
REVIEW ESSAY: "DISCOVERING" ISLAMIC LAW

Arskal Salim. *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia.* Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007. 256 pp.

R. Michael Feener. *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 270 pp.

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Islam was for many years a relative backwater within English-language scholarship on Indonesia. Islamic law, however, was treated with particular indifference. I can think of only two monographs on Indonesian Islamic legal institutions published in the last half of the twentieth century—Daniel Lev's book about the Islamic Courts published in 1972,¹ and Atho Mudzar's study of the *fatwas* of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia published in 1993.² In addition to these books, there has also been a handful of articles touching on some aspect of Islamic law, mostly related to the national marriage law.

No one would describe Islamic law as neglected today. In contrast to the two books on the subject that appeared in the five decades before 2000, at least seven have been published in the eight years since.³ In addition to this surge in scholarship on Islamic

¹ Daniel S. Lev, *Islamic Courts in Indonesia: A Study in the Political Bases of Legal Institutions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972).

² Muhammad Atho Mudzar, *Fatwas of the Council of Indonesian Ulama: A Study of Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia 1975-1988* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993).

³ In addition to the books reviewed here, the other recent books about Islamic law in English include John Bowen, *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); M. B. Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change through Contemporary Fatawa* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); Nadirsyah Hosen, *Shari'a and Constitutional Reform in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007); R. Michael Feener and Mark E. Cammack, ed., *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and M. B. Hooker, *Indonesian Syariah: Defining a National School of Islamic Law* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008). In addition to this English-language scholarship, an extremely

law by Indonesianists, scholars of Islamic law are taking a greater interest in Indonesia.⁴ This change in attitude is to some extent attributable to the fact that Islamic legal institutions have assumed greater prominence since the collapse of the New Order in 1998. During the New Order period, public advocacy for implementation of Islamic law occurred only when the regime invited it and then only within defined limits. With the opening of the political process following Suharto's departure, debates over the role of Islam in the Indonesian state have revived, and major institutional and structural changes since 1999 have resulted in wider application of Islamic doctrine.⁵

Thus, part of the explanation for recent scholarly interest in Islamic law is that there is more to write about. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that because Islamic law is more important now, it was unimportant in the past. Law is central to common understandings of Islam, and while English-language scholarship on the subject is scarce, writing about Islamic law in Indonesian exists in great abundance. This scholarly literature and the study of Islamic law generally have much to offer those seeking a better understanding of Indonesia and Indonesian Islam. The value of the Indonesian experience for those interested in Islam and Islamic law is even greater. Though it comes somewhat late, the discovery of Indonesian Islamic law is certainly welcome.

Arskal Salim, a lecturer at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, is an example of the creative and highly qualified young Indonesian scholars currently writing about Islamic law. In *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia*, Salim examines programs for enforcement of Islamic doctrine in Indonesia in order to explore broader issues relating to the compatibility of Islamic law with the conditions of the modern national state. Salim argues that there is an inherent tension or contradiction in the type of hybrid Islamic and secular legal systems found in many contemporary majority Muslim countries that combine legal institutions and doctrines developed in Europe and North America with elements from the Islamic tradition. The tension or, to use Salim's preferred term, "dissonance," that inevitably accompanies the implementation of a formalized understanding of Islamic law by secular nation-states takes two forms. "Dissonant constitutionality" arises when the constitution prescribes enforcement of a particular interpretation of Islamic doctrine. In this situation, a Muslim may be prevented from following her own

important book that is so far available only in German is Thoralf Hanstein, *Islamisches Recht und Nationales Recht: Eine Untersuchung zum Einfluß des Islamischen Rechts auf die Entwicklung des Modernen Familienrechts am Beispiel Indonesiens* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003). The first volume of this work provides a comprehensive overview of state enactments related to Islamic law beginning with the earliest Dutch decrees through the 1974 Marriage Act, the 1989 Religious Courts Act, and the Compilation of Islamic Law. A second volume provides an immensely useful collection of laws and related documents in their original Dutch and Indonesian.

