

THE ROLE OF 'ULAMĀ' IN INDONESIAN POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

The existence of 'ulamā' in politics in Indonesia has been recorded since the pre-independence period. The struggle of 'ulamā' with the community against foreign colonialism is inscribed in the history. The role of 'ulamā' continued in guarding the process of independence and post-independence. This study is a type of historical research that describes the role of 'ulamā' in Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim country in the world. Through a literature study approach, this research will explore the role of 'ulamā' in society from ancient times to the present. The figure of 'ulamā' in Indonesia is not only alive within the religious sphere, but also plays an important role in politics.

Keywords: 'Ulamā', Politics, Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are several versions of the theory of the entry of Islam into Indonesia, including differences of opinion regarding the path of entry of Islam into Indonesia. Historians differ on this matter with regard to three main issues, namely the place of origin of the harbingers of Islam, the carriers of Islam and the time of arrival. These differences arise due to a lack of information from existing sources, including the existence of some historians who support or reject certain theories.

In general, historians suggest that there are two theories about the origins of Islam in the archipelago, namely the Gujarat and Makkah theories. However, there are also historians who state three theories, such as Azyumardi Azra, a former rector of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for the period 1998-2006, who received the title of Indonesian Muslim scholar and received the honorary title of Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2010. Azra states that there were three origins for the entry of Islam into Indonesia, namely Makkah, Gujarat and Bengal. Unlike Ahmad Masyur Suryanegara, an Indonesian historian and writer who played a role in the Islamization of historical writing who also put forward three theories, namely from Makkah, Gujarat, and Persia.

The foundation opinion of the first Gujarat theory was put forward by Pijnepel (an Indonesian historian and writer who played a role in the Islamization of historical writing) in 1872 AD by interpreting the travel notes of Sulaiman al-Tajir (a 9th-century Muslim merchant and adventurer, originally from Siraf), Marco Polo (an Italian merchant, explorer and writer from the Republic of Venice), and Ibn Baṭṭutah (a Moroccan explorer who

traveled to various corners of the world in the Middle Ages). The Makkah theory emerged when there were many criticisms aimed at the Gujarat theory because there were other sides that were not revealed that weakened the theory itself. The most prominent historical writer in expressing the theory of Makkah is Hamka, the pen name of Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah Datuk Indomo, an Indonesian scholar, philosopher and writer. The Persian theory, pioneered by Pangeran Ario Hoesein Djajadiningrat, one of the first native scholars in the Dutch East Indies and at the same time the first native to receive the highest academic degree from Indonesia. The point of view of this theory is different from the Gujarat and Makkah theories regarding the entry and arrival of Islam in the archipelago. According to Hoesein, Islam entered Indonesia from Persia in the 7th century AD. This theory focuses on the socio-cultural perspective in Indonesian Islamic society which has similarities with those in Persia (Ghofur, 2011).

According to Baiti & Razzaq (2014), the deployment of Islam in Indonesia had various schemes, including through the following channels: trade, marriage, education, *taşawwuf*, politics, arts and culture. Trade channels were the earliest stage in the process of Islamization. This stage is estimated in the 7th century AD involving Arab, Persian, and Indian traders. In this channel, almost all community groups were involved, from kings, bureaucrats, nobles, the rich, to the grassroots. The traders gradually began to settle down, either temporarily or permanently. Gradually these traders formed settlements known as Pekojan. According to a Dutch Orientalist, Van den Berg, Pekojan comes from the word Khoja or Koja, which was used to refer to people of Indian descent who were Muslims

(Adryamarthanino, 2022). In the next stage, some of these traders started to form families by marrying local residents. In the education sector, '*ulamā*', kyai and religious teachers played an important role. These Islamic leaders organized education through the existence of pesantren. It is from these students that later Islam would be socialized in the midst of society.

Next, the *taṣawwuf* channel which is teaching to know and draw closer to Allāh I to gain a conscious direct relationship with Allāh I and obtain His pleasure. *Taṣawwuf* entered Indonesia in the 13th century AD and the most influential school of thought was the *Shāfiī* school. Meanwhile, political channels entered through the power of the king who had a major role in the process of Islamization. When a king embraced Islam, the people usually followed in the footsteps of the king. Then the path of art and culture was carried out in several ways, such as building art, sculpture or carving, dance, music and literature. The most well-known art channels are *wayang* and music performances.

