

Intellectual Interaction and Malaysian *Dakwah* Activism.

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Introduction

The ideas of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad 'Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida made a great impact on the Muslim world especially in the late nineteenth century and the middle of the 20th century. They played a major role as Islamic reformists whose understanding of the *al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah* could be conceived of as post-*taqlid* renewal. The writing of these reformists constituted a critique of the *taqlid* tradition. Their influence on the Islamic world can hardly be underestimated as has often been documented in biographical and other studies. The reformists have constantly argued for a return to the *al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah* as the principal spiritual source of guidance. Except for Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, the three other reformists emphasized the temporal aspect of human development; a result of their exposure to developments in the western world. Their thinking appears to reflect an intellectual reaction to contemporary issues both temporal and spiritual. Both Muhammad 'Abduh and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani exhibit a certain attitude towards problems arising out of the meeting with both Islamic and Western culture and behavioral modes. Nevertheless, both have appeared to have inevitably acculturated western ideas of progress, science and philosophy.

The Father of Islamic Reformism: Jamal Al-Din Afghani (1838-1897) And His Influence in Malaysia.

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) and his close companion, Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) have given a huge contribution to the development of Islamic thoughts. Both published weekly periodicals namely *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa* (The Indissoluble Bond) in Paris in 1884, but later it was banned in Egypt and India by the British (Nikki R. Keddie, 1968: 24). In 1897, Muhammad Rashid Rida, student of Muhammad 'Abduh, made another effort to publish *Al-Manar* (The Lighthouse) (1898-1935).

Indeed, *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa* and *Al-Manar* were influential in Malaya during that particular time. Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin, a friend of Muhammad Rashid Rida was one of the Malay scholars who contributed articles for *Al-Manar*. Sheikh Tahir then continued the reformist ideas in the Malay Archipelago by publishing a Malay journal *Al-Imam* in Singapore in 1906 accompanied by Syed Sheikh al-Hadi, Haji Abbas Muhammad Taha and Muhammad Salim al-Kalali (Mohd. Sarim Hj. Mustajab, 1977: 11). In fact, Sheikh Tahir is regarded as the pioneer of the reformist movement in the Malay Peninsular. The aims of *Al-Imam* were mainly to fulfill the responsibilities of a Muslim by imparting knowledge to the Muslims, offering guidance to be a good Muslim, and "reminding those who are idle, awakening those who are asleep and leading those who have lost their way" (Linda, 1961: 10). The journal's name was adapted from the nickname of Muhammad 'Abduh of Egypt. Its publication was stopped in 1908 and was continued by *Neraca* (Balance) published by Haji Abbas Mohd. Taha.

Al-Imam succeeded in striking an intellectual revolution especially in the Semenanjung Tanah Melayu and the Malay Archipelago generally. Then, *Neraca* (1911-1915) and *Tunas Melayu* (1913) continued the spirit of *Al-Imam* in activating the Malay consciousness. With the same spirit, Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi published *Ikhwan* (1926) and *Saudara* (1928) (Shafie Ibrahim, 1987: 24-25).

Intellectual Interaction and Malaysian International Students

The Malay students, who studied in Makkah or al-Azhar, Egypt brought the reformism thoughts to *Semenanjung Tanah Melayu* (Malay Archipelago) in its early developments. The Malay students concentrated to study in Saudi especially in Makkah and Madinah in the early 20th century. Then in 1920s, there was a major trend where Malay students after studying in Makkah then proceeded to Cairo to continue their study. The pioneering Malay students in Makkah played major role in encouraging friends and parents to send their sons to further their studies in Cairo. Individual such as Shaykh 'Abd. al-'Aziz Affendi al-Suhaimi, a close friend of Shaykh Rifa'ah al-Tahawi, Principal of al-Azhar University also played a notable role. He travelled to Malaya and explained the benefits of pursuing higher education at al-Azhar and gave recommendations for those who wished to further their studies there (Ibid: 97) In 1925, there were about two hundred students who came from the Netherlands East Indies who studied at Al-Azhar University, Cairo (Muhammad

Redzuan Othman, 1994: 100). In fact, during the first quarter of the 20th century, the contributing factors why Malay students decided to study at al-Azhar University rather than at Makkah were: the boom in rubber prices, the Al-Azhar educational system was better adapted to the teaching method used at the *surau*s and mosques, the opening of more *madrasahs* throughout the Malay Peninsular, the availability of convenient transportation i.e. steamships, and the capture of the Holy City by Ibn Sa'ud in October 1924 (Ibid: 98-100). Soenarno (1960: 8) described the period 1906 until 1926 as the religious stage and religious reformism phase.

