

in which capital controls, combined with expansionary monetary and fiscal policies, seem to have provided a viable alternative to the International Monetary Fund's 'imposed' policy prescriptions.

---

John Hilley, *Malaysia; Mahathirism, hegemony and the new opposition*. London: Zed Books, 2001, xiii + 305 pp. ISBN 1.85649.917.0, price GBP 50 (hardback); 1.85649.918.9, GBP 16.95 (paperback).

K. THIRUMARAN

This fascinating work explores Mahathir's years in power as Malaysia's third prime minister, and describes the resulting polarization of state structures, fragmentation of the social polity, and generation of a potentially viable opposition bloc in Malaysia. *Malaysia; Mahathirism, hegemony and the new opposition* is Hilley's first book, based on his doctoral thesis. Composed in a framework which is both theoretical and contemplative, the book is organized into nine chapters, each with its own specific and interrelated agenda. There is also a helpful index of subjects and a list of abbreviations.

Hilley renders his subject in the context of local-global discourse, so that Malaysian issues and events are interceded by and interspersed with extraneous factors. For example, the 1997 financial crisis and the subsequent political fallout between Mahathir and his sacked deputy prime minister Anwar are portrayed in relation to the demise of the Suharto regime at the same period in Indonesia. The pressures on President Habibie had powerful ramifications for Malaysian politics: according to Hilley, the opposition led by Anwar was inspired as well as paralleled by the street protests and the campaigns against corruption and authoritarianism going on in Indonesia.

Mahathirism is predicated on economic growth, and on the accumulation and projection of hegemonic power through state and societal structures. Hilley seems to suggest that because of this project, a new opposition bloc is emerging which may make it possible to countervail Mahathirism. To be viable, Hilley believes, the new opposition bloc needs to be cooperative and must derive its power from a widening basis of 'social and sectoral, rather than just ethnic support' (p. 267). In principle this conclusion is on target, but in practice the capacities of, and the level of cooperation among, the various opposition groups, many of which depend precisely on ethnic or religious support bases, suggests that the undoing of the Barisan National (BN) by the opposition bloc will not be possible in the immediate future.

An interesting question that springs from reading this book is whether, given the shifts in Malay politics and the changing socio-economic cleav-

ages within Malaysian society in the twenty-first century, the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) will survive as a leading party within the BN model of electioneering. Should UMNO attempt 'to develop a broad ethnic base' through gerrymandering, or should it instead 'seek to reclaim its lost Malay following through a more pronounced religious agenda' (p. 263)? The first option might dilute the party's own bargaining power in the BN coalition, while the second would require it to return to grassroots needs with impeccable qualified Islamic leaders. One important issue that the book does not touch on is the spectre of a non-Malay prime minister if election trends continue on a 'proto-class' basis, a possibility raised by Mahathir himself.

Hilley suggests that 'the Malays seek economic prosperity and political reform rather than more Islamisation policies' (p. 263). But this statement is not substantiated by surveys or corroborated with references, and its accuracy may therefore be doubted. While material gains and democratic reforms may be desirable, Islamization policies should not be judged as antithetical to progress.

The Mahathir project may leave a legacy of an emasculated judiciary and a complex politico-economic landscape in which future election results are difficult to predict. Amid this complexity and fluidity, *Malaysia; Mahathirism, hegemony and the new opposition* manages to cover numerous issues in detail and with a degree of fairness. At once comprehensive and incisive, it will disappoint neither the generalist, nor the specialist reader seeking in-depth information.

---

Damien Kingsbury, Eric Loo and Patricia Payne (eds), *Foreign devils and other journalists*. Clayton VIC: Monash Asia Institute, 2000, vi + 277 pp. [Monash Papers on Southeast Asia 52.] ISBN 0.7326.1183.0. Price: AUD 27.50 (paperback).

REINA VAN DER WIEL

For the last twenty years or so, journalism has been a considerable source of friction between Australia and Southeast Asia. Particularly in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, the Australian media has been a target of criticism. The thirteen provocative essays in *Foreign devils and other journalists* seek to find the grounds on which this criticism is based. Moreover, by means of looking at significant reporting stories, they explore the differences in how Australia and Southeast Asia view (the role of) journalism and the way this affects their relationship.

In general discussions, cultural difference is presented as the simple