. There was a saying “*indak lapuk dek hujan, indak lakang dek paneh*” (no moldy due to the rain, and no cracked due to the hot) as a principle related to the traditions that didn't give way for any changes. While the Minangkabau *ulama* (Islamic scholars), or the *Paderi*, were very stringent and opposed the traditionalists due to this (cf Abdullah, 1966; HAMKA, 1982; Daya, 1990; and Noer, 1991).

Datok Kayo, a member of the *Volksraad* (People Council) who continuously criticized the Dutch Indies government, stated in his speech in front of members of *Volksraad* on the condition of the Minangkabau community, who were strong towards their traditions. His speech, then, was published in newspaper of *Sinar Sumatra* (Sumatera Ray), in 1936, as follows:

Boemi poetra Minangkabaoe sangat sekali mendjoendjoengi adatnja, maka lambat benar agama Islam jang sempoerna diketahoei ataoe dipahami oleh boemi poetra di Minangkabaoe, apalagi Qoer'an jang menerangkan agama itoe

dalam bahasa Arab; karena itoe, tidak moedah boemi poetra Minangkabaoe mengerti maksoed jang diterangkan dalam Qoer'an (cited in Daya, 1990:163).

Translation:

Native people of Minangkabau upholds all cultures, then it is slowly Islam that perfect can be known or understood by the Minangkabau people, let alone the *Al-Qur'an* that describes the religion matters in Arabic language; so, it is not easy for the Minangkabau people to grasp and understand the purpose described in the *Al-Qur'an*.

There had been efforts to reconcile the two groups through agreements, but which the two groups believed would not be successful. Both groups should adjust their respective tasks and authority. The *ulama* (Islamic scholars) were not allowed to interfere with the matters of the region (*nagari*), but they had the right to give advice the chief village. Chief village, on the other hand, also didn't have the right to decide something without asking for judgment or *fatwa* from the *ulama*. In essence, the agreement was similar to a traditional saying which stated as follows:

Kalau adat serangkuh dayung dengan syarak, bak santan dengan tengguli layaknya; tapi kalau adat bersimpang jalan dengan syarak, bak antan (alu) pencungkil duri layaknya (cited in Daya, 1990:165).

Translation:

If traditions are in line with *syari'ah* (Islamic law) like milk squeezed from coconut with his meat; but if the traditions deviate or not in line with *syari'ah*, then, it is like pliers which never allied with thorn.

Unfortunately, the agreement didn't hold for long due to the domination of the Dutch colonial government who gave support to the traditionalist, thus setting aside the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and religion. Nevertheless, the *ulama* kept on struggling through various efforts, whether in the form of writing or activities in the social and political organizations. The coming of the reform organization, *Muhamadiyah* (Followers of Prophet Muhammad), made Islam still strong in this area (cf HAMKA, 1982; Daya, 1990; Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

In 1911 to 1917, the influence of Islamic reform movements in Java raised the awareness of Muslims to be literates. This was marked by the emergence of SDI (*Sarekat Dagang Islam* or Islamic Trade League) in Surakarta, Central Java, in 1911, which at the beginning was meant to consolidate Islamic economic strength in Surakarta in facing the domination of Chinese traders, especially in the business of procurement of raw materials for batik. The organization, which was established by H. Samanhudi, aimed to improve the life of Indonesian people to achieve wealth, prosperity, and the greatness of the country (Larson, 1990; and Noer, 1991).

So is the case with Islamic organizations which followed SDI, such as *Muhammadiyah* organization in Yogyakarta, established by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, in 1912; *Persyarikatan Oelama* (Islamic Scholars League) in Majalengka, West Java, established by H. Abdul Halim, in 1917; *Al-Irsyad* (Guideline) organization, and others, all of which were reform movements of Islam. The influence of Islamic reform was achieved by establishing educational and social institutions; publishing books, newspapers, and brochures; and other activities. These reform organizations succeeded in expanding their influences throughout Indonesia, especially because of their abilities in publicizing ideas of reforms through the print media that they owned (Noer, 1991; and Darban, 2000).

Besides to channel aspirations of the umma, SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League) used also its newspapers as one of the means to communicate among members. This Islamic organization published its daily newspaper for the first time on March 1913, with the name of *Oetoesan Hindia* (Indonesia Delegate), under the leadership of Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto and was published in Surabaya, East Java (Stoddard, 1966:319; and Noer, 1991:39). Other SI newspapers were *Sinar Djawa* (Java Ray) in Semarang, Central Java; *Pantjaran Warta* (News Broadcast) in Betawi or Jakarta now; *Sarotomo* (Magical Weapon for War) in Surakarta, Central Java; *Fadjar* (Dawn) in Cirebon, West Java; and magazine of *Al-Lisan* (Spoken), published in Surabaya, East Java (Nasution, 1991; and Noer, 1991).

