

## 8 Traditionalist and Islamist Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia

**Martin van Bruinessen**

Like the madrasas in India and Pakistan, the Indonesian *pesantrens* – religious boarding schools, the local variant of the madrasa – have in recent years drawn some unfriendly attention due to suspicions of their involvement in radical and possibly terrorist activities. The Indonesian authorities did not appear to share those suspicions, certainly not concerning the *pesantren* in general, but those of the Philippines, Singapore, Australia and the US, as well as numerous international journalists have shown grave concern. This was mostly due to the fact that some highly visible terrorism suspects share a connection with one particular *pesantren* in Central Java, the PP (Pondok Pesantren) Al-Mukmin in Ngruki near Solo or with one of a small number of offshoots from this school.<sup>1</sup> Ustad Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who was one of the founders of this *pesantren* in the early 1960s, returned in 1999, after having spent fourteen years in Malaysian exile. He has been accused of being the spiritual leader of an underground movement known as Jama'ah Islamiyah, which is believed to be active throughout Muslim South-east Asia and to have carried out a large number of terrorist acts in this region. Several of the perpetrators of the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002, which killed some two hundred people, were associated with a small *pesantren* in East Java where Ngruki graduates gave lessons; all of them held Ba'asyir in high regard as the most learned and disinterested of the ulama.

The links that this particular *pesantren* had to terrorist acts appeared, upon closer inspection, to be more tenuous than had been originally claimed. Furthermore, nothing could be more misleading than to extrapolate from 'Ngruki' to other Indonesian *pesantrens*. The PP Al-Mukmin and the

handful of secondary *pesantrens* that it has spawned were established with the express purpose of constituting an alternative to the existing 'traditional' *pesantrens*; its founders were Muslim reformists highly critical of the *pesantren* tradition. The curriculum and the general culture of this *pesantren* make it stand out from the vast majority of *pesantrens* in Java and, for that matter, Southeast Asia as a whole. The *pesantrens* of Java and similar institutions (*surau*, *pondok*) in other parts of Southeast Asia are the centres of rural religious life; they tend to be tradition-oriented and socially conservative, the mainstays of beliefs and practices against which reformists have turned their most fervent efforts. Besides the *pesantren* at Ngruki, there have been a few other attempts to establish alternative types of *pesantren*. Some of these were associated with the reformist movements in Islamic Indonesia, such as Persis and Muhammadiyah; others with various Islamist currents from the past three decades or, most recently, the Saudi-inspired Salafi movement. In general, however, the reformist movements have been associated with 'modern' school types with a heavy emphasis on general, non-religious subjects, oriented towards secular professional careers.

In the first decades of Indonesia's independence, mainstream Islam was conventionally represented as consisting of a 'modernist' and a 'traditionalist' stream, with the associations Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama as their major organisational vehicles.<sup>2</sup> 'Modernists' were typically urban and (lower) middle class and sent their children to a modern school; 'traditionalists' were largely rural (or urban lower class) and sent their children to a *pesantren*, where they learned some Arabic and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) but little or nothing about more general subjects. Muhammadiyah, established in 1912, focused most of its energies on education and welfare, establishing hospitals and modern schools, both modelled on Christian missionary examples. In matters of religious belief and practice it was reformist and fiercely opposed to 'syncretistic' practices such as those surrounding death and the visiting of graves and all other practises for which no precedent could be found in the Qur'an and *hadith*. The Nahdlatul Ulama association (NU) was established in 1926 specifically to protect the institutions and practices that were criticised by the reformists and then actually threatened by the then recent Saudi conquest of Mecca and Medina, the centres of traditional learning.<sup>3</sup> The NU was an association of *kyais* (*pesantren*-based ulama) with a mass following, which after Independence became a political party. In the 1950s, most of its active members only had a *pesantren* educa-

tion, which at the time did not include many general subjects, so that the party had great difficulty finding qualified personnel to fill positions in the government and bureaucracy to which it was entitled on the basis of its numerical strength. The Ministry of Religious Affairs thus became its only fief in the newly independent Republic of Indonesia.

Between them, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama can lay claim to the loyalties of about half the Indonesian population. In a recent nationwide survey, 42% of the respondents indicated that they felt more or less represented by the NU, 12% by Muhammadiyah.<sup>4</sup> The way the questions were framed suggests, however, that those who identified with the NU did not mean so much the organisation itself as the religious attitudes it is associated with, including an openness to local traditions (and even syncretism), flexibility and tolerance, as opposed to the more principled and puritan, if not fundamentalist, attitudes associated with Muhammadiyah. In the NU's organisation itself, the *pesantren* remains the major institutional prop, and the *ulama* of major *pesantrens* remain the chief authorities.

### *The Traditional Pesantren: Origins and History*

Dutch colonial scholars have wanted to see in the *pesantren* the continuation of pre-Islamic institutions: forest hermitages, *mandala* communities, or centres of transmission of Hindu and Buddhist scriptural knowledge. Although it is not impossible that certain families and certain locales may represent such a continuity, and although there is an obvious similarity in function – some *pesantrens* are more than just centres of scriptural transmission and are actually centres of spiritual and mystical exercises or supernatural healing besides – the *pesantren* tradition as found in twentieth-century Indonesia is of much more recent origin.

Islam began to spread among the indigenous population of Java in the fifteenth century. The earliest mention of a Muslim religious school thus far is in a Dutch East Indies Company document of 1718, that is based on hearsay and refers to the establishment of a 'training school for religious' near Surabaya.<sup>5</sup> The oldest *pesantren* still in existence was established in the late eighteenth century in the village of Tegalsari near Ponorogo in East Java.<sup>6</sup> A survey of indigenous education by Dutch authorities in 1819 found few institutions that we would recognise today as *pesantrens*. Basic religious

education was given informally in the mosque or in the private home of someone who was slightly more learned than the people in his surroundings. Some of the more advanced students, the report states, were sent to schools in the Madiun-Ponorogo region (where the said Tegalsari *pesantren* was located). In an 1831 survey, simple Islamic schools are mentioned in the coastal districts of Cirebon, Semarang and Surabaya but there were very few inland. Java appears not yet dotted with *pesantrens* at the time of these surveys, which is quite unlike the situation a century later.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the prestigious old *pesantrens* that still exist do not date further back than the late nineteenth century, and many not even that far.<sup>8</sup> Their founders were usually men who had spent years studying in Mecca or Cairo. Rather than imitating Hindu and Buddhist precursors, these late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century *pesantrens* appeared to be modelled on institutions with which their founders had become familiar during their studies in Arabia: the study circles (*halqa*) in the Great Mosque of Mecca (the Masjid al-Haram), Cairo's Azhar, which had a dormitory assigned to South-east Asian students (the *riwaq al-Jawa*), and especially the slightly modernised madrasas in Mecca at the time. The most prominent of the latter was the Madrasa Sawlatiyya, which was established by Indian Muslims in 1874 and which also attracted many Indonesian students. In 1934, following an incident in which their national pride was impaired, the Indonesians abandoned this madrasa and founded their own school, Dar al-'Ulum al-Diniyya, which exists to this very day and has been a major centre of orientation for the Indonesian traditional *ulama*.

Some of the founders of the early *pesantrens* may have belonged to families that already enjoyed some religious prestige; others were bright young men who could make the voyage to Mecca due to patronage; others again supported themselves by engaging in trade. By the mid-twentieth century, and perhaps even earlier, we find the *pesantren*-based *ulama* or *kyais* consolidated into a caste-like rural elite, among whom descent is as important as learning. A *kyai*'s sons shared their father's prestige irrespective of learning; and a bright and learned young man of low descent could only join their ranks by marrying an established *kyai*'s daughter.

