ISLAM, EMPIRE, AND IDEOLOGY: Lord Stanley and the Intersection of Islam and Politics in 19th Century Europe

Baiquni Hasbi

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe
Jl. Medan - Banda Aceh, Alue Awe, Muara Dua, Kota Lhokseumawe, Aceh 24352, Indonesia.
e-mail: baiquni@iainlhokseumawe.ac.id

Husnul Khitam

University of Tennessee-Knoxville, United States of America
Knoxville, Tennessee 37916, United States of America
e-mail: hkhitam@vols.utk.edu

Abstract: This article explores the political biography and thought of Lord Henry Stanley, a member of the British House of Lords, who converted to Islam in the mid-19th century. Through a global historical perspective, it draws on Stanley's personal writings, historical records, and parliamentary debates to trace his journey and analyze his political thought. By placing Stanley at the center of the nineteenth-century international political context, Stanley's biography and political thought challenge the dominant narrative that portrays European officers only as colonizers and imperialists. It also complicates the conventional narrative between Islam and the Christian West that is dominantly portrayed as antithetical. Henry Stanley consistently demonstrated the values of justice, which he believed were deeply rooted in the Islamic political system, amidst the increasing racialization of Muslims both in Britain and in an increasingly Eurocentric international community. While Stanley did not oppose British imperialism in Asia and Africa, he did oppose some British policies in India and the Straits of Malacca, which he felt were the result of Britain's arrogant attitude towards non-European political orders.

Keywords: Lord Stanley, European empire, Islam, modern, international politics

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Introduction

On July 28th, 1873, about three months into the Dutch invasion of Aceh, discussion on the Aceh-Dutch conflict reverberated through the halls of the House of Lords in London. Henry Edward Stanley, also known as Lord Stanley, the third Baron of Alderley, delivered a scathing critique of British involvement in the Dutch illegal invasion of Aceh. He accused the British government of betraying Aceh, its partner that it had sworn to protect in the Aceh-British treaty of 1819. Such a betrayal would have a detrimental impact on British interest and prestige in the Malay Straits, he continued.[1] This episode was not Stanley's first attack on the British crown. He had been one of the loudest voices criticizing British foreign policy throughout his political career. In the case of Aceh, he again delivered similar criticism in 1874 and 1876 regarding unnecessary British colonial policy in the Strait of Malacca.[2]

Contrary to the prevailing narratives, Lord Stanley's staunch critiques of the British government underscore a divergence within the European attitude regarding colonial interventions in Asia and Africa. Lord Stanley's expression challenged the notion of a unanimous European support for expansionist policies, highlighting dissenting voices within the political landscape. Notably, as several scholars recently argued, Lord Stanley was the first British parliament member to convert to Islam in the mid-19th century.[3]

His conversion story as well as his complex perception of British imperialism complicates the discourse on the simplified clash narrative of the the West and Islam today. Numerous intellectuals today portrayed the relationship between Islam and the Christian West as anti-thesis. The only relation between Muslim and European or Western people, the narrative argues, has only revolved around colonizer and colonized. The West

main objective was to propagate Christianity, to colonize Muslims, and to discredit Islam.[4] Certainly, Christianity and European colonialism were intertwined but their relationship was more multifaceted than that is widely accepted.[5] Thus the case of Lord Stanley complicates the simplified narrative. Islam, as practiced and embodied by Lord Stanley, was not always anti-imperialist and anti-Christian, and Europe was not only a Christian land. While Stanley did not outright reject British imperialism, his position on various conflicts, including the Aceh-Dutch War and the Zulu War (1879), showcased his willingness to critique imperial actions.

Despite his conversion to Islam, Stanley's Muslim identity was not always overt in his political discourse. The racialization of Muslims during his political career might have influenced his presentation to his family and colleagues, complicating the intersection of religion and politics in his public persona. This, however, does not mean he was absent from religious-politico matters because on some occasions Stanley did challenge British direct intervention in religious law such as in India.

