

# ISLAM EMBEDDED

The Historial Development of the  
Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS (1951 - 2003)

Volume 2

FARISH A. NOOR







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VOLUME 2

by

FARISH A. NOOR

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*Caption cover:*

'A typical PAS *markaz* (camp, headquarters) located at Kampung Pulau Melaka, south of Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The painted image mounted on the front of the shop carries the image of the *Murshid'ul Am* (spiritual leader) of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat. Photographed by the author in 2000.'

## ABBREVIATIONS

(For Volume I & Volume II)

ABIM	<i>Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
AKIM	<i>Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia</i> [Justice for Mankind Movement Malaysia]
AMDA	Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement
AMSEC	ASEAN Muslim Secretariat
AMSS	Association of Muslim Social Scientists
API	<i>Angkatan Pemuda Insaf</i> [Conscious Youth Movement]
APU	<i>Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah</i> (Muslim Unity Front)
ASN	<i>Amanah Saham Nasional</i> (National Unit Trust)
AWAS	<i>Angkatan Wanita Sedar</i> [Conscious Women Movement]
BATAS	<i>Barisan Tani Sa-Malaya</i> (Malayan Farmers' Front)
BBMP	<i>Barisan Bersatu Mujahideen Patani</i> (United Mujahideen Front of Patani)
BERJASA	<i>Barisan Jemaah Islamiyyah Se-Malaysia</i> [All-Malaysian Muslim Front]
BIPP	<i>Barisan Islam Pembebasan Patani</i> (Islamic Liberation Front of Patani)
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BMA	British Military Administration
BMF	Bumiputra Malaysia Finance
BMLO	Bangsa Moro Liberation Organisation
BNM	<i>Bank Negara Malaya</i> (Malayan National Bank)
BNPP	<i>Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani</i> (National Liberation Front of Patani)
BRN	<i>Barisan Revolusi Nasional</i> (National Revolutionary Front)

## ABBREVIATIONS

BTRK	<i>Barisan Tindakan Rakyat Kelantan</i> (Kelantan People's Action Front).
CAO	Civil Affairs Office
CAP	Consumers Association of Penang
CCA	Christian Conference of Asia
CCC	Chinese Consultative Councils
CFM	Christian Federation of Malaysia
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DDII	<i>Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia</i> (The Council of Indonesian Islamic Propagation)
FAMA	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
FKAWL	<i>Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jamaah</i> [Communication Forum for the Sunnites]
FMS	Federated Malay States
FRU	Federal Reserve Unit
FSF	Federal Security Force
GAGASAN	<i>Gagasan Rakyat Malaysia</i> [The Malaysian People's Forum]
GAM	<i>Gerakan Aceh Merdeka</i> (Free Aceh Movement)
GAMPAR	<i>Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya</i> (United Greater Patani Malays Movement)
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
Gerakan	<i>Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia</i> (Peoples' Movement Party of Malaysia)
GERAM	<i>Gerakan Angkatan Muda</i> [Movement of the Youth]
GSP	Generalised System of Preferences
HAMIM	<i>Hizbul Muslimin Malaysia</i> [Malaysian Hizbul Muslimin]
HSC	High School Certificate
ICMI	<i>Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia</i> (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals)
IHR	Institute for Historical Review
IIFSO	International Islamic Federation of Student Organisations
IIIT	International Institute for Islamic Thought
IJT	<i>Islami Jami'at-i Tulaba</i> (Pakistan)
IKD	<i>Institut Kajian Dasar</i> (Institute of Policy Research)

## ABBREVIATIONS

IKIM	<i>Institut Kemahiran Islam Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Institute for Islamic Research)
IMET	International Military and Educational Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMP	Independence for Malaya Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRC	Islamic Representative Council
ISA	Internal Security Act
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence agency
ISTAC	International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation
ITM	Institut Teknologi Mara (Mara Institute of Technology)
ITO	International Trade Organisation
JI	<i>Jama'at-e Islami</i> (Pakistan)
JIM	<i>Pertubuhan Jama'ah Islah Malaysia</i> [a Malaysian organisation for Islamic revival]
JUI	<i>Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam</i> (Pakistan)
KBI	<i>Kelab Buruh Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Workers' Club)
KIDU	Kolej Islam Darul Ulum (Darul Ulum Islamic College)
KMM	<i>Kesatuan Melayu Muda</i> (Young Malays Association)
KMM	<i>Kesatuan Mujahidin Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Mujahideen Movement)
KMS	<i>Kesatuan Melayu Singapura</i> (Malay Union of Singapore)
KRIS	<i>Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung</i> (Union of Indonesian and Peninsular Malay Peoples)
KSITM	<i>Kesatuan Siswazah Institut Teknologi Mara</i> (Mara Institute of Technology Students Union)
LME	London Metal Exchange
LUTH	<i>Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji</i> (Hajj Pilgrims Management Fund)
MABIMS	<i>Menteri Hal Ehwal Agama Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia dan Singapura</i> (Ministers of Religious Affairs of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore)

## ABBREVIATIONS

MAGERAN	<i>Majlis Gerakan Negara</i> (National Operations Council) (NOC)
MAIK	<i>Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan</i> (Islamic Council of Kelantan)
MAK	<i>Makhtab al Khidmat lil Mujahideen al-Arab</i> (Afghan-Arab Service Bureau)
Maminco	Malaysian Mining Company
MAPEN	<i>Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Negara</i> (National Economic Consultative Council)
MARA	<i>Majlis Amanah Rakyat</i> (Council of Trust for Indigenous People)
MARDEC	Malaysian Rubber Development Corporation
MAS	Malaysia Airlines
Masjumi	<i>Majlis Shura Muslimin</i> [An Islamic political party in Indonesia]
MATA	<i>Majlis Agama Tertinggi</i> (Supreme Religious Council)
MAYC	Malaysian Youth Council
MBC	Malaysian Bar Council
MBM	<i>Majlis Belia Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Youth Council)
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCE	Malaysian Certificate of Education
MCKK	Malay College, Kuala Kangsar
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MCPML	Malayan Communist Party Marxist-Leninist Faction
MCPRF	Malayan Communist Party Revolutionary Faction
MCPSMB	Malayan Communist Party South Malayan Bureau
MDI	<i>Ma'ahad ad-Dakwah wal-Imamah</i> (Institute of Propagation and Leadership)
MGLU	Malayan General Labour Union
MIAI	<i>Madjlis Islam A'laa Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Islamic High Council)
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MIM	Moro Independence Movement
MNDYL	Malayan New Democratic Youth League
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front

## ABBREVIATIONS

MPABA	Malayan People's Anti-British Army
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
MPAJU	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union
MPH	Multi-Purpose Holdings
MPLF	Malayan Peoples Liberation Front
MRLA	Malayan Races Liberation Army
MSA	Muslim Students Association
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
MSS	Malayan Security Service
MTN	<i>Majlis Tertinggi Nasionalis</i> (Nationalist Supreme Council)
MTS	<i>Majlis Tertinggi Sementara</i> (Temporary Supreme Council)
NASMA	<i>Parti Nasionalis Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Nationalist Party)
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NEAC	National Economic Advisory Council
NECC	National Economic Consultative Council
NOC	National Operations Council
NU	<i>Nahdatul Ulama</i> [Biggest Muslim organization in Indonesia]
NUS	National University of Singapore
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
Pakemas	<i>Parti Keadilan Rakyat Malaysia</i> (Social Justice Party of Malaysia)
PAP	People's Action Party
PAPERI	<i>Partai Persatuan Islam</i> (Islamic Brotherhood Party)
PAS	<i>Parti Islam Se-Malaysia</i> (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party)
PBI	<i>Partai Buruh Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Workers' Party)
PBM	<i>Parti Buruh Malaya</i> (Labour Party of Malaya)
PBMUM	<i>Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya</i> (Malay Language Society of UM)
PBS	<i>Parti Bersatu Sabah</i> (United Sabah Party)
PCP	Philippine Communist Party

## ABBREVIATIONS

PDI	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia</i> (Democratic Party of Indonesia)
PEKEMBAR	<i>Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu</i> (United Malay Nationalists)
PERNAS	<i>Perbadanan Nasional</i> (National Corporation)
PETA	<i>Pembela Tanah Air</i> (Defenders of the Homeland)
PIM	<i>Pembantu Indonesia Merdeka</i> (Supporters of Independent Indonesia)
PKB	<i>Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa</i> (National Awakening Party)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PKMM	<i>Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya</i> (Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya)
PKPIM	<i>Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar Islam Malaysia</i> (National Union of Malaysian Muslim Students)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PMCJA	Pan-Malayan Council for Joint Action
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
PMS	<i>Persatuan Melayu Selangor</i> (Selangor Malays Organisation)
PMUM	<i>Persatuan Mahasiswa Universiti Malaya</i> (Universiti Malaya Students Union)
PNI	<i>Partai Nasionalis Indonesia</i> (Nationalist Party of Indonesia)
PPM	Patani People's Movement
PPMK	<i>Persekutuan Persetiaan Melayu Kelantan</i> (Union of Kelantan Malay Loyalists)
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PPP	<i>Partai Persatuan dan Pembangunan</i> (Development and Unity Party)
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PRB	<i>Partai Rakyat Brunei</i> (People's Party Brunei)
PRI	<i>Partai Republik Indonesia</i> (Republican Party of Indonesia)
PRM	<i>Parti Rakyat Malaya</i> (People's Party of Malaya)

## ABBREVIATIONS

PRRI	<i>Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia</i> (Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic)
PSRM	<i>Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia</i> (Socialist People's Party of Malaysia)
PULO	<i>Pertubuhan Perpaduan Pembebasan Patani</i> (Patani United Liberation Organisation)
PUM	<i>Persatuan Ulama Malaysia</i> (Association of Malaysian Ulama)
PUTERA	<i>Pusat Tenaga Rakyat</i> (People's Movement Centre)
PWIC	Psychological Warfare Interrogation Centre
RMPF	Royal Malayan Police Force
RRE	Restrictive Residence Enactment 1933
RSS	<i>Rashtriya Swayamserak Sangh</i> (National Volunteers Society)
S46	<i>Parti Melayu Semangat '46</i> (Spirit of '46 Malay Party)
SAM	<i>Sahabat Alam Malaysia</i> (Malaysian Friends of the Earth)
SDM	<i>Suara Demokrasi Malaya</i> (Voice of Malayan Democracy)
SF	Security Forces
SS	Straits Settlements
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
TNI	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Army)
TRI	Technology Resources Industries
UCCA	University and University Colleges Act of 1971
UGM	Universitas Gadjah Mada (University of Gadjah Mada)
UI	Universitas Indonesia (University of Indonesia)
UIA	Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (International Islamic University)
UIFO	Union of Islamic Forces and Organisations
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia)
UM	Universiti Malaya (University of Malaya)

## ABBREVIATIONS

UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
UNAIR	Universitas Airlangga (University of Airlangga)
UNDIP	Universitas Diponegoro (University of Diponegoro)
UNSC	UN Security Council
UPM	Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (University of Agriculture Malaysia)
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia (Putra University of Malaysia)
UPN	Universitas Nasional Veteran (National Veterans' University)
UTK	<i>Unit Tindakan Khas</i> (Special Forces Unit)
UTM	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (University of Technology Malaysia)
VOMR	Voice of Malayan Revolution
WTC	World Trade Center
WTO	World Trade Organization

## GLOSSARY

(For Volume I & Volume II)

Author's note: The spelling of terms in Malay, Arabic, Urdu and other languages in the original texts from they were taken has been retained. Please note that the spelling of Malay words has changed extensively over the past five decades.

<i>adab</i>	customs/good manners/decency
<i>adat law</i>	customary law
<i>ad'l</i>	justice
<i>Ahad</i>	the one; the singular; God Almighty
<i>ahl al-kahf</i>	people of the cave
<i>ajaran sesat</i>	deviationist teachings
<i>akhlak</i>	moral conduct
<i>al-falak</i>	astronomy
<i>al-jihad al-Islamiy</i>	great Islamic struggle
<i>al-li'an</i>	sworn accusation of <i>zina</i> by a husband against his wife (or vice-versa)
<i>al-yamin</i>	oath
<i>'alim pl. ulama</i>	man of knowledge; knowledgeable persons
<i>amanat</i>	edict
<i>anak watan/bumiputera</i>	sons of the soil
<i>aqidah</i>	faith and belief
<i>aqliyyah Islamiyyah</i>	Islamic worldview
<i>aqliyyah musta'marah</i>	hybrid/contaminated worldview
<i>asabiyyah</i>	clan or tribal loyalty; communalism; ethnocentrism
<i>athar</i>	relics, antiquities, traditions

GLOSSARY

<i>awam</i>	the masses
<i>baju kebaya</i>	Malay dress for women
<i>baju kurung</i>	Malay dress for women
<i>baju Melayu</i>	traditional Malay shirt
<i>bangsawan</i>	traditional Malay performer/thespian
<i>ba'iyat</i>	oath of allegiance
<i>bid'ah</i>	unlawful innovation, heretical doctrine
<i>bomoh</i>	witchdoctor/shaman
<i>cawangan</i>	branch
<i>ceramah</i>	lectures
<i>darah keturunan Arab (DKA)</i>	Malays of mixed Malay-Arab stock
<i>darah keturunan Keling (DKK)</i>	Malays of mixed Malay-Indian stock
<i>daulah islamiyyah</i>	Islamic rule
<i>daulat</i>	authority
<i>da'wa, da'wah, dakwah</i>	(missionary) activities
<i>derhaka</i>	treason
<i>din</i>	way of life, religion
<i>diyat</i>	blood money
<i>do'a</i>	prayer
<i>do'a qunut nazilah</i>	a specific prayer for victory
<i>emir</i>	leader; king; ruler
<i>emir-ul mukminin</i>	leader of the faithful
<i>fajr</i>	(dawn) prayers
<i>fanatik agama</i>	religious fanatics
<i>fardhu kifayah</i>	collective religious obligations
<i>fardhu 'ain</i>	personal religious obligations
<i>fasiq</i>	evil one, sinner, adulterer
<i>fatwa</i>	rulings
<i>fikrah</i>	worldview, concept, idea
<i>fikrah maddiyyah</i>	materialism

GLOSSARY

<i>fiqh</i>	science, discipline (often used in reference to Islamic law), jurisprudence
<i>firaun</i>	pharaoh
<i>fitnah</i>	social chaos; slander, strife, dissension
<i>ghuluw</i>	excessiveness
<i>golongan revolusi</i>	revolutionary group
<i>gugur syahid</i>	martyr's death
<i>hadarah Rabbaniyyah</i>	Islamic (divinely inspired) civilisation
<i>haj</i>	pilgrimage
<i>halaqah</i>	study circle (often in mosques, <i>madrasah</i> )
<i>haq</i>	truth
<i>harakah islamiyyah</i>	Islamic movement
<i>haram</i>	that which is unlawful in Islam
<i>harus</i>	that which is good, commendable
<i>hijab</i>	veil
<i>hijrah</i>	emigration
<i>hirabah</i>	robbery
<i>hisbussayitan</i>	party of the Devil, those on the side of the Devil
<i>hizbullah</i>	party of God, those on the side of God
<i>hudud</i>	lit.: law of the limit/extreme (from the root 'h d d'), meaning limit, border, frontier
<i>ijazah</i>	certificate
<i>ijtihad</i>	method of religious texts interpretation
<i>imam kolot</i>	backward/conservative imams
<i>iman</i>	faith
<i>insaf</i>	repentance, fairness, equity

GLOSSARY

<i>insya-Allah</i>	God willing
<i>irtidad</i>	apostasy
<i>islah</i>	reform
<i>isti'mal al-muruah</i>	sense of honour
<i>ittiyan albahimah</i>	bestiality
<i>ittiyan almaitah</i>	necrophilia
<i>jahili</i>	ignorant, (pre-Islamic) pagan
<i>jahiliyyah</i>	ignorance, (pre-Islamic) paganism
<i>jama'at, jama'ah</i>	community, commune
<i>janggut</i>	beard
<i>jawatankuasa</i>	committee
<i>jawatankuasa agung</i>	executive committee
<i>jawi</i>	Malay in Arabic script
<i>jihād</i>	struggle
<i>jihadi</i>	those engaged in struggle
<i>jubah</i>	robe
<i>kafir</i>	non-believer
<i>kafir-mengkafir</i>	conflict between Muslims accusing each other of being non-believers
<i>kalimah</i>	Muslim recitation/credo of faith
<i>kampung</i>	village
<i>kenduri</i>	feast
<i>kerajaan</i>	lit. 'to live under a raja', traditional Malay term for government/governance
<i>ketidakadilan</i>	injustice
<i>kezaliman</i>	cruelty
<i>khianat</i>	treason
<i>khittah amal</i>	working guidelines, operation/work plan
<i>khurafat</i>	un-Islamic, superstition
<i>kopiah</i>	skullcap
<i>kuasa</i>	power

GLOSSARY

<i>kufr</i>	denial of faith/state of unbelief in God
<i>kuliah</i>	classes; religious lectures
<i>kuliah Jumaat</i>	Friday lectures
<i>kuliah malam</i>	evening lectures
<i>lajnah tarbiyyah</i>	mode of communal study/study circle
<i>lalang</i>	type of long grass regarded as a nuisance by farmers
<i>lebai kolot</i>	backward/conservative religious elder
<i>liwat</i>	'unnatural' sex involving anal intercourse, i.e. sodomy
<i>maddiyyah</i>	materialist culture
<i>madrasah</i>	Islamic seminary
<i>majlis</i>	meeting/conference; assembly
<i>mamak</i>	derogatory term for those of mixed Malay-Indian ancestry
<i>markaz</i>	camp/base
<i>mati shahid</i>	martyr's death
<i>maulvi</i>	conservative religious teacher/leader
<i>mazhab</i>	schools of thought
<i>mencarut</i>	curse/to curse
<i>mesyuarah</i>	consultation
<i>mufti</i>	senior religious functionary
<i>mujaddid</i>	revivalist
<i>mujahideen</i>	fighters in the cause of Islam/Muslims
<i>muktamar</i>	assembly
<i>muktamar am</i>	general assembly
<i>mullah</i>	<i>see maulvi</i>
<i>munafik, pl. munafikin</i>	hypocrite
<i>murshid'ul am</i>	spiritual guide/leader
<i>murtad</i>	apostasy
<i>musahaqah</i>	'unnatural' sex between women

GLOSSARY

<i>mushrikin</i>	idolaters/deviants
<i>muslimat</i>	Muslim women
<i>mustad'afin</i>	oppressed people
<i>mustakbirin</i>	oppressors, ruling elite, haughty
<i>musyawarah</i>	open debate/consultation
<i>mutlaq</i>	absolute
<i>nafiri</i>	traditional musical instrument played during important events such as the birth or death of a monarch
<i>nas</i>	ruling, text
<i>nasyid</i>	religious song, hymn
<i>nechari</i>	naturalist
<i>orang kampung</i>	village folk
<i>pak lebai</i>	traditional term for rural religious elder
<i>panglima jihad</i>	commander of <i>jihad</i>
<i>pawang</i>	shaman
<i>pemimpin agama</i>	religious leader(s)
<i>pendakwah bebas</i>	independent missionary(ies), free missionary(ies)
<i>penghulu</i>	traditional head of village community
<i>penjajah kafir</i>	infidel oppressors; colonialists
<i>pesantren</i>	Indonesian traditional religious school
<i>politik akhirat</i>	lit.: politics of the hereafter
<i>pondok</i>	traditional village religious school
<i>pribumi</i>	native sons of the soil
<i>priyayi</i>	Indonesian traditional-feudal elite class
<i>purdah</i>	seclusion of women from public; now also used to refer to the practice of wearing the veil

GLOSSARY

<i>qazaf</i>	wrongful accusation of <i>zina</i>
<i>qiamat</i>	day of resurrection
<i>qisas</i>	revenge killing
<i>realisma baru</i>	new realism
<i>riba</i>	interest, usury
<i>riddah</i>	apostasy
<i>rukun iman</i>	pillar of faith
<i>rukun Islam</i>	pillar of Islam
<i>sahabat</i>	companions; usually refers to the companions of Prophet Muhammad
<i>Salafiyya</i>	followers of Islamic orthodoxy
<i>salasilah</i>	lineage
<i>sandiwara</i>	play-acting
<i>sariqah</i>	theft
<i>sastera Islam/sastera dakwah</i>	Islamic missionary literature
<i>sasterawan negara</i>	national laureate
<i>sekularisme</i>	secularism
<i>sembahyang hajat</i>	special prayers
<i>serambi Madinah</i>	porch/balcony of Madinah
<i>serambi Mekah</i>	porch/balcony of Mecca
<i>serban</i>	turban
<i>shahadah</i>	recitation of the Muslim credo
<i>shariah</i>	Islamic codified law
<i>sheikh'ul Islam</i>	master/teacher of Islam
<i>Shia</i>	minority group of Muslim people
<i>shirk, shirik</i>	heretical
<i>shirk fi'l nubuwwa</i>	false association with the Prophet
<i>shura</i>	meeting
<i>siasah</i>	politics
<i>siasah shariyyah</i>	<i>shariah</i> -guided political conduct
<i>silat</i>	a form of traditional Malay martial arts
<i>songket</i>	silk and gold-thread Malay cloth

GLOSSARY

<i>songkok</i>	traditional black velvet cap worn by Malay men
<i>subhanallah</i>	praise the Lord
<i>sukun</i>	peaceful
<i>sunnah</i>	traditions following the example of Prophet Muhammad
<i>Sunni</i>	majority current of Islam
<i>surau</i>	small traditional prayer house, smaller than a mosque
<i>syaitan besar</i>	the great Satan
<i>syuhada</i>	martyr
<i>syurb</i>	intoxication or consumption of liquor
<i>taat setia</i>	absolute loyalty
<i>tadarruj</i>	gradualist
<i>tafsir</i>	exegesis of the <i>Qur'an</i>
<i>tajdid hadhari</i>	true vision/civilizational, revival/renewal
<i>takfir</i>	Muslims accusing other Muslims of being unbelievers, infidels and hypocrites
<i>taklif</i>	duty
<i>taklif wa'la tashrif</i>	moral responsibility
<i>takzir</i>	punishments, those not fixed by the <i>Qur'an</i> , such as jail sentences and fines
<i>talib, taliban (pl.)</i>	student(s)
<i>talqin</i>	funeral prayer
<i>tanattu'</i>	meticulous/ostentatious religiosity
<i>taqlid</i>	blind imitation
<i>taq'sub</i>	blind deference to authority
<i>tarbiyyah</i>	study circles, instruction, bringing up
<i>tariqa, tarikat, tarikalh</i>	'the way', common term to denote Sufi brotherhood
<i>tasawwuf, tasawuf</i>	tradition of Islamic mysticism

GLOSSARY

<i>tasbih</i>	prayer beads used by Muslims, glorification of God
<i>tashdid</i>	excessive austerity
<i>tauhid</i>	unity of God
<i>tazkiah syuhud</i>	ritual testimony
<i>theep</i>	angel
<i>towkay Cina</i>	Chinese merchants
<i>tudung</i>	headscarf; veil
<i>ukhtwah</i>	solidarity; fellowship
<i>ulama</i>	plural of <i>alim</i> / ' <i>alim</i>
<i>ummah</i>	the Muslim community
<i>usrah</i>	group meeting; study circle, family
<i>ustaz</i>	teacher
<i>usul</i>	foundations; essentials
<i>velayat-e fakih</i>	vice-regency of jurists
<i>wadah</i>	vessels
<i>wajib</i>	that which is obligatory in Islam for all Muslims, duty
<i>wala'</i>	allegiance
<i>wang ehsan</i>	development aid
<i>waqf</i>	Muslim endowment property
<i>wayang kulit</i>	traditional shadow puppet play, popular in Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia, Indonesia and southern Thailand
<i>wehdatul amal</i>	singular action
<i>wehdatul fikri</i>	singular vision or thinking
<i>zakat</i>	tithe (not taxes, as often stated) paid by Muslims; an obligation for all Muslims who have the means to afford it
<i>zina</i>	unlawful sexual intercourse





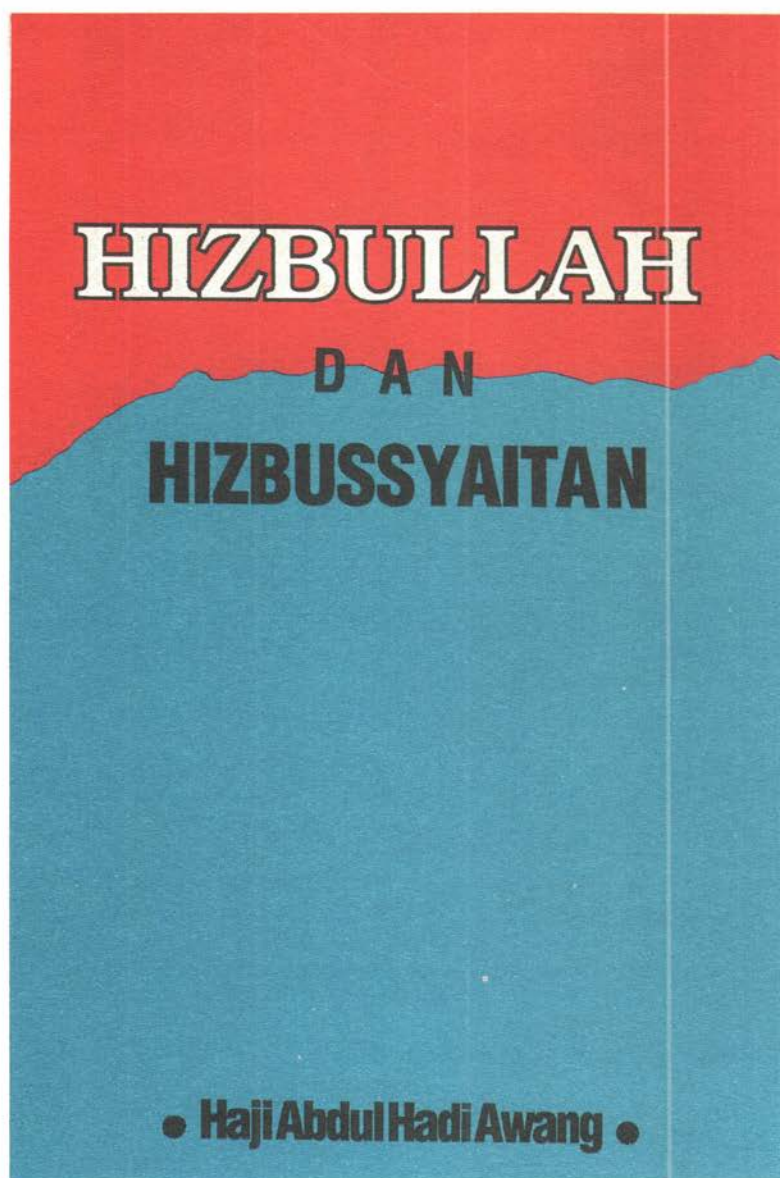
18. The 'Ulama faction' takes over: Ustaz Yusof Rawa in the early 1980s. He was the architect of the 'new' PAS following the disasters and u-turns of the Asri Muda era. It was Ustaz Yusof Rawa who brought about the shifts in PAS's discourse and internal party organisation, opening the way for the rise of the *ulama* and the entry of a new generation of Islamist activists and intellectuals.



19. Ustaz Fadzil Noor, the ex-ABIM Islamist activist who rose to become deputy president and eventually president of PAS following the retirement of Ustaz Yusof Rawa.



20. Tuan Guru Hadi Awang, an ex-ABIM activist who played the role of PAS's firebrand in the 1980s. The *Amanat Hadi Awang* (Hadi Awang's Edict) took the country by storm when he argued that anyone who supported PAS's rival UMNO was actually working against Islam itself. He was also seen as PAS's answer to Anwar Ibrahim, another ex-ABIM activist who was co-opted into UMNO by Dr. Mahathir in 1982.



21. Fire and Brimstone: The oppositional dialectics and tendency towards *takfir* (accusing fellow Muslims of being *kafir* / non-believers) of Hadi Awang were summed up in his speeches and writings. Cover of Hadi Awang's *Hizbullah dan Hizbussyaitan* (Between the Party of God and the Party of the Devil). (Author's collection.)



22. PAS's controversial martyr: Ustaz Ibrahim 'Libya' Mahmood, who was killed by state security forces in the confrontation at Memali in 1985.



23. PAS entrenched in its own laboratory: The PAS building in the town of Kota Bharu, Kelantan. (Author's photo, 1999.)



24. PAS's local touch: PAS branch (Cherang, no. 7 branch) billboard in Kota Bharu, in the shape of a local Kelantanese *wau bulan* (moon kite). (Author's photo, 2000.)



25. 'Taliban are our brothers': Young PAS supporters take to the streets in support of the *Taliban* at the anti-US demonstration outside the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur on 12 October 2001. (Author's photos.)



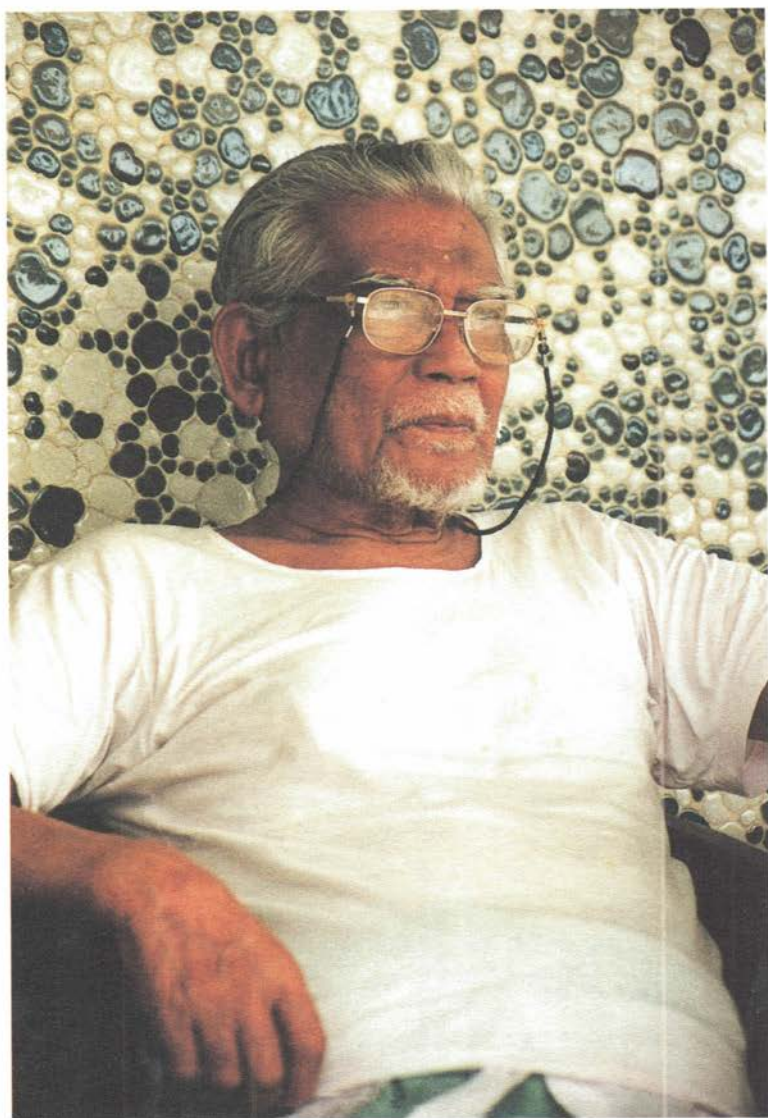
26. The state's predictable response: Riot police firing chemical-laced water from an armoured truck. The blast hit the crowd squarely in the middle and one of the first to be hit was the (then) PAS president, Ustaz Fadzil Noor. The author witnessed this event. (Author's photos.)



27. PAS leader and popular orator Mohamad Sabu firing up the crowd at the anti-US rally. (Author's photo.)



28. PAS leader and activist Dr. Hatta Ramli trying to calm down the younger PAS supporters at the anti-US rally, to no avail. (Author's photo.)



29. Ustaz Yusof Rawa, fifth President of PAS, photographed by the author at his Penang home shortly before his death in April 2000. Despite having served as PAS president, Yusof Rawa lived a simple life in a modest home. (Author's photo.)



30. Present leaders of PAS: Deoband-educated Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the *Murshid'ul Am* (spiritual leader) of PAS. The responsibility of the *Murshid'ul Am* extends beyond the practical concerns of the party itself, and the *Murshid* is seen as a guide for all Muslims, be they members of PAS or not. In Kelantan, Nik Aziz's charismatic appeal is unmatched, and his Qur'anic exegesis is the closest attempt at a localised vernacular activist-oriented reading of the holy text that has ever been attempted in Malaysia.



31. PAS's previous president, Dato' Ustaz Fadzil Noor, who passed away in 2002.



32. PAS's current president, and *de facto* leader of the opposition *Barisan Alternatif* coalition, Dato' Tuan Guru Hadi Awang. While Fadzil Noor was widely regarded as a moderate Islamist, Hadi Awang's more conservative outlook stands out in bold contrast. Internationally he remains a widely respected and highly regarded Islamist leader and *alim*. Domestically, however, Hadi Awang's more confrontational approach has alienated a wide section of Malay moderates and non-Muslims in Malaysia.



33. PAS's former deputy president Mustafa Ali, who was a close associate of Ustaz Hadi Awang and widely regarded as an urbane moderate. He lost his post after he was defeated at the party's general assembly in September 2003.



34. PAS's current deputy president Senator Ustaz Hassan Shukri. His ascendancy to the post of deputy president marked the consolidation of the *Ulama* faction within the party.



35. The young Deoband-educated Ustaz Nashruddin Mat Isa, secretary-general of PAS. Nashruddin is widely seen as the 'model *ulama*' that PAS wishes to promote in the future. Highly articulate and able to address the urban constituency, his discourse is replete with references to Islamic modernity and contemporary social and political concerns.



36. Haji Mahfuz Omar, formerly head of PAS's Youth Wing. A fiery orator and charismatic speaker.



37. Mohamad Sabu, one of PAS's more popular leaders whose combustible rhetoric of the 1980s and 1990s was clearly inspired by the Iranian revolution. He was one of the staunchest supporters of the '*Ulama* faction' that took over the party in the early 1980s.



38. Dr. Mohd Hatta Ramli, one of the leading lights of PAS today. An intellectual by temperament and medical practitioner by training, he was also the political secretary to the previous party president.



39. 'Motivational expert' Dato' Dr. Hasan Ali, one of the many professionals who switched to PAS following the economic and political crises of 1997-98. Widely seen as a moderate voice that is both pragmatic and liberal within and without the party.

## Chapter 4

### 1982–1990: THE RETURN OF THE *ULAMA*: YUSOF RAWA AND THE NEW LEADERSHIP OF PAS IN THE POST-ASRI ERA

*Kemenangan Islam tidak akan datang dengan sendirinya. Allah telah menentukan bahawa kejayaan dalam kehidupan dunia adalah hasil jihad yang berterusan.*<sup>1</sup>

Ustaz Yusof Rawa,  
29 April 1983

#### *In the Eye of the Ayatollah — PAS in the Hands of the Ulama*

*Imej PAS dikatakan seolah-olah berubah mengikut rentak kepimpinan ala Syiah di Iran yang memberikan status yang amat tinggi kepada Ulama dalam pemerintahan negara... Ramai berpendapat bahawa personaliti mereka adalah merupakan manifestasi kepimpinan Islam yang diidam-idamkan selama ini. Oleh itu ketokohan mereka menjadi pujian dan sanjungan pendokong gerakan Islam dan masyarakat.*<sup>2</sup>

Badlihisam Mohamad Nasir,  
*Isu Personaliti Dalam Gerakan Islam Tanah Air*

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: The victory of Islam will not come by itself. Allah has ordained that victory in this world will only come to those who are prepared to engage in a *Jihad* that is never-ending. (Quoted in Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara: Suatu Catatan Hidup Ayahandaku Haji Yusof Rawa*, Shah Alam: Warathah Haji Yusof Rawa Sdn Bhd Angkatan Edaran Enterprise, 2001, p. 128.)

<sup>2</sup> Translation: The image of PAS changed according to the tone set by the Shia revolution in Iran which gave such a high status to the *ulama* continued p. 330

During the 1980s and 1990s, PAS became the most important Malay-Muslim opposition party in Malaysia.

In time, the Islamist party became the greatest threat to UMNO's grip on power and on several occasions the enmity and antagonism between the two parties led to all-out violent confrontations that involved state security forces. That the contest between these two veteran Malay-Muslim parties could have reached such a peak during the final two decades of the 20th century is hardly a surprise when we consider all the variable historical, cultural and political factors that shaped the confrontation between them. A major factor in this local political drama was an event that took place thousands of miles away, in a country called Iran.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 sent shock waves throughout the world and marked a major turning-point in the history of the Muslim world in particular. Ayatollah Khomeini, the *ulama* once derided as 'an old man with lice in his beard' had inspired and led a revolution which resulted in the fall of the Shah of Iran, the *ShahanShah* (King of Kings) and 'Light of the Aryans'. Western intellectuals, politicians and media experts were confounded by the outcome of the 1978-79 popular uprising in Iran and could not understand how the people could have opted for such a radical alternative.

As the Shah (dubbed the 'suitcase monarch') packed his bags and flew off to the US, the incoming flight from Paris that brought home Ayatollah Khomeini on 1 February 1979 seemed to bring with it the hopes and dreams of a glorious new future. Khomeini called on the army and police to support the revolutionaries and to help them in their endeavour to create a new society in Iran. This brave new world was created through the execution of political

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in the field of government... Many felt that their (*ulama*) personalities manifested the spirit of Islamic leadership that they were looking for all this time. Therefore the *ulama* became the object of adoration and respect for those who fought for the Islamic cause in society (Badlihisam Mohamad Nasir, 'Isu Personaliti dalam Gerakan Islam Tanah Air', *Tamadun*, August 1999, p. 37).

opponents (such as the *Mujahideen-e Khalq*), the purging of secular academics from the universities and the arrest, detention and execution of thousands of 'deviants', including homosexuals, prostitutes and other so-called 'social misfits'. Non-Islamist political parties and movements such as the Tudeh party were finally banned, and political life came under the near-absolute monopoly of the *ulama* and Islamist revolutionaries. The monarchical system was abandoned for good, and a new Islamic constitution was introduced. The latest chapter in the history of secular Iran began on 1 April 1979 when Khomeini declared it to be 'the first day of the government of God'.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the problematic and controversial outcome of the Iranian revolution (many of its leaders, such as Ayatollah Shariatmadari, were quickly disillusioned and were later themselves persecuted or forced to leave the country),<sup>4</sup> the fact that it actually took place was enough to provide the Islamist movements of the world with a symbol of success. The world of Sunni Islam was amazed that the world's first Islamic revolution took place in Iran, where the Shias had consciously made the break between religion and politics for centuries. After coming to power, Khomeini and the *ulama* effectively repaired this historical break by declaring that Iran would henceforth be ruled under a supreme *velayat-e fakih* (vice-regency of jurists), which in practical terms meant the

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<sup>3</sup> Dilip Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Pelican Press, 1988, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> Esposito (p. 113) notes that 'The Islamic Republic's first prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, resigned in disgust; Bani-Sadr, its first elected President, fled to exile in France; Sadeq Gohbzadeh, who had held a number of government posts, was executed for his participation in an alleged plot to assassinate Khomeini. ... The Ayatollah Shariatmadari, a senior ayatollah revered for his learning and piety, was himself 'defrocked' in the spring of 1982.' Ayatollah Muhammad Kazim Shariatmadari was particularly opposed to the idea of the Shia clergy directly involving themselves in the daily process of government and running the state, which for him meant opening the way for the corruption of the *ulama* institution as a whole (John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

creation of a clerical dictatorship with *mutlaq* (absolute) power for the first time.<sup>5</sup>

The governments of Malaysia and its ASEAN neighbours were hesitant in their support for the Islamic revolution in Iran and were worried about the possible long-term impact of the revolution on their own countries. Soon after the revolution the younger generation of PAS leaders like Mohamad Sabu began using the Ayatollah's revolutionary rhetoric in their speeches and were condemning the US as the *Syaitan Besar* (Great Satan) that needed to be confronted on all fronts. Many ASEAN technocrats and securocrats feared that the spirit of the revolution might travel as far as the ASEAN region.<sup>6</sup> The thought that thousands of Malay-Muslim students might take to the streets in violent demonstrations against the government became the ongoing nightmare for those in power, particularly as the number of students enrolled in religious schools was growing.<sup>7</sup> However, outright condemnation of the Iranian

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<sup>5</sup> Halliday notes that 'This explicit statement of intent was not just a legitimation of what already existed in Iran, namely a clerical dictatorship. The concept of *velayat-e mutlaq* (absolute vice-regency) was a major new formulation of Islamist politics in the context of an Islamic state that had already been created. ... The key to this new legitimation was given by the concept, invoked in the quotation of the *maslahat* or interest of the people. It was in the name of this interest, which the *faqih* alone could identify, that the specific injunctions of Islam could be overridden. Never were the underlying political priorities of Islamism clearer.' (Fred Halliday, 'The Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism: Iran, Tunisia and the Challenge of the Secular State', in Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan (eds.), *Islam, Globalisation and Postmodernity*, London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 100–101.)

<sup>6</sup> See Fred R. von der Mehden, 'Malaysian and Indonesian Islamic Movements and the Iranian Connection' and Cesar Adib Majul, 'The Iranian Revolution and the Muslims of the Philippines', in John Esposito (ed.), *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact*, Miami: Florida International University Press, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> In 1980, about 14% of Malaysia's total student population was estimated to be engaged in pure Islamic studies. (Quoted in Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 116.)

revolution was not an option, considering the domestic political situation in predominantly Muslim Malaysia and Indonesia (as well as the Philippines with its restless Muslim minority in the south).

Acutely aware of their own tenuous standing before their Malay-Muslim political constituencies, the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia were careful not to directly attack the Iranian revolution or its leaders. Kuala Lumpur extended diplomatic invitations to the new revolutionary government in Tehran, which were reciprocated,<sup>8</sup> but at the same time was keen to ensure that the Malay-Muslim community was insulated from the revolutionary ideas of the Iranian regime. Throughout this period, Dr. Mahathir's government maintained that the Islamic revolution was a matter of domestic concern for the Iranian government and its people, and refrained from making any official judgement on the issue.<sup>9</sup>

It was hardly surprising that Southeast Asian governments were perturbed by these developments in Iran. In Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, dissident Islamist parties and movements

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<sup>8</sup> The level of diplomatic activity between the two countries did not decline significantly in the following years. In 1981, the Malaysian government invited Hashemi Rafsanjani, then Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, to Kuala Lumpur. In 1982, the Iranian revolutionary government established its diplomatic mission in Kuala Lumpur. In 1984, the Iranian Foreign Minister visited Kuala Lumpur and in 1985 Ayatollah Khomeini received the envoy from Malaysia. In 1988, Malaysia sent its Foreign Minister to Iran and, in turn, Minister Rafsanjani made a second visit to Malaysia.

<sup>9</sup> Criticism of the Iranian revolution came from the mainstream media, which was indirectly controlled by UMNO and other BN coalition parties. As early as 1979, English-language dailies *The Star* and the *New Straits Times* were already warning religious groups in the country of the danger of emulating the Iranian revolutionaries. In 1979, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, then Deputy Prime Minister, was already claiming that certain religious groups were planning a violent overthrow of the government (*The Star*, 19 July 1979, 7 Oct 1979; *NST*, 7 July 1979). After the revolution, the *New Straits Times* led the attack on Tehran's new revolutionary government by constantly pointing out the failings and shortcomings of the regime. It also exposed the killings, torture and imprisonment of opponents in Iran by the revolutionary courts and the revolutionary guard.

openly supported the Iranian revolution and its underlying principles. In Indonesia, groups like the *Komando Jihad* under the leadership of Islamist firebrands like Imran bin Zein began mobilizing their followers and issuing a call to arms, taking the Iranian revolution as their cue.<sup>10</sup> In Malaysia, leaders of ABIM (then under Anwar Ibrahim) praised the Iranian revolutionaries for their commitment to Islam. In 1979, Anwar and other ABIM leaders visited Iran and met Ayatollah Khomeini. Upon his return, Anwar called for an 'Iranian Liberation and Solidarity Day' to be held on 16 March 1979.<sup>11</sup> Needless to say, the Malaysian government was not happy about this latest twist in Malaysian–Iranian relations.

Throughout the Islamic world, the socio-cultural and political impact of the Iranian revolution was profound. It furnished the struggle of Sunni Islamist movements world-wide with renewed vigour, and the tenor of their polemics and campaigns was considerably heightened. Islamist movements the world over redoubled their efforts to fight the twin *jahan-khor* (world-devouring satans) — the Eastern and Western blocs — that were crushing the Muslims between them. Chandra Muzaffar has observed that the Iranian revolution marked a turning-point in the development of PAS as well as other Islamist movements like ABIM as it provided them with tangible proof that an Islamist alternative was, after all, a possibility.<sup>12</sup> So great was the impact of the Iranian revolution on the mindset of the PAS leaders in the late 1970s that they continued

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<sup>10</sup> The *Komando Jihad*'s cells were mainly based in cities like Jakarta and Bandung. On 11 March 1981 *Komando Jihad* followers attacked and raided a police base outside Bandung and in the wake of the attack managed to seize a number of weapons. Many Indonesian critics and analysts at the time noted that the shadowy group may have had links with some sections of the Indonesian army however, and that *Komando Jihad* may have been used by the Indonesian army in its underground 'black operations' against other anti-government movements.

<sup>11</sup> Mehden, 'Malaysian and Indonesian Islamic Movements and the Iranian Connection', p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Chandra has argued that for the Malaysian Islamists, the Iranian revolution was 'proof that Islam could establish a state in modern times'. Furthermore, 'to the Islamic resurgents, the revolution in Iran continued p. 335

to sing their praises of Ayatollah Khomeini up to the end of the second millennium.<sup>13</sup>

In other Islamic countries like Pakistan, the move towards Islamisation that had begun long before also began producing spectacular results. In the same year that Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlevi was forced to abandon the fabled peacock throne, the 'Islamic-socialist' leader of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was executed by the regime of General Zia 'ul-Haq which had introduced the country's first hudood ordinances and Islamic tax laws, much to the satisfaction of Islamist movements like the *Jama'at-e Islami*. In Egypt, Anwar Sadat's government was besieged by the resurgent forces of political Islam that he had unwittingly unleashed via his Islamisation programme of the early 1970s. In Syria, Hafiz al-Assad's decision to declare war on the Ikhwan had merely helped to entrench the Islamists even further and crown their

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show that the Islamic state has its own identity. It does not have to follow any set example.' (Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, p. 36.) PAS's leaders greatly admired the way that the revolutionary government of Iran had tried to totally re-invent Iranian society, dictating new norms and standards for everything from popular political discourse to standards of dress and behaviour.

- <sup>13</sup> In an article entitled 'Khomeini: The Limitless Impact of the Ayatollah's Revolution' (*Harakah*, 31 Dec 1999), the *Harakah* editors wrote an unapologetic laudatory piece on the life of their hero and role model, Ayatollah Khomeini. The article stated that: 'At the uncomplicated street level, the impact of Khomeini — as a great man who so obviously practises the austere doctrine he preaches — has been enormous and incalculable. From strife-weary Beirut to the remote village in Java, the ordinary people adorn the walls of their humble homes with his stern, unsmiling countenance. They look upon him as the man who gave them a new confidence, who put Islam back in the driving seat of history.' The authors conclude by stating that 'the first point that all the commentators make is that Khomeini has led a revolution in the full sense of the word. Nothing can take that achievement from him. He has broken all existing moulds of thought and action, he has put everything on a high moral and spiritual plane, he has posed fundamental questions about a Muslim people's destiny in its own, not alien, terms.'

cause with the garland of martyrs. As the heads of the tyrants and oppressors of the ummah rolled one by one, the stakes in the race for power had been raised and the dream of the daulah Islamiyyah seemed one step closer to reality.

The developments in Iran, Pakistan, Egypt and elsewhere coincided with important changes in the political environment in Malaysia, in particular within the Malaysian Islamic movements and parties. The PAS leadership had come under the control of its fiery-tempered fifth president, Ustaz Yusof Rawa, *ulama* Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat and the 'Young Turks' of ABIM.

Ustaz Yusof Rawa and Tuan Guru Nik Aziz had both been PAS members since the 1960s, but their time had finally come. After the disastrous performance of PAS in the 1978 and 1982 elections, the *ulama* within the party began to act. As one of the few PAS leaders who enjoyed the privilege of remaining in power, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz was in the advantageous position of being able to reform the party's organisational structure and cultivate a new generation of leaders. In 1982, Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang took over the running of PAS affairs in Terengganu and he also introduced his own set of structural reforms. Finally in May 1983, at the PAS 29th *muktamar* (general assembly) held at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur, Ustaz Yusof Rawa took over the party presidency.

***Ustaz Haji Yusof bin Abdullah al-Rawa:  
Architect of the New PAS of the 1980s***

*Walaupun jasad dan roh Allahyarham Haji Yusof Rawa telah kembali kepada Allah pencipta dan pengurus sekalian alam, api perjuangan yang telah dinyalakan oleh beliau terus bersama bersemarak di dalam diri dan organisasi kita.<sup>14</sup>*

Mohd Hatta Ramli,  
*Memperingati Yusof Rawa*

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<sup>14</sup> Translation: Although the spirit and soul of our dearly departed Haji Yusof Rawa have returned to Allah, creator and lord of all things, the *continued p. 337*

In the wake of the Asri years, many PAS members felt that it was time for the party to radically re-orient itself and its struggle. The developments in other parts of the Muslim world convinced party members that the time was right to begin a renewed effort against the state and the UMNO-led government, then in the hands of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. In the end, the man elected to the task of re-inventing the Islamist party was veteran *ulama* and PAS leader, Ustaz Yusof Abdullah al-Rawa. He injected the discourse of PAS with a new political vocabulary radically different from that of Asri Muda and Burhanuddin al-Helmy. Any attempt to understand how and why he took the party in the direction that it went should, therefore, begin with a cursory overview of the life and times of Ustaz Yusof Rawa.

Yusof bin Abdullah al-Rawa, popularly known as Pak Yusof, was born in Penang on 8 May 1922. Like the third president of PAS, Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Yusof Rawa's family came from neighbouring Indonesia. His father, Haji Abdullah Mohamad Noordin al-Rawa, was an immigrant from Rawa (near Padang), West Sumatra who harboured a deep distrust of the British and Dutch colonial regimes in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. His mother was a Sumatran woman, Asmah binti Haji Salleh. Like many migrant families, Yusof Rawa's parents settled in the British crown colony of Penang, where his father established his own printing and publishing business called the Maktabah Haji Abdullah Nordin Arrawi. The family settled in the Rawanese settlement known as Kampung Rawa (close to Masjid Melayu), and Yusof was born in his family home at Lebuah Aceh.

Penang, as we have seen earlier, was then a busy cosmopolitan metropole that was home to a number of indigenous and migrant communities. For decades it had been the home of Malays, Acehnese, Minangs, Rawanese, Bugis, Madurese, Javanese as well as Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Turks and Europeans. The tenor of

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*n. 14 continued*

flame of the struggle that he lit continues to burn in each and every one of us and our organisation. (Mohd Hatta Ramli, 'Allahyarham Yusof Rawa', in Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, Kuala Lumpur: IKDAS Press, 2000, p. 15.)

Islam and Islamic discourse in the port-city was thus an open, dynamic and highly cosmopolitan one. Another important factor that shaped the worldview of Penangite Muslims was Georgetown's considerable importance as a port city then (as now). Penang was the final stop for thousands of Malayan and Indonesian Muslims travelling to Mecca on the yearly pilgrimage, and the area around Lebu Aceh and Masjid Melayu was known as the 'mini Mecca' where pilgrims, religious teachers and traders congregated. Yusof Rawa's family business was strategically located in the Malay settlement of Masjid Melayu — placing him at the centre of the Malay-Muslim universe.<sup>15</sup> Yusof Rawa grew up among the Malay and Indian Muslim communities of Penang and thus knew of the social and political developments in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, the Indian subcontinent and the Arab world.

Yusof Rawa first studied at Sekolah Melayu Jalan Carnavon, and later at Sekolah Chaurasta. His secondary education was at the Government English School and then Penang Free School (which had produced other prominent Malay nationalist leaders and politicians such as Tunku Abdul Rahman, the country's first Prime Minister). By then Yusof Rawa had demonstrated his ability in the English language, and his prospects in the British educational stream were good. The future PAS president dreamt of becoming a lawyer and entering the Malayan legal service, but his father was unhappy with the kind of secular education his son was receiving. His strict disciplinarian outlook and orthodox approach to religion convinced him that his son was being 'Westernised' by the colonial education system. As Mujahid points out, for Haji Abdullah Western education was intended primarily to turn Muslim students into apostates and infidels.<sup>16</sup> Finally, he decided to send his

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<sup>15</sup> Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. Mujahid also notes that Yusof Rawa's father had a particularly violent temper and uncompromising view on religious matters. On at least one occasion he whipped Yusof for not attending his *Qur'anic* class. The domineering personality of his father ensured that Yusof Rawa was left with little choice or means to follow his own path in life, and it was his father who finally decided to end his education in Malaya and send him to Mecca for religious studies.

son abroad to take up Islamic studies at the Ma'ahad Al-Fallah in Mecca.

In Mecca, Yusof Rawa found himself in an environment worlds away from the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Penang. Having grown up in a society where social interaction (including interaction between the sexes) was commonplace, he was struck by the rigid and conservative atmosphere of Arabian society which had come under the sway of the Wahhabi school of thought. As Mujahid notes:

*Mekah yang dikuasai golongan konservatif ketika itu mengamalkan amalan Islam yang rigid; dunia luar hampir terputus dari segi teknologi dan arus pemodenan Barat. Yusof Rawa dapat merasai kehidupan Islam yang cukup ketat nilai-nilai dan pegangannya. Pergaulan yang agak liberal di Pulau Pinang adalah suatu pengalaman yang cukup kontra dengan kehidupan barunya.<sup>17</sup>*

Cut off from his friends and family, Yusof Rawa had little else to do but study. At the Ma'ahad he studied Arabic along with religious subjects like *us'ul al-fiqh*, *tafsir*, *tauhid* and Islamic history. He graduated with honours, receiving the *ijazah thaqasur al-deeni*. Despite his academic achievements, Yusof Rawa was unhappy with the environment around Mecca. The only occasion when he and his friends could fool around was when Mecca experienced a flood due to freak weather conditions. Yusof and his friends took the opportunity to swim around the *Ka'aba* and use the main arch in front it as a diving board — something which did not amuse the native Meccans.<sup>18</sup> In Mecca, he also experienced for the first time the racism of the Arabs towards Malays and other non-Arab Muslims. On several occasions he found himself involved in petty

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<sup>17</sup> Translation: Mecca which was then under the control of the conservatives had an atmosphere where the experience of Islam was rigid; it was cut off from the outside world and the latest currents of modernisation from the West. Yusof Rawa experienced a way of Islamic life that was strict and narrow in its values and approach. The liberal mode of social interaction he knew from Penang was something quite contrary to what he was experiencing now (*Ibid.*, p. 20).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

conflicts and brawls with Arab youths who taunted the non-Arab students in Mecca.<sup>19</sup>

By the early 1940s, Yusof Rawa was ready to return to Malaya but his departure was interrupted by the advent of World War II. (Thousands of Malay-Muslims were trapped in Egypt and the Arabian peninsula. Those studying at Islamic institutions like al-Azhar were forced to remain there, and in 1938 there were 10,884 Malay-Muslim pilgrims from the Dutch East Indies alone.)<sup>20</sup> The war had a tremendous impact on the life and trajectory of Yusof Rawa. The tragedy of the conflict was brought home to him when his father was killed during a Japanese bombing raid on Penang.

As a result of the conflict in Asia, Yusof Rawa was forced to continue his studies in Mecca. This turned out to be a stroke of luck, for it allowed him to make contact with other Arabs and to further develop his own knowledge of Islam. He eventually made friends with Hosni Gamal, an Egyptian merchant who hired him as a clerk in his import-export firm. Impressed by Yusof Rawa's ability to read and write in English, Hosni Gamal promoted him to the post of translator and trade representative. It was through Hosni Gamal that Yusof Rawa travelled all over the Arab world, visiting countries like Egypt and Lebanon. While learning the tricks of the trade in Gamal's business, Yusof also enrolled for a correspondence course in business studies with a British university.<sup>21</sup>

Through his business contacts Yusof Rawa took his first tentative steps into the world of Arab-Muslim politics. He came to know of prominent Islamist intellectuals like Muhammad Abduh and Hassan al-Banna through his meetings with Egyptian and Lebanese traders and activists. During this time he also continued to develop his understanding of Islam and Islamic politics. In Mecca, he was exposed to the teachings and ideas of Wahhabi and Maliki scholars, and his own understanding of Islam was shaped, in turn, by them. In time he also developed a reputation as a good

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 236.

<sup>21</sup> Yusof Rawa Mujahid, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, p. 28.

*ustaz* (teacher). Soon he began to attract his own students in Mecca, many of whom were Malay pilgrims on the *hajj*.

After his return to Malaya, Yusof Rawa worked in his father's printing business in Penang, then called the Sharikat Percetakan al-Rawa. There he wrote numerous books on religious subjects like *tafsir*, *hadith* and religious practice, and published books on the Arabic language. He also published a biweekly magazine called *Al-Israh* that discussed matters of religion for a Malay readership. In his magazines and journals, Yusof Rawa discussed the theories of conservative Islamist philosophers like ibn Taymiyya and ibn Qayyim al-Juzi. He also translated many articles and commentaries by Islamist thinkers and ideologues such as Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. His publishing house published Malay translations of Qutb's *Ma'alim Fit Tariq* and *Fi Zilail Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an).<sup>22</sup>

The injection of these new Islamist ideas and theories came at a time when Malaya was in a state of political crisis, as it was obvious that the British could not maintain their hold on their colonies much longer. With the loss of India and Pakistan in 1947, Britain set the process of decolonisation in motion. In 1948, Malaya was rocked by the Malayan Union crisis that discredited the Malay rulers even more and propelled the Malay nationalists of the PKMM and UMNO to the fore. By then, Yusof Rawa was already involved in nationalist and anti-colonial politics in Malaya. The British authorities arrested him for his alleged involvement and support of the reformist movement in Egypt, but later released him.<sup>23</sup>

As seen earlier, the birth of Malay nationalism was not an easy one. By the early 1950s, UMNO was in a state of crisis. During the 'Nadrah affair' of 1950-51, the UMNO leadership (under Onn Jaafar) fared poorly. It was the Islamist nationalists and *ulama*, led by men like Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Ustaz Abu Bakar al-Bakir, who really mobilised the Malays and stood up to both the British and Dutch authorities. As a result of UMNO's leadership

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>23</sup> Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 4.

crisis there were calls for the creation of a Malayan Islamist party independent of UMNO. This finally led to the creation of PAS in 1951.

Yusof Rawa joined PAS as soon as he was able to. He became a member in 1959 and took up the post of *pesuruhjaya* PAS in Penang when Ustaz Ahmad Azam moved to the mainland. He also served in the *jawatankuasa agung*, the party's *jawatankuasa agung* (central committee) and over the years rose to become one of its most ardent spokesmen. From the moment he joined the party, Yusof Rawa was involved in the development and expansion of PAS activities in Penang and Kedah, where his own local constituency was based, and in time he came to be known as one of the leading PAS leaders in the northwest of the peninsula. In 1969, he was one of three PAS candidates who won a parliamentary seat in Kedah (Kota Setar Selatan constituency) after defeating UMNO candidate Dr. Mahathir Mohamad to whom he was distantly related.<sup>24</sup>

PAS was then led by Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy, a progressive Islamist-nationalist who sought to develop a political philosophy linking the themes of pan-Islamism, anti-colonialism and nationalism in a broad all-encompassing political ideology. During the presidency of Dr. Burhanuddin, PAS had begun to develop its Islamist ideology and philosophy in a systematic manner, but there were still few opportunities for the *ulama* to rise and lead the party.

During Mohammad Asri Muda's presidency (1970–82), Yusof Rawa rose even higher up the party hierarchy. When Asri Muda brought his Islamist party into the BN government in 1973, a number of important PAS leaders were given government posts by Tun Razak. Asri Muda and Hasan Adli Arshat became Cabinet ministers. In 1973, Yusof Rawa was appointed as Malaysia's repre-

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<sup>24</sup> Yusof Rawa was related to Dr. Mahathir's wife, Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, whose father was also from Rawa, near Medan, Sumatra. The two were second cousins, and the conflict between Yusof Rawa and Mahathir Mohamad was spoken of in the constituency as a 'family conflict' between cousins. While there were real political and ideological differences between the two men, neither side had any personal enmity towards the other (Interview with Marina Mahathir, 5 May 2000).

sentative to the United Nations in New York.<sup>25</sup> A year later, he was made deputy minister in the Primary Industries Ministry after winning his parliamentary seat during the 1974 election unchallenged. In 1975, he was appointed Malaysian ambassador to Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan. Despite his deteriorating health, Yusof Rawa continued to carry out his duties at breakneck pace.<sup>26</sup> Other prominent PAS *ulama* like Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat were also given important posts within the state's religious bureaucracy.

But as we have seen, Asri Muda's ill-fated decision to join the BN coalition finally proved to be his undoing. Many among Asri's inner circle of advisors believed that PAS would be able to profit from the move, on the popular assumption that Prime Minister Hussein Onn was a weak leader. However, Hussein Onn proved much smarter than his adversaries thought. UMNO had neutralised the threat of PAS at the 1974 polls and, worse still, had exploited the internal leadership crisis in PAS between Asri Muda and Mohamad Nasir that led to the declaration of Emergency in Kelantan on 8 November 1977. At the 1978 election, PAS suffered one of its worst defeats ever.

In 1979, Yusof Rawa returned to Malaysia after his term as Malaysian ambassador to Iran. He had witnessed the final days of the Shah of Iran and was deeply moved by the resolve and determination of the Iranian revolutionaries who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for a political goal at a time when the leadership of their own country was ideologically bankrupt.

The same ideological bankruptcy was evident in Yusof Rawa's party at the time. Asri Muda's constant U-turns on matters of policy and ideology created the impression that PAS was devoid of purpose and a sense of direction. Leaders of the other Islamist movements in the country were hardly any better. Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* of PAS were shocked by the 'betrayal' of another Muslim

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<sup>25</sup> Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> Yusof Rawa's first serious bout of illness was a minor heart attack in 1976 during the International Conference of Ambassadors in Kuala Lumpur. His doctors advised him to stop working for three months and to stick to a strict diet, as he had already been diagnosed with diabetes (*Ibid.*, p. 104).

activist and leader whom they hoped would join their party: Anwar Ibrahim. When told that Anwar had abandoned ABIM and joined UMNO, Yusof Rawa's reaction was blunt and to the point. He said to Anwar: '*Tindakan anda itu umpama menikam kami dari belakang.*'<sup>27</sup>

Frustrated with the failure of political leadership among the Islamist parties and movements, Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* of PAS decided to take control of the situation themselves. In 1982, an internal party *coup* led to Asri being kicked out and the rise of a new generation of leaders.

The first signs of rebellion were seen during the 27th and 28th PAS general assemblies in 1981 and 1982. By then the *ulama* faction of the party was beginning to mobilise themselves and prepare the way for the take-over of the party leadership. During the 27th *muk-tamar*, Ustaz Yusof Rawa contested the post of deputy president, openly challenging Datuk Abu Bakar Umar (who was favoured by Asri Muda). Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* faction won and Pak Yusof was elected.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 further inflamed the already tense situation in many Muslim countries. The mass killings of Lebanese and Palestinian refugees by Christian Phalangist militants in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps right under the eyes of Israeli troops and security personnel added to the growing sense of persecution and helplessness of Arabs in the region and Muslims world-wide. To make matters worse, the beligerent attitude of the Israeli political and military leaders displayed an almost pathological hatred for the Arabs that bordered on insanity. The conflict in the Middle East served as the backdrop to the increasingly heated conflict taking place within PAS, as a new generation of Islamist activists fought to gain control of the party at a time when the Muslim world was slipping into a state of political crisis. The emergence of new Islamist groupings abroad, such as *Hizbullah* and *al-Jihad*, came at a time when PAS was undergoing yet another radical change in its identity. However,

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<sup>27</sup> Translation: Your decision (to join UMNO) is tantamount to stabbing us in the back (Ibid., p. 99).

the trajectories of these movements were never quite the same. While *Hizbullah*<sup>28</sup> began as a radical militant movement that eventually adjusted its tactics to suit the democratic political process, PAS was going in the other direction by adopting an increasingly

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<sup>28</sup> The Lebanese *Hizbullah* movement emerged in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The movement's primary political constituency and base of support was the impoverished slum dwellers in the 'belts of misery' in the poorer cities and towns of the region. From the beginning, *Hizbullah* targeted the poor and underprivileged sections of the Shia community and regarded them as their most loyal supporters. However, *Hizbullah's* origins go further back to the intra-Lebanese conflicts and power struggles in the 1970s. After the creation of the Amal militia in 1975 and Amal's defection from the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) in 1976, the Lebanese community was divided along sectarian religious and ideological grounds. The Lebanese civil war of 1975 made things worse for the Shia community, which was desperate for political leadership and representation. *Hizbullah* was very much influenced by the model of leadership and organisation shown by Amal, and many of its early founders were ex-members of Amal who were persuaded by the ideas of Amal's founder Imam Musa as-Sadr. But as Saad-Ghorayeb has argued, the intellectual fountainhead of the *Hizbullah* was located outside Lebanon, in the town of Najaf in Iraq where thousands of Lebanese Shia students had studied under Shia *ulama* like Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr (Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbullah: Politics and Religion*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 13). As a militant revolutionary movement, *Hizbullah's* ideology and tactics were somewhat different from the other Sunni militias and organisations. *Hizbullah* did not regard secularism as evil *per se*. Nor did it attack other national-liberationist movements such as the PLO that were more secular in orientation. Unlike many Sunni movements, *Hizbullah* also did not engage in any kind of *takfir* discourse, describing their Muslim competitors as '*kafir*' beyond the pale of Islam. *Hizbullah's* orientation was pragmatic from the beginning: its main enemies were Israel and the US, and they supported any political movement fighting for national liberation and against American hegemony. *Hizbullah* extended its support even to non-Muslim movements such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Marxist-influenced Third World leaders like Fidel Castro, Nelson Mandela and Daniel Ortega (*Ibid.*, p. 21). Conversely, they opposed any Muslim group that accepted US help, including the *mujahideen* of Afghanistan, whom they regarded

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militant and confrontational discourse that put it on a collision course with the state. In 1982, the irreconcilable gulf between PAS and UMNO widened even more when PAS *ulama* Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang issued his controversial *amanat* (edict) based on his speech at Banggol Pradong in Terengganu.

The *amanat* of Hadi Awang listed ten major sins that would effectively rob a Muslim of his or her chance to go to heaven.<sup>29</sup> One of these was the sin of supporting a government working against the interests of Islam and the Muslim community. Hadi Awang claimed that the Malay-Muslim leaders of UMNO were *munafikin* (hypocrites) and that to confront a nominally Muslim government that fails to implement Islamic *hudood* law was part of the Muslim's *jihad* (struggle).<sup>30</sup>

The controversial *amanat* took the country by storm and UMNO leaders were quick to retaliate, accusing Ustaz Hadi Awang of being an extremist fundamentalist who practised *takfir* (accusing other Muslims of being unbelievers) and who advocated the use of violence in his *jihad* against the state. Hadi Awang's *amanat* echoed the confrontational polemics of other radical Islamist leaders and theologians of the time, and seemed to bring PAS closer to more

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as puppets of Washington. In its religious outlook and orientation, *Hizbullah* was deeply influenced by Shia *ulama* like Imam Khomeini and Imam Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, *Hizbullah* transformed itself from a militia movement into a social movement and political party. Its pragmatic approach allowed it to form instrumental coalitions with secular and Christian parties and organisations. In Lebanon's 1992 parliamentary election, *Hizbullah* contested and won 12 seats, four of which it gave to its non-Shia allies. In the 1996 election it contested and won nine seats. By engaging in the democratic political process, providing welfare and social work as well as political representation, *Hizbullah* slowly made the transition to conventional politics and is now the biggest Shia political party in Lebanon.

<sup>29</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Dagangnya Dibili Allah*, Memali: Penerbitan al-Jihadi, 2000, p. 84.

<sup>30</sup> Alias Mohamed, *Malaysia's Islamic Opposition*, 1991, p. 83.

radical groups like *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah*<sup>31</sup> and *Tanzim al-Jihad*<sup>32</sup> of Egypt.

It was during this period of growing hostility between PAS and UMNO that Yusof Rawa became the fifth president of PAS. This

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<sup>31</sup> The *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* (originally known as *Jama'at al-Muslimin*) was formed in the early 1970s by ex-*Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* member Ahmad Shukri Mustafa shortly after his release from prison in 1971. The movement was soon given the label *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* (Accusing and Flight) by the Egyptian authorities and media as the group used *takfir* (accusing other Muslims of disbelief) as their main weapon against their enemies. *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* was a messianic group with millenarian tendencies. Its leader Ahmad Shukri Mustafa was deeply influenced by *Ikhwan* ideologue Sayyid Qutb who was known for his use of *takfir* against *Ikhwan's* opponents. *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* members moved to the countryside to live in communes; they created their own micro societies and regarded this as their *hijrah* (flight) from the corrupt and un-Islamic mainstream Egyptian society. Their isolation earned them the label *ahl al-ka'f* (people of the cave). The group was very dogmatic and conservative. Following the teachings of ibn Taymiyya, *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* regarded Egyptian society as decadent and corrupted by un-Islamic values, and opted to break away from the mainstream of society. *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* leaders taught their members that those outside their community were *kafir*. Anyone who left the organisation was declared an apostate and condemned to death. They also regarded other Muslim states as being under *kafir* influence and claimed that Muslims in Egypt should not eat meat imported from other Muslim countries as it came from *kafir* sources. Although the movement was not as large and well organised as the *Ikhwan*, *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* was nonetheless able to carry out terrorist attacks against the state. In 1977, the group kidnapped and murdered Sheikh Muhammad Husain Dhahabi, former Religious Endowment Minister. This led to a massive crackdown on the movement and the arrest of 600 members, the imprisonment of 36, and the execution of five senior leaders. Despite pressure by government security forces, *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* remained active in the 1980s after going underground. It concentrated most of its attacks on members of the Egyptian security forces.

<sup>32</sup> The *Tanzim al-Jihad* (also known as *Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah*) was founded in 1980 by former members of *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* as a continuation of the Military Academy Group (*al-Fanniyyah al-Askariyyah*). The movement's leaders included men such as Muhamad Abd al-Salam Faraj, *continued p. 348*

took place on 1 May 1983, at the 29th PAS *muktamar* held at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur after the party's fourth president, Asri Muda, was overthrown. With the departure of Asri Muda from the scene, PAS's experiment with ethno-

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Colonel Abbud al-Zumur and Lieutenant Khalid Islambuli who were of lower middle-class origins. Many members had ties with the Egyptian civil service and armed forces. Its leaders were inspired by the Iranian revolution and the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini. It announced its arrival on the Egyptian political scene with the spectacular assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on 6 October 1981. In the same year, *Tanzim* members bombed churches in Alexandria and clashed with the Coptic community in Rod al-Farag and Zawiyah Hamra. They also opposed all Islamist organisations and parties working within the democratic process on the grounds that these groups merely helped to perpetuate and legitimise the dominance of the 'kafir' government. The *Tanzim* regarded the Egyptian government as un-Islamic and led by 'kafir' and 'munafikin' who deserved to be killed to open the way for the establishment of an Islamic state. Throughout the 1980s *Tanzim* expanded its recruitment and training efforts, targeting students and young activists in the universities and army in particular. By 1981 it had gathered about 200,000 members and supporters all over the country. *Tanzim* members were given military training, taught the use of arms and explosives, and assigned to watch the activities of government officials and military personnel. The *Tanzim* was an extremely conservative and militant movement. Its political programme was outlined in the tract *al-Faridah al-Gha'ibah* (The Hidden Imperative), written by its founder Muhamad Abd al-Salam Faraj. *Tanzim's* leaders derived their ideas from the writings of conservative Islamist ideologues like Sayyid Qutb and the Hanbali scholar ibn Taymiyya. The movement's main source of religious knowledge and moral legitimisation was blind *ulama* Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman, who provided the *Tanzim al-Jihad* with the doctrinal and theological justification for its practice of *takfir*. The *Tanzim* was prepared to use terrorist methods and to kill civilians in their attacks. They also organised many anti-government demonstrations that attracted considerable support from young activists and students who were against the government's economic policies and Egypt's decision to engage in peace negotiations with Israel. The government responded to *Tanzim* with even more repression and arrests. In the 1992 crackdown, *Tanzim* funds were confiscated and six of their mosques taken over.

nationalism was officially over. At long last, the hour of the *ulama* had arrived.

*Reborn from the Ashes: Yusof Rawa's Reinvention  
of PAS in the 1980s*

*Kemaraan kesedaran Islam sedang menggugat mahligai kuncu-kuncu mustakbirin yang memerintah dunia Islam sekarang. Kemaraan itu sedang berkembang menuju ke tahap yang berupaya menghadapi musuh Islam secara mujawahah bi'l-quwwah. Tidak ada lagi kekuatan dan tenaga yang dapat dikumpulkan oleh mustakbirin untuk menahan kuncu-kuncu mereka.<sup>33</sup>*

Ustaz Yusof Rawa,  
'Menggempur Pemikiran Asabiyyah' (1984)

Ustaz Yusof Rawa came to lead PAS at a time when Malay political discourse had shifted to a different register altogether. The departure of Asri Muda, the rise of the *ulama* faction within PAS and the defection of the Islamist activist-turned-politician Anwar Ibrahim to UMNO meant that both major Malay-Muslim parties in the country (PAS and UMNO) were now speaking the language of political Islam. The political discourse of the older generation of Malay ethno-nationalists had given way to a new generation of Malay politicians and activists for whom Islam could not be relegated to the margins.

It was Yusof Rawa who re-oriented the struggle of PAS and brought it into line with other Islamist movements and political organisations in the rest of the Islamic world. Two important developments within the Islamist party characterised the era of

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<sup>33</sup> Translation: The advance of Islamic consciousness is now threatening the oppressive forces who rule the Muslim world from their palaces and citadels of power. The advance of Islamic consciousness has come to the point where we can now confront our oppressors in the open. They (the oppressors) no longer have the will and the energy to defend themselves and their servants. (Yusof Rawa, 'Menggempur Pemikiran Asabiyyah', speech delivered at the PAS general assembly, 13 April 1984 in Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 80.)

Yusof Rawa's leadership. The first was the rise to prominence of the *ulama*. The second was the steady radicalisation and 'Arabisation' of the political discourse of PAS, thanks to Ustaz Yusof Rawa's conscious attempt to re-orient the trajectory of the party's struggle.

During the presidency of Yusof Rawa (1983–89), the PAS leadership was made up of well-known *ulama* such as Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat and Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang.<sup>34</sup> Ex-ABIM activist and *ulama* Ustaz Fadzil Noor was deputy president. Tuan Guru Hadi Awang (another ex-ABIM activist) was vice-president

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<sup>34</sup> Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang was born on 20 October 1947 in the village of Rusila in Marang, Terengganu. His father, Ustaz Haji Awang Mohamad Abdul Rahman, was the *tok guru* of Rusila and the imam of the local mosque. In his early childhood Hadi Awang was taught by his own father. He then studied at the Arabic school of Marang for 5 years. In 1965–68 he studied at Sultan Zainal Abidin Islamic Secondary School in Marang. Hadi Awang was then sent abroad to study — under Saudi government sponsorship — at the University of Medina (1969–73), where he gained his first degree in Shariah law. He was the President of the Malaysian Muslim Students Association of Madinah and the Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Students. Hadi Awang entered the world of politics and joined PAS in 1964. In 1969, he was appointed as secretary of the Rusila PAS branch, but soon after left for further studies abroad. In 1974–76 he studied *siasah shariyyah* at al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. There he became involved in the activities of the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* along with Dr. Said Hawa, Professor Muhamad al-Wakeel and Dr. Abdul Satar al-Khudsi. He was also secretary of the Malaysian Association's *shariah* and regulations bureau in Egypt. He returned to Malaysia in 1976 and became an officer in Yayasan Islam Terengganu (Islamic Foundation of Terengganu). In the same year he was elected head of PAS Youth in Terengganu. In 1978 he also became chairman of ABIM in Terengganu. He contested for both the parliamentary seat at Marang and the state assembly seat at Manir in the 1978 elections, but lost in both contests. He contested once again in the 1982 elections and won the Rhu Rendang state assembly seat. In 1982 he was elected party vice-president at the same time that Ustaz Yusof Rawa took over as PAS president. He became deputy president of PAS in 1989 when Fadzil Noor became party president. In the 1990 and 1995 elections he retained both his parliamentary and state assembly seats.

and Tuan Guru Nik Aziz led the Dewan Ulama. The PAS leadership was also bolstered by the entry of a new generation of Islamist activists, many of whom had joined ABIM, the IRC and other Islamist organisations during Asri Muda's time. These included prominent ex-ABIM leaders like Syed Ibrahim Syed Abdul Rahman and Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad. This new generation of PAS leaders adopted a more strident and confrontational stand against UMNO and the state which they had articulated as early as 1982, when Asri Muda was still lingering on as the embattled party leader.

During this period of growing *ulama* influence within PAS the party experienced its third major shift in ideological orientation. While the era of Dr. Burhanuddin was characterised by PAS's trenchant critique of neo-colonialism, and the era of Mohammad Asri Muda was characterised by PAS's staunch defence of Malay rights, PAS under Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* soon developed a reputation as an Islamist party violently opposed to *asabiyyah* (communalism or ethnocentrism), *sekularisme* (secularism) and *maddiyyah* (materialist culture) of capitalist development promoted by the UMNO-led government of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

### *PAS under Yusof Rawa: Ideological Re-orientation*

*Identiti PAS sebagai parti politik sedikit demi sedikit dialihkan kepada penegasan bahawa PAS juga adalah badan dakwah yang menyeru manusia menyembah Allah, dan melakukan kebaikan dan mencegah kemungkaran. Identiti ini sebenarnya telah meninggalkan kesan yang cukup besar kepada survival PAS ketika itu dan hingga ke hari ini. Jika PAS hanya suatu parti politik yang hanya berkerja untuk pilihanraya, maka sudah lama PAS akan hilang dari peta politik tanahair.<sup>35</sup>*

Mujahid Yusof Rawa,  
Permata dari Pulau Mutiara

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<sup>35</sup> Translation: PAS's identity as a political party was slowly changed to that of a missionary party that asked the people to worship Allah, to do good and to eschew evil. This shift in identity left a great impact *continued p. 352*

PAS's new ideological orientation was spelled out in no uncertain terms by Yusof Rawa during his first speech as the new president of the party in 1983.

In his landmark speech '*Ke Arah Pembebasan Ummah*' (Towards the Emancipation of the *Ummah*) delivered during the 29th PAS *muktamar* on 29 April 1983, Yusof Rawa rejected the ideology of ethno-nationalism on the grounds that it was fundamentally a form of *asabiyyah* which was a throwback from the age of *jahiliyyah* (ignorance) before the coming of Islam. He also rejected the ideology of ethno-nationalism on the grounds that it was a remnant of the colonial past. (During Dr. Burhanuddin's presidency, nationalism was seen as a tool that could be used to undermine the structures of colonial dominance.) Such forms of communitarian politics had merely led to divisions within the Muslim *ummah* and were the cause of the Islamic party's lack of direction during the 1970s, he argued.<sup>36</sup> Yusof Rawa admitted that PAS under Asri Muda had taken a wrong turn when it opted to defend the exclusive communitarian interests of the Malays. In his own words:

*Berpunca daripada beberapa kesilapan kita yang lalu, orang bukan Islam masih menganggap PAS sebagai parti Melayu yang tebal dengan fanatik kemelayuannya. Fitnah yang ditaburkan oleh musuh Islam dan kesilapan kita yang lalu dalam mengemukakan pendekatan terhadap perjuangan Islam telah membina tembok yang tinggi antara kita dengan orang bukan Islam sehingga mereka sukar sekali mendengar dakwah dan seruan kita.*<sup>37</sup>

Although previous PAS leaders had also defended the cause of Malay rights and Malay nationalism, the new leadership was not

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on PAS then and now. Had PAS been merely a political party working for victory at elections, PAS would have been wiped off the political map of the country a long time ago (Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, p. 95).

<sup>36</sup> Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> Translation: Due to our own mistakes in the recent past, members of the non-Malay community still think of PAS as a fanatical and extremist Malay chauvinist party. The lies that have been thrown at us, and our own mistakes in our approach to the Islamic struggle have created a wall between us and the non-Malays, making it difficult for them to hear what we have to say (Ibid., p. 64).

prepared to tolerate any form of politics that was in any way 'contaminated' by ethnocentric concerns, which they regarded as *asabiyyah*. As Chandra notes:

Fighting narrow nationalism which the party (PAS) described as *asabiyyah* was a major plank in its political platform. PAS (under Yusof Rawa) saw *asabiyyah* as a product of colonial thinking, preserved and perpetuated by Western intellectual dominance. Secularism had helped to rationalise and legitimise *asabiyyah* in the same way that it had helped to preserve other intellectual fallacies too. PAS was of the opinion that *asabiyyah* had caused havoc all over the world. Guided by its rejection of *asabiyyah*, PAS criticised a number of government policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP), for instance.<sup>38</sup>

In his policy speech the following year (1984) entitled '*Menggempur Pemikiran Asabiyyah*' (Confronting the Mentality of *Asabiyyah*), Yusof Rawa upheld his critique against ethno-nationalism and blamed it for the decline of the Muslim *ummah* on the whole and the Malay-Muslims in particular. Nationalism, for this new generation of PAS leaders and intellectuals, was thoroughly secular and modern. It belonged to the world of the here and now, and the profane sphere of *realpolitik* which was responsible for sowing the seeds of *fitnah* and *mihna* (discord and chaos) in the world. The experiment with Pan-Arab nationalism (which was so admired by the earlier generation of PAS leaders like Dr. Burhanuddin) was dismissed as a dismal failure that led to divisions among the Arabs themselves:

*Kahancuran yang dibawa oleh gerakan nasionalisme asabiyyah di dunia begitu jelas sekali apabila kita mengkaji kegagalan Arabisme atau kefahaman nasionalisme asabiyyah Arab. Fahaman Arabisme yang dipupuk dengan semangat berapi-api itu telah membakar kehidupan umat Arab sehingga menjadi tawanan kepada musuh-musuh Islam. Arabisme bertanggungjawab menjadikan bangsa Arab sebagai bangsa yang hina dan mundur. Padahal, ketika umat Arab berada dibawah naungan panji-panji Islam, bangsa Arab adalah bangsa yang dihormati dan disegani.*<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>39</sup> Translation: The destruction that has been wrought by the movement of communitarianism and nationalism in the world is most explicitly continued p. 354

In a radical break from the stand taken by Asri Muda, Yusof Rawa also blamed the ideology of ethno-nationalism for the divisions among the Malays and argued that it was the root cause of their political and economic backwardness:

*Orang-orang Melayu telah menjadi mundur kerana amalan asabiyyah yang zalim. Sistem yang zalim itu mestilah dihancurkan-musnahkan. Usaha membantu orang Melayu akan gagal kerana rasuah dan penindasan, maka rasuah dan penindasan mestilah dihancurkan. Kerana sistem asabiyyah yang zalim itulah menjadi punca kemunduran dan penderitaan seluruh rakyat.<sup>40</sup>*

Although he did not neglect or deny the needs of the Muslim community in specific localities (his speeches were peppered with references to the plight of Muslims elsewhere in the world, including Afghanistan, Palestine, Russia, India, Burma, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia), Yusof Rawa maintained that the solution to the problems facing the Muslim *ummah* did not lie in the sectarian or communitarian politics of nationalism. The answer to the problems confronting the Muslim world was an obvious one for him. It lay in the revival of the institution of the *ulama*.

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*n. 39 continued*

demonstrated by the failure of pan-Arabism or Arab nationalism. The flames of Arab nationalism, which were kindled with such ferocity, ultimately devoured the Arabs themselves and made them the slaves of the enemies of Islam. Pan-Arabism is responsible for reducing the status of the Arab people to that of poor and backward serfs. While the Arabs lived under the banner of Islam they prospered and were a people who were renowned and respected (Yusof Rawa, 'Menggempur Pemikiran Asabiyyah', p. 79).

<sup>40</sup> Translation: The Malay people have become backward thanks to the practice of *asabiyyah* which is oppressive and corrupt. Efforts to help the Malays will fail because of the corruption and oppression (that accompanies this form of communitarian politics), and so such corruption and oppression must be resisted and destroyed for good. This tyrannical form of *asabiyyah* is the root cause of the backwardness and suffering of the people (Ibid., pp. 75-76).

By 1983, Yusof Rawa was already calling for the elevation of the status of the *ulama* as leaders and guardians of society following the precedent set by the Iranian revolution. During his 1983 *muktamar* speech, he explicitly cited the Iranian revolution as the model to be emulated:

*Kejayaan umat Islam di Iran membebaskan diri dari belenggu penguasaan mustakbirin yang memaksa umat Islam Iran dan orientasi kehidupan yang bertentangan dengan Islam menerusi regim boneka Shah, merupakan babak penting kejayaan Islam di zaman ini. Kejayaan itu mendedahkan bahawa umat Islam yang bergantung kekuatan mereka kepada Islam dan pertolongan Allah, sanggup berhadapan dengan mustakbirin yang bergantung kekuatan dengan kebendaan dalam menentukan aliran perubahan sejarah.*

*Keistimewaan revolusi Islam Iran daripada revolusi lain yang pernah berlaku di negara umat Islam ialah ia merupakan revolusi Islam yang digerakkan oleh cetusan hati murni umat Islam Iran seluruhnya yang berpaut rapat kepada Islam yang dipimpin oleh golongan Ulama. ...Kerana itu revolusi Islam di Iran mempunyai asas yang kukuh bagi mendapatkan kebebasan yang hakiki untuk menjalankan kewajipan mendaulatkan agama Allah dalam segenap bidang kehidupan.*

*Kejayaan revolusi Islam di Iran menambahkan lagi keyakinan kita terhadap kejayaan Islam di masa hadapan. ... Kita mestilah mempelajari daripada kejayaan umat Islam di Iran untuk meningkatkan keupayaan dan kebolehan kita untuk berjuang.<sup>41</sup>*

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<sup>41</sup> Translation: The victory of the Muslim *ummah* in Iran in freeing themselves from the oppressive yoke of the tyrants and those who attempted to force upon them a different orientation of life through the puppet regime of the Shah is an important event in the history of Islam today. The victory shows that Muslims who hold on to their faith and their belief in Allah are able to confront their oppressors who cling on to their materialist beliefs and faith in worldly power. The uniqueness of the Iranian revolution lies in the fact that it was started by Muslims who held on to their beliefs and were guided by the *ulama*. ...That is why the Iranian revolution has been able to deliver true freedom in the sense that it has allowed the people to faithfully return to the practice of their religion and it has allowed for the elevation of Islam to the level of a way of life that penetrates into all areas of society. The success of the Iranian revolution has added to our resolve and conviction about the success of Islam in the future. ... We must learn from the success of the Iranian revolution so that we too can develop our will and ability to struggle (Ibid., pp. 43-44).

For Yusof Rawa, the *ulama* would be in the vanguard of the struggle against the forces of the people believing in narrow secular nationalism. The *ulama* had a special role to play in bridging the gulf of class, race and ethnicity in society, and it was they who would lead the *jihad* for nation-building and the creation of an Islamic state:

*Para Ulama akan kembali berperanan bagi menyelamatkan negara dan ummah dari penyelewengan golongan nasionalis asabiyyah sekular yang merelakan diri mereka menjadi boneka penjajah dan hamba abdi pemikiran sekularisme. Ulama-ulama akan tampil ke hadapan dalam jihad Islam ini dan akan memikul amanah kepimpinan sebagai warisan yang suci daripada rasul-rasul yang diutus oleh Allah.<sup>42</sup>*

However, the *ulama* could not come to power without an Islamic movement or organisation to serve as their vehicle. That vehicle was necessarily PAS, but the Islamist party had to be radically restructured and reoriented before it could play its destined role. To succeed in his objectives, Yusof Rawa then began the process of restructuring the Islamist party.

### ***PAS under Yusof Rawa: Institutional Reforms and the Rise of the Ulama***

*Rasulullah pernah bersabda — ‘Dunia ini adalah suatu taman. Taman ini baru terhias apabila adanya lima perkara. Perkara yang pertamanya ialah para Alim Ulama. Jadi kalau Ulama tak ada, maka hancurlah dunia ini. Nabi berkata — Ulama mewarisi ilmu Nabi. Bukan harta, tetapi ilmu Nabi, kerja Nabi. Ulama itu pelita yang menyuluh dunia ini. Maka kita mesti menghormati Ulama. Rasul berkata ‘tahukah anda bahawa ada orang yang masuk neraka secara percuma?’*

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<sup>42</sup> Translation: The *ulama* will come to the fore once again and they will play their part in saving the country from the deviation of the secular nationalists who have allowed themselves to be turned into the puppets of their colonial masters and who have become the slaves of secularism. The *ulama* will come to the fore in this *jihad* (struggle) and they will take up the burden of leadership that was passed on to the Prophets of the past who have been sent to us by Allah Almighty (Ibid., p. 81).

'Siapakah dia?' tanya orang. 'Mereka yang ada dalam hati mereka sikap benci kepada Ulama', jawab Nabi.<sup>43</sup>

Ustaz Ismail Kamus,  
Memilih Pemimpin Yang Adil<sup>44</sup>

PAS's new orientation was reflected in the rites and rituals of membership and association of the party introduced by Yusof Rawa. While the party already had its own constitution and formal membership procedure, Yusof Rawa introduced new requirements meant to test the political commitment and personal faith of its members.

One of the first demands he made of party members was that they should swear *ba'yat* (an oath of allegiance) to PAS and no other political party or organisation in the country, including other Islamist movements like ABIM, *Darul Arqam*, *Tablighi Jama'at*, etc. *Wala'* (allegiance) was due solely to the Islamist party and nothing else.<sup>45</sup> In their ideological orientation and *fikrah* (worldview), party members had to commit themselves to the *fikrah* of PAS and none other. PAS, for Yusof Rawa, was meant to be the one and only *harakah Islamiyyah* (Islamic movement) in the country, and the only party that would promote and uphold the *daulah Islamiyyah* (Islamic rule). Those outside the party were effectively beyond the pale of the Islamic struggle, and neither would there be any room for waverers and fence-sitters.

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<sup>43</sup> Translation: The Prophet once said: 'This world is like a garden. The garden is beautiful only when there are five elements. The first element is the *alim ulama*. If the *ulama* are no longer there, then the world will surely come to an end.' The Prophet said: 'The *ulama* are the inheritors of my knowledge. Not my wealth, but all that I know and all I have done. The *ulama* are like a lamp which illuminates the world.' Therefore we must all respect the *ulama*. The Prophet once asked his followers: 'Do you know who among you will go to hell easily?' 'Who are the ones, oh Prophet?' asked his followers. 'It is they who harbour in their hearts contempt for the *ulama*,' he replied.

<sup>44</sup> Ismail Kamus, 'Memilih Pemimpin Yang Adil', speech recorded in August 1999. Distributor: An-Nahli Enterprise, Gombak, 1999.

<sup>45</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Suamiku Kekasih Allah*, Memali: Penerbitan al-Jihadi, 1999, p. 22.

Also during Yusof Rawa's time, PAS developed into a cadre party with inner party cells and an organic structure. A great believer in the practice of *tarbiyyah* (study circles) — something that had been pioneered and perfected by ABIM and IRC — Yusof Rawa believed that such practices were necessary for the further intensification of missionary and propaganda activities of the party. During his second *muktamar* speech in 1984, he encouraged party members to form smaller cells among themselves:

*Melihat kepada keperluan harakah yang penting ini, ternyata sekali pentingnya peranan tarbiyyah dalam harakah kita. Kerana orang-orang yang kita hendaki itu tidak akan muncul dengan sendirinya tanpa latihan dan pendidikan yang dirancang dengan teliti dan dilaksanakan dengan kegigihan. Oleh itu semua anggota-anggota parti kita, mulai dari hari ini, hendaklah menjadi orang yang mentarbiyyah dan ditarbiyyahkan. Saluran-saluran tarbiyyah yang diwujudkan hendaklah dijadikan sebagai petugas-petugas perjuangan Islam yang setia dan gigih.<sup>46</sup>*

The party also introduced the practice of *usrah* (group meetings), intended to bring party members together and to encourage them to understand, develop and propagate the ideology of the party among themselves as well as among non-members. These *usrah* sessions were divided into different types: *usrah* sessions for the party leaders and *usrah* for ordinary members. *Usrah* sessions for the *muslimat* (women members) were also encouraged. On some occasions, the *usrah* was accompanied by a *kenduri* (feast) held in members' homes to which non-members were also invited. These meetings helped to generate a sense of common belonging and

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<sup>46</sup> Translation: Considering the great need for a movement like ours, it is clear that the practice of *tarbiyyah* is vital to our struggle. This is because the party workers we need will not appear out of the blue by themselves unless they are trained and unless we plan and organise our training programme with dedication. Therefore, from this day onwards, all the members of our party will be engaged in *tarbiyyah* activities and they will likewise receive *tarbiyyah* training. The *tarbiyyah* networks we have set up so far will become the main instruments in our dedicated and steadfast struggle for Islam (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 100).

*ukhwah* (fellowship) among PAS members and bring them closer together.<sup>47</sup>

Apart from *tarbiyyah* and *usrah* sessions, Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders also played an active role in supporting (and often leading) many religious meetings and rituals performed by PAS members. (This was, as we have seen earlier, a practice begun in the 1960s under Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy when the *ulama* were in charge of religious affairs within the party.) *Tamrin* sessions were often held by PAS members, sometimes twice a month. *Qiamulail* sessions were also held on every Thursday evening.<sup>48</sup> PAS members were taught to change their daily practices and way of living, to the point where they were even encouraged to eat from the same plate following the *sunnah* (tradition) of the Prophet.<sup>49</sup> (UMNO party dinners were still being held in posh hotels and the food was being served by waiters.) By actively encouraging such 'authentic' religious rituals among party members, PAS leaders were showing that their pastoral concerns went beyond those of party politics.

The shift towards a more radical form of activism occasioned by Yusof Rawa's re-orientation of PAS made it more attractive to the younger generation of Malay Islamist activists who were active in both local and foreign universities. As Mohd Hatta Ramli<sup>50</sup> has pointed out, it was during this time that PAS experienced its first major influx of university-educated activists and intellectuals from

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<sup>47</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Dagangnya Dibeli Allah*, p. 85.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90. Al-Afghani notes that the end result of this relentless process of education and socialisation was the creation of a party whose members all behaved and lived in a similar manner. In time, PAS leaders were able to encourage party members to change their way of dress and manners. Ordinary members began to adopt the *serban* (turban), *kopiah* (skull cap), *jubah* (robe) and *tudung* or *purdah* (veil) and give up their earlier styles of dress. They also began to use more Arabic terms and phrases in their daily conversations and adopt the mannerism of the *ulama*.

<sup>50</sup> Mohd Hatta Ramli, 'Allahyarham Haji Yusof Rawa', p. 16.

the local and foreign campuses, such as Nashruddin Mat Isa<sup>51</sup> (who later become PAS secretary-general) and Mohd Hatta Ramli.<sup>52</sup>

It is important to note that by the 1980s PAS was attracting a large number of young Malay-Muslim graduates from both local and foreign universities. Many had been sent abroad for their higher education, and while studying in the West they came to

<sup>51</sup> Nashruddin Mat Isa was born in Negeri Sembilan in 1962. His early education (till 1979) was at St. Gabriel's Secondary School in Kuala Lumpur. Nashruddin's first contact with PAS was in 1984 when studying at ITM. After several terms at ITM, he studied at Dar'ul 'Ulum Deoband in India (1984). There his links with PAS were strengthened by increased contact with PAS leaders who visited India. After graduating from Deoband he continued his studies in *shariah* law in Jordan (1990). There he established his own research and teaching group, using the *usrah* model developed by PAS. While abroad he studied several languages including Arabic, English and French. After returning to Malaysia in 1993 he became an assistant lecturer in the UIA Law Faculty. His involvement with PAS intensified as soon as he returned to Malaysia: He was immediately elected to the committee for *lajnah tarbiyyah* and international affairs. He was also elected to the Dewan Pemuda committee for two terms. In 1997, he received a masters degree in comparative law from UIA. He resigned from UIA and joined UKM's Department of Law, where he taught and studied for his Ph.D. But on 14 June 1999, he was elected as secretary-general of PAS, which forced him to leave his teaching post.

<sup>52</sup> Mohd Hatta Ramli was born on 11 September 1956 in Sitiawan, Perak. His early education was at Malay College, Kuala Kangsar. He then studied medicine at UKM (grad. 1982) followed by Public Health at the National University of Singapore (NUS) (grad. 1988). He served as a medical officer with the Ministry of Health (1982-94), and later lectured at UKM Medical Faculty (1994-98). Mohd Hatta entered politics as soon as he began working in the government service. He joined PAS in 1983, just one year after Mohammad Asri Muda had been deposed and the *ulama* faction had taken over. Unlike other younger recruits at that time, Mohd Hatta had never been a member of any university-based Islamist student movement. He rose to become a member of the central committee and personal political secretary to the party's sixth president, Ustaz Fadzil Noor. He was also appointed deputy director of the PAS Research Centre in Kuala Lumpur. In 1998, he resigned his lecturer's post at the peak of the political crisis that followed the 1997 East Asian financial collapse.

know a Western world undergoing its own process of economic, political and social decline. The experience of living in an environment suffering from the ravages of racism, xenophobia, economic stagnation, high unemployment levels and the breakdown of law and order only convinced the Malaysian students that the West was nearing its end and that an alternative had to be found elsewhere. Into this void stepped a number of Western-based Islamist thinkers like Ismail Raji Faruqi,<sup>53</sup> Tahar Jabir

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<sup>53</sup> American-Arab Islamist intellectual and activist Ismail Raji Faruqi was born in Palestine. In 1945, he worked for the Palestinian government and became the governor of Galilee. But in 1948, Faruqi and his family fled to Lebanon after the creation of Israel and the war between Israeli and Arab forces. Faruqi travelled to America where he received Masters degrees from Indiana University and Harvard. In 1952, he gained his Ph.D. in philosophy from Indiana University. Faruqi's longing to return to his Arab roots took him back to the Middle East and in 1954-58 he studied Islamic studies at al-Azhar University in Cairo. Upon his return to the US, he became a fellow at McGill University Faculty of Divinity (1959-61) and studied Christianity and Judaism. In 1964, he obtained a full-time post at Syracuse University Department of Religious Studies. In 1968 he became professor of Islamic studies and the history of religions at Temple University. Two main concerns dominated his life and work: The first was his obsession with Islam and Arab culture, the second was his continued attempt to engage with Christianity and Judaism to show that both religions had deviated from their proper paths. For Faruqi, Islam and Arabism were intimately and essentially linked. He argued that the *Qur'anic* revelations were meant primarily for the Arabs and that Arabic culture was essentially the spirit of the *Qur'an* made manifest. *Urubah* (arabism) was, for him, central to Islam and there could be no understanding of Islam without looking at it through an Arab-centric perspective. He wrote a number of books on this topic, such as *Urubah and Religion*, *Urubah and Art*, *Urubah and Society* and *Urubah and Man*. For him, Arab culture was the medium and vehicle through which the essence of Islam was communicated and spread. Faruqi was also an activist-oriented scholar who wanted to create a following and a base of supporters. To achieve this he formed a number of student and academic networks, including the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), the North American Islamic Trust and the Islamic Steering Committee of the American *continued p. 362*

al-Alwani<sup>54</sup> (they pioneered the Islamisation of knowledge project in the 1980s) and the Islamist economist Khurshid Ahmad<sup>55</sup> who proposed an Islamist solution to the predicaments faced by people living in the modern age. Malaysian students who had been sent to

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Academy of Religion. In 1981, together with Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman, Tahar Jabir al-Alwani and Jamal Barzinji, he founded the International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, Virginia. The IIIT project was meant to lead the way for the 'Islamisation of Knowledge' project. The founders wished to radically re-invent the epistemology, phenomenology and ethics of Muslim civilisation so that Muslims could become modernised without being Westernised. Faruqi also had an enormous impact on Muslim students studying in the West at the time. He was the leader and patron to the Muslim Students Association (MSA) of America. He is also said to have had an impact on Malaysian students studying in Europe and the US. Faruqi influenced the Malaysian Islamist student activist Anwar Ibrahim to enter Malaysian politics and it was because of his advice that Anwar left ABIM and joined UMNO in 1982. Ismail Raji Faruqi's career was cut short when he and his wife Lois Lamya Faruqi were killed on 24 May 1986 by a deranged Muslim convert.

<sup>54</sup> Iraqi scholar Dr. Tahar Jabir al-Alwani was a professor at al-Azhar University in Cairo before he migrated to the US in the 1980s, and became a close friend and collaborator of Ismail Raji Faruqi. They worked together on a number of projects which eventually culminated in the formation of the International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT) in 1981, after the first International Conference on Islamic Knowledge, held in Switzerland in 1977. Under the auspices of the IIIT, al-Alwani and Faruqi led the 'Islamisation of Thought' or 'Islamisation of Social Sciences' project with the aim of reconstructing knowledge and all the major academic disciplines under the guidance of religious sanction. The IIIT project met with a positive response from a number of Muslim states, including Malaysia. Soon after the International Islamic University was formed in Malaysia (in 1983) a number of prominent Malaysian politicians, such as Anwar Ibrahim, took up al-Alwani's and Faruqi's concerns. After the assassination of Faruqi in May 1986, al-Alwani was left to lead the project and direct its activities. He remains an important and influential thinker in contemporary Islamist circles and enjoys a wide following, particularly amongst Muslim students studying in the West.

<sup>55</sup> Indian-born British Islamist scholar and economist Khurshid Ahmad was born in Delhi, India, in 1932. His father, Nazir Ahmad, was a *continued p. 363*

universities in America and Europe did indeed bring back their coveted university degrees, but they also helped to contribute to the process of Islamisation in Malaysia.<sup>56</sup>

Moved by the anti-Western critiques of Islamist scholars and activists such as Ismail Raji Faruqi, Tahar Jabir al-Alwani and

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Delhi businessman with close connections to leading Indian Muslim figures. When India and Pakistan separated, Khurshid Ahmad's family migrated to Pakistan. They first settled in Lahore, where Khurshid made contact with Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi who had formed the *Jama'at-e Islami* (JI) in 1941. From Lahore the family moved to Karachi, where Khurshid enrolled at the Government College of Commerce and Economics. He also became involved in JI activities. Later, under the influence of Zafar Ishaque al-Ansari and his brother Khurram Ahmad, Khurshid joined the student wing of JI, *Islami Jami'at-i Tulaba* (IJT). While at university he also became actively involved in student politics and in 1953-55 he headed the All-Pakistan Islamic Student Association (APISA). After his studies he taught economics at Urdu College Faculty of Economics and Commerce and at Karachi University Department of Economics. He became a full member of JI and ultimately worked in its foreign relations section. In 1966, he moved to Britain where he engaged in *dakwah* (missionary) activities on behalf of JI. He also helped to organise the executive council of the Islamic Council of Europe. Khurshid Ahmad also continued in his work as an educator while in Britain. From 1969-72 he was a research scholar at the University of Leicester, and in Leicester he later established the Islamic Foundation which was, from the outset, closely linked to JI in Pakistan and its network of Islamist organisations. Khurshid has gained a huge following among Muslim students studying in the West, particularly in Britain. In 1978, he returned to Pakistan after the fall of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the rise of dictator General Zia 'ul Haq. In 1986, he became president of the International Association of Islamic Economists. In 1988, he received an award from Islamic Development Bank for his work in Islamic economics. In 1990, he was bestowed the King Faisal award by the government of Saudi Arabia for his services to Islam.

<sup>56</sup> Farish A. Noor, 'Islamisation by Degrees: Europe in the Formation of New Islamist Consciousness among Malaysian Students and Activists between the 1970s and the 1990s', paper for the International Conference on 'Cosmopolitanism, Human Rights, and Sovereignty in *continued p. 364*

Khurshid Ahmad (who were, in turn, strongly influenced by an earlier generation of Islamist thinkers like Hassan al-Banna and Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi), this younger generation of Malay-Muslim activists was attracted to the fiery rhetoric of Yusof Rawa. They were enthused by his uncompromising ideological stand and his willingness to confront the government of Dr. Mahathir on a number of issues such as the NEP, the 'Look East' policy and the Islamisation policy of the UMNO-led government. Here was an Islamist leader and an Islamist party that at least proposed a radically different alternative with no apologies. Yusof Rawa, in turn, opened the way for these younger Islamist activists and intellectuals to have a more prominent and visible role in the Islamic party. While he maintained that the *ulama* had the most important role to play in guiding the *harakah Islamiyyah* and leading the *al-jihad al-Islamiy*, Yusof Rawa saw the need to bring in graduates, professionals and intellectuals to help plan the party's policies. To this end he expanded the scope of activities of the *Dewan Ulama* and renamed it the *Dewan Ulama dan Intelektual Islam* (Council of Ulama and Islamist Intellectuals) in the very first year of his presidency. In his 1983 *muktamar* speech he explained the need for this structural overhaul:

*Pembinaan kembali insan Muslim menerusi program pendidikan dan tarbiyyah akan dikendalikan perlaksanaannya oleh Dewan Ulama dan Intelektual Islam yang akan diberi tugas dan peranan penting dalam penyusunan baru organisasi Parti Islam.*

*Para Ulama dan intelektual Islam merupakan gabungan tenaga yang penting dalam usaha memupuk dan meningkatkan kesedaran Islam dikalangan ummah. Seluruh tenaga PAS di peringkat ahli-ahli dan pimpinan mestilah turut serta secara aktif bagi membantu para Ulama dan intelektual Islam itu melaksanakan tanggungjawab yang diberikan kepada mereka dalam suasana baru itu.*

*Perubahan Dewan Ulama kepada Dewan Ulama dan Intelektual Islam juga bertujuan untuk memadukan Ulama dan intelektual Islam sekaligus menghapuskan jurang perbezaan keilmuan yang wujud dikalangan mereka*

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Multicultural Europe' organised by the Institute of European Studies, UC-Berkeley and the Centre for Global, International, and Regional Studies UC, Santa Cruz, 4-5 May 2001.

dan mengadunkan ilmu dan pengalaman masing-masing dalam konsep, matlamat dan peranan ilmu dalam Islam sehingga dualisma yang memisahkan ilmu syari'at dan ilmu akliyyah itu dihapuskan.<sup>57</sup>

By uniting the Islamist intellectuals and the *ulama*, the gulf between them had finally been bridged. While during the time of Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Asri Muda the *ulama* were allowed to play only an advisory role within the party, they had now come to the fore to occupy centre-stage and were outlining the *khittah amal* (working guidelines) of the party.

Not all PAS leaders were convinced or impressed by these new developments. Some senior members and leaders who had served under Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Asri Muda were worried about what they regarded as the excessive emotionalism and religious fervour among some of PAS's new recruits. PAS leaders like Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah warned the party members about the danger of creating a new generation of 'ayatollahs' in the party, and the excessive loyalty that was now being demanded of the ordinary members.<sup>58</sup> He also warned PAS members to recognise the distinction between 'loyalty' and 'fanaticism', arguing that the shifts in language and manners among the party members did

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<sup>57</sup> Translation: The reconstruction of the individual Muslim through the process of education and *tarbiyyah* will be the task of the new Council of Ulama and Islamist Intellectuals, that will be given an important role thanks to the reforms of the party that are about to be put into place. The *ulama* and Islamist intellectuals happen to be a powerful and important force in our struggle to uplift the level of understanding among the Muslim *ummah* today. The entire membership of PAS, both ordinary members and party leaders, must lend their efforts to help the *ulama* and the Islamist intellectuals achieve their objectives in this new environment in which we are working. The creation of the new Council of Ulama and Islamist Intellectuals is meant to bridge this gulf of knowledge that once existed between them, and it will bring together the knowledge and experience of both sides on the conceptual and practical level, eradicating the dualism that once divided the knowledge of the *shariah* from secular worldly knowledge (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, pp. 55-56).

<sup>58</sup> See, for instance, Abu Bakar Hamzah, 'Mengakui Kebenaran Suatu Kewajiban', *Watan*, 21 July 1988.

not necessarily bring them any closer to realising their political goals.<sup>59</sup>

However, the protests and appeals from men like Ustaz Abu Bakar were to no avail. Yusof Rawa had redesigned and reconstructed the party from within. Most, if not all, of his structural and institutional reforms were designed to secure a number of key objectives: (1) strengthening the position and status of the *ulama* in the party, (2) creating an organic party structure that could be mobilised faster and more efficiently, and (3) creating a cadre membership that could spread the message of PAS even further. These reforms culminated in the creation of the office of *Murshid'ul Am* (spiritual leader/guide) of the party — a post to be occupied by Yusof Rawa himself, as we shall see later, but the immediate effect of the changes was to heighten the pace in the Islamisation race between PAS and UMNO and move the site of Malay political discourse closer to the Islamist register.

#### *PAS under Yusof Rawa: The Shift to the Islamist Register*

The rise of Islamism was only possible when the availability of Islam could be articulated into a counter-hegemonic discourse.

Bobby Sayyid,  
*A Fundamental Fear:  
Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*<sup>60</sup>

Attacking the UMNO-led government for what PAS regarded as its betrayal of Islam and Muslims and for defending a secular system of government inherited from the colonial past, Yusof Rawa and the new PAS leaders began to inject their polemics against the government with traditional Islamist concepts such as *asabiyyah*, *munafikin*, *mustazaffin* and *mustakbirin*, *kufr*, *shirk*. During the presidency of Yusof Rawa there was the most visible and radical shift in terms of the *language* of PAS's politics. While

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London: Zed Books, 1997, p. 73.

Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy's speeches were peppered with references to 'progressive Islam', decolonisation and pan-Islamic nationalism, and Asri Muda's speeches were coloured by his near-fanatical defence of Malay communitarian rights, the speeches of Yusof Rawa and the new generation of PAS *ulama* were full of Arabic phrases and terms previously regarded as part of the esoteric vocabulary of religious elders.

Yusof Rawa spoke of the need for a *harakah Islamiyyah* (Islamic movement) united by a sense of *wehdatul fikri* (singular vision or thinking) and *wehdatul amal* (singular action), guided by the *ulama* who would lead the way in the *al-jihad al-Islamiy* (great Islamic struggle). In turn, party members were kept together by common bonds of *ukhwah* (friendship and solidarity) and they were taught to be *walak* (obedient) to their leaders. The *harakah Islamiyyah* would combat the evil influences of *fikrah maddiyyah* (materialism), *asabiyyah* (ethnocentrism), *jahiliyyah* (ignorance), in order to open the way for *hadarah Rabbaniyyah* (Islamic civilisation) to prosper once again. The *harakah Islamiyyah* would work towards *tajdid hadhari* (true vision) while struggling against *aqliyyah musta'marah* (hybrid/contaminated worldview), to return the *ummah* to its rightful *aqaliyyah Islamiyyah* (Islamic worldview) so that Muslims would no longer be deluded or led astray by other non-Islamic beliefs or ideologies that were *shirik* and *kufr* and that might contaminate their *aqidah* and *iman* (practice and faith).

These shifts were not mere instances of semantic acrobatics. The move closer to the Islamist register also meant that PAS's understanding and practice of politics itself experienced a radical change. As the language of PAS politics began to alter, so did the political and ideological frontiers drawn up within this increasingly Islamised discursive space. The PAS leaders were now projecting an image of Islam couched in terms of a politics of authenticity and purity. The question was no longer whether an Islamic state was necessary, but what kind of Islamic state and how it was meant to look.

