M. van Bruinessen

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REVIEW ARTICLES

MARTIN VAN BRUINESSEN

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN ISLAM?

Fred R. von der Mehden, *Religion and Modernization in Southeast Asia*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986.

Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia, compiled by Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique, and Yasmin Hussain, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985.

M. B. Hooker (ed.), *Islam in South-East Asia*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983.

L'Islam en Indonésie I/II, two special issues of *Archipel*, nos. 29 and 30, Paris 1985.

Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds), *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985.

A. Popovic and G. Veinstein (eds), *Les ordres mystiques dans l'Islam. Chemine-ments et situation actuelle*, Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1985.

Rusli Karim, *Dinamika Islam di Indonesia. Suatu tinjauan sosial dan politik*, Yogyakarta: Pt. Hanindita, 1985.

Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah jalan baru Islam. Rekonstruksi pemikiran Islam Indonesia masa Orde Baru*, Bandung: Mizan, 1986.

Tapol, *Indonesia: Muslims on Trial*, London: Tapol, 1987.

The heightened public interest in Islam, due mainly to events in Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Egypt, has not only resulted in a boom in publications on Islam and politics in Iran and the Arab world, but has also led to a noticeable, though more modest, increase in the number of books and articles on Islam beyond the Middle East. There is a growing awareness of the peripheral zones of the Islamic world both among Muslims themselves and among outside observers. Such internationally oriented Islamic journals as *Crescent International* (neo-fundamentalist) and *Arabia* (liberal) are devoting increasing attention to the Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa and South, Southeast and East Asia. In the Islamic vernacular press in the Middle East, the Afghan *Mujahidin* still score highest in coverage, but the struggles of the Muslim minorities in Burma, Thailand and the Philippines are receiving increasing attention, as are the political tribulations of Indonesia's Muslims. Western observers, too – journalists, politicians and academic area specialists – have turned their attention to the large Muslim com-

munities of Southeast Asia, keen to find out whether any developments parallel to those in the Middle East are to be expected there. Not long after the Iranian revolution, V. S. Naipaul made his 'Islamic voyage', on which he also fitted in visits to Malaysia and Indonesia, to find out what it is that all those Muslims really want and how they plan to achieve it. His best-selling *Among the Believers* (Naipaul 1981) was probably the first popular book to draw attention to the Muslims of Southeast Asia and to some of the problems as well as the dynamics of these communities. Naipaul made no attempt to hide his prejudices and general antipathy towards Islam, and his travelogue does not, of course, offer a balanced view, but many of his observations are acute and to the point. Because of its bias, and its conclusion that Islam does not offer any viable alternative to western civilization and technology, the book was, predictably, not well received in Muslim circles, but it has at least the merit (besides its unquestioned literary virtues) of portraying real, living and thinking people. Naipaul took pains to talk to people and to ask penetrating (and often embarrassing) questions, carefully registering their answers and reactions. His powerful pen sketched lucid, though unsympathetic, pictures of such typical phenomena as the *Darul Arqam* commune in Malaysia, Ir. Imaduddin's 'mental training' sessions with students in Bandung, and the modern, development-oriented, *pesantren* of Pabelan. His conversations in Malaysia, especially, clearly bring out the process by which precisely the western-educated Muslim students may turn to fundamentalism and a complete rejection of western values.

Books and articles of more scholarly pretensions dealing with Islam in Southeast Asia soon followed. The books under review here represent but a fraction of the harvest of the past few years. They are reviewed together because they all, each in its own way, attempt to present an overall picture of Southeast Asian (or Indonesian) Islam, a stock-taking of what is known or understood, and reflections on methods and approaches. Taken together, they should show us the present state of the art of Southeast Asian Islamic Studies.

The first striking thing about them is that all the authors are area specialists, most of whom have previously written on subjects other than religion. None of them is primarily an expert on Islam or brings a considerable acquaintance with the Middle East or other parts of the Islamic World into the field – although Hooker and William Roff (*Archipel* 29) have, from their Southeast Asian vantage point, ventured into Middle Eastern literature. This seems to reflect the fact that, for the average Islamic scholar, Southeast Asia remains as marginal as it has traditionally been, and that it is scholars of Southeast Asia who have become aware of Islam rather than the other way round.

Von der Mehden, by his own account, was prompted to write his book by the world-wide resurgence of religion, not only in countries where this might be interpreted as a *reaction against* modernization, but also in his own, which has often been considered as the most modernized by definition. More than any other development, this resurgence of religion shows up the empirical weakness and increasing irrelevance of most of the conceptual literature on modernization of the fifties and sixties, which tended to regard the decline of religion as a necessary attribute of modernization. Von der Mehden's book purports to sum up and evaluate three decades of discussion about the positive and negative contributions of religion to modernization and, conversely, about the impact of modernization on religion in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. It is astonishing how naive and dated much of the modernization literature seems in retrospect (two favourite examples of successful modernization in the literature of that period, it may be appropriate to add, were Pakistan and Iran). Von der Mehden's discussion in the first two chapters clearly reveals the bias in most of the writings of this school. He demonstrates that most of the authors had no first-hand knowledge of the countries about which they wrote, and founded their arguments on literature that was often superficial and highly biased. Their own intellectual environment, the social science faculties of America's better universities, was generally ir- or even anti-religious, and this no doubt influenced their perceptions of religion in other societies. With but a few notable exceptions, such as Robert Bellah, the authors of the modernization school tended to view religion – whether Islam, Buddhism or Christianity – only as an impediment to modernization. It was their own attitude towards religion rather than any empirical observations outside the western world that caused them to proclaim secularism (usually conceived as a decline of the role of religion in society) an inevitable concomitant of modernization. Von der Mehden, himself a minor contributor to the literature, notes all this and even acknowledges that the very concept of modernization, as used in this literature, is of an epistemologically dubious status, being an ambiguous mix of normative and factual elements. His criticisms, however, are neither new nor original. The modernization school has been under heavier and more consistent fire before, and although it is still influential among policy-makers and government consultants in many places, most creative social scientists have since long turned to other paradigms.

