

Twin Towers exploding in New York. On the other hand, *teror* connotes the sustained but low-level instances of state-induced fear and violence experienced by Indonesians on a daily basis. The latter is also alive in the so-called 'Western liberal democracies' especially the United States and the United Kingdom. Significantly, their militarism is practised on its own citizens as well as globally. The inter-connections in the history, form, technique and operations of state terrorism gives it a global and necessarily comparative dimension that makes any investigative attempt to reduce state terrorism to a series of 'local' or better yet, 'indigenous' effects, an exercise in chauvinism. The book ends on a pointed note. 'I suspect there are both parallels and genealogical links between yesterday's anthropology and culture and today's state terrorism. They are all married by a totalising ambition, "in which the same constitutes itself through a form of negativity in relation to the other". Anthropology and culture were to the formation of the "West" via European colonial construction of the "East" what state terrorism is to the making of contemporary states' self-identity via the construction of subversives' (p.195).

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#### Malaysia

*Politics in Malaysia: The Malay dimension*

By EDMUND TERENCE GOMEZ

London & New York: Routledge, 2007. Pp. 160. References and Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463408000441

Published in 2007, this book may seem dated given the recent turn of events in the Malaysian General Elections but this is far from the truth. In the March 2008 General Election, the ruling coalition, the Barisan Nasional (BN) suffered its largest electoral losses since independence. It lost four states to the opposition and failed to win back Kelantan, which remains under the control of the Islamic party, PAS. Whilst many commentators are currently scurrying to find explanations for these tectonic changes, I found the essays in this edited volume almost prescient in identifying the key transitions in society that have led to the BN's catastrophic failure at the polls. Another valuable contribution is the mapping out of the issues that will continue to be key concerns for the Malay electorate as well as political parties from both sides of the political spectrum in the years to come.

The volume, ably edited by Edmund Terence Gomez, contains five chapters concerning the Malay dimension of politics. It is a welcome and useful addition to the field. The papers were presented at the Fourth International Malaysian Studies Conference in August 2004 and were put together in this volume on Malay politics in order to raise key questions about the nature of Malay political dominance within the state as well as address the 'limited changes in the pattern of political mobilisation and rhetoric of parties claiming to represent the interests of this ethnic community' (p. ix).

Gomez's first chapter on 'Resistance to change – Malay politics in Malaysia' captures the essence of the current political debacle in UMNO. He argues that Malay parties have engaged in limited change and innovation because they persist in

mobilising their supporters along racial and religious lines. These parties have failed to recognise that the overt practice of ethnic politics has become ‘increasingly alien to large segments of society, given the class and generational transitions that Malaysia has undergone’ (p. 3). Gomez’s chapter outlines all the key primers in the current political situation such as marginalised communities supporting the opposition coalition, the intra-ethnic divide among Malays, as well as the younger generation of non-Malays who crave a ‘*bangsa* Malaysia’ identity rather than the continued state-driven focus on ‘*ketuanan Melayu*’ (Malay hegemony). It is a good introduction to Malay politics of recent years but also identifies most of the longer-term structural issues that will continue to dominate discussion in the Malaysian political arena.

There is also a nice balance to this volume with enough discussion to cover both actions and attitudes of PAS and UMNO within the political game. The volume tackles issues like UMNO’s political hold over the legal system in order to constrain political dissent even within UMNO itself (Marzuki Mohamad’s chapter), and UMNO’s reluctance to adopt greater democratisation and its superficial accommodations to the demand for greater human rights (Carolina López C.). Helen Ting deals with how PAS and UMNO have sidelined women in the political process while at the same time creating the illusion of participation through the establishment of their respective women’s wings of the party. Liew Chin Tong, who was elected an Opposition MP for the Democratic Action Party (DAP) in the recent General Elections, provides a thoroughly engaging discussion of the ideological divisions within PAS over their vision of an Islamic state in Malaysia. Khadijah Khalid sums up the volume with an analysis of the 2004 General Election – a stunning success for Abdullah Badawi and his UMNO party – arguing that personality politics and economic factors were the crucial determinants in this electoral rout.

There will be criticisms that the book is not as comprehensive as it could have been. A chapter on the intra-ethnic divide within the Malay community would have been welcome; and certainly a more extensive discussion about the *bangsa* Malaysia issue would not have been misplaced either. However, these criticisms are minor and it should not detract from the fact that this is a useful book on Malay politics, which brings together in a single volume some of the central arguments concerning the state of Malay politics in Malaysia today.

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*Politics and governance in Singapore: An Introduction*

By BILVEER SINGH

Singapore: McGraw Hill Education, 2007. Pp. 201. Figures, Tables, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463408000453

Singapore’s nation building story is a unique and fascinating one. Narratives composed by historians with an eye on dramas and traumas would juxtapose the