The teaching methods in Indonesian *pesantrens* followed those of Mecca and Cairo, and educational reforms in these centres (classrooms, a grading system, changes in curriculum) gradually spread from there to the Indonesian *pesantrens*. The curriculum in Indonesia was very similar to that of

other regions where the Shafi'i school is followed: a few basic compendia of Ash'ari doctrine and the major handbooks of Shafi'i *fiqh* were the dominant texts. *Hadith* collections, which are very important to Muslim reformists, until recently hardly figured in the *pesantren* curriculum. When *hadith* were studied at all, it was in the form of such collections as Nawawi's 'Forty Hadith' (*Arba'in*) or his *Riyad al-salihin*, which legitimised popular devotional beliefs and practices the reformists frowned upon. The *pesantren* tradition held devotional practices associated with the veneration of the Prophet and the visiting of graves in high esteem, and many of its teachers were involved in Sufi orders and Islamic healing. The reformist call for a return to the Qur'an and *hadith* (to replace the uncritical following of classical *fiqh* texts) was strongly rejected by the *pesantren* world, but it did have the effect that in the course of the twentieth century the canonical *hadith* collections of Bukhari and Muslim and an increasing range of Qur'anic commentaries became incorporated into the curriculum of many *pesantrens*.<sup>9</sup>

An important aspect of the *pesantren* tradition is the emphasis on the oral transmission of knowledge, even of written texts. In the traditional didactic styles, that are still maintained in many *pesantrens*, the student studies a specific text with a specific teacher, and upon finishing this text may move on to another teacher, at another *pesantren*, to study another text. The student may sit with others in a circle (*halqa*) around the teacher, who reads the text aloud while students read along with him in their own copies of the book. The teacher stops from time to time to comment on a point of syntax or vocabulary, but he seldom if ever offers a critical interpretation or comments on the applicability of the text. In a more individual mode, the student may himself read passages of the text aloud while the teacher listens, questions, and comments on his reading. Both the teacher and the teachings he handed down were treated with great respect, which precluded a critical discussion. The student was aware of being connected to great masters of the past through the chains of oral transmission (*isnad*) of the texts he studied, just like any follower of a Sufi order had a spiritual genealogy (*silsila*) linking him through successive teachers to the order's founder and ultimately to the Prophet. Love and even veneration for the *ulama* of the past was and is an important part of the *pesantren* tradition. Where possible, one was expected to follow their example, especially in legal thought. Reformists criticised *taqlid*, the 'blind' following of the rulings of *ulama* of the past, and proclaimed the need for independent inter-

pretation, or *ijtihad*, instead.<sup>10</sup> For traditionalists, however, *fiqh* belongs to the essential core of Islam, and *fiqh* is impossible without *taqlid*, following the rulings of the great *ulama* of the past who had developed the Shafi'i *madhhab* or school of *fiqh*.

The debates between reformists and traditionalists, which were at times very heated, revolved around such issues as *taqlid*, rituals for the dead and the visiting of saints' graves, the recitation of devotional texts for 'magical' purposes, etc. Reformists also criticised *pesantren* education for its emphasis on rote learning without critical understanding and the study of post-classical scholastic texts rather than the original sources, Qur'an and *hadith*. Under the influence of such criticism and the demands of a changing labour market, most *pesantrens* introduced changes into their curriculum in the course of the twentieth century. Among the religious subjects, *hadith* and Qur'anic exegesis gradually took a more prominent place; many *pesantrens* added general subjects and organised the curriculum in school classes parallel with those of the public school system.

In Indonesia, the term *madrasa* (spelled as *madrasah* in Indonesian) is reserved for religious schools with classes and a standardised curriculum including mostly general subjects. Government-supervised *madrasas* with 30 percent religious subjects and 70 percent general subjects offer diplomas that give an opening to employment as a religious teacher as well as access to state institutes of higher religious studies (IAIN) and eventually an avenue to a modern career. Many *pesantrens* have adopted the *madrasa* system besides, or sometimes even instead of, more traditional modes of teaching, and have thus to some extent become part of the national education system (although not under the Ministry of Education but that of Religious Affairs).

Those *pesantrens* that maintained the 'traditional' curriculum and methods of teaching came to be known as 'Salafiyah', which may be translated as 'in the way of previous generations'. This term has recently given rise to confusion, when the Saudi-inspired Salafi movement came under suspicion of violent radicalism.<sup>11</sup> Both Salafiyah *pesantrens* and the Salafi movement name themselves after *al-salaf al-salih*, 'the pious predecessors'. But for the latter, these *salaf* are the first three generations of Muslims in the time of the Prophet and for the former the great *ulama* of an idealised, much more recent past. In terms of religious belief and practice, they represent opposite extremes within Indonesian Islam.

*Reformist Alternatives to the Traditional Pesantren*<sup>12</sup>

As remarked earlier, the major reformist association is the Muhammadiyah, which became best known for its modern schools, that offered a good general curriculum with relatively little time devoted to religious lessons. Students in these schools learned no Arabic. Muhammadiyah people spoke of returning to the Qur'an and *hadith* but most could only read them in translation – and their actual religious reading consisted almost exclusively of contemporary reformist writers. Muhammadiyah established a few *madrasas* to train its own religious teachers, but these remained rather unremarkable institutions.<sup>13</sup>

A more interesting effort to bridge the gap between the Muhammadiyah religious attitude and traditional *pesantren* education resulted in the 'modern *pesantren*' of Gontor in East Java, which was established in 1926. Gontor combined the study of classical texts with modern concepts of education and a reformist spirit; it became the example on which a range of other reformist-oriented schools later modelled themselves.<sup>14</sup> For inspiration, the founders of Gontor not only looked at the reformist trend in Egypt (the Dar al-'Ulum, where Abduh and Rashid Rida were active) but also at more modernist experiments in India, the Anglo-Muslim college of Aligarh and even Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education and his Santiniketan experiment. The didactic methods were those of the modern school, and students were obliged to communicate in either Arabic or English, in order to train them in active mastery of these languages. The religious teaching material continued to include some classical *fiqh* texts, notably Ibn Rushd's *Bi-dayat al-mujtahid*, which compares various legal schools. The *pesantren* of Gontor thus positioned itself ideologically between the NU and Muhammadiyah; some of its graduates became teachers in the NU *pesantrens*, others in Muhammadiyah schools. Several went on to establish their own *pesantrens* on the Gontor model, or to reform an existing one, with their Gontor experience guiding them. Since the 1960s, the school has developed close relations with the Saudi-based Muslim World League (Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami).

Other reformist associations also established religious schools that were to have a wider influence. Al Irsyad is a social and religious reform movement active among Indonesia's Hadrami community, that broke away from an earlier, more conservative Arab educational association, the Jamiat Khair

(al-Jam'iyya al-Khayriyya). Al Irsyad's madrasa in Jakarta, established in 1913, taught a curriculum of religious and general subjects exclusively in Arabic, for which it employed mostly teachers from the Arab Middle East. The school was oriented towards Egyptian reformism; instead of classical *fiqh* texts it placed emphasis on the Qur'an and *hadith*, *usul al-fiqh*, and the works of Abduh and other modern authors. The general subjects (at the secondary school level) included mathematics, Arab history and modern European history.<sup>15</sup> Many graduates of this madrasa spread the reformist message as teachers and preachers beyond Hadrami circles in Indonesia.

Persatuan Islam ('Islamic Union') or Persis, established in Bandung in 1923, was by far the most puritan of Indonesia's reform movements and it developed a religious attitude close to that of Saudi Salafism, although not under any noticeable direct influence from Arabia. Unlike Muhammadiyah, it had little interest in welfare work and it concentrated its efforts on 'correcting' religious belief and practice. The fatwas of its founder, A. Hassan, which referred exclusively to the Qur'an and *hadith* but reflected a rational spirit, found eager readers among reformist-minded Muslims outside Persis as well. Persis ran a well-known school in Bandung, not unlike Muhammadiyah schools but with a stronger emphasis on Qur'an and *hadith* in the religious classes. Towards the end of the colonial period, A. Hassan moved to Bangil in East Java, where he established a *pesantren* (of secondary school level) that was to teach only religious subjects. For a long time, this was the only *pesantren* in Indonesia that was deliberately non-*madhhab* and focused very strongly on the study of *hadith*.<sup>16</sup> This *pesantren* became an important training centre for religious teachers of a strict, puritan stripe.