One of the most serious weaknesses of the modernization school is its tendency to look at societies as mere systems of social relations, as mechanisms, which may be highly complex but are all basically similar, obeying the same laws of motion, independently of cultural content. Religion and other aspects of culture were largely neglected as worthy subjects of study, except insofar as they were considered to be factors

impeding modernization. Von der Mehden, in spite of his stated intentions, offers little improvement on this. He shows himself to be well-acquainted with the modernization literature, but much less so with studies on the cultures of Southeast Asia, while his understanding of the religions of the region is definitely poor. His analysis of the relationship between modernization and religion is, therefore, very disappointing. Religion is reduced to a set of five factors, viz. *basic tenets* (in the case of Islam, the five pillars; in Buddhism, the five precepts), *religious institutions* (*sangha*, Catholic priesthood, *ulama*, lay organizations), *popular beliefs* (spirit belief), *popular practices* (feasts, agricultural and life cycle rites, traditional education), and *manipulation of religious symbols*. The concept of modernization is stripped of its more normative and debatable aspects, and Von der Mehden retains only two core elements: *technological development* and the *maintenance of a modern nation state*. In successive chapters he then discusses the (potentially) positive and negative effects of his five religious factors on these two aspects of modernization. This approach, though unsophisticated, might have yielded interesting results if the author had brought an adequate knowledge of the religions of the region as they are actually experienced and practised by its people to the task. Unfortunately, his own observations are extremely weak and superficial, while his knowledge of the literature – both ‘Orientalist’ works and the anthropological studies of the past few decades – is very spotty. He often quotes secondary or tertiary literature as his authorities, while neglecting many studies that would be relevant to the subjects under discussion (for instance, Kessler’s 1978 work on religion and politics in Kelantan or Siegel’s book of 1969 on Acehnese *ulama*).¹ His main correction of the traditional modernization perspective consists in an attempt to offset its commonly negative evaluations (‘high and unproductive expenses’, ‘fatalism’) by pointing to possible positive functions. Thus the Meccan pilgrimage not only represents, to the Muslim countries, a considerable loss of valuable foreign exchange (from Indonesia alone, 40 to 50 thousand perform the *hajj* each year), but it also ‘appears to have strengthened the drive for the accumulation of wealth in order to undertake the *hadj*, broadened the intellectual horizons of many returning pilgrims, and increased a sense of national consciousness’ (67). He quotes Peacock’s thesis (in *Muslim Puritans*) that the *hajj* reinforced ‘theologically reformist views’, and comments that ‘downplaying the role of ritual, emphasizing a more individualistic pattern of thinking, and accepting the need to synthesize Islam with western technology and education’ – tendencies presumably reinforced during the *hajj* – ‘were important in establishing the kind of adaptive mind necessary for modernization to succeed’. It is doubtful whether the *hajj* had these mind-opening effects on more than a few individuals, even when it still involved a long and arduous journey and a stay of many months if not years in the Holy Cities. Nowadays it is no

more than a government-operated, massive airlift, lasting only a few weeks and thoroughly minimizing the pilgrims' exposure to foreign ideas. Hence with regard to the present-day *hajj*, Von der Mehden's remarks are simply nonsense. His discussion of the other religious factors is equally uninformed.

One would expect Von der Mehden to devote some attention to the religious resurgence in response to which he wrote this book. And he does, in fact, namely in the chapter on popular beliefs (!). But here again he leaves us very disappointed, since he does not even make an attempt at analysis, interpretation or explanation. He simply quotes a few disconnected facts – without any analysis – from Nagata's interesting book (1984) on Malaysian Islam and Suksamran's work (1982) on the 'political monks' of Thailand and mentions a few random, unrepresentative events in Indonesia, completely missing the real issues (especially in the latter case). In discussing family planning, he quotes an old UNESCO report on the relevant views of Islam but fails to refer to the recent hot debates on this subject, or to the various *fatwa* issued by Indonesian *ulama*. In the chapter on the impact of modernization on religion he makes the correct observation that the expansion of formal education is responsible for the spread of knowledge of formal religious teachings at the expense of many popular beliefs, but fails to take note of the modernization debate among Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims – one of the most important reactions of the Muslim community.² Readers interested in the religions of Southeast Asia will find little in this book that is worthwhile; it exhibits the same lack of concern with religious meaning that was typical of the modernization school it criticizes.

Many of the things so painfully lacking in Von der Mehden's book will be found in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, a useful collection of older articles and excerpts from books. The expert will have read many of the articles before, but for the student this well-considered and balanced collection of readings forms an excellent introduction to Southeast Asian Islam. The articles are arranged in six sections, dealing with early Islamization, colonial rule, post-independence politics, the institutionalization of Islam, socio-cultural settings and perspectives on modernization. The authors include Snouck Hurgronje (on the *Jawah ulama* in Mecca) and Drewes (on the coming of Islam to Indonesia), as well as anthropologists and social historians working in other paradigms; about half of them are themselves Muslims from the region. The editors have also struck a good geographical balance: Indonesia, as the largest Muslim country, is covered by about half of the 48 articles and excerpts, and Malaysia follows with a third. The remainder deal with the Muslim communities of Thailand and the Philippines, and even those of Kampuchea and Viet Nam. The general quality of the selections is high,

and all are relevant to an understanding of contemporary issues. I warmly recommend it as a source book for introductory courses!

