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THE KUALA LUMPUR RIOTS AND THE MALAYSIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM*

ANTHONY REID†

THE week beginning 10 May 1969 demonstrated in dramatic form both the remarkable success of Malaysia's Alliance Government, and its tragic failure. Its failure to preserve racial peace filled the world's headlines after the violence of 13 May. But it was partly because the promise of success held out by Malaysia had been so attractive that her Government drew so much unfavourable attention. By winning its fourth successive election on 10 May, in a ballot where graft and unfair pressure were minor and peripheral, the Alliance ensured its continuance in office by popular mandate until at least 1974. This is a record equalled only by India's Congress Party among post-colonial countries. That it should have been achieved in a society divided deeply and almost evenly on racial lines reinforced by economic, political, religious and linguistic cleavages, in the wake of serious Communist insurgency, says much for the ability of Malaysia's leaders to limit racial tension while delivering the economic goods.

The Problem of Political Succession

The basis of this success has been the pragmatic working relationship between the United Malays' National Organization (UMNO) and the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), with the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) playing a subordinate role. The Alliance structure in which communal constituent parties are united only at the top is based on hard experience that any party which attempts to be non-communal in policy and organization will ultimately court the suspicion of one, or even both, of the major communities that their interests are being forgotten.

Because UMNO has always had the strongest mass base among the three parties, the Alliance has been able to maintain a political formula of Malay leadership with a substantial measure of Chinese participation, especially in economic matters. This formula was necessary to win independence from the British. It has since become accepted by responsible political opinion over a wide spectrum as the only safe way for the country to be run in the near future. This raises in acute form, however, the problem of political succession.

* Though I have had the valuable advice of many friends and colleagues in compiling this paper, it is essentially a personal record, without access to official reports. Tengku Abdul Rahman's *May 13—Before and After* was published only after this paper was drafted, and the well-documented NOC report, *The May 13 Tragedy*, after it had gone to press. The NOC report gives a much more detailed description of the outbreak of the riots than was possible for the present writer.

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Although disenchantment with the Alliance has been increasing fairly steadily since independence, no opposition party has emerged as a credible successor in terms of the accepted communal formula. The responsibilities and attractions of power have been a constant incentive for Alliance leaders to resolve their communally-based differences by compromise. But for the opposition parties the pressures are all centrifugal. On the crucial communal issues of language, education, citizenship and Malay special rights the Alliance has produced compromise solutions, so that the easiest way for an opposition party to win votes is to attack the compromise from one or other wing. For the underprivileged, moreover, there appears to have been an increasing trend, for which some blame the Alliance,¹ for economic grievances to express themselves in communal terms. The Government has taken steps towards reserving licences for Malay firms, and otherwise encouraging Malay business or foreign businesses which employ Malays. Young Malays facing unemployment demand that the process be taken further to counteract the impossibility of Malays gaining responsible positions in Chinese-controlled firms. Young Chinese in the same position fear their future livelihood will be threatened by these measures which they call 'bumiputra-ism' (*bumiputra* having become the official term for the indigenous people), as well as by the long-standing quota system favouring Malays in the higher civil service. Thus even the socialist programme which formed the ideological base of the main opposition during the 1950s has tended to give way to an increased emphasis by political parties on communal economic issues.

In the interval between the general elections of 1964 and 1969, several changes in the line-up of political parties gave expression to this trend. The Socialist Front, which had tried to concentrate on economic and ideological issues by nominally mirroring the Alliance communal formula, fell apart over language and other issues at the end of 1965. The effectively dominant partner, the Chinese-led Labour Party, moved in a Maoist direction during 1968 and eventually decided to boycott the electoral process. Some of its English-educated moderates, led by Dr Tan Chee Khoon, left to form the *Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia* (GRM) in March 1968. This party also absorbed the Penang-centred and predominantly Chinese following of Dr Lim Chong Eu, who had been President of the MCA at the time of its major split before the 1959 election. The *Gerakan* did obeisance to the agreed formula by appointing an outspoken Malay intellectual as President, but there was even less doubt than in the case of the Socialist Front that it would have to win its votes from the predominantly non-Malay cities and organized labour. Its policy on education and language was tailored accordingly.

The Democratic Action Party (DAP), originating in what was left in

¹ The young Left-wing intellectuals of *Parti Ra'ayat* have been giving clearest expression to this view of late. See Kassim Ahmad's Press statement in *Utusan Melayu*, 2 and 3 June 1969; and his letter in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 August 1969.

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Malaysia of Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party after Singapore's separation in 1965, introduced a newer element into the Malaysian scene. Lee's 'Malaysian Malaysia' campaign of 1965, which had led to the separation, was the first effective challenge to the whole notion of giving protection and privilege to Malays as a race. It broke many of the restraints which an older generation of Chinese politicians had taken for granted in discussing communal issues. The DAP revived the 'Malaysian Malaysia' issue in its election campaign, and aroused similar strong feelings. It campaigned for multi-lingualism, whereby Chinese, Tamil and English should be given official status alongside Malay and encouraged as media of secondary and higher education. In particular it gave solid support to a privately-mooted scheme for a Chinese-medium University, which proved so popular that the MCA was forced to adopt an equivocal attitude at the last moment despite the long and firmly-held Alliance principles to the contrary. It attacked *bumiputra-ism* as favouring a special class of capitalist Malays. Thus for the first time the non-Malay electorate was faced with a well-organized national party appealing to it primarily in communal rather than economic terms.²

The Malay and rural component of the opposition has seen less change. Since pre-war times the major challenge to the Malay establishment of aristocracy and civil service has come from a radical-nationalist group sympathetic to the Indonesian national movement. In the 1950s two separate parties crystallized out of the various organizations this group had formed in the immediate post-war period. The *Parti Ra'ayat* espoused an increasingly ideological socialist policy, and failed to obtain any mass following in traditional rural areas. The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party espoused Islam as the obvious and proper basis for arousing a mass Malay movement against the establishment, and was also more opportunistic in utilizing Malay-communal issues to attack UMNO's compromises in the Alliance. Since 1967 the PMIP has made a considerable effort to counter the Alliance's caricature of it as a party of uneducated and obscurantist peasants by expanding its educated urban supporters. The language issue of that year which alienated many Malay literati from UMNO gave it the opportunity. But although the party was able to increase substantially its following in the semi-urban areas of the West Coast, the intellectuals which it hoped to recruit and which it badly needed generally preferred not to commit themselves openly to the party.

