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Media and Muslim Societies during the Time of Islamic Revivalism (1800s-1950s)

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ABSTRACT

The decline of Islamic empires, most notably the Ottoman Empire, in the late 1800s and early 1900s proved to be a watershed moment in the development of modern Muslim societies. Western civilizations with their secular, modern, and exploitative ideas encroached on Muslim lands, beliefs, and way of life. Muslims who found themselves at a crossroads between the eventual collapse of their own political structure and the disputable, yet attractive prospects of Western modernism faced a revivalism that drove them to re-examine their place in a Westernizing and modernising world. The availability of publishing technology, as well as exposure to new ideas, aided in the dynamic changes occurring in Muslim societies during this time period. This article examines how Muslim societies responded to these developments in the past, and how the media played a critical role in their attempt to endure Western colonial threats while maintaining their Islamic beliefs.

Keywords: *Muslim societies, Media, Islam, Modernism, Revivalism*

Muslim societies expanded during the early Islamic civilizations, which spanned several centuries. As new territories were captured and peoples were controlled under Islamic rule, new aspects of communication and advancements in media technologies enabled Islamic leaders to systematic way govern their territories. Muslim societies became more knowledgeable and were capable to share knowledge, cultures, aesthetics through books, arts, architecture, and other means. However, by the 18th century, Islamic civilizations gradually declined, and Muslims have become the conquered rather than conquerors. As one Muslim empire after another ended up in the hands of European colonials, the history of modern Islam has frequently been made clear in terms of the effect of "the West." According to this viewpoint, the 18th century was a period of degeneration and a precursor to Muslim hardships. However, it is also possible to argue that the era of Western dominance was merely a prelude to the ways in which many different Muslim states and societies interact in their own interpretations of modernity. Communication and media play a significant role in this sometimes-contradictory dynamic in which colonised Muslims figure out ways to confront and, at times, concede to Western physical and cultural control while still attempting to retain their Islamic identity.

The colonials were able to use propaganda to convince certain Muslims that the Western modern lifestyle is superior to the conservative Islamic traditions in their attempt to conquer Muslim lands. The Europeans' superiority in new media technologies undoubtedly aided their control of the colonies. Nevertheless, the Muslims, the same as any oppressed community, remained steadfast in their efforts to retaliate and free themselves from colonial rule, giving rise to a slew of uprisings and activism. The media has played a significant role in

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the growth of modern Muslim societies because it serves as a medium of colonial and western control and also a platform for Muslim discourse and expression.

When Western colonialists started to assert their influence over the Muslim world in the early 1800s, Muslims actively used publication media to debate their state of downturn and how to return to their glorious days. During this time, the concept of modernism was crucial in how different Muslim societies comprehended their situation, resulting in various interpretations and applications that attempted to mediate between Islam and modernity. This was a revivalist period in which Muslims attempted to reform, revitalise, and, in some cases, modernize their lifestyle.

Media in Time of Revivalism (1800s-1950s)

Certain Muslims conveyed an awareness of internal weakness in their societies from the mid-17th century through the 18th and early 19th centuries. Reactions to decrease, both official and unofficial, Islamizing and Europeanizing at times. This dynamic revolves around the concept of modernity. Western powers' expansion occurred not only through military intrusion, but also through secular ideas based on the Western Renaissance of reason, technology, and scientific achievements. The ideas that drove the European Renaissance were that man is at the centre of the universe and that he has the ability to decide his own fate through knowledge and the supremacy of the mind. The feudal system of production fell with the rise of humanism and the Renaissance, and capitalism emerged. The Enlightenment, a philosophical movement that ruled Europe during the 18th century, advocated such ideals as liberty, progress, fraternity, tolerance, constitutional government, and segregation of church and state. These ideals were progressive, allowing the European people to grow in a systematic manner. Nevertheless, secularism, which separates people from religions, is diametrically opposed to Islam, in which everything revolves around Allah's wills and commands.

