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Islam, State and Society in Democratizing Indonesia: An Historical Reflection

Abstrak: *Artikel ini merupakan refleksi historis atas Islam, negara, dan masyarakat Indonesia kontemporer. Sikap dan bentuk perilaku umat Islam digunakan sebagai prisma untuk melihat fenomena hubungan agama dengan negara-bangsa. Bentuk perilaku itu berkisar dari sikap yang paling sulit mentoleransi perbedaan-perbedaan betapapun kecilnya, sampai sikap terbuka terhadap apapun jenis pluralitas agama di dalam masyarakat. Bentuk sikap yang pertama menjadi minoritas kecil, dan menunjukkan dirinya melalui beragam perilaku kebencian. Sementara bentuk sikap yang kedua, yang menjadi mayoritas besar bangsa ini, dapat dibagi ke dalam dua kategori. Yang pertama tidak akan pernah ragu mengutuk jenis kekejaman apapun meski mengatasnamakan agama, dan yang kedua memberi kesan bahwa mereka masih sedikit memahami makna dan tujuan aksi kebencian tersebut.*

 Watak ideologi politik dan gagasan sosial berbasis Islam berkaitan dengan bentuk sikap para pendukungnya. Semakin keras dukungan masyarakat terhadap gagasan yang sekarang disebut "Islamisme militan", semakin pemeluknya menjadi intoleran terhadap pluralitas pandangan. Sebaliknya, semakin liberal pandangan ideologisnya, semakin besar kemungkinannya untuk menerima hak-hak mereka yang berbeda. Dalam situasi ini, organisasi-organisasi Islam terbesar dan tertua, Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Persis, Al-Isryad dan lainnya, seringkali dikategorikan berada di tengah. Sebab, organisasi-organisasi ini lebih berkonsentrasi pada pembangunan sekolah, rumah sakit, panti asuhan, dan aktivitas-aktivitas sosial-keagamaan lain, dan seringkali mereka absen dari dinamika kontroversi kebencian agama.

Sementara itu, banyak Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM) Islam baru, baik yang didirikan oleh organisasi-organisasi Islam tersebut maupun oleh partai-partai politik serta oleh para aktivis muda Islam terpelajar, yang berkonsentrasi pada usaha-usaha pembangunan sosial. Sejumlah LSM juga melakukan penelitian dan memberi perhatian pada persoalan-persoalan masyarakat Islam dan hubungan antar-iman. Pada saat yang sama, kelompok-kelompok Islamis militan atau radikal mempertajam pengawasan mereka terhadap segala jenis perilaku sosial yang dilihat sebagai tanda-tanda berkurangnya ikatan terhadap apa yang dipahami sebagai sikap Islam yang benar. Terhadap perilaku sosial yang tidak mereka ingini itu, mereka tidak ragu untuk melakukan tindakan apapun, meski melawan hukum. Serangan terhadap jemaah Ahmadiyah di beberapa tempat di Jawa Barat dan di Lombok adalah beberapa contoh kasus.

Ketika Soeharto mengundurkan diri, jurang intelektual yang ada antara lulusan sekolah umum dan lulusan sekolah-sekolah agama relatif telah terjembatani. Pada saat Orde Baru berkuasa, terdapat banyak lulusan IAIN yang memperoleh gelar M.A. atau Ph.D. dari universitas-universitas Barat. Selain itu, terdapat pula banyak lulusan sekolah Islam, madrasah, dan pesantren, yang menerima gelar akademik mereka di universitas-universitas "sekular". Komunitas intelektual yang baru muncul tersebut memberi respons yang berbeda terhadap iklim idelogis dan politik. Sebagian di antaranya tidak hanya melakukan dialog yang intens dengan kecenderungan intelektual Islam yang tengah muncul, tetapi juga mencoba melihat ke dalam terhadap apa yang mereka pahami sebagai pesan inti Islam. Mereka juga menyadari bahwa mereka bukan orang pertama yang menghadapi persoalan-persoalan tentang bagaimana melakukan dialog kreatif antara ajaran-ajaran agama yang abadi dan ideal dengan realitas empiris yang selalu berubah. Ringkasnya, sebagian dari mereka memberanikan diri untuk masuk ke dalam ranah intelektual baru, sementara sebagian lainnya memilih untuk memperkuat pertahanan ideologis paradigma agama yang telah lama terbangun.

Para pemikir muda mewarisi fondasi metodologis dari para pembaharu mereka. Jika pada masa lalu pemahaman metodologis yang berbeda telah membagi Muslim ke dalam dua faksi, modernis atau reformis dan tradisionalis, sekarang situasinya telah berubah. Batas-batas dari kedua pendekatan tersebut kini telah kabur. Sebabnya adalah kecenderungan para intelektual Islam baru yang meletakkan kitab suci ke dalam konteks historis pewahyuannya dan kemudian mencoba menafsirkannya dalam konteks sosial dan historis kekinian.

Taufik Abdullah

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الخلاصة: هذا البحث عبارة عن انعكاس تاريخي عن الإسلام والدولة ومجتمع إندونيسيا عصريا. وأما موقف المسلمين يستعمل لنظر إلى العلاقة بين الدين والدولة. وهذا الموقف يدور من موقف عسير في المسامحة بين الخلافيات وإن كانت قليلة، ويشتمل فيه موقف مفتوح على تنوع الأديان في المجتمع. والموقف الأول أصبح أقليا ويظهر منه من تنوع سلوك الكراهية. وأما الموقف الثاني —الذي أصبح أكثريا لهذا الشعب، أمكن أن يقال أنه منقسم إلى نوعين. الأول أنه لا يرتاب في هجم كل نوع من القسوة التي تظهر على اسم الدين، والثاني يدل على أنه لا يفهم المعاني والمقاصد من أعمال القسوة.