Sheikh Tahir Jalaludin was one of the earliest Malay students who studied in Cairo. He arrived at Cairo in 1893 (Muhammad Sarim, 1996: 120). Before that he stayed in Makkah for 20 years. Cairo became the intellectual destination for the Malay students because of the significance of the University al-Azhar as *Manar al-'Ilm* (Minaret of Knowledge) and *Ka'bah al-'Ilm* (Room of Knowledge), the prestigious academic religious institution in the Muslim world (Mona Abaza, 1991: 355). Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin, the pioneer of reformism in Malaya was one of the Malay students, which was influenced by the reformism concept introduced by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh. He was nicknamed "Al-Azhari" because he studied in al-Azhar and "*Al-Falaki*" because he specialized in the discipline of astronomy and became an expert in it. He also received his early religious education in Makkah and brought back religious books to Penang for sale. In Egypt, he became a friend of Muhammad Rashid Rida and attended Muhammad 'Abduh's lectures and met him as well. He also had the opportunity to make a bowing acquaintance with other local personalities of the Egyptian reformist movement (Linda, 1961: 11). After spending about four years studying in al-Azhar (1893-1897), he went to Makkah and taught astronomy for two years. During these two years stay, he introduced reformist Islam to the students from the Malay Archipelago and his teachings gave an impact to the struggle for reformism in the Malay Archipelago especially when they came back to the region (Roff, 1990: 60-61).

In the 19th century, Makkah was a famous place where Muslims from all over the Malay Archipelago converged to further their religious studies (Hugronje, 1905: 254-255). It is no wonder that the Malays were inspired by the ideas of Muhammad Bin 'Abd al-Wahhab. In Makkah also many of the early Malay scholars completed most of their writings on religious teachings especially in the field of

Islamic laws, theology and Sufism (Omar Awang, 1981: 81). In the first quarter of the 20th century, there existed a few Malay students who pursued their study in India such as Burhanuddin al-Helmi. He studied homeopathy in the Ismaeliah Medical College, Secudrabad, Hydrabad, India (Saliha, 1986) He also studied philosophy in Aligarh University, New Delhi and graduated with a bachelor degree in arts and philosophy (Ramlah Adam, 1996: 9) In India he was exposed to the *Naqshabandi* teachings and practised it as well. He also once visited Palestine for a few months and saw for himself the political and military aggression of the British for the establishment of the Jewish Israeli State. In Palestine he was involved in a demonstration against the Balfour Treaty. The British detained him for a few days. It is believed in Palestine, he was introduced to journals and periodicals containing the reformism ideas of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh (Ibid: 11) In 1937, he published a periodical, namely *Taman Bahagia*, in Singapore using his own savings. This periodical contained articles on the Muslims' world affairs and society, included articles on the problems of the Palestinian people emphasizing their rights which had been denied by the British and the Jews. The British detained him one hour after the publication of the periodical (Abdullah Hussein, 1969). He was sentenced to jail for six months for committing an anti-British aggression (Ramlah Adam, 1996: 16).

Burhanuddin was also known as a *Kaum Muda* supporter in spite of actively involving himself in the Malayan politics. He assumed Islam as a Malay political vehicle in order to reveal the Malay attitudes of loving their native country and own race. In his literature, he regularly used *al-Qur'an* and *al-Hadith* to convince his supporters towards the role of Islam as a tool in the revival of the Malay political consciousness. His manifestation on Islam also appeared in his attitudes towards defending and championing the Pattani Muslim struggles in Thailand (Ramlah Adam, 1996b: 257) He was one of the founder members of Hizbul Muslimin, which was established in 1948. This party mobilized Islam as its political ideology. Hizbul Muslimin was influenced by the Indonesian Muslims' party, Parti Masjumi (Stockwell, 1979: 138). Burhanuddin was also involved in several economic and educational bodies. His leadership in PAS manifested his true Islamic political ideology. In the midst of the struggle for Malay nationalism, between 1956 until 1969, Burhanuddin fought for the establishment of *Dar al-Islam* (Islamic State) (Ramlah Adam, 1996b: 257).

