

ULASAN BUKU/BOOK REVIEWS

The Underside of Malaysian History: Pullers, Prostitutes, Plantation Workers..., (ed.), Peter J. Rimmer & Lisa M. Allen, Singapore: Singapore University Press for the Malaysia Society of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1990, v-xiii, 259 pp.

As a person who attended the Colloquium of the Malaysia Society of the Asian Studies Association of Australia (Canberra, June 8-10 1985) from which the nine papers that make up this volume are drawn, I was most impressed by the fact that the editors of the volume were able to knit them together around a unifying theme. The fact that many of the papers already "linked nicely together", and some which fell too far outside the theme were dropped (xiii), does not detract from the efforts of the editors and the writers in bringing out what is definitely a welcome addition to studies on Malaysia. More especially as the Introduction, which is a pleasure to read, also successfully locates the rationale for the theme of "the underside of Malaysian history" within the context of a recognized gap in the existing state of Malaysian historiography.

The editors see this collection of papers as an effort towards redressing an existing imbalance in Malaysian historiography which has tended to focus more on "the visible terrain of society and dominant individuals and groups", considered to be the "major themes in Malaysian life" (p.8). Instead, this book intends to light up hidden or previously "invisible" corners of the past and take us into "the everyday world of ordinary people such as rubber smallholders, estate workers, agricultural squatters, railway workers, hackney carriage syces, rikisha pullers and prostitutes" (xiii). This, the editors hope, will be "a step towards a people's history designed to make present-day Malaysians conscious of the enormous contribution of their unheralded forbears" (ibid).

The nine essays in the book attempt to realize these intentions in different ways by focusing either on a particular social group or specific aspect of social and cultural life or policy. Two papers dealing with estate workers and rubber smallholders (Colin Barlow, John Drabble) and a third on agricultural squatters (Loh Kok Wah) form the first part of the book, aptly subtitled "... in the countryside". The following section which takes us into the cities comprises three papers dealing respectively with railway workers (Amarjit Kaur), hackney carriage syces and rikisha pullers (Peter Rimmer), and Japanese prostitutes (James Warren). Finally, in the third section of the book, imaginatively entitled "... in sickness and in health", there are three papers examining different aspects of physical and mental health problems (Norman Parmer, Lenore Manderson and Robert L. Winzeler).

As a whole, the book certainly gives the reader a variegated series of impressions into some less visible and lesser known aspects of Malaysian history, including for example how an anti-hookworm campaign was conducted in the late 1920s. At the same time, and consistent with the stated intention of presenting "the underside of Malaysian history", there is throughout a conscious effort to deal more with the impact of a capitalist colonial economy on ordinary working class people rather than on colonial officials or the making of colonial policy. Thus the reader's attention is drawn in turn to the vicissitudes faced by estate workers and rubber smallholders, agricultural squatters, railway workers, rikisha pullers or Japanese prostitutes as the parameters of their lives are drawn by economic and social structures over which they have little direct control. The papers provide fascinating reading as they are meticulously researched and packed with rich details. There are also many accompanying tables and maps. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the book is the extremely apt selection of photographs and drawings which really add to the tone and atmosphere of the entire book.

More importantly, perhaps, the book in self-consciously addressing the need for a 'people's history' raises some interesting historiographical issues. The first is what is meant by a 'people's history'? Judging from the methodology and content of the papers, the authors of various papers themselves seem to differ as to what this involves. Lenore Manderson, for example, explicitly states in the opening paragraphs of her paper that it ~"offers little of the view from below though it is concerned very much with the lives of ordinary people" (193). She openly acknowledges that she is able only to give the views of one side as she has relied solely on official sources and concludes her paper with this statement:

"Like others, this episode in Malaysian social history is incomplete: the view from below - the underside of history - remains to be written." (213)

By the more stringent criteria of providing "the view from below" many of the papers, perhaps all, have not yet succeeded in taking us from the "visible terrains" to "the underside of Malaysian history" though they have attempted convincing reconstructions of the conditions of working and living of different social groups in Malaysian history.

The problem of trying to provide "the view from below" takes us to the next issue which is the kind of sources available and appropriate for writing a 'people's history'. The difficulty of "hearing" the voices of ordinary people who have left no written records, a familiar problem in all attempts to research into and write "history from below", is raised in Manderson's as well as several other papers. But does this constitute an insurmountable problem or could more avenues be explored? One noticeable feature of all the papers, for example, is that none of them have used any indigenous sources. Could the inclusion of such sources have obviated to some extent the problems of trying to write the

history of the oppressed and marginalized subaltern groups through perceptions from the top?

