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About the Speaker

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PAS POST-FADZIL NOOR: FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND PROSPECTS

I. Understanding the phenomenal rise of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party: How to read and *not* to read the success of PAS.

‘Realism and flexibility are among the most important features of Islamic methodology.’¹

Rachid Ghannouchi,
*The Participation of Islamists
in Non-Islamic Government.*

The sudden and untimely demise of Ustaz Fadzil Mohamad Noor², President of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) caught Malaysia by surprise. The death of Fadzil Noor also had an immediate effect on PAS’s own complicated internal politics. The ‘moderate’ faction (made up of men like Hatta Ramli, Dzulkefly Ahmad and Kamarudin Jaffar) who were closely associated to Fadzil were left 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 the northern state of Kedah was significantly weakened. (Many of the party’s strategists had hoped that the President’s presence in Kedah would help the party win the state at the next election, adding yet another gain to PAS’s growing list of conquests.) With Tuan Guru Hadi Awang elevated to the post of PAS President and head of the BA (*Barisan Alternatif*), PAS’s centre of gravity had shifted back to the East Coast, to the state of Trengganu. While PAS’s advances on Kedah had been checked, the party’s hold on Trengganu had been significantly strengthened as a result of the untimely death of its President. Overnight, the prospect of an UMNO take-over of Trengganu 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 Dato’ Seri Abdullah Badawi — the ‘Mr. Clean’ of UMNO whose own Islamist credentials are 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.³

The question on everyone's mind at this stage is where will PAS go from here? Is the party set to make more gains in the rural Malay heartland in the north? Or has its advance been checked by the recovery of UMNO's credentials? The recent by-election results in Pendang and Bukit Tinggi — where both UMNO and PAS won one seat each — has left us with little evidence to support any claim at this stage. Before even attempting to answer such a question, it would serve us well to consider the historical development of PAS itself, and take stock of the party's achievements over the past five decades.

After being on the political scene for more than half a century, it is undeniable that 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. It is thanks to their silent and unrecorded efforts, that the party has not only managed to weather 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 today has developed to become a national party with national aspirations, and its presence is both a local and regional one. The party has developed its own cohesive organisational structure, grassroots network and media services. During the political and economic crises of 1997-1998, PAS's official media organ *Harakah* out-sold all the other 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 a host of pragmatic, capable and popular leaders. Those who felt that they were unable to take the party to greater heights were prepared to stand aside and open the way for others who were more able than them.⁴

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 that had been instituted during the time of Dr. Burhanuddin, he remained a charismatic leader whose hold on the followers of PAS was more than considerable. It was Asri who gave a Malay face to PAS, though his ill-fated experiment with the Alliance and later the *Barisan Nasional* turned out to be a disaster for the party. But so great was his popularity (and so strong his hold on the party apparatus) that Asri managed to bring PAS into

line and take part in the *Barisan* experiment. The failure of the project would prove the downfall of Asri himself, but by then PAS had developed such a strong organisational structure that the party would survive 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 been in power in the party ever since. The entry and rise of the *Ulama* faction within PAS marked the moment of the third major discursive shift within the party itself. By then PAS had moved away from the discourse of anti-colonialism and Malay communitarianism, to embrace the discourse of revolutionary pan-Islamism instead.

Rejecting the politics of compromise and adaptability of the Burhanuddin era as well as the politics of communitarianism of the Asri era, the new leaders of PAS adopted a new 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 that was 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 that were 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 as unbelievers), the critique of Malaycentrism 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

One of the major reasons why PAS has managed to develop in the way it did and remain a potent political force to be reckoned with in the country is its ability to tap into the rich discursive economy of Islam and use it as a discourse for political mobilisation.

In this respect, PAS is certainly not the only political organisation that has done so. There exists a vast body of literature that has looked at 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. Syed Vali Nasr's (1994) study of the *Jama'at-e Islami* of Pakistan has shown how the Indian Muslim activist Maulana Abu'l A'la Maudoodi had

managed to activate the political potential inherent within Islam itself as a tool for political organisation and mobilisation.⁵ By creating the *Jama'at party*, 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'. But 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 the other populist parties such as the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muslim League. It has also been unable to prevent other Islamist parties like the *Jama'ati Ulama-i Islam* and the *Jami'at-e Ulama-i Pakistan* from entering and competing for the same discursive space of Islamism. This is largely due to its own over-intellectual approach that is heavily based on its claim to scriptural and doctrinal authority and its attempts to create an Islamist intellectual elite. As Nasr explains:

'Islamic revolution in the *Jama'at's* rhetoric is not the battle-cry of the masses but an elitist 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 sort, 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.'⁶

Till today the *Jama'at's* approach remains a selective one: its primary recruitment base remains the student body, political and business elites as well as members of the Pakistani armed forces.⁷

While some Islamists movements like the *Jama'at* have opted for a top-down approach to Islamist politics, others have preferred the bottom-up approach in order to build a solid base of support prior to embarking on more ambitious Islamisation campaigns.

