

daughter in the care of nuns after the child's father, a senior Falintil leader, refused to fully recognise her birth. Another sharply etched tale follows a member of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) staff back to the Maliana police station, site of a terrible massacre by militia days after referendum results were announced, to look for the remains of her husband's body. Though Cristalis makes clear the role played by Indonesian security forces in driving, and directly participating in, militia violence, she also gives life to members of the Indonesian security apparatus whose motivations are more confused: either out of fear or moral disgust.

If this approach provides a history anchored in a set of personal experiences, it sometimes struggles to comprehensively record the broader context. Where it seeks to fill in lengthy background around events where the author was not present, such as the first 20 years of resistance, or the period of United Nations (UN) transitional administration, Cristalis's account inevitably feels thinner, and might have benefited from broader sources. Where a narrow focus includes her own experience, however, it sometimes offers a richer account than a more comprehensive telling. Cristalis was one of three foreign journalists who chose not to evacuate from the UN compound in the bloody days following the referendum announcement, amid disagreement over whether a group of hundreds of Timorese refugees gathered in the compound would accompany them. This is a period related many times elsewhere by those involved in the cables to and from New York, but Cristalis's view is closer to those with whom she is sharing the crowded floor: confusion over how any option other than full evacuation could be considered.

This second edition has been updated with chapters that take up the lives of several characters following independence. These offer a reasonable guide to major developments in the country, including the 2006 crisis and the shooting of the president in 2008, but again the material is thinner; several of Cristalis's friends have left. The rest of the work has, however, come into sharper focus with a revision; the characters and their motivations and frustrations have been given more space at the expense of the journalist's gloss.

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*Across the causeway: A multi-dimensional study of Malaysia–Singapore relations*

Edited by TAKASHI SHIRAIISHI

Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009. Pp. 265, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463410000664

This book addresses a set of issues that must be resolved by Singapore and Malaysia in order to overcome the challenges that are bedeviling relations across the causeway. The book's clear strength lies in its multidisciplinary approach and includes 15 contributions by historians, political scientists and economists.

In the introduction, Takashi Shiraishi admits that as a non-specialist and non-partisan in the politics of Singapore and Malaysia, he hopes that this book will raise more questions about the nature and development of Singapore–Malaysia relations. Five salient points are raised and discussed. First, the book covers the connectivity and geographic proximity of Singapore and Malaysia. Second, it affirms the heritage of colonial legacy and politicking that underpins the contentious relations between Singapore and Malaysia. Third, the historical memories and contemporary opinions of Singaporeans and Malaysians are greatly shaped by the political bickering between the post-independence leaders of the two countries. Fourth, Singapore and Malaysia are becoming more complementary in some areas such as national security, though they are competing and complementing in economic and development areas. Finally, though successful as independent market development economies, Singapore and Malaysia have to co-operate more closely to buttress their own as well as Southeast Asia's economic development, especially with the rise of India and China as regional powerhouses.

Subsequently, Professor Anthony J. Stockwell, a prominent historian of British imperial history begins the intellectual deliberations by giving a detailed account of the circumstances in which the British used territorial merger between Singapore and Malaysia as a strategy of imperial disengagement. Stockwell's analysis of the politics of decolonisation is refreshing. He alludes to circumstances whereby the British, after the Second World War, had to release their territorial stakes due to over-commitment in managing colonies. This *longue durée* of historical evaluation is then supplemented by another article by Ooi Keat Gin who argues for a historical enduring symbiotic relationship between both countries until colonial dictation and politics of merger–separation divided Singapore and Malaysia into two distinct political entities. Next, Mohamad Abu Bakar proceeds on with the historical exercise by mirroring the earlier two academics' premises. He analyses that co-operation mutated into conflict due to clash of personality, differing nationalistic visions and economic agendas. The era of strong-minded leaders whose impersonation of dictatorial personality-type led to the vital confrontation.

Carlyle A. Thayer adds on to the discussion on ethnic politics, economic interdependence and Singapore's strategic vulnerability with issues on maritime boundaries. Here, Thayer refers to the proximal and relations-building efforts by both countries by referring their territorial contestation — Pedra Branca, to the International Court of Justice. Thus, with economic interdependence and strategic outlook creating greater mood and temperament for co-operation, third-party mediation helps to build more confidence and preventive diplomacy measures. Kamarulnizam Abdullah then opens a new window of discourse by securing the attention of readers on the status of Johor in Singapore–Malaysia relations. As a border state with Singapore and a state within the Federation of Malaysia, Johor's long historical and unique link with the two countries illustrates the co-operations, competitions and tricky diplomatic relations, as Johor is the heartbeat and founding state of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO).

On international relations, to N. Ganesan, Singapore's political, international and security outlook has evolved from a neo-realist core to a more defensive realism tempered by the multilateral membership of regional and international organisations. Thus, from Singapore's perspective, Malaysia is no more the predominant enemy

that the city-state must look out for since other entities such as America and China also have ‘imperialism without colony’ designs on smaller states in East Asia. Abdul Aziz Bari’s article, however, brings back the reader to past issues. In his article, the reader will comprehend that the ejection of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia was constitutional. Though the late Tunku Abdul Rahman was the sole driver of separation, his actions were, in fact, in line with the law of the Federation. According to Professor Albert Lau, Singaporean and Malaysian ideas of governance had produced varying outcomes due to the differing rhetorics of ethnicity, multiracialism, meritocracy and progress. Singapore, however, is ahead of Malaysia in its economic success. Hence, as much as Singapore and Malaysia have similar economic, social and political concerns such as modernisation, developmentalism and wealth accumulation, the speed at which both countries are going and the distribution of national wealth are certainly unequal.

The final section of the book, the economics section, written by Teofilo C. Daquila, Linda Low, Mahani Zainal Abidin and Lee Poh Onn, discusses the aspect of free trade agreements (FTAs), and here Singapore has a head-start. Though FTAs provide opportunity for trade, they are also one of the main factors contributing toward the destabilisation of economies during an economic crisis. Malaysia and Singapore, however, serve as a model partner to other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries in promoting trilateral and plurilateral FTAs. The advantage of economic co-operation must be covered with the greater picture of multilateral institutional support, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). While a political re-merger based on principles is a distant possibility, a merger of economic activity is more achievable.

The underlying strength of this book is its desire to muster greater co-operation between Singapore and Malaysia, leaving political differences to historical memory. Unbounded by the complexity of history, the path toward greater bilateral proximity is indeed in sight as a younger generation of leaders assumes political power. This book, *Across the causeway*, is one of the first few academic initiatives in that direction and thus a ‘must read’ for those who are interested in Singapore–Malaysia relations.

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*The Malaysian Indian: History, problems and future*

By MUZAFAR DESMOND TATE

Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2008.

Pp. 241.

doi:10.1017/S0022463410000676

The more significant contributions to scholarship on the Indians in Malaysia may be traced to several writers. K.S. Sandhu’s seminal *Indians in Malaya* (1969) is