

**THE  
MAY  
13  
TRAGEDY**

**A REPORT**

**THE  
NATIONAL OPERATIONS COUNCIL**

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1969

TEMPAT TAHAPAN KHAS. BATU GAJAH.
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MAY  
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TRAGEDY



A REPORT

THE NATIONAL  
OPERATIONS  
COUNCIL

KUALA LUMPUR

9TH OCTOBER, 1969

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KUALA LUMPUR  
28 OCTOBER 1969



## PREFACE

May 13, 1969 will go down in our history as a day of national tragedy. On that day the very foundation of this Nation was shaken by racial disturbances whose violence far surpassed any we had known. It was only the firm and prompt action of the Government, together with the loyal support of the Armed Forces and the Police, which quickly brought the situation under control. Had it not been for the immediate preventive measures, there is no doubt that the whole country would have been plunged into a holocaust.

For some of us the tragedy has a direct and personal meaning. But the significance of that day does not, and should not be allowed to, escape any one of us. On that day we were jolted into a sharp realisation that the racial problem in this country is a serious one and measures taken in the past to cope with it have not proved adequate.

Friction had always existed at the edges of the various communities, but we continued to live in the hope that the heat generated would not reach an explosive level. This faith in the good sense of every Malaysian, and our belief in the virtues of unfettered democratic processes, characterised the conduct of our affairs since Merdeka. We assumed that those who chose to participate in public life would understand the delicate realities of our society and consequently recognise the need for a certain degree of restraint and

maturity in their activities. It does not take much to realise that there are forces existing in our midst—the Communist agents, the secret societies, the communal extremists—who are out to disrupt our way of life for their own ends.

I was deeply saddened, therefore, to see the turn of events preceding the last General Elections. All the destructive forces were out: candidates courting support on racial lines with reckless abandon; Communist agents in the Labour Party turning a funeral into an arrogant Maoist slogan-shouting demonstration; and secret society members working with quiet but deadly efficiency in generating fear, inciting racial feelings and distributing weapons. These three ingredients made an explosive combination, and the Government sought to separate them and did everything possible to avert bloodshed.

During the campaign a number of Opposition candidates attacked the Constitution in racialist terms. They twisted and misrepresented certain provisions in the Constitution, principally Articles 152 and 153. They agitated for the removal of Article 153 which provides safeguards for the special position of the Malays. This caused grave misapprehensions among the Malays. Malay extremist candidates, on the other hand, campaigned on the most far-out and impracticable proposals—of having a purely Malay Government—ignoring the multi-racial realities of our society and thereby caused much worry among the non-Malays.

The General Elections went off smoothly and the Government was returned with a comfortable majority. The Opposition parties were returned with a few additional seats. This unexpected success on their part unfortunately made some of them lose all sense of proportion, and their members and supporters went on a rampage of insults and obscenities. What started as political activity was allowed to deteriorate into race-baiting.

This Report lays out the facts on the disturbances which broke out on May 13. It outlines the historical background of the mood of the people on that day; it relates the day of tragedy and the role played by the Armed Forces and the Police in quelling the disturbances and returning the country under the firm control of the Government; and, finally, it points to the direction that the Nation should take.

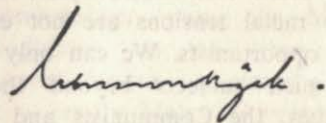
The lesson of the recent disturbances is clear. This Nation cannot afford to perpetuate a system that permits anybody to say or do things which would set one race against another. If the events of May 13 are not to occur again, if this Nation is to survive, we must make sure that subjects which are likely to engender racial tensions are not exploited by irresponsible opportunists. We can only guarantee this by placing such subjects beyond the reach of race demagogues, the Communists and other subversives. We need, therefore, to construct a political framework which is realistic and takes full account of the social

and economic conditions of our people and which is based on an unshakable and sound foundation.

This Report has been prepared with the full realisation that important matters must no longer be swept under the carpet and that the facts of May 13 should be made known to the public. Furthermore, it has been written with the conviction that the objective of national unity must be confronted squarely, and the alternatives before us decided upon sincerely and courageously. The course of our Nation so charted must be pursued with the united efforts of all loyal Malaysians resolutely, with courage and confidence.

It is intended after the publication of this Report to invite representatives of various groups in the country—political, religious, economic and others—to serve on a Consultative Council, where issues affecting our national unity will be discussed fully and frankly. In this way it is hoped to reach an understanding and agreement on these national issues that would ensure the future peace, security and unity of our country and that the May 13 tragedy would not recur.

I ask every citizen to give serious thought to this objective so that Malaysia will continue to prosper in peace.



TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK BIN HUSSEIN,  
*Director of Operations*

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## INTRODUCTION

The object of this Report is to reveal the known facts leading to, and connected with, the racial disturbances which broke out on May 13, 1969 in Kuala Lumpur.

The eruption of violence on May 13 was the result of an inter-play of forces that comprise the country's recent history. These include a generation gap and differences in interpretation of the constitutional structure by the different races in the country, and consequently the growing political encroachment of the immigrant races against certain important provisions of the Constitution which relate to the Malay language and the position of the Malays, principally Articles 152 and 153; the incitement, intemperate statements and provocative behaviour of certain racialist party members and supporters during the recent General Elections; the part played by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and secret societies in inciting racial feelings and suspicion; and the anxious, and later desperate, mood of the Malays with a background of Sino-Malay distrust, and recently, just after the General Elections, as a result of racial insults and threats to their future survival and well-being in their own country.

## INTRODUCTION

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The eruption of violence on May 13 was the result of an interplay of forces that comprise the country's recent history. These include a generation gap and different interpretations of the constitutional structure by the different races in the country, and consequently the growing political estrangement of the two major races against certain important provisions of the Constitution which relate to the Malay language and the position of the Malays, particularly Articles 152 and 153; the reckless, intemperate behaviour and provocative behaviour of certain nationalist party members and supporters during the recent General Election; the part played by the Malaysian Communist Party (MCP) and secret societies in inciting racial feelings and tensions; and the anxious and tense atmosphere of the Malays with a background of nine Malay States and recently, just after the General Election, a result of racial tensions and threats to their future survival and well-being in their own country.

## Part One

# AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

PART ONE

AN  
HISTORICAL  
BACKGROUND

ONE

## PRE-WAR MALAYAN SOCIETY

The present multi-racial character of the country is the direct result of British economic policy before the war which encouraged mass non-Malay immigration. The Chinese and Indian immigrants, during that time, were regarded as transient workers and their flow into the country, and departure, fluctuated with Malaya's economic fortunes. However, they became settled communities in the country by the fourth decade of this century. Malaya's vast economic potential and the liberal, tolerant attitude of the Malays, exploited by the colonial government, caused an influx of Chinese and Indian immigrants, and mass immigration continued until the thirties.

A striking feature of the Malayan society at that time (which continues today, slightly abated) was the voluntary cultural segregation—while the Malays lived in a cultural milieu that institutionally continued in a local context, there was no effort made by the colonial authorities to orientate the increasing number of immigrant races towards local institutions. For the most part, the immigrant races were administered independently and led an independent existence. This partly explains some current attitudes among certain sections of the non-Malay communities, and the difficulties experienced today in nation-building.



The Chinese in Malaya were not without "political consciousness". Such political interests that moved many of them were, however, externally inspired. They played a part in, and contributed substantially to, like most Nanyang Chinese of the time, the 1911 Revolution in China. In 1912, the Kuomintang established a branch in Malaya. Shortly afterwards, other branches mushroomed, but they all went underground a few years later because of opposition from the colonial authorities. After 1923, the Kuomintang organisation fell under strong communist influence and by 1926 the volume of Chinese revolutionary propaganda in Malaya was found to have increased considerably. Kuomintang activities in Malaya reflected strikingly the developments in China.

The year 1927 saw Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek purge the communists from the ranks of the Kuomintang. This led the communist extremists in Malaya, with the assistance of five representatives of the Chinese Communist Party who landed in Malaya at the end of 1927, to break away from the central body and form an organisation of their own.

**This was an important step, indeed a landmark, in the development of the Chinese-dominated Communist Party in Malaya.**

During the inter-war period, the Malays began to realise that the large numbers of immigrants, linked with British economic interests, were having adverse

effects upon the Malay political position. The authority of the Sultanate was being gradually eroded in the interest of a more central administration. However, Malay nationalism before the Second World War lacked popular support and was not effective because of the provincial attitude of most Malays then. Real political awakening for the Malays came after the war.

## TWO

### POST-WAR BRITISH POLICY

After the war, the British Government felt that their policy in Malaya had to be changed and brought up-to-date in the interest of "modernisation". They attempted to unify the various Malay States and the Settlements of Penang and Malacca into a single Malayan Union in order to overcome what they believed to be inefficient pre-War administration of the separate Malay States. This scheme entailed the abandonment of the pre-War policy of recognising the political identity of the Malays. It involved two elements: firstly, the administrative structure was to be unified at the expense of the sovereignty of the Malay Rulers; secondly, the Malays would lose their pre-War position and their political identity as Malays, in that citizenship privileges would be available to everyone (with the exception of Japanese nationals) regardless of race. Those born and resident in the Malayan Union would belong to a common political category. The British White Paper on the subject explained, *inter-alia*, "a stage is now being reached for the system of government [in Malaya] to be simplified and reformed."

Sir Harold MacMichael, Special Representative of the British Government, was sent to Malaya for the purpose of getting approval of Their Highnesses the

Sultans so as to conclude with each State Ruler, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, a formal agreement that would result in a Malayan Union.

In the face of this threat, Malay nationalism saw a sudden upsurge. The Malays, increasingly conscious of their adverse economic condition, and of the competitiveness of the politico-economic world around them created by the immigrant races, feared that they would be economically swamped and politically overwhelmed in their own country by non-Malays. The Malays "used to be poor men in a poor country, and now they were poor men in a rich country," and felt their very existence jeopardised by this threat to their political survival. Inspired by the examples of Asian nationalism around them, especially in Indonesia and India, the Malays were determined to resist the British scheme to create a "Malayan Union". The Malays feared a rule by the Chinese about whose loyalty to the country they harboured certain doubts. As noted earlier, there was an absence of identification of the immigrant races with the local culture. To the Malays, loyalty to Sultan and country was something traditional; to the Chinese, as seen by the Malays, "loyalty" was political loyalty to the State—related to citizenship, political gain and domination.

As a result of widespread opposition by the Malays, the Malayan Union Plan was abandoned in 1948. The MacMichael Treaties were scrapped and in their place was established a Federation of Malaya with the

understanding that this Federation would constitute a step towards self-government. The United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), the party that fought the MacMichael Plan, was the symbol of Malay solidarity. This party agreed in principle to grant rights of citizenship to non-Malays who were genuinely loyal to the country and prepared to swear allegiance to it. Despite this agreement to grant citizenship rights, there was widespread dissatisfaction among the immigrant races as they considered this concession was inadequate.

### THREE

#### MPAJA TERROR

Shortly before Singapore fell to the Japanese during the early part of the Second World War Malayan Communist Party (MCP) guerillas, who had received a certain amount of British training, were placed in position on the mainland as a resistance force against the Japanese occupation. These guerillas later raised resistance units which they called "the independent regiments of the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army" (MPAJA). This organisation was Chinese-dominated, and later on in the course of the Occupation, was swelled by other resistance groups. As guerillas, the MPAJA posed no serious threat to the Japanese.

Despite the outward show of co-operation with the allies, the MCP was making preparations for developing the MPAJA as a permanent armed force to seize power in Malaya after the Japanese defeat by the allies. After the Japanese surrender, the MCP and the MPAJA came into the open and assumed control of the country. When they emerged from the jungles in July, 1945, they mounted a large-scale persecution of the people, whom they accused of having committed "crimes against the people", in addition to collaborating with the Japanese regime.