This book's value lies precisely in having raised such issues for researchers into Malaysian historiography. There is no doubt that as a conscious effort to break away from standard themes and visible terrains and by focussing much more on the lives of ordinary people, it has taken us, as the editors hoped it would, in the direction of a people's history.

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Emotions of Culture. A Malay Perspective, (ed.), Wazir Jahan Karim, Oxford University Press, Singapore/New York 1990, pp. viii, 178. Preface, Tables, Figures, Plates, Bibliography, Author Index, Subject Index.

Aggression and anxiety, ecstasy and envy, honour and shame are part of the range of Malay emotions which are researched in this illuminating collection of essays. Affective states are analysed in various Malay settings: private and public kampong rituals concerned with the phases of love (Wazir Jahan Karim), the *silat* ring (Razha Rashid), the history of amok (Robert Winzeler), the post-menopausal stage of *latah* (Michael G. Kenny) and the ritual space created for the *kuda kepang* (Mohamed Ghouse Nasuruddin). The leading theme which may be discerned from the articles is their preoccupation with the occasional extreme expressions of the emotive moods rather than the ordinary, day-to-day utterances of joy or sadness, sympathy or dislike. Whether it is the madness of love or the trance induced by the galloping spirit horse, the reader is treated to an alluring array of pent-up emotions which must find release in love poems, in violent behavior or in periodic mutterings of obscenities. These repressed stirrings of the soul represent the darker side of individual emotions which once aroused find their own stylization as inspired by Malay culture. It seems thus that the *emosi* aspect of the emotions have been the focus of study rather than that of *perasaan* (feeling) or in other words the "liver" has been given preference to the "heart" as source of the affections.

The introductory section states that the studies aim to clarify the way the Malays solve the emotive dissonance between self and other, or the ever present dilemma between the psyche and *adat*. The examination of this particular conflict has experienced its own troubled moments in the history of anthropology. In her introductory survey of the approaches so far applied in the field, the editor has in a commendable manner brought together the numerous attempts by researchers to unravel the relationship between affective states and society's response. That her treatise of the theoretical currents at times appears to be diffuse may be due

to the variegated angles used by the scholars, in addition to their disinclination to delineate the very meanings of emotion (and culture). This neglect to scrutinize the scale of sentiments in conceptual manner may be a reflection of a general "quarantine of emotion" as a research problem, a phenomenon which was initially observed in the discipline of psychology (Krech D. Crutchfield R., Livson N., 1969, "Elements of Psychology": 520). How in fact are emotions/sentiments to be studied, classified? How do cultures codify them? How are they elicited? Can they be indicated in terms of verbal expressions, tactile gestures, random behavior? What are the boundaries between emotions and social sentiments, between thought and effect?

What strikes the student of Malay culture in the first instance is the non-Malay term for emotion *emosi*, the large number of emotive moods indicated by "heart" *hati*, the colloquial overlap of meaning between feeling, (and emotion), taste, opinion, thought in the word *perasaan*. The five essays however have primarily paid attention to the exuberant expositions of what supposedly are the innermost domains of the sensing self which are managed and orchestrated in ritualized settings. In view of this restricted research frame, the question may be raised whether it is possible to examine the phenomenon that the "Malays have a distinct emotional register" as the book intended to demonstrate.

In the first study on the language of emotions in courtship and marriage, Wazir Karim is concerned with the love sensations that become caught in a cultural script via particular communication processes. Thus emotions generated by courtship and early marriage in the Malay world contain the seeds of madness *gila*, on account of their excessiveness and implied disorder. Precious insights are provided by the author into the ways in which love is contained within courting poems *pantun*. Love spells and secretive strategies used by adolescents that harness the deep-felt yearnings for the loved one are spelled out with anthropological empathy. A most interesting account of the madness complex *gila* associated with love and marriage as instigated by witchcraft is being presented. Similarly the degrees of being besotted linked to space and time provide a fine example how a theory of emotion based on lexical variations of *gila* can grasp the intricate ways of passion and love in interpersonal contexts (table 2.2) However, these feelings of love *kasih* and passion *nafsu* which symbolize the uncontrollable biological drives related to emotions, surely represent only one aspect of the Malay emotive repertory.