It was during this period that the boundary line between PAS and UMNO was re-drawn along strictly policed religious lines, finally leading to the '*kafir-mengkafir*' conflict where members of both parties were accusing the other of being *kafir* (unbelievers),

*munafikin* (hypocrites) and thus beyond the pale of Islam. Though traces of it had always been there, this discourse of *takfir* (accusing other Muslims as *kafir*) had come to the fore in the political rhetoric of PAS by the 1980s. As Chandra writes:

PAS then perceived itself as the only pure, righteous advocate of Islam in the political arena. What is even more important, PAS perceived UMNO in particular to be 'impure', 'tarnished' and 'contaminated' from the Islamic standpoint. Because UMNO had failed to establish an Islamic State, because it does not uphold the *Shariah*, because it does not want to implement Islamic laws and rules, it is beyond the pale of Islam. ... PAS has made it quite explicit that the UMNO leadership and UMNO members fall into the category of *kafir* (unbelievers).<sup>61</sup>

The practice of *takfir* was certainly not unique to PAS. In many ways, the PAS leaders were learning from other radical Islamist groups that had come to the fore in the 1970s and 1980s. The use of *takfir* had become commonplace in other Muslim countries like Egypt due to the rise of extremist groups such as the *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* (*Jama'at al-Muslimin*), led by ex-*Ikhwan* member Ahmad Shukri Mustafa, and the *Tanzim al-Jihad*. Ahmad Shukri was a disciple of *Ikhwan* ideologue Sayyid Qutb (who first introduced *takfir* into the ideology and practice of the *Ikhwan*) and he had accused the Egyptian government *ulama* and religious functionaries of being *munafikin* (hypocrites) and servants of a *kafir* government. The *Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* leaders called on their followers to break away from the rest of society and instructed them not to pray with other Muslims, whom they regarded as *kafir*. The members formed their own separate enclaves and conducted their religious activities apart from other Muslims.

The same was beginning to happen in Malaysia, as PAS members refused to pray with UMNO members in mosques all over the country. Tuan Guru Hadi Awang's division of the Muslim community into two opposing camps: *hizbullah* (the party of God) and *hisbussyaitan* (the party of the Devil)<sup>62</sup> summed up the simplis-

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<sup>61</sup> Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, p. 85.

<sup>62</sup> Abdul Hadi Awang, *Hizbullah dan Hisbussyaitan*, Batu Caves: Jabatan Penerangan dan Penyelidikan PAS Pusat, 1984.

tic dialectics at work in PAS's new radical way of thinking and were taken straight out of the vocabulary and ideology of other radical Islamist groups and thinkers such as Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman,<sup>63</sup> the religious figurehead behind the extremist *Tanzim al-Jihad* movement of Egypt.

As the *kafir-mengkafir* conflict intensified, Yusof Rawa and the PAS *ulama* also attacked UMNO's ideology on the grounds that as a party working within a modern post-colonial political framework it was inevitably contaminated with the evil influence of Western secularism.

From this point onwards, a new chain of equivalences was created in the polemics of PAS. The PAS *ulama* regarded themselves as the inheritors of the mantle of the Prophet, and the party saw itself as the true defender and promoter of Islam, the guardian of Muslims and Muslim concerns, the upholder of the teachings of the *Qu'ran*, *Hadith*, *Sunnah* and the *Shariah*. It was therefore by definition and default the promoter of what is *wajib* (obligatory) and

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<sup>63</sup> Blind *ulama* Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman was the religious figurehead behind the radical *Tanzim al-Jihad* movement in Egypt. Sheikh Umar was himself a keen follower of the school of thought of Ibn Taymiyya, the Hanbali scholar who preached a highly exclusive and reactionary form of Islam. Sheikh Umar provided *Tanzim al-Jihad* with the doctrinal and theological justification for its practice of *takfir* (accusing other Muslims of being infidels and hypocrites). In his view, there were only two groups in the eyes of God: *hizbullah* (those on the side of God) and *hisbussyaitan* (those on the side of the Devil). The 'false Muslims' who do not follow his interpretation of Islam were condemned as *kafir* and *munafikin* (hypocrites) and had to be opposed to the end. Sheikh Umar sanctioned the use of violence and even terrorism against enemies of the *Tanzim* movement. Like Ibn Taymiyya, who had stated it was permissible to kill innocent Muslims to destroy a bigger non-Muslim enemy (Saodah Abdul Rahman, *The Concept of Takfir (Accusing of Disbelief) among Some Contemporary Islamic Movements with Special Reference to Egypt*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1994. p. 298), Sheikh Umar believed that it was permissible to incur civilian Muslim casualties in the cause of *jihad*. He also justified the use of violence against non-Muslims on the grounds that they were supporting 'kafir' governments that oppressed Muslims (*Ibid.*, p. 269).

*harus* (good), as well as the defender of *haq* (the truth), *ad'l* (justice) and the protector of the *mustazaffin* (oppressed). UMNO, and by extension the Malaysian state of which it was the governor and custodian, was seen as Western, modern, secular, historically and temporally bound and fundamentally against the cause and interests of Islam and Muslims. UMNO was seen as the party of *mustakbirin* (oppressors), *munaḥḥikin* (hypocrites), *jahili* (the ignorant) and promoters of *fikrah maddiyyah* (materialism) whose nationalist politics was characterised by sectarianism, opportunism and the demands of the here and now.

PAS rejected UMNO's *tadarruj* (gradualist) approach to Islam and Islamisation on the grounds that the UMNO leadership was fundamentally insincere and *munaḥḥikin* (hypocritical) and that *tadarruj* has always been used as an excuse by secular regimes that did not wish to Islamise their societies to the fullest extent. UMNO's own Islamisation programme was seen as largely cosmetic and fundamentally un-Islamic. However, UMNO was not the only victim of the *kafir-mengkafir* polemics of Yusof Rawa and the PAS *ulama*. As the stakes in the Islamisation race were raised higher and higher, some PAS leaders who opposed the institutional reforms of Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* faction (like Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah) also fell prey to the barbed accusations of their fellow Islamists.

As opposed to the model of government promoted by UMNO, PAS began to propose its own vision of what it regarded as an Islamic state. Shortly after Colonel Gaafar Muhammad Nimeiri launched his own Islamic revolution in Sudan on 8 September 1983, Yusof Rawa called on the Malaysian government to scuttle the political system inherited from the colonial past and to begin the task of reconstructing the state based on Islamic principles. By the early 1980s, PAS leaders were putting forward their own blueprint of an Islamic state for Malaysia. PAS claimed that in their model of the Islamic state there would still be an elected parliament, but one with limited legislative authority. This limitation was necessary because another body with powers superseding those of the legislature had been introduced: the *Majlis Ulama* (Ulama Assembly). Following the model set by the Iranian revolution, PAS proposed to set up a new form of government where the

ultimate sanctity, authority and moral legitimacy of the State rested on its adherence to Islamic laws and norms. This, in effect, made the *shariah* the dominant and exclusive source of law in the proposed model of the Islamic state. Needless to say, this new approach also meant that PAS was now espousing the notion of an exclusive Islamic/Muslim leadership for its model of the Islamic state.

*Fighting Islam with Islam (I): UMNO's State-orchestrated  
Islamisation Programme Begins*

The State has become the primary determinant of the dominant discourse on Islam in Malaysia to which all alternative groups must or have necessarily responded.

Shanti Nair,  
*Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy* (1997)<sup>64</sup>

The UMNO leaders were not about to sit still and allow PAS to gain the upper hand in the discursive contest to define the meaning and content of Islam. True to its form and calling, UMNO rose to the challenge and once again attempted to play its role as 'protector' — but this time on behalf not only of the Malay race but also Islam. The 1980s witnessed the implementation of the UMNO-led state Islamisation policy, designed to promote and project UMNO's vision of Islam as a modern way of life, culture and government. No stone was left unturned in the pursuit to redefine the meaning and essence of Islam itself, as UMNO sought to out-Islamise its nemesis PAS.

Unlike the Islamophobic governments of many other Muslim countries, the Malaysian government under Dr. Mahathir preferred to beat the Islamists at their own game. It has to be noted that throughout his political career Dr. Mahathir had a different way of addressing the challenge posed by the Islamist opposition

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<sup>64</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 41.

in his own country. He did not favour the confrontational approach of other leaders like Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba,<sup>65</sup> the spectacular displays of piety by the likes of Nimeiri<sup>66</sup> or the vague conciliatory manœuvres of Indonesia's Soeharto.<sup>67</sup> Dr. Mahathir

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<sup>65</sup> Tunisian leader Habib Bourguiba came to power as the first elected leader after the country became independent on 20 March 1956. He was born in the small town of Monasir and received his early education in Tunis, the Tunisian capital. Later he continued his education at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. After returning to Tunisia, Bourguiba joined the Destour (Constitution) Party and took part in the Tunisian independence struggle. He was imprisoned and sent into exile by the French authorities a number of times. After independence, Bourguiba and his followers assumed power, but Bourguiba's conduct while leading the country showed his strong authoritarian streak. (Later he even sent his wife and son into exile.) Bourguiba recognised the Socialist Party of Tunisia and attempted to form an instrumental alliance with the leftists to persecute supporters of *al-Ittihad al-Islami* (Islamic Tendency Movement). One of Bourguiba's main aims was to modernise Islam and turn it into a modern ideology compatible with development and capitalism. Bourguiba claimed that the *Qur'an* contained many contradictions and needed to be re-interpreted in the light of present-day realities. He issued a law forbidding the use of the *hijab* (veil) in public offices. He made French the official language of the political administration, and replaced the Islamic *shariah* courts with civil courts. Bourguiba's relentless persecution of Islamist activists, organisations and institutions led to open censure by a number of Arab Muslim scholars and *ulama*, including Sheikh Abdul Aziz ibn Baz (d. 1999), Sheikh Abul Hasan Nadwi (d. 1999) and Sheikh Ali al-Khateeb, the Grand Mufti of Egypt. A firm believer in economic development and material progress, Bourguiba laid great emphasis on the need to modernise the Tunisian economy at all cost.

<sup>66</sup> Gaafar Muhammad Nimeiri's own Islamisation programme launched in Sudan in the early 1980s involved spectacular (and, some might argue, counter-productive) displays of religiosity by the leader and his government. In 1983, Nimeiri ordered US\$11 million worth of alcohol be thrown into the River Nile, marking the end of alcohol consumption in the country. In 1984, his government banned all forms of mixed Western dancing in public. A number of people found guilty of doing so were publicly flogged.

<sup>67</sup> In the same year (1983) that Malaysia began its Islamisation programme in earnest, President Soeharto ordered all Indonesian

*continued p. 373*

had a clear idea of which course he wanted Islam to take in the country. While the discourse of PAS was shaped by a form of oppositional dialectics which divided the world between 'good Muslims' and 'kafir', the Islamist worldview of Dr. Mahathir was one which divided Muslims into 'moderate progressives' and 'mis-guided fanatics'. As Shanti Nair writes:

Domestically, Islamization has focused on a distinction between "moderate" Islam deemed more appropriate in the context of Malaysian society against more radical expressions which are unacceptable to the government. The conflict between "moderate" and "extreme", in effect, encompassed intra-Malay rivalry.<sup>68</sup>

UMNO's brand of modernist and moderate Islam was based on a chain of equivalences that equated Islam with all that was positive in its eyes. Islam was equated with modernity, economic development, material progress, rationality and liberalism. (It is interesting to note that other values like democracy and human rights were not part of this chain of equivalences.) In the same way that PAS's oppositional dialectics framed a reversed chain of equivalences as its mirror opposite, UMNO's understanding of Islam was also framed against a negative chain of equivalences which equated PAS's Islam with obscurantism, extremism, fanaticism, intolerance, backwardness and militancy. This was the 'wrong' version of Islam, to which UMNO's Islam was the answer. The aim of the state's Islamisation policy was to normalise and institutionalise the 'right' version of Islam against the 'wrong' version promoted by PAS, in terms of both ortho-practic behaviour and state policy.

It has to be noted, though, that Dr. Mahathir's 'progressive' outlook on Islam did not mean that he was any less conservative than the *ulama* of PAS on matters of traditional 'Asian values',

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political movements and organisations to adopt the vague, non-sectarian *pancasila* principles as their *asas tunggal* (basic philosophy). This was rejected by many Indonesian Islamist movements, but was accepted by *Nahdatul Ulama*, then under the influence of moderates who wished to co-operate with the government. NU made the *pancasila* its *asas tunggal*, and declared that Islam was its *aqidah*.

<sup>68</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 91.

personal morality or ethics. On 28 July 1984, the Malay-language newspapers *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* reported that Dr. Mahathir, while speaking at a conference on family development, stated that women should stop working if their husbands earned enough to maintain the family. In keeping with his conservative personality and values, the Prime Minister argued that women should concentrate on their household duties as wives and mothers.<sup>69</sup> The bone of contention between UMNO and PAS was not whether Islam was 'liberal' or 'tolerant' in the Western sense, but rather whether as a system of belief and values it could be used to promote a dynamic outlook on economic and political issues.

To this end, the state machinery was directed towards an Islamisation programme designed to eliminate the discrepancies between different sites and sources of Islamic authority while outdoing the claims and promises of PAS and the other Islamist movements like ABIM. (The National Fatwa Council, as we have seen, was formed in 1978 to effectively centralise religious power and authority and keep it in the hands of the federal government.)

In 1981, the UMNO general assembly issued a resolution that the federal and state Islamic councils should enforce and defend the 'purity of Islam'.<sup>70</sup> Following this demand, the religious arm of the State bureaucracy was expanded as never before. New policies were introduced to safeguard Islam and the Muslim *ummah*. In 1981, *Pusat Islam* began identifying various sects and groups said to be guilty of *ajaran sesat* (deviationist teachings), and in 1982 the Ahmadis in the country were stripped of their Malay/Bumiputera status. By 1982, the Prime Minister's office had more than 100 *ulama* working under it and the Ministry of Education had 715 *ulama* on its payroll.<sup>71</sup> The Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981–86) also explicitly declared that henceforth Islam would play a major role in the development of the country (albeit on an inspirational level). In 1985, the head of the Religious Affairs Division of the Prime

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<sup>69</sup> 'PM: Wanita Patut Utamakan Keluarga', *Berita Harian*, 28 July 1984.

<sup>70</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Minister's Department, Datuk Yusuf Noor, announced that the *Unit Akidah dan Ajaran Sesat* (Unit for Faith Protection and Deviationist Teachings) was to be revamped under the *Pusat Penyelidikan Islam* (Islamic Investigation Centre) to monitor and police the spread of 'deviationist' teachings (including certain Sufi practices and Shia teachings) in the country. 'Dakwah attachés' were also sent to various Malaysian embassies to monitor the activities of Malay-Muslim students sent abroad to take courses in Islamic studies, and to ensure that they were not unduly influenced by 'extremist' ideas.<sup>72</sup>

To counter the growing influence of PAS and ABIM on the international scene (both PAS and ABIM had been invited to the International Islamic Congress for the Liberation of Muslim Lands in London in 1979), Dr. Mahathir's government also re-directed the country's foreign policy. The first decade of the Mahathir era was marked by a significant re-orientation of the country's political compass. A new formal ranking of external relations was announced, in the order of (1) ASEAN, (2) the Muslim world, (3) the non-aligned community, and finally (4) the Commonwealth. As Shanti Nair has argued, this shift in foreign relations was matched by a shift in official rhetoric as well:

Throughout the 1980s, Malaysia increasingly (but selectively) sought to identify itself with international Muslim issues and as an activist member of the global Muslim community. Both government and UMNO rhetoric increasingly referred to Malaysia as an Islamic nation and to UMNO itself as the third largest Islamic party in the world.<sup>73</sup>

The move closer towards the Muslim world was obviously a case of 'foreign policy as domestic policy by other means' (to quote

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<sup>72</sup> The first batch of *dakwah* attachés were sent to Malaysian embassies in Jakarta, Cairo and London in 1981. Their original function was to monitor activities of Malaysian students and to ensure they did not come under the sway of 'extremist' groups that might try to influence their ideas about their home country. By 1982 their number was increased and their task was to establish contact with local Islamist organisations and networks and to meet regularly with Malaysian students.

<sup>73</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 80.

Shanti Nair's phrase), and the results met the expectations of the UMNO leaders.<sup>74</sup> But even though nothing much came out of this re-orientation of geo-political priorities (America, Japan and the countries of Western Europe remained Malaysia's biggest trading partners), the effects on the local political scene were considerable. It helped to improve Malaysia's self-image and standing as an Islamic country and it boosted the Islamist credentials of the UMNO leadership.

While other Muslim leaders had consciously tried to control the activities of Islamic centres and institutions of higher learning (Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak had clamped down on the activities of academics and students at al-Azhar, while Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba went as far as closing down the famous az-Zaytounah University), Dr. Mahathir did the opposite: he helped to launch even more Islamic universities, think-tanks and research institutes as part of his effort to develop a new school of Islamic thought in Malaysia.

In 1983, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (International Islamic University, IIU/UIA) was founded. The UIA project was announced after the Prime Minister's visit to the Arab Gulf states. (The announcement was made just a few months before the 1982 general election — something that the UMNO-led government

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<sup>74</sup> Shanti Nair (*Ibid.*, pp. 103–104) notes that 'expectations were not however met by reality. Although there were individual successes in specific areas of economic exchange, overall trade with other Muslim countries remained only a small sector of the total volume of Malaysian trade with the world and appeared strikingly miniscule compared to trade with developed countries (as well as with countries within the Southeast Asian region).' In 1981, commodity trade with Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt and the UAE) constituted only 2% of Malaysia's total exports and 8% of Malaysia's imports. The figures were higher for trade with non-Arab Muslim countries: Pakistan remained Malaysia's biggest non-Arab Muslim trading partner; Pakistan–Malaysian trade in 1984 formed 1% of total Malaysian trade. Turkey, Indonesia and Brunei also chalked up higher percentages than the Arab Muslim countries.

claimed was purely coincidental.)<sup>75</sup> UIA's initial funding came from Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Libya, Turkey and Egypt, and the university's first president was ex-ABIM leader turned UMNO politician, Anwar Ibrahim. To add substance to the UIA initiative a number of international conferences around the theme of Islamic knowledge and science were held. Between 1983 and 1989, Kuala Lumpur was host to the International Conference on the Islamic Approach towards Technological Development (1983), Islamic Civilisation (1984), Islamic Thought (1984), International Islamic Symposium (1986), Islamic Economics (1987), Islam and Media (1987), Religious Extremism (1987) and Islam and the Philosophy of Science (1989).<sup>76</sup> It seemed as if there was no limit to the scope and magnitude of Islamic concerns and knowledge, and that the only event not on offer was the world's first Islamic beauty contest.

Also in 1983 (on 1 July), the government launched Bank Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Bank), the first bank in the country to offer regular banking services in accordance with Islamic restrictions and norms related to commerce.<sup>77</sup> It did not charge interest on loans and (on paper at least) avoided the practice of *riba*. Although Bank Islam was condemned by Islamist economists like Abdur Razzaq Lubis as a cosmetic attempt to bolster the government's Islamic credentials, other Islamic economic initiatives followed suit.<sup>78</sup> Soon

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<sup>75</sup> Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 176.

<sup>76</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 115.

<sup>77</sup> The plan for the Malaysian Islamic Bank was announced one year earlier, on 6 July 1982.

<sup>78</sup> For a critique of the Bank Islam project, see Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, *Tidak Islamnya Bank Islam*, Georgetown: PAID Network, 1985. Lubis condemned the Islamic banking project in Malaysia on the grounds that the bank did not, and could not, represent a radical challenge to the existing global banking system rooted in the practice of interest. Lubis argued that the Islamic Bank in Malaysia was doing the same thing, merely collecting interest in a different form. Such nominal changes were for him cosmetic and ineffectual.

afterwards, Takaful (Islamic insurance company) was launched, as well as *Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji* (LUTH) (Haji Pilgrims Management Fund). By creating UIA, Bank Islam, Takaful and LUTH it appeared as if UMNO was the only party that could keep its promises to the Malay-Muslim constituency.

By initiating its own Islamisation programme, the government of Dr. Mahathir had effectively stolen a march from the Islamists of PAS. In time, the labours of the Mahathir administration began to pay off. The UIA project received considerable financial assistance from the governments of numerous Arab states. Cash injections came from countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, though they were aimed more at projects related to Islamic *dakwah* (missionary) activities.<sup>79</sup> Also, Dr. Mahathir was gaining recognition for his efforts as a Muslim leader. In 1983, he was awarded the 'Great Leader' award by President Zia 'ul Haq of Pakistan (who had previously anointed Anwar Ibrahim). In 1984, Dr. Mahathir received another honour from the Pakistani government during his visit to that country.<sup>80</sup>

On the domestic front, also, the initial results were encouraging for the government. Partly because of the boost to its image and credentials, UMNO managed to defeat PAS in all the by-elections of 1982 and 1983: at Binjai, Terengganu (9 December 1982), Hulu Muda, Kedah (16 March 1983) and Kemumin and Selising, Kelantan (8 September 1983).<sup>81</sup> PAS was beginning to feel itself slipping into the same miserable secondary position it had when Asri Muda was forced to confront the UMNO juggernaut under Tun Razak.

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<sup>79</sup> In 1982, Kuwait donated more than RM120 million for projects launched by *Pusat Islam's Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah* (Islamic Dakwah Foundation). In 1986, eight loans totalling RM390 million were secured from the Saudi Fund to help with other missionary and welfare projects for Muslims in the country.

<sup>80</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 97. Ex-Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn also received an award in 1983.

<sup>81</sup> Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 224.

*PAS's Response to UMNO: 'Bertindak Menentang Kezaliman'*

*Ketika kamu telah menjadi seorgang Islam, maka janganlah cuba menyekat perjuangan kami didalam parti Islam PAS ini untuk menegakkan Shariat Allah dan Kalimah Allah yang tinggi. Jika disekat, kami akan menentang kamu, dan jika kita mati atau gugur, maka gugurlah kami sebagai syahid, dan kamu pula dalam hal ini akan mati sia-sia.<sup>82</sup>*

PAS *ulama* Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood Libya, killed by State security forces at Memali, 1985

In response to UMNO's attempt to push its own Islamisation programme and contain the *kafir-mengkafir* issue, PAS stepped up its ideological offensive.

The PAS leaders realised that the UMNO-led government was more than able to deliver on their promises to the Malay-Muslims of the country. The concentration of power in the hands of the federal government since 1974 meant that whoever was in power was able to redirect vital resources and funds to redistribute the wealth of the country to the Malays. Dr. Mahathir's government embarked on its own stated policy of 'Islamising the machinery of the state' and it had managed to produce tangible results of its own.

Yusof Rawa and the PAS *ulama* were quick to react to the policy initiatives of Dr. Mahathir. He argued that the Islamisation programme proposed by the UMNO-led government was not really designed to lay the foundations of an Islamic state, but was part of an elaborate scheme to make the country appear more Islamic while remaining firmly entrenched within the global liberal-capitalist economic system:

*Adakah projek-projek yang bercorak Islam seperti ini dapat memberi harapan bahawa negara kita akan bergerak keluar dari lingkaran tanpa hujung*

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<sup>82</sup> Translation: And if you consider yourselves to be Muslims then do not hinder us in the Islamic party PAS in our efforts to uphold the *shariah* and *kalimah* of Allah Almighty. For if we are stopped, we shall resist and oppose you; and should we fall in our struggle we would be killed as martyrs while you can only die for nothing. (C. N. al-Afghani, *Perisai Memali*, Baling: Corak Memali Press, 1997, p. 72.)

(vicious cycle) yang dibentuk oleh kuasa-kuasa besar dan akan menuju kepada kemerdekaan yang sebenar? Jawabannya Tidak. Kerana yang sedang membelenggu kemerdekaan negara kita ialah sistem yang didokong oleh kuasa-kuasa penjajah yang mewujudkan lingkaran tanpa hujung itu dan seluruh sistem tersebut tidak mudah dirombak dengan tenaga semangat-semangatan beberapa kerat manusia yang berpura-pura kaget dengan Islamisasi dan mengemukakan program-program Islam yang terbatas.<sup>83</sup>

That some of these state-sponsored Islamic institutions were themselves deeply enmeshed within the local corporate culture and were directly involved in some decidedly dubious dealings made it all the easier for the Islamists of PAS to dismiss them as being cosmetic in nature. (LUTH, for instance, was involved in the operations of the Asian Rare Earth (ARE) company together with the Japanese company Mitsubishi Chemicals. ARE was later accused of dumping radioactive waste in Perak.)<sup>84</sup>

For Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders no Islamisation programme could ever hope to succeed without the committed effort to make Islam the state religion and Islamic law the supreme law of the land. He regarded the Malaysian government's attempts at Islamisation as

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<sup>83</sup> Translation: Do these Islamic projects really give us the hope that we will one day escape from this vicious cycle and that our country will achieve independence in the truest sense of the word? The answer has to be 'no'. For the independence of our country is being obstructed by the global system sustained by the superpowers who have created this vicious cycle in the first place, and this global system cannot be undone by the efforts of a handful of people who pretend to be really committed to Islamisation but who have only offered us Islamisation programmes that are limited in their scope (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, pp. 52–53).

<sup>84</sup> Asian Rare Earth (ARE) was a multinational concern that brought together Japanese Mitsubishi Chemicals and Malaysian BEH Minerals. LUTH was also a major partner in ARE. The company was first set up to extract rare trace elements from tin tailings, but the factory in Perak was also producing thorium hydroxide, a radioactive waste product which had to be disposed of. In the end, dumping sites were found in the state itself — first in the Papan area and later near Bukit Merah. Protests by local residents and environmental groups against the dumping led to an international outcry. (Tan Sooi Beng, 'The Papan-Bukit Merah Protest', in *Tangled Web*, CARPA, 1988, pp. 28–29.)

hollow and of little consequence, on the grounds that the inculcation of Islamic values and norms would not be possible unless the state was prepared to enforce these norms through legal means:

*Islamisasi di Malaysia bertujuan untuk menerapkan nilai-nilai Islam dalam pentadbiran negara tanpa bermaksud melaksanakan hukum-hukumnya. Penerapan nilai-nilai Islam dengan menolak hukum-hukum Islam bukan sahaja aneh, tetapi juga suatu kekeliruan yang penuh putar belit dan padat dengan kepalsuan. Kerana nilai-nilai Islam itu tidak akan terbentuk melainkan menerusi pelaksanaan hukum-hukumnya. Bagaimanakah nilai-nilai Islam akan lahir sedangkan hukum-hukum Islam dari sumber asasinya iaitu al-Quran dan al-Sunnah ditolak? Jika nilai-nilai Islam itu tidak bersandarkan hukum-hukum Islam dari mana datangnya nilai-nilai tersebut? Apakah nilai-nilai yang dikatakan nilai-nilai Islam itu bersumberkan perancang-perancang di Washington atau Tokyo, Moscow atau Paris, London atau Tel Aviv, atau hanya dari celoteh lidah yang tidak bertulang.<sup>85</sup>*

The UMNO-led government's Islamisation programme was, therefore, not without its critics. The government of Dr. Mahathir was aware that by playing the Islamic card and raising the stakes in the Islamisation race it was bound to antagonise the other Islamist movements and parties in the country. Central to the conflicts and debates occurring all over the country was the question of the *correct* interpretation and practice of Islam, a factor that PAS still had in its favour.<sup>86</sup> By then, the *kafir-mengkafir* crisis had reached its

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<sup>85</sup> Translation: The Islamisation programme in Malaysia simply seeks to inculcate Islamic values without having to implement Islamic law. But to try and instil Islamic values while rejecting the necessity of Islamic law is not only ridiculous, it is in fact a conceit and a plot full of lies. This is because these Islamic values will never be inculcated without the implementation of Islamic law. How could such Islamic values emerge if the sources of these values — namely the Qur'an and Sunnah — are rejected? If these Islamic values are not based on Islamic laws, then what are they supposed to be based upon? Are these so-called Islamic values really the creation of a coterie of planners and advisers based in Washington or Tokyo, Moscow or Paris, London or Tel Aviv; or are they the products of glib tongues that do not mean what they say?' (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 83).

<sup>86</sup> Writing in 1986, Chandra Muzaffar noted that 'For among a lot of Muslims the PAS brand of Islam is seen as pure Islam. It is not just its *continued* p. 382

peak and there were numerous reports of PAS and UMNO members praying in separate congregations with separate imams in mosques all over the country.<sup>87</sup> By entering into the Islamist arena, the UMNO-led government was aware it was entering a political and discursive space that was bound to be fiercely contested by the PAS Islamists.

Under Dr. Mahathir, the security apparatus of Malaysia had also grown more powerful. As a result of the introduction of new laws and regulations (such as the Societies Act (Amendment) of 1984 and the Printing and Press Publication Act (Amendment) of 1984), more and more political power and authority were concentrated at the centre, thereby eroding personal freedoms and further restricting the space of civil society. To foreclose any possibility of further doctrinal conflict in the area of religion and religious practice, the

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political exclusiveness that gives the party this image. It is also because of its stated goal of creating an Islamic State; its assumption that Islam is the panacea for all ills; the Islamic educational background of its leaders; their ability to quote profusely from the Qur'an in Arabic; and above all their unscrupulous manipulation of ethnic fears and hopes through their Islamic rhetoric. This is why arresting PAS leaders may be counterproductive, given the widespread misconception of what constitutes 'pure' as opposed to 'impure' Islam'. (Chandra Muzaffar, *Freedom in Fetters*, p. 116.)

<sup>87</sup> The state-controlled, UMNO-owned media played a major part in further sensationalising the *kafir-mengkafir* conflict, and often represented PAS as the more intolerant and fanatical party in the PAS-UMNO conflict. Nonetheless, there were many reports of mosque congregations being split in two as PAS and UMNO members refused to pray before the same imam. On other occasions, it was even alleged that graves had been desecrated and marriages annulled because of rivalry between UMNO and PAS families. Chandra has argued that the crisis was worsened by the conduct of UMNO leaders in some Malay states. In Terengganu, for example, UMNO officials invited several local imams to support UMNO in the 1982 election. Some who refused were subsequently sacked and replaced with state-appointed imams with less credibility and standing in the eyes of the locals. This was one factor that led to the two-imam controversy in Terengganu (*Ibid.*, pp. 115-116).

UMNO-led government also began to empower the religious arm of the bureaucracy. In 1982, the penal and criminal code was amended to allow the state to take action against 'deviant' religious groups, 'cults' and alternative schools of Islamic thought regarded as being harmful to both the state and the Muslim community. These amendments specifically stated that it was an offence 'for any person to cause or attempt to cause, on the grounds of religion, disharmony, disunity or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between persons or groups professing the same or different religion'.<sup>88</sup>

The Malaysian government demonstrated its willingness to use these new weapons when its religious authorities and security forces acted against the underground 'Krypto' movement in the same year. The movement was described as an extremist militant 'Islamic fundamentalist' group planning to resort to the use of violence and terrorism in the country. The group's leaders and some members were subsequently detained under the ISA. This left the PAS leaders with no doubts whatsoever that the UMNO-led government was willing and able to use the machinery of the state against them. With the support of the urban Malay middle classes and slogans like '*Bersih, Cekap, Amanah*' (Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy), it seemed as if nothing could stop UMNO's advance.

Faced with the almost impossible task of confronting the populist Mahathir-Musa leadership (dubbed the '2-M leadership'), Yusof Rawa chose to focus instead upon the chinks in UMNO's armour. When UMNO leader and ex-Youth, Culture and Sports Minister Datuk Mokhtar Hashim was found guilty of murder of a political rival within the party and sentenced to death by the Malaysian High Court, PAS was quick to point to the deeply rooted feudal conflicts and power struggles that had bedevilled UMNO from the very beginning.<sup>89</sup> Another opportunity for PAS to

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 114. The amendment also proposed that those found guilty of causing religious discord should be imprisoned for up to three years, or fined, or both.

<sup>89</sup> Datuk Mokhtar Hashim was sentenced to death on 5 March 1983. The trial was one of the most sensational media events in Malaysia. A *continued p. 384*

project itself came when Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad tabled his proposal to amend articles 66 and 150 of the federal constitution in the Dewan Rakyat on 3 January 1983.<sup>90</sup>

### *PAS and the Constitutional Crisis of 1983*

In 1983, the tenuous 'sociological symbiosis' (to borrow Roger Kershaw's term) that kept together the Malay royal families, the UMNO conservatives and the governmental apparatus finally began to fall apart.

The reason for this breakdown of consensus lay in fundamental differences between the royal families and the UMNO leaders. In particular, Dr. Mahathir was vexed by the goings-on within the

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#### *n. 89 continued*

number of embarrassing revelations came to light during the trial, including Mokhtar's use of *pawang* (shamans) and other such supernatural means to lure his victim to his death. The case proved a major embarrassment to UMNO, much to the delight of its opponents. The death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment after a royal pardon was granted on 2 March 1984. Opposition leaders argued that this was a case of favouritism and double standards.

<sup>90</sup> The amendments were contained in the Constitution Amendment Bill of 1983, which passed the *Dewan Rakyat* (House of Representatives) and *Dewan Negara* (Senate) unhindered. Clauses 12(b), 20 and 21 contained the most contentious points as they effectively sidelined the role of the King in the process of assenting to bills in general and made the King appear redundant in the declaration of a state of national emergency. Clause 12(b) noted that if the King had not formally given his assent to any bill after 15 days, it would be assumed that his assent was given informally. H. P. Lee notes that there was widespread suspicion that the amendments were made because the King's tenure was about to end and he would be replaced with either the Sultan of Perak or the Sultan of Johor, both strong-willed men 'quite likely to defy the government'. In an apparently pre-emptive move to neutralise the King and the powers of the royal houses, the Prime Minister launched a direct attack to severely curtail the King's powers in the decision-making and law-making process. (H. P. Lee, *Constitutional Conflicts in Contemporary Malaysia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 25.)

royal households and the intransigence of some Malay rulers who refused to bend to the government's will. Dr. Mahathir and the UMNO leaders were also increasingly worried about the political manoeuvrings of some Malay Sultans and Rajas who had clearly overstepped the mark and were becoming involved in the world of politics and business. Some rulers (like the Sultans of Kelantan, Johor, Perak and Pahang) were also showing dangerous signs of independent thinking and a political will of their own.<sup>91</sup> As Kershaw has argued, this transgression of boundaries had the immediate effect of destabilising what had been, till then, a neat but delicate balance of power between the respective parties involved:

The role of monarchy in delivering a more traditional kind of legitimacy to the modern Malay elite by proxy, in return for secure wealth and status, may be characterized as one important but unwritten 'social contract' and 'sociological symbiosis' of contemporary Malaysia.

And yet at the same time — within this symbiosis have lurked potential tensions, ready to emerge if ever the Sultans developed ambitions of autonomy in keeping with 'favours rendered' to the elective élite....<sup>92</sup>

The constitutional amendments that Dr. Mahathir wanted to introduce in 1983 had two obvious objectives. One aim was to curb the

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<sup>91</sup> The Sultan of Kelantan, for instance, had taken an active part in the Kelantan crisis of 1977-78, while the Sultan of Johor was showing signs of wanting to exercise power within his state. The Sultan of Pahang had been another cause of concern, mainly due to the increasingly high personal bills he had refused to pay. In an attempt to prove their worthiness and willingness to take on the might of the federal government, the Sultans of Perak and Johor both decided to exercise their power as Heads of Religious Affairs in their respective states in 1982. They independently determined the dates of the fasting month of Ramadhan; as a result, the month was reduced by one day, to 29 days, in both states. This caused a major stir in the Ministry of Religious Affairs for a number of reasons. The *ulama* of the government argued that the timing of Ramadhan was wrong and that it was *haram* (unlawful) for Muslims to fast for only 29 days. The bureaucrats in the capital, however, read it as a direct attack on the power of the federal government and its authority.

<sup>92</sup> Roger Kershaw, *Monarchy in Southeast Asia*, pp. 100-101.

powers of the Malay Sultans and members of the royal houses who, till then, had enjoyed privileges and were granted legal immunity. Dr. Mahathir wished to amend article 66 of the constitution so that any Parliamentary bill to which the King did not assent would, nonetheless, be deemed to have been assented to and consequently automatically become law. The amendment ostensibly sought to pre-empt the possible misuse of royal assent by the King.<sup>93</sup>

The Prime Minister's wish to pre-empt the possibility of abuse of power by the King was understandable under the circumstances. It was well known that at the next meeting of the Conference of Rulers, Sultan Mahmood Iskander Shah of Johor would be elected King. The Sultan was already a notorious figure, and the Malaysian tabloid press was full of sensational stories about some of his more risqué escapades.<sup>94</sup>

Dr. Mahathir had wanted from his early days in politics to limit the powers and privileges of the Malay rulers, and the Sultan of Johor seemed to embody all the traditional feudal values he had always criticised. In his book *The Malay Dilemma*, Mahathir singled out the Malay rulers and the feudal culture of the Malay courts as among the main factors behind the political and economic backwardness of the Malays. In some respects, Dr. Mahathir's critique of the institution of the Malay sultanate went back to the era of the *Kaum Muda* vs. *Kaum Tua* conflict in the 1920s and 1930s, and it

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<sup>93</sup> Chandra Muzaffar (*Freedom in Fetters*, pp. 221–222) has argued that this proposal was fundamentally flawed because 'the monarchs themselves derive their privileges and prerogatives from the people. It would be derogatory to the rights of the people if constitutional rulers can initiate, modify or abrogate legislation. It follows from this that when a bill has been passed by both houses the *Agong* is bound to assent. In fact the Malaysian Constitution suggests this in a clear though casual manner.'

<sup>94</sup> Some of the more embarrassing details of the Sultan of Johor's private life are recounted by Kershaw; they included several assaults on Malaysian motorists, the incarceration of a Malaysian police officer in a dog kennel, the strip-search of a Malay princess at the Johor border and the homicide of a man whom the Sultan suspected was involved in smuggling activities (Roger Kershaw, *Monarchy in Southeast Asia*, p. 103).

stood in total contradiction to the conservative-traditionalist principles of his own party. By the 1960s and 1970s, however, Dr. Mahathir's ideas had gained currency among the younger generation of educated urban-based Malays, in particular the Malay students in the local universities.

The other amendment proposed by Dr. Mahathir was more problematic and worrisome as he wanted to amend article 150 of the constitution to allow the Prime Minister to unilaterally declare a state of national emergency without consulting the King, the Dewan Rakyat or any other institutional body.<sup>95</sup> The amendment was aimed at giving the Prime Minister total power and authority over the matter, and not allowing parliament to question the wisdom or legitimacy of his decision. This amendment would have sidelined the King and the other Malay rulers, but the net effect of the amendment would have been the empowerment of the executive at the expense of the other arms of the state.

To win support for his proposals, Dr. Mahathir went on a tour of all the states on the Malay Peninsula. The 'Semarak campaign', as it was called, was orchestrated by UMNO with the help of state-run agencies like the national television and radio stations, RTM1, RTM2 and Radio Malaysia.<sup>96</sup> During the campaign the state's propaganda machinery worked overtime to produce slogans and songs like the '*Setia*' (Loyalty) anthem<sup>97</sup> that invariably presented

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<sup>95</sup> For a critical discussion of the proposal to amend article 150 of the federal constitution, see Chandra Muzaffar, *Freedom in Fetters*.

<sup>96</sup> The Semarak campaign in the early 1980s was organised by the Information Minister to boost Dr. Mahathir's popularity with the masses. The rallies were highly organised affairs, with millions of ringgit spent to ensure massive turnouts for all the Prime Minister's visits. The rallies were duly reported by the state-controlled media, under the directive of the Information Ministry which continued to propagate the image of Dr. Mahathir as the 'people's leader'. The campaign's slogan was '*setia bersama rakyat*', a call for 'loyalty with the people'.

<sup>97</sup> *Setia* has been described by some as 'a regime-stabilising anthem'. (Clive Kessler, 'Archaism and Modernity: Contemporary Malay Political Culture', in Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah (eds.), *continued p. 388*

UMNO as the sole defender and representative of Malay-Muslim interests, and the UMNO leadership as the embodiment of the state.

PAS responded to the campaign by attacking Dr. Mahathir himself and questioning the motives behind his proposals. Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders rallied to the defence of the Malay Sultans and Rajas, arguing that as traditional rulers they still had a role to play as the defenders of Islam and Malay-Muslim concerns in the country. In the predominantly Malay states of the north, PAS was particularly active in its campaign to defend the status of the Malay rulers. At the peak of the 1983 constitutional crisis PAS leaders openly supported the Sultans. In Kuala Terengganu, PAS organised a massive rally at which PAS *ulama* Ustaz Haji Mokhtar Muhammad read out a 'people's declaration' in support of the royal house of Terengganu.<sup>98</sup>

Yusof Rawa condemned the UMNO-led government's actions, arguing that the real reason behind the campaign was to concentrate even more power in the federal government and the Prime Minister himself. However, PAS's attempts to mobilise popular support for the Malay rulers were checked by the counter-moves of the UMNO-led government. As the crisis began reaching its peak, reports in the mainstream media claimed that certain elements within PAS had come under the 'republican' influence of Iran — certain members of PAS were said to be involved in the circulation outside Kuala Lumpur mosques of pamphlets carrying speeches by Ayatollah Khomeini. To make matters worse for PAS, its ex-president Asri Muda (then an UMNO member) claimed that a PAS *ulama* had been chosen as the ayatollah's special envoy to Southeast Asia and that PAS was now committed to a form of revolutionary politics that would eventually bring down the insti-

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*Fragmented Vision: Culture and Politics in Contemporary Malaysia*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1992.) It was aired regularly by the state-controlled television and radio services, and was soon part of the Semarak campaign.

<sup>98</sup> Zulkifli Sulong, *Operasi Tawan Trengganu*, p. 83.

tution of constitutional monarchy in Malaysia.<sup>99</sup> Under such circumstances, PAS was once again forced to go on the defensive.

In the end, PAS's efforts were in vain. The mainstream media was called in to help in the sustained *blitzkrieg* to destroy the image and reputation of the Sultans.<sup>100</sup> With their reputations in tatters, the royal families were forced to concede defeat.<sup>101</sup> Under the relentless pressure of the mainstream media, the resolve of the Malay rulers was broken and they finally gave in to public pressure. On 20 November 1983, six representatives of the UMNO ruling council submitted their demands to the Conference of Rulers at Istana Bukit Kayangan in Shah Alam. The Timbalan Yang

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<sup>99</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 136. Nair notes that 'despite denials from both PAS and the Iranian embassy in Malaysia, the timing of the statement was crucial in the context of the constitutional crisis'. The media revelations only led to further strain in relations between Kuala Lumpur and Tehran. By the end of 1983 the Malaysian government was openly contemplating the possibility of banning all travel to Iran and ending diplomatic relations with Iran for good. In January 1984, Ghazali Shafie, Malaysia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, met Iranian representatives in Bangladesh and was assured that Iran was not involved in training Malaysians in any kind of subversive or terrorist activities. Nonetheless, by the end of 1984 the Malaysian government had completed a draft proposal for regulating travel between the two countries after further allegations of Iranian 'interference' in Malaysia's domestic political affairs.

<sup>100</sup> Lee notes that 'when the rulers refused to budge in relation to their opposition to the controversial provisions of the 1983 Bill, despite a meeting with a delegation of the Supreme Council of UMNO, the Prime Minister went barnstorming all over the country' (H. P. Lee, *Constitutional Conflicts in Contemporary Malaysia*, p. 32). During this campaign, state control of the media was relaxed and the press was allowed to report extensively on the issue. The press was also permitted for a sustained period (nearly two months) to release many reports of ill-conduct by the rulers and their families over the years. As a result, countless scandals involving the private financial and sexual improprieties of the rulers were revealed to the public on a daily basis, doing untold damage to the reputation of all the royal families.

<sup>101</sup> Sultan Mahmood Iskander assumed the office of *Agong*, and served as the country's constitutional monarch until 1988.

Di-Pertuan Agong (Deputy King), Tuanku Jaafar Abdul Rahman, signed and ratified the constitutional amendment on 15 December 1983. Ultimately, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir emerged triumphant with the Constitutional Amendment Act (1984) in hand and was hailed by the media as the 'champion of the people's rights'. UMNO and Dr. Mahathir had won the day (though Sultan Mahmood Iskander *did* become King the following year, and proved that being the King did little to restrain his excesses).<sup>102</sup>

The 1983 constitutional crisis proved to be a watershed event for PAS in many respects. The party leaders were disappointed by the conduct of the Malay rulers who surrendered so easily under pressure. Zulkifli Sulong noted that:

*Pengalaman menyokong raja-raja dalam isu pemindaan Perlembagaan 1983 telah mengajar PAS untuk menangani isu ini dengan berhati-hati sekali. Ketika isu pindaan Perlembagaan 1983 memuncak, boleh kata PAS secara terbuka berada di belakang raja-raja yang kononnya mahu menentang Dr. Mahathir. Hingga PAS merestui keghairahan ahli-ahli dan para penyokongnya membuat perarakan besar-besaran ke istana untuk menyantakan sokongan kepada raja-raja Melayu.... Bagaimanapun anggapan bahawa raja-raja mahu mempertahankan hak mereka ternyata meleset. Kesan yang diterima oleh PAS ketika itu juga cukup memberi pengajaran.*<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Even after being elected *Yang Di-Pertuan Agong* by the Conference of Rulers in 1984, Sultan Mahmood Iskander Shah's private life remained controversial. In the years that followed, he was accused of even more assaults on ordinary members of the public. The *Agong* was hardly well-disposed towards Dr. Mahathir. On many occasions he was openly contemptuous towards the Prime Minister, going as far as calling him a '*mamak*' (a derogatory term for those of mixed Malay-Indian ancestry) in public (Roger Kershaw, *Monarchy in Southeast Asia*, p. 104).

<sup>103</sup> Translation: The experience of supporting the Malay rulers during the 1983 constitutional crisis had taught PAS to be careful when dealing with such issues in the future. When the crisis was at its peak, it could be said that PAS stood alone in support of the rulers who were thought to be against the government of Dr. Mahathir. PAS went as far as allowing its members and supporters to organise a huge rally that went to the royal palaces, to show their support to the rulers.... However, it soon became clear that the rulers' resolve was quick to wane. As a result of this crisis PAS was taught an important lesson (Zulkifli Sulong, *Operasi Tawan Trengganu*, pp. 83–84).

As if to add insult to injury, the PAS *ulama* who read out the people's declaration of support for the Malay rulers in Terengganu was soon reprimanded by the Sultan himself. Ustaz Haji Mokhtar Muhammad had his *ijazah* and permit to perform Muslim marriages within Terengganu withdrawn by order of the Sultan. The PAS leaders had learned that the Malay Sultans and royal families were not willing or able to reciprocate their support. PAS was once again forced to struggle on its own.

Undaunted by this setback, Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders continued their incessant offensive against the UMNO-led government. Another opportunity came when the government was forced to admit that financial wrongdoings had taken place within Bank Bumiputra and its investment arm, Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF).<sup>104</sup> The BMF scandal of 1983-84 became the first major financial scandal of the Mahathir era, though many more (such as the Maminco scandal)<sup>105</sup> soon followed. The magnitude of the

<sup>104</sup> The BMF scandal was sparked off by revelations about financial irregularities by BMF managers. BMF was a subsidiary company of Bank Bumiputra, based in Hong Kong. From 1979-82 it had granted substantial loans to Malaysian property companies investing heavily in the Hong Kong property market. By 1982, due to the sudden slump in Hong Kong property prices, many of these companies had become insolvent, were forced into liquidation and unable to repay their huge loans. Overnight, BMF was landed with a loss of more than RM2.5 billion, twice the value of Bank Bumiputra shareholders' capital. When the Malaysian press began to inquire what went wrong with BMF, the company's chairman and board of directors refused to give straight answers. But as the media exposés continued, the government was finally forced to launch an inquiry; this was severely hampered when Bank Bumiputra internal auditor Jalil Ibrahim was mysteriously killed during his research mission in Hong Kong. The murder sparked off a second round of speculation about high-level abuse of power and how BMF had been used by businessmen with powerful political connections. The BMF inquiry later revealed the extent of irregular lending practices, indiscriminate investment and the use of political connections to secure huge loans.

<sup>105</sup> The Maminco scandal involved Malaysian Mining Company (Maminco) that was set up to serve as the Malaysian government's price-support vehicle in the global tin market. Malaysia was the *continued p. 392*

losses was staggering by local standards, and the Prime Minister was forced to appoint an investigative committee.<sup>106</sup> However, as the media probe into the BMF scandal intensified, it soon became clear that senior government members and UMNO leaders were also involved. When the committee's findings were kept secret, PAS and the other opposition parties were quick to accuse UMNO itself.

In 1984, the political temperature in Malaysia began to rise, but developments in the country mirrored developments taking place elsewhere in the region: most of the Islamist movements and parties in ASEAN were becoming increasingly confrontational in their approach. In Indonesia and the Philippines, Islamist movements like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were mobilising support against their respective governments.

In April 1984, Yusof Rawa attacked the UMNO-led government in his speech '*Menggempurkan Pemikiran Asabiyyah*' at the PAS *muktamar*. He condemned UMNO on the grounds that it was fundamentally a sectarian ethno-nationalist party and that its policies were focused only on worldly concerns. UMNO was, he argued, not a party that cared for the welfare of the Muslim *ummah*, but

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*n. 105 continued*

world's major tin producer and the government was keen to ensure there was a price-support system to prevent the global tin price fluctuating wildly due to commodity speculators. Originally set up to help prop up the price of tin on the global metal exchange, Maminco began speculating on the price of tin in the world market in 1981–82. However, in 1982, the London Metal Exchange (LME) changed its standard operating procedures and allowed traders to pay a fine instead of losing their stocks if they failed to meet a contractual delivery. This caused a sudden depreciation of the world tin price and, as a result, Maminco had a large stock of unwanted tin. The Malaysian government still refused to admit that it was behind the speculation on tin prices. Only in 1986 did Dr. Mahathir openly admit (at the 1986 UMNO general assembly) that the Malaysian government, operating via Maminco, was the 'secret buyer' of tin stocks in 1981–82 (Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 214).

<sup>106</sup> The specially appointed BMF investigation committee was set up by the Prime Minister's command on 11 January 1984.

rather for the immediate needs of the *mustakbirin* (oppressive ruling élite). He also attacked the government's Islamisation programme which, he argued, was part and parcel of the sectarian form of politics practised by UMNO. Its aim was to divide the Malay-Muslim community while helping to expand UMNO's sphere of patronage and influence on the Malays. UMNO responded by calling PAS a party of religious extremists and fanatics, and accused the PAS *ulama* of being charlatans and traitors to the true cause of Islam.<sup>107</sup>

Later in 1984, PAS *ulama* Tuan Guru Nik Aziz publicly criticised the government for not abandoning the federal constitution that had been inherited from the colonial constitutional model introduced by the Reid Commission in the 1950s.<sup>108</sup> Nik Aziz argued that if the Malaysian government was really sincere in its Islamisation programme then it should take the brave step of laying the foundations for a truly Islamic state in Malaysia.

The intensification of the PAS-UMNO conflict led to confrontations that further marred relations between the two parties. While UMNO leaders were preoccupied with keeping the multiracial and multireligious BN coalition together, PAS leaders began to raise the stakes in the Islamisation race once again and accused UMNO of betraying the interests of the Malay-Muslims. In time, a number of PAS leaders were detained under the ISA on the grounds that their speeches and religious sermons were a threat to national security and racial harmony. Those arrested included Ustaz Abu Bakar Chik, Ustaz Bunyamin Yaacob, Ustaz Latif Muhammad, Ustaz Ghazalli Hasbullah, Mahfuz Omar and Mohamad Sabu.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> In his 1984 national day address, Dr. Mahathir accused the PAS *ulama* of being backward and reactionary and claimed that PAS's model of an Islamic state was fundamentally based on fanaticism and extremism. He also claimed that PAS's approach to Islam was not only un-Islamic, but also against the interests of Islam and Muslims as a whole (*Utusan Malaysia*, 31 August 1984).

<sup>108</sup> This took place during the parliamentary debate on the 1984 budget. (Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 88.)

<sup>109</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Perisai Memali*, p. 26.

Kelantanese PAS leader Mohamad Sabu was detained because of his inflammatory speeches against Christian missionary groups active in the country which he claimed had been trying to convert Malay-Muslims.<sup>110</sup> Another PAS leader, outspoken Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood (also known as Ibrahim Libya), managed to escape detention. Ustaz Mahmood's fate was decided the following year, with tragic consequences for all parties involved.

Aware that its crackdown on the Islamist opposition was bound to damage its own Islamic image and standing before the Malay-Muslim constituency, the UMNO leadership tried to bolster its own Islamic credentials by promoting a number of political events related to wider Muslim concerns. One of the more successful was the visit of Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat to Malaysia in July 1984. The highlight of Yasser Arafat's visit was his televised speech to an audience of thousands at the National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur where he spoke of the plight of the Palestinian people and the Malaysian government's support for the Palestinian cause. The UMNO-led government gained considerable mileage from his visit and the image of Dr. Mahathir as a defender of Muslim interests in the international scene was boosted accordingly.

Despite the government's efforts to project the image of Malaysian leadership in the Muslim world at large, PAS leaders remained unimpressed. Yusof Rawa challenged Dr. Mahathir and the UMNO leaders to take part in a televised debate on the question of which of the two parties was more Islamic. Preparations were underway, but

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<sup>110</sup> Mohamad Sabu was by then one of the most prominent PAS speakers and leaders. A Kedah Malay, he was one of the few party leaders who retained many of the Malay-centric concerns of the Asri era even up to the 1980s. He was well known for his fervent defence of Malay rights and privileges and his open attacks against Christian missionary organisations which he claimed were engaged in a clandestine operation to convert the Malay-Muslims to Christianity. Many of his speeches featured attacks on Christian groups as well as rich *towkay Cina* (Chinese merchants) whom he accused of taking away the land and riches of the Malays. He was detained under the ISA once more in 1987.

at the last minute the debate was cancelled on 8 November 1984 by royal decree. PAS leaders such as Ustaz Yusof Rawa and Tuan Guru Nik Aziz attacked the leadership of Dr. Mahathir and accused UMNO of hypocrisy and cowardice. Public sentiment shifted in favour of PAS, as many felt that its leaders were sincere, while UMNO leaders had panicked at the last minute.

In the following year (1985), the stakes in the political race were raised even higher after the 'Lubuk Merbau incident' when a number of ordinary PAS members were attacked by a group of thugs who broke up a PAS rally. One PAS member, Abdul Rahim Talib, was killed during the attack. PAS leaders alleged that the thugs were hired by UMNO members. In response to these attacks, Ustaz Yusof Rawa condemned the government for its persecution of Islamists. In his *muktamar* speech on 29 April 1985 entitled '*Bertindak Menentang Kezaliman*', Ustaz Yusof Rawa declared that Abdul Rahim Talib had *gugur syahid* (died a martyr's death), and he attacked the UMNO-led government for the *kezaliman* (cruelty) and *ketidakadilan* (injustices) that had occurred under its rule.<sup>111</sup>

By this time the gulf between PAS and UMNO was greater than ever. It had become clear that the leaders of the two parties were speaking on different registers altogether. While Dr. Mahathir's government was trying to develop and disseminate a vision of Islam based on the practical needs of the immediate present, PAS leaders were proposing a completely new form of politics predicated on theological and philosophical premises radically different from (if not opposed to) UMNO's.

It was not only the UMNO leaders who were worried about the developments in PAS. Within the party itself, voices of dissent were beginning to be heard. One of the more vocal critics of the policy reforms of Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* faction was veteran PAS leader Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah. He opposed many of the institutional reforms introduced by the *ulama* and was particularly critical of PAS's attempts to play the 'holier-than-thou' card in its contest against UMNO. He soon found himself outnumbered

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<sup>111</sup> Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 109.

and outmanœuvred within his own party, and during the 1985 *muktamar* the Young Turks within PAS openly accused him of being a *kafir* guilty of *khianat* (treason) against the party and its leaders.<sup>112</sup> Few cared to remember that he was one of the few PAS leaders who had also stood up to Asri Muda and who opposed PAS's entry into the BN government. (In contrast, Yusof Rawa and Nik Aziz had both accepted the offer and were given prominent positions in the BN government.) For his efforts, Ustaz Abu Bakar ultimately found himself blacklisted in the party and his membership was suspended in 1986.

While the PAS Islamists continued to hurl their polemics at the government of Dr. Mahathir, the latter was basking in the glory of its successes. On 9 July 1985, Dr. Mahathir's dream of turning Malaysia into one of the newly industrialised countries (NICs) of the region came one step closer to reality when the first 'national' car, the Proton Saga, rolled off the assembly line. On 26 September, Dr. Mahathir opened the new UMNO party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. It appeared as if the UMNO-led government of Dr. Mahathir was invulnerable to the criticisms and attacks of PAS.

After the violence at Lubuk Merbau and the detention of PAS leaders under the ISA, PAS members were acutely aware of their own vulnerability before the state security apparatus and were growing increasingly defensive. This spiral of confrontation and violence reached its peak on 19–20 November 1985 during the Memali incident at the village of Charok Puteh, near Baling, Kedah.<sup>113</sup> The controversial PAS *ulama* Ustaz Haji Ibrahim Mahmood (@ Ibrahim Libya) was at the centre of the crisis.

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<sup>112</sup> Abu Bakar Hamzah, 'PAS dan "Kurang Akhlak"', *Mingguan Islam*, 29 April 1988.

<sup>113</sup> The Memali incident actually took place in the village of Charok Puteh ('White River') near the village of Mali (later Memali). The two villages were separated by a small river which gave Charok Puteh its name. Ustaz Ibrahim's home and *madrrasah* were in Charok Puteh, not Memali. Most of his followers came from the two villages and the rest of the surrounding *mukim* (district).

*Shot at Sunrise: The Memali Incident and Its Aftermath*

The martyr is the essence of history.

Ayatollah Khomeini<sup>114</sup>

In 1985, the same year that American President Ronald Reagan declared a state of national emergency in the US,<sup>115</sup> and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and Gaafar Nimeiri of Sudan launched their nation-wide crackdowns on the Islamists in their countries,<sup>116</sup> the

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<sup>114</sup> Cited in *The Sunday Times*, 13 April 1980 (Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 168).

<sup>115</sup> On 1 May 1985, US President Ronald Reagan declared a state of national emergency, arguing that it was necessary due to the 'subversive' activities of the Nicaraguan government, which was said to be plotting against the US. Under Ronald Reagan, the US engaged in a number of covert operations to destabilise and overthrow the Marxist government of Nicaragua, leading to a trade embargo that effectively crippled the Nicaraguan economy. The US also supported, financed and helped to arm and train anti-government rebels and death squads responsible for the killing of thousands of civilians and political activists in that country. America was later condemned by the UN, and became the first (and only) state to be denounced by the World Court for actively using terrorism as a foreign policy tool. (Noam Chomsky, *Culture of Terrorism*, New York: South End Press, 1988, and *Necessary Illusions*, New York: South End Press, 1989.)

<sup>116</sup> In 1985, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt decided to act against the Islamist opposition. He ordered the arrest of prominent *ulama* Sheikh Hafiz Salaama who was held responsible for inspiring anti-government demonstrations among the students. The Egyptian government also brought all private mosques under the control of the Ministry for Religious Affairs. In neighbouring Sudan, Gaafar Nimeiri acted against the Islamist opposition after his own Islamisation programme failed. In March 1985, he ordered a clampdown on activities of the Sudanese *Ikhwan*, blaming them for his government's economic and political failures. More than 200 *Ikhwan* leaders and prominent Islamists were thrown into prison, including Dr. Hassan Turabi of the *Ikhwan* and Sadiq al-Mahdi, an Oxford educated great-grandson of the Mahdi of Sudan. Numeiri was less successful than Mubarak in his attempt to contain the Islamist challenge. On 5 April 1985, his *continued p. 398*

Malaysian government had to deal with the first major violent clash with the Islamist opposition. This came at a time when the federal government was already forced to deal with violent demonstrations and bombings in the east Malaysian state of Sabah.<sup>117</sup> The clash therefore could not have come at a worse time for Dr. Mahathir's government. PAS, in turn, was about to lose one of its most charismatic leaders and receive its first popular martyr.

Charok Puteh/Memali was then a small, poor village in Kedah. A majority of its inhabitants were Malay farmers and rubber

*n. 116 continued*

government was toppled after a coup led by the army, who then installed Sadiq al-Mahdi as the first civilian leader of Sudan. (He remained in power until June 1989, when another coup brought General Omar al-Bashir to power.)

<sup>117</sup> The 1984–86 political crisis in Sabah owed its origins to the complex inter-communal politics of the state. Ever since Sabah became part of Malaysia in 1963, the balance of power had been decided by the claims of the two most important ethnic groups, the Kadazan (predominantly urban-based and Christian) and the Bajau (evenly distributed between rural and urban areas, and Muslim). In the early 1980s, Sabah's state government was ruled by the *Berjaya* party, led by Harris Salleh. Dissatisfaction with his style of government led to the resignation of Pairin Kitingan and Huguan Siow, both powerful Kadazan leaders from *Berjaya*. Pairin Kitingan then formed the *Parti Bersatu Sabah* (United Sabah Party, PBS) which was seen as a political vehicle for himself and his Kadazan followers. In April 1985, Harris Salleh called an early state election, expecting *Berjaya* to win, but *Berjaya* and USNO (a Malay-Bajau Muslim party led by Mustapha Harun) were sorely defeated. Harris Salleh and Mustapha Harun then tried to block Pairin Kitingan from becoming the new Chief Minister by appealing directly to the *Yang Di-Pertua Negeri Sabah* (Governor of Sabah). This manoeuvre failed when the Deputy Prime Minister (then acting Prime Minister) Musa Hitam vetoed the move and Pairin Kitingan became Chief Minister. Anti-Kadazan sentiments were high, and from mid-1985 to 1986 the capital, Kota Kinabalu, witnessed a number of violent riots and bombings. Dr. Mahathir's government responded by accusing PBS leaders of harbouring anti-Muslim prejudices and encouraging anti-government sentiments among their followers. The crisis was only resolved when PBS was finally allowed to enter the ruling BN coalition (which it left soon after).

smallholders. Like many other small rural communities whose income depended on the world rubber price, the people of Charok Puteh and Memali were hard hit by the drop in commodity prices and high levels of inflation during the 1970s. Because many villagers were PAS supporters, the village was often left out of rural development projects and state-sponsored assistance.<sup>118</sup> It was here that Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood decided to settle and build his *madrasah*.

Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood was a well-known *ulama* in Kedah who had studied at various *madrasahs* and seminaries such as the Dar'ul 'Ulum Deoband in India and al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt.<sup>119</sup> He had also studied at the University of Tripoli (hence his nickname 'Ibrahim Libya'). Upon his return to Malaysia, Ustaz Ibrahim first worked as an official in the *dakwah* department of Pusat Islam in Kuala Lumpur. He was expected to help justify and rationalise many of the government's policies on Islam and Muslim concerns in the country. One of his assigned tasks was to persuade the young ABIM leader Anwar Ibrahim, who was detained at the Kamunting detention camp, to support the UMNO-led government. The encounter was a fateful one, for Anwar turned the tables on the *ustaz* and accused him of collaborating with the dominant ruling party.<sup>120</sup>

Following this decisive encounter with Anwar, Ustaz Ibrahim grew more determined to propagate his understanding of Islam, that was not entirely compatible with the interpretation of *Pusat Islam* (the official religious authority). He decided to quit the capital and return to his village of Charok Puteh. Back in his village, Ustaz Ibrahim opened his own school, the *Madrasah*

<sup>118</sup> Chandra Muzaffar, *Freedom in Fetters*, p. 333.

<sup>119</sup> Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood's early education was in Malaysia. In his youth he studied at Sekolah Agama Ittifaqiah in Kampung Charok Puteh and later at Pondok al-Khairah at Pokok Sena, Seberang Perai and the *Madrasah* of Nilam Puri, Kelantan. He then studied at Dar'ul 'Ulum Deoband in India before further studies at al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt and, later, the University of Tripoli in Libya (C. N. al-Afghani, *Perisai Memali*, p. 22).

<sup>120</sup> A detailed account of this meeting is found in C. N. al-Afghani, *Rakyat Makin Matang*, pp. 5-7.

Islahiah Diniyyah.<sup>121</sup> He became an active PAS member, in particular in the *Dewan Pemuda* PAS Kedah. In time he gained a large following and his *madrasah* became a centre for political activities as well as Islamic teaching.

The *ustaz* was well known for his fiery rhetoric and strict code of discipline: on several occasions he punished (by caning) not only his younger students but also the older ones (who happened to be married men).<sup>122</sup> He was invited to speak on Islamic matters on national television, and also engaged in numerous discussions with state *ulama* and religious functionaries. However, his own defence of Islamist politics and PAS was soon articulated through oppositional dialectics that drew a dividing line between 'authentic' Muslims and the non-authentic Islam of the *munaḥikin* (hypocrites). Ustaz Ibrahim lamented the fact that the Islamists in Malaysia were not willing to engage in an all-out *jihad* against the secular state and the *munaḥikin* government of Dr. Mahathir. On one occasion he spoke thus:

*Kalau di Iran, Pakistan telah wujud angkatan Mujahidin dan sudah wujud angkatan shuhada, iaitu angkatan berani mati kerana agama, maka di Malaysia kenapa tidak boleh wujud angkatan yang berani mati kerana menegakkan agama Allah? Inilah perkara yang mesti ditekankan pada para pemuda Islam khususnya dalam parti Islam PAS. Kita hendak memberi latihan kepada mereka supaya tidak mati sia-sia.*<sup>123</sup>

The Ustaz also issued a warning to the effect that he and his followers were prepared to fight to the death to defend their beliefs and political commitments:

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<sup>121</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Operasi Kenari*, p. 64.

<sup>122</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Perisai Memali*, p. 70.

<sup>123</sup> Translation: If in Iran and Pakistan there have emerged legions of *mujahideen* and legions of *shuhada* who are prepared to die for the sake of religion, then why is it that we in Malaysia have not been able to create such a force that is prepared to die for the sake of the religion of Allah? This is what we need to emphasise among the young Muslims in our country, and among the youth of PAS in particular. We need to teach them, so that they will not die in vain (Ibid., pp. 77–78).

*Ketika kamu telah menjadi seorang Islam, maka janganlah cuba menyekat perjuangan kami didalam parti Islam PAS ini untuk menegakkan Shariat Allah dan kalimah Allah yang tinggi. Jika disekat, kami akan menentang kamu, dan jika kita mati atau gugur, maka gugurlah kami sebagai syahid, dan kamu pula dalam hal ini akan mati sia-sia.<sup>124</sup>*

When Anwar Ibrahim joined UMNO in 1982, Ustaz Ibrahim was shocked and dismayed. (It was, after all, Anwar who had made him question his own role in the government's religious bureaucracy.) Ustaz Ibrahim then became one of the PAS *ulama* who criticised Anwar the most for his betrayal of the Islamist cause. Apart from his personal attacks on UMNO leaders, Ustaz Ibrahim's controversial and outspoken ideas regarding the need to create an Islamic state via revolutionary means caused the authorities to voice their concern. In time, he was branded a 'deviationist' thinker by the state religious authorities. The *Majlis Fatwa Kebangsaan* (National Fatwa Council) finally issued a *fatwa* against his teachings.<sup>125</sup> Efforts were then made to control his activities.

In 1984, the government finally decided to act against Ustaz Ibrahim. An arrest warrant was issued and he was to be detained under the ISA along with other PAS leaders, including Ustaz Abu Bakar Chik, Ustaz Bunyamin Yaacob, Mahfuz Omar and Mohamad Sabu, for allegedly advocating the use of violence. He refused to accept the charges and condemned the ISA as un-Islamic and oppressive. Unlike the other PAS leaders who were caught and detained, Ustaz Ibrahim escaped with the help of his students. The stalemate continued for more than a year.

In November 1985, the government responded to Ustaz Ibrahim's open defiance with the use of force. While the Prime Minister was on a visit to China, Deputy Prime Minister Musa Hitam was given responsibility for the task. Malaysian security services were ordered to arrest the *ustaz* and his followers. On

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<sup>124</sup> Translation: And if you consider yourselves to be Muslims then do not hinder us in the Islamic party PAS in our efforts to uphold the *shariah* and *kalimah* of Allah Almighty. For if we are stopped, we shall resist and oppose you; and should we fall in our struggle we would be killed as martyrs while you can only die for nothing (Ibid., p. 72).

<sup>125</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Operasi Kenari*, p. 63.

19 November, the village of Memali was surrounded by state security forces, including both the army and the police. A total of 576 security and armed forces personnel were present, along with armoured vehicles.<sup>126</sup> Shortly after the *ustaz* had delivered his *kuliah subuh* (morning lecture) at the *madrasah*, the troops were ordered to move in. Ustaz Ibrahim and his followers resisted their entry with force, and the troops opened fire. In the course of the fighting, Ustaz Ibrahim was killed along with 14 of his followers, and 29 other villagers were wounded. The *ustaz* was shot by members of the *Unit Tindakan Khas* (Special Forces Unit, UTK). One of his followers, Mohamad Piah Yunus, was shot 14 times at close range by soldiers armed with automatic rifles (and survived).<sup>127</sup> Others who died included Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmud, a local teacher and missionary; Ahmad Hassan, ex-leader of the PAS Youth Wing of Kedah 1979–81; Syafie bin Dahaman, Haji Abdullah bin Haji Abdul Rahman, Abdul Manaf bin Waden, Ghazali bin Mohd Saman, Mohd Radzi bin Ahmad, Wan Abdullah @ Idris bin Lebai Kadir, Mohd Aroff bin Hashim, Zamri bin Md Isa, Abdullah bin Yasin, Mohd Daud bin Kadir, Ahmad bin Ismail and Haji Abdul Rahman bin Jusoh. Four policemen were also killed.

The security forces had used automatic rifles, tear gas and armoured vehicles in the assault. An armoured car was used to smash down the front gates of the *ustaz's* home. Immediately following the event, 161 villagers (including women and children) from Charok Puteh and Memali were detained by the security forces. The government then issued a comprehensive ban on all political discussions and rallies in six states — Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis, Penang and northern Perak — all of which (except Penang) were known to be PAS strongholds.

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<sup>126</sup> Khoo notes that 576 police and security personnel took part in the operation, though only 228 actually approached Ibrahim Libya's house and *madrasah* (Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 256 n. 203).

<sup>127</sup> For an account of the killings at Memali and Charok Puteh seen through the eyes of those present, including Mohamad Piah Yunus, see C. N. al-Afghani, *Perisai Memali*.

The killings at Memali came as a shock to the whole country. Although the Memali incident was pale in comparison with violence and atrocities meted out against Islamists elsewhere in the world at the time it was nonetheless an unprecedented event in Malaysian history. As Chandra has argued: 'Memali, in retrospect, is perhaps one of the most vivid demonstrations of the massive use of state power on behalf of the ruling elites.'<sup>128</sup>

This was the first time that the Malaysian government had used such force against the Islamic opposition in the country, resulting in so many deaths. In the face of criticism from both the Islamist opposition and human rights organisations, the government defended the actions of the security forces by insisting that those who resisted were armed religious fanatics and extremists prepared to fight to the death for their *ustaz*. The UMNO-owned and state-controlled media were also called upon to persuade the people to accept the official version of events while discrediting PAS in the process.<sup>129</sup>

PAS leaders were swift to respond to the government's depiction of events at Memali. Ustaz Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders exploited the event to the full, taking it as proof that the government of Dr. Mahathir was fundamentally opposed to Islam and the success of Islamist movements in the country. Ibrahim Libya and his followers were described by Yusof Rawa as *syuhada* (martyrs) who had died for the struggle of Islam against a *kufur* government led by the *mustakbirin* élite of UMNO. PAS condemned the UMNO-led government *in toto*, including ex-ABIM leader Anwar Ibrahim who was a Cabinet member at the time.<sup>130</sup> PAS *ulama* Tuan Guru Nik Aziz, in turn, refuted the government's claim that the movement was led by 'deviant fanatics'. He argued that:

*Sesungguhnya penyalahgunaan agama hanyalah berlaku apabila agama dan salurannya itu dipergunakan untuk mempertahankan kedudukan*

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<sup>128</sup> Chandra Muzaffar, *Freedom in Fetters*, p. 334.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> C. N. al-Afghani notes that 'Semasa peristiwa Memali November 1985, Anwar sudah berada dalam kabinet pemerintah, seorang menteri. Maka Anwar terlibat. Sungguhpun di tangannya tidak berlumuran dengan darah shuhada Memali, tetapi percikan darah itu tetap mengenai tubuh badannya. continued p. 404

*sekularisme bagi mengharuskan tindakan-tindakan zalim seperti yang dilakukan oleh kerajaan pada hari ini.*<sup>131</sup>

In the mop-up operation following the Memali killings, the state security forces detained a number of PAS leaders under the ISA on the grounds that they posed a security threat in the area. The government's white paper on the Memali incident further implicated senior PAS leaders like Ustaz Hadi Awang as the instigators of the violence.<sup>132</sup> To counter PAS's version of events, the Islamic Council of Kedah even issued a *fatwa* which stated that Ibrahim Libya was not a *syahid* (martyr) and that those who were killed did not die in the name of Islam. But once again Dr. Mahathir's government found that its control of the media and information channels was not enough to persuade the public at large. Despite the incessant attempts to present the government's side of the story and to discredit the opposition, public sympathy was once again on the side of PAS and the Islamists. (Years later, in recognition of the suffering inflicted on the people of Charok Puteh and Memali, the Sultan of Kedah, as head of religious affairs in his state, visited the graves of those killed in Memali and offered his condolences to the widows and orphans who remained. For PAS members and the villagers themselves, this came as a tacit, if

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*Anwar tetap bersubahat.* (Translation: During the Memali incident of November 1985, Anwar was already a member of the ruling Cabinet. Therefore Anwar was involved. Even if his hands were not stained with the blood of the martyrs of Memali, some of that blood had nonetheless spilled on him. Anwar was a conspirator (C. N. al-Afghani, *Rakyat Makin Matang*, p. 40).

<sup>131</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 91. Translation: In reality, the only deviation in religion that we see around us today is when religion and religious ideas are used to defend secularism, which has compelled the government to abuse its power as it has done.

<sup>132</sup> Khoo notes that 'an excerpt from a 1981 Haji Hadi speech, which contained references to *mati syahid* ('martyr's death') was reproduced in the 'White Paper on the Memali incident', (Appendix 2), purportedly as evidence of Haji Hadi's extremism.' (Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 254 n. 182).

belated, recognition that the government's use of force and violence was unjustified.)<sup>133</sup>

After the arrest and detention of numerous PAS leaders and the Lubuk Merbau incident, the killing of Ustaz Ibrahim Libya and his followers in Memali was seen as an open declaration of war against the Islamists and their party. PAS members felt that they were not the only ones to suffer at the hands of the government. Elsewhere in the region, the emergence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front<sup>134</sup> (MILF) in the southern Philippines and the

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<sup>133</sup> Mohammad Sayuti Omar, *Salam Tok Guru*, p. 5.

<sup>134</sup> The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was formed in 1984 after a split among the leadership of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) led by Nur Misuari. MILF's leader was Salamat Hashim, an al-Azhar educated Moro student who had joined the MNLF with Nur Misuari and other radical Moro students in 1969. In Cairo, Salamat Hashim was a leader of the Moro student movement in al-Azhar University where, like many students, he studied *fiqh*, Arabic and Islamic history. In 1970, he returned to the Philippines to promote *dakwah* among the Moros. When he broke away from the MNLF and formed the MILF, Salamat Hashim rejected the leadership of Nur Misuari as being too secular and leftist, and the MNLF as too open to other groups like the Christians of Moroland. The MILF was to be a Muslim Moro organisation to fight for an independent Moro Islamic state governed according to *shariah* principles. The MILF rejected compromise with secular groups and regarded Moro ethno-nationalism *per se* as un-Islamic. As Che Man notes, the MILF's ideology is fundamentally based on a political reading of Islam, and the core of its political programme is the Islamisation of Moroland and Moro culture. (W. K. Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, p. 88.) Unlike the MNLF, the MILF received much of its funding and support from more conservative Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The MILF regarded its struggle as a *jihad* rather than a war of national liberation, and drew most of its leaders from the non-traditional Moro élite and religious leaders. The MILF leaders tried to expand their network by penetrating local Islamic schools and *madrasah*. In 1985, the MILF established its headquarters in Camp Abu Bakar, Cotabato. Its main area of activity was the Cotabato region *continued p. 406*

*Barisan Bersatu Mujahideen Patani*<sup>135</sup> (United Mujahideen Front of Patani, BBMP) in southern Thailand reinforced the impression that the forces of radical Islam were on the march everywhere. Armed with such epic antecedents, the PAS Islamists prepared themselves for the August 1986 election. But nothing could have prepared them for the defeat they were about to suffer.

*The Nadir of the Islamists:  
PAS and the Federal Election of August 1986*

PAS prepared itself for the federal election of August 1986 with confidence. The confrontation against the UMNO-led government had cost it dearly, but it had also gained the Islamists recognition at home and abroad, as well as a considerable degree of sympathy from the Malaysian public. Yusof Rawa and the PAS *ulama* had silenced the voices of dissent within the party, and warnings by other PAS leaders like Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah went unheeded.<sup>136</sup>

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*p. 134 continued*

where it had seven other major camps and training centres as well as 'model communities' (Ibid., p. 93).

<sup>135</sup> The *Barisan Bersatu Mujahideen Patani* (United Mujahideen Front of Patani, BBMP) was formed in 1985 by Wahyuddin Muhammad, former vice-chairman of BNPP, and other ex-BNPP leaders. Most BBMP leaders were Patani Muslims who had studied in Malaysia and Indonesia. In 1986, the BBMP leaders invited leaders of BNPP, BRN and PULO to a secret meeting in Kuala Lumpur to discuss ways to unite their efforts against the Thai government. BBMP's orientation is more radical and Islamist than that of BRN (est. 1963) or PULO (est. 1968). It has called on Patani Muslims to take up arms in a *jihad* against the Thai government which it regards as a *kafir* power bent on undermining the rule of Islam and the Muslim identity of the people of Patani. BBMP is less inclined than BRN and PULO to work or cooperate with more secular organisations and liberation movements, and its network is far less developed than that of BNPP, BRN and PULO.

<sup>136</sup> Since 1985 a number of senior PAS leaders had argued that PAS was too weak to fight an election and that the party should boycott the election altogether. In contrast, Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah argued that *continued p. 407*

PAS's arch-rival UMNO also seemed to be in dire straits of its own. Earlier in the year, UMNO's '2-M' leadership had split apart when Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Musa Hitam had resigned from his post on 26 February. His resignation was unexpected, but the political fall-out from the parting of the '2-Ms' was made worse by Musa's decision to circulate his private letter to Mahathir to other senior members of the party.<sup>137</sup>

Apart from having to cope with internal leadership problems, the UMNO-led government was also forced to deal with an increasingly hostile public frustrated by the government's inability to steer the country out of its first post-independence recession.<sup>138</sup>

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PAS should have pushed for proportional representation, hoping that this would give the party a larger number of seats in parliament to match the percentage of votes received. These voices were effectively silenced by Yusof Rawa and the other *ulama* on the central executive committee (Abu Bakar Hamzah, 'PAS dengan Konsep Jahiliah'. *Mingguan Islam*, 20 May 1988).

<sup>137</sup> Khoo notes that in the letter 'Musa explained, that he could no longer remain as Deputy Prime Minister because Mahathir had accused him of privately discrediting Mahathir so as to bring him down'. In his meetings with the public later, Musa went even further and accused Mahathir of being 'crass, rough and hard' and a man 'who pushes things down your throat' (Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 229, p. 257 n. 212). Musa's comments were later used by Mahathir's opponents within UMNO as well as without. Needless to say, PAS leaders exploited the Musa-Mahathir clash for their own purposes.

<sup>138</sup> By late 1985 and early 1986 economic analysts in and out of Malaysia agreed that the country was about to enter its first recession since independence. This came about after the country had made a successful transition from a commodity-producing economy to one based on industrial manufacturing. However, despite increased public sector support of local industries and the advances made through providing new infrastructure, in the mid-1980s Malaysia was losing its competitive edge due to lower labour and production costs in neighbouring countries like Indonesia and Thailand. In agriculture, Malaysia was also losing out to its neighbours. (Thailand competed with Malaysia in natural rubber production, and Indonesia became the world's main exporter of tropical hardwoods, and also posed stiff competition in palm oil production.) (Samuel Bassey Okposin and *continued p. 408*

UMNO still had a long way to go in pushing the Malay economic agenda,<sup>139</sup> while the government had been rocked by a number of financial scandals that had put it on the defensive. In the same year, the Malaysian government imposed a three-month ban on the *Asian Wall Street Journal* (AWSJ) for its exposés of two major bank scandals in Malaysia — both linked to the Finance Minister and the Deputy Home Affairs Minister who were close to Dr. Mahathir. PAS leaders felt that the time was right for them to push their Islamist agenda while other Islamist movements like *Darul Arqam* were making similar demands.<sup>140</sup>

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Cheng Ming Yu, *Economic Crises in Malaysia*, p. 92.) The situation was made worse by the global downtrend, in particular in the economies of Malaysia's trading partners. As a result, Malaysian export earnings dropped significantly. By 1985, Malaysia's GDP growth registered a negative -1.1%. The heavily promoted and state-supported electronics and electrical manufacturing sectors were hit particularly hard during the recession. By then it was clear that the levels of local research and development (R&D) and of technology transfer from Malaysia's trading partners were also deplorably low (*Ibid.*, p. 105).

<sup>139</sup> In 1983, the Malay share of the domestic economy was still below the 30% target set by the NEP launched in 1970. The level of direct equity ownership among the Malays was at 18.7%, of which 11.1% was in the hands of trust funds set up on behalf of the Malays.

<sup>140</sup> In 1986, Ashaari Muhammad, leader of *Darul Arqam*, published his *Auraḍ Muhammadiyah: Pegangan Darul Arqam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerangan al-Arqam, 1986), which outlined the movement's struggle, and proposed the creation of an Islamic society governed by Islamic laws that begin with the revival of faith in the individual himself. The book was immediately condemned by the state's religious authorities on the grounds that it contained deviationist teachings. In 1988, Ustaz Ashaari renewed his attack against the state religious authorities and Pusat Islam for not doing enough to promote Islam in the country. In an open letter to the government, he condemned the authorities for their failure to serve the interests of Malay-Muslims, and for their continuing attacks on Muslim organisations in the country.

Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders had not counted upon the tenacity of UMNO's machinery and its determination to stay in power using whatever means necessary. During the campaign period, the BN government used the national mainstream media, which was under its direct and indirect control, to its full advantage. (Television's impact was quite substantial as it had an estimated audience of 6 million in a country with a population of 15.6 million.)<sup>141</sup> Media coverage of the opposition parties was largely distorted and lopsided, and PAS in particular was singled out as a dangerous party led by religious fanatics and extremists who wanted to create an Islamic state in Malaysia through violence or revolutionary tactics. (Needless to say, the fiery speeches of PAS leaders such as Hadi Awang and Mohamad Sabu did not help restore the public's confidence in the party's image.)

The UMNO-led BN coalition also made religion a major issue in the election. The 1986 BN manifesto promised that Islam's position and status in the country would be guaranteed and that further efforts would be made to promote Islamic education in schools and to make Islam a 'way of life' for the Malaysian public.<sup>142</sup> Despite the extensive media campaign, the 1986 election registered a voter turn-out of 68.1%, the lowest in the country's history.

With the advantage of having the media and other government institutions under their control, the parties of the ruling BN coalition managed to win 57.6% of the votes, and 148 out of the 177 seats (83.6% of seats) (see Table 4.1).

During the election campaign, PAS formed an informal alliance with the *Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia* (PSRM) and *Parti Nasionalis Malaysia* (NASMA) to reduce the competition between the Malay opposition parties. In an attempt to counter the negative propaganda of the UMNO-controlled media, PAS leaders also attempted to woo support from the non-Malay and non-Muslim sections of the electorate. PAS leaders like Ustaz Hadi Awang claimed that the party was willing to accept the idea of a non-Malay becoming the Prime Minister of the country (provided that the person was

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<sup>141</sup> Chandra Muzaffar, *Freedom in Fetters*, p. 260.

<sup>142</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 36.

already a Muslim, of course).<sup>143</sup> The party also established Chinese consultative councils (CCC) with the hope of allaying the fears of the Chinese and non-Muslims in general.

Yusof Rawa was one of the PAS leaders behind the CCC initiative. He regarded it as one of the best ways to wean the non-Malay and non-Muslim electorate away from the clutches of UMNO and the BN, and hoped that they would be attracted to PAS with its new image as an Islamist party blind to distinctions of race and ethnicity. In his speech at Rusila in 1986, he said:

*Kita akan terus menawarkan risalah Islam yang bersifat alamiah kepada masyarakat bukan-Islam. Tawaran kita bukan untuk menindas mereka, bukan untuk memperdayakan mereka dan bukan untuk memaksa mereka. Kita mengemukakan Islam dan penyelesaian Islam untuk mereka membuat pilihan antara politik yang bersifat dominasi politik Melayu dengan politik Islam yang bersifat alamiah.*<sup>144</sup>

To this end, prominent Chinese Muslims like Kamal Koh<sup>145</sup> were recruited by PAS and put in charge of its information bureau and

<sup>143</sup> Hadi Awang's statement was made on 11 February 1985 at a special symposium on Islam and national unity, organised by PAS at the Chinese Assembly Hall in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting was meant to attract potential Chinese voters to PAS's cause, but the symposium was badly reported in the mainstream vernacular Malay press. *Utusan Malaysia*, in particular, attacked PAS for its alleged 'betrayal' of Malay interests and claimed that PAS had organised a meeting in a Chinese assembly hall where pork and alcohol were regularly served (*Utusan Malaysia*, 12 February 1985). In another dialogue session held in Kuala Terengganu, Hadi Awang claimed that the Islamist party did not set out to defend or promote the special rights of the Malays, which for him was an un-Islamic concept (Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 226).

<sup>144</sup> Translation: We will continue to spread the message of Islam that is universal in spirit to the non-Muslim community. Our offering is not meant to oppress them, not to weaken them and not to force them. We offer them Islam and the Islamic way of solving our problems so that they may choose between a politics based on notions of Malay dominance or an Islamic politics that is universal in nature (Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, pp. 130–131).

<sup>145</sup> Kamal Koh was one of the first Chinese Muslims to be promoted to a high level within the party's organisational structure. An active party continued p. 411

inter-communal relations section. The CCCs were meant to serve as part of the party's outreach programme to convince the non-Muslim communities that PAS was not the extremist fundamentalist party depicted by the media. By making these moves PAS showed that it was able and willing to adapt its approach and tactics in line with its new commitment towards a purer form of Islam. It was also showing signs of wanting to break into UMNO's traditional support networks. As Khoo Boo Teik writes:

PAS's overture to the Chinese community bespoke the party's historic, if belated, discovery of Chinese grievances over issues related to language, education, and the NEP. Even if no more than that, the PAS initiative threatened to encroach on UMNO's position as the Chinese community's historical, though 'partial' ally.<sup>146</sup>

PAS's rivals in UMNO were quick to accuse the Islamist party of betraying the interests of the Malays for the sake of political gains, and Anwar Ibrahim condemned PAS's new initiative as the biggest mistake ever made by the party.<sup>147</sup> Dr. Mahathir, in turn, accused PAS of using Islam for political purposes and of sowing the seeds of discord and disunity among the Malays.<sup>148</sup>

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member, he was well known as a PAS speaker among the Malay and Chinese communities (Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, p. 133).

<sup>146</sup> Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, pp. 226-227.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>148</sup> In his book *The Challenge*, Mahathir stated that 'one of the saddest ironies of recent times is that Islam, the faith that once made its followers progressive and powerful, is being invoked to promote retrogression which will bring in its wake weakness and eventual collapse. A force for enlightenment, it is being turned into a rationale for narrow-mindedness; an inspiration towards unity, it is being twisted into an instrument of division and destruction.' It was clear that Mahathir had PAS in mind when he was referring to the forces distorting the message of Islam for their own ends. (Introduction, quoted in Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 37.) See Mahathir Mohamad, *The Challenge*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1986. Originally published in Malay as *Menghadapi Cabaran*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara Press, 1976.

However, PAS's CCCs failed to achieve their intended goal because of the apprehension of the Chinese community. When it was revealed that PAS leaders had engaged in a private consultation with Dr. Mahathir and UMNO leaders at the Prime Minister's official residence (and the news of the secret meeting was leaked to the press) Chinese community leaders were incensed by what they regarded as the perfidiousness of PAS. Many feared that PAS would once again be brought into the fold of the BN, and that Malay dominance would again be the primary issue in Malaysian politics.<sup>149</sup>

PAS's belated efforts to improve its reputation and to tone down its militant image failed miserably. As a result of the devastating media campaign directed against PAS by the state-controlled and BN-owned media, PAS was thoroughly defeated (see Table 4.2). The party won only one parliamentary seat in Kelantan — Pengkalan Chepa, then held by Ustaz Nik Abdullah Arshad (also known as Pak Nik Lah). PAS's share of the vote was 15.3% and its share of parliamentary seats dropped to 0.6%, the lowest ever. Despite its attempts to forge strategic alliances and coalitions with other Malay parties, PAS failed to win the great victory it longed for. Other Islamist movements abroad like the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* were luckier, and PAS's defeat proved that its time had not yet come.<sup>150</sup>

PAS's poor performance in the 1986 election was caused not only by the negative publicity thrown in its direction, but also its own overheated rhetoric and overblown confidence. PAS leader Mohamad Sabu, for instance, stood against his erstwhile ally (now adversary) Anwar Ibrahim in the Pematang Pauh constituency. He was soundly trounced by Anwar with an overwhelming majority, which indicated that the Malay-Muslims were still not ready to accept the revolutionary Islamist rhetoric of the likes of Mohamad Sabu.

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<sup>149</sup> Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, p. 97.

<sup>150</sup> In April 1987, the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* led an opposition coalition which included both liberal and socialist parties in the Egyptian general election. The coalition won 17% of the votes and 60 parliamentary seats, sidelining the Wafd party as the main opposition party in Egypt.

The fiery polemics of men such as Tuan Guru Hadi Awang and Mohamad Sabu also had the negative effect of scaring away non-Malays and non-Muslims, who were not prepared to endorse the creation of an Islamic state. The non-Malay communities could still recall the days when PAS was led by the fiercely chauvinistic Asri Muda who was openly hostile to the Chinese in particular, and they were not used to the Islamist rhetoric of the new PAS leaders. Non-Muslims were apprehensive about PAS's demands for an Islamic state governed by a supreme *ulama* assembly. Unfavourable comparisons with the Iranian revolution and the activities of other militant Islamist movements abroad<sup>151</sup> (which abounded in both the local and international press) made the idea of an Islamic state even more unpalatable to the urban-based non-Malay and non-Muslim communities, as well as a significant section of the Malays themselves. As a consequence, the BN parties were able to reap most of the benefits as the non-Malay electorate swung their support to the mainstream parties. As Hussein Yaakub has noted: '*Suatu hakikat yang tidak dapat dinafikan adalah bahawa sokongan orang Cina dan India terhadap BN mula meningkat selepas pilihanraya umum 1986.*'<sup>152</sup>

As well as the non-Malays, PAS's tactics also alienated the party from some sections of the Malay-Muslim community. In Terengganu, the party failed to win a single parliamentary seat and kept only two of the state assembly seats. PAS's deplorable showing in the state was due in part to the antics of its own members there. Just two days before polling day, errant groups of young PAS supporters held a premature 'victory drive' around the

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<sup>151</sup> In the same year (1986), the Egyptian government arrested 33 Islamist activists, including four military officers, on the grounds that they were plotting to overthrow the government of Hosni Mubarak and pave the way for a violent Islamic revolution in Egypt.

<sup>152</sup> Translation: One fact that cannot be denied is that the support of the Chinese and Indians for the BN coalition began to rise significantly after the general election of 1986 (Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, p. 114). Hussein also argues that the DAP began to suffer losses soon after, because the ruling BN coalition parties had begun to implement policies close to the DAP's own demands.

capital of Kuala Terengganu on their motorbikes. The next day, an even bigger drive was held. The move seriously backfired as local residents felt that the PAS members were too arrogant for their own good and were counting their chickens before they hatched.<sup>153</sup> Come polling day, the party was effectively wiped out in the state: the only state assembly seats they retained were Rhu Rendang and Wakaf Mempelam, held by Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang and Haji Mustafa Ali.

The real winner in the 1986 election was the DAP, led by Lim Kit Siang. DAP's success was due in some part to the failings of the conservative Chinese party, the MCA,<sup>154</sup> which was UMNO's main counterpart in the BN. As in the elections of 1969, 1978 and 1982, DAP won more parliamentary seats than PAS — 24 parliamentary seats (13.6% of total seats), which was its biggest win ever. The DAP and the parties of the left won 21.1% of the total votes, though once again the Malay leftist parties failed to win a single parliamentary seat. In the wake of the election, leaders of the predominantly Malay socialist party PSRM were forced to address the question of the party's poor performance during its general assembly in Johor Bharu. Many felt that the party's image had been

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<sup>153</sup> Zulkifli Sulong, *Operasi Tawan Trengganu*, p. 37.

<sup>154</sup> While UMNO was faced with the problem of dealing with PAS's challenge, its Chinese conservative counterpart, MCA, had serious internal problems of its own. The MCA had experienced a number of leadership challenges during the early 1980s; these disputes only came to an end in 1985 when Tan Koon Swan was elected as president. Later in the same year, Tan became involved in the Pan-El scandal which led to a sudden collapse of both Kuala Lumpur and Singapore stock markets. Legal proceedings were initiated against Tan in Singapore, but an agreement between the two governments allowed Tan to lead the MCA during the 1986 election just before his own trial. However, the Chinese voters turned to the DAP. Shortly after the election, Tan pleaded guilty and was imprisoned in Singapore for one year. After his release in 1987 he was convicted by the Malaysian courts for his involvement in another financial scandal involving Multi-Purpose Holdings (MPH), the MCA's main investment arm. As a result of these scandals and arrests, Tan Koon Swan's political career was effectively wiped out. In September 1986, the MCA elected Dr. Ling Liong Sik as its president.

damaged by its commitment to scientific socialism introduced by its president Kassim Ahmad. Apart from the problems within his own party, Kassim soon found himself at odds with the *ulama* because of his controversial book *Hadis*, which questioned the validity and relevance of some Hadith literature in the light of contemporary realities facing the Muslim world.<sup>155</sup>

In East Malaysia, an important seismic shift had also taken place. In the Sabah election (called one year earlier, in 1985), the Malay and Bajau Muslim parties *Berjaya* and USNO were soundly defeated by predominantly Christian-Kadazan *Parti Bersatu Sabah* (PBS) under Pairin Kitingan. Though the PBS was then a member of the BN alliance, the victory of a Christian party in a state that had experienced large-scale Muslim conversions and missionary activity for so long led to tensions both locally and between Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu. In time, the leaders of USNO and *Berjaya* were complaining of anti-Muslim discrimination by PBS, and fears of a Christian take-over across the region were publicly aired.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Both the State Islamic establishment and the Islamic opposition parties and movements like PAS and ABIM called for the banning of Kassim's book. PAS leaders were at the forefront of the attack, accusing Kassim of deliberately trying to weaken the faith and *aqidah* of the Malay-Muslims by importing such radical ideas from the secular West. Due to public pressure, the Malaysian government was forced to ban Kassim's book despite the sympathy of some UMNO leaders for his ideas. Kassim Ahmad then wrote and published a reply to his critics entitled *Hadis: Jawapan Kepada Pengkritik*, but that, too, was banned because of public pressure. One prominent ex-leader of PAS who attacked Kassim Ahmad was Amaluddin Darus (who had left PAS in the early 1970s when Asri Muda brought it into the ruling coalition). Amaluddin Darus claimed that Kassim Ahmad was a communist sympathiser who was clearly secular and anti-Islamic in his outlook. He also claimed that it was not a surprise that Kassim's book had been published during the time of Dr. Mahathir and Musa Hitam, as they were themselves of secular orientation (Amaluddin Darus, *Kassim: Murtad atau Mualaf?*, Petaling Jaya: Pustaka Abad, 1986).

<sup>156</sup> For many observers it was clear that PBS's victory was due in part to growing Kadazandusun resentment over the mass conversions and *dakwah* activities carried out during the time of Mustapha Harun and *continued p. 416*

The 1986 election results convinced PAS leaders that they still had a long way to go before the party was ready to deliver on its promises. Undaunted by the near-catastrophic outcome of the election, Yusof Rawa and the PAS leaders continued their reforms of the party. One of their first actions after the election was to renew their application for a publishing permit so they could publish a party paper of their own. Perhaps because of the devastating defeat suffered by them in the election, the Ministry of Home Affairs granted the permit for PAS's new party paper, *Harakah*, at the end of February 1987, just a few days before the party's annual *mukhtar*. The paper's first editor was Mohamad Yusof Jalil; other staff members included Abu Bakar Rashid, Mashudi Abdullah and Lokman Ahmad. In the following years, *Harakah* attracted a number of other articulate and influential Malay writers such as Hussein Yaakub, Ahmad Lutfi Othman and Subky Abdul Latif, and it became the party's main organ of communication and propaganda. Although the original publication permit clearly stated that the paper was meant for members of the party only, it soon found its way into local bookshops and newsagents all over the country.<sup>157</sup>

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Harris Salleh. Many Christians in Sabah were also alarmed by the relatively relaxed attitude of the previous administrations over the question of illegal migrants and refugees from the southern Philippines. By 1983, local estimates of the number of Moro Muslim refugees in Sabah were as high as 200,000 (Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 184). As soon as he came to power, Pairin Kitingan voiced his concern about the need to restrict the inflow of these illegal migrants and refugees, pointing to the obvious security problem in the state. Yet Pairin's PBS government was continually harassed by his opponents from *Berjaya* and USNO, who claimed that PBS was allowing Christian missionary groups from the Philippines to infiltrate the state to conduct mass conversions.

<sup>157</sup> Among the conditions imposed were that copies of *Harakah* had to be sold separately from other mainstream newspapers and magazines and could only be sold to PAS members. *Harakah* was also not allowed to include advertisements. Hussein Yaakub notes that when the circulation of the paper was around 60,000–70,000, the authorities paid no heed to it. However, as soon as sales rose above 80,000, they began to monitor sales (Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, p. 218).

In the same year (1987) that the UMNO-led government organised the country's first conference on religious extremism,<sup>158</sup> PAS president Yusof Rawa introduced another major change to the party's organisational structure — the *Majlis Syura Ulama* (Ulama Consultative Council) and the office of the *Murshid'ul Am* (spiritual guide/leader) of the party. During his *muktamar* speech entitled 'Ke Arah Tajdid Hadari' at the party's 33rd general assembly on 10 April 1987, Yusof Rawa spoke of the need for the *Majlis Syura Ulama*:

*Untuk memberikan peluang yang lebih besar kepada Ulama supaya berperanan secara berkesan kita akan mengambil langkah segera bagi menubuhkan Majlis Syura Ulama yang kita telah rancangkan dahulu... Kita harap dengan penubuhan Majlis Syura Ulama ini peranan Ulama sebagai pemimpin ummah akan lebih bermakna dan segala dasar dan keputusan parti akan sentiasa berpandu kepada ajaran Islam dan tidak akan terkeluar daripadanya dengan bimbingan dan panduan mereka.<sup>159</sup>*

When the idea of the *Majlis Syura Ulama* was first raised, the Registrar of Societies refused to accept it on the grounds that it was fundamentally undemocratic. The Registrar noted that in the

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<sup>158</sup> The conference received widespread coverage in both local and foreign press, but PAS leaders condemned the move as a pretext to clamp down on Islamist movements and organisations, and even the *Persatuan Ulama Malaysia* (Association of Malaysian Ulama, PUM) claimed there was possibly a hidden agenda. PUM's leaders registered their concern that the conference might serve as the starting point for a new wave of arrests and detentions, at a time when PUM was trying to initiate a *rapprochement* between Sunnis and Shias in the context of Islamic revivalism worldwide (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 155).

<sup>159</sup> Translation: In order to give more opportunity to the *ulama* to play an active and effective role we have decided to establish the Ulama Consultative Council, which is something we have been planning for some time now... We hope that with the establishment of this Ulama Consultative Council the role of the *ulama* as leaders of the *ummah* will become more meaningful and that all the policies and decisions made by the party will remain within the teachings of Islam and will never deviate from the right path, as long as they remain true to the teachings and guidance of the *ulama* (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 201).

original framework of the *majlis* all its members were appointed, rather than elected by party members. Yusof Rawa then re-designed the *majlis* so that at least two-thirds of its members were elected. In the end, four members were elected by the executive committee, four by the *Dewan Ulama* and four more by these eight members of the *majlis*, bringing the total to twelve.<sup>160</sup> The *Majlis Syura Ulama* was placed below the office of party president, but above the executive committee. It was understood that the *majlis* would be dominated by *ulama*, who in turn dominated the executive committee.

With the establishment of the *Majlis Syura Ulama*, the take-over of PAS by the *ulama* was complete. While in the past the *Dewan Ulama* had been a consultative body that merely approved the policies already determined by the *Dewan Harian Pusat* (Central Committee for Party Affairs), henceforth the *Majlis Syura Ulama* would be determining the policies, orientation and trajectory of the party.<sup>161</sup> The final seal which effectively secured the *ulama's* dominance of the party came in the form of the office of *Murshid'ul Am*, which Yusof Rawa himself introduced; it was an idea he adapted from the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* of Hassan al-Banna which he deeply admired.<sup>162</sup>

According to Yusof Rawa, the *Murshid'ul Am* was to serve as the spiritual guide to PAS as well as the Islamist movement as a whole and Muslims in general.<sup>163</sup> His role was beyond that of party politics: he was meant to be a living embodiment of Islamic practice and an authority on all matters related to Muslim concerns. His advice and teachings were meant for all Muslims, not only PAS members. He was, in a sense, a figure that transcended the party itself and party politics as a whole. The *Murshid'ul Am* would be above the party president himself. He was elected by the senior leaders of the party: four representatives each from the *Jawatankuasa Agung* (Executive Committee), *Dewan Ulama* (Ulama Council) and *Dewan*

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<sup>160</sup> Interview with Mohd Hatta Ramli, 21 January 2002.

<sup>161</sup> Mujahid Yusof Rawa, *Permata dari Pulau Mutiara*, pp. 95–96.

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Haji Yusof Rawa, 18 August 1999.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

*Pemuda* (Young Wing). It is important to note that the office of *Murshid'ul Am* would almost certainly fall to a member of the *ulama* grouping. (The office has only been filled twice, and in both cases the candidates chosen were *ulama*.) It is also interesting to note that the members of the *Dewan Muslimat* (Women's Wing) are not involved in the election of the *Murshid'ul Am*.

In 1987, while still president of PAS, Ustaz Yusof Rawa was elected as the first *Murshid'ul Am*. Yusof Rawa's elevation to the post of *Murshid'ul Am* marked the pinnacle of his achievements as PAS leader who had managed to radically re-invent the party after the debacles of the 1970s. Though he was already showing signs of ill health, the ever-combustible *ustaz* soldiered on as the country was swept by yet another succession of crises due to internal disputes within its arch-rival, UMNO.

### *The Barisan Nasional Falters Yet Again: The Split within UMNO and Operasi Lalang*

One factor that helped give PAS the breathing space it needed was UMNO's internal disputes. While the government weathered the economic storm of the mid-1980s by successfully courting large-scale foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan,<sup>164</sup> it was less able to deal with the internal disputes within the ruling parties of the BN coalition.

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<sup>164</sup> Malaysia managed to squeeze its way out of the 1985-86 recession by actively courting more foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Attractive investment programmes were offered to Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese companies. Many companies were invited to work with Malaysian concerns in pursuing joint projects, such as the manufacture of the first Malaysian car, the Proton Saga. This accommodative approach paid off in the short to medium term, as the Malaysian economy soon showed signs of recovery. The GDP growth rate rose from -1.1% in 1985 to 1% in 1986, 5% in 1987 and 9% in 1988. Samuel Bassey Okposin and Cheng Ming Yu (*Economic Crises in Malaysia*, pp. 110-111) have estimated that FDI contributions helped the Malaysian  
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After Musa Hitam's resignation in February 1986, other prominent UMNO leaders began mobilising their own factions and making preparations for an internal party *coup* to oust president Dr. Mahathir Mohamed. By early 1987, UMNO was effectively split into two warring blocs, dubbed 'Team A' and 'Team B'. Team A, led by Dr. Mahathir himself, included senior UMNO Cabinet ministers and leaders such as Ghafar Baba (the new Deputy Prime Minister), Anwar Ibrahim and their supporters. Team B, led by veteran Kelantanese UMNO politician and former Trade and Industry Minister, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, included ex-DPM Musa Hitam, Rais Yatim, Marina Yusoff and their followers. During the UMNO general assembly on 24 April 1987, Tengku Razaleigh contested the post of party president but lost to Dr. Mahathir by 43 votes. (Dr. Mahathir won 761 votes, Tengku Razaleigh 718.) Following the defeat of Tengku Razaleigh, Dr. Mahathir reacted to the challenge by removing the dissidents from the Cabinet.<sup>165</sup>

Dr. Mahathir's decision to expel all his rivals from the Cabinet and senior positions within the government failed to dampen their combative spirit. It merely aggravated the situation even further by splitting the party in two. Dr. Mahathir's opponents filed a lawsuit in an attempt to prove that the party election of April 1987 was null and void. Tengku Razaleigh, Dato' Rais Yatim and veteran UMNO leader Dato' Harun Idris toured the country and spoke at a number of open rallies where they publicly denounced Dr. Mahathir's leadership. Other members of Team B such as Ibrahim Ali began a campaign to publicly discredit Anwar Ibrahim, who was closely associated with Dr. Mahathir and widely regarded as his protégé. Anwar, in turn, came to the defence of

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*n. 164 continued*

manufacturing sector grow by 20% during the second half of the 1980s, effectively taking Malaysia out of the recession and paving the way for the boom years that followed.

<sup>165</sup> Those expelled included Abdullah Badawi, Ajib Ahmad and Shahrir Samad (all Cabinet ministers), and Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, Radzi Sheikh Ahmad, Rahman Othman and Zainal Abidin Zin (all deputy ministers).

Mahathir by claiming that the Prime Minister had every right to 'want a Cabinet that has confidence in him and in whom he has confidence'.<sup>166</sup> Later, Anwar and his supporters responded to attacks from camp B by raising a number of communitarian issues in an effort to win back the support of the Malay constituency.<sup>167</sup> In time, UMNO's internal disputes began to take the form of communal debate around the issues of Malay rights and Malay dominance.

While the wounds within UMNO were allowed to fester, other parties linked to the BN had problems of their own. The MCA was still reeling after the arrest and imprisonment of its president Tan Koon Swan and a series of major financial scandals linked to the top party leaders.<sup>168</sup> As a result, the MCA was in no position to offer support to UMNO because it was bogged down with its own problems (it had just experienced its own leadership struggle which brought Dr. Ling Liong Sik to the presidency) and was forced to contend with the growing popularity of predominantly Chinese DAP that was eating away at its natural constituency base.

As the ruling parties of the BN tore themselves apart from within, dissident elements within both UMNO and MCA raised a number of sensitive race-related issues in a desperate attempt to bolster their own bases of support and to rally their followers against the perceived danger of an external threat. By mid-1987, conservative Malay nationalists and Chinese community leaders were openly raising demands that seemed calculated to raise the

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<sup>166</sup> Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 271.

<sup>167</sup> Jomo K. S. 'Race, Religion and Repression', p. 2.

<sup>168</sup> After the arrest and imprisonment of MCA president Tan Koon Swan in Singapore and then Malaysia, MCA members were shocked by revelations of serious financial wrongdoings by those closely linked to Tan. In 1986, senior MCA members were accused of being part of an elaborate financial scam involving 24 deposit-taking co-operatives (DTCs), more than RM1.5 billion, and more than 600,000, mainly Chinese, depositors. The Chinese community was outraged, and the MCA leadership was severely discredited in turn (*Ibid.*, p. 4).

political temperature of the country once more.<sup>169</sup> Some of the government's own policy initiatives did not help the situation. These included the appointment of 200 Chinese educationists without Mandarin language credentials to senior positions within the Chinese primary schools and a national *sumpah setia* (loyalty pledge) perceived to have strong Islamic overtones. Elsewhere, the mood in the country was decidedly sombre. The mysterious burning of five mosques in Pahang on independence day (31 August) helped only to heighten the climate of fear that was closing in from all around.

On 17 October, while the Prime Minister was attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Vancouver, the UMNO Youth Wing (*Pemuda UMNO*) held a rally in Kuala Lumpur to demonstrate their anger against Chinese community leaders who had openly attacked the government's new policy initiatives. During the rally, *Pemuda UMNO* members carried banners with slogans like 'Revoke the citizenship of those who oppose the Malay rulers', 'May 13 has begun' (a reference to the 13 May 1969 race riots) and 'Soak the *keris* in Chinese blood'. They also called for another rally to be held on 1 November, asking an estimated half a million Malays to attend. (The rally was to be held in a stadium that could seat only 60,000 people.)

As soon as he returned from Vancouver, the Prime Minister (who was also Home Affairs Minister and Justice Minister) imposed a comprehensive ban on all political rallies and ordered a nation-wide security crackdown against dissident elements threatening national security and racial harmony. Codenamed '*Operasi Lalang*',<sup>170</sup> the security operation that began on 27 October led to the arrest and detention of 119 people under the ISA. The day after the launch of *Operasi Lalang*, several mainstream newspapers were also banned. These included English-language papers *The Star* and

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<sup>169</sup> For a fuller account of the inter- and intra-party squabbles in the BN leading up to the nation-wide security crackdown in October 1987, see *Tangled Web: Dissent, Deterrence and the 27 October 1987 Crackdown in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: CARPA, 1988.

<sup>170</sup> *Lalang* is a common field grass widely regarded by farmers as a nuisance.

*The Sunday Star*,<sup>171</sup> Chinese-language daily *Sin Chew Jit Poh*<sup>172</sup> and Malay-language biweekly *Watan*.<sup>173</sup> *Harakah*, PAS's paper, was not banned — though some of its printers initially refused to print the paper for fear of the consequences.<sup>174</sup>

As well as several MCA and UMNO members (including Ibrahim Ali, Tajuddin Abdul Rahman and Fahmi Ibrahim), many other non-BN political activists, academics and NGO workers were detained in the operation. These included DAP leaders Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh, PSRM leaders, a number of Christian evangelists, environmentalists from the Malaysian Friends of the

<sup>171</sup> One of *The Star's* founders was ex-Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, who launched the newspaper in an effort to generate a diversity of news coverage and political commentary in the country. He was one of the paper's main columnists in the years that followed. *The Star* and *The Sunday Star* became part of the Huaren Holdings stable, then the investment arm of MCA. Jomo has pointed out that by 1987, *The Star's* circulation figures had caught up with those of the *New Straits Times*, owned by UMNO's Fleet Group. *The Star* was only allowed to resume publication in March 1988 (Jomo K. S., 'Race, Religion and Repression').

<sup>172</sup> *Sin Chew Jit Poh* was then widely regarded as the most independent Chinese-language daily in the country. Prior to the 1987 crisis, it had given extensive coverage of the debates and disputes within the Chinese community on the Chinese education and Chinese language issues. It was then owned by the family of Datuk K. K. Lim, a known supporter of ex-Chief Minister of Penang, Dr. Lim Chong Eu.

<sup>173</sup> *Watan* was then the most outspoken among the Malay-language papers. It was owned by the Kraftangan group which was managed by the Kelantanese Yaacob brothers, and chaired by the old Tunku loyalist Tan Sri Khir Johari, who was ousted from the UMNO leadership when Tun Razak came to power in 1970. At the time it was banned, *Watan* was widely thought to be a major supporter of Tengku Razaleigh and Team B.

<sup>174</sup> Hussein Yaakub has pointed out that at the time of *Operasi Lalang*, sales of *Harakah* not only continued uninterrupted, but sales of opposition party papers like *Harakah* and *Rocket* (DAP's paper) reached a peak (Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, p. 216). Also popular at the time was *Aliran Weekly*, the magazine of Aliran, a human rights NGO. At one point, printers of *Harakah* in Selangor refused to print the paper for fear of action by the authorities but another printer in Penang took over.

Earth (SAM), activists from the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) and Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, a Malaysian academic and president of Aliran, a human rights NGO.<sup>175</sup> PAS was not spared, either — a number of its leaders and activists were also arrested.

