

# ISLAM, STATE, AND CIVIL SOCIETY: ICMI AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE INDONESIAN MIDDLE CLASS

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On December 6, 1990, television viewers across Indonesia were treated to the image of President Muhammad Suharto,<sup>1</sup> clad in distinctive mosque attire, striking a large mosque drum (*bedug*) to call to order the first-ever meeting of the Association of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals (ICMI, *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia*). It was a poignant moment in the political and cultural history of New Order (post-1966) Indonesia. For many Muslim Indonesians, the president's act was merely the latest in a series of overtures the Suharto government has made over the past few years to the Muslim community. For other Indonesians, the president's blessing of ICMI seemed to represent a dangerous departure from the non-sectarian principles of the New Order. For Western observers unfamiliar with the government's openings to the Muslim community, finally, the scene appeared rich with irony. Here was a man regarded by many foreign scholars as an *abangan*<sup>2</sup> mystic unsympathetic to

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<sup>1</sup> It is not unusual for Muslims who have completed the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to the Holy Land to take a new or additional name, as a symbol of the significance of the event for their personal identity. President Suharto added the personal name "Muhammad" after his pilgrimage in 1990.

<sup>2</sup> From the Javanese word for "red," *abangan* refers to those Javanese less strict in their adherence to Muslim devotional forms than the so-called *santri*, practicing or "orthodox" Muslims; see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York: Free Press, 1960). It is important to note that many people referred to by outsiders as *abangan* studiously avoid the term for self-ascription, since, outside the Western-educated middle class, it is widely regarded as derogatory. Many prefer to refer to themselves as *kejawen* ("Javanist"), practitioners of *Islam Jawa* (Javanese Islam), or, simply "Muslim," with the understanding that they place more emphasis on the mystical than the legal or ritualistic dimensions of Islam. The larger relationship of Javanism to Islam is a complex matter. Geertz's characterization of *abangan* culture as deeply Hindu-Buddhist was criticized by, among others, the renowned Islamist Marshall Hodgson. Hodgson wrote, "[I]nfluenced by the polemics of a certain school of modern Shari'ah-minded Muslims, Geertz identifies 'Islam' only with what that school of modernists happens to approve, and ascribes everything else to an aboriginal or a Hindu-Buddhist background, gratuitously labelling much of the Muslim religious life in Java 'Hindu.' He identifies a long series of phenomena, virtually universal to Islam and sometimes found even in the Qur'an itself, as un-Islamic; and hence his interpretation of the Islamic past as well as of some recent anti-Islamic reactions is highly misleading." See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 551f. Mark Woodward's *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*

“orthodox” Islam not merely affecting the forms of Islamic ritual, but doing so while inaugurating an organization openly committed to, among other things, the deepening Islamization of Indonesian state and society.

Was the president’s gesture merely an opportunistic stratagem designed to court Muslim support at a time when he was being challenged by segments of the Indonesian military? Was President Suharto, therefore, “merely playing the Muslim card,” as one secularist critic of the government told me in 1992? Or, as suggested by many members of ICMI with whom I spoke in 1991, 1992, and 1993,<sup>3</sup> were the president’s actions more strongly influenced by his recognition of broader changes in Indonesian society, in particular the deepening Islamization of the urban middle class? Might it be, as several interviewees suggested, that ICMI’s ascent testifies to a blind-spot in Western observers’ understanding of Islam and politics in contemporary Indonesia?

In what follows, I want to address these questions by examining the background to ICMI’s founding. My larger goal in doing so is not just to understand ICMI, but to explore a little-studied but important aspect of contemporary Indonesian politics and culture: the struggle to capture and direct the moral allegiances of the urban middle class.<sup>4</sup> Though the

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(Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989) extends this argument further, revealing strongly Islamic elements in many Javanist customs. Though some authors commit the converse error of attributing too great a role to Islam in Javanese civilization, there is little doubt that Western (and even some Indonesian) characterizations of *abangan* tradition have underestimated Islamic influences, and overplayed “Hindu” ones. I discuss these issues, and the vexing problems they raise for Western orientalism, in a forthcoming book on Islam, Javanism, and the nation-state in Indonesia.

<sup>3</sup> The interviews on which the original version of this paper was based were conducted during July–August of 1991 and 1992, in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Malang in the course of a larger project on “Islam and Capitalism in Indonesia: Entrepreneurial Opportunities, Ethical Dilemmas,” under grants from the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture (ISEC) at Boston University. I also engaged in discussions with Abdurrahman Wahid in February and September of 1992, Nurcholish Madjid in March of 1992, and Aswab Mahasin during the fall term of 1992, during their visits to ISEC in Boston. I also wish to thank Michael Peletz, G.G. Weix, and Mark Woodward, and two anonymous reviewers at *Indonesia* for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and Enceng Shobirin of LP3ES for his great help in conducting interviews. I should note, too, that I returned to Jakarta for additional interviews during June–July 1993. For fear of complicating an already long story, I have kept revisions and addenda to the original manuscript to a minimum, adding material only where developments over the past year required an adjustment in the original work’s basic detail.

<sup>4</sup> On the middle class in New Order Indonesia see, especially, Daniel S. Lev, “Intermediate Classes and Change in Indonesia: Some Initial Reflections,” in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, ed. Richard Tanter and Kenneth Young, (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), pp. 25–43, and Aswab Mahasin’s “The Santri Middle Class: An Insider’s View,” in *ibid.*, pp. 138–44. Lev and Mahasin both make the important observation that the new middle class is not a bourgeoisie in the Western European sense of the term, but a complex amalgam of entrepreneurial, commercial, financial, and professional strata—portions of which are independent of the state, while others are deeply involved in it. Using a similar characterization, Howard W. Dick has observed that, measured in terms of income and expenditure, the new middle class is decisively urban, comprising 16.6 percent of the urban population, but only 1.1 percent of the rural. See his, “The Rise of a Middle Class and the Changing Concept of Equity in Indonesia: An Interpretation,” in *Indonesia* 39 (April 1985): 71–92. Finally, I should note that Richard Robison’s *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital* (Sydney: ASAA Publication 13, Allen & Unwin, 1986) provides a broad overview of the political-economic influences on the development of the middle class in New Order Indonesia. Robison emphasizes that Indonesia’s bourgeoisie is fragmented along ethnic lines between Chinese and *pribumi* (“indigenous”) Indonesians. The Chinese fraction of the business class dominates economically, while its political power is severely restricted. Robison points out that “the fragility and vulnerability of the Chinese capitalists is a weakness for the bourgeoisie as a whole in Indonesia” (p. 319), since it severely limits their capacity to struggle for constitutional safeguards against the the government and the military. As I discuss in the conclusion to this paper, ICMI is in part a *political* response to the continuing *social* and *economic* marginalization of the *pribumi* middle class, but its ultimate impact on political and economic democratization will depend upon which of several strategies the Muslim community as a whole adopts in the future.

ICMI example provides an insight into the changing nature of political alliances in the final years of the Suharto era, it also illuminates aspects of this ongoing effort to define the religious orientation of the urban middle class and, beyond it, Indonesian society as a whole.

The example is also of general interest for the comparative study of national development and religion, in that it seems to challenge one of the central tenets of Western social theory—modernist, marxist, and post-modernist alike—concerning “secularization” as a process intrinsic to modernity.<sup>5</sup> As in many other Muslim countries, Islam in Indonesia appears to have emerged from the crucible of early nation-state development not only with a moral vision intact, but revitalized and ready to provide an alternative ideal of what the nation should become. This, at any rate, is the view of many in the ICMI membership. It is a view which, even if only partially accurate, points to a development of fundamental importance for Indonesian national culture.

### New Order Origins: Javanism Triumphant?

For many years it was a truism of Indonesian studies in the West that the military-dominated, New Order government that has ruled Indonesia since 1966 was essentially hostile to Islam. “Suharto and the generals on whom he relies were brought up in a Hindu-Javanized milieu that made them more nominal (*abangan*) than practicing (*santri*) Muslims.”<sup>6</sup> The putative opposition of the ruling elite to “orthodox” Islam is thought to have shaped government initiatives in the late 1960s intended to undercut the influence of Muslim political parties. Confounding Muslim expectations, for example, the government in 1968 refused to recognize the Jakarta Charter as the preamble to the national constitution, thereby dashing Muslim hopes that (as the charter specifies) the state (*negara*) would act to “carry out” (*menjalankan*) Islamic law (*shariah*) among the Muslim portion of the populace.<sup>7</sup>

Not long after this incident, the government again frustrated Muslim hopes, by refusing to rehabilitate Masyumi, the party of Muslim modernists suppressed by the late President Sukarno in 1960. Going further, the government barred Masyumi leaders from participating in the newly formed Partai Muslimin Indonesia (PMI), an organization that was supposed to be the electoral voice of modernist Muslims. After the 1971 elections, finally, the government seemed to move once more against Muslim power by consolidating the nine political

<sup>5</sup> There is no single definition of secularization in sociology, but for the purposes of this paper we can use Philip Selznick’s recent description: “With the separation of spheres [in society], religion loses its hold on practical affairs. Politics and economics are taken to be self-justifying, in no need of guidance from any source other than human purpose and utility. There is a waning of sacredness. . . . Most important, there is a quest for secular foundations of morality, especially in the claims of reason.” See *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 4–5.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Emmerson, “The Bureaucracy in Political Context: Weakness in Strength,” in *Political Power and Communications in Indonesia*, ed. Karl D. Jackson and Lucian W. Pye (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) p. 96. Muhammad Kamal Hassan makes the same point less subtly: “Suharto’s Indonesia, pursuing an ‘Islamic policy’ resembling its colonial precedent, has accentuated communal and religious tensions between the Muslim community on the one hand, and proponents of pre-Islamic Javanese religio-cultural values, secular values, and Christianity, on the other hand.” In *Muslim Intellectual Responses to ‘New Order’ Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980), p. x.

<sup>7</sup> See Allan Samson, “Army and Islam in Indonesia,” in *Pacific Affairs* 44:4 (Winter 1971–1972): 545–65. It should be noted that the precise intent of the Jakarta Charter is highly ambiguous. There has been much disagreement about the Charter’s precise meaning, especially its assertion that the state (*negara*) should have the “obligation to carry out Islamic law for its adherents” (“dengan kewajiban menjalankan syari’at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya”).

parties still operating in the political arena into two, one of which was supposed to represent the interests of Muslims. Both of the newly reorganized parties were subject to extensive government controls. Hence Muslim party activists—who at the beginning of the New Order had expected to enjoy expanded influence, since they had played so central a role in the crushing of the Indonesian Communist Party during 1965–1966—concluded that the government’s primary intent was, once again, to limit their chances for developing an independent base of political power.

Faced with these and other measures, many in the Muslim community came to feel that the New Order government had been hijacked by a anti-Muslim alliance of Chinese Catholics, ex-PSI socialists, and army officers. Most fingers pointed to Major General Ali Murtopo as the mastermind behind these policies. The head of the powerful Opsus, a special-operations intelligence bureau linked to the Army Strategic Reserve Command (Kostrad), Murtopo was one of President Suharto’s two closest aides during the first years of the New Order. Murtopo was known to have Chinese Catholics among his most trusted advisors, several of whom went on in 1971 to establish the influential Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Murtopo and his advisors are reputed to have been the strategists behind the 1971 election, the formation of Golkar, and government restrictions on Muslim and other political parties.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequent events in these first years of the New Order only deepened this sense of disappointment among Muslims. In 1973, the People’s Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat or MPR) seemed poised to rebuke Muslims by proposing to elevate mystical belief (*kepercayaan*) to the same status as “religion” (*agama*), i.e., to a position of equality with the scripturally based monotheistic religions officially recognized by the Indonesian state. This legislation caused deep concern among Muslim leaders, since many regarded the mystical Javanism which was to benefit from this elevation as a heterodox threat to Islam. During the same legislative session, the Assembly moved to “unify” laws on marriage and divorce by greatly limiting the jurisdiction of Islamic courts. Though the Muslim response to both of these measures eventually forced the government to back down, many Muslim observers saw these initiatives as evidence of an ominous turn in New Order policy: not merely excluding Muslims from political power, but restricting their influence in Indonesian civil life as well.<sup>9</sup>

### Islamic Renewal and the Politics of “Cultural” Islam

There were always Muslim intellectuals who took a less pessimistic view of the New Order government. They insisted that restrictions on “political Islam”—that is, on the Islamic parties that aimed to capture the reins of government—should not be equated with government opposition to “cultural” or “civil” Islam, which is to say, an Islam whose primary role in the life of the nation is to serve as a source of ethical and cultural guidance. In the late 1960s, this more optimistic view of government-Muslim relations was advocated by

<sup>8</sup> On the Jakarta Charter and Parmusi conflicts see Ken Ward, *The Foundation of the Partai Muslimin Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970); B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982), pp. 150–53; and M.K. Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses*, pp. 79–83. On Ali Murtopo and CSIS, see Robison, *The Rise of Capital*, pp. 97, 107, 148–52; and Ken E. Ward, *The 1971 Election in Indonesia* (Clayton: Monash University Papers on Southeast Asia, no. 2, 1974), p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> See Emmerson, “The Bureaucracy in Political Context,” pp. 97–98, and Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses*, pp. 143–56.

a number of young Muslim intellectuals, including Usep Fathudin and Utomo Danadjaja from the Pelajar Islam, Ahmad Wahib, Dawam Rahardjo, and Djohan Effendi from the "Limited Group" discussion circle in Yogya, and Nurcholish Madjid from the Jakarta headquarters of the Islamic Students' Organization (HMI, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam). As alumni of the Islamic student movements of 1965–1966, these men were neither dependent on nor committed to the party organizations of the 1950s. Hence in the face of continuing government restrictions on political parties in the late 1960s, they distanced themselves from mass politics in favor of a new strategy of Islamic revitalization. At its heart lay the conviction that a long-term, "cultural" approach to Islamic revitalization had to be formulated, one capable of neutralizing military concerns while slowly deepening the roots of Islam in the nation as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

These young intellectuals at first developed the idea for this strategy in the course of their general discussions. But the figure whose name has come to be most widely associated with this strategy is Nurcholish Madjid, the former leader (1966–1971) of the HMI.<sup>11</sup> In a series of public presentations in the late 1960s and early 1970s (made after private discussions with Fathudin, Danadjaja, Rahardjo, Effendi, and Wahib), Madjid asserted that the Muslim community itself bore much of the responsibility for its failure to achieve political influence under the New Order. The party organizations that Muslim politicians were attempting to revive, Madjid argued, had in the 1950s already demonstrated their inability to capture the hearts and minds of the majority of Indonesians. Rather than reviving these failed initiatives, Madjid further contended, the Muslim community should develop new organizations capable, above all, of winning the moral sympathies of all Indonesian Muslims. Only through such a revolution in values could Indonesia escape the debilitating cycle of polarization whereby party-based Islam inveighed against a government and military deeply suspicious of political Islam.<sup>12</sup>

As in his writings still today,<sup>13</sup> Madjid's style of argument in these presentations was a complex mix of theology, political analysis, and academically informed historical sociology. The novelty of this unconventional blend was especially evident in his remarks on what

<sup>10</sup> Interviews with Djohan Effendi, Dawam Rahardjo, Usep Fathudin, and Utomo Danadjaja, July 1993. Danadjaja and Fathudin were leaders of the moderate wing of the Pelajar Islam, forced from the organization in 1971 because of their public support of Nurcholish Madjid. A. Wahib, Dawam Rahardjo, and Djohan Effendi were members of the "Lingkaran Limited Discussion Group," a Muslim discussion group in Yogyakarta, organized by Mutki Ali, who would become minister of religion in 1971. The role of this Yogya-based group has sometimes been neglected in outsiders' accounts of the *pembaruan* movement.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed overview of HMI's history (by a Christian author), see Victor Immanuel Tanja, *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1982). For a partisan's view, see Agussalim Sitompul, *Pemikiran HMI dan Relevansinya dengan Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Integrita Dinamika Press, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> See Madjid's "Modernisasi ialah Rasionalisasi Bukan Westernisasi," "Keharusan Pemikiran Islam dan Masalah Integrasi Umat," "Sekali Lagi Tentang Sekularisasi," and "Perspektif Pembaruan Pemikiran Dalam Islam," reprinted in his *Islam Kemodernan dan Ke-Indonesiaan* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 1984). All four essays are presented in translation in the appendices to Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses*.

