

# **Islam in Indonesia After Being Freed From Its Political Incarceration**

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According to statistics, 88% of the total population of Indonesia embrace Islam as their religion. Non-Islamic groups were therefore often apprehensive of this large Muslim majority. When the Indonesian State was being constituted, Muslims were feared because of the desire of their leaders to establish an Islamic State in Indonesia. They aroused the suspicion of the government which consequently put pressure on them.

Now after the New Order has been in existence for more than 20 years, it can be observed that the relationship between the government and Islam is much better. The latter feels that it has been offered opportunities by the passing of the Act on National Education, the Act concerning Religious Courts, and the Joint Declaration (SKB) concerning alms given to the poor according to Muslim law (*Zakat*) in 1991. Other milestones of this improved relationship are seen in the setting up of the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) at the end of 1990, and the recent organization of the Istiqlal Festival.

According to Lukman Harun, as soon as suspicion toward Islam on the side of the government disappeared, Islam was able to free itself from its political incarceration. By the term 'political incarceration' Lukman Harun refers to the field of practical politics. He agrees with the opinion of William Liddle which was aired at an informal debate of the Muhammadiyah, that Islam began to develop at the very time it was no longer involved in practical politics.'

This essay will try to trace how Islam freed itself from its political incarceration during the New Order era and how it came, in time, to have

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1. See: Fachry Au, "Akomodasi Non-Politik Islam Indonesia dalam Struktur Orde Baru", Prisma March 3, 1991, p.87.

a close relationship with the government. First we will see the face of Islam before it freed itself from its political ties and was still very ambitious to set up an Islamic State in Indonesia. Next to be considered will be the situation of Islam in Indonesia after its being free of political incarceration, especially its relationship with the Government. Within this context, both internal and external factors causing the change of attitude will be analyzed. Then a critical reflection on this new phenomenon of intimate relationship will follow. The essay will conclude with considering the possible role of Islam in the progress towards democracy in Indonesia.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR AN ISLAMIC STATE IN INDONESIA

According to Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendi, Islam had been the spearhead of opposition against the Dutch since its entering Indonesia. They refer to Snouch Hurgronje's advice to the Dutch Government to destroy Islamic politics as an indicator of the persistence of Islam's opposition. However, when an elite of Western educated intellectuals who kindled the spirit of nationalism and anti-colonialism in the 20th century appeared on the scene (Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir), the leading role of Islam in expelling the Dutch came to an end. From that time onward the national political game was in the hands of a group of secular nationalists. Afterwards Islam, politically speaking, did not have any significant political form.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, since they were a majority among the total population of the country, it was normal that the longing to establish an Islamic State arose among them. The issue was first raised in a statement of leaders of Sarekat Islam at the end of the twenties. At that time, leaders like Surjopranoto and Sukiman spoke of "an Islamic Government" or "an Islamic power under its own flag". Sukiman—later to be known as one of the important leaders in the governing board of the Masyumi Party—stated that it was the purpose of independence to set up an Islamic State.

The first formal conception of an Islamic State was made during the meetings of preparatory committee for Indonesian independence (BPUPKI) in the months from May through July 1945. Here a serious ideological debate took place between representatives of Islamic groups and nationalist secular groups on the matter of the ideology and basis of the State. The Islamic groups put forward the idea of an Islamic State based on Islamic Law. The argument used was that the majority of the population were Muslims. However, Islamic laws could not be enforced because they

2. See: Fachry Au and Bachtiar Effendi, *Merambah Jalan Bans Islam*, (Bandung: Penerbit MIZAM, 1986), p. 80-81.

were not supported by institutional means (a state). Further it was argued that Islam had a direct connection with politics. The nationalists on their side rejected these arguments on the ground that Indonesia had its particular uniqueness. Many doubted whether Islamic Law could meet the needs of modern society.

The debate went on, and in order to avoid a split, an agreement was reached by way of compromise, as laid down in the Jakarta Charter. It was agreed that Pancasila (Five Principles) would be the basic principle of the State. But in order to comply with the wish of the mentioned Islamic groups, the clause “...with the obligation for Muslims to obey Islamic Law” was added to the first principle of Pancasila: Belief in God.