The following three books, edited by Hooker, the editorial board of *Archipel*, and Abdullah and Siddique respectively, are collections of new articles on aspects of Southeast Asian Islam. Most of the contributors to the first are British scholars, those to the second French and Indonesian, with an introductory essay by the American William Roff, whereas the third volume is entirely written by scholars from the region itself. It is tempting to view these books as somehow representing distinctive British, French and 'participant' approaches to Oriental studies, but this would not be entirely just, since they are too different in intent. Hooker's book is the most encyclopaedic of the three, being written from the armchair in a well-stocked library. Each article surveys and evaluates the literature in one particular branch of Islamic studies – history, law, anthropology, letters, politics – and sums up the present state of (the author's) knowledge. Most of the *Archipel* articles, on the other hand, are straight from the workshop, and are the results of recent or ongoing research, often in the field. The scope of these articles is much more limited, but they contribute new material. Together they present a kaleidoscopic picture of Indonesian Islam in its various local contexts that is much more lively and tangible than what the systematic but rather dull British volume offers. It is true, the *Archipel* articles are uneven in quality; the editors seem to have vacillated between the objective of producing a popular introduction to Southeast Asian Islam and the aim of addressing the specialist. Some of the contributions are no more than compilations of generally available information without offering any added insights. This is compensated, however, by the original research results or interpretations in other articles. The Siddique and Abdullah volume is very different again; several of the authors are very active participants in the religious life about which they write, and some of the articles read almost like action programmes rather than dispassionate descriptions and analyses.

Hooker, in an historical survey of the interactions of Islamic law with *adat* and colonial law in various parts of the region, contrasts 'Muhammadan' with 'Islamic' law. The latter 'is derived from the Qur'an and Sunna and is defined in terms of Arabic culture', while the former term is preferred by him where Islam was accepted by peoples with very different cultural backgrounds, and where its laws presumably adopted features of the recipient culture.³ As Hooker shows, *shari'a* rules and regulations have had very little impact on actual legislation in Southeast Asia, in spite of the efforts of what he calls 'the reform movement' to move from the 'Muhammadan' to the 'Islamic'. Hooker's survey of the various forms of legal syncretism in colonial and post-independence law

is useful, but his contrasting of 'Muhammadan' and 'Islamic' (shall the twain ever meet?), with the implication that Islam is basically alien to Southeast Asia, or at least more alien to it than to the Middle East, is apt to make for misunderstanding. There is, after all, just as much tension between abstract ideal and actual legal/political practice in the Middle East as in the more peripheral Muslim areas. His observation that the contribution of the *shari'a* to the formal legal systems of the area has been minimal is correct; but to most Muslims this is not so important as long as the laws are not in flagrant conflict with the regulations of the *shari'a*. Where the latter is perceived to be the case, popular protest may arise (as in the case of the proposed marriage laws of 1973 in Indonesia). The influence of the *shari'a* on Southeast Asian law (both *adat* and 'modern' law) has perhaps been more of such a negative, corrective, than of a prescriptive kind, and its extent cannot therefore be measured by looking only at the resultant legal systems.

A. C. Milner, who writes (in the same volume) about the Malay Muslim states, also makes much of apparent deviations from a hypothetical Islamic ideal, believed to be informed with a strong egalitarian ethos. He mentions several examples of Malay digests (*undang-undang*) being at variance with the *shari'a*, such as in the prescription of fines and traditional alternatives to the *hadd* punishments. Moreover, these laws 'gain their authority by having been laid down by the ruler' (i.e., not by their deriving from divine commands), and the judges (*qadi*) administering them 'appear to have been royal appointees'. Milner considers this to be at variance with an ideal norm that is mainly of his own making. All his examples have, in fact, precise parallels in Ottoman legal and administrative practice. A comparative analysis of Malay *undang-undang* and Ottoman *qanunname*⁴ would probably yield many more such parallels. What Southeast Asia borrowed from India and the Middle East was not 'Islamic' culture but Muslim culture, and it is quite hard to distinguish the autochthonous from the alien in the resultant culture. Milner himself shows this to be so in his discussion of Malay kingship, which he regards as being strongly influenced by the political culture of the medieval Muslim world (which, in spite of the egalitarian ideal of present-day apologetical Islam, was based on principles of absolute kingship and strict hierarchical organization). These influences were most conspicuous, he believes, in the adoption of royal titles such as those used in the 'Persianized Muslim world'⁵, and in the cultivation of the mystical doctrine of the Perfect Man (*Insan Kamil*). Milner rather speculatively assumes that this doctrine may have propped up the claims of superior spiritual achievement and magical powers by which Southeast Asian rulers, both pre-Islamic and Muslim, legitimized their rule. (The Moghul Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) is said to have taken an interest in this doctrine for the same reasons.) Milner puts forward the hypothesis that the timing of the Malay rulers' conversion to Islam was

determined by the fact that by then culturally acceptable forms of Muslim kingship and mystical doctrine had become available. This is hardly convincing, for both had been on hand for several centuries at the time when the first Malay rajas accepted Islam. Moreover, they were not inherently more useful to the ruler than the previously existing ideologies (the king as *bodhisattva*), and the question remains why a raja should have become a Muslim at all. Milner suggests that this might 'have strengthened his relationship with the foreign, Muslim, community in the port', which does not strike me as a particularly strong reason for conversion. Once adopted, Milner continues, Islam proved to be a Trojan horse, making the rajas vulnerable to the radical and more egalitarian interpretations of 18th and 19th century fundamentalist movements, which are summarily discussed. This again is begging the question: did these movements *occur* because of Islam, or did Islam only give them exterior *form* and *legitimation*, the real causes lying elsewhere?

