DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR

Faith-based Charities and the Inclusive Approach: Muhammadiyah during the Colonial Period

Dr. Amelia Fauzia

CHAIRMAN
Dr. Seng Guo Quan

Wednesday, 18 April 2018, 3:00 pm
Political Science Meeting Room, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Block AS1, #04–01, 11 Arts Link, Singapore 117573

Abstract
This seminar re-evaluates Indonesia’s Muhammadiyah organisation. By looking at its charitable wing called Penolong Kesengsaraan Umum (PKU/ Assistance for the Relief of Public Suffering) observers have labelled it puritan, Wahhabi and anti-Christian as well as pluralist, moderate and tolerant. During the colonial period, PKU based its activities on the principle that its assistance is “without discrimination as to race/group and religion.” For most (secular) humanitarian and charitable organisations, this phrase is not unique but is part of their principal stance in distributing assistance. However, in the context of religious charities, which in some instances have been more focused on promoting confessional interests, this inclusive principle is exceptional. How did it come to take an inclusive approach to social services? The talk refers to some factors that have contributed to the inclusivity principle of PKU and will use Putnam’s framework of “bridging” and “bonding” aspects of faith-based philanthropy as social capital. Based on the speaker’s recent journal article, this presentation will expound on the charitable activism of Muhammadiyah in the past and the contemporary period.

About the Speaker
Amelia Fauzia is Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, NUS. She was previously a lecturer at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta. Her research focuses on religion, movements and social change, specifically looking at the relationship between state and civil society. Dr Fauzia received her MA (1998) from the University of Leiden and, following that, her PhD from the University of Melbourne (2009), where she analysed the state and Muslim civil society through the practice of Islamic philanthropy. She has conducted research on philanthropy, democracy, women and disaster relief on Islam in Indonesia, and Southeast Asia more broadly. Among her publications are Faith and the State, a History of Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia (Brill, 2013), ‘Islamic orientation in contemporary Indonesia: Islamism on the rise?’ (co-author, M. Sakai) (Asian Ethnicity, 2014), and ‘Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia: Modernization, Islamization and Social Justice’, South-East Asian Studies, 10(2), 223-236, Dec 2017.

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