



Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times

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Mahathir Mohamad turned Malaysia into one of the developing worlds most successful economies. He adopted pragmatic economic policies alongside repressive political measures and showed that Islam was compatible with representative government and modernization. He emerged as a Third World champion and Islamic spokesman by standing up to the West.

Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times Details

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From Reader Review Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times for online ebook

Nicholas says

This insightful book puts detailed accounts for the man who built Malaysia in his own way and put us on the world map. At the same time, it comes with a heavy price if not costly to us well after his retirement from the political scene.

Amirul says

A balanced, weighted, and amazingly readable account of one of the world's largest larger-than-life personalities.

Nabilah says

Frustrating read because Mahathir is indeed bad (I will never forgive him) but he is not the worst prime minister in Malaysia. That distinction goes to another more deserving figure. At the end of the day, this book made me feel sorry for myself. I feel sorry for fellow Malaysians, for being the playthings of businessmen-politicians who really just in the political arena for their own kicks, their own self-actualization.

Matthew says

This is an excellent and educational read about Mahathir and indirectly about the Malaysia of the eighties and nineties. It is admittedly the first book of history I'm reading on Malaysia so this is not necessarily an informed review. Having said that the author Barry wein, a seasoned journalist, is an excellent writer and appropriately sets the historical backdrop for each chapter, which is organized topically, rather than chronologically. The discussion is thorough, the sourcing is extensive, and what surprises me for a work of this sort, wein appears to have done up to date interviews and reportage of previously undiscovered material in his work; in that sense it blends history and journalism.

The overall verdict is critical and I am surprised, though pleasantly so, that on its publication in singapore, Malaysia did not ban this book despite considering it for a few months - indeed I picked it up at the kl airport. Malaysia has indeed developed economically over the last thirty years, and Wein generously gives Mahathir credit for architecting that growth, however the overriding impression is that underneath this growth, the Mahathir years will be best remembered for the gradual erosion of the country's democratic institutions, in particularly the judiciary which wein notes was well regarded internationally for its independence prior to Mahathir time in power, the cronyism within umno the incumbent political party, as well as the police force, which a royal commision later found to be the most corrupt institution in the country. Living in singapore, we hear of rising crime rates across the straits of Johor and so this sort of thing feels very topical. It is also fascinating to read about the race based politics, given the racial dynamics of singapore are not dissimilar to Malaysia's. and of course the familiarity of names such as anwar, badawi,

Najib razak, etc, who are currently still active political actors, is interesting, though filtered through the lens of a book that is primarily about Mahathir.

On the whole I cannot help but feel that despite his iconoclastic charisma, Mahathir was bad for Malaysia. his contribution was to give it international stature, particularly for its brand of tolerant Islam (at least on the surface; wein makes a convincing case that Malaysia under Mahathir became more polarized racially and religiously) and perhaps to contribute something to its economic development. On the latter point I am skeptical - razaleigh and anwar (one time finance ministers) appear equally if not more competent in terms of economic vision, while Mahathir abetted financial embezzlement and on occasion orchestrated pointless pet projects. Yet there is a human side to him - his marriage was solid, he was reportedly a good and dedicated doctor, and once, when meeting with the Australian pm who had just learnt that his daughter was a drug addict, Mahathir showed courtesy and compassion on a personal level, notwithstanding his political hostility to Australia more generally. Admirable too, I suppose, are his political skill and sheer force of personality.

U-ming Lee says

This is a great book of excellent scholarship with extensive referencing of other texts, newspaper articles and supplemented with interviews with the subject himself. The author was fairly even-handed in his treatment of his subject although at some points in the book it is quite clear what the author's bias is. It should be pointed out, however, that it is extremely difficult to remain perfectly neutral about such a divisive character.

While the book is a fairly easy to read with the author employing a journalistic narrative throughout the book, it should be noted that the book appears aimed towards seasoned Malaysia watchers. The amount of names of secondary characters, political parties, and the references to events would reward only the patient reader who already has some familiarity with the political landscape of the country.

Nevertheless, this book is an essential addition to any bookshelf dedicated to Malaysia and should be recommended to anyone who is interested in finding out more about Dr. Mahathir, the larger than life character who has played a part in the development of Malaysia since the creation of the country.

Aradweb Aradweb Adil says

As a Normal Human Being, BAD News Always Sell!

