After the Kuta Bombing: In Search of the Balinese Soul

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Introduction

By its very horror and the impact it had on Balinese consciousness, the Bali Kuta bombing provides an unexpectedly good way of evaluating the evolution of the political situation in Bali. In a recent article published in a French academic journal, I tried to explain how the structural transformations, both economic and ethno-demographic, which accompanied the large-scale tourism investments of the New Order (1965–1999), have created a potentially explosive situation in Balinese society today (Couteau 2002). This analysis emphasised the role played by economic factors in the processes of change. More specifically it depicted how the Balinese bourgeoisie, having lost con-

1 I would like to thank Pam Nilan, CAPSTRANS and the University of Newcastle (Australia), for the fellowship (9/2002–1/2003) that enabled me to undertake the background study on which part of this work is resting. I am also indebted to Arlette Ottino for her help in completing this article, turning my Gallic English into a proper rendition of the language of Shakespeare, and making me clarify my thoughts in more than a few sections of the paper. All translations are by myself.


Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji perubahan mentalitas masyarakat Bali setelah peledakan bom di Kuta. Tiga reaksi utama menandai peristiwa tersebut yaitu: gelombang solidaritas, kecenderungan ke arah ritual, dan politisasi adat yang mengarah pada tindakan-tindakan diskriminatif terhadap penduduk non-Bali (pendatang). Reaksi-reaksi ini harus dipahami dengan latar belakang hegemoni negara sepanjang abad ke-20, dan khususnya dengan latar belakang manipulasi orde baru terhadap konsep kebudayaan. Paruh pertama abad ini ditandai oleh pemisahan antara kebiasaan atau tradisi (adat) dan agama yang sebelumnya tidak dibedakan, dan kemudian diikuti oleh munculnya identitas religius masyarakat Hindu Bali. Orde Baru di bawah kepemimpinan Soeharto, saat mencoba mempolitisasi etnisitas melalui kebudayaan, menghasilkan hal sebaliknya: sementara regim Soeharto dan kri-
trol of tourism since the 1970s, eventually retreated into ‘tradition’ (religion, custom/adat and culture) to resist the onslaught of non-Balinese capital, related to Suharto’s family and the associates of the New Order regime. The paper also examined outward manifestations of such resistance, such as lynchings, the emergence of local militias and the appearance of a below-the-surface, not-yet-politically-formulated movement for self-rule. It also suggested possible prognoses.

The theoretical basis of this somewhat mechanical analysis was not original. Yet it still sounds new in Bali. Indeed, until quite recently, little attention had been paid to the social and political consequences for Bali, of the huge inflow of capital invested in tourism. The reasons are to be found in a combination of various factors such as the marginal role the island has played in Indonesian politics, the physical and ideological repression, the focus on a ‘discourse’ borrowed from post-modernist ideologies rather than on the realities of socio-economic life, the resilience of the exotic attraction of Bali for western scholars, and the fear on the part of critical observers of being forbidden entry into ‘Paradise Island’. All this has contributed to a thirty year conspiracy of silence on the expropriation process the island has been subjected to, and to a deliberate blindness, or even contempt, on the part of the various parties, to the realities of the economic and social situation of the island. My own personal attempts to try and raise these issues back in the 1990s proved to be an uphill battle. My first attempt, an article written in Indonesian, was censored after a heated debate with the regional authorities who had commissioned that very article from me.2 My second attempt was more successful, but it was, raison oblige, published in a highly edited form (Couteau 1995). Prior to a spate of recent writings on the part of young Balinese writers (Ramseyer and Panji Tisna 2002), the only significant contribution to the debate was Aditjondro’s 1995 article coining Bali as ‘Jakarta’s colony’ (Aditjondro 1995). This fell on deaf ears as it ran counter to the euphoria of the days.

The present paper somewhat tempers the tone of my earlier contribution. It is divided into two sections. The first covers the reactions to the bombing while the second discusses emerging trends in Balinese politics. I argue that there is indeed more to the reality of Balinese social life than simply economic factors. Certain forms of current cultural discourse actually go against mainstream opinions and ideas, contributing therefore to the complexification of the local political landscape. I shall consider their impact in both sections of the paper. I shall conclude with an analysis of the possible outcomes for Bali in the near future.

**The reactions to the bombing**

**The luck factor**

Prior to the Kuta Bombing, many local analysts feared that Bali was inevitably heading toward serious inter-ethnic tensions and even conflicts. Interviewees used words such as puputan (fight to the end), bom waktu (time-bomb), caru (exorcism), Sampit (the place where the Madurese ethnic cleansing took place in Kalimantan after 1998), to express this (Couteau 2002:248–250). And, as will be seen below, the signs were indeed ominous: lynchings, scapegoating of inter-island migrants (pendatang) and even, since the 1998 A.M.Sae-fuddin affair

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2 The local government contacted me for an article to be published in Rahasia Pembangunan Bali (1993). However my text was considered too sensitive and didn’t pass the censorship board. But I was summoned for an explanation and could present my case in front of my censors, all of whom informally seemed to agree with my analysis!
described below a ‘Bali for the Balinese’ ethno-nationalist undercurrent. The devil’s advocates were wrong. After the bombings, no pogroms occurred, and apart from a few isolated incidents (mostly taunts). Bali experienced an extraordinary outpouring of solidarity and inter-communal humanitarian collaboration. Even now, six months after the event, as the community is entering a phase of economic crisis and deep social uncertainty, peace still prevails. This unusually moderate reaction to an horrendous event, may be explained by a set of exceptional circumstances.

First and foremost, the bombing left the local Balinese relatively unscathed. All the Balinese fatalities were outsiders to the Kuta area, and not a few of them were Moslem-Balinese. Most importantly the bombing took place outside the traditional settlement areas of the local Balinese. No members from either Kuta or Legian villages were hurt. The local community did not feel that the attack was directed against them. The *kulkul bulus*, the wooden drum that is the traditional system of alarm in Bali was not even activated. This is an important fact as it is at the village level that the systems of collective protection are organised in Bali. Considering the role played by young Kuta thugs in previous—anti-*pendatang* riots—when they destroyed hundreds of *pendatang* stalls, it is not hard to imagine what could have taken place had ten or twenty of these village youths fallen victim to the bomb (Santikarma 2002).