The scholarly works of David Motadel, Anthony Reid, and Jamie Gilham present valuable insights into the broader dynamics of European engagement with Islam and Muslims during the colonial period. David Motadel's work has effectively challenged the simple 'clash narrative' between the West and Islam, presenting a multifaceted and protean nature of European engagement with Islam and Muslims. By exploring how European empires accommodated and controlled Islam in the colonial states, Motadel aptly highlights the intricate strategies employed by imperial powers to navigate the complexities of governing Muslim populations.[8]

Similarly, biographical works analyzing the relationship between European Muslim individuals and European empires

such as Abdullah Russell Webb, Rowland Allanson-Winn, the fifth Baron of Headley, and Abdullah Quilliam have enriched the tapestry of more complex Muslim individuals' views and relationships with European imperialism.[6] Of particular significance were biographical sketches on Henry Stanley by Anthony Reid and Jamie Gilham. Reid sheds light on Stanley's active role in propelling the interests and concerns of the Southeast Asian region within the colonial framework of the late 19th century. He was passionate about social justice, religious values, and human rights, and frequently spoke out against slavery and unjust treatment of non-European subjects. Such a role positioned him as a key figure in bridging the gap between Southeast Asia and the imperial center. Additionally, Gilham's analysis of Stanley's family and colleagues' reactions to his conversion reveals the challenges of his religious identity within his social and professional circles. This sheds light on the interplay between personal beliefs, societal attitudes, and political contexts that shaped Stanley's views on Islam and imperialism during his time in the British Parliament from 1854 to 1903.[7]

While the above scholarship has critically explored the broader dynamics of European engagement with Muslims and Islam, a gap remains in our understanding of Stanley's political ideas concerning Islam and imperialism. To be fair, Gilham did touch on Stanley's political lobbying and Islamic affairs. His analysis illuminates Stanley's sensitivity to injustice in the colonized East post-conversion. However, a more detailed exploration of Stanley's specific ideas regarding Islam and Imperialism is yet showcased, leaving a gap in understanding the full extent of Stanley's views on these complex issues. This study seeks to fill the gap by examining Stanley's writing, public and personal statements, and editorial contributions to create a comprehensive understanding of his ideas on Islam and imperialism.

Methodology

The primary sources will be selected based on their relevance to Stanley's political career, exposing his views on Islam and imperialism, his political career, and his interactions with colonial policies. These include records of British parliament debates known as Hansard, published journal articles, and edited volumes of Henry Stanley's writing. Then I will focus on identifying Stanley's relations and views vis-à-vis Islam and imperialism and evaluating the context in which Stanley expressed his views. Consequently, Stanley's complex ideas—especially British foreign policies, both in the colonies and other foreign powers—during the 19th century will emerge.

To construct Stanley's ideas, this study approaches Henry Stanley from a global intellectual history lens. In doing so, the lens bridges both historical and literary studies. It explores the complex interplay between ideas and societies on a global scale. This means that, first, I will critically analyze these primary sources under the context of the Eurocentric international order and the onset and increasingly ambitious ambitions of British imperialism. Second, I will locate Stanley's multiple identities in the context of 19th-century international politics. He is a British Muslim who served the British Empire as a diplomat in the Ottoman Empire and later left the job to travel extensively to different parts of the British colonies. Upon returning from his journey, he becomes the third Baron of Alderley, replacing his deceased father. Consequently, his status was also elevated to that of a British peer serving in the House of Lords. Additionally, I need to position him in the context of the 19th-century gradually unfolding Eurocentric international order, which began categorizing and racializing Muslims as the antagonist "other." This context shaped how Stanley viewed Islam, its relationship with British imperialism, and British foreign policies in the colonies and beyond.

Moreover, Gilham asserts that writing Stanley's solid ideas may face challenges. First, Stanley seemed to be private about his beliefs and Muslim identity. He also did not write extensively on Islam, especially during his late political career, as he grappled with various domestic problems and issues directly tied to his responsibilities as a landed aristocrat.[8] Despite such challenges, however, I believe there are enough sources to discuss Stanley's ideas on Islam and imperialism. Indeed, Stanley did not personally write an extensive book on Islam and politics. However, he edited several publications, wrote in journals, and debated British intervention in Indian local law. Together, these publications may highlight his view vis-à-vis Islam and imperialism. One particular primary source that is beneficial to discussing Stanley's ideas is his edited volume, "The East and the West: Our Dealings with Our Neighbors." This book, I argue, can be used as a primary source to analyze Stanley's position on Islam and politics in the 19th century. Published in 1865, about a decade after he served as a British diplomat in the Ottoman Empire, the book was a collection of analyses of international law, political systems, and European foreign policies of the century.

Despite the authorship of the individual essays in the edited volume not being clear, the overarching themes and views proposed in the volume align closely with Henry Stanley's personal and known views. In the introduction section, Stanley indicated that European "perversion of ideas through the use of vague and false terms, such as policy, expediency, civilization, military operations...leads to the rapidly increasing number of little wars...calling attention to these ills, is the excuse or the justification for the publication of this series of essays."[9] Despite his private nature and limited writings on Islam, the challenges of analyzing Stanley's ideas can be mitigated by utilizing a range of primary sources, including publications he edited, journals he contributed to, and records of his debates.

