
COMMUNISM FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY OF ITS IMPACT IN INDONESIA

Gayuh Erlis Suminar

International Open University

ABSTRACT

Communism, as a protruding ideology, has spread its significant influence worldwide. Introduced by Karl Marx and Engels, the ideology has been developing as an opposition to capitalism, aiming to dismantle class divisions in society that led to disparities between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in Europe. Communists do not recognize religion and deny the existence of God. Furthermore, communism has been hostile towards religion, as a reaction of a trauma when religion was a tool for the ruling class to control the lower classes. This paper aims to analyze the dangers of communism from an Islamic perspective and its influence in Indonesia. The study employs literature reviews and interviews with several authoritative sources. The findings indicate that communist ideology contradicts Islamic values and has a negative impact on the mindset of the Indonesian people.

Keywords: Communism, Islam, Karl Marx, Negative Impact, Ideology.

Corresponding author: Gayuh Erlis Suminar can be contacted at bundanemayra@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

As one of popular ideology grew in the world (Danial 2019), Communism emerged as an antithesis toward capitalist ideology (Nurhadi, 2018). This belief offers the concept of

socialism that promises “freedom” in different perspective. One essential and protruding concept in communism to achieve freedom for mankind is anti-God. Their taught considered the existence of God is to restrain human freedom and religion would keep them under control. Unfortunately, this notion is well received by some groups. However, there are oppositions who criticize this concept and Islam is one playing significant role against the concept of anti-God.

Indonesia is a country where communism once flourished. They took part in revolution era of Indonesia, but there have been clashes with the ulama since its arrival (Wibowo, 2021). Coming with an understanding that is considered revolutionary in liberation, in fact communism was not a solution to the problems faced by Indonesian during that era.

Numerous studies were conducted related to Islam and Communism in Indonesia. Some studies deep dive on “*Sarekat Islam*”, once a huge Muslim trade organization and/or political party during revolutionary era which was infiltrated by the communists and eventually controlled by them to spread their doctrine. *The Communist Movement in Sarekat Islam in Surakarta in 1918-1926* is a piece that well depicted how communists penetrating, growing, then corrupting in the *Sarekat Islam* through disunity they created within the organization (Muhammad Farih Fanani, 2021). Furthermore, there is also *The Dynamics of Sarekat Islam and Communist* which scrutinize the infiltration process of communist into the party then performed virus-like behavior who infecting and destructing its host (Ahmad & Mahasta, 2020).

Another compelling study highlights the thoughts of Islamic figures who are in favor of communist views. *Is Communism Contrary to Religion: Islam and Communism in the Thought of Haji Misbach (1914-1926)* (Wilandra, 2024) is evidence showing once a prominent Muslim figure believed that communism and Islam could get along. Haji Misbach, furthermore, tried to showcase a thesis that the aspirations of communism are in line with Islamic goals. This idea was described in a study entitled *Islam and Communism in the Thought of Haji Misbach* (Islam, 2021). *The Relationship between Islam and Communism the Dynamics of the Thought of Sang Kyai Ahmad Dasuki in Surakarta in 1910-1965* (Setyaningrum, 2019) offers another Muslim cleric, Kyai Ahmad Dasuki, who had similar ideas. The study discussed how this figure produce propaganda to support the communist movement. He stated that Karl Max's communist ideology is a way to free Muslims from the oppression of capitalism (Setyaningrum, 2019).

In the earlier discussions, there were no findings of a detailed explanation of communism in an Islamic perspective. Based on this background, this research aims to enrich the field of study through analysis of communism under the Islamic perspective and its impact in Indonesia. The limitations of the impact in this paper include exposure and impact to Islam from the entry of communism in Indonesia circa 1914 until its collapse in 1966.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction to Communist Ideology

Communist ideology upholds socialism. The terminology “communist” describes the far and the radical socialists (Danial, 2019). The idea of communism was coined by Karl Max and

Frederic Engels and poured in The Communist Manifesto issued in 1848. It then spread and was developed by its prominent communist leaders in history, such as Lenin and Stalin (Rujikartawi, 2015).

Communism was born to correct and revolutionize the order of life. The idea is to abolish the existence of classes within society under capitalist system. In addition, it also aims to free people from the attachment to private property, all forms of oppression, and exploitation. Furthermore, communism eager to demolish the huge gap between the rich and the poor. In general, communism emerged as a reaction to capitalist ideology that only support the interests of capital owners and overrode the interests of laborers in the opposite side. The conception brought by communist include the denial of religion, the denial of God and the elimination of individual property rights. They do not hesitate to justify all means to uphold the communist concept (Has et al., 2023).

