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Negotiating Islamisation and resistance : a study of religions, politics and social change in West Java from the early 20th Century to the present

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CHAPTER THREE

THE WANE OF *ALIRAN KEBATINAN* AND RELIGIOUS RESURGENCE: THE NEW ORDER'S POLITICS ON RELIGION, ISLAMISATION AND CHRISTIAN REVIVAL (1965-1990)

This chapter discusses a crucial stage in the development of Islam in Indonesia in the shifting political context in the aftermath of the 30 September 1965 coup attempt, which produced unprecedented political turmoil and seriously damaged President Soekarno's legitimacy. In this context Soeharto came officially to power in 1968 to lead the New Order Regime.¹ Soeharto was acutely aware of complex mixture of fear of Communism and of Islamism as represented by the PKI and DI/TII ideologies fighting for Communism and the investment of the Islamic State. Soeharto and his regime made this fear work for them through the promotion of remarkable socio-political changes in order to gain control over the grassroots and by so doing causing strict control of social and political life. One such change was the promotion of what Boland called 'religious freedom' even if this came with restrictions.² In his words:

.... and religion was in favour as never before. Freedom of religion has also often been stressed since 1965, but with this restriction: that such freedom does not include the freedom to be non-religious, let

¹ Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, pp. 149-151.

² With loyal support from all his aides in the military and the civil forces, Soeharto sought to exercise total control over politics and society. Communists, actual and alleged, were exterminated while the leaders of the left-wing Nationalists were eliminated. Since then the Army played a crucial role, soon becoming the dominant political force. The New Order kept control of the economy by regulating foreign investment. See Herbert Feith, 'Political Control, Class Formation and Legitimacy in Soeharto's Indonesia', in *Indonesian Politics: A Reader*, Christine Doran (ed.) (Centre for South-east Asian Politics: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1987), p. 222. See also Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, p. 149 and Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, Revised Edition (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 135.

alone anti-religious. ...So it came about that after Soekarno's fall his slogan of 1964 once more became topical: the Indonesian people as well as the Indonesian state "must have a God and a religion" (*harus ber-Tuhan dan harus beragama*). It is undeniable that many religious leaders considered this development a reason for new hope.³

It would seem like a paradox that the promotion of religious freedom boiled down to efforts to obliterate the (religious) native syncretic creed across Java. However, with reference to its first principle of the belief in One God, the regime provided the Pancasila with deep religious meaning and by so doing it silently warned the *Aliran Kebatinan* followers in West Java not to take side with the leftists or their sympathizers as they had done in the past.⁴ The anti-Communist mentality of the regime provided the setting for policy making that more or less outlawed the existence of all syncretic movements and, as a consequence, negated their growth and influence in society.

In a similar way, the regime 'abolished' political Islam but promoted cultural Islam and by doing so provided the ground for the unprecedented increase in Islamic institutions and expressions of Islamic cultural identity.⁵ As a consequence, Muslim leaders and particularly the Modernists used this context for the promotion of *dakwah*, after their leaders' pursuit for the rehabilitation of the suspended Masyumi party (of course) was rejected. This *dakwah* campaign, particularly at the grassroots level, had a tremendous impact on the social structures in the decades to come.

Christian leaders also greatly benefited from these remarkable changes. This was so despite the disagreement and the tension they had with Muslim leaders and activists across the country on various matters pertaining to the ethics of propagation, the construction of houses of worship, the receipt of foreign aid, and so on.⁶ As a result of their efforts, Christians won large numbers of converts and they used Soeharto's political change as a solid basis for demanding the unequivocal implementation of article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human

³ Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, p. 149.

⁴ Van Bruinessen, 'Saints, Politics and Sufi Bureaucrats', p. 98.

⁵ *Idem*.

⁶ The study on these issues refers to Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened: Muslim-Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order* (Leiden/Amsterdam: ISIM/Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 21-104.

Rights (UDHR), which guarantees the freedom of religion, including the freedom to convert.⁷ Coincidentally, it was in this context that Christians capitalised on their considerable advance in terms of human capital because they were better schooled and consequently had gained better access to higher positions in society. The people in parts of West Java were aware of this, and also realised that Christian social institutions like hospitals and schools were of a higher quality than others in the area. This made conversion to Christianity for them even more interesting.⁸

Soeharto's political change tremendously influenced the Indonesian political context in entire regions, including West Java. Readers should keep in mind that at the time, all political expression in West Java was in fact a direct reflection of the political dynamics in Jakarta which demanded compliance from all provinces and which influenced the political atmosphere in these provinces.

Soeharto's Politics on Religions and Pressures Against *Aliran Kebatinan*

Soeharto's Regime's Claim of Pancasila and Anti-Communist Mentality

Soeharto's politics on *Aliran Kebatinan* and religion were drawn on the following premises: *First*, Soeharto officially recognised the *Aliran Kebatinan* as '*kepercayaan*' (belief) distinctive from '*agama*' (religion). This constitutional recognition should have ensured the state's protection of this native syncretic creed. This was not the case, however, as Soeharto declared on one occasion that a *kepercayaan* is not a religion but that all religions are *kepercayaan*. The New Order regime slowly marginalised the *Aliran Kebatinan* across West Java and pressured its followers to embrace an official religion. In 1967, the regime tasked the Coordinating Body for the Surveillance of Currents of Belief in Society (BAKOR PAKEM), established in the 1950s, to keep a close eye on *Aliran Kebatinan* groups which were suspected of sympathising with the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI). This

⁷ *Idem*, p. 50.

⁸ Interview with Romo Abu Kasman, chief pastor of the Cigugur Church, Cigugur, Kuningan, 6 August 2009.

suspicion fed the social stigma that descended on them, especially from among believers, both Muslims and Christians.⁹ From 1967 onward, the government also required some hours of religious instruction in state schools that promoted orthodox religions associated with modern schools, literacy and modernity.¹⁰ Under this political pressure and within this shifting social context, the *Aliran Kebatinan* groups and their followers, the *Penghayat*, suffered and failed to prosper.

Second, the regime officially recognised five religions and each citizen was required to embrace one of them. Religious elites were given strong support to conduct *dakwah* or missionary activities. Freedom of religion was promoted from 1965 onwards and atheism was prohibited. Indeed, in a speech before the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), Soeharto proclaimed that every citizen must embrace one formal religion; otherwise they would be considered atheist. The adage was that if one is an atheist, one is a communist. Islam and Christianity were supported in their capacities as counter-ideologies to Communism rather than as moral and spiritual teachings.

Third, religion was useful; radical political Islam or Islamism was not.¹¹ While Soeharto sanctioned the use of the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP), a fusion of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesian Muslim Party (Partai Muslimin Indonesia, PARMUSI) and others, as a conduit for Muslim political sentiment, any attempt to use religion as a political ideology was not to be tolerated. Nonetheless, the regime viewed the Party as a potential threat and hence kept controlling it. Here, while it is unclear exactly what kind of relation between religion and politics Soeharto approved of, it was obvious that he wanted a separation of religion and ideology. Soeharto, therefore, crushed any initiative that might lead to the 'ideologisation' of religion.

Fourth, although hostile towards the use of Islam as a political ideology, Soeharto sought to strengthen his relationship with Muslims. To this end, he lent considerable support to Muslims, especially on matters pertaining to their social and cultural interests, often at the expense of Christian aspirations.¹² By satisfying the Muslims, Soeharto

⁹ Interview, Andre Hernandi, Bandung, 7 July 2010.

¹⁰ Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java*, p. 155.

¹¹ Feith, 'Political Control', p. 222.

¹² Perhaps the best examples to note are Decree No. 1/1969 on Religious

hoped to avoid political instability. At the same time, he sought to firm up an electoral constituency which would help maintain the political *status quo* and his share in it.

Fifth, at first blush, this political stance seems to have favoured Muslims over Christians. In fact, this was not the case. Rather, the New Order regime treated Christians as important allies, many of whom were well-educated technocrats appointed to ministerial and other high-ranking offices. But in essence such policy did not mean to favour the Christians. Rather it was created in the best interests of the regime itself. It was hoped that Christians would contribute to the regime's development campaign and lend a hand in negotiations with Western donors. The New Order regime thus paid attention to the social and religious interests of Christians living in Christian-majority regions, such as Papua, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) and North Sulawesi.

Aliran Kebatinan's Continued Decline

Within these political parameters, *Aliran Kebatinan*, once the worldview of the overwhelming majority of Sundanese and Javanese, suddenly found itself on the back foot. At the expense of *Aliran Kebatinan*, Soeharto's political succession facilitated Islamisation on the one hand and Christianisation on the other. The revitalisation of Islam saw significant social transformation after the 1980s, resulting from *Dakwahism*, while that of Christianity was reflected in the growth and numbers of its adherents and institutions. This coincidence of growth contributed to a sense of competitiveness which ultimately resulted in tension between Muslims and Christians, built up around a number of issues including the ethics of proselytisation, the construction of houses of worship, accusations of forced conversion, the need for pluralism, etcetera. This chapter will discuss the context that gave rise to the

Propagation decreed jointly by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Religious Affairs, and Law No. 1/1974 on Marriage. It seems obvious that the latter represents Muslim voices rather than Christian aspirations. Article 2 (1) of the law states that "marriage is valid only if it is conducted in accordance with the religious laws and beliefs of the parties." This article has produced the common view that inter-religious marriage is forbidden in Indonesia. A good reference to this issue is Ratno Lukito's 'The enigma of legal pluralism in Indonesian Islam: the case of interfaith marriage', *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2008, pp. 176–187.

dialectical dynamic in which these faiths were engaged. Before that, we will explore how the heavy pressure on the *Aliran Kebatinan* has institutionally weakened their creeds and socially marginalised their followers. Especially across West Java, the New Order politics on *Aliran Kebatinan* and religion had several repercussions.

The *first* was that the growth in number of Islamic institutions such as mosques, *pesantrens* and *madrasahs* in rural areas undermined village traditions and led to stronger marginalising of *Aliran Kebatinan* followers contributing to tensions between them and Muslims.¹³ As we will see below in the Subang case, Muslim-supported state organs launched assaults against *Aliran Kebatinan* rituals and historical sites at the Cileuleuy riverside in Cimerta. *Aliran Kebatinan* followers were also forced to embrace Islam.¹⁴ In Lembang, the rise of Islam as a social force replaced village syncretic traditions with Islamic ones which contributed to the gradual Islamisation of the region since the 1960s.

Secondly, Soeharto's support of religion prejudiced state neutrality with severe consequences at the community level. In Sumedang, for example, civil and military officers pressured *Aliran Kebatinan* adherents to embrace Islam. The latter were persuaded that, by becoming Muslim, they would be considered Pancasilaists. The political identification of Islam with Pancasila explains how the ruling bureaucrats used the New Order regime's promotion of religion for its political interests, prejudicing the state's neutrality and autonomy.