### *Independence Movement, Jihad, and Darul Islam*

Both the reformists and the traditionalists had generally adopted accommodating attitudes towards the Dutch colonial authorities. The Japanese occupation during World War II constituted an important break. The Japanese carried out a programme of politicising and indoctrinating the Indonesian *ulama*, and they created an umbrella organisation in which all Muslim associations were represented.<sup>17</sup> Within days after the Japanese surrender in August 1945, Indonesian nationalist leaders declared independence; when the first Allied troops landed to take control of the country on behalf of the



former colonial authorities, they were not welcomed. The highest *ulama* of the NU declared that in the current situation *jihād* was called for, because non-Muslim forces were attempting to occupy independent Muslim territory. *Ulama* of other associations, throughout the country, followed suit with similar declarations of *jihād*. In the following struggle for independence, youth of *pesantren* background, organised in militias called Hizbullah and Sabilillah, played a prominent part.

After four years of intermittent fighting, a split occurred among the Muslim supporters of the independence movement when the nationalist leadership, in negotiations with the Dutch, accepted a temporary military withdrawal from strategically important West Java. The Muslim guerrilla units that refused to withdraw set up their own rudimentary government under the name of Darul Islam. After independence, the Darul Islam refused to recognise the secular republican government in Jakarta, and for more than a decade it continued to control mountainous parts of West Java and to successfully resist all efforts to subdue it. Insurgent movements in Aceh and South Sulawesi joined it.<sup>18</sup> The Darul Islam movement, which also called itself the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII), had a *shari'a* court as its major non-military institution. The political leaders were reformist Muslims, but especially in West Java, it was mostly traditionalist *pesantrens* that provided the movement with its fighting power. In the early 1960s, the movement was finally vanquished and the leaders surrendered or were killed. Decades later, it would become evident that the Darul Islam had continued as an underground movement, maintaining the old network of supporters and recruiting new members.

Initially, the West Javanese Darul Islam appears to have enjoyed quite widespread support, but after the Republican government had won independence, most of the *pesantrens* in the region opted for good relations with this government. The Japanese-created Muslim umbrella organisation, Masyumi, was integrated into the Republic as a major political party. In 1952, the NU broke away from Masyumi to become a separate political party, so that Masyumi became largely (though not exclusively) a Muslim reformist party. In both parties there were individuals who were close to the Darul Islam, but both supported the government's efforts to subdue it.

### *Integration into the National Education System*

Many *pesantrens* nowadays teach a government-approved curriculum consisting of 70% general subjects and 30% religious subjects and are similar to the government-run religious schools known as *madrasa*; they can give their graduates the same *madrasa* diplomas. Insofar as they also offer more intensive religious teaching, this is done at the secondary or higher levels, to students who already have a school diploma. What distinguishes a *pesantren* from a *madrasa* in the state system is that it is a private enterprise, usually with dormitories where a considerable proportion of the students live, and that education in a *pesantren* usually includes more traditional teaching of classical texts in addition to the state *madrasa* curriculum. Moreover, most *pesantrens* concentrate on students of secondary and higher levels. A *madrasah ibtida'iyah* is like a primary school; *madrasah tsanawiyah* and *'aliyah* correspond with lower and higher secondary. Some *pesantrens* offer higher levels that may be called *mu'allimin*, i.e., 'teacher training', or *ma'had 'ali*, a name that suggests university level.

A *madrasa* diploma does not give access to a proper university, but after Indonesia's independence, one Institute for Higher Islamic Studies was established that was accessible to *madrasa* graduates. Since the 1960s, the number of such institutes, then called State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) has rapidly increased; there is now one in each provincial capital. As a result of the *madrasa* curriculum and the opportunities provided by the IAINs, most *pesantrens* have become integrated into the national educational system and have to a considerable extent been brought under government control. For a significant part of the population this development opened up a channel for social mobility. *Pesantren* education was cheaper than education in secular schools, whether private or state, and for certain families an education in a religious school was culturally more acceptable than one in a non-religious environment. Numerous IAIN graduates found employment as religious teachers or in clerical positions or other jobs in the vast bureaucracy of the Department of Religious Affairs (which oversees all religious education, administers marriages, runs religious courts, organises the pilgrimage, and administers the collection and distribution of *zakat*). Increasing numbers of successful IAIN graduates have moreover been able to move on to a general university for postgraduate studies (mostly in the hu-

manities or social sciences) and have embarked upon careers outside the religious sphere.

### *Involvement in Community Development and New Discourses*

Some *pesantrens* deliberately refused to adopt the standard *madrasa* curriculum, for a number of different reasons. Some preferred to offer a solid religious curriculum, reading more and more difficult texts than was possible in the standard curriculum – or different religious texts altogether (non-*madhhab* or Salafi texts). Others did not wish their graduates to become civil servants and preferred to teach them more practical knowledge. In the 1970s and 1980s, several *pesantrens* experimented with teaching agricultural or technical skills besides religious subjects. This approach had been pioneered by the ‘agriculture *pesantren*’ Darul Fallah in Bogor, which was established as early as 1960 by local Masyumi activists, but was soon closed down because its leaders were jailed along with other Masyumi politicians. It reopened in 1967. The curriculum consisted of practical agricultural skills, new technologies, relevant theoretical subjects, and the economic skills needed for small rural enterprises, besides 25% religious subjects. The well-connected leadership of this school found various Western aid agencies interested in supporting this experiment; students came from all over Indonesia, perhaps because of the school’s association with respected Masyumi leaders.<sup>19</sup>

The most famous of the *pesantrens* that experimented with rural and community development was that of Pabelan near Yogyakarta, which belonged to the Gontor ‘family.’ The *kyai* of this *pesantren* insisted on teaching the students self-reliance and refused to give his graduates diplomas in order to prevent them from becoming just civil servants. (Nonetheless, several Pabelan graduates were to have successful academic careers.) Pabelan taught a solid curriculum in Islamic subjects, with a strong emphasis on active command of Arabic, and complemented this with practical training in technical and agricultural skills that could be useful when the students returned to their village.<sup>20</sup> The well-known writer V.S. Naipaul, who visited Pabelan on his ‘Islamic journey’ in 1980, caustically asked what use it was to teach village boys to become village boys,<sup>21</sup> but other visitors, such as Ivan Illich, were much more upbeat about this ‘alternative’ type of education.

Many Indonesian social activists believed that it was precisely this type of education that was needed to bring genuine development to the country and not just economic growth that failed to empower the poor.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, co-operation developed between development-oriented NGO activists and a number of *pesantrens*, including Pabelan, whose leading teachers evinced a definite social commitment and the belief in development from below. The inspiration for this co-operation came again from Indian self-reliance movements, from the experiments of Paulo Freire with teaching the Brazilian poor through 'conscientisation', and from the radical critique of established education by thinkers like Ivan Illich. It was, obviously, highly educated activists with international connections who first picked up these ideas, but their choice of the *pesantren* as the focus of their activities made good sense. In Suharto's New Order Indonesia, the government pursued a policy of depoliticisation of the rural population (as well as the poor urban population) and made it illegal for political parties and all sorts of associations to set up branches and have public activities in the countryside. District towns constituted the lowest local level where activities were permitted; reaching out to the rural population was therefore practically impossible for them. *Pesantrens* were virtually the only non-state institutions actually functioning at the grassroots level, which made them appealing to activists who believed in bottom-up development besides or instead of the government's top-down policies.

It was at LP3ES, a development NGO founded by former student activists of reformist Muslim and socialist backgrounds, that the idea of reaching out to the grassroots via the *pesantren* and turning this traditional institution into a vehicle for rural development and empowerment of the poor was first conceived.<sup>22</sup> In order to identify appropriate *pesantrens* and gain access, some people of NU background were recruited to co-ordinate LP3ES's *pesantren* program. Socially committed students of the Bandung Institute of Technology, who were barred from direct political involvement due to new legislation following a wave of student protest in 1978, joined the effort, with various initiatives to bring appropriate technology to the rural poor through the *pesantren*. Western aid agencies – first the German Liberal Party's Friedrich Naumann Foundation, later various other agencies – supported these efforts financially and with expertise.<sup>23</sup> People of *pesantren* background were recruited as mediators, and gradually a group of experi-

enced activists emerged within the conservative NU that acted as an increasingly effective lobby for a reorientation of this organisation.

