

continued from page 52 >

shown in the case of plantations in East Java and North Sumatra (Mahbubah and Agustono). Labour recruiters play a large role in shaping work relations as they are also given the task of supervision and control, as seen with the dock workers of Tanjung Priok, the plantation workers of East Java, and the domestic workers who work outside Indonesia (Veering, Mahbubah, and Aswatini). In order to secure a stable and docile labour force, various means were used, such as debt from high loan rates and opium addiction (Sairin). The organization of production through the family unit and small-scale production in South Sumatra, where family and wage labour relations overlap, also brings into focus the varied nature of production relations (Purwanto). Workers' attempts to improve their conditions do not always imply their participation in collective action, as workers attempt to obtain income from multiple sources outside their main jobs (Ardana). Family contributions and rotating credit associations (Anarita) help them to overcome long- or short-

term crises. However, discussions did not deal with the way in which sources from the "outside" helped strengthen or inhibit their political position in the workplace. Yet, labour studies in other countries have shown how the interrelationship between collective and individual strategies (both inside and outside the workplace or work relations) is highly important for a better understanding of labour relations.

Different periods in Indonesian history from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were covered, revealing how sources regarding certain periods were more difficult to obtain than others. Some papers argued that although each period provided a particular wider setting for the playing out of different struggles, there was marked continuity between these periods (Ingleson and Schwidder). It would have been interesting if there could have been comparisons within and between specific historical periods and see how these were experienced differently by different localities and social groups, however this was not possible because of the

uneven historical spread of the papers.

Van der Linden stated that in order to understand working class history we must both understand the wider society in which we live and work and examine the interrelationship between "structure" and "agency". We should also be aware that the focus on one may blur out the focus on the other ("the indeterminacy problem") yet a constant attempt to link the two levels should underline our research. Finally, although we should consistently focus on labour and subordinate groups (Bremen) ultimately it was argued that labour history cannot be separated from social history (Boomgaard and Ingleson).

These discussions, preliminary as they were, were quite meaningful for a group who came together for the first time to talk about labour issues in Indonesia. These discussions were sharpened by the presence of the discussants who underlined important parts of the papers and pointed out the gaps (Nilan, Connor, and Farid). Ambitious plans were formulated to continue the discussions and deepen our

understanding on this subject, and a number of activities were suggested. The first among these was that this would be the first of a series of workshops on labour to be held once in two years. Second, that an electronic network would be set up, starting with a small group of researchers who are working on this topic. Third, that together with the initiation of an electronic discussion group, an association of Indonesian labour historians should also be created, which could become the vehicle by which research questions could be stimulated. Fourth, that a merging of bibliographies and archives on Indonesian labour would be very

much desired. Fifth, that two publications, one in English and one in Indonesian, each consisting of a selection of the papers presented, should be produced. Sixth and finally, that an independent archival depot should be created, where documents and records could be stored, systematized and made accessible to the public. Indeed there is still much work to be done. ◀

Dr Ratna Saptari is an anthropologist with a research background in labour issues in Indonesia and is the coordinator of CLARA. E-mail: chlia@iisg.nl

Workshopinfo >

The organizers were Erwiza Erman (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia or the Indonesian Sciences Institute), Jan Elliott (CAPSTRANS (Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies), and Ratna Saptari (CLARA). There were fourteen participants from various Indonesian academic institutions and NGOs, six participants from Australia, and five from the Netherlands. Staff members of the Department of History, Udayana University, secured a good working and social atmosphere for the participants of the workshop.

Islam in Indonesia: First Annual Programme Seminar

Report >
Southeast Asia

20 December 2001
Leiden,
the Netherlands

At the end of the first year of the four-year research programme on Islam in Indonesia, a one-day seminar involving all PhD candidates, senior researchers, PhD supervisors, and specialists in charge with the coordination of the programme or its various sub-projects was organized. The meeting was convened by Johan Meuleman, who received the diligent administrative and logistic assistance of IIAS project coordinator, Josine Stremmelaar.

By Johan Meuleman

The seminar was meant to stimulate and guide future research activities rather than to produce any substantial research results as the individual researchers were all still in the early stage of their projects and some had only started very recently. More specifically, the objectives of the seminar were:

1. To offer each researcher involved in the programme the opportunity to present a survey of his/her project, provisional results, particular points of interest, and particular problems faced in order to invite advice and criticism from all other researchers and all specialists in charge with the supervision and coordination of the project;
2. To enhance the coherence of the various sub-projects;
3. To place the programme and its various sub-projects in a broader scholarly and geographical framework.