Paul Lubeck's (1986) study on the use of Islamic discourse by Islamists activists in Northern Nigeria has shown how Islam was used as a means of creating a new Islamically-oriented urban labour class that would later serve as the bedrock for Nigeria's nascent Islamist revival.⁸ Focusing on the political economy of Kano in Northern Nigeria between 1966-79, Lubeck has studied the process of the creation of a new urban working class (*leburori*) that was held together by appeals to Islamic nationalism and class integration. Working through traditional networks such as Sufi *Tariqas* and Islamic educational institutions (*madrasahs*), the Nigerian Islamists took advantage of the weakening Nigerian state in order to create new bonds

of commonality and association among Nigerian Muslim workers known as the urban *leburori*. The net result was the emergence of a new Muslim urban class that was open to the appeals of the Islamist movements and parties that came on the scene later. This approach has also been employed by Islamist movements elsewhere, from Iran to Southeast Asia.

PAS's approach to political organization and mobilization has always been a combination of the top-down and bottom-up approaches. Being a political party born and bred in the climes of 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. During the time of Dr. Burhanuddin and Asri Muda (1950s-70s), PAS extended its influence all over the country via local networks of contact and communication: Asri Muda's favourite meeting place and recruitment centers were the coffee-shops that dotted the urban landscape of the country. From the 1980s, the ideologues of PAS have concentrated their efforts on the *madrassahs*, mosques and campuses of the country. Unlike the *Jama'at* though, PAS has never adopted an elitist 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 of the fact 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 itself. From the 1950s to the present, 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 to the rural Malay peasantry in the 1950s and 1960s, PAS had tried (along with the Malay leftist parties) to present itself as a viable and credible alternative to the ruling UMNO party. From the 1980s onwards, PAS's image as the defender of Islam and Muslim concerns was altered somewhat by the injection of a more radical and revolutionary rhetoric imported from the Iranian experience, but its identity as the party of choice for the downtrodden and marginalized 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 (1985) has argued, anti-state and anti-systemic resistance in Malaysia has always been of the 'garden variety' kind, employing time-tested and proven tactics such as gossip campaigns, boycotts, theft, foot-dragging and sabotage instead.⁹ It was, as he puts it, a form of 'everyday resistance that made no headlines'.¹⁰

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 systems upon which PAS also depends), PAS leaders from Dr. Burhanuddin to the *Ulama* of

the present 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 Islamists of Malaysia turned to Islam and its rich discursive repertoire for a myriad of morally-loaded symbols, values and tropes in order to weave together a discourse of resistance that was radically different from their opponents. By doing so, PAS was not only using Islam as a discourse of delegitimation against the State, but also as a stamp of legitimacy for their 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 (1979) puts it:

‘It is especially at the level of culture that the defeated or intimidated may nurture their 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 a community of values. In this sense, it is as much a beginning as an end.’¹¹

But this ability to tap into the collective wants of the masses and the discursive moral economy of Islam would not have been done successfully 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 elite. They understood that such figures wielded an enormous degree of psycho-social 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. But the party never allowed its leaders to break or weaken their organic bonds to traditional Malay society. The party had even issued guidelines to PAS leaders and propagandists, reminding them to ‘dress down’, maintain a humble demeanour and to stay close to the people. (Even leather shoes were frowned upon, at a time when many Malay farmers and peasants went around barefoot all day.)

It was the cultivation of such close personal relationships between PAS's middle-ranking leaders and their followers that helped the party develop such strong organic links with its natural constituency. This, in fact, 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 that was operating in and on the field. At no point in the party's history did it allow for a radical rupture that severed its link to its followers.¹² The creation of such an integrated, organic and independent party-political organisation would not have been possible had it not been for three vital factors:

Firstly, 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 it was the party's leadership that 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 revolt within the party itself.

