

## Educational Thought of Kyai Abbas: a Response to the National Awakening and the Struggle for Independence

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### Abstract

In this study, the researcher aims to discuss the adaptation efforts of Kyai Abbas in the world of Education. Kyai Abbas, as the central figure of West Java in the struggle of November 10, 1945, in Surabaya has made a major contribution to the world of educational thought. This is what becomes interesting to discuss. The movement of the independence struggle carried out by Kyai Abbas through education had a great influence on the birth of a cadre of scholars and freedom fighters for the country. Kyai Abbas maintains religious knowledge on the one hand and educates millions of students to defend the homeland. Pesantren became the basis of movement for the fighters in freeing their country from colonization. The approach used in this study is a literature study with inductive analysis. The procedure used in this study was carried out in three stages, namely orientation, exploration, and focused study. However, previous researchers first determine the object of study research by determining the material and formal objects of research. This is done so that research researchers remain focused on the problem under study, namely the problem of educational thinking Kyai Abbas. From the results of the discussion, the researchers managed to reveal the study's findings, that Kyai Abbas managed to make agitation efforts against a condition of colonization through the line of educational thought. Buntet Pesantren Cirebon is not only a place to print ulama cadres but also print fighters for the country that is being colonized. Kyai Abbas built the foundation for Buntet Pesantren by producing alumni with religious knowledge and militancy in defending the homeland.

### Keywords

Education Kyai Abbas; Militancy Students; Independence Movement

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study looked at the efforts made by Kyai Abbas when leading Buntet Pesantren in 1919-1946, especially through education. This study will contribute to modern history, especially the involvement of boarding schools in the struggle and nationalism movements, especially in the era of national awakening.

At that time, the study of the history of the National Awakening was more about nationalists who built and aroused national consciousness. The involvement of the pesantren has yet to be widely discussed, especially in the process of regeneration and National Education conducted by the kyai in pesantren. Among the figures who build regeneration through education in pesantren are Kyai Abbas and Buntet Pesantren.

Previous studies on Kyai Abbas were more on his heroic side in leading the war of November 10, 1945 (Bizawie, 2014). So was the study of the relationship between boarding schools in the battle of Independence (Halpern, 1961). Not many have seen how kyai is building the attitude of militancy among boarding schools in the fight against colonialism.

The study of the world of pesantren is more on the cultural aspects of the pesantren itself, which is centered on kyai, masjid, and madrasah (Dhofier, 1982), such as the educational system of pesantren (Steenbrink, 1986), pesantren and kyai in cultural systems and religious rituals (Muhaimin, 2006), academic traditions of pesantren (Van Bruinessen, 1998) and the dynamics of the boarding school world in social change (Ziemek, 1986).

This study will examine how kyai develops a love of the country through education. That is, education in pesantren is not only a place to print scholars but also to print cadres. To achieve this goal, the kyai-especially Kyai Abbas, reformed the education system in his boarding school. This can be done because the role of the kyai is important in the education system in boarding schools (Steenbrink, 1986).

In the era of kyai Abbas led Buntet Pesantren (1919-1946), Indonesia's situation began to fluctuate. Various elements of society began to carry out political movements to fight for the independence of the Indonesian nation. This period in Indonesian history is called the national awakening period (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1990).

In the early 20th century, in some areas, organizations were formed by the community to make various efforts so that the Indonesian nation separated from colonization. At that time, Budi Utomo, Syarekat Dagang Islam, was born, which later changed to Sarekat Islam, Muhammadiyah (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1990).

The writings on the history of Indonesia related to the rise of the nation have not touched much on the role of pesantren. HOS Tjokroaminoto as a supreme teacher activist also has a boarding school background; he is a descendant of Kyai Hasan Besari (Gonggong, 1985) (Amelz, 1952), as well as Haji Samanhudi, who founded Sjurekat Dagang Islam formed by batik traders in Surakarta in 1905 (Hamidah, 2020).

There are other pesantren background figures, such as Kyai Wahab Hasbullah, the founder of Nahdlatul Tujjar, Syubbanul Wathan and Taswirul Afkar (Rifai, 2010), Kyai Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah Union (Nuris, 2017), Kyai Abdul Halim, the founder of Oelama Association (Falah, 2008), and Kyai Hasyim Ash'ari, "the founder of Nahdlatul Oelama."