The Election

The election results showed, not surprisingly, a return to the anti-Government trend which had been only temporarily reversed by the 1964 election in the heat of Indonesian confrontation.

² The election manifestos of DAP and *Gerakan* are conveniently set out in *Opinion*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1969.

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Table I
Percentage of Popular Vote
(Parliamentary Seats won shown in brackets)

	1959	1964	1969
Alliance	51.8 (74)	58.5 (89)	49.6 (66)
PMIP	21.3 (13)	14.6 (9)	22.6 ⁴ (12)
Urban, predominantly non-Malay opposition ³	23.9 (16)	26.5 (5)	26.4 (25)

The above figures exaggerate the swing to the PMIP, which put up 61 candidates against 53 in 1964, and minimize that to the urban opposition, which put up only 43 candidates against 63 of the Socialist Front alone in 1964. In order to indicate more accurately the swing against the Alliance on the part of Malays and non-Malays respectively I took a sample of seven of the most intensely urban (and non-Malay) and seven of the most rural (and Malay) constituencies. This showed an almost exactly equal swing of $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent against the Alliance in non-Malay constituencies (from 33.7 per cent to 25.2 per cent) and in Malay ones (from 66.9 per cent to 58.2 per cent). Nevertheless the lion's share of parliamentary gains were made by non-Malay candidates at the expense of the MCA. In part this was because the urban seats have always been more marginal. The major factors, however, were the electoral pact between the predominantly non-Malay parties, and PMIP inroads in the West Coast States.

In past elections MCA candidates had the advantage of a divided opposition vote between the Socialist Front and one of the more communal parties. In 1969, without the Socialist Front, the other urban opposition parties were at last able to reach agreement to allocate the urban seats among themselves. Disagreements between the DAP, PPP, and *Gerakan* were therefore not aired during the campaign. Besides maximizing the gains for these parties, their electoral pact served to sharpen the dichotomy Alliance-Opposition, to the point where it sometimes took precedence over long-standing communal voting patterns. This was demonstrated, for example, by the apparent readiness of Chinese in Kedah to vote PMIP,⁵ and for PMIP supporters in Penang to vote *Gerakan*. The success of *Gerakan's* Mustapha Hussein in his Penang State and Parliamentary constituencies was largely due to PMIP support after the PMIP candidate was disqualified on a technicality. The Penang

³ In 1959 the SF (Socialist Front), PPP (People's Progressive Party), Malayan Party and Independents; in 1964 the SF, PPP, UDP (United Democratic Party), PAP (People's Action Party) and Independents; in 1969 the PPP, DAP, GRM (see above) and Independents. This calculation exaggerates the 1959 and especially 1964 figures because the *Parti Ra'ayat* vote is necessarily included in that of the SF. Independents were only important in 1959 (4.8%), when they were mainly MCA defectors.

⁴ This figure is that of Tan Siew Sin, in *Mingguan Malaysia*, 27 July 1969. But C. S. Gray, in *The May Tragedy in Malaysia*, Melbourne, 1969, quotes a figure of 24%. Official figures have not been released.

⁵ Tengku Abdul Rahman, *May 13—Before and After*, Kuala Lumpur, 1969, pp. 25-6.

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PMIP even advertised a post-election rally 'to celebrate *Gerakan's* victory' in that State.

The other factor was that the increased PMIP showing, both in terms of candidates put up and votes won, was disproportionately large in the West Coast States where the urban non-Malay parties had their strength.⁶ By splitting the Malay vote which would normally have gone to MCA candidates through their UMNO allies, the PMIP did more to advance the other opposition parties than itself. Thus the urban parties gained two Parliamentary seats from the MCA in Perak by majorities smaller than the PMIP vote, and 12 State seats in a similar way—5 from the MCA and 7 from UMNO.

Needless to say, analyses of this type were not available to the public immediately after the election. Even the Alliance constituent parties appear to have made no immediate attempt to calculate trends in the popular vote. What was apparent from the turnover of seats was a massive gain for the predominantly non-Malay opposition (from 5 to 25) mainly at the expense of the MCA (from 27 to 13). This provided ammunition for the many critics of the MCA, both in Chinese circles and in UMNO. Before the election there had been the usual internal wrangling in the MCA over the choice of candidates and policies, with the result that some prominent MCA figures in Negri Sembilan and Perak were already looking for an excuse to blame the party leadership for its failure at the polls. On the Monday after the results became known a prominent MCA leader in Perak gave a special press conference to demand that Tan Siew Sin resign the party leadership. He attributed MCA's losses to the leadership's disregard of Chinese demands on language and rights.⁷

Meanwhile in UMNO circles the election setback increased pressure for the resignation of Tengku Abdul Rahman and for a less compromising policy towards Chinese demands especially over language. Indicative of this pressure was a three-hour meeting of UMNO campaign directors on Monday 12 May, after which a spokesman told the press that the 'shocking defeat' of the MCA 'clearly shows that UMNO is in power, and one has to accept this fact'. The

⁶ Table II
PMIP vote in West Coast States
(Seats won shown in brackets)

		1959	1964	1969
Kedah	State	45,979 (nil)	61,294 (nil)	113,292 (8)
	Parliamentary	52,235 (nil)	61,861 (nil)	115,861 (3)
Other (Penang, Perak, Selangor, N. Sembilan, Johore)	State	104,203 (1)	74,343 (nil)	167,053 (1)
	Parliamentary	107,505 (nil)	61,428 (nil)	151,684 (nil)

⁷ *Straits Times*, 13 May 1969.

meeting, probably representative of the younger group of UMNO leaders outside the Cabinet, proposed its own list of recommendations for the new Cabinet. These included depriving the MCA of their two key portfolios of Finance, and Commerce and Industry, and leaving the MCA and MIC with only the portfolios of Defence (Tan Siew Sin) and Cooperatives (Sambanthan).⁸ For the crucial Education Ministry they nominated Sayed Nasir bin Ismail, the man identified most closely with the protest against the Government's National Language Bill in 1967. His nomination undoubtedly reflected the most widespread single discontent with government on the part of articulate Malays—that in practice the Malay language continued to take second place in secondary and higher education as well as the top rungs of the government, legal, and commercial worlds.

