



Article

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF BOARDING SCHOOLS AND KYAI AS
SYMBOLIZATION AND MISTIFICATION OF THE BASE OF
STRUGGLING NATIONALISM FOR THE UNITED STATE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA (NKRI)**

Nur Rizqi Cholid and Aan Heri Ustadzi

Darul Ulum Kudus Islamic Boarding School Kauman Ds. Ngembalrejo RT . 05/04,
Kec, Bae Kab, Kudus Po. Box. 76, Zip Code, 59322
tel. 083845903901/WA. 089525870628
Email : rizqicholid@gmail.com

Abstract

Many Indonesian figures have the idea of independence , but all of them cannot be separated from religious ideology. Even though efforts to marginalize religion are still being attempted, the patriots are always moving forward. Many obstacles will come if religion is upheld, but for the sake of an independence that is always hoped for and looked forward to. The figure of a figure cannot be released in a struggle. The kiai, who became the standard for Islamic boarding school students, really understood the conditions at that time, not reciting and studying what was used as the core standard , but how to take care of themselves and the country. Aside from being a religious preacher, students and kiai, clerics, it was also a stronghold of colonial resistance. His struggle did not stop to defend the country, to the extent that it was said that jihad against the invaders was legally obligatory, this was not declared during the deliberation of religious leaders in Surabaya where it was at the PBNU building, which was attended by NU consuls from Java and Madura, the meeting was also attended by the commander in chief hezbollah. Islamic boarding schools in Java and Madura became the headquarters of the non-regular Sizbullah troops and Sabilillah recitations turned into training in using weapons. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, while the method uses library research. These methods and approaches are considered suitable and appropriate regarding the title of this study.

Keywords: *Kyai, Pesantren , Struggle , and NKRI*

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest original institutions in our country. One educational institution that cares about Education in Indonesia is Islamic boarding schools. the strong significance of the role of Islamic boarding schools in the formation and development of education, especially Islamic education, in Indonesia hardly needs to be debated and doubted. Long before Indonesia's independence, this institution that was nursed by the ulema (Kyai) was present in the archipelago.¹

¹ Abd. A'la. *Pesantren Strategy Towards International Education: Islamic Education Advancing People and Strengthening State Defense*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2016), 97. First edition

The position of Islamic boarding schools is almost inseparable from the life of Muslims in Indonesia. This oldest Islamic educational institution has been known since Islam entered Indonesia. The history of Islamic boarding schools is an inseparable part of the history of the growth of Indonesian society. It can be proven that since the period of the first Islamic empire in Aceh in the first centuries of Hijriyah, then in the walisongo period until the beginning of the 20th century many of the trustees and scholars became the forerunners of the new village. The community's or congregation's acknowledgment of the presence of a Kyai or Ulama is the basic capital for the establishment of an Islamic boarding school and it is from this pesantren that a new community and village will be formed. In the history of Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia, the position of Islamic boarding schools has always been at the forefront.²

The history that has gone through shows that pesantren are not only able to maintain their survival from the exposure of the times, but also can maintain their development which continues to increase from time to time. According to existing data, this institution was first established, especially in Java, in the 15th century by Maulana Malik Ibrahim (one of the oldest walisongos) and then developed by other walisongos at the end of the 19th century, pesantren in Java. grew to 300 units and in 2012 amounted to 27,230.³

In the context of the history of the Indonesian nation, Nadhlatul Ulama is an organization of the nationalist santri movement which has played many strategic roles towards an independent Indonesia. Since its inception, this sarong group has mostly resided in Islamic boarding schools as a space for studying religion (educational function), dialogue on local culture (socio-cultural function) and training sensitivity to problems in society (socio-political function). As a space for studying religion, Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in producing religious scholars who then spread their religious knowledge to all corners of the country. They are strategic agents and spread Islamic teachings that are full of peace and compassion. The figure of an educator who guides the people in dealing with various problems of social life, nation and state.