وطبيعة من إيديولوجية سياسية وقضية اجتماعية التي تنبني على الإسلام متعلقة بموقف عاضديه. ومن أجل شدة مساعدة المجتمع عن القضية التي تشتهر بــ «الإسلامية المتطرفة»، ظهر موقف عدم المسامحة على تنوع الآراء. وبالعكس، من زيادة ليبرالية في إيديوليجيته، فظهرت منها إمكانية كبيرة في قبول حقوقهم المختلفة. وفي هذه الأحوال، أكبر المنظمات الإسلامية وأقدمها مثل هيئة محمدية وجمعية نهضة العلماء وهيئة الاتحاد الإسلامية وهيئة الإرشاد غيرها، كلها تعتبر في منزلة الوسطى. وذلك من أجل أن هذه المنظمات متخصصة إلى تنمية المدرسة والمستشفى والمؤسسة التربية وأفعال الاجتماعية الدينية الأخرى، وكانت هذه المنظمات غائبة عن دينامكية حول الكراهية المبنية على اسم الدين.

ومع ذلك، كثرت المؤسسات الاجتماعية الإسلامية الجدد، سواء كانت أسستها المنظمات الإسلامية أو الأحزاب السياسية أو الفعال من شباب المسلمين خاصة الذين يخصصون أنفسهم فى جهود تنمية اجتماعية. وبعض المؤسسة الاجتماعية تبحث وتلاحظ إلى المسائل المتعلقة بالمجتمع الإسلامية والعلاقة بين الأديان. وفى نفس الوقت، الأوساط الإسلامية المتطرفة تزيد مراقبتهم على جميع السلوك الاجتماعى، وذلك يرى من القرائن التى تدل على تقصير الأفهام الصحيحة عن الإسلام. ولا يخافون فى تطبيق آمالهم وإن كانت مناقضة للقانون والأحكام. وذلك يرى من العنيف عنادهم على جماعة أحمدية فى بعض الأماكن من جاوة الغربية وفى لمبوك (Lombok).

وأثناء استقال سوهارتو (Soeharto) عن كونه رئيسَ الجمهورية، فاتصل الوهد الذي يفاصل عن ثقافة الخريجين من المدارس العامة والدينية. وفى عصر جديد، كثر الخريجون من الجامعة الإسلامية الحكومية (IAIN) الذين أخذوا لقب الماجستير والدكتوراة من الجامعات الغربية. وكذلك كثر الخريجون من المدرسة الإسلامية الذين أخذوا لقب أكادمية من جامعات «علمانية». فهم الذين يتضمنون فى الأوساط الأكادمية الجديدة يستجيبون على قضايا إيديولوجيا وسياسية. وبعضهم قاموا بالحوار الذي لا يدور حول إشاعة إسلامية فحسب، بل يلاحظون أيضا إلى القضايا التى تتضمن فيه روح الإسلام. وأدركوا أيضا أهم ليسوا أولَ من قام بالحوار عن التعاليم الدينية الخالدة والجيدة مع تغير الواقعية. فهم يتجرأون ليدخلوا إلى مجال الثقافة الجديدة، وأما غيرهم يختارون أن يزيدوا على القوة الإيديولوجية على نموذج الدين الذي قد نمى منذ زمان.

أورث شباب المفكرين عن أساس المنهج من المجددين السابقين. وإن كان فى العصر الماضى فهمُ المناهج المتنوعة الذي قسمَ المسلمين إلى فصيلين، وهما عصري وتقاليدى، وأما الآن قد تغير. الحدود من هذين الفصيلين قد غامضت. وذلك من أجل ميل المثقفين الجدد من المسلمين إلى وضع الكتاب المقدس إلى سياق التاريخ من الوحى ثم يتجرأون إلى تفسيره إلى السياق الاجتماعية والتاريخية الحالية.

How should contemporary situation of a country be characterized? Naturally no adequate answer can be given unless a certain set of problems have been determined. If this is the case, then, one may say that, in a way, present day Indonesia can be seen as a tableau of a highly complicated spectrum of divergent Islamic stance on dealing with the intricate place of religion in its relation to the nation-state and society at large. If the attitude and behavior of the people can be used as the prism through which this phenomenon should be seen then one may easily notice some kind of a continuum in the mode of behavior of the Islamic *ummah*. It ranges from the most impatient attitude that can hardly tolerate the slightest differences to the very broad-minded stance toward whatever sorts of religious pluralities in the society. If the former, though to be sure, constituted a tiny minority, may readily express itself in divergent types of hostile operations, then the latter, like majority of the nation, can be simply divided into two rough categories. If the first one would never hesitate to condemn harshly whatever sorts of atrocities albeit conducting in the name of religion and the second would give the impression that they could hardly understand the meaning and the purpose of the hostile act.

The nature of the Islam-based social idea and political ideology is to some extent co-relate with the mode of behavior of its respective supporters. The harder the devotion of the people to the notion of what is now usually labeled as "the militant Islamism"—that is the used to be called "radical fundamentalism"—the more likely its adherents to be intolerant to the plurality of opinions and the other way around—the more liberal in its ideological stand the greater the possibility it is to accept the right of the others to exist. In this situation, the older and the bigger Islamic organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Persis, Al-Irsyad and many others,[1] are quite often caught in the middle. Since these bigger and older organizations have to be more concerned with the development of their respective schools, universities, hospitals, orphanages and other related social and religious activities, they sometimes are left out in the dynamics of the heated religious controversies. In this situation who would be surprised to learn if some Muslim leaders felt the urge to establish the Center for Moderate Islam?