Benar! Sesuatu Yang Melibatkan Keburukan Orang Lain Apatah Lagi Orang Itu Seorang Yang Popular Pasti Akan Menjadi Tarikan Ramai. Begitulah Nasib Perdana Menteri Ke-4 Ini. Buku Ini Adalah Hasil Tulisan & Kajian Oleh Seorang Penulis Luar Negara Yang Pernah Bertugas Di Asian Wall Street Jurnal Yang Secara Terang-Terangan Menulis Mengenai Tindakan Boros Yang Dilakukan Oleh Mahathir Mohamad. Buku Ini Telah Diterbitkan Pada Disember 2009 Namun Gagal Untuk Melepak Di Sebarang Rak Kedai Buku Di Malaysia Kerana Kesensitifannya Yang Agak Menusuk Kalbu. Buku Ini Amat Laris Di Luar Negara Terutama Di Singapura, Hong Kong dan Negara Asia Yang Lain Ketika Ia Masih Lagi Berada Dalam Status Kuarantin Oleh Kementerian Dalam Negeri Malaysia. Akhirnya, Pada 20 April 2010, KDN Telah Menarik Balik Status Kuarantin Tersebut Dan Ianya Telah Boleh Melepak di Semua Rak Kedai Buku Di Malaysia Tanpa Rasa Segan & Silu. Setelah Puas Menjalankan 'RIKI' Mengenai Keberadaan Buku Ini Di Kedai Buku Utama Di Kuala Lumpur, Akhirnya Berjaya Juga Menculik Buku Ini di MPH Cawangan BB Plaza.

Khairul Hezry says

This is a good book on Mahathir's career as Prime Minister and recalcitrant pensioner. It chronicles his rise, fall and rise in Malaysian politics. It also details the unabashed hypocrisy he practised throughout his life. Mahathir opposed foreign troops in Malaysia but secretly made deals with the US and allowed their soldiers to train in Malaysian jungles. Mahathir complained about an unfair press when he was 'blacked out' during Abdullah's premiership but he seem to have forgotten the draconian measures he took to stifle press freedom when he himself was PM. He preached to fight corruption but did nothing when his associates were rumoured to have been less than honest financially. It is made even more disgusting when during the bouts of hypocrisy, Mahathir also presents himself as the champion of downtrodden Muslims everywhere.

Malaysia under Mahathir transformed from a poor nation to a developing nation with hopes of turning into a developed one by 2020. However, the Malaysia we live in today is also in a mess socially, financially, morally and politically mainly because of Mahathir's determined drive for modernisation at all costs and to hell with the consequences.

Ahmad Abdul Rahim says

This is a review I wrote more than 4 years ago (somewhere in 2010)

SYNOPSIS :

The grandson of an Indian immigrant and the first Malay commoner to become prime minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad turned the Muslim-majority Southeast Asian country into one of the developing world's most successful economies. During his 22 years in power he adopted pragmatic economic policies alongside repressive political measures, and showed that Islam was compatible with representative government and modernization. Abrasive and outspoken, Mahathir emerged as a Third World champion and Islamic spokesman by condemning the West, not least for trying to impose liberal democracy and neo-liberal economics on developing nations. By raising living standards and winning international acclaim, he contributed to a sense of national identity, pride and confidence among ethnically diverse Malaysians. But in mixing business and politics, Mahathir encouraged cronyism and failed to prevent the spread of corruption. Authoritarian and impatient, he jailed opponents, sacked rivals and undermined institutions as he pursued his obsession with development. In retirement, he broke a promise to stay out of politics, falling out with his two successors while using all available means to protect his legacy.

COMMENT

Some call it controversial, but I prefer the term revelational. In this recently launched book written by Barry Wain, a former editor of the Asian Wall Street Journal, who is currently a writer for the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, the writer dwells deep into Mahathir's upbringing and childhood, his loatheness towards the passive minds of Malays, how he became so entrenched in materializing his dream vision of developing the country and altering the people's mindset, so much that he bends all rules and crosses every boundaries he encountered, many which bordered in the grey areas between morality and

justification.

Perhaps, the most in-depth account of record on Mahathir's ups and downs throughout his 22 years of premiership, Barry Wain bring forth the most daring accusation in this book: that Mahathir gulped (read; waste) 100 billion dollars off the nation fund in the process. This is certainly a must-read.