⁴ An important recent book by Abdullahi An-Na'im devotes an entire chapter to Indonesia. See Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'a* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 225–66. After surveying the diverse range of views about Islam and the state found in contemporary Indonesia, An-Na'im suggests that Nurcholish Madjid's thinking could serve as one possible model for his (An-Na'im's) vision of an Islamic politics operating in the context of a secular state.

⁵ The most notable changes are the implementation of Islamic Qanun in Aceh and the promulgation of a variety of morals regulations by local governments elsewhere. Other less well-known developments include the expansion of Islamic court jurisdiction to include disputes based on Islamic economic principles and the promulgation of a Compilation of Islamic Economic Law for use by the courts in deciding these cases.

religious convictions if those convictions conflict with officially mandated practice. Imposition of a constitutional mandate to enforce Islamic law could also result in the differential application of constitutional rights if those rights were found to be incompatible with the religious law of some groups, but not others. The second type of dissonance, "dissonant legislation," results from enactment of Islamic doctrine in statutes. As Salim explains:

... the formal implementation of Shari'ah in a nation-state often produces tensions between different legal sovereignties, causes contradiction in its enactment, creates disagreement between national laws, raises conflict with higher laws, results in inappropriate legal drafting, leads to ambivalences in practice, and brings inequality between citizens (p. 4).

In explaining the appearance of this awkward union of incompatible legal ideologies, Salim turns to a discussion of the legacy of the Ottoman millets. Under the millet system, the Ottoman state ceded important powers over matters of personal status to non-state religious authorities. While the millet system ended with the collapse of the Ottoman empire, the legacy of the millet shaped Muslim understandings of the nation-state that became the exclusive form of political organization in the twentieth century. Religious leaders in the former Ottoman territories "considered the nation-state a superstructure that organized religious communities similarly to the millet system, and hence they felt entitled to maintain the implementation of their particular religious law" (p. 40). Although the millet system was not part of the historical experience of Southeast Asian Muslims, Salim argues that early Indonesian Muslim leaders shared a similar vision of the nation-state, and that the implementation of that vision is the source of contemporary dissonance.⁶

Salim argues that the Indonesian state came to resemble the Ottoman millet system because of the role played by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). Although the creation of a ministry of religion was considered and rejected by the constitutional drafting committee in 1945, that decision was reversed after independence as a result of the controversy over what is known as the Jakarta Charter.⁷ The Jakarta Charter refers to language in the preamble to a late draft of the constitution imposing an obligation for adherents of Islam to carry out Islamic law. These so-called "seven words"⁸ were included in the draft that was approved in June of 1945 but then removed before the constitution was formally promulgated on August 18. This eleventh-hour change was reportedly made after representatives from eastern Indonesia threatened to withdraw from the new nation if the seven words were not removed. MORA was created in 1946 as compensation for the elimination of a

⁶ Salim identifies three features of the nation-state that conflict with the existence of an autonomous religious jurisdiction operating within the state (p. 35). First, the state's law-making power is considered to be exclusive; second, legal jurisdiction is territorial rather than personal; and third, nation-states seek to homogenize their populations in order to cultivate national cohesion.

⁷ See R. E. Elson, "Another Look at the Jakarta Charter Controversy of 1945" elsewhere in this issue of *Indonesia*.

⁸ Despite the furor generated by the Jakarta Charter, the text is ambiguous as to whether it imposes an obligation on the state to enforce Islamic law. The seven words that make up the text are: "*dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya*" (the obligation for adherents of Islam to carry out Islamic law).

constitutional guarantee for Islamic law. The effect of this decision, according to Salim, was to constitute Islam as “the dominant millet” in Indonesia (p. 72).