Third, Soeharto's support of religion encouraged *Aliran Kebatinan* followers and former Communist sympathisers to embrace recognised religions independent of actual religious motives. The state's promotion of religion as well as the expansion of grassroots Islamisation initiatives in both rural and urban areas weakened the socio-cultural basis of *Aliran Kebatinan* and negated the influence of Communism. In this socio-political atmosphere, the PKI was obliterated while *Aliran Kebatinan* also experienced a considerable setback. In what follows I will present a few brief case-studies illustrating the social and political repercussions the New Order policy on *Aliran Kebatinan* and religion had in Subang and Sumedang, West Java.

¹³ Ibnu Hajar Apandi, 'Sekilas Perkembangan Islam di Desa Wangunharja Kecamatan Lembang Kabupaten Bandung Barat', unpublished document, Lembang, 26 March 2011. pp. 1-6.

¹⁴ *Tempo*, 'Keluar dari Islam (Lalu masuk lagi)', 4/VI August 1976.

The Weakening of Aliran Kebatinan in Subang

Subang is made up of highlands in the south and plains and coastal-lands in its northern littoral. The southern parts include Sagalaherang, Jalan Cagak, Cisolak, Kasomalang, Bunihayu to Tanjungsang. Islamic influence is rather strong across these areas. Islam probably came to Subang through Cikalama, Sumedang, as suggested by the fact that many Muslim figures, for example the Subang head of the Indonesian Islamic Scholars' Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI),¹⁵ trace their lineage back to Kyai Oo Muhyidin of Pesantren Pagelaran 2 in Sumedang.¹⁶ In terms of intellectual tradition, the influence of Traditionalist Islam as represented by the NU, is strong. The people in this region easily accepted the *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* tradition by virtue of its relative compatibility with local syncretic cultures. Other Muslim organisations such as the Muhammadiyah, PERSIS, and Islam Jamaah are also active there but their influence is minor. In the general elections held from 1971 to 1987, the United Development Party (PPP) won a significant proportion of the votes across southern Subang.¹⁷

While this socio-religious culture characterises the southern part, the northern littoral that encompasses Subang to Pagaden, Pamanukan, Ciasem and Patokbeusi was less influenced by Islam. On contrast with the rest, Ciasem and Pamanukan are relatively more religious, probably

¹⁵ Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) is the Indonesian Islamic Scholars' Council, founded on 24th of May 1975 by President Soeharto. As observed by Mohammad Atho Mudzhar, Soeharto encouraged the MUI's establishment for two reasons. *First*, Soeharto thought that the Muslim community needed a nationwide body of *ulama* to talk on its behalf in the inter-religious body. He also emphasised that such a body would be required to encourage Muslims' participation in solving national problems. In practice, MUI's main role is to give legal opinions (*fatwa*) on Islamic affairs. A very good study on MUI's legal opinions is the one by Mohammad Atho Mudzhar, *Fatwa-Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia: Sebuah Studi tentang Pemikiran Hukum Islam di Indonesia 1975-1988* (edisi dwibahasa) (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), p. 46. A good article about the MUI is Moch Nur Ichwan's 'Ulama, State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia After Suharto', *Islamic Law and Society*, Vol. 15, no. 1, 2005, pp. 45-72.

¹⁶ Pesantren Pagelaran 1 is located in Cikalama, Sumedang. The following account on Subang rests largely on interviews with Hawe Setiawan, lecturer at Pasundan University, Bandung, 14 July 2010.

¹⁷ Interview, Hawe Setiawan, Bandung, 14 July 2010.

owing to their proximity to deeply religious Islamic Cirebon. Large parts to the south of Pamanukan, across Pagaden and Patokbeusi to Subang have green plantations and scenery attractive to Europeans on their breaks during the colonial days. There is a railway station in Pagaden that enables people to travel to and from the area. In the coastal regions, local traditional arts and performances are vibrantly alive and the area has apparently become a hub for arts and performances.¹⁸

Economically, Subang is relatively resource-rich with many plantations in its territory. Subang was home to a famous plantation company named P&T (Pamanukan and Tjiasem, 1886) which later changed its name to NV. Maatschappij ter Exploitatie der Pamanukan en Tjiasem Landen. The P&T Company was led by Peter Willem Hofland. His prominence was later commemorated by a statue which was erected in Subang. P&T owned expansive tea plantations across Bunihayu, Jalan Cagak, and Subang. There are also significant rubber plantations across Kalijati, Pamanukan and Ciasem. Agriculture is thus of great importance in the life of the Subangese. During the 1950s and 1960s, these regions became the bases of the PKI, which engaged peasants in its labour movement. *Aliran Kebatinan* was also based in these regions, but its followers were not necessarily PKI members. Probably due to this background, the New Order regime, from its advent, saw Subang as a communist enclave in need to be cleaned up.

After the New Order Regime came to power, it decided that its rule over Subang had to be different from that applied under Soekarno's Old Order. The New Order adhered to the Pancasila as an important mark of distinction, and designated Subang as a Pancasila Bastion, while launching a radio station called BENPAS (*Benteng* Pancasila) to spread its propaganda.¹⁹ The *Aliran Kebatinan* elite tried to dance to the New Order's tune. The AKP, an important *Aliran Kebatinan* organisation in West Java, demonstrated its loyalty to the Pancasila with its adherents claiming it to be their paramount ideology.²⁰ The AKP even adopted the name 'Agama Yakin Pancasila' which literally means 'Religion Convinced

¹⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰ AKP is *Aliran Kebatinan Perjalanan*, a Kebatinan association that emerged since 1927 and grew well in the 1950s, especially in some parts of West Java. Budidaya is an *Aliran Kebatinan* group in West Java born out of a division within the AKP organisation in 1981.

of Pancasila'. As we will discuss later, the Subangese authorities, together with members of the Traditionalist Muslim youth organisation, Ansor, were hostile towards the *Aliran Kebatinan* community and demolished the Pancasila Memorial (*Tugu Pancasila*) on bank of the Cileuleuy River in 1973. *Aliran Kebatinan's* strategic appropriation of the Pancasila only appears to have gained relevance after Soeharto's downfall followed by the rise of Islamism.

Besides having been home to PKI bases in the past, Subang was and still is also known as an Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI) stronghold. Recently, politicians from the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) have dominated Subang's administrative and legislative bodies. Eep Hidayat, the PDI-P Regent of Subang (2008-2011) introduced an interesting socio-cultural program that required all civil servants once a week to dress in black and to sport a head band (*ikat kepala*) and to wear slippers, a dress code similar to that of the Baduy people of Kanekes, in the Banten's southern littoral.²¹ This promotion of Kanekes culture appears to have been a symbolic reaction seeking to reassert Sundanese ethnic identity amidst the deepening influence of other cultures and identities among the Sundanese and Bantenese. The Islamic identity of Banten continues to strengthen.

Given the area's history, the New Order applied a strategy of containment, placing it under surveillance and deliberately facilitating Islamisation. This initiative, aimed at the grassroots, was supplemented by the promulgation of legislation aiming to marginalise the AKP. On 23 May 1967, the BAKOR PAKEM, the Coordinating Body for the Surveillance of Currents of Belief in Society, issued decree number SK-23/PAKEM/1967 that banned the AKP and its activities across West Java. AKP leaders, never having received a copy of the decree, did not know how to respond to the suspension.²² After this, the state enhanced its promotion of religion by making it a compulsory subject in state schools and universities. Some years after the issuance of the decree, the BAKOR PAKEM of Subang issued another decree number: Kep. 01/1.2.SK.1.312/4/1974 which dissolved the AKP in Subang. By May 1974, AKP followers were forced to declare that they would cease their

²¹ The Baduy people are believed to be the original Sundanese people and their culture is considered authentic Sundanese.

²² Interview, Adang Amung, General Secretary of AKP, Bandung, 7 July 2010.

involvement in the organisation.²³ They were also driven to embrace Islam.²⁴

This ban was enforced following tensions between Muslims and *Aliran Kebatinan* followers, especially of the AKP, about the *Tugu Pancasila* and *sumur wangi* (fragrant well) in Cileuleuy.²⁵ The *Tugu* was constructed by AKP leader Mei Kartawinata as the sacred focal point of pilgrimage, while at the same time symbolising the importance of the Pancasila for the movement and its followers. AKP followers also deemed sacred the well located a hundred meters from the memorial. They believed that its water cured a number of diseases and increased the fecundity of agricultural lands. Some of them stated that, “because the water from the fragrant well had healing powers, why not consider it to be similar to the *zam zam* well in Mecca, and the Pancasila Memorial as our *Ka’bah*.”²⁶

This equation offended Muslims. The AKP claim to the Pancasila did not sit well with the New Order regime. To deprive them of the bases of such claims, and capitalising on anti-*Aliran Kebatinan* sentiments among Muslims, the sacred sites were demolished. One day in 1973, a crowd of people from the village administration office together with Ansor members converged on the sites, demolished the *Tugu* and filled the well with rubbish.²⁷

AKP Suspension

The demolition of the Pancasila Memorial and the AKP suspension across Subang and Sumedang illustrates the sustained hostility in these regions on the part of both the State and Muslim organisations towards the AKP in particular and *Aliran Kebatinan* in general. Denied the freedom to practice their belief, the movement went underground. Most AKP adherents claimed Islam as their religion, especially when having to

²³ ‘Keluar dari Islam (Lalu masuk lagi)’, *Tempo*, 4/VI August 1976.

²⁴ *Idem*.

²⁵ Interview, Mimin Sukandar and Agus, Subang, 14 July 2010.

²⁶ Interview, Engkus Ruswana, Bandung, 27 July 2010. Zamzam water comes from a well in Mecca and Muslims believe it to possess miraculous properties. The *Ka’bah* is the holy centre of Islam to which all Muslims face when performing prayers.

²⁷ Interview, Mimin Sukandar and Agus, Subang, 14 July 2010.

make declarations for official purposes, as on identity cards.²⁸ While regretting the inability to take pride in their true identity, the tactic was necessary for their own safety.²⁹ It was also not unusual during the New Order regime for village administration officials to write 'Islam' on the identity cards of the *Aliran Kebatinan* followers without their prior permission.³⁰

From the 1970s to the 1980s, AKP's underground bases in Subang were spread out across rural areas including Patimban, Randu and Gantar. The most important leaders at the time were Ahmad Zaini and Jinul. Under Zaini's leadership, the AKP grew in strength despite the consistent pressure from regime organs in the villages. As in other places, the AKP proliferated mainly through family ties.³¹ There were also, however, many members who embraced the AKP individually after having gained more knowledge and understanding about it. Yayanda Sapin, a respondent in Pusakajaya in Subang, admitted that he embraced the AKP only in 1988, earning him government surveillance as a consequence. Once, he was summoned and interrogated about his religious affiliation by people working in the village office. Learning that he was an *Aliran Kebatinan* follower, they condemned him by saying "How is it that you do not have a religion? You are just like a pig; Damn you PKI!" Holding on to *Aliran Kebatinan* as their true faith in such daunting circumstances, most AKP loyalists resorted to keeping a low profile and to operating underground.