There are no simple and easy answers to such questions, and every Islamization theory faces embarrassing problems such as the one raised by Denys Lombard in *Archipel* 29: why did Thailand and Indochina, which had previously shared the same Hindu-Buddhist civilization with the archipelago, and where the same 'Islamizing' factors (international trade, large resident foreign Muslim communities) were present, not become Muslim? A general theory of Islamization will either have to be so abstract as to be almost empty of content, or it will have to accommodate itself to a virtually unlimited number of exceptions. One gets an idea of the complexities involved from Christian Pelras' careful study of the Islamization of the Bugis and Makassarese kingdoms in South Sulawesi and from a complementary article by Henri Chambert-Loir on the written accounts of conversion from this cultural area (*Archipel* 29): several rulers here, before their ultimate conversion to Islam, experimented with Catholicism, which they perceived as being more compatible with traditional beliefs and court ritual. Enmities and relations of precedence between the various kingdoms, trade rivalries between the foreign nations, and changing mutual (mis-)perceptions all played their part, as did the efforts of Sumatran (?) Muslim propagandists, who seem to have consciously fashioned a suitable form of Islam, acceptable to the rulers, while the Portuguese remained distinctly unresponsive to Buginese requests for religious education. Pelras believes that the rulers in the end chose Islam because this was the religion of the majority of their trading partners, who may have exerted pressure (i.e., the same hypothesis as Milner's). He does not attempt to answer the question of why they would have been interested in any foreign religion at all and even actively invited Catholic missionaries.

Another aspect of the Islamization of the region in question is delineated

in Gilbert Hamonic's article on the *sayyid* community of Cikoang and their famous *Maulud* celebration. This community was reputedly founded by a Sayyid Jalaluddin, who settled here, after having lived in Aceh and Banten, in the first years of the 17th century. He converted the local people, as sayyids were wont to, to a form of Islam that was highly reverent of the Prophet and his descendants (and is often mistaken for Shi'ism because of this veneration for the *ahl al-bait*), and thereby secured a lasting position of dominance of his own offspring over the common people (so much for the egalitarian ethos of Islam!). The community is renowned for its unique way of celebrating the Prophet's birthday (which is described in some detail, illustrated with photographs) and is reputed to hold rather quaint beliefs. What Hamonic tells us about these beliefs may seem strange at first sight (the creation of the *Nur Muhammad*, the primordial spirit of the Prophet, out of which the entire world was to emerge, in the form of a bird sitting in the tree of life), but they are part of a doctrine which was once widely adhered to, and which is set out in Malay religious texts that are still regularly reprinted and sold throughout the archipelago today (for an analysis of these texts see Nor 1982, for the Nur Muhammad doctrine pp. 13-14). The *Maulud* festival of Cikoang, as Hamonic notes, is an enactment of this cosmological myth, and is highly syncretistic. The ethnologist will recognize many elements of (non-Islamic) rituals in other parts of the Archipelago in Hamonic's description. I myself was struck by a photograph of a *kandawari*, a lavishly decorated wooden tabernacle representing the tree of life which people carry around on this occasion, which I thought was strikingly reminiscent of certain *kavadi* (often ornamented with peacock feathers) that Hindu Tamil women in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore carry on their shoulders during the annual *Thaipusam* procession.

One of the most elusive aspects of Islamization is the gradual penetration of Islam from Java's north coast into the interior. Two articles in *Archipel* throw some light on the modalities of this process. Rachmat Djatnika surveys the pious foundations (*waqf*) of East Java, arranging them according to their date of foundation (ranging from 1500 to 1979). The number of new foundations and their location are indicative of the spread of Islam – and of course, of the social, economic and political conditions, as Djatnika shows. One wonders, however, whether the presently recorded *waqf* are all the foundations there ever were, and whether there may not have been reversion of *waqf* lands to private ownership on a scale that might considerably distort the overall picture. Claude Guillot traces the history of the famous *pesantren* of Tegalsari, the meeting-place of the court and *santri* tradition, and progenitor of many other *pesantren*. He draws attention to the central role played in the process of the Islamization of Java's south by old families of religious specialists gradually adopting Islam while retaining their traditional

functions. The gradual penetration of Islam was, to some extent at least, effected by members of such families who went to study on the north coast and later founded their own *pesantren* in the south.