Differences of opinion regarding the history of the origins of the entry and development of Islam are still being studied. What is certain is that Indonesia has developed into a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Data shows the number of Muslims in Indonesia continues to increase. According to the reports of The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC) (Rizatny, 2022), there are currently 237.56 million Muslims in Indonesia. This number is equivalent to 86.7% of the population in the country and when compared globally, the number is equivalent to 12.30% of the world's Muslim population.

Indonesia is known for its many religious figures such as *'ulamā'*, *kyai*, and *ustādh*. According to *Ustādh Ahmad Sarwat, Lc., MA.* (2017) the term *kyai* is a particular local designation from Indonesia, perhaps peculiar to the island of Java, especially Central and East Java. Usually, the term *kyai* is also applied to elders, not only in matters of religion, but also in other matters. Even old historical relics are often called *kyai*. *Kyai* are also generally pinned on those who have religious educational institutions, namely *pesantren*.

The term *'ustādh'* in Indonesia is usually given to recitation teachers or high-ranking religious teachers in general. In Arab countries, the *ustādh* has a very high position. For example, doctors who have attained the title of professor are entitled to be given the title *Al-Ustādh*.

Among the three vocations, the term *'ulamā'* is not generally applicable, because in terms of *fiqh* it has a very specific meaning and requirements as understood by the majority of Muslims. At the very least, mastering certain sciences, such as the science of the Holy Qur'ān, the science of *ḥadīth*, the science of *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *al-qawā'id al-fiqhiyyah*, and mastering the legal arguments both from the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah. He also understands the problems of the *nāsikh mansūkh* argument, the arguments for *'āmm* and *khāṣ*, the *mujmal* and *mubayyan* arguments and others.

The role of the *'ulamā'* was particularly numerous in the struggle against colonialism and in defending the sovereignty of the Indonesian state. *'Ulamā'* not only act as religious figures, but also have a stake in politics. What has been the role of the *'ulamā'* in Indonesian politics since the pre-independence era to

the present time? This is the basic question that will be discussed in this research.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 'Ulamā'

'Ulamā' is the plural of the singular word "ālim". Literally, scholars mean knowledgeable people. The word is in The Holy Qur'ān *sūrah Fāṭir* verses 27-28:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا ۗ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ
بَيْضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ (٢٧) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ
أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ (٢٨) ۝

"Do you not see that Allāh sends down rain from the sky with which We bring forth fruits of different colors? And in the mountains are streaks of varying shades of white, red, and raven black (27). just as people, living beings, and cattle are of various colors as well. Of all of Allāh's servants, only the knowledgeable 'of His might' are 'truly' in awe of Him. Allāh is indeed Almighty, All-Forgiving (28)."

'Ulamā' in the context of the verse are people who understand and study the laws of life in the universe. Described in the book "*Perempuan Ulama di Atas Panggung Sejarah*" by K.H. Husein Muhammad (Nashrullah, 2020), Arabs call chemists 'ulamā' *al-kīmiya'*. Meanwhile, mathematicians are called 'ulamā' *ar-riyāḍiyāt'*. However, over time, the meaning of 'ulamā' has narrowed to only those who understand religious sciences. For example, interpretation, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *taṣawwuf*, and others.

It is also mentioned in *sūrah Ash-Shu'arā'* verse 197 with the word '*ulamā'*' without starting with *alif lām* but leaning towards *Isrā'īl*.

أَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ آيَةٌ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ عُلَمَاءُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۝ ١٩٧

“Was it not sufficient proof for the deniers that it has been recognized by the knowledgeable among the Children of Israel?” (197).

In that verse, the word '*ulamā'*' is *iḍafah* to the following word, namely *Banī Isrā'īl*. This also indicates that this religion has a special view of the nature of the '*ulamā'*'. As an important theme in the Holy Qur'ān, the word '*ulamā'*' has many synonyms. There are many other words that mean or have the same connotation as '*ulamā'*', including:

- (a) *Al-'Ālimūn* as stated in *Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt* verse 43: “These are the parables We set forth for humanity, but none will understand them except the people of knowledge”;
- (b) *Ūlul 'Ilmi* (those who have knowledge) as stated in *Sūrah Āl 'Imran* verse 18: “Allāh Himself is a Witness that there is no god [worthy of worship] except Him—and so are the angels and people of knowledge. He is the Maintainer of justice. There is no god worthy of worship except Him—the Almighty, All-Wise”;
- (c) *Ūlil 'Abṣār* (those who have knowledge) as stated in *Sūrah Āl 'Imran* verse 13: “Indeed, there was a sign for you in the two armies that met in battle—one fighting for the cause of Allāh and the other in denial. The believers saw their enemy twice their number. But Allāh supports with His victory whoever He wills. Surely in this is a lesson for people of insight”;

