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**PEACE AND UNIVERSAL WELFARE IN AL-ANDALUS DURING
THE REIGN OF THE UMAYYAD**

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Abstract

The main catalyst for the glory and prosperity of a civilization or nation depends on the peace and welfare of humankind in the country. Al-Andalus had achieved its Golden Age in the reign of Umayyad caliphs ‘Abd al-Rahman III (912-961A.D) and al-Hakam II (916-976A.D). Although, there were many obstacles in developing the Islamic Dawlah in the West, both Umayyad rulers had managed to strengthen their positions until their achievement was admired by other rulers in the West and the East. Therefore, this study will highlight the efforts made by both Umayyad rulers in achieving peace and universal prosperity in their country, al-Andalus. This study is based on a qualitative approach by using library research to study and analyze related data from primary and secondary sources. The results of this study show that there are at least three major efforts undertaken by caliph ‘Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II to achieve peace and universal prosperity in al-Andalus. First was by strengthening the autonomy of Umayyad rule in al-Andalus. Second, was by fostering diplomatic relations between Umayyad rulers and other countries from the neighbouring areas around al-Andalus. Thirdly, ‘Abd Rahman and his son, al-Hakam had also given equal rights to the local community from different race and religion.

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1. Introduction

Living in peace and harmony with welfare is the dream of every human being in this world. However, peace and welfare are not an easy task to be achieved by each country. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2017), peace generally involved the freedom from war and violence, especially when people live and work together happily without disputes; and the state of not being interrupted or distracted by concerns, problems, noises, or undesirable actions. When there is peace in the country, people can live happily in prosperity and their welfare is secured.

People in this world nowadays had tried everything in order to achieved peace and universal welfare. They had also built some organizations to help people and countries to solve problems that involved with wars, rebellions, disasters, famines and other problems. For example, the United Nations (UN) was formed in 1945 as a guardian of international peace and security, as a protector of international law, as a promoter of human rights, and as an engineer of socioeconomic advancement (Hanhimäki, 2015). Nevertheless, nowadays we can still witness some big issues happened particularly in the Western countries pertaining to racial bias and religious discrimination, especially towards the Muslims communities that are seen as inferior and are labelled as terrorist. The issue of discrimination had caused people to live in fear and anxiety. This social issue cannot be solved by the help from exterior organizations because this is under the responsibility of the head of state and his organization. They play important roles in bringing peace and harmony for the country and they must protect people under their ruling power from any racial and religious discrimination through implementation of good policies and actions.

In facing discrimination issue in our current life, some lessons and examples can be taken from previous government and civilization as guidelines. For instance, during the time of the Middle Ages, there have been proven that plural society which comprise of various races and religions can live together in peace and prosperity in one country. This statement refers to the glorious era in the history of Islamic civilization in al-Andalus around the 10th century where there were at least four races, i.e. Arabs, Berbers, Spaniards, and Jewish, with three different religions, i.e. Islam, Christian and Judaism living together under one ruling government which was the Umayyad who reigned the country by ensuring peace and prosperity (Ibn Khaldun, 2005). Therefore, this paper aims to examine the efforts undertaken by the Umayyad's rulers in ensuring peace, security and universal welfare in al-Andalus around the 10th century A.D as an example to provide some solutions towards restoration of peace in today's world.

2. Problem Statement

At the final phase of the 9th century, the power of Umayyad reign in al-Andalus began to weaken due to the emergence of rebellion and resistance against the rule of Arabs by Spaniards and Berbers. However, the situation was successfully restored and stabilized with the wisdom and efforts done by 'Abd al-Rahman III and his son, al-Hakam II. They had managed to bring tolerance, peace and prosperity between the three religions, and it was called '*convivencia*'(coexistence) through the policy of their administration. Kearns (2008) viewed that this situation the interaction and togetherness between the various ethnic groups in al-Andalus could not have happen before the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III. The achievement of peace and welfare during his reign had led up to the peak period of glory and prosperity in

al-Andalus and was well-known as The Golden Age of al-Andalus (Ibn Khaldun, 2005). The atmosphere of tolerance between al-Andalus people also contributed towards the advancement of literature, science and arts (Allen, 2009). The peace and glorious in al-Andalus also attract the foreign powers such to establish diplomatic relation with Umayyad of al-Andalus (Cardoso, 2015).