State and Islamisation in Sumedang

The New Order's policies on *Aliran Kebatinan* followers represent the administration's efforts to contain its growth and to funnel its members into an official religion. In this unfavourable climate, *Aliran Kebatinan* followers capitulated to State pressure and converted mostly to Islam or Christianity. With little resistance, many embraced a formal religion and abandoned their native-syncretic currents.³² Those unwilling to

²⁸ Interview, Adang Amung, Bandung, 7 July 2010.

²⁹ Interview, Yayanda Sapin, Subang, 14 July 2010.

³⁰ Interview, Narka, Subang, 14 July 2010.

³¹ Interview, Narka and Darga, Subang, 14 July 2010.

³² In Marpu's case in Cimanggung, Sumedang in 1976, the state's apparatus along with proponents of the ruling Golkar Party encouraged him to

concede, like Yayanda above, were placed under surveillance and were accused by the regime of being PKI sympathisers, a label that carried a heavy social stigma.

The Politics on Marriage and Coercive Conversion

Aliran Kebatinan followers were denied any rights to marry according to their *adat*. According to Law 1/1974 on Marriages, marriage must be conducted according to one's religion and belief. Muslim marriages are registered with the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama, KUA) situated in all districts across the country. Non-Muslim marriages are registered with the Municipal Registry Office. This office, while not explicitly being prohibited to do so, had not been authorised to register the marriage of *Aliran Kebatinan* adherents. This means that *Aliran Kebatinan* members, who were considered to be Muslims, did not want to register their marriages at the KUA but also could not register at the Municipal Registry Office. After the issuance of Law 1/1974 on Marriages, various government organs from ministry levels down to provincial levels issued a number of decrees and regulations on *adat* marriage and its registration.³³ For Muslims, the enactment of the Marriage Law was a reminder to live according to Islam. For *Aliran Kebatinan* followers, the law limited their lives with regards to their *adat* and syncretic culture.

The objective behind the requirement that *Aliran Kebatinan* followers register their marriages at the KUA and the Municipal Registry Office was to encourage them to embrace one of the formal religions, since registration presupposed subscription to a recognised faith.³⁴ The strategy produced ambivalent results. It was not uncommon for followers of *Aliran Kebatinan* to identify themselves as Muslim, as they did on their identity cards.³⁵ For the state, this identification entailed that their marriages should be conducted according to Islamic law as per

embrace Islam and to make his fellow *Penghayat (Aliran Perjalanan)* to do the same. Interview, Marpu, Sumedang, 28 May 2010.

³³ See all degrees and regulations compiled in *Himpunan Peraturan Perundang-Undangan yang Berkaitan dengan Kepercayaan terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Nilai Budaya Seni dan Film, Direktorat Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, 2006).

³⁴ Interview, Andri Hernandi, the Chairman of AKP, Bandung, 15 August 2009.

³⁵ *Idem*.

Law 1/1974. *Aliran Kebatinan* adherents, however, could not accept this scenario. Their refusal stemmed from their view that their identification as Muslim should not necessarily do away with their right to marry according to the *adat*. For many of them, registering themselves as Muslim was purely a pragmatic move and politically motivated. The regime had forced this action upon them.

The issue of *adat* marriages dates back to the 1950s and continued to trouble *Aliran Kebatinan* adherents until 2006 when the relevant laws were changed. In 1953 the AKP of West Java requested that the Regent of the Priangan allow them to marry not in accordance with Islamic law. The Regent, Ipik Gandamana, accepted their request.³⁶ In the New Order era (1967-1998), the marriage issue was more complicated because it was politicised. AKP followers attempted to address this at all levels from the Central Government down to that of the local authorities but never met with a satisfactory resolution.³⁷

'Declaration of Apostasy', Opposing the Politics on Marriage

In July 1976, Marpu, AKP's leader in the Cimanggung highlands in Sumedang and his 262 followers declared that they were abandoning Islam and thereby rejecting Islamic jurisdiction in matters pertaining to their civil rights, such as marriage, burial, and other social and cultural affairs. The national weekly, *Tempo*, reported this development in August 1976. Emus, a member of the AKP in Cimanggung, who was also a friend of Marpu's, had a problem in arranging his daughter's marriage and its registration. Neither the Cimanggung Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) nor the Sumedang Registry Office was willing to register it. While not surprised by the KUA rejection, Emus and Marpu could not accept the Registry's refusal. Emus and Marpu thus consulted Pak Uu, the AKP leader of the Sumedang branch. Pak Uu approached the Registry Office. Surprisingly, with Pak Uu's declaration that Emus was not a Muslim, the Registry Office permitted the registration of Emus daughter's marriage on condition that Emus himself provided a written declaration that he was not a Muslim.

Marpu, Emus, and their friends interpreted this success as a recognition of their identity and the occasion deserved to be celebrated

³⁶ 'Keluar dari Islam (Lalu masuk lagi)', *Tempo*, 4/VI August 1976.

³⁷ Interview, Marpu, Sumedang, 28 May 2010.

by declaring that they were leaving Islam, despite the fact that they had never been Muslim.³⁸ This declaration symbolised their having gained recognition of their rights to marry and to be registered according to existing law.³⁹ It was also an expression of their liberation from Islam, which had become a barrier against them exercising their rights. For them, this marked the end of the state's discrimination against them, a happy occasion after years of frustration with the state's reluctance to protect their right to observe the *adat* they believed in and wanted to live by. This imprudently dramatic gesture, however, provoked a reaction from the Sumedang Court and police and military officers. They soon summoned Marpu and his friends and they were forced to revert to Islam. As will be discussed and analysed later in this chapter, this issue should inspire caution among observers of Islam in this region, sweepingly characterising West Java as entirely Islamic. In the following discussion we will see the results of my investigation into this case and the impact it had on the future development in Cimanggung.

Successful Islamisation under State Sponsorship

This case as reported by *Tempo* surprised me and made me curious so that I decided to do my own investigation. However, I wondered whether Marpu was still alive, and also whether he and his community had remained Muslim after their coerced 'return' to Islam. I wanted to get some idea of the consequences of state-sponsored Islamisation. On 27 May 2010, I went to Cimanggung, Sumedang, to find Marpu. On my arrival I met the village head, Edi Kusnaldi, whom I interviewed. He informed me that Marpu was still around. The next day, I tried to find him in the Sumedang highlands. On my way to his house I met Dede, the head of a sub-village territory, who accompanied me there. On arriving at our destination, Dede approached Marpu's family and told them about me and why I had come. While Dede talked with Marpu's elder son, Yana, some villagers eyed me with suspicion. It was a while before I was invited to enter Marpu's house. Dede informed me that "the people here still remember and fear a return of the 1976 case, so they are always cautious of outsiders like you."⁴⁰

³⁸ *Idem.*

³⁹ *Idem.*

⁴⁰ Interview, Dede, Sumedang, 28 May 2010.

Decades had passed since Marpu had led the mass 'apostasy', so it was indeed my good fortune to have been able to meet him. Although he was 89 years old and could not hear very well, he still spoke eloquently. Marpu recounted that after the declaration, Emus and himself along with some other friends were summoned and interrogated at the Sumedang Court. The interrogation was led by prosecutor Kuffal who was accompanied by police and military personnel. Marpu told me that they were asked to 'return' to Islam. This request was strange for them because they had never been properly Muslim. He could still remember how one interrogator tried to persuade and proselytise him. The interrogator stated:

Kamu harus kasihan sama saya. Negara kita negara Pancasila. Kalau kamu tidak kembali masuk Islam, berarti kamu tidak ber-Pancasila dan tidak kasihan sama saya!⁴¹ (you have to take pity on me. Our state is a Pancasila state. If you refuse to return to Islam, that would mean that you are not a Pancasilaist [loyal to the Pancasila]; and also that you have no pity for me).

It is worth noting how Kuffal equated Islam with Pancasila and how he enticed Marpu and friends to convert to Islam so as to be categorised as Pancasilaists. The association also connoted that loyalties to *Aliran Kebatinan* and Pancasila are mutually exclusive. In the end, Marpu and friends converted to Islam, out of fear of being stigmatised as being other than Pancasilaists. Under this pressure, Marpu and his friends were 'forced' to recite the Islamic profession of the faith (*shahadat*) under Kuffal's direction which was not without some difficulty given the strangeness of the formula to them. Marpu and friends had been given a 'new faith' by the government to replace the one they had had.

Although they had 'returned' to Islam, many Muslims remained sceptical. Marpu remembered that among them were members of PERSIS, the Muslim organisation that enjoyed strong support in West Java.⁴² In response to continuing pressure, Marpu thought that he should convince the people that he was intent on becoming a practicing Muslim. He realised that this required a mosque, which would boost their credibility in the eyes of the Muslims and reduce the likelihood of harm

⁴¹ Interview, Marpu, Sumedang, 28 May 2010.

⁴² *Idem*.

from the more fanatical amongst them. The fact that they had been under public surveillance after their 'return' also factored in Marpu's request for the local authority to build a mosque for the former AKP followers. The Sumedang administration approved Marpu's request, reflecting the government's line on religion. By the early 1980s, the Sumedang Department of Religious Affairs provided a grant of IDR 500,000 for the construction of a mosque. With the support of the people in the village, Marpu constructed the mosque on his own land right behind his house. After its construction was finished, Sumedang's Regent and his subordinates in the civil and military organs came to inaugurate the new mosque. Marpu described the inauguration session as joyous and the inauguration encouraged the subsequent 'conversion' of AKP's followers to Islam, marking the Islamisation of the entire village.⁴³

Since then, the mosque became the centre of Islamisation. It functions as a venue for prayer and for other regular religious sessions. Over time, the holding of the congregational Friday prayers there attracted more and more people. As an important figure, Marpu began to change his lifestyle to more reflect his new faith and identity. He observed the teachings of the *shari'ah*, performed daily prayers, fasted during *Ramadan*, celebrated the *Idul Fitri* and *Idul Adha* festivals, attended *tahlilan*, and *mauludan*, and so on. He began to manage his mosque and to play an active role in the Mosque Prosperity Council (Dewan Kesejahteraan Masjid, DKM) activities in Sumedang. He demonstrated his ability in managing mosque affairs, at the same time increasing his knowledge about Islam. He studied Islam with Kyai Ajengan Abu from Sumedang. After some years he became a *khatib* delivering sermons in his mosque.⁴⁴ All this is evidence of the existence of an intimate connection in the Islamisation project between state organs, local officers and Islamic organisations and leaders.