The appearance of armed Chinese in the MPAJA uniform stirred certain sections of the Chinese community into taking, what the Malays felt, an arrogant

and offensive attitude. For virtually three months between the Japanese surrender and effective British take-over, they held kangaroo courts, committed atrocities, executed many Malays and Chinese and terrorised the population wherever they held sway. **During the brief period of the MPAJA ascendancy the torture and killing of large numbers of innocent Malays became an episode that indelibly imprinted in Malay minds the dangers of Chinese ascendancy.** These events culminated in the outbreak of widespread and serious clashes when the Malays retaliated against the Chinese in rural areas.

## FOUR

## THE 1948 EMERGENCY

The Chinese-dominated Malayan Communist Party started an insurrection at the end of the Second World War with the object of overthrowing authority and taking over the country. To cope with this threat, an Emergency was declared on 20th June, 1948. This outbreak of communist violence, a naked attempt at seizing power, was inspired and directed by the Cominform. This insurrection was skilfully and chauvinistically presented, and not surprisingly large sections of the Chinese community responded. On the other hand the ranks of the security forces were drawn mainly from the Malays. The Malays, therefore, identified Communist terrorism as a Chinese threat. The Chinese, on the other hand, having chosen to remain culturally separate, felt little attachment to the country. This made the Chinese, in the eyes of the Malays, suspect.

The Government, meanwhile, realised that the population had to be welded into a single Malayan nation in order to resist the threat from the Communist Chinese. The mass media were extensively used to propagate the concept of a single Malayan nation. The success of this was initially limited. Between 1949 and 1951, the efforts of the colonial government to attract the Chinese into joining the Police met with little success: only 200 Chinese youths came forward. When National Service was introduced in 1950 considerable

numbers of Chinese and Indians sought to leave the country. Between February and August 1951, over 10,000 Chinese youths fled to China to avoid the call-up. This further added to the disillusionment of the Malays and attracted a certain amount of official comment. The late Sir Henry Gurney observed,

“A feeling of resentment is growing among all the other communities of the apparent reluctance of the Chinese to help. These people (the Chinese) live comfortably and devote themselves wholly to making money . . . .”

In 1952, the next attempt to recruit 2,000 Chinese youths did not succeed despite an offer by the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) to donate between \$50 and \$300 to every Chinese recruit during his period of training. **This should not, however, detract from the fact that several thousand Chinese from all walks of life, particularly those from the MCA and the public services, stood fast by Government and contributed significantly towards the final outcome of the Emergency.**

## COMMUNIST COMEBACK

Since it was driven underground several years ago, the Malayan Communist Party had remained dormant as a militant force. Its members had not, however, given up hope of seizing power. In recent years they have quietly been re-organising themselves for a political come-back. MCP activities show a definite strategy: to weaken the nation by exploiting every sensitive and divisive issue, mainly economic and racial, in the country in a long-term “softening-up” process. Following are some examples:

- (i) In 1967 when the old currency was devalued, known Maoist agents exploited the issue by spreading anti-devaluation propaganda, conducting illegal demonstrations and fomenting discontent. They chose Penang as their target because of the sensitive racial situation on the island. Their skilful exploitation of the situation precipitated widespread Sino-Malay clashes on 24th November, 1967, resulting in the death of several persons. Many more were injured, and several houses and vehicles were burnt. Following these incidents, suspicion and uneasiness lingered on for a long time.
- (ii) In the middle of 1968, thirteen Malaysian saboteurs—two Malays and eleven Chinese—were sentenced to death for treasonable acts

during the Confrontation. Maoist agents mounted an intensive propaganda campaign in favour of the eleven condemned Chinese by selectively inciting racial passions and humanitarian feelings. So effective was the propaganda campaign that it not only aroused local Chinese support but also attracted international sympathy. Apart from appeals from local community leaders, His Holiness the Pope cabled the Prime Minister, on humanitarian grounds, for the lives of the condemned men. Feelings in Malaysia were running high, and serious racial clashes were only obviated through the efforts of the Prime Minister who obtained the consent of Their Royal Highnesses the Sultans of Johore and Perak to commute the death sentence of all thirteen prisoners to life imprisonment.

- (iii) On 24th April, 1969, about a fortnight before the General Elections, an UMNO party worker in Penang was murdered by subversive elements. These elements with known Maoist links were then actively agitating for a boycott of the General Elections. Racial tension was generated to a dangerous level, and a serious clash was averted at the last moment when UMNO leaders instructed their supporters to bury the dead man quietly and in a dignified manner so as to deny the Maoist elements of an opportunity to precipitate a racial clash.

## Part Two

# THE TRAGEDY

## UNCERTAINTY AND MISTRUST

Sino-Malay distrust runs like a thread through the nation's recent history. Racial incidents of various types have been catalogued. The pattern that emerges indicates that the major incidents normally took place in Chinese-dominated areas with strong secret society organisations and most of these incidents inevitably began with a secret society/Malay hoodlums clash.

When the United Kingdom Government decided to bestow City status on Penang, an atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust between the Chinese and the Malays was already prevailing. The British Government decision had a mixed reception. The Penang UMNO decided, for political reasons, not to participate in the centenary and City-status celebrations. As a result, rumours were rife in Georgetown that the Malays would intercept and attempt to disperse the procession.

The procession started at 10.30 on the morning of 2nd January, 1957, without Malay participants. A rumour went down along the line of the procession that there would be trouble. Shortly afterwards the police vehicle leading the procession was called away to investigate a report elsewhere. It doubled back along the procession, and this was misinterpreted by the Chinese participating in the procession as evidence of a Malay attack further down the line. Many of

the participants promptly furled their flags and proceeded to break up a decorated float using the wood as weapons while others entered houses along the procession route and armed themselves with meat cleavers, hatchets and other weapons.

The Police on duty then began to disperse the procession, as the situation was very tense. However, a group of about 50 Chinese while dispersing, chased some Malays into an adjacent house. A Chinese Inspector on duty who intervened to protect the Malays received head injuries from an axe and was forced to open fire, killing one of the Chinese and wounding another. The crowd eventually dispersed when the Officer-in-Charge of the Police District (OCPD) arrived at the scene with a Police party.

Following the above, isolated incidents of assault and minor clashes were reported. Between 2nd and 8th January, 1957 four persons were killed and 48 injured.

## SEVEN

### ISLAND CONFRONTATION

Misunderstanding and animosity had always existed between the Chinese and the Malays in Pangkor. Chinese thugs, particularly the secret society elements, and Malay hoodlums on the island who were known to be collecting protection money, did not enjoy the best of relations.

With this background, a fight took place between a Chinese and a Malay youth following an argument at Sungai Pinang on 1st May, 1959. This led to a confrontation between the Chinese and Malays, followed by a skirmish. Three Malays sustained injuries and considerable damage was caused to property. Shortly afterwards about twenty Malays armed with daggers and parangs advanced towards a group of about thirty Chinese who were also armed with assorted weapons, but the timely arrival of the police averted another clash.

On 2nd May, 1959, the local Imam called for a meeting of the Malays at the mosque to plan protective measures. The Chinese, numbering about sixty, on seeing this quickly armed themselves with parangs, sharpened sticks and bottles, and began to gather menacingly about twenty yards from the mosque. The Malays, in turn, rushed to their homes, armed themselves with parangs and returned to the mosque where



the Chinese group met them with parangs, stones and bottles. In the midst of the clash, a Chinese kongs in the vicinity was set on fire and completely gutted as were six Chinese houses near the mosque. This further angered the Chinese and they retaliated against the Malays resulting in the death of one Malay and five others injured. The Chinese suffered one killed and two injured. Groups of secret society thugs roamed the island, attacking several Malays and causing much property damage. Tension developed in towns and villages in the vicinity of Pangkor but strong action by the authorities prevented the situation from deteriorating.

Curfew was imposed on 3rd May, 1959, restricting persons from leaving or entering the island of Pangkor. Several ring-leaders were arrested and a quantity of assorted weapons recovered. Goodwill committees were formed and police patrols intensified. The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and several Ministers visited the island, and advised the residents to remain calm.

## EIGHT

### PETTY ARGUMENT

The racial disturbances in the Bukit Mertajam district were sparked off as a result of a minor case of assault which took place at the Bukit Mertajam market on the morning of 11th July, 1964. A Malay market employee was hit with a changkol by a 15-year-old Chinese vegetable vendor over a petty argument. When the Malay employee went to his superior's office to report the matter, about forty Chinese appeared. Three of them entered the office and assaulted the market employee.

Dissatisfied with police action following his report of the assault the Malay, accompanied by UMNO party officials, made various efforts to inform the Chairman of the District Council and the District Officer about the incident, but both of them could not be located until ten o'clock the following morning when the employee managed to forward the complaint to the Chairman of the District Council. By then racial tension had built up and, about half an hour later, a fight broke out between approximately thirty unarmed Malays and Chinese at the Bukit Mertajam market, resulting in one Chinese and one Malay injured. The latter died the next day. Subsequent to this a spate of assault cases and arson occurred in the Bukit Mertajam area. A Chinese was killed and a number of others injured.

The assault on the Malay worker, who was an official of the local UMNO branch, was interpreted by some Malay extremists as a challenge to the Malay population. Passions were quickly aroused and, to deter trouble-makers from manipulating the situation, a curfew was imposed throughout the district on 14th July, 1964, and was not lifted until ten days later. A number of people were arrested for being involved in this incident.

There is no indication that this episode was instigated or exploited by any political group or subversive elements. However, secret society agents were known to have exploited the situation by playing on the fears of the local inhabitants in order to collect "protection money."

## RACIAL POLITICS

During the long election campaign, several irresponsible candidates took racialist lines. Blatant incitement of racial feelings was evident in their speeches as they courted support on racial grounds. These opportunists ranged from one extreme, those who misrepresented and attacked Article 153 of the Constitution, to the other, that exploited fears among the Malays that they would be overwhelmed by the non-Malays. Even more extreme were those who questioned the historic right of the Malays to regard themselves as the indigenous people of Malaya.

This dangerous baiting technique by speakers at election rallies could be detected by the difference in the emphasis they placed in their speeches. The speeches for the benefit of English—and Malay-speaking audiences on the one hand differed in emphasis from those for the Chinese—or Tamil-speaking audiences on the other. The same technique was also used in regard to pamphlets and manifestos issued to the public. Vernacular versions were specially designed to incite racial feelings.

Allegations were also repeatedly made that the Malays were given privileges in government jobs to the exclusion of non-Malays and that the Malays controlled the administration and the uniformed services, particularly in Division One of the government services.

It is interesting at this point to compare the allegations with statistics of senior government officers among the various racial groups in the country.

*Figures Relating to Division One Government Officers by Racial Groups, as on 1st November, 1968*

Total	...	3,392	(Excluding Armed Forces and the Police)
Malays	...	1,142	... 36.26%
Non-Malays	2,250	...	63.74%

*Administration Services*

Total	...	1,221
Malays	...	706 ... 57.8%
Non-Malays	515	... 42.2%

*Professional Services (Excluding Education)*

Total	...	1,998
Malays	...	385 ... 19.2%
Non-Malays	1,613	... 80.8%

*Education Officers*

Total	...	173
Malays	...	51 ... 29.9%
Non-Malays	122	... 70.1%

*Police (Absolute figures withheld for security reasons)*

Malays	...	38.76%
Non-Malays	61.24%	

*Armed Forces (Absolute figures withheld for security reasons)*

Malays	...	64.5%
Non-Malays	35.5%	

In the other Divisions of government services and in statutory bodies, the ratio of Malay to non-Malay officers is even less favourable to the Malays. The notable exceptions are in the lower ranks of the Armed Forces and the Police, areas of employment long avoided by non-Malays.