At mid-day the following day (Tuesday 13th), the Central Working Committee of the MCA met, and endorsed the leadership of Tan Siew Sin. On the other hand, they released the shattering statement:

The Chinese community have rejected the Malaysian Chinese Association as their representatives in the Government. . . . As politicians practising parliamentary democracy, the MCA must accept this to be the case. Thus there is no other course for the MCA than to withdraw from participation in government.

The MCA would continue to support the government, but its members would not join the Cabinet or any of the State Executive Councils.⁹

Whether there had been prior consultation with the other members of the Alliance was not revealed. However Tun Razak immediately saluted the courage and principle shown in the statement. He went on to say that the Alliance had explained to the Chinese during the election campaign that if they did not vote MCA there would be no Chinese representation in the Government. This had now come to pass, and 'we hope the Chinese community understand this situation'.¹⁰

In fact the MCA still had as many Parliamentary seats as any opposition party, and despite the pressure from segments of UMNO they knew that Tengku Abdul Rahman would allow both Tan Siew Sin and Khaw Kai Boh to retain seats in the Cabinet. The MIC, whose only two successful candidates (both ministers) scraped in by 146 and 485 votes respectively, chose not to follow the MCA decision. The reason behind the sharp reaction on the part of MCA appears to have been the overriding desire to 'teach the Chinese a lesson'. Many MCA leaders expressed strong feelings that the Chinese electorate had been very foolish to ignore all that the MCA had achieved for them, and that withdrawal was the only way to drive home to the Chinese the necessity of giving the MCA a strong voice in Cabinet. There appears to have been little long-term calculation of what effect a five-year spell of UMNO

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Straits Times*, 14 May 1969.

¹⁰ *Straits Times*, 14 May 1969.

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government might have on the political system as a whole.¹¹ Even more surprising was the haste of the MCA pronouncement in a post-election mood which was rapidly becoming more tense. Radio Malaysia was still broadcasting news of the MCA withdrawal at 8 p.m., when a curfew was clamped on the riot-torn city of Kuala Lumpur. Although not directly connected with the outbreak of violence, the statement greatly increased subsequent tension, not least by leading many Malays to believe that the MCA itself had joined in the 'betrayal' of Alliance policies and was aiming for Chinese power.¹²

Another potentially dangerous feature of the result was the increased tendency, especially in some State Assemblies, for the newly-elected members to divide into Malay Government and non-Malay Opposition.

Table III
Candidates by racial origin; 1969 Election

	Malay Candidates		Non-Malay Candidates	
	Total	Successful	Total	Successful
(a) <i>Parliamentary Seats</i>				
Alliance	67	51	36	15
PMIP	61	12	—	—
DAP	1	—	23	13
<i>Gerakan</i>	3	1	11	7
PPP	—	—	5	4
(b) <i>State Assembly Seats</i>				
Alliance	178	130	77	30
PMIP	177	40	—	—
DAP	8	1	51	31
<i>Gerakan</i>	9	2	28	24
PPP	2	1*	14	11

* Defected to the Alliance, 7 July 1969.

The only State Government to change hands was Penang, where the Alliance was left with only four of the 24 State seats against the *Gerakan's* 16. But this shift had centred on Penang's declining economy. Moreover Penang had already been selected in an intra-Alliance bargain in 1957 as the one State which would have a Chinese, rather than a Malay, Chief Minister. Although the *Gerakan* undoubtedly had less Malay support than the Alliance had had previously in Penang, the change of Government could not be seen as any major disruption of the balance of power between the communities. Despite the tension in Penang which had followed the Chinese-Malay riots of November 1967 and the murder of an UMNO leader there on 24 April, Dr Lim Chong Eu was able to take office on 13 May in an atmosphere of

¹¹ Interview with Kam Woon Wah, June 1969.

¹² Tan Siew Sin was obliged to deny over Radio Malaysia on 15 May that the MCA had left the Alliance.

reassuring calm. His six-man Executive Council included both the *Gerakan's* Malay Assemblymen.

It was otherwise in Perak and Selangor, where the polarization of elected Assemblymen took the most extreme form. Selangor elected 12 Malay and two non-Malay Alliance Assemblymen against 14 non-Malay opposition members (DAP 9; *Gerakan* 4; Independent 1). In Perak the 19 elected Alliance Assemblymen included only one non-Malay, while the 20 elected from the PPP, DAP, and *Gerakan* included only one Malay, who defected to the Alliance after the outbreak of racial disturbances. Both the PPP in Perak and the DAP in Selangor announced their intention of forming governments in coalition with the other opposition parties. The obstacles to their doing so were obviously grave. In Selangor, particularly, the divided opposition had no Malay to put forward as Mentri Besar (Chief Minister). Not only political convention but also the State Constitutions of Perak and Selangor ruled that the Mentri Besar must be 'of the Malay race and profess the Muslim religion'. Although the proportion of Malays in Selangor (29.6 per cent) is comparable to that in Penang (28.8 per cent), its political background is very different as one of the Malay Sultanates in which Malays traditionally monopolized political power. These obstacles made the *Gerakan* pause. After some hesitation a meeting of its Council decided, just as Kuala Lumpur was erupting into violence on the evening of Tuesday 13 May, that the party would not join any coalition government in either Selangor or Perak. The decision was undoubtedly a wise one, even though it was bitterly condemned as 'treachery' by the other parties. It enabled the *Gerakan* to try to build up its image as a genuinely multi-racial party on the basis of its Penang performance, without being dragged into anti-Malay positions in the other two states. The pity was that the decision was not made earlier. In the meantime the DAP leader Goh Hock Guan had been pressing hard towards forming a State Government, and indicated his intention to test the legal implications of the constitutional provision for a Malay Mentri Besar.¹³

The Riots

At a lower level the exuberance of both *Gerakan* and DAP supporters in Kuala Lumpur at the unexpected result was difficult to restrain. Unofficial 'victory rallies' were held on a small scale all Sunday. On the afternoon of Monday 12th, thousands of DAP and *Gerakan* supporters were in the streets to celebrate their victories. Some of the constituency workers staged relatively disciplined marches in accordance with police requirements. Others got out of hand, notably an unauthorized midnight demonstration by the largely Tamil supporters of V. David. During the afternoon and evening there were several reports of small groups of celebrators breaking off on their own to enter some Malay areas where they can hardly have expected to be well received. In

¹³ *Straits Times*, 13 May 1969.