Within the pesantren environment, especially the NU pesantren, the three functions are inherent in the concept of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah (ASWAJA). ASWAJA has several fundamental principles such as tawasuth (moderate), tasamuh (tolerant), tawazzun (balanced) and ta'addul (justice). Since then until now these fundamental values have proven to be able to survive and adapt well in the life of Indonesian society. Traditional Islam that combines religious teachings and local wisdom is able to synergize well so that people can easily accept it well.

If we trace the early days of its birth, Islamic boarding schools are indeed intended as a place to study Islamic religious knowledge. This has started to happen since Wali Songo founded Islamic boarding schools as traditional educational institutions to spread Islam. Islamic boarding schools are considered effective for the transfer of knowledge as well as the positive value of Islamic teachings which refer to the Al-Qur'an, Hadith and the agreements of the scholars who have been tested for their piety and depth of religious knowledge. But in its development, students are not limited to religious knowledge alone, but are also taught about national principles and understanding as a provision to serve the nation and state in the future. It was at this point that it could be said that the nationalism of the santri flourished and played a major role in achieving the ideals of an independent Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools are an asset to train spiritual intelligence as well as to build collective awareness as political people, whose politics leads to the ideals of Muslim unity and the independence of the Indonesian nation.

A kyai is a guardian of the faith and a spiritual teacher who has absolute authority in imparting religious knowledge, be it fiqh, monotheism, Arabic, muamalah and others. But the reality is sometimes found clerics who have limited scientific competence so that rely on charisma to attract people to follow him. Often submitting to the will of the kyai is believed to be able to

²Drs. Marwan Saridjo, Drs Abd. Rachman Shaleh, and Mustofa Syarif, BA., *History of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Dharma Bhakti, 1979), 7.

³ Abd. A'la . *Islamic Boarding School Strategy Towards International Education: Islamic Education Advancing People and Strengthening State Defense*, 97.

give blessings to his followers. It is a custom for the santri, when they meet a kiai, to kiss the kiai's hand, to show the difference in degrees between the two and at the same time wish him luck. Obeying the kiai's will is a way to get a reward, which can save him in the afterlife .

One of the historical records of santri nationalism can actually be traced to the founding of Nahdlatul Ulama on January 13, 1926. At that time fifteen kyai gathered at the house of Wahab Chasbullah (1888-1971) in Kertopaten, most of whom came from East Java. They discussed and formulated strategic steps to defend the interests of traditional Islamic practices which were disrupted by the emergence of organizations influenced by Wahhabi thought and the ideas of reform of Jamaluddin Al-Afgani and Muhammad Abduh. After discussions , it was finally decided to establish Nahdlatul Ulama to strengthen traditional Islam in the Dutch East Indies.

Talking about the national progress of one of Indonesia's best scholars, KH Hasyim Asy'ari will always synergize with his life from a pesantren background, his role as a kyai, his political activities in the movement for Indonesian independence through NU and his strategic values which provide a lot of inspiration for his students.

Kyai and santri especially those who are members of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have played a big role and service in seizing Indonesian independence . This can be seen from the struggle played by the early generation of NU clerics in expelling the invaders. The establishment of NU apart from maintaining and developing traditions or understanding of *Islam in the style of Ahlus Sunnah wal jamaah*, is also full of national spirit , namely to win Indonesian independence.

Research methods

Researchers in this study used a type of qualitative descriptive research, namely research that describes, illustrates, illustrates the state of the object under study in accordance with the circumstances when the research was conducted.⁴

This qualitative descriptive research uses library research, namely activities carried out using library data collection methods.⁵ In connection with this research, the researcher conducted a study at the library or *library research*, to obtain concrete data about the implementation of the contribution of the kyai and pesantren as a symbolization and mystification of the basis for the struggle for the unitary state of the republic of Indonesia (NKRI). The purpose of this library research is to collect data and information using various kinds of materials in the library. The data studied were in the form of books, manuscripts, books, magazines or newspapers which were sourced from the literature.⁶ This technique is carried out in order to strengthen facts to compare differences and or similarities between theory and practice that the author is currently researching.