The increasing plurality or religious ideas, the intrusion of the

globalization process into the national community quite often put the older and the bigger and at the same time more tolerant and open minded religious organizations on the defensive side. In addition to the potential outside challenges these older organizations also have to be more concerned with their integration of their communities of followers.

In the meantime, the numerous newly formed Islamic NGOs, either those that were established by the big organizations and the competing political parties or those that were formed by independent and well-educated young Islamic activists, have been concentrating their efforts in the various types of social development ventures. A number of the newly formed Islam-based research centers that focus to the state of affairs of the Islamic communities and inter-faith relations have also been actively participating in the dynamics of Islamic discourses.[2] In the meantime, the *majelis taklim*, the teaching and the discussion groups of the neighbouring communities, that have operated in most of the Islamic villages as well as in the sections of the towns all over the country, have also been very active in their efforts to deepen the *īmān*, the devotional belief, and the *taqwā*, the religious devotion, of the *ummah*, the Islamic community. At the same time, the radical and fundamentalist or the "militant Islamist" groups have been sharpening their watchful eyes to see whatever type of social behavior that might be construed as the signs of the lessening of the attachment to what they conceived as the proper Islamic behaviors. In the event such unwanted social behavior is assumed to have taken place they would never hesitate to take whatever actions they deem it necessary—even though it means the obstruction of law. The attacks on the Ahmadiyah congregations in several places in West Java and in Lombok can be seen as the cases when the word of tolerance has been forgotten among some sectors of the nation's Islamic communities.

If the terrorist groups that have caused social calamities and human miseries in Bali (twice) and Jakarta (three times)[3] and several times created social anxieties in other places, are most likely to have some kind of direct or indirect relationship with the notorious al-Qaeda, have certainly established themselves as the arch enemies of humanity, the nation and the state the "militant Islamist" organizations have created some kinds of ideological dilemma among the Muslims. Basing on the idea of establishing a society that is supposed to be the genuine

reflection of the totality of Islamic doctrine, these groups aspire to recreate a universal Islamic state—as if the age of the Prophet and the Four Caliphs (the closest friends of the Prophet) could be recovered in the modern time. Apparently, to these organizations and their supporters the course of history and the geographical distances have no role to play in the efforts to build a society blessed by God Almighty.

At the other end of the spectrum of ideologies and pattern of behavior one may encounter some loosely organized networks of Islamic intellectuals and religious thinkers. These intellectual networks have from the beginning of their existence continuously propagated the notion of toleration and pluralism. As one of them states real objective of the intellectual network of the Islamic young intellectuals is to bring back Islam to the beginning of its departure as "a religion to liberate and to enlighten" mankind.[4]

In this rather extreme intellectual climate it is not too difficult to imagine the growing number of the Islamic political parties found themselves in an awkward position. How to gain votes in order to pursue the ideological goals? Or to put it differently, would the ideal Islamic society they might have imagined be attracted to the voters? There was a time—that was during the time when Indonesia was experiencing with the system of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s—the leaders of the Masyumi, the modernist Islamic political party—daringly addressed themselves to the questions of the relationship between Islam and democracy, nationalism, socialism or even Pancasila and daringly took the political consequences of the prescribed ideals in the election. They failed to win the adequate votes in the general election of 1955 and later politically ostracized by the newly established regime, the Guided Democracy,[5] the establishment of which they considered to be unconstitutional. Forty years had passed when the event took place. Now, the Islamic political parties have to find the difficult reality that Islamic ideology does not sell well in the voting booth. The gap between the Islam-based ideology that has been taken as the basis of the existence and the programs that are used as the selling point cannot be easily bridged. The unstable pattern of leadership makes it more difficult for the Islamic political parties to emerge as the intellectual centers of the biggest religion in the country.

In this rather complicated map of the Islamic discourses the *Majlis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI-Indonesian Council of Ulama) find itself in a

rather intricate position. How should the council play its expected role properly? Perhaps no one should be blamed if many young Islamic intellectuals came to a conclusion that the council has made itself the vanguard of Islamic conservatism.[6] In the meantime, numerous so-called *perda-syariah*, the *syariah*-based local by-laws that have been issued by so many provinces and particularly *kabupaten* or districts make one wonders about the boundary between state and society.[7] Would the state again take away something that belongs to the society? Has a new kind of greedy state—the pale copy of the late New Order— been emerging at the local level?

One then may wonder of how the nation-state that is based itself on the Pancasila, the five foundations that has taken the "recognition of the one God Almighty" as its first principle, along with the notion of having "a just and civilized humanity" and others, as the basic foundations of its existence, deal with these conflicting trends? How the older and much bigger Islamic organizations have to deal with this spectrum of mode of behavior and the varieties of religious ideas and visions of the society?

From "the Greedy State" to the Euphoria of *Reformasi*

Looking back at the contemporary history of Indonesia one may realize the significance of the contrasting experiences the nation has had to undergo. All these experiences give the impression as if this nation state has already been destined to become the field where every possible event has the right to take place. Only a few phases in the history of this nation-state people could have an ample time to take a deep breath of relief after experiencing the continuing history of the crowded events.