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Kampong Dato' Kramat some are reported to have trailed through shouting rudely that it would now be the turn of the Malays to lick their boots, and telling Malays to *balek kampong* (return to the village)—a phrase sometimes uttered lightly by non-Malays but evoking the darkest Malay fears of being turned into 'aborigines' in their own country.¹⁴ The compound of the Selangor Mentri Besar, Dato Harun, was also visited by a group of demonstrators who shouted that it was time he made room for the DAP's man.¹⁵

The Malay over-reaction to all this must be seen in the context of the election campaign which preceded it. In heavily Chinese areas like Kuala Lumpur, the appeal of the PMIP to Malay voters was mainly on the grounds that UMNO had sacrificed the Malay-ness of the country for a multi-racial concept in which the Malays in practice got the poorest deal. The cities seemed to prove the point. Malays felt alien in streets full of Chinese sign-boards, faced with educational opportunities mainly in English, and employment opportunities severely limited by Chinese control of business. The counter argument of UMNO was that racial cooperation was the *sine qua non* of progress, that Chinese and Indians had therefore to be admitted to Government, but that the UMNO was well in control and was serving Malay interests better than they had ever been served. Although the UMNO succeeded as before in harvesting the bulk of urban and semi-urban Malay votes, the ground of debate was very fresh in the public mind. The big losses of the MCA to the urban opposition were therefore seen by many Malays as evidence that the Chinese had 'betrayed' the Alliance formula by voting for an opposition that had revived fundamental questions of language and Malay rights,¹⁶ and that UMNO was by no means in control of the situation.

For Malays in Kuala Lumpur this impression was heightened by the essentially unrelated Labour Party demonstration on the day before the elections. This was the funeral of Lim Sun Seng, a Labour Party activist shot by police on 4 May while painting anti-election slogans. The demonstration was an impressively solemn and disciplined one, but observers were startled by the apparent impunity with which Maoist slogans, banners and pictures were displayed. Grass-roots Malay opinion associated this audacity with the election itself and the subsequent over-exuberant demonstrations. 'If the Chinese can so flaunt their Chinese-ness in the nation's capital now,' they

¹⁴ A vivid literary example of these fears is Shahnun Ahmad's novel *Menteri* (1967), partly translated and discussed by C. Skinner in *The May Tragedy in Malaysia*, Melbourne, 1969, pp. 33-7.

¹⁵ Some other examples of this type of insulting over-exuberance are quoted from police reports in *May 13—Before and After*, pp. 78-82.

¹⁶ One of many indications of this thinking was one of the written questions the leading Malay newspaper asked Tan Siew Sin in an interview, 'Do you agree that the May 13 disturbances began because the Malays felt that the Chinese no longer respected their promises regarding language and Malay rights made at the time of independence?' (referring to the pre-Independence bargaining between UMNO and MCA), *Mingguan Malaysia*, 27 July 1969.

argued, 'what will happen to us if they do ever take over the State Government as they threaten.' Paradoxically perhaps, it was in UMNO circles that this feeling of desperation was strongest, because the election and the demonstrations appeared to be proving the PMIP case right.

Some of the other factors operating on the Malays are more general and permanent features of the violence which has suddenly arisen and subsided on various occasions in the Malay world during the past three decades. The geniality of the Malay cloaks a genuine sensitivity to anything which makes him *malu* (ashamed). In the traditional Malay court history there is a sort of social contract between ruler and people, whereby the people exact the promise that although the ruler may kill them, he shall never humiliate them.¹⁷ This sensitivity is heightened by the strains of urban life which tend to place Malays on the defensive, oppressed culturally as well as economically by the Chinese domination of the cities. Far from assimilating into the cities, the vast majority of urban Malays live in one of the many Malay enclaves which recapture many features of rural life. The oldest and wealthiest of these, Kampong Bahru, was in fact a model village created by the British in 1899 to enable Malays to work in Kuala Lumpur's offices without abandoning their essentially rural home environment.¹⁸ It is now the heart of Malay life in the city, but many other *kampongs* of poorer Malays more recently attracted to the city and often 'squatting' on illegally-occupied land, have arisen since the war. Here again Kuala Lumpur resembles most of the other urban centres of Western Malaya. It is significant that all the major racial clashes of recent years in Malaya have been in predominantly Chinese urban areas where the pockets of Malay settlement have felt undue cultural and economic pressure—Singapore (1964), Penang (1957 and 1967), Bukit Mertajam, Pangkor (1958).

On the evening of Monday 12 May, following the opposition demonstrations, a group of about 300 angry young Malay activists gathered at Dato Harun's official residence to demand some immediate counter-demonstration. They came largely from Kampong Dato Kramat,¹⁹ and from Kampong Bahru and several other areas. In terms of UMNO politics they certainly represented the more militant opinion opposed to Tengku Abdul Rahman's leadership and a compromising policy on communal questions, but they claimed to represent grass-roots Malay opinion rather than the local UMNO hierarchy. Dato Harun dissuaded them from holding an immediate demonstration, and attempted to

¹⁷ C. C. Brown (ed.), 'The Malay Annals', *JMBRAS* 25, Pts 2 and 3, 1953, pp. 26-7. The significance of the various stories of Chinese throwing pork in the faces of Malays during the Monday demonstrations is as a typical indication of the way in which Malay sensitivities are exploited in a crisis situation.

¹⁸ W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, New Haven, 1967, p. 193n.

¹⁹ Significantly, the most outspoken criticism of the UMNO leadership's middle course over the language bill in 1967 had come from the Dato Kramat UMNO branch; Margaret Roff, 'The Politics of Language in Malaya', *Asian Survey* VII, No. 5, 1967, p. 327.

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reassure them that there was no danger that Selangor would fall into DAP hands since he was about to announce the formation of a new State Government. The enthusiasts insisted that the insult could not go unanswered, and it was eventually agreed that a mass Malay march would be held the following evening at 7.30 p.m. after obtaining the proper police permission. There would be an initial meeting at the Mentri Besar's house at 7 p.m. which Harun promised to address on the subject of his plans for the new State Government. Dato Harun himself was anxious to stress that the procession should be one of victory rather than tragedy.²⁰

Police permission was duly obtained and the word was quickly spread the following day. Apparently with no more official sanction than that of the Mentri Besar's political secretary, some of the UMNO organization was mobilized, and some transport was provided to the rally in MARA College buses and the like. But at the grass-roots level the demonstration was clearly being advertised as something more than a post-election parade, and the supporters were solicited on the grounds that the future of the Malay race was at stake. Many of those who marched to join the rally from outlying areas wore the white headband of mourning around their songkoks, a symbol which was also used in 1946 when the Malays were mobilized to fight British plans to remove the sovereignty of the Malay Sultans. Violence was clearly thought to be a distinct possibility by many of those invited to join the rally, and shops and offices around the city began to close early at about 4 p.m.