Salim supports his argument about the tension inherent in the application of Islamic law in a modern nation-state with three examples. The first example illustrates the inevitability of dissonant constitutionalism through an examination of campaigns to amend the Indonesian constitution to require enforcement of Islamic law. There have been three such efforts since independence: in the Constituent Assembly during the Sukarno presidency (1957–59); in the Provisional People’s Consultative Assembly at the beginning of the New Order (1966–68); and in the People’s Consultative Assembly sessions during *Reformasi* in the early 2000s. Although all of these efforts failed, Salim uses the debates over this issue to examine the conflicts among the different premises that underlie constitutionalism and religious law. The tension, according to Salim, arises from the fact that Islamic law comprises duties that foster communal values, while constitutionalism is based on individual rights that promote the values of choice and autonomy. The conflict between those two ideologies is presented most starkly in the debates surrounding a proposal to amend the constitution to expand the scope of state protection for individual rights. During consideration of the proposal in the MPR {Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, People’s Consultative Assembly} in 2000, some Islamic parties attempted to qualify constitutional protection of human rights by adding language that would have made those rights subject to religious values. Salim uses these debates to explore more basic conflicts over social values and concludes that “the Islamic faction was less concerned with individual rights and more interested in religious collective rights” (p. 110; citations omitted here).

The second example concerns laws relating to the administration of *zakat* (alms). MORA first proposed legislation to regulate *zakat* in 1967, but it was only in 1999, after Suharto’s removal, that a *zakat* statute was finally passed. The draft law that MORA submitted to the legislature included language that arguably made payment of *zakat* mandatory. Although this language was removed before passage, the 1999 statute expands state involvement in the administration of *zakat* by providing for the regulation of the public and private agencies that collect *zakat*. The significance of this legislation in terms of Salim’s theme is that state involvement with the administration of religious payments has the effect of differentiating among citizens based on religion and conflicts with the principle that citizens stand as equals before the law. More generally, Salim expresses concern over the increasing involvement of the state with religion, and sees in the enactment of the *Zakat* Law a deep and possibly irreversible “permeation of Islamic doctrines in the structure of the secular state” (p. 127).

Salim’s final example looks at the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh. Regional autonomy legislation passed in the years following the collapse of the New Order granted provincial authorities in Aceh new powers to define and enforce Islamic doctrine on matters of dress and morals. Statutes, or *qanun* as they are called, enacted pursuant to those powers mandate compliance with a variety of religious norms and specify punishments for their violation or neglect. Salim’s discussion focuses more on process and the role of state and religious actors in the drafting and enforcement of these *qanun* than on the substance of the laws. He uses the Aceh example to illustrate the problems and distortions that accompany efforts to render religious teachings in a

form and language adapted to the needs of a modern state. The analysis also suggests that transferring control over religious teachings to state institutions will have the effect of diminishing the power of religious authorities.

In his summary of the effect of Islamization efforts over the past several decades, Salim finds that Islamic doctrine has assumed a more prominent role within the Indonesian state than earlier, but it has also been transformed in the process. While "the influence of Islam in the Indonesian legal system has increased significantly since the 1990s," the effect of state enforcement has been to "Indonesianize" or "secularize" the Shari'a.

Islamization of laws in Indonesia entails in part practical secularization of Shari'a, namely, human interference through parliamentary enactment in creating religious obligations that have non-divine character. What are purportedly considered sacred in the national legal system in fact are mostly man-made law, and not necessarily God's law (p. 177).

Challenging the Secular State presents an innovative analysis of a timely and important issue, and Salim supports his arguments with solid empirical research. While the book's central message is both persuasive and significant, a number of the book's theoretical claims strike me as somewhat forced or artificial, and some elements of the critique assume a standard of coherence that real-life legal systems rarely achieve. For example, comparing the Ministry of Religious Affairs to Ottoman millets overstates the degree to which MORA is able to act autonomously, and the efforts by Muslim parties to subject constitutionally guaranteed individual rights to the constraints of religious values is not meaningfully different from what would be expected of nonreligious communitarian conservatives. Although Salim frames the argument in abstract terms as a clash between incompatible legal ideologies, the force and salience of the argument comes primarily from Salim's sensitive analysis of his empirical findings. The most compelling case against state enforcement of a formalized Islamic law comes from Salim's discussion of the consequences of particular Islamization programs. In the details of his case studies, Salim shows that enacting Islamic doctrine as state law both infringes on principles of tolerance and equal treatment guaranteed by the state and also threatens the integrity of religious values by transferring control over religious practices out of the hands of religious leaders.