3. Research Questions

What are the efforts made by Umayyad rulers during the medieval age to achieve peace and universal prosperity in reaching the Golden Age in al-Andalus?

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyse the efforts made by 'Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II as Umayyad rulers in achieving peace, universal prosperity and a glorious era in al-Andalus during medieval age.

5. Research Methods

This writing is conducted by using library research to examine some written sources related to the history of Islamic civilization in al-Andalus in 10th century A.D. Among the primary sources related to the history of the reign of Umayyad caliphate in 10th century A.D. were entitled *Al-'Iqd al-Farid* by Ibn Abi Rabihi and *Kitab Surat al-Ard* by Ibn Hawqal. Meanwhile, there are also many secondary sources related to this topic, either in Arabic and English such as *A'mal al-'Alam* by Ibn Khatib, *Nafh al-Tib* by al-Maqqari, *Spanish Islam: A History of the Muslims Spain* by Reinhart Dozy and *'Abd al-Rahman III: The First Cordoban Caliph* by Maribel Fierro. Thus, these sources can be used to examine the efforts done by the Umayyad rulers, especially 'Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II to achieve peace and universal welfare during their reign until their time was regarded as the Golden Age in al-Andalus.

6. Findings

6.1. Umayyad Rulers Efforts to Achieve Peace and Universal Welfare

When Muslim dominated al-Andalus in 711A.D, they had brought momentous change in the European and Islamic history. The arrival of Muslim in al-Andalus was not as invaders but to eliminate oppression and cruelty of Visigoths rulers in the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, the advent of Islam in al-Andalus had also contributed towards the establishment of a great and glorious Islamic civilization. The Muslim rulers had managed to build a harmonious society and became one of the role models of best community development in the world today. There were three main efforts undertaken by Umayyad rulers to achieve peace and universal welfare in al-Andalus such as by:

6.1.1. Establishing the Autonomy of Umayyad Rule in al-Andalus.

In order to achieve peace and prosperity, a country needs a strong government and a stable power as well as consolidation among its people (Abdullah, 2018). It was proven that peace and prosperity in al-Andalus had led the country to reach its Golden Age in 10th century A.D. However, to achieve peace and welfare in a country is not an easy task, especially to the ruler of the state. There were various efforts

which had been carried out by the Umayyad rulers before 10th century A.D. in order to achieve peace and harmony in al-Andalus, include making some peace treaties with rebels and opponents of the ruling government. Nevertheless, the agreement was only temporary and did not able to bring peace and welfare in al-Andalus until the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III Ibn Muhammad.

‘Abd al-Rahman III was appointed as the eighth Umayyad ruler in al-Andalus to replace his grandfather, ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad I at the age of his early 20s. His appointment had led towards fabulous changes in the Umayyad political institutions and also towards the life of the people of al-Andalus. Dozy (2001) noted that:

‘Abd-er-Rahman III, in carrying on the work begun by his grandfather, adopted totally different methods. For ‘Abdallah’s timid and tortuous procedure, he substituted a policy which was frank, resolute, and daring. Disdaining to mince matters, he told the Spanish insurgents plainly that what he required of them was not tribute, but their castles and their towns. To those who submitted he promised full pardon, to the rest exemplary punishment.

Although people in al-Andalus were against him, ‘Abd al-Rahman continued to rule the country with full of integrity and wisdom until he managed to defeat the insurgency and consolidated the people of al-Andalus and thus, stabilized the political institution of the Umayyads.