However, one day after the proclamation of Independence, the Jakarta Charter which had been signed on June 22, 1945, was again under discussion. Finally, for the sake of national unity (as there had been demands by Protestants and Catholics from East Indonesia) these ‘seven words’ which were very significant for the Muslims were erased.<sup>3</sup>

After the general election of 1955, the matter of an Islamic State was again brought to the fore in the meeting in Bandung of the Constituent Assembly in charge of drawing up a constitution. Although there had already been a split in the Masyumi party—the Awakening of Religious Teachers Islamic Party (NU) and the Islamic United Party of Indonesia (PSII) had separated—all the Islam factions who were present at the Constituent Assembly were united in their struggle for an Islamic State. Although they made up only 40% of the seats, they attempted to reach the same goal which was: either Islam as a basis, or Pancasila with the obligation of Islamic Law (Jakarta Charter). They were confronted by the other groups, led by the Nationalist Party of Indonesia (PNI) and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PM), who were aiming for a pure basis. The prolonged debate did not bring about a compromise because President Sukarno issued a decree on July 5, 1959, dissolving the Constituent Assembly and ordering a return to the Constitutional Law of 1945.

From that time on the issue of an Islamic State became weaker and weaker. Moreover, in 1960, Sukarno dissolved the Masyumi Party on the grounds that part of its leadership were involved in the Republic of

3. See: Endang Saifuddin Anshari, *Piagam Jakarta Juni 22, 1945*, Bandung: Pustaka Perpustakaan Salman, 1981.

Indonesia Revolutionary Government (PRRI)/Permesta uprisings. There remained only one big Islam party, namely the NU and two smaller parties, the PSII and Perti. They backed Sukarno at the time of his guided democracy within the single ideology of Nationalism, Religion and Communism (NASAKOM). After the September 1965 communist uprising and the subsequent dissolution of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PM) by Suharto, a new government was formed under the leadership of Suharto. Once again voices to bring the Jakarta Charter to life were heard. Also, attempts were made by Islamic circles to rehabilitate the Masyumi Party. However, both demands were turned down by the government and the army who were afraid of a return of Islam to the political scene with an agenda to strive consistently and in a constitutional way to establish an Islamic State. Instead, the 'Muslimin Indonesia' Party, Parmisi, was set up under strict control of the government. Apart from that, political activities of former Masyumi leaders were limited or forbidden outright.

Guidelines laid down by the new government were directed towards development. It coincided with de-politization of society, using the concept of the 'floating mass' to paralyze political parties. In 1985, all political parties, including the PPP which was based on Islam, had to accept Pancasila as their sole principal.

Constitutional politics was not the only means used in the struggle for an Islamic State; violence was also used and the term 'extreme right' made its appearance in the Indonesian bureaucratic dictionary. It stood more or less for movements using violence under the flag of Islam. The use of force started with Kartosuwirjo. He established the Islamic State Indonesia in the Prianger region in 1948. His movement, Darul Islam, was a reaction against the political defeat inflicted when the 'seven words' were scrapped from the Jakarta Charter. The Darul Islam movement spread to Aceh in 1953 where it was led by the well known religious leader Daud Beureueh under the pretext that Jakarta had treated Aceh in a stepmotherly way.

In Celebes the Kahar Muzakar movement emerged. Though its origins were different, it also waved the Darul Islam flag.

Step by step, the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) were able to put down these bloody revolts. Kartosuwirjo was captured in 1962 and sentenced to death. Kahar Muzakar suffered the same fate in 1965, while Daud Beureueh was persuaded to come down from the mountains in 1962. These uprisings made the ABRI very suspicious and concerned with regard to Islam at the beginning of the New Order.

Also during the New Order era, violent means were used by certain Islamic groups who were dissatisfied with the policies of the government. They believed that Islamic groups had been discriminated against and they were motivated by a desire to establish an Islamic State as the solution. An example of this would be the terrorist movement called 'Teror Warman' which hijacked a Garuda plane in 1981.

From the above report we can learn about the ideological and political struggle of the Muslims. Before the period of Independence and during the era of liberal democracy, the main attention of most Islam political leaders was focused on the problem of political-ideological development, concentrated as it was on Islam as the basic state ideology. The New Order once again witnessed efforts to set up an Islamic State, but these too failed as in the past.

#### FREE FROM POLITICAL INCARCERATION

The process whereby Islam freed itself from political incarceration is intimately connected with the development of the New Order. There was a great shift in orientation which brought about many changes in the country. I will first analyze the strategy of development followed by the New Order. Then I will look at its structural impact upon Islam in Indonesia, especially with regard to its developing a non-political accommodation. In this context we will see how new lines of thinking developed among some Islamic leaders as a result of this structural impact.