In the last session of my interview I posed my closing question to Marpu who was sitting next to his wife and eldest son. The question aimed to determine his level of happiness in Islam. I asked him whether he was happier as a Muslim or with *Aliran Kebatinan*. He said "Well I am happy with Islam, but I think being Muslim is like eating a banana with

⁴³ *Idem.*

⁴⁴ *Idem.*

the skin; what you really taste is only its skin, you don't taste the real banana."⁴⁵ On 11 August 2010, three months after my interview with him, I was informed by Dede that Marpu had died. Marpu's son, Yana, told me that in the last days of his life, Marpu was still obsessed with matters of the mosque, advising his son to renovate it.⁴⁶

The Islamisation of Cimanggung was a success due to the support of Muslim institutions such as *pesantren* and the MUI. The most important figure contributing to *dakwah* in Cimanggung was Kyai Ajengan Abu from Cikalama in Sumedang. Edi Kusnaldi, the current head of Cimanggung village, informed me that more than 50 mosques and *mushalla* have been constructed in his territory since the 1980s. Edi proudly related that the Village Office involved itself in the promotion of Islam in Cimanggung by holding routine travelling propagation tours (*dakwah keliling*).⁴⁷ The vast majority of Cimanggung's population of 10,000 people is Muslim. There are only five people who declare themselves as AKP adherents.⁴⁸ The attempt by local authorities to Islamise AKP followers was a manifestation at the grassroots of the state's backing of religion and its suspicion of *Aliran Kebatinan*.

Cimanggung is a village in the Cikeruh District, a ten kilometres' drive from Bandung on the Padalarang highway. In geographical terms, it is easier to get to Cimanggung from Bandung than from Sumedang. In the 1970s and 1980s, before the Padalarang highway was constructed, people preferred going to the village via Cicalengka, approximately four kilometres up to the hills, rather than via Sumedang.⁴⁹ Cimanggung itself is directly north of Bandung.

In the west, the AKP gained considerable following in the mountainous Lembang area down to Cimahi.⁵⁰ There are several important AKP enclaves to the east of Cimanggung including Ciparay, Majalaya, and Cicalengka. Thus, the AKP created a half-ring stronghold from Ciparay in the east, through Cimanggung in the north and down to Lembang and Cimahi in the west. Bandung has been known as an AKP

⁴⁵ *Idem*.

⁴⁶ Interview, Yana, Sumedang, 15 October 2010.

⁴⁷ Interview, Edi Kusnaldi, Sumedang, 27 May 2010.

⁴⁸ *Idem*.

⁴⁹ 'Keluar dari Islam (Lalu masuk lagi)', *Tempo*, 4/VI August 1976.

⁵⁰ Interview, Mimin Sukandar, Cimahi, 20 July 2010.

base since the 1950s.⁵¹

Ciparay is the most important AKP home ground to date. Its significance is attested to by the large *Pasewakan* building that was erected in the early 1980s as a place where AKP activities are planned and organised. The *Pasewakan* also functions as a convention hall, hosting art performances and annual festival celebrations. The construction of the *Pasewakan* was initiated by AKP followers. When the building was under construction, one government officer offered financial assistance to the head of the Construction Committee, Iyus Jusuf. Iyus, however, was asked to offer him a bribe so he refused to accept the funds on principle.⁵² The construction of the *Pasewakan* was eventually completed with the sole financial support of AKP followers.

Because of the unfavourable social-political environment under Soeharto's regime, the AKP kept a low profile. In the early 1980s, there were 150,000 AKP members but in the following years their numbers had dropped dramatically to 19,406.⁵³ The 1990s saw no improvement and the 2000 census saw their number further decreased to 14,535 across West Java.⁵⁴ Only a couple of years after Soeharto's fall, the AKP followers tried to reclaim their golden past, attempting a revival in various places across West Java including Subang, Sumedang, Ciparay and Lembang. This will be discussed later on.

In addition to the aforementioned causes, it is worth noting that some more factors at the national level were essential in providing the context for such a change. Hefner's study of the Islamisation in the Pasuruan highlands in East Java⁵⁵ sheds light to a better understanding of this situation. *First*, there was the shift in the social and cultural bases of Soekarno's political reign in the aftermath of his downfall. Hefner observes that Soekarno's fall caused a dramatic political change that created a socio-cultural setting that increasingly shifted away from the social and cultural bases of Soekarno's political reign. Soekarno had been supported by the Nationalists and the Communists and he had followers primarily among the peasant and lower middle classes, most

⁵¹ Interview, Andri Hernandi, Bandung, 15 August 2009.

⁵² Interview, Iyus Jusuf, Ciparay, Bandung, 20 July 2010.

⁵³ Interview, Andri Hernandi, Bandung, 15 August 2009.

⁵⁴ *Population of Indonesia: Results of the 2000 Population Census*, Series: 1.2.2., Table 06.1 and 06.8 (Jakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2000), pp. 31 and 38.

⁵⁵ Hefner, 'Islamizing Java?', pp.553-551.

of who hailed from rural Java where religious syncretism was prevalent. With the extermination of the PKI and the weakening of the left-wing Nationalists, this political base was weakened.

Second was that the implementation of the floating mass strategy by the regime had significantly implicated the dramatic change in the rural political setting.⁵⁶ Hefner observes that Soeharto cleaned up rural political activism via his 'floating mass' policy, which further eradicated the influence of the Communists and the Nationalists across the rural areas.⁵⁷ The 'floating mass' strategy, although meant to serve New Order politics, in fact favoured Muslim groups. In his conclusion to his study of the Islamisation in the highlands of Pasuruan Regency, East Java, Hefner observes:

Moreover, in a curious way— and this is an irony that may not be apparent to some Indonesian Muslim leaders— New Order restrictions on rural political activity may in fact have worked in favour of more broadly conceived Muslim interests. With the field cleared of most of the Old Order anti-Islamic organisations and with strong government pressure on all Indonesians to profess a recognised religion, many former opponents to Islamic parties have come to view Islam in less politicised terms.⁵⁸

The view of Islam "in less politicised terms," corresponded with the weakening of Islamic parties, especially in rural areas, along with the continuous transformation of Islam on the ground as a religious and spiritual entity. Islam actively expressed itself in society through the agency of *dakwah*. It was politically expedient that Soeharto encouraged *dakwah* activities. Modernist elements played a crucial role in boosting Islamic *dakwah* in urban and rural areas. *Dakwah* was promoted chiefly to prevent people from becoming atheists or sympathisers of the Marxist ideology. Hence, religious education and the construction of houses of worship were promoted by the government's development program. This support for official religion and its institutions weakened the *Aliran Kebatinan* across Java. Hefner notes that:

⁵⁶ The 'floating mass policy' prohibited parties to have offices below the district administrative level or to campaign or indulge in political activities in this level, except during times leading up to elections.

⁵⁷ Hefner, 'Islamizing Java?', p. 549.

⁵⁸ *Idem*, p. 551.

Developments under the New Order appear to have only enhanced the overwhelming institutional advantage of the orthodox Muslim community. Javanist initiatives aimed at creating a mass-base and explicitly non-Islamic “Javanese” religion have all but ceased. Despite some regional successes, Hindu and Buddhist organisations still claim only a small percentage/proportion/number of Java’s rural population.....Meanwhile, the social forces undermining village tradition have grown stronger, encouraging villagers, particularly the young, to look elsewhere for more encompassing moral guides to modernity. The Pasuruan example awaits ethnographic comparison with other areas of rural Java. If similar developments are occurring in even a few other sectors of the Javanist community, the New Order may provide the setting for a profound adjustment in the balance of cultural power between Islam and Javanism. Whatever the short-term setbacks of Muslim political parties, the social forces unleashed under the New Order may contribute to the partial realisation of one of the Muslim community’s primary religious goals, the Islamisation of Java.⁵⁹

I believe that Hefner’s observation that the New Order politics on religions may have contributed to the partial success of the Islamisation of East and Central Java also applies to other part of Java.

Political Change and Christian Revival

Christian religious leaders in the post-Soeharto era, like leaders of other religions, could hardly have foreseen that the State would one day offer them again the strong support the New Order had provided rather than merely tolerate them.⁶⁰ As Boland noted, the Soeharto regime had been in favour of religions and had realised the importance of religious freedom as we have seen above.⁶¹ Soeharto, who was a devoted subscriber to Javanese values and worldviews, was surprisingly accommodating to the religious hopes and ambitions of *Dakwahists* and missionaries alike. Moreover, he invited the leaders of religious communities to offer him their ideas with respect to his development

⁵⁹ *Idem.*

⁶⁰ In what follows the general position of Christianity in Indonesia and West Java will alternate because one is incomprehensible to the topic of this book without the other. The reader will find in Chapter Six that particular attention is paid to the situation in some areas in West Java such as Bekasi.

⁶¹ Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, p. 148.

agenda especially on issues such as family planning, education, economic empowerment, and so on. Soeharto's politics on religion were primarily intended to control society but also provided the harmonious setting for people adhering to different faiths. At the initial stage, Soeharto's political recruitment and cultural preference seemed to favour Christians and *Aliran Kebatinan* members over Muslims. However, in the following years changing circumstances had forced him to make adjustments to prevent an upsurge of Muslim opposition.

Christians were seen as important allies to the New Order Regime, with a number of Christian intellectuals and technocrats serving as cabinet ministers and occupying high-ranking posts in Soeharto's cabinet. Examples are General T.B. Simatupang, General M. Panggabean, Admiral Sudomo (before his conversion to Islam in 1997), Minister Radius Prawiro, Minister B.J. Sumarlin, Indonesian Central Bank Governor Adrianus Moy, General T.B. Silalahi, General Benny Moerdani, to name but some. As ambassadors to the West they were invaluable to Soeharto. This picture could not have been more different from that of the *Aliran Kebatinan* members, who increasingly lost political clout after Soekarno's fall and thus gained nothing whereas Christians celebrated the new political context favourable to them and almost immediately reaped the benefits of this considerable transformation.

The Christians enjoyed at least two boons in the wake of Soekarno's departure in the mid-1960s. The *first* was the surprisingly large-scale conversion of *abangan* Muslims to Christianity. Ricklefs argues that one of the most important motives behind this conversion in Java was "animosity towards Islam among *abangan* who had previously supported or been sympathetic to PKI," and that this conversion constituted a "major and on-going transformation of Javanese society."⁶² Returning to West Java, there is no reason to assume that the situation there would have been dramatically different from that in Java despite the fact that *abangan* do not exist in the area.⁶³

⁶² Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java*, p. 138.

⁶³ A more general picture of the situation in Indonesia may be glanced from the following. A survey held by a Catholic organisation claims an increase of 7.45 per cent in the Catholic population in Indonesia in general from 1966 to 1967.⁶³ The leading Christian figure of the Indonesian Christian Church Council (DGI), T.B. Simatupang, reports "an increase of roughly 825,000 in the total membership of the 36 member churches" in 1967 compared to 1964. Simatupang, a Chief Staff of the Indonesian Army (1950-54), also

Secondly, the New Order regime's support to missionary organisations from overseas, particularly from the United States and Europe, benefited Christians as these organisations did everything in their power to help their Christian counterparts in financing church programs and in matters like building mission networks, organisations and management. With this in mind, Christians benefited from the avalanche of foreign aid in the form of financial and human resources (missionaries)⁶⁴ which helped to accelerate the growth of churches and other Christian social institutions across the country. Christians overseas were excited by this state of affairs, which they called a "revival" that was to be sustained.⁶⁵ As they considered Asian countries and Indonesia especially as new promising places for renewed missionary activities after the 1960s, they thought that Indonesia might want to host the World Council of Churches (WCC) conference in 1975.⁶⁶ Simatupang accepted the suggestion to have Jakarta host the conference during the WCC executive committee meeting in Sofia in 1971. Although President Soeharto and the Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Idham Chalid, largely endorsed his plan, the majority of Muslims, particularly the Modernists, were opposed to the initiative.⁶⁷

As devoted critics of Christianisation, the Modernists were suspicious of Christian activities. In responding to the WCC to plan their conference in Jakarta, for example, one leading Modernist, H.M. Rasjidi wrote a book entitled *Sidang Raya DGD di Jakarta 1975: Artinya bagi Dunia Islam* (WCC Assembly in Jakarta 1975: Its Implication to the Islamic World) and accused the conference of being a forum for the planning of the expansion of Western colonialism through Christian missionaries and through Christianising the Indonesian people.⁶⁸ The

claims that there was a "considerable growth" in church membership outside the DGI.⁶³ One Christian account claims that the conversion to Christianity reached two million. See Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java*, p. 138.

