A young student wearing ripped jeans, with long hair and an earring, was called on by a group of people wearing long flowing robes while he was having dinner at a food stall in a street of Yogyakarta. The group of people harassed him and forced him to leave his food. They accused him of being the troublemaker of the event and disaster facing Indonesia today. This situation occurred at the beginning of August 2000, when the first national congress of mujahidin was to be held on the re-establishment of the sharia-r in Indonesia.

Approximately two thousand people represented a group of radical Muslims that are particularly in the public eye at moment, attended the congress. Amongst the participants were Laskar Santri (Santir Patriamitary Troops, Indonesian patriotic public), Pasukan Komando Mujahidin.Jihad, Islamic Command Force. A number of influential Muslim figures gave talks at the congress, such as Sayyid Ali, Syahrial Alim, and Alawi Muhammad. They discussed one central theme: the application of the Islamic sharia as highly necessary in order to solve various problems and disasters occurring in Indonesia today.

Recently, almost every week in Jakarta, the Jakarta Islamic Front of the Defender of Islam conducts nazis. They go to cafes, discoteques, casinos, and other venues which they accuse of being dens of iniquity and break up the on-going activities without being hampered by security agents. A few months ago, a major force called Hizb ut-Tahrir (Front of the Islamic Revolution) even openly trained its members to engage in combat and stated its readiness to go to the battle field in the Moluccas. Several times, similar groups wearing white long-flowing robes and turbans took to the streets in protest against President Abdurrahman Wahid. They also purport that it is a supra-national alternative to the Indonesian state. The movement at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Noorhaidi Hasan is a graduate of the ISIM MPhil Program. He is the author of the book "The Failure of Islamism: A Political Analysis of the Islamic Movements in Indonesia," which has been widely read in the Islamic world.

Islamic radicalism

The phenomenon of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia has emerged since the multi-dimensional crisis facing the country in 1997, which included the collapse of Soeharto’s regime. This movement marked a new phase of the relationship between Islam and the state, after the severe long-term repression of political Islam by the state. Since then, the existence of radical groups on the political scene has become increasingly remarkable and even ‘attractive’. But what is the background of the emergence of such groups? How were they given limited space in national politics? Muslim groups that had lost hope were buoyed up by the attacks culminated in 1998. They were also purposed to demonstrate the failure of the new political Islam by the Islamic Movement. This was mostly due to a general feeling of not having acquired sufficient repre-

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Islamic Radicalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State

Roy indicates that radical neo-fundamentalism combines political and militant jihad to protest against the secular West, with a very conservative definition of religion. He also purports that it is a supra-national movement, working beyond the borders of a single state. Roy adds that despite the failure of Islamism, a modern political Islamic movement which claims to re-create a true Islamic society, not merely by the application of the Islamic charter, but also by creating a new Islamic order through the revolutionary and militant political actions, if necessary. The proponents of the movement do not see the state as a political apparatus. Rather, they see it as a political ideology that should be integrated into all aspects of society. However, Roy adds that even through Islamism has failed since the 1980s, particularly in terms of its original target of creating an Islamic state, its resistance and criticism of the modernist state have succeeded in forcing the latter to introduce a conservative Islamicization policy. Ironically, such policies did not succeed in eliminating Islamism; on the contrary, they have broadened its constituency and supported the radical Neo-fundamentalists.