<sup>13</sup> In his most recent writings Madjid has tended to link his ideas more explicitly to classical Islamic theology and commentary. Some observers see in this evidence of a greater "conservatism" in his mature writings. However, Madjid shows no reluctance to take on controversy, and this theological turn is better understood as an effort on his part to ensure the lasting influence of his work by contextualizing it within Islamic tradition. For examples of his recent writings, see Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, Doctrin, dan Peradaban* (Jakarta: Yayasan Paramadina, 1992). For an example of Madjid's continuing willingness to take on controversy, see his impassioned plea for Islamic tolerance of other religions, made in the aftermath of attacks on Christian Churches in East Java and southern Sulawesi during the fall of 1992, in "Mengkaji Ulang Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam," a special issue of *Ulumul Qur'an* 4,1(1993).

Western observers might have thought an academic issue, the phenomenon of secularization. Madjid accused his fellow Muslims of having "sacralized" profane institutions, such as, most notably, Muslim political parties and the idea of an Islamic state (*negara Islam*). Noting, quite correctly, that there is no Quranic injunction mandating an Islamic state, Madjid criticized Indonesian Muslims for sanctifying an idea that was in fact man-made. Muslims, he concluded, should "secularize" this commitment while preserving Islam's lasting values.

According to Madjid, this effort at desacralization or "secularization" is necessitated by the most central of Muslim doctrines, *tauhid*, belief in the uncompromised oneness of God. "Islam itself, if examined truthfully," Madjid wrote, "was begun with a process of secularization. Indeed the principle of Tauhid represents the starting point for a much larger secularization."<sup>14</sup> This commitment to *tauhid* requires a vigilant and never-ending effort to distinguish what is divine from what is merely human in Islamic tradition. In so doing, Madjid argued, *tauhid* also implies a commitment to reason, knowledge, and science, all of which can be understood as acts of devotion to a Creator whose majesty is immanent in the natural laws of the world. "Thus modernity resides in a process, a process of discovery of which truths are relative, leading to the discovery of that Truth Which Is Absolute, that is Allah."<sup>15</sup>

From a theological perspective, Madjid's comments on *tauhid* lay well within the tradition of Islamic modernism and neomodernism, with their emphasis on the unity of God and the compatibility of science and progress with Islamic revelation. Where Madjid disagreed with his Indonesian modernist elders, however, lay in his insistence that, while paying lip service to these ideals, Muslim leaders had done little to insure their practical implementation. Rather than taking steps to bring about intellectual and economic renewal, Madjid implied, Indonesia's Muslim leaders had wasted their time on ideological bickering and frivolous political adventures. By giving priority to political concerns in this manner, Madjid asserted, Muslims had failed to develop the "psychological strike force" needed to meet the challenge of the new era. The quest for state power, he wrote, led to a fetishism of the *umat's* "quantity" rather than a nurturing of its educational, social, and economic "quality."<sup>16</sup>

The cumulative result of this failed strategy, Madjid argued, was that Muslims were left unprepared to compete with more modernized groups in Indonesian society. Surveying the New Order scene, Madjid took note of the preponderance of Chinese, Christians, and Western-oriented technocrats in private and public enterprise. Rather than condemning this as evidence of a government bias against Muslims, Madjid implied that it was in part the result of the Muslim community's own blunders. If Muslims continued to invest all their energies in bankrupt political initiatives, they would only further marginalize themselves from the centers of influence in New Order society.

Enunciated as it was in the face of the government's continuing suppression of Muslim political activity, Madjid's stance was viewed by some observers, including many older Muslim leaders, as little more than an effort to court government favor.<sup>17</sup> But Madjid's long

<sup>14</sup> "Sekali Lagi Tentang Sekularisasi," in Madjid, *Islam, Kemodernan, dan KeIndonesiaan*, p. 222.

<sup>15</sup> Madjid, "Modernisasi ialah Rasionalisasi," p. 174.

<sup>16</sup> See *ibid.* and Madjid, "Keharusan Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam," pp. 175–81 and pp. 204–14.

<sup>17</sup> See Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses*, pp. 121–23 for a discussion of the attack on Madjid by two distinguished senior modernists, Hamka and Muhammad Natsir. Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy discuss the same

involvement in the *umat* and his reputation as a thoughtful, highly principled, and pious activist would suggest that he may have been genuinely concerned about Muslims' long-term prospects in a fast-changing Indonesia. Often described in the Muslim media in the mid-1960s as the youthful heir to the modernist leader Muhammad Natsir (the former chairman of Masyumi), Madjid was all too aware that confronting the Muslim establishment might imperil his own career. Yet he felt that the Muslim community was reacting in a self-defeating manner to the challenges of the New Order; what was needed, in his view, were bold words to shock the leadership into new ways.

In the months following his well-publicized broadsides, the risks implicit in his initiative seemed confirmed. Madjid was denounced by such formidable modernist leaders as H.M. Rasyidi, Hamka, and Muhammad Natsir. Several young intellectuals who supported him, such as Utomo Danadjaja and Usep Fathudin from Pelajar Islam, were also criticized and expelled from their organizations. Many observers concluded that Madjid's career as an Islamic leader was finished, and his associates would play no future leadership role in Indonesian Islam.

As is often the case in Islamic debates, the theological, not just the political, elements in Madjid's argument excited some of the most furious criticism. The support of Madjid and the "renewal" (*pembaruan*) group for secularization was especially controversial. Critics argued that this idea amounted to a Westernized interpretation of Islam. By understanding *tauhid* as the desacralization of all but God's oneness, it was said, Madjid and his friends ignored Islamic Sunnah, the words and actions of the Prophet as recognized in tradition. These, critics said, provide clear normative precedent for how society should be organized. To deny this is to rid Islam of its sociological wholeness, transforming it into, as one critic put it, a hollow "spiritual personalist ethical system" akin to what Christianity has become in the West.<sup>18</sup> This may be conveniently accommodating to New Order interests, it was said, but it is deeply contrary to Islam's claim to being an integrated way of life.

In fact, much of the detail of Madjid's argument was lost in the sound and the fury of the subsequent debate. Though he and his colleagues were accused of being secularists, they consistently distinguished secularization, described as the desacralization of domains wrongly valorized as sacred, from secularism, a Western ideology advocating a rigorous separation of religion from social life. They condemned the latter, while insisting that the former was required by the spirit of Islamic monotheism. In the aftermath of the controversy, however, Madjid himself expressed some misgivings at his choice of terms, commenting publicly that his reference to "secularization" had invited misinterpretation.<sup>19</sup>

Much as his critics suggested, Madjid's understanding of secularization did show Western influences, at least in the sense that it drew on the work of such liberal figures as the American sociologist Robert Bellah and the Protestant theologian Harvey Cox. But rather than expressing uncritical enthusiasm for the West, Madjid's appeal to these authors was illustrative of the way in which he and his colleagues felt that Muslims should not hesitate to draw on scientific and religious literature from outside Islam, both to deepen their knowledge and to demonstrate Islam's universality. This affirmation of an inclusive and universal Islam has remained a central theme in Madjid's writings to this day, and

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dispute in their *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986), pp. 134–43.

<sup>18</sup> See Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses*, pp. 114, 123, 133.

<sup>19</sup> See his "Sekali Lagi Tentang Sekularisasi" and "Sekularisasi Ditinjau Kembali" in *Islam, Kemodernan, dan Keindonesiaan*, pp. 221–33 and 257–60.

underlies much of his popularity among the educated middle class. In the early 1970s, however, the impact of such a message was lost amidst a debate which seemed to equate secularization with secularism, and secularism with the relegation of Islam to a position of political impotence.

Though conceding, then, that his choice of terms was unfortunate,<sup>20</sup> Madjid never drew back from his broader position on the posture the Muslim community should take toward the New Order government and toward Muslim renewal generally. Though his influence temporarily waned in the mid-1970s, Madjid is important because he was part of something much larger than himself: a shift in strategy among an important segment of the Muslim "generation of '65–66," away from party politics toward principled accommodation with and, wherever possible, manipulation of the political system from within. In this sense, the movement of "renewal" (*pembaruan*) associated with such figures as Madjid, Rahardjo, Effendi, Fathudin, and, later, Abdurrahman Wahid, legitimated the efforts of a larger community of non-party activists seeking to develop new forms of Islamic renewal, especially in the fields of education and social welfare. It also served to sanction the actions of growing numbers of educated Muslims who, beginning in the mid-1970s, saw fit to take up government service after finishing their studies. During the 1980s, large numbers of devout Muslims entered the bureaucracy and quietly labored to promote Muslim interests, while awaiting a softening of attitude on the part of a government determined to prevent any reinvigoration of mass-based party activism.

### Fruits of Renewal

In a general sense, then, this effort at "new thinking" (*pemikiran baru*) was but one of several related developments in the Muslim community at this time, the importance of which lies less in their specific detail or associated personalities than in their sanctioning of a shift of Muslim energies out of formal politics and into social and educational activities. Commenting on Madjid's impact on younger activists, Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy—Muslim scholars and activists themselves—make the point that Madjid's understanding of Islamic renewal encouraged a more "empirical" attitude toward Islam.<sup>21</sup> Rather than quibbling over doctrine or ideological details, Muslims were enjoined to recognize the reality of the New Order and undertake initiatives that could enhance their influence within its institutions.

The political consequences of this change in Muslim attitudes were quite real. Although there were a handful of uncompromising Muslim movements in Indonesia during the

<sup>20</sup> Indeed in our discussion on June 19, 1993, Madjid again affirmed that he is "still quite comfortable" with his views on secularism and secularization, "though it is not economical to use these terms, inviting as they do such emotional reactions from people."

<sup>21</sup> Ali and Effendi, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, p. 133. As Howard Federspiel has noted, another consequence of this change was the arrival of a new class of Muslim intellectuals on the national stage. Unlike traditional Islamic leaders, this new class had no reverential titles and had only nominal ties to the *pesantren*-based system of Islamic education. They were more likely to have been trained in Western social science than traditional Islamic philosophy or scripture. While committed to the ideals of modernization, they rejected the idea that development could be undertaken as a mere technological process without reference to cultural and moral values. See Howard M. Federspiel, *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1992), pp. 7–12. One might add here that these Muslim intellectuals have probably done more than secularist intellectuals to popularize the methods and concerns of Western social science among the Indonesian public.



1980s,<sup>22</sup> the really notable feature of the period was the patient effort of moderate Muslims to build institutions for Islamic education and socioeconomic advance. Indeed, on this point, Indonesia was unusual among Muslim societies during the tumultuous decade stretching from 1978–1988. A general decline in the influence of Muslim political parties there was combined with remarkable social and intellectual vitality in the community as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

It is important to emphasize, however, that Muslim civil associations were not the only agencies involved in these renewal initiatives. The state itself supported a number of cultural-Islamic programs, usually under the auspices of its enormous Department of Religion. At first sight, of course, the state's role in Islamic proselytization may appear surprising in light of the government's reputation among Western scholars as a bastion of *abangan*-ism and, more significantly, in light of its very real restrictions on political Islam. In the opinion of many Muslim observers today, however, the expansion of state support was related to a gradual change in government policy that began to take shape in the mid-1970s, in part as a result of the efforts of "renewal" Muslims working quietly within the system for the interests of cultural Islam.

The first hints of this change were seen in 1974, when the government intervened to tone down MPR initiatives on Javanist "belief" (*kepercayaan*) and Islamic courts, thereby reversing policies which devout Muslims regarded as deeply hostile to their interests. If, as seems plausible, this reversal was little more than a strategic (and still limited) concession in the face of Muslim protest, the Department of Religion's Decision No. 70 in 1978 seemed to reflect a more deliberate opening to Muslim interests. The decision banned missionizing by the members of any one religion (Christians being the main target) among citizens who already professed, however nominally, another government-recognized religion. Christians protested that many Javanese are Muslim in name only, and thus should not be subject to the stricture.<sup>24</sup> But the government brushed these objections aside. Indeed in 1979 the Departments of Religion and Home Affairs joined forces to strengthen the restrictions with their joint decision No. I/1979.<sup>25</sup>

The significance of these new policies is readily apparent if one remembers that, just ten years earlier, the same Departments of Religion and Home Affairs had implemented a program of ideological "reconstruction" (*pembinaan*) that openly encouraged access by Christian missionaries to villages identified as former strongholds of the Indonesian Communist

<sup>22</sup> A small best seller in 1992, Abdulaziz, Imam Tholikhah, and Soetarman's *Gerakan Islam Kontemporer di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1991) presents case studies of the more famous movements. See also M. Nasir Tamara, "Islam as a Political Force in Indonesia" (Cambridge: Occasional Paper, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1985), pp. 23–25.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Munson Jr.'s *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) illustrates how different was the situation in much of the Middle East. Closer to Indonesia, Hussin Mutalib's account of Muslim activists in *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), shows how much the situation of Islam in Malaysia differed from that of Indonesia.