The enormous benefit to be gained from the study of Islamic law in Indonesia is nowhere better demonstrated than in Michael Feener's *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*. Feener is an associate professor of history and a senior research fellow in the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. This book, which is a revised and expanded version of his PhD dissertation, presents a history of twentieth-century Indonesian Islamic legal thought that is at once sweeping in the breadth and scope of its subject and penetrating and nuanced in its dissection and comparison of ideas and approaches.⁹ Well-versed in both the classical and contemporary Arabic legal

⁹ Michael Feener and I have collaborated on several projects, and we were working on an edited volume on Indonesian Islamic law during the period Mike was revising this book. Although I am mentioned in his Acknowledgments, I did not comment on the manuscript or otherwise assist in the revisions, and can take no credit for the final product.

literature, as well as Indonesian culture and history, Feener maps out pathways of intellectual influence and relates the development of Islamic legal thought to changing social and political conditions in Indonesia. The narrative is structured chronologically, but the book is much more than a description of a succession of thinkers. Feener shows how successive generations both built on the ideas of their predecessors and took the received tradition in new directions in response to changing circumstances and novel influences. Through this process of progressive layering of novel ideas and critical reformulations onto existing approaches, there developed a remarkably rich and varied body of ideas and approaches toward Islamic law.

In his first chapter, Feener lays out a framework for the study by describing social, cultural, and technological transformations at the turn of the twentieth century that disrupted the authority structures and epistemological assumptions that sustained the received tradition and laid the foundation for the development of radically different approaches to Islamic law. These changes were mediated through three new or newly formed institutions: voluntary associations, educational-reform groups, and print media. Their combined effect was to open up novel understandings of the social world, to create new and differently qualified structures of authority, and to re-orient thinking about texts, authority, and interpretation.

Each of the six chapters that constitute the body of the book addresses a different approach to Islamic law as shaped both by a set of hermeneutic and epistemological assumptions and by particular constellations of substantive goals and values defined in relation to the social and political environment of the time. An attempt to provide a complete summary of the viewpoints examined in the book risks serious distortion, since many of the approaches developed in Indonesia have parallels in the work of scholars elsewhere, and the significance of the Indonesian contribution consists in the details of its elaboration. With that in mind, the purpose of what follows is simply to delineate the various directions that Indonesian Islamic thought has taken and give a sense of how these diverse strands have built on and worked off one another to form a distinctive Indonesian discourse.

Feener's Chapter 2, "The Open Gate of *Ijtihad*," describes the emergence of a new attitude and approach toward the Islamic legal tradition that broke the monopoly over legal interpretation held by the classically trained scholars (*ulama*) and thereby opened up space for new voices and modes of interpretation. The essence of this new approach involves bypassing the accumulated corpus of scholarly jurisprudence, or *fiqh*, and undertaking a fresh interpretation of the primary sources of the law. Feener explores this approach through an examination of the work of two of its leading exponents. The first figure, Ahmad (A.) Hassan, is, in many ways, a prime example of the new type of legal scholar. With only limited formal education, Hassan worked as printer, petty trader, and tire-vulcanizer before associating with the reformist organization known as PERSIS (*Persatuan Islam*). He was uncompromising in his condemnation of what he perceived to be unthinking imitation of the work of earlier generations of scholars, and argued for the necessity of a new legal methodology based on a reinvigorated study of the primary sources of the law. The other figure discussed in Chapter 2, Moenawar Chalil, also advocated a return to the original sources, but the radicalism exhibited by Hassan was somewhat tempered in Chalil's thinking as a result of his more traditional

education in the Islamic religious sciences, and he was ultimately unwilling to cast off entirely the accomplishments of earlier generations of jurists.