It is basically true that those who were educated in the Middle East brought back the idea of reformism to Malaysia. Abu Bakar Hamzah (1981: 1) observes:

Those responsible for the edition and publication of the journal were mostly educated in the Middle East particularly in the cities of Mecca and Cairo. It was during their stay in those parts of the world that, according to our sources, they began to observe, and subsequently became interested in, the Fundamentalist Movement first founded by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-1791) in Arabia. They were also inspired by the revolutionary ideology of Pan Islamism founded by Syed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (1839-1897) and by the zeal of the Reformist Movement carried on by his two great disciples, Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Syed Muhammad Rashid Ridza (1865-1835) [sic].

In 1917, Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi established a religious school named Madrasah Al-Hadi, but later he moved to Penang and became the head teacher of Madrasah Al-Mashoor Al-Islamiyyah in 1918. Among the famous figures who contributed to the school as teachers were Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin, Abu Bakar Rafi'e and Sheikh Abdullah Maghribi. Sheikh Abdullah Maghribi himself was known as a Wahhabi proponent. With teachers of strong Islamic foundations, experienced and overall influenced by the reformist movements in the Middle East, Madrasah al-Mashoor became 'reformist Madrasah al-Mashoor' (Roff, 1990: 172) and '...the most distinguished religious school in Malaya' (Roff, 1990: 82). What makes the madrasah schools different from other traditional religious institutions (*pondok*) is its curriculum and syllabus. The madrasah system introduced the English Language and 'secular knowledge' instead of religious knowledge. Later Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi quitted from Madrasah Al-Mashoor and published a monthly magazine known as *Al-Ikhwān* in 1926 and he became the editor of the magazine (Amini, 1997: 41).

The influence of reformist madrasah then spread to other states. Similar to Madrasah al-Mashoor in its reformist sense, Sheikh Abdullah Maghribi established Madrasah Al-Idrisiah in Kuala Kangsar, Perak (Muhammad Sarim, 1975: 2). The ex-students of Madrasah Al-Mashoor then established Madrasah al-Diniyah in Kampung Lalang, Perak. Several branches of this madrasah were also born in Perak and this gave an impact to the influence of the reformist movement in Perak (Muhammad Sarim, 1979: 164) In Selangor, Haji Jalaluddin bin Ismail from Minangkabau, Indonesia

established Madrasah Al-Ubudiyyah, Kampung Jeram in 1922. The reformist movement was also highly influential in Negeri Sembilan society especially in the Kuala Pilah area. Maulana Muhammad Maadah bin Layang graduated from Madrasah Mazharul Ulum, India established Madrasah 'Aliyah Islamiyyah (famously known as High Islamic School) (Kamaruddin, 1984: 51). He then instituted another two branches namely Madrasah Islamiyyah in Sungai Dua and Madrasah Jemaah Islamiyyah, Kampung Tengkek. In 1956, Madrasah Ittiba' Al-Sunnah was established in Seremban by *Ittiba' Al-Sunnah* group (Hashim Ghani, 1985: 18). Among reformists who involved with this faction's activities and gave their contributions to this group were Haji Ahmad Amin from Jasin, Melaka, Ibrahim Aqibi from Penang and Abu Bakar al-Ashaari from Perlis.

In the Non-Federated State, the reformist movement influenced and dominated the religious administration of the state as well. The famous often-mentioned '*ulama*' was Haji Wan Musa bin Abdul Samad. Although he was a traditionalist, his attitude towards the practice of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) was more liberal since he accepted opinions and *fatawa* from other sects (Muhammad Salleh and S. Othman, 1974: 166). His position was strengthened by his son, Haji Nik Abdullah who was influenced by the teaching of Shah Waliyullah al-Dahlawi while studying in India.