Another significant feature was the attitude of the press, which reacted with the utmost caution. Commenting on the Bali Post morning edition after the bombing, the ‘press-watch’ magazine Pantau reported that ‘there was no pointing at who might have been responsible for the bombing. The emphasis was on what was taking place on the ground’ (Pantau 2002:12). Such moderation was unexpected. Hadn’t the Bali Post for the past ten years been the main channel for the movement for Balinese ethnic revival, with many of its articles and letters to the editor quick to point at non-Balinese migrants as responsible for anything that goes wrong in Bali? (Couteau 2002: 239) But the editors understood the risks of ethnic unrest and exercised caution. The Monday edition of the newspaper announced in its first page that ‘in the evacuation of the victims, the Kuta population and Moslems work hand in hand’. The executive editor commented further that ‘we did this to ease the atmosphere. We knew that the people were grieving and angry. But we didn’t want Bali to turn into a new Ambon’ (Pantau 2002:12). It may be noted here that the other local media, less suspect of ‘Balicentrism’, and owned by outside capital, followed a similar policy of caution.

The reaction of the Balinese Moslem community was no less significant. Not only did many victims come from the long-established Moslem community of Kepaon, but the first aid-workers to arrive on the site reportedly were a Moslem aid group headed by a long-time resident of the island, Haji Bambang. The fact that the press stressed this point, with Haji Bambang soon becoming a kind of media hero, no doubt helped the Balinese to make the necessary distinction between ordinary Moslems, who were also potential victims, and the perpetrators of the bombing. Later, all the leaders from the national and regional Moslem community closed ranks in their condemnation of the bombing.

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1 What is meant here by Moslem-Balinese are Moslems belonging from communities that pre-existed the Dutch colonisation. I use Balinese for ordinary Hindu-Balinese.
Solidarity

The days and weeks immediately following the bombing saw an extraordinary outpouring of positive feelings. While the internet chatter was more than ever adulating Bali, calls for solidarity and peace and demonstrations of goodwill issued from all quarters. People demonstrated with ‘peace’ tee-shirts, others participated in ecumenical prayers. A committee named ‘Bali for the world’ was set up. Jakarta celebrities came to sing in Bali to raise money in the name of *kembali Baliku* (Give me back my Bali) and Ubud Balinese activists organised a peace festival.

What such manifestations of goodwill tell us is that Bali is part of a national and international economic system whose presence now deeply permeates the collective consciousness of its population. Indeed, having for decades benefited from international tourism, and having been subjected through most of the twentieth century to a constant discourse on the virtues of tradition (*adat*), religion and culture, many Balinese nowadays genuinely believe in the image of a ‘Paradise Bali’ and in the cultural role their island is vaunted to play at national and international levels. They are convinced that their island is ‘traditional’ and peaceful, that Moslems and Hindus have always and will always peacefully cohabit, and that the tourists really come to admire them and their culture. The fact that this image of Bali was imposed under conditions of political impotence and that it was accompanied by a large-scale economic expropriation does not seem to trouble them much.

Quite naturally, the main proponents and actors of the humanistic response to the bombing were those who benefit the most from tourism. Christian Chinese cried and prayed in front of cameras, Western expatriates organised volunteer work and internet buzz-frenzy, while Jakartanese high officials and celebrities participated in peace marches. Those people are indeed best equipped to think globally and act ‘humanistically’. Since their networks are trans-ethnic and transnational, so too is their discourse. But this should not blind us to the fact that ‘humanistic’ sentiments are not incompatible with economic interests. Those who manifest a wish for peace and inter-ethnic solidarity may well in another context turn up as keen investors, shrewd land speculators and stingy employers. We may then legitimately question how many among those calling for inter-religious and interethnic peace do indeed have a stake in the island economy, and how many do participate, either directly or indirectly, in what could be termed the process of dispossession the Balinese are subjected to. Only a few? Probably at lot. Sociologically speaking, it would be naïve to disregard the interests which are at stake in the call for peace. A fact which didn’t escape the attention of some sharp-minded Balinese. Kembar Krepun, a former regent of

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4 This construction of the image of Bali began soon after the Dutch occupation of Southern Bali (1906–1908). It soon divided into two branches: the first one was, and still is, politically constructed by the power that be. One finds during the Dutch colonial period, which saw the apparition of the paradisiacal image of Bali and the beginning of the tourism industry (Robinson 1995:5–9; Picard 1996:20–38; Vickers 1989:91–130). It was pursued by the Japanese in a short campaign to ‘revive’ Balinese culture (Robinson 1995:83–87). Sukarno then (1945–1965) slightly modified it to make Bali a ‘show window’ of Indonesia and a retreat for the country’s nomenclature (Picard 1996:40–43). Finally Suharto (1966–1998) officially enshrined the manipulation of tradition for economic and political purposes through his policy of ‘cultural tourism’ (Picard 1996:40–43; Vickers 1989:194–199). All the while, however, as a response to these politically determined discourses and in parallel to them, the Balinese too proposed their own reactive reading and interpretation of tradition, culture, and religion, with their own idealised vision of their identity (Picard 1999).
Gianyar, declared: ‘even though we mustn’t doubt their good intention, it is clear that behind it are business interests, i.e. the money that they have invested in the Balinese tourism sector’ (Sarad 33 2002:16). Good-willed people need tourism as much as anyone else on the ‘Island of the gods’ (perhaps even more so)!

The retreat into ritual

By contrast, the response of ordinary Balinese to the Kuta Bombing was to withdraw into their own, traditional, Balinese frame of reference. It was not the visible aspect of the bombing that they most feared, but its intangible, niskala aspect—the cosmic disorder such a deed both revealed and would lead to. Having thus framed the event as ‘Balinese’, they reacted accordingly. It is using this perspective that the Balinese response to the bombing, in the form of religious rituals should be understood, as should the conjuring up of all the ceremonial paraphernalia, big and small, for which they are famed the world over. What was at stake here was the necessity of placating the forces unleashed at the bombing site, in order to restore cosmic order. The cultural logic of such reaction was evidenced in the spontaneity with which ordinary villagers came to present offerings at the site, just as one would do in the case of an unexpected or catastrophic happening. Mediums (balian) were called to identify the origins of disorder and ask the souls of the dead what should be done so they would not disturb the living anymore. Over time though, as the local priests and the Balinese intelligentsia became more deeply involved, the rituals became the locus of lengthy debates on the ‘real’ causes and meaning of the bombing as well as the most appropriate ways of keeping its consequences under control. Some participants in those debates saw in the bombing a sign of the soiling and defilement of Bali (leteh or reged). After all, were the two bombed night-clubs not known as places for sexual encounters? Were not naked people seen running away from the burning site? As the debate heated up local intellectuals brought in a more forceful element. A well-known Balinese psychiatrist declared that this was ‘God’s punishment for not having realised true ‘cultural tourism’, but having introduced instead many elements from outside into our Balinese culture’ (The Australian 22 2002).

