

## **REVIVALISM AND RADICALISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN ISLAM: A PATTERN OR AN ANOMALY?**

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The hardening of the position of the Islamic militancy would later be seen as a sad aberration in the history of nation building.... Therefore one may wonder why the attitude of Western powers is determined by the voice of the disgruntled Islamic militants only.<sup>2</sup>

Media attention has been particularly directed at those religious movements that support the use of violence in the expression of their demand.... [W]e need to examine the two faces of this global resurgence in religion—one militant and exclusive, one inclusive, civic, and tolerant to see under what conditions militant fundamentalist subcultures are fostered.... The claim that religion is the solution to the world's problems is particularly strong in fundamentalist subcultures.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Collins, 'Religious Resurgence at the End of the Twentieth Century', in Dick van der Meij et al., ed., *Islam & the West: Dialogue of Civilizations in Search of A Peaceful Global Order*, Jakarta: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and State Islamic University, 2003, pp. 27, 29, 32.

## Introduction

The acceptance of Islam in many parts of Southeast Asia has a major impact on diverse facets of culture and community in the region. It becomes an important element in the identity of Muslims, reflecting new ways of managing society and state. We know very little about how the transformation of early communities in the Malay world into 'Islamic entities' took place. It is assumed that Muslim teachers from the very beginning adopted an open and tolerant approach or method in their missionary activities. Indeed, open criticism of such an 'accommodative proclivity' did not take place until after the eighteenth century when the new proponents of 'puritanism' returned home from their long stay in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Earlier in the 1630s, a comparable phenomenon, this time focusing on intellectual crisis, took place in Aceh when Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d.1657) launched attacks on the Wujudis, who upheld monistic views. If the reformers of the late eighteenth century addressed the Muslim masses in West Sumatra, Raniri was more exclusive, condemning the educated monists.

Before discussing the topic further, it is necessary to offer some parameters for the two key terms used in this paper, namely religious 'revivalism' and 'radicalism.' Both clearly point to the idea of change and improvement based on past models. The major difference lies with the means to achieve change and improvement. Radicalism allows almost any means to reach its set-agenda and objectives. Revivalism or reformism normally opts for evolutionary change, thus avoiding open, let alone violent, conflict. In Islam reform or revival is 'not concerned with readjustments or reformulations of dogma.... Reform is more in the nature of moral revitalization than of substantive change'.<sup>4</sup>

The terms 'reform' and 'revival' can be referred to as *islah* or *tajdid* among Muslim scholars and even Islamic tradition. The Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have said, 'God will send to this *umma* at the head of each century those who will revive and renew its faith (*mujaddid*) for it'.<sup>5</sup> Clearly *tajdid* has the same root in Arabic as *mujaddid*. The concept of renewal or reform can be linked to the basic idea of independent judgement or interpretation (*ijtihad*) among Muslim legal specialists/scholars.

Relevant to the topic of this paper, the two episodes above in West Sumatra and Aceh show the close link between reformism or revivalism and

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<sup>4</sup> Fazlur Rahman, 'Roots of Islamic Neo-Fundamentalism', in P. Stoddard et al., ed., *Change and the Muslim World*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* in *Sunan of Abū Dā'ūd*, see Ella Landau-Tasseron, 'The "Cyclical Reform": A Study of the *Mujaddid* Tradition', *Studia Islamica* 70, 1989, pp. 79-117.

radicalism. Let us briefly examine how such phenomena in the wider Islamic context have been explained by modern scholars.

Fazlur Rahman is one of modern Islamicists who critically addressed Islamic reformism. For him, the Wahhabi movement which shows the internal dynamism of Islamic society represents a new facet of reformism in the eighteenth century, a model par excellence for the universal 'resurgence of orthodox Islam'.<sup>6</sup> It was a moral rather than a theological movement. As he shows further, this movement resulted in the emergence of various patterns of reform religiously, socially and politically. Rahman, however, has failed to clarify the link between the key ideas of reformism and the diverse outcomes he himself outlines.

In more specific terms, Johannes Jansen argues that Islamic fundamentalism or reformism is plagued with dualism, an 'amalgam of religion and politics'.<sup>7</sup> When the proponents of fundamentalism exert their political agenda based on their understanding of the scripture, then almost automatically they opt for peaceful or violent means to achieve such an agenda. What makes fundamentalism dilemmatic being at once widely spread and seriously fragmented in the modern era is the fact that it enjoys the '[o]pen and easy access to Scripture (teaching)' which was previously 'the domain of a small minority of intellectuals'.<sup>8</sup>

David Zeidan<sup>9</sup> categorizes Islamist movement into several currents:

- Recurring cycles of revivals in Muslim history
- Religious reform movements with the tinge of a political agenda
- Fundamentalism emerged as a counterattack against secularism.
- Fundamentalist agenda: Islamic state based on the *shari`a*; yet methods differ between the moderate gradualists and radical revolutionaries.
- Despite being a minority in most Muslim societies, the fundamentalists have won the show. Why? The clear and vehement discourse of offering the solution to the failed secular regimes almost automatically wins the support of the masses.

Prophetic religions, including Islam, see the world as a 'perennial universal battle' in all times and places. History is considered a cosmic struggle between good and evil relying on stark binary dichotomies reflecting

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<sup>6</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, New York: The Anchor Books, 1966, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup> Johannes Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Hurst, 1997, p. xiv.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> David Zeidan, 'The Islamic Fundamentalist View of Life as A Perennial Battle', *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 5/4 (2001), pp. 26-53.

the opposing camps. The conceptualization of a spiritual struggle and battle can easily shift into ideological and even violent struggle excused by 'the end justifies the means' ideology.

Zeidan provides us with a chronology of excommunication (*takfîr*) which has been used to legitimize violence against a person, a group or even a regime. Ignoring or neglecting one of the earliest and most pertinent examples, the rebellion against, and eventually the murder of, Caliph `Uthman ibn `Affan, Zeidan argues that Kharijism is the precursor of Wahhabism (since the eighteenth century) in terms of legitimizing the use of violence to attack and eliminate other Muslims considered hypocrites or infidels (*jâhilis*). Later, Rashid Rida (d.1935) pursues the main aspects of Wahhabism in his *salafî* ideology.<sup>10</sup> The purge of the Ikhwân Muslimûn in Egypt under President Gamal Abdel Nasser (d.1970) paved the way for their taking asylum in Saudi Arabia where their radicalism found a responsive chord among the ardent Wahhabis.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, a new breed of radicalism emerges. Concomitant with this development, Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) elaborates the earlier term of *jâhiliism* to include all systems and laws which deny God's rule, thus 'supplying a specific focus for revolutionary action'.<sup>12</sup> By referring to his own interpretation of *jâhiliya* and *takfîr*, Qutb provides the radicals with an attractive ideology which can be used to justify the categorization of all rival groups and individuals as infidels.

Earlier Youssef Choueiri divided Islamic modern movement into three categories: revivalism, reformism and radicalism. For him the three can be explained in a chronological order, each a response to particular internal conditions and external challenges. Thus, revivalism as represented at its best by Wahhabism in the eighteenth century was the well-known pattern of renewal in Muslim society aiming at getting rid of 'prevalent superstitions and religious innovations.' Moreover, reformism is considered an intellectual movement among educated Muslims who assert the importance of 'knowledge and the function of consultation in the life of the community.' These two categories then are used by Choueiri to bring home his major thesis on radicalism among Muslims. Radicalism, in fact, does not revive

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<sup>10</sup> The *salafî* movement emphasizes the importance of taking seriously and fully the words of the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet. Accordingly, the slogan of 'commanding the good and prohibiting the evil' (*al-amr bi al-ma`ruf wal-nahy `an al-munkar*) has become the trade mark of its social, and not rarely public, action.

<sup>11</sup> Bassam Tibi claims that Hasan al-Banna, in one of his treatises, declares the possibility of using violence against injustice based on the key maxim of the Ikhwan, '*al-amr bil-ma`ruf wal-nahy `an al-munkar*.' This point is taken from Tibi's comments during a session of the *International Seminar on Islam and the West*, 11-13 September 2002, Jakarta.

<sup>12</sup> Zeidan, 'A Perennial Battle', p. 40.

reform; it rather 'creates a new world and invents its own dystopia'.<sup>13</sup> For him radicalism emerges as a direct reaction to the growth of the nation-state and the peculiar problems of the twentieth century.

Under a different agenda, Sydney Jones in her ICG article argues recently that it is seriously misleading to generalize *salafism*, especially to link it with violence let alone terrorism.<sup>14</sup> For her the purist *salafis* are actually, in Choueiri's term, the revivalists who emphasize purity or puritanism in religious practice and castigate any organizational or hierarchical structure for their religiosity; thus political activities were totally out of the question in their way of life. Although Jones never fails to show that many of those who have been charged with terrorism or act of violence had joined *salafi* groups or movements of different shades, she insists that it is difficult to prove that purist *salafism* potentially leads to terrorism.<sup>15</sup> The main issue that Jones does not share with the readers refers to the tendency of the *salafis* to literally implement the scripture and the model provided by the Prophet Muḥammad including the application of Islamic law in both sacred and profane fields. More specifically the proclivity of the *salafis* to emphasize puritanism leading to consider even other fellow Muslims who endorse some different interpretations of the scripture or the prophetic model as unbelievers (*kuffar*) has the greater potential of launching radical actions against non-Muslims.

Now it is interesting to establish some parallel or close categorization between Jones' purist *salafism*, Choueri's revivalism and reformism, Roy's neo-fundamentalism and Metcalf's traditionalist a-politicism.<sup>16</sup> They all seem to suggest that radicalism emerges because of specific historical circumstances. I am in support of such a position; however, I also argue that

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<sup>13</sup> Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Pinter Publishers, 1990, pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> Sydney Jones, 'Indonesia Backgrounder: Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Don't Mix.' Asia Report No. 83, 13 September 2004, Brussels. International Crisis Group (ICG): <http://www.icg.org>, accessed on 18 November 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Certainly it is not a kind of repentance on the part of ICG for its previous essays highly critical on Indonesian *salafis* when it now insists the following: 'There is no way that *salafis* will ever be allies of those engaged in the war of terror but as this report shows, *salafis* are not the same as *jihâdist*s, Saudi funding does not automatically mean support for terrorism, and the terms 'radical' and 'moderate' when used with respect to Islam confuse more that they clarify' (Ibid., p. 23). What clearly appears utilitarian in this argument is the suggestion that the best way to deter the *salafi jihâdist*s from their violent activities is to trust the strict *salafis* to defeat the *jihâdist* arguments using their same texts! At this juncture the suggestions sound logical and applicable; yet, there is no guarantee for the victory of the purists over the *jihâdist*s even in the intellectual plain.

<sup>16</sup> Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans., London: I. B. Tauris, 1994; and, Barbara D. Metcalf, "'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs', International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) Papers, No. 4. Leiden: ISIM, 2002.

the emphasis of the revivalists, neo-fundamentalists or reformists on the comprehensive application of the religious teachings (*shari`a*) on the sacred and the profane as well as the well-established and handy *salafi*/literalist concept of ex-communication (*takfir*) toward untamed fellow Muslims potentially lead to radicalism. This will be the major discussion of this present paper.

Moreover, while discussing reformism and radicalism, it is also useful to keep in mind Voll's thesis on the reformist tradition (*tajdid-islah*) which 'has never been a static one'.<sup>17</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s, the fundamentalist structuring of the reformist tradition has a strong conceptual link with Wahhabism of the eighteenth century. More recently, the fundamentalists have heavily relied on the radical ideas and revolutionary agenda of younger practitioners from Qutb to Osama bin Laden (OBL). The following discussion will focus on the link between Southeast Asia and the major Islamic centres and the dynamism of Southeast Asians in understanding and implementing ideas and methods offered by their brethren in those centres. Historical explanation is given through references to major events related to revivalist, reformist and radical movements among Muslims in historic Southeast Asia.