Muslim thinkers and philosophers of the period were attempting to make sense of their very own place in a modernizing and, for the most part, Westernizing world. Many people began to question the gradual demise of the Islamic caliphates and sought a way to resurrect Islam in the new contemporary and secular universe. Philosophers and elites who have had extensive exposure to Western education and philosophies tried to modernise their society with ideas ranging from complete secularism to Islamic modernism, the former of which is persuaded those Islamic traditions are outdated and incompatible with a contemporary world. Modernist philosophers, on the other hand, believe that Islam is a living religion capable of coexisting with modern systems. During this political and philosophical change in Islamic empires, the media played a significant role in securing Muslim minds and belief systems. The publishing media was largely used at the time by groups of various inclinations to get their message throughout, all in the name of saving Islamic civilization. Consequently, at this point in Islamic history, two types of media can be discovered: liberal-reformist media and modernist media.

The Liberal-Reformist Media

The liberal-reformist media is a type of media sentiment used by certain groups of Muslims during the critical end of the Islamic empires. This form of media mainly consists of publications like books, journals, and newspapers, and also literary mediums like poems and plays, with the goal of reforming what they perceive to be a failure of the conservative religious structure. Inspired by the Western technologies and scientific teachings, the liberal-reformist media promoted ideas of radical and sometimes, secular change. The workings of the liberal-reformist media in the Muslim history can be seen in two liberal Muslim movements of the Tanzimat in late Ottoman empire and The Jadids in Russian dominated central Asia.

The Tanzimat

With the emergence of the Tanzimat movement at the end of the Ottoman empire precipitated the secular movements in the Islamic world that ultimately became most visible in Turkey. The Tanzimat refers to a period of social and political reform that changed the Ottoman Empire by incorporating institutions that were deliberately modelled after those found in Western Europe. The Tanzimat's main goal is to rescue the Ottoman empire by embracing a Westernized and secular philosophy that is suitable to both Muslims and non-Muslims who lived under the collapsing empire. In hopelessness, Ottoman administrations attempted to emulate the primarily French and Russian ways that they saw as more compatible with the contemporary world. The Ottoman Turks shaved their beards, wore European tunics and trousers, listened to Western music, and ditched the turban in favour of the fez during the period's fervour. The sultan issued a more extensive imperial rescript in 1856, which was mostly the result of foreign tension. It abolished, at least on paper, the distinctions that occurred between Muslims and Christians, and granted Christians all of the rights and privileges that Muslims had. This entailed equal treatment in taxation, service in the military, and education. It also called for the establishment of banks, as well as fiscal and agricultural reforms. During the Tanzimat era, the government implemented a number of constitutional reforms that resulted in a fairly contemporary conscripted army, banking structure reforms, the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the substitute of religious law with secular law, and the replacement of guilds with contemporary factories (Hossein 2011).

The Tanzimat's supporters were mostly senior bureaucrats who disseminated the Tanzimat ideals through journals, books, magazines, and various forms of media. Munif Pasha is a bureaucracy cum columnist for *Ceride-i Havadis*, Turkey's first private daily newspaper. He was a liberal intellectual who believed that in order for the Ottomans to progress, they should embrace all Western European institutions. Munif Pasha frequently uses a commanding voice in his writings to convince the public of the significance of applying scientific principles to all facets of life. He is also the founder of *Mecmua-i Fünun*, Turkey's first modern scientific journal. The *Cemiyet-i Ilmiyye-yi Osmaniyye* (Ottoman Scientific Association) published a periodical that encouraged modern scientific ideals. Munif Pasha and other Tanzimat reformers such as Besir Fuad, Suleiman Pasha, Ahmet Vefik Pasha, and Ethem Pertev Pasha are instances of westernised Turkish thinkers who believed the Ottoman country could be revived and progressed if youths were brought up with the liberal ideas of the 18th century European Enlightenment, some of which he translated into Turkish (Poyraz 2010). The repertoire of western-liberals' writings included liberal concepts such as individualism, freedom, men's natural rights, the ideal man, religious liberty, progress, and economic growth (Massot 2016).

By the end of the 1800s, secular publications emphasising the significance of science over religion, like *Envar-i Zeka* (Lights of Intelligence), *Haver* (West), *Güneş* (Sun), *Saadet* (Happiness), *Ceride-i Havadis* (Register of Events) and *Tercuman-i Hakikat* (The Interpreter of Truth), ruled Ottoman intellectual life. Furthermore, various scientific and literary works in French, English, and German were widely translated into Ottoman Turkish.