In the second essay, Malay aggression as a passion becomes restrained in the highly stylized combat form of *silat*. Here Razha Rashid has offered a very informative description of the ways in which violence becomes transcended into elative feelings of being superman, thereby strengthening feelings of power and honour. Types of *silat* within regional Malaysian contexts, the scene of the performance for the "battle", the preparation via magical spells are some of the aspects covered of the "cultural workshop" of *silat*. Not only is the reader

briefed on the various *ilmu* which each type of *silat* nurtures, the study also attempts to explain the underlying meaning of this ritualized violence. Psychological mechanisms of identification with hero and nation are at the basis of this cogent interpretation of the emotions which have been at play during mock combat.

Whereas *silat* trains the Malay participant to convert his urge to violence into a stylized fight, the phenomenon of *amok* seems to symbolize the very outpouring of aggression. In this section of the construction of *amok*, Robert Winzeler applies an etymological approach when seeking how the word changed "through the meandering history of the English use of the term" (p.98). Via this kind of perspective it becomes clear that several meanings (true and false, sane or insane) were attached to the incidences of *amok*, meanings which led foreign observers to conclude that these emotional outbursts were crazed attacks by individuals or furious charges by a group of men during battle. Different interpretations found in the literature refer to insanity, a peculiar defect in Malay character, a suicidal wish, disease or "an agony of fear"; at times *amok* is also related to an inability to express oneself or to a loss of honour. This type of meaning-searching via historical records has widened the understanding of how others (mostly white authors) have used their own state of knowledge to conceptualize Malay violence. An approach of this kind contains superb Foucaultian material which could have been more articulated by the author. The imponderabilities of such an Eurocentric interpretation should moreover have been compensated with some additional data on indigenous constructions of *amok* incidents. In this vein, a reading between the lines of various *Hikayats* has resulted in an exemplary analysis of *amok* in Malay traditional settings and its indigenous social values which among others stress the aspect of planned strategy in *amok* (Badriyah Haji Salleh, 1991, "Amuk: Implikasinya dalam Masyarakat Melayu tradisional", unpublished paper).

Similarity of emotions observable in *amok* which generate abnormal behavior patterns is also present in *latah*, called "the logic of fear" by Michael G. Kenny. These often obscene utterances of incoherent speech and the mimicry of others by middle-aged women are reviewed by means of a number of theoretical generalizations which relate *latah* occurrences to the colonial experience, to a sociological situation (liminality) or a psychological make-up (weakly developed ego.) Interpretations vary from the idea that *latah* is caused by inability to control one's fate to that of depleted *semangat* (soul energy) susceptible to spirit intrusion. Its hysterical character is at times being doubted in the anthropological literature when for instance the pure play aspect is emphasized. The treatment of *latah* could have benefited from more cultural input in order to answer the question why it is that Malay women of that particular age group are so easily startled and then why this should trigger off a barrage of obscenities and clowning acts. If post-menopausal women across a number of cultures are more

susceptible to give free rein to their emotions (because they are less endangering) we should question what is so typical about Malay *latah*.

In the last essay, Ghouse Nasuruddin with his detailed descriptions of the hobby horse dance and involved incantations, contends that Malay emotions in this case are elevated to a form of art. During the trance it is assumed that the spiritual energy of the dancers is set free via a process in which they become possessed by the horse spirit. The entire enactment of *kuda kepang* provides an intriguing portrayal of how the aesthetics of dance combine both restraint and release of emotions via prescribed patterned rhythmic movements leading to random abandon at the climax. This form of theatre symbolizes the separation of emotion and culture while at the same time a fusion with the "higher" forces is generated. Some provocative questions are put forward regarding the borrowing from animism, also on the participation of women in displays of spirit possession. It is a pity that despite the attention given to regional and historical factors, the author did not dwell on the ways these artlike expressions of Malay emotions (particularly its ecstasy component) are being revised under the influence of tourism and other forms of entertainment. One would have liked to be more enlightened on the specific social circumstances which generate the high and low of emotional states involved.

While contemplating on Malay Emotions of Culture, the reader is primarily made aware of the illusive nature of the subject matter. At times the feeling (or is it emotion?) is conveyed that the affective dispositions dissipated between the mazes of loosely defined conceptions. But what kind of emotions were these, of what texture and tone? Are they the primary ones, the raw biological drives? Are there others more refined, more "cooked", more condoned by society and more enduring? No clear theory could be derived from the five essays, possibly because the world of the senses is so hard to streamline. It is therefore questionable whether the book did succeed to "delve deeply into the Malay psyche".