Result and Discussion

Stanley's Unexpected Journey to Islam

Stanley's conversion to Islam and his experience being a British Muslim were not clear-cut stories, especially during the second half of the 19th century, when Europe was progressively distinguishing its identity and imperial ambition against non-European populations, including Muslims. Born in 1827 as the firstborn of an aristocratic British family in Alderley Park, Cheshire, he converted to Islam in 1859 and gained his prominent career as a member of the British House of Lords throughout the high imperialism period (the late 19th and early 20th centuries). Stanley lived through the changes in European attitudes toward non-European people, especially the Muslim communities throughout the world. Therefore, as I will explore more below, Stanley frequently compared the British altered attitude and policies between pre- and during the high imperialism period.

Stanley's keen interest in Islam was not the outcome of a direct encounter with Muslims. Rather, it was ignited by his fascination with the East or the 'exoticism' of the 'Oriental' tradition since childhood. Britain's geopolitical and economic interests compelled its interactions with the "East." Although British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli only declared "The East is a career" in 1847, Britons were already cognizant of such career potential about two centuries earlier, along with the formation of the East India Company. In 1570, Pope Pius V decided to excommunicate politically and economically the British Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603). The severed tie consequently prompted the Queen to expand her empire's connections with diverse empires and kingdoms in Asia and Africa. The year marked a significant effort by Elizabeth to connect with Muslim-majority places. Elizabeth received several Muslim diplomatic missions—i.e., from Morocco in 1599—in London since the late 16th century

and also sent British delegates to Southeast Asia, such as to the Sultanate of Aceh in 1601. As Britons' exposure to the East and Islam became more intense, there were even some reports indicating Britons' conversion to Islam.[10]

British interest in the East did not cease in the 16th century but continued until the 19th century. Sharing a common and growing geopolitical threat both from Russia and France, Britain extended its helping hand to Iran. Iranian aristocrats happily accepted *Ingilistan,* the Persian word for Britain, with its *'ulum-i jadid* (new sciences). For the next several decades, Britons' interactions with the Muslim population only became more intense and even went beyond geopolitical and economic encounters. In 1815, the crown prince, 'Abbas Mirza, sent several Iranian students to pursue the *'ulum-i jadid* in what one of the students, Mirza Salih, called "the madrasas of Oxford." Prior to the high imperialism period, British interaction with the Muslim population took the form of mutual learning and understanding, bridging cultural exchanges, and sympathy and tolerance.[11]

For young Henry Stanley, the sparkling image of the 'East' emerged out of his interaction with popular books such as The Arabian Nights and travelogues detailing Asia and Africa by authors such as Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, a Swiss traveler and geographer.[12] His passion for the East grew quite deep, so much so that his family specifically remembered Stanley inquiring about Arabic grammar when he was twelve years old.[13] In 1866, about seven years after his conversion to Islam, his linguistic commentary on the poetry of Mohammed Rabadan showcased his continued deep passion for Arabic.[14] In his family, Henry received quite a variant description for his eccentric and eclectic interests, especially in the East. Bertrand Russell, Henry's nephew, and the famous British mathematician and philosopher, seemed to dislike him; hence, he had called him "the greatest bore he

ever knew." Nancy Mitford, the great-granddaughter of Henry's sister and the editor of the compilation of Henry's letter with his paternal grandmother, described him as a "curious creature." Among Henry's notes, Nancy continued, were letters on various topics, including Chinese poetry and Arabic assignments.[15]

Henry's deep interest in the East motivated him to dedicate considerable time to studying Arabic while at Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1846 to 1847. Afterward, he left Cambridge to join the British Foreign Office as an assistant précis writer for Foreign Secretary Palmerston, aiming to prepare himself for a career in the diplomatic service. Here again, he engaged with the 'Eastern Question'—burgeoning diplomatic affairs and international issues concerning the fate of the Ottoman Empire.[16] In 1851, his father gave him the choice of working in Washington or Constantinople. Henry took the latter place and worked as a British attaché under Ambassador Stratford Canning.[17]

