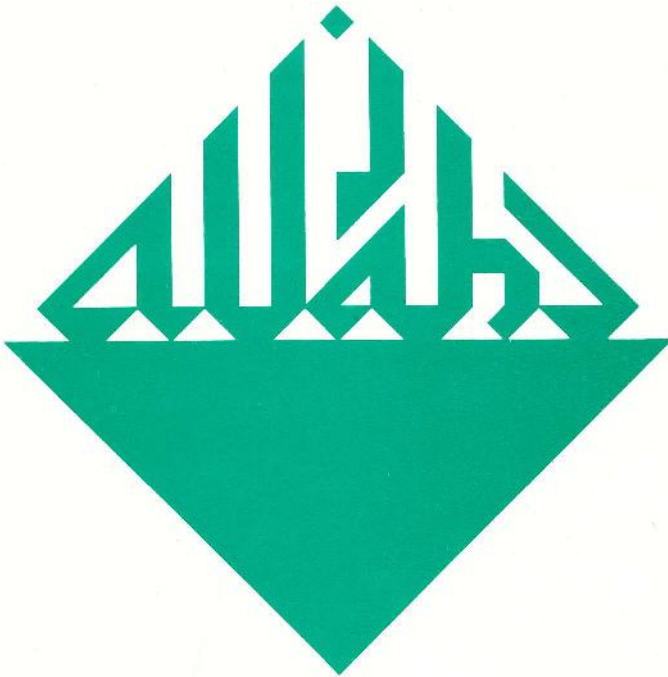


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

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OF ISLAMIC COURTS UNDER THE NEW ORDER
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Interview

Islam, Nationalism and Democracy

A Dialogue with Dr. Anwar Haryono

Historical records show that such a determination is often direct rather than the other way round. This means that Indonesian Islam will only be properly understood if it is located within its larger spectrum of the national political system. In other words, the trend of Muslim participation cannot be detached from the political policy that is applied within any particular period of time.

There are four historical periods concerned with the national political system: colonialism, liberal democracy, guided democracy and Pancasila democracy. Each system was successively applied within the journey of this nation. During the colonial period, Islam deeply involved itself in political activities. Because the struggle against the colonial government was the main agenda, the Muslim political movement was undertaken hand-in-hand with other religious adherents. Throughout a period of more than three centuries, their cooperation formed a common experience, which in turn produced the seeds of nationhood.

The first years of Independence were colored by an aura of democracy. The quest for freedom from the previous eras seemed to have driven this new nation to choose a liberal democratic system. Muslims, though they constituted the majority, appeared to have various political aspirations. Some of them preferred to join the Islamic party i.e. Masjumi, and some joined secular parties, such as the nationalist PNI or the socialist PSI. Political records note that Masjumi then became one of the most influential parties at that time. Its bargaining position was strong so it colored all the political decision-making process. Masjumi, for instance, had a great influence over the establishment of the national constitution starting from its preparation, and it gained a significant number of votes during the first election in 1955.

The era of liberal democracy ended when President Soekarno issued a decree in 1959 calling for a new political system called "guided democracy". This system gave more authority to the president to control national political policies. As a consequence, the authority of the legislative was

decreasing. The fate of Masjumi—and all other parties—then heavily rested in the hands of Soekarno, who at the time was much influenced by communist party (PKI) proponents. Several years afterward, Masjumi and PSI were banned by Soekarno, charged with having been involved in the PRRI rebellion.

The year of 1965 constituted a turning point in Indonesian politics. It was the year when the communists failed in their coup attempt, and it was also the end of the Old Order era, in which Soekarno was replaced by General Suharto. As Suharto came to power, his government, which has been dominated by the military faction, introduced "Pancasila democracy" to replace the guided democracy system. One of its important political policies was to fuse all political parties into three consecutive parties: Golkar, PPP and PDI. However, since Golkar is a government-sponsored party, the other two, PPP and PDI, have little opportunity to grow. This political situation further results in restrictions on political participation as the government also introduced a "floating mass" policy. Muslims, among others, cannot directly participate in the political arena.

Responses to the New Order's political policies came from many factions in various forms. Members of the Petisi 50 (Petition of 50) can be regarded as some of the most bold critics of the New Order government. They have criticized the involvement of the military in the political arena, and other government policies. As a consequence, for some years they have been subjected to many government restrictions. They are not allowed to travel abroad, participate in political parties, teach in universities or receive credit from government-owned banks.

The following dialogue aims to recall the political experience of an Indonesian Muslim: **Dr. Anwar Haryono**. He has been deeply involved in the political arena since the day of independence. He is one of the founders of the GPII (the Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement) and also a proponent of Masjumi. In the liberal era Dr. Haryono was also a member of the Representative Council and the Panitia Sembilan, whose main duty was to reconcile President Soekarno and Vice-President Mohammad Hatta. As a Masjumi proponent, he was very critical of Soekarno's leadership, and this attitude has also been expressed during the New Order era. Although he was not allowed to participate in a new Muslim political party i.e. PARMUSI, Dr. Haryono still showed his great interest in political life by joining the Petisi 50 to express his political aspirations and his concern regarding the present Indonesian political situation.