### **Sources of Inspiration among Southeast Asian Muslims**

In Southeast Asia the propagation of Islam resulted in the emergence of a unique pattern and novel coexistence of religious mosaic. Despite tremendous success, Islam initially spread without any state patronage until the foundation of 'Islamic state' in the region after the thirteenth century. No conquest in Southeast Asia was ever entertained, let alone designed, by the caliphs in Medina, Damascus or Baghdad. Informal and indirect means of propagation of Islam at the hands of traders, scholars, Sufis and other individuals became the most effective channels of passing Islamic images and teachings to the local communities. Consequently the projection and expression of Islam in Southeast Asia represented as much the popular and even partial approach as its scriptural formulation.

When better understanding of Islam through access to written sources became more available and returning students increased in number, re-examination of the prevailing religious practices rose to prominence culminating in the emergence of the reform movement. Interestingly no single pattern of reformist movement predominated, but rather various patterns emerged. How did the movements differ? How far did religious

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<sup>17</sup> John O. Voll, 'Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah', in John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 44.

elements necessitate certain patterns of reform? Were local factors instrumental in determining certain characters or patterns of the movements?

Being in the periphery of the Islamic heartland and naturally later comers in Islamization, Southeast Asian Muslims have experienced dependence on older Islamic centres, especially those in the Middle East. Indeed, the early introduction of Islam to Southeast Asia, unlike that in the Middle East, had nothing to do with the political power and military conquest launched by the Muslim caliphs. Prevailing studies on this issue has confirmed that traders and peripatetic teachers were key players in bringing Islam to the region. This condition left two important impacts on the future of Islam in Southeast Asia: in the first place, no attempt was ever pursued to centralize Muslim communities, including the absence of enforcement of particular religious teachings or unification of Islamic education; secondly, being left on their own, Southeast Asian Muslims never mastered, let alone endorsed the language of Islam, Arabic, as the language of the court made them outside players in intellectual discourse among core Muslim scholars.

Experts have expressed different views concerning the type of religious teaching that developed among Southeast Asian Muslims during the earlier period of Islamization. Among the most vociferous opinions held is that Islamic teachings in Southeast Asia until the twentieth century continued to be dominated by syncretic-Sufi components. Generally such a religion comfortably fitted into the matrix of Southeast Asian thought and tradition, under the strong imprint of Indic tradition. The second school maintains that from the very beginning Islamization was accompanied by orthodoxism, focusing on Ash'ari-Maturidi dialectical theology (*'ilm al-kalam*) and Shafi'i jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

The heavy dependence of Southeast Asian Muslims on the major Islamic centres in the Middle East, including the Indian sub-continent, can be seen in many different manifestations. No significant work on Islam was written by Southeast Asian scholars until the sixteenth century. Indeed, references to Islamic books and treatises were occasionally made in other contemporary genres of literature in the region. The development of educational centres proper among Muslims in Southeast Asia followed the return of more sophisticated students to their home in the region after the eighteenth century. Well until the twentieth century, Islamic movements in Southeast Asia emerged as an extension of comparable movements launched earlier in the Middle East.

### **Early Facets of Reformism and Radicalism in Southeast Asia**

Revivalism or reformism has been located within the context of stagnant intellectual conditions and grossly accretion-prone communities. Reformism

may take place when the standard reference has been formulated, it thus can be used as a yard stick or banner either for the establishment or against an objective community which fails to uphold the standard that prevails. There was apparently a deliberate choice of a particular genre for propagation among the Muslims at the expense of certain other ideas. Unlike previous studies which put much importance on ideas, it is crucial to point out the structural change in society, especially with colonial intensification and major socio-economic imbalances concomitant with the introduction of market-oriented crops and monetization. These issues will not be separately treated in this paper; however, when necessary, relevant literature will be specified.

Although Islamic reformism was a manifestation, or a replay, of the internal dynamism (Kharijism; Wahhabism), it also had potential to express expansion and opposition to the outside world and power. Indeed, the emergence of Islam itself can usefully be adopted as a model and paradigm par excellence in this direction.

In the context of reformism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, models and paradigms for the reformists can be found in al-Ghazzâlî (d.1111), Ibn Taymiya (d.1329) and Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Wahhâb (d.1797). Moreover, the idea of the end of prophethood<sup>18</sup> is contemplated by the emergence of reformers at the beginning of each century. No less important, the radicalism of the Khârijîs is unconsciously upheld by many modern activists. Their purist approach is a resonance of what the Khârijîs fought for.

These developments and changes all happened while moderate Islam in Southeast Asia has continued to prosper and has been propagated diligently by religious scholars and other members of the community. The kind of religious teachings which were propagated and advanced by these scholars may be, in my opinion, gleaned through the study of extant texts written and/or read by them. In order to facilitate the discussion it is worth mentioning that a more activist approach to religiousness was exclusively propagated by scholars of the region no earlier than the second half of the eighteenth century. Earlier writings generally ignore radicalism. As can be seen below, two episodes can be considered exceptions: wars launched by Muslim rulers as early as the sixteenth century against the European intruders and the religio-political purge initiated by al-Raniri (d.1657) purportedly against the proponents of monism and pantheism (*wahdat al-wujûd*) in the capital of Aceh. Interestingly, an extant text of the sixteenth century does include a chapter on religious war (*jihâd*). Indeed, a copy of this *fiqh* text, *al-Taqrîb* written by Abû Shujâ‘ al-Isfahâni (d. 593/1196), was brought to the Netherlands by the Dutch trading mission of 1598. Moreover, in a treatise on

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<sup>18</sup> For the Shî‘îs, the *imâms* stand clearly to pursue, in certain key respects, the prophethood of Muḥammad.



scholastic theology, written by al-Nasafi copied toward the end of the sixteenth century, an allusion to *jihâd* is made in a brief passage when discussing the duties of Muslim ruler.<sup>19</sup> My immediate comment on this issue is that these works seem to be of limited use as can be seen in the limited number of copies available of them.

In examining religious texts widely used among Muslims in Southeast Asia, I strongly uphold, as I have elaborated elsewhere, that the study of old religious texts, standard and popular though they have been, may shed light on better knowledge about a living society. Muslims in Southeast Asia maintain certain standards and levels of religious discipline and learning; indeed, the Shafi'i school, Ash'ari scholastic theology and Ghazzali mysticism and morality predominate their religious discourse and education. Moreover, the roles of text and religious scholar-cum-leader in Islamic Southeast Asia are undeniable. Not surprisingly, the ideal person and lifestyle in the community are determined by individual adherence to the teaching of the texts and commitment to the demands of the scholarly religious community.

For this reason, it is commonly assumed, and in a sense proudly acknowledged by the actors, that the worldly orientation of this community is filled with Sufi and otherworldly activities:

1. In actions depicted by the *fiqh* books, Muslims are provided with clear guidelines on all aspects of life from brushing their teeth to paying taxes on mining products.
2. Morally, one is expected to perfect control over one's emotions and show virtues that transform one to a virtuous man, 'enjoining what is good and discouraging what is evil.'
3. In their beliefs a Muslim should firmly uphold uncontaminated principles about God and other pillars of faith.

In the real world of Southeast Asia, Muslims from this tradition must create a niche. Since all the writers of classical works lived in a Muslim polity ruled by caliphs or sultans, they generally perceived their world and community as an independent and autonomous entity. In this sense there was a disadvantage for pioneer Muslims in the region and also those who continued to live as a minority. Indeed, many concepts and guidelines provided by the scholars had little relevance to their incomplete community. Perhaps it is not far-fetched to suggest that in many instances the guides form an ideal to be realized by many communities in Southeast Asia. Despite this,

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<sup>19</sup> Interestingly in his positive description of the ruler of Samudra (Aceh) in the mid-fourteenth century, Ibn Batuta praised the ruler for his unceasing *jihâd* (*wa huwa al-sultân al-Malik al-Zâhir...kathîr al-jihâd wa al-ghazw...*, see Ibn Batuta, *Tuhfat al-Nuzzâr fî Gharâ'ib al-Amšâr wa 'Ajâ'ib al-Asfâr* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kitâb al-Lubnâni, n.d.), p. 409.

it is evident that emphasis is given to studying certain aspects, ignoring the less relevant. For example, such great writers as Raniri (d.1658), ‘Abd al-Ra’ûf al-Sinkilî (d.1692) and M. Arshad Banjari (d.1818), who generally follow Raniri’s model of writing, never bother to mention the chapter on *jihâd* in their respective major works. Unlike al-Isfahani’s *al-Taqrîb* and al-Nasafi’s ‘*Aqâ’id*, the works of al-Raniri, al-Sinkili and al-Banjari enjoyed wider audience and readers as can be seen in their survival and wide use throughout Southeast Asia.

For Muslim scholars in the region before the time of ‘Abd al-Samad of Palembang (d. after 1788), the emphasis in their teaching, as shown below, focuses on correct belief, proper behaviour, fulfilment of religious obligations from personal cleanliness to lawful diet. The religious war was considered by default the political responsibility of the ruler and thus was not included in their work. As I shall show later, it was by the pen of ‘Abd al-Samad, and those of his contemporaries and after, that the exclusive discussion on religious war was properly developed.

The role of religious motives in Muslim behaviour and actions may be understood through different channels and perspectives or explanations. In this paper, examination of existing religious texts is intended to suggest that ideas passed in the texts and explanations pursued orally by scholars have tremendous impact on their followers as shown in the widespread use of these texts and the intimate nature of teacher-student ties in religious circles.

These texts fundamentally represent a worldview of Muslim society. The development of intellectual technology concomitant with the preservation and dissemination of such a religious and intellectual tradition left its mark on the unity of thought among Southeast Asian Muslim scholars before or outside fundamentalist and reformist trends. The world of the religious scholars has been enthusiastically maintained through various mechanisms, for example, the method of transmission, authorization of transmission, sanction given to outsiders and others. The vitality and strength of such a scholarly religious community is unquestionable. More particularly, the networking system that has accompanied its development locally, regionally and internationally makes its influence more pervasive and long-lasting. Indeed, many authors who identify themselves as Patani live and write outside their own community and world. Despite, or rather because of, this they enjoy aura and respect. This is especially so since the Holy Cities continue to be seen as the pivot of Islamic knowledge in the community.

Elsewhere I have suggested that by studying relevant topics of the Islamic-Malay works, especially those on jurisprudence, we may delineate

the pattern of social formation and interaction in society.<sup>20</sup> I have given particular attention to areas where Muslim scholars in Southeast Asia address the issue of social interaction with other communities. I have chosen four issues which are more relevant to social and political ties between the Muslim community and others in the Southeast Asian context. By examining such issues as the concept of obligatory religious alms and tax (*zaka*), diet (*Kitab pada menyatakan menyebelih dan barang yang halâl dan harâm daripada makanan*), marriage (*Kitab pada hukum nikâh*) and religious war (*Kitâb pada menyatakan hukum perang sabîl*), it is possible to measure how far interaction and exchange may develop between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Moreover, it is also important to note that vigour among the inspired scholars and leaders towards renewal and reform was after all internal dynamism and had inward-looking orientation and thus much energy was more effectively spent on internal or domestic matters. The Kharijis (since 657), Ibn Taymiya (d.1329), Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab (d.1797) and, in Southeast Asia, al-Raniri (d.1657) had after all launched attacks and purges against their Muslim brethren who were considered clumsy and improper. Their attacks and purges are generally justified with the argument that all those Muslims who went beyond the limits of the established doctrine (orthodoxy) were legitimately labelled as *kuffar* or at least apostates.

The dissemination of Islamic teachings in Southeast Asia has followed particular approaches and patterns. It is generally acknowledged that before the introduction of the reformist and modernist ideas toward the end of the nineteenth century, the teaching of Islam revolved around three disciplines: Islamic jurisprudence, scholastic theology, and Sufism and morality. All these disciplines were taught using specific acceptable texts, known as *kitab Jawi* or *kitab kuning*.