The position enabled him to develop an even deeper appreciation for Eastern languages and cultures. In the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Stanley was occupied with the persistent international problem of the 'Eastern Question,' such as subject peoples' attempts to attain autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. The British embassy, in this matter, as among the Great Powers, played its imperialist games by managing or exploiting these tensions. Thus, his first-hand involvement with British imperial policies vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire and other colonies had only furthered his disillusionment with British imperialism and subsequently, Christian faith, especially when Canning tried to intervene in the Ottoman Empire's domestic affairs and aimed to modernize them in the image of Christian Europe.[18]

In November 1848, his mother had begun noticing Stanley's discomfort with British imperial policies and with his liberal view, hence endeavoring to find the midway point "between

conservatism and communism." About four years later, in April 1852, his grandmother indicated a more worrisome aspect of Henry's attitude toward Christianity. Henry "seems to shirk Christian society," and he did not show any effort otherwise, as she described.[19] Despite such theological doubts, however, Stanley's conversion to Islam only occurred in 1859, a year after his abrupt resignation from his diplomatic career.

In summary, Henry's childhood interest in the East, academic studies in Eastern languages, and engagement with British imperial policies played key roles, both directly and indirectly, in his conversion to Islam. Embracing Islam in the mid-19th century marked a notable divergence from societal expectations, indicating his disenchantment with British imperialism and Christianity.

Facing the Racial and Imperial tides: Stanley's Muslim Identity in the 19th century

This section will delve deeper into how the racialization of Muslims, both domestically and internationally in the British context, impacted Stanley's perspective on British imperialism and Islam. Roughly since the second quarter of the nineteenth century, British officers began developing a distinct perception toward non-Europeans. Such attitudes were distinctly different when compared to much earlier years or centuries. As briefly aforementioned, the British officers had engaged in friendly relations with diverse non-European Muslim powers. Relatively based on mutual respect, Britain had allied with and even provided military and political aid to the Ottoman Empire and Iran in the Middle East and the Sultanate of Aceh in Southeast Asia.[20] Since the third decade of the 19th century, however, Britain had a gradual shift in perception toward non-European people, especially Muslim society.

From the eyes of European officers serving in the Strait of Malacca, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran, Muslim society was 'degrading' and 'declining' as opposed to modern and progressive Europe. Muslims, however, did not immediately challenge such depictions since many of them had internalized the European 'decline' narrative and saw Europe as the ideal model for Muslim modernization. For Muslims of the 19th century, there was no contradiction between being Muslim and modeling themselves on the 'civilized' Europeans.[21] But gradually and especially since the mid-19th century, British officers have also increasingly associated Muslims with barbarity, threat, and danger, "which unfortunately is not yet effaced," to quote British officer Thomas Braddell's description of Acehnese.[22] On top of that, the British Empire had increasingly shown its imperial ambitions toward non-European society, and in the context of Stanley's disillusionment, it was especially toward the Ottoman Empire and Indian people.

For Henry Stanley, the British hardened racial attitudes and direct interference in non-European society must have deepened his frustration with British imperial policy. It is telling that Stanley's resignation from his diplomatic position in Athens occurred in 1858, just a year after the Indian, Muslim, and Hindu revolts against Britain in 1857. The Indian revolt marked a watershed of British racialization and minoritization of non-European, especially Muslim, populations in India. From the available records, Stanley did not engage in or respond to the revolt immediately. It was only later in his political career did Henry criticized British colonial policies undermining and enforcing British law on the local Indian law people. His younger brother, John Constantine Stanley, however, was in Allahabad in 1858. He probably had direct engagement with the revolt, at least with the aftermath, if not during the revolt itself. John's comments on the Indian revolt in a letter to his mother exposed

how hardened racialization was toward the Indian native. John made up his mind that "a native understands kindness far less than a dog... that has been the cause of the mutiny."[23] The peak of such rhetoric from British officers would later culminate in the questioning of Muslim loyalty toward the British Queen.[24]

Additionally, in January, of the same year of the Indian revolt, he too was deeply disappointed by his colleagues, who acted 'as if Turkey were theirs, and the property of any speculator who chooses to ask for a concession without consulting the real interests of Turkey.' For Stanley, who developed a deeper connection with the Turks, the comments must have been very disturbing. Stanley's view was confirmed by his father's letter to Stanley's mother. Stanley "thinks there is no country and no people in the world but those stupid Turks, and if their interests are not immediately affected, he sees and knows no politics," his father wrote.[25] Finally, in 1858, as his disillusionment grew deeper, he resigned from his position in the British Embassy and traveled extensively in various Muslim-majority regions.