Eventually the bombing ended up being construed as an expression of the wrath of the gods, the karmic consequence Bali had to suffer for having allowed impurity to hold sway over the land. At a cosmic level it was read as one more sign that the world is entering the age of darkness (Kali Yuga). A high priest commented gloomily: ‘No one knows whether the shock of the bomb is the final stage of pralina or final destruction for Bali, or whether it is a sign of worse catastrophes to come’ (Sarad 32 2002:23). The final upsurge of the debate was the performance of a large-scale Pamarisuddha Karipurbhaya ritual ceremony on the 15th November involving the most powerful priests and the most potent mantras and holy waters the island could conjure up.5 The retreat into ritual had the effect of drawing people’s attention away from modern politics, obliterating temporarily the need to face more down-to-earth issues such as the current state of economic

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5The name of the Pamarisudha Karipurbhawa cycle of ceremonies is taken from the Old-Javanese where it means ‘cleansing’ (pamarisudda) of the danger (bhaya) caused by the enemy. This large-scale ceremony consisted in a series of rites comprising an exorcism (tawuragung), a cleansing of the spot (pangrapuh), a request for forgiveness for past sins (guru piduka), and a huge ritual offering of cows, goats etc. addressed to the spiritual forces of the whole world (labuh gentuh). As for the date of the event, it was selected by a priest on the base of propitious conjunctions on the Balinese calendar. On the Balinese calendar (Breguet G. and Couteau J. 2002).
hegemony and inter-ethnic conflict. Once again Bali retreated into timeless, non-diachronic history, caught in endlessly recurring cycles of time. In the end, it was as if nothing had changed, as if the Balinese were still playing the game everyone, since the Dutch era, expect them to play. The trauma of the Kuta bombing was cleansed in a huge demonstration of orthopraxy which, as would befit anything Balinese, was screened around the world.

The crystallisation of the anti-pendatang movement

The flurry of activities which followed the Kuta bombing eventually subsided, as the debate about the affirmation of ethnic identity resurfaced. Increasingly, discriminative measures were being taken against non-Balinese Indonesian settlers (pendatang), through the empowerment of the Balinese traditional village (desa pakraman or desa adat).

This debate is the end product of an ongoing process of politicisation of Balinese identity which started much earlier, during the days of Dutch colonisation. As Picard has argued elsewhere, discourse on Balinese identity emerged when ‘the inquisitive gaze of foreigners in their midst impelled the Balinese to explicitly account for the definition of what it meant to be Balinese’ (Picard 1999:75). In particular, religion increasingly became used to define ‘Balinese-ness’ (what Picard terms Kebalian). In former times no hard distinction was made between religion as ritual practices on the one hand, and customs and traditions on the other. ‘The community of villagers with their fields and temples,’ writes Ottino about a remote mountain village of Tabanan, ‘are but one dimension of a world which includes also the spiritual entities, ancestors and village gods with whom the community interacts in rituals’ (Ottino 2000:27). Identity was bound to religion only to the extent that outsiders wishing to reside in the space of the traditional village (desa adat) were held to abide by its customs and traditions. Where such conditions were met, or where they lived in their own villages with their own customs, Moslem Balinese were perceived as being as ‘Balinese’ as anyone else. As the Dutch began to exert more influence on the administrative structure of traditional villages, and as Christianity and Islam began to function as institutionalised creeds with their own customs and traditions thereby threatening those of their host-villages, a process of conceptual differentiation took place. Distinct semantic fields were delineated for religion and tradition, for which the words agama, a term derived from Sanskrit, and adat which comes from the Arabic, were borrowed. The difficulty in apprehending what the Balinese then proceeded to construe as their Kebalian or Balinese-ness comes from the fact that agama and adat began to function as two distinct realms of activity and concerns, while agama as ‘religion’ increasingly referred to ‘Hinduism’ as agama Hindu Bali or Bali Hindu, in the drive to prevent nascent Christian and Moslem proselytising (Picard 1997; Picard 2000). Furthermore, for political reasons after Independence, the Balinese had to substantiate their claim that their agama (religion) was not a simple compound of traditions but was entitled to recognition by the nation-state as a world creed on an equal footing with Islam and Christianity. In the process Balinese

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7 I owe this insight on the the impact of Christianity and Islam in Balinese villages to Arlette Ottino, private communication, April 2003. Picard also touches the topic with regard to the role played by intellectuals (Picard 2000:93).
‘agama’ lost its particularistic quality in order to become a world religion acceptable as an official religion for the Indonesian nation in the same way as Christianity and Islam. Adat, on the other hand became more and more marginalised as a result of New Order policies, while retaining some limited official recognition from the state. As the repository of everything particularistic, adat was used under the New Order regime as a means to enhance cultural specificities. As such it became an important marker of cultural identity. Adat was blurred into Budaya Bali (Balinese culture), and, as Picard argues, became a ‘brand image’ characterising the Balinese ‘as a particular ethnic group within the Indonesian ethnic nation’ (Picard 1997:184). Nowadays, adds Picard ‘with their adat secularised and their budaya touristified, agama Hindu has become the emblem of Kebalian (and....) somewhat paradoxically…the paramount embodiment of Balinese identity even though it gained recognition precisely under the condition that it be restricted solely to the Balinese (Picard 2000:109).

It is not accidental therefore, that the discourse of ethnic politics which resurfaced after the Kuta bombing, was not couched in terms of religion but in terms of ‘adat’. Glossed as Bali Hinduism (agama Hindu Bali), Balinese religion is nowadays constructed as being a world religion, while adat remains identified with what is closest to Balinese hearts, their ancestral tradition and local interests. Bali Hinduism no longer reflects those. It was constructed from religious, philosophical and ethical precepts belonging to the classical literature of Vedic India (Bakker 1993). Given the normative aspect of such literature as regards cultural ideas, values and practices, it may safely be said that the official Bali Hinduism discourse aims at the creation of ideal Balinese Hindu society on the basis of what could be termed an idealised vision of what Vedic India was about. This has necessarily led to questioning the relevance of the Hindu caste system (warna) and its legitimacy in the local form of catur wangs and warga in contemporary Balinese society. Such concerns are inevitably divisive, preventing the development of religious solidarity that the fact of belonging to one of the great religious traditions of the world might normally entail. It is only in times of crisis, such as the Saefuddin affair, to which I shall return below, when the relevance of their own religion to national affairs is being questioned, that this sentiment of solidarity emerges. Apart from this, it is adat and its inevitable link to ethnicity, increasingly perceived in terms of ethnic purity, which elicits group solidarity.