(d) *Ūlin Nuhā* (those who have common sense) as stated in Sūrah *Tā-Ha* verse 54: “so eat and graze your cattle. Surely in this are signs for people of sound judgment”;

(e) *Ūlul Albāb* (those who have knowledge). As stated in Sūrah *Āl ‘Imran* verse 190: “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason.”. Heart or core/substantive knowledge, and *ahl udh-dhikr* (who always mention and remember Allāh).

All the words mentioned above are often translated or identified with scientists, intellectuals, scholars, scientists, and others.

In addition to the word ‘*ulamā’* in the Holy Qur’ān, it is also found in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet b in the sentence:

إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ هُمْ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ...

“... *The scholars (ulamā’)* are the heirs of the Prophets”. Narrated by Kathīr bin Qais, Sunan Ibn Mājah 223, Introduction, Ḥadīth 223, Grade: Ḍa’īf (Darussalam)

There are many other titles accorded to the ‘*ulamā’*’, namely *sirāj al-ummah* (lamp of the people), *manār al-bilād* (tower/lighthouse of the state), *qiwām al-ummah* (pillar of the people), *manabi’ al-hikam* (wellsprings of wisdom).

The noble companion Ibn ‘Abbās (Wahidin, 2017) mentioned the term ‘*ulamā’*’ - as quoted by Ibn Kathīr in his commentary:

"They are people who know that *Allāh* I has power over everything. And the essence of a person who knows *Allāh* I is

anyone who does not associate partners with *Allāh* I, makes lawful what is lawful, forbids what is forbidden, keeps His divine messages, and he is sure that he will meet *Allāh* I and all his deeds will be evaluated.”

While Ibn Mas'ūd (Wahidin, 2017) said:

“Knowledge does not lie in the number of *ḥadīth* narrations. But the essence of knowledge lies in the quality and quantity of fear of *Allāh*.”

At the same time Imam Ibn Kathīr (Wahidin, 2017) quoted in his commentary the statement of Sufyān ath-Thawrī from Abu Hayyān at-Tamīmī from a man he said:

“There are three levels of scholars; first: people who know about *Allāh* I and know His commandments. Second: people who know about *Allāh* I but do not know about *Allāh*'s commands. Third: people who know *Allāh*'s commands but do not know about *Allāh* I. then what is meant by people who know about *Allāh* I and know His commands are people who fear *Allāh* I and know *Allāh*'s rules and His obligations. and what is meant by people who know about *Allāh* I but do not know about *Allāh*'s commands are people who fear *Allāh* but do not know about *Allāh*'s rules and His obligations. And what is meant by people who know *Allāh*'s commands but do not know about *Allāh* are people who know *Allāh*'s rules and obligations but do not fear *Allāh* I.”

According to Shaykh An-Nawawi Al-Bantani, a great scholar '*ulamā'* from Indonesia with international standard who became the Imam of the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia (wikipedia.org, 2023), '*ulamā'* are the persons who master all Shara' laws to

determine the validity of intentions and other Sharī'ah deeds. Meanwhile, Wahbah Mustafa al-Zuhayli, a Syrian professor and Islamic scholar specializing in Islamic law and legal philosophy (wikipedia.org, 2022) said that, '*ulamā'* are people who are able to analyze natural phenomena for the benefit of life in the afterlife and are afraid of Allāh's threats if they fall into disgrace (Muhadi, 2018).

2.2 Politics in Islam

According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (IslamAwareness, n.d.), politics is really the justice of *Allāh* and His Prophet. Politics is not a depravity (*munkar*). Real politics administers the affairs of all creatures, invites them to become noble, virtuous, and brings humans closer to good and away from evil (*fasād*). H.A.R. Gibb in his book *Whither Islam*, that it is not only a system of theology, more than that Islam is a complete civilization. In an affirmative tone, Nasir said that Islam cannot be separated from all dimensions of life.⁴ Islam does not separate spiritual issues from worldly problems, but rather covers both of these aspects. Islamic law (Sharī'ah) regulates both, human relations with God and human relations with each other (Mahanani, Marintan, Dewi, & Fuadi, 2022).