SUMMARY

Being one of the least admirer of the government (except JPA) this book really satisfied my crave. Although the subject being brought in the discussion is quite heavy, the writer managed to convey the story in an easy-going, brief and matured language without being too praiseful of Mahathir's success nor lambasting on his questionable actions. The information given in this book is highly engaging. All the scandals and high profile cases are elaborated on a microscopic view, complete with references in every chapter. Overall, Mahathir through the eyes of Barry Wain is very eye-opening and quite fun actually. I would definitely urge all Malaysians to read this. This is OUR history.

PROS : Very detail, packed with loads of information, just all the things you need to know about Mahathir wrongdoings (hurray to government hater). Pretty much Barry Wain's masterpiece.

CONS : There are parts where the writer depicts Mahathir in a rather sarcastic tone.(but again, what do you expect of someone of his statute)

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT: Revelation, engaging, informational and fun in an odd way, must-read !!

RATING : 9.5 / 10

Daniel says

This is a good book about Mahathir. The main focus is on his time as a prime minister, but also includes chapters on his life before joining politics, his rise to power and his time after stepping down. The book is not organized in a strictly chronological way, but with one chapter for each major topic, such as Mahathir's 'vision of a modern nation', his economic policies, scandals, monarchy, foreign policy, his rivals etc. Very interesting was the chapter about the struggle over Mahathir's legacy and how things did not work out as he had expected after he stepped down. Some of the chapters are more about the particular topics than about Mahathir and often it is not even apparent what Mahathir's role was.

The author used to live in Malaysia and writes about Mahathir in a critical but unbiased way, neither lambasting him for his authoritarian tendencies nor just praising him for his achievements in socio-economic development. I recommend this book to anyone interested in Malaysia. It is suitable for people who have some knowledge of the country already, since it deals with Mahathir's political career in some depth, as well as people without much background, since it covers most of the most important issues in contemporary Malaysia.

Aziff says

I started reading *Malaysian Maverick* at an interesting intersection of Malaysian politics. We are weeks shy

away from the country's 14th General Election, and Tun Mahathir, against all the odds, is running as Opposition leader against the ruling party he once helmed. Oh, how the tides have turned. It goes without saying that the title "Malaysian Maverick" the late B. Wain installed upon the former premier is well-deserved. Tun Mahathir indeed is the most interesting leader to have emerged from the tides of Malaysian history and will most likely be remembered as such long after his passing. Which brings me to this biography, which also reads as a critique and analysis of Tun Mahathir's life and political career.

Some might accuse *Malaysian Maverick* of being anti-Mahathir or even bearing the brand of the Malaysian left that's critical for the sake of criticality. But I can assure you that B. Wain does not have any of that in this seminal piece of work. B. Wain's political position seeps through sometimes in subtle sentences, such as when he analyses Tun's nationalistic-streak and rapid embracing of industrial growth at all costs. But overall, B. Wain remains objective and presents the facts as they are, with plenty of references, citations and factual evidence to back up his analysis and claims. This perhaps would explain the recent Royal Commission into the 1990s Federal Bank forex scandal conducted by the current administration against the former premier. Many of the facts, figures and analysis uncovered by B. Wain in great detail in *Malaysian Maverick*.

Malaysian Maverick traces Tun from his childhood in Kedah, with his strict and disciplined teacher-father, to his political involvement in UMNO, the "wilderness years" of his excommunication, through his decades as Prime Minister and resignation years (up until the 5th PM Abdullah Badawi, as B. Wain passed away in 2013 and was unable to update the book). Judge a man by his actions, they say. This is something B. Wain does well when he narrates Tun's political career, his reactions and matches it up against what Tun says and does. Through examining the drive of Tun Mahathir, B. Wain paints a perfect portrait of Tun: a man driven by ambition and vision. A nationalist who loves his country and its people passionately, but also understand the concept of tough love, which his father also raised him with. An industrialist, a futurist but ironically, unreflective on the long-term consequences of his actions.