Perhaps one of the states in which the influence of the reformist movement was widely spread was Perlis. The reformist movement led by Abu Bakar Ashaari regulated the reformist thoughts as the state ideology. In 1963, the clause in the *Undang-undang Tubuh Kerajaan Negeri Perlis* (The Perlis Government Legislation) stated that the state is adhered to the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* mainstream thoughts. This clause emphasizes that its only accepted doctrine is directly referred to the *al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah* rather than to the other *madhabs*, as practiced by other states in Malaysia (Abdul Rahman Abdullah, 1989: 9). Abu Bakar Ashaari does not use any publication to spread his ideas.

There were tremendous efforts made by the Muslims in introducing Islamic reform in Malaysia and a significant role was played by *Al-Imam* with its impact on Malay society during the first decade of the twentieth century. Through the 19th century, the Malays had experienced tremendous events. The external capital was brought in and the coming of the foreigners made radical changes to the economic system and the pattern and structure of the society. As a result, the Malays felt suppressed in their own country. In the early

20th century, the voice of protest appeared among a group of the Malays namely, *Kaum Muda* although it was not very loud. Their main struggle was to mobilize the Malay awareness towards a positive attitude in gaining progress. According to the *Kaum Muda*, this objective could be achieved only by practising Islam based on the *al-Qur'an* and *al-Hadith*, and by abolishing all the beliefs and customs opposing Islam. One of the methods used to raise awareness to their campaign was through publication. In 1906, they published *Al-Imam*, the first Malay newspaper acting as a social analyzer (Khoo Kay Kim, 1985: X). It is a mistake if one only understands that the reformist movement in Malaya in its early stages only emphasized the conflict between *Kaum Muda* - *Kaum Tua*, or that *Kaum Muda* concentrated on the issue of *bid'ah* (innovation) and *'ibadah* (worship) *per se*. The *Kaum Muda* also had its own political programs with clear objectives. They struggle for the establishment of 'God's State', for the introduction of Islamic politics, for the independence of Muslim countries, for the development of political cooperation, and for the cooperation with other Islamic movements in the world (Abu Bakar Hamzah, 1983: 2). The *Kaum Muda* has highlighted certain aspects of Islamic thoughts including the return to *al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah*, the practice of *ijtihad* and discrediting *bid'ah*, and promoting Islamic modernism and nation advancements.

The Influence of Ikhwan al-Muslimin, Jamaat al-Islami, the Iranian Revolution, and the Indonesian Connection.

The influence of the Middle Eastern Islamic movements can be traced in the development of the Malaysian Islamic movement before the Iran Revolution in 1979. It was more obvious after the Iranian Revolution (under Ayatullah Khomeini and Ali Shariati). Almost every PAS and ABIM leader visited Iran as soon as the Revolution reached its victory. There was a very close connection in terms of influence between the dominant world Islamic movement and Malaysian *da'wah* movements. As Khurshid Ahmad (1983: 222) pointed out: "There is an almost continuous chain of Islamic movements operating amongst the Muslim people in all parts of the world."

If the Islamic movements of the world emphasized that Islam was not only a set of beliefs and rituals, but a moral and social movement, it was the same emphasis as the Islamic movements in Malaysia. Khurshid Ahmad (1983: 222) examines:

The most important aspect of the mission of these Islamic movements has been their emphasis on Islam, not just as a set of beliefs and rituals, but as a moral and social movement to establish the Islamic order. And by emphasizing this, they have identified themselves with all the *tajdid* and *jihad* movements of history. The works of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, and Mawlana Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi (Indo-Pak subcontinent), of Imam Hasan al-Banna Shahid and Sayyid Qutb Shahid (Egypt), of Malik bin Nabi and Shaikh Ibrahim al-Jazairi (Algeria), of Dr. Ali Shariati and Imam Kohmeini [sic] (Iran), of Said Nursi (Turkey), and others together constitute the most important influence in producing the contemporary revivalist movements in Islam. The existence of Islamic groups and movements, that call to Islam, command the good and prohibit the evil is an obligation prescribed by Allah in the *Al-Qur'an*: 'Let there rise from among you group(s) that invite society to Islam, command society to do what Allah orders and to refrain from what He forbids and these (group (s)) are the ones who are successful [3:104].