The Jadids

The Jadids were Muslim reformers within the Russian empire who desired a modernised Islam to guide their societies. They are another notable secularist-reformist movement. The Jadids sustained that Muslims in the Russian Empire had gone through a period of decomposition that could only be reversed by acquiring new knowledge and modernist, European-style cultural reform. The Crimean Tatar Ismail Gasprinski who lived from 1851 to 1914, was a key figure in the educational reform movement.

The Jadids often adopted an anti-clerical stance, and this led many Ulama members to brand Jadid's programmes and ideologies as un-Islamic. The Jadids viewed "Qadimists" (proponents of the old ways) as corrupt, self-interested ruling classes who wielded power based on local tradition that was both antithetical to "authentic" Islam and dangerous to society, as

corrupt and dangerous. Islamic scholars and Sufis were seen as promoting a form of Islam that was at odds with both modernity and Islamic tradition. Jadids accused their religious leaders of allowing society's moral degradation while working with Russian officials to maintain their status as religious power elites. They saw the prevalence of alcoholism, pederasty, polygamy, and gender discrimination as evidence of this failure (Khalid 2001).

Print media was used extensively by the Jadids to disseminate their message and to advocate for the *usul ul-jadid*, or "new method," of teaching in the imperial *maktabs* (religious schools), from which the term Jadidism was deduced. Many Jadids worked in printing and publishing, which was a relatively new endeavour for Muslim Russians to get involved with. In Turkestan, on the other hand, a Turkic-language newspaper is first published after the 1905 revolution. Schools and other public institutions were urged to be modernised and reformed by the media. Turkestan Muslims produced and distributed lithographic copies of canonical manuscripts from traditional genres in the early days of printing.

The Jadids used print media to produce new-method textbooks, newspapers and magazines in addition to plays and literature in a distinct Turkestan dialect. When Gasprinski's newspaper *Tercuman* (Interpreter) was published, it was widely read throughout the Empire's Muslim regions by Tatar Muslims, who had access to private newspapers in their native languages. Between 1905 and 1917, there were 166 new Tatar language newspapers and magazines (Khalid 1994).

Many Central Asian papers were published between 1905 and 1908, when the Russian authorities again banned them. Content varied widely among these papers, with some criticising the traditional religious hierarchy while others were attempting to convince more conservative clergy to change their minds. Central Asian participation in Russia's Duma was discussed by some while others aimed to connect Central Asian intellectuals with those in Cairo and Istanbul. Literature of both Central Asian and Western origins was used by the Jadids in order to convey the same ideas usually in forms of poetry and plays.

Language reform and "new method" teaching were pursued with renewed enthusiasm by the Jadids after 1917, who were deeply committed to the promotion of Central Asian nationalism. Early in the 20th century, a newfound sense of self-confidence among Jadid leaders allowed them access to government on an equal footing with Russian citizens. Jadids also joined the Communist Party in large numbers so that they could reap even more benefits from the Soviet system. As the Jadids became more familiar with the inner workings of the Soviet system, the Bolsheviks realised they could no longer maintain total control over them. Bolsheviks set up local Central Asian cadres that were ideologically linked to Socialist revolutionism but disengaged from Islamic religious practises as a result of this strategy. The Jadids were eventually pushed out of public life by this new class (Khalid, 2006).

The Modernist Media

In response to European colonisation of the Muslim world, the Islamic modernist movement adopted and widely used modernist media in the nineteenth century. Muslim modernists sought to defend religion from the assault of rationalism. Muslim modernism must be comprehended in the context of European colonization, as modernist ideas spread throughout the Muslim world as a result of colonization. To put it another way, Islamic modernists were impacted by the European Enlightenment and used positivist and rationalist thinking to reconcile Islamic traditionalist viewpoints with Western thought and values. The modernist media reflected these ideals and disseminated messages that sought to reconcile Islam and the contemporary world. Nevertheless, there is a wide range of opinion among its protagonists about what should be adapted from the West, what aspects of Muslim tradition should be abandoned, and how to deal with colonial and postcolonial authorities. This divergence reflects both differences in the intellectual background and social standing of modernists, who span from traditionally trained mid-level *ulama* (religious scholars) to middle-class lay people.