⁶⁴ Rifyal Ka'bah, *The Christian Presence in Indonesia: View of Christian-Muslim Relations* (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1995), pp. 47-52.

⁶⁵ Avery T. Willis, Jr. *Indonesian Revival: Why Two Million Came to Christ* (California: The William Carey Library, 1977).

⁶⁶ Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, pp. 63-64.

⁶⁷ *Idem*, p. 63.

⁶⁸ Aritonang, *Sejarah Perjumpaan Islam*, p. 415. See also, H.M. Rasjidi, *Sidang Raya DGD di Jakarta 1975: Artinya bagi Dunia Islam* (Jakarta: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah, 1974).

Soeharto regime did not want to risk an outbreak of social and political instability and therefore in response to the Modernists' latent fear it took the pragmatic option to call off the WWC conference in Jakarta. The conference was held in Nairobi instead.

A series of disagreements, tension and conflicts in the preceding years between Muslim and Christian leaders all over the country including West Java over many religious issues such as a propagation code, foreign aid, and the construction of houses of worship, illustrate the continuous distrust between Muslims, Modernists especially, and Christians.⁶⁹ Under this distrustful relationship, Muslims and Christians fiercely competed to secure their interests in order to prevail as will be illustrated in West Java with the Pentecostal experiences. I chose the Pentecostal church because they have been subjected to violent attacks by radical Islamists because of their spectacular growth in the area.

The Revival of the Pentecostals in West Java

The conversion of significant numbers of lay Muslims and the revival of Christianity produced a kind of excitement for the leaders of and people active in different Christian denominations, who had been operating in the country for decades, including those of the Pentecostal churches. Like many members and organisations of other churches, the Pentecostals used the remarkable change in religious politics to strengthen their presence in terms of intense member recruitment and the building of places of worship. After some years this effort provided the setting for the upsurge of Pentecostalism across the country, particularly across West Java.⁷⁰

A brief history of the Pentecostal church in Indonesia in general provides the following picture. In the second half of the nineteenth

⁶⁹ The unfavourable political setting may have contributed to provoking Muslims. An example of this is the commotion around a proposed marriage bill which had been considered much too secular by Muslims. They had protested the initial Bill's adoption of various secular and anti-Islamic principles such as the rights to engage in interreligious marriages and in the procedure of performing and the registration of marriages. To some Muslims, there was a Christian conspiracy in that Bill. See also Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, p. 65.

⁷⁰ Interview, pastor Chrisman Hutabarat (Secretary of the Pentecostal Church of West Java/Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Pentakosta Indonesia/PGPI), Bandung, 7 July 2008.

century, Indonesian Pentecostalism was rooted in the Holiness movement of the Methodist Church in America. This movement insisted on a return to old Methodist religious traditions as prevalent during the time of John Wesley (1703-91) which stressed modesty and passion in worship and service.⁷¹ This movement aimed at a revival of Christians' spiritual life and a return to a free worship style that celebrates sensation and unrestrained emotion.⁷² To this end, the leading figure of the Pentecostal Church, CH. F. Parham established a Holiness Movement independent from the Methodist Church. It was in 1900 that Parham began to promote Pentecostalism with its three major tenets, namely, an emphasis on eschatology, baptism by the Holy Spirit, and 'speaking in tongues' as proof of one's having been baptised by the Holy Spirit.⁷³

As Aritonang and Steenbrink observed, Pentecostalism sprouted from Bali to East, Central and West Java and continued to expand across other islands. From its inception in the early twentieth century, the Pentecostal mission was centred in Surabaya, Cepu, Temanggung and Bandung.⁷⁴ From Bandung, the evangelicals propagated their mission and erected churches in Cimahi, Jakarta, Bogor, Sukabumi, Cirebon and Depok, all in West Java.⁷⁵

Missionaries from the Netherlands had attempted to spread Pentecostalism across the Netherlands East Indies since 1911. Gerrit L. Polman was one of the early leaders of Dutch Pentecostalism. He liked to send the Dutch Pentecostal bulletin, *Spade Regen*, to the Netherlands East Indies, which later influenced the Dutch in Temanggung, Central Java.⁷⁶ As a result, various Dutch Christians including Horstman, Weirs and Van Abode, began to conduct Pentecostal prayer services in 1911.

⁷¹ Van den End and Weitjens, *Ragi Carita* 2, p. 270.

⁷² *Idem*.

⁷³ *Idem*.

⁷⁴ Aritonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity*, p. 880. Gani Wiyono, 'Pentecostalism in Indonesia', in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia (Regnum Studies In Mission: Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies Series 3)*, Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds.), (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2005), p. 309.

⁷⁵ Those based in Temanggung, Cepu and Surabaya planted their churches throughout East Java, Sangir Talaud and Sulawesi. In the following years the mission spread to Lampung in Sumatra, Nias, West Timor, Kalimantan, the Moluccas and Irian Jaya (now Papua). See Wiyono, 'Pentecostalism in Indonesia', pp. 308-309.

⁷⁶ *Idem*, p. 308.

From September 1920 to 1923, after the arrival of the first generation of Dutch Pentecostal missionaries in West Java, the Pentecostal mission was to see the arrival of more missionaries. Among them missionaries were Willem Bernard Blekkink and his wife Marie (Polman's sister) and Mina Hansen, all of whom settled and worked with Horstman in Temanggung, and Johann Thiessen, who settled in Bandung.⁷⁷

In the following years the mission flourished further as many Indonesians converted to Pentecostalism. 1923 saw a *Vereeniging De Pinkstergemeente in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Pentecostal Organisation in the Netherlands East Indies) established in Cepu and officially recognised by the Dutch as a *kerkgenootschap* (church body) through Besluit No. 33, Staatsblad no. 364. This development was due to Weenink van Loon's efforts in concert with other leaders. Most of the converts from 1920 to 1941 were non-Christians, mainly Chinese Buddhists-Confucianists, Indo-Europeans or of ethnic Javanese religious backgrounds, as well as Protestants and Catholics of Dutch origin.⁷⁸

Considerable Pentecostal Growth in West Java

The Pentecostal church enjoyed considerable growth after Indonesia's Independence and continued to thrive from the 1970s to 1990s under the leadership of the prominent and leading Evangelist, Ho Lukas Senduk, popularly known as Oom Ho. Barbara Watson Andaya reports that Senduk was born as Ho Liong Seng in Ternate in 1917 to a middle-class Indonesian-Chinese family. His father was a wealthy Singaporean and his mother was an Indonesian of Chinese descent said to have ties to Ternate's ruling family.⁷⁹ For a period of time they lived in Ternate before moving to Manado, where later he led the Chinese community.

⁷⁷ *Idem.*

⁷⁸ Mark Robinson, 'The Growth of Indonesian Pentecostalism', in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Regnum Studies In Mission: Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies Series 3), Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds.), (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2005), p. 331.

⁷⁹ Barbara Watson Andaya, 'Contextualizing the Global: Exploring the Roots of Pentecostalism in Malaysia and Indonesia', paper presented to a symposium on the Management and Marketing of Globalizing Asian Religions (University of Hawaii, Aug. 11-14, 2009), p. 17. See also Amos Hosea, 'Seluk Beluk dasar Pengembangan Kepemimpinan Om Ho', in Ferry H. A. Lembong (ed.), *Hanya oleh Anugerah: Aku Jadi Seperti Aku Sekarang* (Jakarta: Gereja Bethel Indonesia, 1998), pp. 21-25.

Senduk studied at a Dutch school in Manado and worked for a Dutch oil company in Ambon, the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij (BPM), where he joined the Pentecostal church (*De Pinkstergemeente in Nederlandsch-Indië*) in 1935. During the Japanese Occupation, the Pentecostal Church changed its name to the Pentecostal Church in Indonesia (Gereja-gereja Pentakosta di Indonesia, GPdI), where Senduk was appointed secretary of the Central Board. During 1945-1946 Senduk served a Pentecostal denomination in West Java in Tasikmalaya.⁸⁰

In the mid-1960s, Indonesia went through a period of political turmoil following the failed coup attempt in 1965, which caused a remarkable change in Indonesian politics and society. Senduk used the changing political context to strengthen the Pentecostal mission. In 1967, he established cooperation with one of the world's best-known Pentecostal Churches, the Church of God (CoG), based in the U.S. In the following years, the Church of God helped with the promotion of education and the missionary activities of Senduk's Indonesian Bethel Church (Gereja Bethel Indonesia, GBI), established in Sukabumi West Java in 1970. The major concern of this cooperation was the provision of teacher training programs aimed at providing teachers for elementary schools and for the Bethel Academy of Theology (Akademi Theologia Bethel, ATB).⁸¹ This program continued to expand throughout the 1970s and flourished during the 1980s-1990s with the opening of the Faculty of Missiology. In cooperation with the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, the faculty offered post-graduate studies and offered programs for certificates of Master of Arts in Church Ministry (MACM), Master of Divinity (M.Div) and Master of Theology (M.Th).⁸² GBI is perhaps one of the most successful Pentecostal denominations and it has become the largest Pentecostal community in Indonesia with 2.5

⁸⁰ http://dbr.gbi-bogor.org/wiki/Ho_Lukas_Senduk, accessed 9th of November 2012. In 1952, Senduk formed Gereja Bethel Injil Sepenuh (GBIS) in Surabaya with the help of Dutch evangelist Frans Gerald van Gessel, which was in part in protest to the discrimination suffered by members of Chinese descent within the GBI denomination and due to pressure exerted by other mainstream Christians who denigrated the evangelist Pentecostals as heretics and 'poachers.' Andaya, 'Contextualizing the Global', p. 18.

⁸¹ <http://www.seminaribethel.net/content/sejarah-seminari-bethel-jakarta.html>. accessed 9 November 2012.