A remarkable difference between the New Order and the previous government was its acceptance of ideas of Western development. We know that in Third World countries which gained independence after the Second World War, the paradigm of modernization developed rapidly. According to this paradigm, development is a process of imitation of Western models by poor and underdeveloped Third World countries in order to arrive at what was believed to be a better standard of living, such as had already been achieved by rich western industrial countries.

In Indonesia the principal promoters of this paradigm of modernization were middle class people in urban areas whom Liddle called "the secular modernizing intellectuals". They had, by and large, been educated along western lines.<sup>4</sup> They tried to influence the intellectual climate in the post-Sukarno era by using slogans such as modernization and development. They held that the core of the ideology of development was the sharp difference between the modern and traditional society. The steadily

4. See: FachryAli, 1991, op. cit., p.90.

deteriorating economic situation inherited from the Old Order prompted the New Order to use the ideas of modernization and development as a means to overcome the economic crisis. In this critical phase, those ideas became objectively rooted in the logic of the elite of the New Order. Their ideas of economic development could defeat the ideas of the former government which had put emphasis on ideological rhetorics and political romanticism. In implementing their strategy for economic development, the government followed an open door policy which gave guarantees to international agents to entice them to participate in the development. This was done in order to get a structural basis of support for economic development. It was precisely this process of reintegration which brought about a structural transformation in Indonesian society.

On the economic level the results were impressive. The growth of the manufacturing industry, for instance, gave results as high as that of the middle income of the whole country. In addition, a gradual improvement in the spread of income occurred, especially in Java.

In the social-cultural field, economic development encouraged a greater social-cultural mobilization with the advent of more and cheaper means of transportation. The relative isolation of the rural areas was also overcome by the introduction of cheap radios and easier access to television. Also the intellectual horizon was broadened by rapid developments in printing, and the growing number of institutes of formal education helped to reduce the rate of illiteracy among the people.

The material advances mentioned must be acknowledged as the fruit of the economic development strategies of the New Order. Yet in the political field, following an overemphasis on political stability—necessary though it was for economic development—the New Order established a very strong State vis-a-vis a very weak civil society. This fact was mentioned by Arif Budiman, saying that the rise of an authoritarian-bureaucratic state is quite common in Third World countries where this paradigm of development is used.<sup>5</sup>

M.A.S. Hikam notes that at the time of the New Order the bureaucracy of the State, especially in its executive branches, developed into an effective apparatus capable of managing and mobilizing politics to support policies of the State. Moreover, the government also succeeded in taking

5. See: Arief Budiman, *Negara dan Pembangunan*, Jakarta: Yayasan Padi dan Kapas, 1991.

control over civil society by its corporate structure and its way of obtaining political consensus through ideological hegemony. It was done by exercising tight control over all social and political organizations by means of a number of ordinances, thereby making it impossible for them to become a threat to the State. Ideological hegemony was achieved by banning all ideologies except Pancasila.<sup>6</sup> In this way a process of de-ideologization and de-politization took place, which according to Arif Budiman, is the characteristic of an authoritarian bureaucratic state (OB).

So a change in political structure took place in Indonesia. In the Old Order era, politics in Indonesia was dominated by 'political currents'. A current represented a kind of social organization set up to meet certain needs in the years immediately following the declaration of independence. The political stage in the 50's and 60's witnessed conflicts between different political currents, causing national instability. The deideologization and de-politization of the New Order showed a complete reversal of this. Civil societies were not given any political channels or means to follow up their concerns. Due to the corporate model of government, civil society became very weak.

These structural changes undoubtedly exercised great influence on the Islam community in Indonesia. Muslims realized how small their political role was in the process of social-economic and political reconstruction of the New Order. Repeated failures in the field of practical politics followed on the de-politization of the New Order and brought about feelings of frustration among Muslims. But at the same time it encouraged them to think of new ways other than the field of practical politics. A shift in consciousness shook the concept of the Islamic State which they had been fighting for during the Old Order. We can see this shift in consciousness in the theorizing of various prominent Islamic thinkers such as: Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Imaduddin. Since the beginning of the New Order (in the 70's) Nurcholish Madjid said that Muslims had to support the modernization process initiated by the New Order so as to have a say in the realization of this process of growth. He rejected the idea of the struggle by means of practical politics with his now famous motto "Islam, yes; Islamic Party, no!"<sup>7</sup> Imaduddin, one of the leaders of the Salman Mosque at the grounds of the Institute for Technology in Bandung, said

6. See: M.A.S. Hikam, *Negara Masyarakat Sipil dan Gerakan Keagamaan dalam Politik Indonesia* Prisma March 3, 1991, p.78-79.