*W*e would like to discuss the situation of Islam and Muslims in New Order Indonesia. To be more specific perhaps, we would like to begin with something rather controversial i.e. the coming to power of the New Order government. This government has set up new policies on Islam, which are different from such policies employed by the previous government. Responding to New Order policies, some Muslims prefer to adopt the so-called "Cultural Islamic Movement", such as that promoted by Nurcholish Madjid, rather than the "Political Islamic Movement" as in the Old Order period. Nonetheless, the New Order government still gives opportunities to Muslims to pursue their political aspirations through the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan - the United Development Party). Before discussing the more recent situation, it would be best if you could sketch out the Muslim position in the early decades of independent Indonesia.

We ought to have a long discussion if we want to discuss Islam and Indonesian Muslims. We cannot separate them from the whole history of the nation. The struggle of Indonesian Muslim in gaining independence from the Dutch and Japanese colonials was conducted hand-in-hand with the rest of the Indonesian communities. We also have to scrutinize more carefully the role of Muslim at the beginning of independent Indonesia, especially as we have gained political recognition from other nations. In short, we have to discuss the role of Muslims in rescuing the nation from the ruins of colonialism and imperialism. These early activities have to be placed in the context of political freedom, which was the system applied in the first decades of independent Indonesia.

In the early decades of independent Indonesia, we were still in a period of recovery. This implied not only physical but also spiritual recoveries. In doing so, in addition to the DPR (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat — Representative Assembly), as the people's representative body, whose responsibility is to cover political, economic and social reconstruction, we also established a Constituent Assembly whose main duty was to formulate a permanent constitution. As we all know, the proclaimed constitution of August 18, 1945, was then reformulated again in 1949 and 1950.

The natures of these constitutions were temporary. Therefore, we needed to elect members of the Constituent Assembly whose main job was to accomplish the existing and temporary constitutions. In

carrying out their duties, the members of the Constituent Assembly were assured of freedom to express their thoughts according to each party's beliefs as they were acting as the representatives of Indonesian people in general. The members in fact produced highly valuable contributions for the benefit of society. Unfortunately, it took a long time to accomplish their task, because the topics to be discussed pertained to matters of principle. For example, the question about Marxism. Was it possible to accept Marxism in a country, which since its beginning had declared that its independence was made possible through the blessing of Allah and based its basic tenets on the belief in the oneness of God?

The PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia — the Indonesian Communist Party) was clever enough. It did not form a separate ideology; if it did, it would have lost. In the final debate of the Constituent Assembly, the PKI attached itself to the Pancasila faction. The members of the Constituent were in fact divided into two factions: Pancasila and Islam. In principle, there was no fundamental conflict between Pancasila and Islam. However, the members needed longer to be able to produce genuine results. They had to examine each other's ideas in order to produce valuable formulations.

In order to understand the demands of each faction, the two made comparisons of each other's concepts. The Islamic faction had a relatively more coherent concept concerning social or political affairs. Meanwhile, the Pancasila faction faced difficulties in locating definite concepts on the same problem, due to the diverse ideological orientations of its members. Unfortunately, as the debate was still proceeding, President Soekarno issued a decree on July 5, 1950, introducing the Guided Democracy system to the Indonesian political climate. The main point of this system was to empower the position of the state within the national political constellation. This decision implied that the position of the presidential institution, in which Soekarno himself acted as the president, gained more power. Soekarno's decision appeared immature; he was not patient enough to wait for the result of the Constituent assembly.

The constituent was chaired by Wilopo, representing the PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia — the Indonesian Nationalist Party), while Prawoto was the vice-chairperson representing the Masjumi party. Although Wilopo and Prawoto had different ideological orientations, they had been close classmates. Besides differences, they had commonalities.

Historical records show that each faction could openly express their ideas to the other. This was why Wilopo dared to claim that the members of the constituent had completed 90 per cent of their task. Up until the constituent had finally declared a dead-lock, due to the boycott of the non-Islamic fractions, which then resulted in a non-*quorum*, Prawoto and Suwiryo, the head of the PNI, still tried to make approaches to each other. According to information that I heard directly from Prawoto, the Assembly had reached the final stage of formulation. The formulation was said to have been similar to the presidential decree of July 5, 1959.

Prior to the presidential decree, the Juanda cabinet had formulated a compromised version of the constitution that was named after the Piagam Bandung (Bandung Charter). However, as I have said, were the constituent members given enough opportunity, they would have succeeded in making a national constitution democratically. But, as a consequent, Soekarno could not be a single leader. Soekarno could not possibly be a single leader through a democratic process.

Why did President Soekarno issue a decree while the constituent members were working on the same issue?

I heard some time ago that there was an Indonesian delegation going to Tokyo. The members of this delegation had strongly influenced Soekarno in making the presidential decree of July 5, 1959. Basically, the content of the decree was more or less similar to the formulation created by the constituent. If the latter made a compromise between Islam and Pancasila factions, this meant that they had a similar orientation to the President. Adnan Buyung Nasution, who wrote a dissertation on the topic, emphasized that the content of the presidential decree was similar to what was occurring in the debate about the preamble of the constitution. This was why when the decree was proposed to the DPR elected in the first general election, to find out whether the DPR could join together with the President over the decreed 1945 constitution, the DPR members unanimously voted for the proposal.