In 1971, soon after the first General Election since 1955 was held, General Soeharto, who had for three years served as the Acting President and later "provisional" President, was officially elected by the newly formed MPR—the highest state institution with more than fifty per cent of its members were appointed by the power holder. He reached the highest pedestal of power at the time the country had just about to pass through its most traumatic and violent horizontal as well as vertical conflicts. The conflicts that erupted in several parts of the country had left a deep impact in the psyche of the nation. In the process the nation had to endure the long lasting tradition of revenge in the hearts of a great number of people. However, soon after the New

Order consolidated its power it abandoned the notion of Indonesia as being continuously in the midst of the "multi-complex revolution", such as preached by Sukarno, and made instead the notion of "national development" as the ideological cornerstone of its existence.[8]

True to its words the New Order regime obediently followed the arrangement of power stipulated by the 1945 Constitution. Everything was put in order. On the surface, the New Order showed itself to be the real believer of the 1945 Constitution that had been revived by Sukarno after he, as the Head of the State, abrogated the so-called liberal-democratic 1950 provisional Constitution. With this executive heavy constitution, that stipulates the President is both the Head of the State and the government, the Chief Executive has a relative free hand to take whatever initiative he deems it necessary for the sake of the state. Whatever the case the early years of the New order, after the communists and their alleged followers had been crushed and the Sukarnoists had been pushed to the corner, may still be felt as the "short Indian summer of democracy", when everything of political and economic importance could be openly discussed and debated. However, as this military dominated regime consolidated its power this sphere of openness gradually deteriorated until finally the short summer of democratic political and intellectual discourses progressively transformed itself into a long winter of authoritarianism.[9]

True to its claim as the guardian of the sanctity of the 1945 Constitution the New Order regime regularly held general elections. At least that was on the surface. In the early 1973, however, Soeharto launched an ideological offensive by forcing all political parties, except Golkar, to reorganize themselves into two ideological camps—that is, as what Soeharto said, the spiritual-material and the material-spiritual camps.[10]

The New Order began as the reforming regime that wanted to guide the state toward the direction of its rightful and democratic course. In the process, the military dominated regime abandoned the paradigm of conflict that characterized Sukarno's Guided Democracy, the regime that had now been labeled as the Old Order. The New Order introduced its own crafted paradigm of consensus. It was, however, only a superficial change of the system of discourse for it meant nothing more than change of the preferred style of speech—from the hyperbolic style of Sukarno to that of euphemism of Soeharto. However, the more one

wants to know the significance of the change of the style the more one realizes that the use of two contrasting linguistic modes of expression meant nothing but blurring the actual reality. Any idea or statement that were thought to be a deviation from the state-prescribed consensus could be treated as nothing more than meaningless sound if it was not forced to silence by whatever means.

The period of "the revaluation of all values" *(Umwertung aller Werte)*—the famous Nietzsche's dictum used by Mohammad Hatta, the first Vice President of the Republic in his devastating criticism of the Guided Democracy[11]—was over and the sphere of "the homogenization of all values" with its slogan "unity and uniformity" set in. That was the time when the regime required all social organizations, political or otherwise, to be based on one sole fundamental principle, the Pancasila.[12] All adult citizens but most importantly the military, civil servants, politicians, members of the voluntary association of whatever sorts of activities and the students of all levels were obliged to take the indoctrination programs, where they had to learn the official state ideology, the Broad Outline of the State Orientations (*GBHN*), that had officially been drafted by the MPR, and other related matters. That was also the period when the system of voting in the national and local houses of representatives should be replaced by *mufakat* or consensus— that is a consensus on the basis of the decision that had already been by the Mandate Holder of the MPR—the President.

In the process the once subdued political forces of Islam that had supported General Soeharto and the military in their efforts to crush the communist party, the PKI, the alleged mastermind of the failed attempted coup of October 1965, were gradually but consistently pushed into the corner. Before long Islam, as a political force, had became a wasted political support and suspected former ally. However since Soeharto believed that one of the major sources of social and political crises that had hit the country in the aftermath of the attempted coup of October 1966 was the anti-religious stance of the communist followers, the New Order could not trust people without a clearly distinct religion. Not only because one of the basic tenets of the state (the Pancasila) was the belief in "the oneness of God Almighty", Soeharto convinced that the personal and social attachment to any of the state-recognized religions was a major source of stability. In this frame of mind the government directly took charge in the management

of the annual *ḥajj* pilgrimage, regularly held the national competition for Qur'anic recital and made religious holidays as the official state celebrations. However the regime never hesitated to curtail any religious event that could be construed as being political in nature.

The policy of this military-dominated regime unfailingly created a dilemmatic situation to the Islamic political leaders, particularly to those who had experienced political isolation and personal hardship under Sukarno's Guided Democracy. After their attempt to revive the once biggest Islamic "modernist" political party, the Masyumi, which had been frustrated by the newly established regime and the possibilities for them to be active in the short-lived Islamic based Parmusi (*Partai Muslimin Indonesia*-the Indonesian Muslims Party) which was expected to be the successor to the defunct-Masyumi,[13] along with the political parties had also been curtailed, the Islamic political activists finally shifted their energies to the *daʿwah*—religious propagation—movement.

Soon after the New Order regime enforced the "one sole basic foundation" policy (1986)—that obliged all voluntary associations of whatever forms and functions to base themselves on the state ideology, Pancasila, the "traditionalist"-oriented Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the biggest Islamic organization, followed the step that had already been taken by the "modernist" Muhammadiyah, the second biggest Islamic organization. They stayed away from practical politics.[14] NU announced that it would return to its *khiṭṭah*, the original nature of the organization, being as it was a purely religiously based civil society. Similar steps were soon taken by other Islamic social and educational organizations. Politics had since then become a matter of the individuals as the citizens of the country. On the surface one may notice that politics had ceased to be the business of the Islamic organizations.