The above figures reveal the large extent of participation of non-Malays in the so-called Malay areas of government services. Allegations that the non-Malays are excluded are regarded by the Malays as deliberate distortion. **The Malays who already felt excluded in**

the country's economic life, now began to feel a threat to their place in the public services. No mention was ever made by non-Malay politicians of the almost closed-door attitude to the Malays by non-Malays in large sections of the private sector in this country.

The Prime Minister cautioned against these blatant appeals to racial feelings throughout the campaign. In a speech in Kuala Pilah on 15th April, he warned the Democratic Action Party not to tamper with Article 15 of the Constitution. "If they (DAP) try to do this there will surely be chaos and the prosperity which we now enjoy would be gone."

Certain non-Malay racist election speakers constantly worked up non-Malay passions against Malay policemen and officers, alleging partial treatment in the enforcement of the law. **They contributed directly to the breakdown in respect for the law and authority amongst sections of the non-Malay communities.**

The long campaign did great damage to racial harmony in Malaysia. Political parties at both extremes harped incessantly on "Bumiputrahism" on the one hand, and Malay poverty on the other. This was a dangerous development in a society so visibly identified along ethnic, cultural and economic lines. It also resulted in a strain upon large sections of the liberal Malay population, and placed segments of the non-Malay population, whose loyalty to the country was no longer in doubt, in a difficult position.

## SECRET SOCIETIES AND POLITICS

Secret societies took roots in this country with the arrival of the first waves of Chinese immigrants in the last century. In the absence of strong legal, security and financial infrastructures, secret societies played an important role and their first recorded political activity took place about the middle of the last century when they contrived to create chaos in the state of Perak which led to British intervention and the Treaty of Pangkor in 1874. The role of secret societies has been and continues to be a destructive one. They are involved in "protection" rackets, extortion, kidnapping, robbery and other felonies.

These societies had always maintained a traditional hold over certain sections of the Chinese community, and their activities had intensified in recent years. During the last General Elections, secret societies exercised a certain amount of influence on the political activities of a number of candidates. In some areas, candidates found it impossible to campaign without the payment of "protection money". Coercion and intimidation were the familiar methods of getting support during the last political campaign in certain areas, especially in Kuala Lumpur. Some of these secret society agents, chauvinistically motivated, are dedicated to creating racial tension for the purpose of weakening the country.

A definite link has been established between secret societies and the racial clashes in Kuala Lumpur, and some of these secret society thugs are known to be members of Communist-dominated branches of the Labour Party of Malaya (LPM). They acted for their own specific objectives, to create and maintain a state of tension so that their extortion rackets could flourish

## ENGINEERED TENSION

It would not be correct to say that the Communist Party of Malaya had started the May 13 disturbances in order to seize power immediately. They were not ready for such a step. However, their activities and the activities of their agents in the Labour Party of Malaya, together with paid secret society agents, generated racial tensions to a dangerous pitch. The Labour Party of Malaya largely under the influence of the MCP and almost wholly Chinese in composition, possess distinct chauvinistic tendencies. On 4th May, 1969, a group of LPM youths was sighted painting anti-election slogans by a three-man police patrol in Kepong. When challenged, the youths attacked the police with iron rods and catapults bearing metal shots and forced the police to fire in self-defence. One of the youths was wounded and later died in Hospital.

In contrast to the quiet funeral of the UMNO worker who was murdered in Penang, the Labour Party preserved the corpse of the worker and planned a large funeral to coincide with Polling Day so as to disrupt the elections. The body was deliberately kept frozen for this purpose. Permission for the funeral was given by the Police for the 9th of May instead of the 10th, and the permit was for a small procession not exceeding a few hundred persons, and to take a route that would not tie up traffic in Kuala Lumpur.

These elements defied Police instruction and organised a large parade in which an estimated number of ten thousand persons took part and marched through the centre of Kuala Lumpur, flouting every Police instruction. They chanted Maoist slogans, sang "the East is Red", and displayed portraits of Mao Tse-tung and the Red flag. The parade passed through the heart of Kuala Lumpur and tied up traffic in almost every major street in the city, and provoked Malay bystanders with shouts of "Malai si!" (Death to the Malays!), and "Hutang darah bayar darah" (Blood debt will be repaid with blood).

In view of the scheduled polling on the following day, the Police were under orders to act with the highest restraint. An ugly clash was avoided, and the General Elections took place on 10th May, 1969 without any serious incidents.

## TWELVE

### "VICTORY" MARCHES

On 11th and 12th May, 1969, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Gerakan Malaysia held noisy, racially provocative and intimidating "victory" processions in Kuala Lumpur, followed by numerous splinter processions.

The DAP held several processions on Sunday, 11th May, 1969 all of which were without police permits. On that day at five o'clock in the afternoon a procession comprising five cars and about fifteen motorcycles was seen along Jalan Brickfields heading for Jalan Lornie. In the procession was Goh Hock Guan, the successful candidate for Bangsar Parliamentary constituency and Pantai State constituency. When passing by the Brickfields Police Station, the mainly Chinese participants shouted abusive remarks such as "Apa polis boleh buat—kita raja" (What can the police do—we are king!) and "Buang semua Polis Melayu" (Sack all Malay policemen!).

At about 8.30 p.m. another DAP procession along Jalan Bukit Bintang abused Malay policemen on duty by making obscene gestures and shouting obscenities at them. At 10 o'clock the same night, another DAP procession heading for Kuala Lumpur shouted "Mati Melayu, sakai pergi masuk hutan!" (Death to the Malays, aborigines go back to the jungle) at Malay

policemen as they passed the Travers Road Police Station. At about midnight a mixed DAP and Gerakan procession of motor-cycles and scooters passed by Brickfields Police Station and again shouted insults and obscenities.

Unlike their DAP counterparts, Gerakan supporters did not organise any procession until late in the evening of 11th May, 1969. This, again, was without police permit. At about 10 o'clock that night, about forty Gerakan supporters were seen in cars and riding on scooters along Jalan Changkat Dollah near the Pudu prison. Amidst jubilant shouts, they were heard shouting "Kuala Lumpur sekarang China punya" (Kuala Lumpur now belongs to the Chinese).

The licensed Gerakan procession on 12th May, 1969 led by Dr Tan Chee Khoo, the successful Gerakan candidate for Batu Parliamentary constituency, and Kepong State constituency passed Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Parlimen, Jalan Gombak, Jalan Raja Laut and back to Jalan Ipoh. Insults such as "Melayu balek kampung" (Malays go back to your kampung), "Melayu sekarang ta'ada kuasa lagi" (Malays have lost power), "sekarang kita kontrol" (We are now in control) were hurled at every Malay in sight. The procession consisted of about 500 scooters. When this procession reached the Malay area of Kampong Bharu, such insults as "Melayu keluar—apa lagi dudu-

si" (Malays get out—why do you remain here) and "Kita hentam lu; sekarang kita besar" (We'll thrash you, we are now powerful) were hurled at the Malays.

Malay policemen were singled out for insults, just as they were during the long election campaign.

On 12th May, 1969, at about 7.30 p.m. P.C. 11819 Noordin while on his normal beat at Jalan Pudu was approached by 5 Chinese youths who tried to surround and assault him. As the youths approached the P.C. heard the group yelling "Semua Melayu kasi habis" (Finish off all Malays). The youths ran away when the P.C. drew his revolver.

On 12th May, 1969, at 4.00 p.m. Cpl. 9439 Kassim was on duty at the Enquiry Office in Pudu Police Station. At that time a Gerakan procession passed by the Station twice, and the participants shouted "Kasi halau semua polis" (Chase away all the police).

On the same day at about 8.30 p.m. P.C. 2248 Sulaiman was on duty at the Police Beat Kiosk on Jalan Bukit Bintang. At that time a combined procession by DAP and Gerakan members and supporters passed by the Beat Kiosk. The P.C. heard shouts coming from the procession, "Apa ini Melayu kita negeri dia sudah perintah. Ini negeri bukan Melayu punya" (Why should the Malays rule our country) (This is not a Malay country). "Mata-mata lanchau" (An obscenity directed at policemen).

A short while later while P.C. 27596 was on duty at Jalan Pasar Baru, Pudu, he saw the combined DAP/ Gerakan procession pass by. While passing through the participants shouted "Habis Melayu" (End of the Malays) several times.

Inspector Mansor bin Latt Ibrahim of Jalan Campbell Police Station stated that on 12th May, 1969, at about 7.00 p.m. he was on duty to cover the Gerakan procession. At Jalan Ipoh he heard some of the participants shout, "Butoh Melayu" (An obscenity directed at the Malays), "Pergi mati-lah" (Better go and die).

On the night of 12th May, 1969, Sgt. Major Alias bin Hj. Mohd. Yusof was informed by P.C. 2248 Sulaiman who returned from duty at Bukit Bintang area that the latter heard the people who took part in the Gerakan procession that passed along Jalan Bukit Bintang shout, "Ini negeri bukan Melayu punya kita mahu halau semua Melayu" (This country does not belong to the Malays, we want to chase out all Malays).

Assistant Superintendent of Police, Noordin bin Alauddin, of the Selangor Police Headquarters stated that in the early hours of May 13, 1969, about six hundred supporters of the Gerakan passed along Jalan Halim and taunted residents of Kampong Bharu to get out from the kampong and "Return to the jungle". The groups also passed Jalan Raja Muda and the Menteri Besar's house.

Annuar bin Abbas, a watchman at the Majlis Amanah Ra'ayat (MARA) College\* in Petaling Jaya claimed that at 9.30 p.m. on 12th May, 1969, a "fairly long procession" of Gerakan supporters passed slowly in front of the College, banging noisily on tin cans, shouting and blocking traffic. He heard a few members of the procession shout, "MARA butoh, MARA bundun," (obscenities directed towards MARA) and, "Kapal Layar bochor" (The Sailing Boat leaks). The procession, headed by motor-cyclists, took about half an hour to pass the College. In the middle of the procession, he saw V. David standing in an open car, with a garland around his neck.

Mansor bin Abdul Rahman, a student at MARA College, saw the procession as it passed the College, and confirmed the evidence of Annuar. He further added that the slogans he heard were "MARA lima tahun lagi akan jahanam" (MARA will be destroyed in five years). "Sekarang kita perentah apa boleh buat" (Now we rule, what can you do about it!) "Melayu boleh balek kampong!" (Malays can go back to their kampong!).

Another MARA student, Osman Mahmud, who was in the compound of the College, saw a Gerakan procession pass by and heard shouts of "Melayu sudah jatoh, MARA boleh keluar" (The Malays have fallen—

\* MARA College is part of the Government project to educate poor Malays.



MARA will be dissolved!). Abdul Wahid bin Haji Ebon who was also in the compound at that time heard the participants shout, "Melayu balek, pergumati!" (Malays go home, go and die!). Another MARA student, Abdul Hadi bin Haji Shariff who was also in the compound heard the crowd shout, "Melayu balek kampung, MARA mahu kasi habis!" (Malays go back to the kampung, MARA will be finished off!).

N. Sandrasekaran, a clerk, stated that at about 7.00 p.m. on 12th May, 1969, he was driving his car from Sentul towards town when he was caught in a traffic jam at the Jalan Ipoh/Maxwell roundabout. It was caused by 400-500 Chinese and Indian youths on both sides of the road. When these youths noticed that the driver of the Holden car immediately ahead of Sandrasekaran was a Malay, they became very boisterous and waved their red banners at him. The banners were attached to poles sharpened at one end. At the same time they shouted to the Malay phrases such as "Orang Melayu balek kampung" and "Kapal sudah bochor".