However, the Masjumi had a different view on the decree. It held the opinion that decreeing meant using power. They believed that such a compromise could be attained through a democratic way. This is a fact. Actually, through the decree, Soekarno had succeeded in

making the second compromise of the national constitution after that of the Piagam Jakarta (the Jakarta Charter) on June 22, 1945. The June 22, 1945 constitution was a compromise between nationalist and Islamic orientations as well. All the members were nationalists and Muslims, except A.A. Maramis. Although the formulations between the two compromises were different, the essence was the same. Meanwhile, people were still debating the Pancasila that had been formulated on June 1, 1945. That is alright, but this version of Pancasila was formulated by Soekarno alone. The second Pancasila, the one formulated on June 22, was basically a preamble of the 1945 constitution. Unfortunately, many people regarded it as a separate constitution, as if the Piagam Jakarta only expressed the interests of Muslims, and construed the one that was formulated on June 1, 1945 as the real Pancasila.

Indeed, the one produced on June 1, 1945, had significant meaning, but the one formulated on June 22, 1945 had even greater meaning. While the first was the creation of Soekarno, the latter was the product of Soekarno and the representatives of all factions. On August 18, 1945, Pancasila underwent particular changes and raised debates among the people after 1950's. The Constituent Assembly was then established to accomplish the task of creating a permanent national constitution. As historical records show, this assembly failed to meet its duty—or was intentionally driven to fail—and the presidential decree was then issued. It is indispensable to understand these historical steps. We cannot neglect historical facts.

Some people tend to regard the 1945 national constitution as the one formulated on August 18, 1945, by excluding consideration of it. This does not concord with historical facts. The reality of our political history does not run that way. The present 1945 constitution is the one covered in the presidential decree of July 5, 1959. If the consideration was excluded, the decree would not express the idea of compromise, which was the basic reason of the decree itself. Considering our future political atmosphere, we cannot ignore these historical facts. The meaning of Pancasila and the 1945 national constitution should be referred to the presidential decree.

Concerning the presidential decree at the time when President Soekarno was in Tokyo, Dr. Idham Khalid was contacted by General A.H. Nasution asking his opinion on the planned decree. Dr. Khalid somehow said that

returning to the 1945 national constitution such as the one formulated on August 18, 1945 would not matter if the risk of not acting on it was national disintegration. Because the unity of the nation was given top consideration, Muslims hardly see the important of this constitution. The constitution did not in fact represent the content of the Piagam Jakarta, in which Muslim aspirations were more widely accommodated; the Piagam just acted to inspire the whole content of the constitution.

I heard that General Nasution had large role in the formulation of the decree. However, I do not know precisely whether he went to Tokyo or not. I heard about his role directly from him, but I do not know what kinds of suggestions he made to President Soekarno.

General Nasution did not go to Tokyo, but he contacted Dr. Khalid asking for suggestions to be conveyed to the President. Dr. Khalid and Syaifuddin Zubri, both proponents of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), more or less said that not acting on the Piagam Jakarta would not matter, should the consequence of enacting it be to destroy the unity of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, it would be better if the decree insisted on the reenacting of Pancasila which was formulated on August 18, 1945.

What General Nasution said to me was about the Piagam Jakarta. What I meant by a compromise was, as was mentioned in the decree, with regard to the Piagam Jakarta as the inspiration of the whole constitution. This means that the Piagam Jakarta cannot be separated from the constitution itself. In practice, this understanding does not raise any problems, such as these usually suspected. Suspecting the Piagam Jakarta as the source of inspiration is ridiculous.

There was a considerance in the presidential decree. Later, information indicates that the considerance was wiped out.

No. It was not wiped out, but it is considered as separate from the whole constitution. Bear in mind that the presidential decree consists of a considerance, preamble and content.

After the banning of the Masjumi by President Soekarno, there were some efforts to rehabilitate the Masjumi. Moreover, there were also efforts to establish a political party which could replace the Masjumi, such as the

PDII (Partai Demokrasi Islam Indonesia — the Indonesian Islamic Democratic Party) proposed by Dr. Muhammad Hatta, the first vice-president. How do you see these events?

The banning of Masjumi by the Soekarno regime was considered by the Persatuan Sarjana Hukum Indonesia (PERSAHI — the Association of Indonesian Lawyer) to have been juridically invalid and politically a victim of the Soekarno's authoritarianism. I stress the opinion of PERSAHI, because this organization was neutral and was able to look at the event more objectively. PERSAHI accommodated members from various political backgrounds, such as PNI, Masjumi and so forth. By profession, its members were judges, attorneys, lawyers and law advisers from all over Indonesia. The chairperson of PERSAHI was Wirjono Wirjonegoro, the chairperson of the MA (Mahkamah Agung — the Supreme Court). Given this background, PERSAHI's opinion could stand on its objective assessment. In line with their opinion, I argue that the banning of the Masjumi was not based on any legal considerations at all. Masjumi was the victim of the injustice acts of the Old Order. Therefore, PERSAHI made an appeal to the new government, the New Order, to rehabilitate the banned parties: Masjumi and the PSI (Partai Sosialis Indonesia — the Indonesian Socialist Party). As everybody knows, however, the efforts to rehabilitate these parties did not succeed.