The 7 p.m. rally never started. Before then, as a large body of several hundred Malays marched in from Gombak towards the Mentri Besar's house, hostilities were exchanged between them and the anxious Chinese in Setapak. Word of this spread to the thousands already gathered in the Mentri Besar's compound, and by 6.30 p.m. some of them had already killed two passing Chinese on motor scooters. Within minutes violence began to be reported from various other parts of the city, especially in the form of attacking passing Chinese in cars and scooters. The massed group outside the Mentri Besar's house was beyond the power of anyone to control verbally once the killing started, and within a half hour or so it began to move off towards the Chinese Batu Road area, killing and burning as it went.

The pattern of violence contained many traditional elements familiar to students of the Malaysia-Indonesia region. Among urban Malays in recent years (as among Chinese Tae Kwon Do enthusiasts) there has been a revival of interest in the traditional Malay art of self-defence, known as *silat*. The rituals involved are almost as important as the physical disciplines, and often entail the repeated recitation of certain phrases, selected from the Koran or

²⁰ Interview with Dato Harun, 25 June 1969. The rally at Dato Harun's house appears to have been confused by some journalists and others with an unrelated 'tea-party' for a few hundred select guests which the Mentri Besar had arranged long beforehand for the afternoon, in order to celebrate the expected election victory.

elsewhere, intended to induce a state of purity and therefore of powers that border on the supernatural. The leaders, or *gurus*, of groups studying *silat* are often regarded as possessing superior magico-religious powers themselves. In normal times, the importance of such groups is minimal, but Indonesian as well as Malaysian experience indicates that in violent times of crisis when fears and credulities are exaggerated, such men often emerge to temporary leadership. There was a flood of stories of heroes invulnerable to attack, and in particular, of one female leader reported to have been able to fly into burning houses as well as remaining invulnerable to bullets and knives. There was suddenly an enormous demand for *djimats*, talismans or sacred phrases rendering the wearer invulnerable. After the violence began some experts in the art of invulnerability, from other states, settled in Kampong Bahru in order to minister to the needs of a frightened population.

One of the most perplexing problems, which has given rise to much unfortunate speculation about a 'plot' to cow the opposition, is the failure of the tough FRU (riot squad) units who were posted in the area to take sufficiently drastic action at the very beginning of the violence to prevent it spreading. In the absence of official statements one can only point out that most of the FRU's recent experience has been in handling Left-wing demonstrations, predominantly Chinese. To take the same type of action against a large group of Malays including some influential middle-ranking UMNO members would have taken considerable strength of mind. And that there were youthful UMNO leaders willing to sanction a limited display of violence to 'keep the Chinese in their place' can hardly be doubted. It was not uncommon even in normal times for educated Malays to make the point that the only ultimate weapon the ordinary Malay had against Chinese wealth was violence or the threat of violence, and that sooner or later this would have to be used if the position was not to be lost. In such violence, it was argued, the Chinese had everything to lose and the poor Malays nothing.

Once the FRU had lost the first trick, the violence quickly became uncontrollable, and engulfed most of the areas where Malay settlement borders on Chinese. Chinese gangs, usually led by secret society thugs who possessed a few guns, mobilized to chase out the attackers and then take vengeance on isolated Malays, and on the UMNO building in Batu Road (which defied several arson attempts).

By about 9.30 p.m. troops had moved in under the State of Emergency proclaimed by Tengku Abdul Rahman. Gradually they succeeded in clearing the streets of the Chinese districts. Expecting Chinese reprisals against Kampong Bahru, troops threw a defensive cordon around the area, and established a temporary base in the Sultan Suleiman Club in Kampong Bahru. Nothing was done to persuade the Malays to lay down their arms, however. The Malay settlement continued to behave as though it were an armed camp under siege from the surrounding Chinese, and the mosque loudspeaker

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continued throughout the night to exhort the faithful to give their all in the struggle.

The core of the Malaysian army is the eight battalions of the Royal Malay Regiment, and it was naturally units of this force which were moved in to Kuala Lumpur from nearby camps on the 13th. Unlike the police, the Malay Regiment was not trained to deal with civil disturbance, and the bulk of its experience had been fighting the overwhelmingly Chinese communist terrorists. The soldiers appear to have fraternized with the people of Kampong Bahru, to have accepted and sympathized with their view of the situation, and to have assumed all too easily that Malay violence was defensive and only Chinese gangs were the enemies of order. Thus although they were even excessively effective in terrorizing Chinese into staying indoors, they made little attempt to do the same for Malays during the first days of violence. In a few cases soldiers even tolerated or joined the looting and burning of shops. Thus violence and arson were able to continue on a considerable scale for three or four days after 13 May. Chinese residents of affected areas found that the presence of the military was not always a guarantee that they would not be victimized. About 15,000 people, mainly Chinese living in the areas bordering major Malay settlements, fled during Wednesday or Thursday to safer places. Gradually the police managed to persuade about 6,000 Chinese to move from the temples, halls and other refuges into which they had crammed to two of the city's large stadiums. The third was reserved for Malay refugees from Chinese areas, who numbered a few hundred.²¹

Responsible estimates of casualty figures vary from the Government's 193 dead up to six or seven hundred. In the mob violence of the first night the killing may have been about even between Malays and Chinese, for the Chinese gangsters who came to the defence of their community were able to give a good account of themselves. But from the time the army intervened in strength the deaths were almost all on one side.²² The physical loss of property was understandably even more overwhelmingly Chinese.²³ Chinese fears were fanned by the knowledge that the majority of the 8,000 'curfew-breakers, trouble-makers, rumour-mongers, secret society elements and those carrying offensive weapons' arrested by early July were Chinese. Although there were arrests and prosecutions of those responsible for isolated attacks and burnings after 13 May, there was no public indication that those who took part in the most serious violence in Kuala Lumpur would be punished. Dr Ismail later

²¹ *Straits Times*, 20 May and 20 June 1969.