Such a national political situation influenced the thinking of Kyai Abbas Buntet Pesantren. While leading the pesantren, Kyai Abbas also established Ashbal dan Athfal (Aziz, 2016), an organization of teenagers educated to fight against colonialism (Rosyidin, 2016). Buntet Pesantren routinely conducts war training for this youth team. In addition, Kyai Abbas is also creating clerics who are militant and have a national insight. From here, Kyai Abbas, in addition to acting as the command of the West Java santri troops, also led the santri militancy to fight together in the field of battle.

In addition to the freedom revolution fighters on November 10, 1945, who fought the British Army and NICA (Aziz, 2016), Kyai Abbas was also a charismatic Islamic scholar whose struggle was a lot in the development of Madrasah and pesantren Buntet. Historical recognition states that during the leadership of Kyai Abbas, Pondok Buntet Pesantren developed rapidly in general and religious education. Developed by Kyai Abbas is an educational thought that brings a change in the face of education with teaching systems, methods, and subjects, both in traditional and modern treasures (Rosyidin, 2016). This is what then becomes interesting to discuss in this study. That is about the part of Kyai Abbas in adapting education to the colonial situation in his time. Because basically, the struggle movement carried out by Kyai Abbas through education has an effect on the birth of clerical cadres and fighters with strong militancy, who can be invited to fight and have a love for defending the homeland. In this context, Kyai Abbas plays Pesantren as a base of thought and education to give birth to the movement of fighters to free their country from colonization.

## **2. METHODS**

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative literature study type. According to Taylor and Procter, a literature study reviews various previously published literature (Mahanum, 2021), Where the researcher himself is a key instrument in his research. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data obtained through written data from literature related to the research subject. This research is directed at a holistic background (Subandi, 2011).

In literature study research, the technique of collecting data and information that researchers do is through reading literature or written sources such as books, previous research, papers, journals, articles, reports, and magazines related to research. (Hermawan, 2019). Therefore, qualitative researchers are human instruments that establish research focus, choose data sources, collect data, inventory data, assess data quality, analyze data, interpret data, and make conclusions in their research (Jabar, 2008).

According to Maimun, the procedure that can be done in this figure of Thought research is done with three stages, namely the stage of orientation, exploration, and focused study (Harahap, 2014). Studying this figure's thought is to comprehensively understand the concept of thought, Ideas, and ideas from the studied figure (Mustaqim, 2016). So to explain the research character, researchers need to determine the object of study, which among them is 1). A material object determines the focus of the study of one of the characters ' thoughts; 2). The formal object defines the research approach to Education (Harahap, 2014).

The data analysis used in this study is inductive, and the results of this study put more emphasis on meaning than generalization. The data sources used in this study to achieve the principle of updating (recency) and the principle of relevance (relevance) data were then divided into two groups, namely; 1). Special data sources (primary) are journals, research bulletins, articles, theses, theses, dissertations, and others; 2). General Data Sources (secondary) is a group of textbooks, encyclopedias, and the like (Soelistyarini, 2013).

The research stage of this literature study is done by collecting library data sources, both primary and secondary. The stage is then followed by the classification and inventory of data based on research formulas. In further stages, the researcher performs data processing and analysis, accompanied by reference citations to display research findings, abstracted to obtain complete information, and interpreted to produce a formulation of knowledge to draw conclusions. At this stage of interpretation, the researcher uses philosophical analysis or approach. (Darmalaksana, 2020)

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### *Kyai Abbas and Changes in the Education System in Buntet Pesantren*

In the thought of Kyai Abbas, a good education requires adequate infrastructure. For this reason, the first thing done when leading a boarding school is to build infrastructure or educational facilities, such as cottages and school buildings. During the time of Kyai Abbas, in addition to renovating old buildings also built new buildings (Muhaimin, 1995). the policy was carried out in response to the increasing number of students and the preparation of a new curriculum.

The next step is to change the educational curriculum of the education system while maintaining the old ways considered good. In 1928, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Elementary School) Buntet Pesantren was newly established, and Abnaul Wathan was teaching a secular lesson then. Its composition is 87% religious lessons and 13% secular lessons (Muhaimin, 1995). During his leadership, santri (student) Buntet Pesantren, besides being taught standard pesantren books, was also taught arithmetic, geography, science and Natural History, and the Indonesian language.