Sandrasekaran slowly followed the Holden car and he heard some of the youths saying, "Ini bukan Melayu" (This is not a Malay), referring to Sandrasekaran, meaning that he was therefore not to be jeered at and insulted.

Several other processions of this nature took place in different parts of Kuala Lumpur. Groups of non-Malay hooligans went in front of the Menteri Besar's residence in Kampong Bharu and shouted threats that he would be physically ejected from the house.

## THIRTEEN

### DEFIANCE

The common features in all these were the complete and deliberate defiance of traffic regulations, vulgar and obscene language and gestures, and deliberate provocative slogans attacking the Malays. A pattern of behaviour similar to the Maoist funeral procession of 9th May was evident. The marchers and those in cars and lorries displayed unbridled arrogance and showed nothing less than insolence towards authority.

The leaders of the Opposition parties, both Gerakan and the DAP, neither restrained nor denounced the behaviour of their party workers.

Despite these extreme provocations, the Malay communities in the areas most affected by these insults showed patience and restraint. However, they brooded on the fact that even with the winning of only a few additional seats the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, had shown arrogance beyond belief. To the Malays as a whole, the events from the 9th to 12th May gave cause for fear over their future. On 12th May for instance, the restraint of the Police, and the freedom with which the Chinese flouted the law caused the Malays to harbour doubts as to the willingness or ability of the Government to deal firmly with such lawless elements. A feeling of dismay and uncertainty, coupled with their memories of the 19

angaroo courts, swept the Malay community in the Federal Capital. On the morning of 12th May a group of Kampong Bharu UMNO youths met Haji Ahmad Azali bin Ali, an Alliance State Assemblyman, and told him that they wanted to hold an UMNO procession for the purpose of "showing to the Opposition Parties that the UMNO, too, had a good reason to celebrate, if they were not defeated in the State elections."

## FOURTEEN REACTION

Haji Ahmad Razali made the following statement to the Police:

"On the morning of 12th May, 1969 I intimidated the Y.B. Menteri Besar, Dato' Harun, that the UMNO Youth of Kampong Bahru was desirous of holding a UMNO procession with a view to showing to the Opposition parties that the UMNO too had a good reason to celebrate as they were not defeated in the State Elections. I told the Menteri Besar that the UMNO Youth was greatly embittered by the behaviour of DAP and Gerakan members and supporters who since the morning of 11th May, 1969, had been going about in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya shouting humiliating and insulting words at the Malays. In so far as the UMNO Youth of Kampong Bahru was concerned, the members would not have minded if the insults were thrown at the Alliance or UMNO. But, as I was told by many of the members, the insults, such as 'Allahu Melayu boleh buat' and 'Melayu boleh balek jember sakai' were too hard for them to accept as they were directed to the Malays in general and not to UMNO or the Alliance. The Menteri Besar agreed to my proposal to organise an UMNO victory procession and warned me that the procession must be conducted in a legal, peaceful and orderly manner.

"On getting the Menteri Besar's agreement I told the members of the UMNO Youth Kampong Bahru that they should rally as much support as they could as otherwise there was no point in organising a procession. They agreed to my proposal that the procession be held on the evening of May 13, 1969, to commence at 2130 hours. The assembly point was the Menteri Besar's residence.

"On the night of 12th May, 1969 at about 2130 hours I went along in my car to a number of Malay kampongs in Kuala Lumpur to contact UMNO leaders in order to gather enough support. The Kampongs I visited were Kampong Dato Keramat, Gombak (8½ milestone), Kampong Petaling, Kawasan Melayu, Kampong Haji Abdullah Hukom, Kampong Pandan Dalam and Kampong Jaya. I told them when and where the procession could start. I spent about four hours visiting the various kampongs.

"The response of all the UMNO leaders that I met that night was tremendous. They were keen to gather support and take part in the procession themselves. They said that insults such as 'Melayu sudah habis' and 'MARA boleh tutup' were unwarranted. Some of them told me that during their victory processions, many Gerakan and DAP supporters had made vulgar gestures at the Malays when passing through Malay

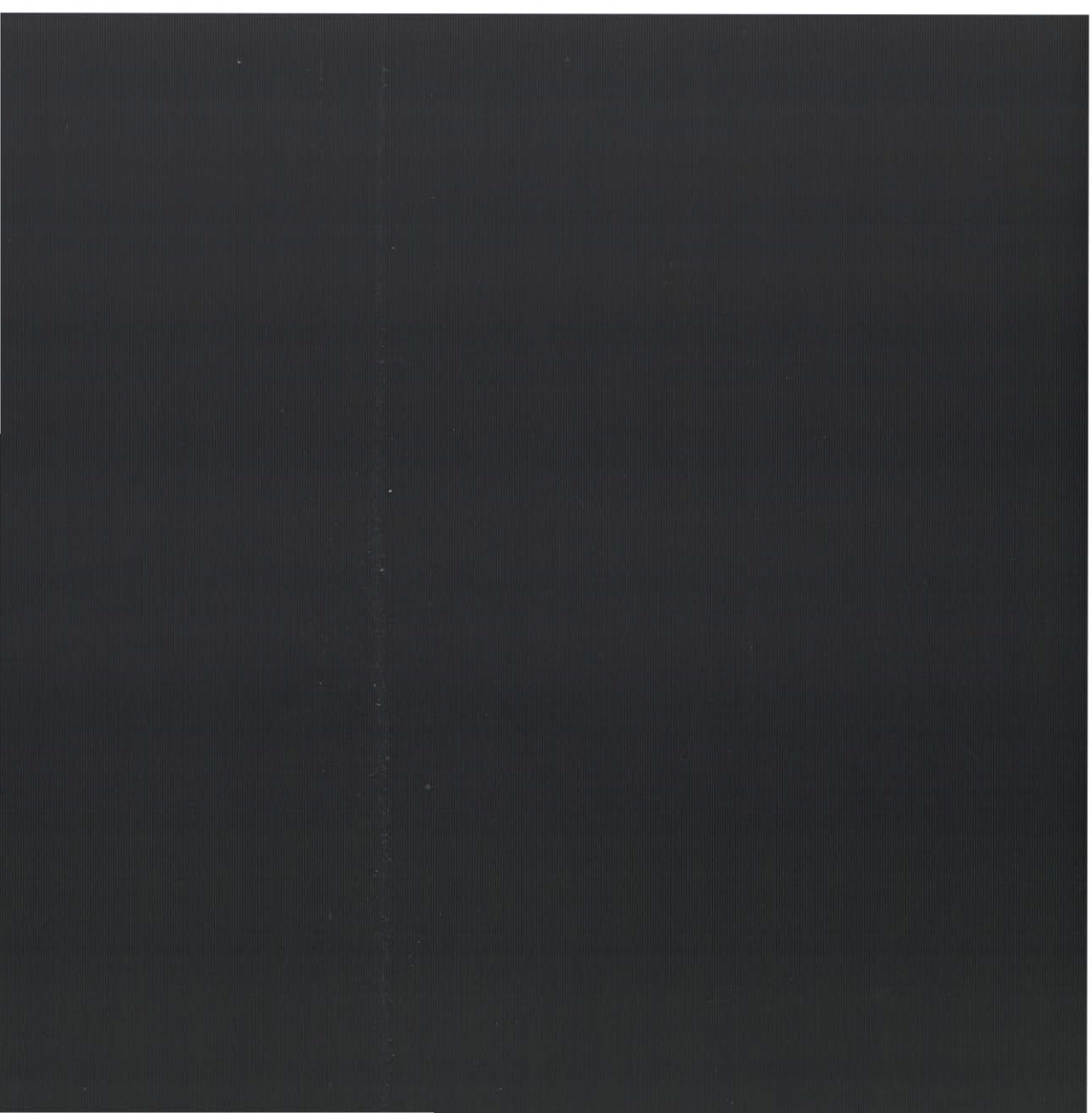
Dato' Harun bin Haji Idris, the Menteri Besar of Selangor, related to the Police in a statement, that, "On

Sunday, 11th May, 1969 at about 1900 hours, I returned to my residence in Kampong Bahru from a visit to Morib. The same evening a number of successful Alliance candidates came to my residence to discuss the formation of the State Government. However, as they were still preoccupied with the election results there was no opportunity to discuss anything positive towards forming a new Selangor State Government.

"That night I began to get telephone calls from persons who identified themselves as UMNO supporters informing me of the behaviour of the participants in Opposition victory processions. Their conduct was regarded as insulting to the Malays. These calls continued to come until the following evening . . . .

Dato' Harun then related how his Political Secretary, Haji Ahmad Razali, subsequently visited and informed him that a group of UMNO supporters who had arrived at his house had expressed their strong desire to hold a victory procession. Dato' Harun invited them to his residence and, in his statement, continued "In the beginning I tried to discourage them from holding a victory procession by stating that something untoward might happen. However, after I was given the assurance that the procession would be held in a peaceful and orderly manner and that a Police permit would be obtained for it, I agreed to their suggestion about holding the procession. In order to lend respectability to it and ensure that the participants behaved

themselves, I agreed to take part and lead the procession. As I felt that I should advise the crowd before the procession commenced, I told them that the participants should assemble in my compound. I could then also take the opportunity to inform the Malays of my intention to form the State Government. Thus I might be able to allay any fear they might have on this matter . . . ."



## FIFTEEN

### MAY 13

After the threats and insults they had been subjected to on the preceding days the reaction of some Malays was to converge on Kampong Bharu.

According to Dato' Harun bin Haji Idris,

"On the morning of May 13, 1969 a meeting of successful Alliance State Assemblymen to discuss the formation of the State Government was held in my office at the Selangor State Secretariat. Later, I returned to my residence and stayed home for the whole afternoon during which I entertained many visitors who came to congratulate me on my election victory.

"At about 1700 hours two Chinese were brought to my residence by Tahir Majid. They identified themselves as couriers from Dr Tan Chee Khoo. They intimated to me that the Gerakan would not enter into any coalition with the DAP and urged me to form the State Government. I told the two Chinese that they should go back and inform Dr Tan Chee Khoo to ring me back personally. Both the Chinese left immediately. When they left I received a phone call from V. David. He said that I should go ahead with forming the State Government as the Gerakan would not join the DAP to form a coalition Government. I was

taken very much aback by what were said by the two Gerakan leaders as these were more or less contrary to what they have said as quoted in the local press earlier.

"The people who came for the procession first assembled in the compound of Haji Ahmad Razali and on the road in front of the said house. There were very few people in the compound of my residence . . ."

By the afternoon of the same day, an announcement was made by Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia that the party would remain neutral in the Selangor State Assembly. This opened the way for the Alliance, the party that had won the largest number of seats, to form the next government in Selangor. At this stage, the Selangor UMNO decided that it would proceed with the proposed victory procession to celebrate the formation of the new Government. On the morning of May 13, the Police agreed to give the necessary permit, since a similar permit had been given to the Gerakan on the previous day. The Police had received an assurance that the procession was to be a peaceful one and, at that stage in the morning, had not received any disquieting intelligence. The proposed procession was organised by the Selangor UMNO, and all its branches in the State were invited to send participants to congregate at the Menteri Besar's residence by 7 o'clock on the evening of May 13, and the procession was to have started at 7.30 p.m.

Some students from MARA College also joined the gathering outside the Menteri Besar's residence since they were also the targets of humiliation and ridicule during the "victory" processions of the DAP and Gerakan parties.