In the same year that the Tunisian Islamists led by Rachid Ghannouchi were thrown back into prison by the regime of Habib Bourguiba, PAS leaders were accused of fanning the flames of communalism and religious conflict in their speeches against Christian missionaries who were said to be engaged in a covert campaign to proselytise among the Malay-Muslims. Yusof Rawa's fiery speeches did little to improve the situation, helping only to bolster the image of PAS as a radical Islamist party bent on creating an Islamic state at all cost. His calls for *jihad* and revolutionary struggle struck a resonant chord with the rank and file of his party, but also helped to alienate PAS from the mainstream of Malaysian society.<sup>176</sup> When the crackdown was announced, a number of PAS leaders were caught in the security forces' dragnet: Zainuddin Abdullah and Omar Khalid were accused of being part of an underground militant organisation,<sup>177</sup> and others like Mohamad Sabu were accused of stirring up anti-Christian sentiments among Muslims. While it was true that PAS leaders were actively campaigning against Christian missionary organisations and openly attacking the Malaysian government for allowing such groups to operate in the country, Jomo has argued that:

(The members of PAS) detained in 1987 were quite marginal to that quickly-aborted (anti-Christian) campaign. Instead, the PAS

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<sup>175</sup> Of the 119 people arrested and detained, 49 were finally sent to Kamunting detention centre, 70 were released within the 60-day investigation period (when technically under police investigation, but not detained under the ISA). The rest were released under restriction orders and banished from their previous place of residence.

<sup>176</sup> In 1987, Yusof Rawa wrote that 'any Muslim who is not brave enough to take part in a *jihad* cannot call himself a real man, because a real man would not run away when he is called upon to undertake a *jihad*. All Muslims must prepare themselves for *jihad* to show that they are prepared to do anything to ensure the victory of Allah.' (*Harakah*, 26 June 1987).

<sup>177</sup> C. N. al-Afghani, *Operasi Kenari*, p. 125.

detainees in Kamunting included some of PAS's more effective activists, some of whom were beginning to articulate a more radical Islamic social programme and initiate dialogues with non-Muslims. Their detention suggests an effort to pre-empt such potentially significant PAS initiatives.<sup>178</sup>

It is also important to note that fears of an imminent Christian take-over of the region were being voiced not only by the more outspoken leaders of PAS. BN leaders and pro-government *ulama* were also voicing similar concerns, particularly in the wake of victory by the predominantly Christian PBS in Sabah.<sup>179</sup>

On 14 March 1988, five months after the crackdown, the government issued its white paper entitled 'Towards Preserving National Security'. The government justified the October 1987 crackdown on the grounds that the country was about to be torn apart by extremist movements exploiting racial and religious issues for the sake of sectarian and communitarian gains. The paper identified a number of organisations and movements as being of 'communist' or 'pro-communist' orientation and accused them of engaging in subversive activities intended to cause havoc in the country. Among those accused was the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), which had actually provided financial assistance to Islamist youth movement ABIM when it was led by Anwar Ibrahim in the 1970s.<sup>180</sup> Critics of the crackdown like Jomo argued that the Malaysian government had acted against these Christian evangelical movements

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<sup>178</sup> Jomo K. S., 'Race, Religion and Repression', pp. 9-10.

<sup>179</sup> From the day it took over Sabah, the PBS government was accused of working hand in glove with Christian evangelical movements in the Philippines. Rumours were spread by USNO and *Berjaya*, who claimed that PBS was ignoring the activities of Christian missionaries actively converting Muslims to Christianity. By 1985, these fears were so great that the Federal Territory Mufti was claiming that '*pihak-pihak tertentu*' ('certain quarters') were involved in a plot to Christianise all of Southeast Asia and that these organisations had been given more than RM2,000 million to achieve this task (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 185). PAS was, therefore, certainly not the only party involved in such anti-Christian polemics at the time.

<sup>180</sup> The CCA had helped to finance ABIM's Yayasan Anda educational initiative earlier in the 1970s.

at the behest of the Singaporean government under Premier Lee Kuan Yew.<sup>181</sup> Apart from Christian evangelists dressed up as Marxists and alleged Marxists dressed up as Christian evangelists, the Malaysian state security apparatus also focused its attention on the Islamist opposition led by PAS in particular.

In the same white paper, PAS and its leaders were singled out for their alleged 'extremist beliefs and strategies'. The white paper argued that *Operasi Lalang* was necessary because of the emergence of militant religious movements prepared to establish an Islamic state 'through violent and unconstitutional means'.<sup>182</sup> The paper claimed that as the inter-communal crisis worsened in 1987, a number of PAS members had formed an underground militant organisation called *Tentera Allah* or *Jundullah* (Army of Allah) in Kelantan on 29 August 1987.<sup>183</sup> The organisation was said to be ready and willing to confront the government and was prepared to resort to the use of violence. Two of the PAS leaders detained — Zainuddin Abdullah and Omar Khalid — were accused of being part of this militant organisation, and once again PAS found itself burdened with the label of being an extremist fundamentalist party preaching revolutionary Islam.

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<sup>181</sup> Jomo has argued that during *Operasi Lalang* the security services of Malaysia and Singapore were working closely together (Jomo K. S., 'Race, Religion and Repression'). The persecution of Christian evangelists in Singapore had intensified during the years leading up to 1987 and the government regarded these movements as a nuisance which had to be contained. Jomo argues that 'the idea of an international Marxist conspiracy in Christian garb was first promoted in May 1987 by the Singaporean government in its efforts to invoke the communist bogey to nip the emergence of a nascent liberal democratic opposition in the bud.' (Ibid., p. 11). He goes on to argue that 'the Singapore hand is evident from the nature of the charges made against the detained social activists. The charges against these detainees contain little that is actually illegal under Malaysian law, while many specific allegations are based on or relate to the incredible alleged Malaysian-Singaporean international Marxist conspiracy story propagated by the Singapore authorities since May 1987.' (Ibid., p. 12).

<sup>182</sup> *Tangled Web*, 1988, p. 37.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

The developments in Malaysia mirrored events in other parts of the Muslim world. Malaysia was not the only country grappling with the problem of political unrest and a resurgent Islamist opposition. Later in 1987, the government of Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia was toppled by Zine el Abidine Ben Ali (then widely regarded as the CIA's man in Tunisia) and the Saudi government was forced to deal with violent demonstrations in the holy city of Mecca that left more than 400 people dead.

In a move designed to appease the Islamist lobby in the country (and to improve UMNO's own Islamist credentials), the UMNO-led government introduced the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1988 that upgraded the power and status of the *shariah* courts, giving the judges the same powers as magistrates in the civil court system. This meant that anyone arrested for an offence that could be tried in a *shariah* court could be arrested and brought before the *shariah* judge within 24 hours. As Rais points out, this move 'for the first time, put the jurisdiction of an Islamic court on par with that of a magistrate court'. Rais also notes that 'the move pleased the Islamic scholars in the country' immensely.<sup>184</sup>

But however hard the UMNO-led government tried to contain the challenge mounted by PAS, in the end its efforts to consolidate its grip on power were undermined by its own weaknesses and contradictions. On 4 February 1988, UMNO was declared illegal by the Malaysian High Court after the revelation of irregularities in UMNO's registration was brought out into the open by a faction within the party led by ousted UMNO leader Tengku Razaleigh who had opposed party president Dr. Mahathir. Immediately after UMNO was declared illegal, leadership of the ruling BN coalition was passed to UMNO's counterpart, the MCA. For a brief period, the presidency was in the hands of Dr. Ling Liong Sik, leader of the MCA.

As UMNO tore itself apart, Dr. Mahathir and his supporters fought to retain control of the party's assets and the very name of

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<sup>184</sup> Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia: A Study of Executive Supremacy*, Kuala Lumpur: Endowment Press, 1995, pp. 102-103.

the party. Both factions wanted to ensure some degree of continuity and consistency even after UMNO had been declared illegal. Dr. Mahathir and his supporters managed to get their new party registered faster under the name 'UMNO Baru' (New UMNO), while Tengku Razaleigh and his followers decided to call their party the *Parti Melayu Semangat '46* (Spirit of '46 — a reference to the year of UMNO's founding).<sup>185</sup>

Also in 1988, the country witnessed the most blatant attack on the independent judiciary since independence. This struggle occurred in the context of the executive wanting to assert its supremacy over the judiciary, and involved the Lord President of the Supreme Court (Tun Saleh Abas), the King (Sultan Mahmood Iskander) and Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir himself.<sup>186</sup> Rais has noted that by the mid-1980s, Dr. Mahathir had grown increasingly worried about comments and criticisms made by some senior judges and the Malaysian Bar Council (MBC). In particular, he was concerned about the negative image of his own government drawn by Malaysian lawyers and was convinced that the Bar Council was guilty of tarnishing the image of the country abroad.<sup>187</sup> Ultimately, it was Dr. Mahathir who silenced these anti-government judgements and criticisms by gaining the support of the King. Dr. Mahathir managed to ensure that the King would call for a

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<sup>185</sup> The party was finally launched one year later, on 5 May 1989, by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and his supporters, including ex-Foreign Affairs Minister Rais Yatim, ex-Deputy Prime Minister Musa Hitam, Marina Yusoff as well as two ex-Prime Ministers, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn. S46 claimed it was a true Malay nationalist party and in the following years the party campaigned aggressively on a number of Malay-related communitarian issues. The party's slogan was '*Hidup Melayu*' (Long Live the Malays), the original UMNO slogan in the 1940s. S46 was widely seen as a defender of the Malay *status quo*. Its image as a conservative and traditionalist political grouping was enhanced by the presence of leaders (Tengku Razaleigh, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn, for instance) belonging to the Malay royalty and aristocracy.

<sup>186</sup> For a fuller account of the 1988 judiciary crisis, see Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia*.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

tribunal to be set up to investigate the conduct of the Lord President.<sup>188</sup> The tribunal finally declared that the Lord President should be replaced. Tun Saleh Abas was removed along with two other senior Supreme Court judges, Datuk George Seah and Tan Sri Wan Sulaiman.

As the net result of this clash between the executive and the judiciary, the former emerged triumphant while the latter was significantly weakened.<sup>189</sup> After chairing the tribunal that judged against the Lord President, Chief Justice Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Omar was elevated to the now-vacant post of Lord President of the Supreme Court.<sup>190</sup> The King and the royal families who had stood by as silent witnesses to the whole event also received their just rewards in another way, for Lee notes that 'the failure of the Conference of Rulers to restrain the government from undermining the independence of the judiciary returned to haunt the Rulers five years later, when the second confrontation between them and the government arose'.<sup>191</sup>

As the UMNO-led government slowly consolidated its hold on the country, UMNO leaders realised that they were still forced to confront a range of opponents on a number of different political

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<sup>188</sup> The advice to the *Agong* to appoint a tribunal came from Dr. Mahathir's office on 25 May 1988. By 13 June, the tribunal had been set up with Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Omar (then Chief Justice) as its chairman. The selection of the tribunal members was criticised by many observers, who pointed out that the chairman was present at the meeting of the Kuala Lumpur judges which had led to the Lord President's letter to the *Agong*. Another tribunal member, Tan Sri Mohd Zahir, was also the Speaker of the House of Representatives and so his selection breached the doctrine of separation of powers (H. P. Lee, *Constitutional Conflicts in Contemporary Malaysia*, pp. 54-55).

<sup>189</sup> A fuller account of the conflict can be found in the testimony of Tun Saleh Abas himself. (Saleh Abas and K. Das, *May Day for Justice: The Lord President's Version*, Kuala Lumpur: Magnus Books, 1989.)

<sup>190</sup> Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Omar was appointed Lord President on 10 November 1988. Lee notes that 'this elevation of a man, who many believed had violated the fundamental rules of natural justice, underscored the irregularity of the whole episode' (H. P. Lee, *Constitutional Conflicts in Contemporary Malaysia*, p. 57).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

and ideological fronts. One major development was the final defeat of the MCP and its armed militia that had been thoroughly worn out after decades of guerrilla warfare in the jungles. By the late 1980s, the MCP was ready to engage in peace negotiations with the Malaysian government. In a special meeting in Haadyai, Thailand, on 2 December 1989, Chin Peng (MCP secretary-general) and Abdul Rashid Mydin, commander of its 10th regiment, agreed to give up their armed struggle against the state and surrender themselves.<sup>192</sup> The Malaysian government, in turn, announced cut-backs in security spending and began to scale down the activities of the Special Branch and state intelligence agencies.

Although the communist threat had been, for all intents and purposes, completely neutralised, the government was still aware that two important Malay-Muslim parties threatened to eat away at UMNO's natural Malay-Muslim constituency. The *Semangat '46* (S46) party of Tengku Razaleigh presented itself as the true inheritor of the UMNO struggle, bolstered by the presence of the country's founding father, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and the country's previous Prime Minister, Dato' Hussein Onn, among its leaders. S46 could also boast of having 13 members of parliament (all ex-UMNO members who had defected to join Tengku

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<sup>192</sup> By the late 1980s, the MCP was practically dysfunctional. During the 1970s, the MCP was based in the border areas between Malaysia and Thailand and had tried to win over the support of the Malays by linking their struggle with that of the Free Patani movement. However, improvements in diplomatic relations between Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, and the increased level of infrastructural investment and development in Patani by the Thai government, had effectively contained unrest in the region by the 1980s. As a result, the MCP was forced to engage in activities like smuggling and dealing in the black market to sustain itself. After the MCP's ceasefire and surrender in 1989, the real extent of the MCP's underground network was made known to the public. One major discovery was a 12-km tunnel from Malaysia to Thailand that had been dug by the MCP guerillas and used as their main conduit for smuggling activities along the border. The Malaysian government, however, refused to lift the ban on the MCP, whose members were also not allowed to take an active part in Malaysian politics.

Razaleigh's camp). UMNO was also forced to deal with the persistent threat of PAS that had not been erased from the political scene. Beleaguered but undaunted, Dr. Mahathir and the UMNO-led government took on both of these Malay-Muslim parties simultaneously — though the tactics employed by the state and its security forces did not always achieve the desired results.

On 14 October 1988, PAS was once again in the headlines. After a massive security operation codenamed '*Operasi Kenari*', 31 PAS members and supporters were detained under the ISA.

The operation was launched after a series of confrontations between members of PAS and UMNO as well as the government's security and intelligence services in Kedah and Perak. After the violence and bloodshed of the Lubuk Merbau and Memali incidents, tension had developed in Kedah in particular. By then many ordinary PAS members felt they were victims of both UMNO and the state security forces. Local PAS members claimed that UMNO leaders were looking for a pretext to declare a state of emergency in the state, or to use the ISA to neutralise the party in Kedah. Things came to a head over disputes about the activities at the PAS seminary Muassasah Darul 'Ulum.<sup>193</sup>

The Muassasah Darul 'Ulum was one of the centres of PAS *tarbiyyah* activity in Kedah. By 1988 it was well known to a large number of young PAS members and supporters from all over the state. In October, Special Branch officers in Kedah received complaints from UMNO members about the activities at the Muassasah Darul 'Ulum. It was alleged that Pemuda PAS members were gathering a stockpile of arms hidden under the floor of the *muassasah*. Special Branch was asked to investigate the matter, but soon encountered resistance from PAS members. Scuffles broke out when the police tried to enter the building by force. When the police were finally given permission to enter the *muassasah*, they found their investigations hampered as the floor was cement. It was obvious that there were no weapons under the floor of the building itself. They were then asked to investigate the

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<sup>193</sup> For a fuller account of the Muassasah Darul 'Ulum affair, see C. N. al-Afghani, *Operasi Kenari*.

latrines being built outside, to ensure no arms were being kept there. Once again, their investigations proved fruitless.

Members of both the state security forces and Pemuda PAS were worried that the situation might escalate into another violent encounter like the one at Memali. Local PAS leaders, including Ustaz Halim Arshat and Ustaz Othman Marzuki, arrived to clarify matters with the police. Nonetheless, a tight and visible security presence was maintained. When the situation failed to improve, the Chief Minister of Kedah intervened directly by asking Cikgu Majid Mohd Isa, head of the state's *silat gayong* (martial arts) organisation, to go to the *muassasah* and assess the situation. When the *cikgu* arrived on the scene, he declared that the state security forces had over-reacted and warned them not to 'stir up a hornets' nest'.<sup>194</sup> Cikgu Majid and the PAS members then organised an impromptu martial arts contest and demonstration, which led to hundreds more people (mostly young men) congregating at the *muassasah*. (One young man who took part in the defence of the *muassasah* was Fauzi Ismail, a Kedah youth who, in the following year, was destined to become a well-known figure in his own right, after being killed while fighting alongside the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan.)

The chaotic affair ended when the Special Branch and police closed down the *silat* performance and ordered the crowd to disperse. None of the allegations against the PAS members housed at the *muassasah* were proven.

Shortly after the incident at the *muassasah*, other accusations were made against PAS members. After a recreational centre at Sik was burned down, the authorities quickly blamed PAS 'militants' whom they accused of trying to disrupt the UMNO Semarak rally scheduled to take place in the nearby town. PAS members were also accused of wanting to seek revenge against the state government after the Muassasah Darul 'Ulum affair.<sup>195</sup> The police

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>195</sup> C. N. al-Afghani (Ibid., p. 71) claims that the police and Special Branch at first believed that the destruction of the KEDA recreational complex at Sik was the work of S46 members, but later turned their attention to PAS.

responded by cracking down on PAS activists in the state immediately by launching *Operasi Kenari*.

Between 14 October and 10 November, the security forces apprehended 31 PAS members and supporters in Kedah and Perak. Six pistols, three hand grenades, various explosive devices and ammunition were found. The entire operation took more than 28 days and its cost was estimated at around RM500,000.<sup>196</sup> Among those arrested and later detained under the ISA were Mohammad Rus Jaafar, Shahrul Fuadi Zulkifli, Shamsul Bahrin Shaari and Shamsul Kamal Jamhari, all prominent PAS activists and members of the party's youth division. Rus Jaafar was also known to the local residents as the community doctor.

Even more interesting was the way that PAS members were depicted in the official press and the mainstream media. Those accused and detained were described as '*mujahideen*' militants planning to start a campaign of 'holy terror' in the state.<sup>197</sup> In the same way that in the past other PAS leaders had been linked to shadowy Islamist militant and terrorist organisations — such as *Pertubuhan Angkatan Sabillullah* and the *Jundullah* movement during the crises of the 1980 Kedah farmers' riots and the nation-wide *Operasi Lalang* crackdown of 1987 — PAS members were once again being cast as Islamic 'terrorists' and 'militants' who were a threat to national security and racial harmony.

The net result of the operation was that it further intensified the confrontation between PAS and the UMNO-led federal government, and painted the conflict as a battle between the forces of militant Islam against the state. The discovery of small arms and weapons during the sweep also helped to reinforce the growing suspicion that militant cells were indeed active in PAS. Party leaders like Yusof Rawa dismissed such findings as mere UMNO propaganda, but failed to realise how their own confrontational tactics and overheated rhetoric had contributed to PAS's new (and largely unwarranted) image as a militant force in the country.

During his final years as PAS president, Yusof Rawa's ardent polemics reached their climax. The culmination of years of passion-

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

ate and intense struggle, his outspoken attacks on the UMNO-led government reflected the extent to which PAS had finally come into its own as an Islamist party with a decidedly radical outlook. Yusof Rawa offered no apologies for his political beliefs and principles. In his *muktamar* speech of 1987, Yusof Rawa criticised the Malaysian government for not doing enough to safeguard the interests of Islam and Muslims in the country. He argued that the educational system remained too secular and that the government's lax national security policy had exposed Malaysian society to the activities of covert anti-Islamic groupings, including Zionist agents, Christian missionaries and communist infiltrators.<sup>198</sup>

Yusof Rawa's uncompromising approach to politics had finally begun to show some results. Despite its failure in the 1986 election, PAS was (structurally and institutionally) a stronger party than it had ever been in the 1970s. This internal discipline and unity were reflected in the party's organisational structure. While UMNO was occupied with destroying itself in public, PAS remained united before its primary opponent. So strong was this strict sense of internal discipline that even the most sensitive and embarrassing matters were dutifully kept under wraps and beyond the glare of

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<sup>198</sup> Yusof Rawa insisted there was a need for a radical overhaul of the education system which had produced a generation of young Malay-Muslims who had lost their sense of direction and whose cultural compass was no longer oriented towards Islam. The education system was based on a secular worldview which separated the spiritual dimension of life from its more profane aspects, and as a result the younger generation of Malays no longer knew what it was to be a true Muslim (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, p. 212). In his speech, Yusof Rawa also warned that the country was being infiltrated by both Christian missionaries from Singapore and communist agents entering as illegal immigrants and refugees (mainly from Vietnam). He argued that the Malaysian government was not doing enough to monitor the activities of Christian missionary groups and that these groups were engaged in a concerted effort to convert Malay-Muslims in the same way that Christian missionary groups were said to be converting Indonesian Muslims. Likewise, he criticised the government for not doing enough to stop the flow into Malaysia of refugees whom he alleged were actually trained communist agents coming to spread their teachings (Ibid., p. 213).

public opinion. During the 1988 *muktamar*, for instance, the scandal involving the *Darul Mal* foundation that handled the savings of pilgrims for the *hajj* was not mentioned even once.<sup>199</sup>

In his *muktamar* speech entitled '*Bertekad Membulatkan Jama'ah*' (Struggling to Unite the Faithful),<sup>200</sup> Yusof Rawa described PAS as the one and only *hizbullah* (party of God) in the country and he maintained that the political struggle of PAS was nothing less than the struggle of Islam itself:

*Wajarlah kita menegaskan bahawa kewujudan PAS adalah menunaikan tuntutan Islam, yang dinyatakan oleh firman Allah... Tegasnya PAS adalah jama'ah yang menyakini bahawa Islam satu-satunya kekuatan yang dapat membangun segala Ummah Islam, membebaskan golongan mustazafin dan menyelamatkan dunia dari kehancuran dan kemusnahan.*<sup>201</sup>

In his speech, Yusof Rawa also placed PAS on the map of the contemporary Islamic world and identified PAS with other Islamist movements like the *Jama'at-e Islami*, *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* and *Hizbul Rifah* that were actively pursuing the goal of an Islamic state elsewhere.<sup>202</sup> He compared the trials and tribulations suffered by PAS members to those of other Islamist movements the world over.

<sup>199</sup> The *Darul Mal* foundation which handled the savings and investments of *hajj* pilgrims was managed by PAS. By the mid-1980s, it was clear that not all was well within the institution and PAS leaders such as Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah had spoken out against its maladministration. It was alleged that millions of ringgit had been lost or stolen by those in charge of the fund, and that the institution was not run in a transparent manner. Despite protests from *ulama* like Ustaz Abu Bakar, the matter was not discussed at the 1988 *muktamar*, by order of the senior *ulama* of the party (Abu Bakar Hamzah, 'Mengakui Kebenaran Suatu Kewajiban').

<sup>200</sup> The speech was delivered at the party's 34th general assembly on 8 April 1988.

<sup>201</sup> Translation: It is only proper for us to emphasise that PAS has come into being for the sake of fulfilling the promise of Islam, as it has been laid down by Allah... PAS is a movement that believes that Islam is the one and only power that can uplift the entire *ummah*, that can free the oppressed and can save the world from its own degeneration and destruction (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, pp. 224-226).

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

In 1988, PAS also organised its *Ijtimak Antarabangsa Perpaduan Ummah* (International Conference on Muslim Unity), inviting representatives from other Islamist movements in Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. What began as a local political struggle between two Malay-Muslim parties had been elevated to the stage of global politics. The Islamist party that was completely unknown in the 1950s now ranked as one of the best-known in the region, though it had not yet secured any concrete successes in the political field.

The developments taking place in the rest of the Muslim world made it even easier for Yusof Rawa to link the chain of Muslim *mujahideen* and *syuhada'*. In 1989, the Egyptian government of Hosni Mubarak launched yet another nation-wide crackdown leading to the arrest, imprisonment and torture of more than 10,000 Islamists, while in Sudan the newly installed military government of General Omar al-Bashir arrested hundreds of Islamists, including Sudanese leader Hassan Turabi and Sadiq al-Mahdi. Along with many other Islamist movements and organisations the world over, the PAS leaders mourned the death of President Zia 'ul Haq of Pakistan and claimed that his was a martyr's death at the hands of the enemies of the *ummah*.

In 1989 — the same year that witnessed the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan — Yusof Rawa delivered his final speech to his party at its 35th *muktamar* (on 31 March 1989). Ill and tired by then (he was suffering from diabetes and a worsening heart condition), Yusof Rawa's speech was read by his deputy, Ustaz Fadzil Noor. In his speech, entitled '*Membina Ketahanan Ummah*' (Developing the Strength of the Ummah), Yusof Rawa spoke at length about the changes and developments that had taken place within the party and the country over the previous ten years. In his eulogy to the party he had come to lead, Yusof Rawa captured the essential elements that had, by then, become the winning formula for the Islamists and the secret of PAS's success:

*Kita mencintai PAS bukan kerana ianya bernama PAS, tapi kita mencintainya kerana ia adalah suatu perjuangan dan gerakan Islam yang telah menghimpunkan golongan terbesar dari kalangan umat yang mencintai Islam dan perjuangannya; kerana ianya adalah simbol kepada keutuhan ikatan golongan terbesar umat di negara kita dalam merealisasikan semang-*

*at dan keazaman perjuangan untuk menegakkan Islam di negara kita. Kita mencintainya kerana ia telah dapat membuktikan, dengan izin Allah, kepayaan untuk berdiri tegak di tengah-tengah negara kita dengan perkasa, menghadapi segala badai dan gelombang firnah dari dalam dan luar. Kita mencintainya kerana ia telah, sedang, dan Insya'Allah akan terus menjadi wadah himpunan kaum mustad'afin yang setia kepada kebenaran dan perjuangan untuk menegakkan keadilan dan menentang kezaliman dalam apa bentuk juga.*<sup>203</sup>

Yusof Rawa's laudatory paeon to the Islamist party summed up how PAS and its members saw themselves by then. It was no longer a movement united and galvanised by ethnocentric communitarian interests, but one that was part of a global struggle predicated on religious and moral terms. By raising the stakes in the struggle against the UMNO-led government and elevating the political discourse of PAS to a higher theological register of absolutes, Yusof Rawa had created a party that was no longer fighting on the same political and ideological terrain as UMNO. While UMNO had dictated the terms of the Malay-Muslim struggle in the 1970s, the tables were now turned in PAS's favour.

So confident were the party leaders that when PAS vice-president Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad (formerly an ABIM member) announced that he intended to leave the party and join UMNO in 1989, PAS leaders remained unruffled.<sup>204</sup> In the same year, the

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<sup>203</sup> Translation: We love our party PAS not simply because it is called the Islamic Party of Malaysia, but we love it because it is the only movement that has brought together the biggest assembly of people who love Islam and the struggle of Islam; because it is the symbol of the strength of the *ummah* that is determined to realise the goal of upholding Islam in this country of ours. We love our party because it has shown that it is able, with God's help, to stand on its own in this country and to face all the calamities and persecution that has been meted out to it from within and without. We love our party because it has, is, and God willing, will remain as the singular movement for the oppressed who strive for truth and justice and who will resist all forms of oppression and cruelty (Ibid., pp. 258-259).

<sup>204</sup> Nakhaie Ahmad's graceless departure from PAS did not do much damage to the party's Islamist image, nor did it add to UMNO's own *continued p. 438*

party's general assembly resolved a motion to urge the international Muslim community to establish an International Islamic Council that would guide the entire global *ummah* according to the *shariah* and Islam as a *deen* (way of life). PAS's call for such a body reflected its own certitude and determination as well as its disillusionment with bodies like the OIC that had failed to defend the interests of Islam and Muslims world-wide.

Ustaz Yusof Rawa resigned from his post as PAS president at the same *muktamar*. He chose to remain as the *Murshid'ul Am* of the party, but retired from active party politics. He settled at his home in Gelugor, Penang, and spent the rest of his years as one of the party's chief policy advisors until his death on 28 April 2000 at the age of 78.<sup>205</sup> Yusof Rawa's son, Mujahid Yusof Rawa, later followed in his father's footsteps and was promoted to the central executive committee of the party's Youth Wing.<sup>206</sup> He also revived his father's publishing enterprise under the name Warathah Haji Yusof Rawa Sdn. Bhd.

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Islamist credentials. Nakhaie soon adapted his image and style in keeping with UMNO's political culture. He abandoned the *jubbah* and *kepiyah* and adopted the coat and tie and bush jacket instead. His critics alluded to this shift in sartorial standards and accused him of selling out to UMNO. (Yahaya Ismail, *Anwar Ibrahim: Antara Nawaitu dan Pesta Boria*, p. 8.)

<sup>205</sup> Yusof Rawa remained an important and influential figure in Malaysian society well after his retirement from active politics. In 1992, he was chosen as the *Tokoh Maal Hijrah* (Man of the Year) in Penang. In 1994, his wife Che Kalsom Ali passed away. Yusof Rawa was then cared for by his children. His son rose to become a key PAS leader in Melaka.

<sup>206</sup> Mujahid Yusof Rawa was born in Penang. Like his father, Mujahid was exposed to both secular and religious education systems. Many of Mujahid's years abroad were spent in the Middle East. He studied Arabic language and literature at al-Azhar University in Egypt. After returning to Malaysia he studied human resources development at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM). He joined PAS and dedicated his life to Islamist activism and educational and training activities. He was later elevated to PAS information and public relations bureau in Melaka and was made a member of the central executive committee of the PAS Youth Wing.

The PAS presidency passed to Ustaz Fadzil Mohd Noor,<sup>207</sup> an ex-ABIM activist who had joined PAS in 1978 and had served as Yusof Rawa's right-hand man in the party throughout the 1980s. Under Fadzil Noor's leadership, PAS continued to make gains in the Malay-Muslim heartland of the north. Years later, he gave Yusof Rawa the credit for single-handedly moulding the Islamist

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<sup>207</sup> Ustaz Fadzil Mohd Noor was born on 13 March 1937 in the village of Seberang Pumpung, near Alor Star, Kedah. He lost his parents while still very young, but he received extensive religious education due to his grandfather, Tuan Guru Haji Idris Al-Jarumi, a respected and well-known *ulama* from Patani, southern Thailand. His schooling began (till 1949) at the Malay School of Derga. He then continued his studies at Maktab Mahmud until 1958. From 1963-67 he studied *shariah* law at al-Azhar University in Cairo on a Kedah state government scholarship. While at al-Azhar, he was appointed deputy president of the Malay Students Association of al-Azhar. Upon his return to Malaysia in 1967 he first taught at Maktab Mahmud and later at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)'s Faculty of Islamic Studies until 1978. By then Fadzil had already become a member of PAS and risen to the post of executive committee member in Kedah and head of the information bureau in the state. Because he chose to run for the 1978 election in the constituencies of Alor Merah and Kuala Kedah, his contract with the university was temporarily terminated. During the 1970s, Fadzil also became a member of ABIM and the Malaysian Association of Ulama (PUM). In 1973-74, he served as the secretary of ABIM's information bureau and he took part in the student protests in support of the farmers in Baling. When ABIM president Anwar Ibrahim was detained, Fadzil Noor took over as president from 1974-78. In 1974, he was also elected as secretary-general of PUM. In 1983, he was elected as deputy president of PAS when Ustaz Yusof Rawa was elected president. In 1989, he was elected as president of PAS after Ustaz Yusof Rawa was forced to retire due to ill health. During the 1990s he strove to develop PAS even further and to expand its network of members and supporters all over the country, directing PAS's efforts to break into the east Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. During his time a number of ex-student activists, professionals and technocrats began to join the ranks and by the end of the 1990s PAS was no longer seen as a party with its base in the rural Malay interior. He passed away in October 2002 and was replaced by Tuan Guru Hadi Awang who became the sixth president of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party.

party anew and bringing it 'back to the right track' along with other Islamist parties and movements that were part of the global resurgence of political Islam.

By the late 1980s, the UMNO-led government's concerns about PAS's growing appeal and the activities of its members were more justified. After nearly a decade of confrontation, the relationship between UMNO and PAS was strained almost to breaking point and the oppositional logic that drew the ideological and political frontiers between the two had taken on a life of its own.

Although none of the claims about PAS's alleged involvement in clandestine subversive activities in the country had been decisively proven, it was known that a number of young PAS members and supporters had become involved in militant activities outside the country. Some of the more committed party members (like C. N. al-Afghani and Fauzi Ismail) had left the country to train as *mujahideen* in places like Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan had already become one of the major recruitment centres for *mujahideen* and *jihadi* volunteers from all over the world. With active support from rogue sections of the Pakistani ISI agency and Islamist organisations like the *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI), the country was turned into a massive training ground for eager young recruits willing to give up their lives for the sake of the Islamic struggle. Militant organisations and movements like the *Ahl-i Hadith*<sup>208</sup> were

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<sup>208</sup> The *Ahl-i Hadith* movement was a 19th-century school of thought based predominantly in the Indian subcontinent which began as a reformist movement very much like the Wahhabis of the Arabian peninsula, and gradually developed into different streams. The major stream of *Ahl-i Hadith* thought was fundamentally conservative and reactionary: it sought to purify Islam of non-Islamic elements that it thought detrimental to the faith and identity of Indian Muslims. *Ahl-i Hadith* leaders called for Indian Muslims to return to the principles of the *shariah*. They rejected the syncretism of Indian Muslim culture and regarded Indian Islam as contaminated by Hindu ideas and customs. They also rejected the practice of *tasawwuf* (mysticism) and regarded Sufi practices as *bid'ah*. Their hard-line approach offended many traditional *ulama* of India who were of the more relaxed Hanafi school of legal thought. Up to the mid-20th century they were a *continued p. 441*

more than willing to open their doors to these young potential martyrs who would be fed to the *jihadi* war machine. Islamist movements outside Pakistan were also prepared to contribute their share of bodies to the cause, and the deaths of young Malays like Fauzi Ismail and Abdul Aziz Samad in Afghanistan added to PAS's image as a party committed to the struggle of Islam and the *jihad* against its enemies.<sup>209</sup>

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marginalised presence in Indian Muslim social life. After the creation of Pakistan, they transferred their attention to the new Islamic republic, opening branches and schools in the 1950s and 1960s. At first they met with a hostile response, particularly in Sindh province, which was known for its Sufi traditions. However, with the rise of General Zia 'ul Haq (in 1979), *Ahl-i Hadith* received a warmer welcome. General Zia directed the army and Pakistani state intelligence services (ISI) to help found more schools and *madrasahs* to serve as recruitment bases of *mujahideen* warriors who would be sent to fight Pakistan's proxy war in Afghanistan. In 1986, they set up Markaz Da'wat wa'l Irshad in Muridke, thirty miles from Lahore in Punjab province as the base for all their future operations. In 1993, *Ahl-i Hadith* set up their own militia unit, *Lashkar-i Tayyeba* (Army of the Pure) which became the militant arm of the movement. The *Lashkar* was used in many covert operations against Indian forces in Kashmir. Though most *Lashkar* members were of Pakistani origin, a considerable number were foreigners. *Lashkar* boasted of the number of soldiers they had sent to fight in Kashmir as well as other hotspots in the Muslim world such as Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo and Mindanao in the southern Philippines.

<sup>209</sup> Abdul Aziz Samad was a Malay youth from Selangor. His family were originally UMNO followers, but he became a supporter of the Islamist opposition. In 1988, he travelled to Afghanistan where he was killed fighting alongside the *mujahideen* forces (C. N. al-Afghani, *Dagangnya Dibeli Allah*, p. 57). Fauzi Ismail was an ordinary member of PAS who travelled to Afghanistan to fight with the *mujahideen* during the Afghan War. Born on 1 September 1962 in Kampung Pantai Cicak, Kedah, Fauzi studied only up to the level of the Malaysian certificate of education (SPM). He did not receive any religious education, and was never enrolled at any local religious school or *madrasah*. Years later, he travelled to Singapore to work as a contract labourer. After returning to Kedah he opened a small sundry  
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However, not all PAS members were happy with the institutional reforms and discursive shifts introduced by Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* faction within PAS. Other Islamist movements in the country such as ABIM and *Darul Arqam* were constantly criticising PAS for its uncompromising stand on certain issues and its increasingly narrow approach to politics in general. (ABIM was then under the leadership of the moderate Islamist Siddiq Fadhil and the leaders of ABIM were constantly reminding both PAS and UMNO that the practice of *takfir* was fundamentally un-Islamic and detrimental to Muslim unity.) Within the party, opponents of Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* faction had also come to the fore. Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad and Ustaz Abu Bakar Hamzah were among the PAS leaders who openly questioned and criticised the fiery polemics of Yusof Rawa, Fadzil Noor and Hadi Awang. In an article written for the journal *Mingguan Islam*, Ustaz Abu Bakar wrote:

*Memangnya perangai orang-orang PAS sekarang ini suka mengafirkan orang lain, suka pulau-memulau, suka rasa dirinya sahaja yang beriman dan bertakwa, sedangkan orang lain adalah kafir belaka. Perangai biadab seperti ini masih berleluasa dalam PAS dan para Ayatollahnya gagal membendung, malah agaknya mereka suka melihat anak buah mereka suka kafir-mengkafir, pulau-memulau dan merasa diri mereka beriman tanpa orang lain. Perangai jahiliah beginilah yang akan meruntuhkan perjuangan PAS.*<sup>210</sup>

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shop. He became a member of PAS and was soon elected as a member of the local committee of the PAS Youth Wing at Kampung Kelut. During the mid-1980s he involved himself in both PAS and ABIM educational activities, but soon withdrew from ABIM when he felt the movement was not doing enough for the promotion of Islam and an Islamic state in Malaysia (*Ibid.*, p. 24). In 1988, he and a number of other PAS members left for Afghanistan to join the *mujahideen* in the war against the Soviet-backed forces of President Najibullah. Fauzi took part in the battles for Khost and Jalalabad. During the siege of Jalalabad he was killed when the trench he was guarding was hit by a shell fired from an enemy tank.

<sup>210</sup> Translation: Sadly it has now become the custom for PAS members to accuse others of being unbelievers, of isolating and alienating themselves from others, of thinking of themselves as the only true believers while everyone else is an unbeliever. This insolent behaviour *continued p. 443*

Ustaz Abu Bakar's warnings did not get him very far. He was marginalised within the party and his membership was suspended. With critics like Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad and Ustaz Abu Bakar sidelined or removed, Yusof Rawa's vision of a rejuvenated PAS had finally come to fruition, though in political terms the success of the party was still less than certain.

### *The Legacy of Ustaz Yusof Rawa Reconsidered*

*Jika hendak dirumuskan tentang sumbangan terpenting Haji Yusof Rawa kepada perjuangan Islam di Malaysia, mungkin ianya ialah peranannya menghidupkan semula kepimpinan politik Islam di negara ini.<sup>211</sup>*

Kamaruddin Jaffar,  
*Memperingati Yusof Rawa*

It is impossible to deny Ustaz Yusof Rawa's enormous impact on the development of PAS in the 1980s. More than any previous leader of the party, Ustaz Yusof Rawa had redirected the party's struggle away from Malay-Muslim ethno-nationalist concerns to a more dynamic and revolutionary Islamist project that was taking the world by storm. As PAS president, Yusof Rawa had systematically questioned and altered the fundamental tenets of the party's

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among some PAS members is now commonplace, and the ayatollahs who run the party have done nothing to contain it; indeed, some of them may even like to see their followers behaving in such a way, accusing others of being unbelievers, alienating others and thinking of themselves as the only true believers. It is this sort of behaviour that will ultimately destroy the struggle of PAS (Abu Bakar Hamzah, 'Tidak Kenal Mata Hati dan Ditimpa Perasaan', *Mingguan Islam*, 17 June 1988).

<sup>211</sup> Translation: If we were to sum up the singlemost important achievement of Yusof Rawa in the context of the Islamist struggle in Malaysia, it would be the role that he played in reviving the Islamist leadership in the country (Kamaruddin Jaffar (ed.), *Memperingati Yusof Rawa*, pp. 10–11).

ideology and by doing so he had brought about a radical paradigm shift in its way of thinking and organisation.

Ustaz Yusof Rawa was also responsible for developing PAS's image as the sole Islamist party in the country as opposed to UMNO, whose own religious credentials had grown progressively weaker over the years. His insistence on obedience, loyalty and commitment to the Islamist cause as envisaged by the *ulama* was manifested in the new rites of membership, political discourse and rhetoric of the party's senior leaders. During Yusof Rawa's time the conflict between UMNO and PAS had intensified to the point where leaders of both parties were accusing each other of being un-Islamic. The odds, however, were in PAS's favour due to the entry of a generation of radical Islamists and the rise of the *ulama* faction within the party. In the wake of the *kafir-mengkafir* crisis of 1982-84, it was PAS, not UMNO, that appeared as the authentic voice of Islam for many ordinary Malay-Muslims.

The other factor that helped to boost PAS's image as an Islamist party was, ironically enough, the efforts by the UMNO-led government to discredit it. Because of the rhetoric of UMNO leaders who continued to vilify PAS as a party of 'fundamentalist militants' and 'extremist fanatics', PAS actually experienced a boost in its own image as an authentic Islamist alternative to UMNO. (The same observation was made by Vali Nasr and Bobby Sayyid in their studies of Islamist oppositional movements elsewhere in the contemporary Muslim world.) The state's use of force and violence, which came to the fore during the Memali killings in 1985, *Operasi Lalang* in 1987 and *Operasi Kenari* in 1988 also helped to reinforce PAS's image as an underdog party suffering persecution at the hands of a tyrannical government. By openly attacking the Islamic party and its leaders, UMNO had effectively robbed itself of its own credibility and legitimacy as a Malay-Muslim party in the eyes of the Malay-Muslims themselves.

The state's heavy-handed use of force also had other negative consequences for the government's attempt to promote an alternative school of Islamic thought to counter that of PAS. While the government of Dr. Mahathir was desperately trying to re-invent Islam as a modern work ethic that was liberal, open, tolerant and progressive, the actions of the state security forces did more than

enough damage to convince the public that UMNO's brand of Islam was not as open and tolerant as it was made out to be. PAS exploited the contradictions in the government's policies towards Islam to further its own claim that the state's Islamisation programme was nothing more than a cosmetic exercise designed to give the government of Dr. Mahathir the veneer of Islamic credibility it badly needed.

The conflation of PAS with 'authentic Islam' during Ustaz Yusof Rawa's time had an important effect on PAS's perception of itself as a political party. More than before (certainly more than during Asri Muda's time), PAS became identified by its ideology rather than its leaders. While Ustaz Yusof Rawa was an important and influential figure within the party, he also allowed for the rise of an entire generation of new leaders who supported him in his tasks. The ascendancy of the *ulama* faction during the time of Ustaz Yusof Rawa did not lead to the dominance of a single leader (which was the case during the time of Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Asri Muda), but rather a group of savant-politicians who led the party by example and by embodying its philosophy.

Thus it could be argued that by the end of Ustaz Yusof Rawa's period of leadership, PAS had begun to break away from the mode of Malay neo-feudal politics where political parties were seen merely as instruments for *wadah* (particular politicians or vessels) to contain particular sectarian interests. PAS had, by then, been re-invented and developed into a political party that stood for a specific, if exclusive, ideological struggle and those who joined the party knew that they were committing themselves to a particular struggle shaped by a particular set of values, outlook on life and even mode of dress. The *kepiyah*, *jubbah* and *janggut* were no longer mere accessories (at least not for the party leaders) — they had become symptoms of a renewed consciousness of Islam now being translated into a political process.

The 1980s were, therefore, a period when PAS and UMNO were intimately engaged in a war of position that brought them face-to-face time and again. PAS had managed to erode UMNO's Islamist credentials during the *kafir-mengkafir* crisis and in its sustained attacks on the state's use (and abuse) of power in dealing with the Islamist movements in the country. However, UMNO struck back

when it won over ABIM president Anwar Ibrahim and PAS vice-president Nakhaie Ahmad. UMNO suffered a major split of its own which resulted in the creation of *Parti Melayu Semangat '46* led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah. But PAS also suffered from divisions within its own ranks, which led to the creation of splinter parties like Asri Muda's *Hizbul Muslimin Malaysia* (HAMIM), Mohamad Nasir's BERJASA and the *Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia* (AKIM) led by Cikgu Musa Salleh.<sup>212</sup> Neither party seemed to be in a position to win the upper hand.

The turbulent situation in Malaysia was reflected elsewhere in the Islamic world, where Islamist movements, parties and governments were facing a plethora of crises. In Iran, the Islamic revolutionary government was faced with both internal and external threats. After successfully expelling the Iraqi invaders from its territory in 1982, Ayatollah Khomeini made the fatal mistake of committing Iranian troops to an offensive against Iraq. The war continued until 1988, when both countries were finally bled dry and there were no longer enough young men to be sacrificed at the altar of martyrdom.

In some other Muslim countries, the Islamist parties had learnt the hard way that co-operation with secular or authoritarian regimes would incur a cost to their own standing and prestige. By 1984, the leadership of the *Jama'at-e Islami* in Pakistan began to distance itself from some of the more unpopular policies of General Zia 'ul Haq's regime, but not before its own image had been substantially damaged by the relationship between the two. In other parts of the Islamic world, Islamist movements were being forcibly neutralised. In Egypt, a major nation-wide crackdown on the Islamist opposition in 1989 led to thousands of *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* members being rounded up, tortured and imprisoned. The Egyptian government was, in turn, condemned by the international community and human rights NGOs for flagrant violation of human rights. In Indonesia, President Soeharto had forced all the

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<sup>212</sup> AKIM contested the 1995 election at both state and federal level (only in Kelantan seats), but it failed miserably and was subsequently wiped off the map of Malaysian politics.

political parties in the country to come together under three broad political organisations: GOLKAR, *Partai Persatuan dan Pembangunan* (PPP) and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI) in 1985. The Islamist parties and organisations rallied under the PPP, but were forced to abandon many of their Islamic symbols and themes.

Just when it seemed that the Islamist movements in the Muslim world were losing their sense of cohesion and purpose, a number of international developments sparked off a new round of activism among them. The 1980s had been a decade of intense political conflict and struggle between the Western and Eastern blocs, but the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev as the new leader of the USSR in 1985 marked a radical shift in the ideological orientation of the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1980s, the ideological frontier between East and West was on the verge of collapse; a fact driven home by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In the capitalist societies of the West, the inherent contradictions in the economic system had also brought about a major re-thinking of the fundamental premises of the ideology of liberal capitalism. The poll tax riots in London in 1989 showed that a vast section of the British public would no longer be content to live with the growing income differentials between the haves and the have-nots. In the US, Tom Wolfe's novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities* held a mirror to the face of liberal capitalism and was read as an indictment of the moral paradoxes of the times. The ideology of capitalism was thus being questioned from within at the same time that communism was falling apart. Francis Fukuyama promptly announced the end of history, while others like Samuel Huntington were on the lookout for new enemies against Western civilisation.<sup>213</sup>

As the world waited with bated breath for a possible clash of civilisations, the controversy surrounding the book *The Satanic Verses* by British author Salman Rushdie mobilised Muslims all over the world and placed Islam at the forefront of the political and cultural agenda once again. The sight of thousands of Muslims

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<sup>213</sup> See Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, No. 16 (1989); Samuel Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilisations', *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3) (1993).

marching in the streets and burning copies of a book that most of them had never read reinforced the impression that there was now a new global force that the West would have to contend with: Islam. After Ayatollah Khomeini issued his *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, few governments in the Sunni world could afford to stand passively by.<sup>214</sup> The government of Malaysia, like many other Muslim governments in Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent and the Arab world, banned the book and joined in the international chorus of condemnation. The death of the ayatollah in 1989 left the issue hanging in the air until the tanks of Saddam Hussein began to roll across the Iraqi border once again, this time heading southwards towards Kuwait. The Gulf War of 1990–91 reignited the flame of many Islamic movements the world over, and once again the time seemed ripe for the *jihad* to secure the *daulah Islamiyyah*.

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<sup>214</sup> At the peak of the 'Satanic Verses' controversy, the OIC secretary-general urged all 45 members of the group to ban the book.

## Chapter 5

### 1990–1997: PAS'S SECOND COMING: THE RISE OF PAS AS THE STRONGEST OPPOSITION PARTY IN MALAYSIA

*Ceramah yang kita adakan bukan hanya bermula sekitar tahun empat puluhan atau lima puluhan, iaitu sebelum merdeka, malah ianya sebagai kesinambungan ceramah-ceramah yang dilakukan oleh para Nabi dan para Rasul sejak dulu lagi.<sup>1</sup>*

Nik Aziz Nik Mat,  
*'Berceramah: Kesinambungan Tugas Nabi dan Rasul'*

#### *1990: A New Decade of Broken Promises Begins*

The gulf war of 1991 in fact demonstrated the limits of Malaysia's Islamic identity as well as its vulnerabilities.

Shanti Nair,  
*Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: Our speeches are not something that began in the 1940s or 1950s, that is the years before independence. They are really a continuation of the speeches given by the Prophets of God long ago. Nik Aziz Nik Mat, 'Berceramah: Kesinambungan Tugas Nabi dan Rasul', in Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Kelantan: Agenda Baru untuk Umat Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: Rangkaian Minda Publishing, 1995, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 244.

The year 1990 was meant to be the beginning of a new decade of global peace and harmony, and millions of people the world over celebrated the first day of the new year with enthusiasm. In the fashion capitals of Europe, the gurus of *haute couture* declared that white was to be the colour of the year, symbolising peace, love and mutual understanding. Just before the orders for the latest line of clothes could be sent out to the sweatshops of Asia, the flaccid attempts at global dialogue were cut short as the tanks of Saddam Hussein rolled into Kuwait on 2 August. Overnight, desert khaki became the colour of the moment, and the world conveniently put aside the agenda for peace for another day. 1990 started with a bang, and a few more were to follow.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 sparked off what has been regarded as the biggest media war ever fought in the history of the human race. The American establishment declared that the Iraqi invasion was a gross violation of human rights and the national sovereignty of Kuwait, then a firm ally of the US. President George Bush declared that the forces of the free world had to unite to counter the threat of an expansionist Iraq, which boasted of having the fourth largest army in the world. In response to this threat, the US (which had an army even bigger than Iraq's) orchestrated a concert of nations that led to the formation of an American-led alliance whose aim was to expel Iraq's invading forces from Kuwait, liberate their ally and re-establish the lines of communication that kept the world's oil supply flowing towards the free world. (The oft-repeated claim that the people of Kuwait would also be liberated from the undemocratic rule of their royal masters was deferred indefinitely.)

The 'Gulf War', as it came to be known, also marked a turning-point in the relationship between the West and the Muslim world. Throughout the Muslim world, popular sympathy and support were showered on Saddam Hussein and the people of Iraq, on the grounds that he was a Muslim leader and that a Muslim country was being attacked by a coalition of infidel states led by a Western superpower. Worse still, the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, long regarded as the holy land of Islam, infuriated Islamist organisations and movements all over the world. In time, not only the Americans were the target of Muslim anger; so also were the

governments of the Arab states, in particular Saudi Arabia. The *Jama'at-e Islami* of Pakistan, for example, condemned the leaders of Saudi Arabia for allowing American troops to be based in their country. As a result, the Saudis promptly stopped channelling financial support to the Pakistani Islamist organisation that had for years been one of the principal benefactors of Saudi aid to the country.

In Malaysia, the Gulf War had the immediate effect of turning large sections of the Malay-Muslim community towards Saddam Hussein, Iraq and the Muslim world in general. The streets of Kuala Lumpur were full of teenagers wearing T-shirts bearing the image of Saddam. Others sported the image of the equally popular SCUD missile. In rare cases, parents even named their unfortunate new-born sons 'Saddam' or 'Scud'. (One of the tender mercies of the patriarchal system being that it does not produce female war-mongers whose names would blight the lives of new-born girls.) Later, a campus hall of the Islamic University in Kelantan was also named after Saddam. Though the anti-American demonstrations and protests were mild by the standards of the mid-1970s, it was patently clear that the mood in the country had changed once again.

As with the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Malaysian government did not know how to react against this sudden and unexpected wind of change from abroad. Malaysia was then a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the government was desperately trying to promote the country in international circles. Cognisant that the Gulf War had touched a raw nerve with large sections of the Malay-Muslim population, the state was nonetheless forced to make a stand in keeping with the mood of the international community. In the UNSC, Malaysia voted in favour of intervention for the sake of liberating Kuwait from the occupying forces of Iraq.

The Malaysian government found itself in a tight spot as a result of its own political success on the international scene. Malaysia's membership of the UNSC meant that it was obliged to cast its vote with the prevailing current of popular opinion in the UN. This was not the case with other Muslim countries with a lower international profile. The government of Jordan, for instance, was able to condemn the US-led military action against Iraq openly and

unreservedly, a move that effectively took the wind out of the sails of the Jordanian Islamist opposition movements and parties like the *Ikhwan*.

To justify its move in the UNSC, the government of Dr. Mahathir insisted that Iraq was in the wrong for violating the territorial integrity of Kuwait and that Saddam himself was far from being a paragon of Muslim virtue.<sup>3</sup> Iraq's persecution of minorities such as the Kurds was cited as evidence of its own weaknesses and flaws. Trying to walk the middle path, the Malaysian government called for a negotiated settlement of the conflict and argued that the UN, not the US, should play the leading role in resolving the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait.<sup>4</sup> But these appeals fell upon deaf ears, as a significant section of the Malay-Muslim constituency had already been won over by the Islamist camp, who argued that territoriality and nationalism were concepts alien to Islam and the Islamic way of life. Furthermore, Saddam Hussein had scored a *coup* against his detractors by claiming that the US-led campaign against Iraq was part of a larger crusade against Islam and Muslims in general.

With Malay-Muslim sympathy clearly moving in the direction of Saddam's regime, criticism of the Malaysian government's stance came from all quarters. The leaders of PAS, *Semangat '46*, ABIM and *Darul Arqam* insisted that solidarity among Muslims and the unity of the Muslim *ummah* should come before the needs of *realpolitik*. *Darul Arqam*'s leader Ustaz Ashaari even went as far as claiming that any Muslim leader who took sides with the West was a *munafik* and a treacherous enemy of Islam and the Muslim *ummah* as a whole.

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<sup>3</sup> Shanti Nair notes that 'in defending Malaysia's stand at the UMNO General Assembly in December 1990, the Prime Minister stressed that when a country faced external aggression, the identity of those extending aid (i.e. the non-Muslim Western powers), was less significant than the aggression itself. Drawing an analogy to Malaysia's situation during the crisis of the *Konfrontasi* with Indonesia, he pointed to the fact, that at the time, Malaysia had needed all the help it could get from the international community.' (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 246).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

PAS openly declared its opposition to the UMNO-led government's stand. Shortly after hostilities broke out, PAS organised a national conference on the issue of the Gulf conflict and made its own position explicitly clear. PAS and its ally *Semangat '46* accused the UMNO-led government of working hand in glove with the Western powers and claimed that the government's official stand was the result of undue American influence and pressure on the Mahathir administration.<sup>5</sup> Employing the grandiloquent rhetoric of Muslim unity and shared identity, PAS leaders claimed that the war between Iraq and Kuwait was strictly an intra-Muslim problem and that the Muslim states should be left alone to deal with it. Fired up by the sabre-rattling rhetoric of *jihad* against the enemies of Islam, PAS and *Semangat '46* even declared they were willing to help recruit Malay-Muslim volunteers to fight on the side of Iraq in the defence of their faith.

While the UMNO led-government was attempting to persuade the Malaysian public on matters of legality, PAS leaders were trying to steal the show by getting directly involved in the conflict. Tuan Guru Hadi Awang's international profile rose considerably when he was asked to join the delegation led by the Turkish leader of the Refah party, Necmettin Erbakan, that went to Iraq and met Saddam Hussein. (In the same year, the increasingly popular PAS

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<sup>5</sup> It could not be denied that the US government was using the now-familiar 'carrot and stick' method to win over the support of its Muslim allies during the Gulf War campaign. The Mahathir administration was acutely aware that Malaysia was dependent on the US, the country's main trading partner. Fear of a possible US withdrawal of Malaysia's generalised system of preferences (GSP) status lurked at the back of the minds of government officials and business leaders. The incentive to co-operate with the US was an offer to Malaysian companies to help with the reconstruction of Kuwait in the wake of the conflict, the conclusion of which was no longer in doubt even by the end of 1990. But these factors merely helped to reinforce the view that the Malaysian government did not arrive at its final policy decision independently. A media report shortly after the conflict which stated that the Bush administration would resume military aid to Malaysia of US\$1.1 million (a paltry sum, by any standards) did not help improve the image of the Mahathir administration (*Ibid.*, p. 249).

leader was appointed to the *Majmak Takrik Mazhab Islami* based in Tehran, Iran.)

As tension mounted and the deadline for Iraq's surrender came closer, it became obvious that the Americans were determined to use force to defeat their foe. In the US, George Bush's popularity soared as Operation Desert Shield gave way to Operation Desert Storm and played itself out before an audience glued to their television sets. Although Russian satellite photos had shown that Saddam's forces were not as strong as the dictator claimed, the marching orders were given. The war itself was a brief — though unequal — exchange of murderous fire. The Iraqi forces (with the exception of the Republican Guard) were practically wiped out, while the allied forces lost more men to friendly fire than enemy attacks. The net result of the brief but bloody conflict was the restoration of America's pride in itself and its ascendancy as the sole superpower in a unipolar new world order.

The heroes of the day were men like General Norman Schwarzkopf, dubbed the 'liberator of Kuwait'. Few Western experts and media consultants cared to point out that the same General Schwarzkopf had helped the Shah of Iran set up his notorious Gestapo-like SAVAK secret police, who were responsible for the deaths, torture and disappearance of thousands of Iranian activists, students, unionists and opposition members in the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> A lesser-known veteran of the Gulf war was a sergeant named Timothy McVeigh, who made his mark a few years later when he drove his truck filled with chemical fertiliser into the Alfred O. Murrah building in Oklahoma city and blew it up, killing 168 people and injuring more than 500 others. It took years before the actual human cost of the war became known,<sup>7</sup> but in the early days

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<sup>6</sup> Willem Oltmans, *Not Guilty*, Breda: Uitgeverij Papieren Tijger, 2001, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> In time, the appalling human cost of the Gulf War was made known to the public at large. By the end of 1999, the US Department of Army Veteran Affairs was forced to admit that 136,031 veterans were partially or completely disabled as a result of medical complications incurred while serving in the Gulf (which became known as 'Gulf continued p. 455

of the new decade the Muslim world found itself defenceless before the might of this new global hegemony.

In the wake of the Gulf War, Malaysia was allowed to send troops to Kuwait as part of the UN international peacekeeping force. The Kuwaiti government expressed its thanks to the leaders of Malaysia (Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Ghafar Baba in particular) for the role they played during and after the conflict. The official Malaysian delegation to Kuwait secured RM7.2 million in direct sales (in August 1991) and a further projected RM32.5 million in the following year as part of the redevelopment and reconstruction programme carried out after the conflict.<sup>8</sup> But none of these developments managed to impress hardcore PAS followers who felt that Malaysia had allowed itself to be used as a pawn in a conflict orchestrated by the world's only remaining superpower.

Though none of PAS's threats were carried out (not a single Malay-Muslim was recruited and sent to fight for Iraq by PAS), the Gulf conflict did serve to reinforce the sharp divide between PAS and UMNO that had been created and reinforced in the 1980s. In the end, PAS gained the most as far as the local Malay-Muslim constituency was concerned.

To make things worse for UMNO, the party was already feeling the gradual erosion of its Islamic credentials before the probing eyes of the Malay-Muslim public. By the early 1990s, UMNO's hopes of finding a rising star in the ex-ABIM leader Anwar

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War syndrome'). Though the US military establishment denied any knowledge or involvement, it was widely speculated that the medical complications were either caused, or made worse, by the cocktail of drugs given to American soldiers serving in the Gulf. The total number of disabled was nearly 25% of those who served in the war. Another 60,000 veterans' claims against the army were denied. By then, 9,600 veterans had died since the war, also as a result of medical complications. The losses suffered by the ordinary people of Iraq were even higher. By the end of 1999, nearly one million Iraqi civilians had died as a result of sanctions imposed on their country by the US-led coalition.

<sup>8</sup> *New Straits Times*, 11 August 1991.

Ibrahim were beginning to fade. While Nik Aziz, Fadzil Noor, Hadi Awang, Mohamad Sabu and other PAS leaders were bombarding UMNO with their constant barrage of criticism, the reputation of Anwar Ibrahim (who had served as head of UMNO Youth as well as Education Minister and Finance Minister) was slowly being torn apart by local journalists and the opposition press. The man who had once said that 'any attempt to uphold Islam within the framework of an economy that practised usury, legalised the sale of alcohol and gambling would be an insult to the religion'<sup>9</sup> did not seem to be doing very much to change the 'un-Islamic' system he set out to convert and conquer. While serving as the country's Finance Minister (from 1991), Anwar was seen by many as the prime advocate of globalisation and a liberal approach to economic policy.<sup>10</sup> This did not sit well with those who expected him to lead the way in Islamising the Malaysian economy.

Although he was known to have served as the *imam* during prayer sessions in his office after meetings, Anwar was nonetheless accused of selling out to UMNO and making concessions to local Chinese business tycoons such as Vincent Tan (head of the Berjaya Group, which had a monopoly of the country's Sports Toto gambling circuit), Lim Goh Tong (owner of the country's only casino, Genting Highlands Resort) and media mogul Ananda Krishnan.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, Speech quoted in *Panji Masyarakat*, October 1980.

<sup>10</sup> John Esposito, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> One of the most direct attacks on Anwar came in the form of a book entitled *Anwar Ibrahim: Antara Nawaitu dan Pesta Boria* written by Yahya Ismail in 1993. Yahya attacked Anwar for allowing himself to be taken in by the corporate culture of UMNO's élite. He compared Anwar to Nakhaie Ahmad, another ex-ABIM leader who had joined PAS in 1982 and defected to UMNO in 1989. Yahya claimed that by the early 1990s Anwar was no different from other Cabinet ministers and UMNO leaders; that he had bought expensive property for himself and his family; that he indulged in wasteful activities like horse-riding and sports; and that he was closely linked to Chinese business tycoons such as Vincent Tan and Lim Goh Tong. Citing a report in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* ('Where There's Muck', 1 April 1993), Yahya accused Anwar of awarding Vincent Tan's Berjaya

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Anwar's international image as a defender of Muslim concerns had also been somewhat diminished by his close association with power and government. The man who had once supported the Iranian revolution and the *mujahideen* struggle and who had been personally decorated by President Zia 'ul Haq of Pakistan was now talking the language of diplomatic compromise and *realpolitik*.<sup>12</sup>

In a bid to consolidate its hold on power (and to blunt the thrusts of the opposition), the government established the *Majlis*

n. 11 continued

Group the contract for a RM6-billion urban sewerage project, without opening it to public tender (p. 42). Yahya also accused Anwar of accepting RM250,000 from the Chinese gambling tycoon Lim Goh Tong on behalf of UMNO Youth (p. 110). Yahya gave an explicit account of how Anwar had grown close to Chinese billionaires and enjoyed a close working partnership with them (p. 45). Yahya compared Anwar in the 1990s with the earlier Anwar, who was active in student politics during the 1970s: 'While he called himself a *mujahed* in the past, he was willing to defend the needs and interests of the people at large against the excesses of the government and the Prime Minister (Dr. Mahathir). But today he (Anwar) is no longer able and willing to do this. He has become part of the machinery of the party and he is now responsible for the very same policies that oppress the ordinary people in the country' (pp. 30-31). 'Anwar has learnt a lot from his master Mahathir and he now dances according to Mahathir's tune. Like the ever-faithful Laksamana who was always obedient to Rama in the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, Anwar is also loyal to his boss despite the fact that he is aware of his master's wrongdoings' (p. 36). Needless to say, the revelations in the book were scandalous at the time and PAS leaders were quick to exploit them in their effort to discredit the UMNO-led government. (See Yahya Ismail, *Anwar Ibrahim: Antara Nawaitu dan Pesta Boria*; Ahmad Lutfi Othman, *Memo untuk Bakal PM*).

<sup>12</sup> While Anwar had supported the Iranian revolution and the *mujahideen* struggle in Afghanistan in the late 1970s, he adopted a softer approach after he joined UMNO and the government. During the campaign for the post of UMNO youth leader in 1984, Anwar stated that the thorny issue of Muslim separatism and irridentist movements in Patani and Mindanao was 'complex' and that Malaysia should not intervene in the domestic affairs of Thailand and the Philippines (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 192).

*Perundingan Ekonomi Negara* (National Economic Consultative Council, MAPEN/NECC) in 1990. MAPEN/NECC was meant to demonstrate the establishment's willingness to work with all sections of Malaysian society, including opposition parties and NGOs, to develop a common economic and development policy in the wake of the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1970–90).

Though PAS was given the chance to participate in the consultations held under the auspices of MAPEN, the Islamist party was not about to relent in its own commitment to the goal of an Islamic state set by Yusof Rawa and the *ulama* leadership of the 1980s. The MAPEN consultations therefore gave PAS an opportunity to fire another salvo at the economic and political record of the Mahathir administration, and the Islamist party's views on the economic, political and socio-cultural problems affecting the country were clear.

PAS's alternative vision of development was spelled out in the party's MAPEN proposals issued as an open memorandum entitled '*Falsafah dan Strategi Ekonomi Negara selepas Tahun 1990*' (National Economic Philosophy and Strategy after 1990).<sup>13</sup> The document began with an outright rejection of the economic and developmental philosophy of the NEP that had been championed by UMNO and the ruling coalition from the very beginning:

*Secara amnya DEB adalah suatu dasar yang meletakkan keyakinan penuh terhadap sistem Kapitalisme. Akan tetapi ianya beranggapan betapa dalam keadaan dan suasana yang khusus untuk negara Malaysia, dengan masalah-masalah seperti pemilikan harta yang tidak seimbang diantara kaum, maka pengubahsuaian yang tertentu perlu dilakukan. Pengubahsuaian ini tidak pula mengubah asas-asas Kapitalisme, tetapi hanya bertujuan untuk mengukuhkan kedudukan kaum tertentu didalam sistem Kapitalisme. ...PAS tidak bersetuju dengan pendekatan yang sebegini. Ini adalah disebabkan sistem Kapitalisme tidak mampu menjamin keadilan, dengan nilai-nilai kebendaan dan keutamaannya terhadap keuntungan yang dengan sendirinya akan menghasilkan kepincangan dan perpecahan.*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), '*Falsafah dan Strategi Ekonomi Negara selepas 1990: Pandangan dan Saranan Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*', Official document circulated by PAS party leadership, 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Translation: In essence, the NEP [New Economic Policy] was a policy that placed its faith in the capitalist system. It took the view that *continued p. 459*

It was clear that PAS's vision of a just society was based on principles directly opposed to those of the state:

*Bagi PAS, keadilan tidak boleh disamakan dengan dasar perjuangan bebas yang dikukung Kapitalisme. Kerana ia hanya menggalakkan pengkelan golongan kaya dan golongan miskin terus dengan kemiskinannya.<sup>15</sup>*

PAS's outright rejection of capitalism seemed more in keeping with the leftist-Islamist rhetoric of Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy in the 1960s than the ethnocentric nationalism of Asri Muda of the 1970s. The party's leaders attacked the government for its record of economic mismanagement, obsession with large-scale projects of little practical value, the culture of crony-capitalism that had been allowed to take root within the political system and the neglect of the poorer sections of Malaysian society.<sup>16</sup> They pointed out that economic development within the country had been far from even: six states in particular — Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis, Sabah and Sarawak — had disproportionately higher levels of poverty than the rest of the country, despite three (Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu) being among the richest in terms of natural

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*n. 14 continued*

considering the particular circumstances in Malaysia, with the problem of unequal division of wealth among the races, modifications (within the system) had to be made. However, these changes and modifications did not apply to the capitalist system itself, but were intended to improve the economic lot of a particular grouping within that same capitalist system. ... PAS does not agree with this approach because we believe that capitalism cannot be a means to ensure social justice, due to its own materialist biases and its promotion of selfish individualism which has only led to competition and disunity among people (Ibid., p. 1).

<sup>15</sup> Translation: PAS believes that justice cannot be equated in any way with the free competition and rivalry that is at the heart of capitalism. This is because it (capitalism) merely defends the existence of the rich while the poor will remain in their wretched condition (Ibid., p. 25).

<sup>16</sup> The document noted that 'under the New Economic Policy, only large scale projects of little public worth were deemed fit to be undertaken by the state. ... The National Development Agencies were more concerned about glamorous projects that appealed to the middle and upper classes than they were about the needs of the poor and disenfranchised in the country' (Ibid., p. 4).

resources like timber, oil and gas.<sup>17</sup> PAS also condemned the government's policy of giving special favours to foreign investors while neglecting the local investor and business community.<sup>18</sup>

PAS's attack on the government's record could not have come at a better time for the Islamist party, for the statistics were on their side. After 20 years of rapid development and modernisation, the human and social costs were clear. The shift towards manufacturing and heavy industries had been profound (manufacturing's share of total exports had risen from a mere 11.1% in 1970 to a huge 58.8% by 1990), but this had also resulted in mass migration from the countryside to the industrial zones on the west coast of the peninsula (see Table 5.1). With that came the steady depopulation of the Malay countryside and a corresponding drop in agricultural production.<sup>19</sup> The NEP had also failed to improve the economic lot of the Malays in general. By the late 1980s most poor households in the country were still Malay (81.7% in 1987) and overwhelmingly rural (82.7% in 1990) (see Tables 5.2, 5.3).

PAS leaders argued that the government's approach to development was skewed by loopholes and contradictions that allowed them to present a distorted picture of the true economic

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 5–6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Shireen Mardziah Hashim points out that poverty had been substantially reduced in many of the target occupations between 1970 and 1990. But her analysis also shows that 'with the exception of fishermen and estate workers during the 1980s, this was largely accomplished by mobility out of the target occupations rather than by increasing incomes within these occupations'. The government's development policies had effectively solved the problem of rural poverty by dismantling the structures of the rural economy and bringing about mass migration from the rural areas to the urban manufacturing centres on the west coast. By doing so, it had accomplished two objectives at the same time: it had eliminated the problem of chronic Malay poverty in the rural Malay heartland and it had also effectively destroyed the rural communities that were once the bedrock of PAS's political support. (Shireen Mardziah Hashim, *Income Inequality and Poverty in Malaysia*, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998, p. 219.)

realities.<sup>20</sup> They then condemned the NEP on the grounds that it had merely intensified the competition and ethnic rivalry between the races without substantially altering the economic fundamentals of the country:

*PAS menolak konsep (DEB) itu. Pendekatan kaum akan meningkatkan lagi 'identifikasi ras' dan dengan itu menajamkan lagi keadaan perkauman. Pembahagian harta yang seimbang hendaklah dicapai melalui sistem ekonomi yang adil dan bukan melalui pendekatan perkauman. Ini adalah satu kaedah yang tidak dapat difikirkan oleh mereka yang kagum dengan sistem Kapitalisme dan sains kemasyarakatan Barat. Mereka ini terus berhasrat untuk mengekalkan sistem Kapitalisme... .<sup>21</sup>*

However, those who expected a return to the days of Burhanuddin al-Helmy soon realised that the discursive shift to a new ideological register was irreversible. The barbed reference to those 'duped by Western social sciences' marked PAS's departure from the leftist-Islamist stance of Dr. Burhanuddin. PAS's critique of the state's economic policies was now couched in terms firmly rooted in an Islamist logic of authenticity and purity. These concerns came across quite clearly in the party's critique of the NEP.

<sup>20</sup> PAS leaders questioned the very definition of 'poverty' according to the government's criteria. The Malaysian poverty line has three main components: 1. food expenditure, 2. clothing and footwear expenditure, and 3. other non-food expenditure. Shireen (Ibid., p. 157) notes that the 'main debate concerning the official poverty line in Malaysia is the appropriateness of using the same poverty line, adjusted for inflation, for over two decades. A secondary issue is that, although Malaysia has different poverty lines for the Peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak, it still uses a single poverty line indicator for both rural and urban areas in all three regions.' In contrast, neighbouring countries like Thailand and Indonesia follow the practice of raising the poverty line for urban areas in contrast to rural ones.

<sup>21</sup> Translation: PAS rejects the concept (of the NEP) entirely. Ethnocentrism will only increase with the identification of race with economic differences, and this will only aggravate the problem of racial tension in the country. The equal distribution of wealth must be achieved through an economic system that is fair and just, and not through inter-ethnic competition. But this is an option that is beyond the calculation of those who are overly impressed by the ideology of capitalism and Western social sciences. They only wish to perpetuate the capitalist system... . (PAS, 'Falsafah dan Strategi', pp. 1-2).

While laying down the framework for their own alternative economic model, PAS leaders also defined their meaning of justice in no uncertain terms:

*PAS mendukung takrif keadilan yang dituntut oleh Islam. Takrif keadilan ini meliputi fahaman dan sikap serta amalan undang-undang dan struktur organisasi. Dari sudut fahaman dan sikap, Islam mendakwa bahawa keadilan tidak akan tercapai selagi mana manusia menafikan bahawa harta miliknya adalah sebenarnya milik Allah yang diamanahkan kepadanya oleh Allah. Ianya harus digunakan dengan cara yang diredhai olehnya.<sup>22</sup>*

Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' of capitalism had, therefore, given way to God's divine hand in the logic of PAS. The party leaders were not shy of also saying just how God's wealth should be spent on earth. The party proposed that an economic safety net be set up to help compensate for the traumatic and dislocating effects of Malaysia's rapid development and integration into the global economy. They argued for the creation of a *Tabung Pembebasan Kemiskinan* (TPK) (poverty eradication fund) and a *Yayasan Pembangunan Rakyat* (YPR) (social development trust) which would ensure that the poorest and weakest sections of society were not be left out of the economic race.<sup>23</sup> PAS demanded that the oil and gas royalties for Terengganu, Sabah and Sarawak be raised from 5% to 10%, of which half should be allocated to the poor of the respective states to get them out of the poverty trap.<sup>24</sup> Land reform also became a major issue for the party leaders (who were no doubt painfully aware of the economic plight of the rural folk who were still the mass base of their natural constituency).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Translation: PAS upholds the definition of justice found in Islam. This understanding of justice covers both our thoughts and deeds, as well as our laws and organisational structures. In terms of thoughts and deeds, Islam asserts that justice will never be achieved unless and until we realise that our wealth in this world belongs only to Allah, and that it has been given to us by the grace of Allah. It should therefore be used in the way that is accepted by Him (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> In the area of land reform, PAS called for the release of 900,000 hectares of land to farmers and agricultural workers who still had no  
*continued p. 463*

However, the real thrust of the PAS attack came when the leaders accused the UMNO-led government of its 'moral neglect' of the people since the 1980s. PAS condemned the government's promotion of what it regarded as 'sinful' and 'decadent' forms of economic and socio-cultural activity, particularly in areas such as gambling, tobacco and alcohol, popular media and tourism. It reviled the numerous investment schemes of the government — such as the *Amanah Saham Nasional* (ASN) — as state-sponsored forms of gambling that were *haram*.

The PAS leaders also denounced the government's promotion of popular culture, commercial media and tourism as 'morally decadent' forms of economic development that had only brought harm to Malaysian society and were a corrupting influence on Muslims. Citing the examples of Thailand and the Philippines (two Southeast Asian countries famed for their sex tourism and now suffering from the ravages of AIDS/HIV infection), PAS lamented the 'breakdown of societal relations and the corruption of moral values' brought about by the influx of tourists from abroad. (However, it omitted to note that not all these 'immoral and decadent' tourists were from the 'evil West' and quite a number were from Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Pakistan.)

To the question of what would constitute a 'proper' way of spending God's wealth on earth, the PAS leaders also had an answer. For them, the solution to Malaysia's economic and social problems lay in placing greater emphasis on public morality and the study of religion. They argued that it was the neglect of religious and moral education that had brought the country to where

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*n. 25 continued*

land of their own. PAS leaders also called for more investment in agriculture and the provision of more infrastructure facilities in rural areas to help the farming communities left behind during the decade of rapid growth in the 1980s (*Ibid.*, p. 31). Similar assistance (both technical and economic) was demanded on behalf of fishermen and small-scale rural industrialists (*Ibid.*, p. 30).

it was, and that the fault lay in the fundamental philosophy of state education that had to be addressed and remedied:

*Mata pelajaran agama dan moral yang diperkenalkan di sekolah-sekolah (dan) juga disebahagian pusat pengajian tinggi tidak lebih dari tempelan kepada sistem pendidikan yang bermatlamatkan kebendaan yang menguasai seluruh sistem pendidikan negara. Keruntuhan moral kian menjadi-jadi di semua peringkat rakyat adalah hasil daripada falsafah pendidikan yang didokong oleh negara selama ini. Kerajaan agak kurang berminat untuk mempertingkatkan dan memperbanyakkan pusat pengajian Islam disemua peringkat pengajian sekalipun pusat-pusat ini jelas berjaya mendokong falsafah pendidikan negara. ... Secara jelas, sistem pendidikan sekarang ini tanpa diambil kira falsafah yang dislogankan, adalah tunduk kepada dasar ekonomi dan politik negara yang berlandaskan falsafah liberalisme kapitalisme.<sup>26</sup>*

Having criticised the educational policy of the state as one based on a Godless, un-Islamic ideology, the PAS leaders argued that in their alternative model of development more financial assistance would be given to religious schools and institutions:

*Bilangan sekolah menengah agama kebangsaan dan negeri begitu terhad, berbanding dengan permintaan yang begitu ramai untuk menyambung pelajaran ke sekolah berkenaan. Pihak Kementerian Pendidikan nampaknya tidak begitu bersungguh atau terlalu lembab untuk meningkatkan dan mengembangkan sekolah-sekolah itu, walaupun kejayaan yang dibuktikan adalah setanding malah dalam setengah hal lebih baik dari sekolah menengah biasa.<sup>27</sup>*

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<sup>26</sup> Translation: The teaching of religion and morality in schools and some of the higher institutions of education in the country is no more than a mere appendage to an education system based on materialism which has become the norm throughout the country. The erosion of moral values which has reached endemic levels across all sections of society is the result of the education philosophy of the state. The government is clearly not interested in upgrading or expanding the system of religious education in the country, despite the fact that these institutions of religious education have clearly followed the guidelines of the state's educational philosophy. ... It is clear that, notwithstanding the slogans that are often trumpeted, the state's educational philosophy is under the influence of the philosophy of liberal-capitalism (Ibid., pp. 11–12).

<sup>27</sup> Translation: The number of middle-level religious high schools at both the state and federal level is so low, despite the overwhelming  
*continued p. 465*

PAS leaders were also quick to point out that the government of the UMNO-dominated ruling alliance, had given more attention to the development of national Chinese and Tamil schools<sup>28</sup> (part of UMNO's concession to the BN component parties) than to Islamic education. Touching upon an obviously sensitive point in UMNO's defence, PAS's spokesmen reminded the government that accountability from an Islamist perspective did not refer to accountability to one's coalition partners or political constituency, but rather to God and God alone.<sup>29</sup>

Citing *Qur'anic* injunctions, the *Hadith* of the Prophet as well as pronouncements of the righteous *khalifat'ul rashidin* (Caliphs) Abu Bakar as-Siddiq and Umar al-Khatab, PAS leaders reminded the government that the task of the true Muslim leader was to 'forbid evil and enjoin what is good'. But PAS's vision of the good life and the ideal Islamic society was diametrically opposed to UMNO's vision of the developed Malaysia it wanted to create. Not surprisingly, the MAPEN discussions reached a deadlock with neither side gaining an advantage. PAS had once again tried to raise the stakes in the Islamisation race *vis-à-vis* UMNO, but the hard-line Islamist rhetoric of some leaders had cost the party valuable support that it might have gained from non-Muslim sections of the population.

It was in the midst of this growing uncertainty and search for direction that the country went to the polls once again.

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n. 27 continued

demand from so many who want to pursue their studies there. The Ministry of Education is patently not interested or too slow in its effort to upgrade and expand this schooling system, even though such religious schools are of the same standard, and in some cases even superior to, the ordinary high schools (*Ibid.*, p. 12).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

*The 1990 Federal Election: PAS's Second Coming*

*Kalau mereka tuduh kita gila kuasa, kita mengaku: 'Ya, memang kita gila kuasa'. Sebab dengan kuasa kita boleh merubah keadaan negara kita yang telah dicengkam kezaliman. Tetapi apa yang lebih penting dari kuasa ialah kebenaran.<sup>30</sup>*

Speech by PAS leader Mohamad Sabu

In the general election of October 1990, PAS scored one of its most important victories ever in Kelantan. An even bigger shock for many was that this happened at a time when the government of Dr. Mahathir was celebrating its economic and political successes. (The country was well out of the recession by then and in the previous three years had enjoyed near double-digit growth, and Malay direct equity ownership in the country's economy had reached 19.2%.<sup>31</sup> UMNO's attempts to discredit the PAS *ulama* also proved futile in the end. Despite attempts by senior UMNO leaders to foreground their own 'progressive' interpretation of Islam, it was clear that the rhetoric of 'pure and authentic' Islam preached by the PAS elders had a greater appeal for many (see Table 5.4).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Translation: If they accuse us of wanting power, we will reply: 'Yes, we are mad for power.' Because it is with power that we can change this country that has been in the grip of tyranny. But what is even more important is that power is the truth. (Speech by PAS leader Mohamad Sabu, in *Profil Pemimpin Mohamad Sabu*, www.mohamadsabu.com, 1995.)

<sup>31</sup> In 1988–90, Malaysia's economy had experienced a radical turn-around; average level of growth was 9.1%. Unemployment had also dropped from 8.3% in 1988 to 6% in 1990. Due to a growth in demand for the country's exports, commodity earnings had increased from RM23.93 billion in 1985 to RM28.97 billion in 1990. As Khoo Boo Teik notes, 'in all these Mahathir could claim that the economic revival vindicated his economic policies and his and Daim Zainuddin's economic management'. (Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, pp. 324–325.)

<sup>32</sup> Prior to the election campaign, UMNO leaders had already begun attacking the Islamist credentials of the senior PAS *ulama*. During the *continued* p. 467

PAS's comeback was occasioned by the formation of the *Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah* (Muslim Unity Front, APU) coalition comprising PAS and a number of other Malay-Muslim parties, including *Semangat '46*, HAMIM (formed by ex-PAS president Asri Muda) and BERJASA (founded by ex-Chief Minister of Kelantan Mohamad Nasir). PAS's decision to enter into a coalition with these parties was not without problems. Prior to the election, there were internal attempts to question the leadership over the issue of working with other parties. This led to a faction within the party, called the *islah* (reform) group. However, it was too small to determine the outcome of the negotiations with the coalition partners and their provocations came to naught.<sup>33</sup>

APU was formed in May 1989 with the intention of breaking UMNO's grip on the predominantly Malay states in the north. The emphasis on Muslim (as opposed to Malay) unity in the name of the coalition was a reminder of the intra-Muslim divide introduced to the arena of Malaysian politics in the 1980s by PAS's use of the politics of *takfir*. APU's claim to be a united *Muslim* front meant that it regarded Islam, rather than Malay identity, as its primary unifying factor. While this may have helped to bring the various Malay-Muslim parties together, it also had the opposite effect of alienating non-Malay and non-Muslim opposition parties. DAP would not join the coalition, despite its overwhelming desire to

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n. 32 continued

1990 UMNO general assembly, veteran UMNO leader Ghafar Baba (then Deputy Prime Minister) claimed that UMNO's ethno-nationalist struggle was also a 'holy' one and the Malays should not fall for the claims of PAS's *ulama* who speak Arabic and who have studied at Islamic seminaries and colleges abroad. Ghafar Baba stated that 'the real meaning of the word *ulama* to my mind, is those who are knowledgeable and who use that knowledge to lead and raise the standard of living in this world and the next' (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 110).

<sup>33</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, pp. 106-107.

break BN's monopoly on power as it could not accept PAS's commitment towards the creation of an Islamic state in Malaysia.<sup>34</sup>

APU's slogan was '*Membangun Bersama Islam*' (developing with Islam), and the one thing common to all these parties was the desire to topple the UMNO-led BN government. The mutual opposition to Dr. Mahathir gave this loose coalition its coherence and internal unity. (The coalition fell apart a few years later, but by then PAS's hold on Kelantan was effectively consolidated.) Another factor in PAS's favour was the unpopularity of the UMNO Chief Minister of Kelantan, Tan Sri Mohamed Yaakob, who was not only seen as 'Mahathir's man' in Kelantan but who had also been ignominiously dubbed '*bapa rasuah*' (father of corruption) by none other than the Sultan of Kelantan.<sup>35</sup>

In the election, APU performed particularly well in the rural Malay heartland of the north. PAS won seven parliamentary seats (six in Kelantan and one in Terengganu), while Semangat '46 won eight seats,<sup>36</sup> including some in the predominantly Malay northern states, despite a last-minute attempt to destroy the Islamic credentials of its leader, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.<sup>37</sup> S46 was also accused by UMNO of betraying the interests of Malay-Muslims because the party had formed an (uneasy) alliance with the predominantly Christian Kadazan PBS party of Sabah.

<sup>34</sup> The bridge between PAS and DAP was the S46 party of Tengku Razaleigh. Soon after the formation of APU, S46 formed a second, parallel coalition with DAP called Gagasan Rakyat Malaysia, or GAGASAN. Thus during the 1990 election campaign, the ruling BN coalition faced two opposition coalitions, APU and GAGASAN. As the election campaign intensified, PBS broke away from the BN coalition and joined GAGASAN.

<sup>35</sup> Roger Kershaw, *Monarchy in Southeast Asia*, p. 109.

<sup>36</sup> Shortly after the election, a S46 member of parliament defected and joined UMNO, reducing S46's representation in Parliament from eight to seven.

<sup>37</sup> During the final days of the election campaign, the S46 president was accused by the mainstream media of having converted to Christianity. This followed reports that Tengku Razaleigh was seen in Sabah wearing a traditional East Malaysian headdress with a cross on it. Needless to say, the rumours proved baseless but the timing was particularly bad for S46.

However, APU's gains were not well distributed among the coalition partners. S46 suffered considerable losses (its share of parliamentary seats dropped from 13 to 8). PAS scored the biggest gains and it was clear that S46 would be relegated to the status of junior partner in the partnership between PAS and S46. PAS leaders who won parliamentary seats in Kelantan included Mohamad Sabu (Nilam Puri), Ustaz Nik Abdullah Arshad (Pengkalan Chepa), Sanusi Daing Mariok (Rantau Panjang) and Haji Bunyamin Yaacob (Bachok). Party president Fadzil Noor failed to win a parliamentary seat, but won PAS's only seat in the Kedah state assembly. Tuan Guru Hadi Awang (Marang) became the sole PAS member of parliament from Terengganu (*see* Tables 5.5-5.9).

Together with its coalition partners, PAS had swept Kelantan *in toto*, wiping out all traces of UMNO. They won all 39 state assembly seats and all of Kelantan's 12 parliamentary seats. Tuan Guru Nik Aziz had urged the people to go out and vote in the election, and to use their votes as part of the *jihād* to topple the UMNO-led government that had gone beyond the pale of Islam.<sup>38</sup> The *ulama* had also urged the people to perform *sembahyang hajat* (special prayers) and read the *do'a qunut nazilah* in their rallies to guarantee success.<sup>39</sup> Soon after the election results were known, the federal government expressed its dissatisfaction in unambiguous terms: the rural folk of Kelantan suddenly found they were no longer able to receive subsidised fertiliser, agricultural development loans or other forms of aid previously given by the government. Grants due to religious schools managed by the Yayasan Islam Kelantan were also perceptibly slowed down. PAS leaders reassured their followers that these were merely signs that the federal government was in a state of panic and anger over the loss of Kelantan, and that after the brief period of BN rule in the state (1978-90), things would soon return to normal.

The other major winner in the 1990 election was the DAP. Its share of parliamentary seats dropped (from 24 to 20), but it had made inroads into areas that were once MCA strongholds. In

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<sup>38</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 109.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Kuala Lumpur and Penang (both areas with high concentration of urban Chinese voters), DAP's gains were significant. In Penang, DAP was three seats short of gaining control of the state government — something that it had come close to doing way back in 1969. The 1990 election gave MCA cause for serious soul-searching. PBS's victory in Sabah (where it won 14 seats) allowed it to stay in power. Thus after the election, it appeared that a strong central government based in Kuala Lumpur was about to lose control of the two states on the very margins of the country — Kelantan in the north of the peninsula and Sabah to the east.

The UMNO-led BN coalition could not count itself fortunate. It had secured 127 parliamentary seats and only 53.4% of total votes. Although BN's representation in Parliament was much higher than that of the combined opposition, critics pointed out that the BN government came close to losing the majority of votes.

Another important factor was the discrepancy between the size of the *Malay* population and the *Muslim* population. Though the 1990/91 census showed that the Malay community was barely more than 50% of the population, the census also showed that the total number of Muslims was much higher: 58.6% (see Tables 5.10, 5.11). By abandoning the ethno-nationalist agenda of the past, PAS was now reaching out to the Malaysian Muslim constituency that was bigger than UMNO's natural ethnic constituency.<sup>40</sup>

Following its victory in Kelantan, PAS selected Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat as Chief Minister. He was the first *ulama* in Malaysia to hold such a high position. PAS president Ustaz Fadzil Noor supported the decision to select Nik Aziz on the grounds that it would bring PAS one step closer to realising its ultimate political goal: to create an Islamic state under the rule of the *alim ulama*.<sup>41</sup>

As soon as he came to power as Chief Minister of Kelantan, the *tuan guru* introduced radical reforms in the state administration. He announced that the legal system and procedures in the state

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<sup>40</sup> It should also be added that by 1990/91 the overall percentage of ethnic Malays in East Malaysia was even lower. In Sarawak they made up 21.2% of the population, while in Sabah they numbered 8.9%.

<sup>41</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 118.

would be changed to an Islamic system based on the *shariah*. He also stopped the issuing of gambling licences, prevented companies from using public advertisements displaying women, banned both modern and traditional cultural practices (such as rock concerts, *wayang kulit*, *mak yong* and *manora*; see Glossary) regarded as un-Islamic, forbade public events (including religious ones like *nasyid* performances) where men and women mixed freely, promoted a campaign for women to wear the *tudung* (headscarf) and radically reduced the expenditure and privileges of politicians and administrators in the state's civil service.<sup>42</sup> Henceforth, all state events and assemblies were to begin with the recitation of the *surah al-Fatihah* and conclude with the *surah al-Asr* and the *tasbih Kafarah*.<sup>43</sup> Along the streets of the capital and the countryside were erected banners that read 'Allahu Akbar', 'Alhamdulillah' and 'Subhan'allah'. Islam had arrived in no uncertain terms in the quiet state of Kelantan Darul Naim.

Working on the basis of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, Nik Aziz radically transformed the socio-cultural, political and economic milieu of Kelantan. From the moment he took over as Chief Minister, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz informed members of the state government and assembly that he would be introducing a new form of *ulama* leadership and state management, governing according to the principle of *musyawarah*. To clear up any unwanted confusion about the difference between *musyawarah* and democracy, Nik Aziz explained the principle of *musyawarah* in the following terms:

*Musyawarah yang dimaksudkan di sini ialah musyawarah terhadap perkara yang tidak mempunyai nas sahaja, sama ada pada al-Qur'an ataupun al-Hadith. Justeru itu, jika suatu perkara tersebut telah terdapat pada nas yang nyata, maka tidak dibolehkan bermesyuarah lagi mencari*

<sup>42</sup> The banning of gambling licences took effect on 1 January 1991. At the same time, the state government began drafting the *hudud* ordinances for Kelantan. The ban on all public events that allowed men and women to mix extended even to religious events such as the *Qur'an* reading competition and the performance of *nasyid* (religious songs) by women-only groups. Nik Aziz's justification was that 'even the voice of a woman could be regarded as part of her *aurat*, and thus it could distract men from their religious duties' (Ibid., pp. 139-140).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

*hukumnya. Apa yang perlu dalam hal ini ialah melaksanakannya tanpa berdolak-dalik lagi.*<sup>44</sup>

In his first speech as the new Chief Minister of Kelantan, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz explained his decision to bring about this *ulama*-led reform in the following way:

*Dewan undangan negeri ataupun Parlimen bukanlah tempat mencipta undang-undang baru, kerana undang-undang Allah telahpun tersedia termaktub dan mesti dilaksanakan tanpa dolak-dalik oleh semua perintah Islam.*<sup>45</sup>

Thus from the outset, space for debate and consultation on issues was circumscribed by the provisions that only matters not touched upon in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* were open to discussion, and if any discussion did take place then only the learned *ulama* were in a position to participate. Liberal critics of PAS were quick to attack this new style of *ulama* leadership as being fundamentally undemocratic and unrepresentative, something the party leadership was particularly sensitive about. To this end, efforts were made to bring members of the non-Malay, non-Muslim communities into local government administrative bodies and consultative groups.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 153. Translation: What is meant by the term *mesyuarah* here is *mesyuarah* (consultation) on matters that have no ruling (*nas*) on them, whether in the *Qur'an* or the *Hadith*. It follows that on all other matters that have already been ruled and decided upon, there is no further need for *mesyuarah*. What is required in these cases is the immediate implementation of what has been ruled upon, with no hesitation or procrastination.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 123. Translation: The state assembly or the parliament of the country is not a place for us to discuss and legislate new laws, because the laws of Allah are already there present before us, and it is the obligation of all Muslim leaders to implement these laws without hesitation.'

<sup>46</sup> Jamal notes that members of the Chinese community were quickly brought into the administration of Kelantan at the local level. Community leaders like Hang Hip Kuan and Ko Beng Ee (representing the Chinese community), S. K. L. Mani and Datuk Khalid Rahim Shaykh (representing the Indian and Siamese communities) were brought into the Kelantan committee for discussion of non-Muslim  
*continued p. 473*

By forcing through these controversial changes, the rejuvenated PAS of the 1990s was showing that it was now a party prepared to go all the way in its promise to radically re-invent the political terrain and political culture of the country. When PAS leaders were accused of being unduly influenced by the 'fundamentalist teachings' of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz responded to the criticisms by pointing out:

*Saya sendiri tidak pernah pergi ke Iran, tetapi saya sendiri terhutang budi kepada ulama-ulama Iran. Saya terhutang budi kepada al-Imam al-Ghazali di dalam bidang tasawwuf dan falsafah, dan kepada Sakdudin Taffazani dalam bidang sastera Islam dan lain-lain.<sup>47</sup>*

For Nik Aziz, the *tuan guru* inspired by the great *ulama* of the past and the architect of the new PAS of the 1990s, the purpose of the Islamic party was nothing short of winning control of the state and, having done so, winning the battle for the heart and soul of the people. This was the sacred duty and covenant carried by the *ulama* in particular, as the inheritors of the Prophet's mission on earth.<sup>48</sup> To understand how and why the party has developed into what it has become today, we need to understand more about the personal background and beliefs of the *ulama* who was singularly responsible for turning PAS into the most important Islamist opposition party in the history of Malaysia: Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat.

### ***Deoband's Own: Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat and PAS's Islamic Government in Kelantan***

*Kehilangan Asri Muda tidak ditangisi sebaliknya diganti Allah dengan seorang pemimpin dan mujahid baru kepada*

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n. 46 *continued*

concerns. Foo Chee Tow, a Chinese businessman, was brought into the Kota Bharu town council (*Ibid.*, pp. 144-145).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89. Translation: I myself have never been to Iran, but I am indebted and grateful to the *ulama* of Iran. I am grateful to Imam al-Ghazali for his work in the field of *tasawwuf* and philosophy, and to Sakdudin Taffazani for his work in the field of Islamic literature and others.

<sup>48</sup> The *ulama* leadership of PAS has, since the 1980s, relied on the slogan 'Ulama perwaris Nabi' (The *ulama* are the inheritors of the Prophet).

*PAS. Pemimpin itu tidak lain tidak bukan Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. Kemunculan Nik Aziz itu sepertilah pucuk dicita ulam mendatang kepada PAS Kelantan. Kesanggupan Nik Aziz memimpin Kelantan adalah sebagai suatu rahmat besar kepada PAS Kelantan, di samping ujian Allah kepada perjuangannya.*<sup>49</sup>

Mohamad Sayuti Omar,  
*Salam Tok Guru: PAS Perintah Malaysia*

The second *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, was born in Kampung Pulau Melaka in 1931. His *salasilah* (lineage) can be traced all the way back to the rulers of Kelantan, Patani and Langkasuka, including Maharaja Srimat Trailokyaraja Maulibhushana Warma Dewa, Raja Surendra, Raja Bharubhasa (Sultan Mahmud of Langkasuka), Sultan Iskandar Shah (the first Sultan of Kelantan), Sultan Mansur Shah, Raja Abdul Rahman, Raja Abdullah, Raja Mohammad and Raja Banjar.<sup>50</sup> His father was Raja Mohammad II, also known as Ustaz Nik Mat Alim Raja Banjar, one of the most prominent *ulama* in Kelantan at the time. Ustaz Nik Mat had studied the *Qur'an*, *Hadith*, *fiqh*, *tasawwuf*, *tafsir* and *tajwid* under famous Kelantanese *ulama* Tuan Guru Mohd Yusuf bin Muhamad, also known as Tok Kenali.<sup>51</sup> His mother, Raja Tijah, was herself of noble stock and belonged to one of the aristocratic families of Kelantan.

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<sup>49</sup> Translation: The loss of Asri Muda was not lamented, for with his passing Allah had blessed PAS with a new leader and *mujhadid*. That leader was none other than Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. His rise was something more than what was expected by PAS in Kelantan. His willingness to take on the leadership of PAS in Kelantan was a great blessing for the party in the state, and a test set by Allah for the struggle itself. (Mohammad Sayuti, *Salam Tok Guru*, p. 144.)

<sup>50</sup> For the complete *salasilah* of Nik Aziz Nik Mat, see Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*.

<sup>51</sup> Jamal notes that while Nik Aziz came from a long line of royalty and nobles, the family's fortunes had declined over the years. His grandfather, Raja Banjar, was a modest agriculturalist who owned farming land in Kelantan and opened up several plantations there. Nik Mat Alim was a student of Tok Kenali and Tuan Guru Haji Musa bin Abdul Samad (*Ibid.*, p. 9).

Nik Aziz was brought up in a prestigious and conservative religious household from the very beginning. His father, Ustaz Nik Mat Alim, had his own religious school, the Sekolah Agama Darul Anwar, and was well known for his curious habits and daily rituals. (One of these was to carry an umbrella with him wherever he went, in case he might encounter any women along the way. In such situations the umbrella served as a useful *hijab* (veil) between him and them.)<sup>52</sup> Nik Mat Alim objected to the fact that his son was forced to wear short pants to the government primary school. After only three months in the school, Nik Aziz moved to a traditional *pondok* school set up by Tok Kenali at Kubang Kerian. He later studied at another traditional *pondok* school in Terengganu, run by Tuan Guru Haji Abbas of Besut.<sup>53</sup> Thus Nik Aziz was the first PAS leader whose education was almost entirely based on the traditional *pondok* and *madrasah* system.

In 1952, Nik Aziz travelled to India to study at Dar'ul 'Ulum Deoband seminary, otherwise known as the Deobandi College that was established in 1867, when the leadership of the Indian Muslim community was in the hands of the *ulama* and the Ashraf élite.<sup>54</sup> Its

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> The Dar'ul Ulum Deoband was founded in the town of Deoband to the northeast of Delhi in 1867, a decade after the failed Indian Mutiny of 1857. The two major figures behind the college were Maulana Muhammad Qassim Nanotawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. Both had experienced traditional conservative as well as Sufi-inspired forms of education. In 1867, they settled at Doad and opened a *madrasah* at the Chattah Masjid. This was the nucleus of the Deobandi School. Both men had new ideas about improving the standard of Islamic education. Their *madrasah* was cut off from the mosque complex itself. The school, finally established in 1879, was funded via public contributions rather than depending on a *waqf*. The college borrowed techniques and methods of the government colleges, with a rector, principal and salaried teachers, but it also had a *mufti* who supervised the issuing of *fatwa*. The Deobandis accepted Sufism in principle as a legitimate branch of Islam, but rejected many Sufi practices and customs on the grounds that they were contaminated by Hindu and pre-Islamic elements. Thus the Deobandi school continued p. 475

founders were Maulana Muhammad Qassim Nanotawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. Both were from prominent *ulama* families and both had studied under the Sufi *murshid* Haji Imdadullah and Professor Mamluk Ali of Delhi College and were influenced by the ideas of Islamic revivalists such as Shah Wali 'Ullah and Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi.<sup>55</sup> The two other co-founders of the college were Maulana Zulfiqar Ali and Maulana Fazl-ur Rahman. Nanotawi and Gangohi had played a part in the anti-British uprising of 1857, as commanders of Indian forces based at Shamli near Delhi.<sup>56</sup>

As strict adherents of Islamic orthodoxy, the Wahhabi-inspired founders and teachers of the Deobandi school were thoroughly anti-Mutazilite in their outlook. For them, the philosophical and rationalist approach of the modernist school was dangerously close to the positivistic trends of the West, which they labelled as *nechari* (naturalist) and materialist. They preferred the approach of the

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became famous for its strict adherence to *Qur'an*, *Hadith* and *Sunnah*, and its zeal to purify Islam of Hindu, Hellenic, Persian and pre-Islamic elements. The students stayed at the *madrasah* for 6–10 years. During this time, they developed close bonds and ultimately the school produced a network of Deobandi *ulama* who shared a similar outlook and approach to Islam. The Deobandi *ulama* were known for their uncompromising and confrontational approach towards outsiders. The school issued 269,215 *fatwas* in its first hundred years, and its *ulama* engaged in many polemics against Hindus and Christian missionary movements. (See Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860–1900*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982 and *Traditionalist Islamic Activism*, Kenneth W. Jones, 'Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India', pp. 48–60.)

<sup>55</sup> Muhammad Aslam Syed, *The Muslim Response to the West: Muslim Historiography in India from 1857 to 1914*, Islamabad: National Institute for Historical and Cultural Research, 1988, p. 72.

<sup>56</sup> When the British counter-attacked, Nanotawi and Gangohi were later forced to flee Delhi. They went into hiding; upon their return they were arrested, but later released because of lack of evidence against them (Ibid.).

Asharites, who argued that the crisis in the Muslim world was due to the lack of faith among Muslims themselves. So great was their hostility to rationalist philosophy and logic that Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi once wrote:

I think that this *falsafah* (philosophy) is a useless discipline (which) is misleading. ... It mars the proper understanding of the *Shariah* and under its sordid influence, men are led to express heretical views. This devilish art, therefore, has to be banished from the *madrasahs*.<sup>57</sup>

Gangohi went as far as warning his students that whoever was caught discussing such ideas or reading books written by the Mutazilite philosophers would be expelled from the institution. Some other Deobandi teachers argued that the modernists and reformers (like Syed Ahmad Khan and the teachers of Aligarh) had not only confused their students, but had also inadvertently planted the seeds of Christianity in them. The Deobandi teachers therefore preferred to focus their attention on traditional subjects like *fiqh* and the study of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. In terms of their *fiqh* (legal) orientation, the Deobandi *ulama* were followers of the Hanafi school of thought and were admirers of the Hanbalite scholar ibn Taymiyya.

Another important aspect of the Deobandi tradition was its complex and ambiguous relationship with the Sufi tradition. While the Wahhabi-inspired Deobandis were reluctant to accept and acknowledge many practices and rituals of the Sufi *tariqa* (which they argued were contaminated by un-Islamic elements and bordered on the heretical), they nonetheless accepted and adapted many Sufi rites and rituals of mutuality and association when it suited them. As Metcalf writes:

Many of the teachers at Deoband shared Sufi bonds and many students sought initiation into the charisma-filled relationship of discipleship. The Deobandis cherished stories about the Sufis. They practiced the disciplines and meditations that opened them to what was typically imagined as a relationship that developed from one that was focused on their teachers to one that engaged with the Prophet and ultimately with the Divine. The bonds among the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

students and teachers in this largely male world were profound and enduring.<sup>58</sup>

Elevated thus to the status of intermediaries between mortals and God, the founders of the Deobandi school were of the opinion that only the *ulama* were qualified to talk about Islam and to interpret the teachings of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. In response to reformers of the Aligarh school, Maulana Nanotawi wrote his *Tasfiyat al-Aqaid*, in which he argued that the *ulama* were the inheritors of the knowledge and work of the Prophet and that modern intellectuals and reformers were not fit to discuss matters related to religion. (In response, Syed Ahmad Khan criticised Nanotawi and accused him and his followers of *shirk fi'l nubuwwa* — false association with the Prophet.)

Under the leadership of *ulama* such as Nanotawi and Gangohi, the Deobandi school furthered its aim 'to revive the sanctity of *Hadith* literature that was being challenged by the modernists' like Syed Ahmad Khan, Sayyid Mahdi Ali and Syed Ameer Ali.<sup>59</sup> The Deobandi school held the belief that *Hadith* literature was next to the *Qur'an* in importance and therefore should not be treated with disrespect. Furthermore, for the traditionalist *ulama*, *Hadith* literature had become the only valid source of information for historians and biographers. The Deobandi school's reputation as a bastion of *Hadith* preservation finally led to its recognition by other Islamist movements and thinkers abroad. Egyptian scholar Rashid Rida even visited the college while on his trip to India, and praised the Deobandi *ulama* for their efforts to defend the *Hadith*.<sup>60</sup>

The Deobandis also had a complex relationship with politics. During the 20th century, leaders of the Deobandi movement were reluctant to engage in open and direct political action. They opposed the partition of India, preferring to work within the context of a secular state where they could pursue their goals of missionary work with minimum interference. The *Jami'at Ulama-i Hind* (Association of Ulama of India), which was formed by Deobandi leaders, threw in their lot with the Indian National

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<sup>58</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf, *Traditionalist Islamic Activism*, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Muhammed Azlan Syed, *The Muslim Response to the West*, p. 74.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

Congress led by Gandhi and Nehru rather than Jinnah's Muslim League.<sup>61</sup> However, a faction of JUH later broke away and formed the pro-Pakistan *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam*<sup>62</sup> (JUI) that concentrated its activities in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. JUI later became the sponsors and benefactors of the *Taliban* movement of Afghanistan.

The Deobandis were therefore a highly complex and internally differentiated community that manifested their activities in many ways. Its leaders were both 'Sufis' and *ulama* who viewed politics like 'an empty box' that could be 'filled expediently and pragmatically depending on what seemed to work at a given situation'. As Metcalf has argued, virtually any strategy was accepted by the Deobandis as long as it served their goals.<sup>63</sup>

It was at the Deobandi school that Nik Aziz first underwent formal religious education at the hands of the Deoband *ulama* and *shaikh al-hadith* such as Maulana Husain Ahmad al-Madani, who taught him that Islam was in need of purification and that the task of safeguarding the interests of Muslims fell unto the *ulama*. The Deobandi school was known for its emphasis on the role of the *ulama* class. It had created a reputation for itself because of its intensive mode of teaching and its closed academic atmosphere that helped to bring the students closer together, thereby creating strong *ulama-murid* networks. Unlike the Aligarh college of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the Deobandi school did not believe in the creation of a Muslim political élite. Instead, it focused its attention and energy on creating a class of *ulama* to serve as teachers and leaders to their communities. Among the prestigious fraternity of the Deobandi school were men such as Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi (who never openly acknowledged his links with the institution), the

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<sup>61</sup> Yohanan Friedmann, 'The Attitude of the Jami'yyat-i Ulama-i Hind to the Indian National Movement and the Establishment of Pakistan', in Gabriel Baer (ed.), *The Ulama in Modern History*, Asian and African Studies VII, Jerusalem: Oriental Society, 1971, pp. 157-183.

<sup>62</sup> Sayyid A. S. Pirazda, *The Politics of the Jamiat Ulema-i Islam in Pakistan 1971-1977*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>63</sup> Barbara D. Metcalf, *Traditionalist Islamic Activism*. p. 3.

founder of the *Jama'at-e Islami*, and Qazi Husain Ahmad, who took over as the third *emir* of the *Jama'at* in 1987.<sup>64</sup>

After completing his studies at Deoband in 1957, Nik Aziz travelled to Lahore, Pakistan to study *tafsir* (exegesis of the *Qur'an*). He then travelled to Egypt where he was impressed by the progress and development that he saw around him.<sup>65</sup> There he studied at al-Azhar University in Cairo, where he first read Arabic and then Islamic law and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). In Cairo, he also became acquainted with the work of other famous Islamist thinkers such as Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb and movements such as the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin*.<sup>66</sup> (Another PAS leader who had established close contacts with the *Ikhwan* while studying in Egypt was Tuan Guru Hadi Awang.) Nik Aziz graduated with a degree in law in 1962, after studying abroad for 12 years.

When Nik Aziz finally returned to Malaysia, his family and friends could not recognise him at first. His appearance had changed radically as he had grown accustomed to wearing Western dress including black leather shoes, coat and tie. However, Nik Aziz soon altered his sartorial style to suit the needs and norms of the environment around him.<sup>67</sup>

Nik Aziz's ideas and beliefs were very much shaped by his educational experiences abroad. The Deobandi school, for instance, taught its students the values of self-reliance and independence. Deoband college itself relied heavily on the donations and sacrifices of its pupils and the community, and this is something that Nik Aziz has tried to inculcate in his own followers in Malaysia. It was this approach that helped him generate the necessary funds

<sup>64</sup> Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi studied the Deobandi curriculum and received an *ijazah* (certificate) from the teachers of the school, although he never joined the ranks of the Deobandi *ulama* himself. He later founded *Jama'at-e Islami* and became its first *emir*. Qazi Husain Ahmad took over as *emir* of the *Jama'at-e Islami* from Mian Tufayl on 15 October 1987.

<sup>65</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 16.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

(through donations) to revive several educational projects, like his father's Darul Anwar religious school, which was in danger of closing.<sup>68</sup>

The lessons drawn from his experience at Deoband and al-Azhar also convinced Nik Aziz that the salvation of the Muslims depended on the guidance they received. The Deobandi school, shaped as it was by its *ulama* and Ashraf culture, argued that Muslims should be guided only by the *alim ulama*, and that society would be best governed when led by the spiritually inclined.<sup>69</sup> Nik Aziz reflected these values in both his personal beliefs and his activities. In 1964, he took up a teaching post at Ma'ahad Muhammadi religious school in Kota Bharu and later at Sekolah Menengah Agama Tarbiah Mardiah, Panchor. Inspired by the example set by the activists of the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin*, in 1967 Nik Aziz took his first steps into the world of politics by joining PAS, which he regarded as the only party that tried to uphold the *iqamah ad-din*, uplift the *khair al-ummah* and pave the way for *daulah Islamiyyah*.<sup>70</sup> He then ran as a PAS candidate for the constituency of Kelantan Hilir (Pengkalan Chepa).<sup>71</sup> By taking these steps, Nik Aziz became part of the *harakah Islamiyyah*.

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<sup>68</sup> Upon his return to Malaysia in 1962, Nik Aziz first worked at Tarbiyyah Mardiah Islamic Secondary School. He then worked at his father's school, Darul Anwar Religious School, which was in a state of crisis at the time as its funds were low and it could not afford to pay its teaching staff and maintenance costs. Nik Aziz began to tour the state, giving speeches in which he compared the state of Islamic education in Malaysia with that of other Islamic countries. He argued that Muslims should pay for their own Islamic education, and cited the example of al-Azhar University in Cairo, which was sponsored by public donations. This produced the desired result, and the public began making donations to Darul Anwar school (*Ibid.*, p. 31).

<sup>69</sup> Kenneth W. Jones, 'Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India', pp. 58, 61-62.

<sup>70</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>71</sup> Nik Aziz took over the constituency from the previous PAS candidate, Tuan Haji Ahmad Abdullah. Jamal notes that even then Nik Aziz's popularity was very much due to his 'scriptural authority' and image as an Islamic leader among the people (*Ibid.*, pp. 73-74).

From this period, Nik Aziz began to lecture his followers and constituents about their religious as well as socio-political obligations. In the curriculum and co-curriculum programme he developed for his fellow teachers and students, he stressed the importance of the role of the *ulama* as the spiritual guides of the community who would care for both the material and spiritual well-being of the *awamm*.<sup>72</sup> He reminded his students in the religious school that they were not separate from society and that they had a moral and spiritual obligation to return to society as leaders and teachers.<sup>73</sup> For Nik Aziz, religious education was a means to create a class of spiritually inclined and *alim ulama* (knowledgeable leaders) who would safeguard the welfare and concerns of Muslims and see that *shariah* law would reign supreme in the land.<sup>74</sup> Students of the religious schools were assets in the struggle to introduce an Islamic political system in the country.<sup>75</sup> Here the Deobandi influence in his thinking was clearly seen.