Secondly, PAS's success would not have been possible without the hard work and determination of the ordinary members of the party themselves. From the day that it was born, 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.¹³

This leads us to the third factor, which is the absence of state patronage and support. From 1951, PAS has had to develop on its own without the sponsorship and backing of the State. Even when it came to power in Kelantan and Trengganu for the first time in 1959, PAS had been handicapped by lack of Federal government-allocated funds. While this may have allowed the UMNO-led Federal government to allocate its vital resources elsewhere, it also meant that PAS was forced to develop itself the hard way, learning to be self-reliant and independent. While the going was tough in the 1950s and 1960s, by the late 1970s and 1980s PAS had inculcated the values of hardwork and thrift. The Islamist party has always had to be careful with its limited funds and has therefore not wasted any of it on grand schemes and projects to beguile the masses.

In fact, a cursory survey of the political terrain in Kelantan and Trengganu would show that the party had 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 Trengganu were occupied with the task of building 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 has to be remembered that tourists are not voters, and that 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 that catered to their immediate needs, PAS maintained a living presence in the Malay-Muslim heartland. The party also tried to lead by example, and attempted to formulate a viable and credible Islamist alternative to the secular developmental model which they opposed. All of these efforts were carried out and communicated via the medium of an Islamist political and ethical discourse that was intended to disarm the discourse of their opponents. The fact that Islamic discourse was also seen as being 'natural' and 'indigenous' was also important, 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 itself began to unravel, due to a number of local and external variable factors that were beyond the control of the state.

Understanding PAS's success: The crisis of the secular 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.'¹⁴

Bobby Said,
*A Fundamental Fear:
Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.*

Bobby Sayyid (1997) 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.'¹⁵

But this is only possible if and when Islam is perceived to have been marginalized 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 repair a rupture that has been wrongfully and mistakenly introduced by agents and variable factors from elsewhere. During the 1920s and 1930s when Islamism first began to gather strength and show its face, the Westernising and Secularising elites 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 itself. It is hardly a surprise that the towering figure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stood heads and shoulders above the rest as the main instigator of the downfall of the Islamic political project — a dubious honour he holds till today.¹⁶

For the Islamists, Islamism therefore marks a homecoming, a return to how things should 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 themselves. But for Islam to make its spectacular comeback, it 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 there to be a dialectical Other in order 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 from the beginning. How and why did this come about?

The dialectical struggle between Islam and Secularism was not a major feature of PAS politics during the 1950s to the 1970s. One of the main reasons for this was that the party leadership simply did not regard Secularism as the Other to PAS and its Islamist project at the time.¹⁷ 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 point of crisis. The developments in Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Algeria, Libya and other countries showed that the post-colonial elite 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 paycheque 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 of the post-colonial states began to flounder.

Linked to the failure of the post-colonial political elite was the failure of the institutions that came under their command. In many post-colonial Muslim societies, the executive branch of the state grew in power and influence, reducing the legislature to a mere rubber stamp. The

judiciary and legal process likewise came in for a battering, as the ruling elite 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.

With the gradual decline of the institutions of the State, the people were desperately on the lookout for alternatives. As the crisis of post-colonial government 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 itself. Here they found what they were looking for: an alternative value and belief system that was located radically outside the economy of governmental discourse. It was a system that had been marginalized and abandoned long ago, but its years in exile meant that it was uncontaminated by the evils that plagued the land. Though it was seen as out-of-date and irrelevant by many, it was precisely its untimeliness and alterity that made it seem so attractive. That alternative value and belief system was called Islam.

But one cannot explain the phenomenal resurgence of Islam on local factors alone. While it is true that the internal contradictions within the post-colonial Muslim state paved the way for Islam's return, it has to be noted that the decline and fall of so many post-colonial Muslim states was also brought about by external variable factors that were 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 as well.

Understanding PAS's success: riding the wave of globalisation

It has been said that the rise of Political Islam today 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. The reality is that Islamists movements have succeeded so well because they have managed to harness the powers and capabilities of globalisation and to tie themselves to the flow of globalisation closely. But 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.

Globalisation's heavy imprint on the growth of Islamism is seen in many ways. We 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 and closer 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, so were they exposed to the new currents of Islamist thinking that were 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 elites to deliver upon their promises and to demonstrate the worthiness of their secular developmental programmes.