Some time ago a plea was made that anthropologists should pay greater attention to the differences in the ways people express feelings (Bourguignon, E., 1979: 112), but do the studies under review give us the impression that there is an indiosyncratic Malay way of handling emotions? Some answers are embedded in the text of the articles and they have shown us the capricious ways along which Malay emotions travel, which in itself is a praiseworthy and eye-opening accomplishment.

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The Malaysian Economy: Spatial Perspectives by George Cho; Routledge. London and New York, 1990, 314 pp. Tables, Figures, Abbreviations, Index.

Is this yet another book about Malaysia? If it is, then the more the merrier provided that it is not just more rhetoric that merely aggravates old issues. This book attempts a spatial perspective about the Malaysian economy, a largely overlooked issue. The emphasis of the book is on development planning: the issues, the problems, and the performance. Thus, the traditional "spaceless" view of national development is extended such that some geography is given to development. It starts with a background chapter concerning its socio-economic setting and political history. A separate chapter dedicated to development planning in Malaysia over the last 40 years follows. Then, there are separate chapters that address rural development in a regional planning context, and the dynamism of the urban areas undergoing transformation. There are two additional chapters. One focuses on industrialisation, its patterns and strategies as well as the dualism that arises between the traditional and modern in production, and the open and the protected in trade. The other chapter discusses political development, Malaysia's image, the communal problem, and the position of East Malaysian states.

The book is, by design, meant to cover a wide range of topics and although it is not able to delve on specific areas, George Cho has been meticulous in his research such that there are more details in there than he admits. As such, a fair synthesis would not be possible here. However, it serves as a useful reading for scholars, especially those interested in carving out research topics about geography and development in Malaysia. There are, however, several shortcomings. One important aspect that is not given attention is the environment. Years ago neglecting the environment in a book on development might have been overlooked. Today when the word development echoes in our ears at most forums, it is not easy to avoid at least offering some suggestions as to how regional type planning might be handled when it often involves cutting down trees. The other aspect neglected is the role of the local authorities in their spatial role of planning and development. In the book, the link between planning at the centre, comprising the Cabinet, the Economic Planning Unit and relevant Ministries, and planning at the subnational level stops at the various regional or agricultural development authorities. This would suffice for the rural component but not for the urban. Since the Town and Country Planning Act was passed in 1976, there has been much activity among various local governments in preparing structure plans as required of them. These plans would be able to affect the process of transformation in the urban areas. How successful have they been?

Unfortunately, the book lacks theoretical rigour. Using spatial perspectives as a keyword conjures up emotions as to how this topic should be approached that a descriptive analysis would not suffice. Then again, theory is only relevant when specifics are addressed so it is up to individual scholars to take up from where George Cho has stopped. This is especially necessary because of the kinds of secondary data that is available which often cannot be used simply. For instance, much subnational analysis is based on the state GDP figures that are found in Malaysia's five-year plans. They are merely disbursements of the national GDP into state shares using various indicators. The point is, without data on consumption and inter-state trade flows it is not possible to get a true picture of subnational production and hence, the state per-capita income. The other point concerns the analysis of the urban spatial hierarchy in which between the 1970 census and the 1980 census Georgetown has fallen from first to third in rank. The book reaffirms what others have said, but it in no way reflects the true picture of urbanisation in Penang. The problem arises from the publication by the Department of Statistics of data on local authority areas for the 1980 census. These local authorities were realigned as a result of the 1976 Local Government Act which leads to boundary changes between the two censuses. Most local authorities, of course, have grown. Penang's is the most extreme case. The entire state falls under two local authorities. Penang may be misinterpreted to be 100% urbanised. Not wanting this, the above publication on local authority areas used the original land office boundaries for Georgetown, thus comparing Georgetown with a smaller area compared with other towns in the country.

It is problems like these that emphasises the importance of theory to supplement descriptive data in addressing spatial perspectives on development. It is hoped that this contribution by George Cho is the start of a more passionate attack on space as a dimension of study in Malaysia. His book is timely, because Malaysians now stand at the threshold to a new era in its development history when the Outline Perspective Plan I becomes OPP2, and the New Economic Policy becomes the National Development Policy. Years from now, George Cho too would have a sequel to write.