There are no comprehensive records of Stanley's worldwide travel itinerary. But at first glance, it seems that he mainly traveled to Muslim-majority places such as, in addition to the Ottoman territory, Penang, Jeddah, and possibly Calcutta to visit his brother Johnny. It was during this immersion with the Muslim community that Henry Stanley's experience of Islam and Muslims became more entrenched. Eventually, he decided to embrace Islam around 1859–1860.

Henry's family did not take the conversion news well. Johnny Stanley seemed in disbelief upon receiving confirmation from Stanley, "You know I have always been a Mussulman at heart."[26] Stanley's father was furious after learning that "wretched fool Henry... was at Penang, living entirely with Mahometans and dressed in their dress...is he mad, or what is he?"[27] In a

separate letter, he again questioned Henry's decision: "What has Henry to do with Arabs at Penang? They are an inferior and degraded class of people."[28] Similarly, was the response from his mother, Henrietta. "I must hope Henry will not go to Calcutta in any way, but as an Englishman, it would be putting everybody in a painful position."[29]

His family response was hardly an exception in British society, which was increasingly defining itself against non-European society, tradition, or religion. Becoming Muslim and dressing like Arabs or Turks, for the majority of Britons during the growing racial tides both in domestic and international contexts, was the antithesis of being an Englishman. Such a view is owed to the perceived European racial superiority over the non-European 'inferior' or 'declining' race. This contrasting definition of Europe versus non-Europe impacted British imperial policy in non-European society. It was this kind of British policy based on the binary categories 'inferior' and 'superior' that Henry Stanley, since having a seat at the House of Lords, spoke against.

Riding the Political Waves: Lord Stanley and British Imperialism

Stanley's critiques of British imperial policies regarding non-European affairs became more obvious since his elevation to the British peerage in the House of Lords in 1869, replacing his deceased father. Available records from Hansard—the official record of debates in the United Kingdom Parliament—indicated that Henry Stanley was occupied not only with British domestic issues, but also with its foreign policies in India, Ottoman, and the Strait of Malacca. During the debate session, Stanley hardly exposed his Muslim identity. However, his critiques of British imperial policies in India clearly show Stanley's familiarity with Islamic law and practice by Muslims in India.

His critique of British imperial policies did not necessarily mean that he was anti-imperialist like many nationalists in the twentieth century. He did not challenge British imperialism in India because he saw that British presence in India did bring benefits to the population. As Gilham suggests, Henry Stanley neatly fit Albert Hourani's description of a 'pre-imperialist' in contrast to the late 19th century high imperialist figures.[30] Pre-imperialists perceived that adding colonies to British possession was equal to adding more heavy responsibility or burden, which did not always serve the British interests or prestige. On the contrary, imperialist figures believed that more colonies meant more privileges and prestige.[31] Another possible way to explain Stanley's positive attitude on imperialism is because the majority of world population of the 19th until the early 20th century—still considered imperial world order as a legitimate system. The systemic change delegitimizing the imperial world order and legitimizing nation, or population-based world order only strongly emerged after the First World War.[32] Since Henry Stanley did not live through the systemic change, therefore, it was unthinkable for Stanley to become anti-imperialist and to imagine a post-imperial world.

Furthermore, Stanley's attack on British imperial policies, I argue, was also a response to what a global historian Cemil Aydin describes as the crisis of imperial world order from the late 19th until the early 20th century.[33] During the period, I argue that Stanley must have witnessed increasing contradictions between European universalist and particularist claims. On one hand, the majority of European intellectuals emphasized the unity of all humanity (universalist) based on shared fundamental principles such as equality and human rights. This universalist perspective, nevertheless, coexisted with particularist notions of European superiority over the Orient, rooted in their beliefs

of racial hierarchies and imperialist ideologies.[34] With such a conviction, Europeans felt "the white man's burden," to quote an English novelist Rudyard Kipling's poem's title in 1899, to spread the 'civilization' to the 'uncivilized' non-European society through colonialism. In spreading so, however, they negated the application of the fundamental principles to non-European society.

Frustrating by such contradictory, thus, Stanley unswervingly criticized British imperial foreign policies throughout his political career. This, for example, was noticeable in his earliest edited volume book "The East and the West: Our Dealings with Our Neighbors" in 1865, just a few years before he became an active member of the Peer of the House of Lords. As commented earlier, while Stanley didn't pen every essay in the book, the introduction suggests he endorsed the ideas within it. This article will focus solely on two chapters—the first and fourth—discussing Stanley's key concepts regarding his critiques of British foreign policies toward non-European societies.