### **Major Religious Ideas and Teachings of Southeast Asian Scholars ('Ulama')**

Despite the fact that Islam reached the region by peaceful means, including trade, the concept of building a community follows the Medinan model. The Meccan model, however, has been ignored by Muslim scholars. But in reality the pioneers must have adopted the Meccan approach consisting of three principles: belief in the unity of God, socioeconomic improvement and justice, and the concept of social equality. Nevertheless the emphasis on

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<sup>20</sup> Iik A. Mansurnoor, 'Intellectual Networking among Muslim Scholars in Southeast Asia: With Special Reference to Patani Works on Society, Coexistence and External Relations', *Islamic Quarterly*, 48, 3, 2005, pp. 37-58.

establishing a community based on the Medinan model could not be pursued equally in all parts of the region. The preoccupation with imposing a universal system could be hampered by the inability of certain Muslim concentrations to gain influence and also opposition from the non-Muslim majority.

It must be pointed out that a Patani scholar, Muḥammad Nur, as quoted above, has categorically argued about the peaceful propagation of Islam. For example, before his migration to Medina, the Prophet Muḥammad never contemplated any idea of war. Patience and perseverance were key concepts during this period. Although he never pursues this aspect further, Southeast Asian scholars who write and comment on *Kitab al-Jihād* generally skipped this point and discussed the obligation of *jihād*. The mindset of religious scholars has been shackled to the political and administrative developments as shown with the emergence of Medinan regimes and the caliphate system or other later political concepts. The Meccan period is considered an abrogated model. In my opinion, such scholars as Muḥammad Nur do sense the relevance of the Meccan model for many newly developed Muslim communities in the peripheries; however, due to his preoccupation with school-oriented thinking his own doubts never won over his own convictions.

The model of religious life among early Southeast Asian Muslims came from that provided by al-Ghazzali, as can be seen in the dominance of *fiqh*, scholastic theology and sufism and morality as propagated by the Hijaz-based scholars.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Muslim scholars placed as much importance on individual rights as protection of one's life, mind, property, and sense of honour or prestige, and family.<sup>22</sup>

In commenting on the works of 'Uthman ibn 'Aqil of Betawi, Snouck Hurgronje insists that a religious teacher like 'Uthman belongs to a group of responsible scholars who attempt to implement the Islamic norms 'in a smooth and moderate manner.' Of course Snouck Hurgronje, as a colonial government officer, expresses his approval to his subordinate, who tries to accommodate the government's interests within the perimeters of the religious norms.<sup>23</sup>

The editor of *Kitab Perukunan* maintains that a Muslim has the obligation to uphold and implement the pillars of the faith (*arkân al-îmân*) and those of Islam (*arkân al-Islâm*). In contrast, all these qualities were vehemently blasted and refuted as destroying Islam by the reformist leaders

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<sup>21</sup> Virginia Matheson and M. B. Hooker, 'Jawi Literature in Patani: The Maintenance of An Islamic Tradition', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS), LXI, 1 (1988), pp. 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> See Ahmad ibn Muḥammad Zayn al-Fatani, *Faridat al-Fara'id*, Edited by Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1990, pp. 95-7.

<sup>23</sup> C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Kumpulan Karangan Snouck Hurgronje*, trans., Jakarta and Leiden: Indonesian Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS), 1993, VIII, p. 36.

in the region, such as the al-Imam group, from the beginning of the twentieth century.

### Early Radical Movements

In Southeast Asia, Islamic radicalism emerged as early as the 1630s when al-Rânirî supported by Sultan Iskandar Thâni launched purges against the proponents of the *wahdat al-wujûd* or the Wujûdîs. Al-Raniri's action apparently failed to generate mass movement. More particularly, during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many activist reformists launched major attacks on their coreligionists with the charge that the latter committed greater sins of polytheism (*shirk*) through their syncretism and diverse religious accretions, including inaction vis-à-vis the increasing dominance of foreign, generally non-Muslim, powers. Later the movements of these activist reformists developed into anti-colonial protests and wars as can be seen, for example, in the Java and Padri wars of the 1820s and 1830s.

The increasing activism or radicalism in many parts of Southeast Asia has been explained by many experts in the context of the spread of Wahhabism and more recently through rapid socio-economic and political change concomitant with the deepening encroachment of colonial powers and European entrepreneurs. I shall argue that the circulation of a new genre of Islamic literature among Southeast Asian Muslims had a direct impact on new awareness and awakening amongst their contemporaries. The role of a new generation of Hijaz-trained scholars from Southeast Asia, including the Patani is undeniable. Indeed, two such pioneer scholars, 'Abd al-Samad of Palembang (d. after 1788) and Da'ud ibn 'Abdullah of al-Fatânî, have contributed a new genre, or at least a new emphasis, of Islamic texts among their coreligionists in the region.

Did the concept of *jihâd* win early endorsement among rulers in Southeast Asia? How often did Muslims raise the banner of *jihâd*, in the sense of holy war, against the conquering Europeans? It is commonly assumed that during the sixteenth century when the Portuguese, followed by the Spaniards, launched major offensives against Malay rulers in the Straits of Melaka and the eastern part of the Archipelago, the idea of *jihâd* was propagated to defend Islamic rules.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly the crucial local texts do

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<sup>24</sup> When the Portuguese attacked Melaka in 1511, the Muslim leaders are claimed to have raised the two books *Hikâyat Muḥammad Ḥanafiyah* and *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* (in some versions such treatises as *Dalâ'il al-Khayrât* and *Umm al-Barâhîn* are also listed). According to *Sejarah Melayu*, the ruler mobilized his subjects and prepared for battles (*Maka Sultan Ahmad pun mengerahkan segala rakyat... berperanglah*). The first and second are well-known Malay texts on the legend of two Islamic heroes Muḥammad Ḥanafiyah and Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib. Muḥammad is a son of 'Ali from a Ḥanafî

not mention such terms as *jihâd* or *perang sabil* to describe the local resistance launched against the Portuguese in 1511 Melaka and against the Spaniards in 1578 Brunei. It is only toward the end of the eighteenth century that local resistance toward European colonizers was described by the contemporary writers as *jihâd*. For example, the resistance launched by Raja Haji of Riau against the Dutch in Melaka in 1784 is described in *Tuhfat al-Nafis* as *jihâd [fi] sabîl Allâh*. The attacks were undertaken to fulfil the religious sanction of *jihâd (fadîlât)*.<sup>25</sup>

Interestingly our earliest *fiqh* texts never bother to list the concept of *jihâd* or *perang sabil* in their contents. Even the staunchest proponent of activism such as Nur al-Din al-Raniri does not include the concept of *jihâd* in his famous *al-Širât al-Mustaqîm*, let alone compose any specific work on *jihâd*. Again, one leading jurist of the new generation of Southeast Asian scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries avoids giving an exclusive chapter on *perang sabil*.<sup>26</sup>

‘Uthman ibn ‘Aqil of Betawi claims that the idea of *jihâd* as propagated by Muslim leaders in the second half of the nineteenth century was invalid and was never undertaken earlier in the Malay world. No religious scholar ever propagated this idea before. Moreover, he criticizes the *jihâd* leaders as caught by *ghurur* (a self-deceived attitude).

On the other hand, as has been shown in diverse modern studies, *jihâdism* began to be endorsed in Southeast Asian writings no later than the late eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The more elaborate, yet popular, manifestation of

wife and Hamzah is the Prophet Muḥammad’s uncle. *Umm al-Barâhîn* is a preliminary text of orthodox theology written by Abu ‘Abdullâh al-Sanûsî (d.895/1490). Under the guidance of Makhdam Sadar Jahan the ruler read this text. *Dalâ’il al-Khayrât* is a famous supplicatory work (*hizb*) written by a north African Sufi of the fifteenth century, Muḥammad al-Jazûlî. Until today some individual Muslims continue to recite this work for its magical power. Moreover, another Sufi-theological work called *al-Durr al-Manẓûm* was widely circulated in Melaka before 1511, even a copy was sent to Pasai for a second opinion.

The Brunei text, *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei* (SRB), does not use the term of *jihâd* to depict the local resistance against the Spanish invasion in 1578 (known locally as the Castile War), see SRB, A: 71-72 (*berbuat kota dengan*); B: 7-8 (*perkelahian bangsa Manila dengan Sultan Berunai*).

For a different view about *jihâdism* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Anthony Reid, ‘Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia: The Critical Phase, 1550-1650’, in Anthony Reid, ed. *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 163-6.

<sup>25</sup> See *Tuhfat al-Nafis: Sejarah Melayu Islam*, edited and annotated by Virginia M. Hooker, trans., Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991, pp. 407-8.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, see Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjari, *Sabîl al-Muhtadîn*.

<sup>27</sup> Merle C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi 1749-1792: A History of the Division of Java*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974; and, G.W.J. Drewes, ‘Further Data Concerning ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani’, *Bidragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (BKI), 132, 1976, pp. 267-92.

*jihâdist* literature can be seen in the various composition of *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in Aceh from the second half of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, a writer of the Acehnese *Hikayat Prang Sabi* refers to ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani, especially his treatise on *jihâd*.<sup>28</sup>

### **Re-examining Reformist and Radical Movements in Twentieth Century Southeast Asia—Part I**

Conservatism among the religious leaders in nineteenth century Southeast Asia has been seen as a result of different convergent factors. Political decline and economic stagnation played an important role in this direction. More specifically, in my opinion, its geographic isolation from many other more established Islamic states, even if this is no longer meaningful let alone applicable today, also hindered Southeast Asian Muslims from making some serious effort at socio-religious reform. As political and economic pressures from European powers increased, Muslims were forced to follow one of two possible roads: participation or isolation. Education amongst Muslims in Southeast did not escape this dualism, as can be seen in the twentieth century.

The beginning of modern education and Islamic reform among Southeast Asian Muslims is commonly believed to originate in the contacts with Wahhabism, Jamalism, and/or Manarism. Many reformist or modernist writers blamed the decadence and decline of Islamic society during the nineteenth century on superstitions, *taqlidi* and outdated implementations of Islam and authoritarian rule. Although there is some truth in this claim, the problem is complex and cannot be fully understood by emphasizing the local factors. In other words, the decline of political, economic and religious conditions of the Muslim world and its major powers had direct consequences in Islamic Southeast Asia.

Now, further questions may be raised in the context of the reform of Islamic education and religious life among Muslims in Southeast Asia. What was the impetus of reform in Southeast Asia during this period? How did local and external factors meet and force reform or even rebellion? A quest for reform had occurred at different stages, intensities and areas. Generally local impetuses grew more serious and gained momentum when external factors universalized the ideas and buttressed the cause. The cases of the wars in Java and Minangkabau in the 1810s to the 1830s are clear examples.<sup>29</sup> The

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<sup>28</sup> P. Voorhoeve and Teuku Iskandar, *Catalogue of Acehnese Manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and Other Collections outside Aceh*, ed. and trans. M. Durie, Leiden: Legatum Warnerianum, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> See Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*.

reformist movement, closely associated with Wahhabism, has been given credit for many such religious outbreaks.

In the field of education the issue is more complex and hence blurred. The complexity is related to at least two interwoven issues: perception and development. On the one hand, education among Southeast Asian Muslims was closely associated with religious education. This, as developed in many other parts of the Muslim world, led to the isolation and decline of education. On the other hand, the aggressive nature of European expansion led to apathy and suspicion among Muslim leaders relating to the adoption and/or adaptation of the European model of education at the time. Under these circumstances, any change to the prevailing system of education had to have religious legitimacy and sanction. Accordingly and understandably, reforms in Islamic education came through 'formal' religious channels such as well-known *ulama*, Muslim rulers, well known personalities, and not surprisingly, *homines novi*, the reformers.