After several attempts to participate in the newly crafted political format had failed, the intellectual search for the proper social role of Islam in the nation-state set in motion. Should the old social and political idealism be maintained and strengthened by new and more appropriate methods or should some kind of adjustments to the changing political situation and social environment be made? What lessons could be learned from the recent tragic and traumatic bloody events—the events that had blemished the history of the nation and implanted the country

with the sense of revenge? In January 1970 Nurcholish Madjid, who had by then been widely seen as an upcoming "modernist" Islamic intellectual leader, created an uproar when he gallantly formulated a new but shocking slogan, *'Islam, yes; Islamic party, no'*. The slogan clearly summarized his idea on the place of Islam in the new political environment of the state and the political orientation of the military-dominated regime. With that catching statement he waved "farewell" to the idea of having an Islamic nation state.[15]

Had this slogan made by a follower of Sukarno or even that of other nationalist leaders it would simply be taken as nothing but an outdated repetition. The slogan was immediately taken as a clear sign to the political oriented Islamic leaders and organizations to re-examine their stand. It was a sign that the period of intense examination on the proper place of the Islam in the changing character of the nation state should have begun.[16] The time when the conceptual boundaries between the so-called *Islam politik*, political Islam, and *Islam kultural*, cultural Islam, became to be properly defined had begun.[17] During this period of self-searching the notion of *da'wah bi al-ḥāl*, the religious propagation by deeds, began to be propagated. The new strategy was the necessary step to follow and to accompany the traditional *da'wah bi al-lisān*, propagation by words. Then the notion of *fastabiqū al-khayrāt*, the competition for the betterment of the society, became a subject of intense discussion. The great leader of the NU introduced the trilogy of solidarity (*ukhūwah*)—national solidarity, Islamic solidarity and universal solidarity. In this period of self-examination several university campuses became the centers of Islamic intellectual activities.

The early period of the New Order might be remembered as one when the process of "de-Islamization" took place in several rural areas in Java. That was the time when many non-practicing Muslims, the so-called *abangan* group, abandoned the religion of their ancestors. This tendency unfailingly triggered inter-religious conflicts in some parts of rural Java. However, a decade or two before the end of the New Order, one could talk about how the process of "re-Islamization" had almost been completed. Some parts of the rural Java experienced the intensive process of *santrinization*—the force of Islamic teaching had been strengthened in the consciousness and the scope of its influence had been expanded in the pattern of behavior.[18] One may say that the last

years of the New Order gave many signs as if a new Islamic paradigm had been emerging.[19]

During the New Order period the state issued the rather modern-oriented the Islamic marriage law and codified the Islamic laws. With the strong endorsement and personal support of the President the Bank Indonesia finally agreed to the opening of the *sharī'ah* bank. The establishment of the ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia,* Association of Muslim Intellectuals in Indonesia), the professed non-political organization that sought to unify the persons belonging to the different Islamic factions and religious orientations or even economic classes and political affiliations. However under the leadership of B.J. Habibie and with the backing of President the birth of ICMI gave every signs of the growing importance of Islam in the political constellation of the New Order.[20]

It was, perhaps, not really an exaggeration to state—as what an astute western observer put it—that Indonesia at that time was one of "the most vibrant centers for new Muslim political thinking the modern world has seen". The participants in this dynamic sphere were not only the intellectuals, but also a lively coalition "linking leaders and mass based institutions".[21] He might be right but it should also be noted that these outward positive trends took place in a time when the New Order had already made itself as the master of the state ideology and the holder of the hegemony of meaning. These intellectual creativities took place within the constraints of the greedy state—the state that had made itself as the only source of anything intellectually and ideologically significance. The activities occurred in the state that had steadily lost its innovative abilities and begun to loose its ideological legitimacy. But who know what was behind the clamoring Panorama?

As the regime grew older its moral legitimacy became weaker and weaker. Soeharto, who had performed *ḥajj* pilgrimage and who had also publicly shown his religiosity, began to talk about the time he might have to step down and became, as he said in Javanese, "a wise sage" (*pandito*). It was during this downturn of personal enthusiasm the state had to face the devastating monetary crisis. The New Order finally succumbed to the massive destructive forces of the crisis. In a very short time the monetary crisis transformed itself into the intricate relationship of economic, social, and political crises. The worst riots in recent memory took place in Jakarta. Soon enough student

demonstrations took place in many university towns. At the peak of the demonstration the leadership of MPR found itself without other alternatives but to urge Soeharto to step down.

And Vice President Habibie, the technological wizard, was left alone to fill the vacant office of the Presidency. On May 21, 1998 Habibie took over the presidency amidst the far from settled political crisis. The event was, as he remembered it, one of the gloomiest moments in his life. Only a few intellectuals who belonged to ICMI, he says in his memoir, who tried to defend him from the hate campaigns.[22] But, perhaps that was also the time when he could only reflect in passing the long dormant democratic tradition in the nation that had from the beginning of its existence taken the ideas of social justice and people's sovereignty as two of the most important pillars of the struggle for independence. Whatever his feeling might be the day he was sworn in as the new President was also the time when the so-called era of *Reformasi*, political reformation, began. The era of the New Order of which he was one of the key players, has been thrown into the waste basket of history.

Habibie was there without any assurances whether he could get the support of the military and other political forces. He had to deal the political crisis in time when his legitimacy as the new President was questioned. But how the emerging intellectual force of Islam had to deal with the sudden disarray of the nation?