Chapter 3 focuses on the work of Hasbi ash Shiddieqy and Hazairin. Writing in the first decades after independence, Hasbi and Hazairin provided the clearest and most forceful expression of the idea that Islamic law in Indonesia should be adapted to Indonesian circumstances. Working out of very different scholarly traditions, both called for the creation of a distinct Indonesian or national school of Islamic law. Hasbi, who was trained in the Islamic religious sciences, immersed himself in the Arabic tradition of Islamic law. Hazairin, by contrast, received an academic education studying Indonesian customary law (*adat*) under an eminent Dutch scholar. Hasbi produced scholarly works on subjects corresponding to conventional genres of Islamic scholarship, and he came to the idea of an Indonesian *fiqh* from an engagement with established Islamic scholarly disciplines concerned with doctrinal diversity and comparative methodology. Hazairin’s outlook was shaped by his ethnographic studies of existing Indonesian social systems, and he gave concrete expression to the concept of an Indonesian school of Islamic legal thought through proposals for family and inheritance law doctrines formulated in the idiom of positive law.

Chapter 4 examines efforts to articulate a vision of Islam as the ideological basis for the Indonesian state. The most influential twentieth-century Indonesian Islamist was Muhammad Natsir. After holding a number of high-level government positions in the 1940s and early 1950s, including the post of prime minister, Natsir left the capital in 1958 to join the Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI, Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia), a Sumatra-based Islamist organization intent on rebellion. In 1961, Natsir and other PRRI leaders accepted a government offer of amnesty and surrendered. When it became clear that Islamic political activism would not be permitted under the new Suharto government that came to power in 1965, Natsir turned to non-political strategies for furthering the Islamist agenda. In 1967, Natsir established the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication) to carry forward the program of social and cultural Islamization through the publication of Islamist-oriented literature and the recruitment and training of Islamic preachers. Natsir’s vision of Islam as a totalizing worldview, in which the affairs of this world cannot be separated from considerations of the world to come, reflects conventional Islamist thought. But Natsir provided a distinctive elaboration of those general ideas in his theory of “Theistic Democracy,” a system in which the sovereignty of the people is to be exercised within limits (*hudud*) established by God. One intriguing aspect of Natsir’s thinking and a striking example of the diversity of intellectual influences on Indonesian Islamic legal thought is Natsir’s incorporation of neo-Thomist natural-law theories that gained currency in the middle decades of the twentieth century and shaped the worldwide movement toward constitutionalism and human rights. Natsir’s Natural Law-inspired vision of the Shari‘a, also shared by Anwar Haryono, the other principal figure discussed in Chapter 4, emphasized intuitive or impressionistic approaches to knowledge of the law rather than the complex textual reasoning that characterized the historical tradition.

Chapter 5 discusses a group of thinkers whose understanding of Islamic law was shaped to some degree by their all having received a Western-style academic education. As Feener points out, the feature that distinguishes the thinking of the

“Muslim intellectuals” who are the subject of Chapter 5 is also shared by Islamist thought discussed in the previous chapter—both are “modern formulations which to different extents are selectively framed by certain essentialist assumptions and categories developed in the religious and social thought of the Euro-American tradition” (p. 131). The three representatives of this strain of thought, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Nurcholish Madjid, and Munawir Syadzali, all emphasized the need to avoid both scriptural literalism and an identification of Islamic law with a set of particularistic *fiqh* rulings in order to develop approaches to normative reasoning that are sufficiently flexible to deal with the demands of Muslim society and yet grounded in religious truths as reflected in the essential message of the revealed texts. Within that broad shared outlook, however, there are significant differences among the three thinkers. Rakhmat proposed as one possible model for a contemporary interpretive methodology an approach he calls the “*madhhab akhlaq*,” or “ethics paradigm,” an approach that he sees as having roots in the teachings of the imams of Twelver Shi‘ism. Both Madjid and Syadzali frequently invoked the example of the second Caliph, ‘Umar, as a model for modern *ijtihad*, albeit in support of very different objectives. Syadzali, a career bureaucrat who as minister of religion presided over the preparation and promulgation of the first official statement of Indonesian Islamic law, cited instances in which ‘Umar issued decisions that departed from prior practice to support his proposal to equalize the inheritance shares of male and female heirs. Madjid’s work was at the opposite extreme from Syadzali’s program for law reform; while he expressed admiration for ‘Umar’s approach to Islamic law, he was more concerned with “macro-level discussions of ‘reinterpretation’ than ... with particular technical aspects of legal reasoning” (p. 136).