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A Select List of Files of the Office of the High Commissioner for the Malay States held by Arkib Negara Malaysia, 1897 - 1942, (comp.), Paul H. Kratoska. Perpustakaan Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, 1990, pp. 123, index pp. 1-1437. Price: MR\$25.00; overseas US\$20.00.

High Commissioner's Office (Chinese Affairs): A Select List of Files; Office of the High Commissioner: A Select List of Files on Borneo (1897-1914); A Select List of Federal Secretariat Files (1948-1954); A Select List of Malayan Union Confidential and Secret Files; A Select List of Malayan Union Files, (comp.), Paul H. Kratoska. Perpustakaan Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, 1990, pp. 214; Index. Price: MR\$25.00; overseas US\$20.00.

Kedua-dua jilid ini merupakan bahan-bahan rujukan yang amat penting bagi para penyelidik di dalam bidang pengkajian Malaysia. Dengan menghasilkan jilid-jilid ini, penyusun Dr. Kratoska telah memberikan sumbangan dan kemudahan yang tidak ternilai harganya. Ini adalah kerana kerja para penyelidik dimudahkan dengan senarai-senarai fail yang terpilih termasuk indeks berkaitan dengan siri surat-surat Gabenor Negeri-Negeri Selat selaku Pesuruhjaya Tinggi yang tersimpan di Arkib Negara Malaysia di Kuala Lumpur. Koleksi ini bagi Negeri-negeri Melayu Semanjung dan Negeri-Negeri Borneo, merupakan satu sumber asal yang penting bagi sarjana-sarjana yang ingin mengkaji soal-soal berkaitan sejarah, politik dan masyarakat negeri-negeri Melayu semasa itu.

Bibliografi sepatutnya merupakan kerja seorang pustakawan, tetapi sudah lama telah menjadi kegemaran Dr. Kratoska, seorang ahli sejarah yang pada suatu ketika pernah mengajar di Universiti Sains Malaysia. Beliau kini berkhidmat di National University of Singapore. Semasa di U.S.M. beliau telah pun menghasilkan satu bibliografi yang sangat berguna: *A Select List of Files in The Selangor Secretariat, 1875-1955*, yang tersimpan di Arkib Negara Malaysia dan diterbitkan oleh Perpustakaan U.S.M. pada tahun 1984. Satu lagi bibliografi yang telah siap disusun oleh beliau ialah *Index to British Colonial Office Files Pertaining to British Malaya, 1838-1946*. Index ini disusun di dalam 12 jilid dan sedang diterbitkan oleh Arkib Negara Malaysia. Sehingga sekarang hanya tujuh jilid telah dicetak. Index ini meliputi fail-fail di dalam siri surat-menyurat Colonial Office di London, seperti C.O. 273, C.O. 717, C.O. 531, C.O. 874 dan C.O. 852. Senarai terpilih surat-menyurat Pesuruhjaya Tinggi, Pejabat Ketua Setiausaha Negeri-Negeri Melayu Bersekutu dan Malayan Union menunjukkan fail-fail yang menarik tentang berbagai tajuk termasuk kedudukan raja-raja Melayu, laporan-laporan polis, tanah, kesihatan, hal-ehwal orang China dan perkara-perkara berkaitan negeri-negeri Borneo. Para sarjana dan pelajar perlu merujuk kepada senari-senarai ini sebelum mereka memulakan penyelidikan. Tetapi sekarang dengan penerbitan ini mereka tidak perlu pergi ke Arkib Negara Malaysia di Kuala Lumpur untuk melihat senarai-senarai itu.

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Malaysian Politics: The Second Generation by Gordon P. Means
Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1991, Preface, Tables, Maps, Bibliography,
366 pp.

Eschewing dependence on any single approach to political analysis and drawing upon available materials, Means attempts a useful and much-needed survey and stock-taking of post-1970 political developments in Malaysia in this - his second - book on Malaysian politics. To understand political developments in the dominant - party political system of Malaysia, Means appropriately focuses upon the actions of the ruling party under the prime ministerships of Razak, Onn and Mahathir and their political strategies in the face of changing conditions and challenges in the country. As the author points out in the preface, such a survey should not only cover the major political events of the period but, more importantly, should ascertain and explain trends and directions as well.