It was observed that the Malay would-be participants were highly emotional on the evening of May 13 as a result of the previous two days of insults and provocations. For some time rumours were rife in Kuala Lumpur that the UMNO procession would be attacked by certain Chinese elements that evening. The Malays were determined to retaliate if attacked. Some of them carried krises and parangs, anticipating a need to defend themselves should they be attacked during the procession. They were mindful of the fact that the procession was to be held in a city whose population was mainly Chinese. Some of those who were unarmed realised that they might need to protect themselves, and quickly improvised weapons such as sharpened bamboos.

While the Malays were gathered at the Menteri Besar's residence in Kampong Bharu, news reached them that some Gombak Malays, would-be-participants in the procession, had been attacked by some Chinese in Setapak on their way to Kampong Bharu.

In his statement, Assistant Commissioner Zamani, Commander of the Police Field Force, said that at about 6.30 p.m., just before pandemonium broke along Jalan Raja Muda, "... a Malay youth, riding a scooter, heading towards the Menteri Besar's residence shouted 'Setapak sudah kena langgar'" (Setapak has been attacked).

According to a Telecoms employee, in a statement recorded by Inspector Abbas "... at about 6.00 p.m. I stopped my car near the Malayan Banking office in Setapak. A Malay youth ran to me and said that a fight had broken out near the Alhambra Theatre down the road ... shopkeepers in Setapak had started to close their shops in a hurry ..."

In a statement recorded by A.S.P. Chan Hon Keong, a Chinese businessman in Setapak recounted that, "at about 6.15 p.m. on May 13, 1969, I was sitting in my shop when suddenly I heard a big commotion coming from the junction of Jalan Setapak and Jalan Gombak. On looking out, I saw people running helter-skelter. At the same time I heard a Chinese shouting, 'anti-Chinese'. I quickly closed the front gate of my shop. By that time I saw a group of Malay youths passing my shop on the opposite side of the road. They were heading towards Kuala Lumpur. I did not have a close look at them because they were throwing

stones at shop-houses on both sides of the road and smashing the windscreen of cars parked by the roadside . . . ”

Another officer, A.S.P. Thomas Sivanathan, Commander of one of the Federal Reserve Unit troops, was off duty on May 13, 1969 at his house at Seavoy Road, Setapak. In his statement he related that, “at about 6.15 p.m. my children who were playing in the compound informed that there was a commotion outside. I looked out and saw a number of male Chinese on foot, bicycles and scooters running from the main Pahang Road to the squatter area behind my house. Hardly a few minutes later I saw the same crowd rushing out to the main Pahang Road carrying in their hands iron pipes, sticks and parangs. On seeing this, I immediately went on foot towards Setapak town to check the whereabouts of my wife who had earlier left the house in my car. On arrival at the junction of Seavoy/Pahang Road at about 6.25 p.m. I saw the road was completely jammed with vehicles and directly in front of the Len Seng Bus Office, there was a crowd of approximately eighty people (about fifty Chinese and thirty Indians) armed with parangs, iron pipes and sticks. They were all facing Setapak town. Whilst I was walking towards the Len Seng Bus Office, several of the armed Chinese who came out of the squatter area passed by me and joined the crowd at the Len Seng Bus Office. Then I saw two cars driven by Chinese weaving through the jammed traffic from the

direction of Setapak town. The screens of both cars were already smashed. These two cars were stopped by the Chinese crowd at the Bus Office and I heard them talking in Chinese. As soon as these two were allowed to pass, I saw two male Chinese on scooters weaving through the traffic coming from Setapak town. On arrival at the crowd, I saw some of the Chinese tried to stop them. They chased the scooters and succeeded in hitting the one in the rear with an iron pipe; The rider fell and ran into the open space by the roadside and disappeared. The other managed to ride fast and disappeared too. At this juncture I approached an armed Indian and asked him in Tamil as to what had actually happened. He told me that the ‘MCA was wagging its tail’ and they ‘wanted to teach them a lesson’ . . . ”

In a statement recorded by Superintendent Chan Ah Chan, a Chinese businessman in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman said, “at about 6.30 p.m. I was standing in front of my shop and noticed that crowds of Chinese were standing on both sides of the road waiting for the procession. Meanwhile, 2 buses arrived from the town area and stopped at the bus stop nearby. Some people in the 2 buses shouted that a fight had already broken out in Setapak. Whilst some passengers alighted, other Chinese youths rushed up the buses to proceed to Setapak . . . ”



It is clear, then, that at that time the trouble had not yet broken out in Kampong Bharu for if it had, the youths would not have rushed to Setapak.

Neither the Malays nor the non-Malays involved in Setapak were originally armed. However, when bottles and stones started to rain on both groups, the Malays tried to obtain weapons from the various shop-houses but the majority were denied these by the shopkeepers who quickly closed their shutters. One Indian stallkeeper and his assistant related in an interview to A.S.P. S. Dorairaja and Acting A.S.P. T. Kurugnanam, that the Malay mob "then started attacking the passing motor-cars with sticks and stones. Some of them ran to my stall and demanded knives from my stall. When both of us replied we have none they punched both of us. My assistant was badly injured in the face . . . . The mob then ran along towards Jalan Gombak/Jalan Setapak junction attacking all parked and on-coming cars with sticks, stones and a few of them carried knives."

As Chinese and Indian hooligans rushed to their houses for weapons, as evident from A.S.P. Thomas Sivanathan's statement, the Malays vented their rage on the windscreens of motor cars parked along the road until they reached the Len Seng Bus depôt where, by then, armed Chinese and Indian youths had positioned themselves. While a number of Malay scooterists rode their way through to carry the news to Kampong Bharu, the majority of the Malays doubled back to Gombak

to arm themselves. By the time they returned to Setapak it was close to 7.00 p.m. and a Troop of FRU under A.S.P. Low Yew Hong were ready in front of the Chung Hwa Chinese School to disperse them with tear gas. By then two scooters were ablaze on the main road, and several persons were injured including an employee of the Selangor Pewter Works, Gombak branch, who later died in the General Hospital.

It would also appear that some MCA Chinese in Setapak had joined the Malay groups as they proceeded from Gombak, thinking that the proposed UMNO procession was to be an Alliance procession. This would explain why the Chinese and Indian hooligans at the Len Seng Bus depôt hit out at the Chinese scooterists. It would also explain the reply given to A.S.P. Thomas Sivanathan by one of the armed Indian youths.

**The established fact is that some Malays while proceeding to the assembly point on foot and scooters (as the local bus service had apparently stopped) were taunted in Setapak by groups of Chinese and Indians, and this developed rapidly into stone and bottle-throwing incidents between opposing groups ten to fifteen minutes before the outbreak of violence in Kampong Bharu. It was news of this fight that sparked off the clashes in and around Kampong Bharu. The taunts and insults of the previous two days had only served to generate the explosive atmosphere.**

It is clear that violence first broke out in Setapak—an unexpected area—at about 6.00 p.m. well before the

procession was scheduled to start in Jalan Raja Muda. Once violence broke out it spread rapidly and uncontrollably to Jalan Campbell, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Kampong Dato Keramat, Kampong Pandan, Cheras and Kampong Kerunchi.

At about 6.20 p.m. on May 13, 1969, A.S.P. Tham Kong Weng, Commander of Troop 5B of the Federal Reserve Units, took his Troop to its assigned position opposite the Chow Kit area along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. Enroute, he passed in front of the Menteri Besar's residence at about 6.30 p.m. There was no trouble there at that time and he proceeded without stopping but he passed on an observation to the Selangor Police Control Centre by wireless that "a crowd of four to five thousand" was swamping the roadside in front of the Menteri Besar's residence and spilling over into the compounds of the Residency and neighbouring houses. Some of the Malays carried sticks and banners and "a few were seen to be armed with parangs and kris." He assessed that there would be real trouble if the scheduled procession was attacked and, mindful of this possibility, made a careful survey of the Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Jalan Chow Kit area as soon as he arrived there a few minutes later. He even checked "the overhead pedestrian bridge for any likelihood of persons throwing things at the procession when it passed below it . . ."

A.S.P. Tham Kong Weng further recalled, "at about 6.40 p.m. while standing on the turret [of his command vehicle] I noticed a column of smoke in the direction of the Menteri Besar's house and I sensed that trouble had broken out and I moved my Troop forward to the Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman roundabout."

The news that Malay would-be participants in the procession had been attacked in Setapak by Chinese groups whilst enroute to Kampong Bharu from Gombak, had lashed through the Malays gathered on the roadside opposite the houses of the Menteri Besar and his Political Secretary, Haji Ahmad Razali. There was a spontaneous and violent anti-Chinese reaction but who its first victim was has not been positively established.

According to Haji Ahmad Razali, "At about 1840 hours, someone rushed to me to say that there was already trouble outside. I rushed out and saw that right in front of my house along Jalan Raja Muda, a van was burning." According to his enquiries, the occupants were two Chinese who had been killed on the spot. He quickly rushed over to the Menteri Besar's residence and found Dato' Harun already standing on top of a bus appealing to the crowd to calm down but the crowd were shouting back, "Tidak boleh tahan lagi Dato'" (We cannot bear this any more) and getting more restless.

Haji Ahmad Razali then "climbed up the bus to assist the Menteri Besar in calming down the crowd.



By about 1850 hours I saw about two hundred to three hundred Malays leaving the compound of the Menteri Besar's residence and moving towards Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. It was clear to me that they were out to clash with the Chinese. Our calls to them to stop went unheard."

As soon as this group of Malays left for Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, FRU Troop 1B under the command of A.S.P. Shahrman arrived in front of the Menteri Besar's residence and sealed the area, effectively preventing any more Malays from joining the group that had just left for Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. The time of his arrival was 6.50 p.m. Several vehicles were already overturned, pushed aside or burning. Three dead bodies were lying on the roadside and, in one of the vehicles, a Chinese business executive feigned death until the Police party was close enough, when he dashed out and placed himself under A.S.P. Shahrman's protection.

In the meantime, the group of Malays which had left for Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman marched down Jalan Raja Muda towards the roundabout, throwing sticks and stones at Chinese groups which were running for safety. According to a Chinese shopkeeper in the area, he closed his steel shutters as the mob passed in front of his shop-house. However, some of his neighbours started to throw bottles down on the mob from

their second floor windows whereupon some members of the mob broke away, attacked these shop-houses and set fire to them.

The main body of Malays were met at the roundabout by A.S.P. Tham Kong Weng who, firing tear gas shells, turned them back. In his estimation there were one hundred and fifty to two hundred Malays in the group. As they ran back to Kampong Bahru, this group was "hit" by FRU Troop 1B under A.S.P. Shahrman and dispersed in smaller groups into the sidelanes of Kampong Bharu. From then on Troops 1B under A.S.P. Shahrman and 5B under A.S.P. Tham Kong Weng, reinforced by Troops 4C under A.S.P. Pritam Singh and 1C under A.S.P. Low Yew Hong were kept extremely busy dealing with both Malay and Chinese rioters in the Kampong Bharu, Chow Kit and Jalan Raja Laut areas. Numerous arrests of armed rioters were made and scores of innocent persons were rescued and protected. Both Malay rioters in the Kampong Bharu/Chow Kit area and Chinese rioters in the Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman/Jalan Raja Laut area were firmly and impartially dealt with.

Some of the Malays who had gathered in Kampong Bharu for the proposed procession became apprehensive: they were unarmed and unprepared for trouble or worried over the safety of their families in the outlying areas, or were intent on avoiding trouble. Thus they ran or cycled or rode their scooters to their respective kampongs, carrying tales of the racial clashes

back with them. At this time the curfew had not yet been imposed. In this way excitement and frenzy were worked up in unexpected places such as Kampong Pandan, Kampong Dato Keramat, Kampong Kerunchi, Kampong Lembah Jaya, Kampong Petaling, Kawasan Melayu and Kampong Haji Abdullah Hukom.