<sup>24</sup> See M. Bambang Pranowo, "Which Islam and Which Pancasila? Islam and the State in Indonesia: A Comment," in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), pp. 479–502. Pranowo observes, "The Islamic groups enthusiastically welcomed these decisions, for they were directed especially toward the Christian missionaries actively carrying out religious propagation amongst the Muslim community" (p. 493).

<sup>25</sup> Indonesian Christian missionaries whom I interviewed in East Java in the late 1970s, 1985, and 1991 believed that these restrictions had a devastating impact on their mission to Javanists. Cf. "Of Faith and Commitment: Christian Conversion in Muslim Java," in R. Hefner, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 99–125.

Party (PKI). Missionaries were also given access to PKI prison camps.<sup>26</sup> Still today Muslim commentators, including some among the ICMI leadership, regard the unrestricted incidence of conversion among Javanese as a clear indication that Christians (especially the Chinese Catholics of Ali Murtopo's CSIS) and "secularists" wielded disproportionate influence during the first years of the New Order. Conversely, reversal of the policy in 1978–1979 is seen as an indication that, despite controls on political Islam, an important change was taking place, as segments of the ruling elite began to recognize the need for a more sympathetic accommodation with Muslims, especially those willing to renounce aspirations for a more explicitly political Islam.

The other program to which Muslim leaders today point as evidence of a basic change in the government's attitude was the effort by the Departments of Religion and Education to expand the institutional foundation for Islamic education and *dakwah* (proselytization) throughout Indonesia. One important feature of this effort was the enormous expansion in State Islamic Institute Colleges (IAIN) which began in the 1960s and which, during the 1970s and 1980s, produced large numbers of graduates trained in Islamic theology, law, arts, and pedagogy.<sup>27</sup>

This expansion in higher education was accompanied by an even more impressive program of infrastructural development sponsored by the Department of Religion, focusing on the construction of mosques, prayer halls (*musholla*), and Islamic schools (*madrasah*), especially in areas regarded as weakly committed to Islam. The construction of mosques in East and Central Java shows the clear and unrelenting progress of this program. In East Java, the number of mosques increased from 15,574 in 1973 to 17,750 in 1979, 20,648 in 1984, and 25,655 in 1990. By comparison, over the same seventeen-year period, the number of Catholic Churches increased from 206 to 324. Protestant Churches increased from 1,330 in 1973 to 2,308 in 1984, but then declined again to 1,376 in 1990. There was a similarly effective program of mosque construction in Central Java, where, between 1980 and 1992, the number of mosques almost doubled, from 15,685 to 28,748.<sup>28</sup> In addition to Department programs, there was a smaller but more conspicuous program sponsored by President Suharto himself, under the auspices of a presidential foundation, the Amal Bakti Muslimin Pancasila. The Amal Bakti program sponsored the construction of 400 mosques and provided support to 1,000 Muslim proselytizers (*dai*), posted to areas of Indonesia which were deemed devotionally weak, including many on the island of Java.<sup>29</sup> In all this, proponents of cultural Islam

<sup>26</sup> Avery T. Willis's *Indonesian Revival: Why Two Million Came to Christ* (Pasadena: William Carey, 1977) provides an unusually frank Protestant assessment of this history. A minister of religious affairs prior to the New Order, Dr. Muhammad Rasjidi published a stinging denunciation of the government policy on Christian missions in 1978. Interestingly, he chose to present his argument in an international Muslim magazine published in Malaysia. See his "Role of Christian Mission: The Indonesian Experience," in *Readings in Islam* 2,2 (1978): 23–28.

<sup>27</sup> See Denys Lombard, *Le Carrefour Javanais: Essai d'Histoire Globale*, Vol. 2 (Paris: EHESS, 1990), pp. 123, 126; and B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, revised edition (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1982).

<sup>28</sup> These figures are compiled from *Dokumentasi Hasil Pelaksanaan Pembangunan Tahun 1984, 1988, dan 1989* (Surabaya: Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah, 1990), p. 209; *Jawa Timur Dalam Angka, 1990* (Surabaya: Kantor Statistik dan Permerintah Daerah Jawa Timur, 1992), p. 72; *Statistik Jawa Timur, 1980* (Surabaya: Kantor Statistik Propinsi, 1981), p. 178; *Jawa Tengah Dalam Angka, 1992* (Semarang: Kantor Statistik Propinsi Jawa Tengah, 1993); and *Jawa Tengah Dalam Angka, 1983* (Semarang: Kantor Statistik Propinsi Jawa Tengah, 1984), p. 182.

<sup>29</sup> See "Setelah Boom Sarjana Islam," in *Tempo*, December 8, 1990, pp. 34–37. For a description of the vast scale of *dakwah* at a provincial level, see Pierre Labrousse and Farida Soemargono, "De L'islam comme moral du développement: L'action des bureaux de propagation de la foi (*Lembaga Dakwah*) vue de Surabaya," in *L'Islam en Indonésie*, a special edition of *Archipel* 30, 2 (1985): 219–28. The impact of these *dakwah* programs in an area

felt that they saw visible confirmation of the wisdom of their strategy of working within the system.

The progress of cultural Islam was not matched, of course, in the political arena, at least as assessed by conventional, party-based measures. The early 1980s saw the government escalate its demand that all social and political organizations acknowledge the Pancasila as their "sole foundation," under the so-called *asas tunggal* policy. The government's effort was deeply resented by Muslim and at least some Christian associations. In the Muslim case, however, the policy had an especially devastating impact, splintering an already fractured Muslim leadership as disagreements broke out over the proper response to the government policy. Still today some Muslim observers believe that the fission of its leadership was an intended goal of the *asas tunggal* policy.<sup>30</sup> In the electoral arena, these developments only reinforced the domination of Golkar, the government-supported party. Despite the occasional defection of supporters during the 1980s, Golkar generally improved its share of the Muslim vote at the expense of the putatively Muslim party. Election observers decried what was widely regarded as governmental manipulation of the leadership of the opposition parties. But the result, in any case, was the continuing atrophy of Muslim electoral muscle.<sup>31</sup>

Despite these political setbacks, many Muslim leaders today regard the 1980s as a decisive turning point for, at the very least, cultural or civil Islam, and a vindication of the accommodative group's attitude toward the government. The great majority of Muslim intellectuals today believe that their acceptance of the *asas tunggal* policy had an important unintended consequence: Once Islam was no longer associated with any single party, and once politicians recognized that the nation was experiencing an Islamic resurgence, all of the political parties began to advertise their commitment to Islam. This "greening" (*penghijauan*, green being the color of Islam) of the campaign process was most dramatically evident during the 1992 electoral campaigns, and received widespread comment in the national media. Lukman Harun, a Muhammadiyah leader and director of the Center for Islamic Studies at Jakarta's National University, summarized what is perhaps the most general view among Muslim intellectuals on this change:

"Yes, we compromised in accepting the Pancasila, and there were many people who disagreed. But at first we didn't really understand what the consequence of this would be. Before there was one party identified with Islam. But look at what has happened. After being depoliticized, suddenly Islam is no longer confined to any one party but promoted by all of them."<sup>32</sup>

But there was another, perhaps deeper dimension to the cultural changes of the 1980s. In Java, where the nominally Islamic Javanist community had long posed a serious obstacle

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historically renowned for its Javanism is illustrated in R. W. Hefner, "Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java," in *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46,3 (August 1987): 533-54.

<sup>30</sup> On the turmoil caused by this policy in the Muslim Partai Persatuan dan Pembangunan (PPP), see Syamsuddin Hari, "PPP and Politics under the New Order," in *Prisma* 49 (June 1990): 31-51; Cees van Dijk, "Survey of Political Developments in Indonesia in the Second Half of 1984: The National Congress of the PPP and the Pancasila Principle," in *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 19,1 (Winter 1985): 177-202; and "Islam Setelah Asas Tunggal," in *Tempo*, June 14, 1986, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> See Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, Revised Edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 245-72. For the 1971 elections, see Ward, *The 1971 Elections in Indonesia*. Some observers view the government's actions as reminiscent of the earlier Dutch policy of tolerating Islamic religion but ruthlessly repressing political Islam. What this analogy overlooks, however, is the fact that, though they tolerated Islamic devotion, the Dutch never provided the massive infrastructural support to cultural Islam that the New Order has.

<sup>32</sup> Interview, June 19, 1993.

to Islamic reform, media and academic reports in the 1980s took note of the fact that many former strongholds of Javanist Islam were beginning to take on a *santri* face. The type of Islam being promoted in most such cases, it should be emphasized, owed more to the politically neutral, "neo-*santri*" Islam supported by the government than it did the political Islam of the 1950s or the tradition of *pesantren*-based independent Islam prevalent in colonial times.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the growth of Islamic devotionism in areas previously renowned for their Javanist heterodoxy was welcomed by Muslim leaders. Indeed, for many, this change in religious culture is a far more meaningful achievement than anything that might be accomplished in the electoral arena.

On all these points, the contrast with the first ten years of the New Order government is striking. While those early years had been marked by a small but controversial movement of Javanese from Islam to Hinduism and Christianity, by the 1980s there was clear evidence of Islamic revival and Javanist decline. Indeed, reports since the late 1980s have suggested that some of the earlier converts to Christianity and, especially, Hinduism were returning to Islam, as the Islamic revival reached into the very heartland of Javanism.<sup>34</sup>

### The Quest for the Middle Class

It was in the booming metropolitan regions of Indonesia, where a new middle class was taking shape even as the gap between rich and poor increased,<sup>35</sup> however, that the most spectacular evidence of cultural Islam's advance was visible. Not surprisingly, universities

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<sup>33</sup> Compare, for example, Bambang Pranowo's portrayal of Islamic resurgence in a former stronghold of Javanism (and the PNI and PKI) in the Magelang regency of Central Java with Hefner's portrait of Islamization in a Javanist portion of Pasuruan. See M. Bambang Pranowo, "Creating Islamic Tradition in Rural Java" (Ph.D. Thesis, Monash University, 1991) and R. Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 193–227. Evidence of the progress of Islamization can be found, however, in the most unexpected sources. Stephen C. Headley's study of the *ruwatan* tradition of exorcism in the Solo region of Central Java, for example, shows that this non-Islamic cult has declined drastically in recent years in the face of the Islamic advance. Paul Stange's studies of contemporary Javanist mysticism imply similar conclusions. In the mid-1980s he wrote that "even though Islam may be politically on the defensive, in the religious sphere it has been gaining ground. . . . Islamic discourse, I would argue, increasingly defines the context of Javanese mysticism." See Stephen C. Headley, *The Murwa Kala, A Southeast Asian Cosmogony* (forthcoming) and Paul Stange, "Legitimate' Mysticism in Indonesia," in *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 20,2 (1986): 79–80.

<sup>34</sup> See Pranowo, *Creating Islamic Tradition*. On Hindu conversion see Margaret L. Lyon, "Politics and Religious Identity: Genesis of a Javanese-Hindu Movement in Rural Central Java" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1977) and Robert Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). This discussion of "reversion" from Hinduism back to Islam is preliminary, based on my observations of recent developments in a Hindu community in South Malang (converted after 1965), and discussions in 1985 and 1991 with Hindu officials from the Department of Religion in Surabaya. In addition, in conversations in July 1993, however, researchers from the Department of Religion's Bureau of Research and Development in Jakarta cited field studies from the Klaten region (once one of the centers for Hindu conversion in Central Java), indicating that a significant number of Javanese youths raised in the families of post-1965 Hindu converts are returning to Islam. In an interview on July 3, 1993, Dr. Th. Sumartana, director of the Institute for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Indonesia at the Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, noted that field studies conducted by his university indicate that recently converted Christians in several rural areas of Central Java are also experiencing backsliding, though not yet on the scale reported among Hindus. Whatever the scale of reversion to Islam, national statistics clearly indicate that the advance of Hinduism and Christianity among ethnic Javanese has, at the very least, stalled.

<sup>35</sup> On the numerical growth of the middle class see Howard W. Dick, "The Rise of the Middle Class," and J.A.C. Mackie, "Money and the Middle Class," in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, ed. Tanter and Young, pp. 96–122.

were at the forefront of this trend. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Indonesia's national universities had been centers of secular nationalism, in which the *santri* community, though represented, was often the weaker of the contending factions in the student body. The 1970s, however, saw the rapid growth of the so-called "Salman movement" (*gerakan Salman*) and related Muslim initiatives on state university campuses. Salman students rejected the scholastic arguments of traditionalist Islam and the exclusivism of modernism. In order to Islamize the secular university, they adopted relaxed, democratic forms of dress, amusement, and interaction, while encouraging strict adherence to Muslim devotional acts (*ibadah*), including the daily prayers, the fast, and payment of alms (*zakat*) to the poor.

The model for this campus-wide devotional movement was developed at the Salman Mosque located at the Institut Teknologi Bandung, under the guidance of M. Imaduddin Abdulrahim, a charismatic intellectual who, years later, would play a central role in the establishment of ICMI (see below). Conducting an extensive campaign of religious outreach, the Salman Mosque Committee invited pop bands to play at the mosque, sponsored seminars on religion and development, published a small journal of culture and economic affairs, and developed a variety of educational and economic programs for poor residents living near the university.<sup>36</sup>

In Java, Salman-inspired religious activities had become a conspicuous feature of campus life at virtually every major university by the early 1980s. The movement also led to the formation of discussion groups that sought to formulate Muslim political and economic policies. A few of these smaller groupings provided the nucleus for the more radical Islamic movements that attracted attention, if not significant public support, in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>37</sup>

The mainstream movement for Islamic revival, however, eventually reached far beyond the university and touched the lives of the urban poor and the middle class. A decade earlier, in the 1970s, few Indonesians could have predicted such a development. Those years had witnessed a rapid expansion in urban wealth and an infusion of Western and East Asian consumer styles into elite and middle-class circles. Night clubs proliferated, alcohol became widely available, and rebellious youths affected permissive lifestyles that their elders, even non-*santri*, found shocking. Urban society was widely regarded as becoming more "monied," and many people took offense at the elite young people's callous disregard for traditional mores and etiquette.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Interviews with University of Indonesia students, July 1992, and with Imaduddin Abdulrahim, August 1992 and June 1993. The Salman journal, *Pustaka*, was published for only two or three years in the late 1970s, but is still today valued as a fine example of deeply devout, politically moderate, but socially critical Muslim journalism. Ali and Effendy place the Salman revival in the context of other developments among urban Muslims in their *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam*, p.308. See also, Abdulaziz et al., *Gerakan Islam Kontemporer di Indonesia*, pp. 207–87.