The other aspect of Deobandi thinking clearly evident in Nik Aziz's style of leadership is the desire to purify Islam and Muslim culture from elements regarded as *khurafat* (un-Islamic), *shirk* (heretical), *bid'ah* (innovative) and *ajaran sesat* (deviationist). As soon as he returned to Malaysia, Nik Aziz declared that many traditional practices sanctioned by the older generation of traditional *ulama* were un-Islamic. The traditional *ulama*, he argued, were wrong because their scriptural knowledge rested on *kitab kuning* (old books)<sup>76</sup> that were faulty or badly translated. He insisted that only a thorough campaign to eliminate and remove all these elements from Malay society could transform them into true Muslims.<sup>77</sup> This

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 32. Nik Aziz's earliest writings were mainly focused on religion and spirituality. His books touched on *fardu 'ain* (religious obligations), life after death and *qiamat* (day of resurrection) (Ibid., p. 61).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 36–37.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> '*kitab kuning*': lit. 'yellow books' — so called because of their age and the discoloration of their pages.

<sup>77</sup> Jamal notes that Nik Aziz immediately found himself in confrontation with the older generation of *alim ulama* who had sanctioned  
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brought him into conflict with the traditional *ulama* of the establishment. In the following years, Nik Aziz's polemics against un-Islamic customs and practices embraced a host of contaminating evils ranging from pre-Islamic Hindu, Hellenic, Persian and animist beliefs to the scourge of modern secular ideologies like communism and capitalism.

Within PAS, Nik Aziz's reputation as the '*tuan guru*' (respected teacher) grew rapidly. By the 1980s, his position within the party's *Dewan Ulama* ensured that he was in the right place to offer comments and criticisms on the conduct of party leaders and members. After he took command of the *Dewan Ulama*, Nik Aziz sought to build up its importance as the party's 'inner chamber' of consultation and arbitration.<sup>78</sup> Together with party president Haji Yusof Rawa, he sought to strengthen the credibility and influence of the *ulama* leadership of the party through the *Dewan* that continued to issue judgements sanctioning the policies of the political leaders of the party. Nik Aziz's position within the party was strengthened even more in 1986 when he became the only PAS candidate to win a parliamentary seat. Following the party's worst ever performance at the polls, the *tuan guru* was given the authority to make whatever changes he felt were necessary to bring the party back into line with its Islamist orientation. Nik Aziz then initiated a series of reforms and purges aimed at eliminating once and for all the vestiges of the Asri era. As Mohammad Sayuti Omar describes it:

*Beliau telah melakukan reformasi kepimpinan, sikap, pemikiran dan pendekatan didalam PAS. Fahaman-fahaman sekularisme yang masih melingkungi sebilangan kecil pemimpin PAS satu masa dahulu perlahan-lahan dihapus dan dibersihkan. Beliau melakukan pembersihan dalam PAS dari*

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many traditional Malay customary practices, such as traditional songs, *wayang kulit* (shadow-puppet) performances and dances like the *manora* which were attacked by Nik Aziz on the grounds that they were contaminated by un-Islamic and pagan influences (Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, pp. 59-60).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

*fahaman kebendaan sesetengah pihak kepada mereka yang benar-benar ingin mengamalkan Islam.*<sup>79</sup>

Following the 'cleansing' of the party of the residual elements of Asri's ethno-nationalist era, Nik Aziz began a purge of PAS leaders and members regarded as moderates who were not able or willing to support the rise of the *ulama* faction within the party:

*Saki baki penyokong Asri yang mengambil sikap politik sederhana, yang kurang yakin kepada kesyumuluan Islam dan pentadbiran Ulama dibersihkan. Nik Aziz benar-benar ingin melihat PAS dikuasai oleh mereka yang mempunyai komitmen perjuangan yang tinggi dan ikhlas, sesuai dengan dasar dan prinsip perjuangannya. Serentak itu beliau mula melatih generasi baru sebagai pemimpin. Kombinasi pemimpin yang dilahirkan beliau mencakupi dua golongan, iaitu agama dan akademik.*<sup>80</sup>

These changes in the party's leadership profile were timely because the confrontation between PAS and the UMNO-led government was intensifying. In the 1990s, observers began to notice a marked shift in the government's attitude towards PAS and the Islamist movements in the country. While the 1980s had witnessed a period when UMNO leaders and state bureaucracy functionaries were willing and able to work with some sections of the Islamist opposition, political developments within and without the country had made this pragmatic approach more and more difficult. Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid notes that: 'In the 1990s, the scenario of overt political repression displacing the pragmatism of co-

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<sup>79</sup> Translation: He [Nik Aziz] began a reform of the leadership, values, thinking and approach of PAS. The secular understanding and values that remained among a small group of party leaders were slowly but surely eradicated and wiped away. Thus he cleansed all the PAS members, from those who still held materialist views to those who were committed towards Islam (Mohammad Sayuti, *Salam Tok Guru*, p. 144).

<sup>80</sup> Translation: The remnants of Asri's followers who still maintained a moderate approach to politics and who were unconvinced of Islam's potential and the *ulama's* ability to govern were soon wiped out. Nik Aziz wanted to see PAS come under the control of those who had only the highest commitment and who were sincere, in keeping with his own beliefs and principles. At the same time, he [Nik Aziz] began to train a new generation of party leaders, made up of two groups: the *ulama* and the academically-oriented (Ibid., p. 145).

optation and Islamisation in order to neutralise the Islamic challenge was displayed.<sup>81</sup>

*Fighting Islam with Islam (II): The UMNO-led Government's Response to the Renewed Challenge from PAS*

As the antagonism between PAS and UMNO deepened, the government began to rely more and more upon the state's religious bureaucracy as well as its security apparatus to neutralise the challenge mounted by PAS and other Islamist movements. State-sponsored Islamic institutes and research centres like IKIM were given the task of promoting the government's own brand of modernist-developmental Islam, and the government-controlled television and radio networks dutifully disseminated their ideas to the captive public.

To further reinforce its grip on the Islamist discursive terrain, the government set up another Islamic institute in 1991: The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, 'Political Dimensions of Religious Conflict in Malaysia: State Response to an Islamic Movement in the 1990s', paper presented at the 1999 Annual Conference on Malaysian Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> ISTAC was officially opened in 1991. It was, from the very beginning, the brainchild of its founder-director, Syed Naquib al-Attas. Anwar Ibrahim, the ex-president of ABIM, was its first chairman. In its early years, ISTAC received much support and patronage from the Malaysian government, both financial assistance as well as publicity and endorsement of its activities. In the preface (p. xiii) of the second edition of his book *Islam and Secularism*, al-Attas outlines the mandate and agenda of his institute: 'Among its most important aims and objectives are to conceptualize, clarify, elaborate, scientific and epistemological problems encountered by Muslims in the present age; to provide an Islamic response to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the modern world and various schools of thought, religion and ideology; to formulate an Islamic philosophy of education; including the definitions, aims and objectives of Islamic education, to formulate an Islamic philosophy of science.' In short, the aim of ISTAC was to *continued p. 486*

under the leadership of influential Islamist thinker Prof. Syed Naquib al-Attas.<sup>83</sup> Coming just a few months after President Soeharto launched the *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia*<sup>84</sup> (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals, ICMI), the forma-

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spearhead al-Attas's own project of the Islamisation of knowledge which in turn is intimately linked to his political project of the revival of the spirit of Islam through the creation of a new class of intellectually competent and knowledgeable Islamic leaders who conform to the rules of *adab* and the social and political hierarchies al-Attas regards as essentially Islamic. Al-Attas was given a lot of freedom in designing ISTAC, down to its architectural details. The main building, which houses the library, conference hall and research units, designed by him, reflects strong Hispano-Moorish styles and features.

<sup>83</sup> Syed Naquib al-Attas is perhaps one of the most influential Islamist thinkers in Malaysia today. His influence extends well beyond the confines of academia and he has played an important role in the cultivation of the Islamic élite in the country. He comes from one of the best-known aristocratic families in the south and is of mixed Malay-Arabic stock. His early academic research was in the fields of Malay Sufism and literature. His fame was assured with the publication of his two-volume dissertation *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (1965, published 1970). This Sufi influence is clearly apparent in his educational philosophy. He also prides himself as a designer, calligrapher and artist. In 1993, he was awarded the Al-Ghazali Chair of Islamic Philosophy by the Malaysian government. (The award was presented by his own student-turned-politician Anwar Ibrahim, then a Cabinet minister.) In 1994, he was awarded membership of the Royal Jordanian Academy and in 1995, an honorary doctorate by the University of Khartoum.

<sup>84</sup> ICMI was formally launched on 6 December 1990. Although Robert Hefner has noted that a complex popular narrative had been spun around the early stages of the formation of ICMI, it is clear that it was 'a Soeharto-sponsored association designed to mobilise Muslim support at a time when segments of the Indonesian military were challenging the president. Soeharto also hoped to use ICMI to take the wind out of the sails of the fledgling pro-democracy movement by dividing it along religious lines'. (Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam*, p. 125.) The formation of ICMI gave Soeharto the opportunity to publicly show off his religious credentials and newfound commitment to *continued p. 487*

tion of ISTAC in Malaysia marked a shift closer towards the Islamist register in both countries. By creating ISTAC in Malaysia and ICMI in Indonesia, the governments of both countries hoped to take the wind out of the sails of the resurgent forces of Islam in their own backyards. However, by trying to fight the tide of oppositional Islam with their own brand of statist Islam, they had effectively added to the inflation of Islamist discourse and also raised levels of expectations among their own people. (Though it has to be noted that ISTAC's focus was more on complex questions of theology, *adab* and Islamic metaphysics as opposed to IKIM's focus on Islamic-related developmental issues.)

ISTAC's founder-director, Syed Naquib al-Attas, himself the product of Eton, Sandhurst and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, was mentor to ex-ABIM leader Anwar Ibrahim<sup>85</sup> (then Finance Minister in Dr. Mahathir's government). His influence was also spread far and wide among a whole generation of Malaysian university graduates and ABIM members.<sup>86</sup>

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Islam. The Indonesian press dutifully reported the story of how Soeharto had dictated his own interpretation of Islam as a philosophy and way of life to B. J. Habibie, who later became a co-chairman of ICMI (*Ibid.*, p. 137). Soeharto was quick to court the progressive elements of the Islamist movement to lend their support to the project: Nurcholish Madjid, Dawam Rahardjo, Imaduddin Abdulrahim and General Alamsyah Ratu Perwiranagara (former Religious Affairs Minister) were all on the committee which drew up the guidelines and working parameters of the institute. The posts of co-chairmen of ICMI went to B. J. Habibie, a German-trained technocrat and close confidant of Soeharto, and Dr. Emil Salim, a Berkeley-educated technocrat who had spearheaded the Soeharto government privatisation and liberalisation policies in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>85</sup> Chandra Muzaffar has noted that 'within the country the person who had the greatest influence on Anwar Ibrahim in his ABIM years was Syed Naquib al-Attas, then professor of Malay Studies at the National University of Malaysia'. (Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, p. 54 n. 23.)

<sup>86</sup> The anti-secular rhetoric of al-Attas was taken up with gusto by ABIM leaders. Chandra Muzaffar (*Ibid.*, p. 48) noted that 'ABIM *continued p. 488*

Al-Attas's most influential book, *Islam and Secularism*, was first published by ABIM in 1978 (the same year that Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published in the West); and it became the standard reference for an entire generation of middle-class professionals, politicians, students and teachers in the country.

In Malaysian academic circles, Naquib al-Attas was known as the Malaysian proponent of the 'Islamisation of knowledge' project, now a major international effort for which he claimed credit. He was well received in high-level social and political circles because of his mixed Malay-Arabic ancestry, his aristocratic background and his intimate links to the early founders of the dominant Malay conservative UMNO party. He was, in short, clearly an establishment figure and his institute was firmly located at the centre of the government's network of Islamic research and academic institutes. By co-opting Naquib al-Attas into its expansive network of Islamic institutions and research centres, the government had managed, yet again, to gain an upper hand against the Islamist opposition.

While the Islamist institutions of the state were engaged in their project of re-inventing Islam as a modern system of values and way of life, they overlooked the fact that their message was not being delivered to all quarters of Malay-Muslim society. (PAS also had its own channels of communication and in 1990 was allowed to publish *Harakah* twice a week, albeit still with the same old restrictions.)<sup>87</sup> The efforts of the state's Islamist institutions were

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criticised secularism and other western ideologies as antithetical to the ideal of an Islamic state. Secularism, for ABIM, is an ideology that restricts the concept of existence to 'this world' and the 'here and now'. ... As a consequence of this, secularism, as an ABIM leader once argued, has resulted in a modern society 'inflicted by such diseases as hedonism, materialism, individualism, utilitarianism, permissiveness, relativistic values and anomie'. A similar view of secularism is found al-Attas's works, such as *Islam and Secularism*.

<sup>87</sup> In early 1990, the *Harakah* editors applied to the Ministry of Home Affairs for permission to publish twice a week, and approval was given. The Ministry also stated that *Harakah* could only be sold to *continued p. 489*

being negated by other government policies. Some of the government's more controversial measures proved a boon for the Islamist party in opposition that was always on the lookout for chinks in UMNO's armour.

PAS did not have to wait long before UMNO began to make mistakes. In the same year that ISTAC was set up, the UMNO-controlled Terengganu government demolished a PAS-run religious educational institution, Institut Berakan, which had been set up in 1976 (when PAS was a member of the ruling BN coalition). The institute had become widely regarded as one of the most successful private educational centres in Terengganu, housing an average of 500 students a year (around 900 during the MCE and HSC examination seasons). However, it was also regarded by some as a den of PAS activism and was accused of indoctrinating its students with PAS's Islamist ideology. The UMNO-led state government decided to act by demolishing the institute (partly on the grounds that the permit for the use of the land had been withdrawn as soon as PAS left the BN coalition in the late 1970s). The institute was demolished at dawn on 19 November 1991, after a series of vocal protests from students and academic staff as well as the local community. PAS supporters jumped at the chance to accuse the UMNO government of practising double standards and were quick to make comparisons with PAS-administered Kelantan next door. In the words of Zulkifli Sulong:

*Kalau di Kelantan kerajaannya memusnahkan rumah-rumah yang dijadikan sarang maksiat, di Trengganu kerajaan pimpinan UMNO memusnahkan sekolah yang dijadikan sarang ilmu. Kedua-duanya berlaku diatas tanah kerajaan. Inilah sistem nilai yang ada.*<sup>88</sup>

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party members and that the newspaper should be clearly labelled and set apart from other publications at bookshops and news-stands. Despite these restrictions, circulation figures rose considerably, and copies of the paper were regularly sold to non-members as there was no effective way to monitor its sales.

<sup>88</sup> Translation: If in Kelantan the [PAS] state government has knocked down buildings used for vice and sinful activities, in Terengganu the UMNO-led state government has decided to knock down a building *continued p. 490*

Also in 1991, the relationship between Kuala Lumpur and the Sabah state government deteriorated once again. On 13 May 1991, Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan (brother of Pairin Kitingan, Sabah's Chief Minister and head of PBS) was arrested and detained under the ISA for two years for allegedly plotting the secession of Sabah from the Malaysian federation.<sup>89</sup> The arrest of Jeffrey Kitingan and some of his followers did little to improve ties between East and West Malaysia, and the incident was used against the government by all the opposition parties as proof of UMNO's hunger for power and dominance.<sup>90</sup> Needless to say, PAS leaders and media organs were quick to exploit the issue to their advantage.

Another controversial move came with the passing of the 1992 National Land Act (Amendment) that proved highly unpopular with the rural Malay-Muslim community. By giving the government the right to acquire land from rural peasants (with no recourse for appeal to the courts) and allowing foreigners to buy land in the country, Dr. Mahathir's government had unwittingly provoked a strong reaction from the rural Malay communities — a section of society long regarded as PAS's natural constituency. When it became known that the UMNO-led Kedah government had used the 1992 Act to acquire 6,700 hectares of land (then given to Duta Point Corporation for the development of Jerai International Park), PAS was among the first to object and to publicise the matter for its own benefit.<sup>91</sup> PAS leaders

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*n. 88 continued*

used for the promotion of knowledge. Both these things have happened on government-controlled land. That is the difference between the two value systems. (Zulkifli Sulong, *Operasi Tawan Trengganu*, p. 74.)

<sup>89</sup> *Sabah Times*, 14 May 1991.

<sup>90</sup> Prominent PBS leaders also detained under the ISA included Benedict Topin, Albinus Yudah, Damit Undikai, Abdul Rahman, Vincent Chong and Alfa Hamid, who were accused of plotting a violent secession of Sabah with the help of foreign agents, funding from abroad and hired mercenaries. (Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia*, p. 294 n. 4.)

<sup>91</sup> *Jenayah Akademik Pemimpin UMNO?*, p. 47.

also criticised the 1992 Act on the grounds that it allowed Singaporeans to buy land in the neighbouring Malaysian state of Johor, thereby raising the price of local real estate and effectively driving rural Malays from their own homes and communities.

The relentless accumulation of power at the centre, and the growing resentment against the increasing dominance of the federal government, meant that outside Kuala Lumpur the presence of the state was often met with resistance, if not outright rejection. This was particularly true of the states and constituencies held by PAS.

In its home state of Kelantan, PAS found itself in a position to translate its own vision of an Islamic state into reality. This it did without hesitation or delay. Some of the more cosmetic changes to Kelantan's social, political and economic life were alluded to earlier, but these were merely the early indicators of greater changes to come. However, PAS's 'home cleaning' plans were temporarily eclipsed by an even more radical overhaul about to take place in the royal houses of the Malay sultanates. What eventually turned into the country's second constitutional crisis had its roots in an earlier conflict (the 1983 constitutional crisis) that refused to go away. More than a decade later, the government of Dr. Mahathir was bent on cleaning the stables of the royal houses once and for all.

#### *PAS and the Constitutional Crisis of 1992-93*

In the same year that the US dispatched 20,000 Marines to Somalia in search of errant warlords; the *mujahideen* finally gained control of Mohamad Najibullah's capital of Kabul, and Thailand's General-turned-Prime Minister Suchinda was forced out of office by pro-democracy demonstrators protesting in the streets of Bangkok, a few (royal) heads were set to roll in Malaysia as well.

The constitutional crisis of 1992-93 came at a time that favoured Dr. Mahathir and UMNO leaders. Malaysia's international standing had improved considerably as a result of its pragmatic handling of the Gulf conflict. The Bosnian crisis that erupted in 1992 also allowed the Malaysian government to play a more vocal role on the international stage, helping the Mahathir administration

shore up its Islamic credentials even more. In the region, Malaysia was seen as a model of sustainable development and 'proof' that an authoritarian form of rule could bring about economic prosperity, material progress and inter-communal harmony.

After more than a decade of rapid economic development (which finally reached its explosive climax five years later), the Malaysian public was well and truly converted to the post-modern creed of consumerism. The painfully obvious differentials of income and wealth between the Malay élite and the ordinary populace were clear for all to see, but the Malaysian press — muzzled as it was by restrictive laws and their patrons — had little else to do but to titillate the jaded masses with tales of the wealth and grandeur of the royal families and their prodigal sons (and fathers).

The Malaysian press was also wont to make unfavourable comparisons between the Malay rulers and kings of neighbouring countries, like King Bhumibol of Thailand who intervened personally in the political crisis that nearly ripped his country apart in 1992. The monarch's timely intervention prevented the crisis from escalating even further and the recalcitrant General Suchinda was finally persuaded to step down from the post of Prime Minister. The Malaysian press were on hand to point out that such statesmanlike qualities were not in abundant supply among the Malay rulers. The conduct of some rulers — the Johor Royal family, in particular — had gone beyond the pale of public tolerance and the mood was right for a major confrontation to keep the royals in check.

There were also other serious political considerations to be borne in mind. Dr. Mahathir, as we have seen earlier, had always made it clear that one of his aims was to bring the royal families under the control of the constitution. This meant not only bringing the members of the royal houses under the rule of law, but also under the influence of the federal government. Some Malay rulers had begun to show dangerous signs of independent thinking and their actions betrayed a willingness (even desire) to confront the federal government head on. This had already been made obvious by the actions of the Sultans of Perak, Johor and Kelantan in the 1970s and 1980s; the Sultan of Kelantan's tacit support for the opposition at

the 1990 election proved to be the final straw.<sup>92</sup> Sultan Ismail Petra was more than willing to play his part in this war of nerves, and as Kershaw has argued, the Kelantanese monarch was quite adept at obstructing the advances of Kuala Lumpur in the affairs of his own state:

... the Sultan of Kelantan may have had little relevance for Malay supremacy, but [unlike his brother-rulers] he was not an embarrassment to non-royal leaders because of misbehaviour which taints them by association. Rather, he had become a taunter of centralized power and the decline of constitutional democracy, on the strength of a modest personal activism and impeccable personal reputation as Sultan of a State under opposition control. This was a challenge far more serious than where Sultans have withheld cooperation from UMNO State Governments in order to extract personal pecuniary benefit.<sup>93</sup>

To prove just how independent he was, Sultan Ismail began to show his support for the PAS-led state government in public (though in private the relationship between the two sides remained cold). He accepted invitations from PAS leaders and began to speak of their Islamisation programme in positive terms. To the shock and dismay of the Kuala Lumpur business community, he also began to interfere in the federal government's plans to build a massive hydroelectric dam at Pergau. This upset not only the political leadership of UMNO, but also the influential coterie of businessmen and financiers who were now part of the ever-growing number of corporate figures under UMNO's patronage network.

Sultan Ismail was, in short, precisely the sort of independent-minded Malay ruler who would have been exiled to the Seychelles during the British colonial era for being 'too smart' for his own good. Needless to say, that did not make him popular with the UMNO-led government.

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<sup>92</sup> Though no member of the Kelantanese royal family played a direct part in the 1990 election campaign, Dr. Mahathir and his supporters claimed the Sultan had played an active part in UMNO's defeat in the election and the return of PAS to Kelantan (Roger Kershaw, *Monarchy in Southeast Asia*, p. 109).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Moves were made to bring the royals into the limelight, so that they would once again come under public scrutiny. The question of the role and function of the royal families was critically discussed at the UMNO general assemblies in 1991 and 1992. This eventually led to a 'Proclamation of Constitutional Principles' intended to lay down rules of proper conduct for the Malay Sultans and Rajas. Just what the proclamation was meant to achieve remained an open question for, as Kershaw has pointed out, three of the nine Sultans (Johor, Kelantan and Kedah) refused to consent to it and, anyway, the document lacked any legal force.<sup>94</sup> Just when it seemed that both sides had reached an impasse, the Tengku Bendahara of Johor — Tengku Majid, son of Sultan Iskander Mahmood — set the ball rolling again by assaulting the goalkeeper of the Perak hockey team on 10 July 1992.

Just how and why the attack took place remains a mystery, though rumours claimed that the Tengku Bendahara was angry with the performance of his own state's hockey team in a match between the two states. The Perak goalkeeper was assaulted before witnesses and the matter quickly became the stuff of local gossip. Not to let such a golden opportunity pass, the Cabinet discussed the matter on 12 September. Soon after, a warning was issued that members of the royal houses should no longer think of themselves as being immune from the law. On 18 October the wayward prince was banned from the sport for five years. The entire episode was handled with considerable panache and skill, further improving the image of Dr. Mahathir's government as the 'defender of the people's rights' and considerably boosting the image of the UMNO-led government. An even bigger bonus came when, not too long afterwards, the father of the prince proved that he, too, was not above the occasional bout of royal rage.

As a result of the fracas involving the Tengku Bendahara, the Sultan of Johor decided to withdraw his state's team from all future tournaments. This move was met with disappointment and anger by scores of Johor sports enthusiasts, who regarded the Sultan's move as erratic and counter-productive, to say the least.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

The situation reached the point of no return when Douglas Gomez, the Johor coach, publicly complained about the isolation of the state's team from the national tournament. As a result of his interview with the local press, the coach was summoned to the palace for an informal meeting with the Sultan. The meeting turned out to be much briefer than expected as the only things exchanged were a few blows. Douglas Gomez was assaulted by the Sultan, again before a crowd of dumbstruck witnesses.

This second assault provided Dr. Mahathir's government with the perfect reason to embark on another campaign against the royal houses. With the tacit support and backing of the Cabinet, Douglas Gomez filed an official police report against the Sultan of Johor on 6 December. The battle-lines had been drawn between the royal families and the government.

Once again, UMNO leaders launched a massive national 'road-show' to get their message across. Senior leaders like Dr. Mahathir, Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba and Anwar Ibrahim toured the country and spoke at length about the need to rein in some of the more uncontrollable members of the royal houses before they did more harm to themselves and members of the public. While most senior UMNO leaders couched their polemics in terms of a discourse of rights and obligations, the rhetoric of Anwar Ibrahim was liberally flavoured with references to Islam, Islamic law and ethics.

Once again, Anwar (and his ex-ABIM supporters in UMNO) was called upon to provide an Islamic justification for government policies. That the executive opened the floodgates to Islamic criticism of the monarchy was hardly a surprise under the circumstances. The move was a tactical one, aimed at ensuring that the campaign against the royal houses could not be deflected or blunted by a counter-critique from PAS and the Islamist opposition.

A forceful counter-move from PAS did not materialise. The Islamist party had, by then, learnt their lesson. The betrayal by the royal families during the constitutional crisis of 1983 (when the Sultan of Terengganu had actually denounced PAS leaders who had supported him) had taught the party that the monarchy could not be counted upon as an ally to the Islamist cause and that the Malay monarchs were more than willing to turn against the very

same people who had defended them. In the end, PAS stood aside and allowed *Semangat '46* to mount a counter-challenge against the advances of UMNO.

However, neither the royal houses nor S46 could hold back the tide of public anger released by the state and the government-controlled media. While Tengku Razaleigh and the S46 leaders attempted to defend the special position of the monarchy as the natural symbol of Malay cultural and political supremacy, the ethno-nationalist rhetoric of the Malay conservatives was no match for the Islamist rhetoric of the likes of Anwar Ibrahim and his supporters. (On this point it is easy to see why PAS chose to stay out of the fray.)

PAS also chose to remain neutral as its leaders were well acquainted with the antics of the royals themselves, many of whom they did not consider paragons of Islamic virtue. As the media campaign intensified, more and more stories appeared in the tabloid press revealing the lurid details and goings-on among the royals. The UMNO-led government had scored a major hegemonic victory by bringing together the Malay urban middle classes, professionals, academics, intellectuals and students in a concerted campaign to rob the monarchy of its credibility and standing once and for all.<sup>95</sup> The campaign culminated in the passing (on 19 January 1993) of a constitutional amendment that removed the rulers' judicial immunity and abolished their immunity from political criticism in the parliament and state assemblies. (However, public criticism was still regarded as sedition.)

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<sup>95</sup> One of the lesser-known events at the height of the crisis was a meeting of Malay writers, artists, academics and intellectuals on 10 January 1993 at the *Sudut Penulis* (writers' corner) of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur. A group of 100 Malay *cendekiawan* (intellectuals) and *seniman* (artists) signed a petition addressed to the government, asking it to end the legacy of neo-feudalism in Malaysia for good. The petition called for the royal families to be brought under the rule of common law, and argued that members of the royal households should be stripped of privileges which were clearly against the spirit of the constitution. (The author was one of those present who signed the petition.)

Although the royal houses had initially refused to give their consent to the proposed amendment, it was clear that by March 1993 the browbeaten royals had all but lost the war. By the end of the campaign, the Malay monarchy no longer enjoyed the unwritten privileges that they had since independence in 1957. The Malay monarchs and princes now had their own private court of justice, complete with its own red carpet to welcome errant royals, but it was clear that they were no longer above the law of the land.

The constitutional crisis of 1992–93 had shown just how weak and ineffectual the Malay royal houses had become. Understandably, the government of Dr. Mahathir had turned the entire episode into a major victory for the Prime Minister and UMNO — which it undoubtedly was. The crisis also demonstrated the extent to which effective political power and the executive's means of mobilising the masses had been concentrated at the centre. However, despite the consolidation of power in the federal capital, vast swathes of the Malay-Muslim landscape remained beyond its control. While the government pressed ahead with its vision of a modernist Muslim community, PAS's leaders had their own ideas of an Islamic state, and by the early 1990s they had their own laboratory where the Islamist experiment could be carried out in full: Kelantan.

*In the Shadow of Hudud: Kelantan as PAS's 'Model Islamic State'*

*Dewan undangan negeri ataupun Parlimen bukanlah tempat mencipta undang-undang baru, kerana undang-undang Allah telahpun tersedia termaktub dan mesti dilaksanakan tanpa dolak-dalik oleh semua perintah Islam.<sup>96</sup>*

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat,  
First speech as Chief Minister of Kelantan (1990)

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<sup>96</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 123. Translation: The state assembly or the parliament of the country is not a place for us to discuss and legislate new laws because the laws of Allah are already there present before us, and it is the obligation of all Muslim leaders to implement these laws without hesitation.

PAS was not unduly impressed or shaken by UMNO's victory over the royal families. For a start, the Islamist party was no longer identifying itself as the defender of Malay traditions and customs, and its links with the royal houses were much weaker in 1993 than in the 1970s and 1980s. Also, PAS was already seen as a party that promoted the idea of Muslim identity over ethno-nationalist politics.

PAS leaders — from Ustaz Yusof Rawa onwards — had been at the forefront of a renewed polemic against Malay traditions and customs which they regarded as outdated, *shirk* and contaminated by pre-Islamic and un-Islamic elements. To drive the point home, the scandal surrounding the murder of the UMNO Pahang state assemblyman Mazlan Idris, which brought to light curious goings-on related to witchcraft, black magic and un-Islamic practices among the UMNO ruling élite, merely reinforced the gulf between the more 'Islamic' PAS and the more 'traditional' UMNO. Mazlan's grisly murder at the hands of the notorious *bomoh* (witchdoctor) Mona Fandey was a major embarrassment to the government of Dr. Mahathir (which had been trying to project the image of UMNO as the party of progressive and modernist Islam), and the sensational event was exploited to the full by PAS.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> The scandal surrounding the murder was the most sensational media story of 1993. Mazlan was a young assemblyman whose career prospects seemed good. What few people realised, however, was that he — like many other Malay politicians and businessmen — was also a believer in black magic and occult rituals. He had paid large amounts of money to clairvoyants, soothsayers and local *bomoh* and *pawang* (witchdoctors) whom he believed could help him with his political career. One was Mona Fandey (@ Maznah Ismail) who, with her husband Mohammad Affendi Abdul Rahman, claimed she could bring him riches and power if he submitted himself to their bizarre and arcane rites. Mona was a small-time celebrity in her own right as a singer and had appeared on several television programmes. On 2 July 1993, Mazlan Idris went missing after being seen with Mohammad Affendi and Mona at the Raub UMNO division office. Two weeks later, his wife filed a missing persons report with the police. Within 24 hours, Mona and her husband were arrested in Kuala Lumpur. Mazlan had been murdered by Mona, her husband and another accomplice, Juraimi Hussein. During the trial the grisly  
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PAS, in any case, now had its own backyard to look after. From the moment that it took over the government of Kelantan, PAS's activities were clearly geared towards rebuilding and strengthening its power base and expanding its constituency. Following the pattern set by many other Deobandi-inspired Islamist movements, the party focused its attention on the sponsorship of religious colleges, *madrasah* and traditional religious *pondok* schools. In the 1991 Kelantan budget the PAS-led government allocated RM15 million to the Yayasan Islam Kelantan (Kelantan Islamic Foundation), to uplift the standard of religious (Islamic) education. State funds were also allocated to *pondok* schools.<sup>98</sup> Tuan Guru Nik Aziz even arranged for the Sultan of Kelantan to tour the *pondok* schools during his birthday celebrations in 1991.<sup>99</sup> Such investments paid off very quickly. In 1990, 34,721 students were enrolled in religious

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details of Mazlan's murder were revealed: He was brought to a deserted house on Mazlan's plot of land at Ulu Dong, 45 kilometres from Raub. Mazlan was asked to lie down and to go into a trance-like state, and was told that money would materialise before him. While immobile, his assailants struck — Mazlan was beheaded and his body was chopped into eighteen pieces. His body was also skinned and the dismembered parts were buried under the house. (Some reports claimed that the body was sewn back together in the Buddhist meditating lotus position.) Immediately after the killing, Mona and her husband went to Kuala Lumpur where they indulged in a shopping spree with the politician's money. Mona even spent some of the stolen cash for a facelift and plastic surgery. The couple were caught when their spending habits aroused suspicion. During the trial Mona revealed that she had helped several other UMNO politicians with talismans, charms and spells. This was a major cause of embarrassment for UMNO — a factor which PAS exploited to the full. In mid-1995, the trial of the three finally ended — all were found guilty and sentenced to death. In 1998, 1999 and 2001 they filed appeals against their sentence, but all were rejected. Finally, at 5.59 a.m. on 2 November 2001, Mona Fandey, Mohammad Affendi Abdul Rahman and Juraimi Hussein were executed at Kajang prison.

<sup>98</sup> Jamal Mohd Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz*, p. 141.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

schools sponsored by the Yayasan Islam. In 1991, the figure rose to 37,726; in 1992, 39,633 and in 1993, 41,864.<sup>100</sup>

It was through the renewed patronage and support of the *pondok* and *madrasah* of Kelantan that PAS hoped to create a second generation of Islamist students, scholars and activists who would later also take up the party's struggle. In time, this extensive network expanded even further, and linked itself with the wider network of Islamist *madrasah* in countries like Indonesia, India and Pakistan.

However, PAS's efforts were not merely local in scope and magnitude. Some reforms envisaged by the party leadership had even greater consequences for the rest of the country. The most significant was the introduction of Islamic *hudud* law through the adoption of the Kelantan Shariah Criminal Code by the Kelantan State Assembly in 1993.

On 25 November 1993, the Kelantan Shariah Criminal Code (II) bill was passed by all 36 members of the Kelantan State Assembly. The bill was formulated by a drafting committee comprising PAS leaders and its most prominent *ulama* and chaired by Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang, the *Ikhwan*-linked PAS *ulama* whose own power base was in the neighbouring state of Terengganu. Under Ustaz Hadi's leadership and guidance, the code was formulated to meet the party's specifications. When tabled in the State Assembly, it was passed without dissent. It should be noted that two members of the Assembly were members of the Barisan Nasional led by UMNO — that they went along with the vote showed just how weak their own position within the state had become.

In order to pre-empt any criticism of the bill, Tuan Guru Hadi Awang had earlier issued a warning that the *hudud* bill proposed by PAS was essentially Islamic and that any Muslim who questioned or resisted its introduction was committing *murtad* (apostasy). He further added that such apostates were outside the boundaries of the Muslim *ummah* and that the punishment for apostasy was death. The rhetorical pyrotechnics of Hadi Awang did not, however, put an end to the debates and arguments against

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<sup>100</sup> Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Kelantan: Universiti Politik Terbuka*, p. 236 n. 18.

PAS's latest effort to create an Islamic state, for the most controversial aspect of the *shariah* bill was its provision for the enforcement of *hudud* laws and punishments.

The *shariah* bill outlined a number of *hudud* offences that would be punished according to Islamic law. Part I of the bill listed the following offences: *sariqah* (theft), *hirabah* (robbery), *zina* (unlawful sexual intercourse), *qazaf* (wrongful accusation of *zina*), *al-li'an* (wrongful accusation of *zina* by a husband against his wife), *liwat* ('unnatural sex' involving anal intercourse, i.e. sodomy), *musahaqah* ('unnatural sex' between women), *ittiyan almaitah* (necrophilia), *ittiyan albahimah* (bestiality), *syurb* (intoxication or consumption of liquor) and *irtidad* or *riddah* (apostasy). The bill also included provisions for *qisas* (revenge killing) and *diyat* (blood money) in crimes of murder or homicide.<sup>101</sup>

According to the provisions of the bill, the process of finding witnesses and collecting testimony and confessions from those involved in *hudud* crimes would be based on traditional norms and standards. All eyewitnesses would have to prove that they were just and morally sound through a ritual testimony known as *tazkiah syuhud*, and those accepted were thought to be men with *isti'mal al-muruah* (a sense of honour). The accused would, in turn, be given the chance to make their *al-yamin* (oath) to prove their own innocence. Those found guilty of any of these offences would be punished according to *hudud* law; punishments to be meted out to offenders included stoning to death, whipping, amputation or mutilation of hands and feet as well as *takzir* punishments such as jail sentences and fines.<sup>102</sup>

Critics of the Kelantan *shariah* bill denounced it as backward, ill-conceived and discriminatory. It was argued that the bill was 'an anachronistic attempt to impose in modern times and upon modern Muslims of good faith what is not the essence or culmination of Islamic law, but only Islamic law in its most archaic, provi-

<sup>101</sup> For a full transcript of the Kelantan Shariah Code (II) bill see Rose Ismail (ed.), *Hudud in Malaysia: The Issues at Stake*, Kuala Lumpur: Sisters in Islam (SIS) Forum, 1995.

<sup>102</sup> *Takzir* punishments are those not fixed by the *Qur'an*.

sional and historically unevolved form'.<sup>103</sup> Many opponents of the bill also argued that it contained fundamental contradictions and loopholes that effectively discriminated against women and religious minorities. Malaysian feminist groups (such as Kuala Lumpur-based Sisters in Islam (SIS)) attacked the bill for the way that it effectively marginalised the role of women and non-Muslims in the legal process and reduced the status of women and non-Muslims to a secondary level. The disqualification of women as eye-witnesses, the downgrading of the value of a woman's testimony in court and the implied view that the life of a woman was worth half of a man's were cited as blatant proof, if any was needed, of the patriarchal and chauvinistic agenda behind PAS's Islamisation policy and its *hudud* laws. Other troubling features, such as the imposition of the death penalty for the crime of *murtad/irtidad* (apostasy), the uncertainty of the status of offenders and victims if they were non-Muslims and the code's problematic relation to the federal penal code were also cited as reasons to have the bill revoked.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Noraini Othman, 'Hudud Law or Islamic Modernity?', in Noraini Othman (ed.), *Shariah and the Modern Nation-State: A Malaysian Symposium*. Kuala Lumpur: Sisters in Islam (SIS) Forum, 1994, p. 149.

<sup>104</sup> In their protest letter to the Prime Minister's Office, Sisters in Islam argued that: 'The [Kelantan *Shariah*] code discriminates against Malaysian women in several of its parts, including: (1) the grounds for presumption of *zina* in clause 46(2); (2) the disqualification of women as eye-witnesses in clause 41(1); (3) the termination of marriage by a husband's accusation of *zina (al-li'an)*, whether proven or not, against his wife in provisions 14 and 15; and (4) the implied endorsement in clauses 2(i) and 62 of the view that *diyat* or compensation for death or injury to a woman should be half that for a man's. The code also has other troubling features, including: (1) The imposition of the death penalty for apostasy, (2) the uncertainty of cases where the victim is of a faith different from the perpetrator of the crime, and/or the witnesses of the crime are not Muslims; and/or the perpetrators are of different faiths, (3) the Code's relation to the provisions of the Penal code. Some offences under the Code are also federal law offences, giving rise to the issue of double-jeopardy where both laws are enforceable' (pp. 7–8). For a comprehensive account of the Kelantan *Shariah* code and the response from liberal Islamist modernist and reformist quarters, see Rose Ismail, *Hudud in Malaysia*, 1995.

The Malaysian government, dominated and led as it was by UMNO, also responded in no uncertain terms. Speaking on the issue of Islamic law and its application in modern Muslim societies, the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, argued that:

PAS's [interpretation of] *Hudud* law is the result of the understanding, or *fiqh*, and interpretations of the *Qur'an* and *Shariah* by PAS people themselves, besides being in the interest of a political party. It does not become part of the teachings of Islam that must be accepted by all Muslims. Neither does it come under the teachings of Islam that resulted from the understanding and interpretations of Imams who are recognised by the Sunnis or Shias. ... Hence, PAS cannot claim that its [interpretation of the] law is accurate and part of Islamic teachings. Even the validity of PAS law cannot be ascertained. They may be judged against the teachings of Islam.<sup>105</sup>

The Prime Minister went on to add that the real motivation behind PAS's introduction of *hudud* laws in Kelantan was political, rather than theological or ethical:

PAS's law is not the result of a valid *ijtihad* process. It was produced to serve interests other than Islam and spurred especially by PAS's political motives. PAS itself admitted that this law was made due to political pressure from UMNO. It was not motivated by Islamic politics, which is different. Hence, PAS's law cannot be endorsed as valid from the Islamic point of view.<sup>106</sup>

On 15 May 1994, the government of Dr. Mahathir officially announced that it would not accept PAS's demand to impose *hudud* law in Kelantan. In his personal letter (dated 15 July 1994) to Tuan Guru Nik Aziz, the Prime Minister was even more explicit in his rejection of PAS's *hudud* bill. The letter read thus:

*Penguatkuasaan kanun jenayah yang digubal oleh kerajaan PAS di Kelantan, menurut kajian sehingga setakat ini tidak menampakkan dan tidak menyakinkan pakar-pakar perundangan Islam yang tidak mempunyai sebarang kepentingan politik bahawa ia selari dengan ajaran dan kehendak*

<sup>105</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, 'Islam Guarantees Justice for all Citizens' (Ibid., p. 65).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

*Islam sebagaimana diuruskan dengan bijaksana oleh Rasulullah dan para sahabat.*<sup>107</sup>

It then continued:

*Kerajaan pusat tidak berhajat untuk bersubahat dengan PAS bagi melaksanakan ketidakadilan semata-mata untuk kepentingan politik dan sokongan oleh orang yang telah diabui matanya. Kerajaan Malaysia yang sentiasa dan terus mempertahankan ajaran dan nilai-nilai Islam tidak dapat membenarkan kerajaan PAS menjalankan suatu yang bercanggah dengan prinsip keadilan yang ditekankan oleh Islam sendiri. Jika PAS cuba juga untuk menguatkuasakan undang-undang yang diciptanya yang sudah jelas bercanggah dengan prinsip keadilan dalam Islam, maka kerajaan pusat akan mengambil tindakan yang sewajarnya terhadap kerajaan PAS demi menjaga maruah dan ketinggian martabat Islam dan penganut-penganutnya.*<sup>108</sup> (Emphasis added)

It was clear that the federal government's rejection of PAS's *hudud* law was total and not open to negotiation. Dr. Mahathir had not only rejected PAS's interpretation of the law — he had gone even further by claiming that the PAS *hudud* bill was something with no basis in Islam which had been conceived purely for the sake of scoring political gains.

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<sup>107</sup> Translation: After consultation with a number of independent experts in the field of Islamic law the government is not convinced that the proposed enforcement of Islamic penal law by the state government of Kelantan is in accordance with the spirit and practice of the law as it was enforced according to the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. (Quoted in Ahmad Lutfi Othman, *Mahathir Khianati Melayu?*, Batu Caves: Penerbitan Pemuda, 1994, pp. 169–170.)

<sup>108</sup> Translation: The central government has no intention whatsoever of collaborating with PAS in its desire to commit injustice purely for the sake of politics and winning the support of those who have been blinded by its rhetoric. *The government of Malaysia, which has always defended the teachings and values of Islam cannot allow the PAS state government to carry out an act which is contrary to the principles of justice that lie at the heart of Islam. Should the PAS state government insist on enforcing laws which it has itself invented, and which are clearly contrary to the principles of justice ingrained in Islam, then the central government will respond by taking whatever steps are necessary to defend the good name and status of Islam as well as its followers* (Ibid., p. 170). (Emphasis added)

In response to the criticism from the central government, the component parties of the PAS-led APU coalition unleashed a barrage of polemics at the UMNO-led government and Dr. Mahathir in particular. The counter-attack was led by PAS leaders like Tuan Guru Nik Aziz, Fadzil Noor and Hadi Awang. Nik Aziz accused Mahathir of being the main obstacle to the implementation of Islamic law in the country and argued that the UMNO-led government was no longer in keeping with the mood of the Malay-Muslim masses:

*UMNO selalu mengecam kita dengan dakwaan bahawa kita terlalu gopoh untuk melaksanakan Hudud. Sedangkan Umat Islam di Malaysia ini telah menerima Islam lebih dari lima ratus tahun yang lalu dan Umat Islam telah menguasai pentadbiran negara sudah hampir empat puluh tahun! Apakah UMNO merasakan masih belum cukup masa? Bilakah masa yang sesuai mengikut pemikiran UMNO untuk membolehkan Hudud dilaksanakan?*<sup>109</sup>

Not to be outdone, S46's leader Tengku Razaleigh also came to the help of PAS as the *hudud* crisis developed its own momentum. He condemned the policies of the Mahathir administration on the grounds that they were not Islamically oriented and too much emphasis had been given to material and economic development. In one speech, Tengku Razaleigh even referred to Mahathir as the *firaun* (pharaoh), a term that, years later, returned to the arena of popular Malay political discourse with a vengeance.<sup>110</sup> Speaking at a public assembly, Tengku Razaleigh claimed:

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<sup>109</sup> Translation: We have often been attacked by UMNO on the grounds that we are rushing headlong towards the implementation of *hudud* laws in this country. Whereas Islam has taken root in Malaysia for the past five hundred years and Muslims have been in power in this country for more than forty years now! Does UMNO still think it is too early for us to implement Islamic law? When, then, according to UMNO's calculations, would the time be right for the implementation of *hudud* laws in Malaysia? (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, 'Mahathir Paling Lantang Tolak Hudud', in Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Kelantan: Agenda Baru untuk Umat Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: Rangkaian Minda Publishing, 1995, p. 59.)

<sup>110</sup> The term was first used by Tengku Razaleigh in a speech entitled 'Ke Arah Masyarakat Adil dan Pembangunan Seimbang' (Towards a Just *continued p. 505*

*Sebagai parti politik yang mewakili orang Melayu-Islam, kami akan terus berusaha untuk memastikan Islam akan diletakkan ditempat yang tertinggi. Kami yakin Islam adalah agama sepanjang zaman yang tuntutannya mesti dipenuhi.*<sup>111</sup>

Another unlikely spokesman for the Islamist cause was Rais Yatim, an ex-UMNO Cabinet minister in Tengku Razaleigh's S46 party, who argued that *hudud* was an integral part of Islam and that a rejection of *hudud* was tantamount to a rejection of Islam itself:

*Hudud adalah soal pokok dalam Islam. Setiap umat Islam menerima Hudud. Kalau kita menolak Hudud, sepertimana yang dijelaskan dalam al-Quran, kita boleh ditolak sebagai seorang Muslim.*<sup>112</sup>

As tensions rose between the PAS-led state government of Kelantan and the UMNO-dominated federal government in Kuala Lumpur, the stakes in the Islamisation race were raised even higher. Yet PAS pressed on regardless, and followed its campaign of Islamisation in Kelantan with even more programmes and projects to promote its brand of Islamist politics and the party's agenda. However, PAS leaders now found that their efforts were being blocked by the royal house of Kelantan. In order to succeed, the party was forced to fight its way into the sacred precinct of the royal palace itself.

### *The Ulama and the King: Palace Intrigues in the Court of Kelantan*

Apart from contending with the obstacles and hindrances being thrown up by the federal government, PAS's attempt to push through its *hudud* law in Kelantan was obstructed by a local factor

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Society and Equal Development) delivered at the annual Semangat '46 rally on 11 June 1994. (Quoted in Ahmad Lutfi, *Mahathir Khianati Melayu?*, pp. 27–29.)

<sup>111</sup> Translation: As a political party that stands for the Malay-Muslims, we [in S46] will struggle to ensure that Islam is given the highest priority and status. We believe that Islam is a religion for all ages and that its demands must be met (Ibid., p. 173).

<sup>112</sup> Translation: *Hudud* law lies at the roots of Islam. All Muslims accept *hudud*. If we reject *hudud* as it is explained in the Qur'an, we can be rejected as a Muslim (Ibid.).

that was far from negligible: the Sultan of Kelantan, Sultan Ismail Petra.

The PAS leadership in Kelantan was well aware that the Kelantanese royal family was headed by a strong-minded ruler who was supported by an equally determined Sultana, Raja Perempuan Tengku Anis Tengku Abdul Hamid. Matters were even more difficult as PAS was now forced to run the state alongside its coalition partner S46 led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, an uncle of the Sultan. The political landscape of the state was littered with invisible toes (including a few sensitive royal ones) that should not be stepped on.

Partly as a concession to S46, in 1994 the PAS-dominated Kelantan government passed the state legal enactment 494/94 that gave more power to the ruler on religious matters. (The move came at the time when the federal government had just passed the 1994 constitutional amendment which further limited the powers of the Malay rulers and spelled out their obligations and responsibility to follow the advice given by their Chief Ministers.)<sup>113</sup> The Kelantan enactment was part of PAS's attempt to woo the ruler closer to the state government and involve him in the state's Islamisation process. As a result of the new legislation, the Sultan had near-total control of *Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan* (Islamic Council of Kelantan, MAIK) and he had more powers to obstruct the passing of any law or amendment not suited to his tastes and preferences.<sup>114</sup> The stage was set for another protracted war of words between the *ulama* and the palace.

PAS pressed on with its aim of introducing *hudud* law in Kelantan, but was forced to deal simultaneously with the federal government and the Sultan of Kelantan. The Mahathir administration exploited this crack in PAS's defences, and efforts were made

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<sup>113</sup> The final 1994 constitutional amendment on the status and responsibilities of the Malay rulers was read in parliament by Anwar Ibrahim. The Malay rulers no longer had the right or power to neglect the advice given to them by their respective chief ministers. Understandably, the staunchly royalist S46 reacted strongly against the amendment, calling it an attack on the Malay monarchy and a betrayal of the Malays.

<sup>114</sup> Mohammad Sayuti, *Hikayat Tok Guru dan Tiga Abdul*, p. 25.

to win over the support of the Sultan on a number of issues. In time, the Kelantan *hudud* campaign became a three-way tussle between the Kelantan palace, the Chief Minister's office in Kota Bharu and Kuala Lumpur. Most surprising was the resourcefulness and agility of the Kelantanese ruler himself, who was just as capable of using PAS and UMNO against each other to protect and preserve what little authority and power he had left. The *hudud* campaign lingered on for years, and was destined to become one of the longest running sagas of Malaysian politics. However, before the Malaysian public could grow weary and jaded with the issue, the first act of another local drama was about to commence.

### *PAS and the Darul Arqam Crackdown*

By the mid-1990s, PAS was in a commanding position within its own home state of Kelantan and its influence had spread far and wide across the rest of the country (and the world, for that matter). While the DAP remained the main opposition party representing the non-Malays, PAS could claim for itself the status of the main opposition party representing the Malay-Muslims. But, unlike the DAP that suffered little competition from other contenders (save the MCA), PAS was forced to deal with two other Islamist groups envious of its lead in the opposition race: ABIM and *Darul Arqam*.

ABIM, as we have seen earlier, had suffered a major split in 1982 when its founder-leader Anwar Ibrahim left the movement and joined UMNO. The movement never really regained its momentum and appeal, and the loss of other key leaders such as Fadzil Noor, Hadi Awang and Mohamad Sabu to PAS made it appear even weaker. The rupture within ABIM was, therefore, to the benefit of PAS, which was in dire need of new charismatic leaders and thinkers. Despite differences in approach (PAS opting for an Islamic state while ABIM aimed for the Islamisation of society), relations between the two remained cordial, with ABIM playing second fiddle to PAS time and again.

However, the same could not be said of the *Darul Arqam* movement that had been set up in the 1960s by former PAS member and neo-Sufi mystic Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad, known to his followers as '*abuya*' (father).

By the mid-1990s, *Darul Arqam* had spread its wings not only across the entire country but also abroad. From its headquarters in Madinah Al Arqam Saiyyidina Abu Bakar As-Siddiq, Sungai Penchala (near Kuala Lumpur), the movement had established and expanded its own network of *dakwah* (missionary) and training camps, shops and business premises, agricultural production centres (producing organic vegetables for their own use and for sale), transport and logistics services all over West and East Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and even up to Central Asia. Members had travelled as far as Uzbekistan to spread their teachings and to form working relationships with various Sufi *tariqa*, such as *Naqshabandiyya*.

One reason for the movement's phenomenal success was its strict internal discipline and unity of purpose, from the dominant personality of its founder-leader Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad. He had effectively consolidated his hold on the movement as a whole by sidelining other potential contenders to the throne such as Ustaz Mokhtar Yaakub and Ustaz Akhbar Anang. Ustaz Ashaari's claim to having direct personal contact with God also proved to be a very effective (not to say convenient) tool for de-legitimising any other claims to leadership of the movement.

Having eliminated any potential threat from within, Ustaz Ashaari was free to develop the movement's organisational structure along his own lines. This he did by creating a 'shadow Cabinet' within the movement. *Darul Arqam* had its own bureaux which mirrored the federal government departments; senior leaders were put in charge of 'ministries' and 'departments', such as foreign affairs, media and communications, *dakwah*, education, and so on. In terms of its structure, goals and tactics, Muhammad Khalid Masud has referred to *Darul Arqam* as a prime example of a transnational movement for faith renewal, in line with the *Tablighi Jama'at* of the Indian subcontinent.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> For a comparative account of the similarities and differences between *Darul Arqam* and *Tablighi Jama'at*, see Muhammad Khalid Masud (ed.), *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, p. lvii.

Apart from the organisational development within the movement itself, Ustaz Ashaari had also strengthened the organisation's profile by winning over influential and important establishment figures like Tamrin Ghafar (son of Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba). The movement also boasted that it enjoyed the support of members of royalty, the Malay aristocracy, and large sections of the urban Malay middle class. A large number of senior followers were university-trained professionals, thus adding to the élite image of the movement as a whole.

By the early 1990s, however, Ustaz Ashaari's pronouncements became more and more forceful and provocative. Due to his growing popularity he was invited to appear on television and radio several times. However, his ideas on Islamic governance and an Islamic state did not win approval from the state's religious bureaucracy and technocrats who did not share his inclination towards Sufism and mystical practices. Ustaz Ashaari's discourteous comments on the Islamic credentials of senior UMNO leaders did not earn him the support of men like Dr. Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim, either. During the Gulf conflict of 1990–91, he wrote and published a book entitled *Perjuangan Teluk: Islam Akan Kembali Gemilang* in which he predicted that the American-led international force against Saddam Hussein would be defeated and that the conflict would result in victory for Saddam Hussein and Islam.<sup>116</sup> He condemned 'craven and hypocritical' Muslim leaders who supported the multinational effort against Iraq on the grounds that they had a higher moral obligation to support other Muslim leaders in distress. (Whether or not the same condition applied to Saddam Hussein, who had unilaterally declared war on two Islamic countries (Iran 1980–88 and Kuwait 1990–91) remained an open question.) It was clear that the real target of Ustaz Ashaari's book was Dr. Mahathir and the other Malay-Muslim leaders of UMNO.

Ustaz Ashaari got into more trouble when he publicly speculated about the internal conflicts within UMNO in 1993–94, at a time when Anwar Ibrahim (then Finance Minister) was preparing

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<sup>116</sup> Ashaari Muhammad, *Perjuangan Teluk: Islam Akan Kembali Gemilang*, Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Sheikhu'l Arqam, 1991.

to oust Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba. During his nightly mystical 'encounters' with God and the Prophet, Ustaz Ashaari had been told that both Dr. Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim would meet their end and that a new Caliph to be installed in Malaysia bore an uncanny resemblance to none other than himself.<sup>117</sup> Ustaz Ashaari also claimed that if a referendum were to be held in Malaysia, he — not the Prime Minister — would probably be the most popular man in the country. Rumours about plots and counter-plots by UMNO leaders against each other were soon tracked down to Ustaz Ashaari, who was then seen as a maverick mystic whose other-worldly aura and charisma had clearly gone beyond the bounds of acceptability. Ustaz Ashaari may have believed that he enjoyed good personal relations with God, but by meddling in the internal affairs of UMNO and the disputes between its leaders, he was courting disaster for himself and his organisation. Soon enough the hand of the UMNO-led government was roused, and the first to feel its blow were the leaders of *Darul Arqam*.

The crackdown on *Darul Arqam* began in earnest in September 1994. Co-ordinating their activities with their counterparts in Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore, the Malaysian security forces and the Special Branch (SB) began a wave of arrests that caught practically every senior leader of the movement. Ustaz Ashaari was in Thailand, but Thai security forces apprehended him and repatriated him to Malaysia in a matter of weeks. Other *Arqam* leaders were rounded up and arrested in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. Within a matter of days, the entire peninsula-based network that *Darul Arqam* had painstakingly built over two decades was shut down. Its companies and business outlets were

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<sup>117</sup> Some of Ustaz Ashaari's close encounters of the third kind were reported in the movement's official magazine. Ustaz Ashaari openly stated that he had personally met with the Prophet Muhammad in his dreams and that the Prophet had poured scorn and derision on UMNO, describing it as a 'pack of liars and thieves'. The Prophet was alleged to have told Ashaari that a new Messiah would soon come to Mecca and that he (Ashaari) would rise to become the new Caliph of the East, based in Malaysia. Needless to say, the Prophet could not be contacted to confirm or deny any of these rumours.

closed, its public services disrupted and its channels of communication cut.

The Malaysian government also tried to secure the support and co-operation of other Islamic agencies and departments in the neighbouring ASEAN countries, but was less successful. At the meeting of the Ministers of Religious Affairs of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (MABIMS) in 1994, the representative of the religious ministries of Brunei, Indonesia and Singapore reserved their right to deal with the *Darul Arqam* problem in their own way and on their own terms.<sup>118</sup>

The federal government justified its actions against the movement on the grounds that *Darul Arqam* was linked to a clandestine militant grouping called *Asykar Badr*, a force of more than 300 militia based somewhere in southern Thailand (though in the end the state prosecutors could not prove any direct link between the two). *Arqam* members were also accused of being involved in militant activities abroad, and in 1994 the Egyptian government arrested 19 *Arqam* members — all female students — for their association with Islamist militant cells in the country.<sup>119</sup> The Council of Muftis and Ulama issued a *fatwa* against the teachings of Ustaz Ashaari who, they claimed, was a danger to Islam *per se* and Muslims in general, and argued that he had deliberately misled his followers with *ajaran sesat* (false and deviationist teachings) contrary to the basic principles of the religion. Rais however, has questioned whether this was not another case of the executive using the Council of Muftis and Ulama as a rubber stamp for its own political manoeuvres.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 197.

<sup>119</sup> Anthony T. H. Tan, 'The Rise of Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia: An Emerging Security Challenge', *Panorama*, No. 1/2001, Manila: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2001, p. 86.

<sup>120</sup> Rais notes that 'the Muftis from the various states were ordered to attend a meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 6 August 1994. The meeting, orchestrated under the Prime Minister's Department, issued a *fatwa* (ruling) that *al-Arqam*, by way of its adherence to the *Aurad Muhammadiyah* (a mystical practice founded by a mystic named Sheikh Suhaimi) was a deviationist observance and was therefore fit and continued p. 513

Whatever the case may be, Ustaz Ashaari and the *Darul Arqam* movement were well and truly cornered this time. The Ustaz's controversial ideas, developed in his book *Aurad Muhammadiyah*, were used against him in the course of the trial that followed. *Arqam's* neo-Sufi practices and ideas were also cited as proof that they had deviated from the proper path of Islam and that the movement's leaders had perverted the teachings of the Prophet.

Ustaz Ashaari and the other senior *Darul Arqam* leaders were detained and interrogated at the government's Islamic rehabilitation centre. In the end, they were made to admit their mistakes: Ashaari and the other leaders appeared on television and confessed that their beliefs were wrong and against the principles of Islam. They then repented their errors and declared that the teachings of the *Arqam* movement had led others astray. Finally, in November 1994, the movement was formally disbanded by the leaders themselves. As the campaign against the *Arqam* network intensified, the UMNO-led government worked to ensure that the movement's followers would not be given refuge or room to manoeuvre in any way. In 1996, *Pusat Islam* authorities announced that the government would amend article 3(1) of the federal constitution to ensure that only the *ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah* (Sunni) majority current of Islam would be officially recognised in Malaysia, and that all other branches of Islamic thought and practice would be regarded as deviationist and punishable by law.<sup>121</sup>

Throughout the *Darul Arqam* debacle PAS remained relatively silent, partly because it was caught up in its own local dispute in Kelantan over the *hudud* bill. It was already forced to contend with both the UMNO-led federal government and the Sultan of Kelantan. PAS leaders felt it prudent to let the *Darul Arqam* affair

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proper to be outlawed. Ironically, three days earlier Datuk Abdul Hamid, a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, declared that the *al-Arqam* movement would be banned 'as soon as the Muftis decided on the matter on 6 August 1994'. It would appear that the Muftis conference was a mere legitimising activity.' (Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia*, p. 249 n. 1).

<sup>121</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 154.

play itself out, though they did take the opportunity to attack UMNO for what it claimed was yet another attack on Islam and Islamist movements in the country.

However, there were also other important reasons behind PAS's quietist stance. For a start, it was clear that some senior PAS *ulama* thought the attack on *Darul Arqam* was partially justified as they, too, found some of Ustaz Ashaari's ideas distasteful and bordering on the heretical. This was particularly true of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, whose Deobandi background was clearly not in line with some of Ustaz Ashaari's more outlandish claims. Although both men were conservatives and fundamentalist-scripturalists at heart, Nik Aziz's Deobandi orientation had also instilled in him a deep and abiding distrust of most forms of Sufism, on the grounds that it was contaminated by pantheistic, Hellenic and Hindu elements antithetical to his purist vision of Islam. (It is interesting to note that the PAS leaders have never been vocal in their condemnation of the government's crackdown on Sufi *tariqa* and 'deviant' groupings in the country. Since the *ulama* faction took over the party in 1982, PAS has been comparatively mute in its protests against the State's relentless attacks on many of the Malaysian Sufi orders. PAS has also never come to the defence of the small Shia community in Malaysia, for the same reasons.) *Pusat Islam's* declaration that henceforth only the Sunni would be regarded as 'true Islam' in Malaysia struck a resounding chord among many of the PAS *ulama*, even if they did not openly admit it then.

The third factor that should not be discounted was the obvious gain that PAS was bound to receive as a result of the crackdown on *Darul Arqam*. The *Arqam* movement had, by 1994, become one of the richest and best organised Islamist organisations in the country. It boasted of having 10,000 members and at least 100,000 other sympathisers in Malaysia alone. *Arqam's* business assets were estimated to be worth around RM300 million (US\$116 million); it had 417 companies and businesses officially listed as part of its concern. The movement also had 257 schools in Malaysia and its own college in Indonesia. Its network of *madrasahs*, schools and *dakwah* centres stretched across the ASEAN region and went as far as Uzbekistan and the Central Asian states. With such an extensive network of businesses and educational centres, *Arqam* was more

than a match for PAS. It effectively posed a challenge to the Islamist party that was trying to spread its influence among the Malay-Muslims of the country. As was the case after the break-up in the ABIM leadership in 1982, PAS leaders knew that they were sure to benefit from this state-orchestrated attack on a rival Islamist movement; many of its members were bound to search for another Islamist movement to call their own.

By coming down so hard on the *Darul Arqam* movement and wiping it off Malaysia's political landscape, the government had inadvertently narrowed the scope of religio-political options for the Malay-Muslim constituency. By removing another competitor from the field, the UMNO-led government had, ironically, helped to boost the ranks of PAS. Though no systematic survey has ever been done, it was widely speculated that a number of *Darul Arqam* members later transferred their allegiance to PAS. *Darul Arqam's* losses were thus PAS's indirect gains. This sudden and unexpected turn of events came just before the country prepared itself for the 1995 federal election.

### *The 1995 Federal Election: The Gulf Widens*

In the lead-up to the 1995 elections, PAS once again found itself at the receiving end of UMNO's polemics.

By the mid-1990s, the gulf between the two Malay-Muslim parties had grown as wide as it could possibly be. The Islamist party that began as a breakaway faction from the conservative-nationalist UMNO had come a long way. While UMNO under Dr. Mahathir prided itself on its achievements in the economic and political advancement of the Malays,<sup>122</sup> PAS was adamant in its

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<sup>122</sup> By the mid-1990s, Dr. Mahathir took personal credit for UMNO's success at re-inventing the Malays. At the 1993 UMNO general assembly, he spoke of the success of the new Malay entrepreneurial class which had become the bedrock of the new UMNO under his leadership: 'Today we have Malays and *Bumiputeras* as heads of *continued p. 516*

pursuit of an Islamic state that would bring to an end the colonial legacy inherited from the West. UMNO's *generasi baru* (new generation) of Malay and Bumiputera entrepreneurs, technocrats and corporate managers stood before PAS's new generation of Islamist intellectuals, activists and *ulama*. At no point was there room for compromise or agreement between the two sides.

Just before the election, UMNO launched another campaign against PAS. Once again, the media was utilised to the hilt as part of BN's election machinery. PAS had little to defend itself with except its own newspaper, *Harakah*, and the regular *ceramah*, *usrah* and *kuliah* sessions that it had been using since the 1980s.

During the fasting month of Ramadhan (February) in 1995, UMNO organised a massive rally at which the party leaders accused PAS of sowing the seeds of discord and disunity among the Malays — a theme with which the general public had become quite familiar. The rally also called for PAS to drop the word 'Islam' from its name (also something that had been brought up many times before, the last instance being the 1994 UMNO general assembly). But Dr. Mahathir went one step further, and claimed that PAS had even altered the meaning of the *Qur'an* and had added sentences that were not in the sacred text.<sup>123</sup>

In the face of this renewed attack from UMNO, PAS leaders responded by claiming that Mahathir had not read the *Qur'an* properly and that he could not even speak Arabic. The conflict between the two parties quickly turned into a battle of wits and personalities between PAS leaders and Mahathir. Shortly before

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departments, scientists, actuaries, nuclear physicists, surgeons, experts in the fields of medicine and aviation, bankers and corporate leaders' he claimed. (Quoted in Khoo Boo Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*, p. 337.)

<sup>123</sup> According to PAS sources, the Prime Minister had claimed that PAS leaders had introduced a line in the *Qur'an* which read: 'O, ye who are faithful, if you truly uphold the religion of Allah, then Allah will surely come to your aid. Verily you will not be swayed by offers of money. Verily you will not be swayed by the subsidies that have been offered by the leaders of the *Barisan Nasional*.' (Quoted in *Jenayah Akademik Pemimpin UMNO*, pp. x-xi.)

the election, one of the strongest personal attacks on Mahathir came from the *Lanjah Penerangan dan Penyelidikan PAS Pusat* (PAS Central Information and Research Bureau). In a book published by the unit, PAS made it clear that one of its main objectives was to destroy the image and standing of Mahathir for good:

*Di Perhimpunan Agung Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu dan di forum-forum internasional yang lain, Dr. Mahathir berucap memakai wajah dan suara palsu kononnya dia seorang fundamentalis Islam berjuang untuk memartabatkan ummah, sedangkala di tanahair beliau membuka topeng, memakai wajah dan suara aslinya bahawa beliau menentang para pejuang gerakan Islam di Malaysia dan di seluruh dunia, menghina dan menyerang pemikiran ulama berwibawa, menganjur tafsiran semula al-Qur'an. Kita mesti mendedahkan hipokrasinya ini kepada umat Islam supaya mereka sedar kepalsuan pemimpin UMNO ini.<sup>124</sup>*

However, Dr. Mahathir was not the only target of PAS's attack. PAS leaders were also actively engaged in a prolonged campaign to discredit his heir-apparent Anwar Ibrahim (then Finance Minister), who had served as UMNO's hammer against PAS. Mohamad Sabu was one of those who consistently accused Anwar of betraying the Islamist cause by joining UMNO. (Both had previously been members of ABIM.) During a parliamentary session, Mohamad Sabu attacked Anwar personally, accusing him of betraying the *ulama* and Islamist activists who had helped him achieve his position:

*Walaupun hati kecil luka di atas sikap beliau (Anwar) menyertai UMNO, tetapi hati kecil kami tetap berdoa semoga beliau berjaya... Harapan kami itu sekarang semakin berkecai. Setelah sepuluh tahun menyertai UMNO, ucapan-ucapannya semasa memberangsangkan kami menyertai PAS dahulu semakin jauh, bahkan- beliau sanggup mengutuk dengan mengatakan*

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<sup>124</sup> Translation: Before the General Assembly of the United Nations and other such international forums, Dr. Mahathir speaks with his false voice and dons the false image of an Islamic fundamentalist who strives to defend the interests of the *ummah*; but back home in his own country he removes this mask and shows his true identity as the one who resists the struggle of Islam in Malaysia and the rest of the world, one who slanders and attacks the thoughts of the learned *ulama*, one who encourages the reinterpretation of the *Qur'an*. We must expose the hypocrisy of this man before the Muslim *ummah* so that they will know how false this UMNO leader truly is (Ibid., p. vii).

*ulamak-ulamak kolot, berfikiran jumud; sedangkan beliau sendiri naik keatas pentas melalui ulamak-ulamak jumud ini. Apakah beliau berbangga sekarang, setelah menjadi kawan Vincent Tan, kawan kepada Ananda Krishnan?*<sup>125</sup>

The 1995 election campaign was, therefore, a particularly bitter one, with personal attacks being made by all sides. UMNO was particularly disadvantaged by internal bickering and public revelations about the scandals and misdemeanours of senior UMNO leaders and Cabinet members.<sup>126</sup> However, the issue was no longer whether an Islamic state was a viable alternative, but rather the Islamic credentials of the Malay-Muslim leaders themselves. While UMNO accused PAS of fanning the flames of religious extremism and intolerance (the *hudud* law controversy was then at its height), PAS responded by claiming that the UMNO leaders were 'false' Muslims and that UMNO's interpretation of Islam was not authentic. The politics of authenticity became the defining feature of PAS-UMNO relations from then on.

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<sup>125</sup> Translation: Although in our hearts we were disappointed by his [Anwar's] decision to join UMNO, deep in our hearts we prayed for his success nonetheless. ... But now our hopes are dashed. After ten years of being in UMNO, his fiery speeches which once moved us to join PAS seem far away. In fact, he is now willing to attack the *ulama* themselves, whom he labels as backward and out of date; whereas his own rise to power was thanks to the support of these backward *ulama*. Is he proud now? Proud that he is the friend of [Chinese business tycoon] Vincent Tan; friend of [Indian media mogul] Ananda Krishnan? (Mohamad Sabu's speech in Parliament when debating Anwar Ibrahim's Budget Proposal for 1993, quoted in Ahmad Lutfi, *Memo untuk Bakal PM*, p. 59.)

<sup>126</sup> During the campaign period, a senior UMNO Cabinet minister was forced to publicly admit that she had allocated millions of ringgit worth of company stocks and shares to her son-in-law (*Utusan Malaysia*, 30 August 1995). Even Dr. Mahathir had to admit that too many Malays were joining UMNO for the sake of securing contracts and to fulfil their own personal business interests (*The Sun*, 13 September 1995). Rais notes that the situation had grown so desperate that the government was warning the public that the May 13 tragedy would erupt all over again if the BN were to fail at the polls (Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia*, p. 249 n. 1).

The election campaign witnessed a further escalation of the Islamisation race between the two Malay-Muslim parties. While UMNO leaders spoke of their party's success in numerous development projects and Islamisation programmes throughout the country, PAS leaders constantly tried to undermine their achievements by resorting to the politics of authenticity and questioning the religious commitment and sincerity of UMNO leaders.

UMNO leaders claimed that they had fought against the encroachment of Western secular and Zionist influences that threatened to undermine the faith and unity of the Malay-Muslims (the film *Schindler's List* had been banned in Malaysia the year before on the grounds that it was 'Zionist propaganda'),<sup>127</sup> and argued that it was they who had put Malaysia on the map of the Islamic world. (Malaysia had just launched the 'Voice of Islam' radio network in Southeast Asia with the help of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Brunei.)<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, the Mahathir administration reiterated the claim that it had challenged the double

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<sup>127</sup> In 1994, the Censorship Board banned the film *Schindler's List* which told the story of Oscar Schindler, a German industrialist and business tycoon who helped to save the lives of several hundred Jews during the Nazi holocaust, as it reflected the 'privilege and virtues of a certain race only' (according to the official letter sent by the board to film distributors United Pictures International (UPI)). Steven Spielberg, the movie's director, claimed that the reaction of the Malaysian authorities was based on anti-Semitic prejudice, while the US State Department issued a statement claiming the film depicted events in Nazi Germany with accuracy and sensitivity. As the debate intensified, Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim tried to persuade UMNO leaders to allow the film to be shown. However, the ban was maintained when the director refused to allow Malaysian censors to edit the sex scenes. In the end, it was the distributors of pirated videos in Malaysia who gained the most, as the film was widely copied and sold under the counter all over the country (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 251).

<sup>128</sup> The Voice of Islam radio network was originally a radio programme jointly produced by the governments of Malaysia and Saudi Arabia in 1984. Its popularity grew and in 1995 it was expanded and, with the help of the governments of Indonesia and Brunei, developed into a radio channel aimed at propagating Islamic teachings and presenting a different angle to the coverage of world news, with an obvious slant towards developments in the Muslim world in particular.

standards and hypocrisy of the Western powers at numerous international meetings<sup>129</sup> and that under the leadership of Dr. Mahathir Malaysia had played a leading role (among the Muslim states) in trying to bring about lasting peace in the troubled state of Bosnia where thousands of Muslims had suffered at the hands of Serbian nationalist extremists.<sup>130</sup> (Malaysia, along with several other OIC countries like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Palestine, had sent a total of 20,000 troops to serve in Bosnia as part of the international peacekeeping force since 1992.)

However, PAS leaders were not impressed by any of these claims. They argued that UMNO's attempt to bolster its Islamic

<sup>129</sup> Long regarded as one of the leading spokesmen for the South, Dr. Mahathir had tried to use his power and influence to bring about a radical change in the international consensus on human rights and democracy. During this period, the Malaysian government was actively campaigning against what it considered double-standards and hypocrisy of the Western states. At the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights, for example, the Malaysian government condemned the US and its West European allies for their indifference to the Bosnian issue and other political and economic crises affecting the Muslim world. Malaysia worked closely with other OIC states to ensure the inclusion of a special clause on the Bosnian issue in the final conference declaration.

<sup>130</sup> Malaysia was one of the South's most vocal actors on the Bosnian issue. When the conflict finally came to its end, Malaysia reacted to the Dayton Accords (issued in December 1995) with caution. Dr. Mahathir insisted that the West had to do more to ensure the peace in Bosnia would be lasting and sustainable. In the following year, Malaysia committed RM10 million towards the initiative by the Clinton administration in the US to help set up and train the Bosnian army. Malaysia's stand on the Bosnian issue was part of a long-term engagement with other countries, aimed at bringing about a reform of the UN itself, as Shanti Nair has argued: 'The country's foreign policy during the Bosnian crisis has been strategically linked to larger foreign policy thinking on the need for radical restructuring of the UN and, effective change in the Security Council as part of a Malaysian agenda for the more equitable representation of the developing world within such fora. These concerns are nowhere more important than in the context of the post-Cold War world order and for small countries like Malaysia who are particularly focused on how such an order will eventually be determined...' (Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 257).

image and credentials was a tactical ploy and that it remained a fundamentally secular ethno-nationalist party unable and unwilling to deal with the challenge of political Islam. To reinforce this claim, PAS leaders cited the government's support for the 1995 OIC resolution against 'Islamic extremism' as an example of its willingness to use the tools of the state to keep itself in power while demonising its Islamist opponents. A similar move was made by the UMNO-led government the following year, when Malaysian government representatives to the annual meeting of the Ministers of Religious Affairs of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (MABIMS) called for greater control over 'foreign influence and religious extremism' in the ASEAN region.

PAS was not moved by UMNO's anti-Western, anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist polemics, either. Instead, it maintained that the UMNO-led government had actually been trying to improve relations with Israel,<sup>131</sup> a point made public when the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* revealed that the Israeli envoy in Singapore had

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<sup>131</sup> Despite the anti-Zionist and anti-Israel rhetoric employed by UMNO leaders, it was well known that the Malaysian government had been trying to improve links with Israel. In 1994, Deputy Trade and International Industry Minister Chua Jui Meng had suggested that the Malaysian government might review its policy towards Israel in the light of improving relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. He argued that as the Israeli government and the Palestinian authorities led by Yasser Arafat were on the way to normalising relations, Malaysia should lift its trade and political sanctions against Israel and allow Malaysian companies to invest in the country. Israel was then regarded as a potential trading partner for Malaysia. But when Israeli television revealed that an informal meeting had taken place between Israeli leaders and the brother of the Malaysian King, the Malaysian public reacted negatively. Relations between the two countries were further complicated when another television report in 1994 revealed that Dr. Mahathir had met the Prime Minister of Israel while on a diplomatic visit to France. PAS immediately condemned the meeting as a betrayal of Muslim interests and accused Mahathir of working against the Palestinian initiative for independence and a Palestinian state. Relations between Malaysia and Israel remained in a state of limbo, and the killing of the Israeli Prime Minister in 1995 effectively ended the attempt to normalise relations between the two countries.

visited Malaysia for a number of unpublicised talks with senior government and business leaders.<sup>132</sup>

UMNO was also accused of a number of dirty tricks during the campaign period. PAS accused the UMNO-led BN government of deliberately relocating more than 70,000 Thai Muslims to key constituencies in the north to secure a victory for UMNO. However, PAS was undeterred by these developments for it also had a 'secret weapon' of its own — the *hudud* bill of Kelantan.

Tuan Guru Nik Aziz and Hadi Awang vowed to use the Kelantan *hudud* law controversy as the '*senjata membaham empayar UMNO*'<sup>133</sup> (weapon to demolish the UMNO empire), while Tuan Guru Nik Aziz raised the stakes in the contest even further by claiming that PAS was the only party that could deliver its promises both in this world and in the hereafter. In a speech delivered just before the election, the *Murshid'ul Am* of the Islamist party said:

*Dalam masa kita memperjuangkan Islam melalui politik, selain daripada melaksanakan perintah untuk menjaga kepentingan dunia dengan Islam, kita hendaklah menjadikan kerja-kerja politik itu sebagai asset yang boleh dijadikan cagaran di akhirat. Inilah falsafah perjuangan kita yang mempunyai kelainan yang besar kalau hendak dibandingkan dengan falsafah perjuangan sekular. Mereka hanya berusaha untuk melihat kejayaan material yang terbentang dihadapan mata mereka sahaja. Mereka hanya mengiktiraf kejayaan material dan bersifat duniawi sahaja sebagai kejayaan yang mutlak. ... Kepada kita yang berjuang di atas landasan Islam ini, kita amat meyakini semua kerja kita di dunia ini tidak terputus daripada persoalan akhirat termasuk soal-soal politik dan pembangunan. Kita tetap akan berpolitik, tetapi melalui sistem politik yang ada masa depan di akhirat. Kita akan berusaha untuk maju tetapi dengan corak pembangunan yang tidak akan menyumbat kami ke dalam neraka.*<sup>134</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, p. 267, n. 17.

<sup>133</sup> Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Pilihanraya Umum 1995: Hudud PAS Senjata Membaham Empayar UMNO*, Kuala Lumpur: Rangkaian Minda Publishing, Chetak Khidmat, 1995.

<sup>134</sup> Translation: While we continue in our political struggle, apart from fulfilling our obligation to care for the welfare of both religion and the here and now, we need to think of our political activities as assets that can be used in the hereafter. This is the basis of our political philosophy, which is very different from the struggle of the secular forces. They can only think of success in terms of material developments that  
*continued p. 523*

By 1995, not only had the gulf between PAS and UMNO widened; so also had the difference between PAS of the 1990s and PAS of the 1960s (under the leadership of Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy).

After the election, it became clear that PAS's confrontational approach had paid off. The other minor Islamist parties that stood by the wayside were effectively removed from the political scene for good (see Table 5.12). The *Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia* (AKIM), originally a splinter group led by Cikgu Musa Salleh that broke away from PAS, contested the elections at both state and federal level in Kelantan, but failed miserably. HAMIM and BERJASA were likewise sidelined (neither party won a single seat) and even S46 failed to secure any significant gains in its struggle to gain control of the Malay heartland. (Its share of seats in Parliament dropped to six.)

PAS contested 46 parliamentary seats and 178 state assembly seats. It won seven parliamentary seats and 33 state assembly seats. Among those who won parliamentary seats were Mohamad Sabu (Kubang Kerian), Sanusi Daing Mariok (Rantau Panjang), Mohamad Amar Abdullah (Pengkalan Chepa) and Haji Bunyamin Yaacob (Bachok) in Kelantan. Tuan Guru Hadi Awang's victory in Marang, Terengganu came as no surprise, either. Party president Fadzil Noor failed to gain a seat in parliament, but was elected to the Kedah State Assembly. (See details of results in Tables 5.13-18.)

Once again, PAS had retained control of Kelantan (where it had six parliamentary seats and 24 seats in the State Assembly). Despite the attempts to dislodge the Islamist party from its tradi-

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stand before their very eyes. They regard material and worldly success as the only valid form of success that has any meaning or worth. ... For us who are struggling along the path of Islam, we are certain that the affairs of this world cannot be divorced from the concerns of the hereafter, and this also includes questions of politics and development. We will continue with our political struggle, but ours is a struggle that is also concerned about the hereafter. We will pursue the agenda of development, but ours will be a form of development that will not lead us to hell later. (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, 'Politik sebagai Asset Akhirat', in Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Kelantan Agenda Baru untuk Ummat Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: Rangkaian Minda Publishing, Chetak Khidmat, 1995, pp. 84-85.)

tional rural base, PAS had further consolidated its hold on the state. The same could not be said for DAP, which suffered enormous losses in Penang and other west coast states. DAP's parliamentary seats dropped from 20 to 9 (though it still had more seats than any of the Malay opposition parties.) PBS also suffered considerable losses: its parliamentary seats dropped from 14 to 8 (which was also still higher than PAS and S46).

For most political analysts, the 1995 election results read as a vindication of the policies of Dr. Mahathir and the BN coalition, which won 167 parliamentary seats (84.3%). The coalition obtained 3,862,694 votes in contrast to the 2,075,822 won by the combined opposition parties. BN had 65.05% of the popular vote, an increase of 12% over the 53.4% it had received in the 1990 election.

UMNO's closest working partner within the BN, the MCA, had also made a major comeback. The Chinese conservative party carved huge inroads into constituencies previously thought of as safe seats by the DAP. That Chinese voters had apparently abandoned the DAP and shifted their support to the MCA (and, by extension, BN) was seen as an open endorsement of the UMNO-led BN government's policies by the Chinese community in no uncertain terms. As Gomez and Jomo have argued: 'the impressive economic recovery since 1987 and government efforts to liberalise, deregulate and demphasise the NEP — long desired by most non-Bumiputeras — had swung significant Chinese sentiment to the *Barisan Nasional*.'<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Edmund Terrence Gomez and Jomo K. Sundaram, *Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics, Patronage and Profits*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 181. Gomez and Jomo have also alluded to the close working relationship between the Chinese captains of industry and commerce and UMNO leaders. By 1995, 'Chinese capitalists also found that they either had to establish links with Malay patrons, capitalists or politicians, or fund UMNO to develop their businesses. The new Chinese capitalists who appeared in the 1980s — Vincent Tan Chee Yioun, Danny Tan Chee Sing, Ting Pek Khiing, Robert Tan Hua Choon, T. K. Lim — were seen to be closely associated with leading Malay politicians rather than independent businessmen; there is much unverified speculation that some of these men have even operated as business proxies for certain UMNO leaders, particularly [Tan Sri] Daim [Zainuddin].'

The failure of S46, HAMIM and BERJASA meant that the APU coalition was nearing its end. The losses suffered by the DAP also meant that the *Gagasan Rakyat* coalition between S46 and DAP had failed to deliver. Practically every opposition party (except PAS) had been let down by their own followers. It appeared as if the only constituency not swayed or persuaded by the government's claims to success were the impoverished but loyal supporters of PAS who were touched more by Tuan Guru Nik Aziz's promises of a different kind of other-worldly politics that would secure their happiness in the world and the hereafter.

The 1995 election also marked a turning-point in the political landscape of the country. By then the percentage of Malay MPs in Parliament had dropped to an all-time low (from 64.4% in 1959 to 52.1% in 1995) (see Table 5.19). This effectively meant that any Malay-Muslim party which aspired to power was forced to work with the non-Malay and non-Muslim communities and the political parties that represented their interests. PAS's inability to come to a working compromise with DAP (and vice-versa) meant that the prospect of an overall victory for the Islamists was still a long way off. But no such hindrances stood before UMNO, which had the support of the non-Malay components of the BN close at hand. All that was left now was for UMNO to clear the decks of the tattered remnants of the opposition and collect the spoils of war. This it promptly did in the following year.

*Alone at Last: The Demise of Semangat '46 and the Rise of PAS as the Only Malay-Muslim Opposition Party in Malaysia*

On 3 October 1996, *Semangat '46* that had been launched by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was officially disbanded.

Since its formation in the late 1980s after the split within UMNO, S46 had been trying to win support from the Malays all over the country. However, S46's main problem was its apparent lack of direction and political objectives. The party was seen by many as the final bastion of traditional Malay culture and values, but it emerged at a time when such values were under attack by the forces of rapid modernisation and Islamisation all over the land.

For those in the Islamist camp, S46's celebration of traditional Malay culture and values harked back to the days when Malay

cultural identity had been the rallying call for Malay nationalists. But PAS in the 1980s and 1990s had rejected ethno-nationalism as an ideology on the grounds that it was fundamentally un-Islamic. For supporters of Dr. Mahathir and UMNO, S46's call for the defence of traditional Malay values seemed equally out of place with the mood of the times. The Malay modernists and reformers of UMNO were looking to the future, with the hope of creating the *Melayu baru* (new Malays), freed from the shackles of traditionalism and feudalism in all its forms. In the eyes of the modernists, S46 seemed to represent all that was backward and retrogressive.

With its main power base in Kelantan (and pockets of support in Johor), S46 could not hope to take on both UMNO and the machinery of the state. Matters were even more complicated for S46 as, by the mid-1990s, it was clearly being asked to play second fiddle to PAS, which was not prepared to hand over to the new party the constituencies it had carefully cultivated over the years. The *ulama* leaders of PAS were also reluctant to endorse and support some of S46's policy proposals, and during the constitutional crisis of 1993 PAS was careful to let S46 enter the ring with UMNO on its own. PAS stood by and watched as UMNO leaders lambasted S46 for its defence of the Malay royal families.

These setbacks had convinced many S46 leaders and members that the party's days were numbered. Lack of funds, the difficulty of setting up grassroots networks in constituencies where PAS and UMNO had already built theirs, and dwindling support for the cause of the party all contributed to the growing feeling of desperation and despair. By 1996, Tengku Razaleigh and party leaders finally decided to throw in the towel for good. The APU coalition was all but dead by then. (And the leaders of S46 would soon turn against PAS, who had been their allies not too long before.)

As if to hammer the point home for the benefit of S46's erstwhile ally PAS, the ceremony marking the 'death' of the party was held in an open school field right in the middle of Kota Bharu, Kelantan and the Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir was present. During the ceremony, Dr. Mahathir read a speech that touched on the issue of Malay unity and the need for Malays to come together, after which he read a *talqin* (funeral prayer) for the ill-fated party and blew the *nafiri* (a traditional musical instrument played during important

events such as the birth or death of a monarch). The Prime Minister then welcomed the members of S46 back into the fold of UMNO. Tengku Razaleigh's ill-fated attempt to carve a political future for himself as leader of the nation had finally come to an end. But not all of Tengku Razaleigh's followers were happy with his decision to disband S46. Shortly after the party was dissolved, a number of prominent ex-members of S46 joined PAS; these included Haji Noordin Yaakub, Abdul Razak Abbas, Hussein Ahmad and a number of S46 Kelantan divisional chiefs.

With the demise of *Semangat '46*, the UMNO-led government had an opportunity to rest on its laurels for a while at least. The crack-down on *Darul Arqam* and the death of S46 allowed UMNO to focus its attention and energy on its main rival, PAS. However, some UMNO leaders were also worried about the costs incurred by the bitter conflict between the government and the Islamist opposition. As well as the deleterious effects of splitting the Malay-Muslim community, the Islamisation race between UMNO and PAS had altered the political terrain of the country in many other ways.

By the mid-1990s, the government's own Islamisation programme had effectively reconstructed the state apparatus. Policies introduced by the Mahathir administration were intended to help 'Islamise' the state machinery from within, by inculcating positive values such as instrumental rationality, hard work and loyalty to the government. But they also opened the way for the penetration of Islamically inclined Malay-Muslim professionals who were products of the state's own Islamic educational system. This led to growing competition and rivalry between those educated in the secular stream and those from the Islamic educational system. Many UMNO leaders feared that if left unchecked the Islamisation programme might serve as the Trojan horse for the Islamist factions within UMNO itself. UMNO (ex-*Semangat '46*) leader Rais Yatim was already warning that:

The Malaysian government, which may later be handicapped by the increasing demands and threats from Muslims, especially from fundamentalists to create an Islamic state in which the *Hudud* will be implemented in full, will finally be cornered into a situation of having to accept it as a parallel legal system, at least for the Muslims. If this be the case, then the areas of legal conflicts will have enlarged into a proportion that may no longer be within the bounds of the conflict of the laws alone. It will then emerge as a massive political

problem considering the demands of multiculturalism on the one hand and the fundamentalist Muslims on the other.<sup>136</sup>

UMNO leaders were concerned about the speed with which the internal reforms in the legal system were being carried out. Rais argued that the reforms were so fast and haphazard that there was no way of ensuring that the new parallel *shariah* legal system could operate properly, and that it might only lead to the marginalisation of non-*shariah* trained lawyers and judges in the country:

To what extent *Shariah* law is handling these end-results is yet to be seen in the modern context of Malaysian life especially in view of the present lack of procedure and clear demarcative supporting facilities that are so important in a workable legal system. ... In the meantime *Shariah*-trained lawyers, especially those trained by the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur and al-Azhar University in Cairo, [were] gaining ground and slowly but surely replacing the London-trained lawyers in various aspects of local law and practice. ... In time [*Shariah*-trained] judges, magistrates and other official judicial and legal officers will take up their respective places in the judicial and legal hierarchy. Western-trained lawyers [were] even then a minority of sorts.<sup>137</sup>

Western-trained Malaysian lawyers were by then forced to compete against the trend to Islamise the legal system in the country. At the same time, the English language was being discarded and replaced with Malay as the language of the courts. Soon enough, talk was rife about the gradual 'ABIMisation' of UMNO from within due to the rise of Anwar Ibrahim and the Islamists of ABIM who had defected to UMNO in the early 1980s.

Apparent signs of Islamisation within UMNO were already visible by the 1990s. Although UMNO had always been a Malay-Muslim party that counted the defence of Islam and Muslim concerns as one of its primary goals, the shift towards the Islamist register within the party had not taken place until the 1980s. By the 1990s, practically all *Wanita* UMNO (UMNO women's wing) members were wearing traditional Malay dress with *tudung* (headscarves) like their counterparts in PAS. Male members were also taking to the use of the *kepiah* (skull cap) and sporting the now-trendy 'Anwar goatie' that was all the rage among the younger gen-

<sup>136</sup> Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia*, p. 386.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 384–385.

eration of Malay-Muslim professionals and students. These sartorial changes did not go unnoticed. UMNO leaders sensed that a slow but inexorable change was taking place within their own party, and the new 'Islamic look' was being foregrounded by senior UMNO personalities like Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (wife of Anwar Ibrahim), the first wife of an UMNO Cabinet member to wear a *tudung*.

While UMNO began to turn on itself, the PAS Islamists were busy concentrating on their own Islamisation project. Bolstered by the entry of new members from the disbanded *Semangat '46*, PAS continued to chart its own course in the choppy waters of Malaysian politics. With its old allies either disbanded or co-opted by its opponents, PAS appeared to be totally isolated in the new political terrain created in the wake of the 1995 election. However, the party's image and standing remained strong among its faithful supporters in the Malay heartland of the north, and it could now count on an additional source of support: the Muslim world at large.

*PAS in the World: The Ascendancy of PAS in the  
Arena of Global Politics*

*Kita PAS, kawan kita gerakan Islam. Walaupun gerakan Islam di Kashmir tidak menang, walaupun gerakan Islam di Palestin tidak menang, walaupun gerakan Islam di negara Arab tidak menang — kawan kita tetap gerakan Islam. Soal menang bukan menjadi hujah kita. Kita yakin bahawa hanya melalui dasar Islam sahaja Ummat Islam dapat diselamatkan di mukabumi ini dan di akhirat nanti.<sup>138</sup>*

Speech by Haji Mohamad Sabu,  
PAS Executive Committee member  
at Semabok, Malacca. August 1999

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<sup>138</sup> Translation: For us in PAS, our allies are the Islamic movement (worldwide). Even though the Islamists in Kashmir have failed, even though the Islamists in Palestine have failed, even though the Islamists of the Arab states have failed — our allies remain the Islamist movement. The question of winning or losing is not part of our discourse. We are convinced that it is only through Islamic policies that the Muslim ummah can be saved in this world and in the hereafter. (Mohamad Sabu, 'Pantun Memantun: UMNO Menuju Kehancuran', speech recorded at Semabok, Malacca, August 1999. Distributor: An-Nahli Enterprise, Kuala Lumpur, 1999.)

As seen in the previous chapters, PAS began as a little-known phenomenon in the backwaters of the Malayan landscape. When it was first launched, PAS was practically unheard of in other parts of the Muslim world (and non-Muslim world as well). But when the party took control of Kelantan and Terengganu for the first time in 1959, the Muslim world was struck with awe and surprise. An Islamist party had come to power in Asia for the first time via constitutional means. Even the Islamist movements in Indonesia, Pakistan and North Africa had not been able to accomplish such a feat, and with such meagre resources and support.

PAS was quick to build on its successes and during the time of Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Dr. Zulkiflee Muhammad it had expanded its network of contacts to the rest of the Malay archipelago and the South Asian subcontinent. During this period, PAS leaders met with other Islamist leaders from Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey and the Arab states with increasing frequency. This trend was temporarily derailed when Asri Muda took over the party in the 1970s and PAS took an inward turn towards the politics of ethno-nationalism. However, even during the time of Asri Muda PAS's door to the outside world was never closed. Asri himself led many delegations to Indonesia to discuss developments within the Malay world and possible strategies for the Islamist movements in the region. As seen in the 1970s, PAS also tried to champion the cause of other Malay-Muslim movements in the region such as the secessionists in Patani and Mindanao. However, PAS's international profile really began to take off after the internal *coup* that led to the fall of Asri and the rise of the *ulama* within the party.

With the emergence of a new type of leadership came a new kind of politics. By the 1990s, many PAS *ulama* had developed contacts and working partnerships with their counterparts abroad. Through the personal links developed by Tuan Guru Nik Aziz, Tuan Guru Hadi Awang and Fadzil Noor, PAS had strengthened its links with Islamist movements such as the *Jama'at-e Islami* of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* of Egypt. PAS leaders were invited to meetings and conferences in other Muslim countries and these invitations were invariably reciprocated. PAS had also begun to send hundreds of young Malay-

Muslim students to various *madrasah* and institutions of learning run by other Islamist movements such as the *Jama'at* and *Ikhwan*, and these students in turn helped to solidify the bonds of contact and association between the various parties and organisations. By the 1990s, PAS may have been isolated in Malaysia, but certainly not in the Muslim world at large.

One of the main architects of this new network of international contacts was Tuan Guru Hadi Awang, whose involvement in the international Islamist network began in the 1970s when he was a student at al-Azhar University in Cairo. There he became involved in the activities of the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* with the help of his academic colleagues Dr. Said Hawa, Professor Muhamad al-Wakeel and Dr. Abdul Satar al-Khudsi.

During the 1990s, Hadi Awang's international profile rose even higher when he represented PAS on a number of occasions. In 1990, he joined the delegation led by Necmettin Erbakan, the Turkish leader of the *Refah* party, sent to Iraq to help resolve the Gulf conflict that began with Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. In the same year, he was appointed to the *Majmak Takrik Mazhab Islami* based in Tehran, Iran, which brought together representatives from all the *mazhab* (different schools of thought) within the Sunni and Shia Muslim world. In 1994, he was appointed to the executive committee of the International Islamic movement based in Istanbul, Turkey. He had also been involved in the International Islamic Secretariat for the Defense of Bait'ul Maqdis (Jerusalem) based in Jordan. He was later a member of the International Muslim delegation led by German Muslim leaders to settle disputes between the *mujahideen* factions in Afghanistan and a member of the delegation led by the Turkish Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan to the capitals of Europe.

The ever-combative Hadi Awang was clearly well respected and admired in Islamist circles outside the country. By the 1990s, his reputation was so strong that he was invited to represent the entire non-Arab Muslim world at an international conference of Islamist movements held in Jordan.<sup>139</sup> The same could be said of other PAS

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<sup>139</sup> Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, p. 136.

leaders who had, by then, secured a place for themselves in the constellation of Islamist leaders and thinkers on the world stage. Hussein Yaakub notes that the reputation of the PAS leaders was particularly good in neighbouring Indonesia, where Islamist parties and movements had a tendency to dilute their struggle via a politics of compromise and accommodation.<sup>140</sup> In the eyes of many Islamist activists and supporters in Indonesia and elsewhere, the PAS leaders had set the correct example by their refusal to compromise on issues of policy and theology. Ironically, PAS's lack of flexibility — which accounted for its lack of political success in Malaysia — was precisely the factor that made it so popular overseas.

In the 1990s, PAS was also opening up to other Islamist movements and parties abroad. Delegates and representatives from parties like the *Jama'at-e Islami* and *Ikhwan* were present at the annual PAS *muktamar* (general assembly). Indonesian representatives from groups like *Nahdatul Ulama* and *Muhamadijiah* began to take a keen interest in the development of the Malaysian Islamist party that was showing signs of success.

Despite its failure to gain a foothold in states other than Kelantan, PAS had maintained the support of its followers in the Malay heartland of the north. PAS had managed to do something that no other party had succeeded in doing: it had built up a solid core of loyal supporters who stood by its leadership and its principles despite risking their livelihood and future prospects by doing so. Commitment and religious fervour had proven to be mightier than government patronage and protection in the end.

Elsewhere in the region and the rest of the Muslim world, Islamist forces were on the rise once more. In neighbouring Indonesia, decades of state repression and systematic depoliticisation had forced the Islamist movements underground, but the resurgent forces of political Islam were about to make a dramatic comeback. In November 1993, hundreds of Muslim students and Islamist activists demonstrated in front of the presidential palace in Jakarta. Their protest was directed against the decision by an Indonesian parliamentary committee to uphold the national lottery

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid, p. 137.

licence, which they claimed was un-Islamic. The protest got the Islamists what they wanted: within a week the committee's decision was overturned and the lottery licence was withdrawn. What was even more interesting was that the Islamist activists were open about their criticism of the Soeharto regime in general, and were prepared to risk their lives and jobs to make their point.

However, the mobilisation of the Indonesian Islamists was not the only matter that bothered the officials of the Soeharto regime. Worse still was the fear of the *Darul Islam* movement, and similar attempts to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state. By the early 1990s, the spectres of the past were being resurrected one by one. Between 1993 and 1995, Indonesian intelligence and security forces had to deal with several clandestine movements and underground cells accused of trying to topple the government and create an Islamic state by force of arms. In August 1994, a nation-wide sweep led to the arrest of 117 individuals accused of plotting to set up an Islamic state via armed revolution. An even bigger sweep in 1995 ended with the arrest and detention of 428 Islamists accused of propagating the ideology of *Negara Islam Indonesia* (Indonesian Islamic State), first voiced by *Darul Islam* leaders. Despite the use of force and threats of violence, the Soeharto regime was not able to check the advance of the Islamist opposition. Nor did appeals to moderate Muslims and liberal Christians help, for the Islamists had grown in number and were prepared to take on both the state and any other group — moderates, liberals, Christians or secularists — who took sides with it. (Soeharto's active courting of the Christians only made things worse for the religious minority group. Soon after, Indonesia's Christians became the target of the Islamists, who regarded them as apologists and supporters of the Soeharto government and security forces.)<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Growing resentment towards the Indonesian Christians (many of Chinese origin) later turned to violence. In 1996, Muslim mobs attacked Christian churches, shops and homes all over the country. In June 1996, 12 churches were destroyed in Java alone. In October, a mob of 3,000 Muslims burned down 25 churches in Situbondo, killing five Christians. In many attacks, it was widely reported that members of the Indonesian armed forces did not help the Christian victims of Muslim mob violence.

Growing discontent and frustration among the Indonesian Islamists and the state's violent repression merely united the various organisations and movements and gave them the unity of purpose that was previously absent. In 1994 — the same year that witnessed the meteoric rise of *Taliban* in Afghanistan — the Islamist groups formed the *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* (Community of the Revival of the Sunna) that later became the source from which other militant organisations like *Laskar Jihad* emerged.

Led by popular and influential *ulama* and ex-*mujahideen* Jaafar Umar Thalib<sup>142</sup> and based at the *pesantren* at Kaliurang, Jogjakarta,

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<sup>142</sup> Of Arab and Malay ancestry, Jaafar Umar Thalib was born in Malang, East Java, on 29 December 1961. His father was an active member of the al-Irshad reformist movement formed by Arab-Muslims in Indonesia in 1913. The movement was a puritan organisation that strove to purify Indonesian Islam of pre-Islamic ideas and practices, as well as Western secular ideas and values. While in Saudi Arabia in 1986–87, Jaafar came under the influence of several Wahhabi teachers such as Muhammad Nasr al-Din al-Albani and Rabi' ibn Hadi Umar al-Madkhali, who taught him both *Qur'anic* and *Hadith* studies as well as Wahhabi *dakwah* methodology. After his studies in Saudi Arabia, Jaafar took part in militia training in Pakistan (along with other foreign volunteers from Southeast Asia and the Arab states) before fighting with the *mujahideen* against the Soviets in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, Jaafar made contact with the Islamist *Jama'at-e Islami* party and its *mujahideen* network. In Afghanistan, Jaafar chose to fight with the *Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl-I Hadith* faction under Salafi leader Jamil al-Rahman. There he learned and accepted the doctrine of *takfir* which requires Muslims to excommunicate and revolt against their own leaders should they not live up to the standards of good Muslims. In 1989, Jaafar returned to Indonesia where he taught at the al-Irshad *pesantren* in Salatiga, Central Java. But in 1990 he studied in Yemen under Wahhabi teacher Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi', a member of a Saudi-funded Islamist movement. Finally in 1993, Jaafar returned to Indonesia and based himself at Jogjakarta. In 1994, he opened his own *pesantren* in Kaliurang and helped to establish the *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* community. Jaafar began to preach his Wahhabi ideas to his followers, and his movement called for the implementation of *shariah* law among the Muslims. The *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* quickly gained a following *continued p. 535*

the *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* began as yet another *dakwah* movement concerned with the Islamisation of Indonesian society (rather than the state). However, Jaafar Umar and the other leaders were very much under the influence of Wahhabi ideas and were orthodox puritans and scripturalists at heart. In its early stages, members concentrated on the task of reforming the behaviour and beliefs of Indonesian Muslims, weaning them away from what they regarded as the 'impure' and unorthodox practices of many Muslims in Java in particular.

The *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* concentrated most of its attention on university students in the local campuses, including Universitas Diponegoro (UNDIP), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR), Universitas Nasional Veteran (UNV), Universitas Indonesia (UI) and Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) — all widely regarded as bastions of secular thinking. *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* was particularly interested in Muslim students who were members of the numerous *halaqah* and *usrah* (study circles) where Islamist theories and ideas were being discussed.<sup>143</sup> Jaafar Umar and other *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* leaders

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among Islamist student activists in local Javanese university campuses and the movement spread its ideas even further via the student and activist networks. On 14 February 1998, Jaafar helped to create the *Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jamaah* (Communication Forum of the Followers of the Sunnah and the Community of the Prophet, FKAWL). The FKAWL later served as the umbrella organisation for a number of militant Islamist groupings; one was *Laskar Jihad* (Jihad Army), led by Jaafar himself.

<sup>143</sup> Many Islamist students were the products of the *Latihan Mujahid Dakwah* (Missionary Activists Training) programme first launched by Imaduddin Abdulrahim, the former Indonesian secretary to the International Islamic Federation of Student Organisations (IIFSO), which was partially set up with help and funding from the Saudi *Rabitat* organisation. Many student *usrah* cells were created by the *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi* (HMI-MPO), a splinter group that broke away from the *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* (Islamic University Students Organisation) led by 'liberals' like Nurcholish Madjid. Unlike HMI, HMI-MPO were less inclined to pay  
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tried to recruit these students and convert them to their cause. Many who joined the movement belonged to the 'hard sciences', such as medicine, engineering and natural sciences.

As the movement developed, its leaders grew increasingly obsessed with the status of the Muslim community in the country and began to adopt a more confrontational rhetoric against those whom they regarded as enemies of Islam and the Muslim *ummah*: the secular nationalists of the Soeharto regime, Indonesian Christians and those whom they regarded as agents of American and Zionist interests in Indonesia. The student activists of *Jama'ah Ihya al-Sunnah* began to conduct *razzias* (raids) on business premises and social centres which they regarded as dens of vice and iniquity. Bars, social clubs, casinos, video centres and cinemas became their favourite targets, and many raids were marked by violence and destruction of property. In time, these attacks became more co-ordinated and organised, led by paramilitary *jihadi* organisations such as *Laskar Jihad*, *Laskar Pembela Islam* and *Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia*.

It seemed as if the forces of militant Islam were also boiling over in other regions. In Pakistan, the conflict between President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif eventually led to the fall of both and the second coming of Benazir Bhutto (in 1993). Pakistan's ever-convoluted political environment had opened the way for the emergence of new radical Islamist groupings such as *Lashkar-i Tayyeba*,<sup>144</sup> a militant *jihadi* organisation com-

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lip service to the *pancasila* ideology of the state, and were more open in their opposition to the Soeharto regime. They also opposed other Islamist intellectuals and activists like Nurcholish Madjid whom they regarded as being too 'soft' and accommodating to the Soeharto government and the non-Muslim minorities.

<sup>144</sup> The *Lashkar-i Tayyeba* (Army of the Pure) was founded in 1993 at the *Ahl-i Hadith* movement's Markaz Da'wat wa'l Irshad at Muridke, a town 30 miles from Lahore, Pakistan. Its origins go back to the highly conservative *Ahl-i Hadith* movement that began in India in the early 19th century. With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, *Ahl-i Hadith* transferred most of its activities there. In Pakistan, they were a minority  
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mitted to the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate by whatever means necessary, which had been formed by the *Ahl-i Hadith* movement and lovingly nurtured by rogue elements of the Pakistani army and intelligence services during the rule of General Zia 'ul Haq. In 1993, the *Lashkar-i Tayyeba* announced its arrival in no uncertain terms by starting its guerrilla campaign in the hotly contested region of Kashmir. The group vowed to liberate the

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group, largely unwelcome until the rise of General Zia 'ul Haq, who helped sponsor such radical groups to bolster the *mujahideen* forces fighting in Afghanistan. By the late 1980s, they had developed *madrasahs* all over the country, particularly in the Punjab and North West Frontier Province. Their main targets were Russians in Afghanistan and the Indian forces in Kashmir. In 1986, *Ahl-i Hadith* set up the Markaz Da'wat wa'l Irshad, which was both an educational centre and a training camp for *mujahideen* recruits. Most of their funds came from Arab sources, including Saudi dissidents. In 1993, the *markaz* created its own separate military branch, the *Lashkar-i Tayyeba*. Four training camps were set up in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The *Lashkar* then began its recruitment drive and by 2001 had more than 500 offices and recruiting centres all over Pakistan, mostly in Punjab. In 1994, a separate Islamic college was set up in Muridke, attracting students from all over the world. By 2001, the organisation had built about 130 schools, with 15,000 students and more than 800 teachers. The students were mostly Pakistani, but the schools also attracted students from the rest of the Muslim world. After the Afghan conflict ended in 1992, the *Lashkar* redirected its military efforts against India and focused its attention on Kashmir. The *Lashkar* leaders vowed to carry their *jihad* into India, with the hope of taking over the entire subcontinent and creating a global caliphate. Aided by the *Jama'at-e Islami* party of Pakistan and Pakistani intelligence operatives from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, the *Lashkar* conducted guerrilla warfare in Kashmir and other parts of India. Prior to the second Afghan conflict between Afghanistan and the US, *Lashkar* had sent several hundred *jihadi* militia as bodyguards for Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden. In 2002, the movement was banned by Pakistan's president General Pervez Musharraf, under pressure from the US government to control religious extremist groups in the country. The movement still exists, but now functions mostly underground.

Muslims of Kashmir from Indian rule, and to take their *jihad* into the interior of India itself.

Apart from home-grown *jihadi* militias, Pakistan also served as the laboratory for a new phenomenon — the *Taliban* movement<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> The *Taliban* emerged from the turmoil and conflict among the *mujahideen* factions and Islamist groupings in Afghanistan. In Kandahar, these conflicts had led to the virtual elimination of the entire Islamist opposition, opening the way for the rise of the *Taliban* in 1994 under the leadership of the *maulvi*-turned-warrior Mullah Muhammad Omar. (Ahmad Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, p. 19.) It was soon spotted by Pakistani and US intelligence agencies who helped it grow by channelling funds and arms to the movement. Many early *talib* (recruits were students) from *madrrasah* run by the *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI) party in Pakistan led by Deoband-educated Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Most young members were of Pashtun ethnic background, many originally Afghan refugees and orphans who had fled to Pakistan in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Within a matter of months after its creation, the *Taliban* had done something that even the *mujahideen* had failed to achieve: they attacked and captured the town of Kandahar (in 1994). Rashid (*Ibid.*, p. 29) notes that 'the fall of Kandahar was celebrated by the Pakistani government and the JUI. General Naseerullah Babar (Pakistani intelligence head) took credit for the *Taliban's* victory, telling journalists privately that the *Taliban* were "our boys".' (From Kandahar, the *Taliban* expanded their activities across the rest of Afghanistan. In 1995, they took over the fabled city of Herat, once a major arts and cultural centre of the Muslim world. In 1996, they captured the capital, Kabul. Mullah Omar then called the biggest assembly of Afghan *ulama* and tribal leaders ever in Kandahar where he donned the mantle of the Prophet Muhammad and declared himself the *emir-ul mukminin* (leader of the faithful). Afghanistan's name was changed to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. By 1999, the *Taliban* had extended their control over most of the country. Life in Afghanistan under the *Taliban* regime was harsh and brutal. Isolated from the rest of the world, the people lived under the strictest form of religious government made worse by incompetent administration and abuse of power. Its infant mortality rate (163 per 1,000, around 18%) was the highest in the world; 25% of the children were dying before the age of five. Life expectancy dropped to 43 years for men and 44 years for women. Illiteracy, already high before the rise of the *continued p. 539*

— that was the product of the manœuvrings of the *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI), a coalition partner in the government of Benazir Bhutto. The JUI had been brought into the ruling coalition by Benazir as part of her effort to counter her negative image (as a modern Western-educated female Muslim leader) among the Islamists. As a result, the JUI was given a position in the ruling Cabinet for the first time in its history. The JUI leadership exploited this situation when its leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman was offered the post of Foreign Affairs Minister and was thus free to travel abroad (especially to Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, America and England) to lobby for funds for the party and its related causes. The main political objective of the JUI then was the support of the *Taliban* movement in Afghanistan that it was supporting via its network of *madrasah* in Karachi, Peshawar and along the NWFP border with Afghanistan and the Indo-Pak border with Kashmir.<sup>146</sup> During this time, the *Taliban* movement in Afghanistan and the *jihadi* groups along the Kashmir border received more

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*Taliban*, rose to 90% for girls and 60% for boys (Ibid., p. 107). Yet throughout the period of *Taliban* rule the government received diplomatic support from Pakistan, Arab states (like Saudi Arabia), the US (which supported the *Taliban* government mainly because of its strong anti-Shia, anti-Iran stand) and even Israel.