There was considerable anxiety in the Chinese areas. Rumours were rife by noon of May 13, that the UMNO procession would turn into a rampage. Secret society elements were noticeably busier than usual. Weapons such as parangs, three-pointed spears, bottle bombs, iron pipes, were distributed among members in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Chow Kit, Jalan Ipoh, Cheras, Bungsar, Jalan Campbell, Bukit Bintang and other parts of the Capital.

An Indian assistant dispenser in a medical clinic observed such an activity whilst walking home just after 6.00 p.m. on May 13, 1969. In an interview given to A.S.P. S. Dorairajah and Acting A.S.P. T. Kurugnanam he said,

"I saw a red and white bus stop between the Circular Road flats, and a group of Chinese, about twenty to thirty of them, with sticks and pipes boarded the bus with the help of the bus driver and conductor who were also Chinese. They then moved off in the bus along Jalan Pekeliling roundabout into Jalan Pahang towards Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. The bus is possibly the Len Seng Bus, which passes this way daily."

Thus, at about the time that violence broke out in Kampong Bharu, secret society agents were ready for action, leading forays into Malay kampongs and attacking Malays in China town areas. The first show at the Rex Cinema, Jalan Sultan was stopped when secret society agents broke into the hall. They singled out Malays trapped among the audience and attacked them. At the Federal Cinema near Jalan Chow Kit, secret society members waited for Malays at the exits of the hall at the end of the first show. At about 8.23 p.m. A.S.P. Tham Kong Weng and Troop 5C of the FRU encountered and dispersed about one thousand armed Chinese rioters in the vicinity of the Capitol Theatre in Jalan Raja Laut. They also rescued and sent to hospital several injured Malays in the area.

In Kampong Dato Keramat, the nearest major Malay area to Kampong Bharu, the commotion in the Kampong Bahru area was heard at about 7.00 p.m. by Fan Chon Chuan, a construction worker who lived in the area. He enquired from his Malay neighbour as to the cause. In his own words, "I was told that it was only a fight. My neighbour did not tell me to run or hide." The situation in the Kampong then was normal and peaceful and Fan went indoors. News of the nature of the "fight" soon filtered through to the Kampong and the Malays there armed themselves and huddled together outside their houses in anticipation of a Chinese attack on the Kampong.

At this time someone shouted the sighting of a land rover loaded with male Chinese, and of a Chinese running through the Kampong from the far side, and a chase ensued. The whole village was aflame with rumours of an impending Chinese attack. According to Fan Chon Chuan, at about 7.30 p.m. his house was set on fire. He and twelve other members of his family escaped to a nearby Army Camp where they were given shelter. His aged father probably perished in the flames.

At about the same time, a Chinese TV repairer was repairing a set in a nearby house belonging to a member of the Royal Malaysia Police Band. When the situation relaxed on the following day, he was dressed up as a Malay, complete with songkok, and smuggled out to the Police Depôt.

In Kampong Pandan, Malay youths in a car and on two motor-cycles entered the Kampong at about 7.00 p.m. and shouted to everyone to get indoors and to shut the doors and windows as, "orang kita telah terkorban di-Kampong Bharu." (Our people have been slaughtered in Kampong Bharu). About twenty minutes later the first shop-house was set on fire. According to Police Inspector Mohd. Hatta, he was at the Kampong Pandan Police Post when, at about 7.30 p.m., one "Toong Fong" bus came from Kampong Pandan Dalam and he stopped it and asked the driver, conductor and two passengers, all of whom were Chinese, to take refuge at the post. Ten minutes later another

bus appeared from Kampong Pandan Dalam. He tried to stop it but it proceeded for another 400 yards where it was stopped by a group of youths and set on fire.

SIXTEEN

## RUMOURS AND THE UNEXPECTED

Although by 3.30 p.m. on May 13, Selangor Police Headquarters had heard rumours of the possibility of an outbreak of violence, the evidence available then pointed to a peaceful procession, but one that could respond in kind if attacked. The rumours also indicated that there was a likelihood of the procession being attacked by certain Chinese elements in the Jalan Chow Kit and Suleiman Court areas. The Police assessed that trouble, if at all, would break out only if the procession was attacked and, in any case, was unlikely to occur until the procession had moved out of Jalan Raja Muda at 7.30 p.m. that evening. Accordingly, Police deployment was geared to prevent any attack on or by the procession from 7.30 p.m. in the sensitive areas. In this way it was assessed that the procession could complete its route without any mishap, provided that sufficient Police forces were deployed before 7.30 p.m.

By 7.00 p.m. a full half-hour before the scheduled procession, Federal Reserve Units were positioned in these areas. One Troop of these riot control experts was in position on Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman/Jalan Chow Kit junction by 6.35 p.m., having passed the Menteri Besar's residence at 6.30 p.m. and noting no acts of violence there at that time. Another Troop arrived at the Menteri Besar's residence at 6.50 p.m.

by which time three persons were already dead along Jalan Raja Muda. One Troop was deployed at Jalan Bukit Bintang, and two Troops were in readiness at the nearby Police Depôt. The personnel of each Troop was made up of forty percent Chinese and sixty percent non-Chinese officers.

Six mobile Police vehicles were deployed: the first at Leboh Raya Foch, the second at Bulatan Raja Muda, the third in Kampong Bharu, the fourth in Kampong Pandan, the fifth in Pudu and the sixth in the Jalan Pekeliling/Jalan Pahang area. In addition, ten units of Police Light Strike Forces in vehicles were deployed: three in the Jalan Bandar area, two in the Pudu/Cheras area, two in the Jalan Campbell area, one in the Jalan Pekeliling area and two in the Brickfields area. It was assessed that with these forces stringed out in these areas from 7.00 p.m., no mischief-makers would dare attack the procession or attack from the procession. **The tragedy was that the first incident occurred both outside the expected areas and long before the expected time.**

The Police decision not to cancel the licence issued for the proposed UMNO victory procession was not easily made. It was based on three principal considerations. The DAP and the Gerakan had both held their licensed as well as unlicensed processions from 11th to 12th May, 1969, extending into the early hours of May 13. Secondly, Malay feelings in the Capital, as a result of two days of racial insults were running high,

and to cancel the licence at that stage would inevitably precipitate to racial trouble. Finally, it was assessed that the best guarantee against an outbreak of trouble was in a properly controlled procession.

Once violence broke out, Police action was prompt. Every available man was mustered, detailed and deployed, including the Federal Police Headquarters and Federal Dépôt staff. Recruits under training relieved experienced Dépôt guards who in turn were deployed on the ground. Even members of the Royal Malaysia Police Band were re-equipped for a Public Order role and rushed to the scenes of disturbances. However, due to the fact that incidents were scattered in various parts of Kuala Lumpur, the Police were fully stretched particularly before the deployment of the Army in sensitive areas at 10.00 p.m., and the arrival of Police reinforcements from Ipoh in the early hours of 14th May. A large portion of available Police resources was committed to rescue work, the escort of stranded persons in sensitive areas and the guarding of vital installations against sabotage. A thousand and one errands of mercy were run, hampering to some extent the efforts to deal with the actual outbreak of lawlessness.

Police movements to deal with the rioters and protect the population were not made easier by the erection of strong road barriers by some Chinese in various parts of the City, affected and unaffected alike, as well as by the initially hostile attitude adopted towards the Police by

some Chinese crowds—an attitude nurtured by irresponsible non-Malay Opposition politicians during the long election campaign.

Based on Police assessment, Headquarters of the Kuala Lumpur Military Garrison (which is responsible for the security of the Capital) was alerted from 3.30 p.m. The Battalion Commander first came to know of the disturbances, and of the "Security Red" situation in Kuala Lumpur at 6.47 p.m. Curfew was declared at 8.00 p.m. Due to the gravity of the situation, the Military had to be called in to assist. Permission for troops to be engaged was personally given by the Hon'ble the Deputy Prime Minister.

When the Army was first called in, it deployed a company of the Royal Malay Regiment for stationary duty to man three Road Control Points. They were not involved in a mobile law enforcement role. Subsequently, another company was brought in. On its way this company had to relieve the Salak South Police Station from a large force of armed Chinese who attempted to overrun it. After relieving the Station from siege, and on the arrival of Police reinforcements a sub-unit of this company was directed to Pudu Lane to rescue a Police Light Strike Force which was under attack by a large force of Chinese. The Chinese mob refused to disperse and gun fire had to be directed against them before they finally dispersed.

In the meantime, the areas of Kampong Bharu and Jalan Chow Kit were getting out of control and the

Army was called in to assist the Police to restore law and order. The first time that a company was sent into the area was at about 10.00 p.m. The company immediately manned the Road Control Points at the junction of Jalan Hale and Jalan Raja Muda and the Bulatan Jalan Raja Muda. When they arrived in the area the shop-houses and overturned vehicles were already burning. Dead and wounded were scattered about.

A section from the company was detailed to investigate the Jalan Perkins area where it was reported that a clash between groups of Chinese and Malays was imminent. When the section arrived there, they managed to persuade the Malay crowd to remain in their Kampong but the Chinese group became even more aggressive. A Chinese was seen shooting away with a shotgun. The section had no alternative but to open fire. This was done after they had given repeated warnings for the crowd to disperse. In this particular incident, the Military inflicted the largest number of casualties, 11 killed, in the whole period of the trouble. The incident took place at about 12.15 a.m. on the morning of 14th May.

There were other occasions during the next few days when the Military had to open fire and inflict casualties but this was against snipers and trouble-makers who broke the curfew, and the numbers involved were one or two at a time. In all cases, the casualties were taken to the hospital and the matter reported to the Police.

The total number of casualties known to have been inflicted by the Army was 41 including both killed and wounded.

#### JOINT OPERATIONS

The situation in the Capital had by then become increasingly uncontrollable and in order to deal with the situation effectively, it was decided to divide the City into two zones with the Military taking over the responsibility of the area East of the Gombak River which included such areas as Kampong Bharu, Chow Kit and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. More Police and Military reinforcements were brought in from outside into Kuala Lumpur. Apart from separating rioters and enforcing the curfew, the security forces had also to cope with sniper fire. On several occasions Military patrols were shot at by groups of Chinese armed with shot guns and pistols. Outside Kampong Dato Keramat, for example, a Military patrol was shot at by a group of Chinese; the patrol returned the fire, killing one. The rest fled.



## SEVENTEEN

### JOINT OPERATIONS

The Military together with the Police carried out a total of thirty-three joint operations to flush out secret society members, thugs, gangsters and other undesirable elements from their haunts. As a result of these joint raids over 2,000 arrests were made by the Police. On three occasions during the joint raids the Military had to open fire to stop trouble-makers from breaking the cordon.

During this period, over 300 Chinese families from the sensitive areas of Dato Keramat and Jalan Raja Muda were assisted by the Military to move to refugee centres at the Merdeka Stadium and the Tiong Nam Settlement.

When the curfew was imposed, everyone was ordered off the streets and had to remain indoors. This order was imposed in all areas except Kampong Bharu, the reason being that the area was swamped with several thousands from out-of-town who had come to participate in the proposed procession and those who sought shelter from the surrounding areas. The majority of them could not be physically accommodated in Kampong Bharu houses and mosque. The only possible solution was to cordon off Kampong Bharu and to treat it as one large curfew area.

Whenever vehicles were available, Police and Military trucks ferried non-residents in batches back to their villages. This has been erroneously interpreted as Police and Military collusion with Malay rioters.