Islam and the Proliferation of Conflicting Ideas

When President Soeharto stepped down he had practically opened up the Pandora's Box. Suddenly all kinds of ideas and wishes as well as the divergent notions of revenge and socio-political illnesses that were for so long covered by the powerful greedy state under his control came out from the illusory and deceiving box of the integrated state and harmonious society. The old questions that had been answered many times emerged again to the surface. What were the real demands of the Proclamation of Independence? With the fall of Soeharto "the era of *Reformasi*" was supposed to have begun.[23] All errors should be rectified, political mistakes corrected and the once imagined Indonesia to be re-constructed. It was also, however, the time of democratic euphoria when all the hitherto hidden ideas and unstated dreams and prejudices made their appearances. When the hidden faces and ideas

had made themselves prominent, Indonesia soon found itself in the crisis of mutual trust. Signs of social disruption showed their ugly faces in several regions. Divergent types of *vigilante*-groups came forward to attack and—as they claimed—to fix whatever they considered immoral and improper in the society. Suddenly Indonesia found itself as if it has already entered into the period of fragmented society.

In the meantime regardless of his rather weak political support President Habibie worked hard to bring back the country to the course that had been envisioned by the founding fathers of the nation. In a relatively short time he managed to return the political rights of the people—by introducing local autonomy law, press freedom, the right of the people to form political party, and a host of other laws that could guarantee the rights of the people. He disbanded the so-called *Badan Pembina Pendidikan Pelaksanaan Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (BP-7, Supervisory Body for Implementation of Guidance for Comprehension and Practice of Pancasila), the body that took care of the indoctrination programs. By dissolving this body Habibie had definitively closed the chapter of Indonesia as being a "greedy state"—the state that also wanted to control people's political consciousness, to be the master ideological orientation, and the power that determined the content of the nation's collective memories.

In 1999 after less than two years in power Habibie dared enough to hold the general election. Perhaps, this was his way of answering a question he asked in public. "What should we do so the next President would not fall into the traps of power?" Habibie's destiny as the President was soon sealed after the slight majority of the members of the MPR rejected his accountability speech. Abdurrahman Wahid, a prominent Islamic intellectual and the former chairman of the NU, was elected as the new President, while Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Sukarno and the leader of the PDI-P, was elected as the Vice-President. A new chapter of the political history of the era of *Reformasi* began. For the first time in history, three out four prominent positions in the state occupied by the leaders whose prominence came from their commitment to Islamic courses—the President (who was the former Chairman of the NU), the Chairman of the MPR (the former Chairman of the Muhammadiyah), and the Speaker of the Parliament (the former Chairman of the Islamic Students Association, HMI). The tragedy was they did not always get along very well. In about two years

this ideal image had become history with a few people still may cherish the memory.[24]

In the meantime, the democratic euphoria continued among the fragmented political elite, whose relationship with the mass population had also somewhat disconnected. That was the time the word *pemimpin* (leader) had unconsciously been changed into *elit politik* (political elite) in the public discourses. At the same time horizontal conflicts in several areas, most notably in Ambon, Halmahera, Palu, West and Central Kalimantan, could still not be subsided. The tragic horizontal conflicts erupted in time when the greedy state of the New Order had been destroyed and the *Reformasi* was still in its early stage. It took place when the legitimacy of the state had been put into question while the society had lost its self defense mechanism to safeguard itself. The greedy state of the New Order had apparently taken away the resources of local wisdom and legitimacy. In the mean time the vertical conflicts in Aceh and the restlessness in Papua could still not be pacified.

It was in this critical period the long subdued political impulses among the Muslims came to the surface. The supposedly Islamic party PPP that had accepted Pancasila as its ideological foundation, such as prescribed by the New Order, shifted its ideological stance by demanding the state to apply "the seven magic words" (in the Indonesian language) in the Preamble of the Constitution ("the obligation of the Islamic adherents to apply the *sharī'ah* law"). The newly formed Islamic political parties, many of them were the break away from the PPP, followed suit.[25] They demanded again the re-issuance of the tentative agreement made by the nation's "founding fathers" that been changed a day after the Proclamation of Independence (1945).

More important than the tendency to turn the clock back to the past such as shown by the Islamic political parties are the formation of a number of Islamic "fundamentalist" organizations.[26] As a matter of theological principle these organizations rejects the legitimacy of the present nation-state. They are preparing themselves for the time when the single universal Islamic state would finally emerge. Either influenced by the Wahabi-style of Islamism or not these organizations that can to some extent be categorized as belonging to the Salafi groups,[27] that is the groups that claim to represent the real and original Islam—such as the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia,[28] Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and other

Islamist groups tend to see the nation-state of Indonesia as nothing but a tolerable stage of transition.

International situation—such as the never ending suffering of the Palestinian people, the worsening situation of Afghanistan, and the continuing restlessness of the Muslims in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines—to some extent influence the situation in Indonesia. The Nine Eleven tragic event (2001) in New York City that soon to be followed by the aggravating situation in Afghanistan and Iraq and other Islamic countries directly or indirectly gave their impacts in Indonesia. The tendencies of Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism immediately grew.

"We've seen radical Islam grow militant, systematic and organized," a young intellectual put it, "while liberal Islam has been unorganized, weakening, not militant, not resistant and unassertive in giving voice to its perspectives."[29] But what they should do?

State, Society and Islam

When Soeharto left the central stage, he among others bequeathed the nation that had relatively managed to bridge the intellectual gap that used to exist between the graduates of the secular schools and that of the Islamic religious schools. By the time the New Order had exhausted the political legitimacy of its existence there were already a number of the IAIN graduates who had received their M.A. or Ph.D. degrees in the Western universities.[30] There were of course a lot more of the graduates of the Islamic schools, the *madrasah* and *pesantren*, who finally received their degrees at the "secular" universities.