<sup>37</sup> As the Islamic revival intensified in the early 1990s, however, less tolerant Islamist movements have gained a small following on and around university campuses. For an overview of their growth—and their rejection of the liberal, inclusivistic Islam of Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid—see "Nurcholish dan Berbagai Jawaban Lain," in *Tempo*, April 3, 1993, pp. 14–21. Violent and often anti-Christian activities have not been limited to student radicals, as the burning of evangelical Christian churches in Pasuruan, East Java, in the fall of 1992 illustrated.

<sup>38</sup> This was a common theme in the responses of independent Muslims I interviewed in 1991 and 1992, when asked to explain why they thought so many urbanites turned to Islam in the 1970s and 1980s. Howard Dick provides economic and structural insight into the same phenomenon with his concept of the "privatization of the means of consumption." See Dick, "The Rise of a Middle Class," and "Further Reflections on the Middle Class," in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, ed. Tanter and Young, pp. 75, and 63–70.

Benedict Anderson's analysis of cartoons and media images from this period captures the widespread ambivalence toward these changes in certain urban circles. Anderson's discussion focuses on the unease felt by elite officials in the face of their own privileged children abandoning the reassuring, if hierarchical, etiquette learned by their parents in rural and small-town Java. Ripped from their earlier social background and unable to fall back on the assertive nationalism of the 1950s, the senior generation's neo-traditionalism seemed quaintly obsolete to a generation of privileged offspring. Anderson describes the anxiety this caused among the Jakartan elite:

Such events suggest to Indonesia's rulers that the future threatens to elude them, and so the past is summoned to their aid. Most of them are deeply aware of the far journey they have made in their lives from the rural townships of late colonial Java to the metropolitan pomp of the "cosmopolitan" Jakarta they now enjoy. . . . Their past has also not prepared them morally for the lives they now lead. Most of them grew up in the sphere of provincial Javanese society, and the norms and values of that society have left powerful residues at the core of their consciousness.<sup>39</sup>

It was against a less-privileged, but otherwise similar background that many middle-class Muslims came to feel uncomfortable with what they regarded as a narrowing or "privatization" (*pribadisasi*) of moral concerns during the 1970s. Unlike the Javanese officials whom Anderson described, however, Muslim urbanites tend to carry a less amorphous experiential "residue" from their early years. They are inclined to respond to the anomie of urban life with precise ethical prescriptions rather than diffuse existential anxiety. Indeed, for them, Islam seems uniquely prepared to speak to the challenges of urban existence. After all, they feel, Islam—especially the neatly modularized and eminently educable variant associated with Islamic modernism (and neomodernism)—is powerfully modern and transethnic. Even in the absence of the tranquil communities of yesteryear, it can work to instill ethical discipline and restraint. Yet Islam can also be seen as thoroughly Indonesian, since its roots reach back to precolonial society and into most, if not all, of the ethnic communities of the archipelago.<sup>40</sup>

One need only compare Anderson's haunting portrait with that of Kuntowijoyo in the epilogue to his *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi*<sup>41</sup> to discern that, however much they shared a similar sense of moral anxiety, Muslim intellectuals were not plagued by the existential vagueness afflicting the Javanist elite. A Yale-educated historian from Gadjah Mada University (trained in part by the Catholic-Javanese historian, Sartono Kartodirdjo), Kuntowijoyo describes the moral crisis among urban youth in terms strikingly similar to those of Anderson, and attributes its origins to similar causes. "Apparently social changes since 1965 have given birth to a new social class, a middle class, one which is almost without roots in any prior historical period."<sup>42</sup> But Kuntowijoyo's analysis goes on to suggest that there is a complex dialectic to the crisis, one not apparent in Anderson's descriptions of the

<sup>39</sup> Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "Cartoons and Monuments: The Evolution of Political Communication under the New Order," in *Political Power and Communications in Indonesia*, ed. Jackson and Pye, p. 315.

<sup>40</sup> Islam's ability to appeal to both modernist and nationalist sentiments is, of course, not peculiar to Indonesia. Ernest Gellner sees it as a general characteristic of modern Islam, and contrasts Islam's success in this regard with Christianity's (relative) political decline. See his *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 75–87, and "Flux and Reflux in the Faith of Men," in *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1–85.

<sup>41</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi* (Bandung: Mizan, 1991), pp. 370–75.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 370–71.

Javanist elite. Alongside the self-indulgent hedonism of privileged youth, Kuntowijoyo observes, there is an emergent counterculture of high moral idealism and principled criticism. This critical culture is not based on traditional Javanese notions of power; indeed, Kuntowijoyo claims (referring to Anderson's and Soemarsaid Moertono's works on ideas of power in traditional Java), it self-consciously rejects these in favor of an unhierarchical tradition which, for Kuntowijoyo, originates in modern Islam.

When the New Order government brought this new middle class into existence, Kuntowijoyo writes, it expected it to be "faithful" (*mempunyai kesetiaan*) to its policies. But among those making the pilgrimage from village to city, there were some who brought an Islamic ideology contemptuous of the elitist values of government bureaucracy. Thus, in Kuntowijoyo's view, this neo-*santri* tradition acts as an anti-hegemonic subculture, quietly subverting elite culture from within:

The process of decolonizing and detraditionalizing consciousness has already gone so far, that the bureaucracy cannot assume [popular acceptance of] a concept of power like that of a magical source radiating invulnerability. . . . The social and moral basis of the authoritarian bureaucracy is finished.<sup>43</sup>

This theme of *santri* subversion of Javanist elitism was common in the critical Islamic literature of the 1980s.<sup>44</sup> The confidently assertive attitude of Kuntowijoyo's commentary is equally characteristic of this writing, distinguishing it from the more uncertain tone of the 1970s' *pembaruan* (renewal) literature. Like many in this new generation of scholar-activists, Kuntowijoyo shows little of the self-doubt of the earlier period. Muslims have joined the ranks of government and business, he notes, and they are prepared to Islamize not only the peasantry, but large segments of the middle class and ruling elite.

Not surprisingly, a now middle-aged Nurcholish Madjid has himself been at the forefront of this newly robust cultural Islam, with its eyes set on government officials and the middle class. In 1986, Madjid established an association for urban proselytization known as Paramadina (from the Spanish, *para*, and the Arabian city of Madinah). Zifirdaus Adnan has wryly observed that, though the Paramadina officials "explained that the target of the *dakwah* (missionary activity) was the middle class people who have not received sufficient understanding of Islam," the presence of high government officials (including the ministers for Religion, Education and Culture, Environment, and Youth Affairs) at the organizations' inaugural celebration indicates that the "the target is not only the middle class but also the elite class."<sup>45</sup> The organization counted no fewer than eight cabinet members on its found-

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>44</sup> For other examples see Ahmad Wahib, *Pergolakan Pemikiran Islam: Catatan Harian Ahmad Wahib* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1981), or Abdul Munir Mulkan, *Runtuhnya Mitos Politik Santri* (Yogyakarta: SIPress, 1992). An important structural dimension of this *santri* "subversion" has been the movement of educated Muslims into positions of influence in the government bureaucracy, a process that only began in the late 1970s. This process was, in turn, related to a change in the class structure of the Muslim community under the New Order. With the decline of native (non-Chinese) business during the Guided Democracy period, and with the New Order's reliance on Chinese capital, the *santri* middle class was obliged to shift its energies out of trade and commerce into professional education for their children. As this new generation of educated *santri* entered government, they became an important voice for Muslim interests. It is among this population that the pluralistic Islam promoted by such figures as Djohan Effendi, Dawam Rahardjo, Syafi Anwar, and Nurcholish Madjid finds its greatest appeal. See, Aswab Mahasin, "The Santri Middle Class: An Insider's View," in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, ed. Tanter and Young.

<sup>45</sup> Adnan, "Islamic Religion: Yes, Islamic Ideology: No! Islam and the State in Indonesia," in *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman, p. 459.

ing advisory board. In interviews during 1992, Cak Nur, as he is affectionately known, openly acknowledged this desire to deepen the faith of the urban elite. He pointed to the expansion of mosques and prayer halls in businesses, hotels, government offices, and Jakarta's affluent southern suburbs as dramatic evidence of success.<sup>46</sup>

Despite setbacks in the formal political arena, then, by the late 1980s Muslim intellectuals showed a new confidence about their long-term prospects under the New Order. It is this air of confidence that is so powerfully evident in Kuntowijoyo's article, with its open contempt for bureaucratic Javanism. By itself, the critical tone of this article is, again, not unusual, as it was a regular feature of Muslim criticism in the 1980s. What was more distinctive about Kuntowijoyo's broadside, however, was not its message but its medium. The paper was first presented at ICMI's inaugural meeting in Malang, East Java, in December 1990. It was then reprinted in the published proceedings of the conference, alongside more cautious articles by government intellectuals.<sup>47</sup>

The example is telling. Although ICMI was inaugurated to the beat of the president's drum, some of its membership showed a marked inclination to march to a different drummer. From the start, however, there was a tension in the organization between those who wished to work closely with the government, and those who hoped to see ICMI act more independently. This tension would become increasingly evident in the months following the Malang symposium.

### State and Society in ICMI's Founding

Media reports on ICMI's genesis often portray it as the spontaneous creation of five students from the Universitas Brawijaya in Malang, East Java.<sup>48</sup> The five students, the story goes, were devout but otherwise unexceptional Muslim youths who yearned to bring together all Muslim intellectuals to talk about the future of the nation and the *umat*. To do so, they proposed a meeting to which leaders from all of Indonesia's major Islamic associations, as well as from government and the media, would be invited. Having conceived the idea in early 1990, the students then approached the rectors of Brawijaya University (a state-run university) and the Malang's Muhammadiyah University (which has a reputation for being the most independent of Indonesia's Muhammadiyah campuses) with their idea. The rectors responded favorably, but hesitated in face of the expense and political sensitivity of such a symposium. Undeterred, the five youths set out at their own expense to visit centers of Islamic education in Java, to promote their idea with leading intellectuals and to raise funds for the conference's expense. In the course of their travels, they met with prominent Muslim intellectuals, including, most notably, Dr. M. Imaduddin Abdulrahim and Drs. M.

<sup>46</sup> An additional feature of the Islamic advance into the middle class has been the emergence of a new kind of revivalist proselytizer (*dai*). Typically these pop revivalists come from a background in film, music, and other mass media rather than Muslim schools. They use deeply emotional accounts of their conversion experience rather than complicated exegesis of doctrine to move people to a deeper faith. At least in these respects this "pop" Islam resembles the contemporary evangelical boom in the Americas. Compare, for example, "Dai-Dai Baru Bak Matahari Terbit," in *Tempo*, April 11, 1992, pp. 14–23, with David Martin's portrayal of Latin American evangelicalism in *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> *Membangun Masyarakat Indonesia Abad XXI: Prosiding Simposium Nasional Cendekiawan Muslim 1991*, (Jakarta: ICMI, 1991 [no author]), pp. 203–10.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, the accounts of the students' role in "Hari Ini, Presiden Soeharto Buka Simposium Cendekiawan," *Pelita*, December 6, 1990; and *Kompas*, "ICMI Jaring Cendekiawan dengan Konsep Minimal," December 5, 1990.



Dawam Rahardjo, who jointly suggested that the students move beyond the idea of a mere symposium and promote the formation of a national association of Muslim intellectuals.<sup>49</sup>

Sensing the importance of government sponsors if the organization was to survive, Imaduddin proposed that the students invite the ministers of the environment, Emil Salim, and of research and technology, Dr. B.J. Habibie to act as chairmen of the national conference. Emil Salim's devotion to Islam, and his reputation as a tolerant, gentlemanly figure, were well known in the national media. Imaduddin and the students were not personally acquainted with Dr. Habibie, but they were familiar with television interviews and a story in the popular Muslim magazine *Kiblat*, in which the minister had spoken warmly of his devotion to Islam.<sup>50</sup>

In subsequent meetings, Emil Salim agreed to attend the national symposium but declined to play a leadership role in any organization, insisting that he was too old and Habibie would be more energetic and effective. The students thus turned to Habibie to lead the proposed organization which, at Nurcholish Madjid's suggestion, had tentatively acquired the title of ISMI—Ikatan Sarjana Muslim Indonesia (Association of Muslim Indonesian Scholars). Contacted through letters and telephone appeals, Habibie at first refused to meet with the students. According to the reports of his aides, he said privately that, though his devotion to Islam was real enough, he was not sufficiently well-versed in doctrinal matters to play such a leadership role. In private Habibie protested, "How can I do it? I am an engineer and a builder of airplanes, not an Islamic scholar!" He is also reported to have expressed fears that by agreeing to lead the organization he might violate the wishes of President Suharto.

It was only after Habibie was contacted by the former minister of religion, Alamsyah Ratu Perwiranegara, that he agreed to meet with the students. It was Imaduddin who had urged the students to overcome Habibie's reluctance by working through Alamsyah, and the tactic worked. The students and their supporters were granted a meeting with Habibie. Thus, on August 23, 1990, the students, accompanied by Imaduddin, Dawam Rahardjo, and M. Syafii Anwar (a close associate of Rahardjo and a former reporter for the Muslim news-weekly, *Panji Masyarakat*) traveled to Dr. Habibie's office on Jl. Thamrin to present their formal request to the minister. The group had been granted a one half-hour appointment. The students and their supporters presented their ideas directly, in what one of the participants later described as a long and slightly anxious monologue. Afterwards, Habibie commented positively on the idea of the association, but again protested that he was not the most appropriate figure for the role, saying, as before, that he was not sufficiently learned in Islamic matters. But he did not turn down the students' request outright. Instead, he asked that a petition be drawn up and circulated among prominent Muslim intellectuals to express support for his leadership of such an organization, so as to impress upon the president (and, no doubt, the Indonesian public) that their appeal was supported by the broader Muslim community. In addition, he asked for an outline of the association's organization and goals, which he would then present to the president. "I am a servant of the president," he said, "so I must go to him to request permission to work with you."

Over the next week, Imaduddin, Dawam Rahardjo, and Nurcholish Madjid drew up a document outlining the organization's goals and expressing support for Dr. Habibie's chairmanship. The document was circulated among prominent Muslim intellectuals in Jakarta,

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<sup>49</sup> What follows draws heavily on interviews with Imaduddin Abdulrahim, Syafi Anwar, Dawam Rahardjo, Nurcholish Madjid, Wardiman Djojonegoro, and Aswab Mahasin in August 1992 and June–July 1993.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Imaduddin, June 18, 1993.