After the data is collected, a data validity check is carried out which includes *credibility , transferability , dependability and confirmability tests* .⁷ On this occasion, the article presented by the author tries to focus on the contribution of the kiai and pesantren as a symbolization and mystification of the basis of the Indonesian struggle by mobilizing the ulama, santri and the Indonesian people to expel the British and Dutch colonialists from Indonesian soil.

DISCUSSION

Islamic Boarding Schools and Indonesian National Spirit

Indonesian nationalism was awakened because of the strong will of the Indonesian people to unite against the colonialists that had occurred for hundreds of years. Not only that, the unity that was born in the context of fighting colonial oppression even after succeeding did not stop there, but had lofty ideals to build a nation and society that was just and prosperous.⁸

⁴Sugiyono, *Quantitative, Qualitative Research Methods, and R&D*. (Bandung: Alfabeta, CV. 2017), p. 59

⁵ Mahmud, *Educational Research Methods* , (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2011), p. 31

⁶M. Nazir, *Research Methods*, (Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia , 1985), p. 54

⁷Sugiyono, *Quantitative, Qualitative and R&D Research Methods* . (Bandung: Alfabeta. 2007), p.207

⁸ Tan Swie Ling, *The Dark Ages of Pancasila: The Face of Indonesian Nationalism*, p.17.

Conceptually, Indonesian nationalism has a relevance to nationalism initiated by Islamic boarding schools by looking at the similar compatibility between the principles of nationalism in the Koran and the three characteristics of Indonesian nationalism, *first*, unity and justice; this concept is in harmony with the meaning of nationalism contained in the explanation of the pesantren book on QS.Al-Hujurat [49]:13. *Second*, welfare; welfare, which is the ideal of the Indonesian nation, is also in line with the meaning of the pesantren commentary on QS. Al-Fajr [89] 8.

Kyai as a Symbol of Struggle

Within the pesantren circles, the various battles that the ulemas and their students participated in left behind various heroic stories which were sometimes accompanied by extraordinary things. After the battle of Surabaya, the students continued to talk about the stories of the fighters who participated in the battle. One of them, as told by Abdul Wahid regarding the atmosphere of KH⁹.

In the story "Kedaulatan Rakyat", which originates from the British allied forces since the battle of Surabaya until 17-12-1945, the British allied troops suffered a loss of seven Thunderbolt aircraft shot down by an Indonesian air repellent. This confused the allies because the Indonesians already had the same aircraft shooting skills as the German army. Did this fall due to the prayer of Kyai Abbas?¹⁰

The mystification of this struggle is a series of events and a long process by the scholars who continuously uphold the Islamic religion. These clerics have long maintained and fostered networks between clerics and students which eventually became the main force in moving fighters into battle. The figure of Hadratus Syekh Hasyim Asy'ari did not stand alone, but beside and behind him stood ulemas who had long had good relations with fellow friends and teacher-students.

The following is a small portion of the kyai who took part in the Republic of Indonesia's war of independence;

- a. KH. Mohammad Ma'roef RA
- b. Mbah kyai subchi prakatan magelang
- c. KH. Amen Sepuh¹¹
- d. KH. Abdul Halim
- e. KH. Noer Ali

Islamic Boarding School as a Struggle Base

Many Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have made history, played an active role in the war for independence. Islamic boarding schools became the last bull for the fighters when all the cities were controlled by the Dutch colonialists. each pesantren has its own historical record which is rarely disclosed in history books.

The following is just an example of several Islamic boarding schools that took an active part in the war for independence.