⁸² *Idem*.

million members and 5,200 congregations.⁸³ Senduk died in 2008 leaving the ambition to build 10,000 Bethel churches across Indonesia for the next generation.⁸⁴

The Pentecostal growth demonstrates the recurring pattern of new churches brought into existence by virtue of fragmentation. Aritonang and Steenbrink observed that one of the major characteristics of the Pentecostals was their propensity for engaging in schisms.⁸⁵ One group that was born out of Pentecostalism was the Charismatic Church whose followers reject associations with any particular denomination. It emerged in the second half of the 1960s and became popular in the 1980s.⁸⁶ Its popularity was the result of its capacity in meeting Christians' need for a new spirituality, certainty and security caused by the failure of the established churches in fulfilling such needs.⁸⁷ Wiyono observes: "When Charismatic conventions offered 'casual' and 'therapeutic' services, warm fellowship, plus comfortable environments (held mostly in ballrooms of expensive hotels), many churchgoers, primarily those from the middle class, intellectual society and mainstream churches, came and joined them."⁸⁸

One important leader of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in the 1970s and 1980s was Jeremia Rim who was a Javanese from Madiun and who steered the movement from Surabaya. His ability and popularity saw him receive frequent invitations to visit the U.S. where he met prominent Charismatic leader, Moris Cerurou, who blessed him.⁸⁹ He also received numerous invitations to lead prayers from Charismatic congregations across Java, Jakarta and West Java. His movement reached its peak in the mid-1980s. In 1985, he organised a massive congregation and healing session called *Kasih Melanda Jakarta* (Love Sweeps over Jakarta) in the Senayan Sports Centre. This successful service attracted tens of thousands of people and inspired Jeremia to hold another session in the following year called *Kasih*

⁸³ Andaya, 'Contextualizing the Global', p. 17.

⁸⁴ Among GBI's important leaders is Niko Njotorahardjo, who led the GBI in Bandung. Interview, Jeremy Wijaya, Bandung, 22 March 2011.

⁸⁵ The trend of schism is analysed by Aritonang and Steenbrink, *History of Christianity*, pp. 881-882.

⁸⁶ Wiyono, *Pentecostalism in Indonesia*, p. 314.

⁸⁷ *Idem.*

⁸⁸ *Idem.*

⁸⁹ Interview, Jeremy Wijaya, Bandung, 22 March 2011.

Melanda Indonesia (Love Sweeps over Indonesia).⁹⁰ The Charismatic boom during the 1980s encouraged the establishment of *bukit-bukit doa*, prayer sites located on hills across Java, but also in Jakarta and Bogor.

Encouraged by the successful congregation in Jakarta, Jeremia established a New Covenant Christian Church in West Java in Bandung with the help of his supporter Bambang Wijaya whom he trusted and who later became his successor after his death in December 1993. Currently, Bambang is the chairman of *Jaringan Persekutuan Doa* (Prayer Alliance Network) throughout the Asia Pacific.⁹¹

The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement gained ground in various parts of West Java. In 1978, Nani Susanti, a businesswoman well-respected by Cirebon's Chinese business community, established the Ecclesia Foundation in Cirebon to promote Pentecostal-Charismaticism in the city. The foundation invited prominent Charismatic leaders from other parts of West Java and from abroad to lead the congregations. The foundation held regular prayer congregations and organised social services.⁹² This movement inspired the presence of the Charismatic movement in other places including Bekasi and Karawang in the West Javanese surroundings east of Jakarta in the following years. As will be discussed below, in November 1999 a foundation named Mahanaim was founded in Bekasi with the task to reach out to thousands of underprivileged children and adults.⁹³ The foundation claims to "help the future of Indonesia's young generation and to equip them to become future world leaders able to meet any challenges in life."⁹⁴ The foundation sought to solve the problem of poverty and to improve the education of the needy to prevent them from "turning into a generation

⁹⁰ *Idem.*

⁹¹ Besides Jeremia Rim and Bambang Wijaya, several others are known to have led the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement during the New Order. They are Mailool, Yusak Tjipto, Nani Susanti, Yuda Mailool, Niko Njotorahardjo, Abraham Alex Tanuseputra, Joe Sudirgo, Hana Sudirgo, Andreas Yosep and Daniel Alexander. Interview, Jeremy Wijaya, Bandung, 22 March 2011.

⁹² Andaya, 'Contextualizing the Global', p. 19. The foundation also built the Gratia assembly hall and sponsored the operation of Christian radio Gratia. In 2008, both the Gratia hall and Gratia radio became the targets of anti-Christianisation protests. The foundation and radio station saw their premises sealed by anti-Christianisation activists.

⁹³ <http://www.love-mahanaim.or.id/vision.php?lang=eng>, accessed on 22 November 2012.

⁹⁴ *Idem.*

without hope trapped in the never-ending cycle of poverty.”⁹⁵ Since then until the Reform Era, the upsurge of Pentecostalism was apparent across West Java and showed a new strength in terms of church attendance, church numbers and organised social services, which created tensions between the church and Muslim hard liners.⁹⁶

Muslims’ Search for Mission Restriction

Of course the Modernists all over Indonesia were very unhappy with the Pentecostal success and with Christianisation in general and therefore they initiated a counter-Christianisation discourse and took anti-Christianisation action, also in West Java. However, they lacked confidence in competing with their Christian counterparts and looked for protection from the State. Modernist leaders did everything in their power to mitigate the Christian mission’s dominance by demanding stringent regulations on missionary funding. In a 1967 parliamentary question session, for example, Lukman Harun, a Muhammadiyah leader, demanded that the government regulate and control the inflow of foreign aid into non-Muslim religious organisations.⁹⁷

All steps undertaken by the Modernists sought to secure the Muslims from being targeted by missionaries. In a panel on Inter-religious Consultation held in November 1967, Mohammad Natsir strongly appealed to the Christian elites not to make efforts to convert believers in other faiths, including Muslims. He argued:

.....what we really hope from you, our Christian brothers, is that you should witness and acknowledge that we are Muslims. Please understand that we are not heathens or animists. We all have embraced a religion, namely Islam. We all have *shibghah* (faith), with our own identity. So please do not go against our identity. Please do not make us a target for Christianisation (leading to apostasy).⁹⁸

Natsir’s appeal represented Muslim hopes in relation to religious propagation. The idea was that missionaries regardless of their religion should not try to proselytise believers in other faiths, that is, people who

⁹⁵ *Idem*.

⁹⁶ Interview, pastor Chrisman Hutabarat, Bandung, 7 July 2008.

⁹⁷ Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, pp. 72-79.

⁹⁸ M. Natsir, *Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Media Da’wah, 1969), p. 1.

have already embraced a recognised religion. Muslims sought consensus with their Christian counterparts on this point but they failed despite the government decrees' favouring their interest.⁹⁹ Christians considered this as running against their religious principles and therefore rejected the proposal. Christians instead argued for more freedom, particularly in the construction of houses of worship. The New Order's voice was careful but clear. In his opening address of the Inter-religious Consultation in 1967, President Soeharto said:

The government wants to assert and guarantee that it will not hamper any efforts of religious propagation. It is the sublime task for a religion to ensure that those who do not embrace a religion in Indonesia become devoted believers. By doing so the Belief in One God adopted by the Pancasila has been adopted. It is, however, the government's concern, if religious propagation is simply done for the sake of increasing the number of followers, let alone that the propagation method used would create the impression that it aimed to attract those who already have embraced a religion.¹⁰⁰

Soeharto's stance soon materialised in a concrete public policy. On 13 September 1969, Minister of Home Affairs, Amir Machmud, and Minister of Religious Affairs, Mohammad Dachlan, issued joint decree number 1/1969, regulating religious propagation and the construction of houses of worship. In principle, the decree accommodated both sides. It guaranteed the freedom to proselytise and worship for all believers but made this conditional on the maintenance of security and social order as reflected in article one.¹⁰¹ Article two of the decree charged the *Kepala Daerah* (local authority) at the district and provincial levels with the responsibility of keeping an eye on religious propagation so as to: (a) prevent it from causing division or polarisation among people of different faiths; (b) keep it free of intimidation, deception, and coercion; (c) ensure its keeping within the law, security and social order.

Point (c) is more or less a repetition of the first article, which betrays the nature of the decree as being in reality more of an instrument towards maintaining social order rather than a guarantee for the freedom of religion. Consistent with the New Order strategy, the

⁹⁹ Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, pp. 57-82.

¹⁰⁰ Natsir, *Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia*, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ Aritonang, *Sejarah Perjumpaan Islam dan Kristen*, pp. 398-399.

decree seemed to favour Muslim interests more than those of Christians. The Indonesian Church Council (Dewan Gereja-gereja Indonesia, DGI) and the Supreme Council of Indonesian Bishops (Majelis Agung Waligereja Indonesia, MAWI) objected to the absence of detailed guidelines on the construction of churches and voiced their concerns over the possibility of government officials facing a conflict of interests because of their own religious affiliation.¹⁰²

The Christian desire to liberalise regulations on proselytisation and Muslim anxieties concerning the potential consequence of liberalisation kept both communities locked in competition, which eroded their relationship. Since the advent of the New Order, relations between the two Abrahamic religions have been largely characterised by latent misunderstanding, competitive tension and hostility. Muslims were suspicious of Christianisation and similarly, the Christians were unhappy with the deepening Islamisation as promoted by *Dakwahists*. Their relationship remains delicate to date, despite each community claiming to have received their religion from the same God, Allah.

Muslim suspicion of their Christian counterparts was rooted in the colonial era. During that time, the Modernists were ardent critics of the Dutch whom they accused of taking a biased position toward Islam. In the 1930s-1940s in PERSIS' central office in Bandung, West Java, M. Natsir devoted himself to monitoring of and reacting to affronts against Islam commonly committed by Christian missionaries. PERSIS' popular magazine, *Pembela Islam*, was used very well to voice and to communicate displeasure at the 'blasphemy' frequently perpetrated during that time.¹⁰³

Colonial precedents fed a post-colonial fear of Christianity. This fear manifested itself in Muslim suspicion of the New Order State, which they saw as favouring Christians. Many could not accept the significant representation of the Christians in the higher bureaucracy and the army, especially in the earlier half of the regime. This state of affairs created prejudice among Muslims. Probably due to this prejudice, Muslim

¹⁰² *Idem*.

¹⁰³ See the interview between an *Antara* reporter and some *Pembela Islam* functionaries including Fachroeddin Alkahiri, M. Natsir, M. Isa Anshary, and Ahmad Kemas, discussing "Urusan Hinaan Atas Islam." The Interview was published by *Pembela Islam* no. 22, 2 June 1941, pp. 426-427. See Natsir, *Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia*, pp. 173-182.

activists were tempted to link any state policy and intimidation against them to a State-Christian conspiracy. As a result, these activists expressed themselves as a strong political protest movement. They were very influential at the grassroots where they had a large following.