Overall, the edited volume book highlights the unequal and hierarchical international relationship between Europeans, especially the British Empire, and non-European countries. Such inequality in international relations, this book observes, was based on the European perceived civilizational superiority and lack of sufficient knowledge and appreciation of non-European civilizations or nations such as the Ottoman, Japan, and China. Such a perception was then manifested in the unjust involvement of European foreign policy through the existence of foreign jurisdiction or "extra-territoriality," and deliberate over-riding of international law and 'native' law. The European manifestations, this book argues, had caused ill-feeling and outrages, unjust war, demoralization of states and individuals, and the spread of confusion and disrespect for legal principles.[35]

The book, I further argue, also represented Stanley's foundational paradigm on British imperial policies in colonial India and its approach toward non-European nations. While he acknowledged some potential benefits of British imperialism for colonies, he adamantly opposed extensive interference in the affairs of non-European countries. Stanley argued that European consuls encountered significant obstacles in ensuring justice between their fellow Europeans and the native populations, primarily due to their deficient grasp of non-European societies. Moreover, their incapacity to remain impartial and their inclination towards abusing power further exacerbated the situation, hindering the fair dispensation of justice in colonial contexts.

The East and the West: Extra-Territoriality and Mussulman Law

Specifically paramount for our discussion is Stanley's repetitive argument on the impact of European military and political might on non-European society in chapters one and three. In chapter one, he highlighted how this power had consistently enabled European countries to secure their full or even greater rights compared to South American and other non-European nations through ordinary treaties between them. One example of such practice, as Stanley argues, was that of foreign jurisdiction or extraterritoriality. He defined it as a condition when one state allows another state to handle legal cases involving the first state's citizens within the second state's borders. Under such circumstances, consequently, whenever Europeans committed crimes in Asian countries, for instance, they could get away with impunity owing to immunity given to Europeans under extraterritoriality.[36] Thus, for Stanley, "the principle of extra-territoriality is the most anti-humanitarian" because it undermined and deemed non-European legislation and punishment as barbarous, which Europeans were not subjected to.[37] In this regard, hoping

that Europe would adhere to the principle of justice was illusory, as Europeans suffered inherent systemic challenges: inadequate European knowledge and languages, impartiality, incompetent officers, and insufficient funding.[38]

One extra-territoriality case challenged by Stanley was on Friday, July 10th, 1868, his early year of occupying a seat as a peer at the House of Lords. On that Friday, he strongly opposed the unjust practice of extraterritoriality in Turkey and Egypt. The debate session discussed several instances of potential power abuse and European consuls' inability to be impartial. The murder of a Greek victim by an Italian was a case in point. The murder was witnessed by English consuls and an Englishman, triggering the British consuls to interfere in the case. British interference finally led the Italian consul to allow the murderer to escape justice. This incident involving multiple foreign nationals in a criminal act exemplified the lack of jurisdiction and accountability within the European consular court system. Lord Stanley, regarding the matter, condemned such injustice and emphasized the need for reform and a more equitable system of jurisdiction.[39]

After the extensive analysis of the ills of the European political system in Chapter One, Chapter Three asserts Islam as a political system. This chapter does not explicitly mention the author's name. However, this chapter was originally written in 1833 by David Urquhart, a Scottish diplomat and a faithful Turcophile. Stanley's decision to insert the chapter into the edited volume seems to fill the lacuna of knowledge about Islam for European readers, a point he strongly addressed in chapter one. Here, the essay endeavors to dispel the myths and stereotypes about Islam and offers an explanation of multiple aspects of Islam, including the political, religious, and cultural dynamics at play in the interaction between Islamic and Western societies. Islamic political system, the author argued, serves as

an essential model of international justice for Europeans. The author even surprisingly claimed that "nations of Europe required first to become Mussulmans before they really could be Christians."[40]

In relation to justice, a principle that the Europeans lacked, as argued in chapter one, the author asserted that the Islamic political system strove to uphold justice and to check on injustices. This was done by creating a representative judicial body, the ulama, which was independent of the prince. In doing so, ulama acts as a moral and legal authority, the author explained, overseeing the ruler's actions to ensure they align with Islamic principles and legal norms. Ulama's role also includes dictating what is permissible and forbidden during wartime. When a violation is encouraged by a ruler, troops are allowed for insubordination as a "respect for the moral dictates of religion, which is perhaps unparalleled in the military history of Europe."[41]