The New Order's rejection of rehabilitation of Masjumi and the PSI was not due to any matters of principle. They did not want to rehabilitate these parties because ABRI (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia — the Republic of Indonesian Armed Forces) felt that many of its members died in the struggle against the PRRI (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia — the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesian). Meanwhile, there was no connection between the PRRI and Masjumi whatsoever. The position of Masjumi in the PRRI rebellion was proven by correspondence between President Soekarno and Prawoto, in which the former asked the latter about his party's involvement in the initial rebellion.

Masjumi proponents still tried to approach the government when Suharto came to power. We attempted to make our last ditch attempt in the rehabilitation of Masjumi party. As the PRRI rebellion exploded, we closed the Masjumi branches. We did not elect the Masjumi people who were involved in the rebellion, in the national congress in

Yogyakarta. Above all, Masjumi tried to bridge and find solutions for the conflicting parties. Basically, the PRRI rebellion was not launched to seize the government; what they wanted was a cabinet reformation in order that it would not be dominated by the communists. They wanted the cabinet to be led by Soekarno, Hatta and Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX. As I was a member of the DPR, we in Jakarta worked on the same direction to solve the problem. We approached Soekarno to stay in the presidential seat, with Hatta as the vice president and Hamengkubuwono IX as the prime minister. When we were working here in Jakarta, we sent Prawoto and Fakhri Oesman to Sumatra. We wanted the PRRI leaders to not make any moves which might cause us difficulties in our negotiations. We had already made approaches to Soekarno and Hatta. We, including the parliament members, were working hard to find the best solution. Therefore, we sent messages again to them to stay cool. Unfortunately, as we were working in Jakarta, bombs had been dropped on the area of rebellion. Everything we did was then completely useless. No negotiation could be undertaken. Sometime later we found out that they did not receive our messages.

This is the relationship between the banning of the Masjumi and the causes of its banning. What I have just said is only mentioning historical facts. We had all worked to find the best solution. We did not want to seize the position of the president, however. We just did not want the PKI to control the government. Not just the PRRI supporters wanted the PKI out of the government, but all factions did too, long before the rebellion exploded.

Then the United States government involved themselves in the PRRI?

Well, that was their business. I do not know myself. I know nothing about that.

Which faction supported the banning of the Masjumi and PSI?

Of course the PKI. When they seized power in 1948, they targeted Masjumi, PNI, state bureaucrats and some factions in the armed forces who opposed them. However, their main targets after 1952 were Hatta and Masjumi. They embraced the PNI and even Soekarno himself was also approached. With regard to their political moves in the Indo-

nesian history, we can assume that the banning of Masjumi was part of their strategy.

The rehabilitation of the Masjumi failed on the basis that many military members fell victim to the PRRI rebellion. Is it possible to say that the military regarded the problem of the PRRI rebellion as a problem between the military and the Masjumi?

Not quite like that. There was nothing explicit as such. Masjumi was Masjumi. Some Masjumi members were indeed involved in the rebellion, and they happened to be proponents of Masjumi. Although we no longer placed them in the organization, the government still regarded our policies soft. The government wanted us to curse the supporters of the rebellion. They asked why the party leaders did not curse the rebellion. We said that cursing was not a habit of the Masjumi. We viewed the problem according to legal and political ethics. We insisted that the rebellion was unconstitutional, as we said to the Juanda cabinet. We could not curse people. Even against the PKI we did no such a thing. We simply described the problems and gave our opinion based on legal and political codes.

Your argument is very convincing, but, it seems to be not quite convincing to the New Order government.

Well, the important thing was that we had met them and Prawoto also conveyed a letter to President Suharto. In the fraction, Fakhri Oesman, Hasan Basri, and I also took initiatives to begin talks. We had reported the problem to the commander of the Komando Daerah Militer (KODAM — Military Headquarter) of Jakarta, General Amir Machmud. Unfortunately, he did not deal with the problem.

It is true that we never had any formal talks with the Army. There was only correspondence between Prawoto and Acting President Suharto. If there had been intensive talks between the two, the situation might have been different. They might have come to an agreement, because the two factions had similar interests. ABRI, especially the army, was anti-communist and so was Masjumi. Nonetheless, the psycho-political barriers seemed to be even greater. In short, there were many factors involved in the failure of the Masjumi rehabilitation.

The political atmosphere was in favor of the rehabilitation due to the fact that the banning of Masjumi was a result of the injustice acts of the Old Order. Political assessment would probably show that the rehabilitation of Masjumi would have brought certain consequences. History shows that Masjumi was one of the most influential parties in the Old Order. Reenacting this party would probably have brought about certain political challenges. However, we never thought that as a victim of the Old Order, we will take the wheel of politics in the New Order. At the time, we still looked upon Dr. Hatta as the heir of national leadership after Soekarno stepped down from his throne. The proponents of Masjumi had formulated their political concepts even before the banning. We were well-informed that people might not agree with Soekarno nor with Hatta; but, if the two figures were willing to join hand-in-hand in leading the country, there would not be any combination comparable to them. Soekarno-Hatta was the best and strongest combination in the Indonesian political sphere. For that reason, Masjumi attempted to ensure that the two did not separate. Unfortunately, history tells a different story.