But it was globalisation that contributed the most to the failure of the secular developmental model in so many Muslim societies. Coming as it did on the bandwagon of liberal-capitalist market reforms and structural adjustment, globalisation's impact was uneven and often traumatic: A wave of Muslim countries — many of them 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 cold comfort for the marginalized 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, then, that in many Muslim societies the rates of unemployment, overcrowding and uneven development grew sky-high overnight.

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 prerogatives of the state. In the process they set up alternative educational networks, communication and logistical infrastructure, local organic linkages as well as propagating 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. Islamism became, in a sense, the Muslim world's response to corporate-sponsored globalisation emanating from the United States and Western Europe. As Bobby Sayyid (1997) puts it:

‘The rise of Islamism was only possible when the availability of Islam could be articulated into a counter-hegemonic discourse’¹⁸

The rise of PAS in Malaysia, the *Jama’at* 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.

Put together, these factors paint a different picture of the rise of PAS and its fortunes. We would argue that PAS has always been a complex and composite phenomenon, and that its political success has been helped by both internal and external variable factors. PAS today stands as 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). But despite the fact that PAS is here to stay, there are still many others who do not have the faintest clue of how to understand it, relate to it, dialogue with it and handle it. It is to that question that we shall now turn to.

II. How *not* to read PAS: Islamism revisited

Islamism has, quite naturally, been seen as a direct political challenge on the state by a number of Muslim governments the world over. This is simply due to the fact that the Islamists wish to present themselves and their parties as a viable alternative to the present order (or disorder) of things. PAS during the time of Fadzil Noor attempted to do just that. In the 1990s it hoped to provide a counter-factual example to the UMNO model of development through its experiments at social and political reconstruction and engineering in the state of 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 the party’s president Fadzil Noor was himself an ex-academic with a technocratic approach to Islam and politics. PAS was also helped by the entry of thousands of young Malay middle-class professionals who abandoned UMNO in the wake of the Anwar Ibrahim affair. On top of that, PAS’s image as a credible alternative to UMNO was boosted thanks to its instrumental alliance with DAP (Democratic Action Party), PRM (Partai Rakyat Malaysia) and KeADILan (Partai Keadilan Nasional), making it a partner in a broad-based multireligious and multiracial alliance for the first time.

PAS’s democratic experiment, however, was soon to come aground as the hardliners 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 melee 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 and pacifist movement dedicated to gradualist change. (It has to be noted that at the peak of the crisis even Fadzil Noor took part in many of the protests. On one occasion at least he was photographed burning the American flag along with Mahfuz Omar, leader of the PAS Youth Wing.) For many local analysts and political commentators, it seemed as if PAS's democratic veil had finally fallen, revealing the radical nature buried inside.

Having said that, 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 been a party that has kept within the law and the Constitution of Malaysia. It is therefore important to understand 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 hardline 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) Islamist whose vision is set and whose determination is unquestionable.

Having said that, however, it is imperative that we recognise PAS for what it is and give the party the recognition that is due to it. PAS's success 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 factually inaccurate as well as politically counter-productive. PAS has expressed support for militant Muslim struggles elsewhere, in places like 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 themselves.)

Our contention here is that one of the major reasons 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*, it remains a fact that an overwhelming majority of PAS members are ordinary Malay-Muslims with ordinary wants and aspirations like you and I. Distorting the image of PAS merely contributes to the distortion of PAS's politics and Malaysian politics by extension. 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 that is forever on the lookout for more fallen idols to put in its pantheon of leaders. As Ayatollah Khomeini once put it, 'the martyr is the essence of history'.¹⁹ The killing of PAS leaders like Ibrahim Libya (in 1985) and the arrest and detention of PAS leaders in 1987 may have helped to cool down political tensions that were set to boil over at the time, but it also helped to shift the party towards a more radical agenda and discursive register.

The bottom line is that if we fail to recognise that PAS has managed to tap into the groundswell of discontent and frustration among the Malays and continue to see the party as a militant threat against the country, we are in danger of applying the wrong antidote to the wrong illness. A political 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 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 state 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 the UMNO/State's strategy is to out-Islamise PAS by coming up with an Islamisation programme of its own. This has led to the introduction of Islamic laws and regulations, the expansion of the Islamic bureaucracy and the 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.