In view of the first objective mentioned, each researcher presented a brief written survey, circulated beforehand among all participants. The second objective was one of the points of interest during the discussion of each individual survey and received particular attention during the final, concluding discussion of the seminar. In order to realize the third objective, an expert on related research questions, but specializing in another region and not directly involved in the programme had been invited to deliver an introductory

keynote lecture. This expert also opened the discussion on each individual research project and on the concluding discussion with his comment, criticism, and advice. Brinkley Messick, professor of anthropology at Columbia University, New York City, who is well known for combining the textual and anthropological study of the tradition of Islamic justice and its development in Yemen as well as in other regions, performed this duty of external expert in a satisfactory manner.

The seminar was attended by researchers, supervisors, the coordinators involved in the programme, the external expert, and by representatives from the IIAS - the main executing agency - and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) - the main sponsor. In addition, the Indonesian programme director, Azyumardi Azra, twenty-odd experts, students, and researchers in related fields attended.

In his keynote lecture, introducing the seminar, Brinkley Messick focused on the question of continuity and change. He divided his lecture in four sections, on modernity, tradition, dissemination, and research methods respectively. In relation to the question of modernity, Messick called for attention to changes and breaks, e.g. in analogy with Michel Foucault's analyses in the European context. Speaking on tradition, he drew attention to the other side of social reality, continuity. Both subjects were elucidated with examples and references. In relation to dissemination, Messick suggested a series of concepts he considered particular rele-

vant to the research programme. In the methodological section of his lecture, he stressed the importance of the interdisciplinary approach, e.g. by combining ethnography and history or textual analysis and fieldwork. He also indicated the interest of life histories in order to understand the combination of change and continuity and furthermore suggested to analyse local concepts and theories relevant to the research object and emphasized the importance of reflection on the relation of the researcher to his object

The body of the seminar consisted of a discussion of the individual research projects of each of the programme's researchers, arranged according to the four sub-themes of the programme: *tarekat* (mystical orders), 'ulam?' (reli-

gious scholars) and fatwas, *dakwah* (religious propagation), and education. They were based on the written surveys circulated beforehand and brief introductions by their authors. The discussion on each individual project was introduced by a comment of the external expert and keynote lecturer of the seminar.

The intensity and high quality of the discussions, the participation of all researchers involved in the programme and other invited experts, their critical attitude, the strong organization, and the friendly atmosphere, all contributed to the seminar having succeeded in realizing its objectives. It has particularly contributed to clarifying and improving the individual research projects and to strengthening the coherence

of the whole programme. From a theoretical and analytical viewpoint, moreover, the seminar has reinforced the position of the programme within more general frameworks. From a personal and organizational perspective, it has helped develop stronger relationships between scholars and academic institutions from various countries, in particular the Netherlands, Indonesia, the United States of America, Egypt, and Australia. ◀

Dr Johan Hendrik Meuleman is an IIAS research fellow, a lecturer at Leiden University in the framework of the Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies, and a professor of Islamic History at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta. E-mail: j.h.meuleman@let.leidenuniv.nl

Short Update: Islam in Indonesia

Update >
Southeast Asia

The research programme "Islam in Indonesia: the Dissemination of Religious Authority in the Twentieth Century", financed by the Scientific Cooperation Netherlands-Indonesia, started in January 2001.

By Sabine Kuypers

All researchers - with the exception of Faisal Bakti (Canda) who is expected to join in May 2002 - have now arrived and started their research within one of the programme's four sub-themes: *Ulama and Fatwa*; *Tarekat*; *Education*; and lastly *Dakwah*. Some researchers are presently in Indonesia for their fieldwork. Our partner in Indonesia, the State University of Islamic Studies (Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta), and especially its Azyumardi Azra, has been actively involved in the programme by participating in research seminars, selecting fellows, and supervising researchers. In October, the "Islam in Indonesia" programme began its so-called "regular programme meetings", during which all researchers meet and

More info >

Information about the other research programmes can be found in this newsletter or at: www.knaw.nl/indonesia More detailed information about the "Islam in Indonesia" programme may be found at: www.iias.nl/iias/research/dissemination.

discuss relevant literature concerning developments in the study of Islam in general, also concerning other regions than Indonesia. On 19 December the research group studied and discussed the work of Brinkley Messick, Columbia University, New York, who gave a keynote speech at the programme's first seminar held on the following day. Last year, Johan Meuleman (researcher within the sub-theme *Dakwah*) organized and convened the programme's first seminar, which bore a general character. His report is also published in this newsletter. In principle, a programme seminar will be held annually and a large conference is planned for the programme's last year. Provided funding is available, smaller and more focused thematic workshops may be held during the course of the programme.

The "Islam in Indonesia" programme is one of the six programmes residing under the Scientific Cooperation Netherlands-Indonesia, administered and co-funded by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). ◀

Sabine Kuypers, MA is Coordinator of the programme "Islam in Indonesia: Dissemination of Religious Authority in the Twentieth Century", and Deputy Director of the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands. E-mail: iias@let.leidenuniv.nl