I was a member of the Komisi Sembilan (the Commission of Nine), whose main duty was to bring about a reconciliation between Soekarno and Hatta. Unfortunately the Komisi Sembilan failed to reconcile these two founding fathers. Neither Soekarno nor Hatta were willing to negotiate. Ten years ago I met one of the members of the Komisi Sembilan, Ahem Erningpradja, a prominent figure of the PNI. He said to me "Haryono, if our efforts to reconcile Soekarno and Hatta succeeded, history would have not run this way." Well, I said, if...

Were the efforts to establish the PDII inspired by the fact that Masjumi had been banned?

I think Dr. Hatta was trying to accommodate the political aspirations of Muslims through the creation of a new political party. I had a long discussion with him; but in the end the New Order government did not grant permission for the establishment of the PDII and the rehabilitation of Masjumi. As a proponent of Masjumi, I made a last ditch effort to rehabilitate the Masjumi. Were the two permitted to exist, I think we could have worked together. Anyway, not all good intentions could be realized.

In a congress conducted in Malang, East Java, to establish the PARMUSI (Partai Muslimin Indonesia — the Indonesian Muslim Party), Mohammad Roem was elected to lead this new party. Nonetheless, the government did not agree with this result. It seems that the New Order government did not want to acknowledge the political aspirations of Masjumi.

There was a gap. The idea of establishing the Partai Muslimin Indonesia, which at the beginning was not abbreviated to PARMUSI, was produced by the Badan Amal Muslimin Indonesia. The New Order government had an idea of providing political institutions for the groups which had not been accommodated by the existing political institutions. The establishment of the PARMUSI was intended to replace the Masjumi as the political party of the Muslims. General Suharto, who was acting president, said that for the time being the responsibility for the national politics lay in his hands. He advised the Masjumi leaders to stay behind the scenes of the establishment of a new Muslim party. When the congress was held, they could show off directly in the arena.

Coming to the preparation of the Malang congress, two factions emerged. The first faction wanted a total rehabilitation of Masjumi, even if it only pertained the people and not the party itself. This meant that they wanted the senior proponents of Masjumi to come directly to the middle of the arena. However, we still tried to look for a moderate figure: Mohammad Roem. He was finally democratically elected by the participants. Even though he was elected, he stated in the congress forum: "I still have a task of writing a book that I have to accomplish. If I were elected I would be non-active." His statement was intended to tell the government that although he was elected, he would be non-active. The organization would be run by the younger functionaries rather than the senior proponents of Masjumi. I happened to be elected as the first chairperson, KH. Hasan Basri as the second chairperson, with Jarnawi Hadikusumo and so forth. There were seven chairpersons, all of whom were from the younger generation. Apart from Roem, we deliberately chose the younger proponents to convince the government about our organization.

I did not know what had happened in Jakarta, because we were in Malang, East Java. Suddenly, we received a message that the government did not agree with the composition of the functionaries. The government would have agreed if the PARMUSI was led by my gen-

eration and not Roem's contemporaries. Although the elected figure was Roem, and this was the result of a democratic election, the government insisted on not accepting this decision. Perhaps the statement made by Roem did not reach Jakarta. Perhaps Roem was not regarded as a moderate figure. However, he was the most moderate figure available at the time, and he had stressed himself as not being an active leader.

Finally, the president issued a decision to affirm Jarnawi Hadikusumo as the leader and Lukman Harun as the secretary general of PARMUSI. The proponents of Masjumi could fully understand this transition situation. We did not want to disturb the New Order in developing the country and nation. We always wanted to support them. I was often asked to accompany party leaders at the inauguration of branches all over Indonesia. I was placed as an elder, although I was only 50 years of age. They needed me not because I was Anwar Haryono, but because I was a leader of the Masjumi. I was acting as a means of legitimation.

Possibly, we may also look at the positive side of the gap. The younger generation, such as Lukman Harun, were then given a chance to enter the national political arena. This event has in turn given birth to the emergence of the MI (Muslimin Indonesia — the Indonesian Muslims), which have great control over the PPP. Without the MI faction, the PPP would not have been able to continue Masjumi's political orientation. Are you of a similar opinion?

Actually, many things that happened in the New Order period also expressed the spirit of Masjumi. Support for law, order, equality and truth is the spirit of Masjumi. Indeed, Masjumi and the New Order had few differences. I felt that the spirit of Masjumi came to life after the beginning of the New Order. Its body was absent but its spirit remained in existence.

