

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1927–1934.* By John Ingleson. Singapore: Heinemann, 1979. Pp. 254.**

Ingleson's book helps towards an understanding of the events in Indonesian history that took place in the years after the abortive communist revolt of 1926. Thanks to painstaking research in the Dutch archives, Ingleson has pieced together the significant trends that emerged from 1927 to 1934 and presented them in a very readable book.

Up to the time of its publication, students of Indonesian history had only a cursory knowledge of the salient issues that dominated the period, viz., the establishment of nationalist organizations like the Perhimpunan Indonesia, the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), the Permufakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI), Partindo, and PNI Baru, the arrests of Sukarno on two occasions, the existence of study clubs, and so on. Ingleson's study adds flesh to the skeleton of details that was available up till now.

However, this last statement may be viewed as rather ungenerous as it can be argued that the book makes a greater contribution than just providing new details. Its publication showed that studies of "national" (as opposed to "local") level politics are still very useful despite a tendency for students in the past and even now to try to write regional histories. Apart from some very dry discussions on the organizational activities of the various parties, the book also succeeds in portraying the character of Sukarno, the principal nationalist leader. History, after all, is about people. However, it should be noted that most of the other leaders were not given the same detailed treatment. Was this a case of their lesser importance or simply a problem that the Dutch archives did not provide sufficient materials for character portrayals? The book's rather pessimistic title, *Road to Exile*, gives a correct reflection of the balance of power in colonial Indonesia. Despite the flurry of nationalist activities, the Dutch authorities were a factor to be reckoned with and Ingleson's study does not omit copious discussion on this theme. In writing a reliable history of the nationalist movement, the Dutch presence cannot be understated.

Two areas of discussion merit special mention. On p. 169 and pp. 193–98, Ingleson tried to clarify the differences between PNI Baru and Partindo. Those who have only a vague idea of this topic would do well to read these pages. On p. 172, Ingleson entered into an interesting discussion on whether Sukarno acted out of political expediency or whether he was obsessed by the Javanese notion of unity. Again, this section merits the readers' attention.

If there are shortcomings to be found, the following can be listed. The subtitle of the book suggests that it is a study of the Indonesian nationalist movement. Actually the focus is on the "secular" nationalist groups. Islamic nationalism is mentioned (particularly in pp. 127–32) but only in passing in the greater part of the book. It should be noted that Islamic nationalism was no less important. Similarly, the impact of the world economic depression was discussed here and there but surely such a major international event should deserve less cursory treatment.

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### **Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java, 1917 – 1942**

LEO SURYADINATA

This book is a study of the nature and historical development of peranakan Chinese politics in Java, with reference to the three major political streams — the China-oriented Sin Po group, the Netherlands-oriented Chung Hwa Hui, and the Indonesia-oriented Partai Tionghoa Indonesia. The work is based on original sources comprising newspapers and pamphlets printed in peranakan Malay and on personal interviews. The author attempts to identify various phases in the political activities of the peranakan Chinese and presents a detailed and documented political history of this Chinese minority in Java before the Second World War.

“ . . . this work will prove invaluable to scholars concerned with overseas Chinese communities, politicization in a colonial setting and the history of Indonesia in the quarter-century before war and revolution engulfed the archipelago . . . .”

— *Pacific Affairs*

“Suryadinata’s book is a welcome addition to our as yet scarce knowledge of peranakan politics in the Netherlands Indies . . . . It fills an important gap in our knowledge of the subject.”

— *China Quarterly*

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