The reformers' determination and ability to oppose the status quo was a passport for mass support including their reformist idea of education. In general, their ideas on education were closely linked to their insistence on widening the scope of religious life and thus more accommodating to modern and Western ideas of education. Several prominent reformers Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi (d. 1934) of Singapore, Tahir Jalaluddin (d. 1956), Abdullah Ahmad of Minangkabau (d. 1934) and Ahmad Dahlan (d.1923) of Yogyakarta with different levels of success initiated bold ideas about education, generally endorsing modern methods and approach. With their argument that modernity in scientific research is not contradictory to Islam, they launched new programs of Islamic education without hesitation. The educational experimentation began with juxtaposing the two different systems of education under the name of Islamic school (*madrasah*). Many of these schools survived only for a few years, others have prospered continuously undergoing revision and adjustment.

On the other hand, the bulk of the *ulama* by virtue of their association with orthodox doctrine believed that communities had to look for ways to adapt to changing eras. Changes were endorsed when they were almost unavoidable. Even then they had to be justified in terms of religious legitimacy and through acceptable channels. As such the religious networks that merged in Mecca provided the channel for change in the education system among the *ulama*.

Meanwhile, European authorities in many parts of Southeast Asia also introduced Western schools and vernacular education alongside the Christian missionary schools. The reformers had no difficulty in endorsing this policy and sent their children to such schools. They saw the positive impact and result of modern education; however, at the same time, they emphasized the importance of the Islamic character of education. The reaction of the *ulama*



was predictably cool, as was also the case with similar phenomena in other Muslim countries during the period. In the light of the above, it is unsurprising that Ottoman experimentation and experience in educational reform did not win a direct, formal and open following among Southeast Asians.

Despite the fact that there was no formal endorsement of the Ottoman educational system in Southeast Asia, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that the introduction of the Ottoman system of education in many parts of the Middle East, especially in the Hijaz and Levant, has impacted on the attitude to modernization of education among students and scholars who had seen the system in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, the invitation of some Southeast Asians to visit and perhaps also to study in Istanbul during the last quarter of the nineteenth century also encouraged the idea of educational reform in their homeland. Again, some teachers with Islamic modernism or reformism from the Middle East were invited to teach certain wealthy and influential communities in urban Southeast Asia.<sup>30</sup>

The intensity of European encroachment upon the Muslim world by the nineteenth century ended the intellectual intra-relationships between the Muslim societies. More importantly, education, even among the great Muslim powers such as the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals, experienced major erosion, deserting the rational sciences. Education became the domain of transmitted sciences. Earlier education was based on the rational and transmitted sciences, including grammar and syntax, rhetoric, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, traditions, exegesis, logic, philosophy, theology and mathematics.

The early reformist schools in Southeast Asia generally offered basic religious training and some elements of secular education. The first fully reformed *madrasa* in Southeast Asia, Madrasat al-Iqbal al-Islamiya, was founded in November 1907. It offered Arabic, religious subjects, English, Malay, arithmetic, geography, history, debate and composition.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, one of the founders and the ideologue of this *madrasa*, had belonged to a study club in the Riau region, known as the Rushdiya Society, founded in the early 1890s. It is not quite clear whether the Society had anything to do with the idea of modern Rusdiye school as had been developed in the Ottoman empire. The successor *madrasas* founded by many other reformist Muslims in Southeast Asia generally followed the initiative of the Singapore model. The syllabus on religious subjects differed from the older system in a sense of inventing new books and a new line of religious

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<sup>30</sup> See Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Moderen*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986, p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> See Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Sayid Syekh al-Hadi 1867-1934*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1994, pp. 121-2.

practices. The secular subjects were generally based on the syllabus endorsed by the government schools.<sup>32</sup>

Related to discipline and books being pursued and taught, are the circles of teachers and *ulama* and their networks. It is interesting to note that Southeast Asian students in the Haramayn were more interested in the study of Sufism and jurisprudence than any other disciplines. In this context, it is not surprising that these students had closer link with the Sufi and *ulama* networks and groups, especially the Shafi`i *ulama*, the Shattariya, Qadiriya, Sammaniya and Naqshbandiya *shaykhs*. For example, as shown by Ochsenwald, during the nineteenth century, the position of the Shafi`i *mufti* in Medina was mostly occupied by the Barzinji family of Kurdistan.<sup>33</sup> It is only logical that many Southeast Asian students, as before, joined the study circles of the Barzinji scholars. In this way the Ottoman patronage of such religious officials indirectly provided better opportunities for many Southeast Asian students to pursue their religious quest in the Haramayn.

The Reformist movement in early twentieth century Southeast Asia put an emphasis on religious purity and social modernity. This can be seen, for example, in the many articles or columns published in Singapore's journal *al-Imam* (from July 23, 1906 to December 1908) and subjects taught at the *Madrasat Iqbal al-Islamiya*.<sup>34</sup> Having encountered mounting difficulties in Singapore the main player in the movement moved to Penang after 1916, founding a school and running various publishing activities aiming at pursuing his Islamic reform.

As can be seen in the articles published in *al-Imam* and *al-Ikhwan* (1926-1931), Islamic reformism at the time focused on religious and social issues. *Al-Imam*, for example, repeats the publication of columns on the following topics:

- Religious issues: bank interests (shares, cooperatives)—not prohibited (*haram*); the Friday prayer does not require the necessary number of 40 participants;
- Methods and ways of enlightening ignorant Muslims to prepare them to be propagators and workers for the well-being of all fellow mankind's;
- Feeling of noblesse oblige among Muslim elite;
- Cooperation among Muslims;
- Enjoining what is good and discouraging what is evil.

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<sup>32</sup> Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah*, pp. 39, 56-7.

<sup>33</sup> William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under the Ottoman control, 1840-1908*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984, p. 52.

<sup>34</sup> Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya*, pp. 60-4.

An untiring leader of the reformist movement, Shaykh al-Hadi (d.1934), used mass media and publication to advocate novel views on such issues as:

- Religion can be better appreciated if approached through reason and modern values (a rational and simple approach to Islam)
- Education should be made comprehensive covering religious and worldly affairs and providing employment for the youth
- Women should be given full rights to education and socio-economic activities
- Endorsement of British rule and policy, including its modernisation programme. For him, the British were the best saviour for Muslims (he was critical of the Malay rulers –but did not advocate any opposition). However, they must conform to Islamic teachings.

Muslim reformists in Southeast Asia nurtured new ideas through inspiration from:

- Models and examples in other Muslim countries: al-`Urwat al-Wuthqa (in 1884, Paris), al-Manar (from 1898, Cairo)
- Increasing publication of vernacular journals in the Malay world and Southeast Asia in general since the 1860s
- Reformist and modernist ideas paved the way for spreading news through modern means
- Modern education and literacy

In Kelantan the Islamic and Malay Council (Majlis Ugama dan Istiadat Negeri), founded in 1915, charted a new phase of major reform. In no other state had there occurred anything approaching the kind of concentration of powers, the relative autonomy, and the financial independence which, from the first, the Majlis in Kelantan represented. Institutionally it became itself a model of Islamic reform for the rest of the peninsula. Islamic reform in Kelantan, according to William Roff, reflected (1) institutional continuity in the process of modernization; and (2) the importance of the administrative institutionalization and bureaucratization.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> William R. Roff, ed., *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 149.

## Re-examining Reformist and Radical Movements in Twentieth Century Southeast Asia—Part II

The intensification of anti-colonial powers in nineteenth century Southeast Asia paved the way for the radicalization of Islamic discourses, propagating jihād as a means to defend the rights of the indigenous and address justice.

Scholars have argued that Islam formed an important element in the rise of national awakening among Southeast Asian Muslims from the beginning of the twentieth century. Unlike the preceding century, however, the twentieth century witnessed declining armed resistance among Muslims against the Western powers in the region. The obvious factors to this decline have been commonly addressed in the changing approaches of the Western powers in their colonies and the spread of new political vocabularies, including nationalism.

After the Pacific War (1941-5), with increasing determination for political independence and shifting policy among the colonial powers in the region, Muslim leaders faced different political and religious environments. First, the establishment of national governments opened new opportunities for political participation. Many did collaborate and support new regimes in the capitals. Second, still others considered the national governments had failed to fulfil the expectation of having a truly Islamic state. Consequently, they maintained an Islamic agenda, refusing to recognize the national governments.

### Was it a Rejection of Centralization or Religious Concern? The Case of West Java and Aceh

Van Dijk maintains that emphasis should be given to the ‘common denominators’ and ‘common factors’ in the rise of the dar al-Islam movement in post-war Indonesia. In Aceh, the rebellion was inspired by religious vigour; whereas in Java, ‘Islamic overtones’ predominated.<sup>36</sup>

In his literature survey on the Aceh rebellion in the mid-twentieth century, Nazaruddin presents various views on the roots of rebellions, including the continuation of the old rivalry between the *ulebalang* (hereditary leaders) and the *ulama* (Muslim scholars), centre-periphery relations, and centralization by Jakarta.<sup>37</sup> After all, the religious dimension of the conflict remains strong and acknowledged. For Feith, the *ulama* opposed

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<sup>36</sup> C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: Darul Islam in Indonesia*, The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1981, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt: A Study of the Acehnese Rebellion*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 1985, p.9.

the central government for their protest against the end of Masjumi's participation in the Ali cabinet (1953).<sup>38</sup>

When the reformist *ulama* (mostly in Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh [PUSA]) launched rebellion in cooperation with the local leaders (*zu`ama'*), the traditional *ulama* (mostly in Persatuan Tarbiah Islamiyah [PERTI]) did not support them. In response Jakarta conciliated the traditional *ulama* with lucrative offers. Later, when Jakarta offered autonomy to Aceh, the local leaders (*zu`ama'*) positively responded by taking the leading role in the negotiation. The *ulama* followed them only much later, especially when the autonomy was seen as sufficiently accommodating their religious aspirations. Thus autonomy was interpreted as fulfilment of the original aim of rebellion.

Support for rebellion came from various sectors for different reasons; however, religion and coercion appear to be very important. The *anti-kaphe* (anti-European) slogan had been maintained by the *ulama* for centuries, especially with the popularization of the *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> The Acehnese have strong ethnic bonds as can be seen in their rejection of the Minang leadership in religious organizations like PERTI and also in their anti-Jakarta (read 'Javanese') slogans in their Darul Islam and later Aceh Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF) / Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM).

### The Case of West Java

The major studies of the Darul Islam movement in Indonesia during the 1950s and 1960s never fail to point to the importance of political centralization and the sidelining of Islamic elements in the power structure of the new nation-state. Jackson, for example, argues that the proclamation of the Darul Islam connotes a paradox.<sup>40</sup> On the one hand, the concept of an Islamic state is based on a fixed system of Islamic law; on the other, the Darul Islam is also presented in modern garb, ranging from republicanism and constitutionalism. Despite the fact that Jackson emphasizes the inflexibility of Islamic law, he makes an important point on the lack of a model for a modern Islamic state. Moreover, in almost 'any violent political endeavor a chasm [develops] between the ideals enshrined in the constitution and the behaviors of the rebellion's participants... at every turning the [Darul Islam] Constitution's more moderate and modern provisions were sacrificed

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<sup>38</sup> Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian Elections of 1955*, Interim Report Series, Modern Indonesian Project, Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1957.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 190.

<sup>40</sup> Karl D. Jackson, *Traditional Authority, Islam, and Rebellion: A Study of Indonesian Political Behavior*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, pp. 3-6.

to the exigencies of Holy War (*jihâd*), and as time passed the movement became more renowned for unspeakable atrocities than for its piety'.<sup>41</sup>

The Darul Islam movement launched by Kartosuwirjo in the Priangan region was a model for resistance based on an Islamic ideology to the post-war central government. Kartosuwirjo did not have a strong religious education background, despite his conviction from a quite early period in the Sarekat Islam struggle against the colonial government. Interestingly, he was active in publishing various articles and notes on Islam and non-cooperation vis-à-vis colonial rule, the main agenda of the Sarekat Islam (later known as Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia [PSII]). Kartosuwirjo's access to wider sources of reading, even in Dutch, led him to suggest a sophisticated philosophical argument during his heyday in PSII. On the other hand, his endeavour to inject new ideas to the party and the challenges he faced shows the delicate balance that the young radical, Kartosuwirjo, tried to strike.