In 1984, an important NU congress decided that 'social activities', meaning relief and development work, would be one of the organisation's top priorities, and it established several affiliated NGOs that were to engage in these activities.<sup>24</sup> The following two decades saw a dramatic increase in NGO activity in and around the *pesantrens*, which at least provided a considerable number of *pesantren* graduates with employment and training in various practical skills. Many *pesantrens* that had been isolated and self-contained were opened up to the outside world through these activities, broadening the worldviews of both teachers and students. It is harder to assess the impact of these activities on the welfare of the poor rural population, however, and opinions on the economic success of the programs are divided.<sup>25</sup>

The integration of the *pesantren* into the national education system also had another interesting consequence: the emergence of a dynamic and rapidly growing circle of young Muslim intellectuals of *pesantren* background, who, while studying at IAINs, were exposed to a range of other intellectual influences that included social science, philosophy, theology of liberation and Marxism. Partly overlapping with the environment of NGO activists, this diffuse group of young people, sometimes dubbed the 'progressive traditionalists', were one of the most surprising and interesting phenomena of the late 1980s and 1990s.<sup>26</sup>

### *Islam Against the New Order*

The developments sketched so far took place in the most visible part of the religious spectrum, among groups and prominent individuals who were acceptable into the New Order government and who themselves agreed in principle, even if critically, with its policies. There were other circles that had a more antagonistic relationship with the regime and resented its policies of social and religious engineering. Two broad groups stand out. One consisted of the most outspoken leaders of the former Masyumi party, who were reformist Muslims with a religious orientation and a liberal democratic political style. The party had clashed with Sukarno over the president's authoritarian style and its leaders had taken part in an American-

supported regional rebellion in the late 1950s, after which the party was dissolved. Suharto never allowed the party to resurface and mistrusted its most prominent leaders, the best known of whom was Mohammad Natsir. Natsir and friends established an association for *da'wa* (religious propagation), the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII), with the intention of changing society and the state by changing individual people's attitudes, transforming them into better Muslims.

The other group, which was even less visible, consisted of an underground network of Islamic activists who strove to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state. The network consisted of the remnants of the Darul Islam movement, which had from 1949 until 1962 been in control of parts of West Java, South Sulawesi and Aceh and as the 'Islamic State and Army of Indonesia' (NII/TII) challenged the Republican government. At the grassroots level, there had always been close relationships between the Masyumi following and that of Darul Islam, but the leadership of both had always been antagonistic to one another. Masyumi considered the Republic as legitimate and Natsir once served as a prime minister; the Darul Islam resented Masyumi's political support for the military operations aiming to destroy it.

The Darul Islam was a home-grown movement and never had international contacts worth mentioning. Masyumi had been more internationally oriented, and the DDII developed especially close contacts with the Arabian Peninsula. It became the preferred Indonesian partner of the Saudi-sponsored Muslim World League (Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islamiyya), of which Mohammad Natsir was a founding member and long-time vice-president. The DDII was the intermediary through which the ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (many of whose activists had taken refuge in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states) first reached Indonesia. It published several seminal texts in translation and was instrumental in introducing Brotherhood-style mobilisation and moral training on university campuses.<sup>27</sup> The DDII has fallen increasingly under Salafi ('Wahhabi') influence since the 1980s.<sup>28</sup>

The *pesantren* at Gontor was ideologically close to the DDII. Like the Dewan itself, it developed increasingly close relations with the Muslim World League, which may have contributed to an increasingly more 'puritan' attitude than in other *pesantrens*. It appears however that the DDII leadership was disappointed with Gontor because it produced alumni who adopted much more liberal religious views and politically accommodating attitudes than what the DDII had hoped for – Nurcholish Madjid, who in

1970 called for secularisation and opposed the idea of Islamic parties, being the most prominent example.<sup>29</sup>

The DDII maintained close relations with the ‘agricultural *pesantren*’ Darul Fallah in Bogor, whose leading *kyai*, Sholeh Iskandar, had always been a loyal Masyumi supporter and a man of moderate views who was much loved and respected by the population of the region. Like many other West Javanese *kyais*, Sholeh Iskandar had chosen to remain in Masyumi when the Nahdlatul Ulama organisation, with all the Central and East Javanese *kyais*, broke away from it to establish an independent party. In 1972, Sholeh Iskandar and a handful of other prominent West Javanese *kyais* who were Masyumi loyalists joined forces to establish an association of *pesantrens*, BKSPP (Badan Kerjasama Pondok *Pesantren*, ‘Association for Co-operation between *Pesantrens*’), with which numerous *pesantrens* in West Java were to affiliate themselves. Most members of BKSPP were traditionalists in religious matters but had been active in Masyumi before it was banned, and the organisation was generally perceived as a Masyumi front organisation. Under Sholeh Iskandar’s chairmanship, the BKSPP made efforts to modernise the management and didactic methods of its member *pesantrens* and to introduce useful modern subjects into the curriculum. Since his death (1992), the organisation has gradually drifted towards more puritan religious views and drawn attention with its anti-liberal pronouncements.<sup>30</sup>

The DDII also played an active role in the establishment of a few *pesantrens* that differed emphatically from the traditionalist institutions in their emphasis on reformist or Salafi religious thought. One of these was the *pesantren* Ulil Albab in Bogor (established in 1987), which catered especially to the students at that city’s agricultural university and had the ambition of producing exemplary Muslim intellectuals. An earlier DDII initiative that targeted a less sophisticated public was established in the Central Javanese city of Solo, a bulwark of Javanese syncretism. The latter *pesantren*, Al-Mukmin, became better known by the name of the village on the edge of Solo to which it moved after some time, Ngruki.

### *The Pesantren of Ngruki*

The *pesantren* Al-Mukmin (al-Mu’min) was established in 1972 by the chairman of the Central Java branch of the DDII, Abdullah Sungkar.<sup>31</sup> Among the

co-founders was a Gontor graduate named Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who was to remain Sungkar's closest collaborator for the next quarter century and his successor upon his death in 1999. Al-Mukmin aimed to combine the best aspects of two models, Gontor for the teaching of Arabic, and the *pesantren* of Persis in Bangil for the teaching of *shari'a*. Classical *fiqh*, the core of the traditional *pesantren* curriculum and also a major part of that at Gontor, was replaced by Qur'an and *hadith* studies in Ngruki as it had been in Bangil.<sup>32</sup> Sungkar, Ba'asyir and their colleagues were fiercely opposed to the Suharto regime, which they perceived as anti-Islamic, and they were strongly influenced by Muslim Brotherhood thought. This influence was to some extent reflected in the teaching of Islamic history and doctrine in the *pesantren*; the curriculum included some Salafi and Brotherhood-related materials.<sup>33</sup> The Brotherhood influence expressed itself mostly in ideological training and clandestine activism that they undertook in a network of contacts outside the *pesantren*.

Sungkar was an active member of a network of mosque-affiliated youth groups, the Badan Komunikasi Remaja Masjid (BKRM), in which some of the most radical preachers of those days were involved, many of them with Darul Islam contacts. In 1976, Sungkar and Ba'asyir joined the underground Darul Islam and became increasingly active in mobilising radicals outside the *pesantren*. Using the organisational model of the Egyptian Brotherhood, they set up an underground structure of cells (*usrah*), members of which were recruited among the most committed of radical mosque activists but also among ordinary neighbourhood toughs and petty criminals.<sup>34</sup> This underground organisation was also loosely referred to as 'Jama'ah Islamiyah', a name that was later to gain a certain notoriety. The relationship with the *pesantren* was a loose one; some of the more serious students at Ngruki were also recruited into the *usrah* movement, and some alumni played a part in extending the *usrah* network into other regions.