SI actively appeared as an organization that defends the weak, thus, it gained much support from the people. SI encouraged Muslims to always improve their religious activities, so that Indonesians can become noble people and not to be oppressed by the arbitrary acts of the colonial government officials (Korver, 1985:196-199).

However, the spirit of Islam sometimes caused conflicts, especially economic conflict like what happened between the Chinese and the members of SI in Jambi, Sumatera; Bekasi and Cirebon in West Java; Semarang in Central Java; and Tuban in East Java. One of the examples was when SI opposed the wage system given to the people. SI demanded a raise in the wage system from 11 cent to 27.5 cents for a half day work of planting in the paddy field. SI noticed that the colonial government was being one sided to the Chinese. This often triggered the native people to be anti Chinese. These kind of occurrences appeared in newspapers and were often became topics of conversation (Korver, 1985:88-89).

In 1913-1920, in its consolidations of its members through its newspaper of *Fadjar* (Dawn), SI often reminded them to prevent themselves from carrying out the Seven Ms behaviours, namely: *main* or gambling; *madon* or sexual desires; *minum* or getting drunk; *madat* or candu; *mangani* or overeating; *maling* or stealing; and *misuh* or berating. The teachings of the seven "Ms", which was echoed by the newspaper of *Fadjar*, were the basic concept which had ever been used as the main discussion of SI Congress in Surakarta, Central Java, in 1913, and which was stated by Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto (Korver, 1985:66; and Larson, 1990).

In the Congress, Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto emphasized that the morality of the people of Indonesia should not be low and Indonesians should not humble themselves by doing acts that are forbidden in Islam. SI made Islam as truly noble values, which had to be fought as the religion of man. The newspaper of *Fadjar* (Dawn) and magazine of *Al-Lisan* (Spoken), then, motivated Muslims to follow the call of SI (Korver, 1985:67).

The calls of SI, which were aimed to improve the life of the people of Indonesia,

were often fulfilled in the form of articles on the importance education based on the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and the *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad), and mastering languages besides Malay, such as Arabic and Dutch. This program was also enacted in SI owned schools such as HIS (*Hollandsch Indlandsch School* or Elementary School) for the *Priyayi* (Javanese noblemen) with Dutch as the language of instructions; and *Sarekat Islam School met de Qoer'an* (SI School with the *Al-Qur'an*) which is an Elementary School specially for members of SI, which used the basic of the *Al-Qur'an*.

As explained in the newspaper of *Fadjar* (Dawn), a local newspaper owned by SI and published in Cirebon, West Java; and also quoted again in magazine of *Al-Lisan* (Spoken), owned by SI and published in Surabaya, East Java, as follows:

[...] bahoewa Sarekat Islam Cheribon mempoenjai azam mendirikan seboeah sekolah jang akan membri pengadjaran pada moerid-moeridnja beralaskan agama Islam, dan seberapa bisa akan diichtiarkan soepaja sekolah itoe tiada lebih rendah dari HIS. Adapoen sijstem jang bakal dipakai dalam itoe sekolah jalah sijstem jang soedah terpendang baik boeat mendidik dan memadjoekan anak-anak Hindia dengan tanah aernja, jaitoe kalaoe diseboet dengan pendek sekolahan itoe berdasar *Al Qoer'an* atawa "*Sarekat Islam School met de Qoer'an*". Sekolah itoe memake dasar agama Islam (*Al-Qoer'an*) soepaja kemadjoean anak-anak tentang lahir dan bathin bisa dapet bersama-sama.¹

Translation:

[...] that the Islamic League of Cirebon had a determination to establish a school that will provide instruction to pupils based on Islam, and as far as possible be arranged so that the school was not lower than HIS (Public Elementary School). As for the system to be used in the school system was already well known both to educate as well as to develop the children of Indonesia with their motherland, namely when called for short, the school based on the *Al-Qur'an* or the SI (Islamic League) School with the *Al-Qur'an*. The schools use the basic of Islam (*Al-Qur'an*) so that the development of children both in physical and intellectual domains can be acquired simultaneously.

¹See, for example, newspaper of *Fadjar*, No.151, Th.2, Cirebon: 10 July 1922; and magazine of *Al-Lisan*, Surabaya: 19 July 1922.

SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League) also opposed the tax collection system by the Dutch colonial government to Indonesian people. As expressed in newspaper of *Fadjar* (Dawn), owned by SI Local of Cirebon, from the speech of a Caretaker of SI Cirebon, named Bratanata. SI thought that the regional government of Cirebon acted inhumanly by carrying out the tax collection levied to the people, as stated further, as follows:

Disini boekan djadi maksoed saja oelangkan hal itoe, atawa bitjarakan Volksraad, dan lain-lainnja. Hanja saja maoe oendjoek kedjelekkkan Gemeente Cheribon berhoehoeng dengan pemoengoetan belasting jang ditimpakan pada poendaknja ra'jat jang sanget melarat.

Lebi djaoe, speker oendjoek boekti dan tjonto tentang pendoeoek boemipoetra di Cheribon, jang mempoenja modal paling banjak satoe Ringgit boeat mendjoeal aoeto, orang itoe dikenakan padjek f. 36,- dalem satoe tahoen. Sementara toekang mendjait jang doeloe asalnja dikenakan padjek tjoema f. 1,- ini taoen dikenakan f. 20.16,- sen, dan banjak lagi jang bisa dioendjoek kaloe kita maoe bilangkan satoe per satoenja. Tapi ini semoea, pendoeoek bisa mendjerit-djerit sadja, kerna pada waktoenja orang-orang itoe dikenakan padjek begitoe berat, zonder dionesoet dan dikasi taoe lebi doeloe.²

Translation:

My intention here is not to repeat it, or anything that has been discussed in the *Volksraad* (People Council), and others. However, I want to show the local government of Cirebon relates to taxation imposed on the shoulders of the people of Cirebon is already very impoverished.

Furthermore, speaker showed the evidences and examples on the native people of Cirebon, who had the capital as much as one *Ringgit* to sell the car, they were taxed as much as f. 36 (thirty six Dutch Gulden) in one year. While a tailor, who during the first taxable only f. 1, this year is taxed as much as f. 20.16 cents, and many other examples can be shown, if it wants to talk one by one. But this is all, the residents could only scream, because at the time when the people were taxed so heavily, they were never investigated and notified before it.

SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League) appeared to give quite a strong influence in the dynamics of the changes of the people, whether in action and ideas which were

²Cited in the newspaper of *Fadjar*, No.152, Th.2, Cirebon: 11 July 1922.

translated in the printed media that SI owned. As an organization that was formed based on Islam, SI did not neglect the social and economic problems of the *ummat* (Islamic society). The injustice, which the people felt at the time, became the theme of struggle to raise the degree of the poor, oppose the economic domination of the Chinese, and also the tax collection which burdened the poor. This also showed the involvement of SI in the dynamics and turmoil of politics, social, and economics (Korver, 1985; and Noer, 1991).

In the magazine of *Bintang Timur* (Oriental Star), which was owned by SI in cooperation with *Muhammadiyah* (Followers of Prophet Muhammad) organization, in 1923-1926, SI addressed that it was imperative for Muslims to master technology and to always base on the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad) in responding to the matters of life. This magazine was similar to weekly magazines of *Pandji Islam* (Islamic Banner) and *Pedoman Masyarakat* (Guidelines for Society), which were published in Medan, North Sumatera, in 1934-1941, owned by the Islamic organization, Sumatra *Thawalib* (Students). This magazines focused on news on the development of Islam abroad, although it also addressed the development in the country. Muslims were required to fight for the country and it had to be based on Islam and had to be through science (Daya, 1990).

Meanwhile, *Muhammadiyah* organization had some magazines, such as the weekly magazine of *Adil* (Justice) in 1932-1942, and *Papadanging Moehammadijah* (Information for *Muhammadiyah*) in 1920-an, which was published in Surakarta, Central Java. *Muhammadiyah* had the same intention as SI that was to "spread the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be upon him) to the native people" and "to advance Islam to its members" (Nakamura, 1983; Noer, 1991; Shihab, 1998; and Darban, 2000).

The propaganda of Ahmad Dahlan on *Muhammadiyah* as a way to spread the reform thoughts in Indonesia was influenced by the thoughts of Muhammad Abduh in Egypt. The first act of reform was carried out in terms of

physical practices, such as determining the *kiblah* (direction of Mecca), cleanliness, and *ijtihad* (endeavor) was it open or not had been closed yet. These acts, especially in performing the daily prayers correctly, carrying out social aid to the poor, and establishing educational institutions and hospital, were actively carried out (Noer, 1991; Shihab, 1998; and Darban, 2000).