Prior to the Pacific War when Kartosuwirjo had been active in the Sarekat Islam, his use of the term *jihâd* remained ambiguous. At times he emphasized the importance of sacrifice in achieving independence; however, he elaborately endorsed a more diplomatic approach. He thus focused, for example, on the meaning of *jihâd* in terms of self-rectification (*al-jihâd al-akbar*).

The PSSI slogan of non-cooperation (self-reliance; *swadeshi*) and *hijrah* attracted Kartosuwirjo. Certainly his early personal contact with Tjokroaminoto had a deep impact on his involvement with PSSI. During the internal conflict in 1936, the proponents of noncooperation won support among younger members of the party. In his (PSII) pamphlet of 1936, Kartosuwirjo emphasizes the necessity of *hijrah* for Muslims, when the *jihâd* can be pursued. Yet, *jihâd* should be interpreted as a positive approach to follow the *sirat al-mustaqim*. Instead of *jihâd al-asghar*, Kartosuwirjo focuses on *jihâd al-akbar*, the building of oneself, community and country.<sup>42</sup> Even as early as 1938, in his *hijrah* pamphlet, Kartosuwirjo already put forward the idea of 'an institute scheduled to train the militant cadres of the party'. The Suffah Institute was a realization of this (approved by the second

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> *Jihâd kecil itu bersifat negatif, karena ia hanyalah satu pertahanan, satu pembelaan diri atau pembelaan agama, terhadap kepada serangan2 musuhnya. Dan jihâd besar itu...mempunyai sifat reconstructief dan positif (kebalikan dari negatif), karena jihâd ini mengandung sifat2: menyusun dan mengatur diri sendiri, menyusun dan mengatur kampung dan negeri serta umat Islam. For PSII, jihâd means jihâd akbar. Sikap politik yang dikehendaki oleh PSII mesti bersifat Hijrah, dan tidak dapat dikeluarkan daripada Hijrah. PSSI jihâd is Islamic jihâd based on the Qur'an and the Sunna. It is neither jihâd which legitimizes offensive strikes, nor instigates conflict and violation of the rights of others. See Al-Chaidar, ed., *Pemikiran Politik Proklamator Negara Islam Indonesia, A.M. Kartosoewirjo: Fakta dan Sejarah Darul Islam*, Jakarta: Darul Falah, 1999. p. 418.*

congress of Komite Pembela Kebenaran Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia [KPKPSII]; PSII Defender of the Truth Committee) in 1941. Located at Malangbong it was planned for education; but turned out to be a military training ground.<sup>43</sup>

To implement Islam fully, Muslims should achieve self-rule. Radicalism was seen as an immediate means to realize such an objective.<sup>44</sup> Kartosuwirjo's contempt toward the collaborators can be seen in his use of the term TBTO (Tolak Bala' Tawil Oemoer; traitors of the nation and religion).<sup>45</sup> In response to the banning of the Friday prayer in the PSII mosque, Kartosuwirjo argues that it is more pressing to prevent vices (listed in full) than to do good (*al-amr bil-ma'ruf wal-nahy `an al-munkar*).

Kartosuwirjo's call to radicalism nicely fitted to the contemporary struggle in the country to achieve self-rule in the 1930s. Kartosuwirjo condemned those indigenous officials who aimed to liquidate the Islamic movement (*yang bersandar kepada Islam revolutionaires, Islam Wahhabi*). In criticizing the use of the Qur'anic verse '...ati`u Allah...' for obedience to the colonial authority (from *ulu al-amr*), Kartosuwirjo argues that the verse was put forward in the context of 'believers' not of any community or nation.

In the context of *Hijra*, Kartosuwirjo points out that PSII aims to fully implement God's law and Prophet Muhammad's model. *Hijra* is a means to regain glory (*falah* and *fath*). Yet, Kartosuwirjo also maintains, citing the model of the Prophet, that He was sent for peace not war, cooperation not conflict. *Hijra* is obligatory and never ceases as such as long as the place continues to endorse ungodly law (*tegasnya peraturan2 yang melanggar Agama Allah*). In PSII, *Hijra* without *jihâd* is incomplete or even invalid.<sup>46</sup>

For PSII in the 1930s, according to Kartosuwirjo, Indonesia was home to many groups: (1) Dutch, the ruling class and the powerful, eager to defend their own interests and power; (2) the nationalists who want to establish an independent Indonesia; (3) the Islamic community (*dar al-Islam*) who have little to do with the motherland, *melainkan mereka hanya ingin berbakti kepada Allah yang esa belaka*. The latter is determined to found *dar al-Islam* where Muslims can implement fully the law of God, either as personal or public law.

During the Japanese occupation, Kartosuwirjo did not occupy any important formal position. After 'being left out', in June 1946 he formed Masyumi Daerah Priangan in Garut, including the Sabilillah corps. He delivered his famous *Haluan Politik Islam*. However, as soon as the Japanese

<sup>43</sup> See Van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam*, pp.31-39.

<sup>44</sup> '...rintangan...wajib kita memerangnya...wajib kita membasminya...dan berlawanan dengan musuh kita dengan ikhlas hati.' See Al-Chaidar, ed., *Pemikiran Politik Proklamator*, p. 320.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 321, 325.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 404, 411.

left, followed by the arrival of the Allied forces, Kartosuwirjo re-emerged, first as an enthusiastic politician. At that point he gave full support to the newly formed Masyumi, an Islamic party. His disappointment with the crude power struggles and loose political alliances during the second half of the 1940s led him to revive his long-held concept of an Islamic state in opposition not to colonial rule but to the nascent republic of Indonesia. The main emphasis of his early conceptualization of a proposed Islamic state was focused on the implementation of the *shari`a*. However, since the country had been facing the return of the colonial power, Muslims had the obligation to defend the independence of the 'Islamic state' recently won through what he had earlier defined the *jihâd al-asghar*.

In his *Haluan Politik Islam* written in 1946, Kartosuwirjo argues for the importance of political participation. The era of ignorance and indifference to politics must come to an end now that Indonesia was independent. Yet, Muslims should not fight for positions selfishly as this would create unrest, conflict and instability. Vision and ambition must be put in the context of facts and reality, or animosity and disunity will result.<sup>47</sup> In 1946, the Muslims had a chance to opt for an Islamic state, if they overcame other challengers, particularly the nationalists and the communists.

Struggles in the way of 'revolution' cover a national scope and socially oriented one. At the national level: independence must be fought through diplomacy and armed struggles (*jihâd fi sabil Allah, bi-ma`na al-qatl wal-ghazwa*). Muslims are obliged (*fard `ayn*) to fight intruders. It is unlawful (*haram*) to be indifferent to exploitation and colonialism. Diplomacy without struggle is meaningless and ineffective. Next, social revolution may take place when some sectors of society, by virtue of ideology and class (*golongan* or *tingkatan*), take the initiative of internal change. Thus it is *fard kifaya* for other sectors of society.

The first is *jihâd al-asghar* and the second is *jihâd al-akbar*. Moreover, individuals are required to undertake private revolution (*shakhsi*). If individuals succeed in conducting private revolution, society will automatically become free and renewed. Nothing foreign will remain with them. It is thus obligatory for individual Muslims to achieve freedom themselves. *Revolusi rakyat* (people's revolution) produces *jiwa merdeka* (spirit of independence); indeed, it ensures that no one will ever dare to interfere with our affairs.

On Islamic ideology, Kartosuwirjo is quite blunt and direct. Islamic ideology requires that:

- The Republic of Indonesia is declared an Islamic state (*berdasar Islam*)

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp.533, 539.



- The government ensures that Islamic law is implemented widely and fully
- Muslims should be provided with opportunities to pursue their worldly affairs and fulfil their religious obligations (*dunia dan akhirat*)
- Muslims and Indonesians of all sectors and backgrounds should be freed from any form of enslavement

Muslims have no other way but to found *dar al-Islam*, the new world of Islam. Success in this world and happiness in the hereafter depend on how well Muslims endorse Qur'anic teachings and the Prophet's guides. Following God in this world means having *dar al-Islam* and achieving God's mercy in the hereafter means entering *dar al-salam*. Muslims are living in grave sin since they fail to form *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-salam*, in fact, they just simply waste their time on the earth.

Kartusuwirjo offers a guideline on how to establish *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-salam*. He categorically insists that the paths and efforts for these two must be pursued as normally and as smoothly as possible based on the prevailing laws belonging to the state and religion. In cases where irregularities emerge then certain emergency measures may be taken to suppress these irregularities.

The major tasks of Muslims immediately after the Pacific War were:

- They should ensure that national revolution, that is full independence, becomes reality
- At the same time they have a task to implement social revolution, when possible, especially when they have achieved complete independence
- They also need to build sufficient and capable human resources, as they have almost none. Yet Muslims have to be confident about re-building and developing their country

Four steps in social revolution, especially relevant to the political field include:

1. Muslims should attempt to win the majority of legislative seats from the village level to the Parliament.
2. Muslims should also attempt to take executive power when possible. This is important since legislation, even made by Muslims, without implementation by the executive will mean nothing. Since Muslims remain behind other communities, they must learn quickly in political and administrative matters. The *ulama* (religious scholars, who know little about politics) and the Muslim intellectuals (who are ignorant of

- religious disciplines) must cooperate to fill the gap. Thus the idea of separation between state and Islam can be eliminated.
3. People must be involved in the process of government, legislation and governance or development. Independence must address the will and problems of the people.
  4. Muslims must be knowledgeable and practice Allah's law and the Prophet's guidance.

Endorsement of all these leading to *dar al-Islam* should start from the individual, village, and so on. This Islamic social revolution will pave the way for Muslims to be pioneers and the leading party in independent Indonesia. This *Revolusi Rakyat Islam* should come easily if those gradual steps are followed. The place, time, opportunity, and condition of society must be taken into account when launching all these.<sup>48</sup> Therefore the task of achieving Islamic Revolution or Islamic People's Revolution should be conducted legally and smoothly (*cara dan aturan yang sebaik-baiknya*); thus Muslims can prove that they are capable and proper as a model for all other citizens. Allah's mercy, however, remains indispensable in achieving all these.

In locating Islamic struggles vis-à-vis the Republic of Indonesia, Kartosuwirjo constructed a plan of the battle field as a tripartite struggle between nationalists, communists and Islamists. The communists had been successful in manipulating and using the other two, since those two were under weak and incapable leaders. Kartosuwirjo was extremely suspicious toward the communists. He was deeply disappointed with the fact that the Republican leaders (mostly nationalist) came under the influence and control of the well-trained communists. Religious leaders fared even worse as they were not well trained in the intricacies of modern political struggle. Kartosuwirjo was also critical toward those Indonesians, either nationalist or Muslim, who collaborated with the Japanese military authorities in Java. Both Masjumi and Jawa Hokokai were used to Nipponize all forms of ideology in Indonesia. For Kartosuwirjo this attempt came to form a hybrid of Jahili-Sintoism and Islam.<sup>49</sup>

When the Dutch launched their second assault (*Actie politioneel II*) in December 1948, many Republican troops left Yogyakarta to share positions with Kartosuwirjo's forces in West Java. This was considered by Kartosuwirjo to be an effective means for the communists to stay behind the façade of the Republic of Indonesia. After WWII, new states emerged but

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<sup>48</sup> In the words of Kartosuwirjo, *Memperkosa hokum dan keadaan, bukanlah sifat dan tabiat Muslim dan Mukmin*. See Al Chaidar, ed., *Pemikiran Politik Proklamator*, pp. 545-6.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 709-10.

were also plagued with social revolution and civil war, including warring ideologies. The struggle to defend Muslims' interests involved not only pens [peaceful and diplomatic means] but also force and weapons—blood indeed. Accordingly, for Kartosuwirjo, Islam had to be protected through the foundation of an Islamic state (*Negara Islam Indonesia* or NII).