The nine chapters of the book are logically structured for the above purpose. After outlining systemic characteristics and the aftermath of the 1969 general election in the first chapter, Means provides in chapter two an account of the response to the problem (as well as opportunity?) confronting them by Razak and his supporters. Key pillars of Razak's political strategy to secure the ruling coalition's (especially UMNO's) support base and to counter threats to it, namely, the New Economic Policy and the formation of the National Front, as well as his collateral moves in East Malaysia and in foreign policy are analyzed. It may be recalled that it was this political strategy and those of the Malaysian political system created in accordance with it that Onn undertook to defend and to preserve when he assumed the leadership of UMNO and of the country upon Razak's death in 1976. The third chapter examines the problems and travails of Onn: his position and problems within UMNO, Chinese dissatisfaction with NEP policies and resulting assertiveness, the PAS challenge in Kelantan, Islamic revivalism, the regional security problem and the related refugee problem. Although the 1978 general election, in Means' reckoning, "reaffirmed" Onn's leadership, nature (i.e. his poor health) forced him to relinquish power in 1981 just as it (i.e. Razak's death) had entrusted him with it in 1976. With Mahathir's accession to the prime ministership, Malaysian politics went into high gear, the result of the intensification of pre-existing problems as well as of more determined responses to them under Mahathir's leadership. It is with political developments under Mahathir that the next four chapters of the book are concerned. A final chapter entitled "Taking Stock" concludes the book.

In the opinion of this reviewer the major contribution and the most interesting part of Means' book lies in its analysis of the Mahathir period and its impact on the political system. One may quibble with Means' discovery

of a "new political idiom" under Mahathir - for in many ways the Mahathir period represents only the maturation of the post-1970 political strategy fashioned by Razak and arguably even of system propensities existing or fashioned much earlier - but the combination of Mahathir's leadership style, his apparently more coherent and definitely more clearly articulated conception of the desired polity and, most importantly, his more determined and wide-ranging actions to shape the Malaysian polity towards that conception may justifiably be adjudged as representing a qualitative departure or change in the political stewardship of the country. Means provides the reader with a more comprehensive analysis of the Mahathir period than is available in any other single volume on Malaysian politics. Brief but meaty sections are available on Mahathir's economic policies, his Look East policy, his handling of relations with the East Malaysian states, and his strategies in relation to the non-Malays and to his core Malay base, including the Islamic constituency. Systematic attention is also given to Mahathir's restructuring (that is to say clarification and diminution of the roles) of governing institutions, namely the monarchy and the judiciary, as well as to his policies on the mass media and human rights. The electoral performance of the ruling coalition, in 1982 and 1986 (but not in 1990) is also examined, as is, of course, the UMNO split and subsequent manoeuvrings that culminated in the birth of UMNO Baru.

Means is by no means merely an unconcerned and passionless chronicler of Malaysian political developments in this book. As heir and repository to the important constitutionalist tradition in Western political thinking, Means is highly disturbed by the accelerated erosion of constitutionalism or of checks upon governmental power under Mahathir. It is easy to pick on Means. The book contains quite a number of inaccuracies, for instance, his repeated assertion of "blatant" gerrymandering by the ruling party - gerrymandering is always very difficult to establish and, if it occurs, is certainly not blatantly evident in Malaysia. However, there is no gainsaying the perpetuation of power by the ruling party, or the identified trend towards the centralization of power in the executive and the corresponding erosion of institutional and other checks upon that power, or the increasing willingness to make use of its vast powers by an increasingly authoritarian government. To lend urgency to the alarm he is evidently sounding on the dangers of unchecked power, Means even recalls Lasswell's warning in *Psychopathology and Politics* that the pursuit of power holds particular attraction for individuals with flawed personalities and with a pronounced capacity for rationalization or self-deception.

Perhaps Means' major shortcoming in this book is that he does not try hard enough to understand and systematically lay out the government's rationale behind its overall strategy for holding on to power and particularly for governing this (as Means well knows) difficult-to-govern plural society. As

this book may be broadly characterized as a study of the dynamic conservatism, or the partly reactive and partly pro-active adaptation, on the part of the dominant party in order to remain in power and to govern the country, it may even be a bit surprising that commensurate attention is not given to the thinking and calculations behind the government's actions that are generally well-analyzed in the book. Understanding the government's rationale is crucial to a deeper understanding and explanation of its actions and hence of the direction of political development in the country. It may even induce greater empathy with the government on Means' part.