In 2000 the UMNO-controlled state of Perlis attempted to put into place the Perlis Aqidah Protection Bill, which would have granted the state's religious authorities the power to take criminal proceedings against Muslims accused of heresy, deviation or other 'crimes' related to their beliefs. The Bill provided for the creation of so-called 'faith rehabilitation centres' where those accused would be kept for a period up to one year, and who would be 'brought back' to the proper fold of Islam. Those deemed 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. But the fact 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 (1997) has argued, the Islamisation race between PAS and UMNO has not actually contributed to the opening of the Muslim mind but rather restricted it even further in Malaysia. What is more, as the two parties continue to up the stakes in the Islamisation race between themselves, they have effectively blurred the distinction between their respective approaches and interpretations, leading to a fusion of visions and objectives where PAS and UMNO's stand on Islam 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.'²⁰

What is needed is 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 in particular. This can be done by considering the impact of the PAS *Hudud* proposals that have become a public concern of late.

One of the biggest and longest-running controversies that PAS has gotten itself into 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 in the state and elected *Tuan Guru* Nik Aziz Nik Mat as the Chief Minister. PAS was not short of supporters for its *Hudud* Bill. It was also not short of opponents, many of whom criticised the Bill and the party that proposed it 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 one of the main causes of the internal divisions within the beleaguered *Barisan Alternatif*, and ultimately became the reason why the DAP chose to break away from the tenuous instrumental coalition. The tabling of the PAS *Hudud* Bill, first in Kelantan and then in Trengganu, 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, it should be noted that the Malaysian 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, the introduction of *Shariah* law led to heightened conflicts within the Muslim community itself, as well as inter-religious conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims.²¹

To expect PAS to surrender the *Hudud* gauntlet would be *naïve* to say the least. As we have argued, 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 has never and probably will 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 Islamist credentials of the government. The beauty and utility of PAS's *Hudud* Bill (at least up to 2002 before Tuan Guru Hadi Awang rose to become 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 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. Due to the pivotal status that *Shariah* occupies in the economy of Islamic theological-legal discourse, it has been elevated to the status of the 'holy grail' of many an Islamist movement. Many Islamist parties today 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 that is 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 itself and it was developed during the golden age of Islamic civilisation 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*.²²

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 during the late 19th century that the demands for religious revival and Muslim solidarity were first heard in the Muslim world. It was the Muslim modernists and reformers who first 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 for the future. (The traditionalist Muslims were quite happy to live with the division between religion and state that was 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 that their efforts did not go unrewarded: in time a host of Islamist parties and movements all over the world emerged, many of them 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.

For what is often forgotten is the fact that for millions of ordinary Muslims the world over *Shariah* not only has the stamp of legitimacy on it, it also happens to be 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. The same was the case of Malaysia, from the time of Tunku Abdul Rahman onwards. But 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 elites and their ideologies. As their hopes and dreams were dashed on the hard rocks of *realpolitik*, Muslims began to look for other 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.) But for the first four decades of its history, PAS made little gains as far as the *Shariah* issue itself was concerned. It was only from the 1990s onwards that PAS has 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 tested and pushed to the limit as more and more corporate misdemeanours were brushed under the carpet or kept under wraps. The Constitutional crisis of 1982-3, 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 these stark realities, it is hardly a surprise if so many among the younger generation of Malay-Muslims today 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 it once again 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.

III. Has PAS's moment passed? The future of PAS in the wake of Fadzil Noor

'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.'²³

Bobby Said,
*A Fundamental Fear:
Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism.*

The loss of Fadzil Noor has been a significant blow to PAS's image and standing as a credible alternative to the UMNO-led government. With Hadi Awang at the helm of the party, PAS is even less likely to be able to bridge the religious and communal gap in Malaysia and the future of the *Barisan Alternatif* alliance is also at stake. But Hadi Awang's rise to party has also given the party an additional boost as far as its Islamist credentials are concerned and we are more likely to witness an intense and possibly bitter conflict over the meaning and content of Islamic discourse in the years to come.

But as we have tried to show in the course of this paper, PAS's rise to power and growing influence was due mainly to its ability to recognise and adapt to the realities of the time. In the 1960s it spoke the language of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism that was common currency in many post-colonial societies. In the 1970s it spoke the language of Malay communitarian rights at a time when the Malay community was fearful of losing its status and privileges. In the 1980s and 1990s, it spoke the language of radicalism when Islamist groups the world over abandoned the ballot box in favour of the Kalashnikov. Today it speaks the language of democracy and human rights before a plural and complex constituency that demands justice, transparency and reform.