This book is fascinating to read at this stage of Malaysian politics, as Mahathir had recently joined forces with the Opposition who he spent his career admonishing, and the coalition is split as to how to respond to this collaboration. Mahathir's sacking of his former deputy-turned-opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim had, after all, gave birth to a resurging opposition wave and the *Reformasi* political awakening among the Malaysian society. So how could you read this complicated man? This is what *Malaysian Maverick* sets out to do, and does spectacularly well. On the one hand, a man who had placed the country's name on the global front and developed its industrial infrastructure. On the other, a man of sheer ambition who had single-handedly corrupted tightened and weakened the nation's institutions through heavy-handed authoritarian style.

In short: Mahathir and Malaysia is paying the price for his decades-long actions, for better or worse. And though B. Wain is no longer be around to see it, I have no doubt he would have found many more things to analyse about Tun Mahathir. This book does not have the leftist-strain you often see in the critical-academic books of the Gerakbudaya brand, which makes it a refreshing read. Though "dated", it's instructive in understanding how Mahathir charts, and will continue to influence Malaysian politics going forward. If there's one book about Mahathir you should read - it'll be *Malaysian Maverick*.

Choong Chiat says

In light of how Mahathir is again Malaysia's PM, it is timely and instructive to learn about and review how he governed during his first tenure as PM.

This book does not paint a flattering portrait of Mahathir. It shows him to be politically astute, driven (if not obsessive), authoritarian, domineering, pugnacious, nationalistic, vindictive and hypocritical. It describes him as the "architect of Malaysia's mega-projects and duty supervisor for several world-class financial scandals". It also describes him as a key figure in establishing and presiding over a system of patronage and cronyism in politics and government.

Perhaps circumstances are different or Mahathir has changed. But I suppose we would need to be vigilant, given his track record, towards how Mahathir would govern again as Malaysia's PM.

Ridhzuan says

Disgruntled Mahathirist wont like it.

Zak says

I started this book one day before the 14th General Elections were to be held in Malaysia on 9th May, 2018. As of this writing, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has led the main opposition alliance (after coming out of his 15-year retirement) to a resounding victory over the ruling government which has held federal power for 60 years, an alliance he himself previously led for 22 years. Malaysians have never known any other government since independence and none of the pundits and analysts gave the opposition any chance of winning. No wonder Dr. M is known as the Grand Old Man of Malaysian politics.

If only the author, Barry Wain, were alive today (RIP), I believe he would be totally awestruck. It's unfortunate that he did not live long enough to really see how aptly he titled this book, for "maverick" is certainly a more than fitting title for Dr. M.

The book itself gives an extensive background of Dr. M's beginnings, achievements, trials and tribulations. It includes a pretty extensive list of scandals that happened while Malaysia was under his watch as well. I found it to be frank and balanced. Although informative, my opinion is that Khoo Boo Teik's "Paradoxes of Mahathirism" offers more insightful analysis of the man himself.

Doreen says

I'll be frank: the main reason I gave this book 4 stars is that I'm a big fan of Dr M's and enjoy reading anything about or by him, even if I disagree with the content. While I found the two chapters on financial scandals somewhat tedious, I thought the rest made for lively, interesting reading, despite the author's occasional turn of phrase that was less "critical" than tending towards playing on the reader's emotions rather than appealing to reason. Mr Wain has tried to be even-handed and has, for the most part, succeeded, though occasionally betrays his personal opinions through word choice. Overall, the book is a good description of Dr M's past and legacy, and makes me look forward to the publication of his memoirs all the more.

Joshua Ong says

The personalized way business and politics intertwined under the Mahathir administration was highlighted when Daim abruptly resigned from the government and as UMNO treasurer in June 2001. Although nothing was said officially, it was known that a rupture had occurred between him and Dr. Mahathir.

With Daim's departure, Dr. Mahathir 'exercised the political will to tackle the problem of corporate debt' among formerly protected companies. In quick succession, 3 of Daim's closest associates lost control of their conglomerates, which were taken over at public expense and restructured. "The targets, timing and remarkable haste of the takeovers" implied that Dr. Mahathir "was politically rather economically motivated."

- Malaysian Maverick

Reading through this book has provided so many insights and uncovered countless gems on Malaysian history, politics, and even social psyche. Mahathir is undoubtedly intertwined with Malaysia, a country moulded by his manoeuvring for almost 50 years now (for better or worse).

Highly recommended for those like me who have never learnt all these relevant facts from our Sejarah textbook.