‘Abd al-Rahman III took more than 20 years from 913 A.D. to 939 A.D. to suppress the revolt, uniting the region and strengthen its power from internal and external treats, especially the threats from Christian kingdoms in the north and the Fatimids in the south (Ibn Abi Rabihi, 1983; Fierro, 2005). Besides, ‘Abd al-Rahman III had also declared autonomous government by using the title ‘Caliph’ – *Amir al-Mukminin al-Nasir li Din Allah* – in 929A.D/316A.H (Dozy, 2001; Ibn al-Khatib, 2003). This declaration had made the Umayyad rulers free and became independent from any political affiliations with the ‘Abbasids in Baghdad, which was the central authority of the Islamic government at that time. Therefore, indirectly, ‘Abd al-Rahman III had succeeded to revive the Umayyad caliphate after they were overthrown by the ‘Abbasids. The success of ‘Abd al-Rahman III had succeeded in stabilizing the politics and strengthened Umayyad government until his reign was acknowledged by al-Andalus people and the outside world as well as respected by its enemies. This situation had significant contributions in ensuring that the atmosphere of al-Andalus was peaceful and harmony as well as safe from external and internal threat.

6.1.2. Strengthen Diplomatic Relationship

Good relationship between the governments of a country and its surrounding countries plays an important part in ensuring the sustainability of the country’s security and prosperity. Good relations between nations do not only benefit substantially from peace and well-being but also contribute towards social development as well as national and economic development. Al-Andalus used to have a very good political relation with other European countries before 10th centuries. The arrivals of many official foreign envoys from Byzantium, Christian Iberian, and Western European courts to Cordoba were reported in the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman II. However, in the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III that foreign envoys arrival was more constant, and it had continued until the rule of his son, al-Hakam II (Cardoso, 2015).

Al-Maqqarī had also mentioned about these diplomatic exchanges between Christian nations and Umayyad al-Andalus. When ‘Abd al-Rahman III repeated successes in the battles against the Christians

nations in north al-Andalus, they hastened to send their ambassadors to Cordoba to gain the friendship and sustaining his goodness. The Umayyad al-Andalus also received an ambassador and the presents from Constantine VII, the Emperor of Constantinople in the year 336A.H, i.e beginning July 22 947A.D (Cardoso, 2015).

'Abd al-Rahman III had managed to establish good diplomatic relationships with the Emperor of Byzantine, Constantine VII (913-959A.D) in order to strengthen Umayyad power and economy. According to Cardoso (2015), the diplomatic relationships between Umayyad and Byzantine were caused by the concern of 'Abd al-Rahman III to defend the Mediterranean and North African shores from the interests of Byzantine and Fatimid. The expansion of Fatimid power in the North Africa was one of the major concerns to 'Abd al-Rahman III and led him to establish these diplomatic exchanges with Byzantine. In addition, the Fatimid had good control of the Mediterranean area including the Sicily and Italian shores which can led the loss of Umayyad influence in the al-Maghrib as it could also damage its mercantile interests, especially the mercantile exchanges between Andalus and Amalfitans (Italy).

The diplomatic relationship between al-Andalus and Byzantine had also brought great impacts and influences on the architectural aspects of al-Andalus buildings, such as in the construction of the Madinat al-Zahra'. According to al-Maqqari (1988) and Gayangos, (1840), the Byzantium influences in Madinat al-Zahra' was 140 columns which had sent by Byzantine Emperor as presents and fountain made of gilt bronze and carved with *basso-relievo* representing human figures brought by Ahmad al-Yunani from Constantinople. In fact, in the reign of al-Hakam II, he was also interested in Byzantine art. He requested Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969A.D), the Byzantine Emperor to supply some mosaics and mosaicists for the extension works of the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Imamuddin, 1981; Khoury, 1996). In addition, al-Andalus had also established diplomatic relations with other Western states, such as France, Italy, Germany, Rome and Slav kingdoms, particularly in the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III. He had sent them envoys and gifts to charter their relations in politics and trades (Cardoso, 2015). The relationship between al-Andalus and Eastern states were also in good condition. Although there were conflicts and bad history between the Umayyads and the Abbasids, both were still in good relationships. This was proven when a musician from Baghdad, Ziryad arrived in Andalus in 9th century and his musical influence was well received by the Umayyad ruler at that time (Dozy, 2001). In the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II, they had imported many books from Baghdad, Egypt and other Eastern lands and recruited scholars to make Cordoba a scientific centre like Baghdad (al-Rodhan, Herd, & Watanabe, 2011; al-Jabri, 1999).

