

United Arab Emirates) began with Abbas J. Ali (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, United States) who highlighted marketing and ethics, while Mohammad Adnan Alghorani (United Arab Emirates) talked about Islamic business ethics. The day concluded with a gala dinner hosted by GIMC's organising committee and held in the Palm Garden of the Park Hyatt Dubai Resort Hotel.

The second day of the seminar was launched by several plenary sessions, among them, "The Islamic Organisation," which was moderated by David Graf (UAEU). The first parallel session began with Shahrzad Chitsaz (Department of Business Management, Islamic Azad University, Iran), and continued with this writer, who discussed "The Employability and Marketability of the Graduates of Islamic Studies in Islamic Banking and Finance: The Malaysian Experience."

During the closing session, the conference co-chair, Bakr Ahmad Alserhan, announced that next year's conference will be held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) on 22-24 January 2012. At that event, the 'International Award for Excellence in Islamic Marketing' will be presented for the first time. Following the 'Best Paper Awards' session, chaired by Martin Fojt (chairman, Emerald), David Graf concluded the conference with several remarks.

### **International Conference 'Penang and the Indian Ocean' (16-18 September 2011, George Town, Penang, Malaysia)**

*Christoph Marcinkowski, IAIS Malaysia*

On 7 July 2008, George Town, the historic capital of the Malaysian state of Penang, was formally inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, alongside Malacca. It was officially recognised as having "a unique architectural and cultural townscape without parallel anywhere in East and Southeast Asia."<sup>1</sup>

The three-day event – organised by ThinkCity, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), academics from the Universities of Cambridge and London, and the Penang Heritage Trust, and attended by this writer and several other leading scholars in the Asian Studies industry, among them, Leonard and Barbara Watson Andaya from the United States – was launched by Tan Sri Dato' Nor Mohamed Yakcop, Minister in the Department of the Prime Minister of Malaysia. It featured the multicultural history, the wider Indian Ocean context, and the present of Penang Island, which is often known as 'The Pearl of the Orient'. Penang –long at the centre of inter-regional networks of exchange – is located on the northwest coast of Peninsular Malaysia by the Straits of Malacca. Highly urbanised and industrialised, Penang is one of the most developed and economically important states in Malaysia, as well as a thriving tourist destination. Its heterogeneous population is highly diverse in ethnicity, culture, language, and confessions.

The event – the first of its kind – was therefore also highly relevant in order to pinpoint the role played by Muslim diasporas within a multicultural setting, an important facet which was also reflected in the recent publication by Professor Wazir Jahan Karim, one of Malaysia's foremost social anthropologists, of a volume entitled *Straits Muslims: Diasporas of the Northern Passage of the Straits of Malacca*, to which this writer provided the "Introduction".<sup>2</sup>

The conference constituted Phase II of an ongoing 'Penang and the Indian Ocean' project, a follow-up of a first workshop organised by academics from the University of Cambridge held in May 2010. This conference featured 20 paper presentations which were subdivided into 6 subthemes: 1) Early History; 2) Trade and Exchange; 3) Cultural Flows and Encounters; 4) Indian Diasporas; 5) Law, Authority, and Modernity; and 6) CENPRIS Ocean Research.

Unfortunately, however, only two papers of that conference – out of 20 (!) – addressed issues that highlighted the role of Muslims (a regrettable circumstance which this writer tried to convey to the participants in various interventions during the Q&A sessions): "Tamil Muslims in the Penang Port" by Khoo Salma Nasution (Penang Heritage Trust) argued that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Muslim traders entrenched in the Coromandel ports held sway over sea trade between India and Malaya, leading to the emergence of a diaspora community which extended in tandem with subsequent British and Dutch expansion. "Being Modern in Penang: The Story of Muhammad bin Hanif" by Rachel Leow (University of Cambridge) resurrected the ideas and life story of Muhammad bin Hanif, a twentieth-century Penang Malay Muslim intellectual. Regrettably, many of the other papers dealt with either marginal ('micro') topics from the colonial period or (over)emphasised the role of India (and by extension ethnic Indians) in Penang's history.

To the mind of this writer, this under or even misrepresentation of the presence of Islam and Muslims in Penang in past and present fits into a larger setting: contrary to public perception – even among Malaysian Muslims themselves – the state of Penang features a Muslim relative *majority* rather than a minority.<sup>3</sup>

Penang's growing importance as *the* prime tourist destination in Southeast Asia in terms of multiculturalism, however, demands that all its constituent ethnic and religious communities be equally represented at future events of this kind. This writer has therefore conceived the publication of a volume entitled *Cultural Complexity in Penang: Identity Politics at a World Heritage Site*, which will be jointly edited by him with Christian Giordano and Khoo Salma Nasution (forthcoming in 2013 with Ashgate in the United Kingdom). In this volume, particular attention shall be given to the heritage of Penang's diverse and multifaceted Muslim community.<sup>4</sup>

For the sake of internal stability, it is hoped that future events of this kind will address certain imbalances in the representation of Penang's ethnic communities,

as it has been forecast that Penang and northern Malaysia will be among the prime economic growth areas of ASEAN and the eastern Indian Ocean region in the decades to come.

## Notes

1. As reported by UNESCO Media Services, 7 July 2008.
2. Christoph Marcinkowski, "Introduction: Multiculturalism in the Diasporas of Southeast Asian Islam," in: Wazir Jahan Karim (ed.), *Straits Muslims: Diasporas of the Northern Passage of the Straits of Malacca* (George Town [Penang, Malaysia]: Straits G.T., 2009), 1-14. For the wider geographical context see also Christoph Marcinkowski, *From Isfahan to Ayutthaya: Contacts between Iran and Siam in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 2005), which carries a foreword by Professor Ehsan Yarshater of the Center for Iranian Studies at New York's Columbia University.
3. It is worthwhile to know that Penang's ethnic composition in 2010 (according to the Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute, SERI) was as follows: 653,600 (43%) Malays (i.e. Muslims), 623,200 (41%) Chinese, and 152,000 (10%) Indians (many of them Muslims, aside from 83,600 (5.5%) non-Malaysians (plus several other minor ethnic groups, most of them Malaysian citizens). The total population of Penang in 2010 was around 1.5 million; see also "Chinese No Longer Majority Race in Penang," *The Star* (Kuala Lumpur), 29 April 2010, available online at <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?sec=nation&file=/2010/4/29/nation/6150254> (accessed on 11 August 2011).
4. Christoph Marcinkowski (with Abdur-Razzaq Lubis), "Muslim Diversities and Sacred Geographies in Penang," in: Christoph Marcinkowski, Christian Giordano, and Khoo Salma Nasution (eds.), *Cultural Complexity in Penang: Identity Politics at a World Heritage Site* (Ashgate, forthcoming in 2013).

## **'International Conference on Islamic Leadership (ICIL 2011)' (4-5 October 2011, Kuala Lumpur)**

*Christoph Marcinkowski, IAIS Malaysia*

The two-day event took place at the Royale Chulan Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was organised by the Faculty of Leadership and Management of the Islamic Science University of Malaysia (Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia/USIM, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan) in collaboration with the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) of Malaysia's Ministry of Higher Education. The conference was intended to be a strategic platform to discuss the issues of leadership in accordance to the Islamic perspective.

According to the organisers, the main objectives of this conference were as follows:

- to discuss various issues pertaining to leadership, specifically on Islamic leadership;