

and economic systems in Malaysia, which surprisingly Schottmann (pp. 127–29) referred to as “neo-reformism”, has been criticized as leading to exclusivist and utopian thinking that has impeded the development of Malaysian society. It leaves readers wondering whether Schottmann is placing the Darul Arqam movement—a neo-Sufi order that was banned in 1994—as neo-reformist, since the essence of the group is to Islamize society and create an Islamic alternative. In fact, a discussion of the banning of Darul Arqam itself, which represents Mahathir’s intolerance towards Islamic groups challenging his popularity, deserves more attention.

Mahathir is a fascinating statesman who deserves to be studied critically. However, one should not overstate his role in Islamizing the government without examining the thinking of the people around him. While Mahathir should not be considered an Islamic thinker, he is the voice for less-developed countries, which are overly represented by Islamic countries. Future studies should consider this aspect of Mahathir’s thinking rather than his views on Islam.

Norshahril Saat

Regional Social & Cultural Studies, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Singapore 119614; email: norshahril_saat@iseas.edu.sg.

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Through Turbulent Terrain: Trade of the Straits Port of Penang. By Loh Wei Leng with Jeffery Seow. MBRAS Monograph No. 50. George Town and Kuala Lumpur: Think City and the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2018. xiii+273 pp.

Through Turbulent Terrain offers an important corrective to treatments of the history—and the ‘heritage’—of Penang that stress its famously ‘cosmopolitan’ character while neglecting the economic bases of the singular society that emerged there. This corrective takes the form of a stimulating, and empirically rich, interpretation of Penang’s changing maritime role. Central to that interpretation is the insight

that, while from the late eighteenth century to around the turn of the twentieth the port of Penang served primarily as an *entrepôt*, it subsequently took on a second and simultaneous function. That is, even as it continued to play its *entrepôt* role, it also became a “Malayan” or “staple” port (pp. 86, 3, 130ff.). This reading of the record of Penang’s trade has implications for understanding both the island’s history and its relationship to its sub-region.

Loh cites Cowan (1950, p. 12) to note that, throughout the nineteenth century, the commerce of Penang included imports of piece goods from India; exports of high-value, low-bulk products to China; and extensive intercourse with Burma, the West Coast of Peninsular Siam and Sumatra. Penang played its part in the opium trade, too.

Trade with the port’s maritime hinterlands was not without complications. The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 notwithstanding, for decades from the late 1830s onward the Dutch impeded commercial access to the harbours of the northeast coast of Sumatra. Loh’s attention to the longstanding concerns that this obstructionism caused the merchants of Penang is noteworthy. So, too, is her attention to Penang’s trade with Burma. As early as the second half of the 1820s, the port of Penang—along with Singapore—imported rice from Arakan. Fifteen years later, two-fifths of its imports from Moulmein comprised the same bulky commodity. The record of this trade during the decades in question complicates our understanding of Penang’s *entrepôt* role.

The discussion in the book of Penang’s contact with Burma during the nineteenth century also quotes A.D. Maingy’s proclamation, issued in the wake of the First Anglo-Burmese War, noting his orders to proceed from Penang to Tavoy and Mergui and “to provide them with a civil and political administration, on the most liberal and equitable principles” (p. 120). This material will of course gratify readers who remember their Furnivall (see Furnivall 1939). It also serves to prefigure Penang’s role during most of the subsequent century and a half as an exporter of institutions, ideals and examples up the Andaman coast and to other neighbouring areas. In the main,

those doing the importing would not be subject to imperial coercion of the sort that took Maingy to Tenasserim. And this enduring role depended on Penang's persistent *entrepôt* function, even in the era that saw it emerge as a Malayan staple port.

One wishes that *Through Turbulent Terrain* brought similarly compelling detail to Penang's lasting *entrepôt* trade with the West Coast of Peninsular Siam. "Kopah" (Takua Pa) and several other ports on that coast come up in Loh's discussion (p. 118). That discussion might well prod scholars to undertake further exploration of the commercial ties between these ports and Penang and of the local agency that saw their residents assimilating influences emanating from the island.

Trade data presented in *Through Turbulent Terrain* make clear that neither the East India Company's foundation of Singapore in 1819 nor its transfer of the capital of the Straits Settlements to that latter port thirteen years later doomed Penang to backwater status. The growth in Penang's exports and imports remained healthy and sometimes rapid. However, and especially in the twentieth century, the location in Singapore of the seat of what was by then the Crown Colony's administration loomed large as a factor in "the perennial unresolved issue of port facilities" in Penang (p. 141).

Loh argues that short-term fluctuations in trade proved far more important to Penang's maritime fortunes than did competition with the larger port at the southern end of the Straits. A corollary of this contention is that, both throughout the nineteenth century and past the mid-point of the twentieth, the port of Penang served a distinct sub-region, "the northwest littoral of Southeast Asia" (p. 130). Appreciation of its historical significance thus calls for research into that diverse, complex and dynamic sub-region—unfashionable as the rise of 'global history' may render such demanding scholarship.

The sub-region that Penang served came to include much of Malaya itself. The commerce in tin and above all in rubber stood at the centre of its emergence as a staple port at the turn of the last century. This development had two crucial and complementary

effects—to tie Penang more tightly than before to economic activity in the Malayan interior and to link it to distant markets in the industrial West. Each of these effects would shape Penang’s subsequent history; the island continues to grapple with each of them even today.

Through Turbulent Terrain incorporates long quotations from the primary sources on which it draws; its appendices include further primary material. Both the text and the appendices of the book present numerous tables of trade figures, serving to demonstrate the arguments advanced. In addition to an extensive and valuable bibliography, the book includes twenty-four colour plates. These plates bring vividness to the volume’s narrative of the trade history of Penang.

Michael Montesano

Thailand and Myanmar Studies Programmes, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Singapore 119614; email: michael_montesano@iseas.edu.sg.

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Bangladeshi Migration to Singapore: A Process-Oriented Approach. By Md Mizanur Rahman. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2017. xx+198 pp.

In this book, Mizanur Rahman examines the experiences of Bangladeshi migrants in Singapore, how they live, and what consequences this migration has for them and their families in Bangladesh. Using sociocultural aspects, he addresses two important