The differences between Masjumi and the PPP pertain to various aspects of phenomena. Both Masjumi and the PPP have a similar spirit in their political orientations. The fundamental difference between the two political organizations lies in the manner and style of expressing oppositional attitudes. The proponents of Masjumi tend to express their position on the basis of an awareness that everything has a risk. The Masjumi used to hold the steering wheel of the government;

but, when they did not hold power, they explicitly placed themselves as an oppositional power. This political climate will not happen in the present political situation. There is no room for difference. Everything has been set up within the so-called consensus. Consensus eventually narrows the possibility of expressing different ideas in solving problems. Everything seems as if though it runs on the same line. There is only one single legitimate line. The lines outside this legitimate line cannot find a way to express their inspirations. When "liberal democracy" was applied, people were free to propose different ideas in order to offer solutions to specific problems. As a consequence, sometime we need to replace a cabinet or people in the governmental organizations. This was, however, the dynamic of political life. On the contrary, the present political spectrum only reveals a single color, a single stream, and a single line. The single stream flows in the elite stratum, while the lower strata are left behind.

How can Muslims express their political aspirations through a political party if the members of ABRI, even though they are Muslims themselves, do not want the proponents of Masjumi and other Muslim to express Islam in the form of politics? Therefore, in response to ABRI's ideas, some Muslim intellectuals prefer to concentrate their Islamic struggle on education. This strategy has been applied since the beginning of the New Order and is claimed to have resulted in the spirit of Indonesian society regarding Islam.

Well, I think such a strategy was driven by past political upheavals. However, if we think about the problem with a cool mind, putting aside past political traumas, we will not worry about *political Islam*. *Cultural Islam* must be produced by Muslims, who understand Islamic teachings in depth and are willing to practice these teachings in their daily lives. It takes time to recover from past political traumas. If we look at developed countries, we find that religious-based political parties do not threaten national interests. All political parties within a country are bound to national interests. The main point is that we have to base our behavior, including political behavior, on a certain set of fundamental values. The source of fundamental values for Muslims is Islam. I would like to emphasize that the emergence of the idea of *cultural Islam* was mostly driven by political traumas in the past political atmosphere of Indonesia. When the time has passed, people

will think again about *political Islam*.

Islam by chance is portrayed in various forms. Some portraits are interesting, while others are scary. We need time to formulate a common understanding about Islam. Although Islam permits its adherents to have different ideas, we all have to bear in mind that this religion was revealed as the blessing for the universe (*rahmatan li al-'alamîn*). It takes time to disseminate this idea. Some people still even regard Islam as a *jihâd* in their own interpretation. The term *jihâd* does not reveal a frightening image to other people. We need time, and do not forget that we only gained our independence 50 years ago. Apart from the fact that we have varied backgrounds of tradition, culture and language, we also need time to come to a common understanding among Muslims themselves.

The Organization of Islamic Conference (O.I.C) has been attempting to formulate the "strategy of da'wah" in Muslim societies. Among the important themes to be discussed is the way to build a common understanding about Islam among these diverse Muslim societies. If the organization succeeds in making the formulation, it will help Muslim societies to interact with their fellows, and other people need not be scared. If we read, investigate and understand Islamic teaching in depth, we will not find any reason to express Islam in such a way as to make others anxious. In a country like Indonesia, *political Islam* will definitely not cause any political disintegration.

I find that the so-called "friendly Islam" comes through non-political institutions. I think Islam will be frightening if it is expressed through a political medium. In spite of that, within the Indonesian context, Muslims do not feel proud of Islamic political parties, such the PPP, which always lose in the election. Therefore, the idea of political Islam should be evaluated again in the future.

That's true. In this present political structure, Muslim political party could not gain supporters even among the majority of the Indonesian Muslims. The party which gained popularity was the one with a loud voice. However, the problem lies more in the people holding the party and not the party itself. Therefore, we have to talk about the "son of the age", which means every historical period has its own figure. Dr. Muhammad Natsir was a great figure in his age; he was not only a party leader but also a statesman. We are also witnessing that, even

though we do not have a Muslim political party, Islam is acceptable to many people. We hope this trend will improve as many people start to understand Islam more deeply. When the government proposed a bill on the Undang-undang Peradilan Agama (Bill of Religious Court), Franz Magnis-Soeseno wrote an article in a newspaper. The content of his article was unbelievable: he looked at Islam as if this religion threatened the position of other people. As the DPR approved the bill, it was then proven that the religious court did not affect political or social disintegration. Indonesian Muslims need a figure who is able to explain and formulate the values of truth and justice of Islam to make others feel at ease.

If we look at the present situation, the rage of Islam has been gradually reduced, even though some people, as expressed by Father Magnis-Soeseno, still regard Islam as a threatening power. However, if we relate this problem to the PPP, we see that this political organization cannot accommodate Indonesian Muslim aspirations, because its own identity as a Muslim party is becoming blurred. Meanwhile, if we relate it to the latest political maneuver, the ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia — the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) may have gained its momentum. And now, the ICMI itself appears to have started to enter the political arena.

The ICMI is an interesting phenomenon. The intention to establish such an organization has been in existence for long time during the New Order era. I was one among others who was contacted by Muslim intellectuals from Central and East Java to establish such an organization. Nonetheless, I always told them to wait until the time comes. I always said so. But when the students from Brawijaya University came to me saying that many people could not wait any longer, I said to go ahead.