The social and cultural changes that spawned new understandings of Islamic law in Indonesia were global in nature, and most of the theories developed in Indonesia have counterparts in twentieth-century thought in other parts of the world. Indonesia is, to some extent, unusual, however, in that traditional approaches to Islamic law that focused on the study of the *fiqh* of one of the four Sunni schools of thought survived in Indonesia longer than in most other Muslim societies through their perpetuation in the *pesantren*. The *pesantren* environment, with its emphasis on authority and an attitude of near reverence for the accomplishments of past generations of scholars, would not at first blush seem conducive to the development of creative new approaches to Islamic law. It is somewhat puzzling, therefore, that many of Indonesia’s most creative thinkers are products of *pesantren* training. The explanation for why this should be so becomes apparent in Feener’s discussion of a number of leading examples of this phenomenon in Chapter 6. For scholars schooled in the *fiqh* tradition, Islamic law is neither a closed set of immutable religious dogmas, as depicted in popular stereotypes, nor the essentially standard-less, discretionary decision-making (“*kadi* justice”) that Max Weber regarded as characteristic of the Islamic judge, or *kadi*, but is rather a vast and diverse body of scholarly rulings on points of law together with an (also varied and contested) set of principles and analytical techniques for critically evaluating the reasoning and authority of these rulings in order to make a choice among them. A number of the “new *ulama*” who come from this tradition combine a *fiqh*-inspired legal methodology with a progressive social critique.¹⁰ Sahal Mahfudh, for example,

¹⁰ The other two figures discussed in Chapter 6, Ali Yafie and Ibrahim Hosen, have assumed the historically more typical role of the *ulama* of acting as apologists for the regime’s policy du jour.

advocates the reconceptualization of *fiqh* as an interpretive methodology that can serve as a "dynamic 'counter discourse' to the hegemonic thought structures of modernity on Islam" (p. 169), while Masdar Mas'udi argues that the institution of *zakat* should be made the basis for conceptualizing the state's obligation to use public funds in ways that are both responsible and "advance the spirit of justice that animates the Islamic religious obligation of almsgiving" (p. 179).

The final substantive chapter discusses developments since the end of the Suharto regime, in 1998. Unlike previous chapters that contain in-depth discussions of a small number of individuals, Chapter 7 presents more summary treatments of a broad spectrum of emerging new voices and movements. In the diverse array of perspectives surveyed here, one sees both the further development of ideas and approaches articulated by earlier generations of Indonesian thinkers as well as the impact of recent global trends and currents of thought.

In the book's conclusion, Feener writes that Indonesia is "arguably the world's most vibrant center for contemporary Islamic thought" (p. 225). That assessment might be considered extravagant to observers accustomed to dismissing Indonesia as, at best, peripheral to the Islamic intellectual tradition. But it is precisely because Indonesia's contribution is not well understood that this is such an important book. What stands out in contemporary discussions of Islamic law in Indonesia is:

... the remarkable degree to which Indonesian thinkers have developed capacities for mediating not merely between research methods and results from "the West" and traditional Islamic sources, but especially for their creative integration of diverse strands of modern Muslim thought from around the world into communication with a broad range of ideas developed in Europe, North America, and elsewhere by non-Muslim thinkers. The thought world of many young Indonesian thinkers and activists has thus come to be characterized by a considerable degree of movement back and forth between classical texts and modern Muslim writings from the Middle East and elsewhere, as well as Euro-American literature in the fields of Law, the Humanities, and the social sciences (pp. 225–26).

The effort to comprehend and faithfully render this complex, multi-dimensional intellectual enterprise is a tall order; it requires an ability to navigate a vast scholarly and confessional intellectual landscape, as well as a sensitivity to the Indonesian cultural and political context in which those ideas develop and interact. Michael Feener is virtually alone in possessing the qualifications necessary to undertake such a study; in *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*, he has written a book that is worthy of his subject.