<sup>146</sup> The main supporter of the *Taliban* in neighbouring Pakistan was the *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI) party led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman. On its own, JUI had neither the political clout nor the finances to support *Taliban* as it did. This only happened after JUI was courted by Benazir Bhutto's PPP party for the 1993 Pakistani election. After coming to power in 1993, Benazir rewarded Fazlur Rehman by appointing him to the Cabinet and making him chairman of the Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, which allowed him to travel to other Muslim countries to solicit funds for the *Taliban*. With foreign funding and support from the Pakistani government and intelligence services, JUI was able to channel funds, arms and training to support the *Taliban* as they rose to power in Afghanistan. The *Taliban* leadership also had direct links with JUI and their educational institutions. In 1999, nine senior *Taliban* leaders and ministers were graduates of JUI's Dar'ul Uloom Haqqania Madrasah in Akhora Khatak in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Ibid., p. 90).

support and materiel aid than ever before — all under the watchful eyes of Benazir's government.

The movement ultimately came under the leadership of the mysterious and obscure Mullah Muhammad Omar<sup>147</sup> based in Kandahar (and who claimed that he had never left the city all his life, save for one trip to Kabul, which he found too decadent and

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<sup>147</sup> The founder-leader of the *Taliban* movement was a little-known Pashtun leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, who was born in 1959 to a poor family in the village of Nodeh near Kandahar. His family belonged to the Ghilzai branch of the Pashtuns. As a member of a weak and defeated tribal group, Mullah Omar had almost no status and recognition at the beginning. He later became a *mullah* and opened his own *madrasah* before joining a *mujahideen* faction — *Hizb-e Islami* under Nek Mohammed — and fought against the Najibullah regime from 1989–92. During his fighting career he was wounded four times and blinded in one eye. In 1994, he became famous after he rescued two young girls from being raped by the warriors of Kandahar warlords. Later in the same year he intervened to rescue a young boy about to be sodomised by two amorous warring warlords. Rashid (*Ibid.*, p. 25) notes that 'Omar emerged as a Robin Hood figure, helping the poor against the rapacious commanders. His prestige grew because he asked for no reward or credit from those he helped, only demanding that they follow him to set up an Islamic system.' From these actions Mullah Omar was able to build his own force of followers who made up the nucleus of the *Taliban*. Though he hardly ever left his home province of Kandahar, Mullah Omar inspired his troops and planned their attacks across the country. In 1995, the *Taliban* captured Herat and in 1996, they captured the capital, Kabul. Mullah Omar's *Taliban* forces later captured Mazar-e Sharif (1998) where they indulged in the mass slaughter, rape and torture of the Shia community. Omar himself was fanatically anti-Shia, regarding them as heretic beyond the pale of Islam. Throughout his period of leadership, Mullah Omar was guided by his own narrow understanding of Islam and highly conservative Pashtun culture and values. Rashid (*Ibid.*, p. 110) notes that 'the *Taliban* leaders were all from the poorest, most conservative and least literate southern Pashtun provinces of Afghanistan. In Mullah Omar's village the women had always gone around fully veiled and no girl had ever gone to school because there were none. Omar and his colleagues merely transposed their own milieu, their own experience, or lack of it, of women, to the entire country and justified their policies through the *Qur'an*.'

corrupt). With Mullah Omar at the helm of the movement, *Taliban* leaders gathered around them thousands of young recruits who made up the rank and file of their irregular force.

In a matter of months, the *Taliban* were strong enough to take on the *mujahideen* and, in 1995, they captured Herat. In 1996, they gained control of Kabul. President Najibullah and his brother were captured, tortured, castrated and then hanged outside the presidential palace, within view of the UN office. More than US\$250 million and 400 pick-up trucks (donated by various Saudi potentates) were put at the disposal of the *Taliban*, who used them during their campaign against the *mujahideen*. After the *Taliban* had taken over Kabul, Mullah Omar summoned the *ulama* and leaders of the various Afghan tribes to Kandahar for the biggest tribal assembly the country had seen in years. On 4 April 1996, Mullah Omar climbed to the rooftop of a building in Kandahar and addressed the assembly below, proclaiming the reunification of Afghanistan under the rule of the *Taliban*. He then donned the mantle of the Prophet Muhammad — the most sacred relic in the country — and declared himself the *Emir-ul Mukiminin* (leader of the faithful) and renamed the country the Emirate of Afghanistan. The long-awaited *Taliban* caliphate had finally arrived, bankrolled by the Saudis and Pakistanis with additional support from the Americans.

Throughout the *Taliban–mujahideen* conflict, Pakistani, Saudi and American secret service personnel were on the scene to advise and monitor their development. Notwithstanding the *Taliban's* open hostility to outsiders and other *kafir* states, the *Taliban* phenomenon was a product of inter-governmental co-operation and the global exchange of funds. Even Israel felt that it could somehow play a part in the rise of *Taliban*, and use them in their own proxy war against Iran.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Israel also supported the *Taliban*, which it saw as another force it could use in its proxy war against Iran. Israeli lobby groups worked long and hard to get Washington to improve its links with the *Taliban* leaders. As Rashid (*Ibid.*, p. 154) notes, 'Israel's intelligence agency Mossad developed a dialogue with the *Taliban* through *Taliban* liaison offices in the USA. Pakistan's ISI supported this dialogue. Even *continued p. 542*

Despite the incessant plotting and machinations by all these external actors, none could actually keep *Taliban* under their control. By 1996, the *Taliban* leaders were more than able to stand on their own two feet and were sure of themselves after achieving so many spectacular victories in such a short time. The *Taliban's* lack of scruples also helped them stay in power despite their lack of diplomatic finesse and management expertise. As the country's shattered economy began to slip into decline, the movement's leaders proclaimed that Afghan farmers would be allowed to grow and sell opium (previously declared *haram*) as long as the drugs were sold to *kafirs* outside the country and the government could tax the earnings of the farmers and drug runners.<sup>149</sup> After their victory over the *mujahideen* factions in 1996, the *Taliban* attracted even more support from other Islamist activists and movements. One guest was Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, whose stay in Afghanistan later cost the people of that war-torn country more misery and suffering than they could possibly have imagined.

It is one of the supreme ironies of the modern Muslim world that the Pakistani government led by an Oxford-educated Muslim woman (Benazir Bhutto) could preside over the birth of one of the most retrogressive and misogynistic Islamist movements of the 20th century. The *Taliban* not only wiped out all resistance to their rule in Afghanistan; they also tried to re-invent the social, cultural and political landscape of the country according to their narrow, dogmatic Wahhabi-Deobandi inspired interpretation of Islam. The first group to suffer was the women of Afghanistan. The *Taliban* closed down schools and universities for women and girls, forced all women to don the *burqa* in public and introduced a new regime of laws and regulations which policed every aspect of social life in the country. Movies, music and television were banned, the press was heavily censored, economic life was brought to a standstill, the religious life of non-Muslims was closely regulated and even kite-

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though Pakistan did not officially recognise Israel, the ISI had developed links through the CIA with Mossad during the Afghan *jihad*.'

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., pp. 118–119.

flying was declared illegal on the grounds that it was an un-Islamic practice.

Malaysia was not immune to these developments abroad. Its own strategic location smack in the middle of trade routes between east and west, north and south, coupled with Malaysia's rapid development in the 1980s and 1990s, made it seem like the beacon of progress in the Muslim world. The establishment of institutions like the International Islamic University elevated the country's status and made it one of the main destinations for Muslim students worldwide. In time, Malaysia became a favourite destination for tourists from the Arab countries and the Indian subcontinent, as well as Muslim scholars and students from all over the globe. But not all of these visitors were necessarily welcomed. Some of the more radical Islamist groups in Indonesia had simply hopped over to Malaysia to relocate their activities when the government of President Soeharto began to clamp down on them. In the mid-1980s Malaysia became the home of the Indonesian cleric Abu Bakar Bashir who was forced to flee Indonesia after the crackdown on Islamists unleashed by President Soeharto and the Indonesian security forces. While teaching at his religious school at Sungai Manggis, Bashir attracted a number of Indonesian and Malaysian students and *ex-mujahideen* (one of whom was Nujaman Riduan Isamuddin, @ Hambali) who joined him there. Ustaz Bashir taught his students that they should reject all forms of secularism, obey only Islamic law and not the secular laws of the country and prepare for a *jihad* for an Islamic state.<sup>150</sup> Bashir and his followers would later return to Indonesia following the fall of Soeharto, but his stay in Malaysia (which went unnoticed at the time) would return to haunt him and the Malaysian government in the years that followed. In 1998, seven Afghans travelling with false Italian passports were arrested in Malaysia and accused of trying to start a bombing campaign in the country.<sup>151</sup> While Malaysia was more than willing to welcome tourists from other parts of the Muslim

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<sup>150</sup> Lily Zubaidah Rahim, 'The Road Less Travelled: Islamic Militancy in Southeast Asia', *Critical Asian Studies*, 35(2) (2003), pp. 217-219.

<sup>151</sup> Ahmad Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 136.

world, the government preferred them to come with cash rather than explosives.

Monitoring the movement of foreigners in and out of the country therefore became one of the preoccupations of the Malaysian government and its security services by the mid-1990s. Malaysia's headlong entry into the globalisation process had opened up the country's economy to capital investment from abroad, but it also meant that the country was no longer a localised space with clearly defined boundaries that could be policed all the time. The traffic of bodies and ideas was becoming increasingly difficult to control, due in part to major developments in communications and information technology such as the internet. While the authorities had their hands full trying to keep track of who was doing what and where, there was also one other area which remained outside the control of the state's security and intelligence apparatus: the discourse of Islam itself.

*The War of Words Continues: PAS's Sacralisation of Politics  
and Politik Akhirat*

Power and Politics do not pre-exist Culture. On the contrary, they are culturally constructed. ... It is in culture that people fashion power and the acceptance of it. If power and its transmutation through a process of legitimisation into authority is intrinsically a cultural phenomenon, then Culture itself is inherently political. The fundamental question therefore is not the mechanics but the *symbolics* of power.

Clive S Kessler,  
*Archaism and Modernity in  
Contemporary Malay Political Culture*<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Joel S. Kahn and Francis Loh Kok Wah (eds.), *Fragmented Vision*, p. 135.

Apart from establishing and strengthening its transnational links and networks with other Islamist movements and parties abroad, PAS in the 1990s was also heavily engaged in the battle for hearts and minds (as well as souls) in Malaysia.

The battle for the soul of Islam itself had, as we have mentioned earlier, begun in the 1980s when the UMNO-led government and PAS began their Islamisation race in earnest. During the 1980s, this contest had turned violent due to the radicalisation of PAS's own discourse brought about by its use of *takfir* and other exclusionary discursive strategies. By the 1990s, the political landscape of Malaysia was dotted by numerous Islamist institutions of research, education and higher learning. From the *pondok* and *madrrasah* in the *kampung* to the International Islamic University close to the heart of the political capital itself, the battle for the meaning and content of Islam was being fought in earnest on all fronts. This was no longer a contest over the mere contents of Islamic discourse, but a hegemonic struggle to gain power and influence over the means of disseminating Islam.

The Islamisation race between PAS and the UMNO-led BN government led to an obvious attempt by all parties concerned to out-Islamise each other. Other Islamist movements such as ABIM and the neo-Sufi *Darul Arqam* movement also joined in the fray. Not to be outdone, the government also had a few tricks up its sleeve. In response to the growing tide of Islamist activism on the campuses and in the Malay heartland, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's government initiated its own state Islamisation programme, culminating in the formation of numerous Islamist think-tanks and research centres. Among these were the Malaysian Institute for Islamic Research (IKIM) and the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), which came under the leadership of influential Islamist thinker Professor Syed Naquib al-Attas.

Despite the enormous advantages that both Syed Naquib al-Attas and Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad enjoyed (the former closely linked to the government and the latter closely linked to God), neither had developed the same following as the *ulama* of PAS, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In time, internal and external problems helped to diminish the popularity and influence of both these Islamist leaders.

From the beginning, ISTAC was associated with its founder-director, Syed Naquib al-Attas. However, Syed Naquib al-Attas' dominant stature and intellectual acumen were precisely the factors that made ISTAC an impenetrable and inaccessible institution whose relevance to daily life diminished day by day. Set as it was in one of the most exclusive (and expensive) parts of the capital, ISTAC was allowed to carry on with its academic work in blissful isolation. The brilliant though highly complex writings of al-Attas — dutifully published in luxuriously bound and prohibitively expensive volumes by ISTAC — were well beyond the reach of the ordinary masses, who had neither the opportunity to buy them or the time to read them. While the research and academic staff of the institute busied themselves with questions about the need for a radical paradigm shift that would bring about an essentially Islamic epistemology that Muslims could call their own, ordinary Malay-Muslims went about their lives as they had always done. ISTAC was not the only institution whose star was set to wane. As we have seen, Ustaz Ashaari and his *Darul Arqam* movement also ultimately fell victim to their own success. By the mid-1990s, the movement had spread its wings not only across the entire country but also abroad. The government's crackdown on the movement in 1994 wiped it off the political map of Malaysia within a number of weeks.

The appeal and influence of both Syed Naquib al-Attas and Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad were limited because they were seen as élitists and their respective institutions were open only to a limited following. While government Islamist institutions like IKIM and ISTAC were engaged in their project of re-presenting Islam as a modern system of values and way of life, they overlooked the fact that their message was not being delivered to all quarters of Malay-Muslim society. Despite all their efforts, IKIM and ISTAC were seen as institutions set up under the patronage of the Mahathir administration and as part of the government's own Islamisation campaign (described as a cosmetic gesture at best by the *ulama* of PAS). Like ISTAC, *Darul Arqam* was hampered by its own success. Ustaz Ashaari had strengthened the organisation's profile by winning over influential and important members of the establishment. However, the large number of university-trained professionals among *Darul Arqam's* followers added to the élite

image of the movement and eventually isolated it from the mainstream of Malay-Muslim society.

Neither ISTAC nor *Darul Arqam* were truly populist in the sense of being able to transcend the cleavages of class, wealth and power that remained all too real in the lives of millions of ordinary Malay-Muslims. What was needed was a 'third voice' that could speak the language of the man in the street, the farmer in the field and the corporate manager in the high-rise apartment block. By the mid-1990s, such a voice was on the scene: that of *ulama* Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat. If the story of ISTAC and *Darul Arqam* spoke of the poverty of riches, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz at least understood and appreciated the riches of poverty.

*The Poverty of Riches and the Riches of Poverty: Explaining the Popularity and Influence of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat*

In time, PAS's local network of mosques, *suraus*, *pondoks* and *madrasahs* became the centres for the propagation of PAS's reading of Islam. In Kelantan, the *ceramahs* (lectures) of PAS leaders continued to attract large audiences, much to the frustration of the federal government. While PAS's opponents understandably dismissed reports of large gatherings at PAS rallies and *ceramahs* as party-political propaganda or sloppy journalism, questions remained about how and why these *ceramahs* were so popular. One factor left out of the discussion altogether was the cultural mediation of religio-political discourse, and how Nik Aziz had managed to bring the message of God down to the padi field.

From the mid-1990s onwards, the *kuliahs* and *ceramahs* of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz have been compiled by the staff and students of the Ma'ahad ad-Dakwah wal-Imamah (MDI) in Kelantan. The first set of lectures, given during the fasting month of Ramadhan in 1995, was compiled and published as a book, *Islam Boleh* (Islam Can Succeed), which appeared just in time for the election campaign of that year. It was immediately followed by a second compilation, issued under the title *Kelantan: Universiti Politik Terbuka*.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> See Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Islam Boleh*, Nilam Puri: Ma'ahad ad-Dakwah wal-Imamah, 1995 and *Kelantan: Universiti Politik Terbuka*.

Most of these lectures were delivered by Nik Aziz at the Ma'ahad ad-Dakwah or Dewan Zulkiflee in Kota Bharu. The format of the lectures was simple, and they followed the same procedures that the *tuan guru* had set when he began lecturing to the public in the 1980s. They began each Friday morning about 9:30 a.m., with the audience ready to take notes and to record the speeches for listening to again. Nik Aziz would begin the lectures with a *doa* (prayer) and then read out a few lines from a *Qur'anic surah* of his choice. The *tuan guru* then offered his own interpretation of the lines. The process would continue until the entire *surah* was completed. This made up the bulk of the lectures, each of which lasted around one to two hours.

Nik Aziz has always tailored his speeches to suit the needs and interests of his local audience. Of Kelantanese origin himself, the *tuan guru* speaks Malay, but in a strong Kelantanese *loghat* (dialect) immediately recognisable to all Malay speakers, even if incomprehensible to some. He uses phrases and terms like '*aku*', '*tuan ambo*' and '*demo*' in his speech — terms of reference so familiar they may border on rudeness to some non-Kelantanese speakers. The lectures were given in an easy-going, informal and even humorous style, filled with jokes and puns that made sense to the local (largely rural) audience, whom he referred to as '*orang Kelante*'.

One point that the *tuan guru* never tired of repeating to his audience was the specificity of their own local condition in Kelantan. It was clear that he was trying to localise a universal religious discourse by relating it to the local socio-cultural, economic and political conditions of his own people. Rather than write and speak at length about abstract theological and philosophical concerns, Nik Aziz's real expertise lay in his ability to localise the universal and universalise the local. By so doing, he made Islam a living reality and a solid presence in the daily lives of ordinary Kelantanese people.

This was most clearly demonstrated in Nik Aziz's *tafsirs* (exegesis) of the *Qur'an*. Among the first few *surahs* that he interpreted were the *surah Hud*, *Yunus*, *al-Taubah* and *al-Furqan*. *Surah Hud* (Hood) is the eleventh *surah* of the *Qur'an*, that was revealed during the last year of the Prophet Muhammad's stay in Mecca,

shortly after *surah Yunus*.<sup>154</sup> The two *surahs* share many similar themes and concerns and there is some continuity in the subjects and personalities featured. As Muhammad Asad has shown, the main theme of *surah Hud* is the revelation and proof of the existence of God and God's will through his Prophets, lessons that Nik Aziz tries to bring home to his fellow Kelantanese listeners. The *tuan guru* begins his exegesis of *surah Hud* with the following observations:

*Walaupun Surah ini dipanggil Surah Hud tetapi bila Allah bercerita Dia punggut habis cerita-cerita orang seperjuangan dengan Hud — cerita Nabi Nuh, dan dua tiga Nabi lain — yang dikira tokoh yang ada banyak cerita. Orang yang tidak ada cerita dalam hidup diatas mukabumi ini laksana orang lesu, orang kaku; bangun pagi bawa lembu ke padang, sebelah petang sabit rumput, balik ke rumah tidur. Kalau kita hidup macam ini saja orang kata kita hidup tak ada cerita, hidup tak ada bernama. Bila dia hidup tak bernama, semasa hidup orang tak berasa dia ada dikampung; kalau mati orang tak berasa kosong. Tidak merasa sangkut dihati dia tidak ada benda yang dibuatnya di muka dunia ini.*<sup>155</sup>

In these opening lines, the cosmic schema of the *Qur'an* and the tales of the Prophets are brought down to the level of the local Kelantanese audience. As if to remind them of their own present state of affairs, Nik Aziz tells his listeners that the one who spends his days just tending to his buffaloes and paddy fields (and goes back to sleep afterwards) does not really merit much discussion —

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<sup>154</sup> Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Quran*, Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus Press, 1980, pp. 310-335.

<sup>155</sup> Translation: Although this particular *surah* is called *surah Hud*, when Allah was telling us this story he picked up all the stories he could find from those who were Hud's companions — the story of Noah, and two or three other prophets — who were regarded as having stories of their own to tell. The one who lives his life on this earth without a story to tell is like one who is worn and mute; he gets up in the morning and takes his buffalo to the field, in the afternoon he cuts the grass and then in the evening he goes back home to sleep. Throughout his life no one knows him; in the *kampung* (village) no one has heard of him, when he's dead no one misses him. No-one remembers him because he never did anything worth remembering. (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Tafsir Surah Hud*, Nilam Puri: Ma'ahad ad-Dakwah wal-Imamah, 1996, p. 2.)

be it in religious texts or profane ones. No one in the *kampung* (village) will remember them. The *cerita* (stories) in the *Qur'an* are, therefore, about those who have led important and eventful lives, unlike them, the little *orang kampung* (village folk) of Kelantan.

From the outset, a great deal of stage-setting has gone into the *tafsir* of Nik Aziz. The stories he tells and the lessons he teaches come from a higher plane, occupied by God's Prophets and 'men with stories to tell'. At the peak of this hermeneutic universe is, of course, God — the author and prime mover of all things. They, the audience, are located right at the bottom of the order of things, at the foot of the stage of life so to speak. Here, according to Nik Aziz, the world is already divided along vertical and horizontal planes that separate the worthy from the ordinary.

It is also interesting to see where Nik Aziz locates himself and the *ulama* of PAS within this grand universal schema. In his *tafsir*, Nik Aziz spells out the role and duties of the '*guru yang benar-benar murshid*' (truly spiritual teachers) like himself: They are the ones who will lead the Muslim *ummah* both here in the world and onwards and upwards to the life hereafter:

*Guru yang murshid maknanya guru yang boleh memimpin manusia ke akhirat, bukan hanya memimpin manusia ke pejabat sahaja. Inilah guru yang dikehendaki oleh Islam.*<sup>156</sup>

If a vertical cleavage between God and Man has been drawn in the *tafsir* of Nik Aziz, the ones who are meant to straddle the divide between the sacred and profane are none other than the *ulama* themselves. They are, in a sense, the ones who stand between the present life and the one to come.

Among the ordinary masses there are also differences and divisions. Elsewhere in the *tafsir* of Nik Aziz there are references to Muslims and non-Muslims, and the latter are further divided into groups and subgroups ranging from *kafir* (non-believers) to *munafikin* (hypocrites), *mushrikin* (idolaters/deviants) and *fasiq* (evil

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<sup>156</sup> Translation: The spiritual *guru* is the one who can lead the people to Heaven, not only lead them to their offices and places of work. These are the sort of *guru* that Islam wants (Ibid., p. 68).

ones). At times, these distinctions coincide with racial and ethnic ones, and it is not unusual for Nik Aziz to refer to non-Malays in his lessons as well, be they Hindus who 'worship' the cow 'as their God'<sup>157</sup> [sic] or unscrupulous 'Cina Apek'<sup>158</sup> (a derogatory term for the Chinese) who exploit and swindle the Malays of Kelantan. But Nik Aziz's condemnation of all of these non-Muslim groups is final and applied with a broad brush that tars all and sundry:

*Semua orang kafir di muka dunia ini jahat belaka — tidak ada seorang kafir yang baik... . Maksiat yang berlaku di dunia ini sama ada oleh orang kafir ataupun fasik.*<sup>159</sup>

It is clear that the audience Nik Aziz wishes to address is a local Malay-Muslim one. Having sidelined all other sections of the public (Westerners, non-Malays and non-Muslims), his target audience has been narrowed to his Malay-Muslim students and followers. But the stage that is set in the *tafsir* of Nik Aziz is also all-embracing and all-encompassing. No single individual or group is ever located radically outside the parameters of God's orderly universe. God is forever present and even the *kampung* and padi fields of Kelantan remain within the panoptic scope of the omniscient God who surveys all that there is to see and knows all that there is to know. The vertical axis connects even the lowliest of Kelantanese to God above, but the peasant in the audience is also reminded of his status and station in life, which is on par with the other nonentities and nobodies sitting next to him/her.

Having reminded his listeners that God's vision is greater than theirs, Nik Aziz goes on to point out that God's wisdom and intel-

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<sup>157</sup> Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Tafsir Surah Yunus*, Nilam Puri: Ma'ahad ad-Dakwah wal-Imamah, 1998, p. 61.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>159</sup> Translation: All the *kafir* in this world are evil — there is no such thing as a good *kafir*... . And all the vice that is committed in the world is due to them, the *kafir* or the *fasiq* (*Ibid.*, p. 217).

It is important to note that Nik Aziz's own definition of what constitutes a *kafir* or *fasiq* is broad enough to include 'bad' Muslims. For he goes on to argue that even Muslims who commit acts of vice should be regarded as *kafir* or *fasiq*.

ligence are also infinitely greater than the Kelantan padi farmer's. He does this by trying to answer the questions that continue to trouble the ordinary farmer in the field:

*Cuba ambo semua tanya: Mengapa Tuhan buat rumput, buat lalang? Takkanlah Allah Ta'ala yang begitu cerdik sanggup membuat benda-benda yang tidak berfaedah. Kita yang bodoh ini pun tak dapat buat benda-benda yang tidak terpakai kerja, inikan pula Tuhan yang maha cerdik, Tuhan yang maha bijak. Sudah tentulah tiap-tiap perkara yang dibuatnya ada faedah, ada hikmah belaka, cuma terletak diatas kita rajin atau tidak didalam mencungkil rahsia masalah ini.<sup>160</sup>*

The *tafsir* of Nik Aziz thus emphasises the hierarchical nature of the Islamic cosmos. By emphasising the insurmountable gulf of knowledge and wisdom between God and ordinary men, he underscores the fact that the universe is fundamentally uneven and unequal. Having convinced his rural audience that the weeds and *lalang* that threaten their fields and crops are actually part of God's divine plan for the cosmos (if only they knew), Nik Aziz next turns to their stomachs. This he does when he attempts to explain to them the complex mystery surrounding God's existence and the limits of mankind's finite knowledge of the world:

*Kamu hendak tahu kebijaksanaan Tuhan, ukurlah apa yang ada pada diri manusia kerana manusia sendiri tak tahu keadaan dirinya. ... Sampai sekarang ini manusia tidak boleh jelaskan lagi apa yang dia berasa. ... Begitu juga masalah nasi dalam pinggan. Sedang kita asyik berbual, bila masuk kedalam dapur terbau masakan. 'Bau apa ini? Bau bawang goreng, bau sup. Aloo!! Sudahlah bersembang, hei berhenti, mari makan nasi.' Cuba jelaskan bagaimana kamu rasa terasa lapar. Macam mana kamu buat? Tidak ada siapa yang boleh kata, yang lapar ini begini, kerana saya buat begini.*

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<sup>160</sup> Translation: Why don't you all ask yourselves: Why did God make weeds, and *lalang*? Surely God who is so clever would not waste his time making things that are useless. We who are so stupid can't even make things like that which are of no use to anyone, what more God, who is so wise and clever. Surely all the things God has created have their uses, surely there must be a wisdom behind it all. It is just up to us, whether we are curious enough to try and learn the secret behind these mysteries (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Tafsir Surah Hud*, pp. 4–5).

*Buat macam mana? Molek-molek kamu sedang berbual, apabila terbau sup serta-merta kamu lapar. Jadi usahlah kamu hendak tahu hal langit dan bumi, hal dalam tubuh badan kamu pun kamu tak tahu.*<sup>161</sup>

Obviously not persuaded by the theories of a certain Professor Pavlov, Nik Aziz's elaboration of the '*masalah nasi dalam pinggan*' (problem of the rice in the plate) aims at the gut instincts and intuitions of his audience. For die-hard sceptics who remain unmoved by the grand logic of the *tuan guru*, Nik Aziz goes one step further and aims below the belt when he introduces another parable of sorts, which involves bodily functions often kept private:

*Kalau ada juga orang yang mengaku dia tahu belaka, kata begini saja: 'Bila kamu bangun pagi dan selak kain, memancut keluar air kencing. Sebelum kamu duduk di jamban, kenapa air kencing tak keluar? Kamu buat macam mana?' Kalau paip, bila kita pulas air terbit memancut. Kamu pulas apa? Pulas pun tidak, mulut pun tak berbunyi, tangan pun tak bergerak, tahu-tahu air kencing memancut keluar. Kenapa air kencing tidak keluar lepas kamu sudah masuk dalam jamban? ...Sampai sekarang ini manusia tak dapat jelaskan lagi apa yang dia berasa.'*<sup>162</sup>

<sup>161</sup> Translation: You who wish to know the extent of God's wisdom, try first to measure the ignorance of human beings who still know nothing about themselves. Till today people still can't explain how and what they feel. ... It's like when you come across a plate of rice. There you are, sitting nicely having a good laugh with your friends, when suddenly you smell something cooking in the kitchen. What's that, you ask? You can smell fried onions, you can smell the soup on the boil. Suddenly, 'Aloo!! That's enough talking, let's eat instead!' Try to explain how this hunger comes to you. How did you do it? Who can say "I'm hungry now because I did this or that"? How did it happen? There you were chatting away nicely and suddenly you feel hungry, you smell the soup and then you feel the hunger pangs. So don't waste your time thinking about heaven and earth, you don't even know what's going on in your belly (Ibid., p. 9).

<sup>162</sup> Translation: If there are still those know-it-alls who think they know everything, just say to them: "When you get up in the morning and lift your *sarong*, out shoots your pee. How come you weren't peeing before you sat on the toilet? How did you do it?" If it was a pipe, all you have to do is turn the tap. So what did you turn this time? You didn't turn anything, didn't say anything, *continued p. 554*

Putting aside the fact that some of Nik Aziz's parables and metaphors obviously hail from the store of *kampung* jokes and toilet humour, the discourse of the *tafsir* works because it operates within the well-established and time-honoured parameters of a localised discursive economy. Employing the symbols, tropes and metaphors of a rural agrarian discourse, replete with its host of bawdy jokes, *risqué* puns and innuendoes, Nik Aziz's *tafsir* are a classic example of local genius and sensitivity at work. It was this ability to transpose an alien message into a local context that allowed Nik Aziz to do something else with his *tafsir*, namely to use them as a convenient and highly effective vehicle for the communication of political messages aimed at his local constituency.

*God is with the Kampung: Nik Aziz's Tafsir as Political Critique*

*Apa perbezaan antara kerajaan dengan gengster? Perbezaan pertama ialah gengster tidak ada bendera.*<sup>163</sup>

Nik Aziz Nik Mat,  
*Tafsir Surah Hud*

The *tafsir* of Nik Aziz are fundamentally multifunctional discourses aimed at securing a number of objectives. At the surface level, they function as tools for religious teaching and *dakwah* (missionary activity), a means to communicate the message and morals of Islam to a local audience — albeit via the use of some rather unorthodox case studies. But it is clear that for Nik Aziz the message of the *Qur'an* is not confined to the *kampung*. In the *tafsir* there is also an obvious and sustained attempt to bring to the fore-

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*n. 162 continued*

didn't touch anything — but the next thing you know your pee is spraying everywhere. How come you don't pee yourself after you've left the toilet? ...Till today people still can't understand how they feel what they do (Ibid.).

<sup>163</sup> Translation: What is the difference between the government and gangsters? For a start, gangsters don't have a flag (Ibid., p. 187).

ground a political critique couched in religio-cultural terms that borrows extensively from the cultural repertoire and discursive economies of the Kelantanese themselves.

One of the religio-political themes that recur time and again in the *tafsir* of Nik Aziz is the theme of the fundamental equality of all before God, and that God alone deserves the love, worship and total obedience of men. No one — be it the Sultan of Kelantan or *Pak Mat* (Uncle Mat) in the *kampung* — should think that their life of splendid isolation shields them from the sight of God. As Nik Aziz himself points out: '*Dari Raja dalam istana, sampai kepada Pak Mat yang duduk dalam kampung, semua sekali kena diberitahu perkara ini: Kamu ini hamba Tuhan!*'<sup>164</sup>

For Nik Aziz, God is clearly on the side of the peasantry and the labourers. In his view, God's mercy flows in abundance to the poor and the pious and it tends to run short for the very wealthy:

*Tuhan kata: 'Bahawa laknat sentiasa mengekori dibelakang penderhaka-penderhaka dalam sepanjang hidup mereka di dunia ini dan di akhirat kelak.' Tuhan berkata di atas dunia mereka dilaknatkan dengan diturun azab sepanjang hayat. Laknat ini maknanya disumpah, kena murka. Kepada orang-orang tua yang hati dan jiwanya masih bersih, mereka akan merasa sangat gerun kalau disumpah orang-orang kampung, apalah lagi bila mendengar orang yang disumpah Tuhan. Tapi bagi orang yang hidup dalam suasana kebendaan, hidup yang suasana materialis — orang yang bergaji besar, rumah besar, kebun besar, berduit banyak — mereka ini tak mengerti apanya kena sumpah. 'Takut apa kena sumpah? Pitis aku banyak, pandailah aku hidup.'*<sup>165</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Translation: From the King in his palace to Pak Mat who lives in the village, you all need to be told this one thing: You are all servants of God! (Ibid., p. 11).

<sup>165</sup> Translation: God has said: 'My curses shall fall on those who have turned against me and shall follow them throughout their lives and in the hereafter.' God has said that his wrath shall fall on them and they will suffer throughout their lives. This wrath is a curse, eternal damnation. The old folk whose hearts are still clean and pure are afraid of being cursed by their fellows in the village, what more being cursed by God. But those who live in the midst of wealth and riches, amidst materialism — those with their huge salaries, grand houses, *continued p. 555*

Here the *tuan guru*'s neat chain of equivalences brings together a host of adversaries to the just and righteous — those with huge salaries, grand houses, large estates, plentiful riches — while the poor and the pious remain as the beloved of God. The moral economy of the peasant has been elevated and re-inscribed by the moral economy of the *ulama*, turning the class struggle in the town and countryside into a grander cosmic struggle between good and evil, right and wrong.

At no point, however, does Nik Aziz, the *ulama* and supreme spiritual leader of the Islamist party, forget that his adversaries are also political ones. He makes clear his opposition to the UMNO-led federal government based in Kuala Lumpur on a number of occasions. In another *tafsir* (*Tafsir Surah Yunus*) he bluntly states: '*Saya ketua parti politik, bukan ketua guerrilla. Kalau saya ketua guerrilla, saya beli SCUD — yang Iraq tidak habis kirim ke Tel Aviv dan Riyadh — untuk bidas Kuala Lumpur.*'<sup>166</sup>

However, as the spiritual leader of a political party, Nik Aziz is forced to limit himself to less explosive tactics such as writing proposals and papers, engaging in seminars and debates. Nevertheless, political engagement for Nik Aziz does take place on a number of levels, and his *tafsir* provide him with yet another avenue to criticise his opponents. This political awareness is clearly shown in his *tafsir* when he describes the nefarious tactics of his political foes. In the *tafsir* of *surah Hud*, for instance, he explains the concept of *munafikin* (hypocrites) with reference to the Special Branch (secret police) of the Malaysian state:

*Tuhan kata: 'Ingat-ingat bahawa mereka itu gulung dada mereka, dengan tujuan hendak melindungi diri atau menyusut daripada Allah, daripada*

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n. 165 continued

large estates, plentiful riches — they do not know what it means to be cursed. 'Why should I fear the wrath of God? My wealth is aplenty, I can take care of myself' they say (*Ibid.*, p. 148).

<sup>166</sup> Translation: I am the leader of a political party, not a guerrilla force. If I was a leader of guerrillas, I would buy SCUD missiles — the one that Iraq has not fired on Tel Aviv and Riyadh — to counterattack Kuala Lumpur (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Tafsir Surah Yunus*, p. 16).

Nabi Muhammad.' Iktibar Quran ini benar-benar menyayat hati, melukakan hati orang-orang tertentu. Serupa kita kata beginilah, didalam majlis ini tentulah ada polis SB [Special Branch] yang datang bukan hendak mengaji, tetapi hendak mencari rahsia. Walaupun dia SB tetapi orang kenal dia sebab dia juga keluar masuk pejabat. Kalau ambo renung adik kakak dan kebetulan ambo kena sungguh pada dia, dia tentulah perkecil sedikit badan dia. 'Aloo! Ustaz nampak aku! Uztas nampak aku!'<sup>167</sup>

References to the police, Special Branch, state security forces, Malay capitalists, the urban élite and, of course, PAS's foremost rival, UMNO, appear in the *tafsirs* of Nik Aziz with such regularity that they underscore the fact that the narratives are clearly a political exercise. By presenting the enemies of PAS via the medium of a religious discourse as he does, Nik Aziz manages to heighten the conflict between PAS and UMNO, where the boundary between the two parties is no longer simply an ideological one but also a moral and religious one.

To further underline his message, Nik Aziz reminds his followers that not only is God on the side of the poor and oppressed, he is also on the side of PAS. In a controversial and problematic paragraph from his *Tafsir Surah Yunus*, Nik Aziz goes as far as stating:

*Dalam kubur pula [malaikat] Munkar Nakir tidak tanya banyak mana kamu bawa pitis, banyak mana kamu ada senjata. Dia tanya siapa Tuhanmu? Apa Agamamu? Siapa Nabimu? Apa Kiblatmu? Jawab dengan hujah. Dia tidak tanya: Kamu anak siapa? Kamu jadi wakil rakyatkah? Kamu rajakah? Kamu Tok Gurukah? Di padang Mahsyar begitu juga....*

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<sup>167</sup> Translation: God has said: 'Remember that they (the hypocrites) will conceal their hearts, in order to protect themselves and to shy away from God, from his Prophet Muhammad.' This passage from the *Qur'an* really touches the hearts of some, hurts the feelings of some. For example, in this meeting there are bound to be members of the SB [Special Branch], who have come not to learn but to dig out information. Even if he is meant to be an undercover SB, he is still known to others as they have seen him coming in and out of his office. If I were to look around at the brothers and sisters in the audience, my eyes might just fall on him, and he will surely shy away. 'Aloo! The *ustaz* has seen me! The *ustaz* has seen me!' he will think (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Tafsir Surah Hud*, p. 24).

*Apabila menjawab, hendaklah jawapan itu serupa dengan ajaran Nabi kerana tidak ada hujah yang paling gagah selain dari ajaran Nabi. Ketika itu jiwa kita akan berasa puas seperti Saidina Bilal apabila dia yakin dengan ajaran Nabi dia sanggup melawan bosnya, ketuanya. Walaupun dipukul dia tetap mengatakan Ahad: maknanya, Tuhan Esa. Dijemur panas dia mengatakan: Ahad. Diletak batu diatas dada, dia katakana Ahad, Ahad, Tuhan Esa. Kalau guna istilah politik sekarang ini kita kata: PAS, PAS, PAS. Hendak kata Ahad, Ahad, Ahad atau hendak kata PAS, PAS, PAS — kedua-duanya benda sama — sebab kita kata agama dan politik mesti disatukan. (emphasis added)<sup>168</sup>*

The perennial struggle between God and the Devil has thus been recontextualised in the local political conflict between PAS and UMNO, Kelantan and the federal government. Kelantan is no longer a locality stuck in the northeastern corner of the Malaysian map. Thanks to the *tafsir* of Nik Aziz the little Malay state is now relocated at the centre of a cosmic struggle where God himself is at hand to help the oppressed and downtrodden.

Critics and opponents of PAS have, over the years, bemoaned the fact that the *ulamas* of the Islamist party have instrumentally used the discourse of Islam for obviously political ends. This is

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<sup>168</sup> Translation: While in our graves the angel Munkar Nakir will not ask us how much money we have brought with us, or how many weapons. They will ask: Who is your God? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet? In which direction do you pray? Answer with confidence. They will not ask: Whose child are you? Are you a people's representative? Are you a King? Are you a *tok guru*? On the field of Mashyar [on judgement day] it will be the same. ... When you answer you have to answer as our Prophet has taught you, for there is nothing as strong as the argument of the Prophet. Then our soul will be as contented as that of Saidina Bilal who, when convinced of the Prophet's teachings, was prepared to confront his boss, his leaders. Even though he was beaten he kept saying *Ahad*: God Almighty. When exposed to the desert heat he kept saying *Ahad*. When they covered his chest with heavy rocks, he kept saying *Ahad, Ahad, God Almighty*. *If we were to use the political terminology of today, we can say PAS, PAS, PAS*. Whether we want to say *Ahad, Ahad, Ahad* or *PAS, PAS, PAS* — *the two are the same* — because for us religion and politics must be made one (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, *Tafsir Surah Yunus*, p. 186). (emphasis added)

clearly evident in some of the more politically slanted comments and readings in the various *tafsirs* of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz and Tuan Guru Hadi Awang. Putting aside the overt political uses of such *Qur'anic* exegesis, scholars of political religion still have to address the dimension of culture and the cultural mediation of politics, so evident in the writings and speeches of Islamist leaders like Nik Aziz.

Though it cannot be claimed that the success of PAS at the polls and at the grassroots level is due solely to the popularity of the religious lectures, classes and *tafsirs* of its *ulamas*, these activities have clearly played a major part in the *renaissance* of the Islamist party since the early 1980s. (A fact that the Islamists themselves do not deny.) The Islamists themselves also often readily admit that the religious lectures and classes given by the leading PAS *ulama* have served a number of other political ends. They have helped to undercut the claims and gains made by the UMNO-led government, helped to consolidate PAS's hold on its own local constituencies, and helped to bridge the gap between the PAS ideologues and the electorate.

Delivered as they are in a local idiom and style familiar to the local audience, the *tafsirs* of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz have proven invaluable for PAS's success, particularly in Kelantan. As far as the aims of *dakwah* (missionary activity) are concerned, the *tafsirs* have helped the Deobandi-educated *tuan guru* to preach to a local audience ideas and values that have changed the way of life of so many Kelantanese. This change has added to the further erosion of many aspects of traditional Kelantanese culture, now regarded as un-Islamic and bordering on *shirk*. The local rendition of the *Qur'an* has helped to localise a discourse which would otherwise have remained alien in origin for a vast number of Kelantanese, who have obviously not taken to the technocratic and academic approach to Islam favoured by the state-sponsored Islamist think-tanks and research centres like IKIM and ISTAC.

The reverse, however, holds equally true. While localising the universal, the *tafsirs* of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz have also helped to universalise or globalise what was once seen as a local affair: Malaysian politics and, more specifically, the intra-Malay politics of Kelantan. By bringing God and the Prophets of the Abrahamic

faith to the theatre of Kelantan, the political arena of the once isolated Malay state has been expanded well beyond its territorial boundaries. The conflict between the PAS state government and the UMNO-led federal government has taken on universal, cosmic dimensions, making it a clash between the faithfuls and the sinners. What was once a local drama has been transformed into a celestial pageant.

Nik Aziz's 'metaphysics of rice' and his references to SCUD missiles being sent to Kuala Lumpur may strike the intellectual and political élite of the metropole as a sad instance of the 'dumbing down' of politics. It nevertheless remains one of the most powerful and effective tools in the arsenal of the Islamist party that has helped its star to rise, from the moment that its leaders began talking to the farmer in the field. Though PAS's critics may be repulsed by Nik Aziz's blatantly political and politicised reading of the *Qur'an*, it remains a fact that his is the only form of organically-rooted vernacular exegesis that has come close to the 'activist exegesis' pioneered by the *Ikwan* activist Sayyid Qutb. In the *tafsirs* of Nik Aziz and the *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* of Qutb, the reader finds similar tactics and methods at work: a summary interpretation of entire sections of the *Surah* (as opposed to the studious word-by-word translation favoured by earlier generations of scholars); a conscious attempt to relocate the meaning of the text in the context of the present-day realities of the audience, and a dialectical logic that divided the world between the faithful and the enemies of Islam (both within and without the body of the *ummah*) running like a red thread throughout the narrative.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> For a further discussion on the revolutionary and pioneering methods of Sayyid Qutb and his exegesis, see: Peter Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses*, Horizon: Singapore, 2001, pp. 90-95. Riddell notes that Sayyid Qutb had deliberately abandoned the earlier method of word-by-word exegesis and favoured the use of extended (and politicised) commentaries on entire sections of the *Qur'an*, that would serve the needs of his own pedagogic approach. By doing so, Qutb broke away from a tradition of established exegesis that went up to the time of Muhammad Abduh.

If there is a lesson to be learned from this, it is that both scholars and politicians should never underestimate the capacity of subaltern discourses to disrupt the discursive field of politics on a wider (national, regional or even international) level. If proof was needed of the effectiveness of PAS's brand of '*politik akhirat*', it was provided by the state apparatus itself. In February 2002, the government-controlled RTM television network aired a 10-minute video clip featuring the 'confession' of a follower of Ustaz Ibrahim Libya, the PAS leader killed by state security forces in 1985. The producers of the clip claimed that the interviewee had confessed that he had been misled by Ustaz Ibrahim and the PAS leaders. However, those who paid attention were quick to realise that quite the opposite was the case. Rather than admit that he had been misled, the follower of the slain *ulama* was extolling the virtues of his fallen leader. Among other things, the interviewee claimed that the *ustaz* was a learned *alim* with miraculous powers, including the ability to disappear and to alter his shape and blend into the scenery. (A convenient and useful ability considering that he had been on the wanted list for more than a year.) It is also interesting to note that not a single religious scholar or official pointed out that such beliefs were tantamount to *shirk* and contrary to the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. Nearly two decades after his death, the ghost of Ibrahim Libya was still capable of beguiling those who came under his spell. If a dead PAS leader could still have such a strong psychological hold on his followers so long after his passing, one can only imagine the hold that the living *ulamas* of PAS might have on their followers today.

*The Storm Clouds Gather: PAS and the Global  
'Clash of Civilisations'*

By the mid- to late-1990s, PAS's development and the rise and fall of its fortunes were closely linked to both internal and external variable factors that it could no longer ignore. The combined effects of globalisation and developments on the home front ensured that PAS was no longer the sole master of its destiny and engineer of its identity.

On the global stage, PAS's identity as an Islamist party was rapidly being redefined according to the new logic of dialectical opposition between the West and Islam aptly summed up by the 'clash of civilisations' thesis of Samuel Huntington. If Islam was seen as a potential ally in the global crusade against communism during the Cold War, by the late 1990s the tables had been turned. Yesterday's comrade in arms was now the mortal enemy of the West, and the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 1993<sup>170</sup> seemed to confirm the growing fears and prejudices of many in the West (notably the US). Huntington's thesis (also published in 1993) adroitly deployed with the defensive trope of the so-called 'Islamic threat' looming over the horizon and threatening the very frontiers of the Western world and Occidental civilisation. Shortly after the attack on the World Trade Center, *Newsweek* magazine carried as its main story an article 'Cold Fury: the Wrath of Islam'. The writer, Christopher Dickey, raised the timely question: 'Does the terrorist strike in New York has its roots in the growing anger against the West shared by Muslim fundamentalists from North Africa to Asia?'<sup>171</sup> Despite protestations to the contrary, Islam, and more specifically its political expression, was obviously being reconfigured as the new ideological threat to the world, in particular to the West.

In the hegemonic struggle to recast Islam in its new role as the greatest threat to world order, the US media undoubtedly played the most important role as director, scriptwriter and stage

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<sup>170</sup> On 26 February 1993, a group of Islamist militants attempted to bring down the World Trade Center in New York by setting off explosives in the underground car park. Five civilians were killed and around 1,000 were injured. The blast failed to bring down the towers, but caused considerable structural damage which cost tens of millions of dollars to repair. The CIA blamed the attack on blind Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman, then resident in the US. A number of other suspected Muslim militants were also rounded up in New York and neighbouring states. Sheikh Umar was then seen as the main advisor and spiritual leader of the radical Egyptian *Tanzim al-Jihad* (also known as *Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah*) group responsible for the killing of Anwar Sadat in 1981.

<sup>171</sup> Willem Oltmans, *Not Guilty*, p. 29.

manager. Even when the fortunes of war turned against the over-paid and overfed defenders of the free world, the US media was always at hand to spin a story or two. The US adventure in Somalia came to a graceless end on 2 October 1993 when the mission to capture the Somalian warlord General Mohamad Farrad Aidid ended in failure with the loss of 19 US troops and two Black Hawk assault helicopters.<sup>172</sup> Americans were shocked by the revelation that the mission to capture Aidid incurred such a cost on American lives. The death of more than 1,000 Somalians during the botched operation did not seem to elicit the same magnitude of concern. Soon after, the US withdrew its forces from the troubled African country, and America's visible presence in the region was considerably reduced, for a while at least. But Mohamad Farrad Aidid was roped in as the latest member of an ever-expanding cast of nefarious foes against the West, and his image as the irrational Muslim leader of a horde of religious extremists and faceless mili-

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<sup>172</sup> In 1992, Washington sent a force of 20,000 US Marines and Infantry to secure law and order in Somalia, which was in the grip of a vicious civil war. In the capital, Mogadishu, Somalian warlord Mohamad Farrad Aidid had come to power with the help of his loosely organised — though heavily armed — militia troops. Described as a maverick warlord running a vast network of criminals and militia forces, Aidid was depicted in the US media as a security threat to the country and the whole region. With the US backing his opponents, Aidid declared war on US and UN troops in Somalia in 1993. In June 1993, Aidid's militia killed 24 members of the Pakistani UN contingent. The US then decided to act, and the American military command ordered the use of US Rangers and members of the Delta Force backed up by armoured assault helicopters to carry out the task. The attempt to capture Aidid and his advisors was a dismal failure. The US troops were trapped and ambushed in Mogadishu and two multi-million-dollar Black Hawk attack helicopters were shot down. After losing 19 men, the US evacuated its troops. Public outrage at the loss of American lives led to the withdrawal of US troops soon after. At the time, little mention was made of the fact that the US troops were rescued by members of the Pakistani and Malaysian forces attached to the UN peacekeeping force in Mogadishu.

tants helped to set the idea of Islam as a religion of violence and terrorism.

As if to drive the point home, the anti-Muslim hysteria that spread across the US in the wake of the bombing of the FBI offices in Oklahoma city in 1995 showed just how far and deep the fear and misapprehension regarding Islam and Muslims had gone by then.<sup>173</sup> Overnight, the term 'Islamophobia' made its transition from academic to mainstream media discourse. Even the subsequent revelation that the bomber was a white American ethno-nationalist and Christian fundamentalist did little to improve the public's own views of Islam, which remained a much maligned and misunderstood religion in the West. In western Europe, the situation was hardly any better. When German scholar Annemarie Schimmel was awarded the prize for literature by the German book publishers' association for her lifetime's work on Islam and Islamic civilisation, the announcement met with a hostile response from many quarters. German authors like Günter Grass condemned the associ-

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<sup>173</sup> The perpetrator of the attack on the Alfred O. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma city on 19 April 1995 was Gulf War veteran Timothy McVeigh, a self-confessed white supremacist and Christian fundamentalist fanatic, who attacked the building by driving a truck filled with chemical fertilizers into it. The blast killed 168 people, including 19 children and injured more than 500 other civilians. McVeigh remained unrepentant to the end. At his trial he confessed that his attack was politically motivated and directed against the federal government, which he claimed had systematically disempowered the state governments. He insisted that his execution be telecast to the nation, making him the first martyr for the extreme right in the country. Within 24 hours after the attack, US TV channels were reporting that the attack was carried out by 'Muslim fundamentalist' groups working in the US. American security experts and media personalities like Steven Emerson claimed that the organisers of the attack were American Muslim extremists based in Oklahoma and other parts of the US. Even after it was revealed that the culprits were white supremacists and Christian fundamentalists, few apologies were offered to American Muslims singled out by the media. At the height of the controversy, a number of Muslim schools and mosques all over the US were attacked and burnt.

ation's decision to honour Annemarie Schimmel on the grounds that she was an apologist for a 'fanatical religion' that was equated with Fascism and Nazism. It was obvious by then that the limits of the Western liberal-democratic imaginary stopped short at the frontiers of Islam and the Muslim *Other*.

Closer to home, by 1997 PAS was well and truly entrenched in its home state of Kelantan. Comfortable in the niche it had carved for itself, PAS went about reconstructing the terrain of Malay-Muslim politics in its private political laboratory. Even as the tide of political Islam was beginning to change in Iran — the country that had inspired an entire generation of PAS leaders — through the sudden and unexpected rise of reformist Mullah Mohammad Khatami,<sup>174</sup> PAS pressed on regardless with its own Islamisation

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<sup>174</sup> By the late 1990s, the Islamic Republic of Iran was undergoing drastic and spectacular internal changes. After more than two decades of living under the rule of the *mullahs*, Iranian society was experiencing a renewed wave of popular revolt against governmental authority. Much of this was due to public resentment against the theocratic regime of the *mullahs*, who never adapted to the popular demands of the masses and who had used their power to repress public freedom in the political, cultural and educational spheres. This was particularly true after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini when the *mullahs* attempted to consolidate their power by strengthening the *eslamiyat* (theocratic) institutions of the state at the expense of the *jomhuriyat* (republican) institutions. In time, a second generation of reform-minded *mullahs* began to appear, and they rallied around them the younger generation of students and young women who yearned for change in the country. The reformers were led by *ulama* Mohammad Khatami, who came to power in the 1997 presidential election. Khatami, who was supported by the liberal Iranian media and intelligentsia in particular, called for a more democratic and pluralist approach to politics. The reformers' argument was that internal reform was necessary to ensure that the Islamic republic could balance the demands of an Islamic polity as well as a democratic and pluralist political system (embodied by the popularly elected parliament, or *majles*). The early discourse of the Islamic Republic, premised on the notion of *taklif* (duty) as understood and constructed by *fiqh*, was openly challenged by modern democratic ideals. During the 1997 election campaign, Khatami and his followers *continued p. 566*

programme with a local touch. PAS's international networks and linkages had also developed and spread all over the world, due to the growing stature and prominence of some of its other leaders like Tuan Guru Hadi Awang. However, beyond the confines of Kelantan, PAS's influence had been checked by UMNO's economic and political successes.

The 'economic miracle' that was Malaysia was seen by many as living proof that a Muslim country could develop while maintaining its own Islamic identity. In international circles, Malaysia was seen as a model Muslim country where Islamic and Asian values could serve as the springboards to success. However, all of this was destined to come to an untimely and graceless end in mid-1997, when the drop in value of the Thai baht set in motion the spectacular collapse of the ASEAN economies. As the economies and governments fell one by one like a pack of cards, a moment of radical dislocation was introduced into the political equation, opening the way for the unexpected and meteoric rise of PAS once again.

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were routinely harassed by the followers of the more dogmatic and conservative *mullahs* of the *Shura-ye Negabhan* (Guardian Council), who at times resorted to violence and intimidation to stem the tide of unrest among the urban masses. The *Shura-ye Negabhan* attempted to block the advances of the reformists by exercising their power to vet and veto the candidates for the 1997 election. Despite all efforts to block him and his reformist group, Khatami won the election, and this was interpreted as Iran's 'second revolution from within'.

Chapter 6

**1997–2003: THE LATEST AVATAR:  
PAS AS THE DEFENDER OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY?**

*Terang-terang saya berani menyatakan sekarang bahawa PAS telah berjaya dengan hujah-hujahnya memikat orang-orang Islam.<sup>1</sup>*

UMNO leader Tan Sri Musa Hitam,  
Speech to UMNO Johor Bharu division,  
19 February 2000

*All That is Solid Evaporates into Thin Air: The 1997 Financial  
Crisis and the Untimely End of the ASEAN Economic Miracle*

We laughed; though our laughing betrayed scorn.  
People on this earth should live in fear.  
When men shake hands with Time, Time crushes  
Them like tumblers; little pieces of glass.

Abu Al-Ala Al-Ma'arri  
(973–1057)

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: I can say clearly now that PAS has succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the Muslims (in Malaysia). (Speech by UMNO politician Tan Sri Musa Hitam before the UMNO Johor Bahru division, 19 February 2000. Quoted in Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, pp. 180–181.)

On 2 July 1997, the government of Thailand and its Central Bank decided to allow the Thai baht to float naturally on the currency market because of the general opinion that the baht was overvalued as it was pegged to the US dollar. It was felt that the unnaturally high price of the baht was causing Thai goods to be less competitive on the international market, thus making Thailand a less attractive destination for foreign capital investment.

Few could have imagined the devastating consequences that would follow from the decision to allow the baht to float, for the currency collapsed almost immediately. (Its value dropped by 15% on the very first day.) As local and foreign investors panicked and pulled out their investments, foreign bankers began calling in their loans. Thai businessmen, in turn, began dumping the baht for dollars, suspecting that further devaluation was in the air and fearing the prospect of having to pay more to service their foreign loans. Fund managers compounded the situation as they began furiously selling the baht, sensing the prospect of a possible collapse in the economy, which soon became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Within a matter of days, the panic had turned into a rout, and the economy was rapidly following a downward spiral.

This chaotic turn of events had serious repercussions on the currencies of all Southeast Asian and Far Eastern economies (many of which were also pegged to the US dollar). Currency speculators, fund managers and foreign investment firms (along with the IMF) had been watching the ASEAN economies closely since the mid-1990s, and had grown increasingly worried about the trend of rapid development that seemed to suggest that the economies were beginning to overheat. The growing current account deficit figures and the glut of business and office properties in capitals like Bangkok, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur had sent the signal that the economies might well be on the verge of peaking.

After the baht began to collapse in July, investors and fund managers immediately turned their attention to the economies of Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore, which were showing the same symptoms of structural overheating. Their prognosis was sadly similar: the time had come to pull out their money *from the region as a whole* as the economies there were exhausted and in danger of structural collapse. The absence of an early

warning system and circuit breakers made the countries even more vulnerable to this sudden change in mood.

The contagion spread like wildfire. Between August and December 1997, the Indonesia rupiah, the Filipino peso and the Malaysian ringgit were also hit. The collapse was further exacerbated by the flight of capital and cash due to the hysteria of the foreign media, the manoeuvrings of fund managers and the herdmentality of foreign investors.<sup>2</sup> Local investors also played their part by abandoning their own economies post haste. Between 2 June and 1 August, the Malaysian ringgit fell from RM2.52 to the dollar to RM2.65 to the dollar. The Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) Index fell from 1,150 points to 978 points during the same period. By 22 September, the ringgit had plunged to RM3.12 to the dollar and the KLSE Index was down to 760 points. By December, the ringgit had dropped below RM4.00 to the dollar, and the National Bank spent RM14 billion trying to save the Malaysian currency from collapse. The seriousness of the situation forced the Malaysian government to establish the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) that effectively took over some government functions.<sup>3</sup> After nearly two decades of uninterrupted growth and prosperity, Malaysians woke up to discover that their dream was over and that reality had arrived on their doorstep, bearing bad tidings.

The 1997-98 economic and political crises had a profound effect on the social, economic and political structures of the ASEAN countries. So rapid was the flight of foreign capital from the region and so spectacular the collapse of the local economies that it seemed as

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<sup>2</sup> The situation in July-December 1997 can only be described as a mindless panic. As economist Jeffrey Sachs of the Harvard Institute of International Development put it: 'what we have experienced (in Asia) is massive inflows based on high optimism about the region followed by massive outflows that one can only characterise as panic. While it is fashionable to talk about crony capitalism in Asia and the myths of East Asian economic performance, I believe that — while those weaknesses are real — they cannot account for the real collapse.' (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 February 1998, p. 48).

<sup>3</sup> The daily running of NEAC was left to Tun Daim Zainuddin, economic advisor to the Prime Minister. Dr. Mahathir and Dato' Anwar Ibrahim were also senior members of NEAC.

if the 'economic miracle' of the 1980s and 1990s was nothing more than a grand illusion. The dislocation of the present opened the way for crisis and antagonism to surface, rupturing settled hegemonies that had been precariously kept together for so long. Almost overnight, a host of new subjectivities and political configurations emerged. Yet nobody knew how these new formations would play themselves out and what the final outcome would be.

For Malaysia and the rest of ASEAN, the 1980s and 1990s marked the era of globalisation and rampant consumerism. The social and cultural landscape of the region had been irreversibly altered thanks to the 'McDonaldisation' of ASEAN society. (Even Kota Bharu, the capital of PAS's home state of Kelantan, had its own McDonalds outlet.) In practically every area of social life, globalisation had left its indelible imprint. The internet had wired up the societies of ASEAN and brought them closer together, allowing ASEAN citizens to chat on-line with each other while also allowing the Islamists of the region to strengthen the ties that bound them.

It appeared as if the body politic of ASEAN was also being attacked by a host of other problems. Cross-border pollution, courtesy of Indonesia's itinerant farmers still practising indiscriminate forest burning in Sumatra and Kalimantan, soon became a regional problem for ASEAN as a whole. In 1997 and 1998, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and southern Thailand experienced the 'haze crisis' caused by the forest fires in neighbouring Indonesia. Added to this was the growing problem of illegal immigration and cross-border crossings that showed no signs of abating. The various efforts by ASEAN governments to stem the flow of illegal immigrants by creating triangular co-prosperity zones such as the tripartite Malaysian-Singaporean-Indonesian Batam Island development project did little to reduce the growing income and wealth differentials between the richer ASEAN members and their less fortunate counterparts. Many of these development zones simply turned into ramshackle cowboy towns filled to the brim with bored and frustrated workers and prostitutes.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Batam, a small, relatively unimportant island in the Johor-Riau archipelago, came to symbolise the failure of the multinational effort to *continued p. 571*

Batam Island was not the only locality bursting at the seams; practically every major city in ASEAN had a major over-population crisis. Decades of over-centralised rule had incurred a terrible cost on the social fabric of many ASEAN countries. The streets of Bangkok, Manila and Jakarta were full of young men from the rural areas desperately looking for work in the capital. The Jakarta slums later served as the recruitment ground for the radical Islamist organisations that came to the fore in the wake of the 1997–98 crisis. To further compound the situation, scores of undergraduates from ASEAN's universities were soon to discover that their degrees did not offer them a free ride to the fabled land of economic prosperity. Graduate unemployment in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia added to the growing feeling of helplessness and hopelessness among the masses in these countries.

The ambiguous qualities of globalisation had, by then, mutated the structures of state and government throughout the region.

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*n. 4 continued*

spread the wealth of ASEAN across the region. Until the *Konfrontasi* of 1963–65, Indonesian officials posted to the desolate island were still being paid in Malaysian and Singaporean dollars. During the 1990s rapid economic take-off, Batam experienced a population explosion as a result of the sudden injection of capital investment from Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia — as well as Western companies and multinationals. By 1997–98 the island's population rose to a peak of 600,000, mostly young Indonesians looking for work in the factories that dotted the island. But social relations were invariably strained due to the feminisation of labour and the fact that most workers were young Indonesian women (who were preferred over their male counterparts). Most young men looked for work in Malaysia and Singapore. When the economic crisis of 1997–98 struck, the island was immediately swamped by tens of thousands of Indonesian workers who had been kicked out of Malaysia and Singapore. Unemployment among the female workers also contributed to the growth of prostitution. Batam became known as a centre for prostitution and sex tourism, attracting thousands of men from Malaysia and Singapore to take advantage of the lack of regulation and policing on the island. This also led to a corresponding increase in the levels of HIV/AIDS and other venereal diseases among the local population.

Porous geo-political boundaries coincided with temporal and special margins that were likewise distorted and folded upon themselves. In the urban landscape of ASEAN, the past, present and future came together to form the hybrid offspring and bastards of the post-modern age. Kuala Lumpur's gleaming KLCC towers stood in full view of the city's illegal squatter settlements; Jakarta's palatial mansions fortified like bunkers sat imperiously next to slums and brothels, and Bangkok's modern highways were choked with traffic throughout much of the day while the owners of flashy sports cars whiled away their time watching their fuel gauges slide towards zero.

Globalisation had rendered impossible the self-representation of the state. By the late 1990s, the ASEAN countries were simply too complex and heterodox to be adequately mirrored by the state's own nationalist discourse. The hybrid and multiple spaces within the region's cities were reflected most clearly in cyberspace, where the internet managed to capture the proliferation of multiple sites of discursivity better than anything else. The growth of Islamist oppositional networks on the internet reflected the fact that all over the region subaltern discourses and critiques were gaining ground among the masses.

The 1997 economic crisis finally brought out into the open the tensions and contradictions that had been growing within the respective ASEAN countries all along. Indonesia was the worst to suffer and the sudden outpouring of public anger and frustration could only be matched by the explosion of violence that had swept the country more than three decades earlier during the anti-communist pogroms of 1965. After the death of President Soeharto's wife in 1996, public displays of resentment and anger against the government grew in strength and frequency. Ibu Tien's role within the symbolic universe of Indonesian (*re* Javanese) politics had been crucial, as she was seen by many as the main pillar of support behind Soeharto, whose own style of government was closer to the traditional notion of Javanese kingship than anything else. As the fibres of the tattered façade of rule fell apart, the anxiety and anger of the masses that had been held back for so long finally came out into the open. Conflict broke out in the outer islands of Indonesia in places like Aceh, East Timor, Kalimantan and Maluku, pitting

ethnic and religious groups against one another. During the first months of the crisis, ordinary Indonesians were on the lookout for scapegoats and victims; among the first to suffer were the Chinese Indonesians, who were singled out as 'economic traitors' and summarily dealt with in the most brutal and inhuman manner. The Chinese quarter of Glodok in Jakarta was attacked and burned, while hundreds of Chinese were robbed, killed and raped by mobs while the army and police looked on.<sup>5</sup> By not coming to the rescue of persecuted communities like the Chinese and Christians, the Indonesian army and intelligence agencies seemed to be inviting

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<sup>5</sup> Persecution of Indonesia's Chinese citizens was one of the most appalling episodes of the 1997–98 crisis. After the fall of Soeharto and the collapse of the GOLKAR-led government, riots erupted in many major Indonesian cities. In Jakarta, the Chinese quarter of Glodok was one of the first to be attacked by mobs. Hundreds of Chinese homes and business premises were looted and burnt, and in the following weeks there were reports of hundreds of Chinese women raped and tortured by the mobs. In many attacks the Indonesian security forces did not intervene to protect the victims. (Some human rights observers alleged that rogue units of the army also took part in the killings and gang rapes. They pointed out that many rape victims were also scarred with knives and other sharp instruments: a tactic used by Indonesian shock troops in West Irian and East Timor in their campaign to terrorise the local population into submission.) It took two years for things to return to normal in Glodok. In 2000, the Glodok Electronic Plaza, the focal point of the violence in the area, was finally reconstructed. Even then there was a conscious attempt to erase and forget the past; the new Glodok Electronic Centre was made of glass and steel, giving the impression of openness and transparency. All traces of the violence were removed, and no monuments to the dead were erected. The popular Glodok Bazaar (another focal point of mob violence) was also rebuilt, but in a neo-classical mock 'Dutch' style. Such 'architecture of amnesia' was seen in most public spaces reconstructed after the riots. The only remaining traces of the violence are found in the domestic residences. Most Chinese homes now have smaller windows with iron bars and spiked wire mesh (to prevent attacks with fire bombs and projectiles). The homes also have higher fences and walls, to keep out intruders, giving the whole area the feeling of a community under siege. Glodok today is effectively a fortified ghetto, and signs of the damage done could still be seen when the author visited Jakarta in October 2003.

violence and chaos into the public arena. At times, the army was directly involved in the violence. This was the case in East Timor, where the armed forces' response to the growing resentment among the Timorese came in the form of the aptly named *Operasi Tuntas* (Operation Eradicate) that began in earnest in 1997.<sup>6</sup> This climate of hostility was kept on the boil and later served as the laboratory for the army's experiment with radical Islamist militias like the *Laskar Jihad*, *Laskar Pembela Islam* and *Laskar Mujahidin* Indonesia.

### **Sic Transit Gloria? *The Impact of the 1997–98 Crisis on Malaysia***

Globalisation had made it impossible for governments to insulate their societies and economies from developments abroad. Malaysia's rapid entry into the globalisation process meant that it could no longer immunise itself from events across its borders. Within six months, the achievements that the Malaysian government and its private sector had built up over nearly one and a half decades were left in ruins. From ebullience and euphoria, the country was plunged into a mood of doom and gloom.

From the early 1980s to the late 1990s, Malaysia was one of Southeast Asia's most rapidly developing economies. For nearly a decade the country chalked up an impressive annual GDP growth rate of 8%. Malaysia had the honour of being hailed as one of the 'miraculous' Southeast Asian 'tiger' economies. Superlatives aside, it is safe to say that the 'boom' years of the Malaysian economy could be attributed to the ideas and vision of one man in particular: Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the nation's fourth Prime Minister who came into power in 1981 replacing Tun Hussein Onn. That the country's 'economic miracle' began with his tenure in office is hardly coincidental. The policies and management style of the Prime Minister gave the Malaysian 'boom' its specific economic and political contours.

The 'boom' years of the Mahathir era can be divided into two periods: the initial 1981–90 decade of 'reconstruction' and the

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<sup>6</sup> John G. Taylor, *East Timor: The Price of Freedom*, 2nd edn., London: Zed Books, 1999, p. xv.

1990-97 'take off' period. While there is indeed continuity between the two, there are also crucial differences that need to be taken into consideration.

### *1981-1990: The 'Reconstruction' Period*

After coming into office in 1981, Dr. Mahathir began a series of radical changes in policy and management style then regarded as tantamount to a serious 'paradigm shift' in Malaysia's economic policy.

One key objective of the Mahathir government was to reconstruct the Malaysian economy by breaking free from the model of the past, in particular ties to the old colonial mother country, Britain. Throughout his political career, Dr. Mahathir always based his reputation on his claims of being an economic nationalist concerned with improving the economic lot of the native Malays and *Peribumis* and winning back the country's economic independence and sovereignty. This was most aptly demonstrated by the country's 'Buy British Last' policy introduced shortly after Dr. Mahathir came into power, and the government's stated aim of winning a bigger share of the economic pie for the native Malay and *Peribumi* races (see Table 6.1).<sup>7</sup> This was also part of the reconstruction programme, designed to ensure that the country would break free from the colonial model of an import-substitution economy. To a large extent, the government accomplished this goal, and it remains one of the greatest achievements of the Malaysian economy to date.

The government of Dr. Mahathir pursued a populist line by promoting grand strategies such as its privatisation programme and the 'Look East' policy of the early 1980s, which encouraged Malaysians to emulate the ways of the East Asian 'dragon' economies of Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. The

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<sup>7</sup> The term *peribumi* refers to native ethnic groups who have always lived in peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. The Malays are one of the *peribumi* races. Others include the Kadazan, Bajau and Murut of Sabah, the Iban, Melanau, Dusun of Sarawak and the Negrito and Sakai of the peninsula.

combination of these policies led to increased earnings from the sale of state-owned utilities and enterprises, increased investment from Asian countries and attempts to introduce Japanese work ethics to the Malaysian industry, which crystallised in the concept of 'Malaysia Inc.'. The gains from privatisation were consolidated by technology transfers and joint ventures with Japanese manufacturers that led to projects like the national car (Proton Saga) and building the impressive Penang bridge and the Dayabumi complex in Kuala Lumpur (see Table 6.2).<sup>8</sup>

However, the rush towards reconstructing the economy was not without its problems. By 1983–85, the world recession was hitting the economies of Southeast Asia, and Malaysia was seriously affected. The events of that period were a mixed blessing in many ways, for the rise in production costs in many developed countries made the Southeast Asian economies (with their cheaper labour and production costs) look increasingly attractive. From 1985, money flowed in from abroad, as developed countries shifted their production sites. Massive influx of foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japan, America and Europe really saved the day for the beleaguered Malaysians (and the rest of ASEAN) in 1985 (see Table 6.3).

### *1990–1997: The 'Take Off' Years*

After the recession had been weathered and the worst was over, Southeast Asian economies were looking very attractive indeed and Malaysia's was by far one of the most attractive of all. The period of corporate restructuring and co-operation with Japan and the West had led to the creation of a new generation of Malay-Muslim corporate leaders and entrepreneurs, who were managing one of the most skilled and literate work forces in ASEAN well suited to the needs of modern hi-tech industries. Malaysia's laws had been reformed to suit the needs of international capital and investors, ensuring asset liquidity and rapid capital transfers in and out of the country. The government had also opened up the

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<sup>8</sup> Some of the more negative socio-economic consequences of the Look East policy are discussed in Jomo Kwame Sundaram, *The Sun Also Sets: Lessons from 'Looking East'*, Kuala Lumpur: INSAN, 1983.

country for massive foreign investment with its infrastructure development projects and increasingly tight labour and union laws. By 1990, the country was blessed with sound economic fundamentals, and the second stage of the 'boom' era was about to begin.

The most salient feature of the second stage of the 'boom' era was the emergence of even more spectacular 'mega-projects'. Indeed, the 1990s could be said to be the era of mega-projects in Malaysia: the tallest building in the world, the longest city in the world (the Linear City project), the world's (then) biggest hydro-electric dam project, the longest bridge in the world, the world's first electronic capital (Putrajaya) and cybercity (Cyberjaya) and the biggest airport in Southeast Asia. Convinced that its bout with the recession of the 1980s was over and that it had been awarded a clean bill of health, the Malaysian government proceeded with these projects regardless of criticism from within and without the country.

However, such massive projects needed to be financed, and most of the necessary funds could only be sourced abroad. Confident that the region was now ripe for investment, Southeast Asian governments began pursuing economic policies that further liberalised their economies. The Malaysian government opened the way for financial liberalisation in no uncertain terms. The local banking sector grew as new banks and lending houses emerged. The Malaysian stock market, the KLSE, also grew by leaps and bounds to become the third largest in Asia as local investors and Western fund managers eyed the attractive prospects of these newly emerging markets. Foreign investors, disappointed by the poor returns at home, were tempted by the higher interest rates offered in ASEAN and the low risk factor as the ASEAN currencies (the ringgit included) were pegged to the US dollar. The 'take off' of the 1990s was thus financed by the influx of investments and short-term loans from abroad.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Malaysian economy benefited greatly from the cash influx from US, Japan and Europe in 1993-96. In 1985, the total foreign investment *continued p. 578*

Despite all the talk of 'radical paradigm shifts' and the praise of the Malaysian economy, many observers have noted that in some respects the developments during the 'Mahathir era' of 1981 to the present have merely proceeded along the lines established by the 1957-69 and 1969-80 generations.<sup>10</sup> While rejecting all suggestions for a radical structural transformation of the economy, Dr. Mahathir has instead kept to the course charted by the architects of the New Economic Policy (NEP), despite the failure of the programme to achieve its intended results. (Rais, for example, notes that by 1992 the Malay stake in the national economy was still far short of the 30% target. In fact, direct Malay equity ownership at that juncture was only 19%.)<sup>11</sup> Some scholars have noted that even the Mahathir government's privatisation policy shared features more akin to the practices of the pre-1981 era.<sup>12</sup>

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*n. 9 continued*

inflow into Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea was nearly US\$20 billion. After plummeting in 1987, investment began to rise again in 1990 (US\$20 billion) and soared to US\$35 billion in 1991. By 1995 it was estimated to have risen to US\$50 billion and in 1996 had reached a peak of nearly US\$70 billion (IMF estimates).

<sup>10</sup> In the field of development and wealth redistribution, it has been argued by scholars like Jomo K. Sundaram and Ozay Mehmet that the initial programmes and projects attempted by the Alliance government under the first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman were fundamentally committed to maintaining the liberal-capitalist economic model inherited from the recent colonial era. This pattern of capitalist development has remained largely unchanged over 40 years and under four successive leaderships. (See Jomo Kwame Sundaram, *A Question of Class, and Growth and Structural Change in the Malaysian Economy*; Ozay Mehmet, *Islamic Identity and Development: Studies of the Islamic Periphery*, Kuala Lumpur: Forum Press, 1990.)

<sup>11</sup> Rais Yatim, *Freedom under Executive Power in Malaysia*, pp. 30-31 f. 9.

<sup>12</sup> On Dr. Mahathir's reliance on privatisation, Mehmet notes 'the Malaysian strategy of privatisation must be seen within the context of the NEP. It represents the latest manifestation of an "official culture" continued p. 579

Undeterred by its critics, the government continued with its policies of privatisation, financial liberalisation, corporatisation and rapid development in its bid to reconstruct the economy and create a praetorian guard of 'new' Malay-Muslim corporate élite. Malaysia's 'boom' years of 1981-97 were thus in many ways a *spectacular* phenomenon indeed. But therein also lay its weakness, for the very nature of this success made it a very fragile and ephemeral entity, forever vulnerable to very *real* variable factors that would disturb its cohesion.

One factor that contributed to investors' insecurity was the rapid growth of the banking and financial sector in Southeast Asia. Since the Indonesian government began its deregulation in 1988, the country's banking sector had grown at an uncontrollable rate. By 1995, nearly 240 private Indonesian banks had emerged to gobble up more than half the market share, and were behaving like a law unto themselves. The situation in Thailand was similar, and by 1997 the banking system of both countries was suffering under the burden of non-performing loans and growing debt.<sup>13</sup> The same problem was beginning in Malaysia, but thankfully on a much smaller scale. Nevertheless, the KLSE's growth to third largest in Asia ought to have been read as a warning sign by the economic planners that the economy was in danger of overheating. Much of this activity was based on speculation fuelled by a seemingly endless flow of easy money from within and abroad.<sup>14</sup>

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n. 12 *continued*

— a culture of Malay modernisation, imposed from above, intended to restructure and transform the Malay community into an urbanised, managerial and industrial one.' Furthermore, 'privatisation strategy also seeks to consolidate the nascent Malay middle class and intends to transform it into an economically viable entity' (Ozay Mehmet, *Islamic Identity and Development*, p. 199).

<sup>13</sup> Ranjit Gill, *Black September: Nationalistic ego, indifference, and greed throw Southeast Asia's equity and financial markets into turmoil*, Singapore: Epic Management Services, 1997, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> The role of the stock market and banking sector in building up the momentum of development in Malaysia and the rest of ASEAN in the 1990s is undeniable. By the mid-1990s, foreign journalists were *continued p. 580*

The generation of demand in Malaysia was further intensified by the activities of the banking and financial sector. Banks and finance houses (both local and foreign) began lending indiscriminately as they competed against each other for more customers. The net result was indiscriminate credit expansion accompanied by the inevitable risk of bad debts and non-performing loans. Loans were given under the most precarious and questionable circumstances that in retrospect can only be described as suicidal. The brokerage firm of Rashid Hussein Berhad (owned by financier Rashid Hussein, also owner of RHB Bank) helped finance the acquisition of a RM1.3-billion stake in Berjaya Industrial, Promet and Kelanamas by 27-year-old tycoon Ling Hee Leong (son of Transport Minister Ling Liong Sik).<sup>15</sup> The young 'baby tycoon' had little experience in the field, and the deal raised the eyebrows of even the most jaded of market players.<sup>16</sup>

Earlier, IMF authorities had warned the Malaysian government that it needed to play a firmer role in controlling and managing the country's banking sector in particular. During the 1996 consultation session with the Malaysian government, the IMF proposed that there should be 'prudential supervision of commercial banks and other financial institutions in facilitating further financial liberalisation'.<sup>17</sup> The concern of the IMF as well as foreign investors was to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the management of banking and lending practices in the country. However,

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noting that even street-hawkers and taxi drivers in Kuala Lumpur were buying and selling shares on the market, thanks to the ready availability of bank loans.

<sup>15</sup> 'Oh for a bailout', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 February 1998, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Critics from the opposition parties condemned the entire deal as an example of political connections being used in business while sceptics regarded it as a potentially disastrous gamble at best. The timing of the loan and acquisition could not have been worse. By February 1998, the value of the shares acquired by Ling had dropped by more than 50%, leaving both the young tycoon and RHB with massive debts that could not be accounted for.

<sup>17</sup> Ranjit Gill, *Black September*, p. 23.

these concerns were apparently not heeded, and by the time of the crisis domestic loans had risen to 160% of GDP, making the country's economy even more vulnerable to currency attacks.

However, the big Malaysian banks and financial houses were not the only ones guilty of adding fuel to the already blazing economy. The role of foreign banks in accelerating the mad rush of the 1990s cannot be overlooked. The IMF estimated that by the end of 1996, the total loans from European, Japanese and American banks amounted to \$318 billion, \$260 billion and \$46 billion respectively.<sup>18</sup> Much of this went into the rapidly developing economies of ASEAN, including Malaysia. (See Table 6.4 for details of assets of major Asian banks, 1996.)

The net effect of the rapid and poorly regulated expansion of the banking and financial sectors in ASEAN gave the region the momentum it needed for quick expansion, but it contributed to investors' insecurities. The lack of transparency and foresight in the practice of many banks in the region (Malaysia included) added to the feeling that this was one of the most vulnerable areas of the region's economy. This was compounded by the banks' high property exposures and the persistent problem of asset inflation. The absence of a local bond and equity market also meant that alternative sources of stable long-term funding were few and far between. Consequently, ASEAN economies were growing increasingly dependent on banks that were in turn dependent on vulnerable collateral and promises of infinite prosperity in the future.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 'Rebuilding Asia', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 February 1998, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup> Ranjit Gill has noted, for example, that the prognosis from foreign investment firms like Keppel Securities remained over-optimistic right up to 1996 and early 1997 (Gill, *Black September*, pp. 29-31). In its investment guide for Malaysia and Singapore of late 1996, Keppel Securities suggested that Malaysia was by far the most attractive prospect in the region, and that profit could be made in three key areas in particular: market-banks, infrastructure and motoring. Their recommendations included DCB, Commerce-Asset and Maybank (banking), UEM and Kedah Cement (construction) and Tan Chong, C&C Bintang, UMW and Proton (motoring). As it turned out, these  
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This massive buying and speculating spree went on unabated right up to July 1997. Early in 1997, an *Asiaweek* report noted that with the completion of the 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers (KLCC) in Kuala Lumpur, commercial property occupancy levels were down to 85%. The last time such figures were recorded was during the 1985–86 recession. The 1997–98 crisis had left Kuala Lumpur with a plethora of half-empty commercial business centres and a forest of concrete pillars and structures. Like the other petrified concrete jungle to the north, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur's forest of uncompleted development projects was a vivid testimony to the years of rapid development that suddenly came to an end almost without warning.

When the Thai bubble burst and its after-effects began to reverberate across the region, Malaysian businessmen were caught unaware and unprepared. Malay entrepreneur Halim Saad, protégé of the Malaysian government's economic advisor Tun Daim Zainuddin and chairman of Renong Berhad, was one of those caught in the maelstrom. His Renong group of companies, which was heavily involved in infrastructure development and construction, was one of the first to be hit by the crash. Other Malaysian entrepreneurs such as Tajudin Ramli and Mirzan Mahathir also soon found themselves with their backs to the wall.<sup>20</sup>

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*n. 19 continued*

were among the worst hit companies during the crisis. By February 1998, EON was selling Proton cars at less than a quarter of the original price and in lots of 10, just to keep itself afloat and minimise its losses.

- <sup>20</sup> By February 1998, Halim Saad's Renong was landed with a US\$800-million bill after buying an ailing steel company in the Philippines. By then it also had a RM4.1-billion debt because of the sudden demise of the construction industry at home. The company was obviously pressing full steam ahead with its acquisitions and projects when the financial crisis struck, and had made no preparations for the possibility of a drastic drop in demand and the value of the ringgit. Like many other major Malaysian corporations, it had not hedged its loans, either. Tajudin Ramli, head of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) and Technology Resources Industries (TRI), was in trouble  
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The list of personal and corporate disasters was a long one. The situation in 1997-98 was different from the earlier recession of 1985-86 because of the sheer volume and magnitude of the disaster. While corporate losses in the 1980s were in the region of millions, in 1997 they were in billions. Even Daim Zainuddin had to concede that 'this is the worse crisis we have faced since the Second World War'.<sup>21</sup> It seemed that Malaysia's attempt to 'leap-frog' its way into the future was all but over; the country's dependence on foreign investment and technology had made it too dependent on external sources of funds and R&D. The economic bubble was being stretched both from within and without, and when it finally burst some were wont to ask why it had not come sooner. (See Table 6.5 for foreign investments, 1982-96.)

### *The Bubble Bursts: UMNO's Split in 1998 and the Anwar Ibrahim Affair*

*Isu Anwar ini telah menggerakkan naluri rakyat. Dengan berbagai telatah, rakyat menanganinya. Begitu juga dengan telatah pemerintah. Nampaknya masing-masing menari di atas tanah yang tidak rata. Keduanya tidak sama tarinya. Gendang, gong dan serunai juga kedengaran sumbang,*

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n. 20 *continued*

due to the rapid expansion of the companies under his wing. MAS had earlier signed a US\$4 billion deal to update and expand its fleet of Boeing 747s and 777s. It had incurred a staggering debt of RM7.2 billion, giving it a debt-equity ratio of 153%. TRI's debts had also increased to RM2.4 billion. Mirzan Mahathir, son of the Prime Minister and chairman of massive shipping company Konsortium Perkapalan, expanded his shipping fleet (MISC), but later the price of his company's shares fell by more than 75%, from RM17.30 to RM3.78. It is estimated that Konsortium's debts had reached about RM1.7 billion, which gave it a debt-equity ratio of 298%.

<sup>21</sup> 'Calling Dr. Daim', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 February 1998, p. 15.

*menambahkan lagi sakit telinga yang mendengar dan sakit mata yang melihat.*<sup>22</sup>

C. N. al-Afghani,  
*Rakyat Makin Matang* (1999)

One of the mixed blessings of the 1997–98 financial crisis was that it stopped Malaysia's entry into the global economic system in its tracks.

In the first half of 1997, Dr. Mahathir went on a lightning tour of the major capitals of the Far East, Europe and America to sell his much-lauded idea of the world's first electronic capital and hi-tech industrial park, the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC). This was one of the grandest and most ambitious in the government's stable of mega-projects, and also the one that courted the most interest and controversy. Unlike the other grand national projects such as the national car and the Bakun Dam, which were regarded as part of the nation's development programme, the MSC was to be a major government undertaking to integrate itself with the rest of the global business community and international market system. Its admirers included such big names in the electronics business as Bill Gates of Microsoft and companies like IBM, Netscape and Sony.

However, the project incurred the wrath of many opponents who felt that the government had made too many concessions to foreign capital in order to lure investors into the country.<sup>23</sup> Many

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<sup>22</sup> Translation: The Anwar issue has finally begun to move the people. They have begun to respond to it in a number of ways. So have the ruling élite with their antics. It looks as if everyone is now dancing, but not on the same level ground. Both sides are dancing, but to a different tune. The drums, gongs and trumpets are blaring out of tune, making it worse for those who have to listen and bear witness to the spectacle. (C. N. al-Afghani, *Rakyat Makin Matang*, p. iii.)

<sup>23</sup> The MSC project was first unveiled in 1997, and the Prime Minister took a two-month break to tour the world and popularise the idea. The plan was to build the world's first fully electronic working and *continued p. 585*

argued that such a project would make the country even more dependent on foreign capital and foreign 'intellectual workers' who would be able to leave the country at a moment's notice.

The 1997 crisis exposed the extent to which the Malaysian economy had become enmeshed within the global economic and financial system that had developed since the end of the Cold War. This global system presided over the transaction of an estimated US\$1.5 trillion on a daily basis (a sum greater than Germany's GDP), and where currency speculation was a daily affair. It was also a system kept together and informed by the workings of the international media (mostly owned and based in the West), and which was littered with an array of uncontrollable variables such as public opinion and market sentiment.

The crisis showed how vulnerable the Malaysian economy was in the choppy waters of international trade. There were simply too many variables entirely beyond the control of the Malaysian authorities. The Malaysian media's ineffectiveness in trying to

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n. 23 *continued*

living environment within a restricted area to serve as a test-bed for experimentation. The mammoth plan included the construction of the nation's new 'paper-free' electronic capital, Putrajaya, the new international airport and the new cybercity, Cyberjaya. While the project met with official endorsement and support from foreign multinationals, it also courted controversy due to the 'bill of guarantees' which included: (1) the provision of world-class infrastructure support, (2) unrestricted employment of foreign (non-Malaysian) workers, (3) freedom of ownership by exempting companies within the MSC from domestic ownership regulations, (4) freedom for companies to source capital from external sources, (5) providing regional leadership in the enforcement of cyberlaws and protection laws, (6) ensuring no censorship on the internet, (7) providing freedom of movement and extradition of capital. The proposal to set up the MSC as a semi-autonomous 'state' with its own separate laws and regulations also caused concern amongst sections of the Malaysian community, who regarded such provisions as an official acceptance of double standards, thus heralding the arrival of the 'two-nation' state in Malaysia. (See Farish A. Noor, 'Cyber-Paradise: Cyberjaya, Odyssey to Multimedia Super Corridor', *Impact International*, 27(7) (1997).)

address foreign reports and disinformation and their failure to win public confidence from the Malaysians themselves made things worse. The crisis taught Malaysians that a small developing country like theirs was no match for the combined forces of currency speculators working in tandem with a hostile international media bent on destabilising the economy. A bitter Dr. Mahathir was heard lamenting this state of affairs during his address to the IMF-World Bank meeting at Hong Kong in September 1997. In his own words:

All along we tried to comply with the wishes of the rich and the mighty. We opened up our markets. ... We were told to allow our money to be traded outside our country... we were told to permit short-selling, even to let trading in borrowed shares... we must allow speculation, we did all that. But that was not enough.<sup>24</sup>

The Prime Minister's appeal for tighter financial regulation unfortunately fell on deaf ears. Within days, critics responded by attacking the Prime Minister's proposals and the ringgit plummeted even further. The Prime Minister was eventually forced to soften his rhetoric, and allow Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim to begin the damage-limitation exercise. The lesson had been learnt; despite its ambitions and goals, a country like Malaysia could not take on the international economic order on its own. Despite claims that the 'miracle' of Malaysia's rapid development in the 1980s and 1990s was due to a judicious combination of Islamic values, Asian work ethic and modernisation, the 1997-98 crisis showed that such proclamations could not simply be taken at face value. Worst of all, the economic crisis also uncovered the Byzantine intrigues and growing contestation for power among the ruling élite of UMNO and the *Barisan Nasional* (BN). The stage was set for yet another internal party feud within UMNO, and this time PAS would reap the benefits from UMNO's feuding as never before.

When the 1997 economic crisis struck, both President Soeharto and Dr. Mahathir were seen by many to be defending their cliques of 'crony capitalists' and political allies. In Indonesia, public outcry

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<sup>24</sup> Ranjit Gill, *Black September*, p. 124.

against the Soeharto government's abuse of power, corruption and nepotism eventually culminated in a massive nation-wide populist movement aimed at toppling the premier. Though it would be wrong to say that the scale of corruption and nepotism in Malaysia was anywhere near that of Indonesia or Thailand, the crisis exposed internal weaknesses in the management of a number of major businesses and corporations. The shadowy world of the banking and corporate sector was forced to open its doors to the public at last, revealing a graveyard of skeletons. The lack of openness and accountability in the management of major private and semi-government corporations like Perwaja Steel, Proton, EON, HICOM, UEM-Renong, etc. also became painfully obvious. Earlier scandals still left unresolved did not boost the public's confidence, either.<sup>25</sup>

While the Indonesian ship of state was being battered by the media storm from within and without the country, in Malaysia Dr. Mahathir was soon confronted by his own deputy Anwar Ibrahim (also Finance Minister) who employed the rhetoric of 'reform and transparency' popularised not only by the IMF but also the Indonesian reformist movement. By late 1997 and early 1998, specu-

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<sup>25</sup> One of the most galling examples was the lack of progress in the investigation into Perwaja Steel, the country's main steel producer. The company was founded in the 1980s as one of Dr. Mahathir's big projects designed to get Malaysia into the premier league of developing industrial nations. Problems arose fairly early when the Prime Minister appointed Eric Chia, a Chinese businessman with no experience in the steel manufacturing industry, to head the company. Throughout Chia's tenure as corporate director, much of what transpired in the company's boardrooms was classified and kept out of public view. Only in 1995–96 did the company show signs of collapse. As its profit margins dropped, its running costs also increased. Funds were channelled to mysterious companies abroad, and tenders were awarded to companies owned by Chia's friends and associates. When Perwaja finally fell apart, early enquiries into its dealings revealed a catalogue of management errors and blatant abuse of power and authority. Accusations of corruption and mismanagement were levelled at the company's leadership, as well as the government for engaging Eric Chia, who promptly disappeared after the fiasco.

lation was rife about a split within the UMNO leadership. It was clear that Dr. Mahathir and his Finance Minister had radically different views on how the economic crisis should be handled. Dr. Mahathir favoured a massive fiscal injection that would kick-start the economy by raising the level of domestic consumption, while Anwar favoured an austerity drive to slow down the already overheated economy. It was also clear that Anwar's prescription was very similar to the IMF's, and many of Anwar's critics claimed that his proposals were inspired by the blueprint offered by the IMF itself. This was a serious charge, for many in Malaysia (and the region) believed that the near-total collapse of the Thai and Indonesian economies was due mainly to IMF interference in their domestic economic affairs.

To make things worse, the deteriorating relationship between the two men was a matter of open gossip and public knowledge. Local newspapers (whose editors were thought to be closely associated with Anwar's inner circle) lent credibility to Anwar's policy proposals by highlighting the need for economic reform, accountability and greater transparency. The Malay newspapers — *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* in particular — were seen as partisan to Anwar's cause, and were making unflattering comparisons between Malaysia and its troubled neighbour Indonesia. In time, Dr. Mahathir was being compared to Indonesia's Soeharto and the extensive news coverage of the anti-Soeharto demonstrations did little to improve things in Malaysia. The Indonesian slogan '*reformasi*' soon made its way to Malaysia and Anwar's supporters began to talk of the need for *reformasi* in Malaysia as well.

On 21 May 1998, President Soeharto was finally forced to step down, handing power over to his chosen successor B. J. Habibie. The previous day, the fraught and careworn Soeharto was told by the American Secretary of State Madeline Albright that his services would no longer be required and that he was no longer 'our kind of guy'.<sup>26</sup> Like that other 'America's boy' Ferdinand Marcos, Soeharto realised that his time had come and he had to go. With

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<sup>26</sup> Noah Chomsky, *The New Humanism: Lessons from Kosovo*, London: Pluto Press, 1999, p. 132.

Soeharto went a host of other characters: Major-General Prabowo (certainly one of the most hated Indonesian army leaders) was removed from his post and demoted to the position of head of Bandung Military Academy.

The fact that the protest movement against Soeharto was led by Islamist activists and Islamist opposition leaders like Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid was not lost on UMNO loyalists who remained firmly behind the Mahathir administration. It was well known by then that Anwar Ibrahim had maintained strong links with some of these Indonesian Islamist leaders and activists, and that he still commanded enormous respect in the country due to his standing as the sole UMNO politician who gave the party its much-needed Islamic credentials. (In January 1997 he became the patron of the *Al-Qur'an Mushaf Malaysia* project which was aimed at compiling all the known copies of handwritten *Qur'ans* in the region and producing an illuminated version that was decorated with *Nusantara* motifs and employed the distinctive Malay school of *Jawi* (Arabic) writing. The project was meant to be concluded in 2000 and at the launch of the project it was Anwar who wrote the first sentence of the *Qur'an: Bismillahi Rahman-e Rahim* — In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, and the Merciful.) The talk on the streets of Kuala Lumpur was that the time had come for a similar *putsch* in Malaysia.

Things finally came to a head at the UMNO general assembly in June 1998 when close supporters of Anwar Ibrahim openly challenged and criticised Dr. Mahathir's leadership. During his speech, Anwar Ibrahim spoke about the need for structural and institutional reform within the party and the government. Referring to the hit movie of the year, *'Titanic'*, Anwar pointed out that when the ship of state was about to sink there was a need to rescue all of the passengers on board, not just the privileged ones in first class. Anwar claimed that in the midst of the crisis there was a need for the government, and UMNO in particular, to lead by example, and that it would be morally wrong to bail out only those businessmen and companies known to have close links to the party and its leaders. The words *'kronisme'* (cronyism), *'nepotisme'* (nepotism) and *'reformasi'* (reform) were uttered for the first time in the sacred precinct of UMNO's official headquarters. For local observers of

Malaysian politics, the message was clear: this was an open attack on the Prime Minister himself, reminiscent of the internal party *coup* that brought down the Tunku in the late 1960s. Anwar was seen to be mounting a direct challenge to Dr. Mahathir, the man who had been his mentor and patron for nearly twenty years.

However, Dr. Mahathir was not the Tunku, and he was more than prepared to take on the challenge from within the ranks of his own party. On the third day of the general assembly, Dr. Mahathir responded to his critics by reminding them of their own debt of honour and loyalty to the party that had protected and nurtured them for so long. Rather than respond to the charges of cronyism and nepotism levelled at the senior UMNO leadership, the Prime Minister ordered that a long list of benefactors and recipients of state aid be posted in the corridors outside the main audience hall of the UMNO building. Delegates and journalists were given ample time to look at the list in detail, and note down the names of the hundreds of UMNO members who had been helped by the party. (Needless to say, those who benefited the most from the disclosure were UMNO's opponents. PAS's newspaper *Harakah* dutifully listed down the names of UMNO beneficiaries to bring home the point that UMNO had been guilty of cronyism on a massive scale all along.)

That many of those on the 'cronies list' also happened to be UMNO leaders who were known supporters of Anwar Ibrahim took the wind out of the sails of the opposition. Dr. Mahathir ended his speech with a thinly veiled warning that UMNO would not tolerate internal dissent of any sort, particularly when the country was facing a major economic and financial crisis. He also noted that in politics, 'today's friend might be tomorrow's enemy, and today's enemy might become tomorrow's friend'. The message was understood, and Anwar's supporters realised that the political career of the country's leading Islamist activist was about to come to an abrupt end.

By then the campaign to remove Anwar from UMNO was in full swing. The Finance Minister was incensed that a book entitled *50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM* (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Be Prime Minister) had been put into the conference kits of

the delegates. Anwar had tried to ban the book earlier, and had threatened to take legal action against its author, Khalid Jafri, on the grounds of slander and defamation of character. Needless to say, the timing of the release of the book was certainly to the advantage of those who wanted to see Anwar removed from the party. It also did untold damage to the standing of UMNO as a Malay-Muslim party that defended the interests of Muslims and the image of Islam — something which PAS exploited to the hilt, as expected.

In the wake of the 1998 UMNO general assembly, the battle-lines within the party were drawn. UMNO was once again split right down the middle, and the BN component parties (and opposition parties, including PAS) were left with little else to do but to sit and watch as UMNO tore itself to pieces in full view of the Malaysian public.

On 1 September 1998, Anwar Ibrahim was sacked by Dr. Mahathir, one day before the government announced the imposition of capital controls. Throughout September, Anwar took to the streets and mobilised the public in his campaign against Dr. Mahathir and the UMNO-led government. He launched the '*reformasi*' movement and soon won back the support of thousands of Malay-Muslim activists, students and UMNO members. Anwar toured the country, openly attacking the leadership of Dr. Mahathir and other UMNO leaders and Cabinet members. He accused the UMNO leaders of corruption, nepotism and abuse of power. In the predominantly Malay northern states of Kelantan and Terengganu, he received a warm welcome from thousands of Malay-Muslim supporters, many of whom were PAS members. In his own constituency in Penang he read out the 'Pematang Pauh Declaration' (see Appendix II) that called for a reform of the Malaysian political system.

The Pematang Pauh Declaration, which served as the blueprint for the *reformasi* project as conceived by Anwar, comprised a number of broad-based demands couched in universalistic terms, conscious that it was addressing a plural audience divided along cleavages of race, ethnicity and religion. From the outset, the movement identified the *Qur'an* and other Asian traditions as the

source of its inspiration. Apart from a reform of the political, economic and judicial system of the country which the reformists claimed had been corrupted and abused over the years, the movement also sought to 'reinforce a dynamic cultural identity, where faith in our noble cultural traditions is intact, but there is openness to all that is good in all traditions'.

However, the *reformasi* movement soon encountered its own share of obstacles. By the third week of September 1998, Anwar Ibrahim was arrested and detained by the state security forces.

The initial reaction from the Malaysian public was a mixture of shock and disbelief. That the man once thought to be the most likely successor to Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad was now detained behind bars had caught the Malaysian public off guard and unawares. The circumstances of his arrest and detention were likewise dramatic and unprecedented. While previous deputy prime ministers had been unceremoniously removed from office or chose to leave of their own free will,<sup>27</sup> Anwar Ibrahim was apprehended in the middle of a press conference in his home by a squad of the notorious *Unit Tindakan Khas* (Special Forces Unit, UTK) who smashed through his front door armed with automatic rifles, and wearing body armour and balaclavas. It is one of the ironies of Malaysian history that the unit despatched to carry out the task was the UTK, which was responsible for the killing of radical PAS leader Ustaz Ibrahim Libya, whom Anwar himself had 'turned' against the government during his detention in the mid-1970s. As images of the spectacular arrest of Anwar spread all over the country and the world thanks to CNN and CNBC, the Malaysian stock market, which had already received a battering since June 1997, plummeted even further.

What happened to Anwar after his dramatic arrest was even more mind-boggling. Bundled into a van and driven off into the

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<sup>27</sup> Dato' Musa Hitam chose to resign in 1986, over the question of the election of the Finance Minister. In 1993, Tun Ghafar Baba was voted out of office by the faction known as the 'vision team' led by Anwar Ibrahim.

night, he was transferred from one vehicle to another until he was finally brought to his destination. That night, while blindfolded and handcuffed and under police custody, the ex-Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia was physically assaulted by none other than Tan Sri Rahim Noor, the Inspector General of Police.<sup>28</sup> When Anwar was finally brought to court several weeks later, the Malaysian public and press were shocked to see the bruises on his face and neck. The infamous black eye of Anwar became the politically loaded symbol of the entire *reformasi* movement as well as *Keadilan* (Justice), the party formed in his wake and led by his wife, Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (who, ironically, was an eye doctor).

In the wake of Anwar's arrest and detention — along with a number of his key followers and supporters — Malaysia found itself once more on the brink of turmoil. Many feared a repeat of the infamous *Operasi Lalang* crackdown of 1987 when a large number of opposition politicians, social activists and public figures were arrested and detained by the state security forces on the grounds that the country was about to slip into a state of anarchy. In the event, the number detained (13 in all) was far lower than expected. One important point to note, however, is that all the detainees were Malay-Muslims who were, in one way or another, linked to ABIM (once led by Anwar Ibrahim), UMNO, or other

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<sup>28</sup> The situation was compounded because Rahim Noor had assured the press and government that Anwar was 'safe and well'. The assault was kept secret until three weeks later, when he was finally produced in court. The image of a wounded and bruised Anwar, with right hand stretched heavenwards before the steps of the Kuala Lumpur High Court, became one of the most visible and popular images in Malaysia at the time. It was reproduced in countless opposition books, magazines, internet sites and spread across the world by Western news agencies like CNN. Rahim initially denied assaulting the ex-Deputy Prime Minister, but during the following inquiry, junior police officers admitted they witnessed the event. The IGP was later charged with assault — though he claimed that Anwar provoked him. He was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and retired soon after.

Islamist bodies such as *Jama'ah Islah Malaysia* (JIM).<sup>29</sup> Among the 13 taken in for questioning, 10 were linked to ABIM. They included ABIM president Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman, deputy president Mokhtar Redzuan, vice president Abdul Halim Ismail, secretary-general Shaharudin Badarudin and ex-members Kamaruddin Jaffar, Kamaruddin Mohamad Nor, Dr. Zambry Kadir and Roslan Kassim. Amidi Abdul Manan, president of the Muslim Students' Union, was also detained, as was Shaari Sungip, president of JIM. Two UMNO leaders, Dato Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Tamunif Mokhtar, were also held. Apart from Islamist activists and politicians, one detainee — Dr Sidek Baba — was a senior academic from the International Islamic University (UIA).<sup>30</sup>

In the following weeks and months, the *reformasi* movement that had been launched by Anwar Ibrahim gained momentum and animated itself. In the wake of Anwar's detention, street demonstrations were organised in major cities. The *reformasi* activists were not confined to the streets and alleys of Kuala Lumpur. In time, a number of pro-Anwar and pro-*reformasi* websites were set up on the internet by anonymous webmasters operating both in and out of Malaysia. As Gary Bunt has noted, Malaysia was one of the few Muslim countries where ownership of personal computers was extensive and specific research had been undertaken related to Islamic applications of computer technology.<sup>31</sup> The confrontation against the state was soon taken to the realm of cyberspace, a terrain hitherto unpatrolled and unregulated by the State security apparatus. Within this borderless space the *reformasi* activists waged their war against the government of Dr. Mahathir, who was soon bestowed a number of titles such as '*Mahazalim*' (Cruel

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<sup>29</sup> The JIM president, one of those detained during a crackdown on Islamist activists, was arrested in the car park of the hospital where his wife was recuperating after complications during her pregnancy; this only made the government seem even more harsh and dictatorial in the eyes of the public.

<sup>30</sup> Most of those arrested were detained for a period of 10–60 days.

<sup>31</sup> Gary R. Bunt, *Virtually Islamic: Computer-mediated Communication and Cyber Islamic Environments*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000, p. 83.

Leader) and 'Mahafiraun' (Great Pharaoh). The use of the internet as a tool to create alternative discursive sites and spaces for anti-government discourse must have been particularly galling for the administration of Dr. Mahathir who was the pioneer in the promotion of information technology.<sup>32</sup>

The 'internet war' was a particularly vicious one, where no quarter was asked or given. As soon as the crisis erupted into the open, Anwar's presence was immediately erased from the public sphere. His photograph and copies of his speeches and statements were deleted from all government websites, including UMNO's homepage. This was reminiscent of the Indonesian government's attack on pro-Timorese websites in 1998-99, when pro-government hackers infiltrated opposition websites and replaced their contents with pro-government messages and information.<sup>33</sup> The *reformasi* activists, however, were quick to regroup and re-organise themselves. Within a year, about 40 'pro-Anwar' and 'pro-reformasi' sites were up and running. The main Anwarite website (anwar-ibrahim1.com) registered around 320,000 hits within six weeks of its launch.<sup>34</sup>

Although Anwar's *reformasi* movement was meant to be a multi-racial, national movement that encompassed the nation as a whole, from the very beginning the Malay-Muslim constituency was the most important component. While a number of non-Malay opposition leaders and NGO activists were present at the street rallies and demonstrations, an overwhelming majority were Malay-Muslims. The main reason for this was Anwar's own decision to reach out to the constituency closest to him: the Malays.

When Anwar had embarked on his roadshow around the country, many of the places he visited were mosques and *surau* that had traditionally been regarded as the final bastion of Malay-Muslim resistance and the sniping posts for Malay-Muslim opposition leaders. Anwar also reverted to his earlier self, using the language of the Islamist activist of the 1970s heavily laced with

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

references to the *Qur'an* and Islamic religious texts. His main points of reference when speaking to the largely Malay audiences were drawn from the corpus of Islamic history. At times it appeared as if the founder and leader of the *reformasi* movement was speaking in tongues, using a broad-based multicultural discourse when talking to non-Malays while adopting a more culturally exceptionalist discourse when addressing his own Malay-Muslim constituency. This allowed Anwar to reach out to a cross-section of the Malaysian populace but, as we shall see below, it also meant that Anwar was opening up the discursive boundaries of the *reformasi* project to the Islamists who later took it up as one of their own concerns and re-interpreted it according to their own needs and wishes.

It was also within the Malay-Muslim community that the level of debate and discussion about the crisis and its aftershock was at its highest. While the non-Malay press was afforded relatively more freedom to report on the issue (indeed, some Chinese-language newspapers were bold enough to publish photographs of the street demonstrations), much of the writing on the 'Anwar Ibrahim crisis' was done in and through the vernacular Malay medium. The vernacular Malay writers and political commentators were at the forefront of the *reformasi* movement, providing its followers with a narrative of truly epic and heroic proportions. Among the books published during this period were Mohammad Sayuti Omar's *Sumpah dan Airmata Reformis Bangsa, Anwar Dizalimi?, Cinta dan Perjuangan* and *Talqin Untuk Mahathir: Nepotisme dan Qarunisme Alaf Baru*; Ahmad Lutfi Othman's *Layakkah Anwar Ketua Reformasi?* and *Anwar: Skandal Seks atau Konspirasi Politik*; Dinsman's *Gawat: Gagalnya Formula Mahathir* and Zabidi Mohamed's *Lelaki UMNO Terakhir: Iktibar Untuk Pejuang Islam*.

Immediately following Anwar's arrest and detention in September 1998, Mohammad Sayuti Omar<sup>35</sup> was one of the first to

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<sup>35</sup> Mohammad Sayuti Omar was one of the most widely read of all the popular authors of works sold and distributed widely among the Malay readership of the country. His output during the crisis of 1998–99 exceeded that of any of his peers and his books sold *continued p. 597*

attack Dr. Mahathir's government. In his writings, the *reformasi* movement and its leader were re-imagined in glorious and epic terms. More so than any other contemporary writer in the country, Sayuti Omar reinvented Anwar Ibrahim as the martyr for the reformist cause. His laudatory paean to Anwar, as the '*reformis bangsa*', reads:

*Harapan musuh-musuh Anwar apabila mereka menahan para mujahid itu, semangat reformasi tidak lagi berkembang dan mengarus di negara ini. Itulah yang mereka fikir. Tetapi perhitungan mereka itu silap. Mereka boleh menahan jasad para reformis itu. Namun semangat dan api jihadnya tidak bisa disekat. Semangat itu akan tetap mengalir dan bergelombang ke dalam diri sesiapa sahaja yang insaf dan sedar akan tanggungjawab kepada agama, bangsa dan negaranya. Reformasi akan terus bergerak. Sekiranya mereka dirantai, doa-doa mereka akan tetap berterbangan menemui Tuhan mereka.*

n. 35 *continued*

thousands of copies. Many went out of print within months. During the 1980s and 1990s, Sayuti Omar was widely seen as a member of the 'alternative press', working for a number of Malay-language newspapers and magazines regarded as anti-establishment. His writings then included *Rahsia Ashaari Terbongkar* (a critique of the leader of the *Darul Arqam* movement) (1989), *Anwar Ibrahim: Mimpi dan Realiti* (1990), *Tradisi dan Trajedi dalam UMNO* (1993), *Agenda 1995: Anwar Lawan Mahathir* (1995) and *Siapa Pencabar Anwar* (1998). He wrote extensively about the political conflicts within UMNO and, like the other hugely popular writer Ahmad Lutfi Othman, he commented on the internal political squabbles and factional clashes among UMNO leaders in particular. In his earlier writings such as *Anwar Ibrahim: Mimpi dan Realiti* (1990), Sayuti had openly criticised some policies implemented by Anwar while in Dr. Mahathir's Cabinet. In turn, Anwar had once attacked Sayuti in the press, accusing him of being a *penulis upahan* (paid writer) hired to write the book against him by his enemies. (Sayuti Omar refers to this episode himself in *Anwar Dizalimi: Siapa TPM Baru?*, pp. ix–x, 59–61.) But when the economic and political crisis of 1997–98 took a turn for the worse, Sayuti Omar was among those who came out in open support of Anwar and the policies he tried to implement. In particular, like many pro-*reformasi* writers, he supported Anwar's calls for accountability and transparency in government and an end to the financial bail-outs used to rescue failing businesses and corporations linked to members of the Prime Minister's family and his close business and political associates.

Dan jika perjuangan mereka itu benar maka Allah akan mengabulkan kerana itulah janji Allah SWT. Biasanya doa orang yang teraniaya itu akan dimakbulkan. Harapan Anwar, seorang 'Anwar' jatuh akan bangkit seribu Anwar lain tidak sia-sia. Hari ini kita sudah dapat melihat dengan jelas, 'Anwar' bangkit dan berada dimana-mana sahaja. Orang yang menyebut tentang kezaliman dan ketidak-adilan wujud dimana-mana. Semuanya menuntut agar segala unsur-unsur Syaitanisme itu dibersihkan. Pada mereka Anwar hanya hilang daripada pandangan mata, tetapi semangat, prinsip, serta ketulusan Anwar sudah menjitwai dan menyelinap ke dalam seluruh urat dan nadi mereka. Orang-orang ini tidak mungkin bisa ditahan dan disekat lagi. Mereka muncul bagaikan gelombang dan taufan. Mereka bergerak bagaikan air, makin dibenteng mereka akan terus mengamuk selagi keadilan dan kebenaran tidak dijelmakan dihadapan mereka.<sup>36</sup>

In Sayuti Omar's work, a heady combination of reformist fervour and religious symbolism sat side-by-side in a sweeping allegory of struggle and liberation, leading to a climax of metaphors and analogies where apocalyptic images ran riot and

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<sup>36</sup> Translation: His (Anwar's) enemies hoped that after they had detained the *mujahid* the spirit of the reformation movement would wane and would no longer flow in the country. That is what they thought. They were wrong. All they could do was detain the physical form of the reformist. But his spirit flows and soars in the hearts of anyone who is *insaf* (repentent), and who is conscious of his *duty to his faith, people and the nation*. The reformation will continue ever onwards. Even if the reformists are bound and chained, *their prayers will fly heavenwards to God above. And if theirs be a just cause, then Allah Almighty will grant them victory and success, for verily, the prayers of the oppressed are always fulfilled by Allah Almighty*. Anwar's hopes, that with his fall a thousand other 'Anwars' would rise up, has come true. Today we have seen 'Anwar' rise up all around us. Those who condemn the cruelty and injustice around them are now everywhere. All of them are calling for all these *Satanic* influences to be eradicated and cleansed. For them, Anwar has merely disappeared from sight, but his spirit, his principles and the Truth he stood for remain in their hearts and souls. These reformists can no longer be held back. They appear, as a tidal wave and typhoon. They move like water; the more they are restrained the more they shall struggle, and they will run *amok* if they do not see justice and truth restored and delivered before their very eyes. (Italics added) (Mohammad Sayuti Omar, *Sumpah dan Airmata Reformis Bangsa*, p. 186.)

the figure of Anwar assumed proportions larger than life, as a unworldly messenger of doom and destruction to the forces of Evil, sent by God to clear the way of obstacles blocking the march of the *mujahidin* of the *reformasi*.