The above remarks, however, detract little from Means' well-founded and well-advised concern about over-centralized power. To spell it out, Malaysians should take serious heed and, contrary to the anesthetizing ministrations of those in power, act on their realization that the political system and politics generally is simply too important to be left entirely to politicians, especially politicians with a yen for monopolizing power - although the level-headed Means does not appear to be optimistic about a quick, sufficient and qualitatively correct development of this nature in present-day Malaysia. It seems in the concluding chapter that, at least in equal extent, Means is addressing and trying to persuade the power-holders as well. Thus he points to various risks attendant upon the authoritarian path, for example, corruption, and adduces reasons for opening up the political system and for providing for more effective popular inputs and checks through participative institutions. Here too, this reviewer feels that a systematic effort to understand the government's thinking behind its strategy would be useful: it would make for more effective persuasion, whether on the basis of unconsidered costs of a given strategy and/or different evaluations of them, or on the basis of its internal or design flaws, namely, that it contains within itself the seeds of possible disappointment or that the necessary conditions required for its success have yet to be met. Parenthetically, it is also possible that had the government's strategy been thus understood and then addressed along these lines, the importance and nature of the bureaucracy and whether the conditions, both internal and external, for effective bureaucratic performance - a crucial requirement for success under any model of development or governance - have been adequately met, will be accorded due attention. As it is, the role of the bureaucracy hardly ever gets the attention it deserves in current general works on Malaysian politics, this and the earlier book by Means included.

It is hoped that enough has been said to whet the reader's appetite for a careful reading of Means' useful and concerned book. The scope of its coverage as well as the essential references contained in it on diverse topics should definitely earn it a place on the bookshelf of anyone with a continuing interest in Malaysian politics. Containing slightly over 300 pages and presently retailed at over 50 ringgit for the soft-cover edition,

this book should be a prime candidate for a low-cost edition to enable it to reach the wide readership it deserves. It should not be overlooked that academics, if not students, in Malaysia nowadays have had to watch their pennies when it comes to books and breakfast cereals alike.

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Catatan ringkas/Briefly noted

Wan Manan Wan Muda dan Haris Md. Jadi, (penyunting), **Akademia Menjelang Tahun 2000**, Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik dan Pentadbiran Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, 1991, pp.194, Lampiran I - IV.

Jilid ini mengandungi 12 buah kertas kerja yang dibentangkan di Persidangan Akademik Kebangsaan pada 13 dan 14 Oktober, 1989. Tujuan persidangan itu ialah membincangkan peranan akademia dalam pembangunan negara - dahulu, hari ini dan masa hadapan. Mengikut penyunting-penyunting, buku ini "memaparkan berbagai pandangan, kritikan dan keluhan para akademik yang melihat peranan akademia dari perspektif yang berteraskan keunggulan ilmu sebagai pra-syarat ke arah kebebasan, keadilan, kebenaran dan kecemerlangan akademik." Antara penulis-penulis ialah Halim Salih, Muhammad Ikmal Said, Rustam A. Sani, Shahnon Ahmad dan Fatimah Hamid Don.

1. **Reminiscences of Tunku Abdul Rahman on the Japanese Occupation, 1941-1945**, 1989, i-iii, 23 pp.; 2. **Force 136 (I)**, 1991, iii-v, 35pp.; dan 3. **Force 136 (2)**, 1991, iii-v, 25pp. Jawatankuasa Sejarah Lisan dan Perpustakaan, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang. Penyelaras Abu Talib Ahmad, Penyunting Sakinah Che Embi. No. 1 MR\$2.00, overseas US\$2.00; No. 2 dan No. 3 MR\$3.00, overseas US\$3.00.

Siri penerbitan Sejarah Lisan Pendudukan Jepun di Perak Utara, Pulau Pinang dan Kedah dihasilkan oleh Jawatankuasa yang terdiri dari ahli-ahli Bahagian Sejarah Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan, USM dengan kerjasama Perpustakaan dan badan-badan lain di USM. Penerbitan No. 1 adalah berdasarkan temubual dengan bekas Perdana Menteri Tunku Abdul Rahman, No. 2 dengan Encik Tsang Jan Nam, seorang bekas Leftenan dalam Force 136, dan No. 3 dengan Encik Lim Hong Pei, juga seorang pegawai di dalam Force 136.

Aspek-aspek yang dijadikan tumpuan dalam temubual-temubual termasuklah kemasukan tentera Jepun ke Tanah Melayu, hal-hal ekonomi, dasar-dasar sosial dan pentadbiran, pergerakan penentengan serta peristiwa-peristiwa yang berlaku di