Specifically in Islam, politics has a special field of study namely *Fiqh As-Siyāsah*. *Fiqh As-Siyāsah* consists of two Arabic words, "*Fiqh*" and "*Siyāsah*". Etymologically (language) *fiqh* is explanations about the understanding or understanding of the speaker's intent, or a deep understanding of the intentions of the words and actions. In terminology (terms), according to Islamic scholars, *fiqh* is knowledge of laws that are in accordance with Islamic law regarding deeds derived from *tafṣīl*

(detailed arguments, namely the arguments or special laws taken from their basic principles and Sunnah).

Dedi, Syah and Putra (2019) concluded that *fiqh* is a set of legal rules or regulations concerning activities in human life in interacting, behaving and behaving in an outward and practical manner, which is the result of in-depth reasoning and understanding of Sharī'ah by mujtahids based on detailed arguments. In other words, *fiqh* is limited to laws that are applicable and *furū'iy* (branches) and does not discuss matters of *i'tiqādy* (beliefs) even though at the beginning of its appearance it was an integral part.

The word *siyāsah* – س ياسة (politics) is taken from the word ساس means to lead or rule, organize, and train. So, *siyāsah* according to language has several meanings, namely to regulate, manage, govern, lead, make policies, government and politics. Imam Abul Wafa Ibnu 'Aqil Al Hanbalī, an Islamic theologian from Baghdad, Iraq, a scholar of the Hanbali school of thought said that (Muhadi, 2018): "*Siyāsah* (politics) are all actions by which humans are closer to goodness and farther away from damage even though these actions were never prescribed by the Prophet b and there is no revelation of the Holy Qur'ān about it. If you say: "There is no *siyāsah* (politics) except that which is in accordance with the Sharī'ah or does not contradict what is stated in the Sharī'ah, then that is correct. But if what you mean by *siyāsah* is only what is limited by the Sharī'ah, then that is a mistake and at the same time blaming the companions of the Prophet b."

Implicitly in the Holy Qur'ān there is no word like politics, but there are many verses related to it, especially those related to

the Caliphate, Imamate, Territories and so on. This is only in the context of creating justice and upholding laws that lead to benefit in accordance with the will of *Allāh* I. Among the many verses that allude to the issue of *siyāsah* are in the *Sūrah Yūnus* verse 14:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ۚ ١٤

“Then We made you their successors in the land to see how you would act. (14)”

In this verse, *Allāh* I explains that humans are indeed designated as caliphs on this earth, wherein a caliph definitely requires special skills to support the task he is in charge of. This skill is what is later known as the term ‘*as-siyāsah*’. However, in this verse *Allāh* I it has not yet explained the values related to *siyāsah* that should be implemented by a caliph. These values are explained in another verse, namely in the *Sūrah An-Nisā’* verse 59,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ۗ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ٥٩

“O believers! Obey *Allāh* and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. Should you disagree on anything, then refer it to *Allāh* and His Messenger, if you ‘truly’ believe in *Allāh* and the Last Day. This is the best and fairest resolution. (59)”

General principles in politics have also been explicitly stated in the *ḥadīth*. One example of leadership qualities in Islam clearly recommended by the *Sunnah* is to always be trustworthy in carrying out the role of leadership is contained in the following *ḥadīth*:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُسْلِمَةَ، عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " أَلَا كَلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ فَالْأَمِيرُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ بَعْلِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالْعَبْدُ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ" ..

The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) as saying: *Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The amīr (ruler) who is over the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock; a man is a shepherd in charge of the inhabitants of his household and he is responsible for his flock; a woman is a shepherdess in charge of her husband's house and children and she is responsible for them; and a man's slave is a shepherd in charge of his master's property and he is responsible for it. So, each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock.* Narrated by 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar, Grade: Ṣaḥīḥ (Al-Albanī), Sunan Abī Dāwūd 2928, Book 20, Ḥadīth 1.

In this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet b explains to us that in essence every human being is a leader in each of their respective capacities. The value emphasized by the Prophet b. in this *ḥadīth* is the value of responsibility. Leadership in any form, whether on a high scale or on a low scale, will be held accountable.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a type of historical research (historiography). Becker (1938) said that the main aim of historiography is to appraise the value of historical works by modern standards. Berg & Lure (Edith Cowan Australia University, 2022) said that historical research or what is referred to as historiography ventures to systematically retrieve the complex nuances, the

people, the meanings, the events, and even the ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present.