7. See: Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendi, 1986, op. cit. p. 122-1 43

that there was no problem with the structure of the State in Indonesia since “the political structure of Indonesia is very much in line with the teachings of Islam...Indonesia is only short of true Muslim.”<sup>8</sup>

At the same time Abdurrahman Wahid did not see the need or use for an Islamic Republic in Indonesia for the reason the majority of Muslims did not want it. The priority of Muslims in Indonesia should be the establishment of a strong and democratic country where social justice would be given attention. The dream of an Islamic State was an example of how Islamic leaders of former times had failed in making their ideas acceptable to the majority of Muslims.<sup>9</sup>

The majority of recent Islam thinkers in the country have now departed from the idea of an Islamic State. This shift was, of course, very much in line with the policy of the New Order, a policy which was very conscious in encouraging religion but without its political dimension. So we see in the last few years the phenomenon of the reawakening of Islam. This awakening shows itself in an increasingly flourishing religious life, supported by the government: Many mosques are being built with aid from the foundation Amal Bakti Muslim Pancasila; Muslim institutions of education, like ‘pesantrens’, are growing; there has also been the assignment of 1000 teachers to isolated areas; and the organization of the Istiqlal Festival.

This shift in consciousness is supported also by developments in the educational field within Islam itself. According to Nurcholis Madjid, before 1950 the average graduate from Koranic schools (Santri) was illiterate since he could not manage the Latin alphabet. The education of these people started about that time with the result that in the early 70s there was a great explosion in the number of Muslim graduates. This situation, which gave rise to great optimism, continued developing in the following decades.

As a consequence of this educational development, religious santris became better equipped to identify themselves with modern Indonesian society. Following on the continuous increase of bureaucratic bodies, they inevitably became absorbed by them. Consequently, in the time of the New Order, these non-political and non-ideological strata of santris greatly increased in numbers in all sectors of the government. Slowly they

8. See: Nasir Tamara, *Sejarah Politik Islam Orde Baru*, Prism a Mei 5, 1988, p.56.

9. See: Abdurrahman Wahid, *Massa Islam dalam Kehidupan Bernegara dan Berbangsa*, Prism a No. Ekstra 1984, p.3-9.

penetrated into strategic positions within the civil government. Fachry Ali believes that it was precisely this process which called for the setting up of the ICMI. It was encouraged by the government.<sup>10</sup>

Besides that, the open door policy, which initially had been directed to economic development, had an indirect influence on the cultural and intellectual climate. Many santris, especially those who had an opportunity to study in western countries, interacted with the intellectuals there. On their return to their own country, this interaction obviously had great influence on the thinking of Islam in Indonesia. As a result many critical reflections on the development of Islam in Indonesia appeared.

Fachry Ali mentions some important points resulting from this development.” First, they obtained a western intellectual perspective which gave them the means of systematically re-evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of Islam in Indonesia. They became conscious of the fact that the lagging behind of Muslims was rather a natural backwardness due to a particular historic process. Hence the effort to raise the standards of Muslims was not confined to the political struggle only, but also extended to educational, economic and socio-cultural fields. Secondly, following the awareness of a more extended struggle, it was realized that the mastery of technical skill was something urgent for the individual. So religious leaders, who formerly had their foothold in ideological and political skills, were pushed aside and were soon succeeded by intellectual leaders and technocratic-bureaucratic, non-ideological Muslims. Thirdly, the intellectual perspective of the West also increased the self-confidence of the santris, especially when confronted with non-santri groups. Hence, there occurred a steady flow of educated santris into government bodies, academic institutes and various other social-cultural organizations which formerly has been the privilege of non-santri groups.