In contrast to Balinese religion which strives for universality, the current discourse on adat rests on local and conservative premises. It proposes a return to the past and to traditional customs as a means of purifying Bali from all the impurities associated with modern change (Vickers 1989:93–95; Warren 1993:17–24; Warren 2000). Such a discourse automatically entails the revalorisation of the desa adat as the ‘ideal’ community of the past, as it is imagined to be from a local reading of anthropological studies and travel books. Therefore, even though Balinese identity is increasingly constructed as Hindu in essence, the notion of identity that links religion to culture and obliterates the local distinctions in adat comes to the fore only in the last resort—usually in opposition to another world religion such as Islam or Christianity, and then only within the formal, mostly urban, context of modern Balinese Hinduism. At village level, the primary field of reference for most Balinese, it is adat which operates to link budaya (culture) to ethnicity.

The debate on adat as a marker of identity is not entirely ideological, though. Through the transformation of land into a marketable com-
modity, *adat* and the *desa adat*, the traditional institution through which *adat* is implemented, suffered greatly from the intrusion of tourism and the infringements of the state upon the land tenure and the village administrative systems—in particular through the 1979 Village Government Law, No.5 (Ottino forthcoming). Whereas much of the Balinese resistance to the implementation of New Order development policies was formulated by reference to a largely formalised *adat*, the reforms which have been undertaken since the fall of Suharto, in particular during Wahid’s presidency (October 1999–July 2001), aimed to restore pre-New Order village structures and institutions. The Decentralisation Law of 1999 enabled the restoration of the prerogatives of the *desa pakraman* or *desa adat* (traditional village), giving legitimacy for the ‘*pecalangan*’, a village militia resurrected from the ashes of the ancient system of village collective security, but using the ‘tough’ methods of the government-controlled *hansip*. The changes were given formal recognition in the Provincial Decree No.3 2001.

It is in the light of these recent developments in the Balinese’s consciousness of their own ‘ethnic identity’ and their place in the Indonesian nation-state that their reaction to the Kuta bombing should be examined. When the bomb blew up the two night-clubs, an ongoing village-bred and village-focused, movement for self-rule was already well established in Bali. But the bombing generated a momentum that may well take the movement beyond its previously limited political objectives of restoring local power. Indeed, as intellectuals in the media, and *pecalang* in the field, are raising the question of who is entitled to reside in a *desa pakraman*, the issue of who, among the ‘*Indonesians*’ or the ‘Balinese’, should ultimately be in control of the island of Bali, looms menacingly on the horizon.

A consideration of the factors leading to this situation requires a further enquiry into the manipulation of the discourse on *adat* for political purposes. To its proponents, *adat*, as noted above, is rooted in the tradition of the past. It is legitimised by what is known, deduced or imagined, of pre-colonial Balinese society, in the Dutch writings on *adatrecht* and studies of village *adat* law (*awig-awig desa*).8 In contemporary Bali, comments by specialists and commentators on *adat* and village law (*awig-awig desa*) literally clog the columns of the press.9 Long buried Balinese legal concepts are being called up from the past to justify the framing of non-Balinese as people with lesser rights. The word ‘*krama tamiu*’ (guest citizen), for example, which was virtually unknown until recently, has been dug up from dubious sources in order to define the non-natives as outsiders. Those so-called ‘*krama tamiu*’ indeed enjoy lesser rights than the ‘*krama wed*’—the sons of the soil. The latter, or so we are told, are the only ones entitled to partake in the village participatory trilogy of ‘*palemahan*’ (land), ‘*pawongan*’ (people) and ‘*parhyangan*’ (pantheon), the unity of which makes up the village (*desa*) (Sarad 34 2003:33).10 Since the ‘*krama tamiu*’ do not participate in the cult rendered to the village gods, so this logic of exclusion goes, they are automatically considered outsiders. This is legitimated by reference to the fact that, in last resort, the gods literally

8 A short version of the famous book on *adat* by the Dutch scholar Korn, V.E. 1932 *Adatrecht van Bali*, is available in a widely circulated stencilled translation.

9 In particular the central pages of the Bali Post, which are often devoted to *adat* issues; but also the magazine Sarad.

10 Arlette Ottino drew my attention that this phenomenon is indeed a resurgence of the ancient village system, according to which the original settlers of the land, the *pangarep*, constitute a privileged class of village citizens, with control over land and rites.
‘own’ (meduwe) the village. However, so the argument continues, even though they are not ‘krama wed’, some of the ‘krama tamiu’ are nevertheless Hindu as well, and therefore special provisions should apply to them; they should be encouraged to join the local ‘desa pakraman’; they are thus expected to ngayah (participate in the collective work) for the ceremonies in the public temples (parhyangan) in their village of residence (Sarad 34 2003:32–34). Based on reference to what is nowadays considered to have been the case in the past, a dual classification of the population is therefore proposed for contemporary Balinese society, that of krama wed/krama tamiu, to which is annexed another classification into Hindus and Non Hindus. Adat is being shrouded in religious legitimacy to justify the discriminative measures likely to be taken against the non-Hindu settlers who cannot be integrated within the system. Ultimately, the logical end result is to simply send ‘foreigners’, viz. the non-Hindus, back to where they belong—that is, outside Bali.

This is not as far-fetched as it seems. Appeal to a historical tradition of exclusion of the foreigner is found in articles such as appeared recently in the magazine Sarad (Sarad 34 2003:24–25). ‘In the days of the old kingdoms’, so the article goes, ‘the population policy was much better than now. At the time, people who crossed the border of a kingdom had to carry a ‘pass’ from the king or ruler of his area of origin…The kings themselves had a population policy according to which certain ethnic groups were gathered in a specific area. So there was no ‘mixing’, as there is today. The remnants of such a policy can be seen in the kampung Bugis, Jawa, Sulawesi, Cina in today’s former kingdom capitals. ‘When ‘alien’ residents were accepted, it was because of the existence of ‘a culture of exchange….because the relations between the ethnic groups were more collaborative in character than competitive (Sarad 34 2003: 38).’ We may question here to what extent this culture of exchange is not still operating today between migrant workers from other islands and the Balinese. We may further question the usefulness of returning to a past which no contemporary Balinese would accept as legitimate nowadays, to resolve a problem pertaining to the modern Indonesian nation-state.