Bogor, Bandung, and Yogyakarta; eventually forty-nine individuals signed it. In the meantime, too, Habibie talked with several of his colleagues in the cabinet, soliciting their advice on the wisdom of his joining the organization. Reportedly most told him to decline the invitation. One, Dr. Saleh Afiff (state minister for national development planning), urged him not to turn down the request but to seek President Suharto's counsel directly. Habibie agreed and arranged an appointment with the president, sending him the petition and outline of the association's goals.

Only Habibie and Suharto were present during their meeting, but a more or less uniform account of their exchange has become common knowledge among cabinet officials. According to this report, Habibie began the meeting by repeating his disclaimer that he is an engineer, a maker of airplanes, and unqualified to lead an association of Islamic intellectuals. Then, more quietly, he is reported to have turned to the president and said, "Also, if I lead this organization, maybe I will be separated [*terpisah*] from Bapak. Perhaps my and Bapak's understanding of Islam differ?" Throughout his public life, Habibie has made a point of demonstrating his unswerving loyalty to the president. His close relationship to the president has been an especially crucial political resource for Habibie because, until ICMI's founding, he has had no other significant political base. So his question struck to the heart of his own political livelihood.

President Suharto is reported to have responded without hesitation to Habibie's query, saying "This is good, you can do it." Then, in demonstration of his own mastery of Islamic knowledge, the president told Habibie to take a pen, open his notebook, and record what follows. Over the next two hours, the story goes, the president "dictated" (*mendikte*) a long discussion of the basic principles of Islam, including the meaning of the *sunnah*, *sholat*, and various passages from the Quran. At the end, he said, "Now you understand what I know." From this demonstration, Habibie was to appreciate that the president's knowledge of normative Islam was great and consistent with his own. The whole meeting lasted six hours, and from it Habibie emerged with a clear presidential mandate for the Islamic association.

Habibie then invited several ministers to his home, where he described ICMI and invited them to join him in its formation. Those present included the minister of internal affairs, Rudini; Fuad Hasan, the minister of education and culture; Azwar Anas, the minister of transportation; Emil Salem, minister of the environment; Nasruddin Sumintapura, vice minister for finance; Saleh Afiff, state minister for national development planning and chairman of the national development planning agency (Bappenas); and H. Munawir Sjadzali, minister of religion. Also invited were two people without ministerial ties: Nurcholish Madjid and Prof. Dr. Insinyur Ahmad Baiguni, a close advisor to Habibie from the BPPT. Of those present, Minister Rudini, who had a reputation as a military man with Javanist sympathies, initially expressed reservations about ICMI. But on learning of the president's support for the organization he quickly agreed to join.

Now with presidential and cabinet support, on September 27 Habibie again met with the students and their supporters, informing them that the president had given his blessing to the initiative. As a condition of his becoming chairman, however, Habibie requested that he be allowed to bring some of his administrative staff from the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT) to work in ICMI. Among those assistants was Dr. Wardiman Djojonegoro, an engineer and close assistant to Habibie at the BPPT, later to become Habibie's right-hand man within ICMI. A Madurese of *priyayi* background,

Wardiman had a reputation for having decidedly “nationalist” views on Islam. But in the months to come he would prove himself a dedicated officer in the ICMI cause.<sup>51</sup>

In this case, as in many of his subsequent appointments, Habibie illustrated his preference for a loyal, pragmatic management, like the one he had built at the BPPT, rather than an ideologically homogeneous group. His appointment of trusted BPPT staff to steering committees in ICMI also reflected his understandable concern that—in the face of continuing military suspicion—ICMI should move quickly to demonstrate that it was not a political organization, but techno-scientific and educational.<sup>52</sup> At this same meeting, Habibie suggested that the term *sarjana* (“scholar”) in the organization’s title be changed to *cendekiawan* (“intellectual”), so as to avoid the impression that ICMI was only open to people with academic degrees. He also suggested that the organization’s first national symposium be held at the beginning of December. All those present agreed, and three teams were set up to coordinate preparations for the symposium, which was to take place on the campus of Brawijaya University in Malang, East Java.

With presidential blessing, preparations for the December meeting now proceeded at a rapid pace. What had begun as an extra-governmental initiative launched by a few Muslim intellectuals—some of whom had a less than cordial history of interaction with the government (see below)—had now evolved into a top-heavy coalition of governmental leaders and extragovernmental Muslims. Officials from the government-sponsored Council of Islamic Clerics (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) were drawn into planning meetings during October and November, as were the minister of religion, H. Munawir Sjadzali, and his departmental staff. The minister of information, Harmoko, was also active in the planning meetings, as were the minister of internal affairs, Rudini, and, of course, Habibie and his staff.

It should be stressed, however, that at this point non-governmental Muslims continued to play a central role in preparations.<sup>53</sup> Imaduddin Abdulrahim, Dawam Rahardjo, and Nurcholish Madjid were all active on important steering committees. Imaduddin’s prominence is the most exceptional in this regard, because up to this time his relationship with the government had been troubled. One of the founders of the Salman movement at the Institut Teknologi Bandung, Imaduddin had been detained on several occasions in the early 1970s, denounced as a “fundamentalist and anti-Catholic” by security forces, and finally arrested and detained without charges or trial during fourteen months from 1978–1979. Eventually he was barred from state employment. After his detention, he traveled to the United States to take a PhD at Iowa State University, hoping that upon his return to Indonesia the employ-

<sup>51</sup> Some Western observers have seen in Wardiman’s appointment an effort to “*abangan-ize*” ICMI. Those familiar with Wardiman, however, note that, whatever his background, he has gone out of his way to demonstrate his loyalty to the Islamic cause. Among other things, during the first year of ICMI’s existence, he was among the boldest critics of Christian dominance in education and the media.

<sup>52</sup> Habibie’s speech to the Malang symposium illustrated this pragmatic emphasis, devoting most of its discussion to the technological challenges of the twenty-first century. When he referred to Islam, he did so in a general fashion, stressing the importance of religion in development. See his “Peranan Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi Dalam Proses Transformasi Masyarakat,” in *Membangun Masyarakat Indonesia Abad XXI*, pp. 1–17. See, too, his speech at the inauguration of the American branch of ICMI in Washington D.C., October 28, 1992, “ICMI: Untuk Membangun Kualitas Manusia Indonesia” (mimeo).

<sup>53</sup> The appointees to the planning committees were Dawam Rahardjo, Sri Bintang Pamungkas, and Muslimin Nasution. Nasution was head of the Bureau of Research and Development in the government’s Department of Cooperatives, and thus (despite otherwise impressive credentials as a Muslim intellectual) could be regarded as a “government” Muslim. Dawam and Bintang, however, were viewed as outspoken independent Muslims. Their appointment to key planning posts was taken as a sign of Habibie’s desire to build a broad coalition reaching beyond the halls of government.

ment ban would be lifted. Upon completing his degree in 1984, however, he learned that the banning-order still applied. Thus he decided to teach for two years in the United States, returning to Indonesia only in 1986. Still unable to get state employment, he eventually formed his own management company, where he has enjoyed considerable financial success.

Another independent Muslim active in the ICMI preparations was Sri Bintang Pamungkas.<sup>54</sup> Educated in Bandung's ITB and then at Iowa State University, Sri Bintang now works in the Department of Economics at the Universitas Indonesia. In the late 1980s he acquired a reputation among Muslim and NGO activists as a courageous and principled critic of government policies. His denunciations of corruption in government were regularly featured in the national press. Moreover, having refused in 1988 to join Golkar, the government-sponsored party which most public employees are required to support, Sri Bintang went on to announce his intention to run for the National Assembly (DPR) under the banner of the opposition Muslim party, the PPP. In 1992 he was elected after what was, by all measures, a campaign exceptional for its blunt criticisms of corruption, economic inequality, and the continuing involvement of the military in national politics.<sup>55</sup>

Not all Muslim critics were won to the ICMI cause. Deliar Noer, for example, a distinguished intellectual of the senior (pre-Madjid) generation, refused to join on two grounds: first, that Habibie himself had previously demonstrated no deep commitment to Islam, and, second, that ICMI was not a truly representative organization, but was designed to promote President Suharto's re-election. Others with ties to the NGO community, such as M. Billah, preferred to remain outside the organization for fear that membership might compromise their ability to act independently. Still others, like the respected historian Taufik Abdullah, declined to join despite repeated invitations, on the ground that ICMI was too closely controlled by the bureaucracy. Like many other independent intellectuals, however, Abdullah has also refrained from publicly criticizing ICMI. In private, he acknowledges that the organization has done some real good, such as sponsoring public discussion of human rights (see below).<sup>56</sup>

Others, however, have not hesitated to criticize ICMI on the grounds that it is encouraging exclusivistic and sectarian attitudes, at a time when what is needed is inter-religious tolerance and a spirit of democratic nationalism. For example, Djohan Effendi, a close associate of Madjid and Rahardjo during the earlier movement for Islamic renewal and now employed in the Department of Religion (and, as of April 1993, a special assistant for religious and social affairs to State Secretary Drs. Moerdiono, an outspoken ICMI critic), has quietly but insistently warned that ICMI is once again politicizing Islam. In doing so, he has said, ICMI risks undermining the hard-won accomplishments of cultural Islam, and indeed may eventually provoke the military to move against those who use Islam for political ends.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Sri Bintang, July 22, 1992.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Bintang's unusually direct criticisms of government manipulation of his own party (the PPP) in "Kritik Bintang untuk Bintang," *Editor*, January 1993, pp. 74-75.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Taufik Abdullah, June 24, 1993. Though concerned about the predominance of government bureaucrats in ICMI, Abdullah categorically rejected the conclusions of some Western observers that ICMI was developed merely to provide President Suharto and Minister Habibie with political support. "No," he said, "there's been a real change in the religiosity of the government elite, real Islamization." In addition, he noted that "there are pockets of independent activity in ICMI, where people are bravely raising new questions, about human rights and economic equalization."

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Djohan Effendi, July 1993.

The outspoken chairman of Nahdlatul Ulama, Abdurrahman Wahid, has also accused ICMI of sectarianism. Despite a personal appeal by Habibie, who visited Wahid when he was hospitalized in February of 1991, Wahid has refused to join ICMI, saying its focus is "exclusivistic" and elitist rather than pan-Indonesian. Ridwan Saidi, the chairman of HMI from 1974–1977 and a former PPP activist, has criticized ICMI on similar grounds, claiming that it reflects a peculiarly bureaucratic vision of Islam.<sup>58</sup>

Wahid's comments have been widely featured in the media. He argues that at this juncture in history the struggle for democracy and justice must take precedence over less-inclusive concerns, including those of the Muslim community. He phrases this argument in unusually blunt terms, shocking even some of his own supporters in the Muslim community. "I am for an Indonesian society, not just an Islamic one," he has said in several public assemblies. Islam, he argues, should not be idealized so that it is regarded as the only ground for democracy, law, or economic justice. Rather, Islam should serve as an "inspirational base for a national framework of a democratic society."<sup>59</sup> In interviews Wahid expressed his additional concern that, with the support of some government officials, ICMI might be used to promote a rigidly exclusivistic Islam contrary to Indonesian Islam's long history of tolerance. It is significant that, despite his criticisms, Wahid did not forbid NU members from joining ICMI, and several prominent figures did join.<sup>60</sup>

What is striking about this first phase of ICMI's formation is that, even as aides to Minister Habibie came to exercise growing influence in its administration, ICMI managed to mobilize a remarkably diverse array of Muslim intellectuals. These included what Wardiman Djojonegoro, the general secretary of ICMI and one of Habibie's closest aides, referred to as the "right and left wings" of the Muslim opposition.<sup>61</sup> This diversity reinforced the sense of spirited exchange so evident during the first ICMI congress itself, from December 6–8, 1990. Most of the speeches presented were scholarly, cautious, and even dryly aca-

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with Ridwan Saidi and Abdurrahman Wahid, July 1992. Both men also commented that they felt that ICMI suffered from a peculiarly bureaucratic vision of Islam. The same theme ran through Nahdlatul Ulama press commentaries released shortly after ICMI's founding. See the report, "Kiai vs. ICMI" in *Aula* 13,1 (January 1991): 10–36.

<sup>59</sup> "Indonesia's Muslim Middle Class: An Imperative or a Choice?" in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, ed. Kanter and Young, p. 24. See also his delightfully ambiguous statements on ICMI in *Tempo*, December 8, 1990, p. 29.

<sup>60</sup> Wahid's position was related, of course, to his efforts to build a non-governmental and non-denominational coalition for democracy through the founding of Forum Demokrasi. Critics of Wahid insist that this effort was related to a putative "alliance" with the Christian minister of defense and security, Benny Murdani, whom Wahid had thought might play a larger political role in Indonesia than has proved to be the case. Wahid himself vigorously denies these charges of a political alliance with Murdani. Though the Forum Demokrasi was not banned, the government made clear its displeasure with the initiative, by, among other things, refusing to reappoint Wahid to the MPR on October 1, 1992. Conversely, the new MPR had a large number of Muslim leaders with ties to Minister Habibie and ICMI. See "Beringin Makin Hijau," in *Tempo*, October 3, 1992, pp. 21–31. On the FD's founding, see "Demokrasi Kita," in *Tempo*, April 13, 1991, pp. 17–27.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Wardiman Djojonegoro, August 9, 1992. Since the field research conducted for this article, Wardiman's national role has been enhanced with his appointment in March of 1993 to the influential position of minister of education and culture. The appointment was widely regarded as strong evidence of the Habibie group's broad influence in the new cabinet. The portfolios of trade, transport, and health also went to Habibie affiliates from his technology agency. More surprising, Habibie supporters were also posted to the influential national planning agency, Bappenas. See "Mafia Berkeley, Habibie, Atau Konglomerat?" in *DeTIK*, April 9–17, pp. 4–5. Though not specifically identified as Habibie supporters, the minister of finance, Drs. Mar'ie Muhammad and minister for the environment, Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, are also regarded as ICMI supporters, both having come from backgrounds as Islamic student activists (Muhammad from HMI and Kusumaatmadja from KAMI).

demic in tone; the published versions of several came with long bibliographies. The actual substance of the papers, however, was more varied. Most respectfully echoed President Suharto's speech, endorsing the government's goals for twenty-first century development. This emphasis was consistent with the title of the symposium, "To Build a Twenty-First Century Indonesian Society," which was notable for its lack of reference to Islam. The papers presented by Habibie's associates emphasized this same theme, underscoring the importance of science and technology in the next phase of Indonesia's industrialization, and urging Muslims to assure themselves a greater role in national development by mastering science and new technologies.