In contrast to the figure of Anwar as the heaven-sent enlightened reformer and saviour of the people, Sayuti painted a radically different portrait of the Prime Minister. While Anwar was cast as the embodiment of the suppressed voice and conscience of the masses, Dr. Mahathir was presented as the tyrannical leader who had brought the country to the brink of economic and political ruin. In Sayuti Omar's '*Talqin untuk Mahathir*' (Funeral prayers for Mahathir), the author straddled the boundary between prose and hysteria when he blamed the Prime Minister for everything that had gone wrong in the country, including the water shortage, the haze crisis and the unnaturally long drought season. Sayuti's eschatological logic reached its apotheosis when the figure of Dr. Mahathir was compared somewhat unfavourably to a host of popular *un-Islamic* villains such as the Pharaoh of Egypt and the Shah of Iran:

*Jikalau kamu (Mahathir) seorang ahli sejarah dan pengkaji Quran; dikau akan bertemu dengan nama-nama seperti Firaun, Qarun dan Haman! Apakah dikau tahu apa yang telah jadi kepada mereka itu? Ketahuikah dikau kenapa Tuhan melaksana dan menghina mereka? ...Mereka itu makhluk yang kufur kepada Allah. Firaun mengaku dialah Tuhan. Qarun pula tamak haloba dengan harta dunia, yang mana akhirnya ia ditenggelamkan dengan hartanya sekali. Wahai Mahathir anak Wan Tempawan, kami bimbang nasib yang menimpa mereka, akan turut sama menimpa dirimu. Kami bimbang kehinaan yang berlaku keatas Shah Iran, Suharto dan Marcos akan berjangkit kepadamu. Bagaimanapun sekiranya dikau tidak bersedia untuk melakukan perubahan, kemungkinan ini tidak mustahil kerana rakyat hari ini sudah mencemuhimu. Jika kau berjalan diratarata tempat orang sedang mempersoalkan tentang dirimu. Orang mempersoalkan kewibawaanmu. Ketahuilah oleh kamu bahawa peralihan sanjungan rakyat kepada mu adalah kerana kegagalan kamu dalam beberapa tahun terakhir ini. Bala yang menimpa negara ini adalah dalam tanggungjawab mu sebagai pemimpin.<sup>37</sup>*

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<sup>37</sup> Translation: If thou (Mahathir) were a scholar of history and a student of the *Qur'an*, you would surely know of the Pharaoh, *continued p. 600*

Another prominent Malay author who jumped into the fray was Professor Shahnnon Ahmad,<sup>38</sup> the *sasterawan negara* (national laureate) and perhaps one of the most important writers in the country.

In 1997–98, Shahnnon, like millions of other Malaysians, was struck by the impact of the economic crisis and the political fall-out

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Caaron and Haman! Does thou know the fate that befell them? Does thou know why it came to pass that God lay his curse upon them?... *They were unbelievers who turned against God. The Pharaoh declared himself divine. Caaron was a slave to his worldly desires, and was thus buried with his riches.* Oh Mahathir son of Wan Tempawan, *we fear for the fate of these sinners, and we now fear for you as well. We fear that the fate that befell the Shah of Iran, Soeharto and Marcos would one day be yours as well. But if you remain unwilling to make reforms, then it is not surprising that the people now despise you. If you were to walk amongst them you would hear them questioning your integrity. They are now questioning your authority. Know that the shift of their alliance to you was brought about by your own failures during these last few years. The catastrophes that have befallen the country are also your responsibility, as you were its leader.* (Italics added) (Mohammad Sayuti Omar, *Talqin untuk Mahathir: Nepotisme dan Qarunisme Alaf Baru*, Kuala Lumpur: Tinta Merah, 1998, pp. 77–78.)

<sup>38</sup> Shahnnon Ahmad was born in Kedah on 13 January 1933. Most of his early education was in Malaysia, but in 1968 he became a lecturer at Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. On his return to Malaysia he taught at Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) and then at USM, where he was promoted to professor of Malay literature in 1980. He has written a number of important novels that have focused primarily on the plight of Malay peasants in the rural heartland of Malaysia. His works *Rentong* (1965) and *Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan* (1966) have become classics of Malay literature. In Shahnnon Ahmad's earlier writings, the concerns, anxieties and fears of the Malay-Muslim community were depicted in narrative form. His characters tended to be simple folk who bore witness to the silent suffering and frustration of their race. *Ranjau Sepanjang Jalan* (The Tortuous Journey), for instance, looked at the plight of the Malay peasantry through the eyes of ordinary Malay village folk who felt that their economic and political lot had been severely compromised by corruption among their own leaders and the influx of foreign (particularly Chinese) migrant communities. In *Ranjau*, Shahnnon described the cities of the west  
*continued p. 601*

that followed. After the arrest and detention of Anwar Ibrahim, Shanon produced what had to be his most controversial work so far, *SHIT* — a novel which, in his own words was '*busuk lagi membusukkan*' (a stinking novel that stinks). Shanon Ahmad's work, it can safely be said, overturned the canons of Malay literature in the most radical way possible. His novel also pushed back the boundaries of good taste and public manners to a hitherto unimaginable degree.

The convoluted plot of Shanon's novel *SHIT* revolved around the character of a lump of excrement called PukiMak (whose initials happened to be P.M.). Its main theme was the need for reform and revolution as another lump of excrement (named Wirawan) chose to rebel against the tyrannical P.M. who had ruled over the other lumps of excrement for more than twenty years. As a result of this excessively long period of residence in the bowels, the individual concerned was suffering from an extreme case of chronic constipation. The story ends explosively, as the intestinal revolt leads to the expulsion of all the lumps of excrement from the belly

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coast as being overrun by 'dragons' — an oblique reference to the Chinese merchants and businessmen who prospered in the urban settlements along the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. Apart from his sustained critique of foreign capital and migrant competitors, Shanon also lashed out against the ruling Malay conservative-nationalist élite. He was a forerunner in the genre labelled '*sastera Islam*' or '*sastera dakwah*' (Islamic missionary literature) that grew increasingly popular in the 1970s and which came to the fore due to the Islamisation race between UMNO and PAS. This era witnessed not only the development of new Islamic movements (like ABIM and *Darul Arqam*), but also the first signs of popular Islamic resurgence in the form of Islamic dress, social norms, popular culture and Islamic literature. Shanon Ahmad was then a leading figure in Islamist intellectual and literary circles. Over the years, however, Shanon's output waned considerably. After a number of novels and essays in the 1970s and early 1980s (when the *dakwah* literature movement was at its height), his contributions diminished significantly. Instead, he spent most of his time teaching.

of the unfortunate individual concerned, much to his relief (though the same may not have been the case for the readers).

Immediately after the release of Shahnnon Ahmad's *SHIT*, the political, academic and literary establishments in Malaysia engaged in a heated debate over the merits of the book. UMNO leaders were, understandably, upset over the work, accusing Shahnnon of obscenity and defamation of character. The author's response was to claim that the novel was a work of fiction and that it did not refer to any person in particular, living or dead. Soon after, PAS leaders added their own contribution to an already complex and confounding crisis when they claimed that the novel was not obscene. The *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Nik Aziz, claimed that even God had *mencarut* (cursed) in the *Qur'an*. Thanks to the publicity, *SHIT* sold better than any of the other books produced at the time; the first edition sold out within one month. Subsequent editions were produced, and the novel became one of the major reference points for the *reformasi* movement and the debates around it. Those who thought it was safe to go back to the bookshops were warned that Shahnnon's next controversial piece was entitled *Muntah* ('Vomit').<sup>39</sup>

Like the other *reformasi*-related texts, the significant role played by religion and morality in Shahnnon's narrative was clearly evident. Indeed, obscenity aside, *SHIT* remained a highly moralistic piece of work which insisted on itself being read as a pedagogic, almost sermonising, text. However, the use of Islam and Islamic discourse was even more evident in the work of PAS member and writer C. N. al-Afghani, for whom *reformasi* was nothing less than a call for *jihad*.

C. N. al-Afghani was perhaps one of the most strident and radical voices of PAS in the 1980s and 1990s. A *mujahideen* veteran of the conflict in Afghanistan and a committed admirer and supporter of *ulama* Ustaz Ibrahim Libya who was slain in 1985, al-Afghani had produced some of the most acerbic critiques against the government, all couched in decidedly exclusive and uncom-

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<sup>39</sup> Shahnnon Ahmad's *Muntah* was released on 30 June 2000.

promising Islamist terms.<sup>40</sup> Apart from his scathing contempt for the UMNO-led government, another feature al-Afghani shared with many hard-line PAS supporters was his deep-rooted suspicion of other Islamist organisations in Malaysia such as ABIM and

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<sup>40</sup> C. N. al-Afghani is perhaps one of the best-known Malay-Muslim writers of the Islamist camp today. His previous writings included *Operasi Kenari: Suatu Hukuman Tanpa Bicara* (1990), *Taleban: Antara Jihad dan Jahat di Afghanistan* (1997), *Perisai Memali* (1997), *Tangisan di Bumi Kashmir* (1998) and *Suamiku Kekasih Allah* (1999), a biography of Solehah Mahmood, widow of Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood. In these and other writings, al-Afghani stated his own views and opinions about the state of the nation in Malaysia. He was well known for his support of PAS, the *ulama* in particular. A number of his works have been dedicated to the memory of one *ulama* — Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood (@ Ustaz Ibrahim Libya) who was killed by state security forces during the attack in Memali in November 1985. A firm believer in the project to create an Islamic state in Malaysia under the guidance and leadership of the *ulama*, al-Afghani attacked both the Malaysian government and the pro-establishment *ulama* on a number of occasions. In his polemical writings, al-Afghani lambasted the political establishment for a number of reasons: its reluctance to make Islamic law the basis of the Malaysian constitution; its collaboration with America and the Zionist regime of Israel in particular; giving in to demands by other non-Muslim communities and allowing Malay-Muslims to convert to other religions. He has also attacked the government for not taking a strong stand against what he describes as 'Hindu chauvinists' and 'Christian missionaries' who, he claimed, were engaged in a covert campaign to lure the Muslims away from the proper path of Islam. His main concern was to defend the Islamist struggle both in Malaysia and in the world at large against the machinations of the enemies of Islam represented by the US, Israel, the developed capitalist states of Europe and their secular collaborators in the Muslim world. In his book *Taleban: Antara Jihad dan Jahat di Afghanistan*, al-Afghani claimed that the destruction of the Muslim *ummah* in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Palestine, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and elsewhere was due to the planning of the US (p. 109). This book is basically a critique of the *Taliban* movement, which he argued was an organisation set up in Pakistan through the help of Americans and Saudis that was meant to break up the *mujahideen* movement in Afghanistan and help to tame the country to facilitate Western intervention and subsequent investment  
*continued p. 604*

its ex-leader, Anwar Ibrahim. In some of his earlier writings, al-Afghani joined in the chorus of disapproval directed towards Anwar who was seen as a traitor to the Islamist cause.

When the 1997 economic crisis first struck, al-Afghani's attention was still primarily directed towards matters related to Malay-Muslim concerns.<sup>41</sup> In due course, he published his book *Rakyat Makin Matang* in October 1998.

This was perhaps the only book that looks at the 'Anwar Ibrahim crisis' and the *reformasi* movement solely from the Islamist camp's point of view. Unlike the other pro-*reformasi* writers and activists, al-Afghani's agenda was far more complex. Like many veteran PAS supporters and the *ulama*, al-Afghani was not ready to forgive and forget the many 'sins' Anwar had committed against the Islamists. While other pro-*reformasi* writers chose to emphasise the Islamist credentials and image of Anwar as a progressive, liberal Muslim leader, al-Afghani did not hesitate to remind his readers of Anwar's attacks on PAS and the leadership of the *ulama* while he was a Cabinet minister in the UMNO-led government:

*Sejak Anwar berkuasa di beberapa kementerian, nampaknya Anwar semakin angkuh dengan PAS. Walaupun Anwar pernah rapat dengan Presiden and Timbalan Presiden PAS semasa dia di dalam ABIM dahulu, Anwar tetap menyerang PAS habis-habisan. Anwar sendiri sedar bahawa PAS berjuang semata-mata untuk meninggikan syariat Islam di Malaysia... Anwar pun*

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in the region. After the publication of this book, al-Afghani was himself attacked and accused of being a Western agent by other Islamist writers in the country. (See C. N. al-Afghani, *Operasi Kenari: Suatu Hukuman Tanpa Bicara*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pemuda, 1990; Taleban: *Antara Jihad dan Jahat di Afghanistan*, Memali: Corak Memali Enterprise, 1997; *Perisai Memali*, Memali: Corak Memali Enterprise, 1997; *Tangisan di Bumi Kashmir*, Memali: Corak Memali Enterprise, 1998; *Suamiku Kekasih Allah*, Memali: Penerbitan al-Jihadi, 1999.)

<sup>41</sup> During this time he wrote *Suamiku Kekasih Allah* ('My Husband, Beloved of God') that recounted the life story of Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood's widow. Al-Afghani's attention was caught only when Anwar Ibrahim was suddenly removed from office in September 1998 and the *reformasi* movement was launched. It was then that al-Afghani was persuaded to put pen to paper once again.

*tahu, bertapa berdosanya seorang yang menghalang usaha-usaha berjuang menegakkan Islam di muka bumi ini, tetapi kenapa Anwar sanggup berada di saf hadapan pimpinan UMNO dalam menentang PAS? ...Walaupun strategi Anwar, dia telah melakukan banyak dosa-dosa yang bukan sahaja kepada PAS sebaliknya kepada Islam itu sendiri. Anwar pernah memper-tikaikan hukum Islam di Malaysia ini. Dia turut bersetuju dengan Dr. Mahathir dan UMNO bahawa Syariat Islam tidak boleh dilaksanakan dalam masyarakat majmuk ini. Anwar sendiri telah menentang hukum hudud yang hendak dilaksanakan di Kelantan. Anwar sering menyatakan, UMNO mesti bersungguh-sungguh untuk merampas Kelantan dari PAS.<sup>42</sup>*

In *Rakyat*, al-Afghani's critique of Anwar's Islamist credentials was backdated to the time when Anwar was a Cabinet minister in the government of Dr. Mahathir. He pointed out that while serving in the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture Anwar did not prevent the 'sinful' and vice-ridden activities that took place in the country's sporting clubs and sports events. He attacked Anwar for not introducing measures such as segregation between the sexes and forcing the athletes to conform to Islamic standards of modesty and dress.<sup>43</sup> Al-Afghani also attacked Anwar's record when the latter was serving as Finance Minister. In particular, he reminded his readers that it was Anwar who continued to issue business licences to gambling houses, massage parlours and other

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<sup>42</sup> Translation: When he served in the various ministries, Anwar showed his arrogance towards PAS. Even though he was once close to the PAS president and vice-president during his ABIM days, Anwar attacked PAS with all his might. Anwar realised that PAS was the only party that was really struggling in the name of Islam in Malaysia.... Anwar knows how wrong it is for a Muslim like him to stand in the way of the Islamic struggle anywhere in the world, so why was he willing to be in UMNO's front line in the war against PAS? Whatever his present strategy may be, Anwar has committed many sins against PAS and Islam itself. Anwar has questioned the laws of Islam in Malaysia. He agreed with Dr. Mahathir and the UMNO leaders who argued that Islamic law could not be implemented in a plural society like Malaysia's. Anwar himself opposed the implementation of *hudud* laws in Kelantan (where PAS has been in power since 1990). Anwar himself had said, on many occasions, that UMNO must do everything it can to regain control of Kelantan from PAS (C. N. al-Afghani, *Rakyat Makin Matang*, 1998, pp. 34-35).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

'houses of ill-repute'. But to al-Afghani, Anwar's biggest mistake was his part in the numerous security operations like the attack on Ustaz Ibrahim and his followers in Memali in 1985, *Operasi Lalang* (1987), *Operasi Kenari* (1988) and the massive nation-wide crackdown on the *Darul Arqam* movement in 1994. For al-Afghani, Anwar shared the blame and responsibility for these events where the Islamists were arrested, detained or killed by State security forces:

*Semasa peristiwa Memali November 1985, Anwar sudah berada dalam kabinet pemerintah, seorang menteri. Maka Anwar terlibat. Sungguhpun di tangannya tidak berlumuran dengan darah shuhada Memali, tetapi percikan darah itu tetap mengenai tubuh badannya. Anwar tetap bersubahat.*<sup>44</sup>

Al-Afghani's belated entry into the *reformasi* camp was also a provisional one. In *Rakyat*, he clearly spelled out what he meant by *reformasi* from the Islamist point of view. Al-Afghani maintained that it was the PAS leaders, rather than Anwar Ibrahim or ABIM, who truly began the process of reform in Malaysian society. This process started when PAS won control of Kelantan in the 1990 general election and when *ulama* Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat came to power as the Chief Minister of the state.

Reformation, for al-Afghani, was invariably linked to the process of Islamisation. In *Rakyat*, he made it clear that the only kind of *reformasi* he was willing to support and endorse was one that led to the creation of an Islamic state in Malaysia. For al-Afghani, Anwar's *reformasi* campaign was handicapped by its leader, who had himself betrayed the Islamist cause and who had collaborated with the 'secular' government of Dr. Mahathir. The PAS Islamists, al-Afghani noted, were not as enthusiastic about the latest political campaign drummed up by the man who, in the 1980s and 1990s, had been UMNO's 'hammer against PAS' and whose own conduct

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<sup>44</sup> Translation: During the Memali incident of November 1985, Anwar was already a member of the ruling Cabinet. Anwar was involved. Even if his hands were not stained with the blood of the martyrs of Memali, some of that blood had nonetheless spilled on him. Anwar was a conspirator nonetheless (C. N. al-Afghani, *Rakyat Makin Matang*, p. 40).

as an UMNO politician seemed to take him further away from his original beliefs and commitments. For this reason, PAS was not able or willing to play a major role in the *reformasi* movement started by Anwar, and al-Afghani warned PAS members not to blindly follow in the footsteps of Anwar, lest they forget that they have their own (Islamist) reformist agenda to pursue:

*Ahli-ahli PAS dibawah pimpinan Ulama boleh dikatakan terlalu cermat untuk bertindak sesuatu. Mereka tidak mudah terpengaruh dengan sesuatu yang tidak dirancang oleh pimpinan mereka. Biasanya, walau apapun mereka akan merujuk kepada pimpinan dahulu. Setahu saya, pimpinan PAS tidak pernah mengeluarkan apa-apa arahan berhubung dengan soal reformasi itu. Malah, murshid'ul Am PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat pernah menyebut bahawa PAS telah lama mengadakan 'reformasi'. PAS tidak berhasrat bersama dengan reformasi tajaan Anwar. PAS juga tidak menghalang reformasi itu.*<sup>45</sup>

Who, then, should come to the fore to lead the *reformasi* campaign? Al-Afghani, for one, was certainly not impressed by Sayuti Omar's portrayal of Anwar Ibrahim as the heavenly saviour who was 'born in the year of the pig and under the element of fire'. For al-Afghani, the answer was clear. Neither Anwar, nor ABIM, nor the so-called 'independent *ulama*' and *pendakwah bebas* ('free missionaries') who have worked with and within the institutional structures of the State are able to rise up to the challenge.<sup>46</sup> Anwar,

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<sup>45</sup> Translation: The members of PAS have remained loyal to their *ulama* leaders and they have been cautious. They have not taken part in any programme not directed by their own leaders. In most cases, PAS members have referred to the party's leadership in all their actions. As far as I know, the PAS leadership has never issued any directives in relation to the *reformasi* issue. In fact, the *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, even said once that it was PAS that really began the process of social reform in the country. PAS therefore has no interest in joining Anwar's reform movement. Nor will PAS stand in the way of the movement (C. N. al-Afghani, *Rakyat Makin Matang*, p. 104).

<sup>46</sup> Al-Afghani regards ABIM as an organisation that was largely neutered and paralysed by Anwar's defection to UMNO and ABIM's incorporation into the political process. In *Rakyat* he refers to ABIM as an organisation more concerned with serving the interests of the *continued p. 608*

ABIM and the *pendakwah bebas* have all collaborated with the UMNO-led government and the state apparatus, and have been contaminated themselves due to the corrupting influence of secular *realpolitik*. Citing examples set by other Muslim martyrs and Islamist leaders of the past like Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam and his own hero Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood, al-Afghani called for open defiance and demonstrations against the tyranny of the state.<sup>47</sup> The way was open only for the 'authentic' *ulama* prepared to revive the Islamist struggle by putting aside their holy books and taking up the sword and shedding their own blood:

*Selagi Ulama hanya menadap al-Quran dan kitab sahaja, percayalah suatu hari nanti al-Quran dan kitab-kitab itu akan dirampas. Setelah itu para Ulama sudah tidak ada lagi al-Quran dan kitab. Bagaimanakah nasib Ulama ketika itu? Sebagai Ulama kita tidak boleh lela nyenyak seperti orang awam. Rasulullah terpaksa mengangkat pedang, para sahabat terpaksa gugur syahid untuk membawa risalah al-Quran kepada Umat di akhir zaman. Hari ini, jika tidak setitik pun darah Ulama yang gugur untuk mempertahankan risalah itu, amat luar biasa sekali.*<sup>48</sup>

In the writings of C. N. al-Afghani, the 'Anwar Ibrahim crisis' and the *reformasi* movement were turned into a renewed struggle for an Islamic state. More so than in the writings of pro-*reformasi* authors like Shahnnon Ahmad, Ahmad Lutfi Othman and Sayuti

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government and the UMNO elite than fighting for the cause of reform (p. 105). The *pendakwah bebas* (independent missionaries) are likewise useless for al-Afghani because they have been 'bought' by the state and instrumentally used by UMNO to bolster its own Islamic credentials (p. 97).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 107.

<sup>48</sup> Translation: As long as the *ulama* sit passively before the *Qur'an* and their books, no change will come to the world. Believe me, one day the *Qur'an* and all those books will be taken away from them. What then will be the fate of the *ulama*? As *ulama* we cannot afford to sleep quietly like the masses do. The Prophet of God was forced to take up his sword; his *sahabat* (companions) died so that the message of the *Qur'an* could be delivered to mankind. Today, not a single drop of the Ulamas' blood has been spilled in the defence of Islam. That is quite extraordinary. (Ibid., p. 102).

Omar, the pen of al-Afghani constructed a monochromatic moral universe where the battle-lines between UMNO, the government and the state on the one hand, and the Islamists on the other had been drawn. Once again, the discourse of *takfir* had made its way into the mainstream of Malay-Muslim politics; at no point in *Rakyat* or in any of his other writings did al-Afghani leave room for compromise. The stage was set for a fateful encounter between the forces of Islam and the forces of the *musrikin* and *munafikin*, led by their *taghut* (tyrannical) leaders who had been cast beyond the pale of the *ummah*.

The shift towards a more exclusive Islamist register marked a radical departure from the foundational premises of the *reformasi* project as outlined by its founder Anwar Ibrahim. While the *reformasi* movement as envisaged and conceptualised within the Pematang Pauh Declaration was meant to emphasise the universal values shared in common by the various ethnic and religious communities in Malaysia, it is clear that the *reformasi* movement as it was understood by the likes of al-Afghani and the PAS leaders was something else altogether. The circulation of the spectacle had effectively severed it from its moorings and allowed it to sail in a direction hitherto unexpected; *reformasi* had been turned into a *jihad*.

### *The Islamisation of Reformasi: PAS's Spectacular Resurgence in the Wake of the 1998 UMNO Crisis*

*Krisis politik ini bukan orang PAS yang rancang. Tetapi bila berlaku perkara begini, ia seakan kita mulai musim kemarau yang panjang, semua pohon sudah kering. Satu punting rokok kecil sahaja boleh membakar seluruh negeri. Suasana yang Islam sudah menunggu selama ini — bila nak naik sangat tak nampak — tetapi bila berlaku begini dimana-manapun orang mencari Islam.<sup>49</sup>*

Prof. Dato' Dr. Harun Din  
Speech at Jejawi, Perlis. 1999

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<sup>49</sup> Translation: This political crisis was not planned by PAS. But now that it has happened, it is as if the whole country has been in a *continued p. 610*

As we have noted earlier, the 1997–98 economic and political crises in the ASEAN region had effectively ruptured and unsettled the hegemonies of the nation-states. In the turmoil that followed, the peoples of ASEAN were desperate for solutions and answers; they longed for a world redeemed and restored to its original order.

It was hardly a coincidence that religion was one of the things to which the people turned. Religion had been at the forefront of numerous public political campaigns in the region for decades, from the mobilisation of the masses during the anti-colonial struggle to the popular anti-authoritarian revolts in the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Burma in the 1970s and 1980s. As the crisis deepened, new expressions of religious identity emerged, ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. Religious leaders, *jihadi* militants, lay preachers and fortune-tellers competed for a larger share of the public market. In time, the entire region was swarming with millenarian movements, extremist organisations and religious parties eager to win more votes and support for themselves. Even in Thailand, politics was divided between the ‘*theep*’ (angel) parties and ‘*mara*’ (devil) parties — proving that the dichotomy between *hizbullah* (the party of God) and *hisbussyaitan* (party of the Devil) was not unique to Islam.

The 1997–98 economic crisis and the ‘Anwar Ibrahim affair’ that followed stretched the fictional landscape of Malaysia to hitherto uncharted horizons. In the eyes of the reformist-Islamists, the attack against Anwar Ibrahim has been read as a deliberate plot to destroy the political career of a prominent Malay-Muslim leader and activist whose Islamist agenda was seen as increasingly threatening to the secular élite within UMNO and the government. The government’s heavy-handed mode of dealing with some Muslim groups, such as ABIM, JIM and the Muslim student movements,

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drought, and all the trees and plants have dried up. Even a small cigarette butt can ignite the whole country. The situation that Islam has waited for so long — waiting for the right moment to rise up — has arrived, and everywhere the people are looking for an Islamic solution. (Harun Din, Speech at Jejawi, Perlis. Distributor: Al-Faizun Enterprise. Komplek Pasar Moden Gombak, 1999).

has tarnished its image even further. Other blunders such as the IGP's assault on Anwar Ibrahim while he was in detention, sending riot police with full gear into the mosques and trying to forbid the practice of *sembahyang hajat*<sup>50</sup> (special devotional prayers) compromised the government's (and UMNO's) Islamic credentials even further.

Within weeks, all the principal personalities involved had been reinvented. Anwar Ibrahim, the Islamist leader-turned UMNO politician who was once honoured by none other than General Zia 'ul Haq and the leaders of the Iranian revolution, was now recast as a progressive liberal modernist in the Western media. Ian Johnson of the *Wall Street Journal* described him as 'an unabashed globalist well suited to the modern world of markets and media'.<sup>51</sup> The man who once led his followers in 'moral cleansing' drives on campus and who had promoted gender segregation among fellow students was now being described by the *Washington Post* as 'a moderate, rational voice'.<sup>52</sup> During his visit to Kuala Lumpur for a regional conference, US Vice-President Al Gore added his own endorsement of Anwar and his *reformasi* movement, labelling the *reformasi* activists 'brave voices' who were 'fighting for their freedom and democratic rights'. Needless to say, Al Gore's comments were warmly welcomed by the opposition (including PAS), though frowned upon by the establishment. It also had the effect (probably unintended) of making Anwar look more and more like 'Washington's man' in Malaysia — something exploited to the full by the imprisoned Anwar's detractors.

Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, never a friend of the Western media and as combative as ever, was recast as the new

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<sup>50</sup> *Sembahyang hajat* are special non-compulsory devotional prayers; they are a popular practice in Malaysia. After the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim, many Islamist groups such as ABIM held large *sembahyang hajat* sessions at mosques all over the country, praying for Anwar and the other detained Islamic activists. These sessions often attracted thousands of followers and were seen as a very visible expression of dissent and opposition against the government.

<sup>51</sup> Ian Johnson, *Wall Street Journal*, 30 October 1998.

<sup>52</sup> *Washington Post*, 13 October 1997.

'Soeharto' in a region where many a crowned head had fallen, and was widely predicted (in the Western media at least) to be the next ASEAN ruler to meet his untimely end at the hands of the mob in the streets. In many ways, the Prime Minister had contributed to his own negative image in the media. In his speech broadcast live to the nation on 21 February 1998, Dr. Mahathir reiterated his belief in the need to cultivate and preserve a wealthy corporate class. It appeared that even after the financial crisis had exposed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the liberal-capitalist framework of the modern Malaysian economy, the *ancien regime* was still soldiering on.

PAS, on the other hand, was also given the opportunity to reinvent itself, and in the months preceding the 1999 election it did just that. The party that had modelled itself after the Iranian revolution and whose members had declared other Muslims 'kafir' and 'munafikin' was given the chance to assume its latest avatar as the defender of human rights and democracy. Just how this came about is best understood when we look at the convoluted comings and goings within the respective parties during the turbulent years of 1998–2000.

The catalyst for PAS's latest attempt at reinventing itself was undoubtedly the use of religio-political rhetoric on the part of Anwar and some elements within his *reformasi* movement. Anwar got the ball rolling when he reverted to the Islamist political discourse he had so expertly deployed during the 1970s. In the crucial period between 1998 and the 1999 election, Anwar (then in prison) was at the forefront of the renewed critique on the government, UMNO and the personality of Dr. Mahathir in particular. His articles and speeches were liberally peppered with references to the *Qur'an*, Islamic history and a host of Islamist references. His target was none other than the Prime Minister, whose own Islamist credentials he sought to damage in the most spectacular manner.

In his tract entitled '*Pesanan Buat Rakyat Malaysia*' published in 1999 (shortly before the federal election), Anwar accused the government of Dr. Mahathir of cronyism, nepotism, corruption and abuse of power.<sup>53</sup> In an attempt to vindicate and defend himself

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<sup>53</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, '*Pesanan Buat Rakyat Malaysia*', Publisher anon, 1999.

against charges of sexual impropriety and abuse of power, Anwar alleged that his downfall was brought about by an internal party conspiracy hatched at the highest level. He claimed that those responsible for his fall from grace were ex-Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin, the Prime Minister's personal secretary Aziz Shamsuddin, UMNO ex-Chief Minister Rahim Thamby Chik and ex-student activist turned UMNO politician Sanusi Junid. As we have seen earlier, Anwar's relationship with Aziz Shamsuddin and Sanusi Junid went back to the 1970s, when they were all student activists together.

Anwar's tirade against the UMNO-led government was couched in explicitly Islamist terms. Citing examples from Muslim history such as the Caliph Abu Bakar as-Siddiq and Jaafar ibn Abu Talib, Anwar spoke about the need to reform the Malaysian political system and reminded his followers that political office was *taklif wa'la tashrif* (a moral responsibility). He argued that the political system was morally and spiritually bankrupt, and that all that was left was a semblance of democracy that was essentially hollow:

*Hari ini demokrasi di Malaysia hanya tinggal semata-mata jasad. Rohnya dibunuh oleh Dr. Mahathir. Malaysia hanya suatu demokrasi pada namanya sahaja. Pada hakikatnya ia adalah satu plutokrasi pemerintahan golongan karya, bukan pemerintahan rakyat.*<sup>54</sup>

That Anwar himself had been one of the '*golongan karya*' for nearly two decades was forgotten in the heat of the argument. Anwar focused his wrath on the personality of his ex-mentor and protector, the Prime Minister. In his *Pesanan*, he openly challenged the Islamic credentials of the UMNO leadership: '*Keangkuhan dan kebiadaban sang pemimpin makin melampau sehingga melibatkan isu agama. Hudud dan aurat dipertikaikan. Ulama dipersenda.*'<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Translation: Today the democratic system in Malaysian has been reduced to its external structures. Its spirit has been killed by Dr. Mahathir. Malaysia is a democratic state in name only. In reality, it has become a plutocracy run by professionals, and no longer by the people (Ibid., p. 18).

<sup>55</sup> Translation: Such is the arrogance and insolence of the leaders of this country that they are willing to challenge matters of religion. *Hudud continued p. 614*

On the personal beliefs and faith of the Prime Minister, he had this to say:

*Kefahaman Dr. M tentang Islam amat dangkal. Beliau sama sekali tidak menguasai bahasa Arab. Tanggapan beliau tentang Islam hanya berpan-dukun kefahaman beliau terhadap terjemahan Inggeris beberapa ayat al-Qur'an. Namun beliau mempunyai keangkuhan untuk mengeluarkan fatwanya sendiri. Beliau berani mempertikaikan pandangan Ulama. Bahkan beliau seringkali menyerang Ulama. Ini amat ketara dalam serangan beliau terhadap Ustaz Harun Din dan arahan beliau supaya Mufti Selangor Datuk Ishak Baharum diberhentikan.<sup>56</sup>*

Needless to say, Anwar's belated defence of the *ulama* served only to bolster the standing and status of PAS leaders (even though it was Anwar, above all, who had served as UMNO's 'hammer against PAS' and who was at the forefront of the attack on other *ulama* in the 1980s and 1990s such as slain PAS leader Ustaz Ibrahim Mahmood and the head of *Darul Arqam*, Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad).

Anwar's attack on the UMNO leadership was total and unrestrained. In the *Pesanan*, he even went as far as attacking Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir on account of the latter's sideburns.<sup>57</sup> Sartorial differences aside, other attacks were of a more ideological and political nature. Anwar condemned his erstwhile UMNO colleague Sanusi Junid on the grounds that he was an admirer of the Nazi ideologue Goebbels.<sup>58</sup> Along with this came a host of other

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*n. 55 continued*

(law) and (the issue of) *aurat* are questioned by them. The *ulama* are insulted by them (Ibid., p. 4).

<sup>56</sup> Translation: Dr. Mahathir's understanding of Islam is so shallow. The man has no command whatsoever of the Arabic language. His knowledge of Islam is limited to the few English translations of a few sentences of the *Qur'an* that he knows. Nonetheless, the man is arrogant enough to issue *fatwa* (rulings) of his own. The man is prepared to question the views of the *ulama*. In fact, he is even willing to attack the *ulama*. This was clear in his attack on *ulama* Ustaz Harun Din, and his decision to call for the resignation of the Mufti of the state of Selangor, Datuk Ishak Baharom (Ibid., p. 5).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

revelations from UMNO's already overcrowded cupboard of skeletons: accusations of child abuse, illicit sex and corruption of the highest order were all brought out into the open, much to the embarrassment of the party (and the benefit of PAS). These also helped to boost the appeal of PAS as an alternative to the beleaguered and divided UMNO. While UMNO's once-favoured son was busy destroying the party he was meant to lead, PAS stood by and bided its time, waiting to reap the benefits from the storm brewing within the ranks of its main rival.

PAS had some important concerns of its own. In its home state of Kelantan, PAS was facing a minor constitutional crisis that brought it into direct confrontation with Sultan Ismail Petra and the Kelantan royal family. The crisis revolved around the status and power of the Sultan as head of state and some contentious state laws (such as the land regulations of Kelantan, which were unique in the country). Though the Kelantan royal house had proven to be one of the most vocal and independent in the country, it was also regarded as a loose cannon on the ship of national politics. The Kelantan royals had shown that they were more than a match for both the federal government and the PAS local government. It appeared as if neither the leaders of PAS nor UMNO could simply bend the will of the Kelantan ruler according to their own whims and fancies.

As we have seen earlier, ever since it regained control of Kelantan in 1990 PAS had been determined to push ahead with its *hudud* law proposals. PAS had encountered serious difficulties when its project was criticised by non-Muslim NGOs, women's groups and social activists all over the country. The federal government also made its own position known by stating categorically that it did not accept PAS's interpretation of Islamic law and that it regarded the PAS *hudud* bill as a political gimmick designed only to win more votes among the masses. To complicate matters further, the Sultan of Kelantan had also jumped into the fray and made his objection to the bill known to all.

PAS was therefore faced with two opposition fronts. On the one hand, it had to contend with the federal government dominated by the BN parties led by UMNO. On the other hand, it also faced internal opposition within its own home state, from the Sultan

himself. To succeed, PAS had to do battle with both opponents and still keep its home constituency intact — not an easy task considering the popularity and status enjoyed by the Kelantan ruler.

Matters were further complicated because Sultan Ismail Petra was one of the few Malay rulers who did not consent to the 1994 constitutional amendments following the constitutional crisis of 1993–94. Along with the rulers of Kedah and Johor, the Sultan of Kelantan did not dance according to the tune of Kuala Lumpur. The 1994 amendments would have allowed the federal government to have more say in local affairs on a state level. In particular, they would have opened the way for changes and reforms in the respective *Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Negeri* (State Civil Administrative Service) and *Majlis Agama Islam* (Islamic Council) of each state. During the 1993–94 crisis, the Sultan of Kelantan was advised by the ex-president of S46, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, not to consent to the amendments as he risked destroying his own power base in the state if he did so. (By 1997, Tengku Razaleigh was back in UMNO.) As a result of his refusal to sign the amendments, the Sultan of Kelantan was still very much his own ruler and the Kelantan royal house wielded considerable power and influence in matters related to local government. Thus he could effectively obstruct PAS's plans to introduce *hudud* law in Kelantan, as well as the other Islamic reforms they had planned for the future.

The intra-state conflict soon crystallised into a personal conflict between the Chief Minister and the *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, and the Sultan. By 1997, the relationship between the Kelantan palace and the Chief Minister's office was at an all-time low. During a Conference of Rulers' meeting in 1997, the Sultan refused to allow Chief Minister Nik Aziz to accompany him; instead, the ruler chose Rozali Ishak.

Caught in this stalemate, PAS could not hope to make any significant gains in its own home state. The matter was left hanging as PAS leaders continued in their assault on the Kelantan royal house, attempting to undermine its power and authority by appealing to religion and the law of God. However, things quickly changed when the 1997–98 crisis struck and UMNO experienced a major haemorrhage of votes and supporters from within as a result of the split within UMNO.

As with the UMNO split in 1987, PAS stood to gain the most. Between late 1998 and mid-1999, an estimated 250,000-300,000 members left UMNO to follow their role model and leader Anwar. Many then joined the *Keadilan* (Justice) party set up by Anwar and led by his wife, Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. PAS also benefited from the split within UMNO, and its own membership rose accordingly. By the end of 1998 the party's newspaper *Harakah* was reporting an increase of 15,000 new PAS members a month. Though no official records and statistics were made public, it was widely estimated that PAS gained around 100,000 new members during this crucial period.

### *The 1999 Federal Election: PAS's Second Coming*

*Sasaran kita dalam konteks politik adalah pengundi. Dalam masa yang sama kita juga perlu membina suatu pandangan baru dalam masyarakat umum tentang PAS yang sampai ke hari ini masih dilihat tidak berbeza dari politik UMNO. PAS tidak dilihat sebagai sebuah gerakan Islam yang berusaha dalam dakwah dan walaupun dikatakan sebagai badan dawah tidak pula dilihat lebih profesional dan canggih dari badan dawah lain. Ini bermakna kita perlu mempelbagaikan program kemasyarakatan PAS kepada berbagai bentuk.<sup>59</sup>*

Nashruddin Mat Isa,  
Secretary General of PAS, 1999

PAS was not the only political entity that underwent changes in the closing years of the twentieth century.

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<sup>59</sup> Translation: In the political context our target is the voters. At the same time, we need to develop a new view among the public about PAS, which till today is thought to be no different politically from UMNO. PAS is still not seen by everyone as an Islamic movement engaged in *dakwah* (missionary) work, and even in the field of missionary work PAS is not seen as being any different from other missionary organisations. This means we need to diversify PAS's social programme in every way (Nashruddin Mat Isa, 'Peranan Muslimat: Strategi Memasyarakatkan PAS', *Mujahidah* IV (1999): 32).

The year 1999 marked yet another significant shift in both local and global political spheres. In the international arena, the world stood and watched as the US inched its way closer towards the realisation of its manifest destiny as the global hegemon in a unipolar world order of its own making. The Clinton administration had shown that it was prepared to push its way to get its message across, and that message would be sent by whatever means were necessary, fair or foul. The more recalcitrant states were told in no uncertain terms that the US was now the sole arbitrator of what was right and wrong with the world. In 1998, that message was delivered to Sudan via a hail of guided missiles that landed with a bang on the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant. In 1999, the Clinton administration once again managed to get its way during the Kosova conflict as it headed the NATO war effort against the Serbian government led by Slobodan Milosevic. In the wake of these explosive successes, the US President's image was transformed from that of a middling saxophonist to Neo-Wilsonian interventionist, and the most powerful country in the world was basking in its own new-found glory. To expand the Americans' comfort zone, the British Prime Minister chipped in his own words of encouragement, heralding the arrival of the 'new internationalism where the brutal repression of ethnic groups will not be tolerated'.<sup>60</sup> (Except, of course, in countries like Turkey and Indonesia that were still firmly allied to the West and remained major clients of the US and British companies.)

American presidents were not the only ones who could transform their public image so readily. The leaders of India and Pakistan were also eager to show the world (and more importantly, each other) that their respective countries were also capable of developing weapons of mass destruction that would rival those in the overflowing arsenals of the West. On 11 May 1998, a sacred date on the Buddhist calendar as it was *Buddha Purnama* (day of the smiling Buddha), the Indian government gave the green light for five underground atomic detonations. Hindu nationalist leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee claimed that this was a boost to India's pride,

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<sup>60</sup> Noam Chomsky, *The New Humanism*, p. 3.

as the country was now a member of the exclusive nuclear club. (That the other members of the club were capable of feeding their populations and did not suffer from chronic uneven development, mass illiteracy and communal violence was lost in the flurry of press releases.) On 28 May, Pakistan detonated its own nuclear device in the mountains of Baluchistan, the most impoverished and underdeveloped province in the country. Pakistan's leader Nawaz Sharif boasted that Pakistan was more than a match for India and that it was the first Muslim country to develop the 'Islamic bomb' — despite the fact that Pakistan's bomb was unable to distinguish between Muslim victims and non-Muslim ones, any more than India's bomb could discriminate between Hindus and non-Hindus. That one out of three Pakistanis was living below the official poverty line seemed of little concern to the bellicose Pakistani leader at the time.

The nuclear weapons race in the Indian subcontinent that began in the 1960s had finally produced the bitter harvest which had been the pipe-dream of so many Indian and Pakistani politicians. In time, both countries were parading their latest line of missiles and rockets, named after Hindu deities and Muslim conquerors of the past.<sup>61</sup> The development of nuclear weapons did little to ease the tension between the two countries. By 1999, India and Pakistan once again found themselves on the brink of war, as troops from both sides fought an undeclared war in the mountainous region of Kargil which led to the combined loss of more than 3,000 troops.

The official Malaysian reaction to these developments was one of dismay and anxiety; the Malaysian government openly stated its rejection of the use of weapons of mass destruction. PAS, on the other hand, condemned India's infidel 'Hindu bomb' while embracing the 'Islamic bomb' of Pakistan. The party's newspaper *Harakah* congratulated the Pakistani scientists for their 'great achievement' — though the party's leaders were quiet on the more

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<sup>61</sup> The Indians soon perfected their Prithvi and Agni missiles, while Pakistan developed its own Shaheen and Ghauri weapon delivery systems.

embarrassing question of Pakistan's non-achievements, particularly in the fields of education, housing and public services.

Closer to home, the Malaysian government had other causes for concern as neighbouring Indonesia seemed to be on the verge of imploding and exploding at the same time. In the Indonesian election on 7 June, despite the odds stacked against her, the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan* (Democratic Party of Indonesia, PDI-P) led by Soekarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri became the dominant party in the land after gaining one-third of the popular vote.<sup>62</sup> Some Indonesian Islamist movements and parties had tried to block Megawati's rise to power by using the tried and tested argument that a woman could not possibly lead a Muslim country (even though numerous Indonesian kingdoms had been ruled by women and the kingdom of Aceh even had a woman — Laksamana Keumalahayati — as its admiral). The *Nahdatul Ulama's* own political front, *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (National Awakening Party, PKB) led by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) came in third. Gus Dur and Megawati were forced to forge a working compromise, with Gus Dur as the President and Megawati as his deputy. But even Gus Dur and the daughter of the legendary Soekarno could not secure the integrity and unity of Indonesia. With the IMF prodding the government from the back, Jakarta was forced to recall its troops and open the way for a referendum on the future of East Timor. When it was finally held, the results were unanimous: 98.5% of the eligible voters came out and 78% of them voted for independence from Indonesia.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Despite failing to win a clear majority, PDI came to power due in part to the disunity and bickering among the other Islamist movements and parties. In the end, PDI broke the deadlock by forming a loose instrumental coalition with other parties, thereby marginalizing the Islamists of NU.

<sup>63</sup> John G. Taylor, *East Timor*, p. xxiv. The pro-independence vote was a costly one. In the following weeks and months, hundreds of Timorese civilians were killed and thousands were displaced, tortured or kidnapped by pro-Indonesian militia units and *jihadi* groups sponsored by the Indonesian security forces. The Indonesian Islamist groups and militias added their own angle to the crisis by claiming that the

*continued p. 621*

With the entire region in turmoil and identities being reconstructed on a daily (if not hourly) basis, it seemed as if the shifting contours of the global political geography had opened the way to anything and everything. The circumstances in Malaysia favoured a major overhaul of PAS's own standing and image in the country, and the Islamist party prepared itself for the coming federal elections with a fair amount of panache.

One of the first visible signs of change was the outward appearance of PAS and its leaders. While the party leadership had opted for a more 'Islamic' look in the 1980s (abandoning the use of Western dress and mannerisms), the 'new look' PAS of 1999 was bedecked in coat and tie. (Prompting the Malaysian journalist M. G. G. Pillay to comment on the 'new PAS in the lounge suit and dinner jacket'.)<sup>64</sup> Though not all PAS leaders embraced this sartorial shift as easily as others (some, like Tuan Guru Nik Aziz and Tuan Guru Hadi Awang clung obstinately to their *jubbah* and *serban*), those who did soon found themselves at ease in their new outfits. Doubtless, the entry of so many ex-UMNO leaders into the ranks of the Islamist party helped. They were on the scene to assist their new-found comrades with any necessary adjustments to their wardrobe.

While the elder generation of *ulama* were left to man the fort, the younger generation of PAS activists and intellectuals was sent out to convert the jaded masses. In time, a new line-up of prominent PAS leaders was on the scene: the one-time free missionary and 'motivational expert' Dr. Hassan Ali, the party's youthful secretary-general Nashruddin Mat Isa and ex-UMNO leader Dato' Kamaruddin Jaffar<sup>65</sup> (previously director of the *Institut Kajian*

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n. 63 continued

pro-independence movement in East Timor was part of a nefarious Christian-Jewish-Zionist plot to dismantle the world's biggest Muslim country.

<sup>64</sup> M.G.G. Pillay, 'The Islamic State Dons a Lounge Suit', *malaysiakini.com*, 19 July 2001.

<sup>65</sup> Kamaruddin Jaffar was born in Wakaf Baru, Kelantan in 1951. His early education was at Sultan Ibrahim Primary School in Pasir Mas; continued p. 622

*Dasar* (Institute of Policy Research, IKD), a think-tank closely associated with Anwar Ibrahim) were on the scene to reach out to new potential voters across the country. Dr. Hatta Ramli, the political secretary of PAS's President Fadzil Noor, was also regarded as one of the party's new leading lights, and was soon PAS's unofficial spokesman dealing with the foreign press.

With men like Hassan Ali, Kamaruddin Jaffar, Hatta Ramli and Nashruddin Mat Isa as the vanguard, PAS was reaching out to constituencies and communities it had hardly ever engaged with before. (PAS had tried to reach out to the Chinese community in the 1980s, but with little success.) This time round, PAS's Islamist rhetoric was liberally peppered with references to democracy and human rights. Issues and questions related to democratic participation, representation, pluralism and cultural diversity were raised by the younger generation of PAS leaders time and again. On the internet the Islamic party's official website even opened up a new webpage link in Chinese that preached the necessity of reform and

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*n. 65 continued*

he later studied at Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK). He then studied at the University of Kent in Canterbury and, for his masters, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Upon his return to Malaysia he became a lecturer at UKM. In 1985, he was a founder of IKD. In 1986, he served as the personal political secretary to Tun Ghafar Baba, who later became Deputy Prime Minister. During the 1980s, his political career developed as well as his own business interests. By the 1990s, he was regarded as one of the upcoming 'stars' in UMNO, though he remained closely connected to Anwar Ibrahim. Kamaruddin's career rose even higher when Anwar became Deputy Prime Minister. Unfortunately, this close association worked against him when Anwar was toppled in 1998. Kamaruddin was one of the few UMNO leaders arrested by state security forces. He was ejected from UMNO in 1999, after which he joined PAS. In the 1999 election, he contested as a PAS candidate and won the Tumpat parliamentary seat. As one of the PAS's newest leaders, he served the party as one of its main advisors and worked in its policy planning and research unit. He also wrote the book *Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmy, Politik Melayu dan Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Anda Akademik, 1980).

social reconstruction (though a similar page for the Indian community did not materialise, which perhaps reflected the party's own concerns and priorities).

The new line-up of PAS leaders and spokesmen was also more concerned about economic and political matters affecting the country. During the months prior to the 1999 election, they spoke about the need for economic structural reform, upholding the constitution, greater transparency and accountability in government. Charges of cronyism, nepotism and corruption (the paramount concerns of the *reformasi* movement) were brought to the fore and adopted by PAS as its new concerns. Specific policies of the Mahathir administration were also targeted. Among them was PAS's claim that should it come to power the party would immediately reverse the university privatisation programme that had been hugely unpopular with the students.

Apart from the new concerns embraced by the party leadership, the younger PAS leaders also seemed to be more prepared to break away from the party's traditional political methods and strategies. The young and dynamic secretary-general, Ustaz Nashruddin Mat Isa, for instance, spoke at length about the need to invent a new approach to PAS's politics before the election:

*Sasaran kita dalam konteks politik adalah pengundi. Dalam masa yang sama kita juga perlu membina suatu pandangan baru dalam masyarakat umum tentang PAS yang sampai ke hari ini masih dilihat tidak berbeza dari politik UMNO. PAS tidak dilihat sebagai sebuah gerakan Islam yang berusaha dalam dakwah dan walaupun dikatakan sebagai badan dawah tidak pula dilihat lebih profesional dan canggih dari badan dawah lain. Ini bermakna kita perlu mempelbagaikan program kemasyarakatan PAS kepada berbagai bentuk.<sup>66</sup>*

At times, Nashruddin's rhetoric seemed more akin to the lingo and jargon of business manuals for direct-selling and advertising. On several occasions, he spoke of the need for PAS to be more proactive and to seek out and identify the needs of the electorate: 'Program memasyarakatkan PAS memerlukan tindakan yang pro-aktif

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<sup>66</sup> Translation: see n. 59 above.

dari kalangan ahli di setiap peringkat. (Kita) mesti mengenal pasti kehendak masyarakat yang mampu diisi.<sup>67</sup>

This proactive approach was coupled with a deep concern for 'quality control' and 'customer satisfaction'. Talking about the need to create a 'win-win formula' (a favourite phrase among Malaysian businessmen), the secretary-general counselled PAS members to learn the ways of the business community so as not to miss opportunities:

*Apabila projek sudah bermula, wujudkan pengawasan dan kawalan supaya tidak lari dari matlamat kerja dan matlamat yang hendak dicapai. Kita tidak mahu banyak tindakan kita yang berlaku secara ad-hoc tanpa ada kawalan dan pengawasan. Ini adalah perlu kerana kaedah win-win yang diamalkan dalam pengurusan dan perniagaan boleh kita ambil dalam program masyarakat kita. Masyarakat adalah ibarat pelanggan yang amat berharga kepada kita, dan tabiat pelanggan barangan sentiasa mengharapkan produk yang baik dan kos yang munasabah. Uslub dan sasaran ini penting kerana di dalam senario politik tanah air dan keterlibatan kita dengan undi dan pengundi; sokongan yang bakal mereka berikan hasil dari usaha memasyarakatkan PAS akan menentukan kedudukan politik (kita).<sup>68</sup>*

At the hands of Nashruddin Mat Isa and company, the 'party of God' was transformed into 'PAS Inc.' looking for 'valued customers' to whom they would sell their quality product, the Islamic state (though at reasonable cost). PAS matched its words with

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<sup>67</sup> Translation: The social programmes that PAS initiates must be proactive and they will have to target society as a whole, at all levels. (We) have to first identify the wants and needs of society that we can fulfil (Nashruddin Mat Isa, 'Peranan Muslimat', pp. 31–32).

<sup>68</sup> Translation: Once (our) projects have been initiated, we need to exercise control and supervision so that our objectives will be met. We do not want our actions to be taken in an *ad hoc* manner beyond our control and supervision. This is important because the 'win-win' formula used in business can also be used by us in our own socialisation programmes. The public should be thought of as our valued customers, and it is in the nature of customers to look for quality products at reasonable cost. This approach is important in the context of national politics, and it affects us as well as the voters and their votes; their support for the programmes and projects we initiate will in turn determine our own political standing in the country (Ibid., p. 32).

deeds and a whole new businesslike and management-oriented approach was introduced to the party and its membership. Overnight, a virtual domestic industry surrounding PAS was created (helped, no doubt, by the entry of so many urban-based professionals and ex-UMNO members). A wide range of PAS-related products was soon available on the market, ranging from T-shirts to key chains, calendars to CDs and video cassettes. (While doing fieldwork in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, the author came across a bottle of PAS mineral water, though the stall vendor was keen to point out that the water was quite ordinary and not 'blessed' by anyone, saying: *'Ini bukan air jampi, tau'.*)

PAS also began to offer social services it had never offered before. 'Motivational expert' Dr. Hassan Ali offered 'summer camps' for children and 'spiritual motivation classes' at his holiday retreat, while the ever-incendiary Mohamad Sabu offered 'snow holidays' in the mountain resorts of Iran on his own personal website, *mohamadsabu.com*.

PAS also began to make significant and visible inroads into the urban constituencies on the West Coast. In Selangor, Malacca, Perak and Kuala Lumpur, the party held enormous gatherings that attracted thousands of followers and on-lookers.<sup>69</sup> But these mass gatherings in the open were somewhat different from earlier similar rallies and meetings in PAS's home state of Kelantan, as PAS leaders were now forced to share the platform with leaders from the other opposition parties. Among the prominent opposition politicians invited to speak along with PAS were Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh (DAP), Syed Husin Ali and Rustam A. Sani (PRM), Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and Dr. Chandra Muzaffar (Keadilan).

Conscious of the need to reach out to the middle classes, PAS also embarked on a series of high-profile 'dinner talks' (or

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<sup>69</sup> The author attended 12 gatherings in and around Kuala Lumpur between May and September 1999. Many were held in open spaces like football fields and parks, and attracted thousands of participants. There was a visible 'market atmosphere', with hundreds of stalls and vendors selling food, drinks and PAS-related propaganda material.

'dine-logues' as they were called) held in several 5-star hotels. The first 'dine-logue' in Kuala Lumpur was held at the (Japanese-owned) Nikko Hotel in the chic upmarket Ampang district, right next to the twin towers of the KLCC. The host for the evening was suave Dr. Hassan Ali, while the guest speaker was the *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz.<sup>70</sup>

Those who wondered if PAS had finally made the transition to national mainstream politics were, however, soon reminded of the party's Islamist outlook and values. PAS leaders like Nashruddin Mat Isa (now dressed in business suit and tie) did not fail to remind his potential customers/voters that PAS was an Islamist party and that PAS's mode of government was a better 'product' than UMNO's precisely because it was an *Islamic* product. Like the other senior party leaders, PAS's secretary-general did not hesitate to lambast the Islamic credentials of the Mahathir administration. Beneath the business suit there remained the Deobandi-educated Islamist and politician who could only compare Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir to the *fir'aun* (Pharaoh):

*Corak pemerintahan Dr. Mahathir hampir menyamai kepimpinan Fir'aun itu sendiri. Sebab dengan kuasa yang diberikan kepadanya oleh rakyat, dia telah menggunakan kuasa tersebut untuk memusatkan kuasa pentadbiran kepadanya sendiri dan mengaut kekayaan negara untuk kepentingan dia dan keluarga dan rakan.<sup>71</sup>*

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<sup>70</sup> The author was present at this dinner. Practically all the guests were Malay-Muslims; many were PAS members. The relatively expensive cost of the dinner (RM100 per head) made it an exclusive and posh affair by PAS standards. Despite the media hype surrounding the event, Nik Aziz's dinner talk was not as impressive as many had expected. During the open dialogue that followed the dinner many of the questions directed to him were tame and uncontroversial. The author was given the chance to ask what PAS intended to do to reverse the privatisation of universities should PAS/BA come to power. (This had been one of the party's election campaign promises.) Tuan Guru Nik Aziz flatly refused to answer the question outright, insisting that such matters would be dealt with only after PAS had been voted into government.

<sup>71</sup> Translation: Dr. Mahathir's mode of government is similar to that of the Pharaoh himself. For with the power entrusted to him by the *continued p. 71*

Following the precedent set by Anwar Ibrahim (who in turn merely followed the precedent set by PAS), Nashruddin attempted to undermine the personal faith and belief of the Prime Minister himself

*Pemikiran beliau (Mahathir) adalah pemikiran yang keliru lagi korup tentang Islam ini. Antara sebab boleh berlaku demikian ialah kerana dia mengambil Islam bukan dari sumber yang asal, sumber yang benar. Dia berpegang ataupun mengambil dan membaca Islam ini dari sumber-sumber yang secondary, sumber-sumber yang datang daripada Barat. Malah beliau (mengaku) sendiri bahawa beliau tidak pernah membaca Quran dalam bahasa Arab. Hanya pandai membaca al-Quran dalam bahasa Inggeris dan bahasa Melayu sahaja. Itu satu kenyataan yang cukup terbuka daripada Dr. Mahathir yang menunjukkan bagaimana dia ambil Islam ini tidak dari sumber yang asal... maka sudah tentulah bacaan-bacaan beliau terhadap Islam diambil daripada tulisan-tulisan yang memang sedia menyerang Islam.<sup>72</sup>*

Indeed, Nashruddin was the one PAS leader who stood out as the 'model' Islamist who straddled both worlds. His earlier education at the Deobandi seminary in India endeared him to the senior *ulama* who regarded him as a model *ulama* in the making, while his knowledge of tactics and management skills clearly impressed the urban electorate who saw him as a prototype of the new PAS

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people he has used the power and centralised it all around himself, and he has reaped the wealth of the land for the sake of his own family and friends. (Nashruddin Mat Isa, 'Pemusatan Kuasa Mahathir Mesti Dihentikan', in Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Talqin buat Tuan Haji Mahathir*, Batu Caves: Rangkaian Minda Publishing, 1999, p. 15.)

<sup>72</sup> Translation: His (Mahathir's) understanding of Islam is confused and corrupted. One of the reasons for this is the fact that his knowledge of Islam is not derived from original and authentic sources. His knowledge of Islam is drawn from secondary sources, from Western sources. In fact, the man himself has admitted that he has never read the *Qur'an* in the original Arabic language. He can only read translations of the *Qur'an* in English or Malay. This was an open admission by Dr. Mahathir that shows he has never studied Islam from its original sources.... thus, of course, much of his own understanding is derived from works that have been critical of Islam (Ibid., p. 17).

leader capable of inspiring the younger generation of voters. But Nashruddin's own conservative educational background and outlook (which came out into the open by late 2001) manifested itself on several occasions during the months preceding the election. On the question of the *ulama's* privileged status and role, his views were clear and to the point:

*Kita orang Islam, dan orang Melayu khususnya, (adalah) satu bangsa yang menghormati golongan Ulama dan golongan Ulama mempunyai status yang tinggi dalam masyarakat. Ulama dilihat sebagai model dalam masyarakat. Jadi, apa yang dilakukan oleh Ulama itu dilihat sebagai suatu yang betul, sebagai suatu yang boleh ditiru dan mesti diikuti. Jadi dengan penyertaan mereka (Ulama) ini kedalam PAS... ini memberi kesan kepada rakyat untuk bersama dengan PAS; kembali kepada Islam bersama dengan PAS, untuk memenangkan Islam di Malaysia.<sup>73</sup>*

While PAS's suit and tie brigade was busy wooing new voters and potential supporters in the urban areas, the party's senior *ulama* were occupied with the task of keeping the ranks in order and strengthening the party's hold on its traditional bases of power in the Malay heartland. There the *ulama* stole the limelight, and their discourse was markedly different from that of the likes of Hassan Ali and Hatta Ramli. Ustaz Haji Harun Taib, head of the *Dewan Ulama* (Ulama Council) of PAS, for instance, was in no doubt whatsoever about the dominant role of the *ulama* should PAS come to power. In his speech entitled '*Ulama dan Politik Tanahair*' (The Ulama and National Politics), he clearly stated that: '*Golongan ulama bukan sekadar menjadi penasihat kepada negara atau kerajaan tetapi mereka adalah pemegang polisi dan pelaksana ke pada dasar negara.*'<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Translation: We Muslims in general, and we Malays in particular, are a race that respects the *ulama* and the *ulama* have a special role to play in our society. The *ulama* are seen as role models by our society. Therefore, whatever the *ulama* do and say is regarded as right, as something that should be imitated and followed. With the entry (of the *ulama*) into PAS... this has inspired the people to follow PAS as well; to return to true Islam by joining PAS, so that Islam will ultimately triumph in Malaysia (Ibid.).

<sup>74</sup> Translation: The *ulama*, as a group, are not merely advisers to the nation and the government but they should in fact be the makers of  
*continued p. 629*

Falling back on PAS's old formula that the *ulama* were the 'inheritors and successors' to the Prophet, Ustaz Harun Taib then went on to say:

*Rasulullah meletakkan mereka (Ulama) sebagai pewaris para nabi. Pewaris para Nabi bermaksud 'menggalang ganti di dalam menjaga agama dan mentadbir dunia dengannya'. Islam menghendaki supaya para ulama menjadi pengganti Nabi dalam urusan mentadbir dunia dan menjaga agama. Itulah yang difahami oleh para sahabat dan para cerdik pandai Islam. Justeru itu, para cerdik pandai Islam yang menulis buku di bidang siasah dan pentadbiran negara menyatakan bahawa jawatan-jawatan penting di dalam negara seperti khalifah, perdana menteri dan para hakim hendaklah disandang oleh para ulama mujtahidin Islam.*<sup>75</sup>

The head of PAS's Dewan Ulama was not the only one who felt that the *ulama* should be give the privileged role of leading and running the country. Practically every senior PAS *ulama* shared the same opinion, and they made their position clear to those who attended their talks and meetings. The one-time free missionary and now PAS *ulama* Datuk Ismail Kamus, for instance, laid down the criteria for leadership in PAS's model state which effectively ruled out every other group save the *ulama* for the post of political leader of the country:

*Dari segi kepimpinan Islam, pemimpin itu mestilah Muslim, orang yang bertaqwa, berilmu dan mengetahui politik Islam dan politik semasa. Berilmu*

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national policies and their executors. (Harun Taib, 'Ulama dan Politik Tanahair', speech delivered to the Dewan Ulama Pas Pusat, 1999.)

<sup>75</sup> Translation: The Prophet has determined that they (the *ulama*) will be his inheritors and successors. Being the successor to the Prophet means having 'to take up the task of protecting the religion and to govern the world according to it'. Islam wants the *ulama* to play the role of the inheritors of the Prophet when it comes to governing the world and protecting the religion. That is how it was understood by the companions of the Prophet and the scholars of the past. That is why generations of Muslim scholars who have written at length about politics have stated that those who hold the most important positions in any country such as the Caliph, the Prime Minister and the judges must come from the ranks of the *ulama mujtahidin* (Ibid.).

*pula mencakupi ilmu agama, dan seorang pemimpin harus juga layak menjadi imam.*<sup>76</sup>

Not having been schooled in the norms of political correctness, many senior PAS *ulama* seemed indifferent to the politically savvy and sensitive discourse of the more articulate party spokesmen operating in the urban constituencies. Confident in themselves and comfortable that they were addressing the same Malay-Muslim constituencies they had been facing for decades, some *ulama* raised concerns that would not have gone down all that well among the more multiracial and multireligious audiences in the major cities. At one point, Ustaz Ahmad Awang, then head of the Ulama Association of Malaysia (PUM) and member of PAS's executive committee, spoke about the 'threat' of Christian missionaries who were actively 'poisoning the minds of Muslim students' in the country:

*Saya juga pernah minta Dr. Mahathir mengenakan tindakan undang-undang terhadap pendakwah Kristian yang cuba meracuni pemikiran pelajar-pelajar Islam. Tetapi Dr. Mahathir jelas tidak setuju dengan pendekatan itu. Dia hanya mahu kita melipatgandakan usaha dakwah.*<sup>77</sup>

While the younger PAS leaders were trying to win over the support and confidence of the non-Malays and non-Muslims, the more senior party *ulama* were addressing themselves exclusively to the Malay-Muslims. For some, the struggle in 1999 was no different from that of the previous decades, and their rhetoric was

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<sup>76</sup> Translation: In terms of Islamic leadership, the leader must of course be a Muslim, one who is devout, knowledgeable and who understands both Islamic and contemporary politics. He must have extensive knowledge of Islam and be someone who is fit to lead prayers in a mosque. (Ismail Kamus, 'Bila Ulama Sanggah Fatwa Haji Mahathir', in Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Talqin buat Tuan Haji Mahathir*, p. 31.)

<sup>77</sup> Translation: I once asked Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir to impose stricter penalties against those Christian missionaries who are poisoning the minds of our Muslim students. But Dr. Mahathir did not agree with my view. He merely asked us to intensify our own missionary activities (Ibid., p. 30).

coloured by the now familiar themes of *jihād* and the struggle for Muslim political dominance. As Dato' Harun Din al-Hafiz wrote:

*Roda Islam tidak akan berputar melainkan adanya jihad. Roda Islam itu tidak akan berputar dengan cepat melainkan adanya jihad yang cepat... Roda itu tidak akan menaikkan ummat Islam selagi ummat Islam itu bukan ummat yang berjihad. Ini ummat Islam mesti faham, dan sekarang meratarata kita bersedia untuk berjihad.*<sup>78</sup>

Neither did the *ulama* give up the ways of the past. Right up to the election campaign, some senior PAS *ulama* were still using the tactic of *takfir* to discredit their opponents and expel them beyond the pale of the Muslim community. For instance, Datuk Ustaz Ishak Baharom, ex-Grand Mufti of Selangor, reminded PAS members and supporters that those who opposed or rejected their Islamisation programme were in fact guilty of apostasy:

*Murtad hukumnya kepada sesiapa sahaja yang mempertikaikan syariat Islam, misalnya hukum Hudud seperti yang hendak dilaksanakan oleh sebuah negeri (Kelantan). Walaupun hanya benci dalam hati kepada perkataan Hudud itu pun, hukumnya adalah sama sahaja.*<sup>79</sup>

The one *ulama* honest enough to admit the need for power was Keadilan *ulama* Ustaz Badrul Amin Bahrom. He, at least, managed to get straight to the point when he plainly stated that: '*Ulamak sekarang yakin bahawa dengan dakwah sahaja kita tidak dapat melakukan*

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<sup>78</sup> Translation: The wheels of Islamic history will not turn unless there is a *jihād*. The wheels of Islam will not turn any faster unless we speed up this *jihād*... The wheels will not uplift the condition of the Muslim *ummah* unless the Muslim *ummah* is prepared to engage in *jihād*. This is something that the Muslim *ummah* must understand, and today all around us Muslims are ready for *jihād*. (Harun Din, Speech at Jejawi.)

<sup>79</sup> Translation: Anyone who questions or rejects the *shariah* of Islam has effectively committed apostasy, as was the case with those who rejected the *hudud* bill proposed by one state [Kelantan]. Even if they have the smallest trace of contempt in their hearts for the word '*hudud*' itself, the judgement remains the same (Ismail Kamus, 'Bila Ulama Sanggah Fatwa Haji Mahathir', p. 31).

*perubahan. We need power. Sebenarnya sudah lama Ulama tahu kita perlukan kuasa.*<sup>80</sup>

Observers of Malaysian politics were understandably confused about the true intentions and nature of PAS. The party leadership seemed to be using a number of different discursive strategies while addressing a multiplicity of audiences and political constituencies. But this in itself was one of the results of the 1997–98 crisis, which had disrupted the flow of continuity within the party and opened the way for different internal voices to come to the fore. All these voices were authentic and all of them spoke of and for the same party; PAS had simply evolved to become a highly complex and internally differentiated entity with a myriad of subject-positions within it. This state of uneasy tension was maintained as the party leaders sought to keep the organisation united at all cost, for PAS was about to embark on yet another political adventure.

With PAS leaders like Kamaruddin Jaffar, Hassan Ali and Hatta Ramli talking about how the party was fundamentally committed to democracy, human rights, cultural pluralism and the rule of law, PAS was opening itself up to the other opposition parties in the country. In time, a loose working coalition was formed between the Islamists of PAS, the leftists of the DAP and PRM and the newcomers of *Keadilan*. This finally led to the formation of the *Barisan Alternatif* (Alternative Front, BA), which was meant to be a broad-based multiracial and multireligious alliance of parties with the stated goal of challenging the BN at the coming elections and denying the ruling coalition the two-thirds majority it had enjoyed since 1957.

The formation of BA was not as easy as it seemed. For a start, there was considerable internal opposition within the ranks of PAS itself. Many senior *ulama* were worried about PAS's image as an Islamist party if it were to form a working coalition with the

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<sup>80</sup> Translation: Today the *ulama* have become convinced that through missionary activity alone we will never be able to bring about political change. *We need power*. In fact we have known for a long time now that we need power. (Badrul Amin Bahrom, 'Tradisi Diktator Menakutkan Rakyat', *Detik*, 15 August 1999, p. 43.)

secular leftists of the DAP and PRM. The DAP's repeated claim that it would never allow or accept the creation of an Islamic state in Malaysia was also a sensitive point for many PAS leaders; some regarded DAP as a bigger threat than UMNO. (DAP vice-president Karpal Singh had even stated that if PAS wanted to create an Islamic state they would 'have to step over my dead body'.)

PAS was not the only party with grave concerns about the viability of the BA project. Within the DAP similar concerns were held by many members. Many non-Muslims had grown wary of the Islamisation race between PAS and UMNO, and were unwilling to compromise over the question of the secular constitutional set-up of the country. DAP's entry into BA was, therefore, a provisional one from the start, as its president Lim Kit Siang pointed out:

DAP knew of PAS's ideological stand for an Islamic State and PAS knew of DAP's ideological opposition to any theocratic state, but we decided to put aside our differences for the sake of the immediate task of saving Malaysian democracy and justice from savage and fatal attacks by the Barisan Nasional government.<sup>81</sup>

On 24 October 1999, the leaders of PAS, DAP, PRM and *Keadilan* signed the 'Common Manifesto of the *Barisan Alternatif*'. Insisting that the 1999 election was not about defeating their opponents and dividing the spoils of power among themselves, DAP president Lim Kit Siang described the launching of the BA manifesto on 24 October as 'a historic event' when for the first time in the history of the country the four major opposition parties have come together on a common platform 'towards a just Malaysia'.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the outward appearance of unity in diversity, it was clear that the biggest obstacle facing BA was PAS's negative image in the mainstream media and its Islamist agenda. The DAP had made it clear that its own entry into BA was conditional, and it would never endorse PAS's plan for an Islamic state. To lend the embattled BA his support, imprisoned Anwar Ibrahim tried his best to assure the public that PAS was capable of governing the

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<sup>81</sup> Lim Kit Siang, *BA and the Islamic State*, Petaling Jaya: Democratic Action Party, 2001, p. ii.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

country should it come to power: *'Percayalah. Barisan Alternatif berkemampuan. PAS memiliki sejarah berjuang dalam wadah Islam sejak belum merdeka lagi, dan mempunyai pengalaman mentadbir Kelantan.'*<sup>83</sup>

The tenth federal election was held on 29 November 1999, during the national secondary school examination season. The pre-election campaign was a hotly contested shambles and much of the negotiations within BA took place behind closed doors. Newly formed *Keadilan* suffered the most, not being able to get the constituencies it wanted and many of its more popular leaders (like ex-activist turned *Keadilan* leader Tian Chua) were given the toughest constituencies to contest.<sup>84</sup> However, voter turnout was quite high by Malaysian standards: an increase of 6.1% was recorded.<sup>85</sup> (The increase would have been even higher — 13.7% — if the 680,000 new voters who registered before 1999 had been included in the electoral roll.)

The election campaign was perhaps the most bitter, abusive and ruthless in Malaysian history. Practically every weapon in PAS's and UMNO's arsenal was used in the intense battle between the two parties. UMNO leaders accused PAS of dividing the Malays and distorting the true message of Islam for the sake of political gains. PAS and *Keadilan*, in turn, attacked the Islamic credentials of senior UMNO leaders, with Dr. Mahathir as their prime target. The pro-opposition cartoonist Zunar constantly depicted the Prime Minister as a decrepit and disfigured old man, whose nose was bent into the shape of the Star of David, suggesting links with Israel.<sup>86</sup> PAS and UMNO accused each other of being the stooge and pawn of nefarious American/Christian/Zionist plotters.

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<sup>83</sup> Translation: Believe me. Barisan Alternatif has the potential (to lead). PAS has had a history of Islamist political struggle since the pre-independence era, and it has experience of having ruled Kelantan. (Anwar Ibrahim, 'Pesanan Buat Rakyat Malaysia').

<sup>84</sup> *Dilema UMNO*, Petaling Jaya: Biro Analisa Politik, 2000, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> The number of registered voters for the 1999 election was 9,564,091, of whom 83.4% were from the Peninsula and 16.6% from East Malaysia.

<sup>86</sup> Kamaruddin Jaffar, *Pilihanraya 1999 dan Masa Depan Masyarakat Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: IKDAS Press, 2000, p. 11.

Right up to the last lap of the election campaign, there were wild speculations about how the votes would go. The short election campaign period of nine days and the massive pro-government media campaign (which gave little positive coverage of the opposition alliance and its policies)<sup>87</sup> made it impossible to predict the outcome. When the results were announced, the country was rocked by the biggest election upset in its history. PAS had swept to power in Kelantan and Terengganu, and had also come close to taking control of Kedah. It had also made significant gains in the predominantly Malay-Muslim states of Perlis, Perak and Pahang.

All in all, PAS won 27 parliamentary seats and 98 state assembly seats. Its parliamentary gains were significant: 10 in Kelantan, eight in Kedah, seven in Terengganu and two in Perak. The state assembly results were even more impressive: 41 in Kelantan, 28 in Terengganu, 12 in Kedah, six in Pahang, four in Selangor, three in Perak, three in Perlis and one in Penang (see Table 6.6, 6.7). Newly formed Keadilan won four state assembly seats, while UMNO won 176. Keadilan also won five parliamentary seats, making a total of 32 Malay opposition seats compared to UMNO's 61.

Among the PAS leaders who won their parliamentary seats were Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat (Kelantan), Tuan Guru Hadi Awang and Mustafa Ali in Terengganu, Ustaz Fadzil Noor, Ustaz Nashruddin Mat Isa, Mahfuz Omar and Mohamad Sabu in Kedah. PAS's new members had also made a significant impact: Shahnon Ahmad, the infamous author of the novel *SHIT*, won his seat in Kedah, Kamaruddin Jaffar won his seat in Terengganu, while Dr. Hassan Ali won his state assembly seat in Selangor and Chinese convert Anuar Tan won the state assembly seat for Kota Bharu in

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<sup>87</sup> The opposition parties were not given equal time and space by the print and media press. BA's regular demands for advertising space in the major national dailies were also turned down. BA had intended to have its manifesto published in all the mainstream Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil newspapers. James Chin notes that 'it was widely believed that the ruling BN parties spent more than RM50 million on advertising' during the campaign. (James Chin, 'A New Balance: The Chinese Vote in the 1999 Malaysian General Election', *South East Asia Research*, 8(3), 2000: 293.)

Kelantan (see Tables 6.8–6.18). PAS leaders were visibly elated with the results. The *Murshid'ul Am* of the Islamist party Tuan Guru Nik Aziz later claimed:

*Apabila Parti Islam se-Malaysia ditubuh oleh Tuan Guru, banyak yang memperlekehkan PAS. Mereka sangka Tuan Guru itu hanya tukang baca doa. Tetapi kita sekarang telah menang dua negeri, kemudian tiga negeri, kemudian empat negeri, kemudian lima.*<sup>88</sup>

UMNO's losses were considerable; in nearly all the constituencies where Malays made up more than 90% of the voters, UMNO was defeated. Among the UMNO heavyweights who lost were Dr. Ibrahim Saad (defeated by Keadilan president Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at Pematang Pauh), Datuk Fuad Hassan (defeated by Keadilan leader Azmin Ali) and Datuk Annuar Musa (defeated by Ustaz Muhammad Mustafa). Worse still were the losses suffered by key UMNO leaders such as Dato' Mustafa Muhammad, Dato' Megat Junid and Dato' Dr. Hamid Othman, the Prime Minister's advisor on religious affairs.

The majorities of UMNO leaders who won had also been significantly reduced. The majority for Dato' Rafidah Aziz, Trade and Industry Minister, was reduced from 10,649 to 2,774. Dato' Seri Najib Razak's majority dropped from 10,793 to a paltry 241, while the Prime Minister's own majority declined from 17,226 to 10,138. The verdict was clear: UMNO had lost the support of the Malay-Muslims. For the first time, UMNO held fewer than half the BN coalition's parliamentary seats (72 out of 148). But despite the unprecedented turn-around, BA failed to deprive BN of its two-thirds majority.

In the wake of the BN victory, the government of Dr. Mahathir convened the 10th Parliament on 20 December 1999, disregarding

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<sup>88</sup> Translation: When the Pan Islamic Party of Malaysia was first formed by the *tuan guru*, there were many who ridiculed PAS. They thought that the *tuan guru* were only fit to read the prayers. But now we have won two states, and soon we will win three states, and then four states, and then five (Nik Aziz Nik Mat, 'Parti Syaitan' (Recorded speech, September 2001), Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Wahyu Recordings, 2001).

the constitutional provision that only the Cabinet could advise the King to summon Parliament. Opposition members argued that the move was blatantly unconstitutional and that all laws passed by the 10th Parliament could be infected by illegality and unconstitutionality. Nonetheless, they were powerless to prevent Parliament convening itself.

It was clear that a powerful message had been delivered via the ballot box. All eyes were now focused on UMNO, and questions were raised about how and why the conservative ethno-nationalist Malay-Muslim party that had regarded itself as the main representative and defender of Malay interests could lose so much support in so short a time. Apart from the obvious fall-out from the Anwar Ibrahim affair, both local and foreign scholars began to look at the UMNO government's record in the field of development and social management. Clive Kessler noted that one major factor had to be UMNO's own approach to the question of political Islam, and how the UMNO-led government's Islamisation policy had effectively shifted the centre of political life closer to the Islamist register. Something had clearly gone wrong with the modernist and progressive approach to Islam that the State had promoted since the early 1980s:

Even in the eyes of many UMNO party loyalists, one undeniable reason for the opposition's, and especially PAS's, advances against UMNO was a palpable and widespread discontent with, and even an emphatic rejection of, the 'modernist Muslim' alternative which Dr. Mahathir had rightly sought to proffer in opposition to PAS's neo-traditionalist Islamist agenda — but which he totally failed to spell out and develop in practice. ... A heavy price was paid for the failure to develop, positively and substantively, the modernist Muslim alternative: a persuasively elaborated and effectively institutionalised understanding of Islam that was consonant both with the rational, democratic and emancipatory values of the Muslim faith at its formative historical moment and of subsequent Islamic civilisation and with the analogous values and spirit of advancing and increasingly inclusive modernity.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Clive Kessler, 'UMNO's Malay Dilemma, or, In Search Again for the Way Forward'. Paper presented at the Malaysian Social Research Council (MSRC) conference in Kuala Lumpur, Feb. 2000, pp. 3-4.

Kessler did not lay the blame entirely on the shoulders of the Prime Minister himself. For him, the weakness of the project lay in its dependency on a class of religio-technocrats that simply did not exist. (Or if they did, there were not enough of them):

But this failure was not Dr. Mahathir's or UMNO's alone. It was the failure primarily and most notably of the Islamic educational apparatus with its variegated intellectual armature which had been expressly created for this purpose and charged with this all-important task.<sup>90</sup>

While recognising the enormous leaps that Malaysia had made over the previous two decades, Kessler's own pessimistic conclusion was that the country was now desperately in search of direction and a way forward:

Politically, UMNO and Malaysia seem straddled between two eras: One dying and the other in difficult birth. To borrow the title of Dr. Mahathir's most famous visionary statement, there now seems to be no obvious 'Way Forward'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 14. Kessler went on to argue that 'The strange thing about UMNO's present dilemma is this: that since 1970 and especially since 1981, UMNO has produced a total transformation of Malaysian, and including at its core, Malay, society; it has changed the face of everything in Malay society, but with one exception: itself. When UMNO and its notables convene for their general assemblies, they proudly parade in the shimmering formal attire of a Malay political world which no longer exists. This very moment of the proudest, most dramatic and self-consciously impressive performative presentation of collective Malay political identity also provides the clearest demonstration of UMNO's new 'Malay dilemma': of an emerging irrelevance which now threatens to distance this grand old party from large parts of the people who have been its social base. ... UMNO's own actions and the cumulative effects of its policies and long rule have shrunk, marginalised and turned into an anachronistic enclave the very social world which its solemn assemblies embody, the world from which and for which this UMNO-staged simulacrum of old Malayness speaks' (Ibid., p. 17). 'As the effects of government policy promoted the accelerating economic diversification and socio-cultural pluralisation of Malay society, UMNO tried to counteract these  
*continued p. 639*

The main beneficiary of the 1999 election was PAS. Though BA cut vast swathes into BN territory, they failed to deny the BN the two-thirds majority that had been their stated objective. Moreover, the real winners were not Keadilan, PRM or DAP, but PAS, which had increased its share of Parliamentary seats many times over.

Euphoria aside, PAS could not discount the fact that the biggest setback to their success in 1999 was the adverse reaction of the non-Malay and non-Muslim community. The Chinese community in particular had been the linchpin for the survival of BN, and PAS leaders were not about to forgive the Chinese leaders of the ruling BN for their attacks on them.

Those who fared the worst were the DAP, who were now members of BA and allied to PAS. Weakened by its own internal feuds and chronic lack of funds, the DAP was in no position to take on the combined might of the BN parties that had accused it of selling out to PAS and of serving as PAS's Trojan horse for an Islamic state.<sup>92</sup> The DAP was sorely thrashed at the elections and

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*n. 91 continued*

differentiating tendencies. It sought to maintain 'Malay unity' by seeking to encourage, or even insist upon, both a restraining social and enforced religious conformism. Social and religious conformity would counteract or override advancing socio-cultural differentiation and thereby preserve Malay unity to UMNO's advantage and on its terms. But that irreversible process of sociocultural diversification is now so advanced that its effects can no longer be contained by efforts to sustain social and religious conformity, and such efforts are often counterproductive. The old UMNO formula for containing the fragmenting effects of its own socio-economic policies, and thereby of maintaining in the name of Malay unity its own political ascendancy over Malay society has demonstrably run its course. It has failed, no longer works and cannot be relied upon in the future' (Ibid., pp. 19-20).

<sup>92</sup> Prior to the 1999 election, the DAP had been rocked by a number of internal scandals and disputes which soon spilled out into the open. In 1996, DAP leader Kua Kia Soong left the party after claiming that his nomination forms for the constituency of PJ Utara had been sabotaged by loyal followers of the party leader. He then published a book entitled *Inside the DAP* in which he personally attacked party *continued p. 640*

its leader Lim Kit Siang lost his parliamentary seat, as did Karpal Singh. In its home state of Penang, the DAP managed to win only one parliamentary seat. The party's share of votes and seats plummeted to an all-time low, and for the first time since the 1960s, DAP had fewer parliamentary seats than PAS, which made it the second opposition party in terms of its representation in parliament. Immediately after the election, the DAP leaders openly claimed that they had been the victims of the MCA and Gerakan, and that they had been let down by the Chinese voters. (UMNO insiders, in turn, claimed that UMNO had been saved by the Chinese vote and that the Malay-Muslim ethno-nationalist party would have to be more sensitive and responsive to Chinese communitarian demands from then on.) Contrary to the conventional wisdom of the time, James Chin has argued that 'the Chinese voting pattern in 1999 was broadly similar to that of 1995' and that 'there had been a significant and permanent shift in the Chinese voting pattern' which manifested itself in the swing for BN throughout the 1990s.<sup>93</sup> It was also obvious

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president Lim Kit Siang and labelled him a dictator. In 1997, the DAP division in Perak broke into two camps. Then in 1998, dissident elements within the party began what they called the KOKS (Kick Out Kit Siang) campaign, led by prominent DAP leaders such as Wee Choo Keong (national publicity secretary), Liew Ah Kim (national vice-chairman) and Fung Ket Wing (national treasurer). The rebels claimed that Lim Kit Siang had run the party like a dictator for the past 32 years and was guilty of nepotism. By 1999, the party was torn and divided within. The decision to join BA merely complicated matters further, as many DAP members did not feel comfortable with the idea of teaming up with PAS because they did not accept its project of creating an Islamic state. During the election campaign, the DAP was unable to fend off criticism by MCA and Gerakan leaders, who claimed that the DAP had abandoned the Chinese community by working with PAS. The DAP also faced serious financial difficulties, and it was significant that during the campaign they did not engage in the customary 'poster and banner' war that had become the norm in Malaysian politics (James Chin, 'A New Balance', pp. 281–299).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299. Chin argues that 'it would be safe to conclude that contrary to conventional wisdom the DAP maintained its position and did not lose any Chinese ground to the MCA or Gerakan' (*Ibid.*, p. 298).

that, despite the claims of BA leaders, the non-Malays, and the Chinese in particular, were not moved by the Anwar Ibrahim crisis or the calls of the *reformasi* movement.<sup>94</sup>

Though the DAP suffered near-catastrophic losses in 1999 — Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh both lost their seats — the PAS Islamists were hardly in a forgiving mood. In the wake of the 1999 election, a number of prominent PAS writers and propagandists openly denounced the Chinese community *in toto* for not supporting the opposition coalition led and dominated by PAS. Many attacks were clearly couched in racist and derogatory terms, depicting the Chinese as essentially greedy, avaricious and unprincipled (echoing the ethno-nationalist diatribes of the Asri Muda era of the 1970s). In his book *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, PAS writer Hussein Yaakub (also known as Ibnu Muslim through his writings in *Harakah*) wrote:

*Kadaan ini jelas menunjukkan bahawa orang Cina tidak mempunyai pendirian tetap dalam politik dan mereka boleh ditarik ke sana ke mari oleh pemimpin-pemimpin dalam masyarakat Cina yang ada kepentingan peribadi di negara ini. Benarlah apa yang dikatakan oleh ahli perniagaan Cina bahawa masyarakat Tionghua lebih mementingkan keamanan dan perniagaan daripada segala-galanya. Ini bererti, orang-orang Cina memikirkan soal wang, cari makan dan kekayaan sahaja tanpa memikirkan soal moral, maruah dan keadilan.*<sup>95</sup>

He went on to add:

*Pendek kata, mereka tidak kira siapa yang memerintah tetapi yang pentingnya asal boleh makan, sudah. Inilah falsafah Cina di Malaysia yang diamalkan dan dapat dilihat selama ini, dan falsafah ini juga digunakan dalam*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>95</sup> Translation: The present developments have shown that the Chinese do not have a firm view of politics and they can easily be led this way and that by Chinese community leaders who are guided by their own interests in this country. It is true, as the Chinese businessmen themselves have often said, that the Tionghua community puts more value on peace and prosperity than on anything else. This means that the Chinese only think of money, business and wealth without considering other matters related to morals, dignity and justice (Hussein Yaakub, *UMNO Tidak Relevan*, p. 120).

*beberapa pilihanraya yang lalu. ... Soal mempertahankan moral dan menentang kezaliman tidak menarik perhatian orang Tionghua di negara ini.*<sup>96</sup>

In the same book, Hussein Yaakub also registered the derogatory comments made by other PAS leaders immediately before and after the 1999 election. One leader, Haji Malik Yusof (PAS state assemblyman for Tahan, Pahang), stated: '*Saya melihat orang Cina tidaklah begitu terikat dengan kepartian sangat. Mereka hanya hendak aman dan boleh berniaga.*'<sup>97</sup>

Other PAS leaders also joined in the anti-Chinese backlash, calling for retaliatory action against the Chinese business community in particular. Mohamad Anang, head of the PAS electoral campaign bureau in Johor, was disappointed with the poor support given by the non-Malays at the election. He called for PAS members to break off economic links and stop engaging in business activities with Chinese and Indian businesses that had supported BN.<sup>98</sup> Sallahuddin Ayub, PAS deputy youth leader and head of the Johor PAS information bureau, likewise called for PAS members to boycott all Chinese and Indian businesses known to have supported BN.<sup>99</sup> Few of these PAS leaders appeared to have considered the negative effects of their own comments, and the consequences on Malay-Chinese and Muslim-non-Muslim relations in the country.

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<sup>96</sup> Translation: In short, they [the Chinese] do not care about who actually runs this country as long as they can live and prosper. This is the philosophy of the Chinese in Malaysia that has been practiced all along and which has been exploited during all the previous elections. ... The question of defending and upholding morals and resisting injustice have never attracted the concern of the Tionghua community in this country (Ibid., p. 121).

<sup>97</sup> Translation: I can see that the Chinese are not that interested in party-politics in general. All they want is peace and to be able do business (Ibid., p. 121).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

*The Rise and Fall of PAS's Fortunes, 1999-2001*

The fact is that all of us face a new historical situation every day. States, organisations, cultures, movements, even civilisations that are most successful are those that can manage, direct, guide, influence, anticipate, manipulate and control the forces of change.<sup>100</sup>

Kalim Siddiqui,  
*Stages of the Islamic Revolution*

After the smoke of the 1999 elections had cleared, PAS went back to work in its home state of Kelantan and surveyed its latest conquest, Terengganu. While the DAP was forced to lick its wounds and UMNO was left with the task of finding out what went wrong, PAS was free to sort out outstanding matters in its new dominions.

In Kelantan, the PAS-controlled state government returned to the bothersome constitutional crisis that had lingered for so long. Almost as soon as the election results were confirmed, the PAS leaders reiterated their aim to resolve the crisis once and for all. As we have seen earlier, the PAS state government had wanted to clarify the role and position of the Sultan of Kelantan, so that the government could implement its policies (including its controversial *hudud* bill) without resistance or obstruction from any other quarter.

The motion, first raised by the PAS Youth Wing of Kubur Maras led by Mazlan Ibrahim, was taken to the PAS Youth *muktamar* held in Kelantan. The issue was not welcomed by all: the Kelantan PAS information bureau did not support the motion, and local PAS leaders like Wan Ismail Wan Jusoh (head of PAS information bureau, Kelantan) and Zulkefli Mamat remained silent. As a result, supporters of the amendment proposals were forced to turn to other PAS leaders and spokesmen. In the end, Takiyuddin Hassan, leader of PAS Youth in Kelantan, took up the matter. Takiyuddin was one of the seven executive committee members of the PAS

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<sup>100</sup> Kalim Siddiqui, *Stages of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 2.

state government,<sup>101</sup> and was regarded as one of the main advisors to Chief Minister Tuan Guru Nik Aziz. He publicised the matter until it was brought to the Kelantan State Assembly.

In the State Assembly, the two UMNO assemblymen (Mohamad Saufi Deraman and Norzula Mohamad Diah) chose to remain quiet and abstained from the vote. Their opposition to the amendments came later when, in the press, they threatened to take legal action against the PAS leadership. Norzula then filed a police report against the PAS Chief Minister, accusing him of sedition and insulting the Sultan of Kelantan.<sup>102</sup> Other UMNO leaders in Kelantan who had lost their seats in the 1999 election were even more uncompromising. Ibrahim Ali launched a campaign against PAS's amendment proposals through the *Barisan Tindakan Rakyat Kelantan* (Kelantan People's Action Front, BTRK).

However, PAS's hold on Kelantan was simply too strong. With a near-total control of both the state assembly and the state's parliamentary seats, PAS passed its amendment proposals with little difficulty. In the following year, on 25 June 2001, articles 15(1) and 39(2) of the Kelantan state constitution were finally amended with more than two-thirds majority in the state assembly. Tuan Guru Nik Aziz, as Chief Minister of Kelantan, hailed the move as a major step in the total reformation of the political system and culture of Kelantan. Speaking in the assembly on the same day, he claimed that the amendments marked a major reformation of the Kelantan governmental apparatus, on par with the great Meiji reformation by Emperor Meiji of Japan.<sup>103</sup> He noted that henceforth the Kelantan government would act according to the will of the people, and the Sultan of Kelantan would be forced to act according to the advice of the Kelantan state government:

*Tidak dapat tidak, pindaan ini akan menjelaskan ungkapan 'bertindak mengikut nasihat', dan menghapuskan segala kesamaran terhadap prinsip*

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<sup>101</sup> The other executive committee members: Anuar Tan Abdullah, Ahmad Yaacob, Abdullah Yaacob, Mohamad Daud, Hassan Muhammad and Omar Muhammad.

<sup>102</sup> *Utusan Malaysia*, 24 June 2001.

<sup>103</sup> Mohammad Sayuti, *Hikayat Tok Guru dan Tiga Abdul*, p. 107.

*demokrasi berparlimen. Prinsip asal adalah kerajaan perlu bertindak mengikut kehendak rakyat dan raja yang bertindak atas nasihat itu hendaklah mematuhi kerajaan.*<sup>104</sup>

PAS, which had come to the defence of the Malay rulers in the 1980s and 1990s, had thus come full circle. The party that had once advised the Malay rulers to resist the constitutional amendments introduced by UMNO to the very end, had now introduced amendments of its own that placed the Sultan of Kelantan in a position where he could no longer (legally) refuse to follow the 'advice' of his own state government.

In the neighbouring state of Terengganu, PAS found itself (for the second time since 1959) able to set up its own state government. Considerable stage-setting went into the event; for the first official photo-shoot of the new state government line-up, the state's new Chief Minister Tuan Guru Hadi Awang and his colleagues were all dressed in black *jubbah* (robes) and white *serban*. 'Men in Black' suddenly had a new meaning.

Under Tuan Guru Hadi Awang, the new state government was soon facing problems and challenges of its own. Immediately after the election results were known, the state was told it would no longer receive royalty payments from Petronas, the national petroleum company. (Terengganu was then the country's largest producer of oil and natural gas, and Petronas had major oil refineries in the state.) PAS president Fadzil Noor claimed this was BN's *hukuman* (sentence) on the people of Terengganu, who had 'betrayed' them by voting for PAS.<sup>105</sup>

When queried, the federal government argued that the money which had been given to the Terengganu state government for

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<sup>104</sup> Translation: Like it or not, these amendments will clarify the meaning of 'acting according to the advice' (of the government) and remove whatever ambiguity surrounds the principle of parliamentary democracy. The foundational principle is that the government must act according to the will of the people and the ruler who acts according to advice must follow the direction of the [state] government (Ibid.).

<sup>105</sup> *Royalti Minyak: Politik Khianat dan Balas Dendam BN*, Kuala Lumpur: Pusat Penyelidikan PAS Pusat, 2000, p. 92.

nearly a quarter of a century was *wang ehsan* (development aid) meant for infrastructure development, and that henceforth the '*wang ehsan*' would, instead, be invested in development projects for the state. But this was no mere semantic shift, as the Terengganu government realised; it meant that Petronas and the federal government were unwilling to relinquish their hold on the state that was now in PAS's hands.<sup>106</sup> The furious row between the state and federal governments that ensued still continues.

Undeterred by the crisis, fiery-tempered Tuan Guru Hadi Awang had another card to play. In time, he announced that Terengganu would table its own *hudud* bill and introduce Islamic law in the state. The federal government immediately reacted to Hadi Awang's challenge with the now-familiar response that such a move would be unconstitutional. They also argued that PAS's interpretation of *shariah* law was narrow, rigid, out of date and politically motivated. Despite protests from the federal government, non-Muslim community leaders, women's groups and civil rights NGOs, the government of Hadi Awang pressed on regardless. Other highly symbolic and politically controversial measures soon followed. In time, the Terengganu government introduced laws and regulations that had not even been introduced in neighbouring Kelantan where PAS had been in power since 1990. The state government imposed a ban on mixed swimming pools, the use of swimming costumes by tourists and a total ban on all forms of 'decadent' behaviour including unisex hair saloons and night-clubs. These measures proved highly unpopular with the local non-Malay business community as tourism was a major source of external revenue earnings for the largely agrarian state.

By then, PAS's antics had already gone beyond the pale of acceptability for its erstwhile ally DAP. Leaders of DAP and PRM began to complain about PAS's deliberate political posturing, and warned that the future of BA was at stake. Their main concern was focused on Tuan Guru Hadi Awang, who — unlike PAS's moderate and pragmatic leader Fadzil Noor — seemed to be playing to

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<sup>106</sup> Farish A. Noor, 'Humpty Dumpty Politics: Or Why Semantic Consistency Matters in Politics', *malaysiakini.com*, 24 April 2000.

the Islamist gallery and was constantly raising the stakes in the battle against the UMNO-led federal government.

The BA leaders were aware that if their newly established instrumental coalition was to survive, it had to appear credible in the eyes of the international community. While the leaders of *Keadilan*, PRM and DAP were trying to cobble together a presentable public discourse that spoke of the need for economic reform, political restructuring and greater transparency, accountability and democratic rights, some PAS leaders seemed more concerned with demonstrating their commitment to a form of Islamist politics that did not go down all that well in Western political circles.

To make things worse, the country was shocked by a number of spectacular events which seemed to suggest that the moderate face of Islam in Malaysia was rapidly mutating into something entirely different.

In June 2000, Malaysians were stunned by the sudden revelation that a major arms heist had taken place in Gerik, Perak. The heist was carried out by a group of 15 men dressed in army uniforms driving in Pajero jeeps painted green to look like army vehicles. After infiltrating two army camps, they escaped with more than 100 items of military hardware, including hand-held rocket launchers, machine guns and automatic rifles. The group was finally tracked down to their hideout in Sauk, where they were encircled by government security forces and the army. After a brief siege and shoot-out, the group was forced to surrender — but not before they had killed two non-Muslim hostages. In the following trial and investigation, it was revealed that the group belonged to a local Malay *silat* (martial arts) group called *al-Maunah* led by an ex-army corporal, Mohammad Amin Razali. The *al-Maunah* group was accused of trying to topple the Malaysian government and establish an Islamic state by force of arms. Mohamad Amin and two deputies were sentenced to death; ten members who pleaded guilty to the charge were sentenced to 10 years each; and 16 others received life sentences. PAS claimed that the entire episode was a government-orchestrated *sandiwara* (play-acting) meant to tarnish the name of Islam and Islamist movements in general. The government accused PAS of sympathising with such movements, but to its embarrassment it was soon revealed that some *al-Maunah* members belonged to UMNO.

Also in June 2000, a second Islamist 'militant' group was identified. The *Jihad* gang was alleged to be responsible for a number of bank robberies, kidnappings and murders in the country. The group was also accused of attacks on non-Muslim places of worship and on business premises they regarded as *haram* (unlawful) in Islam, and the murder of an Indian member of Parliament (MP Joe Fernandez of the MIC). After a failed bank robbery attempt, two wounded gang members were taken into custody. During their interrogation they revealed the identities of themselves and their fellow gang members. The group was rounded up by 7 June. The Malaysian authorities then revealed that most gang members had participated in *jihād* campaigns in Afghanistan and Ambon, Indonesia. Many were graduates from Islamic universities and *madrasah* in Pakistan, Egypt and the Arab states.

The revelation that many members of *al-Maunah* and the *Jihad* gang were Islamists and some were veterans of the *mujahideen* conflict was treated with caution by the opposition. The timing of these events could not have been worse for BA, which was trying its best to present PAS as a credible alternative to UMNO. Constant references in the Western media to Osama bin Laden and the shadowy *al-Qaeda*<sup>107</sup> network also made it more difficult for

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<sup>107</sup> The *al-Qaeda al-Sulbah* (The Solid Base) was first created in 1987 by the Palestinian-Jordanian Islamist leader Sheikh Abdullah Azzam. From the beginning it was meant to serve as the vanguard for a new global *jihād* against the West, the US and Israel in particular. Its members were drawn mostly from the Arab contingent of the *mujahideen* who had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The other key leader of *al-Qaeda* was Osama bin Laden. The two men had worked together to found the *Makhtab al Khidmat lil Mujahideen al-Arab* (Afghan-Arab Service Bureau) in Afghanistan when they were fighting against the Soviet Russians. From the *Makhtab* they recruited the first members of *al-Qaeda*, which soon expanded its networks and began recruiting members from all over the world. Many members came from the Arab states, Central Asia, Africa and Southeast Asia. Even a few Westerners, including American Muslim converts, joined the group. The top training instructor was Egyptian-born Ali Muhamad, formerly a member of the US Special Forces. He trained the members of the groups in other  
*continued p. 649*

BA to present an acceptable face to external observers, and it heralded the coming of a conflict between the West and Islam that was to have a catastrophic effect on PAS's image in the near future.

Developments abroad were having an immediate effect on the tenor and content of PAS's politics. On 28 September 2000, the extremist-Zionist Israeli politician Ariel Sharon provoked a bloody and violent upheaval that scuttled the seven-year long peace process by deliberately walking through the *Haram as-Sharif* (noble sanctuary) compound in Jerusalem's Arab quarter. In the fighting that followed, more than 200 Arabs were killed along with seven Israeli soldiers. The peace process begun during the time of the Clinton administration was in tatters, and Sharon and his Zionist

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countries, such as Sudan and Bosnia. In 1994, Osama escaped an attempt on his life in Sudan by a member of the Egyptian *Takfir wa'l Hijrah*. Osama favoured the use of terror attacks and assassinations in other countries, especially Egypt. Abdullah, on the other hand, wanted the group to consolidate and to base its activities in Afghanistan. Osama's more radical approach made it more difficult for *al-Qaeda* to operate in the open. After the attacks on the US embassy in Tanzania, the US government put pressure on Sudan to give up Osama to them. The failed attack on the President of Egypt made things even more difficult for *al-Qaeda* in Sudan, as Egypt's and America's response was to increase diplomatic support to Sudan's neighbours. In 1989, Abdullah Azzam and his two sons were killed in a bomb attack on their way to Friday prayers in Peshawar, Pakistan. The author Rohan Gunaratna claims that Osama colluded in the assassination of Abdullah, who had been his mentor since he arrived in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Osama then took command of *al-Qaeda*, transferred its base back to Afghanistan and expanded its activities worldwide. Its cells in Egypt and other Arab countries became more active, and in 1998 he issued a *fatwa* calling for a global *jihad* against the Jews and Crusaders of the world (*al-Jabhah al-Islamiyyah al-'Alamiyyah Li-Qital al-Yahud wal-Salibiyyin*). Osama and the *al-Qaeda* were later blamed for the terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001. America's response was to declare a 'war against terror' and to garner international support for a global campaign to wipe out *al-Qaeda* and its entire trans-national network. (Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, London: Hurst and Company, 2002.)

counterparts in the Likud party benefited the most from this. Arab anger and frustration were soon translated into universal Muslim anger. In time, PAS leaders joined in the chorus of anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli condemnation, which soon became a world-wide phenomenon. By then, many other countries and communities the world over were sympathising with the plight of the Palestinian and Arab peoples. At the UN World Conference on Racism held in South Africa, Israel was universally condemned and branded an apartheid state. (The only country that stood by Israel at the time was the US.)

The year 2001, which marked the 50th anniversary of the *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia*, was destined to be a watershed in the history of the party.

As seen in the previous chapters, PAS's evolution had always been closely connected to developments both at home and abroad. By 2001, PAS had developed to such an extent that it was regarded as an important player on the regional Islamist scene. When the *Jama'at-e Islami* of Bangladesh came to power for the first time, PAS leader Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang was invited to address the party as their guest of honour. PAS members were sending their sons abroad for further studies in other Muslim countries, at institutions run by other Islamist parties and movements like the *Jama'at-e Islami* of Pakistan and *Ikhwan* in the Arab states. By 2001, PAS's Kolej Islam Darul Ulum (KIDU) at the *Kompleks Pendidikan Islam* (Islamic Education Complex) Muassassah Darul 'Ulum in Pokok Sena, Kedah was sending its graduates for further studies at the prestigious al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. KIDU was set up in 1997, and its director was PAS President Ustaz Fadzil Noor.<sup>108</sup> At long last, PAS had arrived and its hour had come.

But the process of globalisation had rendered the distinction between the local and the global meaningless, and the Islamist party of Malaysia was about to learn that despite all its efforts to develop and promote its image at home its fate would forever be tied to the wider currents of geopolitics and international relations.

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<sup>108</sup> The other director of the college was Ustaz Abdul Aziz Hanafi.

By then, the biggest and most influential player on the global scene was undoubtedly the US. The country that began as a colony of Britain was now the most economically powerful and militarily superior power in the world. America's presence in the world was a hegemonic one that conflated American interests with global ones. Since World War II, every single US President had taken his country to war in some part of the world. The latest individual elected to play this role proved to be no exception.

On 19 January 2001, George W. Bush came to power after a shambles of an election that brought into question the US electoral process. For the first time in years, the US witnessed major public demonstrations of anger and frustration over the apparent contradictions and flaws in the country's electoral system. Popular American satirist Michael Moore went as far as saying: 'We are no longer able to govern ourselves and hold free and fair elections. We need UN observers, UN troops, UN resolutions! ...We are finally no better than a backwater banana republic.'<sup>109</sup>

But satire has never been an effective foil against the excesses of politics and, despite his initially shaky standing before the public, George W. Bush proceeded to preach his own theory of 'compassionate conservatism'. (Bush's grandfather Prescott Bush's commercial dealings with the Nazis in the 1930s and the presiding of the 'compassionate conservative' over 147 executions in Texas were not regarded as contradictions among his followers and admirers in the country.) Many were taken in by this new philosophy; within a year, the same issues that had helped the Bush bandwagon reach its final destination — security, immigration, law and order — were also taken up by practically every conservative party in western Europe, with considerable success.<sup>110</sup> However,

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<sup>109</sup> Michael Moore, *Stupid White Men, and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation*, New York: Regan Books and Harper Collins, 2001.

<sup>110</sup> By mid-2002, the countries of western Europe had all experienced a major swing to the conservative right. In a series of general elections, the conservatives swept to power in France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal and Italy. The rise of the far right in Europe coincided with the resurgence of the right in the US, and the ideological *continued p. 652*

Bush's compassionate conservatism did have its limits, and did not seem to extend to the sensitive issue of the environment. Also in 2001, the US pulled out of the Kyoto Accord on environmental law and restrictions on the production of dangerous waste materials, on the grounds that the American government was not about to sign away its right to regulate its own industries.<sup>111</sup>

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discourses employed by them were very similar. In the wake of the attacks on the US on 11 September 2001, the extreme right was in an even better position to take advantage of the fears and insecurities of the electorate. This led to the shocking and unpredicted win of the mercurial *Front National* candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of the French Presidential election in early 2002. Though he lost in the second round, Le Pen and the *Front National* won nearly six million votes. In the Legislative Assembly election that followed, the conservative party of Jacques Chirac did much better than expected, and ended the 5-year period of rule by the socialists led by Lionel Jospin. In the Netherlands, a major electoral upset was caused by the sudden rise of extreme-right candidate Pim Fortuyn, who burst on the local political scene with his uncompromising anti-immigration and anti-Muslim rhetoric, claiming Muslims were a threat to Europe and European identity. Calling on Muslims in the Netherlands to respect and abide by Dutch customs and the Christian identity of Europe, Fortuyn wrote and published a book entitled *Against the Islamisation of the Netherlands*. Though attacked by many leftists and liberals, Fortuyn gained wide support, particularly in the Rotterdam region. Less than nine days before the election he was assassinated by a militant environmentalist who objected to his statements about animal rights. Fortuyn's party received a massive sympathy vote from the electorate, winning 36% of the votes and 26 seats in Parliament. The party didn't even exist 80 days before the election.

<sup>111</sup> George W. Bush's own conservative agenda — backed up by the business and industrial interests that supported him — became obvious within months after he took office. In less than a year, the new President had: cut the workforce training programmes for dislocated workers by US\$200 million; cut funding to the childcare and development programme by US\$200 million; cut US\$700 million from numerous public housing repair projects; reduced by 86% funds for the community access programme; cut funding for environmentally friendly vehicles and transport facilities by 28%; cut federal  
*continued p. 653*

The election of George W. Bush was greeted with considerable approval by several Muslim groups in America that shared his conservative values, aspirations and lifestyle. Many Arab and Muslim interest groups hoped that the new President would be more sympathetic to their demands, which ranged from the thorny issue of Palestine to the question of religious schools in the US. Little did they realise then that the man they chose to back would turn out to be the first US President to call for a 'crusade' against the 'menace' of 'global Islamic terrorism'.

Soon after, the players in the global drama began to take up their respective position and roles. In March, the *Taliban* regime in Afghanistan duly complied by living up to the media stereotype of rabid intolerant Muslim fanatics by declaring they would destroy the enormous twin statues of Buddha that had stood for centuries in the mountainous region of Bamiyan. *Taliban* leader, self-proclaimed *Emir'ul Mukminin*, Mullah Muhammad Omar issued a decree calling for the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and every other statue in the country on the grounds that they were un-Islamic. He then ordered that a hundred cows be sacrificed all over the country, to atone for the 'sin' of not destroying the statues earlier.<sup>112</sup> The Western media were immediately parachuted into

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government spending on public libraries by US\$39 million; pushed through a new package of tax cuts, 43% of which went to the richest 1% of American citizens; pushed for the development of a 'mini-nuke' programme to create smaller nuclear weapons for 'limited combat use' (which violated the Comprehensive Nuclear Ban Treaty), and pulled America out of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol Agreement on global warming that had been signed by 178 other countries.

<sup>112</sup> On 26 February 2001, the leader of the *Taliban*, Mullah Muhammad Omar, issued a decree ordering the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. On 14 March, the *Taliban's* Information Minister Qadrutullah Jamal confirmed that both statues at Bamiyan had been destroyed, along with every statue in all the main museums in the country. The news of the destruction was met with shock and horror in other parts of the world. Protests were particularly strong in the West as well as predominantly Buddhist countries like Thailand, Cambodia and Japan. However, much of the media coverage did not  
continued p. 654

the country to cover the event. While they were quick to point out that the *Taliban's* actions were regarded as extreme and condemned by other nations, few Western news agencies cared to mention that many who protested against the apparently senseless action were Muslim theologians like Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who even travelled to Afghanistan with a number of other prominent Sunni *ulama* to persuade the *Taliban* leadership to reconsider. Neither did the media reveal the real reason for the apparent

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tell the whole story. Few Western TV and news services noted that Mullah Omar had previously declared that the Bamiyan statues would be protected by the *Taliban* and that it was not necessary to destroy them. Fewer still reported the main reason for the major U-turn on the part of the *Taliban* leadership, which was prompted by the diplomatic blunder of European donor agencies who had offered financial aid to the *Taliban* government for the upkeep of the statues. At that time, Afghanistan was experiencing a major food crisis, with the whole country on the verge of a major famine. *Taliban* leaders requested additional food aid, or to be given the right to use some of the financial aid from Europe to buy food supplies. When this request was turned down, the result was a major uproar among the *Taliban* leaders and *ulama*. They demanded that Mullah Omar reverse his decision regarding the statues, and that was the real reason behind the destruction. The reaction from the Muslim world was mixed. The *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI) leader Fazlur Rehman stated that he thought there was nothing wrong with the *Taliban's* action. The *Taliban* was also supported by Muhammad Rafi' Usmani, Grand Mufti of Pakistan. Maulana Raba'y Nadwi, rector of Nadwatul Ulama Academy in India, remained neutral, while other prominent *ulama* like Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi counselled against the move on the grounds that the Bamiyan Buddhas were not a threat to the Muslims of Afghanistan and that the statues were *aathar* (relics), which were not worshipped by anyone. Furthermore, some *ulama* pointed out that the Bamiyan Buddhas were one of the few sources of external foreign revenue earnings for the cash-poor country (something which Mullah Omar himself had admitted at the beginning). Sheikh al-Qaradawi and a group of *ulama* flew to Afghanistan to plead with Mullah Omar personally, but their efforts came to naught and in March the statues were destroyed with the use of explosives by *Taliban* soldiers. (M. H. Faruqi, 'The Bamiyan 'Defiance', *Impact International*, 31(4) (2001).)