All above mentioned developments led many Muslims to feel that the relationship between Islam and government had become very friendly. Moreover, they saw that the government was willing to give more heed to their wishes as a majority group by passing laws on National Education, Religious Courts, and the Joint Declaration on Zakat in the year 1989. The government also supported the setting up of the Muamalat Bank, a bank run on Islamic principles (no interest). Finally, a high point was reached when President Suharto went on pilgrimage to Mecca. Many Islam leaders

10. See: Fachry Ali, 1991, op. cit., p. 94-95

11. idem, p 95-96

felt relieved; they quickly proposed him as the candidate to lead the country in the future.<sup>12</sup>

We have seen already that the more intimate relationship between Islam and Government took place when Islam had freed itself from its political incarceration. The weakening of the concept 'Islamic State', which was contended in former times by practical political means, was first of all caused by the structural changes put forward by the New Order. This is particularly observable in the process of de-ideologization and de-politization of the masses carried out in the name of a strategy of economic development. Although these structural changes disappointed the political leaders of Islam at the beginning of the New Order, they later came to see them as being to their advantage as they accommodated to the non-political aspirations in Islam.

New thinkers among the Muslim got the feeling that the New Order gave Islam more room than ever before in playing non-political roles. Nowadays, Islamic circles feel that this accommodation could very well be the materialization of the former political ideals, achieved in the end without an ideological fight. But then we may ask: Is it true that this development really benefits the Indonesian people, the majority of whom embrace the Islam religion; or is this only being felt by the elite? We will now go deeper into this critical question.

#### INTIMACY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND GOVERNMENT: A CRITICAL REFLECTION.

It is proper to question critically the intimacy of relationship between Islam and Government within the context of establishing a state structure by the New Order in which the hegemony of State vis-a-vis civil society has been made strong. In this situation, the civil society has become very dependent of the state. The Indonesian civil society has always been in a position of subordination, especially the lower social strata, where the majority of the population are found.

This subordination was experienced in forms like economic disparity, social injustice, and political inertia. In such situations, the need for civil society to take on a greater political role becomes a pressing challenge for the future of the Indonesian people. This need will also be felt in process of democratization. This process does not merely mean an increased institutionalization of politics, but, more important, opportunities for participation at grass-roots level.

12. Opinions from heads of different Muslim groups about this matter can be read in "Laporan Utama", *Tempo* No. 19, July 5, 1991, p. 25-35.

This critical reflection on the intimacy of the relationship between Islam and government must start from the state structure as built by the New Order. The critical question to be asked in evaluating the phenomenon of Islam as freed from its political incarceration is whether it strengthens civil society as a whole, or the hegemony of State only? To be considered are the flourishing of Islamic religious life, the infiltration of santris in the bureaucracy and the establishment of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (IGMI) and so on, which are often mentioned among the factors which awoke the optimism of the leaders.

The flourishing of religious life—which leaders often call the reawakening of Islam in Indonesia—is something we can easily understand in the context of the State in the New Order; that is to say, as an effort to divert the attention of Muslims to non-political affairs. The non-Islamic groups are in full support since it would mean the demolition of the frightening concept of an Islamic State. However, it appears that its consequence is more far-reaching; namely, the de-politization of the people to an extreme degree. In the New Order State, civil society has become very dependent on the State and can no longer express its own interests.

According to O'Donnel, in the State of the New Order, the hegemony of the State is particularly strengthened by bureaucratic and technocratic networks and apparatus designed to mobilize civil society. Political participation of the masses is limited to the context of accelerating economic development.”

The main focus of civil bureaucracy is on managing various aspects of the social and political process, including the gaining of votes. This tendency towards an exaggerated bureaucracy in present Indonesian civil society is, according to M.A.S. Hikam, nothing other than the logical consequence of implementing this kind of strategy.

Based on this analysis, the optimism in Islamic circles about the entering of educated santris into government positions since the 70's should be questioned, especially if it is the case that their penetration only strengthens the hegemony of the State which is already too strong. Various Islamic symbols are being introduced into the bureaucracy and the state also seems to support these efforts. There is, for instance, a tendency to set up Koranic prayer groups, or to celebrate together the end of fasting in the evening; but do these symbolic activities really contribute towards the strengthening of civil society? Just as the technocrats who entered the bureaucracy ended up as being extensions of the State, so and in the same way, the santris will cast

13. M.A.S. Hikam, 1991, op. cit., p.81.

their lot in with the government.

Dwight Y. King says that the New Order tries to keep up a limited pluralism in civil society by use of the corporate state model. State Corporatism means that organizational networks are established in society which are then monitored and controlled so that they become supportive state organs, fully dependent on the State. The purpose of the New Order is to avoid social unbalance connected with modernization by the early identification of new social forces and the weakening their revolutionary potential.<sup>14</sup> Within this analysis the erection of ICMI, much supported by the State, should be suspected as being one of the State Corporates under the auspices of the State, because, as King states, the New Order does the same thing by erecting semi-official associations like the Indonesian Labour Union (SPSI) for workers, or the Peasants Union (HKTI) for middle class peasants.