In many respects, most *Dakwahists* felt inferior to their counterparts, given the Christian superiority in terms of financial, educational and institutional resources. Rifyal Ka'bah, a Modernist activist in the 1970s, reported on the huge financial aid obtained by Indonesian churches from 1967-1976, most of which was used to fund personnel and to promote service and development projects.¹⁰⁴ As Mujiburrahman has noted, American Christians paid considerable attention to the situation in Indonesia and provided huge grants to support the Christian mission.¹⁰⁵ M. Natsir once analogised the superiority of the Christian mission over Islamic *dakwah* by saying: "How could a cart win a race against an express train?"¹⁰⁶ Mujiburrahman observes:

For the development programmes in 1973 – again with reference to *Sinar Harapan*, 25 May 1973 – Natsir said that the International Christian Aid had provided \$150,000 and the WCC gave \$200,000. Natsir argued that it would be very naïve not to think of the development programmes as a means to convert people. After the Inter-religious Consultation in 1967, he said, there had been a 'free fight for all' and 'survival of the fittest' in the field of religious propagation in Indonesia. In this regard, how could Muslims compete with the Christians, "how could a cart compete with an express train?" he said.

Muslims observed Christian empowerment with unease. The Modernists were especially disappointed and frustrated in their expectations of playing a greater role in development and politics.¹⁰⁷ Boland recalls a *tashakkuran* (thanksgiving) day held by Modernists on 14 August 1966 around the Kebayoran Baru Al-Azhar Mosque. The

¹⁰⁴ Ka'bah, *Christian Presence in Indonesia*, pp. 47-52.

¹⁰⁵ *Time* published a special report on the flow of international aid to Indonesia since the early days of the New Order. Mujiburrahman, *Mengindonesiakan Islam: Representasi dan Ideologi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008), p. 245.

¹⁰⁶ Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, p. 148.

gathering was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of about 50,000. It seems that their gratitude also resulted from the release from prison of various Masyumi leaders including HAMKA, Isa Anshary and Burhanuddin Harahap. Other Masyumi leaders were also present among the crowd including Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, Asaat, Prawoto Mangkusasmitho, Mohamad Roem, Kasman Singadimejo and M. Natsir. Boland relates that the leaders went on stage to present their concerns. A near-unanimous concern was the “rehabilitation of Islam.”¹⁰⁸ Prawoto demanded ‘*rehabilitasi multikompleks*’, something of a total rehabilitation that included the Masyumi’s restoration. This demand, however, was not met and, likewise after September 1965, developments in general “held disappointment for the Islamic community.”¹⁰⁹

Ricklefs captures the psychological state of Muslims at the time well in the following quote:

The religious environment was made more volatile by the changing perception of the senior generation of Modernist Islamic leaders. They had lost some of the self-confidence of the early years of the twentieth century. Rather than awaiting others’ recognition of what they regarded as their natural right to lead the nation, they became bitterly accustomed to the role of political outsiders. They now saw leadership as something to be won rather than assumed. Their belief that anyone who was shown the true Islam would naturally embrace it had meanwhile been shaken by the limited (albeit very significant) progress of the Modernist interpretation of Islam and the hostile reaction it sometimes produced.¹¹⁰

The Modernist perception of having lost out under the new arrangement forced them to re-shape their future trajectory. They reformed their strategy to “bring their religious ideals into engagement with the rapid social transformations of the period and the new course of national development” through promoting *dakwah* activities in the country.¹¹¹ Another major drive that forced Muslims to re-shape their

¹⁰⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁰⁹ *Idem.*

¹¹⁰ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 323.

¹¹¹ R. Michael Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 103-104.

future trajectory was that they were convinced that the New Order was replicating the colonial policy on Islam. The ban on wearing the *jilbab* for Muslim female students at state schools, for example, was seen as a reflection of a secular policy, demonstrating the New Order's commitment to keep Islam in the private sphere in order to prevent it from becoming dominant in the public sphere. Such policy was aimed at containing and mitigating the potential influence of the imported ideology of radical Islamism.¹¹²

The overall political atmosphere during the 1970s was deeply influenced by the New Order's continuous attempt to portray radical Islam as the nation's enemy. From 1976 up to 1988, the regime, as pointed out by Ricklefs, was 'less inclined' to "identify Communism as the greatest threat to the nation's security but rather spoke of 'imported ideology', by which radical Islam was meant."¹¹³ Given this scenario, the early 1970s saw the regime turn to reactivate the *Darul Islam* (DI) movement since it was strategically expedient to conjure up a radical political other, in opposition to which Indonesians would identify with the regime. In fact, this threat was also created to deny momentum to the only Muslim party, the ascendant United Development Party (PPP), in the build-up to the 1977 elections.¹¹⁴ However, the regime's serious miscalculation became evident from the PPP's garnering a significant 29.3 per cent of the votes in the elections, the biggest share it achieved throughout the New Order.¹¹⁵ This intelligence game had involved General Ali Moertopo as general in charge, BAKIN the intelligence agency as operator, and former Darul Islam fighters, who had been incorporated into the Indonesian Army, as mediators.¹¹⁶ The ICG presented the scenario as follows:

The argument provided by BAKIN was that, with the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, Indonesia was in danger of Communist infiltration across the Indonesian-Malaysian border in Borneo, and that only the

¹¹² Yudi Latif, 'The Rupture of Young Muslim Intelligentsia', *Studia Islamika*, Volume 12, Number 3, 2005, p. 378.

¹¹³ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 346.

¹¹⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the 'Ngruki Network' in Indonesia', *Indonesia Briefing*, Jakarta/Brussels, 8 August 2002, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 347.

¹¹⁶ International Crisis Group, 'Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia', p. 5.

reactivation of Darul Islam could protect Indonesia. Whether through coercion or money or a combination of both, a number of DI leaders rose to the bait, and by mid-1977, the government had arrested 185 people whom they accused of belonging to a hitherto unknown organisation called *Komando Jihad*, committed to following the ideas of Kartosuwirjo and establishing the Islamic state of Indonesia (NII). In reality, the *Komando Jihad* was Ali Moertopo's creation.¹¹⁷

As a consequence, mutual mistrust between the regime and the Muslims kept relations tense. With Ali Moertopo masterminding policy, Muslims kept protesting state policies against them while simultaneously working at the grassroots to counter the Christian mission.

The culmination of this mistrust of the New Order regime was the Muslim protests against Soeharto's campaign to impose Pancasila as the sole ideology of the state and of all mass organisations. It seems that through the Pancasila Soeharto wanted to pre-empt Modernist attempts at formulating Islam as an ideology and to thwart their ambition of making Indonesia an Islamic state. On 16 August 1982, Soeharto posited the Pancasila as *asas tunggal* (the sole foundation) in his annual address to the People's Representative Assembly (DPR), urging all social and political forces to consider adopting the Pancasila as their only ideological basis.¹¹⁸ This irked some radical Muslim activists, who then agitated against its acceptance during Friday prayers or other religious occasions.

The Tanjung Priok tragedy in 1984 that claimed tens of Muslim lives in the impoverished North Jakarta neighbourhood perhaps best exemplifies how these factors played out. In the tragedy's aftermath, Muslim activists accused General Benny Moerdani, a national Army Commander, who was a Catholic, of targeting Muslim activists. The state was perceived as an agent of Christian interests only because its representative, who happened to be Christian, was responsible for a particular policy and specific action. This kind of logic fed identity politics which contributed to sustaining a mutual negativity between Christians and Muslims.

¹¹⁷ *Idem*, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam and the State in Indonesia* (Singapore: the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), p. 50.

While Modernist protests continued, the Traditionalists also responded. In 1984, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) declared its return to its initial guidelines (*khittah*) in its congress in Situbondo,¹¹⁹ meaning that it thereby withdrew from the PPP and that NU members were no longer expected to support the PPP. The NU elite granted their followers the freedom to support whatever party they liked.¹²⁰

The regime's desire to depoliticise Islam culminated in 1985 with law number 3/1985, obliging all socio-religious and student organisations to adopt the Pancasila as their sole ideology.¹²¹ Paradoxically, Islam gained greatest influence at a time when its political significance appeared to have dwindled under Soeharto's New Order. It is undeniable that this regime succeeded in weakening Muslim political parties, but it failed to moderate growing devotion among Muslims and the increased presence of Islamic symbols in public life, both of which factored in the rise of what Hefner called "civil Islam" that marked a deepening process of Islamisation.¹²²

Engaging *Dakwahism*, Engaging Politics

Two major orientations surfaced as Islamist/Muslim politics failed. The first was *Dakwahism* and the second was the renewal of Islamic thought. By seeking to promote adherence to Islamic norms and values through *dakwah*, the Modernists tactically circumvented engagement in mainstream politics while planting the seeds for their future constituency. It is reminiscent of Natsir's popular statement: "Before we promote *da'wah* through politics, we engage in politics through *da'wah*."¹²³ In order to realise this idea, in May 1967, the Modernists founded the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) or Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council, with Natsir as its chairman, to implement a

¹¹⁹ See Glossary.

¹²⁰ Martin van Bruinessen, *NU, Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa dan Pencarian Wacana Baru* (translated from *Traditionalist Muslims in a Modernizing World: The Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's New Order Politics, Factional Conflict and the Search for a New Discourse* [Manuscript] (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 1994), pp. 3-7.

¹²¹ Effendy, *Islam and the State in Indonesia*, p. 51.

¹²² Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 121.

¹²³ Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought*, p. 119. see also Mohammad Natsir, *Politik Melalui Jalur Dakwah* (Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 2008), p. 52.

long-term Islamisation.

Given that Soeharto's interest to contain communist ideology required him to encourage *dakwah* and missions in both urban and rural areas, the Department of Religious Affairs was assigned to oversee religious instruction in state schools, designing a curriculum, manuals and textbooks. To sustain the initiative, the Department organised the training of the religious teachers it appointed. The government made religious instruction compulsory, stipulating two hours per week for all state primary schools beginning at form four, continued at secondary schools and for two years at the universities.¹²⁴

At the same time, the government promoted religious education and supported the construction of Islamic schools (*madrasah*) at all levels. In the following years, Soeharto sponsored the establishment of the Yayasan Amal Bakti Muslim Pancasila (Pancasila Muslim Good Deeds Foundation) that helped the construction of mosques all across the country. A huge budget was also allocated through the Department of Religious Affairs to boost Muslim devotion through social development programs. In the late 1960s Soeharto approved the establishment of the National Alms Collection Body (Badan Amil Zakat Nasional, BAZNAS) to help needy Muslims and he declared himself an '*amil*'.¹²⁵ The 1970s and 1980s saw the increasing presence of Islamic institutions in urban and especially rural areas. It was a gradual but consistent development that energised *dakwah* activities. This in part contributed to the decline of the *Aliran Kebatinan* across Java although its practices could still be observed in certain rural areas. By contrast, the Christian mission upsurged everywhere which in turn created anti Christian sentiments as said above.

Initially, such negative sentiments were latent, particularly among the Modernists from PERSIS, the Muhammadiyah and DDII but they became increasingly real especially after the massive conversion to Christianity across Java in the aftermath of Soekarno's downfall.¹²⁶ In West Java these negative sentiments became a matter of serious concern especially after the unprecedented conversion of ADS members in

¹²⁴ Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, p. 196.

¹²⁵ An *amil* is person or organisation responsible for collecting and distributing alms.

¹²⁶ Solahudin, *NII Sampai Ji: Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2011), pp. 132-133.

