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DOI: 10.1355/sj30-3n

*The Malaysian Islamic Party PAS 1951–2013: Islamism in a Mottled Nation*. By Farish A. Noor. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014. 260 pp.

The Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) is Malaysia’s most important opposition party. This book is a welcome follow-up to *Islam Embedded* (2004), Farish A. Noor’s epic two-volume account of PAS from the time of its origins to 2003.

The book’s analysis is complex and compelling. PAS emerged from the religious wing of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) in 1951. It began with little more than an ill-defined commitment to an Islamic state, but moved decisively towards Islamic internationalism under former Malay Nationalist Party leader Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy. It burst on to the national scene in 1959 with electoral victories in Kelantan and Terengganu, and it was one of the first Islamist parties in the world to attain power — albeit at the sub-national level — through constitutional means. PAS moved away from the pan-Islamism of Burhanuddin under the ethno-nationalist leadership of Mohammad Asri Muda (party leader, 1970–82). It joined forces with UMNO in a relationship formalized in the National Front in 1974. However, the two fell out over PAS’s mishandling of affairs in Kelantan, and PAS lost power in Kelantan in elections held in 1978.

The subsequent reorganization of PAS as a conservative *ulama*-led party was not an instant success; the party won only one Federal

parliamentary seat in the 1986 elections. However, by 1990 a split within UMNO, and the emergence in PAS of a more moderate group of professionals, enabled it to regain its Kelantan fortress. Since then it has retained Kelantan, but its fortunes have waxed and waned. Its highest point was in 1999, when another UMNO split helped it to gain twenty-seven Federal parliamentary seats and the leadership of the opposition. It also performed strongly in 2008, heading the state administration in Kedah and (for a short while) Perak, and again in 2013, though it lost Kedah and failed to regain Perak in that year.

The *ulama* faction has generally dominated PAS since the 1980s, but professionals (known from the 1990s as “Erdogan”, after the Turkish prime minister) have been largely responsible for its recent electoral successes. Ethno-nationalists have reasserted themselves, in alliance with the *ulama*, in attempts to work with UMNO after the 2008 and 2013 elections.

Farish insightfully links this analysis to developments in the wider Islamic world and to domestic politics. Some of the major international influences that shaped PAS’s development were the exposure of its leaders to Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood, the writings of radical conservatives such as the Egyptians Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna, and study at the Deobandi College in India. The 1979 *ulama*-led Iranian revolution also inspired hopes of Malaysia following the same path. Important domestic issues included the beginning of the “Islamization race” with UMNO after the 1959 election, the growth of the *dakwah* movement from the 1970s, UMNO’s “modernist” Islamic alternative offered by Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim from the 1980s, and UMNO splits in 1987 and 1998, followed by *reformasi* in the latter case. Other noteworthy domestic developments were the moderate *Islam Hadhari* of Abdullah Badawi and the less explicitly Islamic Malaysia initiative of Najib Tun Razak, along with opposition electoral successes in 2008 and 2013. An unintended consequence of these developments, Farish notes, has been a massive expansion of conservative state and Federal Islamic bureaucracies. An “Islamic leviathan” is already in existence, created not by the widely feared PAS, but by UMNO.

The best part of this work is the rich detail brought to analysis of the 1980s and 1990s, when the current PAS leadership came to the fore and competition between the conservative *ulama* and the Erdogans began. Other sections are also persuasively elaborated, but some parts are less convincing. This reviewer believes that Burhanuddin's concerns were more ethno-nationalist than Islamic internationalist, particularly his support for the unity of Southeast Asian Malays (*Melayu Raya*). In part because of the role played by Mohamad Asri Muda's leadership, who then led PAS in Kelantan and Terengganu, ethno-nationalism was probably more important to electoral success in 1959 than factors such as "PAS's call for an Islamic state" (p. 56). With Asri's assumption of leadership of the party after Burhanuddin's detention in 1965, ethno-nationalism again enabled PAS to enjoy electoral success in 1969.

The book is brought up to date with an excellent analysis of PAS during the turbulent times of Badawi and Najib. Farish credits Badawi with a "new era of inclusiveness and accommodative Malaysian politics" (p. 178), and Najib with aspiring to "open, accessible, accountable and responsible" government (p. 197). But he perhaps overstates the liberal disposition of both administrations on Islamic matters. Abdullah did, after all, prevent discussion of an Interfaith Commission and non-Muslim rights (Article 11), and resisted — as Najib did later — non-Muslim use of the term "Allah".

There are some minor factual errors in this book, but these do not detract from the main arguments. For example, the ruling Alliance was not a "minority government" with 44.9 per cent of the vote and 74 seats after the 1969 elections (p. 62); it won 92 seats, increasing to 97 seats with 50.6 per cent of the popular vote following coalition with a Sarawak party three days after the elections. Also, PAS was always known by that name to its members; the name was not adopted "later" by a party originally known as the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (p. 40). In addition, the change of name to *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* in 1971 (officially in 1973) was not from *Persatuan Islam Se-Malaysia* (p. 78), but from *Persatuan Islam Se-Tanah Melayu*.

This volume represents an ambitious attempt to evaluate one of the world's leading Islamist parties over the course of six decades. It succeeds admirably, and is the best available work on PAS and political Islam in Malaysia.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj30-3o

*Indians in Singapore 1819–1945: Diaspora in the Colonial Port City*. By Rajesh Rai. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014. xxix+325 pp.

Rajesh Rai's commendably detailed and well-researched book sketches the history of Indian migration to Singapore and teases out the specificities and complexities of diaspora and development in the urban landscape of the Asian port city. In doing so, it fills an important lacuna in diaspora studies of Indians in this frontier outpost which has received little attention. Chapter One traces the origins of the Indian population of Singapore. Soldiers arrived first — with Stamford Raffles himself — and some sepoy and camp auxiliaries, including dhobis, remained in the port city. Tamil Muslim traders, known as Chulias or Klings, were the next group of Indians to arrive. Singapore also became a convenient stopover for Parsi merchants, while Chettiars established a niche in the financial sector. Between 1825 and 1860, labour shortages were partially solved by the importation of several thousand, mostly male, Indian