²² *The May 13 Tragedy*, pp. 88-90, lists 143 Chinese killed and 270 wounded in the period ending 30 June as against 22 Malay killed and 119 injured. Thirty-four of the deaths and 125 of the injuries to Chinese were listed as caused by firearms.

²³ A Fire Brigade survey estimated total losses of M\$15 million by arson in Kuala Lumpur in the two periods 13-27 May and 28-30 June. There were 607 cases of premises set on fire, of which over 200 were solid brick buildings and the remainder squatter huts. *Straits Times*, 18 July 1969.

pointed out that the explosive post-election atmosphere provided 'mitigating circumstances' for the 13 May violence, which could not excuse later incidents.²⁴

The way in which Malaysia's leaders reacted to the situation extended it from a tragic but limited racial riot to a major political crisis of confidence. At first it was naturally Tengku Abdul Rahman who dominated the television screens as the acknowledged symbol of national unity. On the Tuesday night (13 May) he blamed the Opposition for provoking the violence, but added that 'retaliation does not help'.²⁵ On the Wednesday night, in announcing the reimposition of emergency powers, he claimed that there was 'an attempt by disloyal elements to overthrow the Government'.²⁶ It was his broadcast of Thursday evening, 15 May, which did most to destroy his credibility as a symbol of unity:

The terrorist Communists have worked out their plan to take over power. They have managed to persuade voters by threat, by intimidation, and by persuasion to overthrow the Alliance through the process of democracy . . .

They branded the MCA as pro-Malay and not pro-Chinese of Malaysia. They got the Chinese to vote against the MCA, and what is more astounding was to see the response they got from the combination of intimidation and threat . . .

We know that in this country the loyal Chinese elements are in fact stronger and more numerous than the other disloyal elements, but these people are well-organised while the peaceful and law-abiding citizens are not.²⁷

Although the other major Government spokesmen were more straightforward in admitting the racial nature of the clash, they all echoed the notion that the communists were primarily responsible. Even Tun Dr Ismail, widely respected as a tough but fair-minded guardian of the nation's security, could not forbear to point out that 'the unseen hand of communism had manipulated events using the Opposition as its tools'.²⁸ Much later he was to admit the point which had been apparent to most Kuala Lumpur residents from the beginning, that the communists had been taken as much by surprise as the Government by the whole affair.²⁹

In other ways too Government leaders unwittingly encouraged the popular impression that they had other objects in view than the identification and elimination of the sources of violence. Although Kuala Lumpur had just elected by large majorities opposition politicians to represent them in all but one of the city's parliamentary and State constituencies, these men were treated as guilty outcasts rather than as leaders. Despite repeated urgings

²⁴ *Sunday Times*, 6 July 1969.

²⁵ Radio Malaysia broadcast, 13 May 1969.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14 May 1969.

²⁷ Radio Malaysia broadcast, 15 May, printed in full in *Sunday Times*, 18 May 1969.

²⁸ Radio Malaysia broadcast, 16 May 1969, partially reproduced in *Sunday Times*, 18 May 1969. Also Ismail's interview with NBC correspondent broadcast over Radio Malaysia, 19 May 1969.

²⁹ *Straits Times*, 21 June 1969.

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from various quarters to associate them in appeals for calm, the Government permitted only one brief statement by the local leaders of the DAP, *Gerakan* and Labour Party deploring violence.³⁰ Not surprisingly, the arrests of V. David (*Gerakan*) and Lim Kit Siang (DAP) were wildly exaggerated by popular rumour. Tun Dr Ismail unnecessarily added to these fears by declaring dramatically:

There is no doubt now that democracy is dead in this country. It died at the hands of the opposition parties.³¹

Finally, the Government announced on Thursday 15 the suspension from publication of the whole Malaysian press, 'a blunder made worse by the inadequacies of the official broadcasting and television service'.³² As the usually cautious *Straits Times* pointed out:

The most trenchant of criticism of the Malaysian Government . . . the worst and most malicious or fantastic of rumours which have swept city and kampong cannot have done the harm that the disappearance of the press will inflict this morning.³³

In a variety of ways, therefore, many residents of Kuala Lumpur and a few foreign correspondents gained the impression that Government leaders were using the violence to change radically the basis of the Malaysian political system. This was a false impression. Government statements were probably influenced from the beginning by the feeling that it was the Malay political base which had to be secured before the Government could begin again to govern. But most of the earliest responses to the crisis were a result not of deliberate policy but of demoralization. Coming immediately after an exhausting campaign, an election setback, the disruption of the MCA withdrawal from the Cabinet, and a crisis of confidence in UMNO leadership, the riots appear to have thrown individual leaders back upon the hackneyed but instinctive responses of the previous decade. Tengku Abdul Rahman in particular was clearly deeply disturbed by the election result and the pressure against him in UMNO. Moreover the Government leaders were not alone in misreading the violence as the work of communists. The police and especially the army, from whom Government information came, appear to have taken several days to reorient themselves from their initial expectation that violence would come from the communist side, as it had so often in the past.

Fortunately the Government regained its balance towards the end of the first dreadful week. Whether or not as a consequence of the strong representations made by foreign correspondents to Tun Razak on Friday 16 May, military discipline was tightened, and a severe curfew imposed on those

³⁰ Radio Malaysia broadcast, 14 May 1969.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16 May 1969.

³² *Straits Times* editorial, 17 May 1969.

³³ *Ibid.*, 16 May 1969.