Where is the Islam in all this? Less charitable sceptics may claim that PAS's own understanding of Islam is narrow and shallow to say the least. But from a political scientist's point of view, PAS remains the most interesting and challenging party to study in Malaysia for the simple reason that it seems to be a living example of political Darwinism at work. The possibility of defeating and containing the challenge of PAS is forever there, as are the range of options that are available when trying to do so. But it remains a mystery to me why successive Malaysian administrations have not opted for the most obvious of choices, and have instead given the party the rationale, justification and martyrs that it so desperately craves in order to sustain it in its long march towards the future.

NOTES

1. Rachid Ghannouchi, *The Participation of Islamists in Non-Islamic Government*. Translated by Azzam Tamimi (Ed.) in *Power-Sharing Islam*. (London: Liberty for the Muslim World, 1993), p. 59.
2. Ustaz Fadzil Mohamad Noor was born on 13 March 1937 in the village of Seberang Pumpung, near Alor Setar, Kedah. Although he lost his parents while he was still very young, he received extensive religious education thanks to his grandfather Tuan Guru Haji Idris Al-Jarumi who was a respected and well known *Ulama* from Patani, Southern Thailand. His schooling began at the Malay School of Derga which lasted up to 1949. He then continued his studies at the Maktab Mahmud until 1958. In 1963, he was sent abroad to study at the University of Al-Azhar in Cairo under a scholarship offered by the state government of Kedah. There he studied *Shariah* law until he graduated in 1967. While studying at Al-Azhar, he was appointed to the post of deputy president of the Malay Students Association of Al-Azhar. Upon his return to Malaysia in 1967, he first taught at the Maktab Mahmud. He then proceeded to teach in the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the Technical University of Malaysia (UTM) until 1978. By then Fadzil Noor had already become a member of PAS. He had risen to the post of executive committee member in Kedah and was put in charge of the information bureau in the state. Because he chose to run for the 1978 elections at the constituencies of Alor Merah and Kuala Kedah, his contract with the university was terminated temporarily. During the 1970s, Fadzil Noor also became a member of ABIM and the National Association of Ulama (PUM). Between 1973 to 1974, he served as the Secretary to the Information Bureau of ABIM and took part in the protests in support of the farmers of Baling that were organised by the students. Later when the president of the movement Anwar Ibrahim was put under detention, it was Fadzil Noor who took over as president of ABIM for a while. In 1974, he was also elected to the post of Secretary General to the PUM. In 1983, he was elected to the post of Deputy President of PAS when Ustaz Yusuf Rawa was elected as its President. Later in 1989, he was elected to the post of President of PAS after Ustaz Yusuf Rawa was forced to retire due to reasons of ill health.
3. Almost immediately after these sudden changes were announced, PAS reverted back to its tried and tested tactic of upping the stakes in the Islamisation race. On 7 July 2002, the Trengganu 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 and called it a political gimmick staged by a party that had run out of ideas. PAS's allies in the *Barisan Alternative* (BA) lamented the move on the grounds that it would only undermine the BA's electoral chances even further, 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.

4. The example of PAS's second President, Dr. Abbas Elias, comes to mind: Dr. Abbas's decision to pass on the leadership of the party to Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy proved to be the most significant decision he had made during his entire period of leadership (1953-1956), and this helped to give PAS the much-needed boost that it required at the time. Never one to project his own interests before that of the party's, Dr. Abbas's selfless act saved PAS at the time when its fortunes were hanging in the balance. Dr. Burhanuddin's period of leadership was also an important stage in the development of PAS. PAS was 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. In terms of his political beliefs, outlook and worldview, 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 Vice President, Dr. Zulkiflee Muhammad, and his own arrest and detention soon after.
5. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994).
6. Ibid, p. 222.
7. 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 their biggest project to date: the construction of a massive 'university city' project to be called '*Kurtuba*' (Cordoba), which will become the *Jama'at's* main recruitment and training centre for the future. Located fifteen miles from the parameter of the capital Islamabad, the city project will give the *Jama'at* direct access to the political capital and considerable clout when it comes to staging more demonstrations, protests and sit-ins. The proximity of Kurtuba to Islamabad also means that the level of co-operation between the *Jama'at* and the government agencies and personnel who are sympathetic to their cause will be facilitated and made more open. This marked the latest stage in the development of the *Jama'at*, which has now become a truly mainstream party in the country.
8. Paul Lubeck, *Islam and Urban Labour in Northern Nigeria: The Making of a Muslim Working Class*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
9. James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*. (New Haven: Yale University Press and Kuala Lumpur: University Malaya, 1985). p. 241
10. Ibid. p. 37.
11. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). p. 240
12. The one exception perhaps being Asri Muda's decision to bring the party into the *Perikatan* alliance and then the *Barisan Nasional* — a move that proved to be highly unpopular with a large section of the party itself and which opened the way for the rise of other Islamist movements like ABIM and *Darul Arqam*.