Historiography relies on both primary and secondary sources including unpublished material. Primary sources consist of eyewitness accounts, oral or written testimony in the form of both public records and legal documents. This includes recordings, letters, journals, diaries or drawings in libraries or private collections. Secondary sources could be oral or written from the second hand, frequently found in textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, encyclopedias, biographies and other media such as tape recordings or films (Edith Cowan Australia University, 2022). This study uses secondary sources to explore the role of *'ulamā'* in Indonesia from ancient times to the present.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 'Ulamā' in Indonesia

The word *'ulamā'* experiences a shift in meaning when it is applied in an Indonesian context. In the view of the Indonesian people, *'ulamā'* are understood as people who are experts or have in-depth knowledge of Islamic religious sciences. This word is inherent in people who are competent in religious matters both in the context of understanding, behavior and religious attitudes.

In one of his lectures uploaded in a video on the Rachart YouTube channel, Gus Baha from Rembang, known as one of the scholars of interpretation who has in-depth knowledge of the Qur'an explained the role of *'ulamā'* in the Republic of Indonesia's independence:

"So, the point is you don't think that this country was only founded by the 'umara. Before the state, there were the '*ulamā*'. In the past, the wali songo until kyai of the independence era had formed one community. There was the chairman of the pondok, there was a treasurer. So, it was the kyai who could move the public to fight against the Dutch. Because a kyai is also a public authority. If Mbah Hasyim Asy'ari, a great '*ulamā*' with the title of national hero and is the founder and founder of Rais Akbar Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dies due to *jihād*, then everyone thinks that they have to do *jihād* against the presence of the Dutch" (Fauzan, 2021).

Musta'in Ahmad, Head of Kankemenag Kabupaten Karanganyar at the MQM (Mukhoyyam Qur'ani Muslimah) V International 2018 event said that the struggle of the Indonesian nation since the pre-independence era to the struggle for independence was inseparable from the important role of the '*ulamā*'. There are the big names Fatahillah, Pangeran Diponegoro, Tuanku Imam Bonjol, and Sultan Hasanuddin. In the proclamation of independence, 7 out of 9 members of the Committee of Nine as The Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence (Indonesian: Badan Penyelidik Usaha-usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan, BPUPK) at that time had the title Hajji, where they were pious people/'*ulamā*' at their time, such as Haji Abdul Kahar Muzakir, Haji Abdul Wahid Hasyim, Haji Ahcmad Subarjo, Haji Soekarno, Haji Mohammad Hatta, Haji, Agus Salim and Haji Mohammad Yamin (Kemenag Kabupaten Karanganyar, 2018).

The Deputy Speaker of The People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (Indonesian: Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, MPR-RI) Hidayat

Nur Wahid reviewed the important role of *'ulamā'* in the formulation and implementation of Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian nation. Hidayat said that *'ulamā'* played an active role in maintaining national unity. According to Hidayat, *'ulamā'* gathered in social organizations (mass organizations) such as Muhammadiyah, NU, Persis, and PUI as well as Islamic parties, including Islamic Syarikats, Penyardar, PII or Masyumi Parties have contributed to saving Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Indonesian: Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia, NKRI) (Pusdatin, 2021).

4.2 Pre-Independence Era

Soedjatmoko Mangoendingrat, a futurulog and one of Indonesia's best sons, led the UN University in Japan from 1980-1987, once said that there is nothing the colonialists in Indonesia are most afraid of besides the *'ulamā'*. It was the *'ulamā'* who became the driving force of the struggle long ago, until finally Indonesia became independent in 1945 (Koto, 2020). Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles FRS, a British statesman, Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, and Lieutenant Governor of Bencoolen, who is best known for bringing about the establishment of Malaysia and Singapore to a more advanced and modern state, said in his book "The History of Java" that "because they (*'ulamā'*) were so respected, it was not difficult for them to incite the people to revolt and to become the most dangerous tool in the hands of native rulers who opposed the interests of the colonial government." (Daud, 2019).

Here are some of the roles of *'ulamā'* in Indonesia when fighting the invaders (SuaraMuslim.net, 2017): First, the *'ulamā'* made

people aware in various pesantren, madrasa, organizations and other gatherings of the injustice and arbitrariness of the colonialists. In Indonesia there are around 56 old pesantren that are over a century old. The data was taken from the January 31, 2023 Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama/ Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU) award at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah/ Beautiful Indonesia Mini Park (TMII). The oldest one was founded in 1475M, namely Pesantren Al-Kahfi Somolangu, Kebumen. Founded by an '*ulamā*' from Hadhramaut, Yemen named Sheikh as Sayid Abdul Kahfi Al Hasani. They witnessed the struggle of '*ulamā*' in raising public awareness of the arbitrariness of the colonialists.