Besides actually helping the Police in the restoration of law and order, the Armed Forces were called upon to do various other jobs in assisting the civil administration to maintain essential services. For example, the specialist teams of the Malaysian Engineers of the Territorial Army were mobilised to assist the civil authorities in the operation of continuous water and electricity supply in the Capital. At Port Swettenham, work came to a standstill but resumed with the help of the Port Unit of the Malaysian Engineers and the Royal Malaysian Navy. The Railway Unit came to the assistance of the Malaysian Railways which almost stopped functioning during the first few days of the disturbances. The Royal Malaysian Air Force, apart from providing constant air surveillance over sensitive areas, transported Army and Police reinforcements from Kota Bharu and Ipoh to Kuala Lumpur respectively.

The Kuala Lumpur Municipality were assisted by the Malaysian Engineers in clearing the roads of the debris of burnt vehicles.

A section of the Armed Forces Field Ambulance Company was attached to the General Hospital, Kuala

Lumpur to attend to the riot casualties. The Military also gave shelter to 4,113 refugees of all races in the various Army camps.

The security forces were under strict orders to restore law and order impartially. This they did extremely well.

## EIGHTEEN

### COLOURED REPORTS AND THE FACTS

Although trouble turned out to be a communal clash between the Malays and the Chinese, the security forces which happened to compose mainly of Malays acted with great discipline and restraint. In their efforts to restore law and order speedily, and to prevent trouble from spreading, there might have been incidents where innocent members of the public were harshly treated. But under the circumstances they were unavoidable.

If members of the security forces had in fact been partial on purely racial grounds as alleged by some quarters, considering the dimension of the disturbances and the number of security forces deployed, which was in the order of 2,000 Military and 3,600 Police, total casualties amongst the race which was said to be the "target" would have been enormous.

There were also allegations of widespread looting by members of the security forces, and the Royal Malay Regiment has been specially singled out by racist propaganda. Investigations revealed that from May 13 to July 31, 1969, only 7 persons had lodged reports of looting by persons thought to be members of the security forces. These were isolated cases of

relatively minor nature, considering the magnitude of the disturbances and the number of security forces deployed. All such reports have been referred to the Criminal Investigation Department, Selangor.

There were also rumours and foreign press reports to the effect that victims of the riots were buried in secret and unmarked mass graves where they could never be identified. According to these reports, drunken soldiers and lepers were employed as grave diggers. The facts are as follows: the majority of bodies could not be handed over to their relatives for burial because of the lack of easy identification, the unhealthy and highly decomposed state they were in, the need for time-consuming autopsies, finger-printing, photographing, tagging and other means of identification, as well as the more important consideration of not allowing anything to further inflame an already ugly racial situation.

Police and hospital officials worked on the identification and recording of the bodies and buried them in such a way as to enable relatives and friends to either exhume the victims for reburial at some later stage or at least to know where they were buried. Towards this end the bodies were buried with identifying tags and identical markers above them. One hundred and two persons thought to be non-Muslims were identified and individually buried with identifications over the graves, in Sungai Buloh on 18th, 20th, 21st and 22nd May. There was no means of telling

their faiths. Eighteen persons who could be identified as Muslims, irrespective of racial origin, were buried in Gombak on 18th May. On 2nd June one more body was discovered and brought to Sungai Buloh for burial. Eight identifiable bodies of persons who originally came from non-sensitive areas were handed over to their relatives for burial.

The choice of burial grounds was made by the Ministry of Health based on the relative absence of incidents in these areas. Burial of both Muslims and non-Muslims was done largely by General Hospital attendants, the Sungai Buloh Leprosarium staff volunteers, Malay labourers from the nearby Sungai Buloh Oil Palm Estate and Municipal labourers. They were supervised either by Police Chief Inspector Phang Lian Tuck, or Police Chief Inspector Shamsuddin who brought the bodies from hospital mortuaries in Police trucks. At no time were soldiers involved, let alone drunken soldiers, as alleged. On one occasion, according to Mr Kok How Wah, a security steward at the Leprosarium in Sungai Buloh, three lecturers and eleven students from the University of Malaya, also assisted in the burial. Mr Kok How Wah was responsible for recruiting the labourers for all burials at Sungai Buloh.

There was speculation that at least two thousand died during the disturbances. This highly inflated figure is

probably due to the unfounded rumours then circulating, and also related to the number of enquiries of missing persons. In the case of missing persons, many were "multiple", in that there were more than one report lodged by relatives and friends for one missing person. (See Appendix for statistics relating to the disturbances).

## FOREIGN PRESS AND THE MAOISTS

The Communist Party of Malaya, never slow to exploit a situation, is drawing recruits and support from the discontented Chinese population who had suffered during the recent crisis. While the aged women and children are satisfied with welfare and relief measures undertaken by the Government and voluntary bodies to ameliorate their plight, the young are being courted by Communist cadres. The recent disturbances are explained to them in terms of Malay guns and Chinese victims.

Externally, they benefit from the inaccurate and unfavourable reporting of some foreign newspapers. Some foreign mass media sometimes unwittingly aid the Maoists in their long-term plans to disrupt the unity in the country.

Apart from unwittingly assisting the Maoists, some foreign mass media, the British and Americans being more noticeably so than others, did a great deal of harm to Malaysians of Chinese origin through slanted reporting. Reports which appeared in certain sections of the foreign press were based more on rumours than on hard facts. This was possibly due partly to the dearth of accurate information during the initial

days of the disturbances. But it cannot be denied that a few foreign correspondents quite enthusiastically accepted wild allegations by certain racial groups as factual. Apart from sensational reporting, even some captions to photographs were obviously erroneous. For example, a photograph showing members of the security forces and armed Malays near the mosque on Jalan Hale was interpreted as Military collusion with the rioters. The facts, revealed by careful investigation, are that the soldiers had successfully contained the Malays; the photographs were taken just before the men were disarmed and returned to their respective villages. Had they been manhandled or shot in the mosque, particularly when they had offered no resistance to the security forces, a nation-wide religious riot would have erupted, with very grave consequences.

Sections of the foreign press also conveyed the impression that the Chinese were a "persecuted minority". This only helped to contribute to the feeling of insecurity and desperation among the Chinese in Malaysia. In some way it had a great deal to do with the Sino-Malay incidents in Singapore which soon followed. Not only was the situation inaccurately represented in some reports, they also completely overlooked the degree of acceptance which the Chinese have won for themselves in this country among the Malays. Besides the adverse effects on the question of race relations

within the country the dishonest reporting could easily have brought about a misunderstanding between Malaysia and some foreign powers. This was averted only through intensive efforts in diplomacy with the cooperation and understanding of the Missions of these countries in Kuala Lumpur.

Part Three

THE TASKS AHEAD



## TWENTY THE BARRIERS

The National Operations Council was created to cope with the National Emergency and to return the country to normalcy. Basically, its functions are to:

- (a) restore law and order;
- (b) ensure the smooth administration of the country; and
- (c) restore harmony and mutual trust among the various races.

The first two tasks are very much in hand. The third, the restoration of mutual trust and harmony, is a long-term process. There can be no question of a return to Parliamentary democracy so long as racial harmony does not exist among the communities. So long as communal sensitivities are tender they can, through irresponsible political propaganda, be easily exploited to precipitate another, indeed more serious, racial clash.

In the sensitive situation obtaining today, the groups than can foment racial unrest are Maoist agents, secret societies and communal extremist elements. At the moment, the Maoist agents have gone underground, but they are currently busy recruiting fresh supporters and are still planning to stage more showdowns as

part of their "softening-up" process in their final bid for power. They pose, therefore, a constant barrier to the return of Parliamentary rule.

The secret societies, too, continue to pose a threat. In the past they existed as part of the social structure in some Chinese communities, exercising control and exacting extortion money. During the recent disturbances, some secret society thugs posed as protectors of certain Chinese areas. Consequently they gained a certain amount of respectability in these communities. The secret societies are known to be exploiting the present situation for their own profit, either through intimidation (such as extortion rackets, boycott of Malay goods, etc.) or through clever use of persuasion and rumour-mongering.

The third group which constitutes a barrier to a return to normalcy are the communal extremists. They are to be found in all the major communities, and though they are in the minority they are vociferous and active. They possess a capacity to disrupt far beyond their numbers, posing a constant threat to the racial harmony of the country where no single community is in the majority. Their activities cannot but weaken the nation, and in the process lend themselves to Maoist exploitation.

The nation has moved into an uncertain period, the length of which cannot be determined immediately. It is, however, moving in the right direction in that

the National Operations Council—by the very nature of its appointment above politics—has given the country confidence and a sense of stability. It takes time before this confidence and stability can be transformed into mutual trust and harmony. In his effort to restore racial harmony and to ensure that it would be enduring as a basis for Parliamentary democracy, the Director of Operations would need to consider a series of norms against which political ideas and activities could be measured so that racial harmony could at no time be placed in jeopardy. A number of principles will have to be formulated with the ultimate purpose of sustaining a harmonious Malaysia.



## TWENTY-ONE

### THE CHOICES

The nation cannot afford another May 13. The entire future of this country rests on the success or otherwise of the Director of Operations in fulfilling his functions.

May 13, 1969, will go down in the history of this country with bleak associations. That date symbolises one sombre fact: an understanding of the country's political and constitutional history, and an appreciation of racial sensitivities, are vital, if another, possibly worse, racial clash is to be avoided in this country. To disregard these political realities would mean endangering the very viability of this country as a nation.

Democracy is practised in many countries in the world today. But each country must assess its own political and social environment realistically and evolve its own Constitution, rules, conventions and practices. Malaysia possesses her own distinct characteristics based on her history and present racial composition. She must now find a solution to her problems—a solution that will provide a guarantee that in future racial sensitivities will never again be provoked by the operation of normal democratic processes, e.g., election campaigns.

There are three alternatives facing the country:

- (i) remain passive and allow racial animosity to deteriorate and finally destroy the nation;
- (ii) return to the pre-1948 Constitutional position; or
- (iii) formulate a solution to work out a positive formula whereby the aspirations of the people can best be achieved with racial harmony and goodwill.

The first alternative, to remain passive, is to be irresponsible.

The second alternative, to return to the pre-1948 position, would be a retrogressive step.

Therefore, the most logical alternative is to pursue the course in (iii) above.

## TWENTY-TWO

### CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Constitution of a nation performs three functions, namely, it expresses the consent by which the people actually establish the nation itself; it sets up a definite form of government; and it grants and at the same time limits the power which that government possesses. Although a Constitution is a fundamental law of a country, there are some provisions in the Constitution which are more basic than others and, therefore, are "entrenched" in it. As regards the Malaysian Constitution, however, the "entrenched provisions" include:

- (i) *the whole of Part III* which are provisions relating to citizenship; and even after the Proclamation of Emergency it is provided in Article 150 (6A) that provisions in this Part shall not be suspended or modified;
- (ii) *Article 71* which provides for Federal guarantee of the Constitution of each State and the rights and prerogatives of the Malay Rulers;
- (iii) *Article 152* which provides for the Malay language to be the National Language and ultimately to be the sole official language;
- (iv) *Article 153* which provides for the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and

legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of that Article;

- (v) *Article 159* which provides *inter alia* that any amendment to the provisions relating to the Malay Rulers (Articles 38, 70 and 71) and the special position of the Malays (Article 153) shall not be passed without the consent of the Conference of Rulers.

To appreciate the political importance of the entrenched provisions of the Constitution one has to go back to the history and origin of the Constitution.