The process of Islamization is discussed from another perspective in A. Day's contribution on (mainly Javanese) Islamic literature, which forms the most fascinating chapter in Hooker's book. In imitation of Oleg Grabar's approach to early Islamic art, Day asks what the adjective 'Islamic' refers to when one is speaking of (Javanese/Malay) Islamic literature. He assumes that the answer can be found by extrapolating Grabar's findings to a different field and a different area, saying: 'in terms of literature, the resolution of a struggle between symbolologies in favour of Islam could have taken the form of the simple *negation of the symbolic content of Hindu-Buddhist literature without involving its replacement by an Islamic symbolism* in any sense equal to its predecessor in richness or scope'; pre-Islamic symbols could 'assume "Islamic" significance *through the very fact that they ceased to have much meaning at all*' (p. 141, emphasis mine). As he develops his argument, Day critically surveys other scholarly approaches. He rejects the notion that the 'Islamic' character of Malay Islamic literature consists in an 'urban' and 'individualistic' orientation, as has sometimes been suggested, showing that both the tone and the style of the texts and the provenance of the extant manuscripts associate them with either the court or the rural *pesantren*, and with nothing that is even vaguely urban or bourgeois. He especially censures De Graaf and Ricklefs' treatment of Javanese texts as mere sources or aids to understanding 'history'. Instead, he urges, such texts should be studied as historical events themselves. Day takes delight in clever formulations, and at times I wondered whether there was anything more than just a few clever formulations. For the alternatives proposed by Day – and some of them sound promising – remain mostly undeveloped. He offers an interesting and convincing re-analysis of the orthodoxy-heterodoxy theme in the *Serat Cabolek*, however, placing this 'mythical' text in its contemporary political context. He regards the 'heterodox' Haji Mutamakin as representing not deviant theological tendencies but the social unrest and Messianistic agitation in the *mancanegara* in response to increasing Dutch interference. The victorious orthodoxy of Ketib Anom Kudus does not reflect a growing influence of *shari'a*-oriented Islam at the court but simply a restoration of a strong centralized kingship; order and established hierarchy are 'orthodox', and only the threat of chaos 'heterodox'. Day carries his analysis too far, perhaps, when he claims that Haji Mutamakin ultimately represents the Dutch, the real threat to the Javanese kingdoms; but as a demonstration of how increasing Dutch interference in Javanese affairs produced historical 'events' like the *Serat Cabolek* it is well conceived.

The anthropology of Islam (the study of 'practical Islam', as he calls it, in contradiction to the idealized Islam of the texts that is the domain of Orientalists) is surveyed by Roy F. Ellen. He attempts both to give a concise description of the various forms of Muslim belief and practice in the various parts of the region, and to sketch the intellectual history of western approaches to Southeast Asian Islam. The contrasting attitudes of the British and Dutch colonial authorities towards Islam (and especially towards Islamic law), resulting in different forms of institutionalization of Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia, are adequately, though very briefly, discussed (amid great praise for the intellectual stature of Snouck Hurgronje). This is followed by a less systematic survey of the post-independence ethnographic literature – the English-language literature, that is. The anthropological approaches have culminated, in Ellen's view, in the interpretative approach of Geertz and his disciples, and indeed, the shadow of Geertz looms large over this chapter. Ellen's classification of the 'varieties of religious experience' roughly follows Geertz, with some changes that are by no means improvements. His juggling with labels such as 'radicalism', 'scripturalism', 'reformism' and 'modernism' creates more confusion than clarity. Here, and also in his sometimes inadequate interpretations of published ethnographic material, one feels that this author might have profited considerably from leaving his study and getting some direct exposure to the cultures involved. As a survey of the (English-language) literature, its foci of attention, and the theoretical issues raised, however, the article is useful.

Some of the same ground is covered, in a more balanced and enlightening way, by Roff in his *Archipel* essay – a thoughtful review of some major trends in studies of Islam and society in the region (especially those of 'Islam and adat' and of Islamization). Roff is clearly not overcome with the passion for reducing reality to a few simple categories and patterns that has informed so much social science writing on Indonesia. This seems to make him more appreciative of the solid scholarly work of Snouck's pupils, in spite of the lack of vision and interpretation for which Dutch scholarship is often criticized. He ends with a plea not to evade the burden of complexity, which deserves wholehearted endorsement.

The present is a place where Hooker and his contributors seem ill at ease. All shy away from a discussion of contemporary affairs, leaving this up to an eminent Indonesian guest author, Deliar Noer. His 'Contemporary Political Dimensions of Islam' is a summary of major political events and developments involving Islamic institutions, parties and groups in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand since the fifties, which is useful as an introduction for the general reader, but offers no new information or ideas.

The focus of the contributions to the Abdullah/Siddique volume is almost entirely on the present and recent past. Three articles, making up

one-third of the book, deal with the relatively neglected subjects of ethnic nationalism and Islamic resurgence among the Muslims of southern Thailand and the Philippines. Uthai Dulyakasem attempts to place his description of Thai government policies and Malay ethnic nationalism in greater Patani in the framework of recent theories on ethnic boundaries and nationalism. He stresses the importance of competition between ethnic groups for the same types of jobs, and the challenge of modern, state-sponsored education to the status legitimization of traditional ethnic élites. Omar Farouk writes, with obvious commitment, on the same subject. His article is an indictment of Thai chauvinism and ethnic and religious discrimination, and a faithful reflection of Malay grievances. Both articles were clearly written before the publication of Surin Pitsuwan's thesis (1985), which to my knowledge is the most comprehensive and best-documented study on the subject.

Nagasura Madale's article on the resurgence of Islam and nationalism in the Philippines is unfortunately very meagre, consisting mainly of quotations of what others have said and of an uncritical list of government measures in response to Muslim demands. None of the books under review adequately covers the Filipino Muslim movement, which has suddenly been propelled into the limelight by the recent developments in that country. It may be useful, therefore, to draw attention to the informative recent book by Cesar Adib Majul, who is one of the few authorities on the subject (Majul 1985).