After the formation of the NII Kartosuwirjo went ahead with a more definite goal of establishing and defending an Islamic state. Miracles of the Prophet as indicated in the Isra'-Mi`raj should guide Muslims in their religious life and beliefs, and the importance of upholding NII with unity and dedication. For him, all cadres and fighters of NII (Barisan Mujahidin Sejati) knew no hypocrisy and apostasy. They committed themselves 100% to *jihâd fi sabilillah*.<sup>50</sup> Kartosuwirjo considers his headquarters as Madinah-Indonesia (*negara basis; negara modal*) comparable to the Prophet's Medina/hijra; thus the *dar al-Falah* or NII will come by way of Allah's will and efforts by the *mujahidin*.<sup>51</sup>

As can be seen in various recent studies of Kartosuwirjo's Darul Islam in West Java, his movement had degenerated leading to its isolation and desperation. In mid-1962 he was captured and later sentenced to death.<sup>52</sup>

### The Case of Aceh

The strength and solidarity of Acehnese society resulted amongst other things in their well-known resistance to any external interference. Yet, it is Islam which has dominated the discourse and ideology of this formidable quality. Since the time of the Portuguese expansion in the Straits of Melaka, Aceh, or its sister states, have played an important role in mobilising forces to defend independence from outside intervention. Its strategic location, economic importance and political stability over its early centuries have nurtured political traditions and intellectual activities rarely challenged in the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 523.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 521-3.

<sup>52</sup> Commenting on the rise of *Darul Islam* in 1948, Ricklefs notes that 'The outbreak of the House of Islam (Darul Islam) rebellion in 1948 rested upon a view of the future state as properly based on Islamic law, ruled by *ulama* and led by the charismatic Kartosuwirjo. Darul Islam was linked to the resistance movement of Kahar Muzakkar in South Sulawesi and that in Aceh.' As for the factors behind the decline and the end of these rebellions, he maintains: '[The] aspirations for an Islamic state eventually disintegrated into chronic banditry in West Java. Ultimately it collapsed with the recognition of Aceh as a Special District in 1959, the surrender of Kahar Muzakkar rebels in the early 1960s and the capture of Kartosuwirjo in 1962. Again, radical religion-based appeals had, for a time, mobilized mass support.' See Merle C. Ricklefs, 'Indonesian Views of the Future', in Grayson Lloyd and S. Smith, ed., *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 2001, p. 240.

contemporary Malay World. During its decline in the nineteenth century, Aceh re-emerged as a major arena of war between the local population and the Dutch. What is more relevant in this present paper is the fact that it was in Aceh that the propagation and popularization of *jihâd* (*Hikayat Prang Sabi*) took place at the time. For later generations the four-decade intermittent war continued to inspire them with confidence and pride in their heroic past. At the peak of the *jihâd* movement in Aceh, the popularization of the idea of *jihâd* and its universalization went unabated. The struggle against the Dutch was not simply seen as local and tribal but universal. Indeed, it was not defined as a war between Aceh and the Dutch but between Muslims and infidels (*kaphe*).

Post-war Aceh saw the re-emergence of armed struggles against outside forces under two main components, Islam and indigeneity<sup>53</sup> as well as nationalism. This can be contrasted with the effect of Islamic reformism and Indonesian nationalism during the independence movement vis-à-vis Dutch colonial rule. Reformism and nationalism to an extent transcended local and primordial orientation and identities. In a sense reformism coalesced and strengthened the Acehnese identification with the wider realm of the nation-state, Indonesia; an imposed and foreign concept. The new nation provided a new hope for and means of association and betterment. Accordingly, resistance against the return of Dutch rule in the second half of the 1940s was propagated by the Acehnese *ulama* and the revolutionary youth as holy war (*prang sabi*).<sup>54</sup> Not surprisingly, such an emphasis also implies that independence would logically lead toward the establishment of an Islamic state.<sup>55</sup>

Disappointment, however, soon cropped up as the new Republic had been more occupied with keeping itself afloat than with addressing local demands, including those of Aceh. The prevailing Acehnese view of being ignored and mistreated by the central government predominated the political discourse of the resistance movement in Aceh. Yet, being an important participant in the foundation of the Republic of Indonesia, Aceh was faced with the dilemma in opposing Jakarta. What should be the ideology of

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<sup>53</sup> See Harry J. Benda, 'South-East Asian Islam in the Twentieth Century', in P. M. Holt et al. ed., *Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 204; and, Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 42.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Morris, 'Aceh: Social Revolution and the Islamic Vision', in Audrey R. Kahin, ed., *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985, p. 91.

<sup>55</sup> If Morris argues that the new element in the Islamic movement in contemporary Aceh manifested in the idea of 'people's sovereignty,' I add that the inherent values of equality and participation in Islamic reformism paved the way for social revolution in Aceh in 1945-6. See Morris 'Aceh: Social Revolution', p. 97.

resistance? Islam? Anti-colonialism? What has been constant and/or shifting in the use of reference and justification for Acehese resistance to the central government?

Daud Beureuh pursued his movement under the facade and umbrella of the Darul Islam movement initiated, and to some extent led, by Kartosuwirjo. Daud had no illusion of declaring independence for Aceh, a political stand which was not even mentioned on the latter day ASNLF website. His movement put forward the idea of an Indonesian Islamic State. For this very reason, I shall not discuss the concept of *jihâd* as propagated by Daud Beureuh. Indeed, I do not see any significant difference between Beureuh's concept of the Islamic state and Kartosuwirjo's.

Despite the popularity and strength of the ASNLF, interestingly it *prima facie* abandons the Islamic slogan for a more local or nationalist ideology. Based on ASNLF interpretation of international law, 'the people of Aceh-Sumatra' are entitled to 'an inherent right to expel Javanese Indonesian invaders from their country... 'indonesia' was a fraud: a cloak to cover up Javanese colonialism'.<sup>56</sup> '[T]he technocratic elite has failed to gain the hegemony once enjoyed by the *ulama* [who had been co-opted by the central government—now they no longer enjoyed the legitimacy of local leadership]. Furthermore, in propounding their 'marginality ideology,' the technocrats have merely highlighted the injustices to which Aceh has been subjected, without themselves being able to do anything to rectify them. Alienated from the technocrats, bereft of the traditional leadership of the *ulama*, and lacking other channels for political expression, in the late 1980s the Acehese were presented with an alternative means of redress: the Free Aceh Movement' [GAM/National Liberation Front of Aceh-Sumatra]:<sup>57</sup>

But sympathy for the movement in its latest phase of activity has not extended to the ultimate aim of an independent state. The GAM may have given the Acehese a voice where they had lacked one before, but the available evidence suggests that, as in the 1950s, rebellion is seen by many as a means of gaining greater control over the province's affairs while remaining within the Indonesian Republic.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the fact that the *ulama* no longer design and control the 'independence movement,' Islam continues to be crucial for the mobilization and legitimacy of the movement. Leon Jones argues that popular belief in the special position of Aceh in defending and implementing Islam leads to

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<sup>56</sup> See *Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra*, Aceh, Sumatra, December 4, 1976; cf. Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, Publication No.74, 1995, p. 63.

<sup>57</sup> Kell, *The Roots of Acehese Rebellion*, p. 60.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

viewing external pressure and interference as an act of ‘transgressing Acehese standards of morality.... The concern of the Acehese to preserve the moral and religious aspect of their local culture from the threat of outside values can be seen in actions against alcohol, prostitution, gambling and dancing.’<sup>59</sup>

### **Patani and Moro Radicalism in Regional Context: Revived Patterns of Resistance to Non-Muslim Government?**

The determination to achieve greater freedom or even independence led to the radicalization among many in Patani and the Moroland. In Patani during the peak of armed resistance in the 1970s, contemporary to the intensification of communist armed struggles in Indochina, military training camps were organized in scattered areas of the Thailand-Malaysia borders. However, they never emerged as enclaves comparable to ones run by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao. For this very reason, Patani never emerged as a suspected major training ground for the so-called Jama`a Islamiya and other terrorist groups in the 1990s, even if it remained a potential node of radical Muslim organizations or groups. On the other hand, the Moroland by virtue of its geostrategic location and its relative isolation from Manila enjoyed importance in providing training ground for fighters, radicals and terrorists. Quoting from Western intelligence sources, a write-up in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* claims that ‘as many as 700 Indonesians were undergoing training on Mindanao in the later 1990s’.<sup>60</sup>

The Moro resistance led by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) suffered decline when it resumed armed struggles after the 1976 Tripoli Agreement. Several factors worked against its solidity and power. Further to the diverse Manila policies toward the MNLF, Ivan Molloy suggests the following points:<sup>61</sup>

- The deep factionalism that emerged within the MNLF in the late 1970s. The emergence of the MILF under Hashim Salamat and Reformed MNLF under Dimas Pundato needs no further explanation.

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<sup>59</sup> Leon Jones, *The Security Disturbances in Aceh during 1990*, Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Working Paper 104, 1997, p. 9.

<sup>60</sup> John McBeth, James Hookway, and Michael Vatikiotis. ‘Indonesia: What if He [Abu Bakar Bashir] Isn’t Guilty?’ *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER), 165/44 (7 November 2002), pp.16-19. [http://www.feer.com/articles/2002/0211\\_07/p016region.html](http://www.feer.com/articles/2002/0211_07/p016region.html).

<sup>61</sup> Ivan Molloy, *The Conflicts in Mindanao. Whilst the Revolution Rolls on, the Jihād Falters*, Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, Working Paper No. 30, November 1983, pp. 17-22.

- The MNLF failed to provide strong and real leadership, as most leading figures lived abroad. Thus the rank-and-file fighters and members faced obvious dangers in the field.
- The declining support from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and other individual Muslim countries seriously weakened the resistance movement among the Moros.
- The MNLF refused to broaden its appeal to non-Muslims in Mindanao.

Yet, the consecutive governments in Manila after Marcos continued to try to persuade the Moro resistance movements to come to the negotiating table. Ironically, various agreements between the Moros and the Manila government have yet to prove their worth to all parties. In this respect, Muslims in neighbouring countries do have sympathy with their brethren in Patani and the Moroland. Moreover several governments have shown keen interest in brokering peace settlements in Patani and the Moroland.

### **Historical Significance**

The career of Islam in Southeast Asia has been generally described this way: peaceful, harmonious and evolutionary expansion. This is despite the eruption of various armed struggles and wars launched by diverse leaders and commanders at different times and locations in the region. Now, should this characterization of Islam be changed or amended with the resurgence of violence fomented by a few radicals in the early part of the twenty-first century? With some reservation, I argue that today's radical Muslim movement should be considered a nodal point in the continuum, not the totality, of historical Islam in the region. Radicalism remains an outsider in the discourse and actions of Muslims in the region. This new episode of radicalism, however, presents a new challenge to Muslims and scholars, particularly in view of the fact that the region, especially Muslims generally, has enjoyed much progress and stability.

Prior to the twentieth century, the legitimate use of violence among Muslims lay with the kings and religious leaders. The last Melakan king, Sultan Ahmad, urged the population and the army to resist the Portuguese onslaught in 1511 by handing over a text of *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*. The ruler of Luzon and later the Moro leaders of the southern Philippines launched campaigns against the Spaniards to defend their territories and religion well until the second half of the nineteenth century. The Malay rulers in southern Thailand resisted military campaigns by both Ayutthaya and Chakri dynasties between the seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries. The Dutch had to deal with resistance movements launched by Raja Haji, Pangeran Diponegoro and Teuku Umar at different periods and locations in

the Archipelago. Although these movements and many others involved different factors and complex issues, what is clear is that Islam emerged as a unifying force and also, in some instances, the *raison de guerre*. Curiously, as I argue elsewhere, the formal use of the term *jihâd* came only later with the appearance of the work of late eighteenth century Southeast Asian scholars such as `Abd al-Samad al-Palinbangi.