Unfortunately, the discourse on adat is not all rhetoric, but often translates into concrete actions in the field. Population control has now effectively become the prerogative of the desa pakraman (villages). This followed administrative decisions taken, for the most part, after the Kuta bombing. Under the seal of a concern for security, the kabupaten-kabupaten (regencies), the city of Denpasar and the local assembly of desa pakraman unanimously decreed that any residents who were not officially registered in the administrative unit in which they lived would have to obtain a residence permit (KIPEM/KIPP), the price of which was set at Rp200.000,00 for three months. The task of implementing this new policy regulation was to be entrusted to the village pecalang, something which in practice amounted to giving full control over the implementation of the population policy to the most unstable elements in society, unemployed young adults and thugs. In order to prevent it from looking overtly ‘anti-pendatang’, the policy was devised in such a way as to apply to Balinese intra-island migrants as well as to migrants from Java, Lombok and other islands. This created havoc. As the price of the KIPEM/KIPP was considered exceptionally high, some Balinese gave up their residence in Denpasar or Kuta, commuting instead each day between their job and their village of origin in order to avoid having to pay the KIPEM/KIPP. Other ‘migrants’ simply ignored the regulation, keeping a low profile or
relying on local acquaintances while waiting for the wind to change. Which it did. Non-Balinese threatened to hold peaceful or even violent demonstrations. As it became obvious that the policy of population control would prove impossible to implement, a new regulation was promulgated in February 2003, now differentiating bluntly between the non-Balinese, who would have to pay Rp50,000,00 for their three-monthly KIPEM/KIPP, and the Balinese, for whom Rp5,000,00 would be sufficient. However, the Balinese themselves became split on the matter. While some villages stuck to stringent financial conditions for allowing pendatang to settle in their territory (something which in fact amounted to keeping most of them away), others virtually closed their eyes and remained relatively open to options. This ambiguous situation prevails today.

The call for pan-Bali Hindu solidarity, retreat into ritual and the crystallisation of ethnic interests reflect the interests of various factions in Balinese society. One of these is the ‘humanists’, mentioned earlier, who represent the main beneficiaries of tourism. They are mostly investors, with their agents and intermediaries. The second group, whom we might call ‘ritualists’, corresponds to a floating mass of relatively uneducated, working and non-working classes, both of rural and urban origin. The third group, the partisans of a yet-to-be defined Balinese self-rule, includes many of the educated members of the peasantry, the unemployed and probably members of the educated classes (white collar workers and teachers) who feel frustrated in their aspirations. Members of this last faction resent having been by-passed during the days of economic prosperity, having lost their former political power, and feel culturally inadequate to cope with the new value system brought on in the wake of the tourism-generated changes.

**Current trends in Balinese politics**

**The corsetting of politics**

What was discussed in the previous section should, to a large extent, be seen as the result of the policies of political, bureaucratic and economic hegemony and hyper-centralisation which characterised the New Order regime. It is not unique to Bali. Throughout Indonesia, the popular masses have been, even when outwardly enriched, expropriated and marginalised in favour of a minuscule Jakarta elite, the army, and related foreign interests. Each effort at resisting that hegemony has been manipulated in such a way that it ends up being deleterious, not to the system of domination itself, but to its weakest agents: the Madurese migrants in Borneo, the Bugis and Butonese in Ambon, the Javanese in Poso and Atjeh and other ‘transmigrants’ of mixed origins in Papua. Eventually, local Chinese middlemen also may be scape-goated. In two cases, resistance to the hegemonic center has assumed the guise of national liberation movements. They are the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement) in Aceh, because of a long history of independence and resistance to violence and exploitation, and the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Papua Independence Organization) in Papua where racial difference has become an identity marker on top of similar violence and exploitation.

Up to now Bali has escaped such a fate. Its traditional elite has long been—and still largely remains—co-opted by the various holders of Indonesian state power, in the same way as they were previously by the Dutch (Vickers 1989:157–189); Robinson 1995:19–51). More importantly, even as they lost control over the levers of the island’s economy, the Balinese actually benefited from the system in terms of their living standards, which are today among the highest of Indonesia. A relatively impor-
tant bourgeoisie appeared under the New Order, their sources of wealth derived mainly from their participation in the tourism industry, land speculation and the development of a dynamic indigenous micro-banking system. As I mentioned earlier, all this has kept the Balinese population receptive to the notion of an ‘Indonesian nation’ as well as cosmopolitanism, and blinded them to the contradictions created by thirty years of New Order politics and economic policies which, with the Kuta bombing, are now coming out in the open. It is anyone guess what political form those contradictions will eventually take. A glance at how New Order politics operated in Bali may throw some light on this.

**New order politics**

It is now public knowledge that Suharto came to power in a bloodbath. Eighty thousand people died in Bali alone (Robinson 1995:273). From the time the New Order was ushered in (1966) up to Suharto’s fall in 1998, centralisation of power was absolute. In Bali, governors and regents (Bupati) were appointed by the regime. Politicians had to be either members of the ruling Golkar or personalities cleared of all leftist sympathies. High and middle range officials were not only filtered, but indoctrinated in the ideology of the state, the Pancasila, and the army and other ‘law’ enforcers clamped down severely on any sign of political dissent.

Under such circumstances, the only domains in which any kind of discussion could occur were those in which the regime found its legitimacy and sociological support: the economy, the process of nation-building, the glorification of a highly revised past, to which must be added in Bali, the promotion of religion, of adat as tradition and culture, which became tools of domination under the garb of ethnic pride. Seminars on those topics became a fad of the New Order days. This meant, however, that it was impossible to discuss the future in terms other than ‘development’ which acquired a moral value in its own right, or to even underline the causes of the social tensions society was experiencing as a result. Thus corseted, any political opposition had to be expressed through indirect channels operating from within the system: as a demand for the implementation of the Rule of Law. Anti-New Order activists were lawyers, or legal-minded people, who busied themselves exposing the infringements of the regime towards its own laws, in matters of land, ecology, corruption and bureaucratic matters but were powerless to expose the inequities such policies entailed. The very lack of political clout which characterised this activism reveals its lack of sociological support. One of the main reasons for it lies in the fact that the economy was outwardly booming, so that people accepted working within the narrow conduit delineated for them by the regime. The ideological framework proposed by the hegemonic state found its legitimacy in this very economic prosperity and was thus widely accepted as such. The notion of development through tourism overwhelmingly came to be accepted, few being aware or even able to warn the local population about the wide-scale expropriation that was taking place. This ideology stuck, in a profoundly Gramscian way, in the consciousness of most Balinese with the result that, with a few exceptions, the Balinese ‘happily’ kept on talking about culture, tourism, tradition and adat, ‘cultural tourism’ etc… for almost thirty years.\(^{11}\) To use a metaphor, the thieves were at work, but there was (almost) no one to shout: ‘maling’ (thief)!