Sungkar and Ba'asyir openly opposed the state ideology of Pancasila and at the time of the 1977 elections they called for a boycott because the only good Muslim candidates (i.e., the former Masyumi politicians Natsir and Roem) were not allowed to participate. Arrested for their oppositional stand and their involvement in the Darul Islam movement, they spent four years in prison. After his release, Sungkar spent the next few years mostly in Jakarta, where he organised *usrah* groups that were part of the NII / Darul



Islam network. When in 1985 the police closed in on this network, he and Ba'asyir fled to Malaysia to avoid arrest.

It was around this time that Sungkar first sent a handful of followers to Pakistan in order to take part in the Afghan *jihad* and gain guerrilla experience. In the following years, a few hundred followers were to receive guerrilla training in Afghanistan and later, after the Afghan *jihad* was over, in the southern Philippines.<sup>35</sup> In the early 1990s, Sungkar and Ba'asyir broke with the Darul Islam leadership, partly because of personal rivalries and partly for religious reasons: their Salafi orientation and the mystical-magical practices in which the latter indulged were incompatible. The organisation that Sungkar consolidated under his own command became known as Jama'ah Islamiyah (JI) and, like the Darul Islam movement (DI), strove for the establishment of an Islamic state in Southeast Asia.

For most of the 15 years he spent in Malaysia, Ba'asyir lived a frugal life as an itinerant teacher and petty trader of medicinal herbs; in the 1990s, he established a modest *pesantren*, Luqmanul Hakiem, in Johor. By most accounts, Sungkar was always an activist and Ba'asyir the scholar and preacher (though one of radical convictions). Both returned to Indonesia after the fall of Suharto in 1998. Sungkar died in early 1999, and Ba'asyir succeeded him as the JI network's imam, although perhaps not in all respects as the leader. He returned to Ngruki and began teaching in the *pesantren* again. In August 2000, when various factions of the previous underground DI established a public association, the Majelis Mujahidin, Ba'asyir was selected as the *amir*, the political and religious leader of this organisation. Other DI factions declined joining the Majelis Mujahidin, preferring to remain underground. Ba'asyir's friends and associates have insisted that the terrorists who carried out the various violent actions attributed to the Jama'ah Islamiyah belonged to breakaway factions not under his command.<sup>36</sup>

Sungkar and Ba'asyir were both a source of pride and embarrassment for the *pesantren* at Ngruki. Their radical reputation was not good for the school's relations with local authorities and it inhibited the acquisition of students from outside the milieu that understood and supported the politics of these two teachers. Several of the teachers who stayed behind, however, shared their ideas, and the *pesantren* maintained contact with them over the years through visits by students and graduates. The ICG reports emphasise the centrality of Ngruki in the Jama'ah Islamiyah network, but many of the JI activists involved in violent acts, and in fact several of

Sungkar and Ba'asyir's oldest and most loyal associates, are not Ngruki alumni. There are indications that some JI activists were first recruited while studying in Ngruki, but it is not entirely clear what this recruitment meant.<sup>37</sup>

Compared to many other *pesantrens*, Al-Mukmin is poor and its teachers lead a precarious life, sometimes earning a little money on the side as preachers. Most of the students are from families that cannot afford high fees; the *pesantren* appears to have few prosperous supporters. Because of its radical reputation, few want to be seen financially supporting it. The *pesantren* carefully maintains its network of alumni, because it is through this network that new students are recruited. A few alumni have established, or joined, modest *pesantrens* themselves. There is a modest network of minor *pesantrens* that have a connection with Ngruki and appear to share its values and militant interpretation of Islam. One of these *pesantrens*, PP Al-Islam in Lamongan, East Java, acquired sudden notoriety because three of the Bali bombers were the brothers of the founder of this *pesantren*. One of the three, Mukhlas or Ali Gufron, was moreover a Ngruki graduate (unlike the brother who led the PP Al-Islam, in fact). However, it was probably more relevant that Mukhlas was also an Afghanistan veteran and had spent several years in Malaysia and taught in Ba'asyir's *pesantren* Luqmanul Hakiem alongside other Afghanistan veterans. The other two brothers had joined him in Malaysia as immigrant workers.

In an operation against a Jama'ah Islamiyah cell in Central Java, the police captured an interesting document that shows that this organisation was making efforts to establish contacts with *pesantrens* throughout the region for propaganda and recruitment purposes but had not been particularly successful. It is a long list of *pesantrens* and individual teachers of religion, with indications of their religious orientation and affiliation, number of followers, and whether or not JI had 'access' there in 1999 (i.e., before JI became associated with the subsequent wave of terrorist acts).<sup>38</sup> The contacts were mostly with individual teachers who did not have their own *pesantrens* or schools. *Pesantrens* affiliated with the NU or Muhammadiyah were mostly reported to be 'inaccessible'.

### *The Hidayatullah 'Network'*

The 2003 ICG report implicates a number of other *pesantrens* in the Jama'ah Islamiyah, notably the 'Hidayatullah network'. Suspected JI activists spent brief periods in the *pesantrens* of this network.<sup>39</sup> The *pesantren* Hidayatullah of Balikpapan in East Kalimantan is no doubt an interesting and remarkably successful institution. The mother *pesantren* was officially established in 1973 by Abdullah Said, a former DI activist and associate of the leader of the Darul Islam movement in South Sulawesi, Kahar Muzakkar. It teaches a puritan, reformist Islam with a strong emphasis on the Qur'an and *hadith*.

Hidayatullah was soon much more than just another *pesantren*; it organised a wide range of social welfare and economic activities among the people living around the *pesantren*.<sup>40</sup> Its alumni established a rapidly growing number of dependencies of the Hidayatullah *pesantren* in various parts of the Archipelago. More recently the Hidayatullah network has transformed itself into a formal nation-wide association, with branches in almost 200 districts all over the country. This network is closely associated with the Bugis diaspora – the Bugis are a seafaring ethnic group originating from South Sulawesi, and there are Bugis communities throughout the Archipelago. 'Daughter' *pesantrens* or branches have been established wherever there is a Bugis diaspora community, from Aceh to Papua. The network also appears to have connections with what remains of the South Sulawesi Darul Islam network, but this is perhaps more a matter of sympathies than of actual organisational links.

The *pesantren* gained wide renown through a magazine it has published since 1988, *Suara Hidayatullah*, which at its peak achieved a circulation of 52,000. The magazine reads like a broadsheet of the Islamist International; it is militant, gives information on all the *jihads* being fought in the world, is fiercely anti-Jewish and anti-Christian, and has interviews with, and sympathetic articles on, all of the radical Islamic groups of the country. Hidayatullah has a strong sense of mission; it trains missionaries (*da'i*) to spread a reformist Islamic message to non-Muslims as well as nominal or traditionalist Muslims in the most distant corners of the Archipelago.

In spite of its DI origins and the militant Islamist tone of its publications, the Hidayatullah *pesantren* network has from the moment of its foundation made efforts to maintain excellent relations with the government, and it has consistently been the beneficiary of government favour. The

mother *pesantren* in Balikpapan was officially opened by the then Minister of Religious Affairs, A. Mukti Ali. A decade later, the *pesantren* received a prestigious government award, the Kalpataru prize for environmental conservation, which was presented by President Suharto himself. Later, Suharto's first successor, president Habibie and Megawati's vice-president Hamzah Haz also made official visits to this *pesantren*. It frequently receives foreign visitors. In 1999, the *pesantren* was awarded an enormous forestry concession in East Kalimantan, as one of a very small number of *pesantrens* thus favoured.<sup>41</sup> In 2001, the Ministry of Religious Affairs designated Hidayatullah as one of the bodies authorised to collect and redistribute *zakat* on a nation-wide scale.