If, in the pre-twentieth century, armed struggles took the form of resistance against colonial, foreign powers; in the last century, especially after the Pacific War, armed struggles were launched to win independence or autonomy, not necessarily from foreign powers but from their own fellow Southeast Asians. The Moros of Southern Philippines continue to demand independence from Manila, the Malays in Patani from Bangkok, Kartosuwirjo from Sukarno and Daud Beureuh from Jakarta. Still, several movements such as Komando Jihâd and the Pamali affairs emerged without grand political demands but were critical to the ideology and morality of national leadership in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur respectively.

Significantly these movements presented the depressing conditions of injustice, poverty and immorality which require action:

- to put an end to exploitation,
- to regain self-conservation,
- to win recognition of dignity and freedom,
- to achieve improved welfare and
- to propagate religious values.

Now, the newest generation of Muslim radicals has endorsed a newly reformatted discourse pursuing some elements of the above with vigour and *noblesse oblige* based on strict literal interpretation of certain Islamic texts and militant doctrine. However, Zachary Abuza argues that the rise of Islamic extremism since Khomeini's revolution in 1979 'has less to do with theology and more to do with the failure of domestic political economies of respective Muslim countries'.<sup>62</sup>

In early Islamic history, certain extremists such as the Ghaylaniya, and later the Hashshashiyun of Hassan Sabbah, undertook diverse acts of violence against other fellow Muslims indiscriminately. Historiographers, or rather Muslim heresiographers, tend to categorize them simply as religious extremists (*ghulat*) as they terrorized political leaders and ordinary citizens alike.

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<sup>62</sup> Zachary Abuza, 'Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network', *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, 24, 2 (2002), p. 433.



What is novel and exceptional lies in the ability of recent radicals to use modern technology to inflict havoc and use their IT know-how to recruit new disciples. Other than that they are no less cruel or fanatical than other early radicals. Yet, as Graham Fuller suggests, Islamists can be expected after their outbursts and anger to settle down and implement what they have fought for, namely justice and democracy.<sup>63</sup>

Saroja Dorairajoo proposes that the better way to understand the Patanis in the context of the modern Buddhist nation-state should be through a cultural approach. Indeed, the Patanis throughout have shown 'a culture of adaptation'. The absence of rebellion or even a violent reaction against the discriminatory and racist policy of Phibun Songkhram (1938-44) should be taken seriously. It implied that violent movements during the second half of the twentieth century could not take place without external help from Muslim brethren in the region and the Middle East.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the generally unsuccessful rebellion which led to adjustment and other actions, including struggles through cyber space,<sup>65</sup> supports the argument that 'the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand reacted to the external forces impinging upon them in a way that best suited their aims and ideals'.<sup>66</sup>

For Muslims in Southeast Asia, history has taught them ways to deal with outsiders from the offer of services, exchange of favours, business relations or armed struggle. The Muslim communities in Patani and Moroland obviously underwent almost similar patterns of adjustment, negotiation, assertion and even war vis-à-vis outsiders. In the twentieth century, caught in major political transformation in their respective homes, the two communities have been forced to seek ways and means to pursue different strategies for survival. From the very beginning, the frustration of being controlled by external powers gave way to rebellion as well as apathy. This can be seen as detailed in various studies,<sup>67</sup> in the Moro resistance to

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<sup>63</sup> Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, New York: Palgrave, 2003.

<sup>64</sup> Saroja Dorairajoo, 'From Mecca to Yala: Negotiating Islam in Present-Day Southern Thailand,' Symposium on Islam in Southeast Asia and China: Regional Faithlines and Faultlines in the Global Ummah, 28 November-1 December 2002, City University of Hong Kong. <http://www.islamsymposium.cityu.edu.hk/abstract/09Dorairajoo.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> The continuing nuisance of the cyber offensive by the Patani movement led the Thai army, for example, to launch its own internet war against the Patani rebel fronts. See *The Bangkok Post*, 15 January 2001.

<sup>66</sup> Dorairajoo, 'From Mecca to Yala', p. 12.

<sup>67</sup> For instance, see Peter Gowing, *Muslims Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon*, Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979; Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*, Bangkok: Thai Khadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, 1985; Wan Kadir Che Man, *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990; Ahmad Omar Chapakia, *Politik Thai dan Masyarakat Islam di Selatan Thailand*, Alor Setar: Pustaka Darussalam, 2000.

American entry after 1898 and scattered resistance by the Patanis to the centralization scheme of the Bangkok regime after 1899. More specifically, the major political upheaval in Southeast Asia following the end of the Pacific War inspired leaders in the two communities to demand more concessions from the central governments in Bangkok and Manila.

Since the beginning of the 1950s, the intensification of the independence movement in Asia and Africa and the rising temperature of the Cold War also paved the way for radicalization of Islamic movement among the Moros and the Patanis as can be seen in the mushrooming of diverse liberation fronts. On the other hand, the new drive toward democratization in Thailand and the opening of more negotiations with the Moro fronts in the Philippines in the second-half of the 1970s have allowed more ways for Muslims to pursue their interests and express their grievances in more formal channels.<sup>68</sup>

### **Intensified Globalization and Muslim Radicalism**

Students of Islam in Southeast Asia cannot fail to point to the role of the Middle East in the flowing of new ideas, or at least as a source of religious reinterpretation, for the Muslims in the region. With the emergence of modern ideologies from different corners of the globe, Southeast Asian Muslims could access and tap such diversities. However, concerning Islamic ideas, discourses and organizations, Muslims are always tuned to those coming from the Middle East in the larger context of the term. More specifically, from the second-half of the twentieth century, the advance of radical interpretations of doctrine and plans of action which have developed in the Middle East found their way also to the region. Past studies categorically linked recent radicalism to wider radical Muslim groups. Yet, generally scholars also give credit to local factors in the emergence of radical individuals and groups in Southeast Asia.

Surin Pitsuwan initiates an approach to Muslim militancy and separatism in southern Thailand by linking it partly to well-established Islamic organizations such as the OIC and the Muslim World League. Specifically, he sees that the 'rise of Islamic fundamentalism' as represented by such organizations has resulted in an awakening among the Patanis. 'One of the most important changes that has occurred for the Malay-Muslims [Patanis] of Thailand is the establishment of various militant groups with the

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<sup>68</sup> Ladd Thomas shows interesting features about how the Thai bureaucracy failed to take the local views and grievances into account. See Ladd Thomas, *Political Violence in the Muslim Provinces of Southern Thailand*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 1975.

publicly-stated aim of liberating the Malay region from Thai rule.’<sup>69</sup> The future of Muslims in the area, as seen in the early 1980s, would very much depend on how the change, challenge and opportunity, as perceived by the Muslim Patanis and the central government, could be negotiated and compromised.

Other scholars have been more specific in addressing the same issue. For example, Geoffrey Gunn attempts with limited success to establish links between Iran and Libya on the one hand and Muslim radicals in Southeast Asia on the other during the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>70</sup> More recently Zachary Abuza argues that the inclusion of Southeast Asian radicals into the al-Qaeda network raises two grave issues.<sup>71</sup> Firstly the internationalization of local grievances has the potential of mutual help in achieving targets. Secondly, how do the diverse radical groups in the region respond to al-Qaeda’s style and strategy? Is it possible that popular resistance movements like the MILF may abandon their national struggle for exclusive terrorism? Commenting on the globalization of recent terrorism, Rohan Gunaratna maintains that the emergence of al-Qaeda as the first international terrorist group *par excellence* has paved the way for centralization of the network and at the same time made its recruitment and operation widespread.<sup>72</sup> Al-Qaeda’s anti-Western call, including that of its allies among Muslims, gives birth to campaigns of terror. Using glaring Islamic slogans, al-Qaeda has recruited man power and executed terrorist acts. Since the late-1990s al-Qaeda has undertaken decentralization of training and other forms of facilitation. Mindanao, for example, was considered as an important workshop centre. After 9/11<sup>73</sup> emphasis has been given to aiming at targets through other Islamic radical groups; al-Qaeda facilitating the latter with ‘trainers and funds, influencing their strategic and tactical direction’.<sup>74</sup> The extent of al-Qaeda’s network in Southeast Asia remains debatable, despite Gunaratna’s insistence that it has succeeded in infiltrating all ranges of Islamic organizations and movements in the region. What is undeniable is that Southeast Asian radicals and their supporters have admired al-Qaeda’s sophisticated techniques and daring actions as well as taken advantage of its empire.

An article published by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in August 2002 provides more specific identification of Muslim radicals in Southeast

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<sup>69</sup> Surin, *Islam and Malay Nationalism*, pp. 220-4.

<sup>70</sup> Geoffrey C. Gunn, ‘Radical Islam in Southeast Asia: Rhetoric and Reality in the Middle Eastern Connection’, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 16, 1 (1986), pp. 30-54.

<sup>71</sup> Abuza, ‘Tentacles of Terror’.

<sup>72</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, ‘Al-Qaeda in the Asia Pacific: Origin, Capability, and Threat’, 2002 International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) Annual Lecture, DeBalie, Amsterdam, 14 June 2002.

<sup>73</sup> ‘9/11’ refers to the dramatic terrorist assault that completely destroyed New York’s ‘twin towers’ on 11 September 2001.

<sup>74</sup> Gunaratna, ‘Al-Qaeda’.

Asia that maintained links with international terrorist organizations. Although the major regional players involve Indonesians, Patani and the Moroland also provide an important nodal point in the network of these radicals.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, Peter Chalk has argued since the mid-1990s that religious radicalism in Southeast Asia has increasingly gone global as more and more Afghan veterans from the region intensified their contact with their fellow Afghan fighters.<sup>76</sup>

Martin van Bruinessen traces the roots of Islamic radicalism in post-Suharto's Indonesia to external sources. Among others, Middle Eastern money, which since the late 1960s had been filtered to certain Islamic bodies such as Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) and Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (KISDI), facilitated the publication of purist approaches to Islamic teaching and expanded the wings of the purists in diverse fields. More specifically, the esprit de corps among those who participated in the battles of Afghanistan in the 1980s-1990s gave them strategic links for common actions upon their return to their respective countries, including Southeast Asia. Again, the propagation of the Wahhabi *salafism* and funds flowing from Saudi Arabia brought about the birth of radical movements advocating the strictest application of Islamic law, eradication of all layers of immorality, and the protection of Muslims under duress. In his final analysis, Van Bruinessen, differing from Oliver Roy's thesis, insists that neo-fundamentalism has succeeded in attracting only a small segment of Indonesian Muslims; despite their vociferousness; the majority continues to follow the well-trodden path of moderate religiosity. Interestingly, some segments of the elite and the educated, Van Bruinessen claims, have been increasingly interested in pursuing Islamic liberalism and returning to the fold of religious order (*tariqa*).<sup>77</sup>

One of the early studies on the new breed of Muslim radicals in Southeast Asia is by Mark Turner, who, despite his prudent analysis of associating the Abu Sayyaf with an international terrorist group, points to its link to those well-known Muslim radicals who were accused of bombing the World Trade Center in 1993, notably Ramzi Ahmed Yousef.<sup>78</sup> During the mid-1980s, some Patani youth, like many others from the region and from

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<sup>75</sup> See ICG (International Crisis Group), Indonesia, Briefing. 'Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the "Ngruki Network" in Indonesia', Jakarta/Brussels, 8 August 2002, pp. 12, 19. [www.crisisweb.org](http://www.crisisweb.org).

<sup>76</sup> Peter Chalk, 'The Davao Consensus: A Panacea for the Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 9, 2 (1997), pp. 79-98.

<sup>77</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia.' An edited paper originally presented at the International Colloquium L'islam politique à l'aube du XXIème siècle, 28-29 October 2001, Tehran.

<sup>78</sup> Mark Turner, 'Terrorism and Secession in the Southern Philippines: The Rise of Abu Sayyaf', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 17, 1, 1995, p. 17.

other Muslim lands, joined military training in Afghanistan. Many spent several months in the training camps and perhaps also in the battle field.<sup>79</sup>

Obviously the plight of Muslim minorities in many different parts of Southeast Asia has won sympathy and even help from other Muslim brethren and organizations, including the OIC. For example, during the negotiation process and the ratification of the agreement between the MNLF and the Manila governments in 1976 and 1996, the OIC made its presence strongly felt.