As Kuntowijoyo's above article indicates, however, much of the discussion was considerably less techno-developmental in its focus. Several discussants raised pointed questions concerning economic justice, and some echoed Kuntowijoyo in criticizing the bureaucratic values of the Javanist elite. Rather than simply endorsing the government's developmentalist goals, these independent scholars emphasized the need to accord Muslims greater intellectual, economic, and political influence as part of a more general effort to democratize Indonesian society.

### The Politics of Cultural Breakthrough

The effort to unite Muslims intellectuals under a single, all-embracing organizational banner has historic precedent. Previously the most notable initiative was the formation of Persami, the Union of Muslim Scholars (Persatuan Sarjana Muslim Indonesia). Founded in 1964 to combat the intellectual influence of the Communist Party, Persami played an active role in supporting then-General Suharto in 1967. It declined after 1968, however, as the result of leadership disputes and government disinterest in its survival.<sup>62</sup>

ICMI's inclusivist organization also replicates a pattern of corporatist inclusion and control which, as Benedict Anderson and David Reeves have emphasized,<sup>63</sup> is a long-standing feature of Indonesian politics, elaborated to its most effective degree under the New Order. But if bureaucratic control was an intent, its imposition nonetheless created important unintended effects. One such consequence, for example, was that Muslim activists previously regarded as enemies of the state and thus subject to political controls suddenly had unprecedented freedom of movement and access to the press. In the months following the first ICMI congress, the media gave prominent attention to Islamic discussions of politics and development, discussions that, just a few years earlier, would have been regarded as dangerously subversive.

Here again, Imaduddin Abdulrahim's experience provides a telling illustration of the depths of this change. In interviews in August 1992 and June 1993, Dr. Imaduddin commented that prior to ICMI's founding it was very difficult for him to give public lectures. Wherever he went, his sponsors were required to obtain permits from the national police, and these were often denied. Since his association with ICMI, he noted, all this has changed. Now he travels freely around the country, "from Aceh to Java," as he put it, and not once has he had to secure police permits. For him, this is proof that, whatever the president's motives in supporting ICMI, an important change has occurred:

<sup>62</sup> See *Tempo*, December 8, 1990, p. 36.

<sup>63</sup> See Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "Old State, New Society: Indonesia's New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective," in *Journal of Asian Studies* 42 (May 1983): 477-96; and David Reeve, *Golkar of Indonesia: An Alternative to the Party System* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 322-64.

"No, it wasn't just an effort on the part of the president to court Muslim support so as to outflank his rivals in the army. Of course, there is a measure of politics of that sort, but I am not so cynical. I think President Suharto has eyes, he sees what is happening, and he realizes that 90% of his people are Muslim and they have to be given a role in national life. It's a genuine opening. It's the first time in twenty-seven years that we have been brought into the political life of the country, and we have to take advantage of it. It may not realize everyone's hopes, but it's a real opportunity."<sup>64</sup>

Dr. Imaduddin's testimony is all the more striking inasmuch as, by his own and others' accounts, prior to 1990 he had made several unsuccessful attempts to establish an association of Muslim intellectuals. The most recent of these occurred in January 1989, when Imaduddin and Dawam Rahardjo invited fifty intellectuals to Yogyakarta to discuss prospects for such an organization. Forty of the fifty invitees showed up. On the second day, however, the police arrived too and closed down the meeting, insisting that it had not received prior clearance and was, therefore, illegal. Participants in the conference blamed Benny Murdani, the Christian-Javanese minister of defense and security, for the action.

More than two years earlier, in July of 1986, Dawam Rahardjo had raised the idea for an association of Muslim intellectuals, at a meeting in Ciawi, Bogor, organized through the joint efforts of the government-sponsored Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Ulama) and his own prestigious Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat (LSAF). When Rahardjo expressed the view that the time seemed right for such an organization, however, representatives from the MUI balked, fearing government disapproval, and the plan was eventually shelved.

Against this background, it can be seen that press reports on the role of the five Brawijaya students in ICMI's founding oversimplify what was, in fact, a more complex history. From the start, prominent Muslim intellectuals were deeply involved in the effort to establish an ICMI-like organization, but for political reasons, they chose to background themselves from the publicity surrounding ICMI's initial development. Indeed, the original Malang meeting in early 1990, at which the five Brawijaya students were supposed to have come up with the idea for the symposium, was not simply a private student event. It occurred in the context of a visit to the Brawijaya University campus by none other than Dr. Imaduddin. Not coincidentally, the rector who had approved Dr. Imaduddin's visit—at a time when Imaduddin was still barred from most campuses, including his own Institut Teknologi Bandung—was Madurese and an alumnus of the Muslim Indonesian Students's Association (HMI), of which Nurcholish Madjid had been chairman (and Imaduddin himself a member) in the late 1960s. Some time after the talk, it was Dr. Imaduddin who took the initiative and urged the students to approach the dean with the idea for a national symposium, saying that they would be remembered in history for undertaking such a path-breaking initiative.<sup>65</sup>

What the simplified story of the students' role does correctly underscore is that the effort to establish an association of Muslim intellectuals, at least in the first instance, did originate

<sup>64</sup> In an interview on June 18, 1993, Imaduddin acknowledged that two incidents *had* occurred since ICMI's founding which indicated continuing bureaucratic opposition to the organization. Both occurred in the context of his visits to foreign countries, where the Indonesian consulate attempted to bar him from organizing local chapters of ICMI. In both cases, Imaduddin reported the incidents to Habibie, who reported them to the president, and the local consulates quickly apologized in person to Imaduddin. The last of these incidents occurred in March 1992.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Imaduddin Abdulrahim, August 6, 1992.

within the Muslim community. However much it was to be drawn into bureaucratic intrigues, the idea for ICMI was not originally a matter of government engineering; its origins lay in a state-society interaction which had a longer and more contested history. Rather than being the brainchild of five anonymous students from a provincial university, however, the original plan for the association originated with well-placed Muslim intellectuals. Some of those intellectuals had a reputation among the security forces that might have compromised the effort to establish the organization had their names been given too much prominence. Imaduddin openly acknowledges that he looked to Minister Habibie for support, since he feared that his own reputation might jeopardize the organization's survival.

An important question remains. What had changed between 1988 and late 1990, so that the government, and the president in particular, felt comfortable in supporting an organization which security forces had sought to suppress just eighteen months earlier? Surprisingly, both supporters and critics of ICMI share similar opinions regarding this matter. Both groups acknowledge that the president's rivalry with certain segments of the military, in particular those allied with the Christian general, Benny Murdani, intensified in 1989 and 1990, in anticipation of the general elections of 1992. As several interviewees commented, one had to look all the way back to the early 1960s, to the conflict between President Sukarno and the military, to find a breach of similar proportions between the government and military.<sup>66</sup>

It is noteworthy in this regard that numerous high-ranking military officers reportedly advised the government against allowing ICMI's formation. In the days prior to the meeting in which the president approved its establishment, Try Sutrisno is said to have advised him to turn down the proposal. As it became clearer that ICMI had the president's support, the military eventually stopped its public criticisms, and Armed Forces Commander Try Sutrisno attended the Malang meeting.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, in interviews during August of 1992, several high-level ICMI officials commented that many in the armed forces continue to view ICMI as "emotional and primordial." They noted that military leaders in several provinces had unsuccessfully sought to block the formation of regional branches of the organization. The obstacles were overcome by outflanking the military commanders. Arrangements were made so that, whenever ICMI planned to announce establishment of an office in a given province, the governor would first release a statement in support of the organization.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> For an analysis of Suharto-military rivalries, see Ben Anderson, "Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite," in *Indonesia* 48 (October 1989): 65-96, and The Editors, "Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite: July 1, 1989-January 1, 1992," in *Indonesia* 53 (April 1992): 93-136.

<sup>67</sup> The military press, however, remained cautious, urging the organization to stick to its goals of national unity and development. See, for example, the editorial in *Angkatan Bersenjata*, "ICMI, Selamat Datang," December 10, 1990. Behind the scenes, military criticism continued, prompting Dr. Habibie to make a much-publicized visit to the offices of the chief of staff, Try Sutrisno, on February 22, 1992, in an effort to dispel rumors that the military opposed ICMI. See the report of the meeting in *Pelita*, "Hapus, Suara di Luar Negeri Bahwa ABRI tak Setuju ICMI," February 23, 1991. The armed forces commander subsequently released the text of his statement to Habibie, entitled, "Pointers Pengarahan Panglima Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia dalam Rangka Menerima Pengurus ICMI." The document's twenty-five short paragraphs make no fewer than twenty references to the Pancasila, religious pluralism, and the need for vigilance against those who would undermine national unity.

<sup>68</sup> Despite this apparent public accommodation, military criticism of ICMI has continued right up to the time of the final writing of this article (July 1993). Rather than attacking the organization as a whole, however, military critics now warn that factions within ICMI want to use it and Islam itself for their own political ends. In a widely publicized speech presented on June 18, 1993, Vice President Try Sutrisno himself warned—without mentioning ICMI's name—that there were signs that some people were using Islam as an "instrument of legiti-



Some of ICMI's critics, including such eminent Muslim figures as Deliar Noer and Ridwan Saidi, cited the president's role in the organization's founding to buttress their claim that it was little more than a vehicle for the president's re-election. Other critics have complained that Habibie has used ICMI for his own political ends, including, most recently, what some people regard as his failed effort to win election to the vice-presidency in March of 1993. (Sources close to Habibie deny that he was ever seriously interested in the vice-presidency, since it would have required that he renounce involvement in his various technology programs.) Prior to his appointment to the ICMI post, these critics note, Habibie enjoyed the confidence of President Suharto but lacked ties to a national organization that could provide a mass base. ICMI, it is said, provided just that.<sup>69</sup>

Staunchly independent ICMI activists like Imaduddin, Ismail Suny, Haidar Bagir, and Dawam Rahardjo respond to these charges against ICMI with three arguments. First, they take issue with Western observers who have reported that the Muslim community is "euphoric" about the Suharto government's opening to Islam, stating that these reports ignore the complex give-and-take that goes on in such a process. In an interview on June 16, 1993, Haidar Bagir, operations director at *Republika* (the ICMI newspaper) and chief editor at the widely respected publishing house Mizan, summarized this view in the following way:

"Some people in the Western media make it seem as if we are so full of emotion [*penuh emosi*] with recent developments that we don't understand the motives of certain government officials. But that's just not true. Democratic politics is bargaining. ICMI may not be a full realization of our aspirations. And yes, some people will be coopted by the bureaucracy. We know that. We know too that many in government supported ICMI for reasons that had nothing to do with religion. But politics is not a matter of Muslims winning and others losing everything. Muslims and non-Muslims are getting lessons in democracy. It's not everything we want. But it's a real opening."

Haidar and other independents within ICMI go on to say that, even if the organization was intended to rally support for the president, its establishment still provides Muslims with an historic opportunity. As Imaduddin commented above, the change has allowed previously marginalized Muslim intellectuals to air their views in public settings.<sup>70</sup> It has also provided

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mation." See *Kompas*, June 18, 1993, p. 1. Two months earlier, in April 1993, he had given his blessing to an even greater challenge to ICMI, supporting formation of an "Association of Nusantara Intellectuals" (ICNU), a non-denominational organization of intellectuals. Still in the planning stage, ICNU's long-term impact remains unclear. See "ICNU, setelah ICMI," in *Editor*, May 1, 1993, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> On the national press's speculation on Habibie's chances for the vice-presidency, see "Jejak-Langkah dari Malang sampai Senayan," in *Tempo*, October 10, 1992, pp. 21-24. Other criticisms of Habibie have focused on his support of state-subsidized "mega-projects," such as his airplane firm, the PT Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara (IPTN). These and other strategic industries under Habibie's direction are reported to receive subsidies of at least a billion dollars each year. See "Belum Saatnya Proyek Untung," in *Tempo*, October 31, 1992, pp. 27-29. See also, "Engineering the Future," in *The Economist*, April 17, 1993 (special supplement), pp. 12-13. Many observers viewed the strong presence of Habibie supporters in the cabinet announced in March 1993, as an indication that the more fiscally conservative economists of the national planning agency, Bappenas, had been dealt a serious if not decisive blow by a new generation of economic nationalists more interested in state-supported, "high-tech" development than in market-oriented and export-driven industrialization. The Habibie influence in the new cabinet was greeted with disquiet in the business and financial community: The president reacted by seeking to reassure the market by appointing two prominent figures from Bappenas as his "personal advisors," positions which, in the past, have carried no real influence. On the Habibie group's move into Bappenas, see "Runtuhnya Dominasi Bappenas," in *Prospek*, April 4, 1993, pp. 20-22 and "Mafia Berkeley, Habibie, atau Konglomerat?" in *DeTIK*, April 9-17, 1993, pp. 4-5.

<sup>70</sup> Another illustration of ICMI's ability to provide a forum for previously marginalized intellectuals is the case of Adi Sasono. Sasono has a reputation as a progressive Muslim with strong ties to the NGO community. Dur-

Muslims with the resources and political latitude to undertake initiatives that were heretofore unthinkable, including the establishment of an Islamic Bank, the Bank Muamalat, and of a national newspaper. A national Islamic Center is also being planned.<sup>71</sup> Whatever ICMI's long-term fate, these initiatives have provided additional momentum for the institutional consolidation of the new Muslim middle class.