As can be expected the members of the emerging intellectual community would give divergent responses to changing political and ideological climate. Some of them do not only conduct an intense dialogue with the emerging Islamic intellectual trends but also try to look deep into what they conceive to be the real message of Islam. They also realize that they are not the first to face the problems of how to conduct a creative dialogue between the eternal and ideal teachings of religion and the ever changing empirical realities. Some of them may have the drive to venture into the new intellectual vista while others may prefer to strengthen the ideological defense of the long establish religious paradigm.

There are several hard realities that can never be ignored and a

number of ideals and dreams of the nation that shall never be forgotten. The hard realities are the dramatic internal political changes that have taken place, on the one hand, and the situation in the outside world that reflect the hypothetical construct of what Huntington says as "the clash of civilizations",[31] on the other. It is again in these highly complicated courses of events the young Islamic intellectuals, who have not only mastered Islamic doctrine and classics but also quite familiar with Islamic intellectual history began to express what they unashamedly call "liberal opinions" in writings. They are indeed the products of the print-culture *par excellence*.

Their writings have not only expressed the deep concern for the trend of group—exclusivity that has hit the Islamic *ummah* but also the strong urge to proclaim that tolerance and inclusive point of departure in understanding social reality. As if to repeat the ideas that had since the colonial time taught by the pioneers of the nationalist movement they untiringly talk and write about the importance of democracy, social justice, gender equality, national unity, civil liberty and solidarity and tolerance as well as the importance of international mutual understanding. They insist on the importance of civic liberties and the need of using pluralist approach in understanding the dynamic and the structure of the society. Therefore, as can be expected, they strongly condemn whatever types of acts of violence and terrorism and try to find out the intellectual, religious, or even educational background of those atrocities. They aspire to having a democratic system that is not solely determined by the voices of the majority but one that is also based on the sense of openness, understanding and justice. Therefore they are very much concerned with the gender issues. As a matter of fact gender equality has been one of their earliest social concerns. They preach about the importance of intellectual openness in dealing with the changing realities. In short while giving the strong support to the state-ideology of Pancasila, they strongly propagate the separation of state and religion. This is what they call "secularism". Or in the religiously based system of discourse they never forget to insist on the principle of "the separation of *ukhrawī* (heavenly) and *dunyawī* (worldly)."[32]

In short their ideas to some extent reflect what Binder says as "liberalism" that is the idea that "treats religion as opinion and therefore tolerates diversity in precisely those realms that traditional belief insist upon without equivocation"[33] Whatever the case, the problems the

young intellectuals, who later daringly identify themselves "as being liberal", is how to defend these ideas from Islamic doctrine? How to convince their co-religionists who have been accustomed to learning the notion that Islam is actually *dīn wa-dawlah*—religion and the state, and that Islam is a universal and eternal doctrine? After all they also know very well the fascination of the older Islamic "modernists" to the apt expression as what the late great Orientalist, Hamilton Gibbs states, that Islam is not simply a religion, it is actually "a complete civilization"[34] But more importantly is how the young intellectuals could convincingly show that those challenging ideas really reflect the true teachings of Islam?

The young thinkers and aspiring reformers, however, have inherited a relatively strong methodological foundation from their predecessors. However in the old days the different understandings of the methodological devices have practically divided the Muslim into two factions, the "modernists" or the "reformists" and the "traditionalists", now the situation has considerably changed. The boundaries of the two approaches have somewhat blurred. The "reformist" ulama, let alone the "traditionalist" ones, are alarmed by the tendency of the new Islamic intellectuals to put the "sacred text", into the historical "context" of its creation and later try to interpret the same "text" from the present historical and social "context". This is the method that has quite often created an uproar even among those who prefer to call themselves the "moderate Islam". By the tendency of using hermeneutics, the method of interpretation that has been developed in the literary study, to interpret the Qur'anic texts the generation gaps become bigger and bigger. Who would then be surprised to learn if some kind of intellectual clash with the *Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, whose members are the representatives of the big Islamic organizations, cannot always be avoided?

Finally if the "modernists", who at the peaks of their activities had introduced modern Islamic schools, established Islam-based nationalist political parties and other types of modern endeavors, could only conduct a distant dialogue with writings of the foreign Islamic reformers, the intellectual world of the young Islamic reformers is far more varied and wider. They not only conduct intense intellectual dialogues with Islamic thinkers, either with scholars who remain in their respective homelands, amidst their own respective societies, be it Egypt, Morocco or whatever, or those have been living in the Western countries, and

mostly write in French or English but also with the "Orientalists", the Western experts on Islam. Some of the young Islamic intellectuals are actually specialists in modern scientific disciplines and academic theories. Occasionally they managed to hold direct conversations with visiting Islamic thinkers and scholars from abroad. They may have the opportunity to visit the other parts of the Islamic world or participate in the various types of international Islamic conferences. They, or at least some of them, indeed also belong to the *jet set* generation.

In the meantime the heated polemic on Islam and the state continues and in the process the social sphere is getting more complicated. The liberal and the moderate may continue to preach the idea of tolerance but the radical and the fundamentalists have become more restless in facing the growing pluralities in the style of life, social behavior and naturally the attitude toward life and religion. They could hardly let any symbol and sign of pluralities of whatever form and function are simply taken as what they are without a controversy, how mild it may take.

Endnotes

* Paper presented in an international conference: "Is Indonesian Islam Different? Islam in Indonesia in a Comparative International Perspective", held by Center for the Study of Islam and Society (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, PPIM) of the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta in cooperation with Leiden University, the Netherlands, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands), and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Indonesia, on the January 24-26, 2011 in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia.