Magazine of *Papadaning Muhammadiyah* had voiced the call of teaching of Islam and advised people to immediately dispensed with all matters in life that were not in line with the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad). As expressed in a song of *Kinanti* (Javanese pantun) entitled "Religion", which was published in the magazine. It stated that living without religion was like an animal, which is unable to control its lust, is enjoying performing sin and counteraction. Thus, men need to learn religion as religion was the guidance from Allah which was aimed to the human welfare and to avoid men from sufferings and it was also a way to reach a noble life.³

The efforts of the reform was, then, often expressed in the magazine of *Bendera Islam* (Islamic Flag) in 1924-1927, a weekly magazine which was a cooperation with the figures in SI, just like when magazine of *Bintang Timur* (Oriental Star) owned by SI which was a cooperation with *Muhammadiyah* organization. The reform efforts made by *Muhammadiyah* attracted Haji Rasul of Minangkabau in West Sumatera and causing him to establish *Muhammadiyah* of Minangkabau Branch in 1925, after he was disappointed towards the Islamic organization that he founded, namely Sumatra *Thawalib* in Padang Panjang, which got influenced by the Communism in 1922-1927. Through Haji Rasul, *Muhammadiyah* then spread to almost all parts of Sumatra (HAMKA, 1982; Daya, 1990; and Noer, 1991:84-95).

The voices of reform in the printed media owned by *Muhammadiyah*, besides about lessons in Islam also talked about the problems on "Islam and nationality" with the

³See, for example, magazine of *Papadaning Moehammadijah*, No.2, *Safar*, 1349 AH (*Anno Hijriah*), July 1930; and it is cited also in Didik Pradjoko (2010:104-105).

aim of preventing the flow of Christianization from the West, also to give spirit to Muslims to improve their behaviors in their religion by improving their knowledge on Islam and general matters (Noer, 1991).

In West Java, especially Cirebon and Majalengka, there were newspapers owned by *Persjaringan Oelama* (Islamic Scholars League) organization, which was founded by K.H. Abdul Halim in Majalengka, in 1913, namely monthly magazine of *Asj-Sjoero* (Deliberations) in Majalengka, in 1934; *Soeara Persjaringan Oelama* (Voice of Islamic Scholars League) in Majalengka and Cirebon, in 1931; *Soeara Islam* (Voice of Islam) in Cirebon, in 1920s; *Pengetahoean Islam* (Knowledge of Islam); *Miftahoes Sa'adah* (Gate of Happiness) in Sundanese language; *Berita Persjaringan Oelama* (News of Islamic Scholars League); *Al-Moe'allim* (Scholars); *Pemoeda* (Youth); dan *Penoendjoek Djalan Kebenaran* (Direction for the Right Track). Each of those medias made an effort to make the thoughts and *dakwah* (Islamic propagation), which were stated could be spread among to people and not to deviate from the teachings of the *Al-Qur'an* and *Hadith* (Noer, 1991).

The reform movements, carried out by PO (*Persjaringan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League), were not much different with other Islamic organizations aforementioned. The PO dealt with social, economic, and educational matters. K.H. Abdul Halim had the principle that the organization, that he founded, had to be equipped with lessons in Islam and general knowledge, even with numerous skills, such as handicraft, trading, and farming (Iskandar, 2001). K.H. Abdul Halim spread his goals in improving the quality of life of the Indonesian people, besides through educational institutions, namely *Santi Asrama* (dormitory for the Islamic boarding school students), also through publishing magazines and brochures between 1930-1941. The press owned by PO discussed, besides the *dakwah* of Islam also a lot about the economic matters of the people, which were developing at that that time (Noer, 1991:82-83).

On the nationalism or nationality, magazines of *Soeara Islam* and *Soeara*

Persjaringan Oelama discussed the relation between feeling of nationalism and Islam. PO owned press voiced a lot on critics towards the policy of bureaucracy of colonial government, and paid close attention on the development of the politics of Muslims.⁴ Thus, through newspapers, Muslims became enlightened in matters of state politics and also science.

Meanwhile, PERSIS (*Persatuan Islam* or Islamic United) was founded in Bandung at the beginning of 1920s, published magazine of *Pembela Islam* (Defender of Islam), in 1929-1933, which intensely gave attention on the study and development of Islam in the nation. It also gave attention on educational activities, *tabligh* (preaching at a religious meeting), and other publications, especially that discussed matters of *iman* (leader of communal prayer) and rituals by refusing (Noer, 1991:100-102). Besides magazine of *Pembela Islam*, PERSIS also published a magazine of *Al-Fatwa* (Instructions) on November 1931. It, then, published a monthly magazine of *Al-Lisan* (Spoken) in 1935-1941, which was published in Bandung, West Java and in Bangil, East Java; and discussed a lot about religious matters, reforms, and politics at that time. PERSIS also paid attention educations activities, besides *dakwah* (propagation) and publication through pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and Islamic books. This attention was to spread the goals and thoughts on reforms (Noer, 1991:103-104).