The influence of Indonesian '*ulama*' was also obvious in Malaysian Islamic revivalism. Books written by Indonesian '*ulama*' in Malay *Jawi* script were used in *pondoks*, mosques, *suraus* and religious schools especially on the *Shafi'i's fiqh* (jurisdiction). It is not denied that the books written by scholars from Pattani and other areas in Thailand and Arabic sources were used as well (Abdul Halim el-Muhammady, 1989: 195). For example, *Kitab Sabil al-Muhtadin li Tafaqqub fi al-Din* by Muhammad Arshad bin Abdullah al-Banjari and *Kitab Sirat al-Mustaqim* by Shaikh Nur al-Din Muhammad al-Jailani al-Raniri and *Furu' Al-Masail* by Syeikh Daud Al-Fatani . Even before 1970's, the books those written by Indonesian scholars were sold and became famous elsewhere in Malaysia especially written by Hamka (Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah) on sufism, Islamic social justice, Islamic teachings, *tafsir* and others. In the 1920's, Hasan Bandong's ideas on the rejection of any particular school of thought or sect for the application of Islamic law with the exception of only the *al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah* gave an impact to the Muslim community in Malaya. Even the state authority experienced the impact. His book named "*Soal Jawab*" became the main reference in Perlis by the *alla-madhabiyah* (no sectarian) group. According to Hasan Bandong, those who claimed to be the followers of Imam al-Shafi'i, do not read the literature written by the Imam al-Shafi'i, and to make the situation worse,

they do not refer to *al-Quran* and *al-Sunnah*. The Shafi'i followers claimed their sect was Shafi'i but they did not follow the exact teaching of Imam al-Shafi'i (Abdul Rahman Abdullah, 1989: 84-89).

The main actors of the *da'wah* movement in Malaysia in the 70s were Malay university students most of them from the Malay peasant society. As Shamsul Amri (1993: 112) emphasized, "...they found *da'wah* to be strongly appealing, first in providing reassurance in the 'confused' and 'disorienting' urban milieu, and secondly as an important para-political outlet". The students who were involved in *da'wah* were mainly Malay-educated and religious educated and were ambivalent about western education. When Malaysia began sending its first batch of government-sponsored students to the Western countries in 1974, the Pakistan, Libya, India, Saudi Arabia and Iran connection became important to the Malays. It was through these students, that books on Islam in English by Pakistanis, Indians and others became popular (Mohamed Abu Bakar, 1981: 1043). According to Nagata, the main external link of this *da'wah* movement which was initiated by these students and later became ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia) was with Egypt, Iran, India, Pakistan, Libya and Saudi Arabia (Judith Nagata, 1980: 131). But according to Shamsul Amri (1993: 112), it was with Indonesia since the students:

...read mostly Indonesian books on Islam, and had dialogues with their Indonesian counterparts, from Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI) and with *ulama*. In fact between 1971-3 there were a number of 'special *da'wah* courses' organised by the Malaysian Islamic Students National Association with the help of their Indonesian colleagues. Some were conducted in Malaysia by the Indonesian, and a few groups, consisting mainly of potential leaders, went to Indonesia to attend courses of one month's duration.

In the 1980s, Malaysian *da'wah* movements started to reflect the activities of major Middle Eastern religious movement the Ikhwan al-Muslimin [Egypt] and the Indian Sub-continent religious movement the Jamaat al-Islami [Pakistan] as well as the Iranian Revolution. According to Nagata (1984: 78):

Internal politics in these countries, as in Malaysia, reflect, or are reflected by, religious movements and the activities of the Islamic Brotherhoods. Jamaat Islam and Al-Ikhwan are now part of the political equation in Egypt, the Sudan, and Syria. All these

groups, as the Malaysian government is well aware, have their roots in youth and student movements of the kind now emergent in Malaysia, and some of the support for Ayatollah Khomeini came from this constituency. All the above are basically fundamentalist in religious orientation. Egypt's Jamaat Islam (sic) in particular closely resembles Malaysia's ABIM in its membership concentration among high-school and university students, and its self-cultivated image of a religious welfare organization, but with covert political ambitions.