When compared to the liberal-reformist media, the modernist media is more vibrant and widely dispersed. This is because the concept of Islamic modernism provided a less

excessive acceptance of Western ideologies while still championing Islam's centrality in Muslim life. The Islamic modernist movement attempted to bridge the divide between Islamic traditionalists and secular reform movements. It also tried to provide a more balanced strategy by attempting to salvage the Islamic empire while also acknowledging that Islam may need to sustain through the formation of nation states. There are numerous examples of Islamic Modernist movements that existed in the segregated and segmented Muslim societies at the time. Representatives of the Islamic modernist trend can be found in almost every area of the Muslim world. Its first centres were formed in India, the Ottoman Empire, and Egypt in the 1860s and 1870s.

The Young Ottomans

In 1865, the underground Young Ottoman was formed by a group of Ottoman Turkish intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire, which they believed benefited only the elite bureaucrats while undermining Turkish and Islamic identities. The Young Ottomans sought to modernise Ottoman society while preserving the Empire by establishing an Islamic constitutional government in the European tradition. Islamic ideals were combined with liberal and parliamentary democracy to highlight the legitimacy of Islam as the foundation of Ottoman political culture.

The Young Ottomans was a contemporary Ottoman elite ideological movement that attempted to build and influence public opinion through their writings. They were responsible for the use of the press as a political tool. Young Ottomans like Ibrahim Sinasi and Namik Kemal, who were among the most prominent of the Young Ottomans, were instrumental in giving new meaning to liberal terms like *hurriyet* (liberty) and *vatan* (motherland).

The new Ottomans began publishing the newspapers *Tercüman-i Ahval* and *Tasvir-i Efkar* in order to keep up the pressure on their opponents. The articles in these papers were heavily critical of the government and proposed ideas of equal rights and the need for political participation at every level of the society. These revolutionary publications took Turkish journalism to a new level by using and promoting ideas of nationalism and constitutionalism. There were many scientific and educational topics addressed by newspaper columnists in the journal's mission to teach the public how to think for themselves. There were many articles written about Ottoman political crisis and the importance of eastern issue during this period in 1860s. *Tercüman-i Ahval* and *Tasvir-i Efkar* were considered pioneers to modern journalism and inspired the publications of other forms of journal that resulted in the birth of over twenty Istanbul-based periodicals and newspapers were published in 1867 (Doganer 2012).

To escape government persecution, Namik Kemal and Ziya Pasha took refuge in Paris to carry on their activities. A free Turkish press emerged as a result of the migration of the new Ottomans to Europe of which the first was the republication of *Hurriyet* (Jeltyakov, 1972). Newspapers such as *Diyojen*, *Basiret*, *Muhbir* and *Ulum*, which were published between 1867 and 1876, had a significant impact on Turkish society. These newspapers upheld the Young Ottoman's aspiration for Islamic Ottoman nationalism and the establishment of a constitutional government. However, many of these publications were short-lived as they faced many restrictions from the authorities prompting many of the journalists to live the industry. At the same time the philosophical ideals of the Young Ottoman were gradually challenged by the younger generation of activists who were more attracted to the secular ways of European Nationalism who later formed the Young Turk movement that later catalysed the secular overhaul of Turkish nationalism leading to the official demise of the Ottoman empire.

Modernist Media in South Asia

Many publications in South Asia's modernist media focused on the need for Muslims to defend the Islamic teachings while also accepting Western ideas that could help secure the Muslim societies place in the modern world. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1878-1898) and Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), are two of the most prominent figures in the early modernist movement of South Asian Muslims.

The works of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan rose to prominence in the aftermath of the Great Revolt of 1857 where he championed a cordial relationship between British rule and Muslims. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a major rebellion in India against British colonialism. The uprising threatened British rule and was costly for the colonialist. The Indians managed to put up a fight against British and was only defeated a year later in 1858 (Belmekki 2007). Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan feared that the outcome of the rebellion will be particularly detrimental to the Muslims. Khan published his famous book *Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* (The Causes of the Indian Revolt) in 1859 where he defended the Indian Muslims and blamed the East India Company for its colonialist policies and ignorance of the intricate cultures of the different societies in India. He went on to suggest that the British include Muslims in the administration to avoid the future occurrences of local rebellions.