All this shows that the flourishing of religious life, the infiltration of santris in government positions, and the setting up of ICMI actually strengthen the hegemony of the State. If so, what in truth can be effected by Islam as the religion of the majority for the growth of Indonesian society?

#### ISLAM AND THE GROWTH OF CIVIL SOCIETY

According to M.A.S. Hikam, a religious movement which is connected with the ruling power-group will become either a reactionary or a reformatory social movement.<sup>15</sup> It will become reactionary when it fails to understand the fundamental social and political problems in civil society, or when religion develops to such an extent that it claims the truth exclusively for itself. Within such religious movements we may expect the emergence either of monolithic discourse, or an authoritarian power structure. The temptation will arise of becoming an elitist and exclusive movement which fails to appreciate other movements based on different structures of meaning. Fundamentalism is one example of such a reactionary movement.

A religious movement can also become a reformatory social movement if it is capable of articulating the fundamental social-political process and give an answer to the existing social and political problems. Such a

14. See: M. Kaisiepo, M., "Dan Kepolitikan Birokratik ke Korporatisme Negara" dalam *Jurnal Ilmu Politik* 2, p.31.

15. See. M.A.S. Hikam, 1991, op. cit., p.84.

movement must offer a precise alternative to society at large and not just to its own community. Then the movement will be authentic and capable of developing a civil society without being dominated by the State.

The political Islamic movement of the past, while fighting for the concept of an Islamic State, may be categorized as a reactionary movement because, as we have seen, the concept tends to monopolize any claim of truth and fails to accept other interpretations stemming from different structures of meaning. This is frightening for other non-Islamic groups.

On the one hand, the role of Islam as a social, reformatory movement, able to offer a precise alternative to society at large and not only to its own community, is something very much expected by the Indonesian people. Such a role would well suit Islam as it is the religion of the majority in the country. Religion is still very much alive in civil society, especially among those at the grass-roots level. Muslim leaders and intellectuals should direct their activities to defend the political interests of the lower classes in society so as to become a more significant influence.

As has been said before, in a condition of strong hegemony of the State, civil society in Indonesia urgently needs, for the immediate future, a struggle to create a more open political climate. It comprises struggle to acquire openness towards political discourse among the existing social forces and the exercise of control over the state by society.

Islam in Indonesia can make a contribution to such a process. It can offer an alternative to the process of modernization by giving an interpretation of social phenomena and by criticizing the negative impact of modernity. Political discourse in society can be strengthened by it and enriched through its way of understanding different concepts, and its interpretation of issues such as social justice, political rights, ethics of work, equality, and so on. Up to the present these areas have been the domain of the state and discussed by the ruling technocratic elite. Moreover, being a structure of meaning, Islam has the ability to empower oppressed society to stand up against their oppressors.

This might be an essential element in the effort to express and demand their interests. By religious values and solidarity, it would be made possible for them to develop their own understanding with regard to social justice, equality, political rights and so on. On the one hand, these values will become their knowledge in managing their daily experiences, while on the other hand, solidarity will become the road by which the meaning of social action is manifested.

For instance, Muslims can encourage the lower strata of society to become more politically minded and more self-confident in matters political. They could also help the lower classes to tackle their own problems by themselves through education, programs of self-reliance, and other practical training. The role of the LSM (Social Self-Reliant Institutes), based on religion, could become an instrument in smoothing the running of such pragmatic programs.

#### CONCLUSION

We have followed the process by which, at the time of the New Order, Islam freed itself from its political incarceration and now enjoys a better relationship with the government. Islamic leaders in former times paid most of their attention to the concept of an Islamic State in Indonesia. Disconnecting Islam from politics was first of all due to structural changes launched by the New Order, especially the de-ideologization and de-politization of the people in the name of a strategy of economic development. Although in the beginning this structural change disappointed the political leaders of Islam, yet they later realized that it was to their advantage since the non-political ideals of Islam could now be better accommodated. The fading away of the concept of an Islamic State during the New Order era brought great relief to the non-Islamic groups. However, at the same time, the de-politization weakened civil society vis-a-vis government. Now it is hoped that Islam will not simply abandon any political involvement, but will renew its political efforts through a reformatory movement. That can be done by empowering oppressed groups of society in order to stand up against their oppressors.