13. Such commitment and dedication remains unmatched by any other party-political organisation in Malaysia today. On several occasions, the author was given the opportunity to compare PAS's mode of organisation with that of other parties in the country: Between 1999 to 2000, the author attended the General Assemblies of PAS and UMNO. At all the PAS General Assemblies that we attended, all the indications of mass popular support were there. PAS members volunteered to help with the organisation of the event in whichever way they could: they cooked and brought food with them; they acted as traffic stewards, crowd control stewards, medical aid stewards and information stewards — all members of the party serving on a voluntary basis. PAS members were on hand to help with setting up stalls, book stands, crowd and traffic control, ushering in guests and journalists. At no point was there ever an official government presence — except for members of the police and security forces who were there to monitor the event. The UMNO Assemblies we visited were a totally different affair. Traffic control was left in the hands of the Malaysian police; catering was contracted out to the hotel caterers; 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 that is no longer able to stand on its own two feet, without state support. (So deep was this dependency complex that it was raised by none other than the President of the party, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad himself, on a number of occasions.)
14. Sayyid, op cit. p. 24.
15. Ibid. p. 48.
16. Sayyid (1997) 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 it and to reconfigure 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 Ataturk. Islam here was described as 'the symbol of obscurantism', a 'purified corpse that poisons our lives', the 'enemy of science and civilisation', etc. (p. 65). In the case of Iran during the time of the Pehlavi 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 marginalize Islam's cultural and political position by presenting it as an external force that came with the Arab invasions of the Persian kingdom. Islam here was being represented as a colonial mindset imposed by the Arabs on the Persians, and conformity with or to Islamic norms was recast as blind imitation of Arab ways. (p. 71). A similar approach was employed by the Baathist regime in Iraq, shortly after it came to power in the 1970s. (p. 72). What all these strategies have in common was the attempt to create a new chain of equivalences with 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.
17. It has to be remembered that many Islamist movements were actually flirting with other secular oppositional movements in the 1950s and 1960s. Dr. Abbas Elias and Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy were themselves products of a mixed educational system and they did not see the secular educational system as inherently evil or anti-Islamic per se. In fact, it is clear that Dr. Burhanuddin himself was a fervent admirer of some forms of secular politics, especially when it was directed against the main adversaries of the time: the forces of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. PAS in the 1960s was therefore a party that was relatively at ease with Secularism and secular movements,

provided they were prepared to work alongside PAS as well. It was for this reason that Dr. Burhanuddin and the Malay Islamist-nationalists of his generation could look up to the likes of Gammel Abdel Nasser and Soekarno, men who today would be ranked among the greatest 'enemies of Islam' by contemporary Islamists.

18. Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*. (London: Zed Books, 1997), p. 73
19. Cited in *The Sunday Times*, 13 April 1980.
20. Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysia's Foreign Policy*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 43
21. *Shariah* law was introduced in Nigeria on 17 October 1999 when the Governor of the state of Zamfara, Ahmed Yani Yerima, introduced the Zamfara *Shariah* bill, which later took effect from 27 January 2000 onwards. The Zamfara *Shariah* Bill extended the scope of *Shariah* law from personal law to criminal law, and this was seen as an attack on the constitution of the country itself. Soon after *Shariah* was introduced in Zamfara, eleven other northern Nigerian states with predominantly Muslim populations followed suit. In the state of Kaduna, the move by the state assembly to pass its own *Shariah* Bill led to protests and confrontations between Muslims and Christians. In the course of the fighting, a number of mosques and churches were destroyed, and scores of Muslims and Christians were killed. In the weeks that followed, the scale of 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 the predominantly Christian parts of the South, where Christian groups began to attack Muslims whom they accused of killing their co-religionists in the North.
22. 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 Moghul 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.
23. Sayyid, op cit. p. 48.

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