The Malay students in the Middle East have shown an interest in expanding the role of Islam in the political life and social life of Malaysia. Many have been drawn to the more conservative Parti Islam sa-Malaysia (PAS) and PAS politicians have often visited students in such centres as Al-Azhar giving Islamic political speeches and PAS's aims in achieving its objectives (Von der Mehden, 1993: 83). In fact, many also have been drawn to ABIM after the establishment of ABIM in 1971. The Malaysian *da'wah* movements are also inspired by the Ikhwan al-Muslimin and Jamaat Islami leaders such as Hasan al-Banna, Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, Abu Hasan Ali al-Nadwi, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Qutb, Sa'id Hawa, Fathi Yakan, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and Hasan Hudaibi. Consequently, the thoughts of several revivalist leaders also gained the same attention such as Amir Shakib Arsalan, Badi' al-Zaman al-Nursi, and Malik Ben Nabi. Books written by these leaders were translated and spread amazingly in Malaysia and were referred and used in *usrah* especially by ABIM and PAS. During this period, PAS and ABIM emphasized the development of personalities, upgrading the spiritual and physical strength, and the understanding of major Islamic teachings among their fellow members. Books written by the Ikhwan al-Muslimun and Jamaat al-Islami were regarded as 'haraki' (movement inspirational) books by members of *da'wah* movements since they emphasized the struggle of the *ummah*. Their works and others have been regularly quoted in books on Islam or in periodicals such as *Dakwah*, *Risalah*, or *Al-Nahdah*, *Qiblat*, and included PAS's bi-weekly newspaper *Harakah*. Their works were also quoted extensively in the annual conferences (Muktamar Tahunan or Muktamar Sanawi) of PAS and ABIM. Their efforts of championing the Islamic causes became examples for PAS's and ABIM's leaders to motivate and courage their members in the struggle of Islam in Malaysia.

Soon after the victory of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the PAS leader during that time, Dato' Asri equated PAS's struggle with that of Ayatullah Khomeini. But this matching was part of his image-making project and to convince the Malay Muslim masses of PAS Islamic character. Perhaps it was a psychological expression and campaign to gain Malay support for PAS causes since Khomeini's victory was also the victory of the Muslim world. PAS was also accused of imitating the Khomeini's concept of politics. This accusation was more obvious after the era of Datuk Asri. At this stage PAS introduced a new concept of leadership, '*Konsep Kepimpinan Ulama*' (The concept of '*ulama* leadership') (Abu Bakar Hamzah, 1983: 3). PAS wanted to change their leadership to a true '*ulama*'. There was also a demand in Malaysia for material on Islamic revolutionary thought. PAS itself had been strongly influenced by Arab political and religious thinking, particularly Egyptian reformers. ABIM had also maintained close ties with Cairo and Ikhwan al-Muslimin movements. Many of the idea of PAS and ABIM were also shaped by the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'ati of Pakistan. In early 1984, the government realizing this dangerous phenomenon, aimed at stopping the flow of this popular material and its reproduction inside Malaysia. They wanted to isolate these movements from negative elements and influences. This had quietly passed into law by *fait accompli* the 'Printing, Press and Publication Bill' (Muslimmedia, May 1984). Even the incidents in Egypt involving Islamic movements such as suicide bombing, leader detentions, theological and political issues attracted PAS leaders. Such *fatwa* by Egyptian religious authorities was often-quoted by PAS leaders. For instance, PAS Youth Leader, Abu Bakar Chik when asked (In a dialogue session in Winter Gathering of Hizbul Islami UK Eire at Muath Welfare Centre, Birmingham on December 1997) whether suicide bombing is legal in Islam, answered that the action is *harus* (permissible) based on *fatwa* by Shaikh al-Azhar. In the 1990s, the relations between PAS and Ikhwan Al-Muslimin became stronger. In September 1990, under the Ikhwan al-Muslimin initiatives, a meeting among leaders of international Islamic movements was held in Amman, Jordan. PAS was among the movements attending the meeting. The meeting came to a decision to sent representative to meet the Saudi, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and Kuwait leaders conveying the opinions of the Islamic movements

and representing the *ummah* in whole (Yusuf and Fadzil, 1995: 321).

There was also a question about whether PAS should follow overseas Islamic movements. Muhammad Sabu, one of the PAS Members of Parliament mentioned that there was an argument about PAS following any other movement outside Malaysia such as Iran, Afghanistan or Ikhwan al-Muslimun because their ways and approaches were different from the conditions and reality in Malaysia. According to Muhammad Sabu PAS did not specify its own approach. He claimed that "...our approaches are still the same as in the 1940s" (Tamadun, August 1998).

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