The Era of Kyai Abbas's leadership in Buntet Pesantren is divided into two important periods. The first period is a patriotic teaching period, which educates students with national insight, and the second period is more academic, which educates students to become scholars. The first period was from 1919 to 1928, while the second period was from 1928 to 1946.

For more academic purposes, Kyai Abbas changed the name of the madrasah to Madrasah Salafiyah Syafi'iyah. The next step is to change the education curriculum to preparatory and elementary. Each takes three years. The preparatory class is Destiny, initial table dan sifir stands, while the next level is the first class, two and three (Muhaimin, 1995).

As for the lessons at the cottage, Kyai Abbas changed the method of learning with; the slogan, bandungan (listening) dan halaqah. Sorogan is a teaching system between students and kyai face to face, and then students read a book in front of the kyai (Dhofier, 1982) (Madjid, 1997). at the same time, the method bandungan is kyai read a book and students record. During the leadership of Kyai Abbas, there were five types of teaching for students: slogan, bandungan, halaqoh, madrasah, and ngaji Pasar (Muhaimin, 1995).

Ngaji Pasar is a study conducted during the month of Ramadan and was completed during that month. Each kyai is required to read a book and complete it. Students use market appreciation as a way to get the sanad of a book. Seconds khatam or finish reading, kyai will meng-Ijaza-I the book while reading the sequence of teachers up to the book's author.

Other recitation methods applied are respecting the ear of residents around. In those days, the kyai in Buntet Pesantren certainly make study at home. This recitation is intended for older people, both men and women. Residents who live near kyai's House and also around Buntet on certain days and hours come to listen to kyai read the book and explain its contents. This study is called respecting the ear, a teaching that only listens.

During his leadership, a standard was made for students when they had to take lessons in madrasahs and kyai. A level of education must be able to understand certain books. The santri ngaji bandongan should have finished the Koran books "small" and can already read the book.

#### *The Temple as a Center of Worship*

Pesantren, with the main axis on kyai (Dhofier, 1982), gives freedom to kyai to make policies based on the situation and conditions faced. However, the Yellow Book (Van Bruinessen, 1995) (Madjid, 1997) remains the main literature that became a reference, although the reading of the Yellow Book experienced dynamics following the insight of kyai.

The increasing number of students gives awareness to Kyai Abbas to select students. This selection

is done informally. Kyai Abbas will see the potential of the students in the ability to absorb the material in a variety of recitations and madrasah. Students who are randomly selected will be developed further according to their potential. The students will be educated directly under his guidance.

The teaching system by way of sorogan, which is generally applied to novice students, is used by Kyai Abbas to galvanize potential students. In addition to asking to be taught a book, the students are also to read the determined book. They will read the book in front of Kyai Abbas. In this way, Kyai Abbas is doing the cadre of scholars. He realized that not all students would be great scholars, so he conducted a selection internally and chose some students. The selected students are taught directly.

The student who is elected by Kyai Abbas directly is Kyai Wahib Wahab (son of Kh Wahab Hasbullah), who, after boarding school, became minister of religion and developed Higher Education, State Islamic Institute (Iain), Tb. Mansur Ma'mun, a qori (reader of the Qur'an in the way of rhythm) international, became an official in the special Regional Government of Jakarta. H. Amin Iskandar, whose career became ambassador in Iraq. KH. Ibrahim Husen, a respected national scholar. Ibrohim Husen has been the rector of Iain Raden Fatah Palembang, rector of Ptiq (College of Quranic Sciences), rector of IIQ (Institute of Quranic Sciences) as well as the board of the Indonesian Ulema Council. Other cadres directly educated by Kyai Abbas are Kyai Ayatullah (Jakarta), Kyai Zuhri (Banten), Kyai Sholeh (Banten), Kyai Abdul Hamid (Banten), Mahbub Bajuri (Regent of Cirebon) (Muhaimin, 1995).

In choosing a cadre of students, Kyai Abbas sees the potential and ability to absorb lessons rather than the lineage or economy of students' parents. One of the cadres of students is Usman, a descendant whom Kyai Abbas raised. Usman as an adult, became a teacher in Buntet and is famous for his ability in the science of Arabic grammar (Chowas, 2019).

In educating the kyai cadres, Kyai Abbas emphasized not only the importance of the ability to read the yellow book but also elaborated on readings to build a life that is more valuable and following the context at hand. The cadres are educated to be sensitive to the situation and the development of society.