Second, '*ulamā*' issued a *fatwā* on obligatory *jihād* against the invaders. The *fatwā* of *jihād fī sabīlillāh*, namely the holy war for the sake of religion has had a great influence in arousing the spirit of heroes. Third, '*ulamā*' mobilized and led the people in a physical struggle against the invaders. Many '*ulamā*' became resistance leaders, such as Pangeran Dipenogoro, Fatahillah, Imam Bonjol, Teungku Chik di Tiro, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, KH. Abbās Buntet, and KH. Zainal Mustafa.

Fatahillah is reported to have married the younger sister of Sultan Trenggono, a ruler of the Kingdom of Demak at that time and was given authority over thousands of soldiers to convert the Sundanese to Islam and seize Sunda from the Portuguese. Fatahillah also joined forces with the Cirebon Sultanate so that it was estimated that they would bring 20 ships carrying around 1,500 troops. After successfully expelling the Portuguese, Fatahillah changed the name Sunda Kelapa to Jayakarta (Subroto, 2022). Tuanku Imam Bonjol is known as the leader of the Padri in Bonjol. The Padri War took place from 1803 to

1838 in West Sumatra. The Dutch Colonial Government changed commanders three times to defeat Tuanku Imam Bonjol (Fajri, 2022). Teungku Chik di Tiro or whose real name was Muhammad Saman was a guerrilla fighter from Aceh. During the Aceh War in 1881, Chik di Tiro managed to recapture the territories which had been occupied by the Dutch. Before the Aceh war, Aceh's territory was only four-square kilometers (Adryamarthanino, 2021). While KH. Zainal Mustafa was a leader of a pesantren in Tasikmalaya and the first Islamic fighter from West Java to organize a rebellion against the Japanese government (wikipedia.org, 2022).

In the Dipenogoro war that took place in 1825-1830 AD, Pangeran Diponegoro apart from gathering the people's strength also developed a strategy in war. Pangeran Diponegoro planned an attack on the Yogyakarta palace by isolating Dutch troops and preventing the entry of outside aid. Pangeran Diponegoro also sent envoys to the regents and clerics to prepare to fight the Dutch. He also separated the nobles who were judged as enemies and friends, and divided the areas of war and defense. The Diponegoro War was led directly by Pangeran Diponegoro, who was accompanied by his uncle, Pangeran Mangkubumi, Ali Basyah Sentot Prawirodirjo as the young commander, and Kyai Mojo with his students. Even though in the end Pangeran Diponegoro was captured by the Dutch and exiled to Makassar and all his troops were disbanded, the Dipenogoro War became the biggest war during the Dutch colonialism in Indonesia (Ningsih, 2021).

According to Muslim scholar, Dr. Adian Husaini, there has been a book of *jihād* that has inspired warrior '*ulamā'*. This book has existed since the 18th century which was written by Sheikh

Abdu-Somad Al Palimbani. The *jihād* book is titled, *Nasihāt al-Muslimīn wa Tazkirawat al-Mukminīn fī Faḍail Jihād fī Sabīlillāh*. If translated freely, it means "Muslim Advice and Reminder of the Believers about the Virtue of Jihad in the way of Allāh I" (Hanifa, 2018).

Not only male *‘ulamā’*, but also female *‘ulamā’* contributed to the struggle during the pre-independence period. For example, Cut Nyak Dien, Tengku Fakinah, who not only served as an educator in the community, but also as a warlord who was able to influence the people to oppose the invaders. Then Rahmah El-Yunusiah, who argues that religion (Islam) is the basis for the formation of human character. According to her, religious teachings are the core of other activities, including politics (Adibah, 2019).

Fourth, to form a unity in defending the independence of the Republic of Indonesia which was proclaimed by Soekarno-Hatta. KH. Ahmad Dahlan with his Muhammadiyah Association (1912), KH. Hasyim Asy'ari with his Nadlatul Ulama (1926), H. Zamzam with his Islamic Association (1923) engaged in education and social charity to educate people on the island of Java, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli with his Tarbiyah Islamiyah Association (1928), Muhammad Arsyad Thalib Lubis with his Al-Jamiatul Washliyah (1930) who was engaged in education and social charity in Sumatra. Dozens of other *‘ulamā’* outside Java and Sumatra who have made a major contribution to the birth of the nation's fighters and finally narrowed down with the birth of the independence of the Indonesian nation and state in 1945.

