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EARLY IDEAS ON REFORM AND RENEWAL THROUGH JOURNALISM IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO: HAMKA'S ACCOUNTS IN AYAHKU (1950)

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Abstract

Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), referred to as the 'Hamzah Fansuri of the modern era,' writes about his ulama and scholar father, Haji Rasul's contribution to modernist thinking in Sumatra. This is encapsulated in Hamka's book *Ayahku* (My Father), first published in 1950. Hamka (1908-81), an essayist, journalist, public historian, scholar, novelist, writer and ulama, was prolific in his writings. Hamka's writing activity had closely followed his participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1927. This is when we see Hamka being closely involved in a principal medium for the spread of modernist ideas, namely periodicals, which were expanding rapidly the spread of the printing presses. His writings and narratives represent a 'key factor' in modernist reformism. Hamka's works are certainly pertinent to the study of Malay society. He left us with an abundance of sources on the dynamics of culture and change in the Malay peninsula and in Sumatra, especially with in the Ranah Minangkabau (Minangkabau heartland). In *Ayahku*, first published on 1st January 1950, Hamka wrote that writing about his father is similar to writing on the development of Islam in Minangkabau - difficult, complex, and contradictory, reflecting a society fundamentally rooted in the encounter between "pembangunan agamanya dan kekerasan adatnya" (advancement of religion and the orthodoxy of its customs). This paper delves on Chapter six titled "Semangat Pembaharuan Islam dan Mengalirnya ke Indonesia" (The Spirit of Islamic Renewal and its Penetration into Indonesia) of *Ayahku*. Many have narrated on al-Imam, and its origins. This paper focuses on Hamka's views, his observations and experience on the role of the press and journalism in the contexts of reform and renewal. It peculiarly illustrates the spirit and dynamics of al-Imam in the Minangkabau heartland. The significance is Hamka's engaging perspective on journalism as an instrument of reform and renewal in the Malay world is seen through the role of his father. Hamka attributes the Paris-based magazine titled *al-Urwatul Wutsqa* (1884) as producing the climate of "kesedaran" (awareness) among Muslims. According to Hamka, the magazine was the outcome of the engagement between Syeikh Muhammad Abduh, with Sayid Jamaludin (Al-Afghani). Both travelled to Paris due to unfavourable intellectual and political conditions in the Middle East. *al-Urwatul Wutsqa* contained anti-colonial narratives, instigating "kebangkitan Islam" (resurgence). To Hamka, the magazine's significance, which later inspired the al-Azhar-based *al-Manar*, which later influenced al-Imam and al-Munir in the Malay Archipelago, as based on the combination between the power of Muhammad Abduh's words and the depth of Jamaluddin al-Afghani's philosophy. In *Ayahku*, we find the critical role of the press in the circulation of modernity to the Malays. © 2024, International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

Author Keywords

al-Afghani's philosophy; al-Urwatul Wutsqa; Hamka; kebangkitan Islam

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