The other articles in this volume are rather heterogeneous. Sharon Siddique describes the administration of Islam in Singapore. Mohamad Abu Bakar discusses recent tensions and conflicts between the nationalist and Islamicist tendencies in (Malaysia's) Malay politics. Kuntowijoyo, in a well-researched article, documents the rise of the Sarekat Islam in Madura in the second decade of this century (which he earlier discussed in a wider social and economic context in his Ph.D. thesis, Columbia 1980). Taufik Abdullah presents some reflections on the changing relations between *pesantren*, court and market, perceiving structurally similar situations and transitions at quite different times and places in the archipelago. A situation of close cooperation between the ruler and '*ulama*' was followed by estrangement, with the *pesantren* turning inward, towards mysticism or idealistic legalism, and thus coming to form an alternative to the dominant (court) culture. This dualistic situation was ultimately replaced by one of renewed accommodation. Some of the ideas put forward are interesting, but I suspect that another selection of case materials might have yielded different patterns.

Four contributions, finally, represent social activists' progress reports rather than the products of scholarly investigations. Mohammad Daud Ali, one of the advocates of full recognition of Islamic law, reviews the position of the *shari'a* under Dutch rule and after independence,

showing how the reception theory of the Dutch adat law scholars has in actual fact been negated. In a few instances, the *shari'a* has been recognized as a source of law in itself, without prior reception into adat. Abdurrahman Wahid comments on the recent reorientation of the Nahdlatul Ulama (of which he is now one of the top leaders), and sketches the world-view of the members of this organization. Mrs. Baroroh Baried reports on the activities and achievements of the Muslim women's organization *Aisyiyah* (sister-organization of *Muhammad-iyah*), with which she has had a life-long involvement. M. Kamal Hassan's survey of Islamic education in the region appears to be little more than a propaganda brochure for his International Islamic University of Malaysia.

Contemporary affairs also receive attention in two *Archipel* articles. François Raillon surveys recent developments (the imposition of Pancasila-as-sole-foundation, the Tanjung Priok riots, and the reorientation of the Nahdlatul Ulama) largely on the basis of reports in the weekly *Tempo*. And P. Labrousse and Farida Soemargono survey the activities of a *dakwah* organization in Surabaya. *Dakwah*, religious propaganda and popular education, is at present one of the most important Islamic activities in Indonesia in terms of invested energy, time and creativity. Since the ban on Masyumi and the gradual regimentation of the officially recognized Muslim parties under the New Order, many former political activists have devoted their passions and energies to the awakening and developing of an Islamic awareness among their compatriots. There are numerous bodies, of quite varying persuasions, active in *dakwah*; surprisingly, they have been little studied yet. This article offers little analysis but deserves mention because it is one of the first on the subject in a western language.

Before moving on to other books, attention should be drawn to two more *Archipel* articles (not all can be mentioned). Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, in 'Islam et Sinité', document the presence over the centuries of significant Muslim Chinese communities in the Archipelago. They subtly refer to, but keep aloof from, the debate on their possible role in the Islamization of Java, and instead elucidate various forms of cultural symbiosis and syncretism. They also discuss some of the literary products of these Sino-Muslims (Mme. Salmon's specialty), the most surprising of which is a *syair* in praise of the Sarekat Islam. The other important group of 'alien orientals', the Hadramauti Arabs, is represented by a short ethnographic study by Chantal Vudly on the Arab community of Pekalongan.

The volume *Les ordres mystiques dans l'Islam* contains the papers of the first of a series of conferences on the historical development and present

role of the various Sufi orders throughout the Muslim world. One paper, by Denys Lombard, deals specifically with the Archipelago. Lombard lists the well-known existing data on early Sumatran Sufism, the introduction of the Shattariya in Sumatra and West Java and of the Khalwatiya in South Sulawesi (both in the 17th century), and the rapid rise of the Naqshbandiya in the late 19th century, as well as details of some minor orders. He supplements this with some short notes on two contemporary practices vaguely associated with *tarekat* (the *dabus* of Banten, with alleged Qadiri connections, and the *basapa* ceremony at the Shattari shrine of Ulakan in West Sumatra) and on two *pesantren tarekat*, viz. Babussalam, the Naqshbandi centre in North Sumatra, and Rejoso, which was once the centre of the Qadiriya wa Naqshbandiya in East Java but has lost its position as such as a result of a conflict of which only the early beginnings are mentioned here. The article obviously has no greater pretension than to collate information from a wide range of written sources, with the addition of an occasional personal observation.

Another article of possible interest to Indonesianists is that by B. G. Martin on the Tijaniya and its adversaries in West Africa. The relatively unknown Tijaniya is experiencing rapid growth in East Java, especially among poor and uneducated Madurese – an environment not unlike that described by Martin – and is the subject of lively controversies there.

The most important contribution to this volume is no doubt that by the late Joseph Fletcher on the orders in China and Xinjiang. Basing himself on sources in Chinese and Japanese, as well as Arabic and Persian, and on some considerable erudition, he shows that the Chinese Muslims were not, as has often been assumed, highly Sinicized and largely isolated from the rest of the Muslim world. The various waves of religious reinvigoration of the 18th and 19th centuries also reached China, giving rise to several *jiḥad* movements here. The Naqshbandiya network played a major role both in the contacts with the wider Muslim world and in the *jiḥad* and defensive rebellions. Fletcher also shows that the two previously known sects, Khufiya and Jahriya, are both in fact branches of the Naqshbandiya. Indonesianists will be surprised to find a pivotal role assigned to Ibrahim al-Kurani, the Madinan teacher of ‘Abdurra’uf of Singkel and Yusuf of Makasar.

Other articles deal with Sufi orders in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey, the Balkans, northern Africa, Sudan and east Africa, the eastern Arabic world and the Indian sub-continent.