Moreover, in the translator's preface to the 1868 travelogue *The Philippine Islands, Moluccas, Siam, Cambodia, Japan, and China at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* by Antonio de Morga, Stanley reiterated his support for the Islamic justice system. He argued that the Spanish imperial system in the Philippines, influenced by Muslim Arabs of Andalusia, was based on justice for all, including natives. He noted that priests could intervene on behalf of oppressed natives against oppressive Spaniards. Stanley suggested that the British Empire, with its expanding Asian colonies, should learn from the Spanish system, especially as European migration increased with improved transportation access.[42]

During a debate on June 29, 1896, in the House of Lords, Lord Stanley again criticized the British consuls in India for imposing policies on Muslim and Hindu legal systems and disregarding local experts' authority. In 1894, the British Privy Council invalidated the practice of *Waqf*, a legal mechanism in

Indian Muslim tradition used to designate property as an inalienable endowment.[43] This means that once assets are designated as Waqf properties, they cannot be sold, transferred, or disposed of in the typical manner. The proceeds generated from this endowment can be allocated to specific social services or charitable purposes as outlined by the donor or founder of the Waqf. Julia Stephens highlights that the invalidation of Waqf was part of a broader British colonial strategy to control religious institutions, legal systems, and practices in India. By targeting Waqf, the British aimed to assert authority over Islamic charitable assets traditionally governed by Islamic law and community norms.[44]

For Indian Muslims, the policy triggered fear and distress. They feared that it would impact Muslims' ability to create Waqf for the benefit of their families and the general poor—a long-standing tradition in the community. Stanley, thus, staunchly opposed the Privy Council's direct intervention in local legal regulations and practices. He criticized the Council for a grave error, contending that it failed to grasp the entirety of the legal system of Hanifa, the predominant legal school of thought among Indian Muslims. Stanley supported his stance by referencing a hadith from the book *Mishkat al-Musabih*, recounting a dialogue between Abu Hurairah and Prophet Muhammad. According to Stanley, this hadith elucidated the legal rationale behind *Waqf* and affirmed its validity within the Indian Muslim community. He further reasoned that invalidating the local *Waqf* practice would have detrimental consequences, as *Waqf* held significant importance as an enduring institution for the prosperity and stability of prominent families in India, particularly during times of peril.[45]

A year later, Stanley raised the issue again in a journal article, continuing his criticism of the British policy of invalidating *Waqf*. He viewed this policy as an unnecessary attempt by the

British to exert greater control over the religious and local practices of both Hindus and Muslims in India. Stanley argued that English lawyers lacked the necessary knowledge to intervene in such matters, stating, "it is impossible to repose such blind confidence in judges who know not a syllable of Sanskrit or Arabic." He supported his argument by quoting a law report from Reis and Rayyet, dated August 8, 1896.[46] Thus, British lawyers were unfit to decide on legal matters pertaining to local laws, as evidenced by the *Waqf* issue in 1896. If such circumstances continued, it could disrupt the harmonious social order of Hindu and Muslim communities and disconnect the legal system from the community it was meant to serve, leading to eroded trust in the British judicial process.[47] To prevent this unwanted outcome, he suggested increasing the number of native lawyers—Hindu and Muslim—on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. These native lawyers, with their deep understanding of regional laws and customs, would enable the Privy Council to deliver more informed and culturally sensitive legal judgments.[48]

Conclusion

This article examines Henry Stanley's transformation from a British diplomat to a critic of imperial policies, highlighting the intersections of identity, ideology, and historical context. His conversion to Islam amid growing British imperialism and racial attitudes reflects his quest for belonging and justice. Stanley's critiques of British policies in India and Ottoman territories demonstrate his deep understanding of Islamic law and pragmatic analysis of colonialism. As the Eurocentric world order solidified, his partial reluctance to embrace anti-imperialist sentiments mirrored the transitional period in global politics. Stanley's commitment to justice challenged the power dynamics of European colonialism and advocated for culturally sensitive

governance. This analysis of Stanley's political thought serves as a reminder of the complexities in navigating identity, power, and justice on the global stage, especially as the world moves toward decolonization and the recognition of diverse perspectives.

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[2] "Address"; "Observations. Address for Papers" (London: Hansard, February 28, 1876), https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1876/feb/28/observations-address-for-papers#column_1001.

[3] Jamie Gilham, "Britain's First Muslim Peer of the Realm: Henry Stanley and Islam in Victorian Britain," in *Loyal Enemies British Converts to Islam, 1850–1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Helen Reid and Anthony Reid, "A Voice for Southeast Asian Muslims in the High Colonial Era the Third Baron Stanley of Alderley," *Education about Asia* 11, no. 3 (2005): 1–6.