4.3 Independence Era

In his speech, Ir. Soekarno or Bung Karno once said the word "Jasmerah", which means to remind people not to forget Indonesian history, because it contains the hard work of heroes. Of the many heroes who helped defend Indonesia's liberation, there was a figure of '*ulamā*' who also fought in it (Redaksi Antero, 2021).

Chairman of the West Jakarta Nahdlatul Ulama Branch Mosque Takmir Institute (LTM PCNU), KH. Muhammad Najihun said that Indonesia's independence was not a prize, but was won by a long struggle sacrificing the wealth and souls of the nation's fighters, in every cry for independence accompanied by loud shouts of takbir. The role of '*ulamā*' is very important as a driving force for struggle, formulating independence and maintaining independence, without the clergy it is impossible for this country to be independent (Hanifa, 2018).

During the independence period, '*ulamā*' contributed, including in preparing for the moment of independence itself. One of them is Al Habib Ali Al Habsyi, known as Habib Ali Kwitang. He was one of the foremost Islamic religious broadcasters in Jakarta in the 20th century. He was also the founder and first leader of the Kwitang Taklim Council, which was one of the forerunners of other religious organizations in Jakarta and played a role in determining the day and time of the proclamation. The first president of Indonesia, Soekarno, before proclaiming independence, first met Habib Ali to ask for opinions on the right day and time to read the proclamation. In addition, he had contributed to the establishment of the first Islamic-based political party in Indonesia, known as the Islamic

Syarikat Party (Indonesian: Partai Syarikat Islam, PSI) (Sulaiman, 2022).

Then, Al Habib Idrus Al Jufri, better known as Sayyid Idrus bin Salim Al-Jufri or Old Teacher. is a warrior figure in Central Sulawesi Province in the field of Islamic religious education. He was considered as the inspiration for the formation of schools of various types and levels in Central Sulawesi under the auspices of the Alkhairaat organization, and continues to develop in eastern Indonesian 'ulamā' who had an important role in independence as the initiator of the heritage flag of the Red and White. Next is Al Habib Syarif Sultan Abdul Hamid II who is a national figure who has been instrumental in designing the Garuda Pancasila State Emblem. The next one is Al Habib Husein Muthahar who was given the honorary title of the Mahaputera star country for his services in saving the heritage flag of the Red and White and also has a guerrilla star for his services in participating in guerrilla warfare from 1948 to 1949. He is also known as the father of Indonesian Scouts and the creator of the Hymne Syukur, Mars Hari Merdeka, Dirgahayu Indonesia, and 17 Agustus.

The last one is Al Habib Ahmad Assegaf who is known as a journalist, historian and writer of Arab descent who was famous during the Republic of Indonesia's independence. His actions attacked the Dutch colonial government through his writings. He had co-founded *Arrabiṭah Al-'Alawiyyah*, which is an organization that records the noble lineage of the Prophet Muhammad b. Through the *Arrabiṭah Al-'Alawiyyah* movement, he had a strong influence in providing guidance and the importance of unity among Muslims in the face of colonialism.

All of this can be seen in the *qasidah*, poems and songs he composed.

4.4 Post-Independence Era

'*Ulamā*' led by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari declared the obligation to defend Indonesia's independence, and in 1954 an Indonesian Ulema Council (NU) in Cipanas made a decision that President Soekarno was *Waliyyul Amri* *Ḍaruri bish-Shawkah*, meaning government holders who had sufficient authority were obeyed by officials and people. Sixth, play an active role in filling the beginning of independence. Prior to independence, '*ulamā*' took part in preparing for independence, including at the BPUPK. And at the beginning of independence, many '*ulamā*' were active in the government or parliament. And also, countless scholars who struggle through organization and education (SuaraMuslim.net, 2017).

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari as '*ulamā*' also led the non-cooperative movement of the Dutch colonialists. During the revolution, the Netherlands advertised Hajj travel services with fares and facilities that could be reached by Muslims in their colonies. The wish of the Dutch East Indies government officials, Van der Plas, the governor of East Java who was the most famous during the colonial period, who issued a policy of giving gifts to '*ulamā*' or certain Muslim people in various regions to go on pilgrimage to Makkah, became meaningless.