1. The history of the rise of Islamic organizations, see Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*, (Oxford, New York and Jakarta: Oxford University Press, 1978).
2. See Budhy Munawar-Rachman, *Reorientasi Pembaruan Islam: Sekularisme, Liberalisme, dan Pluralisme Paradigma Baru Islam Indonesia*, (Jakarta: LSAF and Paramadina, 2010).
3. For the analysis of Indonesian bombers, see International Crisis Group (ICG) reports in http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia.aspx.
4. Abd Moqsith Ghazali (ed.), *Ijtihad Islam Liberal*, (Jakarta: Jaringan Islam Liberal, 2005).
5. See Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962).
6. See for example Luthfi Assyaukanie, "Fatwa and Violence in Indonesia," *Journal of Religion and Society*, Volume 11 (2009).
7. For this discussion, see for example Arskal Salim, *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).
8. For the cornerstone of the New Order's economics and politics, see Mohtar Mas'oed, *Ekonomi dan Struktur Politik Orde Baru 1966-1971*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1989).
9. See for example Taufik Abdullah, *Indonesia: Towards Democracy*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), 341-428.
10. See Ali Murtopo, *Strategi Politik Nasional*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Proklamasi dan CSIS, 1974).
11. Mohammad Hatta, *Demokrasi Kita*, (Djakarta: Pandji Masyarakat, 1960).
12. For this discussion, see Deliar Noer, *Islam, Pancasila dan Asas Tunggal*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Perkhidmatan, 1983).
13. For the history of the establishment of Parmusi, see K. E. Ward, *The Foundation of The Partai Muslimin Indonesia*, (Ithaca: Modern Indonesian Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1970).
14. See Shaleh Harun dan Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Latar Belakang Ummat Islam Menerima Pancasila Sebagai Asas Tunggal: Sebuah Kajian Informatif Pandangan NU-Muhammadiyah*, (Yogyakarta: Aquarius, 1986).
15. See Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1987).
16. See for example Muhammad Kamal Hasan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to "New Order"Modernization in Indonesia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980).
17. The socio-intellectual background of this distinction, see M. Syafi'i Anwar, *Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Politik Tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995).
18. The concepts of "force" and "scope" are borrowed from Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
19. See for example, Taufik Abdullah, " The Formation of a New Paradigm?: A Sketch on Contemporary' in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward a New Paradigm: Recent Development in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, (Temple, Arizona: Arizona State University: Progiam for Southeast Asian Studies, 1996), 47-88.
20. See M. Syafi'i Anwar, "Islam, Negara, dan Formasi Sosial dalam Orde Baru: Menguak

Dimensi Sosio-Historis Kelahiran dan Perkembangan ICMI," Supplement of *Ulumul Quran* III, no. 3 (1992).

21. Robert Hefner's statement in "Islam in Indonesia"—A Conference co-sponsored by the United States - Indonesia Society and the Asia Society, on February 7, 2002. *Jaringan Islam Liberal,* http//islamlib.com/en/page=php?page=article&mode=print&id=257.

22. Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, *Detik-Detik yang Menentukan: Jalan Panjang Indonesia Menuju Demokrasi,* (Jakarta: THC Mandiri, 2006), 69-83.

23. For the discussion of the fall of the New Order regime see for example, Thomas B. Pepinsky, *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

24. For the "impeachment" of Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency in 2001, see Hamdan Zoelva, *Impeachment Presiden: Alasan Tindak Pidana Pemberhentian Presiden Menurut UUD 1945,* (Jakarta: Konstitusi Press, 2005).

25. See for example Bernhard Platzdasch, *Islamism in Indonesia: Politics in the Emerging Democracy,* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009).

26. See Jamhari dan Jajang Jahroni (ed.), *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia,* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2004).

27. See for example M. Adlin Sila, "Pemetaan Varian Kesamamaan Islam Kontemporer: Kasus Gerakan Salafi di Indonesia," in *Prosiding Muncul dan Berkembangnya Varian Keagamaan Islam Kontemporer di Indonesia: Islam, Negara-Bangsa, dan Globalisasi,* (Jakarta: PMB-LIPI bekerjasama dengan Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2009).

28. See for example Din Wahid, "Islamic State or Islamic Society?" in Sukma & Joewono (eds.), *Islamic Thought,* 79-04.

29. This statement was made by Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, a bright young thinker, quoted by Linda Christanty, "Is there rainbow in Islam?," reprinted in *Jaringan Islam Liberal,* 10 Agustus 2006, Islamlib.com.

30. For this discussion, see for example, Fuad Jabali and Jamhari (eds), *IAIN dan Modernisasi Islam di Indonesia,* (Jakarta: Logos, 2002).

31. A critical comment on this very famous thesis see for example, Taufik Abdullah, "The Clash of Civilizations: a prognosis of the Future or the lure of the Past," *Studia Islamika,* Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998.

32. In his well received book Luthfi Assyaukani, himself one of the leading members of the JIL, divides the Islamic political ideologies into three "models". The first one is what he calls "Islamic Democratic State" (is well represented by the Masyumi), the second, "Religious Democratic Stage" (well represented by among others leaders of the Muhammadiyah), and the third, "Liberal Democratic State" (of course, represented by the JIL), see Luthfi Assyaukani, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia,* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009).

33. Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies,* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago, 1988), 2.

34. Gibb puts this observation in his *"Whither Islam".* It was quoted very often. See among others the collection of writings of Mohammad Natsir, *Capita Selecta,* (Bandung & s'Gravenhage: W. van Hoeve, 1955). The book has been published four times. The last one was published in 2009, in conjunction with the 100 Birthday of Natsir.

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