U-turn on the part of the *Taliban*. Mullah Omar was forced to issue his declaration as a result of angry protests from the *Taliban ulama* angered by the refusal of a European Union delegation to allow financial aid to be redirected towards the purchase of food while the country was on the brink of famine. The EU delegation insisted that the money be spent on the restoration of the statues. As images of the shattered statues were broadcast to the world, the negative image of Islam as a religion of intolerance and extremism was sedimented even further. What complicated matters even more was the support for the *Taliban* from Islamist movements abroad like the *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI) in Pakistan and *Laskar Jihad* of Indonesia.

In Malaysia, the response was predictably divided. Though the senior leaders of the UMNO-led government did not spend too much time on the issue, editorials and columns in the UMNO-related press lamented the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and warned of the dire consequences as the entire Muslim world would inevitably be held accountable for the act. PAS opted for what it had always done — maintain a position contrary to that of UMNO. PAS leaders defended the *Taliban's* actions and condemned what they called the 'hypocrisy and double-standards' of the richer nations of the West, who could shed a tear for the destruction of statues while remaining indifferent to the plight of starving Afghans.

### *September 11 and After: How an Event Thousands of Miles Away Impacted on the Political Terrain of Malaysia*

On 11 September 2001 — the same day on which the British mandate for Palestine came into force in 1922 — an event on the other side of the world became the latest unforeseen variable to shape the political terrain of Malaysia. In the early hours of that day, the twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York were rammed by two airliners hijacked by unknown individuals. Minutes later, both towers collapsed to the ground, killing thousands who were still trapped in them. Reports then came of a third airliner that had crashed into the Pentagon building, and a

fourth intercepted and shot down before it could reach its intended target — the White House. To bring home the reality of the events that took place thousands of miles away, the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) twin towers were evacuated the following day, after a bomb scare that came just as Malaysians were coming to terms with the loss of Malaysian workers missing or killed in the New York attacks.

As the events following the attack were broadcast all over the world by American media channels like CNN, emotions ran high. A shocked and bewildered American public soon became angry, frustrated and vengeful. The American media added fuel to the fire by immediately accusing Islamist militant movements and, according to their critics, the Muslim world at large. Editorials in American papers were quick to condemn what they regarded as the 'international menace' of Islamic fundamentalism, and scores of experts were roused from their academic slumber to comment on the danger posed by the new 'Islamist international' poised to take over the free world.

The paranoia and xenophobia stoked by the media were soon echoed by the establishment itself. The US government responded with calls for revenge and retribution, and President George W. Bush vowed that those responsible for the attacks would be made to pay and that the US would lead the new global 'crusade' against terrorism — an unfortunate choice of words that only added to the confusion and anxiety of the time. Other American politicians and intellectuals were even blunter in their public pronouncements. Notorious Republican Senator John McCain surpassed even his own inflated standards where he hysterically stated:

These were not just crimes, they were acts of war, and they have aroused in this great nation a controlled fury and unity of purpose not just to punish but to vanquish — vanquish our enemies. Americans know now that we are at war and will make the sacrifices and show the resolve necessary to prevail. I say to our enemies: We are coming. God may show you mercy. We will not.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Elisabeth Liagin, 'A Terrorist Disaster: And the Warmongers Take Over', *Impact International*, 31(10) (2001): 6.

Needless to say, such sabre-rattling rhetoric did little to calm the situation or to enlighten an already traumatised, emotional and confused populace. Coming at a time when practically every single government in the Muslim world was faced with institutional crises, economic collapse and/or a credibility deficit, the events of 11 September forced the political élite of the Muslim world to take sides. This fact was driven home by the US President himself, who bluntly stated: 'you are either with us or with the terrorists'. Overnight, the monochromatic oppositional dialectics of the Huntingtonian thesis had been turned into a reality, and the Muslim world was forced to live with the consequences.

By the third day after the attacks, a clearer picture had begun to emerge. Both the CIA and FBI laid the blame for the attacks on Saudi dissident-turned-fugitive Osama bin Laden and his *al-Qaeda* group based in Afghanistan. As Osama was based in Afghanistan, the *Taliban* regime was brought into the picture. By drawing a link between the attacks and Osama and the *Taliban*, the US authorities had given the impression that the problem they were facing was one of global proportions. The FBI and CIA claimed that Osama bin Laden's *al-Qaeda* network stretched from the US to Southeast Asia.

The declaration of a 'global crusade' against 'Islamic terrorism' only succeeded in antagonising vast sections of the global Muslim community when it was the last thing the US needed to do. The inept handling of the complex and sensitive matter of co-operation with Muslim governments also helped to ignite local tensions that had been simmering under the surface in many Muslim countries. The first to suffer were the governments of countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Philippines — all facing growing unrest due to the activities of local Islamist opposition movements within their own borders.

Pakistan's government under General-turned-President Pervez Musharraf was brought into the US-led coalition as its most problematic and reluctant partner with the use of a somewhat oversized carrot and an overly endowed stick. Promises of economic aid and a cancellation of outstanding loans were coupled with threats of even more comprehensive sanctions and international isolation should the Pakistani government fail to comply with the

demands of Washington. In time, Islamabad agreed — but not without paying a heavy price in the form of massive demonstrations and violent protests in all Pakistan's major cities, courtesy of Islamist parties like the *Jama'at-e Islami* (JI) and *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI). To further compound matters, Pakistan's entry into the US-led coalition, reluctant though it was, infuriated many senior leaders of the armed forces and intelligence services who had been working with the *Taliban* and the numerous *jihadi* and *mujahideen* groupings in the country all along.<sup>114</sup>

In Indonesia, groups like the *Front Pembela Islam* and *Laskar Jihad* were immediately mobilised and took to the streets as soon as America announced its unilateral move to confront its foes abroad. Like Pakistan, Indonesia was also caught in dire straits of its own. President Megawati Sukarnoputri flew to Washington to discuss the implications of Indonesia's involvement in the international campaign against Osama bin Laden and the *Taliban* — though it was soon clear that the sensitive matter of Indonesia's spiralling debt problem was also put on the agenda. *Realpolitik* considerations aside, the Islamist parties and movements in Indonesia were less pragmatic in their approach to the problem. The Indonesian President was warned by the country's Islamist groups (and members of her own government) that any attempt to appease the Americans would lead to a backlash at home with heavy political costs.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> In time, President Musharraf was forced to place the Islamist parties' leaders (Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Sami'ul Haq of *Jami'at*) under house arrest while stern warnings were issued to Qazi Husain Ahmad and the leadership of the *Jama'at*. The President also removed a number of key leaders of the army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, such as Mohammad Aziz Khan, Mahmud Ahmad and Muzaffar Usmani, who were known to have close links to the *jihadi* movements and the *Taliban*. These measures failed to stop massive (and sometimes violent) demonstrations organised by pro-*Taliban* supporters in Pakistan.

<sup>115</sup> Once news of the deal between Washington and Jakarta became public, the Islamist opposition organized demonstrations in Jakarta against both the US and Indonesian governments. The demonstrations continued p. 659

Neighbouring Philippines was likewise forced to deal with a backlash from Islamist groups and movements in the troubled southern province of Mindanao. Soon after the US response was made known to the international community, the *Abu Sayyaf* group renewed its attacks on Filipino government installations and outposts all over the province, and a new wave of hostage-taking was soon on the way. (As the crisis developed, hysteria and paranoia quickly overcame the redoubt of reason and common sense. There were even suggestions that Osama, like some Saudi Pimpernel, had somehow escaped from his lair in Afghanistan and was now in hiding with the *Abu Sayyaf* in the lush tropical undergrowth of Mindanao.)

The 11 September attacks had many long-term and far-flung consequences for Muslim and non-Muslim relations. For Asian countries with sizeable Muslim minorities, it opened up old wounds after decades of internal civil conflict, and served as a justification for clamping down on local Muslim resistance movements. The highly emotional tone of these exchanges did not, however, help to address the real underlying issues at the root of the problem itself. Worse still, the fear of Islamic militancy was exploited by some as a convenient way to whip up anti-Muslim sentiment, disguised as part of the now global 'War on Terror'. In Southeast Asia, the worst affected country was the Philippines, where fears of renewed militancy by Islamist movements in the south were intensified after the New York attacks.

As the pressure mounted and expectations of a violent conflict grew, Southeast Asian governments were forced on the defensive and compelled to take a stand. Like its neighbours Indonesia and the Philippines, Malaysia was drawn into the fray at the least opportune moment.<sup>116</sup>

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grew in both size and ferocity, leading to large-scale protests and random raids on local hotels where *Laskar Jihad* members were on the lookout for Western tourists whom, they claimed, they wanted to 'expel' from Indonesia.

<sup>116</sup> Malaysia was unwittingly dragged into the investigations that followed the 11 September attack. First, a letter containing anthrax continued p. 660

*Jihad Comes Home: PAS's Reaction to the US-led Campaign against Osama bin Laden and Taliban*

Any number of people can use (Islam) for their own objectives. The main thing for them is to gain power. We are going to be faced with this problem for a long time. We know that we in Malaysia are vulnerable to such forms of extremism, like every other country in the world. Every one of us is vulnerable.

Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad,  
17 November 2001<sup>117</sup>

The attacks in New York on 11 September caught the Malaysian government by surprise. Up till then the government had busied itself with the task of restructuring the economy in the wake of the 1997 economic crisis and trying to re-introduce a moment of normality in Malaysian politics.<sup>118</sup>

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spores sent to an address in the US was said to have originated from Malaysia. It was later discovered that the letter was not contaminated and that nobody in Malaysia was involved. But the FBI's reports also pointed the finger at Malaysia when it was later revealed that Khalid al-Midhar, a close associate of Osama bin Laden, had met other associates in Malaysia in January 2000. Later, a former member of *al-Qaeda*, Jamal Ahmed Al-Fadhil, told a US court that money was deposited in Malaysia — which Malaysian authorities denied.

<sup>117</sup> Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's keynote speech delivered at the Conference on Terrorism organised by the Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Kuala Lumpur, 17 November 2001.

<sup>118</sup> In the wake of the East Asian financial crisis, the Malaysian government's priority was to restructure the banking system. By early 1998, two restructuring agencies, Danamodal and Danaharta had been set up to recapitalise the troubled banks. Between 1998 and 2000 Danamodal injected more than RM8 billion (US\$2.1 billion) into the local banking system. As a result, by 2001 Malaysian banks were rated as financially sound with an average capital-adequacy ratio of 13% compared with the international norm of 8% (as recommended by the Basle Committee on Banking Supervision). By 2001, non-performing loans not serviced for more than three months had  
*continued p. 661*

For the government of Dr. Mahathir, 11 September would be yet another unsolicited external variable that had to be dealt with in the same way as the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Salman Rushdie '*Satanic Verses*' controversy, the Gulf War, the Bosnian conflict and the war in Chechnya. Then, as now, external variables such as these had only forced the stakes in the Islamisation contest between the state and the Islamist opposition, and widened the gulf between UMNO and PAS.

The Afghan conflict of the 1980s, for instance, compelled the UMNO-led Malaysian government to commit itself to a pro-Islamic stand due to pressure from the Islamist opposition parties and movements at home. During this time came the first reports of Malaysians joining the ranks of the Afghan *mujahideen* in Pakistan. Most travelled from Malaysia to Islamabad or Karachi and then Peshawar, then on to recruitment and training camps in the tribal areas along the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) before entering Afghanistan. It was well known that young PAS members and supporters had become involved in militant activities outside the country. Some, such as C. N. al-Afghani and Fauzi Ismail, had trained as *mujahideen* in places like Peshawar in Pakistan. The deaths of young men like Fauzi Ismail and Abdul Aziz Samad in

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plummeted to 10%. (They had reached 25% at the peak of the crisis in 1998.) The Malaysian financial sector was forced to consolidate by the middle of 2001. Fifty-eight Malaysian financial institutions were to be merged into 10 superbanks. The other agency, Danaharta, was given sweeping powers by parliament to manage assets pledged to banks by debt-plagued companies. These assets accounted for about 80% of the RM47 billion it managed. Yet Danaharta had much less success than Danamodal. Though Danaharta claimed to have sold or restructured 75%, or about RM35 billion, of the assets it controlled, very little of this flowed back to the banks. Foreign observers criticised the Malaysian government's approach on the grounds that it allowed large companies to escape radical reforms. It was pointed out that the Renong group (closely connected to UMNO) had modified its restructuring plan three times. The Lion group, another large debtor, was allowed to escape painful restructuring by similar means (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 January 2001).

battlefields far away added to PAS's image as a party committed to the struggle of Islam and the *jihad* against its enemies. UMNO could only fight a rearguard action against the encroachment of the Islamists on their primary constituency, the Malay-Muslims.

The Islamisation race between UMNO and PAS, accelerated because of external variable factors such as these, only contributed to the inflation of Islamist discourse in the country and a rise in the level of public expectations. During the Bosnian conflict, the Malaysian government played a leading role in voicing the concerns of the Muslim community world-wide. However, by the time of the Chechnyan conflict the government's vigorous defence of Muslims abroad was comparatively dampened due to the growing influence of Islamic radicalism in its own backyard.<sup>119</sup>

Even before the attacks on 11 September 2001, the Malaysian government was already taking seriously the threat of growing Islamist militancy in the country. Political leaders, senior government members and heads of the state security services were openly discussing the problem of growing militancy among some sections of Malaysian society, particularly the younger generation of Malay-Muslims, returning students from abroad and the local Islamist parties and movements. Since the opening days of the *reformasi* movement of 1998, terms like *jihad* had begun to penetrate deeper into the terrain of popular political discourse and were seen as indicators of a significant shift closer to a more radical form of Islamist politics. By 1999–2000, the Malaysian political scene was abuzz with stories about *jihadi* and *mujahideen* cells operating all over the country. The spectacular arms heist at Gerik, Perak by the *al-Maunah* group and the string of bank robberies, killings and kidnappings by the *Jihad* gang had become a cause of concern for Malaysians in general.

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<sup>119</sup> The Malaysian government's official stand on the Chechnyan conflict was that it was an 'internal security problem' within the purview of the Russian government. At no point did the Malaysian government express support or sympathy for the Chechnyan resistance movement — though it did voice its concerns about the flagrant abuse of rights and numerous acts of terror committed by the Russian troops against the population of Chechnya.

In August 2001, the government had detained 10 Islamist activists — many of whom were members of PAS — on the grounds that they belonged to an underground militant group called the *Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia* (Malaysian Mujahideen Movement, KMM). The group's leader was said to be Ustaz Nik Adli Nik Aziz,<sup>120</sup> the 34-year-old son of the *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat. Though Nik Adli was only a teacher at a religious school in Kelantan (of which his father was the Chief Minister), the authorities alleged that he had studied in Pakistan *madrasah* and had spent time training and working with *mujahideen* militants in Afghanistan. Several other men arrested had also travelled to Pakistan for religious education and military training with the *mujahideen* operating along the Pakistan-Afghan border.<sup>121</sup>

On 25 September, Nik Adli was detained under the ISA for two years, accused of plotting a campaign to establish Islamic rule across the region. 'Your actions were aimed at toppling the govern-

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<sup>120</sup> Ustaz Nik Adli Nik Aziz is a son of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat. He was educated at both government and religious schools in his home state of Kelantan. He then studied in Pakistan — at Jami'ah Dirasah Islamiah Madrasah in Karachi, and at Ma'ahad Salman, Peshawar which had close connections to the Deoband seminary and *madrasah* networks. In Peshawar, Nik Adli met Afghan fighters and *mujahideen* members. In Afghanistan, he took part in the *mujahideen* campaign against the Russians. Little is known about Nik Adli's *mujahideen* connections, save that he took part in numerous campaigns and returned to Malaysia after the conflict had subsided. Back in Malaysia, he taught at the religious school in Kampung Melaka (his father's constituency) and lived an ordinary life. He was never involved in local PAS politics. In 1999, he was said to have taken over the leadership of the *Kesatuan Mujahidin Malaysia* (KMM), a clandestine group formed by an ex-*mujahideen* and PAS activist, Zainon Ismail, on 12 October 1995. (Nik Adli's younger brother, Nik Abduh, was also educated in the Indian subcontinent. He studied at Dar'ul 'Ulum Deoband seminary in Deoband, North India.)

<sup>121</sup> Those arrested included Zainon Ismail (founder of KMM), Mohamad Lutfi Arrifin (member of PAS Youth Wing, Kedah), Nor Ashid Sakip (head of PAS Youth, Sungai Benut), Ahmad Tajudin Abu Bakar (head of PAS Youth, Larut), Salehan Abdul Ghafar, Abu Bakar Che Doi, Alias Ghah, Ahmad Fauzi Daraman and Asfawani Abdullah. Most were active PAS members and religious school teachers.

ment through an armed struggle and replacing it with a pure Islamic state comprising Indonesia, Mindanao and Malaysia,' read the detention order. Nik Adli was also alleged to have been planning to overthrow the Malaysian government, plotting assassinations and sending Muslims to fight Christians in Indonesia's Maluku islands. His period of alleged military training in Afghanistan in the early 1990s was also included in the list of accusations, but there was no overt allegation of direct links to the *Taliban* or the *al-Qaeda* network of Osama bin Laden.

PAS's newspaper *Harakah* described the arrests of the KMM members as part of the Mahathir administration's attempt 'to woo the Americans'.<sup>122</sup> The paper also claimed that PAS would intensify its efforts to show how UMNO was anti-Islam.<sup>123</sup> For PAS leaders, the arrest of veteran *mujahideen* fighters in Malaysia was something totally incomprehensible. PAS regarded their *ex-mujahideen* members as role models for the rank and file of the party, and their commitment to the Islamist struggle was seen as exemplary forms of conduct to be emulated, not criminalised. Kelantan PAS Youth Wing leader Takiyuddin Hassan claimed that such commitment and willingness to sacrifice their lives 'could only come from those who were committed to the Islamist struggle', and that PAS was 'proud of the fact that its members were willing and able to make such sacrifices in the name of their religion'.<sup>124</sup>

Also in August 2001, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar stated that clandestine 'Islamist militant' networks were operating in the cross-border regions between Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. The kidnapping of Western tourists off the coast of Sabah by *Abu Sayyaf* guerrillas operating from their base in Basilan was cited as a prime example of the new sort of asymmetrical security threat faced by governments in the region.

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<sup>122</sup> 'Tangkapan KMM di bawah ISA: Usaha PM Ambil Hati Amerika', *Harakah*, 16–31 August 2001.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>124</sup> 'Pemuda PAS bangga ahlinya pernah berjihad: Takayuddin', *Harakah*, 5 October 2001.

In an effort to seize the initiative on the issue, Kuala Lumpur had played host to the leaders of Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines — Presidents Megawati Sukarnoputri, Thaksin Shinawatra and Gloria Arroyo — who had visited the country to discuss matters of bilateral concern, one of which was the problem of Islamist militant networks operating in the region. Soon afterwards, the three governments issued a series of statements to the effect that they would henceforth be increasing the level of co-operation among their intelligence and security services to deal with the problem of religious militancy in Southeast Asia. The gravity of the situation became more apparent when 26-year-old Malaysian youth Taufik Abdul Halim was blown up in a shopping mall in Jakarta by an explosive device he was carrying, with the intention of detonating it in the shopping centre at a time when it was full of customers.<sup>125</sup>

While the political temperature in Malaysia was rising yet again, the country saw a number of financial and political scandals that could not have come at a worse time for the Mahathir administration. One particular scandal which helped give the Islamist opposition added leverage was the financial crisis within *Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji* (Hajj Pilgrims Management Fund) which reported a loss of several hundred million ringgit — allegedly due to financial wrongdoings by its administrators as well as other major financial losses due to poor investments.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> The bomb caused him serious injuries which finally led to the loss of an arm. In hospital he was placed under police custody and questioned by both Malaysian and Indonesian security forces about his involvement with a group of Islamist militants thought to be responsible for bombing several churches in Java. Indonesian security services claimed that a number of young Malays from the peninsula were thought to be active in Islamist militant cells in Java.

<sup>126</sup> In August–September 2001, Malaysian police arrested a Tabung Haji administrative officer said to be responsible for losses of up to RM7 million. He was alleged to have made up to 14 withdrawals from the *Tabung Haji* main branch in Kuala Lumpur, and Seremban and Banting branches. The money was said to have been moved to overseas accounts, making it difficult to trace and retrieve. The *continued p. 666*

Described as the 'UMNO government's last frontier of respectability',<sup>127</sup> *Tabung Haji* had always been a major landmark in the new political landscape created by the State's own Islamisation programme that began in the early 1980s. The financial scandals surrounding *Tabung Haji* further eroded the government's standing and Islamist credentials, much to the delight of PAS and the Islamist opposition movements. To compound the already messy situation, the open conflict between the two men with responsibility for running the institution — Dato' Dr. Hamid Othman (Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister) and Dato' Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin (ex-Brigadier General turned Cabinet minister) only made things worse. The crisis was only (tentatively) resolved when the Prime Minister personally called for an investigation.

As if that was not enough, the Malaysian government was soon forced to issue a series of public denials in response to reports by foreign press agencies that the country had become a hub for transnational Islamist networks and terrorist organisations. The Prime Minister's Department and the Ministry of Finance categorically denied that terrorists' funds had been deposited in Malaysian bank accounts and financial houses. The only respite came with the break-up of BA — due to the DAP's reluctance to accept PAS's calls for an Islamic state<sup>128</sup> — and the Sarawak state elections

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scandal came shortly after *Tabung Haji* had been corporatised, and it was a major blow to the government's image. What made matters worse was the related disclosure of *Tabung Haji*'s other major losses due to poor investments, particularly in the palm oil industry, and the 'Technical Corridor' project in Negeri Sembilan (amounting to a few hundred million ringgit). Calls for a major shake-up of the administration were voiced by opposition parties and local NGOs. PAS leaders cited this as proof that the government's Islamisation policy had taken the country nowhere, and that even their Islamic institutions were riddled with corruption and cronyism ('*Tabung Haji Bermasalah selepas Dikorporatkan*', *Harakah*, 16 September 2001).

<sup>127</sup> M. G. G. Pillay, 'A Jihad of Two Hamids', *Harakah*, 16 September 2001, p. 15.

<sup>128</sup> On 22 September 2001, the 22-month-old *Barisan Alternatif* finally fell apart when DAP announced it would pull out of the coalition *continued p. 667*

where all candidates fielded by the opposition (including PAS) were defeated. Observers were quick to point out that fear of religious extremism in Malaysia helped to isolate the candidates of the Islamist party and reduce their chances for victory even more.<sup>129</sup>

Thus matters had already come to a head in Malaysia and the other ASEAN countries long before the two hijacked American Airlines jetliners crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. The attacks in New York and the global media campaign that followed merely accelerated the deterioration of relations between the government of Malaysia and the Islamic opposition in the country. Here was a case of a global event having a multiplier effect on a domestic political struggle.

*The Tide Turns Yet Again: PAS's Response to the American Bombing of Afghanistan and After*

*Kewajiban berjihad ini menjadi tanggungjawab mereka yang berada di negeri yang diserang dan negeri yang bersempadan dengannya, sementara umat Islam yang berada jauh dari tempat kejadian wajib memberi perhatian dan sumbangan.*<sup>130</sup>

Tuan Guru Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang,  
Marang, 18 October 2001

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*continued n. 128*

because their calls for moderation had gone unheeded and PAS was not able or willing to compromise on the crucial question of the Islamic state. For an account of the degeneration and collapse of BA from DAP's point of view, see Lim Kit Siang, *BA and the Islamic State*.

<sup>129</sup> The Sarawak state election was held on 27 September 2001. Of the opposition front, only DAP won a single seat. All of Keadilan's 25 candidates lost, and 11 also lost their deposits. PAS wisely contested only three seats, but lost all. It was widely reported that fear of Islamic radicalism was a major factor that worked against PAS.

<sup>130</sup> Translation: The obligation for *jihad* is the primary responsibility of those in the country that is being attacked and in the neighbouring countries, while it is obligatory for all Muslims who live elsewhere to give their support and show their concern. (Abdul Hadi Awang, 'Jihad Adalah Perisai Umat Islam' (quoted in *Harakah*, 19 October 2001).)

On 7 October 2001, after nearly four weeks of tension and nervous anticipation, the US finally struck. In a series of late-night sorties, American guided cruise missiles rained down upon a number of military targets in Afghanistan, including *Taliban* training camps near Kabul, Kunduz, Mazar-e Sharif and Kandahar. American and British jet fighters soon broke down the country's defences, leaving ordinary Afghan civilians at the mercy of their new-found enemies. The response from the Islamist movements world-wide came as fast as the news of the attacks spread via the internet.

The following day, Malaysia's Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir openly stated his dissatisfaction with the US-led attack. In a press conference held in Parliament, the Prime Minister argued that going to 'war against these countries will not be effective in fighting terrorism'.<sup>131</sup> Although he was also careful to state that the attack on Afghanistan should not be regarded by anyone as an attack on Islam and the Muslim world, Dr. Mahathir did question the wisdom behind the action and pointed out the negative consequences that were sure to follow.<sup>132</sup> Domestic political concerns were also not far from the mind of the Prime Minister. In a thinly veiled warning to Malaysian Islamist parties and groups that might think of extending their support to Osama or the *Taliban*, he pointed out 'we will not tolerate anyone who supports violence and will act against these irresponsible people or anyone who backs terrorism'.<sup>133</sup>

The situation, however, was clearly out of hand by then. While the Prime Minister was trying to calm the fears of foreign investors, Western embassies and tourists, the local police and security forces were put on alert and the American embassy (closed for Columbus day) was placed under guard.

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<sup>131</sup> 'We do not support war against any Muslim nation: PM', *malaysiakini.com*, 8 October 2001.

<sup>132</sup> A senior aide to the Prime Minister, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: 'Malaysia's stand is that if the attacks target specifically Osama bin Laden then they are acceptable, but not a wide-spread strike that will cause civilian casualties' (Ibid.).

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

Also on 8 October, PAS leaders issued their strongest statement yet against the US. For the *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, the attack on Afghanistan was clearly an attack on Islam and Muslims in general. Speaking out in defence of the *Taliban* government, he claimed:

The US hates the *Taliban* because the latter is firmly committed to upholding Islamic values. Osama bin Laden is just an excuse for the US, which has time and again shown its hostility towards Islam, to wage war against the religion.<sup>134</sup>

PAS president Ustaz Fadzil Noor also stated that the attacks were not only against Afghanistan's *Taliban* regime, but constituted a direct assault on Muslims the world over. Speaking to local and foreign journalists in a press conference of his own, Fadzil Noor said: "America has attacked a small and defenceless country like Afghanistan without showing the world strong reason or proof, (and) they are war criminals."<sup>135</sup> He added: "If the Americans are really waging a war against terrorism, why don't they attack Israel, who are terrorists against the Palestinians?"<sup>136</sup> He ended the interview with a clarion call to arms when he stated: "all Muslims must oppose these criminals — this time, there is no denying a call for *Jihad*."<sup>137</sup>

PAS based its critique of the US-led international effort on several premises. The first was the claim there was no direct proof that Osama bin Laden and/or the *Taliban* were directly involved in the attacks on New York and the Pentagon. Second, PAS leaders argued that the terrorist attacks were fundamentally a reaction against US foreign policy and the fact that America's conduct in the Arab world was seen to have a pro-Zionist, pro-Israel slant. For them it was the US, not Osama or the *Taliban*, that was the real terrorist state. Third, PAS claimed that the entire operation was

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<sup>134</sup> Mohd Irfan Isa, 'Osama an Excuse to Wage War against Islam: Nik Aziz', *malaysiakini.com*, 10 October 2001.

<sup>135</sup> 'US Embassy under Guard, PAS Labels Americans 'War Criminals'', *malaysiakini.com*, 8 October 2001.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

linked to a broader American-Zionist agenda to demonise Islam and weaken any Muslim state prepared to challenge the hegemonic might of the US anywhere in the world. (By then the PAS leaders' pronouncements had taken on an increasingly hysterical tone, and PAS was openly denouncing the Afghan campaign as part of a global Zionist plot. These sentiments were reflected in the speeches of the party leaders as well as the party's newspaper, *Harakah*.)<sup>138</sup>

The logic of PAS's critique was couched in terms of oppositional dialectics that pit the West against the Muslim world. Having drawn a chain of equivalences between the US, Western Europe, Israel and the so-called 'Zionist conspiracy' to overthrow and dominate the Muslim world, PAS drew a second chain of equivalences linking Islam, *Taliban*, Osama bin Laden and themselves as the defenders of Islam and the Muslim *ummah*. What eventually emerged was a zero-sum logic of confrontation which — like George W. Bush's now-infamous 'you are with us or against us' statement — left no middle ground for waverers and neutral parties.

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<sup>138</sup> Farish A. Noor, 'Harakah's Costly Blunder', *malaysiakini.com*, 14 October 2001. After DAP's withdrawal from BA, PAS found itself in the limelight again — this time because of the contents of the online version of *Harakah*. By then *Harakahdaily.com* was one of the most widely read online dailies in the country. But on 4 October, independent Malaysian radio station Radiq Radio revealed in its daily bulletin that the online Islamist paper had featured an article entitled 'Auschwitz: The Myths and Facts'. The author was Mark Weber, an American right-wing white supremacist, director of the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) which has been engaged in revisionist readings and writings of Western history. One preoccupation of the institute seems to be re-writing the history of wartime Germany, in particular the Holocaust. Though IHR claims that its aim is to correct distortions of the past in contemporary historical writing, it is clear that its main agenda is to attack what it regards as the creeping influence of 'Jewishness' in American politics. The institute operates under the wing of the 'Legion for the Survival of Freedom', which also runs Noontide Press, whose specialty includes selling books about Hitler and the Nazis. (One title is *Adolf Hitler: The Unknown Artist*.)

The climax finally came on 10 October 2001 when PAS declared a 'jihad' against the US and its coalition partners and gave the go-ahead for its members to openly join and support the *Taliban*. Party secretary-general Nashruddin Mat Isa stated:

If there are any PAS members who would like to go for *jihad*, we cannot stop them because *jihad* is a religious duty. They don't need to seek party approval if they wish to take up the fight in Afghanistan.<sup>139</sup>

Nashruddin Mat Isa's statements reflected the concern and anxiety of Muslims in the region, if not worldwide then. He was not alone in condoning those who felt the need to take up the *jihad* against the West. In neighbouring Indonesia, the *Muhamadijajah* leader and Secretary-General of the *Majlis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Ulama Council, MUI) Din Syamsuddin also declared that the MUI would not stop Indonesian Muslims who wanted to go to Afghanistan and fight the *jihad* against the United States.<sup>140</sup> Soon afterwards, PAS leaders such as Fadzil Noor, Mohamad Sabu and Mahfuz Omar called for a total boycott of all American goods and services, and even for the Malaysian government to send troops to Afghanistan to help resist the US-led attacks.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>139</sup> See Nur Abdul Rahman, 'Serangan Amerika Langkah Permusuhan ke atas Umat Islam', *Harakah*, 11 October 2001 and 'PAS Declares 'Jihad' over Attacks in Afghanistan', *malaysiakini.com*, 10 October 2001. Nashruddin was quick to add that PAS's definition of *jihad* covered a 'wide spectrum including calling for peace, calling for justice and not just taking up arms'. He also noted that 'we [PAS] are not saying that we are going to create a troop to do that. PAS is also not going to sponsor anyone.'

<sup>140</sup> 'Afghanistan Pun Membara' (Afghanistan is Burning), in *Panji Masyarakat*, 17 October 2001.

<sup>141</sup> Tong Yee Siong, 'Mahfuz Wants Gov't to Provide Military Aid to Taliban', *malaysiakini.com*, 11 October 2001. In a press conference statement, PAS Youth Wing leader Mahfuz Omar declared that the Malaysian government should mobilise the member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to fight against the US, 'in any manner required'. Mahfuz also stated: 'OIC should declare the US as a terrorist state and the number one enemy of Islam'. He *continued p. 671*

The Malaysian government wasted no time in reacting to this latest turn of events. On 11 October, six alleged 'militants' were arrested and detained under the ISA on the grounds that they were part of a clandestine underground network plotting to overthrow the country using terrorist tactics. Five were religious teachers of various *madrasah* all over the country, and all were said to belong to KMM, led by Nik Adli Nik Aziz, son of Tuan Guru Haji Nik Aziz.

These arrests had little effect on the resolve of the Islamist opposition. Immediately after Friday prayers on 12 October, PAS leaders called for a massive gathering outside the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur. The gathering was to be a show of support for PAS leaders who intended to deliver a memorandum to the US ambassador (newly posted to the capital) and to demonstrate PAS's endorsement of Osama bin Laden and the *Taliban*. Though the event was meant to be a peaceful gathering, the mood had been set by the PAS leaders who had been vocally condemning the US over the previous few weeks.

By 2.00 p.m. about 3,500 PAS supporters demonstrated in front of the embassy. Most had come directly from the mosques at KLCC and the nearby *Tabung Haji* complex, and many more from the mosques in Kampung Baru and Kampung Datuk Keramat. This was certainly the biggest demonstration in Kuala Lumpur since the *reformasi* demonstrations of 1998. But this time round, the mood and tenor of the gathering had an altogether different edge. Many younger party members were wearing T-shirts, banners and armbands bearing slogans like *Allahuakbar*, *Lailla ha illallah*, and *Jihad*. Placards and banners were hoisted with slogans like 'We love Jihad', 'Crush America', 'Taliban/Afghans are our brothers'. (The day before the demonstration the internet version of the party's paper, *harakahdaily.com* featured a photo of PAS president Fadzil Noor and the head of its Youth Wing Mahfuz Omar burning the US flag at a PAS rally.)

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then called on the Malaysian government to temporarily sever all diplomatic and economic ties with the US — Malaysia's largest foreign investor and export market.

Some of the major PAS leaders present, such as Fadzil Noor, Mustafa Ali and Nashruddin Mat Isa, were finally allowed to enter the embassy to deliver their memorandum. Others like Mohamad Sabu were there to fire up the crowd with their speeches. (At least one PAS leader — Hatta Ramli — was on hand to calm down the demonstrators, but to no avail.) The mood turned sour when the police ordered the crowd to disperse. Just as the PAS supporters began to line up to perform their *solat hajat* (prayers) in front of the embassy entrance, the armoured police truck let loose a blast from its water cannon and doused the crowd with chemical-laced water. One of the first PAS members to be hit was PAS president, Fadzil Noor.<sup>142</sup>

PAS's noisy and emotional demonstration had shown just how far the party was prepared to go to make its point. However, the party leaders did not account for the reaction that was to follow.

*Back in the Dock: The Reversal of PAS's Fortunes in the Wake of the Afghan Bombing Crisis*

The reaction to PAS's demonstration of force came from two important quarters. First, the non-Malay and non-Muslim communities in the country — already shocked by PAS's declaration of *jihad* and show of support for *Taliban* — were appalled by the rhetoric and tenor of the demonstration. The local non-Malay press gave significant coverage to the event, with photos of PAS supporters marching in the streets and quotes from PAS leaders. PAS's call for a *jihad* against the 'enemies of Islam' clearly had a negative impact on the perception of PAS by non-Muslims. Overnight, fears of renewed religious militancy were rekindled due to the fiery rhetoric of the PAS leaders and followers. These fears were further intensified as a number of churches were attacked and burnt in various parts of the country. The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) later issued a statement claiming that those responsible for the arson attacks were motivated by anti-Christian sentiments

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<sup>142</sup> The author was present at the demonstration and witnessed this himself.

aroused in the wake of 11 September, though they did not single out PAS as the main culprit.<sup>143</sup>

Soon after, the non-Malay parties in the BN also began to lend their weight. Wanita MCA, the women's wing of MCA, organised a public forum to discuss the problem of religious militancy and the controversial issue of the Islamic state in Malaysia. Dr. S. Vijayaratnam, vice-president of Gerakan, argued that Western governments (the US in particular) should 'review whatever positive perceptions' they may have had of PAS in the light of recent developments within the party and the stand that it chose to take over the Afghan issue.<sup>144</sup>

The other constituency affected by PAS's sudden reversion to radical politics was the international diplomatic and business community. Already worried about political instability in the region as a whole, these developments in Malaysia did not go down well with foreign investors already worried about the safety of their investments in the country.

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<sup>143</sup> Tong Yee Siong, 'Church Body Believes Arson Attacks Linked to Extremists', *malaysiakini.com*, 6 November 2001. During September–October, four churches were attacked by unknown arsonists in various states: Johor, Kedah and Selangor. CFM felt there was a possible link between religious extremism and the arson attacks. CFM's principal secretary Wong Kim Kong stated that the federation was not convinced the attacks were carried out by an organised group. 'The acts of violence and sabotage were related to religious extremism but they were most probably done by members of the local community,' he said. To prevent the situation exacerbating, the CFM met with Deputy Home Affairs Minister Chor Chee Heung to discuss measures to improve security at churches.

<sup>144</sup> Tong Yee Siong, 'Review 'Positive' Perception of PAS, Gerakan Tells US', *malaysiakini.com*, 14 October 2001. The Gerakan vice-president said that previously the US had been sympathetic to PAS's struggle in domestic politics. However, he added that the US should now 'know its friends' following the demonstration at its embassy. In a press statement he said: 'Please look at who burns the American flag now, and who has been moderate and supportive of the US, even to the extent of volunteering co-operation to assist in the apprehension of terrorists responsible for the Sept 11 calamity.'

Oblivious to the negative image that it would create for itself at home and abroad, PAS's decision to support Osama and the *Taliban* and to declare a *jihad* against the West was the biggest own-goal scored by the party over the past few years. By publicly voicing its stand in favour of Osama and the *Taliban*, the party had alienated itself from vast sections of the local and international community, and pushed itself back to the margins of the local political scene. For many local and foreign observers, it was as if the veil had finally lifted, and PAS had revealed its true self at last. Although the more urbane and polished technocrats within the party had been speaking the language of democracy and human rights for several years, it was now clear where the sympathies and loyalties of the *ulama* leadership really lay. The image of the young PAS supporter with clenched fist in the air, wearing an Osama bin Laden T-shirt and shouting 'destroy the American *kafir* and Jews' dealt a major blow to the image of the Islamist party in the same way that the image of ex-DPM Anwar Ibrahim with a black eye dealt a major blow to the credibility of the State security and judicial institutions three years earlier.

The situation was exploited to the full by the Mahathir administration, which saw it as the best justification for its own policies *vis-à-vis* the local Islamist opposition. Henceforth, the Malaysian government's crackdown on Islamist cells and networks — both real and imagined — received less criticism from foreign and local observers. (The same was true of the crackdown on the Islamist opposition in other Muslim countries like Indonesia and Pakistan.)<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> As the crisis developed, the governments of many Muslim states were forced to take action against Islamist opposition parties and movements. On 17 October, the Pakistani government of Pervez Musharraf charged the leader of the *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Islam* (JUI), Maulana Fazlur Rehman, with treason after he had claimed that President Musharraf had 'sold the country to the Americans'. Two other senior JUI leaders, Aatur Rehman and Abdul Qayyum, were also charged with treason. In response to the arrests, JUI spokesman Hafiz Riaz Durrani said that they rejected the sedition charges and warned that JUI would launch a countrywide campaign against the government's action.

By presenting itself as the face of moderate and progressive Islam, the Mahathir government had successfully out-flanked the Islamist opposition and repositioned itself.

This was made all the clearer when US Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick (on a visit to Malaysia and other countries in the region) publicly stated that President Bush 'was pleased with the support given by Malaysia'.<sup>146</sup> The US then extended its thanks to the Mahathir administration for the support it had shown to the US despite the difficulties it had to face from the local opposition (meaning PAS). By then, it was clear that an *entente cordiale* had been struck; neither Malaysia nor the US was prepared to let political differences get in the way of economic necessity. Trade between the two countries amounted to US\$38 billion (RM144 billion) a year and America was, after all, Malaysia's biggest trading partner. (Under such circumstances, it was difficult to comprehend the rationale behind PAS's calls for a trade boycott against the US — which made little sense to the Malaysian business community in particular.)

Zoellick was also careful to mention all the key words necessary for the upward shift in bilateral relations to register. He stated that Washington viewed Malaysia as an Islamic country which could 'serve the others as a role model for leadership and economic development' not only for the region but also for the rest of the Muslim world. As an *Islamic* country Malaysia was described as 'modern', 'progressive', 'liberal' and 'tolerant' — precisely the terms that were required to form the positive chain of equivalences for which the Mahathir administration was looking.

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<sup>146</sup> Tong Yee Siong, 'US Thanks Mahathir for Support, Understands Malaysia's Dilemma', *malaysiakini.com*, 15 October 2001. At a special press conference in Kuala Lumpur, Zoellick stated that the US 'respects Malaysia for all the internal challenges and tensions it has to deal with, which makes its support more meaningful'. He also denied that the Mahathir government's objection to the US air strike on Afghanistan could jeopardise the countries' bilateral trade: 'Our trade ties are based on close economic relationship. The support we received in many areas will only strengthen the nature of our relationship.' He added, 'I don't see any negative variety [of views] in there. The difference of views is understandable.'

The newly improved relationship between Kuala Lumpur and Washington was also reflected in the new understanding between the two governments. The US Trade Representative spoke not only about economic matters, but also raised a number of concerns related to security issues. Zoellick and Foreign Affairs Minister Syed Hamid Albar discussed various strategies and tactics that could be used to combat the phenomenon of international 'Islamic terrorism'. Later, the US Pacific Fleet commander-in-chief Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair (on a tour of ASEAN) praised the Malaysian government for its help in the global campaign against international terrorism and vowed that Malaysian and US armed forces and security services would co-operate even more in the future as the terrorist networks and militant cells posed a security threat to both countries.<sup>147</sup>

This new understanding was later sedimented when the leaders of Malaysia and the US finally met for the first time (on 20 October) at the APEC conference in Shanghai. After their meeting, both Dr. Mahathir and George W. Bush agreed to seek ways and means to combat the threat of international terrorism and to increase the level of co-operation in both trade and security matters. The cherry on the cake came in the form of Bush's observation that the Malaysian Prime Minister was a man he 'could deal with' and who also had 'a good sense of humour'. For the dour-faced *ulama* of PAS, this was no laughing matter.

Back on the home front, the Mahathir administration added the final touches to a package of political and economic policies designed to maintain public order and get the economy back on the road to recovery. The new budget revealed on 19 October was aimed at jump-starting the economy and helping medium-scale

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<sup>147</sup> 'Admiral Blair: Contain Terrorism for Political Stability', *New Sunday Times*, 25 November 2001. Admiral Blair stated that the US navy hoped to extend and expand its joint military operations with the Malaysian navy to eradicate threats of trans-border terrorism, gun-running, smuggling and piracy in the region. He announced that more joint US-Malaysian naval operations would be held and that the US security forces would 'provide logistics, intelligence and advice to support the regional governments'.

local entrepreneurs and civil servants in particular.<sup>148</sup> The only ones to suffer were the smokers, who faced an additional 20% tax increase to finance their small-time vice.

More good news for the Mahathir administration was soon to follow. On 14 November, PBS, which had left BN on the eve of the 1990 general election and had been the sole opposition party in Sabah, finally rejoined BN. Less than a week later, ABIM president Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman publicly stated that ABIM felt that Dr. Mahathir was indeed a model Muslim leader and Malaysia was a model Islamic society for the rest of the Muslim world to follow.<sup>149</sup> The apparent U-turn by one of the biggest Islamist move-

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<sup>148</sup> The 2002 budget introduced significant tax cuts and raised the pay of civil servants as part of an overall domestic economic stimulus package. The RM111.5 billion (US\$26.4bn) budget was aimed at strengthening growth by boosting local demand. The budget cut maximum personal income tax by one percentage point to 28%, and gave the country's 850,000 civil servants a salary bonus on top of a 10% increase for the next year. Reinvestments by agriculture companies were granted 100% tax exemption against income for five years. During the unveiling of the budget, the Prime Minister said that Malaysia's current account surplus, subdued inflation, low foreign debt and a pegged currency were all factors in ensuring a recovery. Malaysia's trade surplus was expected to rise to RM55.4 billion (US\$14.6 billion) in 2002, from an estimated RM51.74 billion in 2001, with 6% export growth. The manufacturing sector was forecast to grow by 6.5%, because of a recovery in global electronics demand and increased consumer spending on cars and household goods. The services sector was expected to grow at 5.3% in 2002, up from 4.4% in 2001, but agriculture was expected to slow to 0.8% from 1.2%. Inflation was forecast to remain below 2% and employment to rise by 4.25% to 9.8 million, from a population of about 22 million, representing almost full employment. On the whole, the budget painted an upbeat picture for the future, forecasting an overall growth rate of 5% (after a sluggish growth of 1–2% for 2001, due to the effects of the American recession and the Afghan conflict). The size of the financial injection came third after China's and Japan's.

<sup>149</sup> *Utusan Malaysia*, 19 November 2001. ABIM's sudden U-turn was brought about by a number of factors, most related to domestic politics and the complex internal rivalries between ABIM, PAS and Keadilan. Shortly before, at Keadilan's first annual party election, *continued p. 679*

ments in the country provided the UMNO-led BN government with more room to manoeuvre, and it meant that PAS's desire to mobilise Malay-Muslim support behind its calls for *jihād* had failed. With DAP out of the BA and *Keadilan* in tatters, PAS was well and truly isolated and marginalised.

Having lost on the home front, PAS turned its attention to the outside world. On 16 November, the ASEAN Muslim Secretariat (AMSEC) which was under the auspices of PAS and based in Kota Bharu, Kelantan organised a regional conference on global terrorism. It was attended by representatives from Muslim organisations from all over the ASEAN region. At the end of the conference, AMSEC secretary-general Mahfuz Omar (also head of PAS Youth Wing) read out a joint statement from the delegates, condemning the US as the biggest terrorist state and describing George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon as the two most wanted terrorists in the world.<sup>150</sup>

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serious divisions had appeared between *Keadilan*'s ex-ABIM and ex-UMNO members (close personal aides and advisors to Anwar Ibrahim). Differences of opinion and tactics had emerged between the two groups. It was already well known that ABIM members of *Keadilan* opposed the proposed merger between the party and leftist PRM. Many speculated that the merger proposals were being pushed ahead by ex-ABIM leader Anwar Ibrahim, who was then in jail. The run-up to the election witnessed much acrimonious debate and mud-slinging, where ex-ABIM members were accused of wanting to take over the party and to 'ABIMise' it. In the end, all ABIM candidates (Mohamad Anuar Tahir, Dr Muhammad Nur Manuty, Ruslan Kassim and Mustafa Kamil Ayub) lost. In the wake of the election, many ABIM leaders felt the need to distance themselves and their movement from *Keadilan* and BA. Ahmad Azam's open declaration of support for the Mahathir administration therefore came at a time when ABIM was trying to find a way out of the impasse within the opposition BA alliance.

<sup>150</sup> Nyza Ayob, 'Amerika Ketua Penganas Antarabangsa — Resolusi', *Harakah*, 16 November 2001. Among participants were Dato' Kamaruddin Jaffar (PAS central executive committee member), Dr. H. Lukman Hakim Hasibuan (vice-president, Gerakan Pemuda Ka'bah Pusat, Indonesia), Faisal Malkatiri (head, Youth Wing of Islamist Bulan Bintang party of Indonesia), Fan Yew Teng (Malaysian *continued p. 680*)

But even then PAS was no longer able to muster the necessary support in its campaign at home. A host of internal and external factors, ranging from PAS's tactical blunder in supporting the *Taliban's* call for *jihad*, growing concern over the threat of international terrorism, the renewed violence in some parts of the ASEAN region like the southern Philippines and Indonesia and the mood swing of the populace, had ensured that PAS's advances had been checked, for a while at least.

It appeared as if PAS's gains over the previous three years had been all but squandered, and the party would once again have to begin at the grassroots level. (A fact borne out by the local university council elections that took place in the same week. PAS and UMNO once again fought out their proxy wars on the local campuses.)<sup>151</sup> Thus it could be said that the events of 11 September did indeed have long-lasting and far-reaching consequences. As a result of those fateful attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the face of Malaysian politics had been changed once more.

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peace activist), Mohamad Azmi Abdul Hamid (co-ordinator, Malaysia-based Third World Network), Nik Mohd Nasir Nik Abdullah (representative, Young Muslims Association of Thailand), Shahrhan Kassim (ABIM) and Syed Ibrahim Syed Abdul Rahman (PAS central executive committee member). Describing the attack on Afghanistan as part of a long-term conspiracy against Islam hatched by the US and other anti-Muslim governments, the conference called on the OIC to play a more active role in the resolution of the Afghan crisis and to openly condemn the actions of the US and its allies, most notably Israel.

<sup>151</sup> The one area where PAS's influence was still considerable was the local university campuses. In the campus elections in November almost every student council fell into the hands of PAS-supporting student candidates. New regulations were introduced to control activities of PAS supporters on campuses (including a total ban on public speeches in UKM), but to no avail. In many cases, PAS supporters won their seats uncontested. Of the 13 main institutions of higher learning, the five most prestigious universities — Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and the International Islamic University (UIA) were all clearly hotbeds of PAS supporters.

The success of the Mahathir administration was due partly to its correct reading of the reaction to the 11 September event. The UMNO-led BN government correctly estimated the sense of shock, horror and apprehension that was bound to emerge in specific sections of the Malaysian community — the urban middle classes, the non-Malay and non-Muslim minorities and the foreign business/diplomatic community. Sensing the growing alarm among those who felt that Malaysia was in danger of being drawn into the web of international 'Islamic terror', leaders of UMNO in particular were quick to address the issue and to placate the fears of the general public. Nothing was spared in the effort to ensure the Malaysian (and international) community that Malaysia would remain on its secular, moderate and capitalist course (even if the Islamic state debate had not died down in some quarters). UMNO leaders were careful to insist, time and again, that theirs was a brand of 'modern', 'progressive', 'liberal' and 'tolerant' Islam that would not allow itself to be hijacked by 'militant' and 'extremist' elements. Here was a case of a local political élite astutely interpreting the mood swings and shifts in perception bound to be brought about by the events that took place thousands of miles away in New York.

PAS, on the other hand, was held captive by its own local constituency. Failing to recognise the swing in public opinion, PAS leaders brought the party to the brink of ruin by declaring that they would support the *jihad* called for by Osama bin Laden and the *Taliban*. Seemingly unaware of the catastrophic results that were bound to follow (a strange and unexplainable factor indeed, considering PAS's long experience in Malaysian politics), PAS leaders pressed on regardless down a path that would only lead to its marginalisation and isolation. Here was an example of a political party that totally failed to understand the magnitude and depth of the mood swing in Malaysia, among both the Malays and non-Malays. While PAS managed to score points among their own natural followers, the Malay-Muslims, their losses from the general Malaysian public (and international opinion) were considerable. Overnight, it appeared as if PAS had revealed the fundamentalist streak that was still deeply rooted in the mentality of its leaders and followers.

As the events of 11 September clearly showed, Malaysian politics was, and is, plugged into the global current and has never been isolated from external influences. With the country being drawn into the orbit of globalisation, events such as 11 September are bound to play an even bigger role in domestic politics. The boundaries between 'inside' and 'outside' no longer exist. The frontiers of the imaginary homeland go as far as the cameras of CNN or the Al-Jazeera network will take the viewer. Malaysia has entered the global stage, and the world has come knocking on its door, bringing with it unprecedented challenges that can never be ignored.

### *End of an Era: PAS in Post-Mahathir Malaysia*

In the months following the US attack on Afghanistan and the US-led 'global war against terror', PAS's fortunes were set to fall once again. The Islamist party that had experienced such a spectacular rise in its fortunes in 1999 was being re-cast as a 'radical', 'fundamentalist' threat to the country and the region. The political cost of PAS's support for Osama bin Laden and the *Taliban* proved even higher than initially expected. In time, the party was being mentioned alongside other radical movements such as the *Abu Sayyaf* in the Philippines and the *Fron Pembela Islam*, *Majlis Mujahideen* and *Laskar Jihad* in Indonesia. Foreign observers and scholars who knew even less about PAS and Malaysian politics went as far as claiming that the party was linked to Osama's *al-Qaeda* group, a barbed assertion to say the least, which did untold damage to the party's credentials and standing as an alternative to UMNO and the BN.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Farish A. Noor, 'Fighting Their Own Demons: The Reinvention of Al-Qaeda as the New 'Global Threat'', *malaysiakini.com*, 6 July 2002. Among those who have tried to link PAS to Osama bin Laden and *al-Qaeda* is the author Rohan Gunaratna. In his book *Inside al-Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, Gunaratna claims PAS was linked to *al-Qaeda* on the grounds that it has shown sympathy and support to the MILF in the Philippines, which is known to have links with Osama bin Laden. *continued p. 683*

Elsewhere in the region the fear of Islamic militancy did little to assuage concerns of an Islamic resurgence in ASEAN: In 2000, Manila experienced a bomb attack at its main city station that claimed fourteen lives — the Indonesian Islamist Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi was later blamed for the attack. In the same year, the Jakarta Stock Exchange (JSE) was also bombed, though this time blame was eventually put on two senior officers of the Indonesian élite KOPASSUS unit who were accused of planning the attack and trying to make it look as if it was the work of radical Islamist groups in the country. (In time the shady dealings between the Indonesian army and radical Islamist groups would come to the surface, prompting the government and armed forces to engage in an extensive campaign of denial.)<sup>153</sup>

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Laden. But this in itself does not prove anything, as the Moro struggle in the southern Philippines has also attracted the attention and support of other movements, including many non-Muslim ones. Needless to say, Gunaratna's method of analysis and conclusions leave much to be desired, as none of his claims were substantiated by any solid evidence. Gunaratna also linked *al-Qaeda* to ABIM and APU. ABIM's active involvement in inter-religious dialogue and recent endorsement of a multi-NGO campaign for the universal protection of all religious sites leads one to question Gunaratna's claim that it is a politically radical movement. As for APU, Gunaratna fails to note that it had ceased to exist in the mid-1990s. The damage, however, was done — and PAS was linked to Osama, *al-Qaeda* and *Taliban* in the writings of Gunaratna and many other authors.

<sup>153</sup> The undercover relations between the Indonesian army and radical Islamist groups date back to 1965, when elements of the Indonesian armed forces (then known as ABRI) were actively courting radical Islamist groups in order to wipe out the PKI and pockets of their supporters all over the country. By the 1970s, the relationship had developed into a pragmatic one, with Indonesian commanders like General Ali Murtopo thought to be behind the emergence of groups like the *Komando Jihad*. As the Soeharto regime began to fall apart, senior commanders of the TNI began to create and cultivate groups like the *Laskar Jihad* and other *jihadi* groups that were used to unleash a campaign of terror in troubled provinces like East Timor and West Irian. Later the leaders of these radical groups would admit to their continued p. 684

It has to be noted that much of what has been said and written about PAS in the wake of 11 September has been ill-conceived and off the mark. While it is true that radical elements indeed existed in the rank and file of PAS in the past, it would be wrong to say that the party is committed to any form of radical Islamic politics as a matter of policy. (It should be noted, for instance, that during the anti-Chinese riots in Indonesia in 1998, PAS president Fadzil Noor was one of the few Malaysian leaders who unreservedly condemned the racist attacks.)<sup>154</sup>

However, PAS's open support for the *Taliban*, its uncompromising stand on the question of the Islamic state and its relentless campaign to introduce *hudud* law in Terengganu and Kelantan all helped to paint a picture of the party as an organisation bent on altering the political terrain of the country for good. PAS's campaign to introduce *hudud* law in Terengganu met with stiff and vocal resistance from both BN and DAP, as well as numerous human rights and women's NGOs in the country, who objected to the Bill on the grounds that it was archaic and discriminatory towards women. The skirmishes between PAS and the UMNO-led government continued well into 2002. Then in June 2002, two important developments took place.

On Saturday 22 June 2002, Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad was scheduled to address UMNO members at the party's annual general assembly in Kuala Lumpur. He had just returned from yet another trip to Europe, where he had stopped at the Vatican to pay an official visit to the Pope (during which he brought up the issue of Palestine and the need for Muslims and Christians to work towards a more just international order). In his speech, Dr. Mahathir spoke of the need for the Malays to develop their knowledge skills and to break free from the culture of eco-

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own dealings with the Indonesian army and units such as KOPAS-SUS. The leader of the *Laskar Jihad*, Jaafar Umar Thalib, for instance, would openly state that his organisation had received support and political protection from senior politicians of the Soeharto regime as well as the commanders of the Indonesian army.

<sup>154</sup> James Wong Win On, 'Farewell, Fadzil', *malaysiakini.com*, 24 June 2002.

conomic, political and intellectual dependency upon the state — a theme he had raised many times before. Suddenly, in the middle of his speech the man who had led the country since 1981 and whose vision of an industrialised and developed Malaysia had radically transformed the social, economic and political terrain of the country, broke down and wept. He then turned to the dumbstruck audience before him, and announced that he wished to resign from the posts of Prime Minister and UMNO president.

Dr. Mahathir's sudden and unprecedented announcement was met with shock and horror. The delegates to the UMNO assembly broke down and cried out, calling on him to stay on and remain as their leader. In the chaos that followed, the Prime Minister was ushered off the stage by his ministers. It was later announced that the Prime Minister would stay on till October 2003, allowing for a transition period of 15 months, after which his deputy Dato' Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would take over as the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Unseemly as it may have appeared, Malaysians were assured that the country would have yet another peaceful transition of power. In the media tumult that followed, a plethora of voices came out both in support and against the Prime Minister. Many of Dr. Mahathir's staunch followers and admirers praised him for his foresight and vision, and declared him to be the model Muslim leader of the time who had dragged Malaysia into the modern age. Despite the criticism that had been heaped upon the country's leader over the previous two decades, it was undeniable that Malaysia had been radically transformed by the economic policies of the Mahathir administration. (A claim underscored by the fact that Malaysia was one of the founders of the World Trade Organisation and was then ranked the 17th trading nation in the world.<sup>155</sup> The UNDP's Arab Human Development Index Report (AHDR) clearly

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<sup>155</sup> The WTO was formed in 1995, after the GATT discussions known as the Uruguay Round. Its history goes back to attempts to create the first International Trade Organisation (ITO) in 1945, following the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, but the ITO failed to get off the ground. In 1947, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) *continued p. 686*

showed how far Malaysia had come compared to the other Arab-Muslim countries.)<sup>156</sup>

PAS leaders, true to their oppositional character, declared that Dr. Mahathir's tearful farewell was yet another '*sandiwara*' (play-

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was first debated in Geneva. The GATT discussions continued for decades, leading to the Uruguay Round from 1986–93 (the longest discussion series in the history of GATT). As a result of the Uruguay Round, WTO was formed in 1995. Malaysia was a founding member, and was one of the few non-European countries involved in the WTO project from the start. By then, Malaysia was already ranked as one of the top trading nations in the world, exporting more than any other Muslim country, and its volume of trade (despite its relatively small population size) was more than twice that of India. The Malaysian government was keen to play an active part in the formation of the WTO and its activities. Even as the WTO's membership expanded, Malaysia remained a key player and was part of the intimate and exclusive 'Green Room' group within it. Though Malaysia was now a member of the WTO, it continued to voice the concerns of the South and developing countries. Malaysian WTO representatives raised issues related to the environment, patent rights and other concerns of developing countries.

<sup>156</sup> In July 2002, the UNDP released its first ever AHDR, covering 22 Arab States, all members of the Arab League, with a total population of 280 million. Though the report noted some progress in basic education and improvements in health care, the overall prognosis was devastating. It noted that over the previous two decades growth in per capita income in the Arab states had been the lowest in the world except for sub-Saharan Africa. The annual growth rate was only around 0.5%, which meant the average Arab citizen would take more than 140 years to double his income (while other regions could do the same in 10 years). Labour productivity was also deplorably low. In 1960–90, it declined at an annual average of 0.2%, while it accelerated in every other part of the world. The report also noted that, despite the population boom, much of the local Arab labour force was not being fully and effectively utilised. Unequal education opportunities hindered the social mobility of many young Arabs (51% declared they wished to emigrate abroad in search of employment and a better quality of life). Women were also being regularly discriminated against at the workplace, school and government. (Female representation in Arab national politics was lower than in Latin America, Asia  
*continued p. 687*

acting) designed to delude the voters, and were in no mood to give Dr. Mahathir a smooth exit.

The following morning, PAS lost its president Ustaz Fadzil Mohd Noor who had undergone heart bypass surgery two weeks before and had never recovered from his operation. Already suffering from diabetes and hypoglycaemia for 17 years, Fadzil Noor slipped into a state of unconsciousness after his operation and was kept under close watch in the intensive care unit of the Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan. His condition slowly deteriorated and at 10.00 a.m. on Sunday 23 June 2002 he passed away.

Coming so soon after the Prime Minister's resignation announcement, Fadzil Noor's death stunned the nation, and PAS members in particular. His body was later flown to Kedah — courtesy of the Royal Malaysian Air Force — and buried at Muassassah Darul 'Ulum, Pokok Sena. The leadership of PAS was handed over to Tuan Guru Hadi Awang, the *ulama* and Chief Minister of Terengganu who had been pushing for the implementation of *hudud* law in the state. For many local political scholars and observers, the death of Fadzil Noor marked the end of PAS's 'democratic experiment'. As writer Terence Netto said:

He glittered briefly on the national political stage and stuttered out in a whimper. Death came rather unexpectedly to Ustaz Fadzil Noor,

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and some African countries.) Despite advances in expanding educational facilities and opportunities, investment in higher education, research and development (R&D), and internet and computer technology (ICT) was appallingly low. As such, Arab societies were experiencing large-scale urban unemployment due to a glut of lesser-skilled workers unable to compete with migrant workers and foreigners. To make things worse, many living in the Arab states were barely able to exist on some of the lowest income earnings in the world (around US\$2 per day). The report also noted that the repressive political climate in many Arab states meant that accountability and transparency were clearly absent, opening the way for a culture of political and economic patronage, corruption and nepotism. The authoritarian culture of many Arab societies also hindered the development of free and open political activities and restricted the activities of the local press ('The Poor Arab Street', *The Economist*, 4 July 2002).

but it was, in a sense, an apposite coda to a career whose author had already become marginal to the tide he rode with prescience to a central role in the Malaysian Opposition and that petered out in the aftermath of Sept 11. ... After that it was relentlessly downhill. PAS' support for the *Taliban* and calls for *jihād* projected starkly its medieval moorings, something that Fadzil managed to screen through adroit manoeuvres over three years from September 1998. PAS' doctrinaire support for the *mullahs* who destroyed the Bamiyan statues and sheltered Osama bin Laden confirmed that the party's recently urbane exterior was a veneer camouflaging an essentially medieval core. Also, the unyielding determination of PAS deputy president and Terengganu *Menteri Besar* Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang to introduce Islamic law in the state has polarised political society across party lines — into against-*Hudud* and for-*Hudud* factions. Fadzil, an Islamist politician of faintly liberal credentials, would have found that divide beyond his capacity to straddle. In that sense his death came not too soon.<sup>157</sup>

Fadzil Noor's death also had an immediate effect on PAS's own complicated internal politics. The 'moderate' faction (men such as Hatta Ramli, Dzulkefly Ahmad and Kamaruddin Jaffar) closely associated to Fadzil were now leaderless. Fadzil's death also meant that PAS' strongest link to Anwar Ibrahim (and, by extension, Keadilan and PRM) was no longer there. With the loss of Fadzil Noor, PAS's presence in Kedah was significantly weakened. (Many party strategists had hoped that the president's presence in Kedah would help the party win the state at the next election, adding yet another conquest to PAS's growing list.) With Hadi Awang elevated to the post of PAS president and head of BA, PAS's centre of gravity had shifted back to the east coast, to Terengganu. While PAS's advances on Kedah had been checked, the party's hold on Terengganu had been significantly strengthened as a result of the untimely death of its president. Overnight, the prospect of an UMNO take-over of Terengganu slipped further over the horizon.

With the unexpected death of Fadzil Noor and the equally unexpected departure of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's political terrain has been markedly altered. The rise to power of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi — the 'Mr. Clean' of UMNO whose own Islamist

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<sup>157</sup> Terence Netto, 'Fleeting Ride of Moderate Islamist Fadzil Noor', *malaysiakini.com*, 24 June 2002.

credentials are as impressive as they are respectable — and the sudden promotion of Tuan Guru Hadi Awang to the post of PAS president and *de facto* leader of the opposition means that Islam is set to remain squarely in the middle of the stage of Malaysian politics.

Almost immediately after these sudden changes, PAS reverted to its tried and tested tactic of raising the stakes in the Islamisation race. On 7 July 2002, the Terengganu state assembly unanimously passed Hadi Awang's infamous *hudud* bill, which imposed a number of new punishments like whipping, amputation and stoning to death for crimes like adultery and theft. UMNO leaders immediately attacked the move, calling it a political gimmick staged by a party that had run out of ideas. PAS's allies in the BA lamented the move on the grounds that it would only further undermine the BA's electoral chances, and lure them away from the foundational ideas and values of the BA's common manifesto. Fifty years after UMNO leaders had ridiculed PAS as the party that would chop off hands and feet if they ever came to power, it seemed as if the bad joke of the 1950s was about to become a grim reality.

*Postscript: The Fortunes of PAS in the Age of the  
'War Against Terror'*

Today, as Malaysia slowly drags itself out of the quagmire of the 1997–98 financial and political crises and is swept along by the global 'war against terror', Malaysian society will undoubtedly be looking for the way forward. Both UMNO and PAS will be there to offer the electorate their respective visions of the future, but what happens next in the drama of Malaysian politics is only a matter of speculation at this stage.

The characters of the *wayang* have already taken up their respective roles and are playing their parts on cue. Predictably, in the wake of 11 September and the reassertion of American power abroad, the governments of ASEAN have been falling over themselves to get into the good books of the US government, Wall Street and the IMF. In the Philippines, the government of President Gloria Arroyo Macapagal (whose own father was helped to power by the Americans) went against the letter and spirit of the post-Marcos

constitution in order to invite American troops (and American foreign aid) to help in the country's long and bloody war against Moro separatists in the south of the country.<sup>158</sup> Singapore's elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew has openly declared that the safety of the world could only be guaranteed by the United States,<sup>159</sup> while

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<sup>158</sup> One of the first countries in ASEAN to lend its support to Washington's global 'war against terror' was the Philippines. Bending over backwards to accommodate US military and strategic interests, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo Macapagal invited US troops and intelligence personnel to the Philippines to help her handle the 'problem' of Muslim-Moro unrest in the troubled island province of Mindanao. By doing so she has gone against the will of her people and broken some of the most fundamental tenets of the post-Marcos constitution which explicitly forbids foreign troops to be based and to operate in the territory of the Philippines. The most recent infringement of the post-Marcos constitutional set-up was the war games between US and Philippine forces code-named *Kalayaan-Aguila 2002* or *Mindanao Balikatan 02-1* held in Basilan and Zamboanga led by the American Special Operations Forces (SOFs). *Kalayaan-Aguila 2002* marked the largest US military intervention engaged in actual combat against real human targets on Philippine soil since the Philippine-American War (1899–1901). It deployed the largest number of US troops for combat in the Basilan-Zamboanga area since the Moro Wars (1901–1911). In the wake of 11 September and Arroyo's pledge to help the US 'fight terror' in her country and ASEAN, US military aid to the Philippines has been increased from US\$1.9 million to US\$40 million. Thus far American troops deployed in the Philippines between 2001 and 2003 included an initial military presence of 250 soldiers based all over the country to help with counter-insurgency work, training and intelligence gathering (in 2001). Between late 2001 and early 2002 an additional 660 American troops, including 160 Special Operations Forces (SOFs), Navy SEALs units and Green Beret commandos were sent there. They have been used as the US contingent in US-Philippines *Balikatan* joint exercise with *Abu Sayyaf* as 'live human targets' and are mostly based in Southern Mindanao. Apart from troops the Americans have also offered material help in the form of helicopters, night vision equipment, surveillance technology, information sharing and even hunting dogs to help the Philippine army track down Moro 'rebels'.

<sup>159</sup> On 12 May 2003 the *New Straits Times* reported that Singapore's veteran leader Lee Kuan Yew had publicly stated that "Without the  
*continued p. 691*

Australia — whose government and media have used the Bali bombings of 2002 as a justification for the projection of Australian military power abroad — has been elevated to the dubious status of America's anointed 'Sheriff' in Asia.

Faced with such developments, the governments of predominantly-Muslim Malaysia and Indonesia have been left in a quandary. While Indonesia under President Megawati Sukarnoputri battles to keep its economy afloat under pressure from the IMF and creditors abroad,<sup>160</sup> it has been hard pressed to play according to

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US, terrorism — whether (by) *al-Qaeda*, *Jemaah Islamiyah* or whatever groups all over the world — cannot be stopped." The Singaporean leader urged his fellow citizens to "think (in the) long-term. We have to decide what's in our interest. We cannot allow emotions and sentiments to decide our policies." Singapore remains a key US ally and made its facilities available to American forces during the Iraq invasion of 2003. Its strong relationship with the US was further strengthened when the two countries signed a landmark free trade agreement the previous week. *New Straits Times*, 'Only US can stop terrorism, says Kuan Yew' (12 May 2003).

<sup>160</sup> Five years after the economic crisis of 1997-98, it would appear that the prescriptions offered by the IMF have not solved any of Indonesia's economic woes. In 2002, the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA) completed the massive sales of bad loans with a total value of Rupiah 135 trillion. With this sale the IBRA was expected to meet the target of Rp42 trillion for the year, but even that was not enough to boost consumer and investor confidence. The IMF's loan of US\$347 million also did little to affect market sentiments. Since becoming Indonesia's fourth president in July 2001, Megawati has been forced to meet the demands of the local business community, foreign investors, local political parties as well as increasingly vocal Islamist groups in the country. The new Indonesian constitution that was passed on 11 August 2002 managed to reject the calls for an Islamic state and re-state the primacy of the principles of the 1945 Indonesian constitution, but this in turn has led to outcries and protests from Islamist opposition groups like the *Majlis Mujahideen Indonesia* (MMI). The 2002 constitution's emphasis on keeping the army out of Indonesian politics and paving the way for eventual civilian rule in Indonesia has also angered sections of the TNI, and has opened the way for pragmatic and instrumental coalitions  
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Washington's rules and to allow American intervention in its domestic security concerns. President Megawati has tried to convince the Americans that Indonesia will co-operate with the US on matters of international security and the fight against terrorism, but this in turn has alienated her from her own predominantly-Muslim constituency and earned her stinging criticism from fellow Indonesian leaders like Hamzah Has, Din Syamsuddin (Secretary-General of the *Majlis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesian Ulama Council, MUI), and hardline groups like the *Majlis Mujahideen Indonesia* and *Front Pembela Islam*. The government's persecution of Islamist groups and the sentencing of those accused of the Bali bombings — most notably Imam Samudra, Amrozi, Mukhlas and Ali Imron<sup>161</sup> — have turned them into martyrs and heroes of the *jihadi* movement instead.

In Malaysia, the fortunes of PAS have become tied to the vicissitudes of global politics as well. Worried about the declining image of the party both at home and abroad, the leaders of PAS have tried their best to present a united front before an ever-critical domestic and international audience. But the internal shifts and changes within the party mean that the shift towards the Islamist register and the growing influence of the *ulama* in the party machinery are set to remain for some time to come. At the party's 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in September 2003, the post of deputy

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between radical Islamist groups and rogue elements of the Indonesian army to work together with the goal of toppling the Megawati government.

<sup>161</sup> It is interesting to note how those accused of the Bali bombings, notably Imam Samudra, Amrozi and Mukhlas, were able to turn the trials in their favour and use the public court proceedings to project their message of *jihad* to the wider community. Foreign observers and correspondents were dumbstruck by the reaction of Imam Samudra and Amrozi, who appeared calm and controlled when they were passed the death sentence for their role in the attacks. Both Imam Samudra and Amrozi then used the trial to voice their own demands, claiming that they did not fear death and that they did not accept the verdict of the court — on the grounds that they wanted to be tried by a *Shariah* court instead. Only one of the accused — Ali Imron — confessed that he had made a serious mistake and expressed regret over the killing of the people in Bali.

president of the party was passed over to the *ulama* Senator Ustaz Hassan Shukri, who beat the incumbent Mustafa Ali — long regarded as one of the ‘technocrats’ among PAS’s senior leadership — by 133 votes. With the passing of Fadzil Noor in 2002 and the defeat of Mustafa Ali in September 2003, it would appear as if the entire senior leadership of PAS is now in the hands of the *ulama*.<sup>162</sup> Soon after came the announcement that another senior PAS *ulama*, Ustaz Harun Din, would lead the party’s campaign to take over the northern states of Kedah and Perlis at the next election.

The question remains as to which direction PAS will take in the future and how it will negotiate the difficult straits of Malaysian politics. PAS’s claim that it will enforce *hudud* laws in the state of Terengganu in the month of Ramadhan (October–November 2003) caused yet another stir in the ranks of the *Barisan Alternatif* coalition, whose strength and unity have already been tested on many an occasion by PAS’s unilateral moves. Later in October 2003 the PAS-run government of Kelantan announced that it would stage a roadshow across the state with the aim of promoting proper forms of attire for Muslim women in Kelantan — the announcement was met by criticism from women’s groups and NGOs in the country.

Not to be outdone, the Mahathir administration also attempted to play to the Muslim gallery by raising issues and concerns that had gained currency in the Muslim world of late. During his speech at the OIC meeting held at the new capital of Putrajaya in October 2003, Malaysia’s Prime Minister spoke of an international Jewish conspiracy to rule the world by proxy. His statements were met with applause from the assembled delegates from the Muslim

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<sup>162</sup> Despite losing his post as deputy president of PAS, Mustafa Ali retained his position as the party’s vice-president by securing 492 votes together with Dr Hassan Ali (613 votes) and Azizan Abdul Razak (563 votes). Those elected to fill the 18 central committee posts were Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, Dr. Hatta Ramli, Kamaruddin Jaffar, Husam Musa, Taib Azamuddin, Ahmad Awang, Abdul Wahab Ismail, Hashim Jasin, Wan Mutalib Embong, Abdul Ghani Abdul Rahman, Abu Bakar Chik, Dr. Lo’ Lo’ Mohd Ghazali, Subky Latif, Dr. Syed Azman Syed Nawawi, Idris Ahmad, Daeng Sanusi Daeng Mariok, Anuar Tan Abdullah and Syed Ibrahim Syed Ahmad. Salahudin Ayub won uncontested as Youth chief.

world,<sup>163</sup> though Jewish groups in the West were quick to respond with threats of an economic and political boycott of Malaysia. After 22 years in office Dr. Mahathir's vision of a modernist school of Islam is still not accepted by the Malaysian public as the government had hoped — instead, the country is still trying to shake off the stigma of being regarded as a base for Islamic terror groups and the government's list of radical Islamist movements has grown even longer.<sup>164</sup>

PAS, on the other hand, seems confident that its fortunes will rise in the long-run. During his September 2003 interview with

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<sup>163</sup> Following Dr. Mahathir's speech he was immediately attacked by Jewish lobby groups from all over the world. The response from the Muslim world was quite the opposite. The Arabic channel *al-Jazeera* ran a viewers' survey (between 18 to 21 October 2003) with the question: 'Do you support Dr. Mahathir of Malaysia's statement at the OIC that the Jews rule the world by proxy?' A record number of viewers (60,169) participated in the survey, and 94.9% of them answered 'Yes'. In the wake of the row over Dr. Mahathir's comments the US Senate then voted unanimously to tie religious freedom to the RM4.56 million (US\$1.2 million) military aid package to Malaysia. The measure requires the State Department to determine that Malaysia 'supports and promotes religious freedoms, including tolerance for people of the Jewish faith' before releasing the money. (*malaysiakini.com*, US Senate Ties Malaysian Aid to Religious Freedom, 28 October 2003.)

<sup>164</sup> Among the alleged radical/militant Islamist groups on the Malaysian government's watch list were: the *Tentera Sabillullah* (1967), *Golongan Rohaniah* (1971), *Koperasi Angkatan Revolusi Islam Malaysia* (1974), *Kumpulan KRYPTO* (1977), *Kumpulan Mohamad Nasir Ismail* (1980), *Kumpulan Revolusi Islam Ibrahim Mahmud* (1985), *Kumpulan Jundullah* (1987), *Kumpulan Mujahideen Kedah* (1988), *Kumpulan Perjuangan Islam Perak* (1988), *Kumpulan al-Maunah* (2000), *Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia* (2001) and *Jama'ah Islamiyyah* (2001). It is interesting to note that most of the groups alleged to have terrorist links and activities were based outside Kelantan and Terengganu, the two states that have been most closely associated with PAS. In fact many of them such as the *Kumpulan Revolusi Islam Ibrahim Mahmud*, *Kumpulan Jundullah*, *Kumpulan Mujahideen Kedah* and *Kumpulan al-Maunah* were formed and based in the state of Kedah, which ironically happens to be where the constituency of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad is.

BBC's Tim Sebastian for the programme *Hardtalk*, PAS leader Mustafa Ali reiterated his party's struggle for social reform, democracy and human rights. Though the *ulama* leadership of PAS may have had other things to say about the matter, Mustafa Ali went as far as defending the freedom of belief (including the right of Muslims to change their religion, as long as they do so 'quietly') and claiming that PAS's *hudud* laws would apply only to Muslims. Insisting that PAS would abide by the principles of the Malaysian constitution, Mustafa Ali emphasised that PAS, as an Islamic party, wanted to promote peace, freedom, justice and democracy. When asked by Tim Sebastian if he thought that PAS would eventually come to power in Malaysia, Mustafa Ali's response was a typically political one: "*Insha-Allah*" (God Willing).

The perennial *wayang* of *kerajaan* continues, still.



## Part 2

# UNDERSTANDING PAS: THE POLITICS OF ISLAMISM REVISITED

The problem of religion as an instrument of political ends is as old as history.

Abdulaziz Sachedina  
*The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 4.



## CONCLUSION

### UNDERSTANDING THE RISE OF PAS IN MALAYSIA

#### *Understanding the Phenomenal Rise of PAS, 1951–2003: How to Read and Not Read the Success of PAS*

Realism and flexibility are among the most important features of Islamic methodology.

Rachid Ghannouchi,  
'The Participation of Islamists  
in Non-Islamic Government'<sup>2</sup>

After being on the political scene for more than half a century, it is undeniable that the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) has achieved more than any other opposition party in Malaysia.

When it was first formed, PAS was a loosely knit organisation whose members shared dual membership with its mother organisation, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). PAS was then so poor that it could not afford even a simple typewriter, much less an office to call its own. From the beginning, the party has been forced to rely on the goodwill, commitment and dedication of its members and it is thanks to their silent and unrecorded efforts that the party has not only weathered the storms of Malaysian politics but has also developed to become the biggest opposition party in Malaysia with two states under its control and its branches extended to every corner of the land. PAS has become a national party with national aspirations, and its presence is both local and regional. The

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<sup>2</sup> Rachid Ghannouchi, 'The Participation of Islamists in Non-Islamic Government', in Azzam Tamimi (ed.), *Power-Sharing Islam*, London: Liberty for the Muslim World, 1993, p. 59.

party has developed its own cohesive organisational structure, grassroots network and media services. During the political and economic crises of 1997–98, PAS's official media organ *Harakah* out-sold all the major mainstream newspapers, and its web-TV (which could be accessed via any computer terminal anywhere in the world) was watched by thousands in the country and the world over.

PAS's success has also been aided by many pragmatic, capable and popular leaders. Those who felt they were unable to take the party to greater heights were prepared to stand aside for others who were able and willing to do more. The example of PAS's second president, Dr. Abbas Elias, comes to mind: Dr. Abbas's decision to pass on the party leadership to Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy proved to be his most significant decision during the entire period of his leadership, and helped to give PAS a much-needed boost. Never one to project his own interests before those of the party, Dr. Abbas's selfless act saved PAS at a time when its future was hanging in the balance.

As described in Chapter 2, Dr. Burhanuddin's period of leadership was also an important stage in the development of PAS, then caught in the maelstrom of Malaysian politics, which was in turn drawn into the *realpolitik* struggle of the Cold War. By aligning his party with the Malay left and communists, Dr. Burhanuddin had hoped to forge a broad-based national coalition that could take on the might of the ruling Alliance. Dr. Burhanuddin was a committed Islamist who managed to reconcile his religio-political principles with the ideological struggle against neo-colonialism and imperialism. He was, without doubt, the most adept and brilliant Malay-Muslim political leader of his generation and his efforts were stalled only by the untimely death of the party's deputy president, Dr. Zulkiflee Muhammad, and his own arrest and detention soon after.

During the 1970s, PAS came under the leadership of the staunch ethno-nationalist and defender of Malay communitarian rights, Dato' Asri Muda. Though Asri effectively overturned many of the policies introduced by Dr. Burhanuddin, he remained a charismatic leader whose hold on the followers of PAS was more than considerable. As shown in Chapter 3, Asri gave a Malay face to PAS, though his ill-fated experiment with the Alliance and, later, the *Barisan Nasional* was a disaster for the party. But so great was his popularity (and so strong his hold on the party apparatus) that

Asri brought PAS into line and took part in the *Barisan* experiment. The failure of the project proved Asri's downfall, but by then PAS had developed such a strong organisational structure that the party survived the loss of its leader.

The other reason for PAS's continued survival and success in the wake of Asri's fall was the rise of the *ulama* faction, which has held power in the party ever since. The entry and rise of the *ulama* faction marked the third major discursive shift within the party. By then, PAS had moved away from the discourse of anti-colonialism and Malay communitarianism to embrace the discourse of revolutionary pan-Islamism.

Rejecting the politics of compromise and adaptability of the Burhanuddin era as well as the ethno-nationalist communitarian politics of the Asri era, the new PAS leaders adopted a discursive strategy that viewed and presented Islam as a discourse of resistance and delegitimation. Islamism became the vehicle for a counter-hegemonic and anti-systemic project aimed at bringing about a new social, moral and political order embodied by the Islamic state. Added to this was the entry of new discursive strategies designed to weaken the ideological standing and credibility of PAS's opponents in UMNO, and to rob UMNO of its most persuasive arguments: the use of *takfir* (the practice of accusing other Muslims of being unbelievers); the critique of Malay-centrism as *assabiyah*; the rejection of the pre-Islamic Malay past and the grafting of terms and concepts drawn from the experience of the Iranian revolution — all marked the shift towards a more radical Islamist register.

Looking at PAS today, it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the party's demise in the near future. Even PAS's opponents have conceded that the party's presence on the Malaysian political scene is set to be a long and enduring one. All that is left for us now is to understand the reasons for PAS's success, and the lessons that can be learned from them.

*Understanding PAS's Success: Political Organisation,  
Mobilisation and Development*

'No civilisation, whether Islamic or un-Islamic, that views life from a universal stand-point and possesses a comprehensive system of administering the worldly affairs, can resist the urge for power in order that it may change the social life of all its subjects after its own pattern. Without the power to enforce, it is meaningless to believe in or present a doctrine as a way of life.'

Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi,  
*Tajdid-o-Ihya-i Din*<sup>3</sup>

One major reason why PAS developed in the way it did and remained a potent political force to be reckoned with is its ability to tap into the rich discursive economy of Islam and use it as a discourse for political mobilisation.

PAS is certainly not the only political organisation that has done so. There is a vast body of literature on how various Islamist ideologues and political leaders have turned to Islam as a means of mobilising popular support along class, ethnic and cultural-linguistic lines. Seyyed Vali Nasr's study of the *Jama'at-e Islami* of Pakistan has shown how the Indian Muslim activist Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi managed to activate the political potential inherent within Islam itself as a tool for political organisation and mobilisation.<sup>4</sup> By creating the *Jama'at*, Maudoodi hoped to build a force of change within Pakistan itself, leading Nasr to the conclusion that the party sees itself as the 'vanguard of the Islamic revolution'. However, while the *Jama'at* has succeeded in putting itself on the political map of Pakistan, it has failed to gain a national mandate or a strong regional following like other populist parties such as Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muslim League. It has also been unable to prevent other Islamist parties such as the *Jami'at-ul*

<sup>3</sup> Ab'ul Al'aa Maudoodi, *Tajdid-o-Ihya-i-Din*, 1st edn., 1940, republished: Petaling Jaya: The Other Press, 1999, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*, London: I. B. Tauris, 1994.

*Ulema-i Islam* (JUI) and *Jami'at-ul Ulema-i Pakistan* (JUP) entering and competing for the same discursive space of Islamism. This is largely due to its own over-intellectual approach, heavily based on its claim to scriptural and doctrinal authority and its attempts to create an Islamist intellectual élite. As Nasr explains:

Islamic revolution in the *Jama'at's* rhetoric is not the battle-cry of the masses but an élitist crusade aimed at appropriating the state. As a result, the *Jama'at* has adopted a pedantic and literary style and ignored populist themes. The party even continues to respect the right of private property and has avoided challenging the existing economic structure of Pakistan... . In short, the *Jama'at* has failed to convert revivalism as an ideology into revivalism as a social movement. It has failed to mobilise the masses for collective action for any sustained period of time under an Islamic banner.<sup>5</sup>

Nasr further argues that the *Jama'at* has been handicapped by its own disavowal of populist politics and populist strategies, something the other parties have not failed to use in the democratic space of Pakistani politics. Unlike other parties such as MQM and PPP, the *Jama'at's* political platform has not been based on the factors of ethnic loyalty, anti-establishment polemics or populism. The *Jama'at* remains today the most important and influential Islamist opposition party in Pakistan. It was directly responsible for the fall of Benazir Bhutto's government; the sit-in organised by the *Jama'at* during the final months of Bhutto's second term brought her down a second time. The *Jama'at* was also responsible for the fall of Nawaz Sharif, and after he was allowed by the military government of Pervez Musharraf to go into exile in Saudi Arabia, the *Jama'at* condemned the government on the grounds of treason and betraying the interests of the Pakistani people. Till today, the *Jama'at's* approach remains a selective one: its primary recruitment base remains the student body, political and business élite as well as members of the Pakistani armed forces.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>6</sup> Of late, the *Jama'at* has received considerable support from the growing number of disaffected members of the Pakistani armed forces. The *Jama'at* has also embarked on its biggest project to date: *continued p. 704*

While some Islamists movements like the *Jama'at* have opted for a top-down élitist approach to Islamist politics, others have preferred the bottom-up subaltern approach to build a solid base of support prior to embarking on more ambitious Islamisation campaigns.

Paul Lubeck's study on the use of Islamic discourse by Islamist activists in northern Nigeria has shown how Islam was used to create a new Islam-oriented urban labour class that would later serve as the bedrock for Nigeria's nascent Islamist revival.<sup>7</sup> Focusing on the political economy of Kano in northern Nigeria in 1966–79, Lubeck has studied the creation process of a new urban *leburori* (working class) held together by appeals to Islamic nationalism and class integration. Working through traditional networks such as *madrasahs* and Sufi *tariqa*, the Nigerian Islamists took advantage of the weakening Nigerian state to create new bonds of commonality and association among Nigerian Muslim workers. The result was the emergence of a new Muslim urban class open to the appeals of the Islamist movements and parties which appeared later. This approach, as shown in the previous chapters, has also been employed by Islamist movements elsewhere, from Iran and Turkey to Southeast Asia.

PAS's approach to political organisation and mobilisation has always been a combination of the top-down and bottom-up approaches. As a political party born and bred in traditional Malay neo-feudal politics, PAS has exploited both established notions and values of leadership as well as modern modes of recruitment, mobilisation and indoctrination.

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the construction of a massive 'university city' to be called 'Kurtuba' (Cordoba), which will become the *Jama'at's* main recruitment and training centre. Located 15 miles from the capital Islamabad, the project will give the *Jama'at* direct access to the political capital and considerable clout for staging more demonstrations, protests and sit-ins. The proximity of Kurtuba to Islamabad will also facilitate, and make more open, co-operation between the *Jama'at* and government agencies and personnel sympathetic to their cause. This marks the latest stage in the development of the *Jama'at-e Islami*, which has now become a truly mainstream party.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Lubeck, *Islam and Urban Labour in Northern Nigeria: The Making of a Muslim Working Class*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

During the time of Dr. Burhanuddin and Asri Muda (1950s–70s), PAS extended its influence all over the country via local networks — Asri Muda's favourite meeting places and recruitment centres were the coffee-shops and *suraus* that dot the urban landscape. From the 1980s, the ideologues of PAS have concentrated their efforts on the *madrasahs*, mosques and campuses of the country. Unlike the *Jama'at*, PAS has never adopted an élitist approach to Islamist politics: its message was sent out to the man in the street and, from the very beginning, PAS leaders preferred the face-to-face, down-to-earth approach. Cognisant that its appeal and natural support would come from the Malay-Muslims of the rural heartland, PAS has also been quick to note and exploit the internal contradictions and simmering tensions within rural Malay society. Since the 1950s, successive generations of PAS leaders have been able to present the party as the voice of the subaltern classes. Working on the collective insecurities and fears of the rural Malay peasantry in the 1950s and 1960s, PAS tried (along with the Malay leftist parties) to present itself as a viable and credible alternative to UMNO. While doing so PAS never really discarded its appeals to Malay communitarian interests, despite its outward rejection of ethno-nationalism which it condemned as un-Islamic.

Since the 1980s, PAS's image as the defender of Islam and Muslim concerns has been altered somewhat by the injection of a more radical and revolutionary rhetoric imported from Iran, but its identity as the party of choice for the downtrodden and marginalised has remained constant.

PAS understood that the prevailing circumstances in Malaysia would not allow for an open confrontation between the ordinary masses and the state. As James Scott has argued, anti-state and anti-systemic resistance in Malaysia has always been of the 'garden variety', employing time-tested and proven tactics such as gossip campaigns, boycotts, theft, foot-dragging and sabotage.<sup>8</sup> It was, as he puts it, a form of 'everyday resistance that made no headlines'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. 241.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Instead of adopting an openly confrontational approach (which might have introduced a moment of radical dislocation that would have jeopardised the sedimented value and belief system upon which PAS also depends), PAS leaders from Dr. Burhanuddin to the present *ulama* have rallied their followers and supporters around the banner of Islam and an alternative religio-centric moral-cultural vision of the future. Like their counterparts elsewhere in the world, the Malaysian Islamists turned to Islam and its rich discursive repertoire for a myriad of morally loaded symbols, values and tropes to weave together a discourse of resistance couched in a moral economy radically different from their opponents. By doing so, PAS was using Islam not only as a discourse of delegitimisation against the state, but also as a stamp of legitimacy for its own religio-political alternative. PAS's moral and cultural vision was thus not merely a critique, but also a map and grand design for a new political and cultural order that it wanted to build in the future. As Scott writes:

It is especially at the level of culture that a defeated or intimidated peasantry may nurture its stubborn moral dissent from an elite-created social order. This symbolic refuge is not simply a source of solace in a precarious life, not simply an escape. It represents an alternative moral universe in embryo — a dissident subculture, an existentially true and just one, which helps to unite its members as a human community and as a community of values. In this sense, it is as much a beginning as an end.<sup>10</sup>

However, this ability to tap into the collective wants of the masses and the discursive moral economy of Islam would not have been successful without the help of a dependable body of party leaders, functionaries and propagandists. PAS has been particularly good at understanding and exploiting traditional values and notions of leadership, charisma and status among the Malays. During the 1950s and 1960s, the party actively sought the support of Malay religious functionaries, teachers, vernacular Malay writers and the newly emerging rural business élite. They under-

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<sup>10</sup> James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976, p. 240.

stood that such figures wielded an enormous degree of psychosocial importance and influence in their own societies and that through them the message of PAS could be disseminated even more effectively to the Malay electorate. Pastoral care, rather than confrontational revolutionary tactics, had always been the preferred mode of ideological dissemination for the Islamist party.

However, the party never allowed its leaders to break or weaken their organic bonds to traditional Malay society. As seen in Chapters 2 and 3, the party issued guidelines to PAS leaders and propagandists, reminding them to 'dress down', maintain a humble demeanour and to stay close to the people. Even the wearing of leather shoes was frowned upon, at a time when many Malay farmers and peasants went around barefoot all day.

The cultivation of such close organic-pastoral relationships between PAS's middle-ranking leaders and their followers helped the party develop strong organic links with its natural constituency. This is the rare accomplishment of PAS; it is perhaps the only party in the country that has not distanced itself from its natural vote base despite its electoral successes. While UMNO allowed itself to become institutionalised and identified with the government, PAS remained a *political* party operating in and on the field. At no point in the party's history has it allowed a radical rupture that could sever its link to its followers. (The one exception perhaps being Asri Muda's decision to bring the party into the Alliance and then the *Barisan Nasional* — a move that proved highly unpopular with a large section of the party and which opened the way for the rise of other Islamist movements such as ABIM and *Darul Arqam*.)

The creation of such an integrated, organic and independent party-political organisation would not have been possible except for three vital factors.

First, PAS's pyramidal leadership structure was always based on a strict hierarchy and division of labour between the leaders and the followers. It is interesting to note that PAS has gone through at least four major shifts in its political-ideological approach. From the time of Dr. Burhanuddin to PAS's latest avatar as the defender of human rights and democracy, it was clear that the party leadership determined the orientation and approach of the party *in toto*. It also has to be noted that with the exception of the internal party

*coup* against Asri Muda in 1982, PAS has not experienced a major internal revolt. None of the splinter parties that have broken away from PAS have managed to survive either — an observation that is equally relevant for its nemesis UMNO.

No study of the historical development of PAS would be possible without a detailed analysis of the lives and personalities of its leaders. The post of party president is not just a position of leadership and responsibility in the party, for the president is the embodiment of the party itself and the orientation of PAS as a whole has always been determined by the president. PAS has been able to maintain this hierarchical mode of leadership because the party was led by men who practised what they preached. Throughout its history, PAS has never had leaders who kept aloof from the rank and file of the organisation. Their lifestyles proved to be modest, though their political ambitions were far greater. While interviewing PAS ex-presidents Ustaz Yusof Rawa and Dr. Abbas Elias between 1999 and 2001, the author noted that both men lived very ordinary lives. Yusof Rawa in particular was quite content to live in retirement in a simple single-storey residence in an ordinary neighbourhood in Penang. Similarly, in his interview with the present leader of PAS Tuan Guru Hadi Awang the author was shown, by his lifestyle and working habits, what an Islamic form of leadership could (and should) be like.

Second, PAS's success would not have been possible without the hard work and determination of the ordinary party members. From the beginning, PAS has survived mainly on the support and commitment of its members, who have provided the party with a steady stream of donations and voluntary work. With little to offer them save the promise of salvation in the hereafter (and a just world in the present), PAS leaders have been able to call upon their followers to make enormous sacrifices for the sake of the party.

Such commitment and dedication remains unmatched by any other party-political organisation in Malaysia. On several occasions, the author had the opportunity to compare PAS's mode of organisation with that of other parties — from 1998 to 2002, the author attended the general assemblies of PAS and UMNO. At all the PAS general assemblies, the indications of mass popular support were visible. PAS members voluntarily helped with the organisation of the event in whatever way they could: they cooked

and brought food; they acted as traffic stewards, crowd control stewards, medical aid stewards and information stewards — all party members serving on a voluntary basis. PAS members helped to set up stalls, bookstands, ushered guests and journalists. Never was there an official government presence — except for police and security forces there to monitor the event.

The UMNO assemblies were totally different. Traffic control was left to the police; catering was contracted out to the hotel; media coverage was given courtesy of the state-controlled television and radio services. After being in power for nearly half a century, UMNO gives the distinct impression of being a party no longer able to stand on its own two feet, without the crutches of state. (So deep was this dependency complex that it was raised by none other than the UMNO president, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, on a number of occasions.)

The third factor is the absence of state patronage and assistance. From 1951, PAS has had to develop on its own without state sponsorship. Even when it first came to power in Kelantan and Terengganu in 1959, PAS was handicapped by lack of federal government-allocated funds. While this may have allowed the UMNO-led federal government to allocate vital resources elsewhere, it also meant that PAS was forced to develop itself the hard way, learning self-reliance and independence. While the going was tough in the 1950s and 1960s (Chapters 1 and 2 describe how difficult it was for PAS leaders to secure funding and assistance from the Malay middle classes), by the late 1970s and 1980s PAS had inculcated the values of hard work, thrift and sacrifice. The Islamist party has always had to be careful with its limited funds and has therefore not wasted any on grand schemes and projects to beguile the masses.

A cursory survey of the political terrain in Kelantan and Terengganu would show that the party managed to make its presence felt through the most simple and low-key measures. While the UMNO-led federal government busied itself with a host of massive national construction and development projects, PAS activists in Kelantan and Terengganu were occupied with the building of simple bus stops and rest areas along the hot and dusty East Coast highway. While foreign investors and tourists may have been impressed by the government's 'mega-projects', it should be remembered that tourists are not voters, and it is the local constituency that

counts the most. PAS understood this, and their small-scale efforts proved their worth by paying out political dividends later.

By reaching out to the people and providing them with services catering to their immediate needs, PAS maintained a living presence in the Malay-Muslim heartland. The party also tried to formulate a viable and credible Islamist alternative to the secular developmental model that they opposed. All of these efforts were carried out and communicated via the medium of a vernacular Islamist political and ethical discourse intended to disarm the discourse of their opponents. It was also important that Islamic discourse was seen as being 'natural' and 'indigenous', as it helped PAS to present its project as a natural and inevitable return to roots and origins, the reconstitution of a broken cultural body dismembered by external political machinations.

For the first three decades of its existence, PAS's gains were checked by the advances of UMNO and the success of its developmental model. Things only began to change when the secular developmental model began to unravel, due to a number of local and external variable factors beyond the state's control.

### *Understanding PAS's Success: The Crisis of the Post-colonial Developmental Project*

Crisis describes the situation in which sedimented relations and practices become unsettled, when the unity of a certain discursive field becomes disarticulated. This leads to the disruption of routinisation. As the space for sedimented social relations shrinks, the terrain of undecidability expands. ... The expansion of undecidability precludes the possibility of deriving outcomes from that crisis. By definition, one cannot predict the undecidable.

Bobby Sayyid,  
*A Fundamental Fear:  
Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 24.

Bobby Sayyid has argued that the central aim of Islamism is to restore Islam's place as the central reference point for all social, cultural, economic and political life in Muslim society. In his words:

Islamism is a project that attempts to transform Islam from a nodal point in the discourses of Muslim communities to a master signifier. In particular, the Islamist project is an attempt to make Islam the master signifier of the political order.<sup>12</sup>

However, this is only possible if and when Islam is perceived to have been marginalised or reduced in its importance and significance by those who opt for a different approach to politics and government. Islamism in this sense is a restorative project, one that seeks to heal a rupture wrongfully and mistakenly introduced by agents and variable factors from elsewhere. During the 1920s and 1930s, when Islamism first began to gather strength, the Westernising and secularising élites were seen as the 'enemies of Islam' and agents of dislocation and rupture, as their policies had introduced the fatal division in the heart of the Muslim community. It is hardly a surprise that the towering figure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stood head and shoulders above the rest as the main instigator of the downfall of the Islamic political project — a dubious honour he holds till today.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> Sayyid has compared the policies of several modernising Muslim regimes and placed them all under the rubric of 'Kemalism'. He notes that Mustafa Kemal's modernising project in Turkey did not seek to eliminate Islam altogether, but rather to displace and re-configure it as the negative constitutive Other to the modernising project. Rather than remove or erase Islam's discursive presence, it was reinscribed as the source and cause of all that was wrong in Turkey prior to the ascendancy of Atatürk. Islam was described as 'the symbol of obscurantism', a 'purified corpse that poisons our lives', the 'enemy of science and civilisation', etc. (Ibid., p. 65). In the case of Iran during the time of the Pahlevi dynasty, a somewhat different tactic was used by the Shahs. Falling back on Iran's pre-Islamic past and Aryan heritage, the rulers of Iran tried to marginalise Islam's cultural and political position by presenting it as an external force that came with the Arab invasions of the Persian kingdom. Islam was represented as a

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For the Islamists, Islamism therefore marks a homecoming, a return to how things could be and ought to be. Here lies its emotive and moral appeal to Islamists as well as ordinary Muslims who may not be members of any Islamist party or organisation. To make its spectacular comeback, Islam needs to have an opposing force to confront and an obstacle to overcome. (One can hardly imagine an anti-climax worse than an unrecognised and unannounced comeback.) For this, Islamism requires a dialectical Other for the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness, to commence. More often than not, this constitutive Other happens to be secularism, but this was not always the case, and secularism was not seen as the enemy of Islam in the beginning. How and why did this come about?

As shown in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, the dialectical struggle between Islam and secularism was not a major feature of PAS politics during the 1950s–1970s, mainly because the party leadership simply did not regard secularism as the Other to PAS and its Islamist project. During the 1950s–1960s, many Islamist movements were also flirting with other secular oppositional movements. Dr. Abbas Elias and Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy were themselves products of a mixed education system and they did not see the secular educational system as inherently evil or anti-Islamic *per se*. It is also clear that Dr. Burhanuddin was an admirer of certain forms of secular politics, especially when directed against the main adversaries of the time: the forces of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. PAS in the 1960s was therefore a party relatively at ease with secularism and secular

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colonial mindset imposed by the Arabs on the Persians, and conformity with or to Islamic norms was recast as blind imitation of Arab ways (Ibid., p. 71). A similar approach was employed by the Baathist regime in Iraq, shortly after it came to power in the 1970s (Ibid., p. 72). Common to all these strategies was the attempt to create a new chain of equivalences which equated modernity with progress, science, rationality, development and change. Related to this was a corresponding chain of negative values that equated Islam with backwardness, obscurantism, stagnation and stasis. The net result was not to expel Islam from the sphere of civil society or popular discourse, but rather to retain it at the very periphery as the negative counterpart to the modernising project itself.

movements, provided they were prepared to work alongside PAS. For this reason, Dr. Burhanuddin and the Malay Islamist-nationalists of his generation could look up to the likes of Gamal Abdel Nasser and Soekarno, men who would now be ranked among the greatest 'enemies of Islam' by contemporary Islamists.

The discursive shift only took place in the 1970s, when it became clear that the post-colonial project in so many Muslim countries had reached a crisis point. Developments in Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Algeria, Libya and other countries showed that the post-colonial élite in these Muslim states were unable to carry out their revolutionary projects to the end. Corruption and compromise became the order of the day, as many post-colonial leaders succumbed to the temptation of living in now-vacant colonial palaces and the generous pay cheque offered by foreign (often Western) donor agencies. Nepotism became commonplace, and abuse of power was in time routinised. Crippled and burdened by both domestic and externally imposed ills, many post-colonial states began to flounder.

Linked to the failure of the post-colonial political élite was the failure of the institutions under their command. In many post-colonial Muslim societies the executive branch of the state grew in power and influence, reducing the legislature and judiciary to mere rubber stamps. The judiciary and legal process came in for a battering, as the ruling élite grew accustomed to the vice of selective persecution to get their way and to eliminate their political rivals and adversaries. Management and government of the state became an in-house affair, often kept in the hands of a single family. In countries like Pakistan, for instance, Muslim leaders such as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto even went as far as creating their own private police/security forces to serve their personal political agendas and settle vendettas against their opponents.<sup>14</sup> Even in

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<sup>14</sup> More than any Pakistani leader before him, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was responsible for destroying the country's bureaucracy and judiciary. He was obsessed with the idea of creating a civil service personally beholden to him. From 1971-74 he sacked up to 1,400 senior civil servants without giving due cause or reason. In 1973, he created his own para-military force, the Federal Security Force (FSF) which served as *continued p. 714*

Malaysia, the credibility deficit of the ruling élite had become painfully obvious by the 1960s. Writing in his *Malay Dilemma*, the future Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad noted:

... the Government, glorying in its massive strength, became contemptuous of criticisms directed at it either by the opposition or its own supporters. The gulf between the Government and the people widened so that the Government was no longer able to feel the pulse of the people or interpret it correctly. It was therefore unable to appreciate the radical change in the thinking of the people...<sup>15</sup>

Developments such as this could only serve to weaken the credibility of the government and the state apparatus, opening the way for the emergence and rise of anti-systemic forces in the country. With the gradual decline of the state institutions, the people were desperately on the look-out for alternatives.

As the crisis of postcolonial governmentality deepened, the sphere of contingency and undecidability expanded to engulf practically all avenues of government and law. There seemed no hope of finding a cure within the system, so those who were disillusioned merely looked beyond the frontier of the state. Here they found what they were looking for: an alternative value and belief system located radically outside the economy of governmental discourse. It was a system that had been marginalised and abandoned long ago, but its years in exile meant that it was uncontaminated by the evils that plagued the land. Though seen as out-of-date and irrelevant by many, its untimeliness and alterity made it seem so attractive. That alternative value and belief system was called Islam.

However, one cannot explain the phenomenal resurgence of Islam on local factors alone. While the internal contradictions

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his own 'fascist praetorian guard' (in the words of Roedad Khan). Bhutto claimed that the FSF was a back-up to the police and army, but in fact it was mainly used by him for political purposes — to eliminate the enemies of PPP. The FSF became the most notorious para-military force in the country, responsible for many cases of extra-judicial killings, kidnappings, torture and rape.

<sup>15</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, Singapore: Daniel Moore Asia Pacific Press, 1970; Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk, 1982, p. 15.

within the post-colonial Muslim state paved the way for Islam's return, the decline and fall of so many post-colonial Muslim states was also brought about by external variable factors beyond their control. Globalisation was therefore a major factor behind the demise of the secular developmental model, and it also played a decisive part in the rise and spread of Islamism across the world.

### *Understanding PAS's Success: Riding the Wave of Globalisation*

At a moment when the post-colonial nation-state has lost innumerable sovereign powers to neo-liberal global restructuring, Islamism has seized the popular imagination by capturing the mantle of anti-imperialist, populist nationalism in most Muslim majority states.

Paul M. Lubeck and Bryana Britts  
'Muslim Civil Society in Urban Public Spaces'<sup>16</sup>

It has often been said that the current rise of political Islam was aided and abetted by the forces of globalisation that have dominated the world over the past few decades. This is certainly true, but the truth is also far more complex than many of us would admit. Islamist movements have succeeded so well because they have harnessed the powers and capabilities of globalisation and closely tied themselves to its flow. Witness, for example, how PAS adapted itself to the latest developments in computer and communications technology — it was the first party in Malaysia to develop its own party website, on-line web TV (to make up for its lack of access to mainstream national media), internet chatrooms and on-line dialogue sessions, etc. Globalisation has also helped the rise of such movements by undermining the capabilities and power of states to govern themselves and to manage the internal structural tensions and rifts within their own societies.

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<sup>16</sup> Paul M. Lubeck and Bryana Britts, 'Muslim Civil Society and Urban Public Spaces: Globalisation, Discursive Shifts and Social Movements', in J. Eade and C. Mele (eds.), *Urban Studies: Contemporary and Future Perspectives*, London: Blackwell, 2001, p. 45.

Globalisation's heavy imprint on the growth of Islamism is seen in many ways. I have referred above to the discursive shift closer towards the Islamist register that has been seen in many Muslim societies. This was one of the axiomatic effects of globalisation as it made the world a smaller place and ruptured the boundaries of political geography, discursive economies and thought systems the world over. As Muslim societies experienced the (often dislocating) effects of culture shock and exposure to the West, they were exposed to the new currents of Islamist thinking gaining ground elsewhere. In the battle for hegemony and influence, both Islamist movements and Western political and economic interests were caught in a desperate battle for the hearts and minds of their new constituencies. What tipped the balance in favour of the Islamists was the failure of secular Muslim élites to deliver upon their promises and to demonstrate the worthiness of their secular developmental programmes.

However, it was globalisation that contributed the most to the failure of the secular developmental model in so many Muslim societies. Riding on the bandwagon of liberal-capitalist market reforms and structural adjustment policies, globalisation's impact was uneven and often traumatic. A swathe of Muslim countries — many with weak and dependent post-colonial economies already lagging behind in the development race — were forced to adjust to the economic realities of the day. This meant adopting developmental policies and strategies that contributed to the widening of the income gap; mass rural migration to already overcrowded cities; opening of the local market to predatory external agents, and removing the last vestiges of protectionism that offered some comfort for the marginalised and economically downtrodden.

The net result of globalisation was social instability, atomisation and the breaking down of the social contract between state and citizens, growing dependency on foreign capital and increased vulnerability and exposure to an international economy where might was right and only the strongest could survive. Little wonder that the rates of unemployment, overcrowding and uneven development grew sky-high almost overnight in many Muslim societies.

A new global Islamist cityscape was built in the urban spaces of Muslim states. The combined effects of mass rural migration, entry of illegal foreign workers, increased competition between locally

educated (and *madrrasah*-educated) Muslims and foreign educated élites and non-Muslims contributed to the growing tensions between different professional and occupational groups. Better educated, occupationally mobile and exposed to local and external currents of thought and ideas, these urbanised Muslims later made up the vanguard of the new Islamist wave in the same way that the *Kaum Muda* reformers of the 1920s and 1930s exploited the freedoms offered to them by the colonial cityscape.

Islamism, therefore, began as an urban phenomenon and developed within the cosmopolitan environment of the modern Muslim city. The battle for the future of Islam was fought between secular élites and the newly emerging defenders of political Islam who combined the discursive tools of Islamist ideology with the instruments of modern communication, mass mobilisation, networking and political organisation. It is not a coincidence that the current wave of global Islamism has been most visible in Muslim states with the highest urbanisation rate (see Table 7.1). It must be noted that the first major Islamist revolution in the world took place in Iran, one of the most urbanised Muslim countries in the world (50% in 1980).

As globalisation sweeps the globe and accelerates the urbanisation rate in Muslim city centres, a growing pool of surplus labour and disaffected youth will undoubtedly emerge. Coupled with the recent major demographic boom in the Muslim world, the signs are that Islamism will find itself a ready and receptive constituency at its very doorstep.

Islamist movements were quick to jump into the void created by the implosion and collapse of the post-colonial state. Funded in many cases by Saudi and other Arab donors and patrons, these movements quickly took up the social responsibilities that were once the prerogative of the state. In the process, they set up alternative education networks, communication and logistical infrastructure, local organic linkages as well as propagated their own brand of often conservative and oppositional Islamic politics. In time, Islamism emerged as the most vocal and visible force for counter-hegemonic and anti-systemic change in the world. In the words of Lubeck and Britts:

Islamism operates at a multiplicity of levels: it simultaneously envisions itself as a force for the revival of global Islamic unity, a movement to reform the territorially defined national state and a creator of

a moral economy in urban neighbourhoods. At a moment when the post-colonial nation state has lost innumerable sovereign powers to neo-liberal global restructuring, Islamism has seized the popular imagination by capturing the mantle of anti-imperialist, populist nationalism in most Muslim majority states. Therefore, due to the decline of other alternative visions, Islamism has emerged as the most powerful anti-systemic social force opposing Western-led globalisation especially since the collapse of the Soviet model. Viewed from the micro-level perspective of urban neighbourhoods, Islamism creates a diverse network of civil society groups delivering goods and services, each sharing an appealing cultural narrative claiming 'authenticity'.<sup>17</sup>

Seen in this light, Islamism became, in a sense, the Muslim world's response to corporate-sponsored globalisation emanating from the US and western Europe. As Bobby Sayyid writes: 'The rise of Islamism was only possible when the availability of Islam could be articulated into a counter-hegemonic discourse.'<sup>18</sup>

Ironically, the rise of PAS in Malaysia, the *Jama'at-e Islami* in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the *Ikhwan'ul Muslimin* in the Arab states would not have been possible without the help of the IMF, World Bank and Western multinational corporations (MNCs) that contributed to the breakdown of civil society and the secular state.

A simple example to support this claim is drawn from the Malaysian experience itself. By the early 1990s, the Malaysian government was clearly at the forefront of the globalisation process and consciously introducing a package of economic reform policies to open up the national economy and bring it in line with the neo-liberal economic philosophy that was the dominant paradigm in international economics and finance. One new policy was the corporatisation of local universities and institutions of higher education to create a more competitive education market and to ensure that such institutions could generate profits on their own.