Van Der Plas's dream was to attract the hearts of Muslims to be willing to support the Netherlands with the lure of gifts to go to fulfill the fifth pillar of Islam in the holy land. KH. Hasyim Asy'ari opposed, he issued a *fatwá* that going to Hajj during the revolutionary period by using a Dutch ship was unlawful. As a

result of KH Hasyim Asyari's *fatwá*, the prize offered was devoid of enthusiasts. In fact, the Indonesian mukimin in Makkah were reluctant to serve those who went on pilgrimage because they received gifts from Van Der Plas (Hafil, 2020).

The proclamation of Indonesian independence did not mean that this country is clean from colonialism. The arrival of the allied troops after independence disturbed Indonesia's condition, especially when coupled with the fact that NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) also took part in the allied forces.

The first step taken by the NU management was to immediately summon the NU consuls to determine their attitude towards the actions carried out by NICA who backed the British. The meeting was preceded by the presentation of Kyai Haji (a term or title in Javanese ethnic culture, for religious figures or people who lead pesantren). Hasyim Asy'ari on the basis of Islamic law in the form of the main principles regarding the obligations of Muslim men and women in *jihād* to defend the independence of their homeland and nation. The meeting then produced a decision in the form of a resolution, which was later named the Jihād Resolution (Heriyanto, 2017) (Akbar, 2019). The clerics also led an army known as Laskar *Hizbullah* which was launched into the spirit of *Jihād* Resolution. This troop joined PETA (Pembela Tanah Air), special forces in the Japanese colonial era and took part in the November 10 war which was later designated as Heroes' Day (Hanifa, 2018).

The fighting spirit of the '*ulamā*' spread to all regions in Indonesia. Acehnese '*ulamā*' wrote poems known as *Hikayat Sabil War* (Indonesian: *Hikayat Perang Sabil*, HPS) to instill the

fighting spirit of the Acehnese people. HPS is a poem that contains suggestions to contribute to the war against Dutch colonialism which was conveyed to the wider community. Generally, HPS is delivered in the Meunasah, Dayah environment, homes, or where fighters are hiding (Pizaro, 2017). Then during the process of political transition from Bung Karno and Bung Hatta in 1966, history records the great contribution of '*ulamā*' with pesantren in eliminating political influence from The Communist Party of Indonesia (Indonesian: Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) (Muhadi, 2018).

Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara, a historian and writer from Indonesia who played a role in the Islamization of historical writing also explained that on August 18, the day after the proclamation, three people gathered to formulate Pancasila. The three are '*ulamā*', namely KH. Wahid Hasyim from NU, and Ki Bagus Hadi Kusumo and Kasman Singodimedjo from Muhammadiyah. It was the three '*ulamā*' who concluded that Pancasila is the state ideology and the 1945 Constitution is the state constitution. From there, Bung Karno was appointed president, and Bung Hatta as vice president (Hanifa, 2018).

Then when many regions wanted to declare their own independence, the '*ulamā*' sparked a unitary state, namely NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia). That is Mohammad Natsir, he fought with Masyumi and Syarikat Islam to make NKRI a reality (Andryanto, 2022). Quoting the words of KH. Muhammad Najihun, the role of '*ulamā*' is very important as the driving force of the struggle, formulating independence and maintaining independence. Without the '*ulamā*' it is impossible for this country to be independent.

5. CONCLUSION

The role of '*ulamā*' in Indonesian politics can be a role of providing advice, suggestions and input that needed by leaders. They can be advisors to leaders (*mulūk*) in various kinds of problems. '*Ulamā*' have a very strategic role as advisors to leaders so they do not deviate from Islamic law and carry out the mandate of their people.

Another strategic role is to strengthen or increase the rights and or interests of Muslims in society. In addition to providing advice and advice to leaders, '*ulamā*' are required to actively participate in the improvement of the wider community. This is because '*ulamā*' are usually close to the community. Educating also means improving people's *akhlāq*, reminding them of the importance of their concern for religion and paying attention to all the problems that befall them. By playing an active role in society, '*ulamā*' have taken a strategic position in politics in a country.

'*Ulamā*' also play a role in taking positions in practical politics as well as the struggle against arbitrariness. '*Ulamā*' are in the ranks of fighters along with the people, awakening the concept of justice. '*Ulamā*' are a driving force for fighting spirit, and thus become role models for the people. This role has been ongoing for a long time, especially in Indonesia which is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. With the exploration of the role of '*ulamā*' in politics in Indonesia, it further strengthens the premise that '*ulamā*' do not only play a role as religious figures, but also contribute to building a civil society and state environment.

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