\(^{11}\) It is only in the middle 1990s that that a resistance to the New Order investment policy appeared (Warren 2000:5–9).
since the thieves were actually redistributing
the crumbs of tourism, in the name of ‘culture’.

The delusion of ‘cultural tourism’

The Balinese, Picard argues, have re-
responded to touristification as they did previ-
ously to colonisation and integration into the
Indonesian nation-state, by ‘negotiating their
own meanings with significant others even as
they take their distance from them’ (Picard
2000:93). Modern Balinese identity thus came
to be constructed in terms of adat, religion
(agama) and, increasingly, culture (budaya),
foreign categories which the Balinese have
successively bargained for, appropriated and
reinterpreted for their own purposes. Contem-
porary modern Balinese identity is thus a syn-
cretic notion, drawing as much from selected
western norms, principles and values as from
Bali’s own cultural stock. Picard adds that this
selective appropriation of foreign elements has
eventually led to a ‘drawing of boundaries be-
tween hitherto conceptually undifferentiated
domains within Balinese society’ (adat, agama,
budaya), and, perhaps more importantly, to the
Balinese becoming increasingly conscious of
being ‘a people’ in the ethnic sense of the term.
The end result of this is that the composite
modern identity of the Balinese has acquired a
cult value, becoming essentialised as Balinese
identity (what Picard terms Kebalian), and that
it is being used to push political claims and
challenge the Indonesian state. Ironically this
process, which was encouraged by the New
Order regime for purposes of national construc-
tion, is now backfiring against the Indonesian

However, no matter how lacking in foun-
dation this notion of modern Balinese identity
may appear to us, what matters is that it is now
considered legitimate enough to justify politi-
cal claims in the struggle for resources. In the
process, the concepts of culture and cultural
tourism have evolved from being merely de-
scriptive of a socio-historical reality to becom-
ing an asset, a symbolic resource or ‘capital’,
in the sense given to this term by Bourdieu,
justifying the systematic expropriation the is-
land has been subjected to. The debates sur-
rounding the concept of cultural tourism give
a good idea of what is at stake. When the New
Order regime decided in the 1970s to use tour-
ism as a means of development, the only ob-
jection put forward by the Balinese elite was
that tourism should be of a ‘cultural’ kind (Pi-
card 1996:119). In other terms, tourism should
be developed along their terms. They felt that
should keep control over it, and that their posi-
tion at the apex of the economic and social
structure should remain unchallenged. This
explains the insistence on the part of the local
elite to foster and protect ‘Balinese culture’, as
the most significant (and financially reward-
ing) Balinese symbolic capital, through the sale
dance shows, artefacts, etc, over which they
retained effective monopoly. The New Order
and its associated crony capitalists had alto-
gether different expectations. According to
them, Balinese culture should be marketed to
reinforce their economic stronghold over the
island in the name of ‘national unity’ (Kesatuan
Indonesia). The alternative was thus Bali was
thus between a rent-seeking capitalism owned
and managed by Jakarta, an option which
would lead eventually to the destruction of the
local culture for the benefit of an increasingly
homogeneous nation-based economic and cul-
tural framework on the one hand, and a locally
managed and owned, slower-growing capital-
ism dominated by the Balinese cultural and
economic elite, on the other. Not surprisingly,
both parties—the regime and its cronies, and
the Balinese elite claimed ‘cultural tourism’ as
their ultimate goal. Thus promoted, the notion
of cultural tourism became a catchword, one of
many in a country largely run by ‘development’ slogans. But behind it hid a trap. Cultural tourism was espoused by just about everyone who was remotely involved in Balinese affairs, from officials to academics, the local intelligentsia, ordinary Balinese, and of course investors. There ensued an eerie situation in which both the proponents of the New Order’s policy for Bali and its opponents used the same vocabulary of reference to push contradictory arguments. To quote but just one example, it was in the name of ‘cultural tourism’ that the Balinese resisted ‘outside’—mainly Jakartanese investments, but in its name also that investors stealthily appropriated much of the island’s economy. As what can only be termed an imposture was never exposed as such, the paradoxes grew relentlessly more absurd. The more the island’s economy was sliding away from Balinese control, the more the Balinese themselves protested that tourism should be ‘cultural’. The more ‘cultural tourism’ was being used as a catchword to hide deceptive practices, the more ‘culture’ itself became of importance to the people as a marker of their identity. As the Balinese gradually lost the ownership of their land and turned to alienating means of subsistence as wage earners or part-time workers in the informal sector, ‘cultural tourism’ ironically became also a marker of their powerless ness. Today still, the ideological discourse on culture and cultural tourism still holds good, even as the agrarian base on which Balinese culture rests is fast shrinking into irrelevance.

The whole institutional framework supported the imposture. Sometimes naively, at times cynically, the Balinese elite eagerly embraced the idea of cultural tourism. Ida Bagus Mantra, former Governor of Bali from 1978 to 1988 saw in tourism a means of reinforcing the culture of the island (Mantra 1995). As former director general for Culture (Dirjen Kebudayaan), he created the large-scale yearly Bali Art Festival (Pesta Kebudayaan Bali). Based on village dance and music contests and lasting a whole month, this Art Festival brought village culture within the sway of the regime’s bureaucracy, with the ultimate goal of marketing it to tourists. It therefore contributed significantly to the emergence of a culture of tourism (Picard 1996:167–171). After thus re-engineering Balinese culture at the behest of, and for the benefit of the New Order regime, it was left to his successor, Ida Bagus Oka, the next governor (1988–1998), to shamelessly invoke the ‘cultural successes’ of his predecessor to justify selling out prime land to non-Balinese, mainly Jakarta investors.