The education of Kyai Abbas forms the character of scholars who always seek the best solution to every issue. In one of the events, *bahtsul masail diniyah* (discussing religious matters, one of the traditions of NU and pesantren), Kyai Ibrahim Husen had a serious debate with Kyai Mahrus Ali (Pesantren Lirboyo) about whether or not women should be judges. This is an example of the role of Kyai Abbas in shaping the character of Islamic boarding school students. This means that Kyai Abbas made a major contribution to educational thinking in the Pondok Pesantren Buntet Cirebon. Islamic boarding schools are able to produce scholars who have a deep understanding and religious thought.

### ***War as the Center of the Warriors***

Buntet pesantren, a cadre of "pure" scholars, is also used as a cadre of fighters. Although since 1928, the education of struggle and war has yet to become the concentration of Kyai Abbas in building and developing pesantren, but still taught the insight of nationality and State defense to the students. Even students and children around are also taught how to defend the country.

The education of the struggle is still maintained based on the awareness of Kyai Abbas that the challenges ahead are not only intellectual but also physical struggles. For this purpose, Kyai Abbas still teaches the physical struggle or war strategy, creating ulama candidates as prospective mentors.

The rise of the people's struggle movement throughout Indonesia can not be separated from the attention of Kyai Abbas. He also formed Hezbollah troops in Buntet Pesantren. This force consists of students taught the struggle and war strategy. Kyai Abbas applies certain criteria in choosing students to be fighters. The first criterion is to understand the Yellow Book. Both have the spiritual ability or inner strength to run *riyadhoh* or *tirakat*. All three fought valor and were ready for martyrdom.

The three criteria or requirements are applied to have their purposes. Mastery of the yellow book is important so that, first, the fighters do not waver in their intentions, namely fixed *jihad fi sabilillah* to

defend the nation and country of Indonesia. Second, when the fighters stop in an area, they can preach and convey religious knowledge to the community. Third, the fighters can still understand how to carry out religious obligations in difficult situations by knowing the Yellow Book. The second requirement is needed because the struggle is hard times and suffering; people used to *tirakat* dan *riyadhoh* are accustomed to living hard, so it is not a problem when you have to lack food and sleep in the wild. The third requirement is related to mental; hearing the sound of bullets, bomb explosions, and wounded comrades and martyrs requires mental and strong courage. Without these things, the Santri-fighters will slack his spirit.

Kyai Abbas will train students who meet these criteria at the pesantren. At certain times, Kyai Abbas gave War lessons and also war training. Intensive training prepares students and boarding schools to fight when needed. Students who are trained to become fighters are students who are adults and not married.

During his leadership, he built a team of children and adolescents named *Ashbal* dan *Athfal*'s duty to be a spy. The children were instructed to play outside Buntet and roadside so that when colonial soldiers came, they immediately reported to santri fighters to get ready (Muhaimin, 1995) (Fathi & Wajdi, 2004). The strategy worked. Several times the colonial army came to Buntet to look for santri-fighters in Buntet Pesantren and its surroundings but were not found.

These santri-fighters, when Indonesia became independent, continued to fight to maintain independence. This period in Indonesian history is called the war of Independence (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1990). At that time, the Dutch colonial came to regain control of Indonesian territory.

In the history of Indonesia, the Dutch attempt to regain control of Indonesia failed because the people had united and fought to defeat the Dutch (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 1990). Pesantren throughout Indonesia also actively fought by forming fighters (Bizawie, 2014), including Buntet Pesantren. Some of them became soldiers, and many returned to pre-war activities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The educational thought of Kyai Abbas is recorded in the history of Buntet Pesantren. There are five important points of thinking Kyai Abbas. First, education requires adequate infrastructure. With good infrastructure, students become more comfortable learning. Second, the curriculum is developed based on the ability level of students, not age. Third, down directly trains personal students who have the potential to be educated into scholars. Fourth, maintain the education system that was previously implemented. Fifth, students are developed based on potential.

The educational thinking of Kyai Abbas cannot be separated from the adagio or principles used by the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization, namely maintaining good traditions that have been running and taking better traditions to be developed. With this principle, Buntet Pesantren can keep up with the times and maintain its identity. Old traditions are experiencing a refreshment with new elements coming in.

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