

## Appendix D: Muslim Intellectuals' Movement at Glance

Since Indonesian independence, in 1945, along with the process of educational democratisation, there has been a strong demand for education, including tertiary education (Ranuwiharjo 1991:53). Because of their underprivileged condition, in terms of status and finance, very few students, who came from santri background, had access to higher education (Tempo 14.6.1986). In the 1960s, when the number of higher level education institutions increased rapidly, students from santri circles began to have a wider access to continue their study to the tertiary level. The result of this was that in the 1970s those students who graduated from various tertiary educational institutions began to occupy bureaucratic positions in the government, and some of them became involved in private and business circles.

In the political sphere, however, they did not give voice to their view, especially because at that period, as McVey (1983:199) puts it, the New Order regime of Suharto “[restricted much more] the political and social role of Islam than the preceding leftist government of Sukarno had dared”. Such restrictions, as a matter of fact, had been experienced by Indonesian Muslims since the late 19th century, when the Dutch began to colonise the Indonesian archipelago. The Dutch realised that Islamic political power threatened their domination. C. Snouck Hurgronje, the architect of Dutch policy on Muslims affairs, discouraged any Islamic involvement in politics (McVey 1983:200). Later, long after the Dutch and other colonial powers left the Indonesian archipelago, the Islamic de-politisation process continued to take place.

From such a continuous restriction, Muslims became much more aware of the sensitivity of an Islamic attribute in political sphere, since it had always been identified as anti-government and with rebellions to establish an Islamic state. Moreover, they also became aware of the continuous political defeat experienced by Muslims by other powers on the political stage. This awareness led to the need for a new “format” (Ma'arif 1993:177) or “break through” (Tempo June 1986) of Islam in its involvement in Indonesian development in general. In the late 1960s, Indonesian Muslim intellectuals set out a new step of Islamic history in Indonesia. Instead of expressing Islam through political jargon, they promoted what was called “cultural Islam”. By this new strategy, they tried not to be involved in mass politics, instead they applied a cultural approach to Islamic revitalisation, which in the long term would neutralise military and government suspicion and strengthen the “roots of Islam in the nation as a whole”. According to this new view, Islam should not serve as a political ideology, but as a “source of ethical and cultural guidance” (Hefner 1994:4, cf. Ali 1986:175–191).

The emergence of this Muslim intellectual movement cannot be separated from the role of Nurcholis Madjid, an ex-leader of the Islamic Students' Organisation (HMI, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam). One of the most controversial themes proposed by him was "Islam, yes. Islamic Party no". In his view, "there is nothing sacred, except Allah. Islamic parties are not sacred, therefore, it was wrong to say that those who did not vote for the Islamic party were not Muslim" (Tempo June 1986). In 1970s, this idea was criticised as being "secular", that is trying to separate Islam from political life. Various strong criticisms came from Islamic militant groups, including various Islamic movements which began to develop in the same period of time. Despite these criticisms, this Islamic cultural approach with its friendly (*ramah*) image gradually gained support from Muslim intellectuals, and the most important point was that the government seemed not to be allergic to this new format of Islam. Relations between Muslim intellectuals and the government became much more intimate, in the sense that those who promoted cultural Islam either voluntarily or forcefully supported government policies. This could be seen for example when the government launched a "Mass Organisation" act, which forced all Islamic organisations to replace their foundation (*azas*) with Pancasila. Almost all Muslim intellectuals, after a heated polemic, supported or accepted the rule. In the view of militant Muslims, such a decision was a major defeat for Muslims. Such accomodative attitudes of Muslim intellectuals towards the government might be understood also as the only way to survive in an emergency situation (*darurat*), because if they openly opposed or disagreed with government policies, they took risks. For more detail information about Muslim intellectual movement, its history, classification, and its role in national development see Federspiel's *Muslim Intellectuals and National Development in Indonesia* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1992). See also Muhammad Kamal Hasan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to "New Order" Modernization in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980), Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986), and M.Syafi'i Anwar's thesis, *Hubungan Islam dan Birokrasi Orde Baru: Study tentang Pemikiran dan Perilaku Politik Cendekiawan Muslim dalam Orde Baru 1966–1993* (Jakarta: Fakultas Pasca-Sarjana Universitas Indonesia, 1994).