Naivety and cynicism certainly may be said to have been involved in an institution-building policy that enshrined Bali’s dependency on the central government. Indeed, although the Denpasar Art School may justifiably be proud of the hundreds of students enrolled in its dance department, it should be noted that no institute of higher education was ever set up to teach foreign languages to the Balinese. Similarly, whereas departments of Balinese, Old-Javanese, applied anthropology, and even a graduate diploma in cultural studies—in short disciplines relating to the specific interests of cultural tourism—were created by Udayana University in Denpasar, sociology or philosophy, of more general interest were pointedly ignored. The Balinese were thus never given the appropriate tools they needed in order to reflect upon, or even question, the changing structure of their own society; nor were they ever able to receive the education necessary to manage the new economy properly. Ironically, such was the prestige of cultural tourism that, for 30 years, the Balinese kept on welcoming with local dances and flower offerings, the very officials and (often crony) investors who were signing contracts for the purchase of hundreds of hectares of prime investment Balinese land.
The politicisation of cultural identity

Unavoidably, in the long run, the discrepancies between the official aims of the policy for cultural tourism and the harsher realities of its implementation on the ground were bound to generate—not open political protests, something inconceivable in the political context of the times—but indirectly opposition as ‘identity’ increasingly took the form of a political discourse. Initially this hidden form of resistance was focused on culture and its various derivatives, tradition, adat, or religion as well as some of its typical manifestations literature, painting, scholarly publications, all of which looked to the past for legitimacy while affirming the enduring permanence of Balinese values and traditions, through their relevance to modern interests. This affirmation of Balinese identity through the ‘traditionalisation’ of tradition literally swamped all aspects of cultural life from the 1980s onwards. I personally had the opportunity to study its manifestations in the field of modern art (Couteau 2003). Between the mid-seventies and the turn of the century, Balinese artists, almost without exception, produced paintings that were either figurative representations of the island’s beauty or, increasingly, pseudo-abstract-looking works laden with elements symbolic of traditional Balinese Hinduism (chequered black and white poleng cloth, mountain, Barong eyes, rerajahan etc). Not a single artist dealt with the social problems of the island. Every one of the paintings thus concurred with the cult of Balinese identity. This emphasis on culture promulgated under the New Order was indeed not innocent. It was engineered in order to extract a concept of culture from a religious tradition which drew the admiration of foreign visitors, in order to make it more marketable. However, it was inevitable that the contradictions between religion and economics would be exposed, as the marketing of Balinese ritual practices for tourist purposes became more and more common.

The commercialisation of Balinese religion is not a recent phenomenon. Indeed, back in the 1930s, it was already possible to order performances of Barong and Rangda for tourist consumption (Picard 1996:148). But this early commercialisation of religion was not perceived as a threat. It enabled the local aristocracy who controlled the cultural and ritual networks in those days, to consolidate their status and power through the redistribution of the windfalls from tourism among their subjects. However, conditions are different in contemporary Bali. Following the failure on the part of the Balinese to impose their own version of what cultural tourism should be about, the commercialisation of religion is nowadays carried out under the control of outsiders. The first signs of a politicisation of the notion of culture appeared back in 1993, when the Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) project was launched. The GWK project intended the building of a huge cultural park around what was promoted as ‘the biggest statue in the world’, a gigantic reproduction of Wisnu astride the mythical bird Garuda. Not only did this project actually intend to use the image of a Balinese god for commercial purposes, but it also was to be financed with outside capital. This gave rise to lengthy debates in the written press, on the notion of ‘Balinese culture’ and the appropriateness of turning religious symbols into tourist attractions (Warren 1995). However, this was nothing compared to the protests which followed the announcement, a few months later, of the projected construction of a luxury tourist resort, the Bali Nirvana Resort, in Tanah Lot. Built by financiers related to the New Order, the hotel was promoted as having a unique view over the Tanah Lot temple. This time, the Balinese soon understood that what was be-
ing commercialised was not simply peculiar ‘aspects’ of Balinese religion but the idea of religion itself. The reaction was immediate: the occupation of land, written protests, student demonstrations. The protests, which lasted several months over 1993 and 1994, initiated the politicisation of a large segment of the Balinese bourgeoisie who defined their cultural identity in terms of religion (Agama Hindu Bali) (Picard 1996:193–194; Suasta and Connor 1999). Since then, any action which was suspected of defiling or desacralising Balinese religious beliefs in any way, set off a volley of protests on the part of groups who view themselves as the defenders of ‘Balinese-ness’.

It is in this context that the Balinese reaction to the recent influx of pendatang, inter-island migrants, mostly Moslems, who come to Bali in search of a better livelihood, must be understood. Many Hindu Balinese perceive this influx as an invasion of their traditional space and a threat to everything their religion stands for, in particular their cultural identity. It is significant that the anti-pendatang movement has, since the early nineties, increasingly taken the form of inter-ethnic tension, leading to a severe repression of the migrants and the closure of a number of traditional villages (desa adat) to them (Couteau 2002:239–241). By the middle nineties, however, as more pressing issues occupied the attention of students and activists, the pendatang problem was relegated to the background, to flare up again in the last two years of the twentieth century, with the arrival of refugees from troubled areas (Am-bon, Jakarta, and Timor-Timur). Fled to Bali, believing it to the a ‘safe haven’ free of the inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions flaring up elsewhere. The riots in Kuta in May 1999 during which hundreds of pendatang stalls and vehicles were destroyed and one death was reported, and a wave of arbitrary lynchings in 1998 and 1999, soon put an end to this belief.

Such anti-pendatang actions must be set in the context of the fact that the Balinese constitute a cultural and religious minority in a nation-state where the transition to democracy ironically may translate into a Moslem-led or even an Islamist government, something unthinkable under the Sukarno and Suharto brands of authoritarian secularism. Today any religious group may openly vie for political recognition. Because of the traditional ties between religion and access to land and residence in a village setting, in Bali this inevitably takes on an ethnic dimension.

One incident which stands out as embodying the ethnic dimension of the confrontation between the Balinese as Hindu and the rest of the Indonesian nation who are mainly Moslems, is the A.M.Saefuddin affair. A brief survey of the unfolding of events may be useful here. On the 15th October 1998, the Islamic newspaper Republika published a provocative remark made by A.M. Saefuddin, one of the ministers in Habibie’s cabinet and a self-proclaimed candidate from the Islamic Development Party, the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan). He commented on Megawati, then Vice-President of Indonesia and her habit of visiting Hindu temples while in Bali. ‘Isn’t she a Hindu whereas I am a Moslem? Is the Indonesian population ready to have a woman of Hindu origin as President?’ This comment raised an immediate outcry in Bali, leading to the establishment of an ‘action committee’ of Hindu Balinese activists. Called AUM (Aksi Umat Menggugat or Action of the Accusing Faithful), an acronym which, not coincidentally, recalls the sacred Hindu syllable OM. In the Bali

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12 Between 1980 and 2000, the percentage of registered Moslems, the main group of pendatang, jumped from 5.2% to 10.3% of the population for the whole island, and 25.5% in the city of Denpasar alone (BPS 2002).
Post the same day, one could read the following statement ‘The option of *Bali Merdeka* (Independent Bali) must be considered if Habibie does not cleanse the insult the Hindu community suffered, by sacking A.M.Saefuddin’. This was followed by demonstrations in front of the regional parliament. Over the next few days, while demonstrations were engulfing the whole island, several Balinese leaders spoke up, to request sometimes with veiled threats, that President Habibie take prompt action to make amends by sacking his minister. Among the various threats of retaliation, the idea of an independent Bali emerged as one of the strongest and most popular options. Once articulated, the idea worked its way in the minds of the Balinese as one possible way out of its dilemma as a minority culture in a predominantly Moslem nation, all the more so as the economic conditions and the infrastructure of the island were such that the notion of an independent Bali appeared quite feasible.