The second response to those who view ICMI as an elite subterfuge focuses on the sociological background to this opening. Dawam Rahardjo, for example, echoing Imaduddin's comments, has observed that the mere fact that the president would make significant concessions to Muslims testifies to the Islamization of growing segments of the middle class and bureaucracy. "We are witnessing a basic change in Indonesian social class—the movement of large numbers of better-educated Muslims into the upper echelons of business and bureaucracy."<sup>72</sup> Sources close to President Suharto himself report that on several occasions in the mid-1980s he commented on the impressive number of Muslim scholars with PhDs and other degrees of higher education, noting that the new generation of Muslim leaders is different from the earlier ones. A distinguished legal scholar and vice chairman of the executive board of Muhammadiyah, Dr. Ismail Suny, who was detained without charges in the late 1970s for his outspoken criticisms, summarized what is perhaps the most widely held view among Muslim intellectuals on the dynamics of this change:

"There's no need to oversimplify the president's motives. The president realized that if there was a large group that opposed him, that wasn't good for the nation, and it wasn't good for his own interests. So, no, it's not a momentary tactic on his part, because he was concerned not just with the elections but with a process of Islamization that will have a longer influence in Indonesian society."<sup>73</sup>

Several high-ranking government officials I interviewed confirmed this analysis, though from a somewhat different vantage point. One official, a man with strong Javanist sympathies, commented that the president had taken note of developments in Algeria and Lebanon, and was determined that in Indonesia an increasingly powerful Islam should not be

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ing most of the 1980s, he was well known for his democratic-socialist, "dependency theory" views on development. In the early 1980s, he, along with Aswab Mahasin and a number of other liberal Muslim intellectuals, established a foundation to help former Communist *tapol* (political prisoners) reintegrate into society, an initiative which excited strong disapproval in certain government circles. From this background as a Muslim outsider, Sasono today has risen to a position of leadership within ICMI, as a close advisor to Minister Habibie. Yet he has not let up in his calls for human rights, economic equalization, and democracy. Now, however, unlike previously, his speeches are widely featured in the mainstream press. To take but one example, a story on the front page of *Bisnis Indonesia*, July 1, 1993, carried a detailed account of a speech in which Sasono had a) called for the publication of the names of wealthy businesspeople defaulting on bank loans; b) argued for more aid to small enterprises; c) asserted that the key to combatting economic mismanagement was greater democratization; d) appealed for higher taxes on the rich; and e) urged Indonesia to renegotiate the debt so as to diminish Indonesia's dependence on foreign capital! As discussed below, Sasono was also one of the leading figures behind the campaign to discuss human rights in ICMI.

<sup>71</sup> ICMI's national newspaper, *Republika*, was launched on January 3, 1993, and immediately given high marks for the quality of its reporting. Its circulation has grown from 45,000 in January 1993 to 120,000 in July. See "Islam Kosmopolitan dalam Berita," *Tempo*, January 9, 1993, p. 33. On the founding of the government-supported Islamic Bank, Bank Muamalat Indonesia (BMI), see *Prospek*, November 2, 1991, "Mengapa Baru Sekarang BMI Berdiri." See also my "Islamizing Capitalism: On the Founding of Indonesia's First Islamic Bank," in *Intellectual Development in Indonesian Islam*, ed. James Rush and Mark Woodward (Tempe: Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, forthcoming).

<sup>72</sup> Interview, August 3, 1992.

<sup>73</sup> Interview, June 23, 1993.

pushed into the opposition. Wardiman Djojonegoro (now minister of education and culture) made a related point, commenting that the primary purpose of ICMI is "to break down the wall between Muslims and the government." He added that in the early years of the New Order the government's policy on Islam had inadvertently been one of "benign neglect, because religion wasn't taken into account in development programs." Now the president himself has decided to replace benign neglect with "support and protection" of the Muslim community.

Citing W.F. Wertheim's famous comment that Indonesian Muslims historically have been a "majority with a minority mentality,"<sup>74</sup> Bambang Pranowo, director of the Bureau for Social and Religious Research of the Department of Religion, commented in August 1991 that this "majority is finally beginning to think and act like a majority." Whether this translates into formal political power is, of course, a far more complex matter. Nonetheless, the fact that government officials feel inclined to position themselves alongside the Muslim community is a remarkable change from the first years of the New Order. Many supporters of the "renewal" strategy of working within the system see this as a decisive vindication of their earlier views.

The third and final response of ICMI supporters to their critics is that, whatever the role played by elite rivalries in ICMI's founding, and whatever ICMI's ultimate fate, the organization has had a visible influence on the devotional piety of growing segments of the middle class. "ICMI has made bureaucrats who were previously afraid to perform the Friday prayers proud to do so," said one ICMI official in 1992. Nurcholish Madjid echoed these sentiments. Whatever its long-term political impact, he said, ICMI has deepened Islamic devotion among the middle class and government officials. "This," he added, "is a valuable achievement in itself."

### Developmental Ironies

However distinctive ICMI's achievement, several incidents in the months following its founding illustrate the degree to which it operates in a highly constrained and uncertain environment. The examples suggest that, though ICMI may succeed in winning certain concessions from the government, its ultimate role in the life of the nation will be determined by broader political events.

The first incident illustrates the way in which, as ICMI's structure was consolidated in early 1991, efforts were made to limit its autonomy and bring it under greater executive control. In the weeks following the Malang congress, newspapers and magazines around the country were rife with speculation as to whom Dr. Habibie would choose as ICMI's general secretary. Given his ministerial involvements, it was assumed that Chairmain Habibie would have to be assisted by a general secretary who would exercise day-to-day control over ICMI's operations.

Almost uniformly, the print media speculated that Dawam Rahardjo was the top candidate for the job.<sup>75</sup> Unlike other behind-the-scene operators, Dawam had never been regard-

<sup>74</sup> W.F. Wertheim, "Indonesian Moslems under Sukarno and Suharto: Majority with Minority Mentality," in *Studies on Indonesian Islam*, ed. B.B. Hering, (Townsville: Occasional Paper No. 19, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, James Cook University, 1989), pp. 15-35.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, "Cendekiawan Muslim: Melangkah Dari Malang," in *Tempo*, December 8, 1990, p. 27; and "Makin Kuat Kans Dawam," in *Fajar*, December 8, 1990, p.1.

ed by security forces as an extremist or anti-government activist. He has strong ties to the NGO community, and for years has managed to walk a fine line between criticism of specific government policies and support for the general goals of national development. Like Imaduddin, however, Dawam had a long history of involvement in efforts to establish a national association of Muslim intellectuals. He also had impeccable credentials as a devout Muslim, an accomplished scholar, and someone who, though occasionally cooperating with the government on development projects, maintained a careful distance from the bureaucracy. Over the years, finally, Dawam had also distinguished himself as a development theorist (his training is in economics), a fact that provided him with credentials well suited to the kind of pragmatic role Habibie hoped ICMI would play. For all these reasons, Dawam's election to general secretary appealed to independent Muslims and seemed acceptable, it was thought, to the government.

In the first weeks of January 1991, Habibie supporters gave hints to the press as to the eventual organization of ICMI. Claiming that it would have a state-of-the-art "matrix" structure like that of modern industry, Habibie's assistants indicated that ICMI would not have a general secretary, because none was needed under such a system. While independent intellectuals would play prominent roles within each matrix sector, the crucial managerial positions at the top of the organization were to be recruited from Habibie's Agency for the Development and Application of Technology (BPPN).

Several independent intellectuals, including Sri Bintang Pamungkas and Dawam Rahardjo, were quick to find fault with this plan. In public statements they complained that the proposed structure was undemocratic and denied independent Muslims their right to positions of influence in the organization. Speaking in the most forceful terms, Dawam accused Habibie of allowing ICMI to be taken over by bureaucrats.<sup>76</sup> Over the next three weeks there was great tension, as some observers thought the fledgling organization was on the verge of collapse. The criticism seemed to seal Dawam's fate, guaranteeing that he would not be accorded the position of assistant chairman, which went instead to Habibie's trusted advisor from the BPPT, Wardiman Djojonegoro. Nonetheless, to the surprise of some observers, ICMI survived, indeed with relations among Habibie, Dawam, and others still intact. Habibie responded to the criticisms by emphasizing the necessity of the matrix structure if ICMI was to be an effective instrument of development. Working with people on both sides of the dispute, Habibie also repeated comments he has made in the face of every public crisis he has confronted, namely that the expression of different points of view is necessary in any democratic organization.<sup>77</sup> Despite criticisms over his choice of officials in ICMI (or, more recently, his promotion of ICMI officers for seats in the National Assembly), pro-democracy Muslims like Dewi Fortuna Anwar and Adi Sasono see gestures like this as encouraging signs that Habibie appreciates that criticism and openness must become accepted features of Indonesian politics.

Indeed, having heard of the disputes that racked ICMI during its first months, I expected in 1991, 1992, and 1993 to hear independent Muslims voice disapproval of Habibie's leadership. Not surprisingly, there *was* a widespread consensus among independent Mus-

<sup>76</sup> See Dawam Rahardjo's outspoken, "Seandainya saya . . .," in *Berita Buana*, January 14, 1991. Other independent Muslim intellectuals voiced similar concerns about the subordination of ICMI to bureaucratic power during the weeks preceding Habibie's announcement on February 14. See, for example, "Dikawatirkan, ICMI Akan Jadi Perpanjangan Birokrasi," in *Suara Karya*, January 31, 1991, p. 1, and "ICMI Hendaknya Independen," in *Pelita*, January 31, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, the reports in *Media Indonesia*, "Jangan Persoalkan Kritik Pendiri ICMI," February 7, 1991; and in *Berita Buana*, "Habibie: Tak Ada Masalah Dalam ICMI," February 6, 1991.

lims (and even many government supporters of Habibie) that ICMI was far too dependent on the personality of Habibie, and that the organization had to be made more independent. To my surprise, however, at a more basic level even independent Muslims seemed to have a generous measure of good faith toward the chairman. All described Habibie as hard working and ambitious; some also readily acknowledged that he might be using ICMI as an instrument for his own political interests. But all commentators affirmed that his devotion to Islam was genuine. And most felt that Habibie had played a crucial and positive role in improving relations between Muslims and the government. As one ICMI official told me in August of 1992:

“Habibie may be using ICMI for his own political ambitions. What do you expect in politics? But if he were ever to become vice-president we would benefit. And the concessions we make to the bureaucracy still leave us with great latitude to undertake social programs for the strengthening of Islam.”

Finally, it should be noted that there is an important economic dimension to Habibie’s appeal. Many Indonesians see him as one of the few leaders speaking to the problem of the continuing marginalization of Muslims in Indonesian economic life. The economic liberalization of the late 1980s has unleashed a new wave of enterprise, but Muslims and, more generally, *pribumi* (indigenous, non-Chinese) Indonesians remain minor players in it. Though his economic ideas have been criticized as elitist, wasteful, and, ultimately, self-defeating, Habibie’s impassioned discourses on technology and “value added” industry appeal to the large number of middle-class Indonesians who fear that the low-wage, export-oriented industrialization favored by economic technocrats may provide low-paying employment for the masses of poor, but very little for the indigenous middle class. From this perspective, Habibie is in a long line of Indonesian economic nationalists, who would bend the rules of market capitalism to allow state intervention to improve the position of Indonesia’s indigenous majority. Many people question, however, whether such an interventionist strategy is in the best interests of either economic development or democratization.<sup>78</sup>

Government influence over ICMI was also evident in two later incidents that pitted reform-minded independents against Habibie aides. In May of 1991, Emha Ainun Najib, a popular Javanese author and the director of the “Cultural Discussion” bureau within ICMI, sought to have ICMI sponsor a small conference on the Kedung Ombo dam project in West Java, a highly controversial development project which has displaced thousands of rural dwellers from their lands. Before the conference could be held, Najib received a warning from an ICMI superior that the organization could not properly sponsor such an event. Behind the scenes, other independents were reminded that this kind of activity was foolish, embarrassing Habibie and needlessly squandering ICMI’s political capital on an initiative doomed from the start. Eventually, Emha Najib resigned from ICMI.

On May 2, 1992 another incident revealed much the same tension between independent reformers and government officials. In the seminar room of the ICMI Secretariat on Jl. Thamrin in Jakarta, several dozen people gathered to discuss human rights in Indonesia. Among them were independent ICMI members; prominent and, from the government’s perspective, controversial human-rights advocates such as Mulya Lubis, Aswab Mahasin, and H.J.C. Princen; and outspoken critics of the Suharto government, such as Chris Siner. As the event’s opening address was coming to an end, ten uniformed officers appeared and

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Sjahrir’s politely worded but devastating critique of Habibie’s economic vision in “Habibie, Tek-Ti, dan Teknokrat,” in *Tempo*, July 3, 1993, pp. 86–87.

requested to see the conference permit. The ICMI members explained that no such permit was needed, because the seminar was an internal ICMI affair, like others which had taken place at the headquarters. The police insisted that all meetings of more than five people required a permit and politely but firmly insisted that the meeting stop. The organizers yielded and brought the meeting to an end.<sup>79</sup>

Events such as these have prompted a handful of individuals to quit ICMI, so as to maintain their independence from the bureaucracy. As of late 1993, however, the rate of attrition remains surprisingly low. It has been offset, moreover, by an influx of new members, many from the ranks of the bureaucracy.<sup>80</sup> But numerous reform-minded independents remain in the organization, in the belief that, even as some political initiatives are curtailed, ICMI remains an important vehicle for advancing Muslim social interests in government and society.

Most liberal Muslims continue to feel that their hopes for a more progressive ICMI are not entirely without foundation. They point, for example, to the fact that during the fall of 1992 and the spring of 1993, it established a new research and policy-discussion center, known as CIDES, the Center for Information and Development Studies, with a steering committee that included such outspoken Muslim liberals as Adi Sasono and Dewi Fortuna Anwar. Shortly after the Center's founding in September 1992, Adi Sasono took what was, in light of the previous failure in May of 1992, the rather bold step of announcing that CIDES would sponsor a one-day seminar on human rights after ICMI's annual national meeting in December. The fact that this was the first national event to be sponsored by CIDES prompted some observers to wonder whether the meeting would, in fact, be allowed. Despite rumors that it was to be banned by security officials, the meeting did take place. Moreover, as with the attempted May meeting on human rights, this conference included presentations by prominent human rights activists from outside ICMI, such as T. Mulya Lubis.

The CIDES leadership's bold commitment to human rights issues did not end there. The Center publishes two newsletters and a journal, *Afkar*. When the first issue of *Afkar* appeared in February of 1993, it astounded even many ICMI members by reprinting six of the texts given by panelists at the December human rights meetings, several of which contained unusually frank assessments of the human rights situation in Indonesia. At first, Minister Habibie privately expressed concern that the pilot issue of a journal promoted as ICMI's publication flagship should concentrate on such a controversial issue. But, forced to decide whether he would go along with the journal's publication, Habibie affirmed his stance that CIDES should be independent, inclusive of a variety of perspectives, and willing to take on timely issues. While some observers had feared that Adi Sasono's daring action might cost him his job, Habibie made a point of expressing his confidence in him and the open discussion of human rights issues he was promoting.

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<sup>79</sup> Based on interviews with junior ICMI staff involved in the conference preparations, July 1992. Though reporters from several news organizations were present at the human rights conference, the police closure was mentioned in only one press report, "ICMI pun Kena Semprit," *Tempo*, May 9, 1992.