6.1.3. Practice Equality in the Local Community

A peaceful and prosperous nation not only has political stability and strong government but also influenced by the justice, receptiveness, and equality of the government towards its people, particularly in the multiracial and religious nations. Since the Muslim armies entered the Iberian Peninsula, the Andalus region was occupied by multiracial communities, namely the Arabs, the Berber, the Spaniards and the Jews who professed different religions, namely Islam, Christianity, and Judaism (Ibn Khaldun, 2005). Prior to the reign of 'Abd al-Rahman III, governmental institutions were dominated by Arabs only because they viewed other races as inferior (Dozy, 2001). This has led to dissatisfaction among the other

nations lived in al-Andalus, especially among the Spanish population who considered themselves as the rightful owner of the land. Therefore, this situation often led to rebellions and resistance towards the government in al-Andalus Arab uprising especially during the reigns of ‘Umar ibn Hafsun (Ibn Hafsun), Sa‘id ibn Mastana (Ibn Mastana), ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Marwan (Ibn Marwan) and Toledo which the majority of the population are Christians. Nevertheless, the situation had changed after ‘Abd al-Rahman III ascended the throne of government. He had made some reformation towards the country’s administrative policy by accepting men and women of all ethnic groups and religions who were qualified to join in his administrative government (Kearns, 2008). He himself had a Jewish minister named Hasdai ibn Shaprut who was also his advisor and physician. Hasdai had also served with al-Hakam II as his minister (Allen, 2009). According to Kearns (2008) in the reign of ‘Abd al-Rahman III there was an evolution of cultural development and the most dominant culture at the time was the Arab culture. Non-Arab nations comprising of Christians and Jews had also embraced Arab culture in their daily lives and this process was known as Arabization. One of the fundamental aspects of Arabization was the usage of Arabic language by most of the people in al-Andalus (Ibn Khaldun, 2005). Therefore, there were only a few younger generations of the Christians who used Latin. ‘Abd al-Rahman III had successfully united all races, religions, and cultures in al-Andalus by three factors; first, he was unequivocally a man of virtue, charisma, talent and had a good leadership quality; second, he got full support from his people in general and thirdly, he himself had a mixed blood of the Arab and Spanish which give him the ability to be fair towards the Arabs and the Spanish people without any bias. These culture mixtures had indirectly established a culture of tolerance and the spirit of *convivencia* – the historical term used to describe the “coexistence” of Muslim, Christians and Jewish communities in al-Andalus and by the extension of interaction, exchange, and acculturation nurtured in the al-Andalus atmosphere during his reign (Wolf, 2007).

In fact, ‘Abd al-Rahman III had also provided equality and justice to his people so as to avoid resistance and rebellion from the Spaniards and other al-Andalus residents. This policy of receptiveness and equality continue to be implemented in the reign of al-Hakam II. He had given patronage to scholars in upholding the scientific field, regardless of their race and religion. He had also built twenty-seven free schools for his people and it was said that nearly everyone in al-Andalus could read and write during his reign (Dozy, 2001).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, to achieve peace and universal welfare in the country requires great effort of leaders and cooperation among its people. Stable and strong governance are fundamental in order to achieve peace. The unstable and weak governance will make the country vulnerable and exposed to threats from internal and external enemies. Besides, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries with foreign countries were also very important, especially with the neighbouring country and other countries that can bring some benefit for the country’s prosperity either from the political or economic aspects. Through the establishment of diplomatic relations, it can reduce the risk of warfare and also expand trade networks that will benefit the economy and the nation’s development. Leaders who have fair and equitable attitude were leaders who were loved and respected by their people. Therefore, the

attitude of 'Abd al-Rahman III and al-Hakam II, who practice justice, receptiveness, and equality had made the administration of their country respected by the people of al-Andalus and other countries. They were generous in helping the people and state in the aspects of welfare, knowledge, and development so that they succeeded in making Cordoba, the capital of al-Andalus as the ornament of the world and bringing Al-Andalus civilization to the Golden Age. Hence, good leadership and wisdom of Umayyad governments can be used as a guidance and example for current leaders in establishing a peaceful and prosperous nation.

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