In addition, to combat the perceived backwardness of the Muslim community in India, Khan made a concerted effort to persuade his fellow Muslims to adopt relevant Western ideals and standards. Reinterpreting Islam in the light of modern science and reason, he reduced it to its essence, the Qur'an. Khan founded his own journal *Tehzeeb-ul-Akhlaq* (Social Reformer) in 1870 to spread awareness and knowledge on modern subjects and promote reforms in Muslim society. He was primarily focused on reconciling Islamic ideologies with Western education. In his books, proposed that Islam appreciated reason and natural law and scientific inquiry is readily inherent in Islamic traditions (Robinson 1998).

One of Khan's most important contributions to the reformist movement is the formation of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Collegiate School in Aligarh. The college attracted a large student body despite it being heavily criticised by conservative Muslim leaders as being too Westernised. The college offered scientific and Western subjects, as well as Oriental subjects and religious education. Near the turn of the 20th century, it began publishing its own magazine and established a law school. In 1920, the college was transformed into Aligarh Muslim University (Hassan 2006).

Muslim poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, a leading intellectual in South Asia, was another notable Indian modernist. Scholar Iqbal advocated for the development of strong Muslim personalities and an open-minded Muslim society through the practise of *ijtihad* (reasoning). Poetry by Iqbal is mostly written in Persian, but after 1930 he began writing in Urdu. His writings were often aimed at the Muslim population of India, with a greater emphasis on Islam and Muslim spiritual and political awakening.

More than 7,000 of Iqbal's 12,000 poetries are written in Persian. His first collection of poetry, *Asrar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), was published in Persian in 1915 and was his first major work of art. An emphasis on religion and spirituality permeates these poems. This has been hailed as one of Iqbal's finest works of poetry by many critics. For Iqbal, the best code of conduct for a nation's survival is the Islamic way of life, as he argues in *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (Hints of Selflessness) (Voll 1999).

Another philosophical poetry book by Iqbal in Urdu, *Zarb-i-Kalim* (or The Rod of Moses) was released two years before his death in 1936. His political manifesto can be found here. "A Declaration of War Against the Present Times" was the subtitle. According to Muhammad Iqbal, today's problems are the result of modern civilisation's godlessness, materialism, and injustice, which is fuelled by the exploitation and subjugation of weak nations, particularly the Indian Muslims themselves (Sevea 2012).

Modernist Media in Egypt

Modernist media in Egypt was much influenced by ideas of Jamal Al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897). Al Afghani was a politician, political activist, and journalist who believed in the power of a resurrected Islamic civilization in the face of Western colonisation. He was a traveller who shared his ideas in Iran, Egypt, India, and Turkey, among other places. His time in Egypt was especially significant because he published a number of notable journals and newspapers that instilled reformist ideas in the hearts and minds of Muslims.

Al-Afghani was well-versed in the modernist philosophy and methodology of *ijtihad* (reasoning). He relocated to India around 1857, where he became acquainted with Western science and developed strong anti-imperialist feelings, mainly against Britain. Throughout the rest of his life, Afghani worked to convince Muslim rulers to modernise and unite against European superiority (this places him in the present termed pan-Islamic). His ideas inspired many admirers and supporters from young Muslims at the prestigious al-Azhar University in Egypt who later brought back these ideas back to their own place of origin. Afghani published the revolutionary journal *Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa* (The Firm Bond) in 1884. Although it was short-lived, the journal was considered one of the earliest pioneer publications that was directed to the Muslim ummah, calling it to unite against Western Colonialism (Polk 2018).