Actually in essence, all Islamic press media tried to remind all Muslims to realize the importance of science so that Muslims can adjust with the advancement of the era. The voices of Islamic press reminded Muslims to be more advanced than the Europeans. This will deny G.F. Pijper (1985, 1987, and 1992)'s view that Indonesians in the 20th century would implement traditional, which was mixed with polytheistic; thus, any form of reform that came to Indonesia, would experience difficulty to be accepted.

Following is an excerpt of the report written by G.F. Pijper (1987), in 1928 and 1929, when he paid attention on the

⁴See also magazine of *Soeara Persjaringan Oelama*, owned by PO (*Persjaringan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League), Th.III, No.10, October 1931, p.104.

development of Islam in Cirebon, West Java, as follows:

[...] Tombs and sacred places are scattered in Cirebon. In Java, the religious adherence can only be seen realistically in Banten and Cirebon. This area is also the area of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). The *kyai* have great influence among the people until now. Religious life is still traditional. New religious schools up to the present are unable to develop in Cirebon. *Muhammadiyah* and *Sarekat Islam* cannot set their foot here, only the union of conservative ulama, namely *Nahdlatul Ulama*. While in the South, in Majalengka, there is *Perserikatan Ulama* (Pijper, 1987:80).

According to the writer, G.F. Pijper (1987)'s report stating his view that the people in Cirebon would not accept reforms is incorrect or not true in the whole. This is because Islamic organizations, such as SI (*Sarekat Islam* or Islamic League), *Muhammadiyah* (Followers of Prophet Muhammad) organization, and PO (*Perserikatan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League) were able to spread the teachings on reform there. They even were able to establish schools based on the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad).⁵

A.P.E. Korver (1985) even reported that the members of SI of Cirebon Branch, West Java reached a number of 40,000 people, which if compared to the number of members of SI in other parts of Indonesia was the highest after SI of Batavia Branch (now Jakarta) which reached 60,000 people (Korver, 1985). Thus, G.F. Pijper's view was, one again, not proven.

An article in magazine of *Soeara Islam* (Voice of Islam) in Cirebon, owned by PO (*Perserikatan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League), stated an importance of science, as follows:

[...] *djatoehnja deradjat Oemat Islam, serta malang dan oentoengnja nasib bangsa-bangsa Islam, teroetama djatoehnja itoe hanjalah berpadanan dengan kelalaian bangsa-bangsa Islam tentang memperhatikan, mematangkan, menegoehkan, dan menghidoepkan pengetahoean Ilmoe Islam, mengoatkan atoeran-atoeran Islam, dan memikoel koeadjiban-koeadjiban bersetoedjoean dengan pengetahoean Ilmoe Islam itoe.*
Pada kejakinan PO, kelebekan dan deradjat Oemat Islam itoe, di moeka boemi semoanja dan

di tanah air kita, kepoelaoean Hindia, sebagai bahagian oemat itoe poen djoega, hanjalah dapat beroebah, djika dihilangkan sebab-sebabnja kelalaian tentang hal-hal terseboet tadi [...].

*Demikian djoega, dimana terbit perloenja, kan membitjarakan dan seboleh-boelnja menghabisi perbantahan2 jang terbit daripada perselisihan [...] maka PO telah seia-sekata dengan sekalian anggaoetanja akan melakoekan segala ichtiar jang patoet dan tida melanggar wet-wet negeri boeat berhoeboengan dengan segala golongan, perkoempoelan, dan saedara-saedara oemat Islam goena mempersatoekan segala oesaha dalam agama Islam, oentoek menjebarkan adjaran-adjaran dan menegoehkan atoeran kehidoepan ke-Islam-an, akan goena keselamatan doenia dan segala bangsa adanja.*⁶

Translation:

[...] the fall of the degrees of Muslims as well as unfortunate and luckily fate of the Islamic nations, especially the fall were comparable only to the negligence of the Islamic nations in notice, to finalize, to affirm, and turn the knowledge of Islamic science, strengthen the rules of Islam, and assume obligations in line with the knowledge of Islamic Sciences.

In the PO (Islamic Scholars League)'s opinion, the weakness and the degree of the Muslim community, in around the world and in our country, Indonesia, as part of the Muslims in the world, can only change if we eliminated the causes omission of these things earlier [...].

Likewise, where necessary in publishing, will discuss and where possible, eliminate strife-conflict arising from disputes [...] the PO has formed an alliance with all members to make every effort worthy and does not violate the state laws to relate well with all the groups, associations, and the Muslims brothers to unite all efforts in the Islamic religion, to spread the teachings and affirm the rule of life based on Islam, making it useful for the salvation of the world and all the people in the world.