2.2 The Movement of Communism in Indonesia

Communism entered Indonesia through the influence of Dutch socialists when Indonesia was colonized by Dutch back then. In 1913, H.J.F.M Sneevliet, a Dutch labor leader, came to Indonesia to introduce the idea of communism. He then approached the Indonesian trade unions and provoked them to become militant to fight for worker's rights. Under Sneevliet's initiative, in 1915 the Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging (ISDV) was founded. Having through a long process, the ISDV then changed its name to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) (Dwiki Anugrah Gustiawan, 2022).

The communist movement in Indonesia then infiltrated the *Sarekat* Islam, once a huge Muslim organisation and/or political party to announce its ideology. Although they believe in no God, they use Islamic organizations to achieve their goals. They were successfully developed their influence in society since *Sarekat* Islam had abundant of followers (Wibowo, 2021). The leader of the leftist *Sarekat* Islam, Semaoen, then was appointed as the chairman of PKI. During 1926 to 1927 the organisation has initiated rebellion against the Dutch in Jakarta, throughout Java and Sumatra. The purpose of the attack was to overthrow the Dutch colonial. However, these actions could be suppressed by the Dutch government in a short time (Dwiki Anugrah Gustiawan, 2022).

The eradication of PKI by the Dutch colonial did not make communism vanished. D.N Aidit, the Indonesian communist led the revival of PKI (Kurniawan, 2012). Indonesia won its independence in 1945 and held its first general election in 1955. It was at this time that the PKI was included in the list of parties participating in the election. It received more than 6.1 million votes and ranked fourth (Tempo, 2019). This shows that there is still public support for the communist party. The Soekarno's regime also provide space to communism in Indonesia with the establishment of the NASAKOM ideology (Nationalist, Religious, Communist).

During the period, PKI tried to get rid of all those who were in different side and against them (Tempo, 2019). One of its actions was to expose documents that criticized the cabinet at the time. In 30 September 1965, PKI was considered the one that responsible for the abduction and the murder of the

Indonesian army generals. This action was later suppressed by Indonesian government. In result, PKI was prohibited to exist in Indonesia and designated as a banned organisation based on the decree of the General Assembly of Indonesia in 1965 (Wibowo, 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this research is a qualitative methodology. Denzin and Lincoln define a qualitative approach as research whose findings are not obtained using statistical methods. (Lubis, 2018). The research process in a qualitative approach understands problems based on data and reports them in the form of words arranged systematically and scientifically (Ismayani, 2019).

This research uses a literature study method where researchers collect reference sources from books, journals and scientific publications that are relevant to the object of research. Furthermore, identify from literature sources, analyze and draw conclusions. This is in line with what Ruslan stated that literature studies are carried out by reading scientific journals, reference books and publication materials (Salmaa, 2023). Furthermore, the literature data that has been collected will enter the identification, reduction, and presentation stages. The data will then be analyzed to draw conclusions and presented.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Communism in Islamic View

Islam, as a merciful religion, is a perfect system to be a guidance for mankind to live their lives. Islam is able to answer all the challenges and problems that various ideologies are now trying

to solve, one of which is communism. The Islamic perspective on communism is based on the main sources of Islamic law, The Al-Quran and sunnah. Here is an Islamic perspective on some of the concepts brought by communism:

a. Hostility to religion and denying God

In the Quran, Allāh explains about God as the Lord of the universe. In Sūrah Ali Imran verses 190-191, Allāh invites people to think about the creation of the rainbow and the earth and the alternation of day and night. Humans can recognize the existence of Allāh through His creation. This automatically refutes the communist misconception of the absence of God.

Communists regard religion as a shackle for humans. In addition, religion is only a tool for the ruler to oppress the lower classes. Islam views religion as a system that protects humans. Conducting religious teachings properly, humans are invited to the path of salvation in this world and the hereafter. Religion forbids humans to do injustice to others. Religion also guides people to do good and realize justice and welfare.

b. Abolition of individual property rights

Islam teaches that everything in the world belongs to Allāh. However, Allāh has determined the sustenance of His servants as He has written before the creation of the earth. In the Quran, Sūrah Adh-Dhariyat verse 58, Allāh tells us that He is the one who provides sustenance to His servants. It is also mentioned in Sūrah Hud verse 6 that Allāh guarantees sustenance for each of His servants, including even creeping animals. Then in Sūrah Fathir verse 3 Allāh also calls on humans to remember the

blessings and sustenance that Allāh has given and worship Allāh (Tuasikal, 2015).