In recent years, the battle of Afghanistan against the Soviet occupation and post-Soviet Afghanistan motivated many Muslim activists from Southeast Asia to join the Afghans in their struggle and later take advantage of the war experience and funds provided to learn the ideology of resistance and to participate in military training and guerilla warfare.

How pervasive is the influence of the Afghan camps, including the Taliban and Bin Laden, on Southeast Asian activists? And how strong is the link between the ex-Afghan fighters from Southeast Asia and Bin Laden's network or organization? I concur, as Bertil Lintner argues when reviewing Rohan Gunaratna's *Inside Al-Qaeda*, that despite the continued link between certain Southeast Asian groups or individuals with al-Qaeda or Bin Laden, mainly because of funding dependency and the attraction of naked power, Southeast Asian radicals emphasize their own regional or national concerns.<sup>80</sup>

### **Patterns of Recent Radicalism**

The idea of an Islamic state continues to predominate amongst radical Muslims. This can be seen in the armed struggles pursued by certain segments of the Moros and the Patanis. The loosely organized Mujahidin groups continue to argue for the establishment of an Islamic state either peacefully or through armed struggle. Yet, some newly founded movements such as the Islamic Defence Front (FPI) in Jakarta launch radical campaigns for the implementation of the *shari`a* in a more consistent and determined way, despite their tolerance of the present political system. FPI opts not to replace the system, but to make it more truly Islamic instead. Moreover, MNLF and ASNLF emphasize the importance of independence by virtue of history, land and culture over the establishment of an Islamic state. Clearly the refusal by ASNLF to include an Islamic agenda is intended to win wider world sympathy and opinion, as can be seen in the promise by its president Hasan di Tiro that an Islamic state is the future form of the government in

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<sup>79</sup> Wan Kadir, *Muslim Separatism*, p. 104.

<sup>80</sup> Bertil Lintner, 'Terrorism, Think Local,' A column review of Rohan Gunaratna's *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, *FEER*, December 5, 2002.

Aceh through referendum if required. For him, ‘Aceh will be an Islamic State because the people of Aceh will want it so.’ This was not even mentioned in the ASNLF declaration of independence in 1976.<sup>81</sup>

In the recent discovery of a religious guide for the radicals in Patani, *Berjihâd di Patani*,<sup>82</sup> it is understood that the classical exposition of *jihâd* as a means of achieving justice, independence and dignity continues to inspire certain Muslims to face their modern reality in a religious context. In the

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<sup>81</sup> Greg Barton insists that it is injustice, not religion, that is the source of Acehnese anger in the 1990s, and in fact many Acehnese *ulama* are involved in efforts to end the conflict. Even so, the coincidental fact that Islam forms an important part of Acehnese identity seems to prey upon the mind of international media, and reports on the ongoing violence in Aceh rarely fail to mention Islam. ‘Ironically, in many ways the authoritarian nature of the Suharto regime meant that liberal Islam was protected through the 1970s and 1980s from forces that might otherwise have retarded it, as has been the case in countries like Egypt, Pakistan and Malaysia. The result was that liberal Islam in Indonesia has developed into a broadly based movement that today is able to hold its own.’ See Greg Barton, ‘The Prospects for Islam’, in Grayson Lloyd and S. Smith, ed., *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001, p. 253.

<sup>82</sup> Composed in Jawi script the book says that once ‘liberated’, the state of Pattani must be ruled by religious leaders. The writings specifically single out the adoption of Shafi’i, one of Islam’s four schools of thought and jurisprudence, widely embraced by Muslim communities in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Brunei:

- The bulk of the book’s contents is full of references to the Koran, especially in chapters that call for struggle against ‘injustice’, by a Muslim definition. Quoting the Muslim holy book, the anonymous author said followers of Islam have a moral obligation to defend their communities’ property and named the ‘occupiers’ of that property ‘enemies of God’.
- The author addressed local Muslims, blasting them for not taking action against ‘the occupiers’. ‘We should be ashamed of ourselves for sitting idly by and doing nothing while our brothers and sisters are trampled on by our conquerors,’ they said. ‘Our properties have been confiscated and our assets stolen from us. Our rights and freedoms have been curbed and our religion and culture have been sullied. Where is your commitment to peace among our people?’ the writer asked.
- The author called on Muslim women to support their husbands and sons in the struggle to liberate the region and to view their deaths as martyrdom in a fight for justice in the manner akin to prophets and martyrs throughout history. ‘It is known that all Muslims who have faith in God and his prophets have warriors’ blood,’ the author said.
- ‘Your ancestors’ blood, which has been spilled in the name of upholding God’s way, each and every day and night, has been stirring inside you as it looked for a way out . . . in order to bloody this land so that light may shine from East to West and so that all will know that this land of Pattani has opened itself up to the blood of holy warriors,’ the author said.
- The author compared the struggle of ethnic Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand to that of Muslims around the world, who, the author said, were being ruled ‘unjustly’ by non-Muslims. Muslims must have faith in God and carry out the fight in his name, the author said. ‘Let us go and spark this fire and look for them everywhere, night and day, and kill those infidels to show non-believers that Muslims are strong while living in this world’ (*The Nation* June 5, 2004).

Moroland, despite the signing of several agreements for a peaceful solution and the formation of an autonomous Muslim region, the call for *jihâd* against Manila continues to win wide support among the Moros. The MILF, for example, insists that it is working toward the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of the *shari`a*. Its founding president, Hashim Salamat maintains that the 'MILF strictly follows the Islamic line and its objective in waging *jihâd fi sabilillah* is to make supreme the word of Allah and to establish an Islamic government'.<sup>83</sup>

Radicalism in the twentieth century grew out of complex historical changes. Frustration with the unfulfilled promise of independence, erosion of religious values and failed state system came up as major factors of radicalism among Muslims. Coupled with the continuing perceived injustice, poverty and inequality suffered by their brethren elsewhere, radicalism also took an international dimension.

## Summary

Seen in the examples of major reform movements in Southeast Asia, it is obvious that Islamic reformism focused on bringing ideas and practices back to purist Islamic teachings. In seventeenth century Aceh, Raniri propagated the orthodox version of Islamic belief system. In West Sumatra, reformism was aimed at eradicating unlawful practices and vices among villagers. Early twentieth century Islamic journals in Southeast Asia advocate Muslims to face and, if necessary, endorse modernity, and return to the purist teachings of Islam. This emphasis has since been pursued by different modern organizations formed by Muslims in the region.

In practice, the lack of a sophisticated intellectual foundation coupled with the tenacity of indigenous culture led some reformers to address the practices more than the ideological facets of religiousness in Southeast Asia. Orthopraxy (correct practice) in Islamic society, as argued by many scholars,<sup>84</sup> continued to dominate the discourse and also the implementation of Islamic reformism in the region. This can be seen clearly in the context of radicalization of Muslim reformers in West Sumatra, who depended more on harassing and even intimidating fellow villagers who had been accused of indulging themselves in vices prohibited by Islam than on persuading them to the right path. In Aceh, Raniri borrowed the hand of the ruler to get rid of what he termed 'Muslims who went astray.' On the other hand, the simplicity of the religious discourse and argument of the radicals often can be contrasted to the complex ideological bases of their opponents. This can be

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<sup>83</sup> *Crescent International* 1994.

<sup>84</sup> Rahman, 'Roots of Islamic Neo-Fundamentalism', p. 24.

seen in the exchanges between Raniri and his adversaries in seventeenth century Aceh, in the controversy of Shaykh Siti Jenar in sixteenth century Demak, as well as socio-religious division in mid-nineteenth century capital town of Brunei, known as the Haji Mahomed affairs. Indeed, condemnation of opponents was followed by ex-communication and even purges.

In the twentieth century, those reformers who turned radicals were more interested in changing the structure of the state than in introducing the purist teaching of Islam. Kartosuwirjo was more interested in seeing an independent state governed by the *shari`a* than in making Muslims closer to their religion. Seen in relation to his social and educational background, his objective was not surprising.

Reform in Islam has an inherent character and root origins. Muslims are invited to examine the scripture and respond to historical change. Thus, from the Islamic perspective, reform is indispensable for the community. Since the timing of reform is specifically linked to the beginning of each Hijri century (*ra's al-qarn*), its occurrence is limited; normally only a single reformer is acknowledged in any given century. Historically, reform movements cannot be isolated from their complex environments. Historical actors in the movements thus create and at the same time respond to particular locations and contexts. Not surprisingly, a singular Islamic reformism may develop or materialize in diverse forms and manifestations, as can be seen in the emergence of such contrasting figures as al-Ma'mun (d.833), al-Ghazzali and Ibn Taymiya (d.1329) in the early period, and Muḥammad `Abduh (d.1906) and Ayatullah Khomeini (d.1989) in the last century.

Reformism in Islam is indispensable and historical; its manifestation, however, takes diverse forms depending as much on internal dynamism as on larger contemporary and historical processes and changes. Since Islam has been historicized, despite its strong insistence on and imprint of 'scripturalism,' it participates in and cannot dispense with the historical process. It nurtures and raises its own historical actors but it also accommodates some others who do not fit to its norm.

Missionary religion tends to pursue dual approaches—evolutionary and radical—in sharing its teachings with interlocutors. During the early period of Islamic history, this dualism manifested in the gradual progress of the Islamic mission in Mecca and rapid territorial expansion after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in 632 CE. As a missionary religion, claiming universal application, Islam emphasizes the importance of change and progress in the quality of life of the individual and society focusing on winning hearts. In history, however, when political, or other, agendas predominate, religion potentially falls prey to being manipulated through, or even taken advantage of, by non-religious causes or patronage.



The license of religious propagation is often used to legitimize radical actions, including military initiatives and violence against outsiders. The fact remains, however, that Islam continues to be propagated and taught in communicative and peaceful ways, manifesting in peripatetic teachers, sufi adepts and diverse educational institutions. The idea of reform and change remains their main agenda and focus, yet they remain immune to radical or revolutionary actions. The tolerance, inclusiveness and harmony in their action and initiatives may be contrasted with the radical style and revolutionary undertakings agitated for by a new generation of teachers and political leaders who manipulate certain aspects of the scripture and are forced by historical circumstances to launch their radical and often uncompromising approaches and actions.

The end of the Cold War, the growing influence of Huntington's thesis, 'the clash of civilizations,' and the 9/11 attacks have reignited the pejorative view of Islam and its institutions, including its concept of *jihâd*. Radical interpretations of Islamic doctrine by recent purists and implemented by committed disciples has been seen popularly as 'a focal representation' of contemporary Muslims. Obviously Muslims, or to be more precise, mainstream Muslims, succeeded in establishing a civilization which embraces diverse nations and accommodates different cultures. Such achievements are possible mainly because of their positive and open approach to all constituents and members of the community, coming from diverse orientations, backgrounds and origins. Yet, Islam's reliance on the scripture always opens an opportunity for critical re-assessment. The competition and conflict between the defenders of the status quo and the voice of new interpretation often lead to crises, soon followed by synthesis or a return to earlier paradigms.

To view Islamic history as the unfolding of an outright and categorical agenda of violence misses the original message of Islam as a religion for all humanity. At the same time, to maintain that Islam has no 'illegitimate children' in history in the form of 'war mongers' and 'radicals or terrorists' is to censor history.

I have argued that radicalism represents a facet but not the pattern of Islamic revivalism or reformism. A number of core ideas and relevant historical episodes have been explored and presented to elucidate this. Firstly, how orthodoxy, or rather orthopraxy, found its place in Islam? What was its relation with reformism? Secondly, how was orthodoxy propagated and how did it win support in Southeast Asia? Finally, how was reformism accepted or confronted and how did it pave the way, if at all, for radicalism among certain quarters? How could revivalist movements opt for different paths—evolutionary and radical? Can a distinction be made between religious and non-religious factors in reformist and radical movements?