Thus, PO (*Perserikatan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League) looked to have broad horizon on the decline of the Islamic world, especially in its own country. PO identified the problems that made Muslims to be left behind among others was the negligence to hold dearly to the teachings of Islam (Iskandar, 2001). PO often opened itself to dialogues with other organizations to unite Muslims and together struggle for awakening of the deegree of Muslims in the Dutch Indies (Indonesia now).

⁵Newspaper of *Fadjar*, No.151, Th.2, Cirebon: 10 July 1922.

⁶See magazine of *Soeara Islam* (Voice of Islam), No.1, Cirebon: 1 January 1927.

Meanwhile in *Soeara Islam*, which was also read by people in Cirebon, covered the matters on nationalism or nationality. This can be seen in an article entitled "Islam and the Feeling of Nationalism", which was written as follows:

[...] tiada dengan toempahan darah, maka pada abad ke-15 timboellah agama Islam di Tanah Djawa. Pelahan-pelahan, tapi boleh benar menggantilah agama Islam daripada agama Hindoe, jang doeloe digoenakan orang di seloeroeh Hindia ini.

[...] dengan begitoe maka tiap-tiap orang Boemipoetra mendjadi Moeslim. Kebangsaannja tida terpetjah-belah, tapi malah bertambah-tambah koeatlah persatoeannja, sesoedahnja melempar agama Hindoe dan Boedha, dengan ber-agama Islam.

Islamlah Agama Kebangsaan. Kata-kata: "Saja seorang anak Negeri dan Islam", telah dalam betoel bahwa Islam diisap oleh Ra'jat Hindia.

Saban-saban desa, kampoeng, apakah di tanah pasisiran maoepoen di tanah perboekitan, sama mempoenjai langgar dan seorang goeroe mengadjinja. Sekarang tahoeleh kita, bahwa tida dengan paksaan poela dalam menoentoet pengadjaran ilmoe Islam itoe, sebaliknja apa poelalah jang kita ketahoei?

[...] oentoek membangoenkan perasaan Kebangsaan kepada Ra'jat, maka haroeslah digoenakan orang "Islam"; oentoek memperhatikan keperloean Ra'jat sebangsa, maka Islamlah jang haroes diperboeat alatnja!

[...] begitoeleh, maka perhimpoean pemoeda-pemoeda bidjaksana sebagai Indonesische Studieclub, oempamanja, berhaloean dan bertoedjoekan menoentoet kemerdekaan Ra'jat dalam hati dan pergaoelan hidoep bersama, agar merdeka dalam pemandangan dan dalam perhimpoean; djadi bila dengan bersoenggoeh-soenggoeh, maka haroeslah bagai anggaoetanja mentjahari perhoeboengan dengan Ra'jatnja seloelas-loeasnja.

Maka dari itoe, dari mana lagi, selain dari Islam terdapatnja! Islam jang menjama-ratakan akan segala manoesia di sekoeliah kolong langit! Dengan keterangan jang singkat ini, moedah-moedahan persangkaan jang di-address-kan kepada perhimpoean Persjarikatan Oelama dilenjapkanlah daripada dirinja pemoeda-pemoeda terpeladjar dan bidjaksana, teroetamanja toedoehan bahwa Persjarikatan Oelama itoe conservatief, atau melempar pantolon palmbich plus couponnassje dari kiai-kiai jang alim lagi bidjaksana; P.O. meroebah agama Islam atau P.O. pro-Katholiek dan mengoerangkan Soennah; manakala dari fihak jang amat berkoeasa, P.O. bertjampoerkan Karl-Marxisme, tiada dengan diselidiki lebih dahoeleoe sedalam-dalam dari jakinnja, akan segala fatsal terseboet tadi (ibidem with footnote 6).

Translation:

[...] not with bloodshed, then, in the 15th century AD (*Anno Domini*) came the religion of Islam in Java. Slowly but surely, it is true that Islam has replaced the Hindu religion, which once practiced by people throughout Indonesia archipelago.

[...] thus, each person of Indonesia becomes a Muslim. Nationalism is not split, even growing stronger towards the unity, after throwing Hinduism and Buddhism, by accepting the religion of Islam.

It is true that Islam is a religion of nationality. The words: "I am an indigenous people and a Muslim", it has profound true that Islamic religion is absorbed by the Indonesian people.

Each village, town, whether that is in the coastal areas and in the mountains, both have a mosque and a teacher of the *Al-Qur'an*. Now aware to us that there is no compulsion anyway to learning in Islamic studies, on the contrary what we know anyway?

[...] to evoke a sense of nationalism in the people's heart, it must be used the people of "Islam"; to pay attention to people's needs as one nation, then Islam should be used as a tool.

[...] thus, it is wise youth associations such as the Indonesian Study Club, for example, that aimed and directed to demand the independence of the people in the psyche and social life together, to be free in the expression and assemble; so if done seriously, it must be for the members to make the relationship widely with the people.