The establishment of the ICMI could fill the gap that the PPP cannot fill. The PPP's role is, however, limited; the same applies to other parties. This is because our political structure circumscribes the roles of political parties within the national political arena. Whoever leads the PPP, they have in fact tried their best.

There are some interesting shifts concerning the image of Islam in our political life. For example, some years ago, discussing Islam publicly would have been criticized. Now, people are free to talk about

Islam everywhere. This means that everything is dependent on the public situation. We do not know what will happen in the future, but all of these phenomena indicate that the position of Islam is becoming more important among Indonesians, not only for the Muslim section, but also for other parts of Indonesian society.

Geo-politically, Indonesia's position is strategic. Besides this, particularly within the context of the Muslim world, Indonesian Muslims never become involved in so-called *leadership rivalry*, a rivalry among Muslims in the Middle Eastern countries. We all know that there has been a struggle between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey to gain political control over Muslim societies. Indonesian Muslims never involve themselves in such rivalry; they tend instead to be neutral. As the biggest Muslim country, Indonesian Muslims are expected to play more significant roles. In fact, some of the expectations have been fulfilled by Indonesian Muslims. What has been implemented by Minister B.J. Habibie in technological engineering has indeed given Muslims in general a form of pride, even though he is heavily criticized in his own country. I went to the Middle Eastern countries several times and I heard positive comments on Habibie's achievements. They were very proud, even though the image of our country in the Middle East is still occupied by our export of cheap labor.

Middle Eastern Muslims now believe that the revival of Islam will start from the eastern area. Who else if not Indonesia? Thus, with regard to the question, we have an opportunity to make it come true. The problem rather lies in the way to use the momentum, the means of introducing a peaceful Islam and practicing it as blessings for the universe. In other words, proposing a kind of Islam which brings prosperity, truth, justice and equality. This is the challenge. Many people ask me about the present situation of Islam and I always insist that we may lose everything, but never lose hope. And this hope has been increasing recently.

This momentum will indeed give you reason to be optimistic, that Indonesian Muslims will pioneer the revival of Islam in the future. On the contrary, however, especially within the national context, such a feeling may not have a strong basis. The powerful political elites have their own perception about this momentum and about Indonesian Muslims in general. On the one hand, you cannot ignore the fact that Muslim politicians

are now coloring the Indonesian political scenery both in the legislative and executive bodies; but on the other hand, their positions are very dependent on the "charitable hands" of the previous ruling elites. In other words, the ruling elites are well-informed about the significant of Indonesian Muslims and at the same time they want to use Muslims to secure their own position. Concerning the problem of succession, for instance, which has been going on for many years, the strategic position of Muslims has been assessed in detail by the elites. They were then given a greater opportunity to hold specific power in the legislative and executive bodies. However, the real power is still in the hands of the political elites, even though Muslims seem quite content with what they receive. Can we say that Muslims are themselves acting as a "vehicle" for the elites in the coming succession?

It is a matter of duty; not a matter of using or being used. It is a duty for every citizen. We have to regard it as a duty, because it's our problem after all.

Or may be it is a risk: say that the present leaders are authoritarian and Muslims secure them.

Out of these perceptions, it is our duty to always hold on the constitution, including the national leadership. Of how continuity should proceed does not only mean individuals or a denial of change and renewal.

But the factor of individuals is sometimes destructive.

Not destructive, but it becomes a consideration. Individuality is one factor to be considered. In Arabic terms we find *ibn zaman* (son of the age). Every single age has its own leader. Although it is a mere illustration, I never feel pessimistic. It is normal as a social dynamic and change.

Some people do not agree with Muslims only acting as a "vehicle" in the process of succession. They want Muslims to have greater power to control political arenas. On the other hand, some parties feel resentful about the present position of Muslims, even though they do not hold real power. One fact that Muslims are unlikely to avoid is that they will face confrontation

with other factions.

You speak about the game of power, while I do not talk about it yet. I do not talk about political games. I instead discuss the problem in general sense. Therefore, I do not agree with your term "vehicle". I do not want to use this term, because we cannot determine who the "vehicle" is and who uses the "vehicle". Anyway, the "vehicle" is our "vehicle". It is our duty as members of a nation and *ummah* to pay attention to the problems of our own society, including the problem of leadership. How to deal with the problem of succession in the following election? This is what I have said previously about *ibn zaman*. Every historical period has its own people. As one of the Qur'anic verses states "*min al-mu'minîna ri'âlun* (among the believers someone who leads). Thus, if we want to talk about nation and *ummah*, do not talk about political games and power politics beforehand. I do not want to talk about that at this time.

But this is the reality.

It will happen by itself; but I do not want to talk about power politics at this time. This is something which must and certainly will occur. We just face it in a normal way. This is my principle.

Based on recent developments, such as the establishment of the ICMI, the situation of Indonesian Muslims and the image of Islam in general are improving. Meanwhile, as you said, we only gained our independence 50 years ago. This means that, as a nation, we are still in the process of maturing. The process itself is manifested in the so-called development project. What do you think is the proper role to be played by Muslims, especially if it is related to the recent developments Muslims have gained?