After the Malays rejected the MacMichael Plan, a Working Committee was appointed in 1946 by agreement between the Governor of the Malayan Union on the one hand and Their Highnesses the Malay Rulers and Representatives of UMNO on the other. It was made known too, and understood by the Working Committee, that the question of citizenship was to be studied on the clear understanding that the Secretary of State "has accepted the principle that the special position of the Malays shall be safeguarded". The Committee was also reminded that "the Malays have no alternative homeland whilst the remainder of the population, with few exceptions, retain in varying degrees a connection with their country of origin and in many cases regard that country and not Malaya as the primary object of their loyalty".

However, a second Committee was formed in 1946 to look into the draft proposals of the first Working Committee and also to see to it that "all the interested communities in Malaya had full and free opportunity of expressing their views". This Committee held several public meetings and received 81 memoranda in all from the various communities in the country. It is important to note that the majority of the non-Malays, as expressed in their respective memoranda, did not question the special position of the Malays or the sovereignty of the Malay Rulers.

The 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement for the first time made provision for the acquisition of citizenship by non-Malays in the Malay States. This provision was further widened by an amending ordinance passed in 1952. The next important landmark in the history of citizenship in this country was the Merdeka Constitution. A commission was appointed for this purpose with Lord Reid as Chairman. In all, there were 118 meetings of the Commission in Malaya, in addition to the consideration of representations in a less formal manner. Many of the recommendations of this Commission were embodied in the Merdeka Constitution. A further gap was opened by the introduction of Article 14 (1) (d) which conferred citizenship by operation of law to "every person born within the Federation on or after Merdeka Day". On Malaysia Day this provision was amended to read "every person born within the Federation on or after Merdeka Day and

before October 1962." These were agreed to by the Malays in return for a reaffirmation of the special position of the Malays and the specific obligation of the Government to safeguard that provision while at the same time protecting the legitimate interests of the other races.

The entrenched provisions in the Constitution are the result of agreement between all the communities in this country. They are the product of consultation and compromise. They represent binding arrangements between the various races in this country, and are the underpinnings on which the constitutional structure such as fundamental liberties, the machinery of government and a score of other detailed provisions are built. If these entrenched provisions are in any way eroded or weakened, the entire constitutional structure is endangered, and with it, the existence of the nation itself. It was the failure to understand, and the irresponsible and cavalier treatment of these entrenched provisions, that constituted one of the primary causes of the disturbances on May 13, 1969. Those who believe in the democratic tradition tend to think in terms of fundamental political liberties, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. This belief, however, has never accepted the theory that any person can advocate treason or sedition or what comes to the same thing, the abolition or advocating the overthrow of constitutional government by force, fraud or subversion.

It is considered that this country's racial problems can be met in the following ways. Citizens of this country, especially those who became citizens by virtue of the provisions that started with the Federation of Malaya Agreement, 1948, leading to the Merdeka Constitution, 1957 should understand the significance of the entrenched provisions of the Constitution. Malaysians, despite their ethnic origins, should appreciate the potential and distinctiveness of their country. The guidelines will be provided by the newly-formed Department of National Unity, and the National Operations Council.

Secondly, it will be necessary for the Government to enact laws which will *inter alia* make it an offence for any person to utter, print or publish words or statements or do any act which questions any matter, right, status, position, privilege, sovereignty or prerogative established or protected in the entrenched provisions of the Federal Constitution, or which has a tendency to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between the different races.

It may be necessary to consider amending the Federal Constitution itself for the purposes of accommodating the new laws as well as for protecting the provisions of Article 152 (relating to the National Language and the languages of other communities) so that this Article will be placed with equal importance with such provisions as Articles 38 (relating to the Conference of Rulers and

its functions), 71 (relating to Federal guarantees of State Constitutions) and 153 (relating to position of the Malays and the legitimate interests of the other communities) all of which provisions cannot by virtue of Article 153 (5) of the Federal Constitution be amended or repealed without the consent of the Conference of Rulers. It will also be necessary to protect in the same manner any law providing sanctions in respect of any act or utterance which questions matters contained in the entrenched provisions of the Constitution.

Finally, it may be necessary to consider amending the Federal Constitution to protect Article 159 (5) by providing in the Constitution itself that this clause shall not be amended or repealed without the consent of the Conference of Rulers. The passing of these laws will provide the basis for an assurance that racial feelings will not again be exploited by the operation of normal democratic processes. These measures are tenable in law and are not inconsistent with democracy.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969

1. Deaths, by Race (in brackets killed by gunshots) as at 30th June, 1969

	<i>Malays</i>	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kedah/Perlis .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Penang .. .. .	—	—	1	—	1
Perak .. .. .	1(1)	1(1)	9(1)	—	11(3)
Selangor .. .. .	22(8)	12(5)	123(34)	15*(1)	172(48)
Negeri Sembilan .. .. .	—	—	4	—	4
Malacca .. .. .	1(1)	—	6	—	7(1)
Johore .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Kelantan .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Trengganu .. .. .	1	—	—	—	1
Pahang .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL ..</b>	<b>25(10)</b>	<b>13(6)</b>	<b>143(35)</b>	<b>15(1)</b>	<b>196(52)</b>

\* Highly decomposed bodies found in Klang River and Mining Pools.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

2. Injured by Firearms, by Race, as at 30th June, 1969

	<i>Malays</i>	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kedah/Perlis .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Penang .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Perak .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Selangor .. .. .	37*	17	125	1	180
Negeri Sembilan .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Malacca .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Johore .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Kelantan .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Trengganu .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Pahang .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL ..</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>180</b>

\* Includes 3 police constables.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

3. Injured by Other Weapons, by Race, as at 30th June, 1969

	Malays	Indians	Chinese	Others	Total
Kedah/Perlis .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Penang .. .. .	1	—	1	—	2
Perak .. .. .	2	—	5	—	7
Selangor .. .. .	82	9	129	15*	235
Negeri Sembilan .. .. .	—	—	4	—	4
Malacca .. .. .	5	—	5	—	10
Johore .. .. .	—	—	1	—	1
Kelantan .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Trengganu .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
Pahang .. .. .	—	—	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL .. .. .</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>259</b>

\* Includes Eurasians, Pakistanis and Singaporeans.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

4. Figures Relating to Arrests and Those Charged in Court, by Race, as at 31st July, 1969

	ARRESTED				Total
	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others	
Kedah/Perlis .. .. .	100	70	30	9	209
Penang .. .. .	166	401	340	11	918
Perak .. .. .	328	1,557	569	11	2,465
Selangor .. .. .	1,008	2,144	797	31	3,980
Negeri Sembilan .. .. .	59	175	64	—	298
Malacca .. .. .	156	325	26	3	510
Johore .. .. .	112	373	27	1	513
Kelantan .. .. .	87	7	1	—	95
Trengganu .. .. .	29	2	—	—	31
Pahang .. .. .	32	72	20	—	124
<b>TOTAL .. .. .</b>	<b>2,077</b>	<b>5,126</b>	<b>1,874</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>9,143</b>

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

4. Figures Relating to Arrests and Those Charged in Court, by Race, as at 31st July, 1969—(cont.)

	CHARGED IN COURT				
	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others	Total
Kedah/Perlis ..	23(8)	12(1)	16(12)	3	54
Penang .. ..	119(107)	273(247)	286(284)	9(9)	687
Perak .. ..	230(214)	1,211(1,196)	438(438)	11(11)	1,890
Selangor .. ..	549(382)	1,166(904)	657(578)	27(7)	2,399
Negeri Sembilan ..	59(17)	33(32)	30(29)	—	122
Malacca .. ..	55(23)	85(37)	21(15)	1(1)	162
Johore .. ..	26	98	2	—	126
Kelantan .. ..	42	4	—	—	46
Trengganu .. ..	17	1	—	—	18
Pahang .. ..	13	24	20	—	57
<b>TOTAL ..</b>	<b>1,133(751)</b>	<b>2,907(2,417)</b>	<b>1,470(1,356)</b>	<b>51(28)</b>	<b>5,561(4,552)</b>

NOTE:

- (i) Others include Eurasians, Europeans, Pakistanis, Thais and Singaporeans.
- (ii) Figures in brackets indicate those charged for breaking curfew orders and are included in the unbracketed figures.
- (iii) As at 31st July, 1969, 382 Malays, 490 Chinese, 114 Indians and 23 Others were already charged with offences other than breaches of curfew orders. As the police complete more and more investigations, some or all of these figures will increase.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

5. Figures Relating to Those Awaiting Trial for Murder and Arson, by Race, as at 31st July, 1969

	MURDER			ARSON		
	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Malays	Chinese	Indians
Penang .. ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
Perak .. ..	1	—	—	—	—	—
Selangor .. ..	—	2	—	2	—	—
Negeri Sembilan ..	14	—	—	—	—	—
Malacca .. ..	2	2	—	6	1	—
<b>TOTAL ..</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>—</b>

	MURDER AND ARSON			TOTAL			Grand Total
	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Malays	Chinese	Indians	
Penang .. ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Perak .. ..	5	—	—	6	—	—	6
Selangor .. ..	10	—	—	12	2	—	14
Negeri Sembilan ..	—	—	—	14	—	—	14
Malacca .. ..	—	—	—	8	3	—	11
<b>TOTAL ..</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>45</b>

NOTE:

There is a distinct possibility that any or all of these figures may increase with the completion of more CID investigations after 31st July, 1969.

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

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6. Arms Captured as at 30th June, 1969 (Exclusive of Those Surrendered in Kepong and Jinjang) by Race

	Chinese	Weapons Seized	Indians	Weapons Seized	Malays	Weapons Seized
Penang ..	2	2 home made rifles	1	1 sabit	1	1 knife
Pahang ..	7	4 spears	—	—	—	—
		2 iron pipes				
		2 long wooden sticks				
Negeri Sembilan	40	10 iron pipes	1	Ordinary pen-knife	1	1 long knife
		5 samurai swords				
		12 iron rods				
		29 assorted weapons				
Perak .. ..	16	1.32 Browning Pistol	1	knife	15	2 sticks of gelignite
		6 parangs				8 detonators and fuse
		3 spears				10 sharpened bamboo spears
		7 a/weapons				7 parangs
						1 kris
Selangor ..	258	17 axes	74	24 axes	178	10 axes
		12 spears		47 spears		34 spears
		124 pipes		117 pipes		52 pipes
		22 parangs		47 parangs		61 parangs
		15 Electric bulb Acid bombs		49 poles		48 poles
		12 bottles bombs		20 a/weapons		1 shotgun
		7 swords				1 pistol
		56 a/weapons				44 round shotgun ammo
						47 a/weapons

STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

7. Total Weapons Voluntarily Surrendered, by Race, as at 31st July, 1969

	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Total
Selangor .. ..	10	72	10	92
Perak .. ..	6	6	3	15
TOTAL ..	16	78	13	107

NOTE: The other States—NIL RETURN.

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STATISTICS RELATING TO THE EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY FROM 13TH MAY TO 31ST JULY, 1969—(cont.)

Following May 13, 1,019 persons were reported missing. Of these 46 were found in the Dead list, 25 in the Injured list, and 125 in the Detained list. The rest returned safely to their homes, except for the 39 persons as given below:

## 8. Still Missing, as at 31st July, 1969, by Race

	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Total
Penang .. .. .	—	3	2	5
Perak .. .. .	2	1	2	5
Selangor .. .. .	2	15	1	18
Negeri Sembilan .. .. .	—	2	1	3
Malacca .. .. .	—	1	1	2
Johore .. .. .	1	3	—	4
Trengganu .. .. .	2	—	—	2
Other States .. .. .	—	—	—	—
TOTAL .. .. .	7	25	7	39

NOTE: Figures obtained from Police Station Reports.

J.C.K., K.L.