Another leading figure in Egyptian modernism was Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), who was Afghani's contemporary. He is considered by some as Egypt's most prominent modernist Muslim. Abduh pursued his studies in philosophy and journalism. Abduh was disturbed by society's division between Westernizers and conservatives. To bridge the gap, he attempted to demonstrate that Islam is consistent with reason and science, and that it is able to offer the moral foundation and guiding principles for adjusting to modernity. Abduh wrote *Risalat al-Tawhid* (The Theology of Unity) and distinguished between specific rules pertaining to worship and general principles pertaining to worldly affairs in his Qur'anic exegesis, the latter leaving room for *ijtihad* as rational deliberation based on public interest and a synthesis between the four legal schools (Amir et al. 2012)

Together with Afghani, Abduh co-edited *Al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*. Abduh was also the editor of the state newspaper *al-Waqi al-Misriyya*. He was determined to change Egypt's entire society, and he believed that education was the best way to do so. The *Risalat al-Waredat* (Conceivables' Letter) was published in 1874. He also wrote an article called *Al-Islam Wal Nusraniya Bain Al-'Ilm Wa Al-Madaniah* (Islam and Christianity: Science and Civility) wherein he explained why he believes Islam promotes modern scientific methods.

Abduh's work was continued by his disciples namely Rashid Rida who published the influential weekly magazine *al-Manar* (extension). *Al-Manar's* content was much influenced by the ideas of Abduh. The content of *al-Manar* is divided into two parts namely, the interpretation of the Qur'an which is elaborated according to the views of Muhammad Abduh as well several fatwas and discussions on Islam and its practices. The second part of the magazine features several articles on politics, society, literature, history and civilization, religious issues and several keynote speeches and related important letters of agreement (Zain & Ghazali 2021).

When Abduh died in 1905, Rida and other prominent reformers at the time continued to debate on issues related to the Islamic world and propagated ideas of reform and modernism to audiences outside the Arab world (Amir et al. 2012).

Modernist Media in the Malay World

Egyptian Muslim reformism found its path to the Malay Peninsula and resonated to the Malay Muslims who were also subjugated by Western colonialism. Egypt wielded considerable influence over the Malay Peninsula because the Qur'an tells stories about the Prophets who hailed from or were centred in Egypt, such as Yusuf, Musa, and Harun, this land of the Prophets attracted the Malays' imagination and minds (Othman & Haris 2018).

The existence of one of the Muslim world's oldest universities, Al-Azhar University, established by the Fatimid dynasty in 970, was a major factor in this. Al-Azhar University's reputation drew students from all over the Muslim world, such as the Malay Archipelago, to continue pursuing religious education at this prestigious Islamic educational institution. Malay students had already been in Egypt since the second half of the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the presence of a small *jawi rivaq* (Malay-Indonesian students' residence hall) at al-Azhar University during this period.

Sheikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, an al-Azhar former student, is largely viewed as the first Malay proponent of 'Abduh's ideas. Tahir played a key role in the spread of Egyptian reformism in the Malay world after his return to the Malay world in 1899. Tahir and other

reformists spread reformist ideas in Singapore through the publication of *al-Imam* (1906-1908). *Al-Imam* was modelled after the popular journal *al-Manar*, and the majority of its articles were translations and adaptations of *al-Manar*. Nevertheless, *al-Imam* did not only borrow from *al-Manar*, but it also included articles acknowledging the local issues that Muslims in the Malay world faced. Backwardness, foreign power dominance, ignorance of current knowledge, idleness, complacency, dispute, and lack of collaboration among Muslims were among them.

Al-Imam was pivotal in spreading Muhammad Abduh's reformism ideals not only in the Malay Peninsula, as well as in the Dutch East Indies. This was made possible by the periodical's widespread distribution in the region. *Al-Imam* also had representatives in Jakarta, Tjiandur, Surabaya, Semarang, Pontianak, Sambas, and Makasar. As a result, this reformist periodical played a vital role as cultural brokers, translating Islam's new purity, rationalism, and vitality into Malay - the Archipelago's lingua franca - and also into aspects pertinent to a local, Malay-Indonesian point of reference (Zakariya 2007)

Tahir also wrote several original works, the most renowned of which was *Kitāb ta'yīd muttabi' al-Sunna fī al-radd 'alā al-qāil bil-sunniyyat al-rak'atain qabla al-jum'at* (Book encouraging Sunnah followers in trying to refute those claiming that the Friday supererogatory prayer is recommended) which was published in Malay and Arabic. This book has received praise from a number of notable 'ulama, including Rashid Rida. Likewise, his *Perisai Qadiani* [The shield against the Qadianis] and *Risalah penebasan bid'ah di Kepala Batas* [Treatise on clearing innovation in Kepala Batas] were both original works (Zakariya, 2007).