Therefore, where else if not from Islam to be gotten! Islam is a religion that equal to all human beings around the world. With the short descriptions, hopefully accusations addressed to the organization of Islamic Scholars League immediately removed from the youths whose educated and wise, especially the accusations that the Islamic Scholars League is conservative, or reject to wear trousers with necktie of *Kyais* (Islamic scholars) whose pious and wise; PO (*Persjarikatan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League) has changed the religion of Islam or PO was pro-Catholic and reduce the *Sunnah* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad); meanwhile from the top government, PO has been mixing the teachings of Karl Marx, not be researched advance with the heartiest conclusively, about all these problems previously.

Based on an article above, Indonesian people evidently could accept reform which occurred in their areas. Indonesians, at that time, had been aware of the importance of science, how strong was the understanding to Islam, unity of Muslims and the nationalism to be independent from any kinds of oppressions

and stupidity. In Surakarta, Central Java, although the families of the Sultanate were usually very cooperative with the Dutch Indies government, they were actually the ones who were able to prevent the *zending* mission of the Christians. They were even able to establish *Mamba'ul 'Ulum* (Source of Sciences), an Islamic boarding school which had modern education system and inspired the establishment of *Pesantren* Gontor in Ponorogo, an Islamic boarding school also, and other modern Islamic boarding school in Indonesia (Dhofier, 1990; Madjid, 1997; and Felay, 2003).

The various developments of reforms, especially through press media in the beginning of the 20th century, made Ir. Soekarno understood and made many opinions on Islam. His strong tendency towards the importance of reforms by understanding science and understanding Islam was made as a frame of mind in discussing parts of the teachings of Islam. Bernhard Dahm (1987) and Muhammad Ridwan Lubis (1992) concluded that the frame of mind of Soekarno on Islam consists of three things: *first*, there is no other religion besides Islam which stresses more on unity; *second*, there is no other religion beside Islam which is simpler and rational; and *third*, Islamic progress (Dahm, 1987; and Lubis, 1992:135).

The first principle was stated by Soekarno in his letter from Ende, East Indonesia island, to Ahmad Hassan, a leader of PERSIS (*Persatuan Islam* or Islamic United) in Bandung, West Java, on 1st December 1934, as follows:

Walaupun Islam zaman sekarang menghadapi soal-soal yang beriboe-riboe kali lebih besar dan lebih soelit daripada soal "sijid" itoe, maka toch menoeroet kejakinan saja, salah satoe ketjelaan Islam zaman sekarang ini ialah pengeramatan manoesia jang menghampiri kemoesjrikan itoe. Alasan-alasan kaoem "sijid", mitsalnja, mereka poenja brosoer "Boekti Kebenaran", saja soedah batja, tetapi ta' bisa mejakinkan saja. Tersesatlah orang mengira bahwa Islam mengenal soeatoe "Islam Aristocratie". Tidak ada satoe agama jang menghendaki kesamarataan lebih daripada Islam. Pengeramatan manoesia itoe adalah satoe sebab jang mematahkan djiwanja soeatoe agama dan oemat, oleh karena pengeramatan manoesia itoe melanggar taoehid. Kalaoe taoehid rapoeh,

datanglah kebentjanaan (Sukarno, 1965:325; and cited also in Lubis, 1992:135-136).

Translation:

Although Islam nowadays face the problem that thousands more bigger and more difficult than the problem about the *Sayid* (lord), but instead in my view, one of the weaknesses of Islam today is to sacred towards man who approached idolatry. Reasons for *Sayid's* group, for example, they have a certificate of "proof of truth", I've read it, but could not convince me. Astray those who think that Islam had known an ideology of "Islamic Aristocracy". There is no religion that requires equality beyond religion than Islam. Consider sacred to man is one of the reasons that broke the spirit of a religion and Islamic society, therefore consider sacred to man is violation to monotheism in Islam. If monotheism fragile, then came the catastrophe.

Soekarno's view in the excerpt above was that Islam didn't differentiate race and groups, there is no feudal system, and Muslims had to move forward and avoid doing polytheism, something that violates *tawhid* (acknowledge the oneness of God) and a disaster to human mankind (*cf* Ash-Shiddiqy, 1952; and Sukarno, 1965). Soekarno also viewed that the door to *ijtihad* (individual interpretation and judgment in Islam) was widely open, and refused the attachment on the understanding of the religion based on the formulation of the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) in the past. This was reflected in Soekarno's statement, as follows:

Kita menamakan kita poenja kaoem ini pro-idjtihad. Kita menamakan kita poenja kaoem ini anti-taqlid. Maka kita tidak maoe meng-onderzoek kembali kita poenja faham-faham sendiri? Kita tidak maoe "meng-idjtihad" kembali kita poenja pengertian sendiri, dan maoe berkepala batoe sahadjja menetapkan bahwa kita poenja pengertian itoe soedah benar dan tak perloe diselidiki kembali? Kalaoe kita maoe bersikap demikian, maka kita sendirilah jang mentjekek mati kita poenja ketjerdasan, dengan tjara lambat-laoen. Kita sendirilah jang mengoper pekerdjaan kaoem taqlid, jang menjoedahi tiap-tiap adjakan akan heronderzoek dengan kata: "Maoekah engkaoe melebihi Imam jang empat?" (Sukarno, 1965:345; and cited also in Lubis, 1992:137).

Translation:

We call our group is pro-*ijtihad* (diligence). We call our group's anti-*taqlid* (taken for granted). So we'd like to review our own ideologies? We do

not want to rethinking our own understanding, and would be stubborn just stipulate that our understanding of it is correct and does not need to be examined again? If we want to be so, then, we ourselves will strangle to die our intelligence, by slowly. We are the ones who took over the job of the *taqlid's* group, which ending every invitation to review by saying: "Will you exceed the greatness of four *Imams* (school of thought's top leaders in Islam)?"

The rational principle of Soekarno was also influenced by the thoughts of Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, also Amir Ali and Ahmad Khan in India. According to Soekarno, something rational is a formulation based on the logic of the mind, which can be explained through casual process, not by something mystical. So, Soekarno thought that Islam should not ignore the inventions, which were caused by modern science and the other way around science, should not ignore the basic concept of science of the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam). Thus, Muslims will be more advanced compared with the other *ummat* or society (*cf* Sukarno, 1965; Stoddard, 1966; and Lubis, 1992:171).

CONCLUSION

The events, which occurred in the beginning of the 20th century, showed how strong the struggle of Indonesian people in facing the Dutch colonialism. Both nationalistic and Islamic organizations carried out activities in the field of economy, social, politics, and religion; and had made changes to the people to thrive and be critical towards the developments in the world. In carrying out political and other matters, the organizations channeled their reactions in many aspects, among others through printed media or press.

The content and their views of their articles in the printed media, in the era of struggle, had many similarities, namely providing information on the advances that had been gained by other nations. Just like the changes that occurred in the Indonesian people in general, which were due to various ideas of changes and reforms that arrives, the ideology of Islam also played a very big role in the changes of Muslims in Indonesia at that time, in stimulating the people of Indonesia, both in the villages and in cities, although there

were also many reactions and challenged that occurred, which sometimes also caused revolt and upheavals.

Thus, press functioned as a means of spreading the *dakwah* (propagation) and stimulating the Islamic reforms movements, which had the task of eradicating mystical and superstitious matters which were developing in the traditional community (*adat*). The change of mindset in Muslims was a part of the influence of the reform movements, which tried to prioritize the use of the mind (rational), in this case through press media.

All the Islamic organizations, which existed in Indonesia, always fight for the truth of Islam. They had a viewpoint that in facing the modern world and the progress of time, people should not carry out activities that were *khurafat* (superstition), mystical, superstitious, sorcery, deception, and others; but had to refer to the *Al-Qur'an* (holy book in Islam) and *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad), and understand the development of science. These efforts were to invite people to be self aware of the backwardness and to immediately abandon the life that was not in line with the teaching of Islam.

Islamic press in the colonial Dutch Indies era had been successful in voicing the efforts of Islamic reform, a movement towards progress which was done by Islamic organizations. In terms of religious, nationalism, and education, Islamic press directly or indirectly had provided a place for Muslims in accommodating and channeling the aspirations of Muslims in this country.⁷

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⁷**Statement:** I, hereby, declare that this article is my own work; so, it is not a product of plagiarism, due to all sources that are cited in this article, I showed it in the References. This article is also not submitted, reviewed, or published in other scholarly journals yet.

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Kyai Haji Abdul Halim of Majalengka, West Java, Indonesia

(Source: <http://www.hijarpui.org>, 16/2/2016)

On the nationalism or nationality, magazines of *Soeara Islam* (Voice of Islam) and *Soeara Persjarikatan Oelama* (Voice of Islamic Scholars League) discussed the relation between feeling of nationalism and Islam. PO (*Persjarikatan Oelama* or Islamic Scholars League), established by Kyai Haji Abdul Halim in Majalengka, West Java, Indonesia, owned press voiced a lot on critics towards the policy of bureaucracy of the Dutch colonial government, and paid close attention on the development of the politics of Muslims. Thus, through newspapers, Muslims became enlightened in matters of state politics and also science.