The last three books to be reviewed here do not have any scholarly pretensions but present information on aspects of contemporary Indonesian Islam that are hardly if at all touched on in the works discussed so far. Rusli Karim’s book is an attempt, by a concerned Muslim, to present an integral *tableau* of Indonesian Islam in the late seventies and early eighties – a survey of the various social groups that make up the *ummat*,

of the issues discussed and the challenges faced by them, and of their failure to meet the latter head-on. It is written not so much for a public of scholarly outsiders as for other committed Muslims, and hence a certain background knowledge of Indonesian Islam and recent political events is assumed. The author not merely describes and analyzes the present situation but takes position on a great many issues. He is a man of strong opinions and delivers harsh verdicts on many persons and states of affairs, but he backs up his negative judgments with empirical data. It is the most informative book on the struggle of mainstream Islam during the past decade that I have yet read. The first part of the book is an anatomy of organized Islam, discussing official institutions, grass-roots organizations, informal leaders and communication networks. For the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama*), this section forms a useful complement to Deliar Noer's earlier, more systematic study of 1978, discussing the contrasting policies of the past three ministers and the clash between Council and minister that led to Hamka's resignation as the Council's president. The survey of the organizations (*Muhammadiyah*, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), and the student and youth organizations), summarizing recent internal discussions, is at times highly critical and, in the case of the NU, not entirely fair. But the assessment of the Muhammadiyah (to which the author himself is committed) is also unflattering: it is criticized for a serious shortage of adequate leadership, a low degree of intellectuality, and lack of an integral concept of Islam. The author places his hopes in a new type of leader: the Muslim intellectual, who is well-educated, committed to society and to Islam as an ideology, and in active communication with the *ummat*. Such Muslim intellectuals so far are a rare species (Karim counts 82, give or take a few). The vast majority of educated preachers still restrict themselves in their sermons to points of belief and ritual, keeping clear of socially relevant matters or controversial ideas. The performance of the country's Muslim universities in producing creative Muslim intellectuals is particularly disappointing to Karim: almost none of his 82 elect received his or her education at one of these institutions.

The book continues with a short history of the vicissitudes of the Muslim political parties under the New Order, paying special attention to the recent conflicts within the NU and the PPP and to the imposition of the Pancasila as sole foundation, and quoting the views of various participants and commentators. Here again the author comments on the (widely felt) crisis of leadership, the division of the *ummat*, and the painful absence of an agreed set of objectives for which to fight.

The only glimmer of light in the rather sombre picture of Indonesian Islam painted by Rusli Karim is provided by the emergence of a new type of Muslim intellectuals, the beneficiaries of a relatively recent trend of wider participation by young people from a 'santri' background in higher

education. A widely shared expectation (or hope) is that these intellectuals will replace the older types of leaders of the Muslim community, the *'ulama* and the Muslim politicians. With the spread of general education, the intellectual superiority of the traditional *'ulama* is becoming less and less self-evident, and the complaint that 'there are no longer such great *'ulama* as in the past' is now commonplace. The (former) leaders of modernist organizations and Muslim parties are, for other reasons, also felt to be inadequate as leaders of the community. Under the New Order, the Muslim politicians have been either reduced to politicking in the margin or banned from politics altogether. Many of them, as was mentioned above, consciously turned to *dakwah*; they were not capable, however, of restoring to the *ummat* the dynamism it had lost. Their religious writings and speeches have been mostly arid and uninspiring, and often apologetic and defensive, if not reactionary.

A new generation of Muslim thinkers, to a large extent a product of the New Order, emerged in the 1970s. Most of them had originally been active in the Muslim students' union HMI. Nurcholish Madjid, who served two three-year terms as the HMI's national president, became the most visible spokesman of a heterogeneous group that regarded the renewal (*pembaharuan*) of religious thought as its task. The early seventies resounded with a polemic between Nurcholish and various opponents about secularization, which has drawn some scholarly attention⁶ and which almost drowned out the other subjects raised by this group, such as the theme of democracy and social justice as basic elements of Islam. The 'renewal' debate on a variety of themes continued, with new people joining in, some with quite different concerns from the original group's. Former student activists returned from studies abroad with wider intellectual horizons and a strengthened commitment to Islam. A rapidly increasing volume of modern Muslim literature from Egypt and Pakistan, and in the eighties also from Iran, became available in translation, putting forward new views and concerns, and stimulating this debate. The past five years have been a period of unprecedented productivity (in quantity, at least) by young Muslim intellectuals. *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam* [Clearing a New Path for Islam] is intended to be a stock-taking of this modern Muslim thinking, and one should not expect more than just that. Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy attempt, in the first half of their book, to place the new Muslim thinking in the context of changes in the world economy and of the political, social and economic transformation of Indonesia. This has resulted in what is little more than a chaotic collage of quotations from a wide, but apparently not assimilated, reading. Their classification of the new Muslim intellectuals is not very enlightening, either, and in their discussion of several of these thinkers they dwell almost exclusively on themes that are not, to my mind, the most central to their concerns. Despite these and other objections that may be made against this book (it received a fair amount of