<sup>80</sup> In theory, membership in ICMI is open to every Muslim with a grade school education and a "concern for the national environment." Admission, however, requires supporting letters from two existing members. In interviews, some independent members complained that, from the beginning, many recruits were government bureaucrats, designed to dilute the influence of independents in the organization.

### Conclusion: Islam, State, and Civil Society

We are so accustomed to thinking . . . only of politicians using religion for political ends, that it is extremely hard for us to understand what politics might look like if we could see it through religious eyes, or in a religious perspective, and thus imagine the possibility of religious people using politics for religious ends.

—Benedict Anderson<sup>81</sup>

What we saw fifteen or twenty years ago, described by Geertz as *abangan* and *priyayi*, that almost doesn't exist anymore. Today it's clear that the great majority of people want to become Islamic.

—Harry Chan, Founder and Director, CSIS<sup>82</sup>

For the moment it would be premature to forecast ICMI's future. Just as the timing of its founding was shaped by national politics, its future will be too. One thing that will likely affect its profile in years to come will be the background and size of its membership. A continuing influx of government bureaucrats may dilute the influence of independent Muslims and further undermine the organization's autonomy. Though Chairman Habibie once spoke of recruiting one of every five Indonesian Muslims to the organization—a program which might have excited lively opposition from the military—Wardiman Djojonegoro, his vice chairman (and, as of March 1993, the new minister of education and culture), now cites a more modest goal of 100,000. Membership as of August 1992 was about 11,000, with offices in all of Indonesia's provinces and several countries abroad. By March 1993 membership was reported to have grown to 40,000. Significant growth beyond these figures remains uncertain, dependent as it is on the continuing support of the president and the allaying of security concerns.

But if its future is unclear, ICMI's history is already revealing. At the very least, it reminds us that the well-worn formulas on Indonesian politics and religion are no longer sufficient for understanding the changing nature of Islam and society there. In particular, the identification of the government as a bastion of "*abangan-ism*" deeply hostile to "Islam" now seems rather simplistic, ignoring as it does the diversity within the government, and, equally important, the far-reaching changes that have taken place in Islam and Javanism themselves.

This is not to deny that there have been, and continue to be, fundamental differences of opinion between various actors within the state apparatus concerning the proper role of Islam in government and society. The first years of the New Order government were marked by initiatives which limited not only the political power of Islam but its civil influence as well. From a Muslim perspective, the most lamentable of these was the government's decision to allow Christian missionaries free access to ex-PKI villages in Java, which is to say, access to people whom Muslims regarded as members of the *umat*, however nominal or heterodox their profession of the faith. But there were other measures as well, measures that revealed a strong interest on the part of some officials in restricting the political and civil influence of Islam.

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<sup>81</sup> "Religion and Politics in Indonesia Since Independence," in *Religion and Social Ethos in Indonesia*, ed. Benedict Anderson, Mitsuo Nakamura, and Mohammad Slamet (Clayton: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1977), p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> Interview, July 6, 1993.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, government policies—or again (to underscore the fact that on matters of civil religion the New Order regime has been far from monolithic) different bureaus and agencies within government—gave evidence of a more complex attitude toward Islam. Restrictions on political Islam remained in full force, and the drive to require all organizations to accept the Pancasila diminished even further the political influence of the putatively Islamic party, the PPP. Behind the scenes, however, other bureaus within the government implemented programs less hostile to Muslim interests, especially in the religious field. The actions of Christian missionaries were severely restricted through the joint efforts of the Interior Ministry and the Department of Religion. The Department of Religion built mosques and madrasas. Its support for *dakwah* proselytization stemmed the tide of Hindu and Christian conversion and reinforced a counter-process of Islamization that has had significant impact even in Javanist portions of the countryside. Governors and bupati exchange Islamic greetings at public events, and are prominently featured in television coverage celebrating Muslim holidays. In 1988 rules for religious education in the schools were reinforced. In 1989 the authority of the nation's Islamic courts was strengthened, over the strenuous objections of secular-nationalist members of parliament. In 1990, after months of stormy protest, the government finally allowed Muslim school girls to wear *jilbab* (religious veils) to classes. In 1991 an Islamic bank was established. Also in 1991, shortly after ICMI's founding, President Suharto became Haji Muhammad Suharto, after his celebrated pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>83</sup> Finally, in several widely reported cases between 1990 to 1993, the government prosecuted and secured harsh prison terms against a journalist and comic performers accused of slandering Islam.<sup>84</sup>

In themselves these events do not point to a decisive break with the policies of the early New Order. Some observers might be tempted to dismiss them as symbolic gestures. But if they are symbolic, they are not “merely” symbolic. Rather, they point to an ongoing and unstable process whereby changes in society—in particular, the growing influence of Islam in the bureaucracy and urban middle class—have led some in the higher echelons of government to look at Islam in new ways. Some have clearly begun to take their faith more

<sup>83</sup> An article on the president's pilgrimage in *Tempo*, July 6, 1991, “Bukan Haji Politik,” provides an unusually frank assessment of the political considerations that influenced Suharto's trip. At the same time, however, the report highlights the fact that president's profession of Muslim devotion has a deeper precedent than the early 1990s. Among other things, it notes that the president reads Arabic script and received a portion of his education in Muhammadiyah schools. One could add here that, while many Indonesianists in the West continue to speak as if Suharto's religious ideas remain unchanged, there is ample evidence that he began to broaden his views beginning in the early 1980s. For example, around that time the president hired a well-known Islamic preacher, Kyai Haji Qosim Nursekha, to train his family in Islamic devotion. The president's interest in mysticism continued through this period, but it is interesting to note that one of his most influential mystical counselors, H. Zahid Husein, is said to have played a role in the 1980s in encouraging Javanist mystical sects to identify with Islam and distance themselves from Christianity.

<sup>84</sup> The most heated incident was the “Monitor Case,” in which the government demanded and won a prison term of five years against Arswendo Atmowiloto, a popular journalist at the Christian-owned tabloid *Monitor*. Arswendo was responsible for a poll in which readers listed the Prophet Muhammad as eleventh among the individuals they most admired. This may not be an inaccurate measure of the views of *Monitor's* readership, a large portion of which was Christian and Chinese. But the inclusion of the Prophet along side ordinary individuals was seen by militant Muslims as blasphemous and insulting, and excited violent street protests. In response to these actions the government moved to secure Arswendo's conviction. The government's handling of the incident caused concern among Western observers, and a fair number of liberal Muslims, who saw it as an example of the way in which the symbols of Islamic solidarity may be abused by those seeking political advantage. See “News From Asia Watch,” April 10, 1991. More recent prosecutions for slandering Islam have included two cases against student-artists who have mimicked Islamic devotion during their performances. See “Terpeleset di Hari Rabu,” *Tempo*, June 6, 1992, p. 34 and “Terpeleset di Ketoprak,” *Tempo*, January 16, 1993.



seriously. Others, noting shifting winds, have simply seen a strategic advantage in charting a new course, even if they themselves feel no particular piety. And still others in the military and government remain neutral or even hostile to the opening to Islam. As one government official told me in 1992, some fear that an effort to "play the Muslim card" may get dangerously out of hand, ultimately "ruining everything the New Order has accomplished."

Whatever the balance of forces at present, the complexity of this situation indicates that the characterizations of government cultural policies as "*abangan*" or, worse yet, "secularist" in some Western writings now have little meaning. It is doubtful that such a monolithic characterization was ever fair to the complexity of religious interests struggling within the government. Such pioneering figures as Djohan Effendi, Dawam Rahardjo, and Nurcholish Madjid seemed to have sensed this from the start, and maneuvered accordingly. The strategy pursued by these advocates of Islamic renewal has born fruits that, fifteen or even ten years ago, most Indonesianist scholars in the West would have thought unimaginable.

For the Muslim community itself, the establishment of ICMI and the growing influence of Muslim institutions have, as Aswab Mahasin put it, "made many people who were previously embarrassed about their faith, because it looked backward and unmodern, proud to act like Muslims." For many devout Muslims these achievements have real relevance for their society. Many see the state and politics not as ends in themselves, but as means for the creation of a greater good, the realization of Islamic ideals in society. For such people, the symbolism of Islamic devotionism is not just symbolic, but the very substance of an ethical order.

Inevitably, however, recent Muslim successes have also raised questions, questions that will acquire special urgency if the Muslim middle class or its governmental advocates come to exercise greater political influence. In a Western historical idiom, these questions have to do with the nature of the "civil" society toward which the Muslim community aspires. For a few Islamist purists, of course, the very idea of a civil society is suspect because it is seen as a Western creation and an abnegation of one of their most cherished ideals: that religion can and should serve as the groundwork for the reformation of society as a whole. The concept of religion implicit in the idea of civil society is a peculiarly restricted, uncomprehensive one. Rather than providing a master plan for the whole of society, religion under this model primarily serves as a moral reference point for legal, economic, and political structures. "Civil" religion may be influential and informative, but it is not exhaustively determinative of state and societal institutions.<sup>85</sup>

Most devout Muslims profess allegiance to the idea that Islam is a total way of life. But the implications of this truism for Muslim visions of modern society are quite varied, as different Muslims interpret its truth in profoundly different ways. For those for whom it means that Islam can and should impose an all-encompassing legal-political system on society, the Western notion of civil society seems decidedly anemic. It suffers from the same deficiencies that, in some Muslims' eyes, modern Christianity does: it places religion too much at the margins, making it appear as if, whatever its professed goals, religion lacks the capacity and the will to reform the whole of social life.

Whatever their vision of Islam and society, Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia will continue to confront the question of just how comprehensive a role Islam can and should play

<sup>85</sup> This, for example, is the concept of religion that underlies Robert Bellah's concept of civil religion in America. See his *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

in societal reformation. Is it a total system, or should its societal role be conceived on analogy with the concept of civil religion in the West, serving as a source of inspiration and motivation but not as the charter for an all-embracing social system?

Abdurrahman Wahid anticipated these controversies in a small paper presented at a conference at Monash University four and one-half years before ICMI's founding, where he stated:

"Different Muslim groups have responded [to this rising consciousness of Islam] by formulating two main strategies to achieve those objectives. The first is by idealizing Islam as the only feasible social system able to maintain true democracy, strict adherence to law and economic justice. The so-called 'Islamization process' taking place in the life of the whole nation should be used to promote the idea of an 'Islamic society' in Indonesia. This strategy of struggling for an Islamic society in Indonesia naturally collides with the other strategy. According to the so-called 'soft' groups, Islam plays an important role in the life of the nation, if only for the reason that Muslims constitute the overwhelming majority of the population. But the role Islam should play is not derived from the idealization of itself as the only alternative to the existing situation, but rather as the inspirational base for a national framework of a democratic society. As such, Islam is not an alternative to other social systems, but a complementary factor among a wide spectrum of other factors in the nation's life. A bitter debate is therefore unavoidable between those opposing views. . . . As of now, it is not clear where the support of the Muslim middle class will go to."<sup>86</sup>

As this statement implies, Wahid himself is an outspoken proponent of the "national" rather than "Islamic" society idea. In recent years, he has expressed concern over the way the government has courted certain circles within the Muslim community. He has cautioned that the government should make clear its opposition to fundamentalism and support Muslims, like himself, committed to the idea of Islam as a moral influence rather than a totalistic program. Not surprisingly, he expresses disappointment at the fact that, so far, the government has not responded positively to his appeals.<sup>87</sup>

Other intellectuals, like Sugeng Sarjadi, a former HMI activist who, in 1992, shocked his Muslim friends by joining the PDI party and running for the DPR, go even further than Wahid.<sup>88</sup> Recently Sarjadi has publicly criticized his Islamic colleagues for, in his view, once again confusing incidental opportunities with Islam's deeper values. Muslims have been seduced, he says, by the government's embrace of Islamic symbolism. Meanwhile, what are really needed are principles of justice and fair play that can be implemented for Indonesians of all faiths:

"What's the meaning of this religion, Islam? If an abangan makes the pilgrimage and becomes a santri, what's the point? Is that Islam? Make the pilgrimage but add to it corruption, what do you get? [Naik haji ditambah korupsi, jadi apa sih?] Isn't Islam really

<sup>86</sup> "Indonesia's Muslim Middle Class: An Imperative or a Choice?" in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, ed. Kanter and Young, p. 24.

<sup>87</sup> Wahid's standing in the Muslim community has been hurt, however, by his perceived ties to the former minister of defense and security, Benny Murdani. Since the 1980s, Wahid made no effort to hide the fact that he had regular conversations with Murdani, insisting that it was better that Murdani hear Muslim perspectives on Islam rather than security reports alone. As tensions between Murdani and Suharto rose in the early 1990s, however, Wahid's foes played up his ties to Murdani, and they celebrated when the president removed Wahid from the National Assembly.

<sup>88</sup> Interview August 3, 1992.

about universal values of justice? Can you buy the symbolism of Islam without its ideals of justice?"

Other Muslim intellectuals, including such independent figures as Dawam Rahardjo and Lukman Harun, insist that the dichotomy of Islamic symbolism and practical justice may be a false one. They point out that one cannot create the ethical discipline required to guarantee justice in Indonesian society by leaving Islamic morality at the doorway to the halls of government. If Islam is to be a force for social reformation, its high standards must be carried into government. How otherwise can it work to inspire and reform? Muslim values cannot simply "complement" national institutions, they must underpin them. "I'm not for a society based merely on national identity alone," Dawam said in interview, "because it violates the principles of Islamic universalism." Ultimately, he added, it renders the Islamic reformation of society ineffectual, because it fails to provide the values needed to make democracy and economic justice realizable.

Quite aside, then, from the politics of elite rivalries, the ICMI example provides insight into what will likely be a matter of intense debate within Indonesia's Muslim community over the next few years. For the moment, it should be emphasized, that debate is not between liberals and "fundamentalists," but among a leadership that is, by the standards of international Islam, among the most sophisticated and liberal in the Muslim world. It is a leadership which, if it succeeds in its hope of creating a modern and pluralistic Indonesia, could serve as a model for other Islamic societies.

In the long run, however, the debate between different types of Muslim leaders and different visions of Islam will be shaped by the ability of the present Muslim leadership to deliver on their promise to bring an ever-growing portion of the Muslim populace into national life. There is, of course, a widespread belief, endorsed even in certain government ministries, that up to now Muslims have not been accorded their fair share of development. The strength of this idea among the Muslim middle class has had much to do with their support for ICMI and Minister Habibie. Whatever ICMI or Habibie's fate, this perception is likely to remain a powerful force on the Indonesian scene. It will give practical urgency to a debate about different visions of Islam and different ideals of what Indonesia should become.