### *Pesantren Al-Zaytun*

A survey of *pesantrens* with Islamist links is not complete without mentioning the *pesantren* Al-Zaytun in the district of Indramayu (West Java), which has been the object of many controversies over the past few years, because of the seemingly unlimited resources to which it has had access, because of allegations of heterodox beliefs and practices, and because of its alleged links with an underground DI network as well as the state intelligence organisation. The PP Al-Zaytun has drawn much attention because of its grand, modern and fashionable architecture and the megalomaniacal ambitions of its founder, a Gontor graduate and IAIN alumnus named AS (Abdussalam) Panji Gumilang. Construction was begun towards the end of the Suharto era, and the *pesantren* was officially opened by Suharto's successor Habibie in 1999. It has been receiving numerous dignitaries ever since, who usually praised it as a symbol of the progress of Indonesian Islam. It looks much more affluent and modern than most university campuses, with five-story dormitories housing 1500 students each (four of them built, six more planned), and a six-story mosque under construction that will have a capacity of 150,000 worshippers. The *pesantren* owns a considerable amount of land, raises cattle and fowl and organises various other economic activities, providing its students with on-the-job training.<sup>42</sup>

The extravagant style of this *pesantren* has led to much speculation regarding the sources of its affluence, and two seemingly incompatible sources have frequently been suggested: the Suharto family and the Darul

Islam movement. Strange though it may seem, the *pesantren* has enjoyed the warm sympathy and patronage of numerous members of the political elite, under Suharto as well as his successors, and it also appears to be very closely associated with one particular wing of the Darul Islam, the 'Regional Command IX' (KW9).

KW9 was a network active in the larger Jakarta and Banten districts and separate from the original DI, established by DI leaders who had surrendered to the army in 1962 and had later co-operated with state intelligence officers in various covert operations. KW9 was allowed to operate relatively freely, recruit new members, and raise money in various ways including – allegedly – through robbery and extortion. In the 1990s, a certain Abu Toto, who appears to be none other than Panji Gumilang, emerged as the commander of KW9 and put its organisation on more solid footing in terms of both membership and financing. Soon after the official opening of the *pesantren*, a flood of publications appeared, mostly by Islamist authors, denouncing Panji Gumilang for his dubious fund-raising activities, for his deviation from the original DI ideals, his collusion with shady elements in the state apparatus, and for promoting heterodox views and practices among his followers.<sup>43</sup> Some claim that KW9 members were taught quaint interpretations of the Qur'an and were not required to pray regularly or give up alcoholic beverages. At the same time, however, they allegedly declared the Muslims outside their own community to be unbelievers, taking whose property was legitimate. The community compared itself to the Prophet's followers in Mecca, before the establishment of the first Islamic state in Medina. In this phase, it was reasoned, the first Muslims faced a dominant heathen majority and their first objective was survival as a community. The canonical obligations and interdictions of the *shari'a* had not yet been implemented in Mecca, and KW9 similarly postponed imposing them until the Islamic state was actually established. Members, however, had to make sacrifices for the movement, and everyone was required to contribute a regular sum to the movement's treasury.<sup>44</sup>

Despite negative publicity, the *pesantren* Al-Zaytun continued to attract many students. Its founder and sheikh, Panji Gumilang, enjoyed such strong protection that he appeared immune to all criticism. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) carried out investigations and found some truth to the allegations made by the *pesantren*'s critics. The MUI report found that many of the teachers and students prob-

ably have a DI background. Students are actively recruited by officers of KWg's regional structure, and large, not entirely voluntary contributions by DI families constitute a major source of the *pesantren*'s wealth, in addition to considerable grants received from members of the political elite. However, the report found no trace of the teaching of heterodox doctrines and practices in the PP Al-Zaytun. The curriculum is very similar to that of other Gontor-inspired *pesantren*, the report concluded.<sup>45</sup>

Instead of the *pesantren* being a hotbed of radical Islamist politics, then, it would appear that this *pesantren* effectively mobilises an existing Islamist network to collect funds and recruit students, who are given a mainstream religious and vocational training in a setting that radiates accommodation with the state and openness towards the outside world. Unlike the Hidayatullah network, Al-Zaytun shows no interest in international *jihadi* causes; its focus is on Indonesia, and its public discourse is a developmentalist one that is reminiscent of Suharto's New Order.

### Conclusion

There is currently a wide range of *pesantrens* and madrasa in Indonesia, affiliated with all of the major currents in Indonesian Islam. What they have in common is that they teach Arabic religious texts, in most cases alongside a non-religious curriculum. Most of the *pesantrens*, and certainly most of the large ones, are affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama or share its religious outlook. The core of their religious curriculum consists of Shafi'i *fiqh*, often complemented with Sufi ethics. Many of these *pesantrens* are led by charismatic teachers, who have considerable authority among the population at large. In election time they are therefore courted by politicians. Prior to the 2004 elections, for instance, leaders from most of the parties made high-profile visits to *pesantrens*, expecting their visits to influence voters. There have been times when the *pesantrens* jointly opposed government policies, for instance, over a proposed family law believed to be contrary to the *shari'a*, but most of the time these traditionalist *pesantrens* have accommodated themselves with the government and sought its patronage.

Reformist associations established their own *pesantrens*, offering curricula that corresponded to their reformist orientation, the study of *fiqh* being complemented or replaced by that of Qur'an and *hadith*. Gontor remains the

model for most of the reformist *pesantrens*, some of which remain aloof from politics, whereas others court the government and yet others appear to perceive themselves as part of the international Islamic movement. A small number of *pesantrens* have aligned themselves with the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood or the Salafi movement.<sup>46</sup>

Three distinct *pesantrens* or networks of related *pesantrens* have historical links with the underground Darul Islam movement: Ngruki, Hidayatullah and Al-Zaytun. Both Hidayatullah and Al-Zaytun appear to owe their success to pre-existing Darul Islam networks, the former also to the structure of the Bugis diaspora. Both have sought, and achieved, close and cordial relations with the government. Al-Zaytun appears even more accommodating with the government than the average NU *pesantren*. Hidayatullah has, it is true, adopted a militant and almost paranoid Islamist discourse, but its teachers and alumni have not been directly associated with any violent activities. This cannot be said of Ngruki; many people arrested in connection with terrorist violence in Indonesia or neighbour countries have either studied there or passed through the *pesantren* as visitors. What connects these men, however, is not Ngruki but their shared experience in Afghanistan, the southern Philippines or Malaysia; the same network includes many others who have never studied at Ngruki – in fact, the most prominent members of this terrorist network are *not* Ngruki alumni.

## Notes

- 1 This *pesantren* was presented as the central hub in an Indonesian Al-Qaeda network in a report prepared by Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group, 'Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: the case of the "Ngruki network" in Indonesia'. Jakarta and Brussels: International Crisis Group, August 2002. A later report by the same author, 'Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: damaged but still dangerous', Jakarta: International Crisis Group, August 2003, lists a number of other *pesantrens* that appear to have a connection with the Jama'ah Islamiyah network.
- 2 The term 'modernist', as it is commonly used in Indonesia, may be somewhat misleading. It refers to all of the varieties of Muslim reformism, including the most literally scripturalist. The classic study is: Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1940*, Kuala Lumpur, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- 3 Martin van Bruinessen, 'Muslims of the Dutch East Indies and the caliphate question', *Studia Islamika* (Jakarta) vol. 2 no. 3, 1995, 115-140.
- 4 Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, 'Indonesia's approaching elections: politics, Islam, and public opinion', *Journal of Democracy* 15(1), 2004, 109-123.
- 5 M.C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java*, Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2006, p. 89.
- 6 Claude Guillot, 'Le role historique des perdikan ou "villages francs": le cas de Tegalsari', *Archipel* 30, 1985, 137-162.
- 7 J.A. van der Chys, 'Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het inlandsch onderwijs' ('Contributions to the history of indigenous education'), *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 14, 1864, 212-323; cf. M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese society: Islamic and other visions (c.1830-1930)*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2007, pp. 49-52.
- 8 The historical evidence is surveyed in: Martin van Bruinessen, 'Pesantren and kitab kuning: Continuity and change in a tradition of religious learning', in: W. Marschall (ed.), *Texts from the islands: Oral and written traditions of Indonesia and the Malay world* [Ethnologica Bernensia 4], Berne: University of Berne Institute of Ethnology, 1994, pp. 121-146. Available online at: [http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/pesantren\\_and\\_kitab\\_kuning.htm](http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/pesantren_and_kitab_kuning.htm).
- 9 On the books studied in the *pesantren*, and the shifts in the curriculum see: Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kitab kuning: books in Arabic script used in the *pesantren* milieu', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146, 1990, 226-269 (available online at: [http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/kitab\\_kuning.htm](http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/kitab_kuning.htm)). There is a striking similarity to the curriculum in Kurdish madrasas, as described in: Zeynelabidin Zinar, 'Medrese education in Kurdistan', *Les annales de l'autre Islam* 5, 1998, 39-58 (available online at: [http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/medrese\\_education\\_kurdistan.htm](http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/medrese_education_kurdistan.htm)).