In Islam, Allāh provides a system for managing wealth. Among the examples are the laws of *zakat* and *sadaqah*. Humans are required to pay *zakat* so that wealth does not only revolve around the rich but also the poor. In addition, Islam also encourages humans to do alms to help people in need. For the favors of the property given later humans will be held accountable for the assets they have. In a hadith narrated by Ibn Masud, the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said that in the afterlife, people will be asked about five things, including where the wealth was obtained and how it was spent. If private property rights are not recognized, as in the communist concept, then how can people be held accountable for property that does not belong to them? This will certainly cause confusion (Has et al., 2023).

Communism brought the concept of eliminating individual property rights and centralizing the economy. Only the state has the right to property and the means of production (Nurhadi, 2018). This is also not in line with Islam which prohibits humans from taking other people's property unlawfully as Allāh conveyed in Sūrah Al-Baqarah verse 188. Allāh gives rights to property which must be managed in accordance with His rules and will later be held accountable for it.

c. Restriction of the right to choose a job

One of the applications of communism is the restriction of the right to choose a job. The central role of the state does not provide freedom to determine work based on their interests

and desires. Contrary to this, in Islam there are no restrictions in choosing a job. Islam encourages people to work according to their abilities. All work can be done as long as it does not violate the laws of Allāh. All forms of halal work can be done. This is as said by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) in the narration of Ibn Majah no. 2144 that we should fear Allāh by taking the good path in seeking sustenance, namely taking the halal path and leaving the haram path.

4.2 The Negative Impact of Communism in Indonesia (1914-1966)

The concept of communist ideology is expected to be the solution in creating the ideal new world order. However, in reality, it actually caused negative impacts such as distancing people from God and neglecting moral or social values. In addition, the absence of freedom in some aspects, for example in terms of choosing a job, led to a decline in people's creativity and initiative. In addition, the same incentive system also demotivates people because they are not rewarded according to the amount of effort they put in.

Communist ideology has influenced since its entry process. Communist efforts to control Indonesia have had deep impacts, including the mindset of some people who think communism is in line with Islam. Although communists believe in the doctrine of anti-God, they used Islamic organizations to spread their ideology. This caused divisions within the Muslim society. They also sought support from religious leaders through the similarities between the teachings of Islam and communism. They incorporated the idea that communism was in line with

Islam, which seeks to save people from oppression and achieve equality (Siburian, 2022).

Communist infiltration to Indonesia during pre-independence era results in the idea of Islamic communism (Andriani, 2020). The notion was initiated by Haji Misbach, a cleric and skilled propagandist. His thought was considered to bridge between Islam and communism. He echoed the common goals of Islam and communism in opposing the oppression of capitalism. In his view, the equal rights promoted by the communists were in accordance with Islamic teachings that prohibit injustice (Wilandra, 2024). Furthermore, in his speech he emphasized that one can only be said to be a true Muslim if he cannot accept the principles of communism. Islam must support communist thinking in the association of life because according to him, if the world applies communist principles, it will be easier for Muslims to carry out Allāh's commands (Wilandra, 2024). Among the figures who followed Haji Misbach's thoughts and actively spread them was Kyai Ahmad Desuki (Setyaningrum, 2019).

5. CONCLUSION

Communism was conceived as a revolutionary ideology by Karl Max and Engels. It is a concept to fight the oppression of those in power through elimination of social classes and centralization of the economy. Communists are more radical than socialists because of their more radical movement. Communists will use all means to achieve the goals, including acts of violence and hypocritical. Communism also promotes hostility towards religion and denial of the existence of God. Under the scale of the Quran and sunnah, the communism concepts are clearly

opposites to Islam virtues. Concepts related to human rights such as the abolition of property rights and the right to choose a job are not in line with Islam.

Communism entered Indonesia in 1913 and was eradicated by Indonesian government in 1966. It caused significant harm to Islam in Indonesia. To spread their doctrines, communists infiltrated the *Sarekat* Islam which had a lot of followers. This caused divisions within Indonesian Muslim. In addition, communism has successfully influenced the thinking of some Islamic clerics that eventually promote the born of Islamist communism. Among the ideas of Islamist communism is to align communist goals with Islamic goals in terms of fighting the oppression and colonization. In addition, communism is also considered can facilitate Muslims in carrying out Allāh's commandments. Thus, communism had an impact on the mindset of some Indonesian people at during the era.

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