[4] See Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara, *Api Sejarah*, vol. 1 (Bandung: Salamadani, 2014); Ibrahim Alfian and Zakaria Ahmad, *Sejarah perlawanan terhadap kolonialisme dan imperialisme di daerah Aceh* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional, Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Sejarah Nasional, 1982).

[5] Recent scholars have challenged the simplified narrative, see Muhammad Ali, *Islam and Colonialism: Becoming Modern in Indonesia and Malaya* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Nico J.G. Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherlands East Indies A Biography of Sayyid 'Uthman (1822 - 1914)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[8] David Motadel, "Islam and the European Empires," *Historical Journal* 55, no. 3 (September 2012): 831–56, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X12000325.

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[7] Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850-1950* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2014), chap. 1.

[8] Gilham, 44.

[9] Henry Edward John Stanley Stanley, *The East and the West: Our Dealings with Our Neighbors* (London, Hatchard and co., 1865), iii–vi.

[10] Alexander Wain, "Early British Converts to Islam," *IAIS Malaysia Bulletin on Islam and Contemporary Issues No. 41 (Nov.-Dec. 2017)* 41, no. Nov-Dec (2017): 5.

[11] Nile Green, *The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen's London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 1–8, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400874132.

[12] Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 23.

[13] Nancy Mitford, ed., *The Stanleys of Alderley: Their Letters between the Years 1851-1865* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1968), x.

[14] Henry Edward Stanley, "The Poetry of Mohamed Rabadan, Arragonese," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 3, no. 1 (1867): 81–104.

[15] Mitford, *The Stanleys of Alderley*, xi.

[16] Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 23.

[17] Mitford, *The Stanleys of Alderley*, 31.

[18] Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 25.

[19] Mitford, *The Stanleys of Alderley*, 42; Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 24–25.

[20] Cemil Aydin, "The Ottoman Empire and the Global Muslim Identity in the Formation of Eurocentric World Order, 1815 - 1919," in *Civilizations and World Order; Geopolitics and Cultural Difference*, ed. Ismail Yaylac and M. Akif Kayap nar (UK: Lexington Books, 2014); Kam Hing Lee, *The Sultanate of Aceh/ : Relations with the British, 1760-1824* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995); Green, *The Love of Strangers*.

[21] Cemil Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought.* (Columbia University Press, 2007), chap. 2.

[22] Thomas Braddell, "On the History of Acheen," *The Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* 5 (1851): 15–25.

[23] Mitford, *The Stanleys of Alderley*, 195.

[24] William Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel against the Queen?* (London, 1876); for an analysis of Hunter's work, see Ilyse Fuerst, *Indian Muslim Minorities and The 1857 Rebellion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019).

[25] Mitford, *The Stanleys of Alderley*, 139.

[26] Mitford, 219–20.

[27] Mitford, 223.

[28] Mitford, 225.

[29] Mitford, 227–28.

[30] Gilham, *Loyal Enemies*, 40.

[31] Albert Hourani, *Europe and the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 101–2.

[32] Eric D. Weitz, "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 1313–43.

[33] Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought.*

[34] Aydin, chap. 2.

[35] Stanley, *The East and the West*, 1–54.

[36] Stanley, 5, 29.

[37] Stanley, 13.

[38] Stanley, 32–36.

[39] "Consular Courts In Turkey And Egypt—Observations" (London: Hansard, July 10, 1868), https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1868-07-10/debates/7bf4323d-bbf4-4107-94eb-2cc3cc595219/ConsularCourtsInTurkeyAndEgypt%E2%80%94Observations.

[40] Stanley, *The East and the West*, 191.

[41] Stanley, 198.

[42] Antonia de Morga, *The Philippine Islands, Moluccas, Siam, Cambodia, Japan, and China, at the Close of the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Henry Edward Stanley (London: Hakluyt Society, 1868), viii–xi.

[43] Julia Anne Stephens, *Governing Islam/ : Law, Empire, and Secularism in Modern South Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 168–69.

[44] Stephens, chap. 2.

[45] "Mussulman Law In India" (London: Hansard, June 29, 1896), https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/1896-06-29/debates/f8ca4612-9237-4aa7-bdee-4e18dc2cc643/MussulmanLawInIndia.

[46] Henry Edward Stanley, "The Privy Council as Judges of Hindu and Mussulman Law," *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarter Review and Oriental and Colonial Record*, 3rd, 3, no. 5 and 6 (1897): 9.

[47] Stanley, 6–9.

[48] Stanley, 12–13.