*Bali Merdeka* has indeed taken hold of people’s imagination, even though the majority of the Balinese are staunch supporters of the PDI-Perjuangan party. Eighty per cent of Balinese voted for that party in the 1998 elections. As the PDI-P is heir to Sukarno’s Nationalist Party of the post-independence days, there seems a priori little reason to doubt the reality of their attachment to the Indonesian Republic. The Balinese fought valiantly alongside other Indonesians for the independence of Indonesia during the guerilla war from 1945 to 1948. To this commitment to the nation must be added the fact that many members of the Balinese elite enjoy strong personal links with Jakarta government officials and of course private investors. In addition the loyalty of the Balinese to Sukarno’s own daughter, today’s President Megawati, is linked to the fact that her father’s mother came from the north of the island. The virtue of such connection is not lost on Megawati who deliberately keeps it alive. Prior to the A.M.Saefuddin affair, she used to ‘pray’ in Balinese temples. It is clear that for many Balinese there is a strong bond between the ideals of Indonesian nationalism, represented in Sukarno’s days by the PNI, Megawati’s current PDI-P, and what the Balinese perceive as their ethnic identity.

Yet, as much as it reinforces the bond of Bali with the Indonesian state, the ethnic character of the Indonesian nationalism of the Balinese is also a sign of its very limits and conditionality. ‘Whither Bali?’ we may ask, when the magic connection between the island and the Indonesian state is broken when Sukarno’s daughter Megawati loses her presidency, or if a coalition intent on Islamising Indonesia comes to power?

**Discussion**

The paper has tried to demonstrate that the Balinese are at a crossroad. They are still attached to a certain concept of the Indonesian nation, embodied by the PDI-P and Sukarno’s family, in which Balinese ethnicity and Indonesian multi-ethnic ideals can be reconciled through secularism. Yet, as was illustrated by the A.M. Saefuddin affair with regard to agama, and by the anti-pendatang movement with regard to adat, this bond depends to a large extent on Balinese agama and adat not being perceived as under threat, the first by

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13 PDI-Perjuangan stands for *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* (Indonesia Democratic Party for Struggle), a secular party opposed to Suharto’s Golkar and to a host of Indonesian Islamist parties.

14 This was shown in particular on October 21st, 1999, when PDI-P thugs, dissappointed by Megawati’s defeat in her bid for the presidency, went on rampage throughout the island, destroying dozens of public buildings.
Islam, the second by settlers unassimilable into the adat system. If and when this occurs, the bond is bound to weaken and the call for self-rule, leading eventually to Bali Merdeka, will take over. In such a context, culture (budaya) which unites adat and agama in ethnicity and has been greatly over-emphasized in the ideological discourse of cultural tourism, actually strengthens the Balinese consciousness of their ‘ethnic’ uniqueness, long held in check under the New Order regime.

The future for the Balinese appears full of uncertainties, although the view is not altogether pessimistic. The Kuta bomb has given the Balinese the opportunity to behave in conformity with the ideal image they and the rest of the world have of them. In some respect it allowed them to put into practice what they held in discourse, i.e. their tolerance, their capacity for acting so as to defuse conflict and potential tensions, and to care for the souls of others, non-Hindu foreigners. This capacity to reach out beyond the boundaries of their own religion and culture, has taken them momentarily out of their own crisis. In this respect the Kuta bombing may be said to have had a definite cathartic effect on the island.

The other side of the picture is less rosy. The Kuta bombing, now compounded with the impact of the Iraq war and the atypical SARS pneumonia, has abruptly pulled the economy of Bali to a stop. The number of tourists has dwindled to fewer than half the normal figures. People who, until recently, had become accustomed to a steadily rising standard of living, suddenly find themselves impoverished. Some have permanently lost their jobs, while many others are on compulsory leave, as hotels and travel companies try to minimise their losses. The hardest hit are the workers in the informal sector. Those who used to take out a living in tourist resorts are now compelled to go back to villages if they are Balinese, or back to their island of origin, if they are pendatang. Farmers themselves, who had previously effected the transition to cash crops such as fruits and vegetables, find their market gone. Another consequence is the crisis of the well-established Balinese micro-banking system. Many members of the previously emerging bourgeoisie are now threatened with bankruptcy, as are the land speculators since Bali is no longer the safe investment haven it was supposed to be.

Under such circumstances one may ask what will remain of the feeling of solidarity which has characterised Balinese reactions to the Kuta bombing. There is evidence that it has lost some of its appeal. The economic crisis brought about by terrorism fuels growing doubts about the place of Bali in the Indonesian nation and the wisdom of national unity, raising the question of the eventual possibility of opening Bali directly to foreign markets without transiting through Jakarta.

Among ordinary Balinese who are bearing the brunt of the crisis, the suspicion that it is after all Islam ane ngae benyah (Islam that is wreaking havoc) is now gaining ground. For some Balinese, it becomes urgent to restore the ancient customs in order to bring back a much desired cosmic order to an island where the pendatang would at last know how to behave (metilesang dewek). Considering the daunting problems Bali has to confront, the solidarity and magnanimity shown by the Balinese may thus be no more than a hiatus in their long road to a yet undefined political self-rule.

It now behoves the national and local politicians to understand that such a road does indeed exist, and to try to open it in a way that is in conformity with the image of peace and solidarity many Balinese are still trying to give of themselves. In this respect they will have to
acknowledge the claim for equality of status and prestige the modern agama Hindu Bali makes upon other official Indonesian religions. They will also have to acknowledge the strength of adat and village communities by forbidding further large-scale alienation of land and controlling the migratory movements. Finally they will have to recognise that ‘Cultural Tourism’ (Pariwisata Budaya), while satisfying in theory, might turn out to be a dangerous imposture, if they ignore the fact that it serves to hide large-scale expropriation of the Balinese, or that when paired with the demands of adat and agama, it will lead directly to ethnic politics. If they fail to recognise these facts and aspirations, the future of Bali is anyone’s guess.

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