This depends on the person answering. A politician will say "I will participate in the political arena", while an artist will probably be eager to create artistic works as freely as possible. I myself cannot deny that I was a party man. I do not want to be absent from involvement in political developments. However, my present arena is not politics; my arena is *da'wah* (Islamic call). Therefore, what I can give at the moment is creating and developing a situation, in which everybody, faction, party, citizen is able to express their desires according

to their needs and beliefs. Of course, these have to be done in accordance with the national constitution. This is my general answer.

Provided that your idea is related to the real political system, creating and developing a sustainable situation, means creating a democratic atmosphere. Is there anything basic to do in order to make particular changes and improvements in our political system?

I would like to answer this practical question as follows. There is a big difference between those who are in power and those who are not. This difference seems unbridgeable. I was very happy when President Suharto met General A.H. Nasution, who used to be a military forces commander in the Old Order era. I am happy with this development. Meanwhile, I also think that were these two figures to meet together not only to recall nostalgic memories but also to discuss our nation and state problems, they would certainly have a greater opportunity to create a situation in which every party would have the same access to participation. Such a situation, however, is not easy to create, since there is no approach nor dialogue between what I call the *wise men of Indonesia*. I am certain there are many wise men politicians. We have to look for and meet them together. Our present situation is as such that people think as if they do not know the way out. We have parliament and representative bodies, but we do not know to what extent these institutions have functioned and to what extent they have fulfilled their duty. Therefore, we need to establish dialogues between what we call the *wise men of Indonesia*. President Suharto is a prominent figure of the New Order and so is General Nasution. They have started a dialogue. Reading Nasution's recent writings, it appears that his thoughts are still fresh, even though he suffers from the ailment of old age. Take advantage of the dialogue while Nasution is still alive.

Although what you have described is a matter of principle in Indonesian political life, it still remains marginal within the official political agenda. The people in the presidential secretariat, for instance, have yet to define the problems you have proposed and even the subject to be discussed. For this reason, your quest for dialogue between the wise men of Indonesia has not yet been implemented.

Not yet, but that does not mean not at all. I am quite patient to wait

for it.

You may lose the momentum. General Nasution is old, he is ill.

Momentum is to be defined by God. What we have to do is to take the initiative. At every opportunity I insist that what we need is problem solvers. Criticizing is easy, but more important is how we can meet the different perspectives and come to a common solution. Do not undermine the fact that during 50 years of our independence, many serious problems have been successfully overcome through lobbying before being officially formalized.

Such as Habibie's initiative to invite the members of the Petisi 50 (the Petition of 50) to the government-owned strategic industries? In fact some factions did not like his maneuver.

It's up to them. They have a right not to agree.

But it will result in the sharpening of friction among the younger generation.

Therefore, my own opinion leads to only one projection: we must take the initiative; the one who defines the initiative is up there [God]. If we do not think in this way, we may easily slip into frustration.

You devote yourself to da'wah as the first person in the DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia — the Council of Indonesian Islamic Da'wah). According to our analysis, your position is an effect of a bigger political process, in which a talented politician like yourself cannot participate directly in the political arenas. We would like to know whether your present position is strategic enough if we compared it to direct participation in the political arena, such as being active in party politics. We would also like to know how far your position in the DDII could support your political ideas?

Well, I would like to reverse the question. Is there anything else that I can do instead of being active in the DDII?

Join the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan — United Development Party)?

If I were allowed to join the PPP, I would have been active since the beginning of PARMUSI (Partai Muslimin Indonesia — Indonesian Muslim Party). In fact, only *da'wah* is the open field for me to be done and I accept it whole-heartedly. I feel that what I have done in *da'wah* is useful for society, and the Islamic world in general appreciates it. I get moral satisfaction from what I have done in *da'wah*.

Your prediction on the coming general election: what sorts of political feud and radical change may occur during that time?

I do not want to make any specific prediction. Looking from the existing situation and structures, there will not be any radical changes. There will be only a slight change in our political life.

No turbulence? What if the 1965 turmoil reoccurs?

That's what we do not want.

Of course not, but the existing situation seems to lead in that direction.

In principle, we, as citizen who are conscious of our rights and responsibilities, must be alert in whatever situation. Bear in mind that in a struggle we must always hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

*Many people are afraid of being associated with a particular faction. As you have been so active in *da'wah*, do you have the same feeling as they do?*

If you are afraid, just stay at home. There is a wise Malay proverb saying that *kalaupun takut dilembur pasang, jangan berumah di pinggir pantai* (If you are afraid of the wave stream, do not build a house on the coast). Everything has a risk. That's normal.

As a politician, you are known as a cautious figure. But in the past few years you have been so brave in proposing criticism of the ruling party, and then, particularly in the more recent situation, you have drawn closer to Habibie, even though he is not so popular among other parties.

That's up to them. Every party has freedom to express its opinion.

Your bravery.

I never feel myself to be brave. I am what I am. When I signed the Petisi 50, people said that I was brave. I never feel that way. I just did what I must do. I felt that signing the petition at that time was my duty.

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