criticism in Indonesia), it is a rich source of information on the most recent intellectual developments in Indonesian Islam. The authors first sketch the beginnings of the 'religious renewal' movement and the first polemics of around 1970. Then, passing over in silence the intervening period, they present synopses of (some of) the ideas of today's leading Muslim intellectuals, as reflected in their (recent) writings. Few would disagree with their choice of ten thinkers; in terms of productivity, originality and influence these are, in fact, the most prominent. They all belong to the same age-group (born in the early 1940s, the youngest in 1949), and most of them were active in the HMI in Nurcholish's time. Only three of them pursued religious studies, the others graduated in other disciplines, and most of them spent several years studying abroad. In spite of these similarities, there are significant differences in outlook and attitude. Amien Rais and Jalaluddin Rakhmat, who never belonged to the 'renewal' movement, are most insistent on the Islamic ideal of social and economic justice, and are most influenced by the Iranian thinkers Shariati and Muthahari (and therefore viewed with misgivings by the authorities). The authors place strong (too strong, I feel) emphasis on their anti-western pronouncements and their view of Islam as being universal and absolute. This puts them in a position that is almost diametrically opposite to that of Nurcholish Madjid and (present NU president) Abdurrahman Wahid, who are paragons of religious openness and tolerance, and are considered to be political accommodationists (and quite popular with the government). Two others who were close to the original 'renewal' movement, Dawam Rahardjo and Adi Sasono, have made their mark primarily as organizers and social activists involved in numerous grass-roots development projects. It is not clear from the book whether there has been any dialogue, dispute or polemic between these various trends, or how the ideas of each have developed. But at least we have here a first presentation of the major issues addressed by these young Muslim intellectuals, of the questions asked and the tentative answers given.⁷

Indonesia: Muslims on Trial, finally, deals with the radical fringe of Indonesian Islam and with violent events that are not mentioned at all, or only in passing, in the other books (with the exception of Raillon's *Archipel* article). Not long after the government's announcement of new legislation forbidding political parties and organizations to embrace any ideologies other than the Pancasila (i.e., effectively de-Islamicizing these), riots broke out in Tanjung Priok which were brutally put down by the military. Prominent Muslim leaders contested the official reading of the events, and angry radicals retaliated with bombings. In a series of trials, the prosecution attempted to prove the existence of a number of subversive plots and to implicate prominent regime critics in the riots and the bombings. The centrepiece of the book is formed by a compila-

tion and an analysis of Indonesian press reports on these trials, and a reconstruction of the Tanjung Priok incident on the basis of defendants' and witnesses' testimonies in court. The anonymous authors are evidently not great admirers of the Suharto regime and its human rights record, but they refrain from making assertions that cannot be founded on fact. They mention, but do not commit themselves to, the widely held belief that the riots and bombings were part of a large-scale intelligence operation meant to weaken organized Islam and to silence vocal Muslim critics. They *do* imply that the trials were highly unfair and intended to victimize the liberal and Islamic opposition, but that is hardly an unfounded assumption. The manipulation of the trials became unambiguously clear even from the Indonesian press reports; rarely has this taken place more openly.

An introductory chapter outlines the history of the relations between the armed forces and organized Islam since independence, and describes the gradual regimentation of the Muslim parties and earlier cases of 'Islamic terrorism' (*Komando Jihad*, the Imran group). The final chapter deals with the latest wave of Muslim arrests and trials, involving an alleged movement called *Usroh*. 'Usrah' (Arabic for 'family') is the term used by the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, whose literature is popular among Indonesian students, as their equivalent for the communist 'cell'. Since all Islamic political activities have been virtually banned, and all legal organizations must be based exclusively on the Pancasila, groups of young people have started meeting in small circles at private homes, following the *usrah* pattern. They have formed discussion groups and attempted to establish alternative, Islamic (as opposed to 'Pancasilaist'), communities. Their reaction seems to be, in general, quietist and escapist rather than activist, and it is highly doubtful whether all the Indonesian groups called *Usroh* form part of a single network. The information of our authors is based exclusively on reports of the trials, and therefore leaves many questions unanswered. But the biographical data on the defendants, compiled from a variety of national and regional newspapers, provide us, as in the case of the Tanjung Priok and bombing trials, with interesting information on the backgrounds of the *Usroh* members.

NOTES

- 1 A satisfactory discussion of the English-language anthropological literature is given by Roy F. Ellen in the book by Hooker reviewed below.
- 2 On this debate see Hassan 1982, and Ali and Effendy, under review here.
- 3 This resembles, but is not identical with, the distinction between 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' (or, preferably, '*Islami*') that is made by many contemporary Muslims, whereby the former is simply descriptive of anything that Muslims are, do and have, while the latter refers to the ideal models derivable from the Qur'an and Sunna. There are, in this view, no Islamic societies but only Muslim societies in the modern world. For some, the

Madina of the Prophet and the rightly guided caliphs provides an ideal model; others, including Khomeini, proclaim that an Islamic society has never yet been realized. The term 'Muhammadan', of course, is considered by many Muslims to be inappropriate, if not derogatory.

- 4 Numerous Ottoman codes for various provinces, most of them dating from the 16th century, are still extant and there is a considerable body of scholarly literature on legal and administrative practice in the Ottoman Empire. Translations of several representative *qanunname* can be found in von Hammer 1815; an important recent synthetic work is Inalcik 1973; cf. the same author's article of 1969.
- 5 Milner seems to be unaware of Hamka's interesting observation that the titles of the earliest rajas of Pasai (Al-Malik as-Salih, Al-Malik al-'Adil, etc.) resembled those of the Egyptian Ayyubids and were quite unlike those of other contemporary Muslim rulers, including those of Iran and India (Hamka 1984:232-4).
- 6 Boland 1971:221-224; Hassan 1982; and various later works based on these two. Nurcholish Madjid himself feels that both these works, as well as the book under review, miss the point of what he meant, and believes that the best presentation of his and his friends' ideas is in a recent essay by Pabottinggi (1986).
- 7 English-language articles by eight of these ten thinkers may be found in *Prisma – The Indonesian Indicator* 35, which represents an integral translation of the extra issue (*nomor ekstra*) of the Indonesian-language *Prisma* of 1984.

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