- 10 On these aspects of the *pesantren* tradition, see also: Martin van Bruinessen, 'Traditions for the future: the reconstruction of traditionalist discourse within NU', in: Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds), *Nahdlatul Ulama, traditional Islam and modernity in Indonesia*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1996, pp. 163-189.
- 11 The ICG report 'Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia' makes the mistake of attributing puritan ideas to traditionalist institutions, reporting that out of over 14,000 rural *pesantrens* in Indonesia, some 8,900 'teach Salafi principles' (p. 26). This should be 'use the traditional (*Salafiyah*) curriculum and teaching methods'. The report assumes a correlation between *jihād* movements and Salafi ideas, but rightly points out that only a handful of *pesantren* 'have anything to do with JI or radical jihadism' and that even among the latter, most of the students 'emerge as pious, law-abiding citizens.'
- 12 An earlier version of the following sections appeared in: Martin van Bruinessen, 'Divergent paths from Gontor: Muslim educational reform and the travails of pluralism in Indonesia', in: Freek L. Bakker and Jan S. Aritonang (eds.), *On the Edge of Many Worlds [Festschrift Karel A. Steenbrink]*, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2006, pp. 152-162.
- 13 H. Mahmud Yunus, *Sejarah pendidikan Islam di Indonesia [The History of Islamic education in Indonesia]*, Jakarta: Mutiara, 1979, p. 271-7. The number of Muhammadiyah-affiliated madrasas and *pesantrens* has, however, continued to increase as the organisation felt the need for more educated people with a knowledge of Arabic and Islamic scripture.
- 14 Lance Castles, 'Notes on the Islamic school at Gontor', *Indonesia* 1, 1966, 30-45; Ali Saifullah HA, 'Daarussalaam, pondok modern Gontor', in: M. Dawam Rahardjo (ed.), *Pesantren dan pembaharuan [The pesantren and renewal]*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1974, pp. 134-154; Mahrus As'ad, 'Ma'had al-Juntûr bayna'l-tajdîd wa'l-taqlîd' ['The school of Gontor between renewal and tradition'], *Studia Islamika* vol. 3, no. 4, 1996, 165-193.
- 15 Yunus, *Sejarah pendidikan Islam*, pp. 307-314. Al Irsyad's opting for Arabic as the medium of instruction made it dependent on textbooks from Egypt, so that for several decades its students read about the geography of the Arab world and nothing or little about Indonesia. After Indonesian independence, some subjects were taught in Indonesian. On Al Irsyad, see also the excellent study by Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1999.
- 16 On Persis and its *pesantren*, see: Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and ideology in the emerging Indonesian state: the Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957*, Leiden: Brill, 2001. Cf. my review of this book in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003), 171-173.
- 17 Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945*, The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958.
- 18 C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the banner of Islam: the Darul Islam in Indonesia*, The

- Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981; Holk H. Dengel, *Darul-Islam. Kartosuwirjos Kampf um einen islamischen Staat in Indonesien*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1986.
- 19 M. Saleh Widodo, 'Pesantren Darul Fallah: eksperimen pesantren pertanian' ['The pesantren Darul Fallah: experiment of an agricultural pesantren'], in: M. Dawam Rahardjo (ed.), *Pesantren dan pembaharuan [The pesantren and innovation]*, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1974, pp. 121-133.
  - 20 M. Dawam Rahardjo, 'The life of santri youth: a view from the pesantren window at Pabelan', *Sojourn: social issues in Southeast Asia* 1, 1986, 32-56; M. Habib Chirzin, 'Impak dan pengaruh kegiatan pondok Pabelan sebagai lembaga pendidikan dan pengembangan masyarakat desa' ['The impact and influence of the activities of the pesantren of Pabelan as an institution of education and village-level social development'], in: *Pesantren: Profil kyai, pesantren dan madrasah [Warta-PDIA no.2]*, Jakarta: Balai Penelitian dan Pengembangan Departemen Agama R.I., 1981, pp. 69-78.
  - 21 V.S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers, an Islamic Journey*, New York: Knopf, 1981.
  - 22 The initials LP3ES stand for 'Institute for Economic and Social Research, Education and Information'. Its founders were affiliated with Masyumi and the Socialist Party of Indonesia, two parties that had been banned during Sukarno's last years and initially welcomed the New Order and its pro-Western development policies.
  - 23 M. Dawam Rahardjo (ed.), *Pergulatan dunia pesantren: membangun dari bawah [The struggle of the pesantren world: construction from below]*, Jakarta: P3M, 1985; Manfred Ziemek, *Pesantren dalam perubahan sosial [The pesantren in social change]*, Jakarta: P3M, 1986.
  - 24 Martin van Bruinessen, *NU: tradisi, relasi-relasi kuasa, pencarian wacana baru [NU: tradition, power relations, and the search for a new discourse]*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994.
  - 25 For an assessment see: Martin van Bruinessen and Farid Wajidi, 'Syu'un ijtima'iyah and the kiai rakyat: traditionalist Islam, civil society and social concerns', in: H. Schulte Nordholt (ed.), *Indonesian Transitions*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006, pp. 205-248.
  - 26 Djohan Effendi, 'Progressive traditionalists: the emergence of a new discourse in Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama during the Abdurrahman Wahid era', Ph.D. thesis, Deakin University, Department of Religious Studies, 2000; Laode Ida, *Kaum progresif dan sekularisme baru NU [The progressives and the new secularism in the NU]*, Jakarta: Erlangga, 2004; Martin van Bruinessen, 'Liberal and progressive voices in Indonesian Islam', in: Shireen T. Hunter (ed.), *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Religion and Modernity*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, forthcoming (2008).
  - 27 Asna Husin, 'Philosophical and sociological aspects of da'wah. A study of the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia', Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1998; Lukman Hakiem and Tamsil Linrung, *Menunaikan panggilan risalah: dokumentasi perjalanan 30 tahun Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, Jakarta: Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, 1997; Martin van Bruinessen, 'Genealogies of Islamic