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Malay districts which had previously been treated indulgently. Attacks on Chinese life and property on any major scale were curbed, though sporadic arson and violence continued for several weeks. Strong pressure from the *Straits Times* helped to have the newspapers restored on Sunday 18th. Tengku Abdul Rahman decided, probably rightly, that he was not the man to restore order among discontented Malays, and Tun Razak and Tun Dr Ismail emerged as the acknowledged strong men in the National Operations Council (NOC) formed piecemeal on 15-17 May to co-ordinate executive action during the emergency. Despite its announced withdrawal, the MCA began again to be associated prominently with the Government. Tan Siew Sin and the MIC leader Sambanthan were named on Saturday 17th as members of the nine-man NOC. The benefit of Tan's return was immediately apparent in his organization of the distribution of essential foodstuffs, through almost exclusively Chinese wholesalers, to a city under curfew. When Tengku Abdul Rahman named his nineteen-man Cabinet on 20 May, it included three former MCA Ministers, Tan Siew Sin, Khaw Kai Boh, and Lee Siok Yew, as 'Ministers with Special Duties', while a fourth was named Assistant Minister.³⁴

Thus the worst Chinese fears were proved unfounded, and a return to the basic ingredients of the old recipe began to seem more likely than a Malay Government. From 23 May Chinese commercial leaders began a campaign to persuade the MCA to revoke its decision to withdraw from the Government and thus to transform the temporary 'Ministers with Special Duties' into substantive Ministers. The call was even joined by some of the pre-election MCA dissidents, indicating that the Central Working Committee had succeeded in teaching its 'lesson' to some Chinese. At a popular level, intense bitterness against the Government and against Malays was created among those directly affected, and a deep fear of the unknown future swept all Chinese in the affected cities. At least until August, racial antagonism was kept high by the almost complete boycott by Chinese in Kuala Lumpur of Malay eating-stalls and taxi-drivers, and the refusal to wear *batik*. But speculation that the Chinese would be driven into the arms of the communists was exaggerated. Insofar as anybody gained prestige by coming to the physical defence of the Chinese community, it was not the MCP but the secret society gangsters. To judge from the failure of the Labour Party's call for a boycott of the election, communist influence was at a low ebb. The appeal of the DAP in particular to the communal interest of the Chinese in Malaysia proved more attractive to most than the irrelevant Maoist clichés which abound in Labour Party circles.³⁵ The Chinese of Malaysia are still a relatively comfortable community with a great deal to lose in violence, and they know this.

³⁴ *Straits Times*, 21 May 1969.

³⁵ Some evidence of the Labour Party's realization of this swing to the DAP was furnished by Labour's attacks on the racism of the DAP just before the election. *Straits Times*, 9 May 1969.

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It is therefore unlikely that there will be more than a tiny trickle of recruits to the banner of violent revolution.³⁶

The Crisis in UMNO

The effect of the violence on the Malay political scene has been more fundamental. No observer can deny the major shift of articulate Malay opinion since the events of May, in a direction which tends to reject the former political system as unworkable. This sense of failure and the need for fresh beginnings has been expressed in almost every field—race relations, parliamentary democracy, national ideology, economic planning and international affairs. It has affected in some way the whole UMNO political spectrum from conservative civil servants to discontented students. But the initiative was taken after 13 May by the younger group which had already become identified with opposition to the Tengku's leadership, to what they regarded as weak-kneed and unprincipled accommodation to pressures from the Chinese side, and most specifically to the 1967 National Language Bill allowing the continued use of English. This group saw in the election set-back a reason to press for immediate change of personnel and policies. But the riots and the Government's response to them gave far more strength to their hand. By failing to condemn explicitly the rioters who began the violence, and laying all the guilt on communal electioneering and provocation from the non-Malay side, the Government encouraged the belief among Malays that the fault did in fact lie with too much weakness and liberality towards the ungrateful non-Malays. Moreover the initial weakness of the Government towards violence from the Malay side not only allowed that violence to continue (notably in the renewed outbreak at Sentul on 28 June, directed this time against the Indian community), but provided apparent confirmation of the extremist view that violence brings political rewards. Only after the violence was the Government manifestly preoccupied with meeting Malay demands above all else. All this served only to strengthen the tide of protest within UMNO, and encouraged the leaders of the opposition to the Tengku's leadership to overestimate their own strength.

The formation of the NOC, comprising a very heavy weighting of men close to Tun Razak,³⁷ gave initial satisfaction to the supporters of change. But the lines of opposition were quickly drawn in reaction to the campaign to get the MCA back in the Government. Shortly before a crucial UMNO executive meeting scheduled for 9 June, pressure to keep the MCA out of the Govern-

³⁶ Communist activity in the Malaysia-Thai border region has increased since July 1969, but the little evidence available suggests this is at least as much a result of Malay recruits from South Thailand as of Chinese from Malaysia.

³⁷ The civilian members of the NOC as originally constituted were Tan Siew Sin, Sambanthan, Dr Ismail, Razak, Hamzah bin Dato Abu Samah (Razak's brother-in-law, and also Minister of Information), Ghazali Shaffie (permanent secretary of the Foreign Ministry, who comes from Pahang like Razak and Hamzah), and Abdul Kadir Shamsuddin (Director of Public Services). The Malay members of the Council had in common an energetic, fair-minded, essentially administrative approach to problems.

ment was mounted by Dr Mahathir, an effective UMNO radical who topped the voting for the Executive Committee at the September 1968 UMNO assembly, but nevertheless lost his Parliamentary seat to the PMIP, and two veteran 'ultras', Syed Ja'afar Albar and Syed Nasir Ismail, who had fallen out with the leadership over Singapore in 1965, and language in 1967, respectively.³⁸ The UMNO-controlled *Utusan Melayu* group of newspapers gave considerable prominence to the growing support for their views among UMNO leaders outside the Cabinet.³⁹ But at the meeting Tun Razak was able to assert himself to have this issue terminated with the statement that the MCA alone should decide its policy. To emphasize his control Razak announced after the meeting that UMNO and all other political parties would be forbidden to hold meetings or wage political campaigns for the duration of the Emergency.⁴⁰

That these decisions were made in the absence of Tengku Abdul Rahman (undergoing an eye operation) and Khir Johari, who had been favoured by many Chinese as a successor (in Japan), seemed to mark Tun Razak's final arrival as a national leader. He left for the Canberra defence talks in mid-June after a statesmanlike television address which showed a welcome realism about the problems to be faced, and even a much-needed touch of humility in the promise that

We in the Government are determined for our part to tighten our belts and pull up our socks and take whatever measures necessary to restore racial harmony and goodwill, to safeguard the sensitivities of the various races, and to see that every one of us has a rightful place in this country.⁴¹

The outlines of these new measures were clarified during the first two weeks of July, after Razak's return. The NOC's analyses of the roots of the 13 May affair appeared to be:

- (i) Malay dissatisfaction over the non-implementation of long-standing policies to make Malay the effective National Language;
- (ii) non-Malay provocation of Malay sensitivities by challenging their privileged position under Article 153 of the Constitution;
- (iii) urban and small-town unemployment on the part of school-leavers, both Malay and non-Malay.