The corporatisation of higher education in Malaysia was in keeping with the goals of economic structuring the world over. As in North America and western Europe where the state had opened the way for the privatisation and commercialisation of education, the economies of East Asia were following suit. The first university

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 73.

to corporatise was Universiti Malaya, in Kuala Lumpur, the oldest university in the country. So brazen was the corporatisation process that the university authorities even considered the prospect of allowing the American fast-food chain McDonalds to open an outlet on campus.<sup>19</sup>

The corporatisation policy effectively shifted the burden of payment and upkeep of the universities from the government to the students themselves. The move incurred the wrath and protests of thousands of Malaysian students, who overnight would have to pay for their education by securing loans from banks and state sponsors.

Coming at a time when locally educated Malaysian students were already facing stiff competition from their foreign-educated counterparts, the move merely added to their long list of concerns and worries. Job prospects were diminishing, and opportunities were few and far between. The rate of graduate unemployment was also rising, particularly among locally educated Malay-speaking graduates. By causing this major dislocation on campus the state had effectively alienated an entire generation of university students overnight. In time, student dissatisfaction was skilfully and effectively exploited by Islamist movements on campus, and the election of student leaders showed a massive swing in favour of PAS and the Islamist opposition. The student council election results of 1999-2002 all showed that an overwhelming majority of Malay-Muslim students still feel alienated and discriminated against by the government's education reform policies. This remains a trend till today, and PAS now has at its disposal a large and willing pool of graduates to tap in the future. This is an example of how market-induced structural reforms actually went against the state and played into the hands of the Islamist opposition in countries like Malaysia.

Corporatisation of higher education was merely a symptom of a wider trend of state withdrawal and the expansion of the market in globalising economies. However, as the example above illustrates, the drawing back of state borders does not mean that economic forces alone will come into the void and predominate, for there are

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<sup>19</sup> This move resulted in considerable public protest and after a heated public debate in the mainstream media, the authorities were finally forced to back down.

Islamist forces prepared to take up the challenge of local government and micro-management relinquished by the state. Globalisation has therefore eroded the power of the state and curtailed the scope of government, but it has also opened the way for a form of 'government from below' as Islamist movements, parties and groups come into the fray to compete with other market forces in the race to manage a society that has been left leaderless. As Lubeck and Britts have noted:

As the twin forces of structural adjustment and state withdrawal take their toll on urban living standards, the Islamists have seized the opportunity handed to them by global restructuring so as to employ graduates and professionals in their parallel social and economic service sector. Quite paradoxically, neo-liberalism's privatisation policy has buttressed the role of Islamist networks as providers of urban social services and charity.<sup>20</sup>

Islamism has an added advantage that Western-led market forces do not have — a moral economy to call its own. As the post-colonial Muslim state retreats and pulls back its borders, the battleground left open to the forces of the free market and Islamism is an uneven one. Western multinationals and foreign capital interests may enjoy the advantage of vast expertise and seemingly infinite resources, but they cannot compete with the Islamists' theocratic discourse with its promise of heavenly reward in the hereafter. In the long run it is this appeal to authenticity, moral purity and righteousness that will serve the *ummatic* aspirations of Muslims the most; a Big Mac from *Dar'ul Harb* may fill your stomach, but it won't deliver you to paradise.

Put together, these factors paint a different picture of the rise of PAS and its fortunes. I would argue that PAS has always been a complex and composite phenomenon, and its political success has been helped by both internal and external variable factors. PAS today is the single most powerful oppositional force in Malaysian politics and its hold on a vast section of the Malay-Muslim electorate cannot be underestimated or taken lightly (least of all by UMNO). However, though PAS is here to stay, there are still many who do not have the

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<sup>20</sup> Paul M. Lubeck and Bryana Britts, 'Muslim Civil Society and Urban Public Spaces', p. 57.

faintest clue of how to understand it, relate to it, dialogue with it and handle it. It is to that question that I shall now turn.

*How Not to Read PAS: Islamism Revisited*

Ultimately, for Muslims, Islam is another word for 'Goodness incarnate'. Thus, when Islamists claim that the best government is an Islamic government, here 'Islamic' refers to the incarnation of goodness, so that the claim becomes: the best government is good government. This is a claim that is difficult to refute directly, except by attacking the relation between Islam and the incarnation of goodness. But it is precisely at this point that Islam is strongest, because, for the majority of Muslims, Islam must be the definition of good.

Bobby Sayyid,  
*A Fundamental Fear:  
 Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*<sup>21</sup>

Islamism has, quite naturally, been seen as a direct political challenge to the state by Muslim governments the world over because Islamists wish to present themselves and their parties as a viable alternative to the present order (or disorder) of things. During the time of Fadzil Noor, PAS attempted to do just that. In the 1990s, it hoped to provide a counter-factual example to the UMNO development model through its experiments in social and political reconstruction and engineering in Kelantan. In the post-1998 crisis period, PAS assumed its latest avatar as the defender of human rights, democracy and constitutionalism in Malaysia. It was helped by the fact that party president Fadzil Noor was an ex-academic with a technocratic approach to Islam and politics. PAS was also aided by the entry of thousands of young Malay urbanised middle-class professionals who abandoned UMNO in the wake of the Anwar Ibrahim affair. Also, PAS's image as a credible alternative to UMNO was boosted by its instrumental alliance with DAP, PRM and PKN, making it a partner in a broad-based multireligious and multiracial alliance for the first time.

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<sup>21</sup> Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 48.

PAS's democratic experiment, however, was soon to run aground as the hard-liners within the party began to surface. The thorny issue of the Islamic state was brought back to the fore by less accommodative leaders like Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat and Tuan Guru Hadi Awang. Hadi Awang's Apostasy Bill — which called for the execution of Muslims who chose to leave their religion — added to PAS's image as a 'fundamentalist' party that had not abandoned its radical agenda. Then came 11 September and the political mêlée that ensued. PAS's open and vocal support for Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar and the *Taliban* effectively destroyed the party's image as a democratic movement dedicated to gradualist and pacifist change.

However, it is important to note that with the exception of a few major clashes in the 1980s (such as the killing of Ustaz Ibrahim Libya in Memali in 1985), PAS has kept within the law and the constitution safeguards of Malaysia. It is therefore important to appreciate that any attempt to deal with the challenge of PAS should begin by looking at the party itself and what it is. Only then can we chart a way into the future and think of how to relate to PAS in the post-Fadzil Noor era.

### *PAS under Hadi Awang: 'Fundamentalist Threat' or Voice of the Subaltern?*

With Hadi Awang as the leader of PAS and *de facto* leader of the opposition, PAS is even less likely to abandon its hard-line and uncompromising approach towards issues such as the Islamic state and *hudud* law. Long known for his confrontational posture, fiery rhetoric and combustible temperament, Hadi Awang is to Fadzil Noor what Lenin was to Marx, a practical (rather than theoretical) hands-on Islamist whose vision is set and whose determination is unquestionable.

However, it is imperative that we recognise PAS for what it is and give the party its due recognition. PAS's success, as already shown, is the result of its own hard work and dedication, rather than the product of violent struggle. To demonise PAS as some sort of 'fundamentalist menace' or, worse still, to link it to international terror networks and militant movements would be both fac-

tually inaccurate as well as politically counter-productive. PAS has expressed support for militant Muslim struggles elsewhere, in places such as Kashmir, Afghanistan, Patani and Mindanao, but that in itself does not make one a radical Islamist. (Likewise, American teenagers who sport Che Guevara T-shirts are not necessarily committed communists.)

Our contention here is that one major reason why no-one has been able to deal with the challenge of PAS is because few have actually understood it and what it stands for. Rather than engaging with the Islamist party, or more importantly addressing the social, cultural, economic and political concerns that have contributed to its rise, they have, instead, concentrated on destroying the party's standing by discrediting it and depicting it as a militant threat that it simply is not. While some mavericks and militants do exist in the party today, and have been linked to groups like *al-Maunah*, *Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia* and *Jama'ah Islamiyyah*, the overwhelming majority of PAS members are ordinary Malay-Muslims with ordinary wants and aspirations. Distorting the image of PAS merely contributes to the distortion of PAS's politics and, by extension, Malaysian politics. In a country that has remained blissfully free of radicalism for some time (in the wake of the communist insurgency during the Emergency), the demonisation of PAS would be a great disservice to Malaysia and Malaysians, particularly if it ends up creating a monstrous entity that will eventually slip out of control.

Furthermore, the UMNO-led government should realise that by persecuting PAS it also risks the prospect of creating even more martyrs and heroes for a party forever on the lookout for more idols to place in its pantheon of fallen leaders. As Ayatollah Khomeini once said, 'the martyr is the essence of history'.<sup>22</sup> The killing of PAS leaders like Ibrahim Libya (in 1985) and the arrest and detention of PAS leaders in 1987 and 1988 may have helped to cool down political tensions set to boil over at the time, but they also helped to shift the party towards a more radical agenda and discursive register.

The bottom line is that PAS has managed to tap into the groundswell of discontent and frustration of the Malays. A political

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<sup>22</sup> Cited in *The Sunday Times*, 13 April 1980. (Dilip Hiro, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, London: Pelican Press, 1988, p. 168.)

misdiagnosis would risk taking PAS and the country along the wrong path of action, contributing to the radicalisation of PAS and Malaysian politics in general, harming the country's image and credibility at home and abroad. The net result is that a crisis of potentially catastrophic proportions may be created by accident, but this is simply too high a price to pay for negligence and lack of proper intelligence.

*Ending the Islamisation Race: The Need for a Different Voice of Islam in Malaysia*

Related to the demonisation of PAS's image is the misunderstanding of its message and demands. Thus far, the UMNO-led government has assumed that the vote-swing in PAS's favour has been a genuine swing in favour of Islamisation and the Islamic state. As a result, the other arm of UMNO's strategy is to out-Islamise PAS by creating an Islamisation programme of its own. This has led to the introduction of Islamic laws and regulations, expansion of the Islamic bureaucracy and empowerment of religious authorities in Malaysia — all of which have contributed to the narrowing of discursive space in the country in general and the Malay-Muslim community in particular.

Examples abound of UMNO's ill-conceived initiatives to out-Islamise PAS. In 2000, the UMNO-controlled state of Perlis passed the Perlis Aqidah Protection Bill, which would have granted the state religious authorities the power to take criminal proceedings against Muslims accused of heresy, deviation or other 'crimes' related to their beliefs (see Appendix II). The bill provided for the creation of 'faith rehabilitation centres' where those accused would be kept for a period of up to one year, and would be 'brought back' to the proper fold of Islam. Those assessed as unredeemable would have been declared apostates and would have lost their rights as Muslims.

That such a bill could have been passed at all is shocking, to say the least. That it was passed in a state controlled by UMNO shows that UMNO's own thinking and understanding of Islam has hardly progressed any further than PAS's. (PAS's apostasy bill would have called for the death penalty for apostates.) As Shanti Nair has

argued, the Islamisation race between PAS and UMNO has not contributed to the opening of the Muslim mind in Malaysia, but rather restricted it even further. As the two parties continue to raise the stakes in the race, they have effectively blurred the distinction between their respective approaches and interpretations, leading to a fusion of visions and objectives in which the stand on Islam of PAS and UMNO seem almost identical: 'An analysis of UMNO's position on the place of Islam in Malaysia might easily draw the conclusion that the party has moved from being a moderate-Muslim party to a radical one — what were once considered to be extreme demands by PAS now in fact constitute government policy.'<sup>23</sup>

A careful and studious analysis of PAS's Islamisation programme that helps us understand how and why it has attracted the attention and support of the Malay-Muslim community is needed. This can be done by considering the impact of the PAS *hudud* proposals that have recently become a public concern.

One of the largest and longest-running PAS controversies is the question of *shariah* law and its stated aim of implementing *hudud* punishments should it ever come to power in the country. This controversy goes back to the 1990s, when PAS first tabled the Kelantan *hudud* bill after it came to power and elected Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat as Chief Minister. PAS was not short of supporters for its *hudud* bill. It was also not short of opponents; many criticised the bill and also the party on a number of grounds. PAS's political opponents labelled the *hudud* bill a political gimmick, while women's groups attacked it on the grounds that it was discriminatory towards Muslim women in particular. The *hudud* bill was also a main cause of the internal divisions within the beleaguered *Barisan Alternatif*, and ultimately became the reason why DAP broke away from the tenuous instrumental coalition. The tabling of the PAS *hudud* bills, first in Kelantan and then in Terengganu, has therefore incurred a considerable political cost to PAS.

Though PAS's opponents have lamented the party's inability and reluctance to compromise on the *hudud* issue, the Malaysian

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<sup>23</sup> Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysia's Foreign Policy*, p. 43.

case is far from unique. Other Islamist movements and parties have tried to force their way when implementing their own versions of the *shariah*, with varying degrees of success. In Pakistan, Islamist parties like the *Jama'at-e Islami*, *Jamiat'ul Ulema-i Islam* and *Jamiat'ul Ulema-i Pakistan* managed to move the state apparatus closer towards the *shariah* by simply shifting the discursive centre of Pakistani politics closer towards the Islamic register. In other countries like Nigeria and Sudan, introduction of *shariah* law led to heightened conflicts within the Muslim community itself, as well as inter-religious conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>24</sup>

To expect PAS to surrender the *hudud* gauntlet would be naïve to say the least. PAS — as a political party schooled in the mores and norms of political contestation — knows that the *hudud* issue is one of the best tools it has at its disposal. Operating with the full knowledge that the UMNO-led government will probably never compromise on this highly sensitive and emotionally loaded issue, PAS has been able to use *hudud* as one of its most effective weapons to weaken the resolve and tarnish the government's Islamist credentials. The utility of PAS's *hudud* bill (at least up to late 2002 before Tuan Guru Hadi Awang became its president) was that it would never come to pass. PAS's leaders probably suspect — rightly — that the federal government will never allow any PAS

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<sup>24</sup> *Shariah* law was introduced in Nigeria on 17 October 1999 by Governor Ahmed Yani Yerima of Zamfara state. The Zamfara *Shariah* bill, which took effect on 27 January 2000, extended the scope of *shariah* law from personal law to criminal law; this was seen as an attack on the country's constitution. Eleven other northern Nigerian states with predominantly Muslim populations soon followed suit. In Kaduna state, the move to pass its own *shariah* bill led to protests and confrontations between Muslims and Christians. A number of mosques and churches were destroyed, and scores of Muslims and Christians were killed. In the following weeks, the violence increased, leading to widespread arson and murder. Muslim and Christian neighbourhoods were destroyed by mobs led by religious leaders. The Nigerian government was finally forced to intervene when the violence spread to predominantly Christian parts of the south, where Christian groups began attacking Muslims whom they accused of killing their co-religionists in the north.

state government to actually implement any of the *hudud* punishments, which ironically saves PAS from the embarrassment of having to actually chop off hands and feet, whip and stone people to death in public.

From a political scientist's point of view, the *hudud* issue has to be one of the most effective discursive and ideological tools that PAS has had in its formidable arsenal. *Shariah's* pivotal status in the economy of Islamic theological-legal discourse has elevated it to the status of the holy grail of many an Islamist movement. Many Islamist parties locate and identify themselves according to their commitment to the implementation of *shariah* law. (The question of whether their respective experiments with *shariah* actually live up to the ideals and principles of justice and equity so important to Islam invariably lags further behind.)

In the midst of the controversies that have overtaken many Muslim societies today, the question of how and why *shariah* has become so popular has been completely overlooked. Lest we forget, *shariah* is not a new development in Islam; its formulation dates back to the beginnings of Muslim civilisation, and during the golden age of Islamic civilisation it was developed to the level of a sophisticated science. It should also be noted that for centuries *shariah* was not seen as a crucial element that would somehow fill the psycho-social void within the Muslim *ummah*.<sup>25</sup>

The demand for *shariah* should therefore be located in the moment when Muslim societies began to experience their political, economic and cultural decline. It was in the late 19th century that demands for religious revival and Muslim solidarity were first heard in the Muslim world. Muslim modernists and reformers first

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<sup>25</sup> The Ottoman dynasty, for instance, managed to thrive and prosper for seven centuries with a clear and neat division between religion and state at its core. The offices of the *Vazir* (Prime Minister) and *Sheikh'ul Islam* (head of the religious community) were both under the control of successive Ottoman Sultans who kept their feet in both worlds. Likewise, in Moghul India Islam served as the mainframe upon which the empire was constructed, but this was also a Muslim dynasty that compartmentalised itself into distinct secular and religious spheres. *Shariah* was never an issue in these cases.

brought *shariah* back to the centre stage of Muslim politics, seeing it as the remedy to the social ills of Muslim society and presenting it as the framework for the new Islamist project they proposed. (The traditionalist Muslims were quite happy to live with the division between religion and state introduced by the Western colonial powers, as it suited their own interests perfectly well.) The Muslim modernists and reformers saw in the *shariah* a ready-made discursive economy that could be effectively utilised to create organic linkages with the Muslim polity which would, in turn, pave the way towards political mobilisation and the creation of modern political movements. Many of those who turned to the *shariah* as a vehicle for political organisation found their efforts did not go unrewarded; in time a host of Islamist parties and movements all over the world emerged, many openly committed to a return to the *shariah* and the reconstruction of the Islamic state.

The other factor that has contributed to the growing demand for *shariah* is the failure of many post-colonial Muslim states, a factor that has often been bracketed out of the discussion by *shariah's* opponents.

What is often forgotten is that for millions of ordinary Muslims the world over *shariah* not only has the stamp of legitimacy, it is also a legal system that has had a direct and relevant impact on their lives. In many of the predominantly Muslim colonies of the West, the division between civil and religious law meant the creation of local *shariah* and/or customary courts where justice was delivered immediately. Muslim peasants and workers from Morocco to Indonesia did not have to travel all the way to the colonial capital to have justice delivered to them; the local *shariah* court — sponsored and regulated by the colonial state apparatus — was always on hand to deliver judgements on the day itself. The fact that ordinary Muslims did not have to engage lawyers (and thus incur heavy costs); that they knew the verdict even before the judgement was pronounced and that the system seemed consistent, open and reliable meant that *shariah* courts enjoyed a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of many Muslims.

In the post-colonial period, practically every newly independent Muslim state embarked on extensive and impressive development initiatives. The modernising programmes of Ayub Khan of

Pakistan, Soekarno of Indonesia and Nasser of Egypt were expected to deliver the bounties that independence had promised the people. Malaysia was the same, from the time of Tunku Abdul Rahman onwards. However, the failure of so many modernising programmes, coupled with the creeping culture of corruption, nepotism, abuse of power and authoritarianism in so many Muslim states pointed to the failure of secularising élites and their ideologies. As their hopes and dreams were dashed on the hard rocks of *realpolitik*, Muslims began to look for alternatives and the Islamists were there to provide them with one: the *shariah* and the Islamic state.

To understand the appeal of PAS's *hudud* proposals today, one would therefore have to look at the corresponding failure of its counterpart, the civil legal system. PAS has always called for the creation of an Islamic state and the introduction of *shariah* law in the country (though the party's own understanding of what such an Islamic state would look like has changed over the years, from the time of Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy to Asri Muda to Yusof Rawa and the present generation of *ulama* leaders). For the first four decades of its history, PAS made little gains in the *shariah* issue. Only from the 1990s has PAS made *shariah* its main weapon against the UMNO-led government, and with some success.

That this shift took place at a time when Malaysians were exposed to a string of major corporate and political scandals could not be a simple coincidence. As the scandals grew in scale as well as number, the public's faith in the civil legal system was pushed to the limit as more and more corporate misdemeanours were brushed under the carpet or kept under wraps. The constitutional crisis of 1982–83, the UMNO legal battle of 1987, the constitutional crisis of 1991–93, the financial crisis of 1997 and the 'Anwar Ibrahim' crisis of 1998 all contributed to the steady erosion of public confidence in not only the ruling coalition, but also the institutions of state such as the police, legislature and judiciary.

Faced with stark realities, it is hardly surprising if so many of the younger generation of Malay-Muslims have given up with the secular developmental model. Though this does not pretend to be an exhaustive analysis, one can tentatively conclude that one of the main reasons why *shariah* law and *hudud* have become so popular among many Malay-Muslims is the failure of the secular option.

The solution to the 'problem' (if it merits being described as such) is to restore the integrity and credibility of the civil legal apparatus itself. Rather than demonising PAS's *shariah* project and engaging in an endless debate about the religious credentials of 'PAS's *hudud*' or 'UMNO's *hudud*', it would be simpler to reform the civil legal system in the country so that once again it does what it is meant to do: mete out justice in an open, fair and consistent manner according to the fundamental principles of the Malaysian constitution.

The UMNO-PAS debate over *shariah* law, *hudud* punishments and the Islamic state have to be located in the political context of the struggle. This debate has been highly political in nature from the very beginning. The question, however, is trying to understand PAS's own approach to politics and *what kind of politics* PAS is trying to put into place.

*Where is the Politics in All This?*  
*The Anti-politics of PAS's Islamic State*

The desire to expunge contestability from the terms of political enquiry expresses a wish to escape politics.

William E. Connolly,  
*The Terms of Political Discourse*<sup>26</sup>

From the day it was formed, PAS has called for the setting up of its model of an Islamic state in Malaysia, but few have seriously asked what PAS's Islamic state is meant to accomplish and what are its aims and intentions.

As seen in the previous chapters, PAS's idea of an Islamic state has been constantly evolving and adapting itself to suit the needs of the times. In the 1980s and early 1990s, PAS's Islamic state was one that would effectively reverse the constitutional set-up of the Federation of Malaya, reducing Parliament to a rubber stamp while the true locus of power would be the shura council com-

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<sup>26</sup> William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1974, p. 213.

prised of the party's chosen *ulama*. Such an Islamic state would have made it virtually impossible for any non-Muslim to lead the country, and it would have had serious repercussions for women, minorities and minors whose standing and status within the new order would have been significantly compromised. In the late 1990s, PAS's Islamic state went through another major revision, as the party's ideologues busied themselves with the task of reinventing the party's image as the new defender of human rights, democracy and constitutionalism in Malaysia. Be that as it may, PAS's stand on other related issues such as *shariah* law and *hudud* punishments has remained constant over the past two decades at least.

Despite the changes in PAS's own complicated politics, few have cared to comment on the understanding of politics within PAS itself. As a political party, PAS has used the political process to bring about a paradigm shift to the political culture of the country. But what does this change signify?

Like many other contemporary Islamist movements the world over, PAS's project of creating an Islamic state in Malaysia is intimately linked to its own understanding of politics and the political process itself. Many of PAS's critics have claimed that the party's Islamist project and model of an Islamic state has a streak of authoritarianism running through it. They have cited examples of post-revolutionary Iran, Sudan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan as cases where the Islamist project has encountered difficulties and where Islamist regimes have been guilty of human rights abuses and an over-centralisation of power, in the hands of the *ulama* in particular. While it is undeniable that the abuse of power and religious authority in some of these states is simply too obvious to ignore or deny, it is nonetheless important to have a deeper understanding of what the Islamist project itself has tried to achieve.

Darius Rejali's study of the relationship between the citizen-subject, society and the state in post-revolutionary Iran is a good example of such a balanced analysis.<sup>27</sup> He correctly points out that the revolutionary government of Iran was concerned more with

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<sup>27</sup> Darius Rejali, *Torture and Modernity*, 1994.

the need to reconstruct society from within and bring about a new form of religio-politics that reconciled the needs of government with the demands of moral economy. Rejali notes that 'the problem' that Islamist movements and governments face 'is not to seize power, but (how) to *make* power'. The Islamist project should, therefore, be seen as something far more ambitious than its detractors would claim: Islamists do not simply want to take over the governmental apparatus, but to reinvent it all over again.

This point has been expanded and analysed further by Armando Salvatore in his outstanding work *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*.<sup>28</sup> Employing a Habermasian approach that identifies in Islamism a move towards the establishment of an integrated, all-encompassing, self-referential and self-explanatory order of knowledge and power, Salvatore argues that the Islamist project is itself a product of Islam's encounter with modernity and an episode in the modern project itself. Rather than dismiss political Islam as a search for lost origins or a false asylum, Salvatore sees in Islamism a conscious attempt to restore a sense of order and balance in dislocated (and often dysfunctional) Muslim societies caught between narrow traditionalism and modernity.

But what kind of order (both political and epistemological) is being yearned for here? If the Islamist project is one of reconstruction and reform with the aim of setting up a new order in the here-and-now, what are the shades and contours of this order to come?

Before even attempting to ask such a question, we need to clear away some of the misunderstandings and misperceptions that have become normalised and sedimented of late. The claim that Islamism is somehow dedicated to the creation of authoritarian regimes and despotic modes of rule has to be seriously interrogated and criticised for the fallacy that it is. The plain truth is that the modern political project itself marks a moment towards governmentality, centralisation and control, and that there exists no modern state or political order in the world that can do away with governmentality. A cursory overview of the development of

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<sup>28</sup> Armando Salvatore, *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*, Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 1997.

Western political theory will show that practically every major Western political theorist has grappled with the same issues and concerns that plague the Islamists of today, and that there exist a number of commonalities in terms of their approach and concerns: from Thomas Hobbes to Karl Marx, the central question of Western political thought has been how to justify the chains that bind men rather than having to do away with them.

Hobbes opted for what Connolly refers to as the 'politics of divine containment', where the central aim of government was to create an egalitarian social order and where dissent (particularly over questions of religious dogma and orthodoxy) would be foreclosed.<sup>29</sup> In Hobbes' model of the ideal Commonwealth captured in his *Leviathan* (1641), the sovereign would rule as God's head prefect on earth, ensuring that the boundaries of discursive economies, social norms and political activity would not be transgressed. This, in many ways, is similar to the concern of some Islamist movements who see *shariah* law and *hudud* punishments as a means to keep society in line rather than an active force that can be used to interfere directly in the private lives and spaces of citizen-subjects. (One is, of course, not suggesting here that Hobbes was the ideological founder of *Taliban* — but only that such common concerns can be traced between Islamist movements and their Western counterparts over the centuries.)

Traces of the Islamists' overriding concern for moral values and public virtues can also be found in the ideas of Western thinkers like Rousseau.<sup>30</sup> In the same way that Rousseau hoped to justify the citizen's forced membership to the common citizenry by emphasising both the obligations and benefits of civic culture, so Islamists today emphasise the benefits of membership to the Muslim moral-political community. If this in turn opens the way for the creation of a docile and submissive citizenry, one should add that such an emphasis on the domestication of society is certainly not unique to Islam or the Islamist project. The challenge

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<sup>29</sup> William E. Connolly, 'Hobbes: The Politics of Divine Containment', in *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.

<sup>30</sup> William E. Connolly, 'Rousseau: Docility through Citizenship', in *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.

that stood before Rousseau (as it stands before the Islamists of today) is to find the means to morally justify such social bondage and submission to the greater will of the community as a whole.

Indeed, when one compares the ideas of Western political thinkers of the past and contemporary Islamists, a host of common concerns come to the fore: the need to find a justification for social ordering, policing and government; the need to root their projects in some teleological or eschatological formula; the need to locate the political moment of the present on some grander stage that transcends the confines of the mundane and profane. Hobbes thought he had found the answer in Reason, Rousseau found his solution in the state of Nature, while Hegel found his refuge in the rationalisation of the Spirit. In all these cases, the master signifier 'God' has been transplanted and grafted on various other values (Reason, Nature, Spirit) in a number of ways, as the final seal that would guarantee their success.<sup>31</sup> That practically all of the major Western thinkers had to resort to some way or another of re-introducing the divine function into the modern political process is proof that the presence of a transcendental component — as master signifier — was required to keep their grand narratives intact. That Islamist movements and ideologues of today resort to the same should not therefore strike us with surprise, suspicion or horror. The real question is what is this divine presence meant to achieve or secure with respect to the Islamist project today?

As shown in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, PAS's understanding of the Islamic state is one based on the premise that theirs is a model of government and social management ordained by God and thus a manifestation of divine will and manifest destiny. In this respect, PAS is no different from other contemporary Islamist movements that base their political claims on references to God or the divine origins of their political project. The often-stated assertion by PAS leaders like Tuan Guru Nik Aziz, Tuan Guru Hadi Awang and

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<sup>31</sup> As Connolly writes: '(The moderns) killed the God who could ground an entire way of life in common injunctions and assurances. When previous understandings of God's hand in the world wilted, early modern thinkers tried to enliven them by transplanting God into Reason, or Nature, or Spirit or the Subject.' (William Connolly, 'Hobbes', p. 137).

(now deceased) party president Ustaz Fadzil Noor that their Islamic state has its origins in divine will is a discursive strategy with which students of political Islam would be familiar.

My intention here is not to engage in an inquiry into the moral and theological basis of such claims, but rather to consider the intended political and discursive effects they are meant to produce. By appealing to God and divine will as the basis of their political project, Islamists like the leaders and ideologues of PAS are effectively trying to foreclose the possibility of critique and interrogation of their political project. Simply put, by claiming that they are merely carrying out God's work on earth, PAS's leaders have denied their own agency and responsibility for their political project while also closing it off from further contestation and enquiry.

This desire to close down avenues of critique and enquiry marks the moment of closure in the modern Islamist project, and the gesture performed by PAS has been enacted by countless other Islamist movements and parties world-wide. By doing so, the Islamist project is presented as a fixed, complete and irreversible project that has to be accepted *in toto*. As Sayyid notes:

Islamism is attempting to replace one set of meta-narratives with another. ... Islamism is presented with all the certainty of a meta-narrative. The content of Islamist discourse is replete with grand claims and essentialist categories marshalled in an uncompromising language.<sup>32</sup>

This in part explains the preponderance of other related concerns, such as the quest for a politics of authenticity, nostalgia and pure origins that we see so clearly in the language of PAS from the 1980s onwards. The use of the discourse of *takfir* and other forms of confrontational politics which appeared in PAS circles from that time also contributed to the hardening of boundaries and helped to shore up the distinction between the Islamists and those outside or opposed to their project. The net effect was to give Islamism clearer frontiers and margins, and a more identifiable presence on the Malaysian political scene.

The closure of the grand narrative of Islamism also marks the end of the political moment in politics as it denies or forecloses the

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<sup>32</sup> Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp. 117–118.

possibility of critique, interrogation, revision and renovation of the project and also its fundamental ideas. That Islamists in particular would like to arrest and end the moment of the political in Islamist politics is understandable, considering the plasticity and over-determined nature of the signifier 'Islam' itself.<sup>33</sup> But this also means closing the doors of *ijtihad*, conceptual revision and renovation from within — which some like Connolly have argued is an indispensable component of the process of political change itself.<sup>34</sup>

This, then, is the real objective of PAS's grand political and ideological project: to bring to an end the moment of political contestation in politics itself and to create a radically new socio-political order where stability, harmony and peace are achieved at the cost of alterity, difference and the freedom of interpretation. Like the *Leviathan* of Hobbes, the Islamic state that is the dream of PAS and other contemporary Islamist movements seeks to restore order to society by arresting it at the same time, on all levels — social, ideological, discursive and epistemological. It is a political programme inherently anti-political in nature and intent, one that seeks to use politics as a weapon against itself. The end result of this struggle to banish political contes-

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<sup>33</sup> Sayyid has noted the elasticity of the concept of 'Islam' and how it serves the cause of the Islamist project so well: 'Islam has emerged as the means of articulating a multiplicity of positions without losing its specificity. That is why, when much of the literature complains about the emptiness of the Islamist programmes and the malleability of Islamic symbols, it is missing the point. What is extraordinary about Islam is that, although it can be used to articulate so many divergent positions, it maintains its specificity — it remains 'Islam'.' (Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 44).

<sup>34</sup> Connolly has argued that conceptual revision, though not a sufficient condition for political change, is nonetheless an indispensable part of it. As he argues: 'Conceptual revision is involved in any political strategy that aims at reconstituting social life in modest or in radical ways. Without forgetting that the process of conceptual revision does not work in isolation from other factors, it is nevertheless a profoundly important dimension of politics itself. More generally, without a proliferation of conceptual contests, politics, with its complex blend of pressure bounded by civility, its tensions, and its relatively open horizons, would wither and dissipate.' (William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse*, p. 204).

tation from the political arena is, as Connolly argues, the marginalisation of the political to the point of insignificance:

The desire to expunge contestability from the terms of political enquiry expresses a wish to escape politics. It emerges either as a desire to rationalise public life, placing a set of ambiguities and contestable orientations under the control of a settled system of understandings and priorities; or as a quest to moralise public life thoroughly, bringing all citizens under the control of a consensus which makes politics marginal or unimportant.<sup>35</sup>

The anti-political nature of Islamist politics explains how and why Islamists are so determined to close the avenues for conceptual revision and inquiry, and why the discourse of Islamism is replete with discursive strategies intended to foreclose the possibility of critique. For it is only when such discursive strategies are employed that the grand narrative of the Islamist project can get off the ground, and the story of a pure, authentic and unadulterated Islamic state can be told. Having said that, however, there remains one other crucial question that has to be asked: what is *Islamic* about the Islamist project of PAS?

### *Where is the Islam in All This?*

#### *PAS as a Fundamentally Political Party*

The *Qur'an* is a teaching primarily interested in producing the right moral attitude for human action. The *correct* action, whether it be political, religious or social, it considers to be *'ibada*, or in 'the service of God'. The *Qur'an* therefore emphasises all these moral tensions and psychological factors that generate the right frame of mind for action.

Fazlur Rehman,  
*Islam*<sup>36</sup>

Having asked the question of what is the politics of PAS, it is only appropriate for us to also ask what is specifically *Islamic* about the

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>36</sup> Fazlur Rehman, *Islam*, 2nd edn., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 241.

Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party. After all, an Islamist party cannot hope to base its Islamist credentials only on its name. In an age where popular Islamism has spawned an expansive commercial culture replete with goods and services that carry the 'made in Islam' tag — ranging from 'Islamic shampoo' to 'Islamic pop', such qualifications are even more necessary if we are to distinguish the genuine product from the bootleg copy. An Islamist movement or party has to show how its own approach to politics and government differs from other movements that it considers to be un-Islamic (or even anti-Islamic) and it has to live up to certain Islamic criteria and norms of *adab* and *akhlak*. It is here where one separates the men from the boys, and the Islamists from the charlatans and carpetbaggers.

It remains a peculiar feature of contemporary academic scholarship on political Islam that much of the focus so far has been on the political dimension of Islamism rather than its theological dimension. This is odd to say the least, considering some of the aberrations and deviations witnessed of late among the various Islamist movements, parties and governments that dot the landscape of the contemporary Muslim world. Failure to do so means robbing ourselves of an important analytical tool that would help us differentiate the truly Islamic movements from the ones that are Islamic in name only. We also put ourselves at risk of lumping together a broad band of movements and organisations under the general heading of political Islam.

In his last speech before his death, Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani — one of the spiritual and intellectual founders of the 1979 Iranian revolution — warned of the dangers of religious extremism and the harm that might be done when religious functionaries are given near-total control of the state apparatus. Citing the example of the politicised clergy in western Europe during the Middle Ages, Ayatollah Taleqani warned his followers about the dangers of allowing religious functionaries to govern alone, unaided and unhindered by other sections of civil society. He also cautioned the newly emerging nation of the dangers of *takfir* and intra-Muslim conflict, lest it render the claims and achievements of the revolution hollow in the end:

We have not yet recognised the goal of Islam. We all talk about the Islamic revolution, (but) ask yourselves, what is the goal of Islam? This group, that group, 'they curse one another' (*Qur'an, Surah*

29: 25). This one contradicts that one, this one calls that one deviationist. But we have not yet recognised what Islam demands, what Islam is.<sup>37</sup>

Ayatollah Taleqani's warning remains as relevant today as when it was first uttered in 1979. For it is clear that many of the Islamist movements that have emerged all over the world in the past century have introduced new concepts, innovations and ideas that go against the central tenets of faith, conduct and ethics in Islam. Quite often, the history of Islam has been distorted and re-represented in ways that suit the political agendas of the movements themselves. The ideologues of the *Jama'at-e Islami*, for instance, have claimed that the first *Jama'at* was formed by none other than Prophet Muhammad in Mecca<sup>38</sup> — an example of how Islamists have 'folded time' in their quest for a politics of authenticity. Such a statement would be comparable to the claim by the *Murshid'ul Am* of PAS, Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat that the *ceramah* (public gatherings) of PAS began at the time of the Prophet himself.

The search for an authentic Islamic polity has often also taken a turn towards nostalgia, as witnessed by the short-lived *Taliban* experience in Afghanistan. By banning Western music and popular culture, denying Muslim women the right to education and a public role in life, and imposing a strict and narrow Wahhabi-inspired understanding of *shariah* law and *hudud* punishments, the leaders and ideologues of *Taliban* believed that they were restoring to Islam the purity and authenticity it had lost over the past millennium. The net result, as we have seen, was an unmitigated disaster for both the regime and the people they ruled.

While Western critics and opponents of such movements have often pointed to the abuse of human rights and authoritarian

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<sup>37</sup> Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani's last sermon (1979), translated by Charles Kurzman. From *Majmu'eh-e goftar-e Pedar Taleqani*, Tehran: Mujahedin-e Khalq-e Iran, 1979, p. 53.

<sup>38</sup> See, for instance, the writings of Na'im Siddiqi, an ideologue of the *Jama'at-e Islami* of India and Pakistan. In *Muhsin-i-azam*, his biography of the Prophet Muhammad, Na'im went as far as claiming that the *Jama'at* has its origins in the early Muslim community of Mecca, when under the leadership of the Prophet.

systems they have erected in the name of religion, few of their detractors have bothered to question the Islamic credentials of the movements themselves. For it has to be remembered that apart from the blatantly abusive and divisive nature of the politics of *Taliban* and their ilk, many of their activities and actions have also been contrary to the spirit and morality of Islam. Here I would like to raise such concerns in relation to some of the practices and tactics that have been employed by PAS in particular.

### *Takfir and Dialectics: The Ethics of Political Contestation in Islam*

One of the defining features of PAS politics since the 1980s has been its use and reliance on the discourse of *takfir* as a political tool against its opponents. As shown in the previous chapters, the entry and subsequent employment of the discourse of *takfir* is a fairly new development in the history of PAS. Though traces of it already existed in the 1970s, *takfir* only became a prominent feature of PAS politics after the rise of the 'ulama faction' in 1982. For the first three decades of its existence, PAS's mode of political opposition was one based on its ideological and political differences with its opponents. PAS leaders such as Dr. Abbas Elias, Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy and Asri Muda were more inclined to criticise their UMNO counterparts on the grounds that the latter were either too pro-Western or had failed to serve the communitarian interests of the Malay-Muslims in the country.

From the early 1980s, however, a visible discursive shift to the *takfir* register could be seen. Beginning with Tuan Guru Hadi Awang's opening salvo — his infamous *amanat* — the discourse of *takfir* slowly but surely worked its way into the language and thinking of PAS. The most extreme proponent of this tactic was Ustaz Ibrahim Libya, whose open attacks and defiance of the state authorities eventually cost him his life in 1985.

*Takfir* remains a central pillar of PAS's oppositional strategy. Right up to the 1999 election and the by-elections in 2001 and 2002, PAS leaders were at the forefront of accusing their opponents of being 'secular', 'Westernised' and 'nominal' Muslims. The PAS propaganda machine remains fully employed around the clock, churning

out numerous leaflets, posters and audio-visual tapes of the speeches of PAS leaders condemning their opponents as *kafir*, *munafikin*, westernised orientalists, Zionist agents and enemies of Islam. During the Pendang and Anak Bukit by-elections in July 2002, PAS leaflets carried an image of Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad with his head superimposed on the figure of a Christian priest. Over the years, PAS's use of *takfir* has produced a veritable hate-machine that has proven itself useful on more than one occasion.

Lest the reader be left with the wrong impression, I would like to point out here that *takfir* — despite its prevalence among so many Islamist movements and circles today — has no basis in Islamic faith or ethics. Indeed, what the Western media has singularly failed to note over the years is the vast body of literature and speeches produced by countless respectable *ulama* who have condemned the culture and practice of *takfir* on the grounds that it ultimately distorts relations between Muslims and does a great disservice to the image and message of Islam. Numerous *ulama* have warned against the tendency of *ghuluw* (excessiveness), *tanattu'* (meticulous religiosity), *tashdid* (excessive austerity) and *taq'sub* (blind deference to authority) that is so prevalent among the more hard-line and extremist Islamist movements.

One of the most vocal and consistent critics of the culture of *takfir* has been *alim* Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who in his essay 'Islamic Awakening: Between Rejection and Extremism' took issue with those extremist sects and groups that engage in *takfir* against other Muslims. Contrary to the oppositional approach of the hard-liners, al-Qaradawi counselled for wisdom and understanding when judging the behaviour, practice and beliefs of other Muslims:

(The call to Islam) cannot succeed without wisdom and amicability, and without taking into consideration human nature — man's obstinacy, resistance to change and argumentativeness. These characteristics necessitate the exercise of kindness and gentleness when attempting to reach man's heart and mind so that this hardness can be softened.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, 'Islamic Awakening: Between Rejection and Extremism', in Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 201.

In the same essay, he asks:

How could we expel a Muslim from the fold of Islam merely because of his commitment to certain controversial matters that we are not sure are permissible or forbidden, or because of his failure to perform practices that we are not certain are obligatory or recommended? This is why I object to the tendency of some pious people to adopt and cling to hard-line opinions, not only in their own personal practice but also in influencing others to do the same.<sup>40</sup>

The bottom line is that by accusing other Muslims of being *munafikin*, *kafir* or 'nominal' Muslims, the hard-liners have taken unto themselves the final power and authority of judgement which in Islam is reserved only for God. This, in effect, amounts to a deviation of *aqidah* and is thus a serious aberration from the Islamic point of view, as I shall elaborate later.

By abrogating upon themselves the power and authority of God, such Muslim hard-liners have also effectively excommunicated themselves from the larger body of the Muslim *ummah*. This point has been raised by Muslim scholars across the spectrum, from traditionalist-conservatives like Sheikh al-Qaradawi to modernist-reformist thinkers like Fazlur Rehman.<sup>41</sup> As Rehman has argued, the use of *takfir* as a means of gaining discursive and political leverage over one's opponents does not place one above other Muslims; it actually leads to marginalisation and exile from the mainstream of Muslim society.

Apart from the un-Islamic nature of *takfir* as a practice and political strategy, the contemporary experience of *takfir* betrays an intimate link to Western understandings of oppositional dialectics. In the case of the Iranian revolution; the Islamist resurgence in Egypt, Pakistan, Nigeria and Sudan; and the use of *takfir* by PAS in Malaysia, a common reliance on a form of dialectical thinking that is essentially modern can be detected. This dialectical thinking is evident in the common quest for clear and identifiable boundaries between Self and Other, friend and enemy, in-group and out-group. Accompanying these dichotomies is the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>41</sup> Fazlur Rehman, *Islam*, pp. 169–170.

call for resistance and opposition, culminating in a synthesis born out of confrontation.

This modernist streak — though never admitted — was clear in the thinking of many modern Islamist ideologues like Mehdi Bazargan. In his essay 'On Religion and Liberty', for instance, Mehdi Bazargan clearly shows his own reliance on the logic of dialectical opposition as the vehicle for social change:

Freedom requires... the existence of an oppositional force, along with the power of choice on behalf of the individual or the society. Opposition promulgates movement and change, which may, in turn, lead to decline and progress, depending on the choice of the agent involved.<sup>42</sup>

The contemporary experience of *takfir* is often predicated upon such a logic of dialectical opposition which requires the presence of a constitutive oppositional Other for the Islamist project to get off the ground. Simply put, if the radical expression of Islamism requires an external enemy to oppose, one will simply have to be found. And if one is not readily available, then it has to be invented for the sake of the dialectic itself. This explains the constant witch-hunts and persecution of political opponents, intellectuals, writers and academics at the hands of Islamist movements world-wide today. PAS is no exception to the rule, as it has shown that it is prepared to engage in a politics of muck-raking to besmirch the credibility and Islamic credentials of its opponents to present itself in a positive light. Once again, one has to question the Islamic credentials of a party that can only call itself Islamic as long as it has an un-Islamic Other (real or imagined) to frame itself against.

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<sup>42</sup> Mehdi Bazargan, 'Din va Azadi', translated by Mahmoud Sadri from *Bazyabi-ye Arzesh'ha*, Tehran: Nehzat-e Azadi-ye Iran, 1983, p. 80.

*Dialectics, Violent Hierarchies and Democratic Pluralism*

Without restoring the principle of coexistence, Muslims will not be able to recapture the spirit of early civil society under the Prophet. The principle of 'equals in creation' can serve as a cornerstone of a Muslim civil society.

Abdulaziz Sachedina,  
*The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*<sup>43</sup>

Apart from introducing the necessity of opposition and confrontation, oppositional dialectics also introduces violent hierarchies between the Self and Other, between those of the in-group and those of the out-group. This in turn complicates, and at times renders impossible, the creation of a plural democratic politics where those of the out-group can be interacted with in a meaningful way and on equal terms.

Evidence of such violent hierarchies can be found everywhere in the rhetoric and discourse of PAS. The party's understanding of secularism and the West, for instance, invariably conflates the two (thus foreclosing the possibility of claiming that secularism could possibly have Islamic roots and antecedents) and places both on a lower, inferior register. As has been seen in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the new understanding of secularism and the West that crept into PAS's thinking came in the form of a reversed Orientalism linking Islam with a host of positive attributes while linking secularism and the West together in a negative chain of equivalences. This negative chain of equivalences was, in turn, placed on a lower register that subordinated it to the positive one above, and also invested it with a myriad of negative attributes and values. While this helped the ideologues and leaders of PAS to present themselves and their party as being somehow more 'authentic' than their 'Westernised' and 'secular' opponents in UMNO, it also meant that PAS's relationship with the West itself became more problematic and difficult. In time, it helped to normalise the view

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<sup>43</sup> Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*, p. 139.

that PAS was somehow anti-Western, and boosted the claim that should PAS ever come to power in the country, Malaysia would find itself alienated from the Western world.

The same could be said of PAS's understanding of the non-Muslim Other. As I have tried to show via a close reading of the discourse of PAS, non-Muslims have been cast as the root of all evil in the world, the enemies of Islam and the agents of the West. Such an outlook has made it practically impossible for PAS to reach out to the broader Malaysian electorate as a whole, or to maintain its instrumental alliances with non-Muslim parties and NGOs (as the pull-out of the DAP from BA testifies). Though PAS's demonisation of non-Muslims was at its peak during the 1980s, such prejudicial attitudes still remain embedded in the party. During the by-elections in Kedah in July 2002, for instance, some of the negative propaganda heaped upon UMNO included leaflets with the image of the Prime Minister dressed in the garb of a Christian priest. This was meant to be read as an insult against the Prime Minister, which also meant that the figure of the Christian priest somehow also had a pejorative meaning attached to it — a move that backfired on the party as it only helped to shore up the Christian non-Malay vote for the UMNO candidate.

The irony behind it all is that while PAS's use of oppositional dialectics may have helped it consolidate its hold on its natural constituency of Malay-Muslims, it has also alienated it from the rest of mainstream Malaysian society, where more than 40% of the population are non-Muslims. Furthermore, it could be argued that by introducing such violent hierarchies between Self and Other, Muslims and non-Muslims, PAS has also denied itself the opportunity to advance towards a politics of democratic pluralism on Islamic terms.

Yet there have been many Islamist thinkers who have argued that for the Islamist project to get off the ground and achieve any degree of political success, it is precisely such dialectical thinking that must be jettisoned first. Islamist intellectuals like Rachid Ghannouchi, for instance, have called for Islamists to adopt a '*tauhidic* approach' to politics that stresses the unity and commonality of origins and purpose between all human beings, as God's fellow creatures here on earth. Others, like Abdulaziz Sachedina, have argued that Islamists need to return to the Islamic roots of

democratic pluralism, grounding their understanding of democratic pluralism on solid Islamic discursive resources.

The challenge before Islamists today is to communicate the message and concerns of Islam and Muslims to a broader audience, comprising Muslims as well as non-Muslims. To succeed, this active engagement must be predicated on an ethics of recognition and respect for the Other that affords others the same rights, dignity and status that Muslims expect for themselves. As Sachedina writes:

Religious pluralism calls for active engagement with the religious Other not merely to tolerate, but to understand. Toleration alone does not require active engagement with the Other. It makes no inroads on mutual ignorance... . A morally and spiritually earnest search for common understandings within our particular religious traditions can lead the way for society as a whole. Religious pluralism can function as a working paradigm for a democratic, social pluralism in which people of diverse religious backgrounds are willing to form a community of global citizens.<sup>44</sup>

But it is in the search for common ground with the non-Muslim Other that PAS has failed the most. From its scare-mongering campaigns in the 1980s to its support for *Taliban* in 2001, PAS has consistently played to its own gallery and, by doing so, marginalised and alienated the non-Muslims in the country. It is doubly ironic that the party that has demonised non-Muslims is also the one that is most vocal when condemning the demonisation of Islam and Muslims by the Western media and governments. In its effort to out-Islamise its nemesis UMNO, PAS has often adopted a confrontational stance towards the non-Muslim 'threat', both real and imagined. This has, unfortunately, robbed the party of a vital avenue for political action and mobilisation and has brought it no closer towards a meaningful form of democratic pluralism, which has to be the goal of any party aiming to gain power in a multicultural society like Malaysia.

### *Aqidah and Politics: Separating the Spheres of Faith and Praxis in Islam*

Another facet of contemporary Islamist movements is their constant attempts to conflate questions of faith with questions of poli-

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

tics. PAS is no exception and, as seen in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the leaders and ideologues of the party have gone to great lengths to show how and why their political cause is a religious one. In the most extreme cases, PAS leaders have gone as far as conflating their party with Islam itself.

From the time of Yusof Rawa, PAS leaders have indoctrinated their members and followers with the belief that theirs was the only party that truly represented Islam and Muslim concerns. So deep and thorough was this association between the party and religion that PAS leaders even claimed that PAS was the only natural choice for Muslims in the country and that other Islamic movements and parties (including UMNO, ABIM, JIM, *Darul Arqam*, etc.) were not part of PAS's *harakah Islamiyyah*.

This conflation of religion and politics also extended to daily commonplace political activity. Since the 1980s, the PAS propaganda machine has propagated the belief that voting for PAS is an essential element of faith and also an expression of Muslim religiosity. By describing the party's struggle as part of the perennial *jihad* to bring about God's order on earth, PAS has tried to show that its political message and activity are also part of Muslim practice and belief.

Numerous examples come to mind to illustrate this point. When the Kelantan state government attempted to push through the controversial Kelantan Shariah bill in the early 1990s, PAS leaders and ideologues claimed that supporting the Kelantan bill was a necessary requirement of all Muslims, regardless of their party-political affiliations. Opposing the bill, Tuan Guru Hadi Awang argued, was tantamount to rejecting Islam itself. To even question the logic and practicality of the bill was regarded as an interrogation of Islam. The same argument was used to drum up support from the Malay-Muslims for the Terengganu *hudud* bill and the apostasy bill of Hadi Awang that called for the imposition of the death penalty on Muslims who left their faith.

The problem with this approach is that it leads Islamists to commit a serious error by confusing matters of *aqidah* (faith and belief) with *siasah* (politics) that rightfully belong to the historically shaped realm of *shariah*. By presenting political issues as issues of faith, the distinction between *aqidah* and *shariah* becomes blurred, upsetting the hierarchical order of knowledge and disciplines

within Islam. While political concerns rightfully belong in the realm of *shariah* law and regulations, they are not part and parcel of the fundamental tenets of faith in Islam.<sup>45</sup>

From a theological point of view, the distinctions between *aqidah*, *shariah* and *akhlak* are crucial in Islam, as the scope and magnitude of freedom of thought and action are limited according to the requirements of the various categories. On matters of *aqidah* (such as belief in God, belief in the Prophets and holy books, praying five times a day, fasting during Ramadhan, etc.) there can be no room for doubt or question; for these are the fundamental requirements of Islam on which there can be no compromise. But where matters of *shariah* are concerned, there is much greater scope for freedom of interpretation, innovation and development, which also accounts for the diversity and richness of Islamic law and all matters under its purview, including politics.

As any Islamic scholar will be able to point out, support for *shariah* law, *hudud* punishments or even the creation of an Islamic state is not among the *rukun iman* (pillars of faith) or *rukun Islam* (pillars of Islam), but rather comes under the dominion of law and social norms. How, then, can the call for an Islamic state or *hudud* punishments be regarded as a matter of faith and belief? There is nothing to support the argument that a Muslim who does not support the creation of an Islamic state is a lesser Muslim than one who does. These are some of the important questions that have been left out of the Islamic state debate in Malaysia, as well as in other parts of the Muslim world that have witnessed the resurgence of political Islam.

### *Conclusion: Islam Embedded*

Despite the persecution and demonisation it has experienced at the hands of its detractors, PAS is set to remain on the political terrain of Malaysia.

This book is not simply an attempt to write the history of this complex religio-political party, but also to account for its success and development over the past five decades. But in the end, the

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<sup>45</sup> Saodah Abdul Rahman, 'Melayu Perlu Berubah', *Utusan Malaysia*, 30 July 2002.

story of PAS is just as much a story of Malaysian, and in particular Malay-Muslim politics. It is impossible to tell the story of PAS without telling the stories of the other agents and actors who were instrumental in the dramatic story of PAS's rise to power. Identities being relational and inter-connected, the identity of PAS is just as much bound up with the identities of its adversaries and competitors. PAS's story is, in the end, the story of Malaysian politics itself with all its manifold quirks, ironies and contradictions.

Because identities are relational and political identities are not excluded from this simple fact of life, the fortunes of PAS were, and are, inextricably linked to the fortunes of its nemesis UMNO. I have tried to show how and why the rise of PAS over the past few decades was linked to the relative decline of UMNO and the ruling BN coalition. PAS today may be reeling from the aftershock of 11 September and the serious political gaffes and blunders committed by its senior leadership, but this does not mean the party is about to make an exit from the political stage. Indeed, it could be argued that the renewed vigour and ascendancy of UMNO — now recast by the Western media as the 'moderate' face of Islam in Malaysia — may well backfire and prove to be to PAS's advantage in the long-run. As Malaysia's international profile improves and the Malaysian government gravitates closer to the centres of global power in the present struggle against 'global terrorism', PAS will undoubtedly turn this to its own advantage, accusing the Malaysian government of being too 'pro-Western' or even 'anti-Islam' once again.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Despite the strong anti-Western and anti-American rhetoric of the Malaysian political élite, it ought to be remembered that the US remains the single biggest trading partner of Malaysia. In the 2001/2002 financial year, Malaysia's exports to the US amounted to 20% of total exports, worth around US\$30 billion in goods and services. US direct investment into Malaysia in turn was valued at US\$10.5 billion. Linked to this were Malaysia's close military and strategic ties to the US, probably one of the best-kept open secrets in the country. For decades, the Malaysian armed forces and intelligence services have co-operated with the US on joint manoeuvres and shared intelligence-gathering activities. The US and Malaysian air forces have conducted joint training exercises. US navy SEALs *continued p. 750*

Another factor that could always fall into PAS's favour is the ineptitude and desperation of its opponents. All over the Muslim world, the advances of political Islam and the Islamists have been aided and abetted by the blunders of the secular modernising post-colonial élites. From Pakistan to Sudan, Nigeria to Morocco,

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*n. 46 continued*

units conduct exercises in Malaysia twice a year, while the US army regularly conducts jungle training exercises in Malaysia. Since 2000, more than 75 US military ships have visited Malaysia and more than 1,000 US air force flyovers are recorded every year. The US has also helped to train Malaysian army personnel; more than 1,500 officers have been trained under the US International Military and Educational Training (IMET) programme since 1984. In 2000, 204 Malaysian officers participated in aero-medical training, chemical operations and leadership training courses hosted by the US. Malaysia has recently received approval to purchase US-made F/A 18-D Hornet jet fighters, after the revival of its military modernization programme (temporarily shelved during the 1997 economic crisis). The Malaysian intelligence services also helped to monitor the alleged *al-Qaeda* members who visited Malaysia prior to the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US, and have passed vital information on their whereabouts and activities to their CIA counterparts. Transnational government-to-government co-operation between the two countries intensified after the 11 September incident. In March 2002, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) chief, Robert Mueller, visited Malaysia. This was followed by a visit to the US by Defence Minister Najib Tun Razak. In May 2002, the Malaysian Prime Minister made an official visit to the US, where he reiterated the Malaysian government's commitment to the global war against terror. This visit culminated in the signing of the joint US-Malaysian declaration to combat global terrorism in the region, committing both countries to further co-operation in mutual defence, banking regulation, border control and intelligence sharing. Another (unstated) consequence of the upturn in Malaysia-US relations was the downgrading of the Anwar affair in the US's list of priorities. On 28 August 2002, the US's new ambassador to Kuala Lumpur, Marie Huhtala, openly stated that Malaysia and the US had 'moved on from the Anwar issue'. ('US: Bilateral Relations have Moved beyond Anwar Issue', *malaysiakini.com*, 29 August 2002. For details of Malaysia's military co-operation with the US since the Tunku's era, see Najib Tun Razak, 'US-Malaysian Defence Co-operation: A Solid Success Story', Speech presented at the Heritage Foundation, 28 August 2002. Available at [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org).)

Tunisia to Indonesia, the rise of Islamism was partly due to weak, corrupt and essentially discredited élites who turned to Islam as a discourse of legitimation to perpetuate their own power and right to rule. But in all these cases, the entry of Islam into the national political sphere has merely led to the Islamisation of national politics and the raising of expectations of the Muslim masses. In the end, it was always the Islamists who gained the most, taking advantage of the renewed religious commitment of the masses and discursive shift closer to Islamism.

PAS's phenomenal rise to power would not have been possible without the state-sponsored Islamisation programme of the UMNO/BN-led Federal government. As UMNO continues to raise the stakes in the Islamisation race, PAS stands to gain the most due to the shift towards a more Islamically inclined national politics.<sup>47</sup> The latest Muslim country to fall into this situation is neighbouring Indonesia which, in March 2003, introduced Islamic law in the troubled province of Aceh in an attempt to placate the Islamist opposition who have suffered persecution at the hands of the

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<sup>47</sup> UMNO's insecurity with regard to its own Islamic credentials remains a major problem for the image-makers of the party. After more than two decades of state-sponsored Islamisation, UMNO leaders are unsure of its own standing and credibility on Islam. At times, the absence of a clear, coherent understanding of UMNO's own Islamic worldview manifests itself in counter-productive policies of the UMNO/BN-led federal and state governments. One such controversy involved a new Johor Baru City Council ruling in January 2003 that non-Muslims wishing to keep pet dogs had to get the written permission of their Muslim neighbours before applying for, or renewing, their dog licence. The ruling received considerable coverage in the local and Singaporean press, and led to a condemnation of the Johor Baru City Council by DAP leader Lim Kit Siang. In a speech in Ipoh on 2 March 2003 — when he once again reiterated his party's commitment to a secular democratic Malaysia as envisioned in the 1957 constitution — Lim Kit Siang described the new city council ruling as 'most unreasonable and against the spirit of a tolerant, sensitive, harmonious and progressive plural Malaysia of diverse races, languages, cultures and religions.' (See DAP party statement: 'Malaysia Boleh — No Dogs Allowed without Approval of Muslim Neighbours', [bungaraya-request@listserv.net-gw.com](mailto:bungaraya-request@listserv.net-gw.com), 3 March 2003.)

Indonesian state for so long.<sup>48</sup> President Megawati Sukarnoputri's government may have believed that by offering this token gesture of reconciliation to the Acehese opposition the turmoil in the province could be brought under control. But what it has done is merely reactivated the demands of the Islamists in other parts of the country. Megawati is not the first Muslim leader to toy with Islamism as a variable in politics, and she will certainly not be the last.

PAS's rise and development have been neither accidental nor predetermined. At times, the party could have been destroyed for good, or left the path its leaders had set forever. Yet PAS endures, despite the odds, and presses on regardless of the vicissitudes of *realpolitik* and the variable contingencies that continue to disrupt the settled continuities of politics. Central to its political success is the message that it has carried all the while, the message it is still trying to propagate: the message of Islam and the restorative project that is part of its identity.

In the wake of 11 September and as the star of the American Empire is set to rise, PAS now finds itself at the receiving end of unwanted attention from the global media and Western security agencies. The demonisation of PAS now comes as part of the global 'war against terror' orchestrated by the hawks of Washington and their cronies abroad. Faced with such seemingly insurmountable odds, PAS presses on. The party and its members have grown accustomed to misrepresentation and persecution after being on the political scene for more than half a century.

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<sup>48</sup> On 3 March 2003, the secular government of Indonesia granted the north Sumatran province of Aceh the right to introduce and enforce Islamic law in their territory. The very next day, tens of thousands of Acehese Islamists marched in the streets of Bandar Aceh, the provincial capital, to celebrate the introduction of *shariah* law and the opening of the first official *shariah* court. The Aceh *shariah* laws provide for Islamic punishments for practices like drinking alcohol, gambling and adultery. The move was applauded by Islamists all over Indonesia and the rest of the ASEAN region (including Malaysia), and merely raised the level of expectations even more. It did not, however, put an end to the Acehese separatists' demands for independence from the central government.

In the final analysis, PAS's success or failure will depend not so much on the whims and will of Western superpowers or their own detractors at home. As a political party that seeks to win the mandate and support of the Malaysian public, it is in the public political arena that PAS will meet its greatest challenges.

PAS has been motivated by the need and desire to install a new social, moral, ethical and religious order that — if it is ever successful — will radically disrupt the *status quo ante* and reinvent the world around it. In this respect, PAS is like any other Islamist organisation, all of which have tried to change the world around them and have in turn been changed themselves. The *Hizbollah* of Lebanon began as an Iranian-backed Shia militant group, but evolved into a democratic party carrying on its struggle in the arena of constitutional politics; the *Jama'at-e Islami* of Pakistan began as an élitist Islamist party with a strong cadre-based organisational structure, but has transformed itself into a populist organisation offering welfare and educational services embodied in its latest project, the university city of Kurtuba; and the radical militant *Jama'ah Islamiyyah* of Egypt has renounced the use of violence and terrorism altogether, and has even gone as far as publicly apologising to the Coptic community of Egypt for their anti-Christian polemics and violence in the past.

The discourse of PAS has also changed and adapted according to the mood of the time, but whether the Malaysian public of today can accept the current discourse of PAS — replete as it is with the ubiquitous tropes of *kafir*, *munafikin* and *mushrikin* — remains an open question. So is the question of whether the party can adapt itself to the pressing social realities and demands of the present age. The choice ultimately depends on PAS and its members themselves, but one thing is for certain: PAS is here to stay, and it is largely due to the efforts of PAS over the past five decades that Islam is well and truly embedded in the social, cultural, economic and political terrain of Malaysia.



## TABLES

**Table 1.1 Population of Malaya according to Ethnic Group, 1931 and 1947**

Ethnic Group	1931	1931	1947	1947
	Number ('000s)	Percentage	Number ('000s)	Percentage
Malays	1,864	49.2	2,428	49.5
Chinese	1,285	33.9	1,884	38.8
Indians	571	15.1	531	10.8
Others	68	1.8	65	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,788</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,908</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Socio-economic sample survey of households in Malaysia. (1967-68: 54), quoting figures from 1947 census.

**Table 1.2 Candidates for 1955 Election according to Ethnic Group**

Political Party	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Total
Alliance (UMNO and MCA)	35	15	2	52
<i>Parti Negara</i>	29	1	-	30
PAS	11	-	-	11
National Association of Perak	8	1	-	9
Labour Party	-	2	2	4
Perak Malay League	3	-	-	3
Perak Progressive Party	1	-	1	2
Independents	16	1	1	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>129</b>

**Table 1.3 Results of 1955 Election**

Political Party	Number of Seats
Alliance (UMNO and MCA)	51 (36 UMNO; 15 MCA)
PAS	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>

**Table 2.1 Population of Malaya according to Ethnic Group, 1957**

Ethnic Group	Number ('000s)	Percentage
Malays	3,126	49.8
Chinese	2,334	37.2
Indians	707	11.1
Others	112	1.9
Total	6,279	100.0

Source: Socio-economic sample survey of households in Malaysia. (1967-68: 54).

**Table 2.2 Results of 1959 Federal Election**

Political Party	Number of Seats
Alliance (UMNO and MCA)	74 (UMNO 55; MCA 19)
PAS	13
Fron Sosialis ( <i>Parti Rakyat</i> and <i>Parti Buruh</i> )	9
PPP	4
<i>Parti Negara</i>	1
Malaya Party	1
Independents	2
Total	104

Table 2.3 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1959 Election

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of State Assembly Seats	Percentage of Votes Won by PAS at Federal Level
Kelantan	9	10	28	30	63.9 % (UMNO: 26.9%)
Terengganu	4	6	13	24	36.9 %
Kedah	-	12	0	24	23.6 %
Perlis	-	2	0	12	31.7 %

**Table 2.4 Results of 1964 Federal Election**

Political Party	Number of Seats
Alliance (UMNO, MCA and MIC)	89 (MCA 27)
PAS	9
Fron Sosialis ( <i>Parti Rakyat</i> and <i>Parti Buruh</i> )	5
PPP	2
UDP	1
PAP	1
Total	107

Table 2.5 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1964 Election

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of State Assembly Seats	Percentage of Votes Won by PAS at Federal Level
Kelantan	8	10	21	30	57 %
Terengganu	1	6	3	24	(UMNO: 43%) 32.7 %
Kedah	-	12	0	24	25.1 %
Perlis	-	2	1	12	37.1 %

**Table 2.6 Results of 1969 Federal Election**

Party	Number of Seats
Alliance (UMNO, MCA and MIC)	74 (MCA 13)
PAS	12
DAP	13
PRM	1
Gerakan	8
USNO	13
SCA	3
SNAP	9
SUPP	5
PPP	4
Pesaka	2
Total	144

Table 2.7 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1969 Election

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of State Assembly Seats	Percentage of Votes Won by PAS at Federal Level
Kelantan	7	10	18	30	52.2 % (UMNO: 47.5%)
Terengganu	2	6	11	24	49.4 %
Kedah	3	12	8	24	41.3 %
Perlis	-	2	1	12	43.8 %

**Table 3.1 Population of Malaysia according to Ethnic Group, 1970**

Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
Malays	4,886,912	46.8
Other Native Races (Negrito, Senoi, Kadazan, Dayak, Iban, Murut, etc.)	908,167	8.7
Chinese	3,555,879	34.1
Indians	942,944	9.0
Others	145,628	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,439,530</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 1970 national census figures from Malaysian Department of Statistics (1972: 24). (Quoted in Judith Nagata, 'What is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society', *American Ethnologist*, 1 (1974): 224.)

**Table 3.2 Percentage of Malays in the Fields of Medicine, Engineering, Statistics and Law, 1970**

Field	Malay-Muslims	Non-Malays
Architecture	4.3	95.7
Accountancy	6.8	93.2
Engineering	7.3	92.7
Dentistry	3.1	96.9
Medicine	3.7	96.3
Veterinary Medicine	40.0	60.0
Lawyers	12.8 (1975)	87.2 (1975)
Statisticians	29.9 (1980)	70.1 (1980)

Source: National Census Department figures for 1970–80. (Quoted in *Tamadun*, May 1999, p. 62.)

**Table 3.3 Results of 1974 Federal Election**

Party	Number of Seats
<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan, PPP, USNO, SCA, SNAP, SUPP, and PAS)	135 (UMNO 62, MCA 19, PAS 14)
DAP	9
Pakemas	1
Independents	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>

**Table 3.4 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1974 Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	–	10	–	30
Terengganu	3	6	9	24
Kedah	–	12	–	24
Perlis	–	2	–	12

**Table 3.5 Results of 1978 Federal Election**

Party	Number of Seats
<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan, USNO, SCA, SNAP, SUPP and BERJASA)	130
PAS	5
DAP	16
Independents	3
Total	154

**Table 3.6 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Penang in 1978 Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	2	12	2	36
Terengganu	–	8	–	30
Kedah	2	13	7	27
Penang	1	9	1	27

Source: *Election Results in Malaysia: A Handbook of Facts and Figures on the Elections 1955–1990*, Kuala Lumpur: New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad, 1994.

**Table 3.7 Ownership and Control of the Corporate Sector in Malaysia, 1970–1980**

	1970 Ownership (\$ million)	1970 Ownership (%)	1980 Ownership (\$ million)	1980 Ownership (%)
Malaysian residents <sup>a</sup>	1,952.1	36.7	18,493.4	57.1
Bumiputera total	125.6	2.4	4,050.5	12.5
Bumiputera individuals	84.4	1.6	1,880.1	5.8
Bumiputera trust agencies <sup>b</sup>	41.2	0.8	2,170.4	6.7
Other residents	1,826.5	34.3	14,442.9	44.6
Foreign residents <sup>c</sup>	3,377.1	63.4	13,927.0	42.9
Total	5,329.2	100.0	32,420.4	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Including foreigners residing in Malaysia.

<sup>b</sup> Includes shares held by state-sponsored Bumiputera Trust agencies like PERNAS, MARA, UDA.

<sup>c</sup> Includes shares held by nominee and other companies, including Bumiputera interests.

Sources: Malaysia (1976: 86, Table 4.16.); Malaysia (1981: 62, Table 3.14). Quoted in Jomo Kwame Sundaram, *A Question of Class: Capital, the State and Uneven Development in Malaya*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 264.

**Table 3.8 Results of 1982 Federal Election**

Party	Number of Candidates
<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan, USNO, SCA, SNAP, SUPP and BERJASA)	132
PAS	5
DAP	9
Independents	8
Total	154

**Table 3.9 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1982 Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	4	12	10	36
Terengganu	–	6	5	26
Kedah	1	12	2	24
Perlis	–	2	–	12

**Table 4.1 Results of 1986 Parliamentary Election**

Party	Number of Seats
<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan, USNO, SCA, SNAP, SUPP and BERJASA)	148
PAS	1
DAP	24
Independents	4
Total	177

**Table 4.2 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1986 Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	1	13	10	39
Terengganu	–	8	2	30
Kedah	–	14	3	28
Perlis	–	2	–	14

Source: *Election Results in Malaysia: A Handbook of Facts and Figures on the Elections 1955–1990*, Kuala Lumpur: New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad, 1994.

**Table 5.1 Malaysian Exports, 1970–1990 (percentage of total)**

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Agriculture	58.6	49.9	39.7	29.3	18.8
Manufacturing	11.1	20.9	22.3	32.8	58.8
Mining	22.8	21.0	33.3	33.3	17.8
Other	9.3	8.3	4.7	4.6	4.6

Sources: Malaysia Yearbook 1981: 18–19, 1986: 48–50, 1991: 23, 1993: 26.

**Table 5.2 Percentage of Poor Households in Peninsular Malaysia, 1975–1990**

	1975	1980	1985	1987	1990
Rural (agricultural)	69.0	66.6	63.0	n.a.	n.a.
Rural (non-agricultural)	31.0	33.4	37.0	n.a.	n.a.
Rural	87.4	85.3	83.3	83.0	82.7
Urban	12.6	14.7	16.7	17.0	17.3

Source: Shireen Mardziah Hashim, *Income Inequality and Poverty in Malaysia*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998

**Table 5.3 Percentage of Poor Households in Peninsular Malaysia according to Ethnic Group, 1976–1987**

	1976	1984	1987
Malay	75.5	81.0	81.7
Chinese	15.9	13.8	12.8
Indian	7.8	5.2	5.5

Source: Shireen Mardziah Hashim, *Income Inequality and Poverty in Malaysia*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998

**Table 5.4 Results of 1990 Federal Election**

Political Party	Number of Seats
<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan, USNO, SCA, SNAP, SUPP and BERJASA)	127
PAS	7
<i>Semangat '46</i>	8
DAP	20
PBS	14
Independents	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

Source: *Election Results in Malaysia: A Handbook of Facts and Figures on the Elections 1955–1990*, Kuala Lumpur: New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad, 1994.

**Table 5.5 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1990 Federal Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	6	13	24	39
Terengganu	1	8	7	32
Kedah	–	14	1	28
Perlis	–	2	–	14

Source: *Election Results in Malaysia: A Handbook of Facts and Figures on the Elections 1955–1990*, Kuala Lumpur: New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad, 1994.

**Table 5.6 Successful PAS Parliamentary Candidates, 1990 Federal Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
<b>Kelantan</b>		
Wan Jamil Wan Mahmood P17 Tumpat	24,578	11,662
Ustaz Nik Abdullah Arshad P18 Pengkalan Chepa	27,321	17,447
Sanusi Daing Mariok P21 Rantau Panjang	18,618	6,777
Mohamad Sabu P22 Nilam Puri	19,596	8,139
Haji Bunyamin Yaacob P23 Bachok	24,772	12,254
Shukri Haji Hassan P27 Machang	15,944	7,738
Haji Ibrahim Mahmood P28 Kuala Krai	18,336	9,895
<b>Terengganu</b>		
Abdul Hadi Awang P34. Marang	17,631	350

**Table 5.7 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kelantan, 1990 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Ramli Haji Abu Bakar N3 Wakaf Baru	9,985	6,026
Nik Aziz Nik Mat N4 Semut Api	9,504	6,993
Cikgu Haji Daud N5 Kemumin	9,310	4,410
Ustaz Halim N6 Banggol	8,387	6,075
Dato' Halim Mohamed N8 Bukit Payong	8,494	4,092
Mawardi Haji Ahmad N9 Lundang	9,354	5,871
Hassan Abdullah N11 Pengkalan Pasir	6,872	2,835
Zakaria Ismail N12 Meranti	6,736	3,527
Hussin Ibrahim N14 Bukit Tuku	6,336	2,093
Abdul Rahman Musa N15 Chetok	5,642	2,290
Muhammad Shukri Abdul Rahman N17 Mulong	5,794	2,948
Haji Daud N18 Peringat	7,413	3,220
Haji Idris Ahmad N19 Tawang	8,808	5,182
Haji Omar Muhammad N20 Perupok	7,221	3,042
Ustaz Man N22 Cherang Buku	5,124	1,584
Muhamad Husain N24 Gaal	5,837	3,073
Che Bisi Hassan N25 Selising	6,85	3,905
Haji Mat Yusoff N26 Ketereh	6,916	2,926
Mat Yusoff Mat Sah N28 Bukit Panau	7,504	3,182
Abang Soh N30 Jeli	6,495	3,392

**Table 5.7 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kelantan, 1990 Election (continued)**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Haji Wan Husin N32 Labok	6,196	3,749
Ustaz Ya N33 Banggol Judah	5,198	2,120
Wan Hasan Wan Yusof N35 Guchil	6,323	3,048
Ismail Yaacob N36 Manik Urai	5,970	3,608

**Table 5.8 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Terengganu, 1990 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Abdul Latif Mohamad N3 Jertih	4,382	597
Zahari Muhammad N5 Jabi	4,210	1,036
Haji Harun Jusoh N13 Bandar	4,682	726
Wan Abdul Mutalib Embong N15 Batu Buruk	6,048	984
Mohamad Abdul Wahid Endut N16 Wakaf Mempelam	6,040	890
Baharuddin Mohamad N18 Bukit Payong	4,163	17
Abdul Hadi Awang N19 Ru Rendang	4,750	853
Harun Taib N22 Manir	3,810	423

**Table 5.9 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidate, Kedah, 1990 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Fadzil Noor N13 Bukit Raya	10,923	1,829

**Table 5.10 Ethnic Composition of Malaysian Population, 1990/91**

Ethnic Group	Percentage of Total Population
Malays	50
Indigenous peoples	10.6
Chinese	28.1
Indians	7.9
Others	3.4

Source: Malaysian National Census, quoted in Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, pp. 18–19.

**Table 5.11 Religious Composition of Malaysian Population, 1990/91**

Religious Group	Percentage of Total Population
Muslim	58.6
Buddhist	18.4
Christian	8.1
Hindu	6.4
Confucianist, Taoist and other Chinese religions	5.3
Others	3.2

Source: Malaysian National Census, quoted in Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, pp. 18–19.

**Table 5.12 Parliamentary Seats Won by Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah Component Parties, 1990 and 1995**

Party	1990	1995
PAS	7	7
<i>Semangat '46</i>	8*	6
HAMIM	–	–
BERJASA	–	–

\* One of the 546 members of Parliament left the party and joined the Barisan Nasional coalition soon after.

**Table 5.13 Performance of PAS in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis in 1995 Federal Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	6	14	24	43
Terengganu	1	8	7	32
Kedah	–	15	2	36
Perlis	–	3	–	15

Source: Election Commission,

[http://www.spr.gov.my/laporan/1995/B\\_1995.html](http://www.spr.gov.my/laporan/1995/B_1995.html)

**Table 5.14 Number of Parliamentary and State Assembly Seats Contested by PAS, 1995 Federal Election**

Number of parliamentary seats contested	46
Number of parliamentary seats won	7
Number of state assembly seats contested	178
Number of state assembly seats won	33

**Table 5.15 Successful PAS Parliamentary Candidates, 1995 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
<b>Kelantan</b>		
Wan Jamil Wan Mahmood P19 Tumpat	17,682	1,918
Mohamad Amar Abdullah P20 Pengkalan Chepa	20,410	11,094
Sanusi Daing Mariok P23 Rantau Panjang	16,284	4,505
Mohamad Sabu P24 Kubang Kerian	21,377	10,125
Haji Bunyamin Yaacob P25 Bachok	21,336	4,990
Ibrahim Mahmood P31 Kuala Krai	14,933	3,206
<b>Terengganu</b>		
Abdul Hadi Awang P37 Marang	21,945	882

**Table 5.16 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kelantan, 1995 Election**

	Number of Votes	Majority
Ahmad Yaacob N3 Pasir Pekan	6,980	2,739
Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman N4 Kijang	6,865	4,309
Nik Aziz Nik Mat N5 Chempaka	7,851	4,917
Mohd Yusoff Ludin N6 Panchor	6,499	3,051
Abdul Rahim Wan Abdullah N7 Tanjong Mas	9,213	4,985
Halim Mohamed N9 Bunut Payong	7,414	2,490
Ramli Abu Bakar N10 Wakaf Baru	7,077	1,277
Che Hassan Abdullah N12 Pengkalan Pasir	6,529	1,036
Mohd Nassuruddin Haji Daud N13 Meranti	5,060	2,079
Mohd Yusof Abdullah N15 Bukit Tuku	5,336	1,741
Daud bin Jusoh N17 Pasir Tumbuh	6,129	2,972
Mohd Daud Mat Iraqi N18 Kenali	9,375	5,446
Hassan Mohamood N19 Tawang	7,191	2,445
Omar Muhammad N20 Perupok	6,953	1,784
Shamsuddin Abdul Rahman N23 Kadok	5,506	1,341
Hanafi Haji Daud N25 Chetok	4,834	343
Mat Yusoff Mat Sah N26 Bukit Panau	6,420	964
Che Bisi Hassan N28 Selising	5,767	1,347
Sulaiman Ahmad N30 Semerak	4,784	248

**Table 5.16 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kelantan, 1995 Election (continued)**

	Number of Votes	Majority
Alwi Jusoh	5,168	1,324
N31 Gaal		
Yahya Saman	5,921	1,332
N33 Banggol Judah		
Hassan Muhammad	4,759	102
N34 Kemuning		
Abdullah Yaacob (@ Tok Imam)	4,540	409
N36 Air Lanas		
Ismail Yaacob (@ Pak Su Will)	4,691	1,829
N40 Manek Urai		

**Table 5.17 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Terengganu, 1995 Election**

	Number of Votes	Majority
Abu Bakar Abdullah	5,079	344
N9 Tepuh		
Ismail Haji Mamat	4,920	236
N10 Teluk Pasu		
Mohamad Abdul Wahid Endut	6,379	1,119
N13 Wakaf Mempelam		
Wan Abdul Mutalib Embong	6,756	641
N16 Batu Buruk		
Yahaya Ali	5,535	269
N17 Alur Limbat		
Abdul Hadi Awang	6,285	1,394
N19 Ru Rendang		
Harun Taib	4,091	365
N22 Manir		

**Table 5.18 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kedah, 1995 Election**

	Number of Votes	Majority
Fadzil Noor N18 Bukit Raya	11,466	2,416
Azizan Abdul Razak N20 Sala	8,367	196

**Table 5.19 Ratio of Malay to Non-Malay Members of Parliament, 1959–1995**

Year	Malays	Non-Malays	Total Number of Parliamentarians	Percentage of Malay Parliamentarians
1959	67	37	104	64.4
1964	69	35	104	66.3
1969	82	62	144	56.9
1974	91	63	154	59.1
1978	87	67	154	56.5
1982	88	66	154	57.1
1986	103	74	177	58.2
1990	102	78	180	56.7
1995	100	92	192	52.1

Source: Parliament Records Office. Quoted in *UMNO Rosak Bersama Agenda Mahathir*, in Tarmizi Mohd Jam (ed.), *Talqin buat Tuan Haji Mahathir*. Batu Caves, Selangor: Rangkaian Minda Publishing, 1999.

Table 6.1 Ownership of Malaysian Limited Companies, 1970 and 1990 (NEP projected figures)

Sector	Malays 1970	Malays 1990 (p)	Non-Malays 1970	Non-Malays 1990 (p)	Foreigners 1970	Foreigners 1990 (p)
Agriculture	1.0 (14)	30.0 (628)	23.7 (339)	40.0 (837)	75.3 (1,080)	30.0 (627)
Mining	0.7 (4)	30.0 (829)	26.8 (146)	35.0 (967)	72.5 (394)	35.0 (967)
Manufacturing	2.5 (34)	30.0 (9,709)	37.9 (510)	40.0 (12,945)	59.6 (804)	30.0 (9,709)
Construction	2.2 (1)	30.0 (221)	63.7 (37)	45.0 (331)	34.1 (20)	25.0 (184)
Transport	13.3 (11)	40.0 (117)	74.7 (61)	50.0 (146)	12.0 (10)	10.0 (29)
Commerce	0.8 (5)	30.0 (769)	35.7 (216)	40.0 (1,024)	63.5 (386)	30.0 (769)
Banking/ Insurance	3.3 (21)	30.0 (963)	44.4 (283)	40.0 (1,284)	52.3 (333)	30.0 (963)
Total	1.9 (103)	30.1 (14,076)	37.4 (1,979)	40.1 (18,767)	60.7 (3,207)	29.8 (13,949)

Note: Figures in parentheses are absolute values in Malaysian Ringgit (RM) millions

Source: MTR SMP, 1973, p. 86-87, Tables 4-9. From James V. Jesudason, *Ethnicity and the Economy: The State, Chinese Business and Multinationals in Malaysia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 72.

**Table 6.2 Major Development and Construction Projects by Japanese and Korean Companies, 1980s**

Project	Country	Company
Dayabumi Building Project	Japan	Takenaka Komuten and Kumagai Gumi
UMNO Headquarters	Japan	Takenaka Komuten and Kumagai Gumi
Pemodalanan Nasional Berhad (PNB) General Office	Japan	Shimuzu Kensetsu
UBN/Shangri-La Hotel	Japan	Taisei Kensetsu
Employees Provident Fund (EPF) General Office	Japan	Taisei Kensetsu
PKNS low-cost housing project	Japan	Hazamagumi, Taisei Kensetsu
Urban Development Authority (UDA) building	Japan	Taisei-Maruneni
Penang Bridge	Korea	Hyundai
Maybank General Office	Korea	Keang Nam/Dae Woo Construction
Kenyir Dam	Korea	Hyundai
Sabah Natural Gas Project	Korea	Daelim
Pahang prefabricated housing project	Korea	Samick
Pahang Damar project	Korea	Young Dong

Source: 'Nightmare for local builders', *The Star*, 27 March 1984, and 'Seoul Builds a Bridge', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 June 1984.

**Table 6.3 Top Ten Foreign Investors according to Share of Fixed Assets, 1984**

Country	Fixed Assets (RM million)	Percentage of Total Foreign Investments
1. Singapore	1,069.8	25.0
2. Japan	766.6	17.8
3. United Kingdom	755.2	17.6
4. United States	473.0	11.0
5. Hong Kong	305.0	7.1
6. Australia	131.5	3.1
7. West Germany	114.9	2.7
8. Holland	88.1	2.1
9. India	57.9	1.3
10. Switzerland	50.9	1.2
11. Others	483.5	11.2
Total	4,296.4	100.0

Source: MIDA, Investment Promotion Division. Extracted from Jesudason, p. 180.

**Table 6.4 Major Asian Banks and their Total Asset Value as Percentage of GDP, December 1996**

Hong Kong Bank (International)	81.5 %
DBS Bank (Singapore)	41.4 %
Maybank (Malaysia)	37.6 %
Hang Seng Bank (Hong Kong)	32.6 %
Bangkok Bank (Thailand)	24.3 %
State Bank of India (India)	12.4 %
Sakura Bank (Japan)	9.8 %
Metrobank (Philippines)	7.9 %
Bank Negara Indonesia (Indonesia)	6.5 %
Lloyds Bank (Britain)	22.0 %
Chase Manhattan Bank (United States)	4.4 %

**Table 6.5 IMF and UBS Estimates of Total Foreign Investment Inflows into the Top Five Developing Asian Economies, 1982-1996 (in Billion)**

1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996
	\$9	\$1<	\$1<	\$20	\$30	\$35	\$65>

Source: *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 February 1998, p. 48.

**Table 6.6 Performance of PAS in the Peninsular States, 1999 Federal Election**

State	Number of Parliamentary Seats Won by PAS	Total Number of Parliamentary Seats	Number of State Assembly Seats Won by PAS	Total Number State of Assembly Seats
Kelantan	10	14	41	43
Terengganu	7	8	28	32
Kedah	8	15	12	36
Perlis	–	3	3	15
Perak	2	23	3	52
Pahang	–	11	6	38
Selangor	–	17	4	48
Penang	–	11	1	33

Source: Election Commission,  
[http://www.spr.gov.my/laporan/1999/dewan\\_rakyat.html](http://www.spr.gov.my/laporan/1999/dewan_rakyat.html),  
<http://www.spr.gov.my/laporan/1999/dun.html>

**Table 6.7 Number of Seats Contested and Won by PAS, 1999 Federal Election**

Number of parliamentary seats contested	63
Number of parliamentary seats won	27
Number of state assembly seats contested	238
Number of state assembly seats won	98

**Table 6.8 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Penang, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Mohd Hamdan Abdul Rahman N11 Permatang Pasir	8,430	3,194

Note: Overall performance:  $1/33 = 3.03\%$  seats

**Table 6.9 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Perlis, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Zolkarnain Abidin N5 Santan (Padang Besar)	2,802	269
Ahmad Ali N13 Guar Sanji (Arau)	3,318	603
Hashim Haji Jasin N15 Sanglang (Arau)	3,245	333

Note: Overall performance: 3/15 = 20% seats

**Table 6.10 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Perak, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Ahmad Azhar Sharin N6 Titi Serong	8,358	1,462
Jaberal Sabran Hasamawi N9 Gunung Semanggol	8,448	743
Faizol Fazli Mohamed N33 Belanja (Parit)	5,971	119

Note: Overall performance 3/52 = 5.8% seats

**Table 6.11 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Selangor, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Ustaz Sallehen Mukhyi N3 Sungai Besar	4,666	156
Dato' Dr. Hassan Ali N6 Sungai Burung	5,591	91
Ustaz Ismail Kamus N17 Gombak Setia	11,821	953
Shafie Abu Bakar N23 Kajang	10,922	37

Note: Overall performance: 4/48 = 8.3% seats

**Table 6.12 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Pahang, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Abdul Malik Yusof N9 Tahan (Jerantut)	3,727	103
Abdul Aziz Long N17 Penur (Paya Besar)	9,326	1,925
Mohamad Iqbal Hamdy N18 Kuala Pahang (Pekan)	5,752	1,805
Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man N23 Jengka	5,338	319
Idris Omar N32 Semantan (Temerluh)	6,165	1,314
Abdul Aziz Yaakob N34 Guai (Temerluh)	5,244	523

Note: Overall performance: 6/38 = 15.8% seats

**Table 6.13 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kedah, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Abdul Ghani Ahmad N3 Ayer Hitam	8,558	144
Mohd Yusof Zakaria N7 Kuala Kerang	6,368	821
Wan Jaafar Wan Ahmad N8 Pedu	5,841	446
Ismail Kamis Bukit Lada (Pokok Sena)	9,367	852
Mohd Shauki Ibrahim N10 Langgar	9,228	2,799
Ustaz Fadzil Mohd Noor N15 Anak Bukit (Kuala Kedah)	8,480	1,840
Phahrolrazi Mohd Zawawi N17 Pengkalan Kundor	8,806	675
Mohamed Taulan Rasul N18 Bukit Raya	13,653	5,184
Azizan Abdul Razak N20 Sala (Yan)	10,305	2,621
Mohd Isa Shafie N22 Belantek	6,523	492
Yahya Abdullah N23 Jeneri (Sik)	7,176	393
Suhaimi Ahmad N31 Kupang	12,801	3,043

Overall performance: 12/36 = 33% seats

**Table 6.14 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Terengganu, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Nik Mohammad Zawawi	4,426	487
N1 Kuala Besut		
Abdul Rahman Abdul Aziz	5,099	710
N2 Kampung Raja (Besut)		
Haji Mohd Salleh Abbas	5,075	1,464
N3 Jertih (Besut)		
Abdullah Mat Dan	4,619	598
N4 Hulu Besut		
Shaharizukirnain Abd Kadir	5,013	1,494
N5 Jabi (Setiu)		
Rozali Muhammad	5,180	451
N6 Permaisuri (Setiu)		
Mohamad Hitam	3,923	157
N7 Langkap (Setiu)		
Abu Bakar Chik	4,381	1,187
N8 Batu Rakit		
Abu Bakar Abdullah	6,952	3,057
N9 Tepuh		
Ismail Mamat	6,463	2,570
N10 Teluk Pasu		
Alias Razak	4,629	1,942
N12 Bukit Tunggal		
Mohamad Abdul Wahid Endut	8,981	5,760
N13 Wakaf Mempelam		
Mohd Azmi Lop Yusof	6,756	511
N14 Bandar		
Sulaiman Abdullah	6,175	2,574
N15 Ladang		
Wan Abdul Mutalib Embong	9,422	5,400
N16 Batu Buruk		
Yahaya Ali	7,575	3,275
N17 Alur Limbat (Marang)		
Hassan Mohd Salleh	6,686	2,356
N18 Bukit Payung (Marang)		
Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang	7,881	3,843
N19 Ru Redang		
Mustafa Hassan Ali	7,131	1,609
N20 Pengkalan Berangan		
Harun Taib	5,207	1,916
N22 Manir		

**Table 6.14 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Terengganu, 1999 Election (continued)**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Mamad bin Puteh	4,968	1,844
N23 Kuala Berang		
Roslan Ismail	3,368	87
N25 Bukit Besi (Dungun)		
Azman Shapawi Abdul Rani	5,550	2,443
N26 Rantau Abang (Dungun)		
Wan Hassan Mohd Ramli	6,643	3,173
N27 Sura (Dungun)		
Satiful Bahari Mamat	6,706	2,686
N28 Paka (Dungun)		
Mehamad Sulong	4,425	264
N30 Kijal (Kemaman)		
Awang Jusoh	6,564	436
N31 Cukai (Kemaman)		
Ismail Harun	5,561	479
N32 Air Putih (Kemaman)		

Overall performance: 28/32 = 87.5% seats

**Table 6.15 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kelantan, 1999 Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Wan Hussain Wan Ahmad N1 Pengkalan Kubor (Tumpat)	7,115	2,432
Noordin Yaakub N2 Kelaboran (Tumpat)	7,619	3,060
Ahmad Yaacob N3 Pasir Pekan (Tumpat)	8,389	4,931
Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman N4 Kijang (Pengkalan Chepa)	7,352	4,812
Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat N5 Chempaka	8,649	6,347
Mohd Yusoff Ludin N6 Panchor (Pengkalan Chepa)	7,443	4,411
Abdul Rahim Wan Abdullah N7 Tanjong Mas (Kota Bharu)	10,843	7,313
Tan Teng Loon (@Anuar Tan) N8 Kota Lama (Kota Bharu)	8,470	445
Takiyuddin Hassan N9 Bunut Payong (Kota Bharu)	9,362	5,538
Ramli Abu Bakar N10 Wakaf Baru (Pasir Mas)	8,502	2,618
Wan Othman Wan Yusoff N11 Tendong (Pasir Mas)	6,930	2,002
Hassan Abdullah N12 Pengkalan Pasir	7,877	2,862
Mohd Nassuruddin Daud N13 Meranti	5,983	3,018
Abdullah Abdul Razak N14 Gual Periok	7,358	3,156
Mohd Yusof Abdullah N15 Bukit Tuku	6,315	2,482
Buni Amin Hamzah N16 Salor (Kubang Kerian)	7,543	4,003
Ahmad Baihaki Atiqullah N17 Pasir (Kubang Kerian)	7,042	4,191
Mohamad Daud N18 Kenali (Kubang Kerian)	10,316	7,457
Hassan Mohamood N19 Tawang (Bachok)	8,177	3,756
Omar Muhammad N20 Perupok (Bachok)	7,906	3,236
Shaary Haji Awang N21 Jelawat (Bachok)	8,720	3,198
Wan Ismail Wan Jusoh N22 Melor (Peringat)	6,847	2,109

**Table 6.15 Successful PAS State Assembly Candidates, Kelantan, 1999 Election (continued)**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Shamsudin Shukri Rahman N23 Kadok (Peringat)	6,738	3,187
Mohamad Ashari Mamat N24 Ketereh (Peringat)	6,776	899
Hanafi Haji Daud N25 Chetok (Tanah Merah)	5,885	1,822
Mat Yusoff Mat Sah N26 Bukit Panau (Tanah Merah)	8,041	2,935
Muhamad Kamil Harun N27 Gual Ipoh (Tanah Merah)	5,200	904
Saipul Bahrin Mohamad N28 Selising (Pasir Puteh)	6,816	2,466
Zainuddin Haji Mamat N29 Limbongan (Pasir Puteh)	7,829	3,658
Hussin Awang N30 Semerak (Pasir Puteh)	6,118	1,475
Dr. Nik Mazian Nik Mohamad N31 Gaal (Pasir Puteh)	5,720	2,075
Zulkefli Mamat N32 Pulai Chondong (Machang)	6,583	2,318
Zakaria Yaacob N33 Banggol Judah (Machang)	6,893	2,795
Hassan Muhammad N34 Kemuning (Machang)	6,335	1,591
Mohamad Anizam Rahman N35 Kemahang (Jeli)	6,251	628
Abdullah Yaacob N36 Air Lanas (Jeli)	5,634	1,132
Mamat Abdullah N37 Pergau (Jeli)	4,195	329
Zulkafli Yacob N38 Guchil (Kuala Krai)	5,100	629
Ibrahim Mahmood N39 Mengkebang (Kuala Krai)	6,457	1,703
Ismail Yaacob N40 Manek Urai (Kuala Krai)	5,066	1,518
Rapar @ Abdul Ghaffar Yusoff N41 Dabong	3,167	581

Note: Overall performance: 41/43 = 95.3% seats

**Table 6.16 Successful PAS Parliamentary Candidates, Perak, 1999  
Federal Election**

Candidate	Number of Votes	Majority
Hasan Mohamad Ali P54 Parit Buntar	5,931	2,094
Mat Basir Rahmat P66 Parit	2,003	1,293

Note: Overall performance: 2/23 seats

**Table 6.17 Successful PAS Parliamentary Candidates, Kedah, 1999  
Federal Election**

Kedah	Number of Votes	Majority
A Bakar Othman P5 Jerlun	17,104	380
Zawawi Ahmad P7 Padang Terap	12,218	1,053
Mahfuz Omar P8 Pokok Sena	27,466	3,637
Mohamad Sabu P10 Kuala Kedah	23,548	991
Ustaz Fadzil Noor P11 Pendang	22,413	2,939
Ustaz Nashruddin Mat Isa P12 Yan	16,041	182
Shahnon Ahmad P13 Sik	13,504	478
Taib Azamudden Taib P16 Baling	21,468	1,394

Note: Overall performance: 8/15 seats

**Table 6.18 Successful PAS Parliamentary Candidates, Terengganu, 1999 Federal Election**

Terengganu	Number of Votes	Majority
Hassan Mohamed	19,166	3,057
P33 Besut		
Che Ghani Che Ambak	18,477	3,020
P34 Setiu		
Shukrimun Shamsudin	21,608	7,078
P35 Kuala Nerus		
Syed Azman Syed Nawawi	31,580	14,448
P36 Kuala Terengganu		
Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang	30,183	12,700
P37 Marang		
Muhyidin Abdul Rashid	17,790	4,111
P38 Hulu Terengganu		
Mustafa (@Hassan) Ali	22,248	8,118
P39 Dungun		

Note: Overall performance: 7/8 seats

Table 7.1 Urbanisation and Demographic Shifts in Six Major Muslim Countries, 1995–2015

	Malaysia	Indonesia	Pakistan	Nigeria	Iran	Algeria
Population, 1997 (million)	21.0	203.4	144.0	103.9	64.6	29.4
Population in largest city, 1995 (million)	1.2 Kuala Lumpur	8.6 Jakarta	9.7 Karachi	10.3 Lagos	6.8 Tehran	3.7 Algiers
Urbanisation trend (% rise)						
1975	37.7	19.4	26.4	23.4	45.8	40.3
1980	42.0	22.0	28.0	27.0	50.1	43.0
1997	55.0	37.0	35.0	41.0	60.2	57.0
2015 (projected)	66.2	52.4	46.7	55.4	68.8	67.5

Sources: United Nations and World Bank Development Report 2000; United Nations Development Report 1999. References quoted from Paul M. Lubeck and Bryana Britts, 'Muslim Civil Society and Urban Public Spaces: Globalisation, Discursive Shifts and Social Movements', in J. Eade and C. Mele (eds.), *Urban Studies: Contemporary and Future Perspectives*, London: Blackwell, 2001.

## APPENDIX I: PAS's PARTY ANTHEM

The first official anthem of the *Persatuan Islam Sa-Malaysia* (as PAS was then known). Lyrics by Muhammad Asri Muda, music composed by Abdullah Bukhari in 1956.

Lyrics:

*Bersatulah wahai kaum Muslimin,  
Dengan semangat dan roh kebenaran.  
Berjihadlah wahai kaum Muslimin,  
Walau kalah atau capai kemenangan.*

Oh Muslim Community, Unite!  
With truthful spirit and soul,  
Oh Muslim Community, struggle on,  
Whether victory or defeat be ours.

*Bersatulah wahai kaum Muslimin,  
Dengan obor sinar kebahagiaan.  
Berjihadlah wahai kaum Muslimin,  
Walau roboh atau tegak kejayaan.*

Oh Muslim Community, Unite!  
With the torch of Peace in hand,  
Oh Muslim Community, struggle on,  
Whether we fall or uphold victory.

*Berjuanglah wahai asharullah,  
Dengan semangat yang tidak kenal kalah.  
Berkorbanlah wahai yang beriman,  
Dengan harta dan segenap kepunyaan.*

Struggle on, *asharullah*,  
With the spirit of those who know not defeat,  
Sacrifice, ye who are faithful,  
With your wealth and all that you can give.

*Bergerak ke gerbang jaya,  
Agar bebas dan kekal merdeka.  
Beramailah wahai roh yang suai,  
Hingga nyata benarnya janji Rabbi.*

Onwards to the victory arches,  
So that we will be free and forever independent,  
Come together, ye of kindred spirit,  
Till the promise of the God is fulfilled.

Chorus:

*Selamatlah Persatuan Islam melangkah,  
Membimbing Ummat ke medan siasah,  
Berpedomankan Quran dan Sunnah,  
Suburlah hidupnya dan berbuah.*

May our Islamic Movement move safely on,  
Leading the community (of the faithful) to the field (of  
politics),  
Inspired by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*,  
May our movement thrive and prosper.

## APPENDIX II: ISLAMIAH AQIDAH PROTECTION (PERLIS) BILL 2000

**B**elow is a transcript of the Islamiah Aqidah Protection (Perlis) Bill 2000 that was nearly passed in 2000. Perlis has always been under the control of UMNO, the ruling party. The bill was finally stopped after a heated media debate that followed protests from Malaysian human rights NGOs.

### **The Islamiah Aqidah Protection (Perlis) Bill 2000**

#### Arrangement of Clauses

##### Clause

1. Short title, application and commencement
2. Interpretation
3. Jurisdiction of the Court to make declaration and order
4. Acknowledgement as a Muslim
5. Information and investigation
6. Powers of Syariah Enforcement Officer in conducting investigation
7. Appearance in Court of the person who has attempted to change aqidah
8. Powers of the Court against the person who has attempted to change aqidah
9. Procedure if the person repents
10. Procedure if the person refuses to repent
11. Powers of the Court in order of the settlement of liability, etc.
12. Reference for determination of the religious status of a deceased person
13. Register of declaration and order
14. Determination of Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre
15. Powers to make rules

## A BILL

An Enactment to provide provisions for the protection, rehabilitation and determination of the aqidah of a Muslim and matters connected therewith.

ENACTED by the Legislature of the State of Perlis as follows:

### Short title, application and commencement

1. (1) This Enactment may be cited as the Islamiah Aqidah Protection (the State of Perlis) Enactment 2000.  
(2) This Enactment shall come into operation on a date to be appointed by the Ruler by notification in the Gazette.

### Interpretation

2. (1) In this Enactment, unless the context otherwise requires —  
“Administration Enactment” means the Administration of the Syariah Court Enactment 1991;  
“Attempt to change aqidah” means any act by a Muslim who is mukallaf on his own free will either by word, deed or by any means that may be interpreted as an attempt to change his aqidah and belief towards the religion of Islam;  
“Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre” means any rehabilitation centre as determined under section 14 of this Act;  
“Court” means Syariah High Court established under subsection 7(1) of the Administration Enactment;  
“Hukum Syarak” means the laws of Islam as contained in the Al-Quran and the Sunnah Rasul Allah S.W.T.;  
“Islamic Family Law” means the Islamic Family Law Enactment 1991;  
“Judge” means a Syariah High Court Judge appointed under subsection 6B(1) of the Administration Enactment;

“Majlis” means the Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Isti’adat Melayu Perlis established under subsection 4(1) of the Administration of Muslim Law Enactment 1963;

“Peguam Syarie” means a person appointed as Peguam Syarie under section 24 of the Administration Enactment;

“Syariah Enforcement Officer” means the officer appointed under section 29A of the Administration of Muslim Law Enactment, 1963 and includes the Chief Syariah Enforcement Officer;

“Secretary of the Majlis” means the Secretary of the Majlis Ugama Islam appointed under subsection 4(6) of the Administration of Muslim Law Enactment, 1963.

(2) All words and expressions used in this Enactment and not herein defined in this Enactment but defined in the Interpretation Acts 1948 and 1967 (Act 388), shall have the meaning thereby assigned to them respectively in the Acts to the extent that such meanings do not conflict with Hukum Syarak.

#### Jurisdiction of the Court to make declaration and order

3. The Court shall have jurisdiction to —
  - (a) Declare that a person is no longer a Muslim;
  - (b) Declare the religious status of a Muslim who has died; and
  - (c) Make any other order as it deems fit in relation to the matters stated under paragraphs (a) and (b).

#### Acknowledgement as a Muslim

4. For the purposes of this Enactment and any other written law, a Muslim shall at all time, be acknowledged and treated as a Muslim, unless a declaration has been made by the Court under this Enactment that he is no longer a Muslim.

### Information and investigation

5. If from information received or otherwise, a Syariah Enforcement Officer has reason to suspect the commission of an attempt to change aqidah by a Muslim, he shall as soon as possible investigate the matter.

### Powers of Syariah Enforcement Officer in conducting investigation

6. In conducting an investigation under section 5, a Syariah Enforcement Officer shall have all the powers conferred on him under the Criminal Procedure in the Syarak Enactment 1991, as if he is conducting a criminal investigation under such Enactment.

### Appearance in Court of the person who has attempted to change aqidah

7. (1) If at the end of his investigation under section 5, the Syariah Enforcement Officer is of the opinion that —
  - (a) Here is sufficient evidence or reasonable ground of suspicion to justify the commencement of proceedings under this Enactment against the person; and
  - (b) The person against whom such investigation is conducted has attained the age of eighteen or more, he shall make an application to the Court for a summons to be issued requiring the appearance of that person before the Court and that person shall appear as required.
- (2) If the person who has been served with a summons under subsection (1) is not present as required, the Syariah Enforcement Officer shall apply to the Court to issue a warrant of arrest to secure his attendance.

### Powers of the Court against the person who has attempted to change his aqidah.

8. When a person appears or is brought before the Court under section 7, the Judge shall —

- (a) Advise such person to repent, and if the Judge is satisfied that he has repented according to Hukum Syarak, record his repentance and order his release; or—
- (b) If the person refuses to repent —
  - (i) Order that he be detained at the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre for a period not exceeding one year unless he has earlier repented under subsection 9(2); and
  - (ii) Order the Syariah Enforcement Officer to submit a report to the Court and the officer in charge of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre, relating to the liabilities or obligations of that person under the Islamic Family Law not later than thirty days before the expiry of the period of his detention.

#### Procedure if the person repents

- 9. (1) If at any time, the person who has been ordered to be detained under subsection 8(b)(i) has repented, the officer in charge of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre shall prepare a report and, as soon as possible, produce that person before the Court.
  - (2) If the Judge is satisfied that the person brought before him under subsection (1) has repented in accordance with Hukum Syarak, he shall record the person's repentance and order his release.

#### Procedure if the person refuses to repent

- 10. (1) If the person under detention refuses to repent, the officer in charge of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre where he is detained shall, if —
  - (a) The report by the Syariah Enforcement Officer indicated that the person has no liability or obligation under the Islamic Family Law, produce him before the Court at the end of the period of his detention; or
  - (b) The report by the Syariah Enforcement Officer indicated that he has liabilities or obligations under the Islamic Family

Law, produce him before the Court not less than thirty days before the expiry of the period of his detention.

(2) The officer in charge of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre shall at the time the person is produced before the Court, submit to the Judge a progress report pertaining to the rehabilitation programmes which has been carried out on such person.

(3) When the person is brought before the judge under subsection 1(a) or (b), the Judge shall again advise such person to repent, and if —

(a) The Judge is satisfied that the person brought before him has repented in accordance with Hukum Syarak, he shall record the person's repentance and order his release; or

(b) The person still refuses to repent, the Judge shall, after examining the reports submitted to him and after hearing any explanation from such person, record his refusal to repent, and if —

(i) The Judge is satisfied that the person has no liability or obligation under the Islamic Family Law, declare that the person is no longer a Muslim and order his release; or

(ii) The Judge is satisfied that the person has any liability or obligation under the Islamic Family Law, section 11 shall apply.

Powers of the Court to order the settlement of liability, etc.

11. (1) In circumstances mentioned under subsection 10(3)(b)(ii), before the Judge makes a declaration against the person, he shall proceed to hear the liabilities or obligations of that person under the Islamic Family Law as if a divorce has occurred under this Enactment.

(2) In determining the liabilities or obligations under subsection (1), the Judge shall hear and decide the claims of all parties under the Islamic Family Law.

(3) When the Judge has decided on the liabilities or obligations of the parties, he shall in order —

- (a) Declare that the person is no longer a Muslim and dissolve his marriage;
  - (b) Determine the person's liabilities or obligations under subsection (2); and
  - (c) Release the person unless he has earlier been released upon the expiry of the detention.
- (4) When an order made by the Judge is in respect of a liquidated sum such sum is recoverable as a Civil debt.

Reference for determination of the religious status of a deceased person

12. (1) A declaration to determine the religious status of a deceased person under section 3(b) shall be made by way of reference to the Court.
- (2) No reference shall be made under this section unless by the Secretary of the Majlis and only the Secretary of the Majlis may be a party in that reference.
- (3) The Secretary of the Majlis may on his own motion, or on the application of any person shall, as soon as possible, refer to the Judge for a declaration whether the deceased was a Muslim or otherwise at the time of his death.
- (4) A reference shall be supported by —
- (a) Grounds of reference;
  - (b) An affidavit verifying the facts that are relied on for the reference; and
  - (c) A certificate of urgency.
- (5) Where an application for a reference under subsection (3) to the Secretary of the Majlis is made by any person, he shall furnish the material facts of the case which must be supported by an affidavit to prove that he has an interest in that application.
- (6) If the person making the application to the Secretary of the Majlis is a non-Muslim, he must file together with his application a statutory declaration made under the Statutory Declaration Act 1960 [Act 13].

(7) At the hearing of the reference, the Secretary of the Majlis shall have the right to be heard whether in person or by a Peguam Syarie and the Court may hear any other person on the matter to arrive at a just decision.

(8) If at the end of the hearing, the Judge is satisfied that —

(a) The deceased was a Muslim at the time of his death, he shall make a declaration of such fact and may order any person to do any act to give effect to the declaration and may specify the period in which such order is to be carried out; or

(b) The deceased was not a Muslim at the time of his death, he shall make a declaration of such fact and may make any other order that he deems fit.

#### Register of declaration and order

13. The Secretary of the Majlis shall keep and maintain or cause to be kept or maintained a register in any form as he deems fit for registration of the declaration and order made under this Enactment.

#### Determination of Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre

14. The Majlis may, by way of notification in the Gazette, determine any place or institution, as an Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre for the purposes of this Enactment.

#### Powers to make rules

15. (1) The Ruler, on the advice of the Majlis, may, by notification in the Gazette make rules as may be necessary or expedient for the purposes of carrying into effect the provisions of this Enactment.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), such rules may —

(a) Make provisions for the control, isolation, detention, protection and rehabilitation of the person detained in any of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre;

(b) Require the person responsible or the officer in charge of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre to submit to the Court

reports and information in respect of the person detained at the centre;

(c) Regulate the procedure of admission to or discharge from an Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre; and

(d) Make the contravention of or a failure to comply with any regulation made under this Enactment an offence and may prescribe a fine not exceeding one thousand ringgit or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months for such offence.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. This proposed Enactment seeks to provide provisions relating to protection, rehabilitation and determination of the aqidah of a Muslim and matters connected therewith.
2. Clause 1 seeks to provide provision for the short title, application and commencement of the proposed Enactment.
3. Clause 2 defines certain words and expressions used in the proposed Enactment.
4. Clause 3 provides the jurisdiction of the Court to declare that a person is no longer a Muslim, the religious status of a Muslim who has died and the granting of any other order that it deems fit.
5. Clause 4 provides that a Muslim shall at all time be acknowledged and treated as a Muslim unless declared otherwise by the Court.
6. Clause 5 seeks to confer powers on a Syariah Enforcement Officer to investigate if he has reason to suspect the commission of an attempt by a Muslim to change his aqidah.
7. Clause 6 provides that in conducting an investigation, the Syariah Enforcement Officer shall have all the powers under the Criminal Procedure in the Syarak Enactment 1991.
8. Clause 7 provides that if there is sufficient evidence of an attempt to change aqidah by a Muslim, the Syariah Enforcement Officer shall apply to the Court to issue a summons requiring the attendance of the person in Court.
9. Clause 8 provides that if a person appears on the summons but refuses to repent, the Judge may order him to be detained for a period of not more than one year at any Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre.

10. Clause 9 deals with the procedure of a person under detention who has repented and the power of the Court to release him.
11. Clause 10 provides the procedure for production before the Court of a person who refuses to repent any time before the expiry of his detention for him to be dealt with or at least thirty days before the expiry of his detention if he has liabilities or obligations under the Islamic Family Law for it to be determined before a declaration is made.
12. Clause 11 gives the Judge the power to hear and determine the person's liabilities or obligations and to dissolve his marriage after making a declaration that he is no longer a Muslim including allowing any liquidated sum so ordered be recoverable as Civil debt.
13. Clause 12 provides that any declaration to determine the religious status of a person who has died must be by way of reference to the Court by the Secretary of the Majlis either on his own motion or on the application of any other person and in the case where that person is a non-Muslim the application must be supported by a statutory declaration.
14. Clause 13 provides for the maintenance of a register for all declarations and orders made under this proposed Enactment by the Secretary of the Majlis.
15. Clause 14 provides for the determination of the Aqidah Rehabilitation Centre.
16. Clause 15 deals with the powers to make rules.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

This proposed Enactment will involve the Government in extra financial expenditure the amount of which cannot at present be ascertained.

Signed:

Ishak Bin Sahari  
State Legal Adviser,  
Perlis.

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