- radicalism in Indonesia', *South East Asia Research* 10 no.2, 2002, 117-154 (available online at: [http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/genealogies\\_islamic\\_radicalism.htm](http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/genealogies_islamic_radicalism.htm)).
- 28 The Indonesian Salafi movement that emerged as a distinct current in the 1990s (and that is the subject of Noorhaidi's contribution in this volume), owed little to the DDII, however. Its founders had direct links with Salafi circles in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.
- 29 See the comments to this effect in: Kamal Hassan, *Muslim intellectual response to New Order modernization in Indonesia*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa, 1980; cf. Anthony H. Johns, 'An Islamic system or Islamic values? Nucleus of a debate in contemporary Indonesia', in: William R. Roff (ed.), *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning*, London: Croom Helm, 1987, pp. 254-280.
- 30 M. Syafii Anwar et al., 'The perception of *pesantren* communities in West Java towards secularism, pluralism and liberalism', Research report, Jakarta: ICIP, 2005.
- 31 The history of this *pesantren* is sketched in: Farha Abdul Kadir Assegaff, 'Peran perempuan Islam (penelitian di Pondok Pesantren Al Mukmin, Sukoharjo, Jawa Tengah)' ['The role of Muslim women: research in the *pesantren* Al Mukmin, Sukoharjo, Central Java], Tesis S-2, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Program Studi Sosiologi, Jurusan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, 1995; Zuly Qodir, *Ada apa dengan pesantren Ngruki?* [What is the matter with the *pesantren* of Ngruki?], Bantul: Pondok Edukasi, 2003; ES. Soepriyadi, *Ngruki & jaringan terorisme: melacak jejak Abu Bakar Ba'asyir dan jaringannya dari Ngruki sampai bom Bali* [Ngruki and the terrorist network: following the trail of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and his network from Ngruki to the Bali bombing], Jakarta: P.T. Al-Mawardi Prima, 2003.
- 32 The curriculum included the *tafsîr* of the Egyptian reformist Maraghi and the works on *hadith* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani and by M. b. 'Ali al-Shawkani (Qodir, *Ada apa dengan pesantren Ngruki*, p. 52-3). Though not part of the traditional *pesantren* curriculum, these works are taught in numerous more reformist-inspired *pesantren*.
- 33 A list of books taught in Ngruki in the mid-1990s (in Qodir, *Ada apa dengan pesantren Ngruki*, p. 52) mentions *Jundullah* [Army of God], a book that argues it is an obligation for Muslims to establish a state based on the divine law by the Syrian Brotherhood leader Sa'id Hawwa as one of the textbooks for doctrine. Another important text was the Salafi scholar M. Sa'id al-Qahtani's *Al-walâ' wa-l-barâ' fî'l-islâm* [Loyalty and avoidance in Islam], which warns the student not to befriend non-Muslims or even Muslims of different persuasions. A former student recalls the moral imperatives of *al-walâ' wa-l-barâ'* as constituting the core of the disciplining in Ngruki (Soepriyadi, *Ngruki*, p. 24-5). These texts would not be found in more traditional *pesantrens*, or in most of the reformist ones.
- 34 The best published study of this *Usrah* network is: Abdul Syukur, *Gerakan Usroh di Indonesia: peristiwa Lampung 1989* [The *Usroh* movement in Indonesia: the Lampung

- incident of 1989*], Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2003. A good early overview, based on court documents of trials against arrested *Usrah* members, is: Tapol, *Indonesia: Muslims on trial*, London: Tapol and Indonesian Human Rights Campaign, 1987. There is much useful information in a thesis by a Ngruki graduate: Muh. Nursalim, 'Faksi Abdullah Sungkar dalam gerakan NII era Orde Baru (studi terhadap pemikiran dan harakah politik Abdullah Sungkar)', Tesis Magister, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Program Pascasarjana, 2001. See also Bruinessen, 'Genealogies' and International Crisis Group, 'Al Qaeda'.
- 35 Nursalim, 'Faksi Abdullah Sungkar'. A detailed overview of Sungkar followers who went to Pakistan during the 1980s is given in: International Crisis Group, 'Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: damaged but still dangerous', Jakarta: International Crisis Group, 2003.
- 36 One of Ba'asyir's spokespersons, Fauzan Al-Anshari, claimed that whereas Sungkar's followers had been bound to him by a vow of obedience (*bay'at*), no one had made such a vow to Ba'asyir (interview, Jakarta, 16 March 2004). There is little doubt that Ba'asyir approved of *jihād* in the Moluccas in defence of the local Muslims there, but his associates claim that a part of the Jama'ah Islamiyah, led by Hanbali, went its own way after a meeting in which Ba'asyir rejected violence against non-combatants (various interviews).
- 37 One of my informants is a former student in Al-Mukmin, who was recruited into the NII by an older peer – not by a teacher! – in 1993, when Sungkar and Ba'asyir were living in Malaysia. Another frequent visitor of the *pesantren* told me that promising students would be singled out for special treatment. They would be woken up in the middle of the night and told to perform nightly prayers, after which they would be given special instruction, presumably of a religious but secret nature.
- 38 'Daftar Kyai / Ulama / Tokoh Masyarakat di Wilayah Wakalah Jawa Wustho (Jawwus) Bulan Robi'ul Akhir 1420 H / Juli 1999' [List of Kyai, Ulama and Prominent Personalities in the Region of the Central Java Command, Juli 1999]. Copy acquired by International Crisis Group; part of a set of trial documents of which copies have been deposited in the libraries of Australian National University (Canberra) and the KITLV (Leiden).
- 39 International Crisis Group, 'Jemaah Islamiyah', p. 26-27, uncritically repeated in various other reports.
- 40 The following paragraphs owe much to Hidayatullah's self-representations in its journal and the websites [www.hidayatullah.com/](http://www.hidayatullah.com/) and <http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hidayatullah>.
- 41 Reported by Margot Cohen, 'Faith in the Forest', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 January 2000.
- 42 See the self-representation at: [www.tokohindonesia.com/ensiklopedi/a/abdussalam/index.shtml](http://www.tokohindonesia.com/ensiklopedi/a/abdussalam/index.shtml), where the modernity of the *pesantren* and its excellent relations with members of the Jakarta political elite are emphasised, mentioning especially New Order

politicos who survived into the post-Suharto era. Two major halls in the *pesantren* are named for Presidents Suharto and Sukarno (the latter was dedicated during Megawati's presidency); there are also buildings named after the Golkar politicians Akbar Tanjung and Agung Laksono, suggesting patronage and protection.

- 43 Al Chaidar, himself a former activist in the KW9 structure and later closer to another wing of DI, wrote the first denunciation: Al Chaidar, *Sepak terjang KW. IX Abu Toto Syech A.S. Panji Gumilang menyelewengkan NKA-NII pasca S.M. Kartosoewirjo* [How the KW9 of Abu Toto Sheikh A.S. Panji Gumilang corrupted the post-Kartosoewirjo Darul Islam movement], Jakarta: Madani Press, 2000. The Islamist activist Umar Abduh published no less than three books against Panji Gumilang and his *pesantren*: Umar Abduh, *Membongkar gerakan sesat NII di balik pesantren mewah Al Zaytun* [Uncovering the deviant NII movement behind the posh pesantren Al Zaytun], Jakarta: LPPI, 2001; idem, *Pesantren Al-Zaytun sesat? Investigasi mega proyek dalam Gerakan NII* [Is the pesantren Al Zaytun misguided? Investigation of a mega-project within the Darul Islam movement], Jakarta: Darul Falah, 2001; idem, *Al Zaytun Gate. Investigasi mengungkap misteri. Dajjal Indonesia membangun negara impian Iblis* [Al Zaytun-gate, investigation of a mystery: Indonesia's Dajjal builds a diabolical dream state], Jakarta: LPDI, 2002. Video footage of a visit to the *pesantren* by the head of Indonesia's state intelligence organisation BIN, Hendropriyono, was widely circulated on video discs. The intelligence chief's unusually cordial speech, in which he threatened people who dared to slander Al-Zaytun, was seen by many as confirmation of the intimate links between Panji Gumilang and the intelligence apparatus.
- 44 Al Chaidar, *Sepak terjang KW9 Abu Toto*, pp. 104-8; Majelis Ulama Indonesia Team Peneliti Ma'had Al-Zaytun, 'Laporan lengkap hasil penelitian Ma'had al-Zaytun Haurgeulis Indramayu' ['Full report on the research concerning the school Al-Zaytun in Haurgeulis, Indramayu'], Jakarta: Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2002.
- 45 Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 'Laporan lengkap hasil penelitian Ma'had al-Zaytun Haurgeulis Indramayu'; interviews with KH. Ma'ruf Amin, head of the MUI's investigating committee and with Ahmad Syafi'i Mufid, who carried out a similar investigation for the Ministry of Religious Affairs, March 2004.
- 46 In the list of teachers in Central Java mentioned in note 32 above, which was compiled by an apparent JI cell in 1999, 23 out of 368 were identified as Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated, 7 as Salafi and 6 as Darul Islam; 143 were affiliated with NU and 141 with Muhammadiyah. Most of the Muslim Brothers were not teaching in *pesantren* but in universities and colleges.