The policies enunciated in July to meet these problems in the future can be classed under the same heads:

- (i) The immediate beginning of the transition of English-medium schools to the Malay-medium, by insisting that those beginning school next year take all subjects except English in the Malay-medium. With the

³⁸ *Utusan Malaysia*, 5 June 1969.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6 and 7 June 1969.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 June 1969; *Straits Times*, 10 and 11 June 1969.

⁴¹ *Straits Times*, 14 June 1969.

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gradual advance of that batch of students through the school system, the whole English-medium school and University system would be transferred to Malay by the middle 1980s. At the same time, by such symbolic gestures as refusing to receive an important letter from the teachers' union in English, the new Education Minister, Abdul Rahman Ya'acub, emphasized that the National Language, now rechristened 'Bahasa Malaysia', would be taken seriously by the Government henceforth.

- (ii) Government pronouncements about the eventual return of a Parliamentary system have been qualified by the restriction that a way must be found to prevent politicians raising 'sensitive' issues. At the minimum this is taken to mean Article 153 itself, though some Government spokesmen have suggested a list of forbidden topics so extensive as virtually to prohibit meaningful debate.
- (iii) Economic priorities will be shifted from the preoccupation with rural development in the form of agricultural schemes, to the establishment of labour-intensive industries. As Tun Razak stated, 'Young people now want work, they do not want their own land'.⁴² Small industries which could absorb people in the lesser towns and villages would be given special encouragement. At the same time non-citizens with permanent resident rights (of whom there are several hundred thousand, mainly Indian labourers and Singaporeans) would be deprived of their jobs through a system of non-renewable work-permits valid for three months to two years.

All these measures contain positive elements, though their abrupt introduction as a result of political pressure rather than careful planning and preparation will cause unnecessary disruption and personal hardship. The most surprising decision is the sacrifice of the English educational stream, the best-organized of the four and the only one which has brought the races together, while leaving the Chinese and Tamil schools intact. Chinese schools have evidently been judged more difficult to handle and less of a challenge to Malay identity. But if Malay education is to have any usefulness as a unifying factor it will be necessary to seal off these escape routes for the antagonism which exists towards it.

These concessions to Malay opinion established a safer position from which the UMNO leadership could reestablish their grip. The lines of conflict during June tended to focus around support for the 'new order' identified with the NOC. While opposition politicians called for a speedy return to Parliamentary Government, the Malay activists insisted that the NOC should continue to govern as long as needed. The limitations to the power of the Malay critics became apparent during July and August when the debate

⁴² *Utusan Malaysia*, 10 July 1969.

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became most intense about the personal role of Tengku Abdul Rahman. Dr Mahathir made the tactical mistake of writing a bitterly critical letter to the Tengku on 17 June and then allowing it to be duplicated and circulated by student activists during July. Because of the embargo on political meetings (except on the University campus where a large anti-Tengku demonstration was permitted on 17 July), such 'underground letters' became the major form of political pressure, and many of those circulated were of a more racially inflammatory nature than Mahathir's. But far from inducing the Tengku to retire, Mahathir's action brought him fighting back from virtual retirement, and forced his Cabinet colleagues to rally to his defence.⁴³ In the process the radicals were temporarily silenced.

On 12 July Mahathir was expelled from the UMNO Executive Committee, at a meeting of that body presided over by Tun Razak. Two days later the possession or circulation of his letter and several others was made an offence. On the 16th Tun Ismail pointed out forcibly that no exception could be made to the Emergency prohibition on political action in favour of Malays who considered themselves engaged in a 'national struggle'.⁴⁴ At the end of July the Tengku sacked from his post as Assistant Minister to Tun Razak one of the most capable of the younger UMNO leaders, Musa Hitam, known as a discreet but effective critic of the Tengku in the Cabinet. Finally on 29 August the Tengku himself chaired a meeting of the NOC for the first time. Several hundred Malay students marked the occasion with a second anti-Tengku demonstration on the University campus, which was unexpectedly crushed by police with tear gas.

All of these moves met with surprisingly little resistance. Even the students seemed unprepared to continue their campaign after four student leaders were arrested for three days after the 29 August affair. The circulation of underground extremist literature also dropped off markedly. But it would be wrong to assume from this that the Malay movement has petered out. For the moment it lacks a champion. Most of the Tengku's critics initially wanted only to see the NOC continue in power under Razak's leadership. Since Tun Razak has naturally been unprepared to bring pressure to bear on his mentor, impatience with him has grown, but no other credible leader has yet appeared in the wings.

But having once felt their power the young urban Malay militants will remain a force to be reckoned with in the future, even assuming the Tengku soon finds an opportunity to step down gracefully. Among these militants there are undoubtedly elements of dangerous irrationality, including an anti-Western reaction to the criticisms voiced by the foreign press, a romanticization of violence and authoritarianism, and a xenophobic racism. But there are just

⁴³ The Tengku's deep sense of personal injury is very apparent in *May 13—Before and After*, pp. 117-35.

⁴⁴ *Utusan Malaysia*, 17 July 1969.

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as many elements of genuine modernization, demanding an end to aristocratic paternalism and the opportunistic nature of many of the deals 'at the top' between Chinese businessmen and the Malay elite. The question is whether the present UMNO leadership is capable of the dynamic quality which can attract these energies into constructive paths. The loss of men with the ability of Dr Mahathir and Musa Hitam makes it especially difficult to answer this question confidently, unless through the NOC more of the talent available in the Civil Service is brought into prominence. Nor is the present Government strong enough to undertake a fundamental attack on the sources of racial conflict, such as a modification of some of the exclusive one-race institutions which have provided much of the fuel for extremism in the past.

On the other hand the prospects of a return to an open parliamentary system are even gloomier in the atmosphere of bitterness which has followed the violence. A system of non-discussable topics imposed from above on a reluctant Opposition could never be workable. Probably the most hopeful possibility would arise if the Opposition itself, or a section of it, was eventually driven by frustration over its present impotence to evolve an agreed formula on racial questions. Before 13 May it would have been laughable to imagine the PMIP agreeing to any common action with the predominantly non-Malay opposition. Since then, however, both the PMIP and the *Gerakan* have played their cards shrewdly and with an apparent moderation which they no doubt intended to contrast well with the extremism which has been tearing at the Alliance.

This is certainly a faint hope. Until or unless something of the kind occurs, however, the least dangerous course will probably continue to be an administrative style of government through the NOC.