The reformist media were challenged by colonial censorship as well as criticism from conservative Muslim clerics. Responding to these challenges, the Malay reformists used journalism and writing as a platform to initiate their criticism against the traditional Malay elite and 'ulama. Inspired by Egyptian and South Asian reformist periodicals, Malay reformists published their own reformist journals like *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwan*, *Saudara*, and *al-Munir* to support ideas of Islamic modern reformism in local terms and language.

Likewise, another notable Malay thinker, Syed Shaikh Al-Hady, was enthralled by Muhammad Abduh's progressive ideas, and Al-Hady took the lead in promoting them to the Malay audience. He translated into Malay two of Abduh's Qur'anic exegesis. The first was *Tafsīr Juz' 'Amma* (Exegesis of the last section of the Qur'an) and the second was *Tafsīr al-Fātihah* (Exegesis of the opening chapter of the Qur'an). He also supported 'Abduh's concept of the compatibility of Islam and rationale and promoted this in his own work, *Kitab agama Islam dan akal* (Islam and reason). Al-Hady wanted to inform the Malay Muslims that every component of Islam is compatible with rationale. He claims that if Muslims carefully examine the obligatory rituals, they will recognise their utility, benefits, and relevance to modern necessities (Zakariya 2009).

Dissatisfied with the way women were treated and positioned in traditional Malay society, al-Hady recognised the importance of granting women more freedom in society. Between 1926 and 1928, al-Hady published in his periodical, *al-Ikhwan*, a series of articles titled *Alam Perempuan* (Women's World). The articles were then edited and published under a proper book called *Kitab Alam Perempuan* (Book of Women's World). Tahir and al-Hady were instrumental in raising Malay awareness of modern socioeconomic and political realities. Their reform, nevertheless, did not result in a mass movement because they were disorganised and lacked coherent and particular programmes for socioeconomic and political changes. As a result, they were unable to effect broad and long-term changes in Malay society at the time (Hamisan 2020).

Modernist Media in the Maghribs

The movement of merchants, pilgrims, and official state delegations across the Arab world, brought al-Afghani and 'Abduh's reformist and modernising ideas to the Maghribs beginning in the late nineteenth century. Similar to the experiences of the Malay Muslims, Ideas of reformism came to the Maghribs through students of al-Azhar. Abdallah al-Sanussi and Abu Sha'ib al-Duqqali were among a growing number of reform-minded scholars who went back to Morocco from their studies at Al-Azhar and brought with them ideas of nationalist reform. They

established madaris hurra (free schools) and secondary schools independent of French administrative supervision, in Fez, Sale, Rabat, and Marrakech. Young reformists from the Maghribs read and even contributed articles to reformist journals such *al-Shihab* and *al-Najah* in Algeria and *al-Mu'ayyid* and *al-Manar* in Egypt. Because of the strict media control imposed by the French, reformist expression in Morocco continued to remain clandestine, limited to personal correspondence or, in the case of *Umm al-Banin*, secret press with restricted circulation (Zaghlami 2016).

The reformist movement in the Maghribs exploited the increasing availability of print publications in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In addition to the rising volume of imported material, print technologies such as lithography (1865) and moveable type (1906) saw increased use only after the 1880s, as private printing houses and personal operations grew to generate tens of thousands of quantities.

To conclude, numerous attempts to resuscitate Islam and withstand Western control have been largely unsuccessful. By 1818, the British had secured complete rule over India, and between then and the aftermath of World War I, they acquired numerous other colonies and mandates. Although not all Muslim territories were conquered, virtually all were enslaved in some way, whether psychological, political, technological, cultural, or economic. Only the Saudi rule in the Arabian Peninsula's core region can be considered independent, and even its 1930s oil development invited European interference. However, as demonstrated here, Muslim communities did not passively allow the West to effortlessly control them. By utilising emerging media technologies, particularly newspapers, books, and journals, Muslim leaders were able to distribute messages and information urging Muslims to unite and defend their principles while also realising the necessity of adapting to changing times. While some of these movements may have been more Islamic in nature than others, they demonstrated the Muslims' resilience, and while the Muslim world eventually fell into Western hands, the legacy and intellectual ideas that arose during this period shaped subsequent Muslim polities and intelligentsia.

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