⁹Drs. Munib rowandi asthma hadi,

¹⁰Quoted from the book "*to be the superpower country*" by KH. Sa'adih Al-Batawi & Dr. nandang najmiulmunir, Ir, MS [in http://fero-assamawaat.blogspot.com/2011/12/next-peran-ulama-tasawuf-dalam.html](http://fero-assamawaat.blogspot.com/2011/12/next-peran-ulama-tasawuf-dalam.html)

¹¹KH. Amin Sepuh 1893 had attended Islamic boarding school KH. Cholil Bangkalan, with (at that time his Ustadz) KH. Hasyim Asy'ari (Read; Stories of Wisdom: KH. Abdurrahman Arroisy). During the period of KH.Amin Sepuh's caretaker, Pondok Gede Babakan Reached its Golden Age and Contributed Much in Creating Reliable Religious Figures, Almost All Elder Kyai in the Cirebon Region Even Spread to Remote Indonesian Areas, Were His Disciples, Call It Kang Ayip Muh (Cirebon City), KH. Syakur Yassin, KH. Abdullah Abbas (Buntet), KH. Shukron Makmun, KH. Hannan, KH. Sanusi, KH. Muchsin (Kwitang), etc.

- a. Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo _ _
- b. Sidogiri Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School
- c. Al Muayyad Islamic Boarding School, Surakarta
- d. Al Hikmah Sirampog Brebes Islamic Boarding School.
- e. Gampiran Islamic Boarding School and Pulosari Lumajang

The Rise of Patriotism

The earliest reaction to the consolidation of the Dutch government and the breakdown of *the aristocracy*¹² It's been a long time coming from Muslim circles. The changing balance of power gave rise to a movement of kiai and santri who opposed colonial authority. Even since the consolidation of Mataram in the early 17th century, the Javanese *aristocracy* has been divided into two groups of ruling priyayi, who are conditioned by Javanese values, and Kiai who represent communities loyal to Islamic religious beliefs.

With the entry of the priyayin *aristocracy* into the Dutch colonial government, the Kyai became the only independent representatives of Javanese society. Their authority, number and influence were very broad, thus increasing their awareness of Muslim identity, and making them aware of the resistance of the Muslim world to colonialism.¹³ As a result of colonialism, the people lost their leadership, while the colonial rulers really squeezed their lives. The people's crops were used for the benefit of the Dutch colonial government. Eviction and confiscation of people's land for the sake of the people's fear and difficulty in facing the oppression. This happened in the 14th century.¹⁴

The period of change in Java since 1900 was started by KH Hasyim Asy'ari opening Islamic boarding schools in Jombang, East Java, from low to high levels which graduated many scholars. There is no doubt about the struggle of Kiai and Santri to create world peace, one of them is KH. Hasyim Asyari founded a socio-religious organization called Nahdhatul Ulama' or abbreviated as NU,¹⁵ with the most basic vision and mission to create world peace.

Through the pesantren he founded, then also through the NU *jam'iyah*, Kyai Hasyim named nationalism and patriotism which would inflame the flames of resistance of the people's students against colonialism which had taken root for centuries. through his teachings and fatwas, Kyai Hasyim sowed awareness to rise and fight, free himself from the colonialists and in the end succeeded in inflaming a physical revolution to seize and defend the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁶

¹² Is a form of government in which power is in the hands of a small, privileged, or ruling class. The term comes from the Greek aristocrata, meaning "the best rule." At the time of the word's origins in ancient Greece, it was understood to mean the best government by qualified citizens and often contracted either with a form of monarchy, or of a single individual. In later times, aristocracy was usually seen as government by a privileged group, the best individuals, the aristocratic class, and contractual democracy. See Alfian, et al. *Islam in Southeast Asia*. (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo, 2007), p-56

¹³ Ira.M.Lapidus, *social history of Muslims*, page -321

¹⁴ Muryifah Sunarto, *history of Indonesian Islamic civilization*, (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005), p-29