Kuningan to Catholicism in 1964.¹²⁷ Over time this facilitated the permeation of Catholic influence in various villages in West Java, such as Cisantana in Cigugur, Ciawi in Tasikmalaya, Pasir in Garut and Manggahang near Bandung as we have seen in the Chapter Two.¹²⁸

Under these circumstances, Muslims felt they were under pressure in such a way that they even believing unverivied reports, rumours and leaflets causing even more unrest. In 1970, for instance, DDII functionaries were alarmed by a leaflet that went around and which stated that Central Java would have been Chritianised after 10 years.¹²⁹ Muslim leaders, including Natsir were worried about this development in Christianisation efforts and the unrest it brought and as a result their reaction was that they would not allow the region to be Christianised any further.¹³⁰

Kahin is critical about Natsir's position towards Christianisation, as she considers it not in line with his support for democracy and his admiration of Western culture.¹³¹ Kahin said:

Natsir's struggles in trying to work out the relationship between Islam and democracy and between Islam and nationalism are in line with his ambivalence regarding the influence of Western powers and Western thought. As with many of reformist Muslim thinkers who influenced him, and especially Haji Agus Salim who had worked so closely with leading members of the Dutch colonial administration, Natsir was torn between an admiration and embrace of the "positive sides of Western culture" and a strong opposition to Western imperialism and what he saw in the Netherlands East Indies as its effort to Christianize the people it governed.¹³²

It seemed a paradox that while Natsir admired Western culture his outlook towards Christianity was unfavourable. He never objected to non-Muslims assuming high positions as cabinet ministers even if he believed that the Indonesian President should be a Muslim.¹³³ It seems possible that this paradox was the result of his involvement in the Islamic mission organisation called the Muslim World League of which

¹²⁷ K.H. Athian Ali (Chairman of FUUI), Bandung, 27 November 2008.

¹²⁸ Steenbrink, 'A Catholic Sadrach', p.295.

¹²⁹ *Idem*.

¹³⁰ Interview, K.H. Miftah Faridl, Bandung, 4 April 2009.

¹³¹ Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy*, p. 24.

¹³² *Idem*, p. 24.

¹³³ *Idem*, p. 186.

he was appointed vice President in 1969.¹³⁴

Since 1980, Natsir focused on *Dakwahism* especially after his relationship with the Soeharto regime had increasingly become worse because of his association with the opposition group *Petisi 50*. He was banned from making trips overseas. Because of this, he turned his *dakwah* attention inwards and he made Bandung one of his homebases for his *dakwah* activities alongside Jakarta. He capitalised on his relationship with Saudi and other Middle Eastern countries to get financial aid. From Bandung he continued his strategy to place the *Dakwahism* on the shoulders of young Muslims who studied at tertiary educational institutions in Bandung, Bogor, Jakarta and elsewhere in part through *Bina Masjid Kampus* as will be discussed in the next chapter.¹³⁵

Dakwahism and Secularism

As stated above, the two major orientations of the Muslim community in responding to their political circumstances, especially among Modernists, was to promote *Dakwahism* and to renew Islamic thought. While *Dakwahism* was promoted by senior Modernist leaders, in the early 1970s, young Modernist intellectuals led by Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005) began to turn away from their seniors. Madjid's bold call to reform Islamic thought clearly contradicted the struggle of Natsir and his supporters to re-create a Muslim *ummat* and an Islamic state in which the *shari'ah* would be enforced. With his popular slogan '*Islam Yes, Partai Islam No*', Nurcholish set the rationale for his reform and his quest for the relevance of Islam and the political discourse of modernity, strictly emphasising the unity of God and promoting liberal and progressive ideas.¹³⁶ Nurcholish deliberately challenged his fellow Modernists' obsession with an Islamic state and tried to delegitimise their claims to an 'Islamic' politics while questioning their ability to

¹³⁴ *Idem*, p. 184.

¹³⁵ *Idem*, p. 179.

¹³⁶ On Nurcholish Madjid's Renewal Movement, See Muhammad Kamal Hassan, 'Muslim Ideological Responses to the Issue of Modernisation in Indonesia' in Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique and Yasmin Hussain (eds.), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 362-378. See also Chaider S. Bamualim, *Transforming the Ideal Transcendental into the Historical Humanistic: Nurcholish Madjid's Islamic Thinking (1970-1995)*, unpublished MA thesis, Leiden University, 1998.

properly address the challenges Muslims faced.¹³⁷ The reform challenged DDII's politicisation of Islam, known initially as political Islam and subsequently as Islamism.

Nurcholish's reforms tended to be less critical of NU Traditionalist Muslims. The senior generation of Modernists, who were very much anti-Traditionalist, were thus faced with challenges posed by their own younger generation as personified by Nurcholish, but also by the state and by thriving Christianity. This partly explains why these Modernists sought support from, and alliance with, Muslim forces overseas, especially from Saudi Arabia. This effort brought financial aid, but also the transmission of an "Arab-Islamic" political and religious discourse,¹³⁸ reflecting the failure of the senior Modernists to independently produce a discourse on Islam and politics relevant to the context of modern Indonesia's pluralistic society.

Since Independence, Modernist exertions towards gaining political prominence, whether through *Dakwahism* or the renewal of Islamic thought, have only met with frustration. They had first hoped that they were in a position to win the nation's leadership, but this did not eventuate. They also attended the *Konstituante* sessions (1955-57) with the genuine expectation that they could defeat their Nationalist and Communist rivals, however this was unsuccessful. Soon after the destruction of the Old Order and the PKI at the hands of Soeharto's military forces and supporting Islamic organisations in October 1965, Modernists thought that their time had finally come. Once again, there was only more frustration. Although Modernist Muslims supported the New Order's rise to power, after only a few years they found themselves marginalised by the elites of the same New Order, which overwhelmingly consisted of military personnel and of only small groups of civilians.

The *Dakwahists* feared that Christianity's growing influence might herald a deepening process of Westernisation and by implication of Secularisation and hence they actively tried to defeat Christianity. This

¹³⁷ Bamualim, *Transforming the Ideal*, pp. 16-17.

¹³⁸ The term "Arab-Islamic" discourse is used by Armando Salvatore to denote "a framework of reference [that] occurred through the transcultural interaction between two discursive formations, orientalism and Islamic reformism." See Armando Salvatore, *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity* (Reading, United Kingdom, Ithaca Press, 1997), p. 81.

explains why, in the early 1970s, Nurcholish Madjid's renewal movement was challenged when he opined the need to reform Islamic thought through recourse to concepts enunciated from Western ideas and notions, such as secularisation, liberalism, de-sacralisation, et cetera.¹³⁹ Madjid points out that:

The term secularisation actually means all forms of *liberating development* which function to liberate the ummat from their own historical process of growth which is no longer capable of distinguishing which values are Islamic and transcendental from those that are non-Islamic.

Because of his 'secularisation' ideas, Nurcholish, who was previously considered Natsir's potential successor and therefore known as 'Natsir muda' (Natsir junior) disappointed his seniors and added to their frustrations. DDII members understood that, if not downright against them, Nurcholish's movement in any event did not support their interests. Against this backdrop, the DDII began to develop a connection with campus *dakwah* activists in order to provide a shelter for devout Muslim students at secular universities against the dangerous influence of Nurcholish's reform movement and the threat of secularisation which in essence it considered part and parcel of Westernisation and Christianisation.¹⁴⁰ This connection can be traced to Muslim activist training sessions Natsir and his colleagues organised in the Indonesian Hajj Committee (Panitia Haji Indonesia, PHI) in Kwitang, Jakarta in 1968, and subsequently in Pesantren Darul Falah in Bogor, West Java.¹⁴¹

Conclusion

This chapter relates the social transformation born out of the intricate dialectics of New Order politics, religious development and social change, which resulted in the rise of religions as identities and significant social forces, on the one hand, and in the decline of local

¹³⁹ Muhammad Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Response to "New Order" Modernisation in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementrian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1982).

¹⁴⁰ Latif, 'The Rupture of Young Muslim Intelligentsia', p. 393.

¹⁴¹ A.M. Lutfi, 'Gerakan Dakwah di Indonesia', in Clifford E. Smith (et al.), *Bang Imad, Pemikiran dan Gerakan Dakwahnya* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Pers, 2002), pp. 158-164.

syncretic creeds such as *Aliran Kebatinan*, on the other. Soeharto's promotion of 'religious freedom' for official religions, with restriction, favoured Islam, Christianity and other faiths weakening local syncretic currents. While it is unclear exactly what kind of relation between religion and politics Soeharto approved of, it was obvious that he wanted a separation between religion and ideology. He, therefore, crushed any initiatives that might lead to the 'ideologisation' of religion. These politics transformed religious ideology to mere *dakwah*/missionary activities.

Under this shifting context, the significance of the official religions had considerably increased, producing *Dakwahism* and mission activities. The immediate implication of this situation was that Islam and Christianity, in particular, increasingly became important as aspects of social identity. The dynamics of religious life at the grassroots, which promoted Islamisation and Christianisation, depended on how religious leaders responded to various social factors (e.g., migration, education, economic situation, institutions, et cetera). The process of Islamisation (and Christianisation) was very much related to the regime's search for strategic allies in order to neutralise the influence of Communism and in order to impose its hegemonic control over society. Against this motive, the promotion of religion was not built on a solid vision of religious freedom and tolerance. The Christian leaders sought a liberal policy in spreading religions whereas Muslims, on the contrary, demanded restrictions. Meanwhile, the regime saw order and stability as its priority and warned all parties in society not to violate this (despite its support of religious mission). The absence of a solid vision of religious freedom and tolerance sparked tension between communities of different religions, especially between Muslims and Christians.

Soeharto's increased interest in Islam also contributed to Islamisation and social change in Indonesia. As a Javanese, Soeharto actually was personally inclined towards *Aliran Kebatinan*. However, he did not sustain this devotion for a mix of political, social and religious reasons. Meanwhile, in the end, his own spiritual needs compelled him to seek a form of personal piety.¹⁴² This quest saw Soeharto develop greater interest in learning about Islam since the early 1980s although he did not completely abandon his devotion to 'mystical power' or *Aliran*

¹⁴² Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java*, pp. 118-124.

Kebatinan/Javanism.¹⁴³

Seeing Christianity as their greatest opponent, the Modernist leaders sought for a gigantic leap in organising and leading the *dakwah* agenda. They realised that they would not be able to win the religious race with the Christians unless they were equipped with qualified human capital and the proper resources in order to promote the birth of *dakwah* activists from among intellectual circles (the middle class). Therefore, Natsir turned his eyes to campuses and began to cultivate his mission on these secular training centres. After some years, this strategy proved fruitful, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

This rather long discussion of the situation in Indonesia in general is necessary to provide the background for what was about to transpire in West Java. Many new developments were initiated in this context of which the Salman *dakwah* movement on the ITB campus in Bandung in West Java was one of the most important as will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. We will see there that the nation's general attitudes towards religion in the entire country caused a movement that was initially specific to West Java but later spread out over all of Indonesia.

¹⁴³ Hefner, *Civil Islam*, p. 83.