¹⁵ At that time he founded NU together with two of his themes who also included major ulama', namely KH. Abdul Wahab and KH. Bisyril Syamsuri, right on 31 January 1926 or 16 Rajab 1344H NU was inaugurated and declared in Indonesia, the initial establishment of NU was to strengthen religious knowledge among the community, therefore in its movement NU was driven and developed by Kiai, Santri and all activists of the salaf Islamic boarding schools, This organization was founded as a response to the discourse on the establishment of a caliphate state and the purification movement led by Rashid Ridha in Egypt, what would happen if at that time KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and the students did not respond to any movement that could divide Muslims in particular and the world in general, See, Rizem Aized, *Ulama' Nusantara*, (pangruwating, yogyakarta, press, 2016), p-90

¹⁶ Anwar Rosihan, *The Rise and Fall of the Islamic Movement in Indonesia*. (Jakarta: Fadli Zon Library. 2011), p-74

The spirit of the santri to realize the Kyai's Jihad Resolution

The arrival of the allied forces (Allied Forces Nederlands East Indies) or AFNEI after the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, disturbed the condition of the Indonesian government. This was due to the existence of the Dutch Indies Civil Administration (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) or NICA troops who took part in the allied forces.

The meeting of the consuls took place on two days, 21-22 October 1945, at the PBNU office in Bubutan, Surabaya. Apart from being attended by NU consuls from Java and Madura, the meeting was also attended by the commander of Hezbollah, Zainul Arifin. There are differences over who chaired the NU consul meeting. Hasyim Latif, who was directly involved in the Surabaya meeting, stated that KH Wahab Hasbullah was chairing the meeting.¹⁷

Rois Akbar Hadrotus Syeh KH. Hasyim Asy'ari read himself the results of the Nadhlatul Ulama Organization's decisions and responses to the condition of the nation and state, namely the Jihad Resolution. The resolution read out on October 22, 1945 contains a statement that the struggle to maintain its legal independence is obligatory 'Ain for Muslims, and the war to defend independence is a holy war (Jihad fi sabilillah).¹⁸

Finally, the big war broke out on November 10, 1945. In the deployment and attack on Surabaya, the British said that the deployment of their military forces at that time was the largest after the war in World War II. The number of troops deployed was 10,000 to 15,000 personnel. From the sea, it was assisted by cannon shots from the Sussex cruisers and several destroyers.

The important role of Kyai and santri in defending the independence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia was increasingly visible at that time, this was seen when Kyai sent flocks of Santri to join Hezbollah, Sabilillah, and other fighting organizations. In fact, not only did they come from the East Java region, but quite a number of Hezbollah units, Laskars and students from Islamic boarding schools in Central Java and West Java also attended and strengthened the defense lines of the fighters in Surabaya.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

Islamic boarding schools are unique and oldest institutions typical of Indonesia, the achievements of pesantren in Indonesia which have made history, played an active role in the war for independence. Islamic boarding schools became the last straw for the fighters when all the cities were controlled by the Dutch colonialists. The various battles that the ulemas and their students participated in left behind various heroic stories which were sometimes accompanied by extraordinary things. After the Surabaya battle, the students continued to talk about the stories of the fighters who participated in the battle for the independence of the Republic of Indonesia.

The mystification of the struggle of Kyai and Islamic boarding schools is a series of events and a long process by the scholars who continuously uphold the Islamic religion. These clerics have long maintained and fostered networks between clerics and students which eventually became the main force in moving fighters into battle.

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¹⁷ Sutomo, *the battle of 10 November 1945, the actions and experiences of a historical actor*, (Jakarta: Visimedia, 2008), p-113.

¹⁸ Tamyiz Burhanudin, *Akhlaq pesantren: view of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari*, (Yogyakarta: Ittiqo press, 2001)p-216

¹⁹ Marwati Djoened, et al, *National History of Indonesia V*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2008), p-114.

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